

An abstract painting of a figure in profile, facing left. The figure is rendered with thick, expressive brushstrokes in a variety of colors including red, blue, yellow, green, and white. The background is a mix of vertical stripes of red and blue. The overall style is expressive and gestural.

SCHOOL OF ARTS PRESS

SUNWAY UNIVERSITY | MARCH 2020



ABOUT US

The School of Arts at Sunway University offers a variety of disciplines, ranging from Advertising and Public Relations to Design, Architecture, Film Production, Theatre and Music.

School of Arts Press (SOAP) is a monthly newsletter in which we provide information on student and staff achievements, past events as well as a notification platform for upcoming events.

ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

In this month's issue, SOAP looks into how the SOA community cope with being online as the April semester commences. The newsletter also covers happenings and achievements of the SOA community amidst the ongoing MCO.



School of Arts Press —


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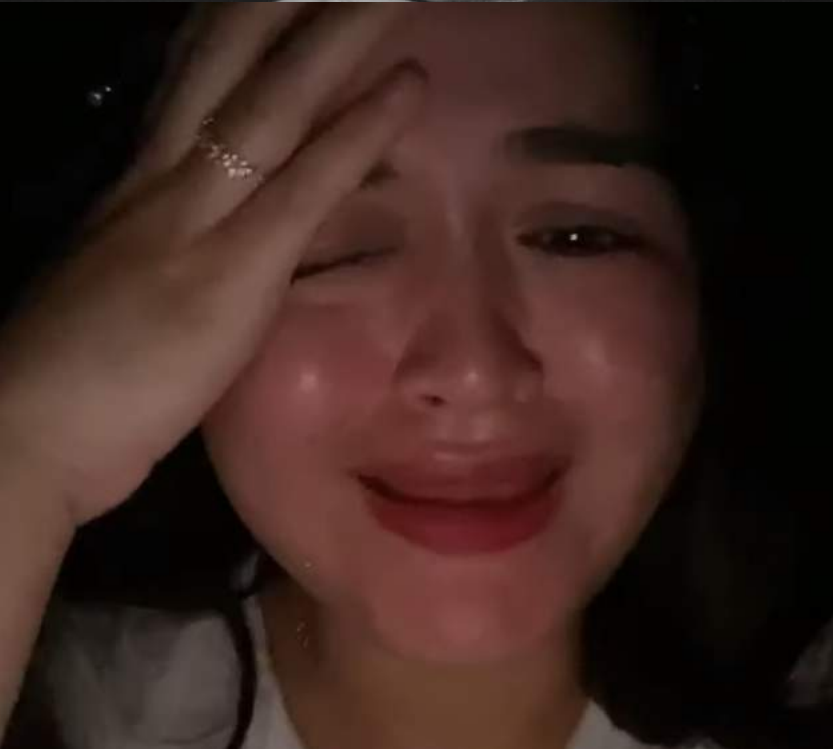
Cover Photo: Chris Tan's artwork for the ZHAN Art Space's 1st Anniversary GOLD group show titled — "A Kintsugi Girl with Broken Heart "



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MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

I looked back at my comments in the last SOA Newsletter, written after ten days of MCO. How long ago that seems now! At that time, we were anxious about an upcoming adventure into the world of 100% online learning.

Now I can report that things seem to be going quite well overall. See below in this newsletter for first-hand reports from three of our students who discussed their learning experiences. You will also read about some of the many public activities our staff are engaging in, in spite of the "social incarceration".

Now, as the MCO appears to be relaxing, we look forward to what comes next. Sunway University is committed to exclusively online learning for the current semester. Like other universities around the world, no decision has been made yet about the fall semester, although we certainly would like to be face-to-face if that is possible. In the meantime, I trust that everyone is staying safe!

Please forward this email to anyone who would be interested in receiving a monthly review of upcoming events and past successes in the SOA. Links to subscribe or unsubscribe are included at the bottom of the newsletter.

— *Professor Donald Bowyer*

WELCOME TO ALL STUDENTS!
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School of Arts Press welcomes all 140 new March 2020 intake students! We would like to also take this opportunity to thank you for choosing to be part of Sunway University's School of Arts.

To all our returning students, School of Arts welcomes you back into another semester!

We hope you have a wonderful academic journey ahead and we look forward to bringing you more stories about our wonderful community!

CHRIS TAN AT ZHAN ART SPACE'S 1ST ANNIVERSARY GOLD

By Chris Tan, Teaching Fellow,
Department of Art and Design





Photo Source: Chris Tan

At the end of March, Chris Tan, School of Art's teaching fellow in the Department of Art and Design, participated in ZHAN Art Space's 1st Anniversary GOLD group show. In conjunction with its celebratory milestones, ZHAN Art Space organised a group show and invited 20 talented artists from various walks of life to explore the meaning of art and gold. The artworks produced are diverse, ranging from traditional painting styles to art installations.

Inspired by people who suffered from depression, Chris Tan's diptych *A Kintsugi Girl with Broken Heart* challenges viewers to reflect if a depressed, broken heart can be repaired.

Kintsugi is known as a Japanese art of repairing broken or cracked items with powdered gold. This diptych expresses the idea of how a broken girl undergoes repair with Kintsugi. Her beauty is renewed, her look is refreshed exteriorly, however, her heart condition remains unknown. The exhibition took place in both actual physical venues in The School, Jaya One, and online platforms for over a month. Check out Chris' Instagram page [@christan.art](https://www.instagram.com/christan.art) for more details.



Photo Source: Asian Media Information and Communication Centre, Inc. Youtube Channel

ETC: E-LEARNING IN TIMES OF CRISIS

In early April, Prof. Bradley Freeman, Head of the Department of Communication moderated ETC: E-learning in Times of Crisis organised by the Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC). AMIC with the help of Upstream Media, conducted this free online webinar as a platform to discuss online teaching and assessments amidst the current pandemic.

Panelists of this webinar shared insights for educators to better understand and prepare themselves to undertake online teaching by using major online teaching tools and software. The topics that were discussed are the state of E-learning technologies and online courses, common misconceptions on e-learning platforms, how to use e-learning technologies in times of crisis, and e-learning practices applied to blended learning. The panelist addressed various questions from over 400 viewers. Participants were eligible to receive a certificate of participation.

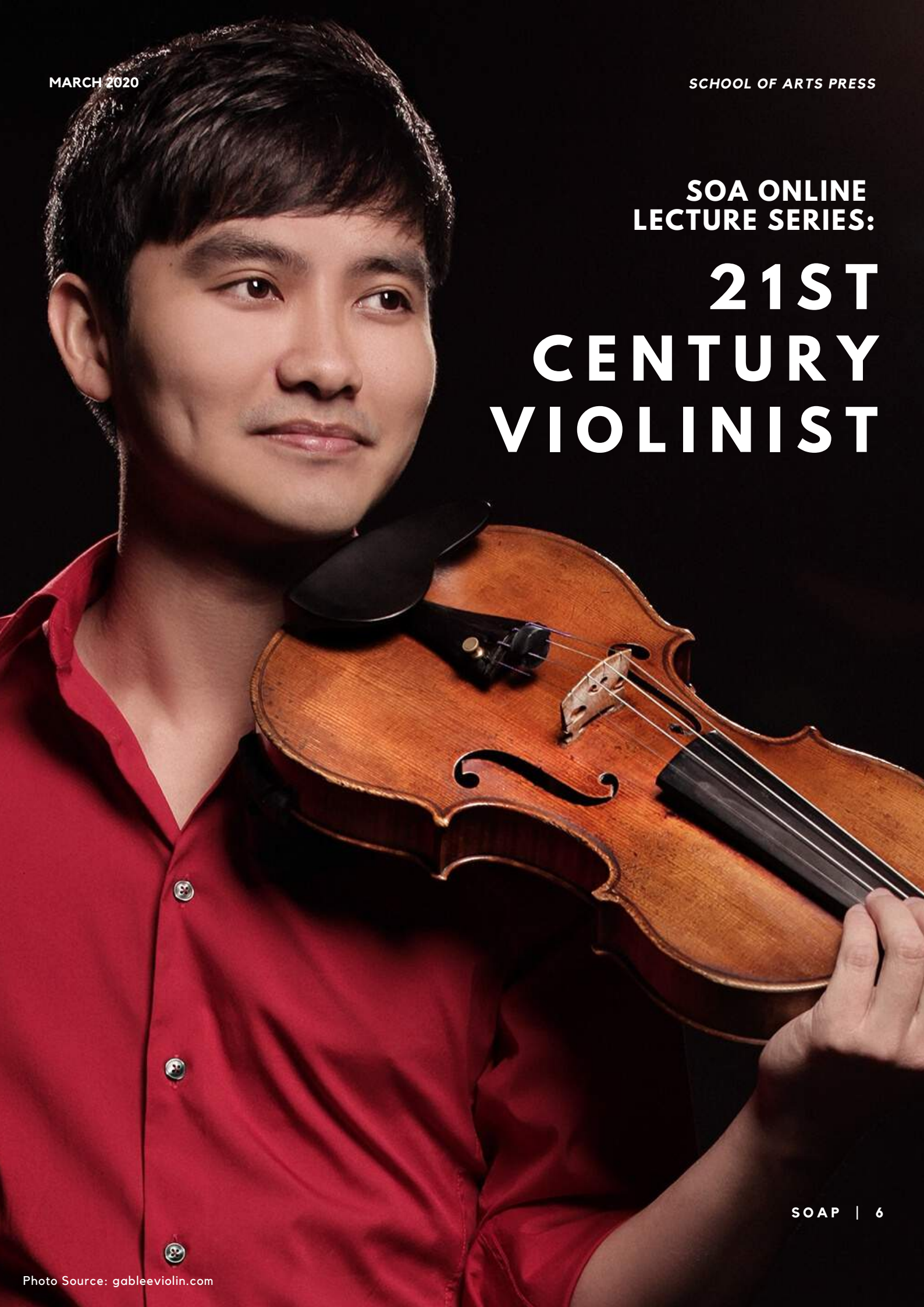
The webinar can be viewed [here](#).

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SOA ONLINE
LECTURE SERIES:

21ST CENTURY VIOLINIST



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Dr. Andrew with Gabriel Lee during the online lecture livestream

As part of the SOA Online Lecture Series initiated during the MCO, Singaporean violinist and educator Gabriel Lee was invited to give one hour of online lecture to both Music Programme and CMAT students. The lecture took place on 22nd April, and was facilitated by Dr. Andrew Filmer over Zoom. The class was also streamed live over Facebook and was considered to be an "informative presentation", as commented by a viewer on SOA's Facebook page.

The lecture was conducted in semi-formal interview style, where Dr Andrew posted questions to Gabriel. One of the things he discussed was the use of "looping" as a method to teach music online, which he adopted from one of his teachers. Gabriel explained that this method incorporates the use of a looping pedal and demonstrated for the class an example: The famous tune of "baby shark" is adopted when he teaches very young students. To encourage his student to play, he would first record the chords accompaniment on the violin and looped it. Then he would add in the counter melody. Finally, his student is asked to play the melody line.

The lecture ended with Q&A sessions by academic staff and students. Since online teaching and learning is a hot issue in the times of COVID-19 pandemic, many have been interested to hear opinions, as well as concerns, from both the presenters and receivers about its effectiveness, and challenges. The participants were eager to learn the teaching method and aspirations in Gabriel's international projects.



Live Music Series with School of Arts



"Home Alone Music" is a series created by Dr. Andrew Filmer to ease your boredom during the stay-at-home weeks of the MCO. Up to 19th April, there have been 7 episodes posted on Dr. Andrew's Facebook personal page - [Andrew Filmer](#). Each episode was accompanied by a different story about his musical life while he is in self-isolation.

The series feature Dr. Andrew, either by himself or together with his colleagues over Zoom, to perform beautiful covers, and compositions which have been recorded, then posted on his Facebook page with a hashtag #homealonemusic. Dr Andrew has excellently adopted the online platform to make his series incredibly engaging. He successfully generates a cozy and warm atmosphere from his home, bringing his audience into his musical world, at the comfort of their own homes.

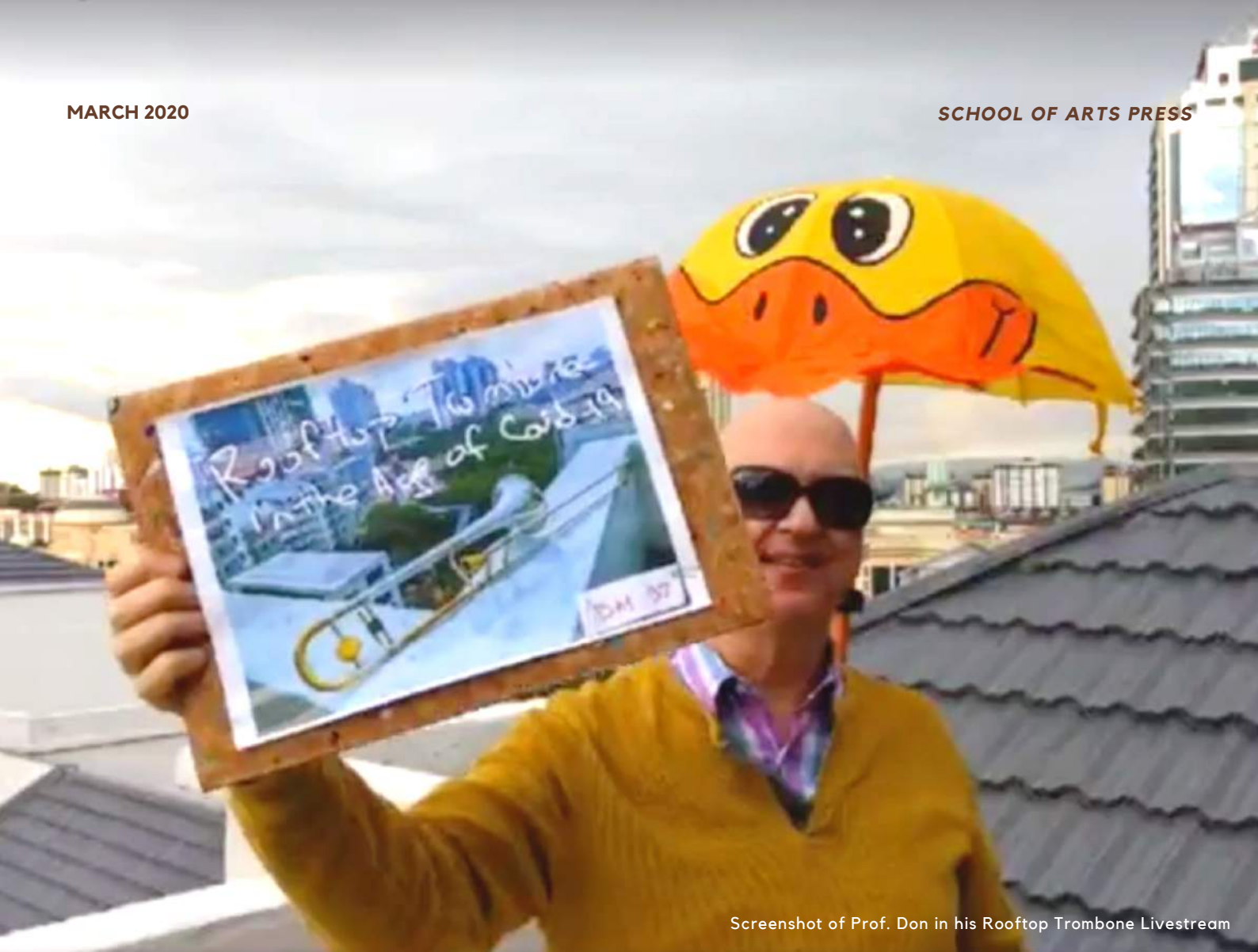
Home Alone Music is not just about pleasing performances. Through one of his episodes, he expressed support for the "Charity Busking Edition" where the founding members of Attune get together for an online busking. The amount raised through online busking has been gifted to St. Nicholas' Home, Penang, a home for the blind which has launched an appeal for help. Visit [St Nicholas' Home for Blind's](#) page if you are interested to contribute to the donation fund for those who are less fortunate than us!

Keep updated on Dr. Andrew's page to enjoy more refreshing music stories from "Home Alone Music" series!

SENJA SESSIONS WITH AZMYL YUNOR

SOA senior lecturer Azmyl Yunor, aka our resident troubadour performed online concerts #SenjaSession! These sessions were streamed live on his Facebook - [Azmyl Yunor](#) and Instagram - [azmylyunor](#) page. The concerts were held on 21st, 22nd, 23rd of April, at 6pm. The series were streamed throughout the MCO and the dates above were when the three episodes #4,5,6 of his series were released, and of course, it was FREE! Azmyl brings a free-spirited and energetic soul into each of his performances, along with his witty and poignant no-holds-backs original bilingual songs.

Keep updated on Azmyl's or SOA Facebook page for further information regarding the next episode of #SenjaSession! Do not miss your chance watching the live show, and interacting on the spot with Azmyl, as well as other audiences.



Screenshot of Prof. Don in his Rooftop Trombone Livestream

ROOFTOP TROMBONE WITH PROF. DON!

Stay tuned for Prof. Don Bowyer's musical series "Rooftop Trombone in the Age of Covid-19". Streamed live at 5pm daily on Prof. Don's Facebook page - [Don Bowyer](#), as well as our SOA's Facebook page - [School of Arts, Sunway University](#). Each episode, Prof. Don serenades you with his trombone music, as he puts it "live music and bad jokes". This 10-minutes mini concert is performed at his apartment rooftop.

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Aldina Azani's "The Story"

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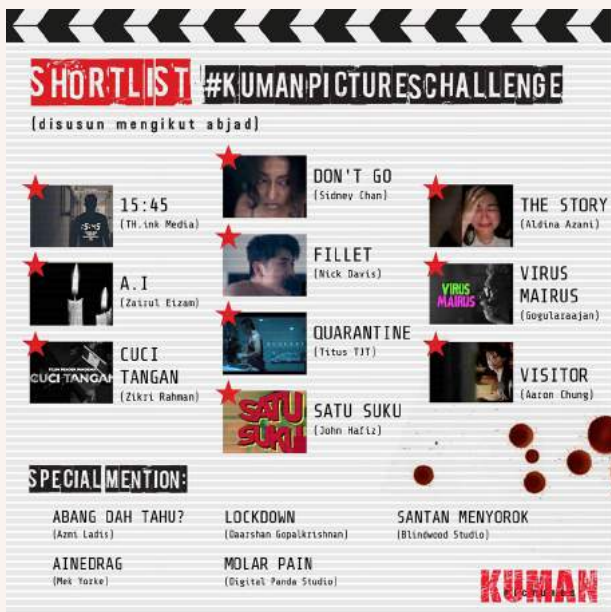


Photo Source: Kuman Pictures Facebook Page

Kuman Pictures is a Malaysian film production company that is well-known for their low-budget horror and thriller films. They have recently held a short film contest named Kuman Pictures Challenge and have received over 200 submissions three weeks after it opened (from the 30th of March 2020 to the 15th of April 2020). A month after, 10 films were shortlisted to win and Aldina Azani's "The Story" was one of them.

Aldina is a BA (Hons) Digital Film Production Year __ student and according to the small description box under her short film on Youtube, "The Story" was her take on realism. She acknowledges how social media has become a big part of society's culture and wanted to tackle the subject of "Alternate Reality Game". When asked about how the idea for the short film came about, Aldina admitted that there was a series of "weirdness" that came to it.

"I got the idea when I was in the shower and heard a loud bang on my door". Thinking that it was her sister, she decided to ignore the noise until she realised that the banging didn't stop. "I furiously walked out of the bathroom ready to pounce on whoever's been knocking non-stop but when I was out the door, nobody was in the room."

"I then saw that the cupboard door was ajar, so I braced myself to get a scare from my sister, but when I went to check it, there was nobody there". Aldina went on downstairs to ask whether there was anyone upstairs and much to her dismay, no one was.

"The blood drained from my face when I realised I was the only upstairs the whole time."

"My imagination went wild and for some reason, it reminded me of those "if you don't share this, some ghost is going to haunt you" posts I saw a few years back on Facebook."

That little incident then became the inspiration of "The Story", and when Azmyl Yunor, Aldina's lecturer, shared that Kuman Pictures was holding a short film competition, Aldina thought to herself "meh, why not" and entered. The short film has garnered around 737 views and is available to watch [here!](#)



Photo Source: Aldina Azani

Online Learning: What Is It Like?

With the great uncertainty of the global pandemic that is looming over us, Sunway University took the decision to have the March 2020 semester conducted online. School of Arts Press reached out to the students in the School of Arts to hear their thoughts and to share their experiences while they go through this change from being in class to remote learning.



Adapting To Grow

By Teo Sullin,
BA (Hons) Communication Third Year Student

I remember the morning I found out this semester would be conducted online: I was honestly stuck between feeling relieved and sad. Having 2 more semesters to go before my internship, my heart was set to enjoy the last 6 months creating even more memorable times with the people that have made my study years so enjoyable. However, with this MCO, I have to face the fact that I won't be able to physically meet them everyday and this saddens me even though I know that it is very important for the health of everyone to stay at home. I began to envision and prepare myself mentally for the months that I have to participate in online lessons for the rest of the semester. Throughout my 14 years of studying, this was extremely new and exciting at the same time. Questions began popping up like, "How are presentations going to be done?" "Will this affect the effectiveness in a group project?", and "Will I be able to cope and do well despite the change?".

Fast forward four weeks into online classes, I have made interesting realisations about myself as a student. In the beginning, it was difficult to absorb information as it felt like my mind would immediately go into a relaxed state since videocall do not usually use as much brain power as compared to academic topics. Because of this I find myself zoning out every now and then or start doodling during lessons (sorry!). Thankfully, quicker than I expected, I was able to get back on track two weeks after classes have started. It took a turn for me when I firmly decided that I am not going to waste my time attending classes and not gaining anything. Thus, I became an active participant by asking questions which helped improve my focus and effectiveness in learning.

As I am writing this, I have come to reflect and realise how online learning has helped me feel more engaged, present in class and to recall what I've learnt faster than physical classes. Compared to traditional learning styles, I tend to feel more comfortable asking or replying to questions asked by my lecturers during classes. This has definitely saved time and helped me address my queries on the spot, instead of procrastinating to ask the questions a few days later. I guess addressing my curiosity and thoughts immediately help make things more memorable.

I'd say that online classes have been impacting me positively over the past four weeks. My efficiency and productivity is gradually increasing as I practice self-discipline to adapt to this new lifestyle. To top that off, the decision of the institution to exclude the results of this semester has helped me focus so much more and wanting to learn not just for the sake of getting a good score.

One Day At A Time

By Jared Wee,
(Hons) Digital Film Production Second Year Student

When the lockdown began at the end of March I was enjoying the end of a lovely family vacation. "Finally time to get back to work!", I thought, "I can't wait to enjoy some much needed socializing with my friends in film school!" Life can change pretty fast if you don't pinch yourself now and then. Soon the MCO was reinforced and I spent the following days in my own home. I had to remind myself that my classes were going to come soon, but somehow it felt like some kind of extended holiday.

Online learning was a little awkward and cumbersome in the beginning. I was not used to learning a very practical and experience-based art subject, such as filmmaking, in the comforts of my own bedroom. Our lecturers similarly resented this change but after some technical blunders, we became accustomed to our new learning environment. Though it pains me that we are not out on set shooting a film, I do appreciate our lecturers' choice of intellectual and theory-based subjects, exposing our generalized film palette to a variety of international art-house films. Some might jump at the chance to stay at home for weeks on ends but I have a strong hunch that most of us budding artists & filmmakers may feel confined in our own comfortable surroundings, unable to venture forth into the world to experience life as it once was. Though I long for the days of real human interaction and learning with friends, I have come to learn that the time given to us may have been a blessing in disguise.

Now that we are not distracted by the hustle and bustle of the outside world, we can achieve a state of solitude which is perfect time to express our creativity through words and art! We have heard of tales of legendary painters and writers isolating themselves in the middle of nowhere to complete their magnum opuses. Is it just a coincidence that we have been given a chunk of time to while away on endless Netflix and social media binging? No. This should be the time to sit down and write that passion project that many of us say we will get to but never gotten into doing it. Now should be the time to read that 2-inch thick book that's been collecting dust; to watch a 3-hour art house film, and of course to finally get some exercise! In a time when we are brutally reminded of the frailty of life, we should make each day count. After all, we do not know how many of them we have left.

Online Learning, Effective or Defective?

By Lee En Yuen, Samuel,
BA (Hons) Design Communication Year 2 Student

So far, Online Learning has been going on smoothly for me. However, there are hiccups along the way. Ever since the Vice-chancellor has declared that the March semester will be done fully online through Blackboard Collaborate, I am impressed with the ability and stability of this platform to be able to connect us with our lecturers easily to carry out lectures. This experience has provided me with the convenience of being able to attend classes from the comfort of my own home. Nevertheless, I have faced some challenges during this period, such as really bad video and audio quality due to unstable internet connection from both sides. This interrupts the delivery of the subject, causing us to miss out on some important information about that lesson or the assignment. This has been my experience of going through online learning.