

Changing lives with music

A concert with a heart, the upcoming Toyota Classics 2014 will feature original arrangements that will thrill the audience while also helping those in need, writes ANTHEA DE LIMA



PAMELA NICHOLSON AND VASKO VASSILEV

WHETHER it's to unwind after a hard day at work, to alleviate boredom as your feet pound relentlessly on a treadmill or simply because music is the food of love, there is no doubt that we love listening to it at just about any time of the day.

And if philanthropy is also a passion, there's no time like the present to combine two of your major interests. All you'll need to do is buy tickets to Toyota Classics 2014, a fundraiser that will feature an envelope-pushing, highly prestigious classical music orchestra that boasts some of the best soloists from around the world.

To be held on Nov 11 at Dewan Filharmonik Petronas, the one night gala performance will be graced by the Sultan of Selangor, Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah, former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his wife, Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamad.

The concert, which celebrates its 25th anniversary this year, stems from a regional corporate social responsibility programme by Toyota. Aptly themed *Music That Moves Lives*, this year's edition spans seven countries across the region, namely Singapore, Cambodia, the Philippines, Brunei, Thailand, Vietnam and Malaysia.

Organised by UMW Toyota Motor, the Toyota Classics 2014 will feature the Covent Garden Soloists Orchestra from London, with Bulgarian violin prodigy Vasko Vassilev and piano soloist Pamela Nicholson, under the baton of world-renowned conductor Miguel Angel Navarro.

UMW Toyota Motor president Datuk Ismet Suki said

the Toyota Classics programme has positively transformed thousands of lives. He added that the company hopes to expand the frontiers of classical orchestra with a musical extravaganza that will touch lives far beyond the stage.

"We believe in striving and making a difference in every place where we live, work or conduct business; which is in line with the company's initiatives," he explained.

Nicholson is widely respected in the industry for her courageous (and controversial) conversion of the

classical violin, its repertoire and her daughter – internationally-renowned violinist Vanessa-Mae, famed for her classical and techno musical stylings.

Navarro will lead the orchestra in an exclusive repertoire as the Toyota Classics 2014 will showcase – for the first time in its history – original arrangements by Nicholson that include movie theme songs from classic westerns to modern-day blockbusters.

Believed to be among the longest running classical music fundraisers in Malaysia, with a firm legacy of representing the philanthropic pillar of UMW Toyota Motor's corporate social responsibility initiatives, combined proceeds from ticket sales and corporate donations for the Toyota Classics concerts in Malaysia

has raised more than RM7 million for 56 non-profit and charitable organisations.

This year's edition aims to raise funds for the Lung Foundation of Malaysia, the National Kidney Foundation and Pertubuhan Kebajikan dan Perlindungan Nur Qaseh Malaysia.

Tickets are priced at RM220, RM170, RM120 and RM60, and can be purchased from the Box Office, Dewan Filharmonik Petronas.

