

# Harp and flute on the double

Two professional flute and harp recitals are taking place within days of each other, and the repertoire spans Mozart to the modern day.

On Thursday, the Singapore Symphony Orchestra's principal flute Jin Ta and principal harp Gulnara Mashurova present Mozart's classic Concerto For Flute And Harp at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory Concert Hall.

Four days later, on Monday, harpist Katryna Tan and the SSO's assistant principal piccolo player Roberto Alvarez premiere all-new works from eight modern composers.

The composers are Alvarez's former teachers at the Conservatory of Asturias, Spain, or colleagues past and present. They are Spain's Fernando Agueria, Maria Dolores Malumbres, Miguel Prida,



Harpist Katryna Tan and flautist Roberto Alvarez will perform works from modern composers in their recital.

ST PHOTO: TERRENCE LIM

Jorge Muniz and Ignacio Rodriguez Guerra, as well as Singapore's Robert Casteels, Ho Chee Kong and Chen Zhangyi.

The coincidence of concerts prompted

The Straits Times reviewer Chang Tou Liang to say: "This is most unusual - and they happen to be the two finest flautists in Singapore paired with the two finest

book it

## A FRENCH SOIREE WITH THE CONSERVATORY ORCHESTRA

**Where:** Yong Siew Toh Conservatory Concert Hall  
**When:** Thursday, 7.30pm  
**Admission:** \$15 from Sistic (call 6348-5555 or go to [sistic.com.sg](http://sistic.com.sg))

## LA NOCHE - NEW MUSIC FOR FLUTE AND HARP

**Where:** Esplanade Recital Studio  
**When:** Monday, 7.30pm  
**Admission:** \$30 from Sistic

harpists in Singapore."

Jin and Mashurova, who are also conservatory faculty, are playing with the music school's orchestra as part of Yong Siew Toh's ongoing concert series.

The pressures of work ensured their last such recital, anchored around their instruments, was several years ago, but both tell Life! how much they enjoy matching melodies on stage.

According to Mashurova, 41, the flute and harp combination has inspired more composers than any other set of chamber music instruments, apart from piano and violin. "I think it's just the combination and how the instruments support each other."

Adds Jin, 39: "I've tried the flute with different instruments, saxophone, drums, guitar and piano, but flute and harp is the best. The sound, especially on high octaves, is crystal."

Both describe the Mozart concerto as "a fun piece and part of the standard repertoire".

"Roberto is far more adventurous," Jin says, in a nod to his colleague's concert. "I'm more conservative, I prefer playing a

piece that is mature and ready."

Working with harpist Tan, 35, Alvarez, 33, last year coaxed eight friends to come up with eight new works for the flute and harp on the theme of night, or "la noche" in Spanish. The resulting CD, *La Noche*, retails in the Esplanade music store for \$20.

"When you get a CD of flute and harp, it's usually the same music being played. I wanted to expand the repertoire," Alvarez tells Life!

While he and Tan found it was easy to get composers to comply with their "experiment", it was much harder to interpret the music hot off the sheet.

Alvarez explains: "It's all new music. We didn't have any recordings, any references. We had to interpret it from scratch."

They resorted to asking the composers to sit in, or e-mailing sound clips to those overseas.

"But most said, 'Just do what you like'," Tan says. "It was quite challenging but also quite fun."

Akshita Nanda