

## UCSI holds **first** annual music maestro concert

THE sweet sounds of opera music was heard at UCSI University's Blue Ocean Strategy Hall, as singers from the OperaPlus and Flanders Opera Studio of Belgium graced the stage. Performers from Malaysia, Belgium, Italy, Thailand and the United Kingdom came together to "wow" the international and local audience. Among them were Boyd McCleary, the British High Commissioner and Frank Van de Craen, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Belgium and Mohamed Juhari Shaarani, director general of Istana Budaya.

Pro Musica, which means "in favour of music", is an ensemble of outstanding singers from the Flanders Opera Studio of Belgium who travel the world to perform for the international audience. Their appearance at UCSI University marks the third and final performance in Malaysia after performing in Penang and Ipoh earlier this month. Their next performance will be in Singapore.

The main cast of the opera ensemble were singers Inês Madeira (Portugal), Enrico Casari (Italy), Andrew Ashwin (United Kingdom) and Sabine Conzem (Belgium). Also performing with them were opera singers from Thailand who were trained under OperaPlus. They were accompanied on the piano by Hein Boterberg and UCSI University School of Music part-time lecturer Genevieve Wong Jen-Pei.

The production was under the artistic direction of Ronny Lauwers, a singing coach as well as a professor at the Brussels Royal Conservatory of Music, together with international vocal teacher, Loh Siew Tuan. The concert also featured a special interlude performance by Malaysia's own international dance maestro Ramli Ibrahim and the Sutra Dancers together with soprano Sabine Conzem.

Loh was responsible for mooted the idea for



Lim (far left), Loh (far right), and Lauwers (back row, sixth from right) with the performers and music coaches of Pro Musica 2009.

ed to assisting young singers in the advancement of their vocal, musical and drama capabilities. Loh has voiced her enthusiasm to collaborate with UCSI University's School of Music to train and coach students who are majoring in classical music (vocals) at the university in the near future.

The Pro Musica concert is UCSI University's inaugural Music Maestro Annual Concert, a yearly event which aims to bring world class musical performances from around the world to Malaysia.

The entire production was accompanied by the newly-acquired Steinway piano which the university purchased for future musical events at the acoustically-refined Blue Ocean Strategy Hall. One of the world's finest pianos, this instrument is a major addition to the school's facilities, and will play a significant role in the development of UCSI University's postgraduate music programmes.

Datuk Seri Lim Chong Keat, the cultural advisor for the Pro Musica concert, lauded the concert at the UCSI University Kuala Lumpur Campus as the best among the three that they have had in Malaysia.

Drop by at UCSI University and talk to the counselors. They can also be contacted at 03-9101 8880