

# SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS RELEASE

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SPEECH BY MR ONG TENG CHEONG, ACTING MINISTER FOR CULTURE,  
AT THE OPENING OF THE SECOND FESTIVAL OF ARTS  
AT THE VICTORIA THEATRE ON MONDAY, 11 DECEMBER '78 AT 8.00 P.M.

The First Singapore Arts Festival held last year was a resounding success. I am indeed gratified to note that the organisers have been encouraged to stage an even bigger and more ambitious show this year.

In the next few days, the public will have the opportunity to see and enjoy the various performing arts being staged reflecting our rich multi-cultural heritage.

An art exhibition featuring paintings by local and foreign artists has also been incorporated in this year's festival programme. This adds greater interest and variety to the festival.

The enthusiastic response to this festival was reflected in the large number of local entries received by the organisers. A record 140 entries were received this year compared to only 77 last year. The sponsors have been encouraged by the response. It is a significant development, indicating a trend towards greater involvement in cultural activities.

I wish to thank Mobil Oil Private Limited for once again sponsoring what is fast becoming a premier national event as well as a cultural landmark.

Now that we are in the process of improving the quality of life based on gracious living, this trend needs to be given a new impetus and momentum. Moral and financial support for our artists, cultural groups and organizations should continue to be given, and more generously so, in the years ahead. Those with artistic talents should be given opportunities to display them, and those with

cultural potential, should also be nurtured so that their artistic talents may be fully developed.

Cultural development cannot and should not be left solely to the government. It should be everybody's concern, much more so in a tightly-knit society like ours. The government will continue to play its part by providing the organisational support. This alone, however, could not usher in a new cultural era without the tangible support from the commercial and industrial organisations and the people. I am confident that all those who share in our social and economic development and have benefitted from our prosperity would want to help enhance our cultural life, and indeed, many may wish to make such a commitment.

The returns of such commitments cannot be computed in terms of dollars and cents. The returns can be both tangible and intangible. Tangible in the sense that they can witness the creation of a more vibrant cultural environment in which all cultural pursuits would blossom. Intangible in the sense of having a feeling of satisfaction that they have helped to bring about this new cultural renaissance.

The ensuring cultural excellence will not only enhance the graciousness of our life-style but also help to strengthen the moral fabric of our society, since moral and ethical values are embedded in the traditional art forms.

In cognizance of this, I am pleased to announce that the Ministry of Culture has now set up a Cultural Foundation designed to finance cultural development. The Foundation will receive donations from the public and corporations which will be tax-exempted. Funds so collected will be used to subsidise the promotion of worthwhile cultural projects or activities, give scholarships or awards in any field of art, and grant financial assistance to individuals and cultural organisations to undertake artistic pursuits both locally and overseas.

The success of launching the Cultural Foundation will depend on the support from the community including our business corporations, professional groups, cultural bodies and individuals. I, therefore, appeal to all, especially business organisations, to

make generous donations to the Foundation. The Cultural Foundation, once established, will, I am confident, go a long way to expand our cultural base and accelerate the pace of cultural development, the eventual outcome of which will be cultural enrichment for everyone.

On this note, I now have pleasure in declaring the Second Festival of Arts open.

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