

# Report of the Second Edition of Myanmar Music Festival

June 7-17, 2015



**မြန်မာ့အသံဖွဲ့စည်းမှု ၇၀ နှစ် ဖျော်ဖြေပွဲ**  
အမျိုးသားကဏ္ဍ (မြို့မကျောင်းလမ်း)  
**Celebration Concert**  
NATIONAL THEATER (MYOMA KYAUNG STREET)  
JUNE 14 2015, 6:30 P.M.  
၁၄ ဇွန် ၂၀၁၅၊ ည ၆ နာရီ၊ မြို့မကျောင်း

**PROGRAM WITH CYCLE TIME 8-11**  
အသံဖွဲ့စည်းမှု ၇၀ နှစ် ဖျော်ဖြေပွဲ ၈ နာရီ မှ ၁၁ နာရီ အထိ ဖြစ်ပေါ်မည်။

**SOME DEMOS IN FESTIVAL FILM/VIDEO**  
အသံဖွဲ့စည်းမှု ဖျော်ဖြေပွဲများကို အသံဖွဲ့စည်းမှု ဖျော်ဖြေပွဲများဖြင့် ဖော်ပြမည်။

**ALL EVENTS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**  
အသံဖွဲ့စည်းမှု ဖျော်ဖြေပွဲများကို အသံဖွဲ့စည်းမှု ဖျော်ဖြေပွဲများဖြင့် ဖော်ပြမည်။

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## Overview

The second annual Myanmar Music Festival was held in Yangon from June 8<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup>, featuring musicians from Taiwan, Switzerland, and the United States. The festival is organized in association with Myanmar's Ministry of Culture and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in celebration of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Nations. The week-long music festival attracted musicians, scholars, educators, and entrepreneurs, who participated in dozens of music performances, educational workshops, and panel discussions. Through the performances of music, events held in Yangon, Mandalay, Naypyidaw, Myitkyina, and Pyay share the common goals of respect, peace, tolerance, and sustainable development.

On June 14th, Renata Dessallien, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Myanmar, as well as Diramore, Director of Music Department at National University of Arts and Culture, gave opening speeches at the celebration concert held at Yangon National Theatre. The spectacular response from the public also initiated the joint collaboration of 2015-2016 Myanmar Music Festival: A Southeast Asia Tour, with Myanmar's Ministry of Culture and the United Nations.

As a continuation from 2015, the Naypyidaw concert on June 18<sup>th</sup> was attended by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and members of the National League for Democracy. At the concert, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said the most urgent matter at hand for Myanmar is for various ethnic groups to arrive at the consensus of unity. She also described music as the best method of education, because music is not only a means of self-expression, it can also help reach consensus with others. Moreover, she expressed aspirations for future installments of Myanmar Music Festival to continue promote democracy, peace, and unity for Myanmar, through the work of music.



***(Music) is the higher form of communication. It creates oneness between people and it is a great equalizer. The Myanmar Music Festival takes it one step farther by connecting people across continent, across culture. It is opening hearts and mind.***

--- Renata Dessallien, The UN Resident Coordinator

## International Collaboration



***We find it quite natural to incorporate a diversity of music genres on the same concerts including Myanmar Traditional Music, Myanmar popular music, western music from different eras and choir music in multiple languages all performed by a diversity of musicians.*** --- Diramore, Music Director at University of Arts and Culture

2013, Myanmar Music Festival has since then continuously received recognition and support from local, as well as international institutions. As the beneficiary of many resources, Myanmar Music Festival has become the largest local privately organized music and culture exchange program. On June 8<sup>th</sup> and June 9<sup>th</sup>, the music festival kicked off at the American Center and the Embassy of Switzerland, respectively, with local students, embassy officials, and various civil groups in attendance.



Musicians from the U.S., Switzerland, Japan, Taiwan, and Myanmar performed at the Switzerland Embassy.

## Community Involvement: Promotion and Participation



***What we need the most in this country is unity and peace and you can help them through music: to bring people together, to overcome the differences and focus on what we have in common. Do anything you can to promote peace, unity and understanding.***

--- Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

Conflicts among ethnic groups and religions continue to plague Myanmar society. In order to promote understanding, respect, and trust among different groups, Music Festival's choir is formed. Working with international peace promotion organization, Children International Summer Village (CISV), choir membership consists of various ethnic groups, cultures, and religions. During the festival, choir members learnt mutual respect and understanding, as well as songs from different countries and languages, thereby achieving harmony through appreciating multiple cultures within music.



Choir members from different cultures and religious backgrounds practiced and found harmony through music.

In addition, before and after the festival, organizers also arranged for musicians to perform at local hospitals, art galleries, and bookstores in cities around Yangon, including Mandalay, Myitkyina, and Pyay. For the local communities, these concerts provided residents a first-time opportunity to get to know Western Classical music and diverse cultures.



Pyay is a UNESCO-recognized World Heritage Site. A Buddhist nun at a local temple single handedly takes cares of 250 orphans. Festival musicians took this photo after a performance at the temple.



Myitkyina is the capital city of Kachin State. Since it's located near the border with China, ongoing conflicts have occurred in recent months. Kachin Theological College (KTC) is a followers-funded theological school. Musicians from the Myanmar Music Festival performed its first concert at the school.



International Artist and Faculty performing with Jason, a piano student of the festival at Parami Hospital/ Samitivej International Clinic. A first to have a classical music concert at a hospital in Myanmar.

## **Inclusion and Sustainable Development**

Inclusive and Sustainable Development are United Nations' primary goals. At the time of celebrating the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of UN Charter, Myanmar Music Festival also collaborated with UNESCO, organized forum discussions on the topic of "Achieving Inclusive and Sustainable Development Through Arts." Hosted by Esuna Dugarova, participants include UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Myanmar, Renata Dessallien, Music Festival's Artistic Director Kim Gallagher, Associate Director Erina Iwasaki, social entrepreneur Austin Yoder, as well as Myanmar local artists. Forum topics include how to promote national development through arts, in-depth discussions on how to increase inclusion and sustainability within Myanmar Music Festival, as well as strive for a development direction compatible with the local societal atmosphere.



Photo of Forum Participants



Myanmar music students photographed with American violinist after performance.

## **Diverse Cultures and Harmony**

***The aims of the Myanmar Music Festival and the aims of the United Nations are the same.  
Promoting understanding and acceptance, unity and diversity, peace and lasting harmony.***

--- Renata Dessallien, The UN Resident Coordinator

**When we listen to music we realize something that we have in common, but yet something that enhances our individuality, which is what freedom is all about.**

--- Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

Since opening up, people from around the country are extremely curious about Myanmar. After being closed off to the world for half a century, Myanmar is again learning to get to know the world. At a time like this, music is the perfect medium for such a goal. Myanmar Music Festival not only provides students of music an opportunity to grow, musicians from around the world also have a chance to learn Myanmar music. Meanwhile, participants have the opportunity to express themselves, as well as learn to appreciate different cultures, thereby achieving harmony and exemplify the spirit of democracy.

The second annual Myanmar Music Festival not only promotes cultural exchange between Taiwan and Myanmar, it is also received recognition from the United Nations. Moreover, Myanmar democratic leader Aung San Suu Kyi has expressed commitment to continue participating in the festival. Myanmar Music Festival plans to work in association with Myanmar's Ministry of Culture and the United Nations, to jointly organize the 2015/2016 Southeast Asia Tour, which shall continue to promote the spirit of freedom, democracy, and peace throughout countries in Southeast Asia.





***Absolutely sure the understanding that have developed during this short week of festival has surpassed any longer political and economic exchanges, this is because music brings us together seamlessly as one big family as we are.***

--- Renata Dessallien, The UN Resident Coordinator



Joint Performance with International Musicians at Yangon National Theatre for the festival's final concert.

## **Conclusion**

The festival received support from a diversity of sponsors: Local Myanmar Sponsors, International Corporations, US Embassy, Swiss Embassy, Taiwan Democracy Foundation, Johnson Foundation. The festival performed a diversity of musical genres performed by a diverse group of musicians promoting cooperation, peace while empowering Myanmar Musicians to develop their skills as performers, speakers, and entrepreneurs. Audience reach included orphans in Pyay, students in Myitkyina, Myanmar general audience in Mandalay and Yangon, doctors and nurses at Parami hospital, and more. The National Theatre concert attracted an estimated 1400 people. The total number of visitors to the festival is estimated to 3000 people and we hope to keep growing our audience both in number and diversity.

Additional Videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2YmxEtvdsEY>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d\\_w0x7sjSRw&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d_w0x7sjSRw&feature=youtu.be)

Additional Reports:

Celebration Concert : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xgx5TJolFc0>

Parami Hospital Concert : <https://youtu.be/z2seT-akLTM>

Yangon Gallery Concert : <https://youtu.be/rBikPh0Nwfw>

American Center Concert : <https://youtu.be/xFWJIsHx4-E>

## 2015 FINANCIAL SPONSORS

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