

Iskandar Mirza Ismail: Multi-talented and Versatile

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Cultural Medallion recipient Iskandar Mirza Ismail is one of Singapore's most multi-talented and versatile musicians.

Iskandar is a composer, arranger, conductor, music director, artistic director, producer, performer and educator. Working in genres ranging from jazz, pop, ethnic, new age, orchestral to fusion, he ranks among Singapore's most admired and respected musicians.

Iskandar studied at the renowned Berklee College of Music in Boston, USA, where he won the John Lewis Jazz Masters Award in 1978 before graduating a year later. His musical achievements are obvious from the many significant projects he has since been involved in.

For many years, he took on the responsibility of being the music director of Singapore's National Day Parade. He was also the music director for the opening and closing events for 17th Southeast Asian Games (1993), World Trade Organisation's opening show (1996), and the music arranger behind the Wonders of Asia segment of 2006's Asian Games opening ceremony.

Aside from composing music for the Chingay Parade for many years, he did the musical arrangements for stage musicals like *Kampong Amber* (1994), *Sing to the Dawn* (1996), *Snow Wolf Lake* (1997), *Chang and Eng* (1997, 1998, 1999) and *Beauty World* (2008).

Iskandar's talent is recognised not only at home but also regionally and internationally. Aside from arranging for Shanghai Philharmonic Orchestra, he has arranged and conducted for Singapore Symphony Orchestra, Istana Budaya Orchestra (Malaysia), Bangkok Symphony Orchestra and China National Opera & Ballet Orchestra.

His musical works were also featured in Spotlight Singapore (Tokyo 2006 and Moscow 2008) and Singapore Season (London 2005 and Beijing & Shanghai 2007), as well as in the 6th Sao Paulo Biennial of Architecture and Design (2005).

His recording credits include work with local singers like Dick Lee, Jacintha Abisheganaden and Tanya Chua, as well as regional artists like Jacky Cheung, Andy Lau, Sandy Lam, Aaron Kwok and Tracy Huang.

Iskandar is active in nurturing the musical interests of youths. He is the music director of the NUS Jazz Band and was involved in Singapore Youth Festival over various years. He has also been involved with the ChildAid charity concert.

He was the recipient of Malay newspaper Berita Harian's Achiever of the Year (2003) for Arts. In 2007, he was awarded an Honorary Fellowship by the London College of Music, Thames Valley University.