

Matthias Manasi and the Selangor Symphony Orchestra in top form at the New Year's Concert 2024

Standing ovations for Matthias Manasi and the Selangor Symphony Orchestra.

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The New Year's Concert with the Selangor Symphony Orchestra is the musical highlight at the start of the year in Kuala Lumpur, the capital city of Malaysia. The start of the musical year with the New Year's Concert 2024 under the German star conductor Matthias Manasi, who conducted this prestigious musical event for the first time in the concert hall The Platform Performing Arts Theatre in Kuala Lumpur captivated with exhilarating resoluteness at an exceptionally high level.



Matthias Manasi conducting the traditional New Year's concert of the Selangor Symphony Orchestra at The Platform Performing Arts Theatre in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on Jan. 14, 2024. (Photo/Chin Peng Hon)

As expected, the Selangor Symphony Orchestra's New Year's Concert 2024 was superlative. Matthias Manasi and the orchestra displayed subtle poetry, dazzling orchestral colors, Broadway flair and gripping attack and everything in between.

The large audience in the famous The Platform Performing Arts Theatre was treated to a first-class New Year's concert with an exciting, colorful program with a number of novelties: in addition to classical composers such as Tchaikovsky, Vivaldi, Offenbach, and Father Strauss, whose Radetzky March is the eternal encore, numerous Broadway highlights and other popular tunes could be heard, this meant a celebration of philharmonic sound culture and a musical tour de force, which was supported by the participating soloists and which created musical sparks.

Matthias Manasi and the Selangor Symphony Orchestra opened the 2024 New Year's Concert

with a thrilling and rousing rendition of "The Final Countdown". Matthias Manasi animated the orchestra to an anthemic, radiant style of playing, with energetic collective accents that opened the concert with impressive vigor. This was followed by Carlos Gardel's tango "Por Una Cabeza". With his unique elegant, fluid conducting style, Matthias Manasi inspired the orchestra to a beautiful and exquisite sound, the musicians played with a dancing, elegant phrasing, sensitively, smoothly and in an unforgettably lyrical, velvety way. The singer Wendy Woo, one of three soloists, then presented herself with an impeccably sung, pointed "November Rain" (Guns N'Roses). This was followed by "A Million Dreams" from "The Greatest Showman", which she sang overwhelmingly beautifully and stirringly.

Wendy Woo and Jazper Nimoi then sang the Broadway classic "A Whole New World" to perfection. Jazper Nimoi sang "I Don't Want to Miss a Thing" by the rock group Aerosmith. Under Matthias Manasi, the orchestra accompanied with the perfect rock feeling, breathtaking precision and a huge palette of nuances. The orchestra and the singer were always perfectly balanced. Jazper Nimoi hit the right romantic gesture and passionate expression in the song "Can't Take My Eyes Off Of You", brilliantly accompanied by the orchestra. Matthias Manasi conducted with vigor and drive and, with his brisk, gripping and spirited conducting, was an inspiring partner for Jazper Nimoi at the conductor's podium. You can rarely hear an orchestra so perfectly precise, so incredibly nuanced like under the baton of Matthias Manasi. With a lively performance of "Sweet Child O' Mine" sparkling with cheerful virtuosity and an impeccably pointed, rocky, groovy interpretation of "Hawaii Five-O", Matthias Manasi and the orchestra sent the delighted audience



Matthias Manasi conducting the traditional New Year's concert of the Selangor Symphony Orchestra at The Platform Performing Arts Theatre in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on Jan. 14, 2024. (Photo/Chin Peng Hon)



Matthias Manasi conducting the Radetzky March at the New Year's concert of the Selangor Symphony Orchestra at The Platform Performing Arts Theatre in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on Jan. 14, 2024. (Photo/Chin Peng Hon)

off to their break.

After the break, the concert continued with one of Tchaikovsky's most popular works, the Valse from his Serenade for Strings in C major. This Valse is often performed alone and is a sweeping work of uplifting sonorities, playful pizzicati and memorable tunes. With his elegant conducting style, Matthias Manasi inspired the orchestra to create an interpretation full of colorful nobility and elegance, sensibly soft in the lyric passages, then almost dancing at the conductor's podium. You felt like you were in a Belle Epoque ballroom where couples sway while dancing.

In Winter from Vivaldi's "Four Seasons", Hyungi Kim, the orchestra's concert master shone with brilliant and breathtaking virtuosity and a beautiful violin sound and was accompanied by Matthias Manasi and the orchestra precisely and with a rousing, nuanced and stylistically perfect orchestral sound, which created a wintry, ice-glittering mood painting. Afterwards, the likeable Wendy Woo enchanted the audience with a magically sung Memory, the most famous song from the musical Cats. In the musical, the song is sung by Grizabella, who recalls her glorious past and explains that she wants to start a new life. Matthias Manasi and the orchestra delivered the magical orchestral sound of this song to Wendy Woo's great and very touching interpretation and fascinated with numerous magical shades of sound in the orchestra. A goosebumps moment in the concert.

With "All I Ask of You" Wendy Woo once again showed her brilliant singing skills. The iconic ballad "All I Ask of You" is a heartfelt and emotional song composed by Andrew Lloyd Webber. It was written for the popular musical "The Phantom of the Opera" and has been a timeless classic ever since. This beautiful and powerful duet captures the essence of love, longing and the complexity of relationships. Like very few conductors, Matthias Manasi manages to elicit a singing sound full of intensity and nuances from the orchestra and accompanied Wendy Woo's touching singing in a congenial way. Wendy Woo's performance of "I Dreamed A Dream" from the musical, "Les Misérables" was nuanced and touching. The orchestra under Matthias Manasi once again delivered an exemplary and absolutely brilliant performance with an exquisite, singing and sparkling orchestral sound.

This was followed by two highly interesting, exquisite and stirring Chinese pieces, sung by Lenny Ooi, "Li Xiang Lan" by Fumio Hayasaka and "Ai Shi Yong Heng" by Dick Lee. His performances were thoughtful and nuanced. It was fascinating to see again the sovereignty with which Matthias Manasi brought the countless nuances of the score to light and created a unique interpretation of these pieces with the orchestra.

After his solo pieces, Lenny Ooi sang the duet "Ni Zui Ten Gui" with Wendy Woo. Matthias Manasi and the orchestra celebrated the numerous melodies of this piece in a beautiful and melting way, always with breathtaking precision together with the singers. The audience responded with frenetic applause and demanded encores.

As is tradition at a New Year's concert, the Radetzky March was performed which Matthias

Manasi conducted facing the audience and, with a mischievous smile, instructed them when they should clap and when not. A second encore was the Can-can by Jacques Offenbach to close this unforgettable New Year's Concert. At this afternoon of 14 January 2024, Matthias Manasi and the Selangor Symphony Orchestra achieved an unforgettable and impressive New Year's Concert with this unusual program. It was a good start to the New Year 2024.

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