

**SPEECH BY MS LIM GEOK CHENG,  
PRINCIPAL, SCHOOL OF THE ARTS  
SOTA AWARDS 2018  
30 JULY 2018, MONDAY, 3.00PM  
SOTA CONCERT HALL**

Ms Grace Fu, Minister for Culture, Community and Youth

Distinguished Guests

Parents, Students and Teachers

Good afternoon

Welcome to Awards Day. I would like to thank everyone for supporting a niche cause in education, an arts enriched education for students passionate in the arts. Our special thanks too to the parents, for sending your children to this special school.

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 SOTA has achieved a 100% pass rate for the sixth year running. Our sixth batch of graduating cohort has done very well; over 80% of our International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) students scored 35 points and above. The International Baccalaureate Career-related Programme (IBCP) students did exceptionally well last year, with over 90% of the cohort achieving excellence in their examinations comprising Career-related Studies and DP subjects. This is the best performance by IBCP students since SOTA started the programme in 2014.

**Looking back**

This year we celebrate our 10th Anniversary. I would like to share some photographs which I hope capture SOTA's development as a school. These photos have been handpicked by our film teacher, Mr Alex Toh. Towards the end of 2007, our pioneer batch of SOTA students gathered for the first time at our holding site at Goodman Arts Centre. It was a significant moment, to the

start of a great adventure for SOTA. We had developed our curriculum but we were still constantly refining it as we prepared to commence operations.

Everyone expected the School of the Arts to have lots and lots of the arts but in truth an adventure was just as important. We believe in providing rich experiences for the students to help them develop depth in their worldview.

We build ruggedness and resilience, yet another aspect of the holistic education we provide which the public rarely sees.

In 2010 SOTA moved here, our permanent location at Zubir Said Drive. It was the starting point of the community coming together to celebrate National Day at the rooftop. We can see the fireworks from up there!

Part and parcel of life at SOTA was to take rehearsals very seriously. Many students would voluntarily spend many hours to make sure the performances would be just right.

The school culture continued to be developed as one very supportive of showcases across art forms. Students would attend the performances of their friends and gain an exposure beyond their own art form. 2012 was the year we started film too.

Here you see our students on a Service Learning trip to Laos. Community Service is a key feature of life at SOTA and students take the first steps to becoming leaders who will draw on their creativity to make a difference in the future.

In 2014, we started IBCP, a programme very much appreciated by students who want to be artists. This programme allowed them to have more time to do the arts, more masterclasses and more interactions with the industry, providing a sound foundation for further studies in the conservatories.

In 2015, the School started to have more interdisciplinary performances,

something we continue to encourage more of to develop creativity in our students.

In 2016, Literary Arts started and our visual arts scene see more works that encourage interaction with the audience.

In 2017, we see greater confidence and a sense of play in our showcases, for example in our voice ensemble concert, Madrigal Madness. SOTA has indeed been through an exciting journey.

### **Nurturing Artists & Supporters of the Arts**

10 years later since Day 1, what graduands have SOTA produced? When I meet fellow educators from local and overseas institutions, they are often impressed by the fact that our alumni are in various institutions all over the world, studying a wide range of courses. This is because our students are passion driven. They make their own choices in life and many take the path less trodden. Yet, whatever path they take, Art is always and will always be a part of their lives.

Our six cohorts of graduates include outstanding young artists. Many of them have been making their creative presence felt in the local and international arts scene as playwrights, musicians, actors, dancers and filmmakers. For example, Adelene Stanley from the Class of 2012 performs with home-grown company, Frontier Danceland. Another alumnus, Bennett Bay from class of 2013, will be releasing his second music album, 'In Memory Of' this coming September.

Amni Musfirah was awarded the National Arts Council Arts Scholarship to pursue Contemporary Writing and Production at the Berklee College of Music in Boston. Amni has since released her first Malay single in 2016, as well as two English songs and an Indonesian single last year. She is currently writing and producing songs for artists in the region and is also working towards releasing her own album next year. We can look forward to her show this September at the Esplanade, where she will showcase all the songs she has

written in Malay.

SOTA graduands, have also gone on to pursuing their studies in various sectors such as social service, business, technology, medicine, engineering, law and architecture.

Take for example, Wesley Tay. Wesley is currently pursuing Architecture at the School of Design and Environment, NUS. In the spirit of an artist, he wants to use architecture as a tool to shape and change the world. To celebrate SOTA's 10th Anniversary, Wesley has created an artwork installation located at the escalators outside. Do check out his artwork during the reception later!

Krish Sheri, is currently pursuing Medicine in NUS. Krish's time at SOTA helped him realise that Science and Arts were essentially two sides of the same coin. Discipline, perseverance and teamwork are some of the qualities that both artists and doctors must possess. Despite his busy schedule, Krish finds time to dive into music, and has performed as an alumnus in SOTA's music concerts, in university events and for the Asian Contemporary Ensemble.

SOTA has done well as a young school; I am glad that SOTA has provided an alternative pathway to success, one that is passion driven that offers diverse possibilities.

### **SOTA's 10<sup>th</sup> Year Celebrations**

This year we celebrate our 10th anniversary. Two weeks ago, we had a school-wide celebration, followed by the planting of a sapling to symbolise new growth. On the same day, we had an appreciation dinner for our staff, partners and donors. Our invited guests also had a sneak preview of our first-ever Arts Trail; a showcase featuring multidisciplinary performances and installations around the SOTA school campus.

To end my speech, I would like to share a video clip on our 10th Anniversary

Celebrations. But before that begins, let me extend my congratulations to all the students who are receiving awards today. Every award we hand out today is both an affirmation and an inspiration. You have worked hard and done your parents proud. Persevere and continue to be eager to learn.

Thank you.