

Entertaining Obama

Singapore gears up to treat Apec leaders to a night of music and food

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Internationally acclaimed violinist Min Lee, Singapore Idol winner Taufik Batisah and home-grown songbird Kit Chan will be facing their most illustrious audience yet at the Esplanade Concert Hall come Nov 14.

Among the distinguished guests that evening will be United States President and Nobel Peace Prize winner Barack Obama, Chinese President Hu Jintao and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev.

The politicians will be in town for the Apec (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) Leaders Week meetings from Nov 8 to 15. They will be among 2,000 invited

guests who will get to watch the 30-minute multimedia show, part of Singapore Evening at the Esplanade.

The show's creative director, Dick Lee, 53, admits it will be a tough crowd to please.

He says: "This will be the biggest show I've done, the most high-level one because they have seen every country, every cultural show. I feel you can't just give them the usual. You have to take it to another level."

He has composed two pieces for the evening: an instrumental number to be performed by Min Lee and a theme song, *Our World, One World*, which Kit Chan will sing. Taufik will croon popular favourites *Heal The World* and *What A Wonderful World*.

The People's Association will also offer a cultural performance anchored by a modern soundtrack. Lee is the artistic director of People's Association Talents.

The theme for Singapore Evening –



Singers Taufik Batisah and Dick Lee cannot wait to perform. ST PHOTO: LIM SIN THAI

Our World, One World – ties in with this year's Apec theme, Sustaining Growth, Connecting The Region.

Lee says: "The show is inspired by the spirit of cooperation and cohesion that unites the 21 Apec member economies. Water, a key element connecting the

world, is also a key theme that integrates the different components of the show.

"The performers and performance groups participating in the show reflect Singapore's multicultural heritage as well as our vibrancy and diversity. I want to present a simple, elegant and sophisticated

show with lots of heart and energy."

After the musical extravaganza, delegates will be treated to a waterfront dining experience at the Esplanade.

Mr Soo Siew Keong from the Singapore Tourism Board, who is in charge of Apec's accommodation and hospitality sub-committee, says the area showcases "Singapore's exciting signature skyline".

The Esplanade area will be closed to the public on that day and four interactive cultural pavilions – Chinese, Malay, Indian and Peranakan – will be set up.

Guests can have their fortune told, get a henna tattoo, learn to wear a sarong and look in on a Peranakan wedding.

There will also be two amphitheatres featuring cultural song and dance performances.

Dinner will be served buffet style, featuring signature Singapore dishes, in an alfresco setting under a marquee.

The Apec Leaders Week meetings, the pinnacle event of the annual year-long Apec meetings, are expected to draw about 10,000 delegates from the 21 member economies.

The guest list has some of the performers all abuzz.

Taufik, 27, says: "We're really excited to perform for our ministers and for the foreign ministers. One name keeps popping up and that's President Obama. He's like a rock star when it comes to world leaders."

Lee says: "I think I would be dumbstruck, starstruck. He is the biggest star in the world if you think about it, bigger than Madonna."

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