

Celebrating Peranakan culture

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(From left) Fraser, Noor Azmi, Sidek and Tang announcing the Peranakan Penang festival during the press conference.

THE Peranakan Penang festival kicks off on Friday with a plethora of fascinating events celebrating one of the state's most iconic cultures.

There will be a gala fashion show, musical performances, exhibitions, culinary presentations, tours, workshops and talks by prominent Peranakan personalities, scholars, artists, designers and entrepreneurs.

Most of the physical events will also be live-streamed on major online platforms like Facebook and YouTube to make them accessible to everyone.

The festival is organised and produced by eSolved MSC Sdn Bhd in partnership with Joe Sidek Productions with funding from the Federal Government's investment arm, MyCreative Ventures Sdn Bhd, under the Creative Industry Recovery Grant.

Festival director Joe Sidek said most of the events would be free-to-attend, with a number being ticketed. However, seats are limited so interested parties should register soon.

“The success story of the Penang brand as an arts and cultural destination can partly be attributed to a long-standing eco-system of arts festivals and events.

“Peranakan Penang will highlight the richness of Peranakan culture in the region, with a focus on the local Peranakan community here.

“We hope this will grow into an international festival that allows us to showcase our creative talents to the world,” Sidek noted.

Festival producer Charles Tang said there would be 17 events over the 10-day festival, making it one of the largest to be organised post-pandemic.

“This hybrid of physical plus online streaming model is ideal in the current situation.

“Those who can’t attend events physically will still be able to watch the events live and be a part of them.

“It’s the best of both worlds,” Tang said at a press conference held at E&O Hotel, which will host the Peranakan Penang Fashion Show at 8.30pm on Friday.

Serving as the opening gala, it will feature collections from Ranndy Goh, Kenny Loh, betterthanblouses, Jing Ooi, Shasha’s Collection, Jonathan Yun Sculptural Jewelry and Nam Loong Fine Jewellery.

MyCreative Ventures chairman Noor Azmi Mat Said added that having the events online makes them available in perpetuity. He believes this will be a major trend in the next five years.

“The returns generated by this exposure will come later in the form of increased tourism and economic opportunities,” he shared.

Other highlights include the Peranakan Batik Exhibition at Bangunan UAB in China Street Ghaut showing some of the finest pieces from Penang, and Lasem and Pekalongan in Indonesia.

The Jawi Peranakan of Penang Exhibition taking place at No. 7 and 9 King Street will chronicle the history and heritage of the community. Both exhibitions run from Friday to Dec 26, with viewing hours from 10am to 6pm daily.

Bangunan UAB will also host two Sembang Peranakan discussions on Straits Chinese Peranakans and Jawi Peranakans at 3pm on Sunday and 5.30pm next Tuesday (Dec 21) respectively, each led by prominent personalities on the subjects.

At 8.30pm on Dec 22, there will be a Jazz Ethnic and Peranakan Keronchong performance by the UiTM Chamber Pop Orchestra.

Then, it is back to the E&O Hotel for Malam Keronchong and Ronggeng at 8.30pm on Dec 25.

The Peranakan Christmas evening features songbird Janet Lee, WVC Jazz, and NusPARC Ronggeng Ensemble.

Also at the press conference was the hotel's general manager Alison Fraser.

For details or to register, visit <https://peranakanpenang.com/> or <https://www.facebook.com/peranakanpenang>.