**PRESS RELEASE**

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***The Power Of Small***

***My Performing Arts Agency’s (MyPAA) Commitment In Building A Conducive Malaysian Arts Ecosystem***

KUALA LUMPUR, 15 June 2016 – The economic climate of the world has been undoubtedly temperamental and this has resulted in many public and private organisations reducing their funding programmes that support the arts, thus affecting many artistes and arts organisations in Malaysia who may see their futures hanging in the balance. Amid the uncertainties, **My Performing Arts Agency** (MyPAA), one of the leading cultural and creative industry partners in Malaysia, is no exception to this predicament but as the adage goes, “the show must go on!”

The press conference, held at the Auditorium of FINAS’ Content Pitching Centre Malaysia, was attended by Encik Mohamad Razy Mohamad Nor, Deputy Director General of the National Department for Culture and Arts - Policy and Planning (JKKN), Joe Sidek, Festival Director of George Town Festival (GTF), Izan Satrina Mohd Sallehuddin, Founder and Director of MyPAA, and Brian Johnson Lowe, Co-Founder and Director of MyPAA. Today’s press conference announced a series of strategic platforms that aims to strengthen and contribute in building a conducive arts ecosystem for the country, in addition to positioning Malaysia as an emerging and serious arts player.

Today’s announcement paved the way for work to begin on the below strategic platforms:

* **The Royal Arts Gala Fund** / crowdsourcing for corporate contribution to fund Malaysian arts community every 2 years / targeted call for applications December 2016 / nationwide
* **Research and Conference in Facilitating Corporate *Mécénat* Activities and Establishing a Network in ASEAN Countries** / a conference involving Japanese and ASEAN corporations for private and public stakeholders who are currently or considering supporting cultural economy / 24 August 2016 / Le Meridien Hotel Kuala Lumpur
* **Borak Arts Series** / a regional arts conference for performing arts practitioners and business leaders / 27-28 August 2016 / The Wembley, Penang

The efforts are yet another slate of strategic initiatives of MyPAA which aim to cultivate Malaysian sectors mainly the private, public and the arts community – artistes, organisations, NGOs amongst others to partner with multiple stakeholders - local and international partners to create more scale, more reach, more impact, more resource, more demand to scale up Malaysian arts locally and globally.

**1. The Royal Arts Gala Fund**

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**The** **Royal Arts Gala Fund** was an initiative started by MyPAA in 2012 as an output from the National Creative Industry Policy (DIKN) efforts with JKKN. Funds were raised in 2012 and 2014 through The Royal Arts Gala, and disbursed in 2013 and 2015 to fund artistic excellence and energise the collaborative partnerships for the creation and development of new arts ventures in Malaysia. To date, 49 artists/arts organisations or works have been funded utilising more than RM1 million raised previously. In totality, the recipients have engaged up to 44,000 pax of audience.

The aim of **The Royal Arts Gala Fund** encourages global culture mobility, with the larger aim of extending networks and supporting collaboration between cultural professionals from Malaysia and international partners. The funding of up to RM30,000 can be utilised for the following:

* Go global - The promotion of Malaysian artists and works overseas (eg. in performing arts market, festival, showcase, pitch session, tour)
* Fostering collaboration - The facilitation of international co-productions and collaborations involving Malaysian and overseas talent
* Capacity building - The development of technical and managerial skills among Malaysian performing arts managers and administrators
* Research - Documentation of the performing arts

*“In the face of the economic climate and funding cuts for the arts, MyPAA aims to intervene and restructure the fundraising process of* ***The Royal Arts Gala Fund*** *by crowdsourcing from up to 10 corporate and individual philanthropists, who will also enjoy tax exemption from the contribution. The case of the arts in Malaysia may not be a top priority but there are some who strongly believe in the power of the arts, and have supported the development of Malaysian arts in their own capacity. We are reaching out to these angels, as well as to new ones, to join the much-needed effort. Consistency in whatever we do is important and hence we hope to have a steady form of fund generation on an uninterrupted basis to provide the industry some assistance. If all goes well, we hope the call for applications can take place this December 2016,”* said Brian Johnson Lowe.

Corporate and individual philanthropists can email azirah@mypaa.com.my for more information on contributing to **The Royal Arts Gala Fund**.

**2. Research** **and Conference in Facilitating Corporate *Mécénat* Activities and Establishing a Network in ASEAN Countries**



Izan Satrina Mohd Sallehuddin continued the press conference with an introduction to the **Research** **and Conference in Facilitating Corporate *Mécénat* Activities and Establishing a Network in ASEAN Countries** that will be conducted on **24 August 2016** at Le Meridien Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The conference is curated for corporations, cultural practitioners, NGOs, government agencies, intermediaries, funders, policymakers as well as relevant cultural and creative ecosystem stakeholders. This supporting programme aims to promote corporate philanthropy and *mecenat* (support of the arts and culture)via implementing research, mutual exchanges, symposiums and conference in collaboration with Southeast Asian countries; organised by **Association for Corporate Support of the Arts *“Kigyo Mécénat Kyogikai”***,Japan (KMK) since early 2015. The KL-leg of the conference features a keynote address, presentations from Japanese, Malaysian and international corporations that have already contributed to *mecenat* activities, panel discussion, round table sessions and performances. Featured speakers in the KL-leg conference include President of KMK, **Motoki Ozaki**, International Arts Director of Bennesse Arts Site Naoshima, **Akiko Miki**, General Manager of Corporate Culture Department SHISEIDO Co. Ltd, **Yukihiro Saito** and more.

Seats for **Research and Conference in Facilitating Corporate *Mécénat* Activities and Establishing a Network in ASEAN Countries** can be secured at [www.mypaa.com.my/kmkconference](http://www.mypaa.com.my/kmkconference) from 20 June onwards.

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| No | Ticket category | Ticket prices | Description |
| 1 | Early Bird ticket (valid till 31 July 2016) | RM100 | Price includes admission to conference, one coffee break and lunch. |
| 2 | Normal Price ticket | RM150 | Price includes admission to conference, one coffee break and lunch. |

*“We signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) known as the Corporate Mecenat Japan-Malaysia Connection with KMK in Japan last month, however our discussions with KMK kick-started at our annual, regional arts conference, Borak Arts Series, in November 2014, via The Japan Foundation Kuala Lumpur, when the Executive Director of KMK, Taneo Kato and Executive Secretary of KMK, Yasuko Ogiwara, attended to speak about arts and cultural support for a creative and vibrant society. This is when MyPAA, along with our industry peers, were first introduced to the established mecenat system in Japan. Without a doubt, we expressed our desires to learn more about the system and how to seed a strategic platform with similar philosophy in Malaysia. MyPAA then initiated an informal Coalition of Corporate Support for the Arts, consisting of an encouraging number of local corporate bodies, in addition to public stakeholders to discuss on developing partnerships, promoting support for arts and culture, information exchange, advocating, research and cultural fundraising support. After four meaningful meetings of 30 organisations, we are steadily moving towards a promising future,”* said Izan Satrina Mohd Sallehuddin.

*“Diplomatic and cultural exchanges between Malaysia and Japan remain a focus for our country. Malaysia recognises the enormous potential of corporate participation in the culture sector and welcomes the bilateral relationship between KMK Japan and MyPAA Malaysia. We are committed to cultivating corporate investment and philanthropy, and it is with great pride that we support the MOU signing. We look forward to a rewarding cultural partnership that educates and enriches the experience for all of us and further drives cultural investment,”* said **YBhg. Dato’ Ahmad Izlan Idris**, Ambassador of Malaysia to Japan during the MOU signing last month in Tokyo.

**About Association for Corporate Support of the Arts “Kigyo Mécénat Kyogikai (KMK), Japan**

KMK continues to undertake efforts to promote and heighten awareness of corporate arts support building a cultural infrastructure for the encouragement and development of business and arts partnership. As means to achieve this mission, KMK conducts a variety of programs such as research, seminars and award programs acting as an intermediary. In 1994, KMK was granted the status of “Specific Public Interest Promoting Corporation” by the Agency of Cultural Affairs. Under this status, KMK initiated the Arts Project Assistance Approval Program, which provides corporations based in Japan with tax-deductible advantages upon supporting arts projects. In 2011, KMK received the status of “Public Interest Incorporated Association” by the Cabinet Office, Government of Japan. For more information, log on to www.mecenat.or.jp/english/

**3. Borak Arts Series**

The fourth regional **Borak Arts Series** – a regional arts conference for performing arts practitioners and business leaders, returns to Penang this **27 - 28 August 2016**, at the internationally acclaimed George Town Festival, Penang, Malaysia. The first two conferences were held in Kuala Lumpur in 2013 and 2014. 2015’s conference in George Town was a hit amongst the local and ASEAN artistic community, convincing the organiser of the festival to welcome back the networking and capacity building platform.

Building from 2013, 2014 and 2015’s themes of Building Sustainability in the Arts, Building Knowledge Capacity in Funding and Mobility, and ASEAN and the Future, respectively, this year’s theme looks at **Bringing Arts Closer to Home**. The conference topics cover i) examining the role of the arts in conflict resolution and recovery, ii) the different facets of communities to understand how creativity unleashes internal strength, voice, self-expression and a sense of belonging, iii) social impacts and iv) evaluating output, amongst others. (refer to annex for complete programme schedule)

Some of the featured distinguished speakers include **Sayantani Raychaudhuri**, General Manager- Communications of Banglanatak dot com (India) – a social enterprise fostering pro-poor growth and protection of rights of women, children and indigenous communities using theatre and intagible cultural heritage, **Joanna Sherman**, Artistic Director, Bond Street Theatre (US) – a company that responds to humanitarian crises through the uplifting powers of the arts, **Dara Huot**, Director, Phare Performing Social Enterprise (Cambodia)- a social circus enteprise that works with Cambodian youth at poverty-stricken areas, repatriating refugees, disadvantaged children from the street, troubled homes and trafficking, **Janet Pillai**, Founder, Arts Ed Penang (Malaysia), **Kathy Rowland**, Independent Researcher and Writer (Singapore), **Eddin Khoo**, Founder and Director, Pusaka (Malaysia), and more.

“*With over one hundred unique events each year since its inauguration in 2010, the Festival seeks to create new and vibrant connections between the traditional and the contemporary, the past and the future. We are very excited to be working together with MyPAA on the Borak Arts Series for the second time. I believe that programmes that spur intellectual discourses would complement well with all the performances and exhibitions that happen during this month-long festival, making the George Town Festival a celebration for the mind and senses,”* said Joe Sidek.

To be organised at The Wembley, Penang this year, Borak Arts Series brings together artistes, presenters/producers, intermediaries, and funders to experience a programme consisting of a keynote address, panel discussions, country updates (India and Singapore), round table sessions, networking platforms and performances. In spirit of bringing ASEAN arts to the world, the conference once again features Pitchpad ASEAN and One-on-One Meetings with festival directors and venue programmers.

**Pitchpad ASEAN** is a forum for ASEAN creators and arts professionals to share and discover new performing arts projects. Up to ten ASEAN submissions are selected to pitch their new works to a stellar line-up of international festival directors and venue programmers in the presence of more than 170 performing arts professionals. Successful participants will be hosted in Georgetown to aid them in their pitch. Professional performing artists or companies can email armani@mypaa.com.my to request for the application form. Candidates are required to submit their applications by 31 July 2016.

Some of this year’s stellar line-up of festival directors and venue programmers who are involved in the One-on-One Meetings and Pitchpad ASEAN are **Kristopher McDowell** (CEO & Founder of KMP Artists, USA), **Joe Sidek** (Festival Director of GTF and Butterworth Fringe Festival), **Andrew Ross** (Artistic Director of Darwin Festival, Australia), **Joseph Mitchell** (Festival Director of OzAsia Festival, Australia), **Hisashi Shimoyama** (General Producer of Ricca Ricca Festa, Japan) and more.

Seats for Borak Arts Series are limited and interested participants are encouraged to purchase tickets as soon as possible via [www.borakarts.com](http://www.borakarts.com). Tickets are priced as follows:

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| No | Ticket category | Ticket prices | Description |
| 1 | Early Bird ticket (valid till 31 July 2016) | RM98 | Price includes admission to 2-days conference, two coffee breaks, lunch, and conference kit. |
| 2 | Normal Price ticket: | RM162 | Price includes admission to 2-days conference, two coffee breaks, lunch, and conference kit. |

This year’s Borak Arts Series also includes a pre-conference programme named the **Community Engaged Arts (CEA) Network Meeting**, scheduled from 2.00 pm to 5.00 pm on 26 August 2016; one day before the main conference. The CEA Network will convene a meeting to discuss how the network can help advance the field of community/ socially-engaged arts.  CEA Network is an informal network of scholars, intermediaries and practitioners from Asian countries who are interested to interrogate and develop the field of Community Engaged Arts/Socially Engaged Arts at a regional level. Participation is free of charge however pre-registration is mandatory. Those interested can email cea.asia@gmail.com with a brief introduction of themselves. More information on the network can be obtained via [www.ceaasia.wix.com/home](http://www.ceaasia.wix.com/home) .

*“Borak Arts Series is coming to its fourth year and attendees who have attended the previous years can all validate that the conference has enriched them in one way or another. I urge the ASEAN communities especially Malaysian arts community who are involved in creating works and wanting to expand their networks to sign up as nowhere in the world can you be within arm’s reach to some of the most iconic personalities in the international performing arts industry. Admission fees to performing arts conferences around the world would cost an arm and a leg but Borak Arts Series’ admission fee is greatly subsidised so that Malaysian and ASEAN artists and companies have the opportunity to explore the endless possibilities out there - it is priceless.”*

“*We are very delighted to see Borak Arts Series grow from strength to strength. A local home grown brand that has gained much regional traction, Borak Arts Series has become the starting point for many conversations with partners outside Malaysia, initiated either by MyPAA or by the artistes and producers actively investing in their international relationships,”* remarked Izan Satrina Mohd Sallehuddin.

Borak Arts Series 2016 is made possible by the following partners: George Town Festival, Yayasan Hasanah, Yayasan Sime Darby, Asia Center Japan Foundation, ASEF Culture 360, ARTERI and The Daily Seni.

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**About My Performing Arts Agency (MyPAA)**

A member of the International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA), MyPAA is one of Malaysia's leading cultural and creative industries development partners that is set up to cultivate an ecosystem in which creative workers are able to do what they do best: tell stories, heal heartbreaks, explore and challenge their creative realms. We aim to promote entrepreneurship across multiple creative fields, nurture a skilled and empowered arts workforce, and multiply the number of people experiencing the arts. Our roles include arts management for arts organisations, strategic arts engagement and outreach planning. MyPAA is a Civil Society Organisation Partner of Hasanah Foundation (under Khazanah Nasional Berhad) and partner to Bursa Malaysia Bullcharge Race. MyPAA continuously works with both public and private stakeholders and the community for the benefit of the industry. For more information, log on to mypaa.com.my

**For media enquiries:**

Alvina Tai Amelyn Ang

Priority Communications Sdn Bhd Priority Communications Sdn Bhd

T: (603) 7954 5336 T: (603) 7954 5336

E: alvina@priority.net.my E: amelyn@priority.net.my