

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

**SPEECH BY MS THIEN KWEE ENG,
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4.30PM, THE HALL @ THE ARTS HOUSE**

Introduction

1. Good evening! Great to be here with all of you at the official launch of LIVE! Singapore, the Global Performing Arts Exchange. We are very happy that Singapore was chosen to host this event, one that will definitely place Singapore on the world stage for the performing arts industry.

Economic Potential of the Performing Arts Industry

2. Performing arts is undeniably an exciting industry with a promising outlook. As Asia's middle class grows in size and sophistication, we'll see greater demand for lifestyle products and services such as musicals and plays. Performing arts companies are thinking of how to better access Asia and to do business. Take a look at Broadway, West-end and closer to home, S. Korea for example, that has a vibrant musical theatre industry with more than 50 companies staging 150 musicals each year. There is definitely economic potential and Singapore is well poised to ride on this growth and capture opportunities in the performing arts industry.

Why Singapore?

3. Between 2003 and 2007, the total number of performances in Singapore increased by 60%, with music and theatre

accounting for three quarters of the performances staged in 2007. Esplanade's visitor-ship has consistently been more than 7 million over the last five years. Our world class infrastructure at the Esplanade and the upcoming Integrated Resorts offer excellent platforms for content creation.

4. Today, we have a good base of theater companies and creative talent. Our cosmopolitan and multicultural makeup informs our creative arts and gives us the unique edge in content creation for Asia. On top of all these, we have a very strong business infrastructure, excellent connectivity to our region and a pro-business environment.
5. We therefore welcome performing arts companies to forge partnerships and leverage Singapore as a launch-pad in Asia to do business, create content and premiere them in Singapore. IMG Artists, entertainment presenter Lunchbox Theatrical Productions and audio and visual specialist Creative Technology UK are examples of companies that have established their base here, signalling their confidence in Singapore as Asia's business hub for performing arts.
6. If we are successful, the ecosystem of performing arts companies and supporting services will generate economic outcomes and also create diverse job opportunities for Singaporeans, as producers, choreographers, actors, directors, set and lighting designers. It will drive vibrancy and anchor Singapore as a global city for the arts.

LIVE! Singapore

7. Today, the launch of LIVE! Singapore will present an excellent opportunity to raise Singapore's international visibility in the business of performing arts. We encourage companies to leverage LIVE! Singapore as the platform to exchange knowledge, forge partnerships and use Singapore as a business hub to access Asia. LIVE! Singapore will also give our local arts community a chance to showcase their work on this global platform and access international markets.

Conclusion

8. In closing, let me congratulate Koelnmesse and IMG Artists on the launch of LIVE! Singapore. I wish the organizers every success and look forward to seeing LIVE! Singapore go from strength to strength in the coming years.

9. Thank you, and enjoy the rest of the evening.