

SCO News 新加坡华乐团讯息

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Record-breaking performance

The first records were set inside the new National Stadium yesterday, but not by an athlete or sports team.

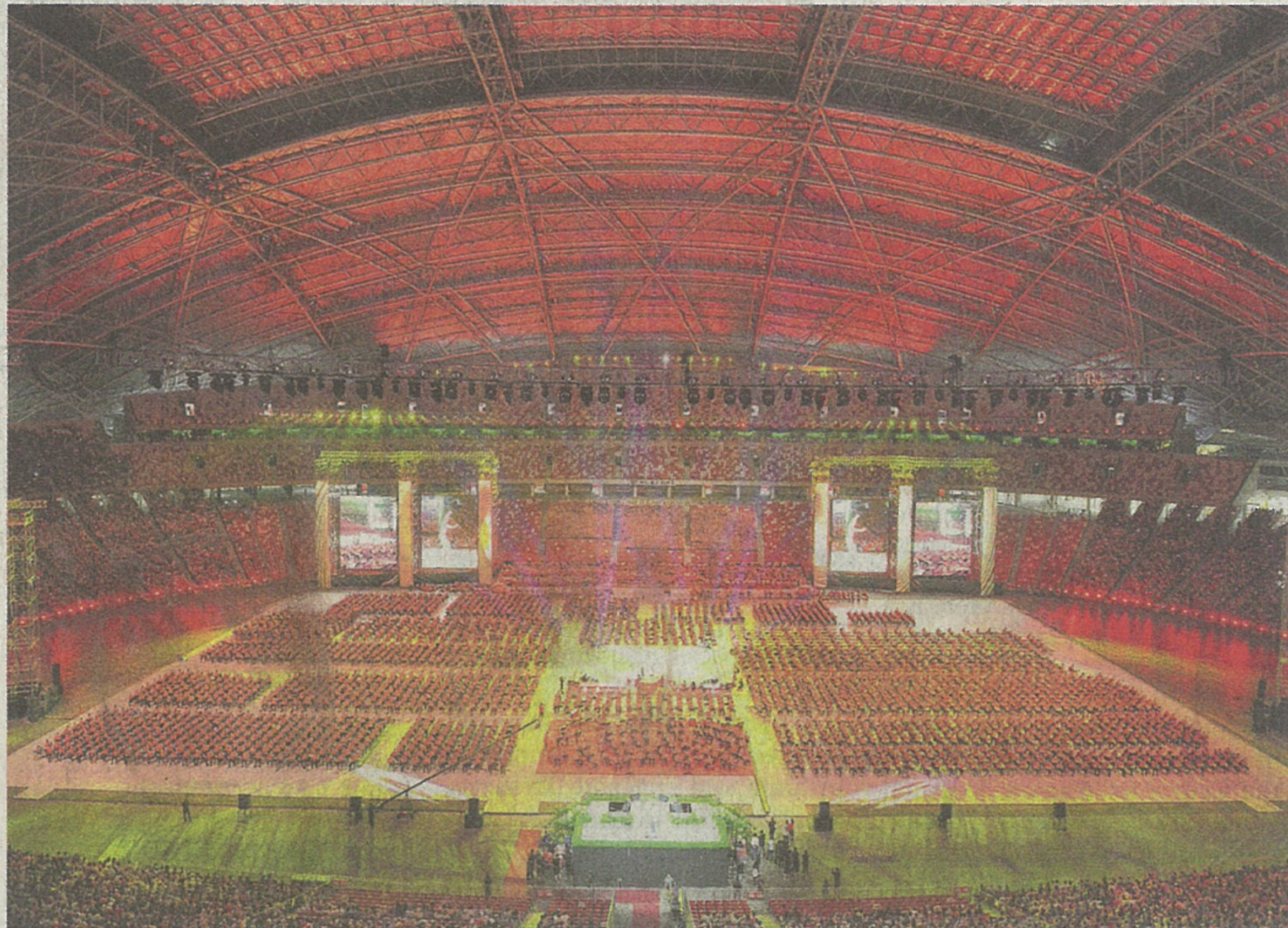
The honour went to the Singapore Chinese Orchestra (SCO), which broke two Guinness World Records for the largest Chinese drum ensemble and largest Chinese orchestra performance.

It pulled off these feats during a concert under the dome of the National Stadium at the newly opened Singapore Sports Hub last night.

The record for largest Chinese drum ensemble was made during its performance of the song Power Singapura!

An ensemble of more than 4,500 musicians and choir members garnered the SCO its second Guinness World Record in another event.

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ST PHOTO: DESMOND WEE

SCO breaks two world records



ST PHOTOS: DESMOND WEE

The Singapore Chinese Orchestra broke the record for the largest Chinese drum ensemble during its performance of the song Power Singapura!

It pulls off feats at first concert at National Stadium, a highlight of Sports Hub open house

Lydia Vasko

The Singapore Chinese Orchestra (SCO) broke two Guinness World Records for the largest Chinese drum ensemble and largest Chinese orchestra performance.

These were feats they pulled off during the first concert at the National Stadium, at the newly opened Singapore Sports Hub last night.

The record for largest Chinese drum ensemble was made during its performance of the song Power Singapura! composed by Quek Ling Kiong and Phang Kok Jun.

They were led by the Singapore Chinese Orchestra's resident conductor Quek Ling Kiong.

The rest of the concert was conducted by SCO music director Yeh Tsung, 64, who led an ensemble of 4,557 musicians and choir members through a 90-minute mega-concert titled Our People, Our Music 2014, which also garnered them a second Guinness World Record.

The orchestra performed eight pieces, which included Richard Strauss' Also Sprach Zarathustra, Op. 30; Variations On Singapura by local composer Phoon Yew Tien; and A Man Should Stand Strong, the theme song from the Tsui Hark movie Once Upon A Time In China. It was accompanied by a martial arts performance by Vincent Ng.

The concert closed with a performance by Dick Lee, who sang his 1998 National Day Parade theme song Home, which he wrote and was originally sung by Kit Chan.

About 30,000 people were at the concert, including Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and his wife, who were the guests of honour; Minister for Culture, Community and Youth Lawrence Wong; and Minister in the Prime Minister's Office Grace Fu, who is also Second Minister for the Environment and Water Resources and Second Minister for Foreign Affairs.

The concert was one of the highlights of the Sports Hub's open house yesterday.

It was also the first time Mr Yeh had ever conducted an ensemble of this size. "Not only was it a huge number of people, but they were al-



The Singapore Chinese Orchestra also broke the record for the largest Chinese orchestra performance last night at the National Stadium. SCO music director Yeh Tsung led an ensemble of more than 4,500 musicians and choir members through a 90-minute mega-concert titled Our People, Our Music 2014.

so from a wide range of backgrounds, from professional musicians to people in the early stages of their musical education," he said.

The 3,345 orchestra members and 1,212 choir members were from 128 school, community centre and clan association musical groups which answered an SCO open call for participants last year.

They ranged from a 2 1/2-year-old playing a small pallet drum to musicians in their 80s who had been practising in groups since March. However, Friday was the first time that all the more than 4,500 members were able to rehearse at the same time, due to lack of a large enough rehearsal space.

"How to put them together was a huge task that I had never met before, but that made things more interesting, more exciting. We consciously wanted to have an event which was historic, and if you want historic, you will have a challenge and I was very happy to take that on," said Mr Yeh.

The orchestra was so large that he had to conduct the musicians and choir members from a raised platform about 3m high. His image was also projected onto two screens for musicians who were seated too far away to see the conductor in person.

Another challenge was the size of the National Stadium, a 55,000-

seat sporting arena which was not designed as a classical music concert hall.

Mr Yeh and a team of over 45 SCO staff spent rehearsals on Friday and Saturday testing equipment and amplifying instruments like the ehru and cello to make sure the acoustics were balanced and clear. He also chose music with "clear instrumentation" to compensate for the stadium's echo.

His efforts were appreciated by Mr Casey Gan, 42, himself a musician.

"I think the concert was great, especially for the first time in the stadium. To organise something of this size must have required a lot of coordination and effort, but the

sound was a bit echoey and it may take a few more events to find the sweet spot for sound," he said.

But for Mr Yeh, the concert was about more than making music.

He said: "The final goal of this event was not just making music. From making music we express ourselves and connect with each other; the orchestra is like many streams forming one ocean."

"We build and feel the message that Singapore is our home, that home is no longer an apartment with four walls but a country where we all live, enjoy and share together and music is used as a bridge to make this happen."

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