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NEWLY FORMED MUSICIANS GUILD TO PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR PROFESSIONAL MUSICIANS IN SINGAPORE – A MILESTONE IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

25th April 2015 – Celebrated musicians and prominent members of the arts and music industry gathered at The Little Arts Academy, 10Sq @ Orchard Central today for the official launch of **The Musicians Guild of Singapore**. The establishment of The Musicians Guild (The Guild), a non-profit professional organization, is a ground-up effort to rally and support musicians of all musical genres and specializations in Singapore.

The benefits offered by the Guild aim to cater to the needs of musicians who are mostly self-employed or freelancers who do not enjoy regular employment benefits or career development opportunities at an organizational level. The Guild's Chairman, veteran composer Professor Bernard Tan explains that "in order for the music industry to remain robust and to grow from strength to strength, it is essential for a career in music to be first viewed as a viable option. Hence, the Guild seeks to enhance the status and well-being of professional musicians and to serve as a platform that will foster collaboration, exchange of ideas, information and resources within the musical community for the attainment of common goals."

The Guild's main mission is to provide professional advice and support for musicians working in Singapore for matters relating to their career, livelihood and professional development. It will also serve to advocate for the collective interests of the music profession.

With the intent of tapping on Singapore's diverse pool of music talents, skills and resources, its Board of Directors comprise notable musicians within the music industry including jazz vocalist/ former lawyer Rani Singam, songwriter/producer Eric Ng of Funkie Monkie Productions and Chinese instrumentalist/educator Yang Ji Wei of the Teng Ensemble. The Board also comprises various leaders with in-depth arts industry knowledge and experience including Colin Goh, CEO of The RICE Ltd, actor and former Nominated Member of Parliament Janice Koh and prominent entertainment lawyer Samuel Seow. The Guild's Patron is Ambassador-at-Large Professor Tommy Koh who was the founding chairman of the National Arts Council (1991-1996).

Incorporated in May 2014 after receiving the National Arts Council (NAC) Seed Grant from 2014-2016, the Guild spent the its first year by delving into how it may best serve its future members and gathering the necessary resources to do so. A series of focus group discussions with various communities within the industry from performers to educators and composers were conducted to understand the different issues affecting musicians in Singapore.

"There is a great variety of circumstances and needs within the profession, so we need to prioritize those that we can sustainably provide that are of the greatest value to our



members while planning ahead to gather the resources we need to provide more services in the future.” states the Guild’s Executive Director Adrian Tan.

“Launching its membership drive in March 2015, its impressive array of members’ benefits including special insurance plans, free legal consultation, a web-based knowledge repository, a jobs database as well as monthly professional development workshops and networking sessions. Membership categories with different entry requirements, benefits and annual subscription fees are designed to cater to not only full-time professional musicians but also amateur musicians and music students.” further adds Adrian Tan.

One of the Guild’s members will be Cultural Medallion Award recipient Jeremy Monteiro who lends his strong support to the Guild. He believes that it “will become an important organization in helping musicians achieve excellence, create collaborations and be a source of assistance and information to musicians who may need help navigating a professional career. The formation of the Guild is a milestone in the history of Singapore music. I look forward to attending the Guild’s activities.” states Jeremy Monteiro.

With a large and active membership, the Guild hopes to facilitate research and communication which will lead to a deeper understanding of the important issues that affect musicians in Singapore. This will enable the Guild to better represent the needs of its members when working with government and non-governmental stakeholders like the NAC, NTUC and other industry groups, as well as the general public when the need arises. Emphasizing the role of advocacy, Janice Koh opines that “whilst tangible membership benefits will encourage people to sign up, it is the Guild’s ability to effectively represent and champion the interests of its members that will ultimately be the most important benefit of being part of a professional association.”

Optimistic that the Guild will play a pivotal role in bringing together a diverse and growing community of professional musicians, Professor Bernard Tan would like to “strongly urge all working musicians in Singapore to join the Guild so that it will truly represent and bind together the entire professional musical community.”