





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 Sunway University's School of Arts monthly newsletter in which we highlight and 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 highlights another award for With Love, Elaine, Dr Pauline's publication, Dr Perline and Chris Tan artwork features, our international students' stories about online learning, and more!

School of Arts Press -

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School of Arts



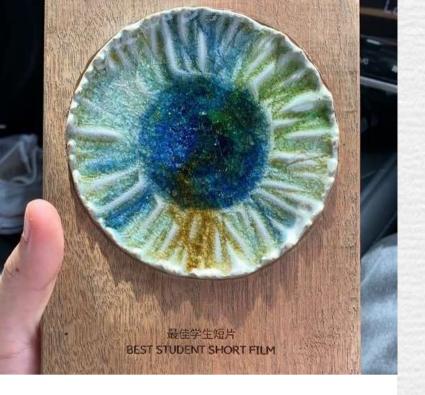
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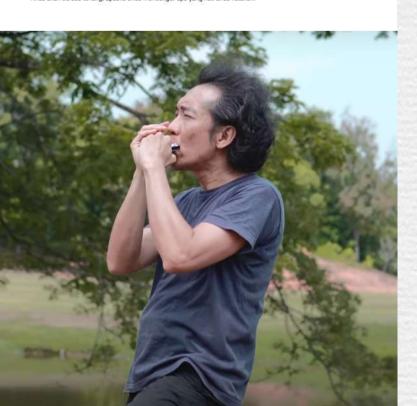




Peaceful Time Cat air 38 cm X 53 cm 2020

Penyataan Pengkarya

Anda akan berasa tenang, apabila anda mendengar apa yang hati anda katakan.



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MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

A new semester began this week — online again, which none of us really look forward to! Let me assure you that all of us students, lecturers, administrative staff, and me - long for the day when we can again conduct face-to-face classes.

In the meantime, Sunway University will continue to provide a quality education through the pandemic hardships. The university has invested heavily in technology to smooth the delivery process, online library resources to support learning, and a variety of other tools that enhance the quality of teaching, learning, and research.

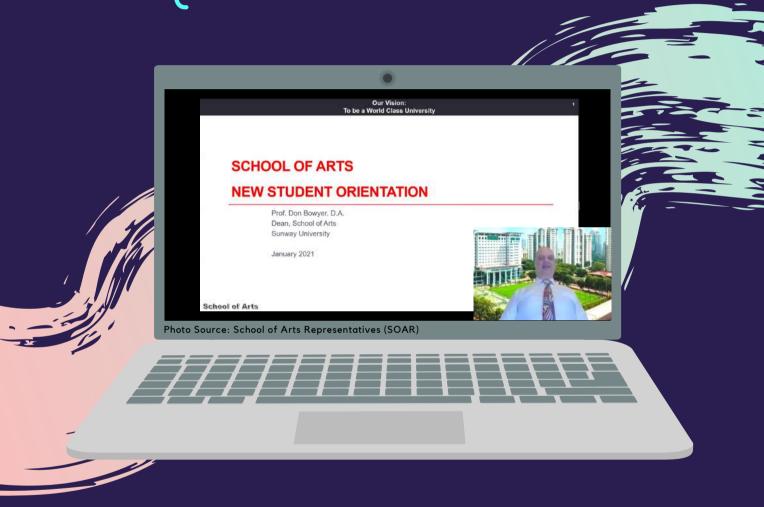
Meanwhile, read stories below about awards and other accomplishments that our students and staff are earning during this "special period." We are certainly not just sitting around waiting for a vaccine!

Another interesting feature in this issue outlines how some of our international students are managing to keep up with online learning while juggling different time zones.



Professor Donald Bowyer Dean of School of Arts

New Students!



The School of Arts would like to give a warm welcome to all of our new January 2021 intake students!

For our returning students — welcome back!

Stay safe and all the best everyone!

Rooftop Trombone v3.0

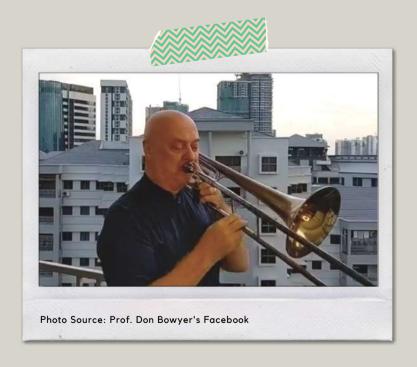


IT'S BACK!

The Dean of SOA — Prof. Don Bowyer has returned once again with another edition of Rooftop Trombone 3.0!

He is streaming live music and sharing (as he puts it) "bad" jokes once a day for several minutes throughout the new Movement Control Order (MCO) in Selangor.

Watch our Dean and show your support for Rooftop Trombone catching his live streams and recordings here!



Dr Pauline Publishes About 'Digital Democracy in Asia'

It is no doubt that digital technologies and political developments have become inextricably intertwined over the years, especially with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic whereby everything has been happening online.

Dr Pauline Leong recently published an titled "Digital Democracy in article Malaysia" in ASEANFocus' 4/2020 Issue which is a quarterly publication that provides concise analyses and perspectives on ASEAN matters.

In the article, she delves into the influence of digital technologies on the democratic process in Malaysia and its prospective changes in the next general election.

To read about Dr Pauline's article (pg 14) and more from the issue published by the ASEAN Studies Centre at ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, click here.

Additionally. Dr Pauline has also submitted a book chapter titled Politics, New Technologies: Social Media and the Democratic Process in Malaysia" for the book Digital Technologies and Democracy in Southeast Asia. The School of Arts Press is looking forward to more of her work being published!



Photo Source: ASEAN Studies Centre



Dr Pauline Pooi Yin Leong is currently an Associate Professor with the Department of Communication, School of Arts. Assoc Prof Leong is the author of Malaysian Politics in the New Media Age: Implications on the Political Communication Process, a book published with Springer.

Virtual International Music Competition 2020

For the past few years, Sunway University and the School of Arts have been collaborating with Persatuan Chopin Malaysia, a non-profit organisation dedicated to creating awareness and appreciation of classical music by holding concerts and competitions.

As one would expect, 2020 became a year that led to their first ever Virtual International Music Competition with multiple musical categories — Piano, Vocal, Violin, Cello, Double Bass, Clarinet, Harp, Guitar, Percussion, and Composition.

The competition was organised in collaboration with Sunway University and opened to musicians of all nationalities for the competing categories of Young Talents, Primary School, Junior School, Senior School, Open Age, and Chamber/Ensemble.



Judges of the competition.

Photo Source: Chopin Society







Judges of the competition.

Photo Source: Chopin Society

All entries were submitted in video format and judged by a distinguished international panel of jury from 18 different countries! The Jury President is none other than Prof. Snezana Panovska, who is in the process of launching the Sunway Conservatoire of Music.

There were more than 560 participants from 5 continents and 38 different countries around the world. That being said, two winners from the Composition category will be selected, and their works will be premiered at the Gala Concert for the winners at Sunway University in 2021. The full list of final results can be found here.





Kinchang Penindas - Azyml Yunor



Photo Source: Azmyl Yunor's YouTube

commemorate the 10th folk anniversary of singersongwriter Azmyl Yunor's breakthrough bilingual 'Warga', a special music video for his protest song entitled "Kinchang Penindas" which translates to 'Tricks of the Oppressor' was released just in time for the New Year.

"It's really a prayer or wish — the chorus refrain — so here's to a year free of oppression worldwide, let's make it happen or at least resist it and keep up the good fight... and a bittersweet farewell to 2020," Azmyl explained.

The <u>music video</u> was directed by up-and-coming filmmakers Fahmi Sani and Aaron Chieng, who are alumni of School of Arts, and produced by Ninth Floor Productions. Shot in Kajang, the music video features a montage of rustic and contemplative scenes in and around the town, offering a commentary on beauty found amidst uncertainties.

The album is considered to be a modern classic and declared as "...a slice of Malaysiana that might give the disillusioned some direction home" by Juice magazine. 'Warga', has since sold out (with no plans of reprinting) and can now only be streamed on Spotify and YouTube.



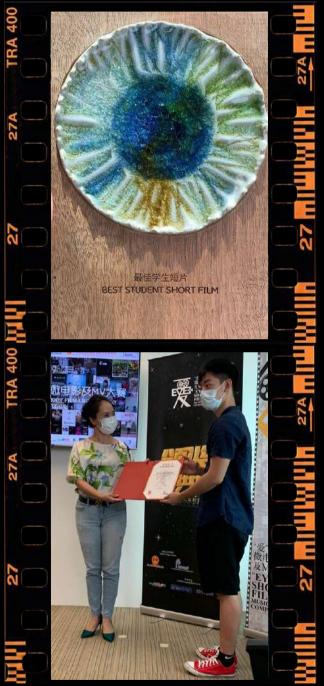


Photo Source: Alina Wong

SOA congratulates student directors Alina Wong and Sheldon Chong, and team members Derrek Lee and Justin Tan for winning the Best Student Award Short Film for their documentary, With Love, Elaine at the "Eye" Short Film & Music Video Competition. The event was organised by the Embassy of the People's Republic of China Malaysia, FINAS and Mango Media.

"We found out about the competition by chance on social media, filled out the necessary forms and sent the film in. It was such a surreal moment for us to win because we never really gave the application much thought and it wasn't until we advanced to the Top 10 that we really started getting excited," said Alina Wong, codirector. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, only Sheldon Chong was able to attend the award ceremony and accept on behalf of the team of four.

With Love, Elaine also won the MAS See Films: Students' Category Jury Award at the 16th Mini Film Festival last year and the team has also been featured in <u>Berita Harian</u> (local newspaper) and the <u>official Sunway University website.</u>





Photo Source: Alina Wong

This short film documents the unconditional love of Datin Elaine Khaw for her husband, Datuk Ooi Eow Jin, a renowned pianist and composer who was diagnosed with Azheimer's, and her son Raymond who has a brain tumour.

Faced with financial hardship due to rising medical costs, Datin Elaine decided to make and sell kuih kapit or "love letters" to pay off the medical bills. The documentary is also a love letter to the audience as Datin hopes that her husband, a national icon who once worked alongside Tan Sri P. **RTM** Ramlee and known the as Orchestra man", "piano will be remembered.

The team was unclear about the concept of the film at the beginning stages. But once they had met and heard Datin Elaine's story, everything clicked and fell perfectly into place. The blissfulness of memories arose, and became a prominent role in the film.

The team strived to make Datin's memories alive again so that she can never forget the special moments spent with her beloved husband, as she remembers for him when he could not. "She (Datin) was our greatest inspiration. She changed our lives with the story of her own,"



Photo Source: Sunway University News

Just like all young, aspiring filmmakers, the production team of four has big plans for their upcoming projects in the near and far future.

Sheldon Chong, the co-director, is currently working on two projects: building the concept of a horror film producing a murder-mystery themed short film that is set to begin shooting once MCO ends. While he remains focused on his studies. Sheldon is determined to keep creating compelling stories that stiremotion for the viewers.

Alina Wong, who was also codirector, is taking things at a slower pace to "enjoy the process" more by working on other creative aspects of film like costume and art design in addition to writing and directing. She considers it a blessing that her studies never allow ideas and projects to run out. However, what Alina is currently working on remains a secret for now! Derrek Lee, the gaffer and translator, also has upcoming projects that are undergoing conceptual agreements as well as stories that are waiting for approval to be shot. He hopes to further improve himself in order to produce more award-winning films. Derrek also wishes to create more content with his team in the future as he enjoys learning and growing with them.

Justin Tan, the director photography, is currently seeking employment within the Malaysian film industry and has withdrawn from the film production program. He is able to continually apply what he has learnt as a student in the real-world which is a "testament" to how effective the course is. Justin also hopes to produce more content with the Love, Elaine team in the future as they have a good working relationship and strong team dynamics.

SOA STAFF ARTWORK

featured in Project 'People of Passion' (P.O.P) 2020

Recently, Dr Perline Siek Hwee Ling and Mr Chris Tan, a lecturer and teaching fellow from the Department of Art, Design and Media had their artwork published in a project called 'People of Passion' (P.O.P).

This project and publication was organised by a group of students from the Faculty of Fine Arts, The National Academy of Arts Culture and Heritage (ASWARA) under the purview of the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism Malaysia.

The aim of the project is to empower and highlight the efforts of artists and activists generated through their creativity and sincerity of mind and spirit, such as expression of emotions, views, interests and philosophies. It is also to encourage art-making in our "new normal" lives.

The documentation of all featured artists and their respective artworks—consisting of a variety of shapes, materials, mediums, techniques and processes—can be explored in the P.O.P e-book.





As an expressionist abstract painter, Chris Tan's main source of inspiration comes from the local social scenes, theology, and personal memories from when he was a child. His featured artwork entitled, Pathway to a Secret Garden is an oil on canvas piece was which inspired by Frances Burnnet's novel, The Secret Garden. Using the author's metaphor, Chris says his artwork "depicts the secret intuitive feeling of a depressed middle-aged man surviving in this noisy world". Besides, the focus of the painting is not about the ambient environment surrounding the man, but rather his utmost feelings when entering a temporary hiding place.



Pathway to a Secret Garden Cat Minyak atas Kanvas 155 cm x 94 cm 2019

Penyataan Pengkarya

Novel Frances Burnnet The Secret Garden mengisahkan tentang sekumpulan kanak-kanak yang menemui tempat persembunyian rahsia mereka pada hampir waktu kehancuran. Dengan menggunakan kiasannya, karya seni saya menggambarkan perasaan intuitif rahsia seorang lelaki pertengahan umur yang tertekan yang hidup dalam dunia yang bising ini. Fokus karya ini bukanlah mengenai tentang persekitarannya, tetapi perasaannya yang paling dirasai ketika memasuki tempat persembunyian sementara tersebut.

Photo Source: ASWARA

On the other hand, when Dr Perline is not teaching and conducting research, she spends her free time mainly producing rough drawings and incredible watercolour paintings. Although short, her statement on the featured watercolour artwork, Peaceful Time perfectly encapsulates the entirety of the painting — "You will feel calm, when you listen to what your heart says."

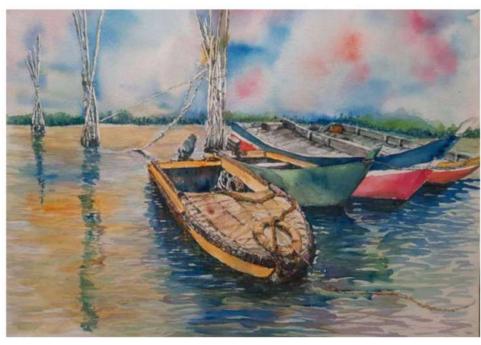
Finally, the School of Arts would like to congratulate both Dr Perline and Mr Chris Tan for their remarkable achievements!



PERLINE SIEK HWEE LING

Dr Siek Hwee Ling (Perline) adalah seorang pensyarah reka bentuk di Sekolah Seni, Universit Malaysia Surway, Beliau banyak mempelajari perspektif reka bentuk budaya seni tima dan barat setelah menamatkan pengaliannya di Australia dan Taiwan. Penyelidikannya lebih tertumpu kepada bidang pendidikan reka bentuk dan daya Perline pernah merangkul anugerah perak dan gangsa di dalam pertandingan The Asia International Conference of Art and Design (AICAD), Invention and Innovation in Design 2019 di Jakatta, Indonesia. Selain penyelidikan, waktu Japang beliau banyak digunakan untuk menghasilkan lukisan kasar dan lukisan cat air. Beliau pernah mengikut pameran seni di Malaysia, Taiwan, Indonesia dan Myanmar. Beliau juga telah diundang sebagai penceramah untuk beberapa ceramah dar bengket reka bentuk di beberapa universiti di Taiwan dan pernah mempamerkan fisalsafa teka bentukyar di pameran seni "Amid the Gap", the 8th Rangsit University International Design Exhibition, Work in Progress pada Jun 2009ses pada Jun 2018gelia Exhibition, Work in Progress pada Jun 2018gelia Chibition, Work in Progress pad

Photo Source: ASWARA



Peaceful Time Cat air 38 cm X 53 cm

Penyataan Pengkarya

Anda akan berasa tenang, apabila anda mendengar apa yang hati anda katakan.

Photo Source: ASWARA

LEARNING BEHIND THE SCREEN:

An International Experience



As countries worldwide went into lockdowns over the past few months and borders remained closed, many of our students were unable to return to Malaysia for classes. We decided to reach out to a few international students in SOA and asked them to share their experiences about learning from afar.

Kazuki Nakagawa



Photo Source: Kazuki Nakagawa

Kazuki is a 2nd year student who is in her 3rd semester for BA (Hons) in Communication. For her past few semesters, she had to study from her home country Japan, which on the bright side meant that she could spend more time with her family as compared to studying in Malaysia.

Of course, studying from afar comes with some difficulties such as the differing time zones between the two countries as well as the occasional internet connection issues. As a result, Kazuki would constantly worry about potential miscommunication during lectures.

Despite her concerns, she says "all the lecturers were quite supportive and willing to make time for consultations, so I could frequently ask questions about coursework". The patience and sense of understanding from lecturers meant that Kazuki did not feel as if she was studying far away from Malaysia.



The positive side of online semesters also made it easier to set up a time for meetings with her classmates — hence providing an opportunity for Kazuki to rethink her learning methods.

She says, "I definitely look forward to meeting my classmates after COVID goes away!". She has indeed developed solid friendships with her fellow peers while working online with them.

She wishes to look for internship and job opportunities whenever circumstances permit her to come to Malaysia. "It may be tough for me, but I'm excited to challenge myself in my favourite country, Malaysia!", she exclaims.

In the future, Kazuki aspires to be involved in work that can contribute to Malaysia's development as a nation by applying what she has learnt in the field of Public Relations and Advertising. She strives to do her best now to make her dream come true.

Indri Alya Himawan



Photo Source: Indri Alya Himawan

Currently residing in Indonesia, Indri is a final year student in BA (Hons) in Communication. When classes switched to online learning, she mentions that it took her awhile to get used to studying through online platforms such as Zoom. "Being in another country, I had to make adjustments to the schedule because of the time difference", so she would sometimes be forced to wake up earlier in the morning.

Furthermore, getting group work done proved to be another challenge for Indri as online communication channels are unable to replace the convenience of meeting up with group mates for a face-to-face interaction. As most can relate, studying in the comfort of one's own home may not be very productive. "The semesters I spent online didn't feel like I was actually studying. I didn't have the motivation, and all I wanted to do was sleep", Indri says.



However, she did appreciate the opportunity to do things at her own pace for example, not having to get dressed for physical classes. Although it is "not an effective way to study", she claims that online semesters made it much easier for her to access and fit classes in her daily schedule by simply listening through her mobile phone.

In fact, Indri says that the lazy and laid back feeling as a result of being at home made her more motivated to do her work because she realised that no one was there to remind her to complete assignments. When asked what could be improved, she believes that getting students to switch on their cameras would make one feel a sense of responsibility and obligation to focus on lectures. "You are seen and your lecturer can see you too", she says.

At the end of the day, Indri looks forward to graduating this course equipped with the knowledge and skills required in her future career. "As tiresome and repetitive as it sounds, I do want COVID to die down because I miss going out with my friends and going to campus.", she mentions with the hopes that her final year in university would be a memorable one.

Felicia Santoso



Photo Source: Felicia Santoso

Felicia is a first year student in the Music Performance Programme. She says that having all her classes online from her home country, Indonesia was undoubtedly interesting. Her university experience started off with her programme leader introducing Felicia as her programme's first international student, which shocked and excited her at the same time.

Initially, she had several doubts on her ability to understand the lessons by learning through screens, or whether she could make new friends. To her surprise, "the reality was better than I thought, and very positive". It turns out that it was not difficult to interact with her cohort as she befriended many people who were willing to help and support one another during this confusing time. Besides that, she says that her lecturers were not only clear and wellprepared in delivering lessons, but they were also extremely approachable.



"I truly appreciate the effort of my lecturers to give us guidance and quick solutions when faced with problems," she says, emphasizing on her private instructor's eagerness in helping her overcome difficulties.

Unfortunately, there were occasions where sudden power cuts would lead to a failure in internet connection, forcing Felicia to reconnect to her Zoom classes which caused her unnecessary panic. The silver lining to online learning is that she could re-watch recorded lectures and pause at important points, something she would not have been able to do in face-to-face classes.

"Overall my online learning went well and I learned lots of new things," she notes. Finally, Felicia cannot wait to meet her lecturers and friends in person and hopes to have an enriching experience with them in real life once the global pandemic is over.

Roz Retita



Photo Source: Roz Retita

Roz, who is in her 2nd Year of Bachelors in Communication, expected difficulties when having to adapt to the Malaysian culture and one of it is the way people converse and the new environment. However, she found herself adjusting well as she found similarities in the food and language(s) to her home country, the Philippines.

"I thoroughly enjoyed being able to experience culture shocks like hearing the use of three languages in one sentence and casually picking them up in my daily conversations".

As for the learning part, Roz felt that it was not hard to follow because it is like being in a cool community with open discussions amongst lecturers and peers. She also felt that she was encouraged to learn at her own pace much more compared to when she was attending physical classes.



Just like others who found comfort in friends, Roz is grateful to have met people that have been such an incredible help to get her out of her comfort zone. "A sense of familiarity comes easily when one is accepted despite differences, like being in different courses," she notes. Roz credits her close friends as her "biggest motivators" and states that they never fail to help her realise her potential while making life amusing. Although she claims there were strains in the friendship when education came into the mix, Roz would not have it any other way.

Candidly, Roz admitted to feeling anxious about looking ahead during these circumstances because she prefers to live in the present and deal with whatever comes in its own time. Regardless, she has multiple dreams she wishes to achieve in the near future. Aside from wanting to use her position in the SOAR (School of Arts Representatives) to bridge students of SOA together, Roz hopes to also find success as a content creator and as a singer/songwriter. "I want to continue pushing myself beyond my capabilities to see how far I can go, I aim to do better than my own expectations,".

Fizza Zaidi



Photo Source: Fizza Zaidi

Fizza is currently a Year 2 student doing her Bachelors in Communication. She describes her learning experience in the past year as "mixed" as she was presented with challenges that other students can relate to such as the absence of a classroom environment, completing group assignments virtually, and being stuck at home.

Originally from Dubai, Fizza had to adapt to being away from home during a global pandemic but stated that the lockdown(s) helped her explore new ways to find motivation to stay focused.

Online learning gave Fizza a greater sense of flexibility when it came to completing work and being able to rewatch recorded lectures to revise before exams was a great help to her academic experience. "I also enjoyed attending classes in my pajamas with unlimited access to snacks during lectures!"



As a member of the Sunway University Student Council, Fizza has to juggle her new duties while balancing her responsibilities as a scholarship student, which was no doubt harder to do virtually. Besides forming a routine with a proper time for everything (including Netflix), Fizza is grateful for her lecturers that helped ease the transition to online learning with the best of their abilities.

"A special shout-out to Ms. Vijaya, who always kept our classes fun and engaging and also for always assigning the appropriate amount of work that never overburdened us!"

While it is easy to focus on the negative aspects of the current situation, Fizza thinks that both students and teachers play a role in creating a positive online learning experience. She states that being compassionate to the struggles faced by both parties is the best way to overcome obstacles. Having empathy and an open mind can make all the difference in these situations.

Just like everyone else, Fizza is eager to return to campus and reunite with her friends! She hopes that she will be able to begin her internship physically next year and plans to volunteer for more projects in her remaining years of study.

Sabrina Yunus



Sabrina, who is a 2nd Year Communication student from Brunei, stated that online learning has definitely been a challenge. While she does enjoy being able to have classes in her room, Sabrina misses being able to physically walk to classes and interact with friends that she has not seen in more than a year

Among other things, finding motivation to study has been one of the toughest tasks for Sabrina to overcome. "Having to adapt to the change of routine has been tough both mentally and physically for me," she says. She feels that being cooped up at home doesn't give one much inspiration to get up and get work done. Considering it a "win-lose" situation, Sabrina claims that attending lectures within the comfort of her own home has taken away much of what she enjoyed doing in a university environment.



Despite the struggles, Sabrina is grateful for the lecturers she has encountered that have always done their best to make the experience less strenuous for everyone and more enjoyable. "As a student and as an individual having to live through the pandemic, I really do appreciate their efforts because in my opinion it's one of the things that have helped me during these circumstances the most."

Sabrina has high ambition as she wishes to achieve many things in the coming years. She wishes to gain long-lasting friendships with the people she has met whilst studying abroad. She also wants to make meaningful connections with people for future career networkings. Not forgetting her passion, Sabrina also hopes to become successful as a part-time dancer and performer.

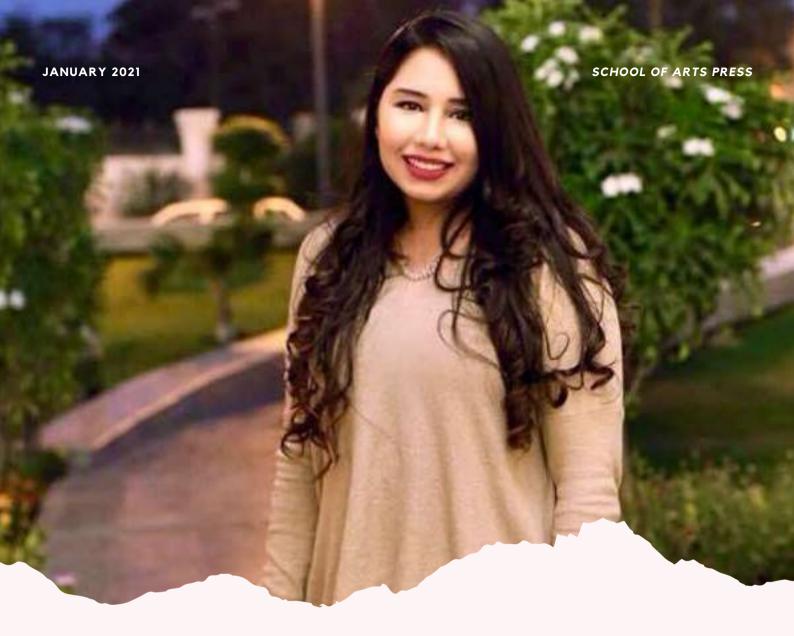
Farah Anwar



Photo Source: Farah Anwar

Presently living in Pakistan, 2nd Year Communication student Farah shares that last year was the first time she experienced learning from a distance. "It was a complete new experience for me, one that I took time to get used to as I personally prefer studying face-to-face."

One of Farah's biggest obstacles was the time difference between Malaysia and her home country of Pakistan, where 8 a.m. classes meant she would have to wake up by 5 a.m. However, after a few weeks she was able to adjust herself to the routine and gradually got used to having lectures in the early hours of the morning.



Other challenges that Farah faced were the many internet connection issues with online classes because the internet was unstable at both ends. "There were times where the lecturer's voice was inaudible and I had to either ask my friends to repeat what was said via text or re-watch the recorded session to view if I had missed anything important,".

Farah also had to send emails to the lecturers or professors when she had questions or required more information because she felt uncomfortable with speaking up during an online class, as compared to during a physical one.

Farah hopes to see the full faces of people rather than having to guess their expressions based on eye movements alone. She also wishes to travel and see her sister who she has not met in more than 3 years. Intending to make the trip last year, Farah's plans were cancelled due to the pandemic and restrictions that prevented her from doing so. "I hope this year will prove fruitful for us all so we can gather and meet our loved ones,".



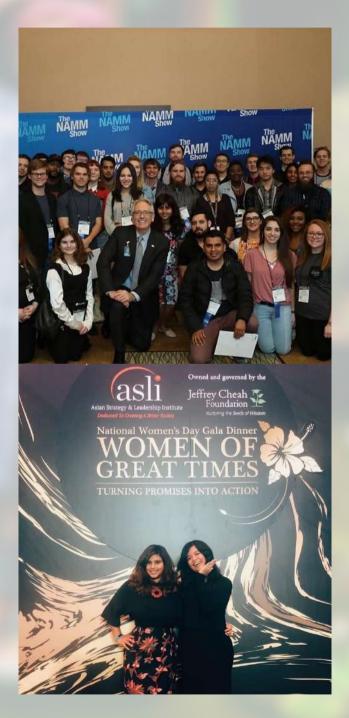
NEW YEAR, NEW ALUMNI FEATURE!

In this issue of LAS, the School of Arts Press features Kirthana Kuhendran, a BA (Hons) in Contemporary Music (Audio Technology) 2020 graduate.

In this issue of LAS, the School of Arts Press features Kirthana Kuhendran, a BA (Hons) in Contemporary Music (Audio Technology) 2020 graduate.

During her time with SOA, Kirthana was able to explore her talents as a musician and a creator to the fullest. In 2018, she became the first and only non-US student to receive the 2018 President's Innovation Award from the NAMM Foundation (the National Association of Music Merchants, US) and flew to California as a participant in the world's largest music trade event only for music products, pro audio and event technology.

As her opportunities kept pouring in, her recognition as a performer increased. She was asked to perform for the Women of Great Times Gala Dinner where Tun Dr Mahathir and his wife, Tun Dr Siti were present.









Kirthana credits her success to her lecturers, calling them "truly unforgettable". She recalls how they support her until today, by attending her performances and theatre shows. Another memorable moment for her was collaborating with Dr Andrew Filmer and Mr. Samuel Tan for a cover of 'Tanah Pusaka' that was uploaded on YouTube and Facebook.

Now doing work in a theatre company for sound operations and sound design, Kirthana finds herself in a position that suits her skill sets best, one that combines her love for performing and new learnt passion for audio technology.

Now working on sound operations and sound design in a theatre company, Kirthana finds herself in a position that suits her skill sets best: one that combines her love for performing and her new passion for audio technology. "Certain subjects that I studied whilst at Sunway Uni, like Sound Design, Film Scoring, and Malaysian Music, opened my eyes to the possibilities available to me and really broadened my career options,".





As her love for telling stories through audio mediums grows day by day, Kirthana plans to produce her own sound-based exhibitions and shows in the future that she hopes will convey her creativity in the most inclusive way possible.



She also hopes to visit more countries in the future (once travelling is allowed again) to collaborate with individuals that specialise in audio technology to widen her perspectives and further fuel her passion for this industry.

Life After School of Arts (LAS) focuses on the lives of SOA graduates in various aspects. Each month, one alumni is featured and asked to share their favourite highlights while studying, motivations that kept them driven and recent achievements plus how they aim to succeed in the future.