



Splendour

AT THE
ESPLANADE

Call them what you like but the structures at our new arts centre are just grand. Meet the women behind the designs

Cheang Mei Ling, 35
Associate with DP Architects

"I've been with DP Architects for 12-and-a-half years, and worked for a decade at my job as a project architect. I've been on the team since 1993, when DPA won the project to design The Esplanade. Now, as it is nearing completion and is the talk of the town, I am very excited and eager to share the spaces it has to offer.

"Of course, much of the debate on The Esplanade has been on its structure. But since architecture is rather subjective, I feel that we have reflected an appropriate style for the Arts and risen to the challenge. Personally, I prefer to call The Esplanade 'lanterns in the park'.

"Negative comments about its architecture don't bother me at all, because I know we have addressed all the constraints that we were faced with, including working closely with international experts in every field. I think that architecturally, we have given it our best shot. Its dramatic and bold forms have been designed to attract attention anyway.

"However, I hope visitors will also stop and feel the intimacy of the auditoriums, observe the very delicate Asian-influenced interior of the Concert Hall, and enjoy the breathtaking view from the Circle 2 foyer. We should all be proud that The Esplanade will be a very important landmark for Singapore."

CLOTHES: DANIEL YAM ACCESSORIES: SWAROVSKI



Lydia Fong, 40
Director of DP Design Pte

"My company gave birth to the interior master plan and interior works for the art centre. The creative team of 20 worked on this project for two-and-a-half years, with input from specialist foreign consultants such as an acoustician team from New York and a theatre project team from England. From the start, it was our mission to create a unique Asian theme for the centre.

"I feel that some of the interior treatments that warrant special attention are in the Concert Hall, where we interpreted the concept of Asian baskets. Also, in the interiors of the Theatre, we took the cue from origami, the Japanese art of paper folding.

"Every piece of architecture has a story to tell; the same goes for The Esplanade, which will be an important landmark in our cityscape. The Concert Hall and Theatre of The Esplanade are our crown

jewels – nowhere in the world can you find a duplicate of the interiors or of the fabulous acoustics. As a local firm, we are very proud to have been given the opportunity to design the interiors.

"The Esplanade structures evoke controversial comments and reactions, but I'm too close to the project to be bothered by them. Nevertheless, I believe that when people have a reaction to a building's architecture, it's the best way a city can be known to the world!"



Seah Bee Kee, 42
Structural Engineer with
CPG Consultants Pte Ltd

"Here's something interesting: Do you know that the whole structure of the Esplanade could be lifted up by helicopters, if there were those strong enough? For acoustic reasons, this 'quiet' structure is sitting on rubber pads, and there are no connections, such as bolts and nuts, to connect this 'quiet' structure to the bottom 'noisy' structure. This makes The Esplanade truly a structural wonder!

"I began work on the project in 1996 and was involved in the structural design of the Theatre. I enjoy singing and dancing, so it's an honour for me to be involved in this project. While I was working on it, I even daydreamed that one day I would have the chance to perform at the Theatre and Concert Hall!

"But seriously, as our society evolves, our pace of life gets more exciting and stressful. If, as a place for the Arts, The Esplanade can give us a better chance of softening our stress, all our efforts will have been worth it. In that sense, being aware of or involved with the Arts helps us lead a healthier life.

"When the exterior cladding of The Esplanade was just put up, I agree that it really did look like a durian at first sight. But I feel that as it's a tropical fruit, the durian is ideal to represent us as an Asian country! I hope that The Esplanade will really take a lead in developing the Arts across Asia." **W**

CLOTHES: LE GALLERIA ACCESSORIES; SWAROVSKI

Opening Highlights

The Esplanade's Concert Hall boasts acoustics that can deal with everything from Western orchestras to Asian classical music. Here are some highlights of The Esplanade's Opening Festival, which runs from October 12 to November 3:

- Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra With jazz superstar Wynton Marsalis. An education

and performance residency, Oct 2 and 3

- The London Philharmonic Orchestra. With conductor Kurt Masur, Oct 14 and 15
- XingPop. Featuring 20 major local artists, Oct 18
- Cabaret: A Single Woman Standup. Comedy by local female artistes, Oct 18, 19, 25, 26 and 31, and Nov 1 and 2
- Cesaria Evora. Solo

performance, Oct 19

- Svar Sangam. With India's top classical musicians, Oct 20
- Mui Suet See. Cantonese Opera, with the Singapore Chinese Orchestra, Oct 21 to 23
- Marco Polo and Princess Blue, a "symphonic epic", Oct 26 and 27
- Recital by opera superstar Jessye Norman. Recital, Nov 1

Did You Know...

- The glazing that forms the two domes of the Esplanade is 28.76 mm thick and consists of 6 mm glass, 12 mm air gap and 10.76 mm laminated glass. The glazing and sunshades work together to help reduce heat gain.
- There are 4,908 sunshades covering the two domes.
- The pipe organ in the Concert Hall is made up of over 40,000 components and took six months to assemble. The long pipes were imported from Germany.