

**SPEECH BY MS LIM GEOK CHENG, PRINCIPAL, SCHOOL OF THE ARTS
SOTA AWARDS 2016
16 MAY 2016, MONDAY, 4.00PM
SOTA CONCERT HALL**

Ms. Grace Fu
Minister for Culture, Community and Youth

SOTA Board Members

Parents, Students,

Teachers and

Distinguished guests

1 Good afternoon. Thank you for making time to join us at SOTA's Awards Day. Today, we celebrate the achievements of those who have done well in their studies, artistic pursuits and overall leadership development. We are happy to announce that our fourth batch of graduating cohort has done very well with a 100% pass rate in both the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme and the International Baccalaureate Career-related Programme.

2 It would be impossible for me to present the myriad learning experiences of our students within a short awards ceremony but I am confident that through the performances, you will catch a glimpse of the creative juice and passion that is part of our DNA. Every performance you witness this evening, is a creation by a member of the SOTA Community.

The SOTA Education Experience

3 At SOTA, we focus on our students' strengths: their love and passion for the arts, their natural sense of curiosity and their desire for expression. Our

lessons are taught in a memorable way, with the arts and academic subjects integrated together for a deeper understanding of the concepts. In the following video clip, you will see how our academic subjects are taught.

[Video]

Learning comes alive in our humanities, language and science lessons through these arts-inspired pedagogies.

4 We constantly seek to broaden our curriculum, so that a greater diversity of talent can flourish. We pioneered the world's first IB Career-related Programme, IBCP, in dance, music, theatre and visual arts. IBCP has helped make dreams come through for students who want a career in the arts.

5 Our first batch of IBCP graduates has achieved excellent results and more importantly the doors to study at conservatories are opened to them. A couple of our students received offers at conservatories even before they graduated. For instance, our IBCP Dance graduate, Natasha Boon was offered a place in the second year of Modern Ballet at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland before she graduated. When she was still a student in SOTA, one of her choreographic works was showcased at the CONTACT Contemporary Dance Festival.

5 With IBCP, the network of partnerships SOTA has with Arts Institutes, and corporate organisations have expanded, providing more opportunities for SOTA graduates' to realise their dreams.

Fulfilling Dreams in Diverse Ways

6 Today, we also celebrate the dreams of our students and our Alumni coming true in various fields. Many of our IBDP graduates continue their studies in diverse areas, including Architecture, Law, Liberal Arts, Mathematics, Political Science, and Psychology, just to name a few.

7 We have Darshini, who is a theatre student and a PSC scholar; she is currently studying Law at Cambridge University. Sarah, our dance student and also a PSC scholar, is currently studying Political Science at Yale University. We have Krish, who is currently studying Medicine at NUS and Linheng, our Visual Arts student, is studying Biomedical Science and Chinese Medicine (a double degree course) in NTU. Of course, we also have graduates pursuing arts-related or arts degree courses. For instance, Cheng Jin, she is the first 1st Singaporean to study Music Composition in the prestigious Juilliard school and her composition was recently featured at SSO's 37th Anniversary concert. And our recent IBCP graduate, Aqilah, who has recently been featured as one of 25 emerging Singapore artists, will be pursuing Fine Arts in Glasgow School of Art, Scotland.

8 With each cohort of SOTA graduates venturing beyond where their seniors have gone, we hope the network built will benefit future generations of

SOTA students, so that they may achieve diverse pathways, according to their passion.

9 Our teachers are an inspiration to the students. Many of them are practising artists themselves and have made their mark in the respective arenas. We have Ms Silvia Yong from our Dance faculty. She is the Associate Artistic Director of T.H.E Second Company to train young dancers. Under her mentorship, our students have thrived in finding their own artistic voices. Mohd Fared Jainal from our Theatre Faculty is currently the artistic director for Teater Ekamatra. Fared has collaborated extensively with various art groups in Singapore as a director, performer, visual artist and set designer. Our Head of Faculty for Visual Arts, Mr Tan Wee Lit inspires his students through his multiple works for private and public collections including the most recent, Cloud Nine : Raining at the Singapore River as part of the Public Artworks commissioned under the Public Art Trust.

Serving the Community as a Young Artist

10 While academic and artistic excellence is important, SOTA also aims to groom leaders with humility, integrity, people-centredness and passion. SOTA students are encouraged to use their artistic talents to contribute meaningfully to local and overseas communities.

11 An example of a local project, is one led by our Year 5 Visual Arts student, Jacob Meyers. His team worked with an architectural firm, to redesign the interior spaces of an autism center. His team spent three days

interacting with the users of the spaces, mainly the students and staff, to find out how they were using the spaces. They then worked on their design proposal and presented it to the consultants who gave them valuable inputs. Through this project, our students learnt more about the needs of people with autism.

12 Our Year 4s and 5s who undertake service learning trips to various Southeast Asian communities often aim to use the arts as an instrument for social and environmental change. A group of Year 4s embarked on a project to Laos, to introduce the local children and the community to the arts. As the trip progressed, they were inspired by the locals' spirit of caring for each other in spite of their living conditions.

Let me share with you a snippet of the video clip made by our students

[video]

These experiences provide our young artists with global perspectives of world issues and valuable insights into different cultures, and mark the first steps to becoming leaders who will draw on their creativity to serve different communities.

13 Many of our alumni also continue to contribute to the community after graduating from SOTA. For instance, Raphael Yee, our theatre alumnus, recently started an initiative to connect people with volunteer opportunities. It is an interesting idea. It is called 'voltup', an online platform where people who

are keen to volunteer can sign up and they will be matched up with the volunteer opportunities that are aligned with their areas of interest and their commitment level. His aim is to build a community of passionate people from all walks of life eager to make a difference in society.

Conclusion

14 It's very important to nurture a creative generation who will provide a different perspective and solution to life's challenges. Our donors and partners believe in our cause of developing the potential of our students and to them, seated amongst the audience, we say thank you. Our students have earlier presented a video to them and we would like to share a shortened version with you.

[video]

The video is produced by our students, a pair of twins, Giordon and Giordan. We are very proud of them.

15 Finally, let me extend my congratulations to all alumni and students who are receiving awards or performing today. All of you have worked hard and shown grit and determination in your pursuit of artistic and academic excellence. I look forward to watching your dreams unfold in the years to come.

Thank you and I wish you an inspiring time of celebration with the SOTA community!