

SPEECH BY MS LIM GEOK CHENG
SCHOOL OF THE ARTS, SINGAPORE
10TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
20 JULY 2018, 8.00PM
SOTA MULTI-PURPOSE HALL

President Halimah Yacob

Ms Grace Fu

Minister for Culture, Community and Youth

Mr Baey Yam Keng

Senior Parliamentary Secretary

Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth & Ministry of Transport

Mr Philip Jeyaretnam

Chairman, SOTA Board

Members of the SOTA Board

Distinguished guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

1 A very warm welcome to all. Thank you for making time to join us this evening to celebrate SOTA's 10th Anniversary. It has been an exciting day for the SOTA community as we began celebrations with a concert this morning followed by the planting of a sapling to symbolise new growth. And now, we look forward to an enjoyable evening with all of you.

Significant milestones

2 Tonight I would like to take the opportunity to share SOTA's beginning and milestones with you. The idea of having a school to offer an education anchored in

the arts began in 2003 as an initiative by the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts. Dr Lee Boon Yang and Dr Tan Chin Nam threw their weight behind the project and made possible the existence of SOTA. Tonight, they are here with us and we take the opportunity to thank them for their visionary leadership. Mr Lee Tzu Yang was tasked to oversee the set-up of SOTA and he was instrumental in shaping the direction for the school. He has another engagement to attend tonight but he came last night for our rehearsal of the arts trail.

3 This award-winning building you're in is designed to be a "Laboratory of Creativity", a blank canvas with physical and creative spaces for experimentation, expression and discovery. The architects, Wong Mun Summ and Richard Hassell have built us a very beautiful school. Mun Summ is here tonight to celebrate with us. Thank you.

4 In 2008, SOTA started operations under the helm of Mrs Rebecca Chew. She was a firm believer of a holistic education and she sought to groom future generations of artists and creative professionals in diverse fields. She set the tone for loving the arts so that students would be future supporters and patrons of the arts. Our thanks to Rebecca for her continual support of the school.

5 The school has constantly explored ways to grow the curriculum for an arts education. Film was introduced as an IB subject in 2013. In 2014, SOTA became the first national school to offer the International Baccalaureate Career-related Programme. This pathway provides an option for students who demonstrate exceptional artistic ability and potential, and who want to pursue a career in the arts. In 2016, the Literary Arts programme was introduced as the sixth art form to develop the creative flair of aspiring poets and writers. And we have none other than Philip Jeyaretnam, our Chairman, to thank for helping us shape the programme.

Our achievements

6 We have come a long way since the start of SOTA. Our students have achieved 100% passes in the IB examinations since 2012. Each cohort is inspired by the cohort before them to do their best.

7 Our graduates have gone on to illustrious universities, conservatories and tertiary institutions in diverse fields, including Juilliard, Bartlett, Yong Siew Toh, NUS, SMU, NTU, Stanford and Cambridge. Many have received scholarships. Last year, dance graduate Cheri Wee was the first SOTA alumna to be awarded the President's Scholarship. She is now reading psychology and philosophy at Oxford. We are very proud of her.

A "*kampong*" to thank

8 The success of the school and our students would not have been possible without the help of the community. We would like to thank our generous donors, The Ngee Ann Kongsi, Temasek Foundation Nurtures, The Business Times and JP Morgan for believing in our cause of an arts-enriched education.

9 To all our board members, teachers and staff, past and present, we applaud you for your passion and commitment in guiding our students. Our students' achievements would not be possible without your belief in the potential of each child and your willingness to go the extra mile with each of them. My heartfelt thanks to all of you!

10 We also thank our alumni for returning ever so often to help out in key events and performances. Tonight, we have with us, Wesley, Joy and Janel who have created works to help us celebrate our 10th Anniversary. Thank you for the iconic pieces, a celebration of our creativity.

11 And finally to our parents, without whom we would not have these talented individuals to work with, our thanks to you for walking with the school every step of the way. The part that you play in your child's development cannot be overstated.

12 And to all who have extended a helping hand along the way, we thank you for the encouragement. Just as how the sapling we planted this morning signifies the start of the next phase of the school's growth, I am hopeful and excited about what our students can achieve in the years ahead. Tonight we celebrate and tomorrow we begin a new chapter in nurturing our students for the future. Thank you.