

**SPEECH BY MS LIM GEOK CHENG, PRINCIPAL, AT
THE SCHOOL OF THE ARTS AWARDS DAY 2015,
FRIDAY, 15 MAY 2015, 1.00PM AT THE SOTA
CONCERT HALL**

Mr Lawrence Wong, Minister for Culture, Community and
Youth

SOTA Board Members

Parents and students

Distinguished guests

Good afternoon and welcome to SOTA's Awards 2015.

Thank you for making time to join us in our celebrations
today.

2 The achievements of our students are a culmination of their learning and the guidance provided by their teachers and parents. As a school, at the core of whatever we do, we seek to nurture and develop our students to their fullest potential. Our teachers inspire students to do well through guidance and even one-to-one coaching. In that context, we are happy to announce that our 3rd cohort has done very well for the International Baccalaureate Diploma Examinations and we thank the teachers on their behalf.

3 Our students achieved 100% diploma passes and their mean diploma score of 38.89 was better than the Singapore's average of 36.43 and the global average of 29.94. Close to half of our students obtained a score of between 40 to 45 points, with 26 students achieving top scores of 42 points and above.

Providing inspiration in the arts

4 Beyond the academics, SOTA flourishes as a school with a special emphasis on the arts. In the arts, our teachers provide powerful inspiration through their own achievements.

5 Our Head of Theatre, Sean Tobin, has been appointed as the artistic director for the M1 Singapore Fringe Festival. He has encouraged more Singapore artists to participate and sought to keep the performances fiercely experimental, innovative and fresh, yet not alienating. This year's festival, under his helm, saw a record turnout for all ticketed events, garnering a wider audience reach. Another theatre faculty member, Peter Sau, was recently awarded the Best Actor for his role in Art by Nine Years Theatre in the Straits Times Life! Theatre Awards.

6 Our Dean for Arts, Dr Kelly Tang is a highly-regarded Singaporean composer, whose compositions are regularly performed by the Singapore Symphony Orchestra (SSO), the Singapore Chinese Orchestra, the Singapore National Youth Orchestra and T'ang Quartet. In celebration of the re-opening of Victoria Concert Hall last year, the SSO had commissioned him to compose a new piece to commemorate the event. I was there for the event and I saw SOTA students look up in awe when they heard that their teacher was the composer.

7 Jason Lim, our ceramics teacher is one of Singapore's top ceramists and he is an active performance artist too. He is the artistic director of the 9th instalment of performance art festival, *Future of Imagination*. His ceramic works have also been collected and commissioned by various public museums, art institutions, corporate companies, and private collectors both locally and internationally.

8 Our dance alumna and current teaching faculty member, Chia Poh Hian, will take on a new chapter in her life as a member of T.H.E Dance Company in about a month's time. She graduated with First Class Honours at the London Contemporary Dance School (LCDS) and returned to SOTA to teach. While we are sad that she will leave our school soon for a professional dance career, we are proud of her achievement and look forward to her future contributions to the Singapore's dance scene.

9 Do join me in giving a round of applause to the achievements of our teachers and their work in impacting our students' lives.

Update on IBCC

10 Last year, we launched the International Baccalaureate Career-related Certificate Programme. This is specially designed for students with exceptional

talent who are clear that they would like to be groomed as artists. Our first batch of students will be graduating next year but a couple of them have already been offered places at conservatories because of their excellent performance.

11 I would like to share with you a video clip of some of our IBCC students talking about their learning experience since they embarked on the programme. Of particular significance for them would be opportunities to work with industries, have a deeper appreciation for the different facets of their art form and have an authentic exposure to a portfolio career. *Video Clip*

12 IBCC was one of the many initiatives supported by our former Chairman, Mr Lee Tzu Yang. Even though Mr Lee is unable to join us here today, on behalf of the SOTA Community, I would like to thank him for his visionary leadership, support and contribution as our Chairman over

the past years. At the same time, we welcome our new Chairman, Mr Philip Jeyaretnam, and give him our fullest support in his vision for SOTA.

Providing the avenues to grow the arts

13 Since inception, SOTA has grown from strength to strength in the development of Dance, Film, Music, Theatre and Visual Arts. Besides strong passion in these art forms, our students have also shown great interest in creative writing and we have encouraged this. Enthusiastic and supportive teachers in the Literature Faculty such as Mark Rozells, Dr Chew Yi Wei and Colin Cheong have provided writing as a sort of co-curricular activity for students from every art form.

14 Today we are proud to announce the publication of creative works in a book, *Random Access Memory*; a culmination of work by teachers and students over the last 4 years.

Providing the inspiration to do good

15 Besides an emphasis on arts and creativity, we seek to develop our students to become leaders who will influence and contribute to the community through their creativity and talents. Very often, we have invited positive role models to SOTA to inspire our students.

16 Earlier this year, we invited Mr Gregory Burns, an internationally acclaimed artist and a Paralympic athlete to SOTA. Mr Burns shared how he overcame his handicap and challenges to become who he is today. To him, obstacles are just things in your path which you can overcome in a variety of ways. Today, some of our students continue to work with Mr Burns on a sculpture, BELL of Inspiration, for the SEA Games.

17 When Jane Goodall, a well-known conservationist, came to Singapore, our students and teachers put

together an afternoon of words and music with Jane Goodall Institute (Singapore), to inspire all to make a difference for animals, people and environment.

18 The following clip shows an animation done by Janice Yap, a Year 3 Visual Arts student for the Jane Goodall event. *Video Clip*

Conclusion

19 SOTA's vision is to shape and impact society through an education in the arts. There are no boundaries that limit the profound impact an arts education can have on a student. Beyond artworks and performances, arts education is about forging inner character and inspiring a sense of personal destiny, regardless of any vocation the student decides to excel in.

20 As in previous years, this third cohort of SOTA graduates will blaze new pathways through pursuing

higher studies at universities and conservatories beyond where past SOTA graduates have gone before.

21 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.

22 To our donors and partners who are here today, our thanks to you for your continued support and partnership.

23 To all, let's celebrate the students' achievements with the SOTA community!