

SOTA HONOURS ZUBIR SAID'S MUSICAL LEGACY IN ANNUAL FUNDRAISING SHOW – IMPACT 2023

The production raised over \$140,000 towards the SOTA Endowment Fund

On 10 November 2023, School of the Arts, Singapore (SOTA) commemorated its annual fundraising show *Impact 2023*, the second edition of a performance series that raises funds for the SOTA Endowment Fund (SEF). Held at SOTA's Drama Theatre, this year's show honours the life and music of the late Zubir Said – the composer of Singapore's national anthem and other well-loved songs like *Semoga Bahagia* – whose inspiring journey as a visionary composer has influenced generations of musicians and arts educators in Singapore.

“Being located at 1 Zubir Said Drive, it is especially significant to have Zubir Said as SOTA's cultural icon for *Impact 2023*. The production is a befitting celebration of the past 15 years since the school's opening, and a testimony to the legacy he has imparted through his life and passion for music. For the audience, I hope that they will see SOTA as a school of creative individuals who see learning and creating intertwined. For our students, just as they are learning about cultural icons who have left their impact, I hope that they will see themselves as cultural leaders of tomorrow,” said Mrs Mary Seah, Principal of SOTA.

In addition to live renditions of Zubir Said's music, *Impact 2023* also featured dramatic scenes from various aspects of his life, such as his realisation of his passion for music at a young age, his life during the war, and his eventual reconciliation with his father. The multidisciplinary production was depicted through Dance, Film, Music, Literary Arts, Theatre and Visual Arts, and was collaboratively created by SOTA students, alumni and staff.

“It's been important that we really try to find authentic inspiration and influence from Zubir Said. Having said that, it's not the aim to create a comprehensive biography of him, but rather a meaningful compilation of responses to his life and work. What you see in today's show is an assembly of songs, scenes, poems, images and dances that stem from a very personal place. We have let Pak Zubir's life and music touch our hearts and spark inspiration,” said Mr Sean Tobin, Artistic Director of *Impact 2023*.

For Year 5 Dance student Chloe Chee, the production represented a valuable learning opportunity. “Being a part of *Impact* is meaningful to me both as a performer and a SOTA student. It has allowed me to give back to the school and apply what I have learned in my years at SOTA. It was also an opportunity to be a part of a unique multidisciplinary project which is a new and exciting experience for me,” she said.

Impact 2023 is made possible with the generous support of donors that share the same belief in arts education. They are Mr Oei Hong Leong (Diamond Donor), SBS Transit (Gold Donor) and Ashurst LLP (Silver Donor). A total of over \$500,000 has been raised from the *Impact* Fundraising Series since 2022 towards the SOTA Endowment Fund.

More information on selected scenes and the auction of Zubir Said's portraits can be found in Annex A, while selected photos can be found in Annex B.

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About Impact - SOTA Fundraising Show

Impact is an annual fundraising show that is organised by School of the Arts, Singapore (SOTA) to raise funds for the SOTA Endowment Fund (SEF).

Like the roots of a tree, the SEF was set up in 2019 to serve as a strong foundation towards growing a self-sustainable source of funds for the school in providing our students with bursaries, scholarships, and other financial assistance. The fund ensures that SOTA's unique arts education remains accessible so that no child gets left behind due to financial disadvantage.

Supporting our school's vision to nurture the next generation of cultural leaders who positively impact society, the annual fundraising show takes inspiration from a local icon who has made significant contributions in shaping Singapore's arts and cultural landscape. Young aspiring artists at SOTA are encouraged to learn from the stories and works of these icons, in turn creating new and original works for the show.

Featuring Dance, Film, Literary Arts, Music, Theatre, and Visual Arts works by the SOTA community, *Impact* is a carefully crafted multidisciplinary showcase that is cohesive and rich in meaning. It is a celebration of everything that makes the SOTA education experience unique.

For more information, please visit <https://www.sota.edu.sg/getting-involved/donate/impact>

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.

For more information, please visit <https://www.sota.edu.sg>

Annex A - Selected Scenes

CHILDHOOD

Child's Play Written by Dia Bansal (Year 4, Literary Arts) and Sab (Class of 2015, Theatre)
Choreography by Ho Hui Yuan Emily (Year 5, Dance) and performed together with Regina Tan Ruiqi (Year 5, Dance)

Composition by Teo Kang Lee, Kenny (Year 5, Music)

Violin duet performed by Teo Kang Lee, Kenny and Goh Shi Qin (Year 5, Music)

Multimedia projection by Joan Dwiartanto (Class of 2017, Dance)

Animation by Kang Yuan Ting (Year 5, Visual Arts)

Year 5 Dance student Emily Ho choreographed a dance piece inspired by Zubir Said's early life, where he enjoyed his youth with a passion for music. She collaborated with Year 5 Music student Kenny Teo to devise a performance that captures the theme of embracing each others' differences, conveyed through two dancers and two violinists performing separately before eventually coming together and performing as one.

Relating to Zubir Said's days as a young hopeful artist, Emily said, "It was very meaningful to me to be able to tap into my experience as a youth myself and find similarities in Mr Said's life that I could translate into dance. The main theme I chose was friendship and learning how to accept and embrace one's differences, a recurring theme that appeared in many of Mr Said's songs."

Year 4 Literary Arts student Dia Bansal, who wrote the script titled *Child's Play*, hopes that the audience can learn from Zubir Said's experiences. "I believe one important takeaway from the show would be to care for your family. Despite the fact that sometimes we may disagree with one another, we need to try to look at an issue from new perspectives and accept each other for who we are, compromising to find a balance."

ANTHEM

Confessions of an Immigrant, a Teacher and a Dreamer written by written by Quek Chi-E (Year 4, Literary Arts)

All I've Ever Wanted written by Sophie Ang Jia Shuen (Year 4, Literary Arts)

Composition by Josh Teoh (Year 4, Music)

Animation by Chua Yun Xuan (Year 5, Visual Arts)

As the composer of Singapore's national anthem, *Confessions of an Immigrant, a Teacher and a Dreamer* was written and directed to portray Zubir Said's pride and devotion for Singapore that came through in the lyrics of *Majulah Singapura*, and the disappointment and heartache that came with the early debate surrounding changing the national anthem.

Despite these struggles, *All I've Ever Wanted* depicts the momentous occasion when Zubir Said reconciled with his father after years of estrangement, because of the national anthem and his enduring dedication towards his passion for music.

This is accompanied by an original composition by Year 4 Music student Josh Teoh. In researching and creating his piece, Josh hopes he is able to convey the range of feelings associated with the heartfelt moment. “I was inspired by the touching story of Zubir Said’s father travelling from Indonesia to Singapore to meet him. I wanted my music to paint that scene of a father and son reuniting. This opportunity has allowed me to expand my range as a composer by writing with a narrative in mind. Through my piece, I hope that I am able to convey the emotions of longing, regret and eventually happiness and peacefulness” he said.

Auction of Zubir Said’s Portraits

As part of *Impact 2023*, Year 6 Visual Arts student Na Byungha painted three portraits of Zubir Said for auction to raise funds for the SEF. With a renewed understanding towards the composer of Singapore’s national anthem, Byungha hopes that more people can discover his endearing side as an arts educator, his love for nature, and his deep passion for music through her paintings. These portraits are up for auction [here](#) till 17 November 2023, 3pm.

Annex B - Selected Photos (high resolution can be found [here](#))



(L-R) Nabil Jasmani (Class of 2012, Theatre), Putra Harris Benjamin Bin Ismail (Year 2, Theatre), and Irsyad Dawood (Class of 2017, Theatre) each played the role of Zubir Said at a different stage of his life.



Syakirah Noble (Class of 2017, Music) performed Zubir Said's *Semoga Bahagia* in the opening scene of *Impact 2023*.



The scene *Childhood* featured (L-R) Putra Harris Benjamin Bin Ismail (Year 2, Theatre) as young Zubir Said, and Nabil Jasmani (Class of 2012, Theatre) as his father, Tok Said.



Childhood also featured an original dance choreography by Ho Hui Yuan Emily, performed together with fellow Year 5 Dance student Regina Tan Ruiqi, accompanied by a violin duet performed by Year 5 Music students Teo Kang Lee, Kenny and Goh Shi Qin.



Year 5 Dance students (L-R) Tang Ngiang Sam Carina and Chloe Chee Pei Yi performed an original choreography created by Carina, as part of the scene *Illness*.



War featured a dance choreography by Year 4 Dance students Kristen Sara Wong Rui En, Tan Xuan Hui Janelle, Eunice Teo Kah Yu, and Tham Kai Yi, Jamie. The scene is accompanied by a performance of Zubir Said's *Sayang Disayang* by Syakriah Noble (Class of 2017, Music) and a multimedia projection by Joan Dwiartanto (Class of 2017, Dance).



In the scene *Film*, Music teacher Mervyn Lee (3rd from left) and Year 4 Music students (L-R) Rishab Vijaykumar, Natalie Renee Lim Zhi Xuan, San Juan Majesty Ferdinand Talines, Yeo

Kai Yue Cadee, and Shadrach Johanan Yankaya performed an original composition created by Natalie, accompanied by an multimedia projection by Joan Dwiartanto (Class of 2017, Dance).



(L-R) Farah D/O Haja Nazemuddeen (Year 6, Theatre), Shanti Eliza Solomon (Year 3, Theatre), Raiya Basalamah (Class of 2017, Theatre), Putra Harris Benjamin Bin Ismail (Year 2, Theatre), and Irsyad Dawood (Class of 2017, Theatre) performed in *Anthem*.



Anthem also depicted the reconciliation between Zubir Said and his father Tok Said, played by (L-R) Irsyad Dawood (Class of 2017, Theatre) and Nabil Jasmani (Class of 2012, Theatre) respectively.



Year 2 Theatre student Putra Harris Benjamin Bin Ismail (left) delivered a ballad written by Ong Xin Yan (Year 3, Literary Arts) in the penultimate performance of *Impact 2023*.



Syakirah Noble (Class of 2017, Music) brought *Impact 2023* to a close with her rendition of Zubir Said's *Pulang Merantau*.



Curtain call featuring all performers of *Impact 2023*.