

Ballarat-based Creative Director and composer Chee Wei Tay receives major Singapore music honour

COMPASS Award recognises Tay's work as Music Director of a landmark national immersive exhibition that drew more than 30,000 visitors

Ballarat, Victoria / Singapore — 14 September 2026 — Ballarat-based Creative Director and composer Chee Wei Tay has received a 29th COMPASS Award in Singapore, taking out Top Local Instrumental Contemporary for his composition for *Now Is Not The Time*, a major immersive exhibition created to commemorate the 100th birth anniversary of Singapore's founding Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew.

Presented annually by the Composers and Authors Society of Singapore (COMPASS), the COMPASS Awards are among Singapore's most significant honours for music creators, recognising outstanding achievements by composers, songwriters and music publishers. For Australian audiences, they occupy similar territory to Australia's major music industry honours, with a particular focus on music creators and their works.

A national-scale immersive experience

Now Is Not The Time was conceived as a large-scale, multidisciplinary immersive exhibition commemorating the centenary of Lee Kuan Yew's birth. Occupying approximately 40,000 square feet, it brought together music, spatial audio, film, virtual production, artificial intelligence, generative art, architecture and sculpture to create a multi-sensory journey through Singapore's history, transformation and future. More than 30,000 people attended during its 15-day public presentation.

As Music Director and composer, Tay was part of the exhibition's creative leadership team, developing its musical identity and using music and sound to shape the emotional journey of audiences through the experience.

Accepting the project also came with an unusual degree of personal and creative responsibility.

"When I was first approached about the project, my initial reaction was actually to consider declining it," Tay said. "The subject carries immense significance to Singapore as a country, and I remember thinking, quite simply, 'I really don't want to mess this up — that would be the end of my career!'" he joked.

"Jokes aside, there was an enormous sense of responsibility in finding the right musical and emotional language for something of this significance. I'm incredibly appreciative of the producers and the Show Director for placing their trust in me. Given the cultural significance of the subject, that trust was something I never took lightly.

"What made the project particularly exciting — and challenging — was that the music wasn't simply accompanying something happening on a screen. It existed within a much larger

environment alongside film, architecture, sculpture, technology and sound. All of those disciplines had to work together to take the audience somewhere emotionally."

From Singapore to Ballarat

Tay has worked professionally across film, television, theatre, live performance and large-scale multimedia productions for more than 25 years. His career has extended beyond composition into music direction, conducting, sound engineering and creative direction — experience that allows him to work across both the artistic and technical sides of a production.

Now establishing the next chapter of his career in regional Victoria, Tay hopes the recognition will also open the door to new collaborations closer to home.

"Ballarat has an extraordinary history, strong cultural institutions and an incredibly rich collection of stories," he said. "I'm interested in what happens when we take those stories and ask what else they could become — whether through theatre, exhibitions, immersive experiences, music, technology or something we haven't thought of yet."

"For me, the exciting part is always the same: start with the story, bring the right creative people together, and see how far we can push the idea."

Tay travelled to Singapore to receive the award in person at the 29th COMPASS Awards Presentation at Marina Bay Sands on 13 September 2026. His attendance and associated professional development activities in Singapore were supported by the Australian Government's Regional Arts Fund, administered in Victoria by Regional Arts Victoria.

During the visit, Tay is also undertaking meetings and professional engagements aimed at strengthening creative connections between his established international networks and his growing practice in regional Victoria.

About Chee Wei Tay

Chee Wei Tay is a Singapore-born, award-winning Creative Director and composer who now calls Ballarat home. Across a career spanning more than 25 years, his work has encompassed film, television, theatre, live performance, immersive exhibitions and large-scale multimedia experiences. His international credits include projects for PBS NOVA, HBO Asia, National Geographic, Discovery Channel and Channel NewsAsia, alongside feature films, documentaries and cultural projects. His work explores the intersection of storytelling, music, technology and audience experience.

Regional Arts Fund acknowledgement

This activity was supported by the Australian Government's Regional Arts Fund, which supports sustainable cultural development in regional and remote communities in Australia.

Interview availability

Chee Wei Tay remains in Singapore following the COMPASS Awards and is available for phone, radio and video-call interviews. In-person interviews in Ballarat and Victoria are available from 27 September 2026.

Media enquiries

Chee Wei Tay taycw@declaffer.com +61 405 250 126 cheeweitay.com

Images: High-resolution award presentation photographs are available via [this Dropbox link](#).