THE ACS (INDEPENDENT) PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

OUR HISTORY
In 1926, Mr T.W. Hinch founded the first ‘orchestral ensemble’ with the help of Goh Soon Tioe, who was then a student. The official date given for the establishment of the ACS Orchestra is 1962. The orchestra grew under the artistic guidance of Mr. Choo Hwee Lim and Mr. Lim Peng Ann – teachers who acted as conductors and advisors who saw the ensemble transform into a fully-fledged string orchestra. By 1971, the orchestra had expanded into a symphonic orchestra with wind, brass and percussion sections and began establishing itself as one of the leading school orchestras in Singapore.

With the appointment of Mr. Chan Tze Law as Music Director in 1997, the ensemble was henceforth known as the ACS (Independent) Chamber Orchestra and in 2006, the inaugural cohort of International Baccalaureate students from the ACS (Independent) Chamber Orchestra championed yet another reformation for the orchestra. With that, the ACS (Independent) Philharmonic Orchestra was born.

OUR MISSION
With strong support from the school, the ACS (Independent) Philharmonic Orchestra seeks to explore a wide range of repertoire, further their contributions to Singapore’s increasingly vibrant music scene, and maintain old partnerships whilst establishing new ones with other orchestras and performing arts groups. It also aims to cultivate youth leadership.

The orchestra has clinched ten consecutive top awards at the biennial Singapore Youth Festival Central Judging (1999-2017) – a feat no other school has achieved – and hopes to continue bringing glory to God and the school.

OUR TEACHERS AND CONDUCTORS
Ms Denise Tan (Overall Teacher I/C)
Mrs Serilyn Goh (Years 1-2 Teacher I/C)
Ms Athena Hsieh (Years 3-4 Teacher I/C)
Ms Patricia Xu (Years 5-6 Teacher I/C)
Mr Yang Zheng Yi (Secondary Orchestra Conductor)
Mr Edward Tan (IB Orchestra Conductor)
PROGRAMME

Combined Orchestra
Darren Ang - Take Flight
Justin Hurwitz, arr. Robert Longfield - Music from La La Land

IB Orchestra
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart - Symphony No. 29 in A Major K.201*
Johann Sebastian Bach - Keyboard Concerto in D minor BWV 1052*
Astor Piazzolla - La Muerte Del Angel

Intermission (20 min)

Secondary Orchestra
Antonio Vivaldi - Overture “Alla Rustica” RV 151
Antonio Vivaldi - Concerto in B minor for 4 Violins RV 580*
Gustav Holst - St Paul's Suite Op.29 No.2

Combined Orchestra
Matthias Oh - The Graffiti in my Mind

*selected movement(s)
ALUMNI COMPOSERS

Darren Ang

Darren Ang graduated from ACS (Independent) in 2015 and has been writing music for the school ever since.

In 2016, he arranged several hymns and the ACS Anthem for the school's Founder's Day service. He also composed an original electronic piece titled “Out of It” for the Dance Venia SYF Arts Presentation 2017 and most recently, he was commissioned to orchestrate the entire set of backing tracks for the Drama and Choir Festival of Arts 2018 musical, “The Prince of Egypt”.

Darren currently runs a Youtube channel specialising in video-game music arranging and has published several albums of his arrangements and compositions on digital stores. Darren is contactable at darrenang97@gmail.com.

Matthias Oh

Matthias Oh studied in ACS (Independent) from 2011 to 2016. He has been composing original works for the school and various local organisations ever since he was a student.

In 2015, as a Year 5 student, Matthias wrote an original wind band work titled “Jubilation March”. His work won the Outstanding Merit Award in the Under-18 category of the Singapore Wind Symphony's "March On" competition and was later premiered by the Wind Band Association of Singapore at the Esplanade Concert Hall.

Matthias arranges for major school functions as well. He arranged "Be Thou My Vision" for full symphony orchestra and choir for the 2016 Founder’s Day service, and more recently, his “Beauty and Bright”, a piece composed for string orchestra in 2015, was premiered at the 2018 Founder’s Day service.

Matthias continues to write for various genres. He also engages and works with the school’s Symphonic Band and Wind Ensemble, which perform his compositions. Matthias is contactable at matthias_oh@hotmail.com.
SOLOISTS

Isaac Koh Xu En (5.03)

Isaac started learning piano at the age of 4 and picked up violin at 11. He obtained his Diploma of The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (DipABRSM) in piano performance in 2016, ABRSM Grade 8 Violin in 2017, and the Licentiate of the Royal Schools of Music (LRSM) in piano performance this year.

During his 13 years of music education, he has had many opportunities to perform both as a soloist and a piano accompanist. The latter includes a concert held at the Amadeus International School, Vienna, where he performed Shostakovitch’s Five Pieces for Two Violins and Piano with two young violinists at the age of 11. In 2014, he was selected to participate as a piano/harpsichord accompanist in a workshop and masterclass on continuo playing conducted by an accomplished Viola da Gamba player, Jennifer Eriksson, Founder and Director of the Marais Project.

A most memorable experience was being selected after a nation-wide open audition to perform as one of fifty pianists alongside local home-grown artistes as well as international piano celebrity, Lang Lang, in the Sing50 concert to celebrate the nation’s 50th jubilee celebration in 2015.

He also had numerous opportunities to attend masterclasses conducted by Professor Paul Gulda, Piano Department, Amadeus International School, as well as other reputable pianists such as Krystian Tkaczewski, Boris Kraljevic and Simon Mulligan in 2013. The latter was organised by Steinway Gallery Singapore in conjunction with the Steinway No.1 Historical Exhibition held at the National Museum.

Isaac has also performed at various school events and participated in chamber music competitions together with other members of the Philharmonic Orchestra: violinist Ezekiel Tan Xin An and cellist Aoden Teo Masa Toshi. Together, they clinched Gold with Honours at the 2016 Raffles International Music Festival and the trio was also invited to perform at the Award Ceremony.
Wong Yee, Ethan (4.09)
Ethan started learning the violin when he was 5 years old. He obtained a distinction in the Licentiate of the Royal Schools of music (LRSM) in music performance in 2016 and performed at the ABRSM Diploma Awards Ceremony the year after. In 2014, Ethan was awarded second place in the American Protégé Competition and performed at Carnegie Hall New York and also received the Platinum Award at the 5th Singapore Performers’ Festival & Chamber Music Competition. He was also a finalist in the Singapore Raffles International Music Festival.

Since joining the Anglo-Chinese School (Junior) String Orchestra in 2011, Ethan has developed a passion for playing in an orchestra and sought opportunities out of school. In 2015, he was selected through a nation-wide audition to perform with the Metropolitan Festival Orchestra at Sing50, a concert celebrating 50 years of Singapore music, and has also been a member of the Singapore National Youth Orchestra since 2016.

Javan See Kaiyi (2.13)
Javan started learning violin at the age of 3 and fell in love with it ever since. In 2014, he joined the Fuchun Primary Strings Ensemble and became the Concertmaster from 2015 to 2016. Javan achieved third place in the American Protégé International Piano and Strings Competition 2015, second place in the 4th Thailand International Strings Competition 2015, Silver Award for the Solo Strings Competition in the Singapore Raffles International Music Festival 2015 and Gold Award for the Instrumental Ensemble Competition in the same Music Festival in 2016. Javan also made it to the Semi-Final round of the biennial Singapore National Piano and Violin Competition in both 2015 and 2017 in the junior and intermediate categories respectively.

Javan continuously seeks opportunities to improve his violin skills. He participated in Masterclasses with Kam Ning, Lynette Seah and Siow Lee Chin in 2015, the Singapore International Violin Festival where he had masterclasses with various renowned violinists around the world in 2016, and in April 2017, the New Virtuosi Violin Mastercourse in England. Later that year, he also had the opportunity to learn from Russian violinist Alexander Trostiansky and Taiwanese violinist Ray-Chou Chang.
Ng Ee-Jun (1.07)
Ee-Jun started learning violin at age 4. In 2017, he obtained distinction for ABRSM Grade 8 Violin Examinations. He enjoys performing and taking part in violin competitions both locally and internationally.

Some of his achievements include winning fifth place in the 2016 Taiwan Cheer Music International Competition violin category for 5th & 6th Grader, Silver award for 2016 Singapore Performer’s Festival, Gold award for violin ensemble at the 2016 Raffles Art International Competition and Honourable mention in the 2017 American Protégé Competition; he also performed at the Winner’s recital at the Carnegie Hall (New York). Most recently, he won 2nd Place Winner (Intermediate Category, Violin) for his solo performance and 1st Place Winner for his ensemble piece in the 2018 Vienna Virtuoso Festival Competition, and will be performing alongside other winners in the Baroque Hall at Altes Rathaus in Vienna this June.

Sia Juling (4.15)
Juling began learning the violin at the young age of 5 and has consistently worked hard to improve - his motivation stems from wanting to use his talents to give back to school and society. Since joining the ACS family in 2015, Juling has been a part of the Philharmonic Orchestra and has given his best efforts to both serve and represent the school through this CCA; he has performed at numerous school events such as Founders’ Day and the Performing Arts Night Festival as well as external events like the biennial Singapore Youth Festival (SYF) Arts Presentations in 2015 and 2017, SYF Celebrations at Esplanade Concourse and many more.

Being part of the Music-Elective Programme (MEP), Juling has also actively participated in several MEP events. He has performed various ensemble and solo items at the school's annual MEP concert ‘ACSPressivo’ and also performed in the orchestra at the biennial MOE-MEP Concert ‘Snapshots’ concert in 2016. Juling has been selected for the Snapshots orchestra and will be representing the school once more this coming July.
MUSICIANS

Year 1:
Dillon Josh Tan
Donavan Quek
Khoo En, Christopher
Matthew Ho Qing Ern
Ng Ee-Jun
Samuel Tan Yek Hee
Tham Shun Heng, Matthew

Year 2:
Arthur Ong Zheng Jie
Chen Gene
Christian Sai
Colby Chua E-Chao
Fredrick Suwandi
Gregory Isaac Lau En Hao
Ian Mok
Javan See Kaiyi
Jin Sunghoon
Lim Jun Kai, Gabriel
Low Yew Keng, Timothy
Shaun David Huen
Yam Lu Wen
Yang Han Yu
Zachary Siay Yongxian

Year 3:
Aiden Chan Wei-Jun
Benjamin Sin Ee Jin
Chia Teck Hon
Chong Wei Choon
Julian Maximillian Willis
Loo Jia Sheng Jayson
Lucas Law Jia Xuan
Matthew Kurniawan
Ryan Lim Yan Xing
Soh Shi Ryan
Tan Wei Jun (Brandon)
Yuan Jing Xin

Year 4:
Aaron Loh
Aoden Teo Masa Toshi
Chang Seongmin
Ivan Yulianto
Jabez Teng Zhi Xian
Jonathan Ang Wei En
Jonathan Ngien Zi Yang
Lewis Tham Zile
Sia Juling
Soh Shi Sean
Tan Hon-yi Patrick William
Wee Chong En, Orden
Wong Yii, Ethan^ 
Zachary Yong Zhi Jie

Year 5:
Chen Yixin
Choy Ren Jun, Euan
Elise Khor Xin Yi
Ezekiel Tan Xin An
Isaac Koh Xu En
Lin Xin Rose
Liz Yeo Siu Wen
Shaine Goh Si Hui

Year 6:
Benjamin Liu Junyang
Ethan Shew
Ezekiel Canaan Yi Jie Teo
Genevieve Koh Kai Wen
Jang Jun Woo
Joel Chen Yeh Siang
Joshua Seow Zhong-Yi
Kim Hwi Jin
Luke Yaw An Wen
Wee Hong Xuan Dylan^ 
Zhang Xinai
Zheng Wanxuan

^concertmasters
“Take Flight” was written specially for the ACS (Independent) Philharmonic Orchestra by alumnus Darren Ang, a Higher Level Music student (Class of 2015). As a cellist in the orchestra during his time as a student and having taken on various leadership roles such as Section Leader and Vice-President, the orchestra has always been incredibly close to his heart - and when the opportunity arose to write a piece for it, he conceptualised “Take Flight”, grounding it on a principle from one of his orchestra teachers-in-charge: to go forth and soar, but always remain humble.

The piece opens with an enthusiastic build-up into a cheerful and bright theme - the musical image of a bird lifting off from the ground and enjoying its freedom in the sky. The theme weaves in between the parts of the orchestra before the whole orchestra sings a song of joy together in an exuberant staccato.

A series of down-bowed tutti chords leads the piece into a mellow and intimate middle section with a warm melody played by a solo cello. This is the musical representation of humility: quiet and suppressed, yet hopeful and confident. Unlike the rhythmic nature of the opening section, the middle section is song-like and sensitive, and it expands towards a passionate tutti.

Gradually, a beat emerges, and the aria is brought to a close. A quartet heralds back the first, cheerful theme, following which the orchestra gradually picks up momentum once again, finally building into a fearless statement of the theme of the middle section - a triumphant, yet humble ending.
The 2016 film La La Land cultivated a worldwide audience for film musicals and won six of fourteen Oscar nominations. With a title that is both a reference to the setting of Los Angeles and an idiom representing one's detachment from reality, La La Land is a dreamy, bittersweet love story of Mia, an aspiring actress, and Sebastian, a jazz pianist, who fall in love pursuing their dreams in the City of Angels.

La La Land’s critically acclaimed soundtrack, composed by Justin Hurwitz, comprises a variety of songs, of which Mia and Sebastian’s Theme, Audition (The Fools Who Dream), Another Day of Sun, and the Oscar-winning City of Stars are featured in Longfield’s arrangement. The piece opens slow and subdued with a lone violin playing the soulful Mia and Sebastian’s Theme, before the orchestra joins in, swelling into the lyrical, scalic theme. Poised at the fermata, the upper strings jump into the upbeat, syncopated riffs of Another Day of Sun, with the lower strings following suit with rhythmic pizzicato.

After exchanging melodies between sections, the piece moves into a lilting waltz as the first violins play the melodies of Audition (The Fools Who Dream), interjected by the violas and cellos. After a mellow response to the violins by the cellos, the theme returns yet again before the cellos begin the familiar swing ostinato of City of Stars. As the violas deliver its famous melody, the piece returns to a quicker, waltz-like reprise of Mia and Sebastian’s Theme. Having come full circle, the lone violin plays its song once again before the orchestra joins in, softly and subdued, to bring the piece to a close.
Having written his first symphony at the tender age of nine years old, Mozart (1756-1791) was already an experienced composer by the time he completed this symphony at the age of eighteen and even wrote fourteen new symphonies between 1772 and 1773. Thereafter, however, Mozart’s activity in symphonic writing lessened and he wrote only three new symphonies over the next two years, with Symphony No. 29 being the most noteworthy. This work was completed on 6 April 1774 and remains one of his better known symphonies, ranked among some of the greatest works he has ever written.

The first movement, Allegro Moderato, is in sonata form and the opening idea of the catchy first theme is characterised by an octave drop and pulsating repeated notes. This idea rises sequentially and the first theme is repeated, this time joined by the Horns and Oboes. A gentler, lyrical second theme is presented and similarly repeated. The development section of this symphony is particularly short and the easily-recognizable first theme thus returns shortly, cueing the recapitulation section.

The virtuosic and energetic finale, Allegro Con Spirito, is also in sonata form and the first theme, with its octave plunge, immediately recalls the first movement. The second theme is characterized by insistent appoggiaturas and the exposition ends with rapid upward scales played by the violins - an idea that closes each section of the sonata form. Following the development and recapitulation, the coda is marked by a statement of the theme in unison, with horn-calls and the rising scales that signal the end of this masterpiece.

We would like to thank the following performers from the Symphonic Band and IB Wind Ensemble:

Oboe 1: Jeong Min Lee (4.10)   Horn 1: Marcus Lee Yu Ze (6.08)
Oboe 2: Yeo Jeanne (5.08)     Horn 2: Wong Zi Bin, Matthew (4.11)
GERMANY
Johann Sebastian Bach
Keyboard Concerto in D minor BWV 1052 i. Allegro (1738)

Born in 1685 in Eisenach, Germany, Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1740) was more well-known during his lifetime as an organist than a composer. His concertos for single harpsichord BWV 1052-1059 were published between 1738 and 1739, when he served as director of the Collegium Musicum. Gottfried Zimmerman, who hosted the Collegium’s weekly performances at his coffee house, was known to have owned a harpsichord “of large size and range of expressivity”. In fact, German harpsichords were well known for their lush tonal colour, which far surpassed that of French and Italian instruments. It would not have been unusual for Bach to compose a concerto which unleashed the full sonorities of such an instrument.

Bach scholar Richard Jones has remarked that this work ‘conveys a huge sense of elemental power’ that is certainly expressed in the wide leaps in the opening theme. Widely speculated to have been transcribed from a violin concerto (which has since been lost), there are also apparent violinistic idioms, such as in the first and second solo episodes where the keyboard reworks bariolage (the rapid alternation of notes on adjacent strings) and uses double stops.

ARGENTINA
Astor Piazzolla
La Muerte Del Angel (1962)

Piazzolla (1921-1992) was mainly a tango composer and arranger renowned for incorporating elements of jazz and classical music into the style of tango.

La Muerte Del Angel (‘Death of the Angel’) is the second of two ‘angel pieces’ written as incidental (background) music for Tango del Ángel, a play in 1962 by Alberto Rodríguez Muñoz in which an angel heals the spirits of the residents of a shabby Buenos Aires neighborhood, but is unfortunately killed in a knife fight. The piece begins with an electrifying three-voice fugue with a fast, disjunct theme passed dissonantly among the sections. The dramatic and intense fugue stops abruptly and gives way to a sentimental and lyrical passage. When the opening theme returns, however, it is no longer contrapuntal and the frequent glissandi are no doubt fitting of the title and the narrative.
Overture “Alla Rustica” RV 151 (c.1725-1730)
Vivaldi (1678-174) composed the Concerto for Strings in G Major, more commonly known as Concerto Alla Rustica, between mid-1720s and 1730 and it is one of his most well-known concertos today. This short and festive concerto for strings is mostly in contrapunctal style and consists of three short movements.

The first movement, Presto, uses moto perpetuo (perpetual motion) and its running quavers and rapid tempo create a characteristically Baroque sound. Towards the end of the virtuosic showpiece, there is a sudden juxtaposition of the first section as the same melodic material is presented in the parallel minor key, G minor, bringing the movement to an ominous close. The second movement, with its slow Adagio tempo, longer note values and chordal texture, provides some respite but very briefly - the tempo picks up in the final movement, Allegro. Quick and dance-like, this closing movement features a busy cello line that accompanies and supports the main melodic line played by the violins.

Concerto in B minor for 4 Violins RV 580 (1st and 3rd movement) (1711)
Vivaldi’s Concerto in B minor for four solo violins and strings is the tenth work of Vivaldi’s set of twelve concertos for string instruments, published together as his Opus 3, titled L’estro armónico, which roughly translates to ‘the harmonic inspiration’. Vivaldi, himself being a virtuoso violinist, composed many concerti for the violin, but rather few for four violins.

The first movement, Allegro, opens with a dialogue between the four soloists rather than among the full orchestra. Like every other concerto in the set, there is alternation between the soloists and the ripieno. The repeated-note theme is shared among each part, and eventually leads the first movement to a close on a strong cadence. The final movement, also Allegro, features a triple-time theme for the ripieno, which alternates with wonderfully unpredictable solo episodes.

Cello Concertante: Gregory Isaac Lau En Hao (2.06)
ENGLAND

Gustav Holst

St Paul's Suite Op.29 No.2 (1922)

I. Jig: Vivace
II. Ostinato: Presto
III. Intermezzo: Andante con moto
IV. Finale (The Dargason): Allegro

St Paul's Suite (Op.29, No.2), originally titled Suite in C, is a composition for string orchestra by the English composer Gustav Holst (1874-1934). It was published in 1922 and is named after the St Paul's Girls' School in the United Kingdom, where Holst was Director of Music from 1905 to 1934. This piece was written in gratitude to the school which had built a soundproof studio for him. Gustav Holt spent a good portion of his musical life dealing with students and other non-professional musicians. In 1903 he succeeded his good friend as the director of the school orchestra at James Allen's Girls' School in London. Two years later he became musical director at the St. Paul's Girls' School, a post he kept for the rest of his life. Along with his teaching, he continued to compose in his spare time, and around 1907, began to explore English and Scottish folk music. Those folk tunes started making their way into compositions like the St. Paul's Suite. This piece was written in gratitude to the school which had built a soundproof studio for him.

The suite opens with a slightly dark Jig, based on a memorably rustic tune. The ostinato second movement features a tender melody and an accompaniment spiced with pizzicati. A passionate modal theme, announced by the full string body and later taken up by a quiet solo violin, dominates the third-movement Intermezzo. The rousing Finale takes up the folk tune "The Dargason", repeating it 30 times with harmonic and rhythmic variations. Towards the end of the movement the famous tune "Greensleeves" makes an appearance as a countermelody.
Graffiti in my Mind is filled with the distinctive sounds of jazz. Three individualistic sections can be heard, where different sounds of jazz are presented.

The first section opens with vigour, and is characterised by energetic rhythmic grooves and colourful harmonies alongside the vivacious melody. The robust nature of the music creates a dynamic atmosphere that propels the music forward.

The second section then paints a tranquil and romantic scene. It opens with the piano introducing the calm and affectionate opening melody, after which the music modulates into various keys as the strings takes over lead from the piano. The opening melody eventually returns towards the end of the section, this time played by the strings in a grandiose fashion, which draws the audience intimately close before the closure of the section.

The final section is celebrated with a joyous and upbeat atmosphere, characterised by upbeats and swing rhythms. The harmonies and melodies are playfully coloured with blue notes, and the section rejoicingly closes the piece on a jubilant note.

As vivid and contrasting moods are painted by short episodic sections of various jazz music, Graffiti in my Mind captures emotions, sensations and memorable tunes that is encapsulated in a piece of music. Hence, it readily paints this collage of emotions, atmospheres and jazz on the blank canvas in the minds of listeners, just like graffiti.
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- Mr Liu Guo Yi, Mrs Arlene Chan and performers from the Symphonic Band and IB Wind Ensemble
- Mr Gabriel Phee and Year 2 Level Teachers (Ushers)
- Mr Peter Dumortier, Student Councillors and House Leaders (Ushers)
- Ms Ni Ni Tun, Ms Jou Wei-Kay and students from Photographic Society
- Mr Loy Xing Jian (voluntary photographer)
- Stage crew (volunteers)
- Parents of our CCA members
- You, our audience, for making this concert a memorable one for us!

TO GOD BE THE GLORY, THE BEST IS YET TO BE

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