



## MEDIA ADVISORY

### **SOTA LAUNCHES NEW LITERARY ARTS PROGRAMME**

Singapore, May 16, 2016 – The School of the Arts Singapore (SOTA) today announced the launch of its Literary Arts programme, a programme that focuses on developing students' talent in literary arts and creative writing. This is in addition to the five other art forms already offered by SOTA – Dance, Music, Film, Theatre and Visual Arts.

#### **Developing a generation of storytellers**

2 As Singapore's only pre-tertiary institution specialising in the arts, SOTA believes it can play an important role in the nurturing and development of the next generation of storytellers. The craft of weaving a good story is a common thread amongst the various art forms, and with an already active community of writers within the school, it was a natural step to introduce literary arts as an art form. In addition, with literary arts being an area that Singapore is growing, SOTA hopes to be part of the national push for more local writers.

3 The Literary Arts programme aims to develop students who possess depth and versatility as writers – not only will they be immersed in a natural environment rich in the arts, they will also be exposed to a myriad of experiences that will hone their sensitivities to the environment and the world at large. Students will learn a range of writing genres to develop breadth and depth in the craft of writing. These include poetry and prose, fiction and non-fiction, screenplays for film and stage, short stories as well as journalistic writing.

4 SOTA is fortunate to have a distinguished Literary Arts Advisory Panel to oversee the development of the Literary Arts programme. The panel comprises Mr Philip Jeyaretnam, Chairman of SOTA, who is an acclaimed writer himself; Dr Meira Chand, Chairperson for the Singapore Literature prize and author of nine best-selling novels; Mr Yeow Kai Chai, Festival Director of the Singapore Writers Festival and an accomplished poet and writer; Dr Angelia Poon, an Associate Professor of English Literature at Nanyang Technological University; and Ms Adeline Foo, a best-selling writer of fiction for young readers.

5 "The introduction of the Literary Arts as a new course of study at SOTA fills an important gap by offering an intensive programme where aspiring poets and writers can develop their imagination and craft to the fullest. Someday, these students will contribute significantly to the burgeoning body of Singaporean

literature, as well as in the fields of journalism and communications,” said Ms Lim Geok Cheng, Principal, SOTA.

6 “What I really love about literary arts is having the freedom to express my thoughts, feelings and emotions through writing. I also love being able to learn many different techniques to improve my writing. I do hope to become a writer in the future because nothing lights up my life like writing does,” said Ethan Kan, Year 1 Literary Arts student.

7 Please refer to Annexes A and B for more details on SOTA’s Literary Arts programme and the bios for the Literary Arts Advisory Panel.

For more information, please contact the following:

Lee Yuen Mei (Ms)  
Senior Executive  
Office of Corporate Communications  
School of the Arts Singapore  
DID : 6342 5807  
HP : 9186 2692  
Email: [yuenmei.lee@sota.edu.sg](mailto:yuenmei.lee@sota.edu.sg)

## **About The School of the Arts, Singapore**

The School of the Arts (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 shape and impact society through an education in the arts, SOTA aims to identify and groom future generations of artists, creative professionals to be leaders in all fields, and to be patrons and supporters of the arts.

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

## **ANNEX A**

### **About the Literary Arts Programme**

Literary Arts is an art form that explores the many facets of the human condition through the medium of words. Students will be exposed to the six key writing forms of Non-Fiction, Short Story, Novel, Poetry, Playwriting and Graphic Novel. Through the Literary Arts programme, students will get to apply the conventions, form and techniques of each representative writing forms and build their very own literary world, while being open-minded about the multiple worlds that are different from their own.

Literary Arts aims to:

- a. Give students the knowledge to create their own literary work;
- b. Promote inquiry and appreciation of the six literary art forms;
- c. Give students the platform to take risks, explore and develop their skills; and interest in all six writing forms; and
- d. Create open-mindedness towards different ideas and concepts and take risks in building their own literary worlds.

## **ANNEX B**

### **About the Literary Arts Advisory Panel**

#### Introduction

The groundwork for the Faculty of Literary Arts was laid in 2015, when an advisory panel of industry experts and writers convened to set broad directions that the Faculty should aspire to achieve. While the panelists come from different professions and backgrounds, they are united in the belief that the written word and creative writing can challenge and transform society.

The Literary Arts Advisory Panel gives indispensable wisdom, advice and insight on how the Faculty can shape its curriculum to maximise the impact on the students while giving them the necessary space and skills to become creative individuals who will one day impact society at large with their written works.

#### Biographies

##### **Philip Jeyaretnam**

Philip Jeyaretnam is the Managing Partner of Rodyk & Davidson LLP, a leading commercial litigator and international arbitration counsel. Philip was appointed as Senior Counsel in 2003 at the early age of 38 and is named in all the major legal publications as an expert in arbitration, construction law and litigation.

Philip is on the Public Service Commission, the constitutional body that oversees the civil service in Singapore. He is also on the Presidential Council for Minority Rights, which advises the President of Singapore under the equality provisions of the Constitution.

Philip is the Chairman of the School of the Arts, Singapore Board and is author of *Abraham's Promise*.

##### **Adeline Foo**

Adeline Foo is a graduate of the New York University Tisch School of the Arts, Asia. She started writing picture books in 2006. To-date, she has written 16 books and 12 picture books.

Adeline's bestselling work is *The Diary of Amos Lee*, which was published in 2009, for which she received the inaugural First Time Writers & Illustrators Publishing Initiative Award given by the Media Development Authority of Singapore and the National Book Development Council of Singapore. She has received support to publish thirteen picture books for early readers. Three of her books have been adapted into animation shorts, with a fourth new series turned into a TV show that aired on the the okto channel.

### **Dr. Angelia Poon**

Dr Angelia Poon is presently the Associate Professor and Deputy Head (Programmes & Teaching) of English Language & Literature at the National Institute of Education (NIE). She has obtained her PhD in English Literature, Brandeis University. She has edited several books including *Writing Singapore: An Historical Anthology of Singaporean Literature* and the *Little Things Anthology of Poetry*, which is an assigned text for the Faculty of Literary Arts.

### **Dr. Meira Chand**

Dr. Meira Chand is of Indian-Swiss parentage and was born and educated in London. She has a PhD in Creative Writing from the University of Western Australia.

She is the author of nine novels including her most recent novel, *A Different Sky*, which is written in Singapore. On its publication, *A Different Sky* was a Book of the Month choice by the UK bookshop chain, Waterstones, and was included on popular American talk show personality Oprah Winfrey's recommended reading list. The book was also long listed for the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award in 2012.

She is a board member of the National Arts Council and was chairperson and chief fiction judge for the Singapore Literature Prize in 2012 and 2014 respectively. Chand has also served as the chair for the Commonwealth Writers Prize for the region of South East Asia and South Pacific. In 2011, she received a Special Recognition Award from the Ministry of Information, Communication and the Arts, Singapore and was also recognised for Pioneering Contributions to the Arts and Heritage of Singapore in 2015. She is now a Singapore citizen and has made her permanent home in the country.

### **Yeow Kai Chai**

Yeow Kai Chai is the author of poetry collections *Secret Manta* (2001) and *Pretend I'm Not Here* (2006). His poems and stories have been widely published and anthologised. He is an editor at the Quarterly Literary Review Singapore, and has been an editor and music critic for The Straits Times. His third poetry collection, *One to the Dark Tower Comes*, is forthcoming.

He is presently the Director of the Singapore Writers Festival.