

FOKL to feature classical opera music on June 17 & 24

KUALA LUMPUR: The second edition of the Kuala Lumpur Orchestra Festival (FOKL) will feature a blend of classical opera works and local orchestral talent on June 17 and 24.

Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra (MPO) conductor Ahmad Muriz Che Rose said the performances, to be held at the Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) auditorium here, offer a fresh experience by presenting popular songs from opera pieces, led by resident conductor Gerard Salonga.

"We are highlighting a repertoire of well-known opera pieces —

songs that are easy to enjoy and sing along to — performed by local classical singers from Fiamma Studios," he told Bernama on Thursday.

DBKL is hosting FOKL 2025 from May 31 to June 29 at selected venues across the city.

FOKL is an initiative by DBKL to champion music, nurture new talent and elevate the creative economy in the heart of the city.

Ahmad Muriz also expressed confidence in the festival's future, especially as it begins to attract the attention and participation of international orchestras.

"To me, this festival has exceeded

the original standards set by DBKL. When orchestras from abroad express interest in participating, it adds value. This shows the festival is gaining recognition and making a positive impact in the orchestral music scene," he said.

He also said that DBKL is collaborating with the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra, allowing both sides to exchange knowledge and expertise, while also helping to nurture and inspire members of the Kuala Lumpur Youth Orchestra to reach international standards.

Meanwhile, Kuala Lumpur Mayor Datuk Seri Dr Maimunah

Mohd Sharif said FOKL is more than just a music programme, adding it is a platform for developing the arts and cultural ecosystem by nurturing young talent.

"Music is colour-blind, music is ethnic-blind and music actually brings us together as one big family. What you see and hear in the performances is the result of hours of practice and devotion. As you know, to be good at something, one must develop the discipline of practice.

"So for DBKL, this is a long-term investment to widen the opportunities for our children

from all backgrounds to have an encounter with music," she said, adding DBKL is also organising an Orchestra Festival Forum as a space for sharing knowledge, expertise and experience.

Earlier yesterday, Maimunah, representing DBKL, signed a Memorandum of Understanding with MPO, represented by its chief executive officer Hassina Begam Abdul Gani; and Istana Budaya, represented by its director-general Zubaidah Mukhtar.

Maimunah said this strategic collaboration is part of DBKL's ongoing efforts to strengthen the arts and culture sector, diversify

the tourism experience in the capital and align with the Kuala Lumpur Heritage initiative aimed at revitalising the city centre as a vibrant, active and attractive creative hub.

"(Besides FOKL 2025) other planned initiatives (under the collaboration) include publishing an annual events calendar through the VisitKL portal and organising the Kuala Lumpur Park Festival in October. This collaboration will also continue until 2026 with FOKL being held on a larger scale and having a wider impact on the community," she said. — Bernama