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**SPEECH BY MS LIM GEOK CHENG, PRINCIPAL, SCHOOL OF THE ARTS  
SOTA AWARDS DAY 2014  
21 MAY 2014, WEDNESDAY, 1.00PM  
SOTA CONCERT HALL**

Mr Lawrence Wong  
Minister for Culture, Community and Youth

Mr Lee Tzu Yang,  
Chairman, School of the Arts

Parents and students

Distinguished guests

Good afternoon and welcome to SOTA's Awards Day. Thank you for making time today to join us in celebrating the achievements of our students.

The theme for this year's awards day is 'Pathways'. It signifies the diverse pathways that our students are taking or will be embarking upon. Pathways also symbolise the expanding network of partnerships SOTA has forged with corporate organisations and local and overseas institutions of higher learning.

### **Excelling Beyond SOTA**

Today, we celebrate the achievements of our students who have excelled in various aspects of their education. We are happy to announce that our second batch of graduating cohort has done very well for the International Baccalaureate Diploma Examinations last year. They achieved 100% diploma passes and their mean diploma score of 39.18 was better than the Singapore's average of 36.53 and the global average of 29.95. The cohort has also performed very well in the Arts subjects, with a mean score of 6 to 7 points in Dance, Film, Music, Theatre and Visual Arts at Higher Level.

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Many in our graduating cohort (both the first and second batches) have done us proud not only with their excellent performance at the IBDP examinations, but also with their deep passion for the arts and desire to contribute to the community. They continue to excel beyond SOTA, while maintaining close ties with the SOTA family. Some of them are here with us today. We have Amelia Fong Su-Yin, who will be receiving the Prime Minister's Valedictorian Award today. This prestigious award is supported by our Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, and is given to one graduate each year who has demonstrated excellence in the academic disciplines, the arts, leadership and service to the community consistently over his or her six years in SOTA. Amelia believes strongly in applying her capabilities to serve the community. She led the Gotong Royong project in 2012, a student-based initiative where like-minded youths gather to exchange ideas on bringing about social change. In 2013, she took charge of a project where SOTA students are provided the opportunity to volunteer and conduct art lessons for children whose parents were in prison.

A few of our alumni have sent in their video clips sharing about their takeaways from a unique education at SOTA. Indeed, all of them are appreciative of the opportunities provided by the school and we would like to share their thoughts with you today.

<Alumni videos>

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We wish the alumni students all the best and we constantly encourage them to shine beyond SOTA.

### **Learning and Growing in SOTA**

SOTA students are unique: they are encouraged to experiment and express so that they will discover new insights and develop creative thinking; they learn in a supportive arts environment, surrounded with like-minded peers and teachers who are passionate about the arts; they get specialized training and advanced learning opportunities to pursue their arts discipline to the highest level possible and they grow in character and leadership through SOTA's various student development programmes.

Over the years, what binds us together is the strong belief that our mission to shape and impact society through an education in the arts will continue to nurture the next generation of artists, creative professionals and leaders for the creative industries. We embrace a holistic educational philosophy and provide a learner-centred environment where both academic and artistic potential can be best realised.

Today, I would also like to share with you insights by some parents on how their children have grown through our connected curriculum and how coming to SOTA have widen their child's appreciation and love for the arts. Please enjoy the videos.

<Interview videos>

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It is our joy and privilege as educators to walk this journey with each child, as they experience this life-transforming moment in their growing up years as a SOTA student. I would like to thank parents and family members who have been supportive of SOTA and partnered us in their child's learning journey.

### **Two New Awards**

SOTA has been benefitting from the generosity of Ngee Ann Kongsi, Temasek Holdings and JP Morgan, which have been generously contributing through various scholarships and bursaries. This year, our benefactors have provided additional awards to encourage and nurture our students in the arts.

We have the new SOTA-Ngee Ann Kongsi Outstanding Young Artist Award sponsored by Ngee Ann Kongsi for the graduating student who has attained the highest distinction in the arts and shown the greatest promise of shaping the future arts landscape. We also have the David Marshall Scholarship for Young Artist, sponsored by the Temasek Education Foundation. This will be given out to deserving Year 4 and 5 students.

The Ngee Ann Kongsi Outstanding Young Artist awardee is Tyen Ying Fong, a Theatre student from our 2013 cohort. She is adaptable and loves experimentation in theatre. She was a cast member of 100 years of Solitude, which was presented during the Hua Yi Festival in 2012. Besides acting, she sings and plays the guitar and piano. Outside of school, Tyen has been volunteering at Waterfall Centre, an afterschool day care centre for the

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underprivileged children. She will be studying Law and hopes to set up a community theatre company in the future and engage people who are not necessarily actors or involved in theatre.

### **Partnerships and Collaborations**

SOTA believes in engaging learners in and through the arts. We actively seek to work with partners for sustained synergies that can have long-term impact on our students. Through these partnerships and collaboration, our students receive authentic learning opportunities. They get to showcase their work, learn from accomplished arts practitioners to refine and improve their craft as well as to understand the workings of the arts industry.

One of the partners we work closely with is the ***National Heritage Board***. This year, our Visual Arts students get the opportunity to design interactive exhibition works for NHB Children's Season. Our students will also be working with NHB's lighting experts to create lighting installations for the Night Festival.

We will also be working with the ***National Gallery***, in areas such as student work attachments, curriculum enrichment and student participation in the Gallery Ambassador programme. Our students will also get the opportunity to be mentored by the Gallery experts in curating works and setting up exhibitions.

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Our Dance Faculty has been working with ***The Human Expression (T.H.E) Dance Company*** to provide opportunities for our students to learn from local and visiting international dance professionals. Our students also get to attend their rehearsals and even showcase their own dance creations at T.H.E platforms such as the Contact Contemporary Dance Festival.

Through our collaboration with the ***Orchestra of Music Makers*** and the ***New Opera***, our Music students get to participate in their open rehearsals and performances. There will also be attachment opportunities for our students with the Orchestra of Music Makers to develop orchestral management skills

English Literature Faculty has been working with the ***British Council*** and ***Singapore Writers' Festival*** to bring in internationally esteemed writers such as Poet Laureates Sir Andrew Motion and Carole Ann Duffy to share and inspire our students.

Besides the arts organisations, our Visual Arts Faculty has also been working closely with corporate organisations such as law firms, **Ashurst** and **Allen & Overy**, where selected artworks by Visual Arts students are showcased at their offices.

Our Visual Arts Faculty has collaborated with ***Louis Vuitton*** since 2012 under SOTA Arts Excellence Programme. Internationally renowned artists such as Richard Wentworth, Tadashi Kawamata and Daniel Arsham were brought in by LV to conduct masterclasses for our Visual Arts students. After the

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masterclasses, our students also get the opportunity to exhibit their artworks in LV's Espace gallery at Marina Bay Sands. Our students also get to go on learning journeys to design-focused exhibitions such as Venetian 2013.

Many of these partnerships extend beyond arts to the academic domains to support the overall development of our students.

We also seek to establish and maintain close links with our local arts institutions such as ***Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, LASALLE College of the Arts*** and ***Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music***, to engage in arts education exchanges, dialogue, sharing of good practices and provision of higher education pathways for our students. Our educational partners are here today, I take this opportunity to thank them for their support and partnership.

Finally, to all alumni and students who are receiving awards or performing today, I congratulate you for your outstanding achievement in the varied fields of learning. All of you have worked hard and shown grit and determination in your pursuit of artistic and academic excellence. I am hopeful and excited about what you can achieve in the years ahead.

To all, I wish you an inspiring time of celebration with the SOTA community!