

Tengku Irfan, biography

Malaysian-born **Tengku Irfan** has appeared around the world as a pianist, composer, and conductor, and has been praised by *The New York Times* as “eminently cultured” and possessing “sheer incisiveness and power”. Irfan has performed with orchestras worldwide with conductors Claus Peter Flor, Neeme Järvi, Kristjan Järvi, Robert Spano, George Stelluto, Jeffrey Milarsky, among others. His compositions have been premiered by highly-acclaimed orchestras and ensembles, and have won international awards including three **ASCAP Morton Gould Awards** in 2012, 2014, and 2017.

Now 20 years old, Irfan started his piano lessons at age 7 and developed an interest in composing shortly after. His major debut performance was at age 11, performing Beethoven's Piano Concerto in E flat (Wo04) with the **Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra** under the baton of Claus Peter Flor, where he improvised his own cadenzas for all three movements.

Other performance highlights include the **Juilliard Orchestra**, **AXIOM**, **Singapore Symphony Orchestra**, **Sao Paulo State Youth Orchestra**, **Estonian National Symphony Orchestra**, **Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra**, **Aspen Chamber Symphony**, **Peoria Symphony Orchestra**, **MDR Sinfonieorchester**, **Aspen Philharmonic Orchestra**, and a solo recital at the la Virée classique Festival Montréal, on invitation from Kent Nagano. Irfan also won the **Aspen Music Festival** Prokofiev Piano Concerto No.2 Competition in 2013, and was resident pianist for the **Aspen Contemporary Ensemble** for four consecutive years since 2014.

Irfan is often chosen to premiere new compositions (performances/studio recordings) due to his speed and ease in learning new and demanding repertoire, and also for his interpretation of composers’ works.

Irfan’s career as a composer has garnered three **ASCAP Morton Gould Awards** and a **Charlotte Bergen Award** with performances and premieres by orchestras such as the **Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra**, the **Singapore Symphony Orchestra**, and the **MDR Simfonieorchester**. His orchestral composition titled *Keraian*, was premiered by the **New York Philharmonic** at Avery Fisher Hall, with Case Scaglione conducting.

Irfan made his conducting debut with the **MusicaNova Orchestra** in April 2015, for the premiere of his string orchestral piece *Nocturne*. He conducted the premiere of his piece *Pengembaraan Minda dan Kenyataan* in New York, and conducted the **Malaysian Philharmonic Youth Orchestra** for the world premiere of his orchestral piece *What Does It Take to Dance?* in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore. Irfan recently conducted the **Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra** during their 20th Anniversary Gala Concert 2018. In conjunction with this anniversary, Irfan was appointed as the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra Youth Ambassador.

He has performed on live telecasts on national television in Malaysia, and on popular U.S. classical music radio programs such as *From the Top* (when he was introduced by Emanuel Ax), WQXR, WGBH Classical New England's *Drive Time Live*, Europe's Klassikaraadio, Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk (MDR.de), and Deutschland Radio.

Irfan was a double major in piano & composition in the **Juilliard Pre-College** program (under Yoheved Kaplinsky & Ira Taxin). He currently studies at the **Juilliard School** as a double major in piano & composition under Yoheved Kaplinsky and Robert Beaser respectively, and also studies conducting with Jeffrey Milarsky and George Stelluto. Irfan served as Teaching Artist Intern for the **New York Philharmonic Composer’s Bridge Program**, and is a proud recipient of the **Juilliard School Kovner Fellowship Award**.