SCHOOL OF ARTS PRESS

SUNWAY UNIVERSITY | AUGUST 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 highlights the award winning film *Geran*, *With Love* student film award, and many more activities by the SOA family.

School of Arts Press -

Advisor/Editor: Rachel Ong (SOA Arts Project Manager)

Writers: Sophia Alyssa & Annie (Nguyen Phuc Thao Nguyen)

Design: Sophia Alyssa

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School of Arts, Sunway University

<u>soa.su</u>

School of Arts



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MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

They're back!!!

After a looooong March semester (which started in April this year) that was 100% online due to the MCO and all the little MCOs that followed, students and staff are finally back in classrooms this semester. It's different, of course, with social distancing and masks, and many of the classes are still online or hybrid (simultaneously online and face-to-face for different groups of students), but we celebrate that the campus is once more alive with energy!

If I could take a moment, I would like to extend a special note of gratitude to all of our staff who somehow managed to reinvent higher education twice in the space of half a year. Anyone who tells you that online teaching is easier than face-to-face is simply uninformed. Likewise, anyone who says hybrid is easier than online. Our academic staff are working extremely hard to deliver an outstanding educational experience. And our administrative staff are doing amazing things as well, responding to students both virtually and inperson. Finally, I should mention that our students have been terrific – even those who sometimes forget to put their masks on (you know who you are). This Covidized-learning model is a challenge for students as much as it is for staff – particularly in the Arts, where so much of what we do involves collaboration that is often difficult at a distance. I offer a heartfelt congratulations to all the SOA students and staff for making it work.

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

Photo Source: School of Arts Representatives (SOAR)

WELCOME NEW STUDENTS!

School of Arts warmly welcomes all of our August 2020 intake students to a new journey!

Stay safe and good luck!



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SOA ORIENTATION WITH SOAR

The School of Arts Representative, otherwise known as SOAR took a different route for the August 2020 Orientation. Working alongside the School of Arts administrators, SOAR with the help of Sunway University's Student Council, organised a "hybrid" orientation for the August 2020 new intake students.

Held mainly on Level 9, students from the respective departments met at designated venues, following COVID-19 guidelines and SOPs. School of Arts Dean, Prof. Don Bowyer gave a virtual introductory welcome to the students followed by the School Manager Ms Chong Aoi Lee and SOAR's Vice President Nasya Yong. Later, the students were also given a welcome and introductory speech by their respective Head of Departments and Programme Leaders. SOAR took the students on a virtual tour of the School of Arts and introduced its facilities through a video that they have produced.



Photo Source: School of Arts Representatives (SOAR)



Photo Source: School of Arts Representatives (SOAR)



DON BOWYER'S COMPOSITION AT SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL PIANO FESTIVAL

We all know Prof. Don Bowyer as the dean of School of the Arts and a trombonist. What some of you may not know is that he is also a composer! One of his compositions, titled *Very Stable Genius*, was performed by Dr. Phillips, Associate Professor at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire in a virtual concert called *Nicholas Phillips Presents* #45 Miniatures Project: A Musical Protest. The concert featured 14 other compositions on the theme of protest music. The history of protest music can be traced back at least several centuries, from early opera through Shostakovich protesting Soviet censorship under Stalin, and continuing through civil rights jazz anthems and anti-war folk music of the 1960s.

The response was overwhelming, with submissions of short piano compositions from 50 different composers, some with multiple submissions. Incidentally, Dr. Phillips performed a masterclass and recital at Sunway University in January 2019.

The introduction to Bowyer's piece begins at 39:42 in the video, but the entire performance is worth watching! Read more on Nicholas Phillips Presents #45 Miniatures Project: A Musical Protest <u>here</u>!

This concert was put together based on the pianist, Dr. Nicholas Phillips' joke on Facebook about commissioning a piece with any of the following:

- Movements limited to 140 notes, 140 measures, 140 phrases, or other permutations of the Twitter character limit
- Erratic shifts of: character, dynamic, articulation, tempo
- Improvisatory sections that do not relate in any way to the thematic material of the piece, or commonly accepted musical practices. In ANY way.
- Playful/childish outbursts, in the form of "heckler chords" or "bad hombre-like nonchord tones" with shocking key area explorations highly encouraged!
- "Tonality-change" denier (i.e. Anti-Modulation) sympathies
- Structural musical elements in no way qualified to be a part of supporting the administration of the composition
- Short, repeated motifs that are expressed vehemently (but not developed), then forgotten by the average listener at crucial later moments when they could change the appreciation/understanding of the piece.
- A blatantly critical and unwavering sense of self-importance, in the face of widespread critical disdain, and limited audience base.

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CHRIS TAN'S NEPHESH @ ZHAN ART SPACE

School of Arts Press would like to congratulate Chris Tan for his first solo exhibition titled Nephesh at ZHAN Art Space! In the month of July and August, the School of Arts' Department of Art and Design Teaching Fellow showcased his artistic expressions of examining the paradoxical relationships between the soul and flesh through Nephesh.

"Nephesh" is a Hebrew word found in the Holy Bible that refers to the "living soul". Chris Tan applies the biblical idea, in which God breathed His own breath into man, making human beings different from other creatures (Gen 2:7) "created with the ability to think, to reason, to create and long for eternity". Soul and flesh cannot be separated until death, and this became the central theme of Nephesh exhibition. With his observation and study of human beings' inner responses to the ambient environments, he presents this observation in a collection of 24 paintings, applying the study of figurative forms and abstract art as techniques. He sees the thin layer of undertone as the 'soul' of painting and textured impasto as the 'flesh'. Each painting reflected his personal interpretation of the harmony between the body and the soul.

The paintings were completed over four years with each individual painting created for months on end. Desmond Tong and Tong Gin Chee, ZHAN Art Space co-founders as well as their siblings gave Chris the opportunity to freely express himself with his own direction. Throughout the period of the exhibition, a number of School of Arts students and lecturers from Sunway University have visited the show in support of Chris' first solo exhibition.

Read more about Chris Tan and Nephesh here

Source: Ch











finché vita in petto avro as long as my heart beats





Photo Source: School of Arts Facebook

MUSIC PERFORMANCE BY SCHOOL OF ARTS MUSIC STUDENTS

On 28 August, the Music Performance programme presented a showcase to mark the end of the March 2020 semester. This involves the creative efforts of students and staff largely recording separately at home, and allowing technology to bring them all together musically. The event was streamed online over Facebook and lasted for 50 minutes.

Due to the abrupt switch to virtual learning and teaching, Dr Andrew Filmer shared that his students coped with numerous challenges for the first half of the year before getting used to virtual lessons. However, they have managed the situation with a sense of determination, and this showcase was seen as the accomplishment for their efforts throughout the whole semester. Ms. Yiling, SOA part-time lecturer, likewise shared her experience of music-making during the MCO. She had to record her singing part according to her students' prerecorded parts.

As she could not practice face-toface with her students, she had to imagine the emotions that they expressed through the track. Then, she responded accordingly to make the collaboration more harmonious.

In the middle of the showcase, Dr. David Chin and Dr. Andrew Film also shared their perspectives regarding the "new normal" circumstances of this semester. Albeit tons of obstacles that both educators and students had to face such as the lack of equipment, or deprivation of some benefits when not practicing physically, our lecturers still expressed their positive point of views. Dr. David mentioned that one of the few good things about this virtual semester was that students were strictly required to submit their audition videos regularly which in turn, would prepare them for professional life.

Music Performance students and their teachers are filled with a sense of accomplishment for putting together a wonderful Music Showcase!

Keep updated on the School of Arts Facebook and Instagram pages for further events!

Click <u>here</u> to rewatch the showcase



Photo Source: Lite FM

DR. PAULINE LEONG GUEST ON LITE FM AND THE STAR FEATURE

On 14th August, SOA lecturer, Dr. Pauline Leong was invited on the local radio station, LITE FM to share her opinion about the latest news. Some of the issues that were discussed include the snap polls, the revitalization of Zoo Negara, the minimum wage for Malaysian employees, and Covid-19 vaccines.

Over the programme, we hear Dr. Pauline's perspectives on the discussed topics. For instance, when asked about her suggestion to save Zoo Negara from closing down, and entice people to come and see the animals, she emphasized the vitality of buzz marketing such as by getting celebrity endorsement, or partnership with schools.

On the topic of the Covid-19 vaccine, Dr. Pauline had thought-provoking viewpoints. She assumed that the collaboration of the vaccine invention means a nation would need to allow others to pitch into its scientific and technical capability, which would be a national security matter. Furthermore, she expressed her concern about intellectual property in terms of rights to own and sell the invention.

Click here to watch the full videol

That is not the only highlight for Dr. Pauline this month. On Monday, 17 August, Dr. Pauline was also featured in The Star (a mainstream Malaysia newspaper) in the article "think before you forward". In this article, she discussed the vitality of media literacy among the young generation in the digital age as fake news is served up at an alarming rate. In regards to the topic, Dr. Pauline emphasized the hazards of fake news, as well as the demand to be responsible on online platforms. She also highlighted the crucial role of parents as gatekeepers in affecting their child's decision of the right media choices. Since everyone can be a content producer and be a part of the production process, Dr. Pauline cautioned that we should be accountable when disseminating information.

Read the article here



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.

ALINA & SHELDON INSPIRED BY DATIN ELAINE'S PERSEVERANCE

The fresh winners of the Jury Award for Student's Category at the 16th Mini Film Festival were recently featured in Berita Harian, a local Malaysian newspaper for their award-winning short film "With Love, Elaine".

In the article, Sheldon Chong, one of the directors of "With Love, Elaine." shared that the perseverance of Datin Elaine Khaw Lean Kee was an inspiring story to be told. The story also gave us a glimpse of Datuk Ooi Eow Jin's relationship with Allahyarham Tan Sri P Ramlee. They decided to document their life story as one of their first final year projects.

Read more about the stories on the making of "With Love, Elaine." <u>here</u>

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CONGRATULATIONS SUMMER CHIA **CONSOLATION PRIZE @ LOGO DESIGN CONTEST 2020** THIN VEGETAP

SINCE

Berjaya Café

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EVERYONE SUCCESS This August, Summer Chia Chun Hui, a Diploma in Graphic & Multimedia Design student has participated and won the Consolation Prize in the Logo Design Contest 2020 at the Berjaya Cafe Logo Design!

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The contest was initiated by Berjaya Youth, a youth empowerment initiative by Berjaya Corporation Berhad where submitted logo designs are to potentially be used for a cafe that serves a variety of healthy vegetarian cuisine at Berjaya Times Square Hotel, Kuala Lumpur.

The School of Arts would like to congratulate Chia Chun Hui for her win!





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Beethoven's Symphony No. 5



Photo Source: Royal Swedish Orchestra

BEETHOVEN'S FIFTH SYMPHONY WITH BERNICE OOI AND DR. **ANDREW**

On 20 August, SOA Lecturer - Dr.Andrew Filmer joined Bernice Ooi, violinist of the Royal Swedish Orchestra, to discuss concepts and strategies of phrasing in one of the most famous compositions in classical music: Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. In this online series by The Rondo Production, they looked into the shaping of graceful phrases within the rhythmic challenges of the musical passages. This combines elements of technique and musicality.



Play

Dr Andrew Brian Filmer is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Film and Performing Arts. Among some of the subjects he teaches are Large Ensemble, Principal Study, Music History: Renaissance to Classical.

MUSIC NATION SPEAKS: INTERVIEW WITH CHRISTINE MAY YONG

On 21 August, Ms. Christine May Yong, Program Leader of Contemporary Music Program was interviewed on the latest episode of Music Nation Speak, which is a podcast that features talented musicians and music producers. The program was streamed live on Music Nation's FB and YouTube page, lasting for 1 hour and 45 minutes. The host of the show is a Malaysian singer and songwriter Jocelyn Wong, who was a part-time tutor in School of Arts.

In the talk show, Ms. Christine shared many interesting stories about her musical journey and how she found her passion in ethnomusicology. She showed her appreciation to people she met - the teachers who gave her her first lessons and those who have guided her on the path and fostered her passion for music. The road to chasing her dream is not always a smooth and straight one. Some phrases of that journey included multiple obstacles she had to face such as overcoming cultural differences, and/or discrimination of gender. She shocked her mother when she made an astonishing decision to decline to stay in Australia and come back to Malaysia with a wish to contribute to Malaysia's music industry. For her, Malaysia is her place, her hometown. Hence, she believes she should do something for her dear nation.

We are thankful for Ms. Christine's insightful and inspirational stories and hopeful that it will inspire the younger generation who are pursuing a career in the music industry.

Rewatch the podcast here



Christine Yun-May Yong is a lecturer in the Department of Film and Performing Arts. She is the Programme Leader for the CMAT programme and teaches World Music and Malaysian Music subjects. Christine is also an ethnomusicologist and gamelan musician by training.

Photo Source: Music Nation



AZMYL @ BFM'S "A BIT OF CULTURE"

Our most active SOA lecturer, Azmyl Yunor was invited for a talk on BFM's A Bit of Culture on 7 August. Together with the host Kam Raslan, and BFM's Video Producer & Strategist Rahmah Pauzi, they discussed three topics within the local cultural context: Putrajaya, photo studio vs the selfie, and tenet of journalism.

During the show, Azmyl delightfully shared his recent visit to Putrajaya during the post-MCO where he unearthed a revived feeling of wonder despite the administrative capital's rather sterile surroundings. On the next topic, Kam recalled that in the past, going to photography studios to take family portraits was a highlight of the day. However, the evolution of smartphone cameras has changed the game, and may have diminished the demand of these services. The trio spent time reminiscing about their days posing in a photo studio. Rahmah closes this edition with her thoughts on the tenets of journalism, and stresses its ties to the practice as a profession. She bemoaned the rise of citizen journalism and predicted the competitiveness in people aspiring to be at the forefront of a news cycle.

Relisten to the postcard here



Azmyl Yunor @ Azmyl Yusof is a senior lecturer in the School of Arts. He is also an independent English and Malay language singersongwriter, multi-instrumentalist, and writer. He is a journalist and filmmaker by training. The School of Arts Congratulates Nor Hazlin Salam and the Geran team for winning the Daniel A. Craft Award for Excellence in Action Cinema @ 19th New York Asian Film Festival 2020

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CONGRATULATIONS to our DPFA lecturer Nor Hazlin Salam and the Geran team for winning the prestigious Daniel A. Craft Award for Excellence in Action Cinema at the 19th New York Asian Film Festival (NYAFF) 2020!

Geran is a Malaysian film that showcases the traditional Malay martial art of silat, called Gayong Pusaka. The film follows the story of two siblings who try to defend their honour and their land from being taken away, after the youngest brother disappeared and mortgaged the land's grant to a loan shark.

Hazlin, who worked as the First Assistant Director and Line Producer of the film, shared that Geran, under The Layar Pictures and Tree of Hopes Productions film, was a passion project made purely independently with little to no budget. "We literally had a script, a camera, and a group of great friends and family members who believed in us." Hazlin is not the only one from the School of Arts who was involved in the making of this film. Many of the DFP students were involved "keeping the ship afloat". Amonast them are: Amvrul Fahmi, Alisha Claran, Derrick Ong, and Chan Cheok Hymm who worked within the Director's team. Camera Technical team, and doubled up as the sound recordist. DFP also sponsored the usage of go-pro cameras as well as the sound recording devices for the film.

"I CAN PROUDLY SAY THAT SOA SUPPORTED US IN THE MAKING OF THIS FILM IN SOME SMALL WAY TOO"

A Sila

"[IT WAS] QUITE SURREAL FOR US ALL."

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Hazlin along with many others who worked on Geran was very touched by the international recognition that the film was able to gain. She expressed that the impact of a no-budget film getting international recognition by NYAFF was an eye opener to a lot of the industry players.

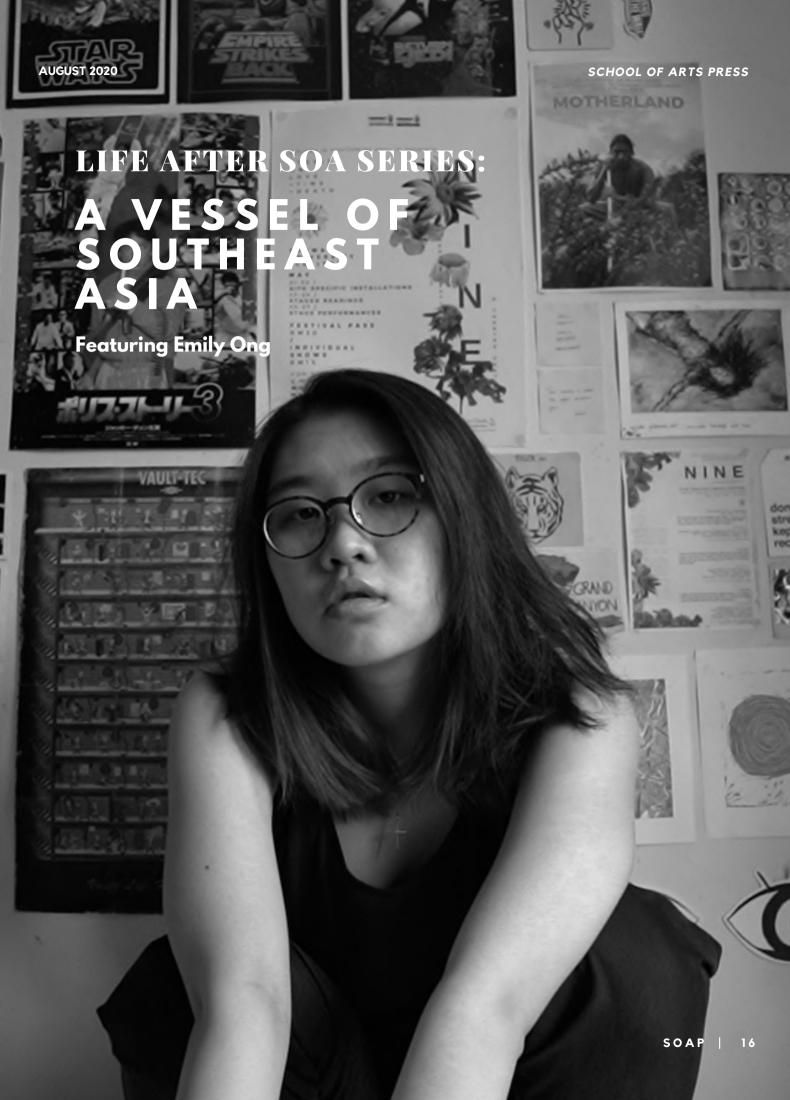
Read more about Geran here:

English Article: Eastern Kicks

Malay Article: Kaki Muvee



Nor Hazlin Nor Salam is a lecturer in the Department of Film and Performing Arts. She is an awardwinning filmmaker, experienced stage actor as well as a director in both fiction and non-fiction films.



"MY THEATRE EDUCATION WAS UNDER SOME OF MALAYSIA'S FINEST THESPIANS"

Photo Source: Emily Ong

If you remember Azmyl Yunor's "Let It Come" music video, the name Emily Ong should ring bell. Emily Ong Shuyi is a Class of 2018 graduate in the Diploma in Performing Arts (DPA), and it was her years in DPA that, in her words "gave [her] a real sense of belonging and roots".

These inspiring figures come in the form of Anne James, Mark Teh, Kelvin Wong, Qahar Agilah and Ali Alasri who, in her words "awakened me to the side of Malaysian art that I wished I had been a part of sooner". Emily also extended her gratitude to her film lecturers Azrain Ariffin, Azmyl Yunor, Amanda Eu, and Ms the guidance Hazlin for and opportunities that she has gotten even after she had left Sunway. "The diploma was a prominent part of my self-discovery".

Emily feels that the community of creative people and collaborators within her diploma batch is a place of where she comes from and where she can always go back to. Some of her closest friends and most respective creatives came from her class. She will be forever grateful for the friendships and to what she would refer to as her "little art bubble". It was the most formative experience, she recounted.

Apart from directing one of Azmyl Yunor's recent music videos, Emily carries a number of accolades to her name. In the past, she has won the Best Young Director Award at the Short To The Point ISFF and a Best Lead Actress award at the Short+Sweet KL Film along with a number of selections for international short film festivals. mily had the opportunity to intern at Apparat Sdn. Bhd. under Dain Said and Nandita Solomon and was involved in the shooting of their telemovie.

She quipped that "it was all thanks to the education she received from the people [she] looks up to in the Malaysian film industry".

Currently, Emily is in the United Kingdom, pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Film Productions at Arts University Bournemouth. Prior to leaving Malaysia, she had done freelance work revolving around the camera and art departments both within and outside of the industry for a year. Emily stressed that confidence and self-assurance were two of the most important things when she learned it comes to one's own work. She admitted that amongst her peers, she was never the strongest performer. She owed it to her lecturers for teaching her how to own up to her choices and committing to them. Having learned the lessons she was taught, Emily was able to apply them to her areas of strengths in filmmaking.

While her future plans may consist of "becoming an internationally recognised, critically acclaimed, and commercially successful, allaround adored writer-director", a level of self-manifesting descriptors as she would say, Emily's current plans after she graduates with her degree is to obtain practical work experience in the British Film industry. Emily sees herself splitting her time between being in Kuala Lumpur and the United Kingdom like "every famous contemporary Malaysian author [she's] read about". "My only hope is that I become a prominent and effective vessel for Malaysian and South-East Asian voices in my filmmaking regardless of where I end up in the world".

"THE KINDS OF FILMS I AM CURRENTLY MAKING THERE WOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE IF THIS FOUNDATION HAD NOT BEEN LAID IN DPA."

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