

## **RAINFOREST WORLD MUSIC FESTIVAL 2024 RETURNS WITH THEME 'EVOLUTION' WITH GRAMMY AWARD WINNING ARTISTE KITARO AS HEADLINE**

**Sarawak, Malaysia, March 22, 2024** - Sarawak Tourism Board (STB) is thrilled to unveil the highly anticipated Rainforest World Music Festival (RWMF) 2024, set to be a transformative celebration under the theme 'Evolution'. In its 27th edition, the RWMF promises an immersive experience that transcends music, incorporating responsible tourism, cultural celebration, and environmental stewardship.

The festival lineup is nothing short of extraordinary, featuring a diversity that showcases 20 acts in total, made up of 68 international musicians from 14 countries across 6 continents together with 63 Malaysian artists. This exciting amalgamation of sounds and cultures promises to create a musical fusion like never before, showcasing the richness of global musical traditions right here in the heart of Sarawak. All the acts combined command a massive global fanbase of 12 million, comprising followers from Spotify and various social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, Twitter (X), and Facebook.

Among the festival's headlining acts is the **Grammy and Golden Globe award winner Kitaro**, a Japanese recording artist renowned for his groundbreaking electronic-instrumental music. **Kitaro Live World Tour** will be coming to the Rainforest World Music Festival for the first time to enchant and captivate audiences with his ethereal compositions and transport them on a musical journey like no other. Kitaro won his Grammy in 2001 at the 43rd Grammy Awards for Best Album in the New Age category.

Alongside Kitaro, headlining at the RWMF this year from West Malaysia is none other than **Dato' Zainalabidin**, known for his hit song 'Hijau' which has been around for over three decades. It was one of the first few songs in the country to be categorised under the genre of 'World Music' when the concept was still relatively new in Malaysia. Zainalabidin is an award-winning artist, having won multiple prestigious awards throughout his career such as the Millennium Gold Award: Highest Award for Contribution to the Music Industry in 2002, Best Entertainer at the Seri Angkasa Award in 2004 and the Best Male Vocal in an Album ('Puteri' album) at the Music Industry Award (AIM).

Representing East Malaysia is Sarawak's own **Belle Sisoski**, who is well-known for using her creative platform to raise awareness about indigenous rights, environmental and musical conservation in Sarawak. This remarkable 18-year-old was also 2nd place with her song "Stop Your Games", in the 2022/2023 Commonwealth Song Contest. She connects with the younger generation and introduces them to the rich variety of Sarawak's traditional instruments through her music.

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Coming all the way from Cuba is the **Havana Social Club**, a dynamic group of nine members from Cuba, Singapore, Venezuela, and the USA. They share a deep love for Cuban and Latin music, serving as not just a band but cultural ambassadors on a mission to illuminate Asia and beyond with the vibrant rhythms of Cuba.

Other international acts include **Alright Mela Meets Santoo** (Pakistan/France), **Bourbon Lassi** (Australia/Malaysia), **Imarhan** (Algeria/France), **Krakatau Ethno** (Indonesia), **Nini** (Taiwan/USA), **Rizal Hadi and Folk** (Indonesia), **Rhythm Rebels Featuring Selonding Bali Aga** (Indonesia), and **Tribal Tide** (Singapore).

Attendees to RWMF 2024 will also be entertained by other Malaysian acts such as **The Borneo Collective** (East Malaysia), **Adrian G** (West Malaysia), **Alena Murang** (East Malaysia), **Nisa Addina** (East Malaysia), **Salammusik** (West Malaysia), **The Colour of Sound's Malaysia** (West Malaysia), **Tuni Sundatang** (East Malaysia) and **Zarul @OurBodySound** (West Malaysia).

**The Borneo Collective** is a first-ever musical project, called the '*Soul of Sarawak*,' to be performed at RWMF2024, featuring Sarawak's masters of traditional instruments backed by an ensemble of world class musicians from all over Malaysia. The ensemble consists of Malaysia's Living National Heritage Matthew Ngau, Jerry Kamit of Tuku Kame, Joe Gendang, Ezra Tekola of At Adau among others.

YB Dato Sri Abdul Karim Rahman Hamzah, Minister for Tourism, Creative Industry & Performing Arts Sarawak shared "The Rainforest World Music Festival 2024 transcends its role as a mere music festival; it embodies the theme of 'EVOLUTION', where sustainability, responsible tourism, and cultural exchange blend in perfect harmony to converge. We anticipate to surpass RWMF2023 attendees for the entire festival weekend, creating a platform for key opinion leaders, environmental advocates, and youth changemakers."

The Minister added "Ticket options for RWMF 2024 cater to every enthusiast, from the coveted 3-day pass priced at RM635 for adults, granting access to the entire weekend of festivities, to the 1-day pass for adults offering early bird pricing at RM235, pre-sale at RM283, and door sale at RM333. Children aged 3-12 can join in the excitement with a 1-day pass priced at RM 80, while admission is free for children below 3 years old. Ticket sales will open on mid-April 2024 and exciting giveaways await ticket purchasers in support of Sarawak tourism's ongoing responsible tourism and sustainability initiatives."

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In line with the theme of 'Evolution', the Rainforest World Music Festival 2024 continues to take bold strides towards sustainability and responsible tourism. From eco-friendly initiatives to advocacy for greener practices, the festival aims to inspire positive change for a better, more environmentally conscious future.

"The Rainforest World Music Festival has always been a beacon of cultural celebration, a vibrant tapestry of diverse musical traditions and a champion for the indigenous voice of the world. In this 27th edition, we are taking an important step forward. With the Evolution of RWMF, we are transforming the festival into a dynamic platform that advocates sustainable practices in tourism and conservation, paving the way for the next 25 years of this festival", emphasised Sharzede Datu Haji Salleh Askor, CEO of Sarawak Tourism Board.

The Rainforest World Music Festival 2024, will embrace the evolution of music expressions, the unity found in diversity, honour the wisdom of indigenous traditions, and cultivate harmony that transcends boundaries. Our shared experiences will ignite a passion for preserving our planet and cherishing the richness of our collective heritage. Together, through music and beyond, we can create a brighter future for generations to come.

The Rainforest World Music Festival 2024 invites music enthusiasts, environmental advocates, and cultural explorers alike to join in this unparalleled celebration of diversity, evolution, and harmony.

For more information and ticket bookings, please visit the official Rainforest World Music Festival 2024 website at [www.rwmf.net](http://www.rwmf.net).

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## **About Sarawak**

*A kaleidoscope of culture, adventure, nature, food and festivals: is the best description for Sarawak. Sarawak comprises 34 ethnic tribes with their own unique traditions, lifestyles, music and food, while sharing their warm hospitality. Malaysia's largest state, Sarawak, endowed with some of the oldest rainforests on Earth. Its vast landscape spans over 120,000 sq kms, with towering mountains and cool highlands, jagged limestone formations and mysterious cave systems, winding rivers and quiet beaches; where adventures are waiting to happen. Festivals are hosted throughout the year celebrate the eclectic blend of modern and traditional culture, food, music and religious practices that can be found nowhere else. In Sarawak, there is always 'More to Discover'.*

# MEDIA RELEASE

## **About Sarawak Tourism Board**

*Sarawak Tourism Board is the key promoter for Sarawak. STB is a winner of the Asia Pacific Excellence Awards 2016 by Asia-Pacific Association of Communications Directors (APACD) and has received the ASEAN PR Excellence Award 2015 Gold Award. The Rainforest World Music Festival is a five-time Top 25 Best International Festivals recognised by Songlines World Music Magazine (2011 – 2015). Meanwhile, the Rainforest World Music Festival and Borneo Jazz Festival Virtual Experiences were recognised by World Responsible Tourism Awards 2021 as 'Ones to Watch' under Destinations Building Back Better Post-Covid and the virtual experience of the 2021 Rainforest World Music Festival won the PATA Gold Awards 2022 under Sustainability and Social Responsibility Category for Culture. Sarawak Tourism Board also won the Golden City Gate 2019 five-star award, Marketing Excellence Awards 2021 for Excellence in Mobile Marketing (bronze) and PATA Gold Awards 2022 its destination video entitled 'A Journey Awaits' under the marketing category.*

*STB was honoured with the "Nation's Pride Award" in Tourism Promotion Excellence at the BrandLaureate BestBrands Awards for the year 2022-2023. Additionally, at the Malaysia Public Relations Awards (MPRA) 2023, STB's campaign for the Rainforest World Music Festival titled "The Comeback Stronger Brand Story" was recognized with the Campaign of the Year award. STB also secured the Gold Award for Product Brand Development (B2C) under the theme "Comeback Stronger", acknowledging its compelling narrative emphasizing sustainability practices. STB received the Best Global PR Campaign Award at the DAVOS World Communications Forum Award (WCFA) 2023.*



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[www.sarawaktourism.com](http://www.sarawaktourism.com)