

CLASS OF 2023 CELEBRATES CULMINATION OF THEIR SOTA JOURNEY

The 2023 cohort of the School of the Arts, Singapore (SOTA) received their International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) and IB Career-related Programme (IBCP) results at 2.00pm today, marking the culmination of their six-year journey in SOTA.

The Class of 2023 has displayed grit, courage, unity and optimism in braving challenges together, including navigating three uncertain years due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mrs. Mary Seah, Principal, expressed immense pride in the graduates' growth and encouraged them to uphold their creative ethos, envisioning them as future cultural leaders.

"Driven by their passion for the arts, they chose to embark on an unusual educational journey at SOTA. Over the years, they have developed unique artistic and creative ways of learning. We hope they will carry forth these traits to be innovative thinkers, arts and cultural advocates of the future."

Ms Neo Lih Miin, a dedicated member of the Parent Support Group (PSG), acknowledged the cohort's immense dedication and hard work. The PSG, rallying the parent community, has worked closely with the school, offering unwavering support and encouragement throughout the year. "We share their joy today and celebrate all their achievements. We wish the students all the best as they embark on for the next phase of their learning journey."

Creative Learning Approaches

At SOTA, fostering an environment where students explore their interests and focus on the learning process itself is important for their development as lifelong learners.

"I think having an education so intertwined with the arts has definitely shaped my perspective, and encouraged me to think beyond the conventional.... Artistically, I was given much room to explore on my own and develop my voice in writing, and I think I've definitely learnt to express myself in ways I couldn't have if I had not taken this path," - Khoo Yi Xuan, Class of 2023.

The Class of 2023 also adapted disciplinary methods and deployed them in novel contexts:

Charlene Tan, a music student, used personalised techniques to aid her learning process, such as creative raps and song parodies to reinforce historical facts and developed mnemonic techniques for different subjects.

Similarly, Moy Rui Yu, a visual arts student, integrated typography with mathematics, demonstrating graph transformations through creative representations.

Bernadette Koh, a theatre student, uncovered an effective way through her theatre lessons to reinforce what she has learned by having conversations about a subject with her reflection in a mirror.

Future Aspirations

Looking ahead, the Class of 2023 aspires to contribute significantly to Singapore's arts scene and add value to the community through their artistic pursuits:

Charlene Tan, aims to compose universally accessible music, bringing solace to marginalised communities through her compositions.

Muhamad Irfan Bin Muhamad Rapid, a visual arts student, seeks to specialise in Southeast Asian art, emphasising its cultural richness and historical significance for global recognition.

Parveen Kaur, a music student, hopes to pursue Business Finance studies while continuing to preserve and nurture appreciation for Chinese music among Singapore's younger generation.

A total of 160 students sat for the IB examinations in 2023, with more than one in two IBDP students scoring 38 points and above. All IBCP students achieved commendable performances in their Career-related studies, Core and DP subjects.

Please refer to Annex A for selected profiles of students from the Class of 2023.

ANNEX A

Some graduates from SOTA's 2023 cohort include (in alphabetical order):

Koh Hui Ching Bernadette, IBDP

Bernadette always had a sense of calmness and easiness whenever she performed in front of a live audience. Performing on stage brought so much joy to her life that she decided to pursue her Theatre journey in SOTA.

During her time in SOTA, Bernadette's desire to enhance her knowledge in dramatic arts empowered her to explore a diverse range of scripts. She performed in the SOTA Theatre production of "Richard III" in 2021 and was also selected to devise a local piece in SOTA's inaugural fundraising "Impact" performance in 2022. Besides performing, Bernadette experimented with playwriting and placed second in TheatreWorks' digital "24-hour Playwriting Competition" in 2020. With her outstanding achievements, she received the Best in Theatre Award in 2021 and the Arts Performance Module Award for her teacher-directed production and Practitioner's Lab in 2021.

Over the years, Bernadette grew to become a dependable and confident leader. She was well-liked by her peers and was elected Class Chairperson in 2020 and 2023. In 2022, she also served as a "ScholarsConnect!" Mentor and used this opportunity to foster meaningful relationships with her juniors.

Bernadette intends to further her studies in the United Kingdom (UK) to pursue a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Professional Acting with hopes to perform in the UK National Theatre. Her ultimate goal is to play a significant role in the developing Theatre scene in Singapore.

Grace Ng Hui Cheng, IBCP

From an early age, Grace has aspired to become a professional ballet dancer. Initiated into the world of ballet at the tender age of 3, her attraction to dance grew over time as she used it as an outlet for her to express herself and derived joy in doing so. At SOTA, Grace embraced opportunities that enabled her to gain experience and grow her skills as a dancer.

Grace recounted that her internship at P7:1SMA Dance Company as part of her IBCP curriculum provided her valuable insight into the dance industry. She had the chance to be a part of the dance company in real life and experienced how a dance company operates. She also had the opportunity to meet more people in the Singapore arts scene and gained a better understanding of the arts industry that would aid her in her future planning after the internship.

"I am eternally grateful to have participated in multiple masterclasses, some ballet and contemporary, so that I got to explore and discover what I truly enjoyed. Using the reflective skills taught in the curriculum, the classes were effective in helping me understand my strengths and weaknesses, as well as how tips from one class could be applied to another."

Khoo Yi Xuan, IBDP

An avid reader since young, Yi Xuan has always been interested in the art of storytelling. She was drawn to Literary Arts' potential to capture scenes and images through the written word, empowering her with the ability to create worlds and characters that she felt drawn to. Seeking to develop her interest in writing, she decided to enrol in SOTA's Literary Arts programme and hone her craft.

Yi Xuan displayed a strong passion for Literary Arts by challenging herself to explore various forms of writing such as poetry, short stories, and even documentary scriptwriting. Participating in the Arts Excellence Programme (AEP) in 2019 and the Arts Plus Programme from 2020 to 2021, she was able to gain new perspectives on her craft and learn from other experienced writers. She also participated in the Scenario Writing Competition as part of the Future Problem Solving Programme, placing second in the Senior Division, Singapore, with her scenario titled Sunflowers in the Wind.

"I think having an education so intertwined with the arts has definitely shaped my perspective, and encouraged me to think beyond the conventional. I am never too quick to assume things, or adopt a skewed or biased perspective, before I truly consider other perspectives. Artistically, I was given much room to explore on my own and develop my voice in writing, and I think I've definitely learnt to express myself in ways I couldn't have if I had not taken this path."

While Yi Xuan is yet to decide on where she would be furthering her studies, she is interested in pursuing Psychology and undertaking a career in the psychological field, be it in research or practice.

Muhamad Irfan Bin Muhamad Rapid, IBDP

Initially a quiet and extremely shy boy, Irfan had difficulty speaking up and making friends in Primary School. He largely spent his time drawing alone as a way to express himself. Irfan never thought of pursuing Visual Arts beyond just a hobby, but his aspirations changed upon visiting an art exhibition. Wanting to immerse himself in a learning environment anchored in the arts and learn alongside like-minded aspiring artists, Irfan decided to pursue his education at SOTA.

At SOTA, Irfan blossomed learning in an environment that focused on arts and with a supportive community that spoke the same language. He found his voice and transformed to

be a confident and open-minded student. "Because of the supportive community as well as the opportunity for me to pursue what I loved doing, coming to SOTA helped me come out of my shell."

Irfan is thankful for the many learning opportunities that SOTA has offered in his art form. He always looked forward to the workshops with professionals which allowed him to gain exposure to a variety of artistic techniques. A particularly memorable experience was the opportunity to be a part of the organising team for the Year 5 Visual Arts showcase, Palindrome, where he helped to curate and arrange artworks in the exhibition space. The opportunity provided Irfan experience beyond the classroom and helped him develop a deeper understanding of behind-the-scenes work in the arts industry.

Irfan intends to continue his studies in Singapore and specialise in Southeast Asian art, delving deeper to explore the significance of its impact and influence. He looks forward to contributing towards the genre's global recognition and appreciation by highlighting its cultural richness and historical significance.

Parveen Kaur d/o Geramir Singh, IBDP

Despite spending much of her childhood in China, it was during an ensemble performance in Singapore that Parveen discovered her love for the Pipa, a stringed instrument also known as the 'Chinese lute'. At the age of 10, she embarked on her music journey of learning the Pipa as she was attracted by its distinctive and unique timbre. Subsequently, she chose to join SOTA and pursue a deeper exploration of music.

At SOTA, Parveen's love for the Pipa grew and her exceptional musical talent was recognised with multiple awards and achievements. She achieved first place in the National Chinese Music Competition in the Junior, Intermediate, and Open categories in 2016, 2018, and 2020, respectively. Parveen was also a winner of the Annual SOTA Concerto Competition in 2020, which provided her the opportunity to collaborate and perform a solo concerto with the Orchestra of the Music Makers (OMM).

Parveen plans to study Business Finance in Singapore and pursue a career in the finance industry. She also aspires to play an active role in fostering the growth of the Chinese music scene in Singapore. She is currently a member of various Chinese music organisations, including the Singapore National Youth Chinese Orchestra since 2019 and the Singapore Pipa Society since 2016. She is also currently a musician with the Teng Company (see her profile [here](#)).

"I hope to continue participating in orchestral and ensemble performances, as well as impart my knowledge and passion for Chinese music with others. Eventually I'd love to be able to introduce the rich heritage of Chinese music to the younger generation, helping them nurture an appreciation for this artform while ensuring its continuity in a vibrant artistic landscape here in Singapore."

Moy Rui Yu, IBDP

Nominated for a Harvard Book Award, Rui Yu exemplifies humility and compassion through her actions to help the vulnerable communities.

Rui Yu was nominated for the Harvard Prize Book for the empathy she carries towards the people groups that she had studied and would often wonder how she can make a change for the community. Her compassion for the underprivileged inspired the integration of her love for volunteering with her Social and Cultural Anthropology Internal Assessment research to explore the impact of poverty on children's self-identity.

Her growing interest in Anthropology and the global community led her to take part in the 2022 e-International Humanities Symposium organised by National Junior College, where her team presented on how childhood sexual assault affected the construction of the masculine identity of South African men. She went beyond her Extended Essay assignment (part of the IB curriculum) to conduct interviews with single African-American mothers living in the United States to uncover their struggles as a marginalised minority group despite the time difference to supplement her readings.

The exposure to research and fieldwork deepened her interest in Social Sciences, and she hopes to pursue a degree in Sociology. "I hope to make use of my sociological knowledge to work in Singapore's social service sector to improve the lives of Singapore's vulnerable communities in the future."

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About School of the Arts, Singapore

The School of the Arts, Singapore (SOTA) is Singapore's first national pre-tertiary specialised arts school with a six-year integrated arts and academic curriculum, leading to the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma or Career-related Programme, for youths aged 13-18 years old.

Under the ambit of the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY), SOTA offers a dedicated development path for those who have interest and show early talent in the arts, providing a learning environment where both the artistic and academic potential can best be realised.

With a vision to nurture creative citizens for the future, SOTA aims to identify and groom artistic and creative learners who positively impact Singapore and the world, through a vibrant learning environment that is anchored in the arts.

A school of the future, SOTA embraces a holistic educational philosophy that celebrates experimentation, expression and discovery.

About the IB Diploma Programme

The IB Diploma Programme (DP) is an academically challenging and balanced programme of education with final examinations that prepares students, aged 16 to 19, for success at university and life beyond. The programme is presented as six academic areas with a central, three-component core. It encourages the concurrent study of a broad range of academic areas. Diploma Programme students study two modern languages (or a modern language and a classical language), a humanities or social science subject, an experimental science, mathematics and either one of the creative arts or another science or social science subject.

About the International Baccalaureate Career-Related Programme

The IB Career-related Programme (IBCP) is an innovative education framework for students aged 16 to 19 incorporating the vision and educational principles of the IB into a unique programme specifically tailored for students who wish to engage in career-related learning.

IBCP students engage with a challenging programme of study that genuinely interests them while gaining transferable and lifelong skills in applied knowledge, critical thinking, communication, and cross-cultural engagement. They are well prepared to succeed at institutions of higher learning.

For more information on IB, please visit www.ibo.org.