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S'pore orchestra all jazzed up for China showcase

Singapore Chinese Orchestra teams up with renowned jazz pianist for concert tour

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Home-grown jazz pianist and composer Jeremy Monteiro and the Singapore Chinese Orchestra (SCO), conducted by maestro Yeh Tsung, will showcase a unique blend of jazz and Chinese music during a week-long concert tour in China kicking off in Shanghai this Saturday.

The 2010 work by Singapore composer Kelly Tang – Montage: Three Movements for Jazz Piano and Chinese Orchestra – will also be performed in Nanjing on May 20 and Suzhou on May 23.

But last night, a Singapore audience got to savour it first, when the performers played the 20-minute-

long piece during a pre-tour concert at the SCO Concert Hall in Shenton Way.

Other concert highlights include works by other local composers, and performances by SCO musicians, as well as those from China such as Mr Qin Liwei, a Singapore-based world-renowned cellist.

Last night's programme also included SCO resident composer Law Wai Lun's The Voyage From Admiral Of The Seven Seas, Chinese composer Liu Xijin's Legend Of The Merlion, and Kun Opera performed by two singers from Suzhou, Shen Fengying and Yu Jiulin, as well as 10-year-old erhu player Ma Hanxiang, also from Suzhou.

Mr Monteiro, 53, a Cultural Medallion winner, said the concert tour would be his first with SCO in China, though he had performed with jazz bands in several Chinese cities before.

"I am looking forward to it as blending jazz with Chinese music

is always a big challenge," he added.

SCO general manager Terence Ho, 44, said the orchestra's 83 musicians would be its largest group ever to perform in China, since SCO first visited the country in 1998.

He said SCO is taking part in the Shanghai Spring International Music Festival, and had been invited by the Jiangsu Performing Arts Group for its concert in Nanjing.

It is performing in Suzhou to mark the 20th-anniversary celebrations of the China-Singapore Suzhou Industrial Park. It is also giving a matinee children's concert there on May 24.

SCO chairman and tour leader Patrick Lee, 65, said: "We are presenting works of several Singapore composers, especially those with a Nanyang flavour, and show how Western music like jazz can blend with the Chinese orchestra. Hence the name of our concert tour, the Fusion of East and West."

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