

Boston Phil conductor to speak at business seminar

By **CHUANG PECK MING**

WHAT is a world-famous orchestra conductor doing in a seminar on business leadership?

Not to conduct business, of course. Boston Philharmonic Orchestra Benjamin Zander is one of the key speakers at next month's Singapore Human Capital Summit.

Still, what has conducting an orchestra got to do with leading a business? Plenty, apparently.

Kwan Chee Wei, the chief executive of the Human Capital Leadership Institute, a co-host of the annual event, says business leadership today involves a lot of indirect leadership and leading people of disparate backgrounds and skills – which is precisely what a conductor does.

In fact, Dr Zander, who believes in the transformative power of music, is

a much sought-after motivational speaker on leadership in the international lecture circuit, commanding a fee of US\$40,000 upwards.

Through stories, music and concepts, he has provided a new perspective on leadership. As a conductor, he sees his job as awakening possibilities in others.

The orchestra is a group of highly trained individuals poised to coalesce into an active whole. "Passion, creativity and the desire to contribute are basic human instincts to be released," says a line in one of his promotional handouts.

Dr Zander uses the metaphor of the orchestra and a life-time of experience conducting, coaching and teaching musicians to work his magic and to tear down the barriers to corporate productivity.

The theme for the two-day semi-

nar on Sept 11 and 12 at Resorts World Sentosa is "People Strategies for Asia: Future-Proofing Your Organisation", which reflects the growing importance of Asia's talent landscape in driving business growth.

Acting Manpower Minister Tan Chuan-Jin will deliver the opening address at the seminar, which is co-hosted by the Ministry of Manpower and the Workforce Development Agency. Other speakers include best-selling author and world-renowned business thinker Gary Hamel, Tata Starbucks chief executive officer Avani Davda and Singapore Management University's president Arnoud De Meyer.

At least 650 local and regional participants are expected at the seminar, which will cover subjects such as building future-ready organisations, business and government and driving sustainable business growth in Asia.