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George Town Festival Set to Close with an Enormous Art Bash

The 16-day long celebration will draw to an end with a runway presentation and diverse selections of performing and installation arts

George Town, Penang, Malaysia, 22 July 2019: THE George Town Festival 2019 (GTF 2019) will be capping its 16-day artistic adventure on 28 July 2019 at Lebuhraya Pantai with *The Extravaganza*, casting 120 artists from ten countries to form an enormous art bash that is worth a universal celebration.

This free-to-attend event is brimming with diverse selections of performing and installation arts ranging from contemporary to traditional and novel performances at selected spots, inviting visitors to experience arts in a new way.

The finale night will also see the closing ceremony of the Festival, to be presided by Penang Chief Minister YAB Chow Kon Yeow and Penang State Exco For Tourism Development, Arts, Culture and Heritage (PETACH) YB Yeoh Soon Hin at 8.30pm at Lebuhraya Pantai.

Among some of the not-to-be-missed programmes happening at the finale's main stage are a runway presentation titled *REBORN* which is designed to speak for the voiceless, bringing about much-needed awareness on environmental conservation and animal abuse prevention as well as *BIRD*, a dance performance created in artistic collaboration between visual theatre company WHS from Finland and Pichet Klunchun Dance Company from Thailand. Taking centre stage is WindRiver Productions, led by Aida Redza, who will be mesmerising visitors with a dance performance entitled *Reclaim*. Other acts joining the grand finale include Angika Fine Arts, which will be presenting varied Indian dances for all to enjoy through *Odissi* as well as HANDS Percussion, which is set to build the Festival to a crescendo through rhythmic beatings of *jidor* and *shigu* drums in *In the Name of Celebration*.

Meanwhile, the *Dance in the Air* zone will feature aerial silk performance by Malaysian-born Noah Yap and aerial rope performance by Linda Vellar from Spain. Joining these incredible aerial silk and rope performing artists is the group Mi Santa who will keep audiences on their toes with risky yet jaw-dropping acrobatic techniques mixed with trapeze and Cyr wheel in *Contigo Me Voy*.

Over at *The Wonder* zone, fire artists from France and Singapore will manipulate fire through staff twirling, poi spinning, and spellbinding pyrotechnic effects while Incredible Mallakhamb from India is

set to draw huge crowds with eclectic *Mallakhamb* performances that are bound to thrill the festival-goers — not forgetting Linda Vellar from Italy who will charm audiences with her enthralling hula hoop act.

Adding colour to the festival is the *Back in Time Photo Exhibition*, which is a specially curated photo exhibition featuring photos captured during the first 15 days of the ongoing Festival, where visitors can look forward to taking a short trip back in time.

Other zones to look out for are *Melodious Joy*, which is filled with current, innovative and urban music as well as *Magical Light*, where FILAMEN, a local projection mapping community group and Ewe Chen Chin from Lo-profile use vibrant neon lights and dynamic colours to transform the space into a lively night-time streetscape.

The finale will be made merrier with live acrobatic show, making the night an Instagrammable event for everyone.

Details of *The Extravaganza* are as follows:

1.0 THE EXTRAVAGANZA

The Festival's grand finale – *The Extravaganza* – will cast local and international street and performing artists to form an enormous art bash that is worth a universal celebration. This free-to-attend street event is brimming with diverse selections of performing and installation arts ranging from contemporary to traditional and novel performances at selected spots, inviting visitors to experience arts in a new way.

2.0 MAIN STAGE

Step into an immersive world of enthralling dreams as you witness the otherworldly beauty of contemporary and traditional dance movements at George Town Festival's grand finale. The night is made 'livelier' with a thought-provoking reflection on humanity through performance and runway presentation, leading viewers into impressive visual odysseys. To amp up the reverie, HANDS Percussion is joining forces with the dancers from WindRiver Productions and Angika Fine Arts to deliver high-octave performances like none other!

The following table lists the programme line-up at the finale's main stage:

| Programme | Details |
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| <i>Reclaim</i> by WindRiver Productions (Malaysia) | <p>To celebrate George Town Festival's grand finale, WindRiver Productions, led by Aida Redza, dedicates a dance expressing power, poetry and the care for our island. The performance begins by tracing the memory of our shoreline along Beach Street, and as it moves up to the stage, the dance starts to call attention to the concerns over our changing sea and landscape.</p> <p><i>Reclaim</i> is a stirring call-to-action for us to recover and protect the past before making forced changes to create a new future.</p> |
| <i>Odissi</i> by Angika Fine Arts (Malaysia) | <p>Angika Fine Arts is set to present varied Indian dances at George Town Festival 2019. Lawrence Sackris, the Artistic Director of Angika Fine Arts, will leave festival-goers in awe with his graceful performance of the <i>Odissi</i> – one of the classical Indian dance forms originated from Orissa with its own beauty and uniqueness.</p> <p>Sackris, together with the Angika Fine Arts' dancers, will bring you astonishing performances. Prepare to be mesmerised by the spellbinding movement of <i>Dandiya</i> dance, which is performed by a group of men and women moving in circles to measure the steps and mark the time by sticks called <i>Dandiya</i>. Catch a glimpse of the colourful Indian culture through the energetic Bollywood dance, in the midst of a vibrant music.</p> |
| <i>REBORN</i> (Malaysia) | <p><i>REBORN</i> is a contemplative runway presentation meticulously designed to speak for the voiceless, bringing about much-needed awareness on environmental conservation as well as animal abuse prevention. It presents a stark contrast on the appearance of the models, offering audiences an intimate, unvarnished look at the violence behind our seemingly beautiful world.</p> |

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| | <p><i>REBORN</i> is brought to you by Chan Hong Yu, an emerging visual artist who is currently the Artistic Director of Oonik Design in Penang. For Chan, visual art can be very connotative and can also be used to express the imagination of the creator vividly, just like other artistic creations.</p> |
| <p><i>BIRD</i> by WHS (Finland) and Pichet Klunchun Dance Company (Thailand)</p> | <p>On stage, the performers are confined in a birdcage, teaching fake birds to fly. Liberating birds from a cage and letting them fly freely is thought to be a good deed, but while someone is setting the birds free, someone is taking them captive.</p> <p>Brought to you by WHS, a visual theatre company from Finland, and Pichet Klunchun Dance Company from Thailand, <i>BIRD</i> is an unmissable thought-provoking reflection on humanity from the perspective of birds.</p> |
| <p><i>In the Name of Celebration</i> by HANDS Percussion (Malaysia)</p> | <p>Carrying the <i>jidor</i>, playing the <i>shigu</i>. From one festival to another. A new aspiration, crossing traditional boundaries with movement and music.</p> <p>When the music begins, it's an avid greeting from HANDS Percussion and its musicians! The award-winning drumming and percussion troupe is all set to present an exuberant performance where audiences will be treated to the rhythmic beatings of <i>jidor</i> and <i>shigu</i> drums, to make the celebration even merrier!</p> <p>HANDS Percussion clinched the coveted BaliSpirit Festival and The World Economic Forum in 2015 and had performed in the United States, Switzerland, Taiwan, Indonesia and more.</p> |

3.0 DANCE IN THE AIR

When it comes to spellbinding and thrilling aerial performances, we've got you covered! Get ready for a dazzling showcase of riveting aerial acts which defy the bounds of gravity, spinning and dropping high above thrillseekers, leaving them in perpetual awe. The aerial silk performance by Malaysian-born Noah Yap and aerial rope performance by Linda Vellar from Spain will have you holding your

breath, unable to move a muscle in anticipation of the next heart-pounding move. With a combination of acrobatic techniques mixed with trapeze and Cyr wheel, Mi Santa from Spain and Argentina is set to deliver *Contigo Me Voy*, an astonishing show that you would not want to miss.

The following table lists the programme line-up at *Dance in the Air*:

| Programme | Details |
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| <p><i>Fallen Angel & Light of Hope</i> by Noah Yap Kok Boon (Malaysia)</p> | <p>Noah Yap Kok Boon, a troupe leader and artistic director of TEAM Theatre, is also a full-time drama instructor. He got involved in stage and performing arts since 2005 and is currently pursuing his dancing passion at Viva Vertical Malaysia, majoring in aerial hoop, aerial silk and pole dancing.</p> <p>At the GTF 2019 much-buzzed about finale, Noah will hit the stage with a raw, heart-stopping, delicate aerial silk performance, pushing his physical limits without reservation. This highly recommended show will grant audiences an unforgettable visceral experience.</p> |
| <p><i>Contigo Me Voy</i> by Mi Santa (Spain & Argentina)</p> | <p>Two human beings, sharing their universes.</p> <p>The intersection of two lives, trying to make one, the simple, the uncomfortable, the repetitive, the unachievable things.</p> <p>Different but together.</p> <p>The group Mi Santa consists of two artists from Spain and Argentina, with more than ten years of experience working on stages. The creation of Sofia Demicheli, <i>CRUDA</i>, and the latest work of Martin Samanna, <i>Alumen</i>, form the extraordinary show of <i>Contigo Me Voy</i>. They are set to keep audiences on their toes with risky yet jaw-dropping acrobatic techniques mixed with trapeze and Cyr wheel, a heart-stopping show like no other.</p> |
| <p>Aerial Rope Act by Linda Vellar (Italy)</p> | <p>The rope serves as a minimal line between the air and the ground where the energies of the body are reversed. Audiences can witness a corporal contortion filled with a sense of alienation that is different</p> |

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| | from that of a normal human being. The captivating show by the widely travelled Linda Vellar from Italy will bring you on a mind-blowing voyage to other universes and then go back home. |
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4.0 THE WONDER

The Wonder is a hotbed of activity at *The Extravaganza*. Get all fired up as fire artists from France and Singapore manipulate fire through staff twirling, poi spinning, and spellbinding pyrotechnic effects while Incredible Mallakhamb from India draws huge crowds with eclectic *Mallakhamb* performances that are bound to thrill the festival-goers — not forgetting Linda Vellar from Italy who will charm audiences with her enthralling hula hoop act.

The following table lists the programme line-up at *The Wonder*:

| Programme | Details |
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| <i>Mallakhamb</i> by The Incredible Mallakhamb (India) | The Incredible Mallakhamb is one of the most distinguished group of performers in the world, with an experience of more than 18 years in Mallakhamb, a traditional Indian sport in which a gymnast performs feats and poses with a vertical wooden pole or rope. They have performed at numerous international platforms, including Festival of Mondial, India's Got Talent, Georgia's Got Talent and Setouchi Triennale 2016 in Japan. If you like an impressive display of strength, skill and creativity fascinate you, then Incredible Mallakhamb is just for you. |
| <i>Jonnie Fire Show</i> by Jonathan Goh (Singapore) | To amp up the reverie of the night, Jonathan Goh from Singapore will be delivering a high-octave fire performance like none other! Jonathan has collaborated and worked with various arts groups in Singapore such as Acropolates, Nadi Singapura, Orkestar Trio, SA and Temple of Fine Arts. He is currently managing his own performing duo, The Annoying |

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| | Brothers, and is working with a social circus group known as Bornfire. |
| <i>Special Hoop Act</i> by Linda Vellar (Italy) | Sometimes a circle is more than meets the eye. In her enthralling hula hoop act, Linda Vellar from Italy combines awesome tricks with multiple rings. Imagine this: a hula hoop is raised from the floor, encircling her, seemingly lifted by unseen hands. This compelling show is performed with such exquisite control that she appears almost motionless and the hula hoop seems to take on a life of its own. |

5.0 'BACK IN TIME' PHOTO EXHIBITION

In case you missed out the first 15 days of the ongoing Festival, this is an excellent opportunity for you to catch up. Take a short trip back in time through a specially curated photo exhibition which explores all types of theatre, music, dance, and visual art imagery through the lens of professional and emerging photographers. Taken throughout the Festival, they are gorgeous!

6.0 MELODIOUS JOY

There is a certain buzz about listening to the soothing sounds of violin by Julian Lee, harp by Bryan Lee, saxophone, guitar and cajon by 3 Tones right here in George Town. If you love current, innovative and urban music, *Melodious Joy* may be just what you are looking for.

7.0 MAGICAL LIGHT

Whatever you're doing, make sure you're in town to experience the glowing magical light in the dark! Watch as the historical landmark of George Town is brought to life with illuminating artistic creations, unveiling the living story of the Festival, accompanied by the enchanting charm of the night. Jointly brought by FILAMEN, a local projection mapping community group and Ewe Chen Chin from Lo-profile, the vibrant neon lights and dynamic colours will transform the space into a lively night-time streetscape that is unmissable! Keep your eyes peeled for an astounding acrobatic show amid the magical light, too!

Acrobatic Act

A strange character appears amongst the audiences and interacts with them. With an extremely flexible body, Ines balances on the hands and moves in a twisted way. It is a thought-provoking story of the different and the unknown, hoping to make the crowd realised that, beyond the superficial differences, we are all made by the same fundamental essence.

8.0 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Extravaganza highlighted programme is expecting some 80,000 visitors, so festival-goers are advised to carpool or use public transportation (CAT bus) and e-hailing services when heading to the Festival to ease traffic congestion.

Road Closure

Lebuh Pantai, Lebuh Bishop, Lebuh Gereja and Gat Lebuh Gereja will be closed from 9pm on 26 July to 6am on 29 July to facilitate *The Extravaganza* highlighted programme.

Grab Promotion

Visitors can enjoy RM5 off each ride for four (4) Grab rides per user when travelling to and from the Festival's highlighted programmes such as *When Night Falls* (13 & 14 July), *Art in the City* (20 & 21 July) and *The Extravaganza* (28 July) using the Grab promo code GRAB2GTF19. The promotion is valid for Grabpay payment method only.

For more information, please visit georgetownfestival.com and follow us on Facebook at George Town Festival.

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About George Town Festival

The George Town Festival (GTF) is an annual festival held in Penang's capital, George Town, in honour of the city's designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Festival also aims to promote arts, culture and heritage in Penang. The annual GTF is endorsed by the Penang State Government with the full support by the City Council of Penang Island, George Town World Heritage Incorporated and Penang Global Tourism in celebration of local and international works of art.

GTF also serves as a leading art platform in the region for local and international artists to connect, granting them the opportunity to collaborate and to bolster the local and international art communities. The Festival is committed to promoting the beauty of arts, culture and heritage to all as a not-to-be-missed major arts event.

Returning for its tenth edition, TLM Event is set to deliver a whole new way of experiencing arts. This year, GTF embodies the idea of making arts accessible to all, regardless of age or background. A vast amount of visual art, theatre, music, dance, film, photography and more will be packed into 16 days for all to feast their senses. From traditional auditoriums to halls, shophouse walls and historic buildings, the Festival will see world-class performances, installations and collaborations such as thought-provoking artistic activities, intimate talks, interactive sharing sessions and more to make sure that there is something for everyone.