

GIGS

Red Dot August: Ralph Alvern
Singapore singer-songwriter Ralph Alvern started out as a busker plying his trade along Orchard Road and has since performed on the same stage as artists such as Nathan Hartono and Shigga Shay. In this performance, he performs songs from his EP, *About Your Love*, singing about the white, black and grey areas of love. Part of Red Dot August, a celebration of things uniquely Singapore by the Esplanade.

WHERE: Watch it at bit.ly/3kdnFvd
WHEN: Till Sept 7, noon

Red Dot August Screening: A Zubir Said Tribute

This concert highlight reel from 2017 features artists such as guitarist Az Samad, vocalist Syakirah Noble and saxophonist Sean Hong Wei, who came together to celebrate the late Singaporean composer Zubir Said's 110th birthday and 30th death anniversary. They performed his well-known hits such as *Semoga Bahagia*, *Sayang Di Sayang* and *Selamat Hari Raya*, alongside lesser-known film songs. Part of Red Dot August.

WHERE: Watch it at bit.ly/3gw3ztU
WHEN: Sun, 2pm - Sept 7, noon

Coffee Morning & Afternoon Tea Online: Cantopop Unplugged

Local singer Donnie Chan, best known as the voice behind the movie soundtrack of *I Not Stupid* (2002), teams up with Shuk Fong, a singer and singing coach who has been performing since she was seven alongside her mother, a national champion vocalist. The duo will perform Cantopop favourites made popular by artists such as Sam Hui, Danny Chan and Paula Tsui. *Coffee Morning & Afternoon Tea* is an online series by the Esplanade featuring English and Chinese hits performed by veteran Singapore artists.

WHERE: Watch it at bit.ly/2XwtTMX
WHEN: Aug 17, 3pm - Aug 19, 3pm

TALKS

Embracing Challenges Through Resilience

This Zoom talk aims to teach participants how to manage and build mental resilience while adapting to a new normal during the pandemic. Organised by the National Library Board and the Singapore Association of Mental Health.

WHEN: Tue, 1 - 2.30pm
ADMISSION: Free with registration
INFO: bit.ly/2EUcTtJ

Hello! I Am A Publisher. #AskMeAnything

This online talk, hosted by publisher Phoon Kok Hwa of Candid Creation Publishing, is targeted at those who wish to become published authors of non-fiction books. Mr Phoon, who has 17 years of experience, will field questions on writing and publishing.

WHEN: Thu, 8 - 9pm
ADMISSION: Free
INFO: bit.ly/2Xsi22k

CLASSES

You Don't Need To Know How To Code To Be A Maker: A Comics Workshop

This Zoom coding workshop teaches kids fun and creative problem solving through maker culture, and allow them to create characters for their own projects. Conducted by Philippine-born artist Tintin Pantoja, who illustrated *The Makers Club: Game On!* comic; and Saad Chinoy, a technologist from Engineering Good, a non-profit organisation that empowers disadvantaged communities through humanitarian engineering, who has more than 15 years of experience. For children aged seven to 12.

WHEN: Sun, 11am - noon
ADMISSION: Free
INFO: bit.ly/2XtKRvV

Vocal Masterclass & Singing Webinar By Aaron Matthew Lim

Mr Aaron Matthew Lim, an Estill-certified voice master trainer and vocal director of Intune Music School, will conduct a discussion of pop singing, followed by an online class where participants will be taught to utilise what they have learnt in the webinar and receive feedback on improving singing techniques and vocal quality.

WHEN: Aug 15, noon - 1.30pm, 2.30 - 4pm
ADMISSION: Webinar: \$30; Masterclass: \$50
INFO: bit.ly/2Dcuv3B

Music Picks

Boon Chan Assistant Life Editor recommends

GOLDEN MELODY AWARDS NOMINEES



Familiar names make up the nomination list for this year's Golden Melody Awards' Best Female Mandarin Vocalist. In addition to previously reviewed titles from Fish Leong, G.E.M. and Waa Wei, also in the running are Taiwan's Faith Yang for *The More Beautiful, The More Invisible*; Taiwanese singer-songwriter Peggy Hsu for *Hypnocity*; and Taiwanese-American singer Joanna Wang for *Love Is Calling Me*. The winner will be announced on Oct 3.

POP THE MORE BEAUTIFUL, THE MORE INVISIBLE
Faith Yang
★★★★☆



The intriguing mea culpa electropop of Repentance opens Taiwanese singer Faith Yang's (left) seventh studio album. Is that a mischievous wink at her supposedly cold persona? ("So, I should have done my best not to be hated.")

And the album closes with the skittery title track, a rumination on the elusiveness of beauty.

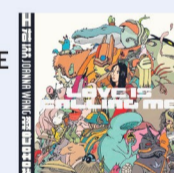
These bookend tracks are composed by Chinese singer-songwriter Guo Ding, who was behind the excellent *The Silent Star Stone* (2016).

Other A-list collaborators here include Lala Hsu, Hsiao Yu and William Wei. The diversity of talent makes for a work that packs in a lot - from the balladry of *Disoriented* to the bouncy pop of *Body Sing*. But it never feels less than cohesive, thanks to Yang's distinctive vocals, which seem more supple with age.

A beautiful record that deserves to be in the spotlight.



RETRO POP LOVE IS CALLING ME
Joanna Wang
★★★★☆



The Taiwanese-American singer's vocals prove to be a perfect fit in these atmospheric remakes of love songs from the 1960s to the 1980s.

Joanna Wang (above) - who made her debut in 2008 with *Start From Here* - has a smoky voice and sense of playful drama that cast these Mandarin, Cantonese and Japanese chestnuts in a new light.

She is not interested in peddling the songs here simply for their nostalgic value, choosing instead to leave her inimitable stamp on the light and breathy *Apple Blossom*, the lazy and jazzy *Blues In The Rain*, and the sultry *Forget Him*.

One quibble: A wider selection of songs would have been more welcome than the repetition of some numbers in a different language.

POP HYPNOCITY
Peggy Hsu
★★★★☆



From *Snowman* (2009) to *Magical Shop* (2011), Taiwanese singer-songwriter Peggy Hsu (right) has always been a purveyor of whimsy and fantasy.

This time round, she has conjured *Hypnocity* (a more direct translation of the Chinese title would be *City Of Lost Things*), a vaguely European work, judging by the swell of violins and accordion - and one in which death lurks, from titles such as *The Dying Swan* ("A cursed love/ Cannot escape fate") and *Death Of A Slate Painter* ("Living is not easy/ Trapped in the sand"). There is a definite undercurrent of darkness here.

Hsu is perhaps most effective on *In The City Without You*, "Good Night", in which the melody tenderly evokes the ache of yearning ("My thoughts are all of you/ But where are you").



GARDENS BY THE BAY AND MEDIACORP NATIONAL DAY CONCERT 2020

This immersive hour-long online concert to celebrate Singapore's 55th birthday is set in Gardens by the Bay.

The line-up features the likes of Nathan Hartono and Inch Chua. There will also be a special rendition of *Home* by President Halimah Yacob and her husband Mohamed Abdullah Alhabshee (both centre), accompanied by (from far left) JJ Neo, Desmond Tan and Taufik Batisah.
WHERE: Channel 5, mewatch.sg and www.youtube.com/mewatch
WHEN: Aug 10, 8pm
ADMISSION: Free

PHOTOS: ASIAMUSE ENTERTAINMENT, ICE STUDIO, IPEGGYHSU/FACEBOOK, JOANNA.SONYMUSIC/FACEBOOK, MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION, NAIWEN.BAOBEI/FACEBOOK, SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT