

AUG-OCT 2010 ISSUE 31



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LOCAL MUSIC SPECIAL
CHUA ENLAI

**KATY
PERRY**
PERFECT CALIFORNIA GURL
SEZAI RI SEZALI
TOKIO HOTEL
JAY CHOU
MIKA



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Cafeteria iLido

3 Temasek Boulevard #B1-012
Suntec City Mall

Loft

16A Haji Lane

Threadbare & Squirrel

43 Haji Lane, 2nd Storey



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HYPE



editor geraldine lee
deputy editor ng jian yang
michelle ng
arts editor sophie hong
editorial manager clarissa chiang

designers melvin poon
dawn lazaro

photography jasmine chong

contributors

amala kannan
amanda jacquelin
bibek gurung
chong si min
clare isabel ee
dhevarajan devadas
erica rae chong
jonathan chua
jotham lian
kon xin hua
david lim hong wee
liu xing
lydia yap huili
marinne santiago

nur hazirah binte sikarji
janine ong
renu begum
siti nafisah bte mohd alias
melissa tan
teo wen cheng bjorn
toh ming wei aaron
toh wei-jill
valerie chua jia lin
yeong kar yan
yeung ching kit joshua
yu jiawei ranon
zachary neal wickeremasuriya
zafirah bte salim

advertising sales emeline chen
justine chng
alexis chen
lee lun xi
fifi handayani

editorial consultant sng-fun poh yoke

design consultant ahsan uddin shan

photo consultant siew kee liong



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HYPE
m:idea
Blk 53 #01-01
School of Film & Media Studies
535 Clementi Road, Ngee Ann Polytechnic
Singapore 599489

T: 6460 8504 E: hype.midea@gmail.com

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Hey guys!

I hope you've been looking forward to HYPE, because I know I sure couldn't wait for it to be published. Phew! What a journey it's been!

After reinventing and intensifying our new look in the previous issues, this time, we've become **StarStruck** after interviewing artistes like the oh-so-hot **Katy Perry** (interview on pg 26), the hopelessly sentimental **Sezairi** (pg 12) and the quirky but cute **MIKA** (pg 20).



To say that I've had fun putting this issue together would be an understatement. Besides sharing lots of joy and tears with my insanely dedicated colleagues, I also had the opportunity to interview one of my favourite bands, **Tokio Hotel** (pg 22), when they came down to Singapore to perform at the Audi Fashion Festival. It was such a surreal experience talking to them that I couldn't believe it when it was all over.

But there's more.

On July 31, we'll be having our very own inaugural **HYPEUP!** (pg 8)! There's going to be live performances by **Trella**, **Postbox**, **Duxton Plains** and **Run Neon Tiger** with lots of shopping to be done as well, so make sure you come down to ***SCAPE** that day!

Finally, with National Day almost upon us, we also have a **local music special** (pg 63) dedicated to highlighting the amazing Singaporean artistes who've impressed us with their tunes, be it post-hardcore or folktronica (a blend of folk and electronica).



And now that HYPE is finally out, I'm going to go and put on my headphones and just kick back to the soothing tunes of **Olivia Ong** (pg 74). :)

Cheers,

Geraldine

Geraldine Lee
Editor

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Are you HYPED Up?

Prepare yourself for the HYPED Up! Flea Market!

By Yeung Ching Kit Joshua

Too much of a good thing can never be bad, which is why HYPE is bringing together your love for shopping, good music and fun at the HYPED UP! Flea Market!

HYPE is launching its latest issue #31 and we figured – what better way to celebrate than to have a smashing event with lots of people?

Take a day off your busy schedule and come down to our inaugural flea market that will be held at the newly opened *SCAPE The Street + Market, on July 31 from 2 pm.

Think that this will be your typical flea market? Well, think again! Besides browsing through the usual knick-knacks, you will also get serenaded by the live performances of your favourite local bands.

Expect awesome music from local indie bands like Postbox, Trella, Run Neon Tiger, and Duxton Plains (read more about these bands on pg 66), all while bargain hunting and shopping for vintage clothes, self-made accessories, and gorgeous shoes.

Do put on your fabulous outfits for the event, as our photographer will be taking pictures of all you well-dressed individuals for the ongoing HYPEspotting contest during the event.

These pictures will be uploaded onto our Facebook page, where everyone will be able to vote for the best-dressed individual, who stands to win attractive prizes.

For the first time ever as well, HYPE will also be holding a cover exhibition to showcase the covers of all the magazines we've had throughout the years. So make sure you stop by HYPED Up! Flea Market on the last day of July!

Mark the date on your calendars now – 31 July 2010, 2 pm to 9 pm!



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Warning: Sound is Electric

With a seamless mix of rock melodies and intricate electronic beats, Quick Quick Danger is basically a ten-man band made up of just four guys.

By Bibek Gurung

The style of Quick Quick Danger (QQD) is best described as a rock band playing energetic power-pop suffused with “phaaaaat electronic beats”.

Made up of vocalist Marc Lian, guitarist Fred Ji, bassist Kyle Zhang and drummer Nate Xu, QQD also has a laptop belting out pre-recorded synthesised beats. It makes for a unique live experience – think Boys Like Girls meets Jay-Z.

“We started with a really clear goal,” says Marc, the band’s frontman. “We didn’t want to be like any other local band out there currently.”

Few local bands have actually been bold enough to attempt this sonic experimentation, but QQD took to it with great panache. So far, it seems their musical intrepidity has paid off.

The band’s cover performance of British-born, R&B singer Jay Sean’s “Down” on Youtube has garnered over 190,000 views since 2009. Through the videos, legions of fans from all over the world, especially the US, have become fans of this humble indie outfit. Even Jay Sean himself loved their covers, going so far as to comment on one of their videos.

“His management company said we should do a video and they would feature it on their website!” says Marc. Alas, that deal was not to be, with National Service and other commitments getting in their way.

Besides style, QQD’s appeal comes from the subject matter of their songs. With a range of eclectic influences including R&B and television shows, most of their songs are layered with upbeat energy and bittersweet lyrics.

So why did they choose their style of music?

“The reason we play electro-pop songs is because we don’t have so much anger,” explains Kyle, “Our lives are quite happy, so that’s why we choose to write electro-pop songs.”

Since their inception, the band has played a number of gigs and is in the process of planning their Extended Play (EP) to launch their first CD, *Love Electric*. It will feature a collection of four songs written and produced entirely by the band on their trusty old computer.

And until then, they’ll keep us electrified with their bittersweet party tunes and infectious attitude.



Sweet, Sweet Sezairi

In an exclusive interview with HYPE, reigning Singapore Idol, Sezairi Sezali, talks to Siti Nafisah Bte Mohd Alias about his childhood, music and coffee!

PHOTOS & INTERVIEW COURTESY OF UNIVERSAL MUSIC SINGAPORE



As I approached the gates of SPH News Centre, I spotted this semi-familiar guy in a yellow plaid shirt, a hat, and black-rimmed glasses with a guitar slung across his back headed in my direction. Our eyes met, he smiled shyly, and I said to him, "I'm interviewing you!"

"Yeah, I know!" he exclaimed.

As we waited at the lobby in complete silence, I sneaked a surreptitious look at him and found him staring at his phone uncomfortably. Only then did I realise he wasn't kidding when he'd said he was a shy guy.

Idol

Sezairi Sezali, 23, is a recognisable name since he became the third *Singapore Idol* last year.

His smooth soulful crooning and guitar-playing are familiar to fans of *Singapore Idol* but Sezairi did not think of being a musician till four years ago, when he was then aged 19. Several of his friends recognised his vocal talent and suggested that he give professional singing a shot.

His first step into a music career thus began. After undergoing multiple auditions and taking Grade 1 to Grade 5 music theory tests within a month, he was finally accepted into LASALLE College of Arts that year to do pop vocals.

"My dad was sort of unhappy with the fact that I was doing

music," he says. "So I asked for a spot in Music Technology instead, where I convinced him that I wanted to do recording and sound engineering."

An audiophile himself, his father relented.

That marked the start of Sezairi's musical journey and his entry into the local music scene with his band, Juxtapose. Joining *Singapore Idol* showed once again that music was serious business to him.

Son

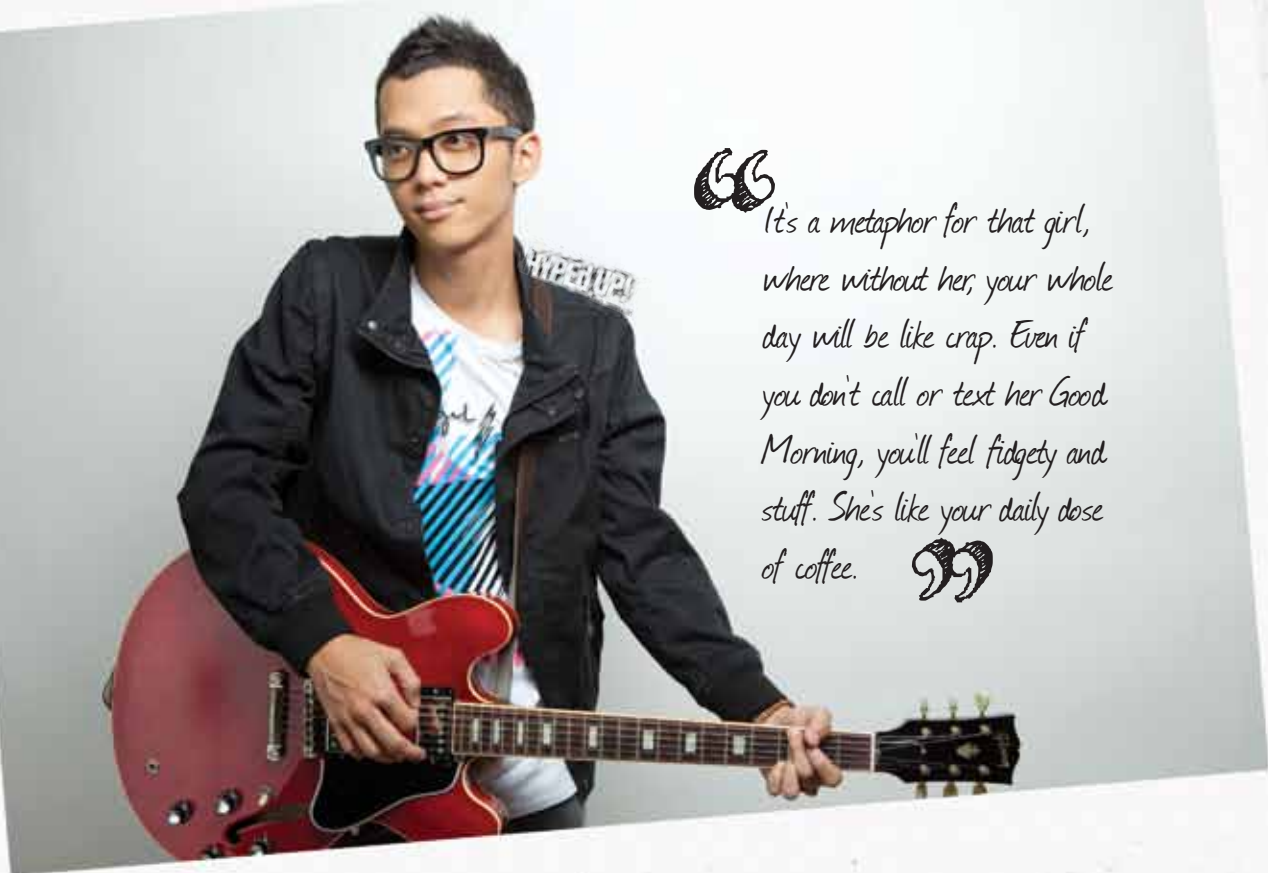
Raised in a close-knit family, the self-confessed mummy's boy, claims to be the "good boy" of the family.

"My younger brother was the notorious one while I was the good kid," he says.

"When I was younger, people would carry me and I wouldn't cry. [They] always mistook me for an ang moh kid... because I looked very *mat salleh* (Malay slang for Caucasian) for some reason."

However, that doesn't mean his parents could relax and not worry. Sezairi admitted that his parents were pretty strict with him while he was growing up as they expected more out of him, being the older of the two boys.

He jokingly told us how he would get the blame whenever he



“It’s a metaphor for that girl, where without her, your whole day will be like crap. Even if you don’t call or text her Good Morning, you’ll feel fidgety and stuff. She’s like your daily dose of coffee.”

fought with his brother, Sehaimi, who is two years younger.

“My mum would keep canes in different parts of the house,” he recalled with amusement. “It’s always at places you don’t expect, like behind the curtain or under the kitchen table, then suddenly, wah-pah!”

Nevertheless, he holds fond memories of helping his mother make pineapple tarts in the kitchen as a young boy and snuggling up to her in bed after he’s had a frightening nightmare.

Charmer

While this scrawny dude in geek glasses is not your regular knight in shining armour, this has all changed since he was crowned the winner of *Singapore Idol*. It is not surprising to see young girls waiting for him at the void deck of the block where he lives just as he leaves the house.

“I went over to the other side [of the block] and took the stairs, trying to be a ninja and all,” he laughed.

He told HYPE how he once walked a girl all the way back home when he was 17, after he missed the last bus and he had no money on him.

Yes, he charms with his ‘cool cat’ persona and infectious sense of humour.

Composer

With the release of his debut album, *Take Two*, recently, Sezairi bares his heart and soul to his listeners.

A testament to his musical influences from young, he claims *Take Two* to be the perfect showcase of his personal life and emotional side.

“It is a little more personal,” he said at a previous media session. “The songs I write are very close to the emotional side of me. I hope that people would actually know me better as to what kind of performer I’d like to be.” A particularly special song in his new album he penned with producer Jason Tan, is “Morning Coffee”.

He explains. “You know how some people need coffee to go in the morning and without it, you’ll just feel like crap the whole day?”

“It’s a metaphor for that girl, where without her, your whole day will be like [crap]. Even if you don’t call or text her Good Morning, you’ll feel fidgety and stuff. She’s like your daily dose [of coffee].”

So does Sezairi need a cuppa to get through the day? “It depends on the day. I don’t like to be too dependent on caffeine but recently, I have to.”

Hoping to establish himself as a singer-songwriter, Sezairi’s *Idol* dream is only just beginning.

“I can and just hope that people out there can feel me as much as I think they should.”

Sezairi’s album, *Take Two*, is available in all major record stores now.



Just Jay

A decade ago, a meek and quiet man who dreamt of songs burst into the Mandopop scene. The hurricane he left in his wake shook up the Chinese music industry and left a permanent imprint on the landscape.

Liu Xing & Ng Jian Yang pay tribute to the music extraordinaire.

Fanatics worship him as God's gift to Mandopop. They swoon over his emotive ballads, rave about his versatility with musical instruments; they wax lyrical over his, well, lyrics.

Detractors lambast him for his stilted acting. They decry his music as boring, a repetitive and staid formula that has remained unchanged throughout his career. They disparage his signature mumble and his chronic inability to enunciate; they label him as the fluke that should never have been.

But whether you love him or hate him, it is undeniable that Jay Chou, 31, the de facto King of Mandopop today, has enthralled millions of fans worldwide in his 10 years in showbiz, and he does not look to be budging from his throne anytime soon. Not bad at all, for someone who entered the notoriously fickle entertainment industry almost purely by accident.

Chou was first spotted by legendary funnyman and influential television host Jacky Wu in *Super New Talent King*, Taiwan's version of American Idol, when his friend (whom he barely knew) entered both their names in the talent show without his knowledge. Despite the abysmal singing of his friend, which was described as "lousy", Chou's complex piano arrangement convinced Wu of his virtuosic music composition skills, and he was hired as a contract composer.

It was a veritable dream come true for the man who eats, sleeps and breathes music. He traded his voice recorder (which he used to sing, record and edit his own voice) for

the seventh-floor soundproof chamber at Wu's music studio, and for almost two years, he cloistered himself within its teal walls, dreaming and creating melodies for other music artistes. It didn't matter that he did not get to sing his songs, or that he was paid a paltry US\$600-a-pop (\$830). The simple man dreamt not of becoming a star, but of making songs.

But a star he was destined to be, and like all stars, Chou's radiance didn't and couldn't remain buried for long. His big break came when Wu sold his music studio (and Chou's contract) to Alfa Music. His new manager, Yang Jun Rong, asked him to release his own album, and from his arsenal of written but as yet unused melodies, *Jay* was born.

The November 2000 album drew mixed reviews, with many praising the sensual ballads, which carried surprising depth and clever metaphorical lyrics. Others lampooned it as a collection of incoherent mumblings. But what is certain is that the album cemented his reputation as a gifted singer-songwriter.

In his debut album, Chou sang of love and love lost, one of two themes that will later recur ad nauseam throughout all his future albums. Standout love numbers from his music career include "Lovable Woman" from *Jay*, which expresses a man's affection towards his fair lady, and "Dandelion's Promise" from his 2007 album *On The Run*, a poignant and stirring recount of childhood promises between two young lovers.

The other theme is family. His family portrait shattered at the tender age of 14 when his parents became divorced, Chou developed a special connection with his mother and maternal grandmother. He first touched on the subject matter in his 2001 album *Fantasy* (arguably his best album to date) with the song, “Dad, I’m Back”. In it, he sang of a drunken father who beats his wife and child (he has repeatedly denied the song having any links with his father). The controversial song caused a huge furore over what was then considered a taboo subject in Chinese music.

Then again in 2003, the self-professed mama’s boy named his fourth album *Ye Hui Mei*, after his mother, whom he credits for his successes today (she saw his musical spark at the age of 4 and enrolled him into piano classes). “Grandmother” in 2004’s *Common Jasmin Orange* and “Listen to Mother’s Words” in 2006’s *Still Fantasy*, paid tribute to the two women who never once stopped believing in him.

He was certainly not the first person to sing R&B – Alex To pioneered it in the 90s – but it wasn’t till his breakout debut that hordes of rabid Mando-rappers and R&B crooning imitators poured out of the woodwork, eager to latch onto the tailcoats of his success. Widely lauded for singlehandedly reviving the then flagging Mandopop scene, Chou had come into his own as a dominion and trendsetter.

It is indisputable that no one has found as much success as the inimitable man who sparked off the R&B renaissance in the early 2000s. In his 10 years in the entertainment industry, Chou has swept countless accolades in every imaginable category and possibly others still waiting to be invented at various music awards, with the most notable recent example being his Best Mandarin Male Singer title at the 2009’s Golden Melody Awards in Taiwan, often dubbed the Chinese-language Grammys.

Sure, he has his flaws, but it is hard to argue with his

“Contrived? Yes. Predictable? Definitely. Yet to call his music unchangingly banal would be an overly simplistic dismissal of this icon’s works...”

Nine albums down the road, at *The Era*, Chou is still singing about love, with a brief departure into a reflective piece about his showbiz career thus far in “Superman Can’t Fly”, and oh look – more love (think “Love’s Flight Diary”, “Said Goodbye” and “Long Time No See”); all in his trademark (or shamelessly repetitive if you are a critic) fusion of R&B, rap and classical music – served Chinese style.

Contrived? Yes. Predictable? Definitely. Yet to call his music unchangingly banal would be an overly simplistic dismissal of this icon’s works. Chou has mastered his music genre, and while he is unlikely to demonstrate any abrupt shifts in the future direction of his music, he has innovated within his comfort zone, constantly absorbing the latest styles and trends, and then seamlessly incorporating them into his Oriental-flavoured tunes.

In “It Rained All Night” (2010’s *The Era*), as in many of his other tracks, Chou meshes Western instruments with Chinese instruments, like the pipa (Chinese lute) and the two-string erhu, interweaving the mellifluous layers to brilliant results. “Cowboy On The Run” (2007’s *On the Run*) was rollicking good fun with a jaunty tune that evokes sentiments of Old Texas, while “Rosemary” (2006’s *Still Fantasy*) borrowed heavily from lush orchestral accompaniments to create a Bossa Nova tune that is reminiscent of lounge music popular in 1930s China.

achievements. Even if we forget for a moment his awards, the fact remains that Chou’s albums routinely go double or triple platinum (he has released an album every year since 2000, except in 2009) not only in his native Taiwan, but also in mainland China, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore.

The reason is simple. Jay is entirely believable.

When he sings of the immeasurable pain from a crippled love, your heart breaks just a little with his. When he whispers in your ears that he needs you so bad right now, you swallow it hook, line and sinker. His voice rings out with a sincerity and earnestness that is becoming all too rare in an industry rife with farcical shallowness (we’re looking at you Cyndi Wang).

Almost as if in deference to his selling power, Chou also enjoys complete artistic and creative control over his albums and videos, something that is unprecedented among his ethnic Chinese idol peers. He has a clear vision of what he wants, and nothing anyone says can sway him; a self-assured attitude that reveals the utmost confidence he has in his own music.

A March 2003 article in TIME Magazine revealed that in order to write one of his hits, “Nunchuck” (2001’s *Fantasy*), Chou actually taught himself to use the martial art weapon

and then appeared with it in the music video.

What is then most surprising is that the multi-talented music maestro, who has also acted alongside veterans such as Chow Yun-fat in 2006's *Curse of the Golden Flower*, directed 2007's sleeper hit *Secret*, and is appearing as Kato in 2011's Spring blockbuster *The Green Hornet*, has managed to remain so humble, almost as if "unaware" and thoroughly unimpressed by the enormity of his considerable accomplishments.

"It's the timing, the place and the people that allowed me to make a step forward," the pop idol explained self-deprecatingly in a 2008 interview with CNN, more down-to-earth than one would usually expect from a bona fide pop superstar.

But success has a price – Chou is a perennial favourite of the paparazzi, who stalks his every move. After five years of having his unsolicited photographs splashed across various tabloids, Chou famously lashed out at the paparazzi, with whom he shares a tumultuous relationship, in the song "Besieged From All Sides" (2005's *November Chopin*), where he blatantly described them as "dogs" and the tabloids as "dog magazines".

The intensely private man detests the media scrutiny, his discomfiture apparent in the terse replies and assiduous lack of eye contact during interviews, a stark contrast to his debonair stage persona.

Perhaps that is because Chou is most in his element in his music videos, on the silver screen, and on the stage of a sell-out concert; an entertainer without compare. But take away all that, and all that is left is a taciturn, reticent, almost painfully shy person who just wants to sing.

And sing his heart out he will, critics be damned.





Coping without Copeland

Aaron Marsh, frontman of Copeland, tells Chong Si Min how his journey was like with Copeland for the past decade and what his future plans are.

PHOTOS BY JOTHAM LIAN

After 10 years of making music together, Copeland has finally called it a day – making their concert on May 5 and 6 the very last time that they played here.

Frontman Aaron Marsh, drummer Jonathan Bucklew and guitarist-brothers Stephen and Bryan Laurenson never thought that their fourth performance here would also be their last in this country.

In 2003, Copeland played to sold-out shows at Baybeats and Home Club. The band returned again in 2007 to another sold-out show at the Glass Pavilion.

Even after touring the world for almost a decade, Aaron still holds fond memories of the Baybeats gig.

"It was the first time ever where we just showed up somewhere and thought, 'Holy crap, there are a lot of people here!' And a lot of them know our music! We were pretty blown away," recalls Aaron, who hails from Florida.

Describing that performance as "surreal", he says, "I seriously don't even remember playing the songs. I just remembered the feeling I had before I was onstage, it was very strange."

He held a dazed look on his face for a while before saying, "I think we all felt a little bit like rock stars that day."

The announcement of the break-up last October may have shocked fans worldwide, but Copeland decided to hold one last tour to thank those who have shown them unyielding support over the years.

The band even took it one step further by letting their fans decide on the set list by voting on their website.

"The farewell tour was really just for the fans," Aaron says. Their final gig was a bittersweet affair. Cries of "Don't break up!" from anguished fans were heard during the occasional intervals in between songs.

For Aaron, the most painful show of the tour was at The Social, a club in his hometown, Florida.

"We've played at (the club) more times that I can count, so it's pretty heart-wrenching to play one last time there." It isn't hard to understand why Aaron felt that way. After all, Copeland has come a long way since their formation in 2001.

After just a year of signing with independent record label, The Militia Group, the band released its debut album, *Beneath Medicine Tree*, in 2003. What followed was a string of promotional tours around the country.

All that while, Copeland penned heartfelt and emotionally draining compositions that would soon become their signature sound, best exemplified in the album, *In Motion*, which was released in 2005.

The subsequent year marked the band's move to major label Columbia Records – just two weeks after the release of their third studio album, *Eat, Sleep, Repeat*.

The band also saw the exit of bassist James Likeness in 2007, who went on to pursue a career in graphic design.

All seemed bleak – until Copeland broke off their partnership with Columbia Records and realigned themselves with Tooth & Nail Records in 2008, where their last studio album, *You Are My Sunshine*, was conceived.

However, Aaron reveals that two years after their last album, they felt like they hadn't moved ahead.

"That's when we started to seriously entertain the idea of just letting it go."

Throughout the interview, Aaron was forthcoming with his answers.

That is, until he was posed with the inevitable question of Copeland's fifth studio album which alluded to the split.

It was then Aaron hinted at the distance between him and the rest of the band.

"Basically, I wanted to make the record, [but] no one else in the band wanted to make it. The label wants us to but I don't want to do it without everybody."

While Stephen and Bryan have since gone on to start their own band named States, Aaron clarified that he, however, would not be involved in projects that his bandmates embark on from now on.

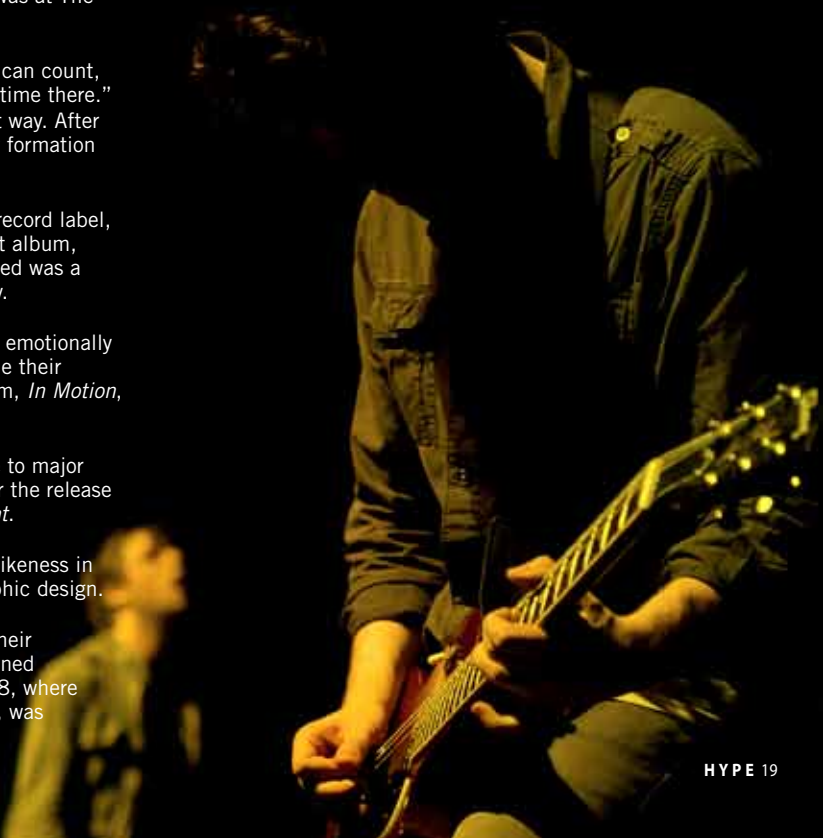
On the other hand, he did not rule out a collaboration with their drummer, Jonathan.

"If Jon does something, he might have me involved and I would love to have him play on records that I produce."

For now, Aaron is focusing his efforts solely on another aspect of his music career – producing albums at his new studio, The Vanguard Room.

"I may start another band too, at some point, but I'm keeping my cards pretty closed right now."

Like the lyrics of the band's signature closing song, "You Have My Attention", the farewell tour made the feelings of the band clear to their dedicated fans. "You have my attention like you've had all the while."



The odd boy out

Don't let his chart-topping hits, bold fashion sense and outrageous persona fool you. Beneath that 1.9-metre explosion of colour and curls lies an introverted yet endearing boy who calls himself a "hermit".
By Jill Toh

Interview & photo courtesy of Universal Music Singapore

To call Mika (real name Michael Hoolbrook Penniman Jr) a bag of surprises would be an understatement. If his colourful songs and flamboyant stage performances are anything to go by, we could be well interviewing a nut.

Though visibly tired, the pop singer tries to keep the energy level high throughout our 20-minute interview. Very commendable (and not to mention professional), considering that he had touched down in Singapore not too long ago, straight after playing five shows in Japan and Korea.

This is his first visit to Singapore but the Londoner is already familiar with our Housing Development Board (HDB) flats as he took GCE A Level Geography back in high school.

"For two years I had to study [about] Singapore and [its] housing plans and development. Yesterday, I finally saw (the flats) for the first time and I was like, that took me two years to study?", Mika says with a dry laugh.

True to his reputation, the Lebanese-American surprised us further by muttering a few simple words in Mandarin, such as "peng you" (friend), "ni hao" (hello), and "lao shi" (teacher). However, the pop star is quick to deny that his Mandarin is up to standard.

"I used to bribe my teacher with chocolates and we used to listen to canto-pop or mando-pop, so I just got fat and learnt nothing."

Underneath the jokes, however, lies an endearing introvert who shies away from the limelight once the performance is over.

And he has succeeded in staying under the paparazzi's radar. The curly-haired singer says candidly, "I hide. I hide and I tour. I'm a hermit and I manage to avoid [the press] simply by touring."

"My career is a weird one; it is one that is very much divided in many different places around the world that it basically keeps me out of one place for too long and therefore, as far as the UK was concerned, it kept me out of the tabloids as I'm not there for years on end."

While other celebrities might rely on getting their names published on tabloids and gossip blogs to fuel their careers, Mika prefers to let his works do the talking. As such, he is fiercely insistent on not compromising on any aspect of his performances - not even when faced with possible repercussions.

Citing the Morocco stop on his *Imaginarium Tour* as an example, Mika reveals that he vehemently refused to take "Billy Brown", a song about a married man who fell in love with another man, out from the setlist. He also fought strongly against changing the elements of his elaborate stage setting, which includes Roman Catholic crucifixes and plus-sized girls dancing in corsets.

"The thing about my music is that it sounds euphoric, it sounds joyful, but at the root of it there's quite a lot of twisted darkness to it. It's like a gothic fairytale."

- Mika on his musical style.

"I was like, no! Absolutely never change anything! We bring what we do to wherever we are in the world and we don't compromise," explains the 26-year-old.

Perhaps this resilience was built from years of being bullied in school. Growing up was not easy for this successful artist, who is best known for his loud fashion sense and wide vocal range. Ironically, it was those exact same qualities



that led his schoolmates to call him names such as "childbearing hips" and "choirboy fag".

The bullying got so bad that he had to be pulled out of school and was homeschooled by his mother instead. Mika was so affected that he stopped reading and writing, which only worsened his dyslexia. Luckily, he found solace in music and the rest, as they say, is history.

"People often ask if [my success] is some version of vengeance [towards those people in school] and I think no, because that would mean that I'm doing it all for them and they're the last people I ever want to think about again in my life."

His adolescent years was no doubt a painful period of time for him. So what would Mika do differently if he had the ability to go back in time?

"Nothing," says the pop star with an unwavering certainty. Instead of going back in time, Mika said that he would like to have the ability to stop time.

"You could compromise someone by stopping time, taking off all their clothes and then putting them in a park, so they'd wake up and they're in hell and you could get your revenge," explains the quirky singer, causing the room to burst into laughter.

Since his debut in January 2007, Mika has been nothing short of a breath of fresh air in the overcrowded pop music scene of today. And if rumours are to be trusted, he is set to shake things up a little bit more by featuring a collaboration with the Princess of Pop, Lady Gaga, on his third studio album.

Until then, keep your fingers crossed; pop music may just be taking a turn in the right direction.





Checking in with Tokio Hotel

Hailed as one of Germany's most successful acts in 20 years, Tokio Hotel takes some time out from their busy schedule to speak to **HYPE** about living their dreams.

By **Amanda Jacquelin and Geraldine Lee**

Photo and interview courtesy of Universal Music Singapore

Ten years ago, they were but a band of prepubescent teenagers who played at live clubs in Germany on weekends for €150 (\$261), living out their dreams of being musicians.

Fast forward to 2010, and those boys are now men, who have gone from playing at small clubs for 500 people, to over 500,000 screaming fans at the foot of the Eiffel Tower in France.

They are Tokio Hotel.

Here in town for the very first time for the Audi Fashion Festival on Apr 28, Tokio Hotel will be performing at the annual SINGfest festival, held from Aug 3 to 5 at the Fort Canning Park with the likes of Katy Perry, Orianthi and Wonder Girls.

Sauntering into the Astor Bar at St Regis Hotel, Bill Kaulitz, frontman of Tokio Hotel, is all clad in black as he makes his way over to the high backed leather booth facing us.

Following closely behind are the rest of his band members: twin brother Tom Kaulitz, who plays the guitar, Georg Listing, the long-haired bassist, and Gustav Schäfer, their reticent drummer.

It becomes clear during the interview that Bill is the front man for a reason. The smoky-eyed singer laps up attention like a cat with a bowl of cream, and Georg and Gustav, who're 23 and 21 respectively, look more than happy to take a back seat and let him answer the questions, while Tom, 20, occasionally interjects with a comment here and there.

Their beginnings

In 2001, after seeing Tom and Bill perform in a club, Georg and Gustav offered to form a band with them, and thus Devilish (their original name) was born. Their big break came when a group of producers saw them perform, and impressed by their onstage energy, signed the band on with Sony BMG Germany.

However, just before the release of their debut album, Sony terminated their contract, despite having completed the production of their album. Universal Music Germany picked them up instead, and with that, Tokio Hotel was born. ("Tokio", the German spelling of Tokyo, a city that they've always wanted to go to; and "Hotel" because they had been living in hotels while on tour)

Their first single, "Durch Den Monsoon" (Through The Monsoon) from their debut German album, *Schrei*, thrust them into the limelight. Hitting No.15 on the German music charts in August 2005, the song quickly rose to the No. 1 spot five days later where it stayed for 22 weeks.

"It was totally surprising for our record company, our producers, for everyone," says Bill. "No one had expected a success like that. And for us, [it was like] we started a completely new life."

As testament to their success, they've had their albums gone 10 times platinum worldwide, racking up a total of four No. 1 singles and sold out concerts in Europe.

Things seemed to be going well for them until in 2008, after a strenuous non-stop 43 concerts for their *1000 Hotels*

European tour, Bill had to undergo surgery for a cyst that had formed on his vocal chords due to a throat infection that had gone untreated.

Bill says, "It was a really horrible time for us. We were on a European tour, and we cancelled like, 18 concerts. It was just really bad, because I had no voice and wasn't allowed to speak at all and [all I did] was sit in a hotel room because I couldn't do anything."

While Bill did eventually regain his voice after surgery and vocal rehabilitation, the band's dream of performing could have almost ended, if Bill had lost his power of speech.

"We [could] only [have become this famous] because of his voice," said Tom in a 2009 interview on *100 Prozent Tokio Hotel* (100 Percent Tokio Hotel), a documentary broadcasted by RTL Television charting the rise of the band.

"If [Bill had lost his voice], it would have been over."

Fame... and its price

Indeed, at their very first performance as Tokio Hotel in 2005, it became apparent just how successful the band had become when thousands of fans swarmed the small village they had been booked to play at six months before they'd become famous.

"Everything was out of control. They didn't expect to have so many fans turning up. It was crazy and there was no way to get to the stage safely. We were just sitting in our car, and everyone was hitting the car," says Bill.

Interjecting, Tom says, "I liked it because it was the first time we recognised we had fans."

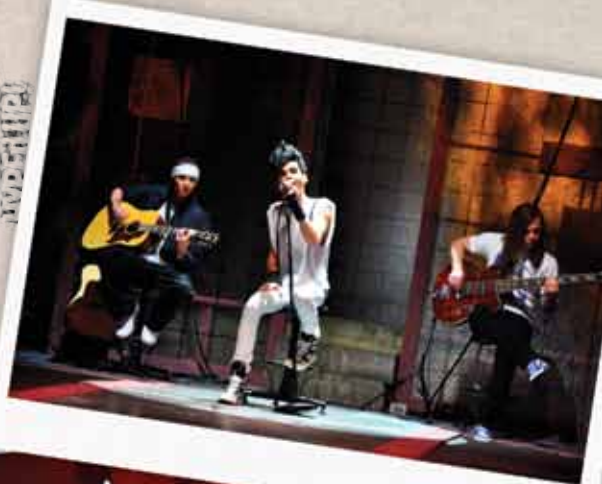
But fame doesn't come without a price.

Despite having more than their fair share of fans, Tokio Hotel also have their haters, some of whom their bodyguards have reportedly caught at red carpet events, armed with knives while disguised as fans. Gustav has also been hit on the head with beer bottles while out at a club in Magdeburg, which he had to be given 36 stitches for.

In late 2008, the band also had several female stalkers who hounded them incessantly for months. They threw eggs at their cars, wrote threatening letters to the band, and even followed them to their homes and assaulted the twins' mother.

Conquering Asia

"It feels really good that we're in Asia right now. It's unbelievable for us. We didn't know that we had fans here and we could tell that they were really, really happy to see us. It felt good and we had a really warm welcome at the airport, and some of them were even crying," says Bill.



PHOTOS BY GERALDINE LEE

And while their fame might have given them the opportunity to travel and perform worldwide and meet their fans, it is not without its disadvantages, as Bill explains.

"You don't [even] see your luggage anymore and you know, sometimes you just want to sleep in your own bed", laments Bill.

"But [despite that], we usually have a [great] time together – it's like having four brothers on the road [because] we do everything together. And although we get bored of the schedule sometimes, [doing this is] still our dream."

We've got 5 copies of Tokio Hotel's *Humanoid* (Special Limited Edition) CD worth \$21.95 which contains exclusive tracks and a bonus DVD to give away. Just answer this simple question!

What was Tokio Hotel's original name?

Send in your answer along with your name, IC number, and contact details to hype.midea@gmail.com. Contest closes 27 August 2010.

Music in their Blood

Maybe it's in the genes, or maybe it's just chemistry no ordinary friendship can ever hope to produce, but some brothers are simply built to perform together. Jotham Lian gives you the lowdown on bands that have flourished with the blood of siblings in them.



PARAMORE

Hayley Williams, if you didn't know, is secretly the sister of fellow band member Tayl... Okay, we're just kidding. While Hayley may steal all the attention with her fiery mane and rock hard attitude, the backbone of the band is built upon the strong brotherly love between lead guitarist Joshua Farro and drummer Zachary Farro. With Joshua's melodic riffs, and Zachary's heart pounding beats, this duo will most certainly continue making music long after Hayley's hair dye fades out.

JACKSON5

Before cementing his place as the King of Pop with his signature moonwalk move at Motown 25, the late Michael Jackson kick-started his career with the people closest to him: his family. To be specific, Michael was part of The Jackson 5 with brothers Jackie, Marlon, Tito and Jermaine, with whom he performed and toured till 1975. With their family appeal and little Michael leading with his self-described "Minnie Mouse" voice, the Jackson brothers captured millions of hearts worldwide.



OASIS

Oasis is the perfect example of how a sibling band can bring out both the best and worst of their relationship. Call them erratic, controversial, or anything you want, but you can't deny that Liam and Noel Gallagher have written some of the most memorable rock songs in the past few decades. It was a pity, however, that their rivalry culminated in the leaving of Noel right before a gig in 2009.

Goodbye, Oasis.



JONAS BROTHERS

The world's favourite band: The Jonas Brothers. Well, at least that's the name you'll hear when you ask tweens about their favourite band. The eponymous group consisting of Kevin, Joe and Nick Jonas may catch your eye with their boyish good looks and their "family-friendly" image, but that's about it when it comes to their achievements, despite having produced four albums. Now, excuse us while we go find something to stop this bleeding in our ears caused by the incessant caterwauling of their teenybopper fans.

Perfect California Gurl

Her controversial lyrics and quirky dress sense are about as subtle as a fireworks display. Katy Perry is one hot chick who is undeniably fine, fresh and fierce.

By Erica Rae Chong

INTERVIEW COURTESY OF WARNER MUSIC SINGAPORE



If ever there was a woman whom many men desired, then it would be a woman who's not only smart, funny and beautiful, but one who has also been crowned the "Hottest Woman Alive".

That woman is Katy Perry.

Named No. 1 on Maxim Magazine's 2010 Hot 100 list, the dismayed groans of males all over the world could be heard when Katy Perry announced her engagement to British comedian Russell Brand in January after just three months of dating.

Best known for her controversial hit singles like "Ur So Gay" and her titillating fashion sense, Katy shot to fame in April 2008 when Madonna told Ryan Seacrest in a radio talk show that the track – a scathing kiss off to Katy's metrosexual ex – was her "favourite song right now".

When asked about how she'd felt when she heard that Madonna liked her song, the California girl says, "Everybody has that Madonna poster on their wall and they have that dream about their icon leaping out of the picture and kind

of talking to them and having that, 'aaah' moment. And I feel like that actually happened to me in my life. It was Madonna, and she had my first and last name [right]."

Katy is set to perform at SINGfest 2010 at the Fort Canning Park on Aug 3, along with other major artistes such as German rock band Tokio Hotel, Kayne West, Smashing Pumpkins and Korean group The Wonder Girls.

Shortly after being blessed by the Queen of Pop, Katy released her debut single, "I Kissed A Girl", which was, well, about kissing another girl's cherry flavoured lips. A provocative ode

to "the beauty of women" from her second album, *One of The Boys*, it was a major radio hit and shot to the No. 1 spot on the Billboard Hot 100 chart, and stayed there for seven weeks.

"'I Kissed A Girl' is about curiosity," says Katy. "It's a song that I wrote because I opened up a magazine and I saw Megan Fox or Scarlett Johansson. I looked up at my boyfriend and I said, 'You know what, I'm not gonna lie, I know you have your one. This is mine. If she were to walk in

"I don't follow trends. I'm just not into what everyone else is wearing. I have my own look, which I call 'Lolita Meets Old Hollywood Glam.'"



through the door and wanted to make out with me, I'm not going to lie, I would probably let her do so."

"I Kissed A Girl" was soon followed by "Hot N Cold", her second consecutive top three single, as well as the decidedly mellower "Thinking of You" which exhibited an unexpectedly softer side of Katy, whose biggest music idol is the "flamboyant and colourful" Freddy Mercury from Queen for "really being himself".

With her third album, *Teenage Dream*, set to release next month, fans across the globe are eagerly anticipating yet another fun, attitude-packed album from Katy, if its lead single, "California Gurls", is anything to go by.

The summer anthem, with its catchy lyrics about undeniable California girls and infectious beat, debuted at number one on the Billboard charts and is her response to the anthemic rap ballad tribute, "Empire State of Mind", by Jay-Z and Alicia Keys about their hometown, New York.

"Everybody was holding their drinks in the air and dancing [to the song], and I thought, 'We're not in New York, we're in Los Angeles!'" said Katy in a recent interview with The Sun in May. "What about California? What about all the homies [friends from back home], the gin and juice, the swaying palm trees, and the sun-kissed skin 24-7?"

The music video sees Katy Perry as a game piece controlled

by Snoop Dogg, whom she'd collaborated with on the song, in Candyfornia – a colourful board game like world that threatens to give diabetes to the viewer with its numerous biscuit-paved streets, ice cream bushes and gummy bears. She travels through the snake and ladder styled game, freeing the various girls trapped in jelly and candyfloss that she meets along the way. The video culminates in a showdown between "Snoop Doggy Dogg" and herself, where she defeats his gummy bear minions in a shower of whipped cream.

Staying true to her signature quirky style, Katy brings a new meaning to the word "delicious" as she decks herself up in a brassiere adorned with cupcakes to a whipped-cream-spewing version of Madonna's iconic cone bra, to wearing nothing at all atop a fluffy cotton candy cloud in the music video.

Her unconventional wardrobe outside of her music videos, then, comes as no surprise.

"I don't follow trends," says the kooky singer. "I'm just not into what everyone else is wearing. I have my own look, which I call 'Lolita Meets Old Hollywood Glam.'"

And indeed, her style ranges from pin-up-girl vintage to red carpet glamour and even to the plain outrageous. Whichever way, her edgy fashion sense has plastered her across countless tabloids, and she has often been compared to





fellow divas like Madonna, Lady Gaga and Christina Aguilera.

Katy has also performed in a kimono embellished with plastic sushi; worn a dress with a carousel skirt complete with miniature flags and bright coloured poles to the MTV Euro Music Awards 2008; strutted down the red carpet in what looked like a large, sequined, turquoise handkerchief tied around her body at the 2010 Much Music Video Awards; and posed topless for the August 2010 issue of *Esquire*.

However, this young starlet wasn't always as flamboyant as she is now. Brought up on a diet of gospel music like "Oh Happy Day" and "His Eye is on the Sparrow" from the *Sister Act* soundtracks, Katy grew up in a strict household where her parents, who were travelling ministers, forbade her to listen to secular music.

"I wasn't really involved in a lot of pop culture to the state when people have pop culture references from the 90s. I'm completely clueless! The New Kids On The Block are still the new kids on the block [to me]," says the pop star who left home at 17 for Los Angeles.

The move to Los Angeles, which is about an hour's journey away from Santa Barbara, her hometown, seems to have been good for her. "I just kind of started changing and growing and singing about everything under the sun," says Katy.

The change seems drastic, especially when you compare the squeaky clean image projected in her debut album, *Katy Hudson*, a gospel-rock album that she'd recorded at 17.

It'd taken agonising five years before *One of The Boys* was finally released, but Katy says, "It all worked out so wonderfully. I'm glad I didn't put out the record I thought I should have put out when I was 17 or 18. When you're 17 or 18, you know everything. Nobody can tell you [what to do]. All of a sudden, I'm 23 and I'm like, 'Mom! I don't know how to do my taxes. Help me!'"

Fast forward two years later and Katy's grown up to grace the cover of *Esquire*, getting ready to release a third highly-anticipated album, and making plans for her wedding slated to happen sometime at the end of this year. But it doesn't stop there.

She's also been chosen to voice Smurfette in *The Smurfs*, due to be released in 2011, despite never having watched a single episode before.

"I've never seen an episode of *The Smurfs*, because my parents wouldn't let me," said Katy in a June interview with MTV news. "My mother thought that Smurfette was a little bit [raunchy], being the only female in the village. And now I've shown her: I called her up and said, 'Guess what, ma? I'm Smurfette.'"

"I always want to surprise people and try and live up to my idols like Freddie Mercury and his stage presence, his participation with the audience, and not caring what people thought," says Katy.

That said, fans can look forward to a night of fun, head-bopping hits. We're just hoping she brings along her whipped-cream bra.

Want to watch Katy Perry perform live on Aug 3 at the SINGfest 2010? Just answer this simple question and you'll stand a chance to win a pair of tickets worth \$350!

What is the name of Katy Perry's first album?

Send in your answer along with your name, IC number, and contact details to hype.midea@gmail.com. Contest closes 31 July 2010.

SIZZLING POWERHOUSES

By Renu Begum and Janine Ong

Singapore's biggest outdoor music festival SINGfest 2010 is back with a bang at Fort Canning Park from Aug 3 to 5, with music ranging from rock to metal to K-pop. SINGfest made its debut in August 2007 with the goal of staging international top acts from different genres of music here for fans in Asia. Here's the scoop on some of the acts that have been lined up for you this year.

30 SECONDS TO MARS

Though the American band from Los Angeles was formed since 1998, they only shot to fame after the release of their second album, *A Beautiful Lie*, in 2005. They're the only band from the United States to have shot an entire video in China, staying true to constantly providing a fresh outlook on the hard rock and metal scene.

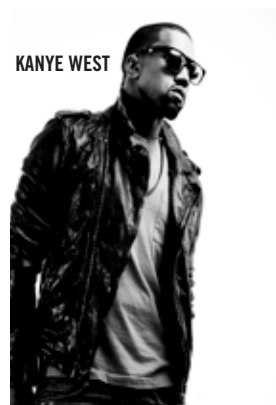
They have been likened to The Killers, only with a more eclectic and abstract tone. This is the result of their fiercely independent song-writing skills and maturity, creating Billboard Chart Top 5 hits like "Kings and Queens" and the crowd favourite, "The Kill". Their most recent album, *This Is War*, hit the Top 20 in its debut week.



KANYE WEST

One must have a pretty indestructible reputation (or have a deathwish) to have the gall to upstage much-loved country music princess, Taylor Swift, at the MTV Video Music Awards. With five critically acclaimed albums in a span of eight years, Kanye has won a slew of 38 major awards.

Starting out as a producer, he was initially seen as not marketable when he approached the record label for the position of a rapper. He didn't portray the street image most rappers have, and was in fact a stellar student; in his own words, "I got A's and B's and I'm not even frontin'".



ORIANTHI

First recognised as the lead guitarist for Michael Jackson's comeback concert series that never came to be, Orianthi is an Australian singer-songwriter packed with a modern girl-power attitude. Her debut single "According to You" made the charts at #8 in Australia and #17 in the United States. The 25-year-old has been writing songs since the tender age of 15, but her lovely looks and one-of-a-kind music video (for "According To You") has also contributed to her electrifying entrance into the music industry.

WONDER GIRLS

You may have heard about them, seen them more than once, or maybe even tried to dance like them. Now, this K-Pop sensation is back with their latest single, "2 Different Tears". Having made their debut in early 2007 with the Korean hit "Tell Me", this five-member girl band has bagged more than 25 music awards for their hard work and talent. They were in Singapore earlier this year and last year for various showcases, and will be gracing the Lion City once again for SINGfest 2010. Be sure to catch them!



Other acts include The Smashing Pumpkins, Tokio Hotel, Kool & The Gang, Diane Birch, The Like, Lupe Fiasco, Ian Brown, Jilly Black, Hail The Villain, and The Vines.



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IN A CLASS OF THEIR OWN



By Yeong Kar Yan

When Google released its first playable doodle for Pac-Man's 30th birthday on May 22, Pac-Mania swept across the world and studies by software firm RescueTime, revealed that the classic video game embedded on Google's homepage gobbled up 4.8 million hours in productivity since it was put up – that's US\$120 million (\$169.6 million) gone!

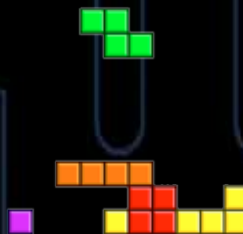
Playing *Pac-Man* (<http://google.com/pacman>) got us at HYPE a little nostalgic over our Game Boy and Playstation days, so we surfed internet memory lane and found four more classic games to zap your time away.



1. Space Invaders (1978)

After its release, people were playing this arcade game so much that it caused a 100-yen coin shortage in Japan and the banks had to quadruple coin production to meet the demand. The game is fairly simple. Stop the flying monsters from invading Earth by shooting them down with a laser. The sneaky little buggers move faster as the game progresses and even beep incessantly just to annoy the player.

ZAP 'EM HERE: <http://www.johnjohn.co.uk/html/spaceinvaders.html>



3. Tetris (1989)

Puzzles and games lover, Alexey Pajitnov, created *Tetris* while working for the Computing Centre of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. Clear the ascending blocks away by aligning them in a horizontal line, and do it fast before they fill up the screen. Besides being hours of fun and entertainment, playing *Tetris* regularly can also boost one's brain power, according to studies by Mind Research Network. So start aligning those blocks now if you need a brain boost!

CLEAR SOME BLOCKS: <http://www.freetetris.org/>



2. Super Mario Bros. (1985)

The moustachioed plumber got his name when Mario Segale, landlord of the warehouse that Nintendo was renting in Tukwila, Washington, came to bug for payment. In *Super Mario Bros.*, he is tasked to rescue Princess Toadstool (later renamed Princess Peach) by destroying enemies and overcoming obstacles to reach her. To date, *Super Mario Bros.* still holds the record for best-selling video game of all time, with over 40 million copies sold worldwide over the last two decades.

SAVE PRINCESS PEACH: http://nintendo8.com/game/629/super_mario_brothers/



4. Puzzle Bobble (1994)

Burst the bubbles by matching three or more of the same colour. The ceiling moves lower and lower with time and if you fail to clear the bubbles quickly enough, Bub and Bob, the mascots of the game, will meet their tragic end. *Puzzle Bobble* ranks eighth on Telegraph's list of 20 best Internet Flash games, and has been made available online for free distribution. Say hello to unlimited playtime on *Puzzle Bobble*.

THE BUBBLES GO 'POP': http://www.gameslunatic.com/onlinegames/play_puzzle_bobble_arcade_game_free.htm

A woman is shown from the chest up, smiling and looking to her right. She is wearing a brown beanie and a light-colored cardigan with a dense floral pattern in shades of green, blue, and yellow. The background is a soft-focus forest scene with green foliage. The lighting is warm and natural, suggesting an outdoor setting during the day.

*“The adventures first,
explanations take such
a dreadful time.”*

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland & Through The Looking-Glass

ON WILSON: **SALFORD LADS** FLORAL SHIRT \$45
ACCESSORIES STYLIST'S OWN

ON JULIA: **WONDERWOOL** CHECKERED DRESS \$39 **EGG3 CATHAY** WHITE SKINNY BELT \$39,
WHITE BRACELET \$28 **DR MARTENS** FLORAL BOOTS \$209



Photography Leonard Wee
Photography Assistant Goh Bailin
Art Direction Michelle Ng
Stylist Michelle Ng
Hair & Makeup Christian G
Models Julia Ishikawa, Wilson Leonardi (Shine)



*"A little magic can
take you a long way."*

James and the Giant Peach

"If you look the right way, you can see that the whole world is a garden."

The Secret Garden




ON JULIA: **AL&ALICIA** YELLOW TOP \$128 **ALLDRESSEDUP** NECKLACE \$229

ON WILSON: **FURRMUSE** BROWN LEATHER JACKET \$159 **VERY WOONDERLAND** DENIM SHIRT \$79, GREY CHINOS \$159
ACCESSORIES STYLIST'S OWN



ON WILSON: **SALFORD LADS** CHECKERED SHIRT \$45 **VERY WOOOONDERLAND** BLUE CHINOS \$159
DR MARTENS BLACK BOOTS \$179 **EGG3 CATHAY** BLACK SUITCASE \$190
ACCESSORIES STYLIST'S OWN

ON JULIA: **DUICETFIG** SHEER BLUE DRESS \$79 **DR MARTENS** FLORAL BOOTS \$209
ACCESSORIES STYLIST'S OWN

A woman with long dark hair is kneeling on a forest floor covered in brown leaves. She is wearing a teal short-sleeved button-down shirt and white boots with red floral patterns. Her hands are clasped in her lap, and she is looking upwards with a serene expression. The background is a sun-dappled forest with trees and foliage.

*"Here is my secret.
It is very simple: It is
only with the heart
that one can see
rightly."*

The Little Prince



“You can’t stay in your corner of the Forest waiting for others to come to you. You have to go to them sometimes.”

Winnie-the-Pooh



ON JULIA: **THREADBARE & SQUIRREL** WHITE DRESS PRICE UNAVAILABLE
EGG3 CATHAY PINK SKINNY BELT \$69 **DR MARTENS** FLORAL BOOTS \$209
ACCESSORIES STYLIST'S OWN

Bag, Steal or Borrow

They say he who dies with the most toys wins. With the increase in luxury goods rental stores, it's no surprise that youths today are slogging their guts out just to own a designer item.

By Zafirah Salim, Valerie Chua & Nur Hazirah

To land a job akin to Andrea Sachs' in *The Devil Wears Prada* is a dream come true for most girls. Just pause for a moment and think of all that access to Chanel, Prada, Christian Louboutin and the likes.

And if you didn't know her better, you would think that Adele Koo, 21, is one lucky girl for having clinched the job to live the life that a million girls would probably die for.

Often clad in designer labels from head to toe while swinging one of her many designer bags, she glows with confidence as she sashays down the street. That's the power of her array of designer bags of Miu Miu, Chanel, Hermès, Balenciaga and Marc Jacobs - just to name a few. For her, forking out thousands for a bag is worth it as long as it boosts her confidence.

However, not wanting to be a financial burden to her family with her excessive spending habits, she took up three jobs with average wages. She works as a part-time retail assistant, a freelance tutor and is also managing her own blogshop. It is not an easy feat, but that is how the cookie crumbles for a girl who wasn't born with a silver spoon in her mouth.

"I'm sick and tired of envying my friends and silently wishing that I can afford expensive stuff too, just so I can show off to them," says Adele.

So to her, the sleepless nights she suffered were all worth it when she got her very first designer bag, a Chanel 2.55.

However, there are also times when she realises the need to tighten her pocket strings, and that is when she turns to renting or buying a second-hand designer bag.

Reebonz.com, an online site that offers authentic designer goods at heavily discounted prices, claims that "discounted luxury is [no longer] an oxymoron". The "exclusive, invitation-only" online avenue hosts private sales for their members with discounts up to 80 per cent. It is no surprise that youths

are flocking to the site to satisfy their cravings for luxury.

Fuelling the temptation of youths are the free shipping, and installment plans. Such online shops offer 6, 12 or 24-month installment plans so youths are able to own a Miu Miu bag "for as little as \$3 per day".

Such good deals are not only available online.

Ms Ophelia Teo, owner of Designers Exchange, a store that buys and sells second-hand branded bags, shoes and accessories at Orchard Plaza, reasoned that second-hand branded goods are more popular because of the bargains. She explains, "A lot of people don't like to hang on to their bags for too long. When they do sell them, they are still in relatively good condition with hardly any defects."

It is indeed economical to buy a second-hand designer bag instead of buying it at the full retail price. The store carries an extensive range of designer labels, and a small Louis Vuitton purse only costs slightly over \$100- and that is 30 to 40 per cent cheaper than the actual price tag. Ms Teo also emphasised that all goods sold are guaranteed authentic, and the buying price depends on the brand and condition of the bag.

HYPE conducted an online survey on 134 youths aged between 13 and 24 and found out that six out of 10 teenagers work to earn extra cash for personal expenditure. 80 per cent of them cited splurging on personal items with a hefty price tag of more than \$300.

But really, we need to ask ourselves. Are all these things necessary?

Mark Twain sums it best when he said, "Any so-called material thing that you want is merely a symbol; you want it not for itself, but because it will content your spirit for the moment".



PHOTO BY GERALDINE LEE

The Boys Join In

Whoever said that only girls cared about fashion and class will be proven wrong. In this new era, more men are seen wearing favourite designer labels such as Armani, Hugo Boss, Burberry, Ted Baker... and the list goes on. High-end boutiques are no longer just a girl's soft spot.

Hafiz Yusof, a student from Temasek Polytechnic, receives luxury goods as gifts from his older sister whenever they fly overseas together. Such is the blissful life of the 18-year-old, who explained that they were tokens of appreciation from his sister for accompanying her during her trips. One of his favourite shopping destinations is Hong Kong, as the high-end boutiques there change their collection every now and then.

Hafiz often parades his branded bags during parties when meeting new people as he believes that carrying such designer bags makes him look poised.

Although he knows that there are outlets to rent luxury goods, he would rather work and save up to buy a branded bag that he can call his own. Since he does not hold a part-time job, his sister rewards his "wants" when he travels around with her.

However, Hafiz takes special precautions to never to spend beyond his means, especially with a credit card. He would rather purchase the bag he wants only if he can afford it, if not he will get it another day as swiping the credit card can lead to paying more than he should.

"Never ever buy counterfeit designer bags too! The reason why you buy a luxury item is to actually feel content about owning the original," Hafiz advises.

Another guy who is very proud of his designer collection is Muhammad Iskandar Basar, 20. Being in National Service does not deter him from his love of Birkins. He is someone whom people would call a spoilt brat as he grew up watching MTV and living under the influence of high-fashion designers and idols.

Looking at his designer collections, most girls will turn green with envy because he owns practically "every label you can think of". He indulges in these luxury goods monthly, even if it means "going around with an empty stomach", which was what happened when he placed an order for his Hermès Jige croc clutch.

"I usually try to shop smart when it comes to the likes of fashion labels but a little sacrifice is definitely worth the investment!" says Iskandar.



Girl: (based on 20 surveys)

Average cost of one piece of clothes \times number of pieces bought in a month
 $= \$40 \times 4 = \160

Average cost of one pair of shoes \times number of shoes bought in a month $= \$40 \times 2 = \80

Average cost of one bag \times number of bags bought in a month $= \$60 \times 1 = \60

Expenses in school in a month (Food + transport) \times 20 school days
 $= (\$7 + \$3 = \$10) \times 20 = \200

Expenses out of school in a month (Food + transport) \times 8 weekend days
 $= (\$15 + \$3) \times 8 = \$144$

Total: **\$644**



What an average youth spends in a month

Boy: (based on 20 surveys)

Average cost of one piece of clothes \times number of pieces bought in a month
 $= \$50 \times 2 = \100

Average cost of one pair of shoes \times number of shoes bought in a month $= \$80 \times 1 = \80

Average cost of one bag \times number of bags bought in a month $= \$60 \times 1 = \60

Expenses in school in a month (Food + transport) \times 20 school days
 $= (\$7 + \$3 = \$10) \times 20 = \200

Expenses out of school in a month (Food + transport) \times 8 weekend days
 $= (\$15 + \$3) \times 8 = \$144$

Total: **\$584**



PHOTO BY NUR HAZIRAH

In today's society, the phrase "natural beauty" probably does not hold any meaning anymore. Valerie Chua, Nur Hazirah and Zafirah Salim find out why.

More women today are turning to man-made beauty products in a bid to transform themselves from plain to perfect.

According to the 2009 annual consumer product factsheet by the Singapore Economic Development Board, it is estimated that the market for beauty products in Singapore is worth \$120 million annually. The demand for products such as perfumes, skincare and makeup products is expected to grow at a yearly rate of 30 per cent.

Wati Manson, 23, a freelance make-up artist, swears by dreads extension and make-up. To her, natural beauty only exists in rural villages.

"In a cosmopolitan society (like Singapore)... getting influenced by the media is king. Natural beauty is almost a myth now," she says.

She spends close to \$280 on fake lashes, dreads extensions and make-up a month and to her, all these are worth every single cent. She explains, "It is very important to feel good in your own skin. If you are unhappy about any part of yourself, fix it! Life's too short to be miserable."

The media plays a major part in influencing society's views on beauty. Hence the pressure on girls to look good is very strong. Unfortunately, not everyone is blessed with Kate Winslet's flawless complexion, Penelope Cruz's naturally smoky eyes or Angelina Jolie's thick lips. The next best thing is to create the look of your choice.

Angus McGrouther, a professor of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery at Manchester University, who was interviewed by BBC in 2004 in the article "Who will be beautiful in future?" said, "If people are living happier lives, and their concerns are being spread to things like controlling

weight and it's not harming anybody else, then that seems positive."

The most common types of beauty products or services that Singaporean girls use are fake eyelashes, fingernail extensions, as well as fake tans and lasik eye surgery.

Of course, there are also a few that have turned to extreme cosmetic surgeries in order to look beautiful, and Heidi Montag is one of them.

The starlet, who is turning 24 this year, did a total of 10 surgeries within a day. Her surgeries included a brow lift, botox, rhinoplasty, fat injections, chin reduction, liposuction on her neck, waist, hips and thighs, ears pinned back and breast and buttocks augmentation. Heidi claimed in an exclusive interview with People magazine in January 2010 that she did it because she felt pressurised to look good as her looks were often made fun of when she was young.

In a poll of 50 teenage girls, HYPE found that 36 of them use at least one beauty product to enhance their features. Twenty of them, with an average \$500 monthly allowance, spent more than \$150 in the past month on beauty product with fake-eyelashes, make-up and coloured contact lenses being the most common products used.

Despite times of recession, major cosmetic companies like Elizabeth Arden found that their Red Door Salons still held on strong.

Ayaz Furniturewalla, 46, a general manager of the brand's distributor market and travel retail in Asia Pacific and the Middle East, who was interviewed by The Straits Time's Urban supplement in 2008, said, "Beauty is recession-proof. Even when the economy isn't doing well, people still need a little distraction to feel good about themselves".

Boy, you're beautiful...

Who says that 'beautiful' is used only to describe women when Fauzi Rassull flaunts his good looks wherever he goes?

Proclaiming himself "Singapore's Only Male Bitch", gossip blogger Fauzi Rassull, 21, (<http://fauzirassull.blogspot.com>) is an anti-fat advocate, and has even gone to the extent of creating a group page on Facebook titled "Get Thin or Die Trying". He managed to attract 900 members before the administrators took the page down in April last year.

Getting "thinspire[d]" is not his only definition to 'look[ing] good'. Besides dressing up (women's garments included), his usual beauty regimen includes coloured cosmetic lenses, fake eyelashes, black eyeliner and painting his nails black.

He definitely does not mind spending money on such beauty products, or even the time to make himself up. He confessed that he could take up to an hour to straighten his whole head of hair.

He says, "Maintaining good looks is a total effort and one has to make that effort. We deserve to be pampered."



PHOTO COURTESY OF MIDEA

This "pretty boy" is also a member of the Vogueliscat group, a male version of The Pussycat Dolls. Calling themselves the "fanciest and sexiest dance crew in Singapore", they condone the use of artifice to achieve beauty. It is not an unusual sight for them to turn on the full beauty works for their dance performances, from fancy-coloured highlights or hair dyes to heavy make-up.

Despite the sacred notion of natural beauty being beauty at its best, Fauzi sees nothing wrong in being a consumer of artificial beauty products, even for men. "Everyone's naturally beautiful even without the cosmetics, but sometimes it's nice to spice it up. It enhances my facial features rather than hiding them," he says.

Nip, Tuck

HYPE talks to a plastic surgeon to find out about the good, the bad and the evil of aesthetic surgery.

Dr Rexon Ngim, a senior consultant plastic surgeon at Aesthetics Plastic Reconstructive Surgery in Upper Bukit Timah, believes that his expertise is useful to people in many ways.

Aesthetic, or cosmetic, surgery, involves techniques to enhance beauty and make one more attractive. Reconstructive plastic surgery, on the other hand, helps to correct and restore impairments on the body for it to return to normality.

Dr Ngim says, "Most people would relate plastic surgery to cosmetic surgery, which they consider 'bad' or fake. However, I beg to differ and believe that both types of surgery, cosmetic and reconstructive, have their own advantages."



He thinks that beauty is of outmost importance in this society to earn a living, followed by intelligence and finally materialism.

According to Kate Lorenz in an article published on CareerBuilder.com in September 2007 titled "Do pretty people earn more?", studies show that attractive people receive more attention and would probably earn a higher salary than those who are average looking.

If one is considering plastic surgery, Dr Ngim, who is in his 50s, advises consultation with specialists from hospitals instead of beauticians. He noted that many of his patients who consulted beauticians had troubles such as the lumps after injecting silicon in their face, for instance.

Throughout his 29 years of experience, Dr Ngim has provided support for these "survivors", as what he likes to call his patients, by doing various surgeries ranging from cleft lip surgery to double eye-lid creation to nose jobs.

"Looks are not the only aspect that people are looking at. They want to be accepted. [And] as a plastic surgeon, I could save a limb, save lives and save faith," says Dr Ngim.

P.S. I MADE THIS MYSELF

Wish you had a million bucks to get your hands on those designer labels? Fret not, because **HYPE**'s gonna share with you some good ol' DIY tips for you to breathe new life into your unused garbs and still get that runway look for less.

By Zafirah Salim

Designer of the Day: Alexander Wang

"Anyone can get all dressed up and glamorous, but it is how people dress in their off days, that are the most intriguing." This line from Alexander Wang has been quoted time and time again, but it never gets old.

So what if he's a Parsons dropout? Wang still managed to prove himself to be a noteworthy fashion designer, and has since taken the fashion industry by storm at the tender age of 18.

His signature design aesthetic is the "model off-duty" look. His article of faith is that "during the in between, wayward days [is] when a person's true style emerges from their everyday life." (AlexanderWang.com).

And that sums up his wonderfully wicked collection of laid-back looks, which never fails to give a surprising twist to his designs.



SHEER CUT-OUT TANK/SWEATER

This piece is perfect for those who refuse to sacrifice fashion for the humid weather in Singapore.

Photos by Nur Hazirah

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Old tank/sweater
- Sheer piece of fabric
- Fabric scissors
- Needle and thread



1



Browse through your wardrobe and we're sure you'll find a long-forgotten tank or sweater that's been buried under your pile of clothes. Grab them, and start cutting out map-like patterns (or any patterns you like, really).

2



Layer a piece of sheer fabric underneath the pattern and stitch it in place. Do the same for the other patterns, and when you are done, you'll have your very own inspired piece of A. Wang!



RIPPED CHAIN SHORTS

Add a touch of brilliance to the old pair of denim shorts hanging in the back of your closet!



WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Denim shorts/jeans
- Fabric scissors
- Eyelet holes set
- Chains

1



If you don't already have a pair of denim shorts, you can cut up a pair of your old jeans. That will leave the ends frayed, and if you like, you can shred the hems and distress it for that edgy look. (Place a cutting board underneath those shorts before you start cutting.)

2



Make a series of eyelet holes near the hem of the shorts in random order.

3



Pass the chains through the eyelet holes and hook it in place. It's best to use chains of varying lengths, and repeat this step until you are satisfied with the chaining!



All it takes is some willpower, patience and creativity to create a runway-ready piece for you to rock. Best of all, do it for a fraction of the price. Now when your friends gawk at your outfit, you can proudly whisper to them, "P.S. I made it myself". What are you waiting for? Get down to it already!



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"You should never, never
doubt something that no one
is sure of."

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory



Photography Leonard Wee
Photography Assistant Goh Bailin
Art Direction Michelle Ng
Stylist Michelle Ng
Hair Christian G
Makeup Valerie Seah
Models Julia Ishikawa, Wilson Leonardi (Shine)

ON WILSON: **FURRMUSE** CHECKERED BLAZER \$159, WHITE TEE \$49, CHECKERED PANTS \$119, POLKA DOTS SKINNY TIE \$39



ON JULIA: **THREADBARE & SQUIRREL** SHEER BLOUSE PRICE UNAVAILABLE
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EGG3 CATHAY BRACELET \$45 **HEELS** STYLIST'S OWN

ON WILSON: **FURRMUSE** GREY BLAZER \$139, BLACK PANTS \$119
SALFORD LADS FLORAL SHIRT \$45 **ACCESSORIES** STYLIST'S OWN

"A heart is not judged by how much you love;
but by how much you are loved by others"

The Wizard of Oz



“There was something in her movements that made you think she never walked but always danced.”

Anne of Green Gables



ON JULIA: **ALLDRESSEDUP** NAVY JUMPSUIT \$649
ACCESSORIES STYLIST'S OWN

ON JULIA: **AL&ALICIA** BEIGE BLAZER \$329, BLACK SLACKS \$249 **DULCETFIG** VINTAGE
NECKLACE \$109 **ACCESSORIES & HEELS** STYLIST'S OWN

ON WILSON: **FURRMUSE** BLACK TRENCH \$159, WHITE TEE \$49, KHAKI PANTS \$119
SANDALS STYLIST'S OWN





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Marilyn Ling, Chief Marketing Officer, Singapore Pools Pte Ltd
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HOO ARE THE GUARDIANS OF GA'HOOLE?

By Valerie Chua Jia Lin



Soren, a young barn owl, is kidnapped by one of the soldiers at St. Aegolius Academy (St. Aggie's) and imprisoned there. St. Aggie's is an orphanage on the surface, but an army of soldiers for the evil force on the inside, and they plan to brainwash Soren into becoming one of them.

He befriends a clever elf owl, Gylfie, and they escape to search for, and assist, the legendary Guardians of Ga'Hoole – noble, wise owls who will be fighting the army created by the wicked rulers of St. Aggie's.

The computer-animated film adaptation by Warner Bros., titled '*Legend of the Guardians: The Owls of Ga'Hoole*' is directed by Zack Snyder and based on the first three books of the children series *Guardians Of Ga'Hoole* by Kathryn Lasky. The three books, *The Capture*, *The Journey*, and *The Rescue*, were written from 2003 – 2004.

This will be Zack Snyder's first animation film, a deviation from his usual genre of action and thriller, such as *Watchmen* and *300*.

Main protagonist Soren is voiced by Jim Sturgess, who acted in movies *21* and *The Other Boleyn Girl*. Rachael



Taylor, widely known for her roles in horror flick *Shutter* and *Transformers 1*, voices Gylfie. Other notable actors include Hugo Weaving (*The Wolfman*), Emilie de Ravin (*Lost*) and Ryan Kwanten (*True Blood*).

Like the book, this film will take you on Soren's journey of self-discovery, the importance of family ties and friendship, and his journey to becoming a true Guardian of Ga'Hoole.

Legend of the Guardians: The Owls of Ga'Hoole will hit the big screen on 4 November 2010.



GRITTY TRUTHS

By Lydia Yap



Adapted from the first book of Stieg Larsson's Millennium Trilogy of the same title, the film version of *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (and facial piercing) is Lisbeth Salander, an edgy and complicated computer genius played by spunky Noomi Rapace. Her job is to help investigative journalist Mikael Blomkvist (Michael Nyqvist) to dig into the dark past of a high-profile murder case.

While investigating the case, Salander uncovers dirty truths that lead to allegations and legal matters that conflict with her own past.

Rapace herself has a gritty past — in 1994, she participated in street protests against the Nazis in her stand against violence, which was revealed in an interview with *Dazed and Confused Magazine* March this year.

The film's dark themes are similar to those of the 2008 movie *Changeling*.

However, the cool one-up that *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* has is its contemporary touch with modern technology. So instead of an Angelina Jolie searching through tattered documents in a musty office, you get an intense bisexual chick icily hacking computer codes.

The book, previously titled *Men Who Hate Women* (direct translation from Swedish), has achieved cult status across its country of origin, Sweden, and is spreading worldwide. The title was changed because English publishers felt it was too harsh and wanted something more conservative.

Expect a few characters and scenes from the book to be missing from the film adaptation, and some scenes from Larsson's other book *The Girl Who Played with Fire* included to explain Salander's past more clearly.

The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo opens on 12 August 2010.



A TALE OF WOE

By David Lim Hong Wee

It would seem that where you are born determines the kind of person you're going to be, the kind of friends you're going to make, and the kind of person you'll fall in love with eventually.

At least, that seems to be the case for Doug MacRay, the protagonist in Chuck Hogan's 2004 novel, *Prince of Thieves*.

Doug and three men he grew up with rob a bank. They hold the branch manager, Claire Keesey, hostage briefly before releasing her. Claire is the girl who has captured his interest while he was tailing her for the heist.

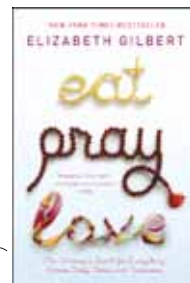
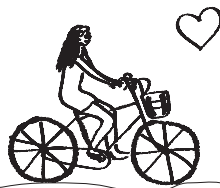
The FBI is hot on their heels and Doug, unable to forget Claire, invites himself into her post-robbery life. A potentially dangerous romance ensues.

The film adaptation titled *The Town* sees Ben Affleck as both



FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

By Siti Nafisah Bte Mohd Alias



BOOK COVER COURTESY OF PENGUIN BOOKS SINGAPORE

Fresh out of an excruciating divorce and a breakup (two different men, love no. 1 and love no. 2, mind you), Liz decides to embark on a journey of self-discovery.

Over the span of a year, she delves into the culinary pleasures of Italy, seeks spiritual enlightenment at an Ashram (religious hermitage) in India, and learns to balance the two in Indonesia, where coincidentally, she finds love again.

director and male lead. Reviewers praised Affleck for his 2007 directorial debut in the highly acclaimed *Gone Baby Gone*. Rebecca Hall, of *Vicky Cristina Barcelona* fame, will be playing Claire.

Hogan did a masterful job with the pen, working strong humanity into his book. The novel received the Hammett Prize in 2005, an annual award for English books in crime writing.

For all its positives, the ending left a bad aftertaste – as if the long and eventful journey you made was for nothing.

We are keeping our fingers crossed that Affleck will end the movie adaptation better.

The Town is slated for release on 16 September 2010.

Sounds like a tall tale, but *Eat, Pray, Love* is, in fact, a memoir based on the true accounts of American author Elizabeth Gilbert.

With Julia Roberts playing the protagonist in the film adaptation, one can see how she can effectively portray Liz as the emotional wreck before the divorce. Expect yet another sterling performance from her as in *Sleeping With the Enemy*, where she brought to life the character of an abused wife who discovers new-found strength when pushed to the limits.

The film also stars the ever-dreamy James Franco (as love no. 2), Javier Bardem, and Richard Jenkins.

It should be interesting to see how director Ryan Murphy, creator of Golden Globe award-winning TV series *Nip/Tuck*, and the popular show *Glee*, will transform Liz's spiritual journey in India into something more generic that can be received by non-religious moviegoers.

It will be a challenge, seeing as how the book is not a read for all. Not everyone will agree with Gilbert's spiritual – for lack of a better word – preaching, which may also come off as self-indulgent.

However, that can be easily forgiven if you admire her effortless writing style. Gilbert's impeccable humour and way with words will tug at your heartstrings as you read about how she emerges a stronger woman.

Eat, Pray, Love is slated to hit Singapore screens on 7 October 2010.

hitting all the right notes with glee

With all the excitement surrounding the highly acclaimed television series *Glee*, HYPE delves into the show's storyline and explores its effectiveness in sending the right messages to teenagers.

By Kon Xin Hua and Melissa Tan

Beneath its veneer of cheery feel-good song and dance routines, *Glee*, an award-winning musical dramedy, tackles heavy issues such as teenage pregnancy, physical disability, self-esteem issues, and even homosexuality.

The American musical comedy-drama television series, scripted by Ryan Murphy, Brad Falchuk, and Ian Brennan, tells the tale of a bunch of social misfits at the fictional William McKinley High School in Ohio who band together to form a choir (also known as a glee club) called New Directions. On their journey to win the glee club championship, they are assisted by Spanish teacher William Schuester while head cheerleading coach Sue Sylvester attempts to thwart them at every opportunity.

While serious issues are dealt with seriously in most other TV dramas, *Glee* seems to be exceptional in succeeding to tackle issues, effectively passing on the harsh truths of life in an entertaining format. It would seem to have captured the attention of an audience, judging from the 13.66 million viewers it garnered in its highest rating episode, "Hell-O".

Take one example. Quinn Fabray (played by Diana Agron) has got it all going for her. She's the queen bee of William McKinley High School, head cheerleader of the Cheerios, and president of the celibacy club. However, when she gets pregnant with Noah Puckerman's baby, she is dethroned and chaos ensues when her boyfriend, Finn Hudson (Cory Monteith) finds out.

Such a topic that *Glee* builds into its plots is what secondary school student Gregory Woo, 16, thinks of as "taboo".

"Glee uses a plethora of different song genres, all of which, are entirely appropriate to the scenes," says Gregory. "Music, being a more efficient way of delivering emotion, engages the audience, gives them a better feeling of the severity and consequences of such issues."

Teenage and adult issues come up as the show progresses, and are sometimes incorporated into song and dance routines such as Quinn's performance of "Papa Don't Preach", a song about teenage pregnancy and abortion in the episode "Hairography".

Says Erin Fitts, 26, an American who is teaching at St. Patrick's School, "The show does a good job of portraying these issues in American society. Many of the issues you are looking at, like teen pregnancies, adoption and homosexuality are issues that are seen in almost every school in the US."

"The school in *Glee* is a good representation of the American high school culture, although I will say that some of it is a bit exaggerated, particularly some of the bullying," adds the History and Social Studies teacher, who once worked in a residence hall as a Resident Assistant for four years, counselling the university students who lived there.

Gabriel Woon, 18, a student from St Joseph's Institution International (SJII), adds, "Teenage pregnancy has always been an issue, especially in more liberal societies like the USA or Europe, but the plight of pregnant teenage girls has gone unnoticed. With *Glee*, I believe it can help to bring forth the importance of this issue."



Speaking of Kurt Hummel's (Chris Colfer) experiences in the episodes "Acafellas" and "Preggers", Gabriel says, "Similarly, the plight of homosexuals has not really been explored in any [mainstream] television show, although it has been heavily scrutinised and criticised. *Glee* takes these issues and explores them through the variety of characters it portrays."

And so, the ultimate question: Is *Glee*, the television musical which has recently swept a whopping total of 19 nominations for the 62nd Primetime Emmy Awards, an effective medium in being informers of these social issues?

Miss Fitts believes so. "They may not be specifically thinking about adoption or teen pregnancy, because I think most teens don't think about it unless they are confronted with it. But *Glee* is an outlet for them, because sometimes it's easier to look at an issue in someone else's life to help you decide how you feel about it," she says.

She elaborates, "If you can see something played out in front of you, you can make decisions about the issue, whether it's to keep a child as a teen mother or to bully another student."

But not all agree. Mdm Maziyan, 45, a secondary school teacher who's been teaching for more than 10 years, says, "Personally, I feel that the lessons, such as promoting safe

sex, are overshadowed by the [entertaining and hilarious] songs and dance, the focus on the vibrancy of youth – are perhaps too strong for them to be taken on the path of moral awareness. But *Glee* does make an interesting subject for coffee-table talk and for "breaking the ice."

Whatever the case, it seems that *Glee* has been effective to an extent, having gotten people involved with or aware of such issues, and has affected some greatly.

One such person is singer-choral director Derrick Kam, 24. A huge fan of *Glee* who wishes to stage a *Glee* flashmob someday, he reveals that he was an outcast during his schooling years.

"Much of this show is about acceptance. It's about accepting who you are and the people you meet [for who they are]. Like the *Glee* [characters], I can relate to them because I was somewhat outcasted in school for not being "cool". [It] has helped me to be more comfortable with whom I am, [because] in the end, we are all different people," says Derrick.

Instead of sounding crass and vulgar by adding expletives into your tirade to emphasise your points, Jill Toh shows you how to deliver witty and cutting repartees, the Sue Sylvester way.

"Your resentment is delicious."

It's hard to be fabulous sometimes. When you're exceptional, you'll get more than your fair share of detractors, so you've got to have a witty comeback for those moments when they start deriding your fabulousness. When they're done preaching, flash a sardonic smile as you say this and then watch as they start to stew, and eventually lose their cool in a fit of rage. You'll be surprised by how fun it is.

"Your delusions of persecution are a telltale sign of early stage paranoid schizophrenia."

Sometimes, life is unfair. You get stuck next to deluded, rambling idiots who refuse to listen to anyone but themselves. They use their incessant blatherings to annoy the world at large, so feel free to be brutal and tell them this straight in the face. Some people just need a wake up call, so think of it as doing a service to them. Someone's got to do it!

Disclaimer: We are not liable for any sort of defamation, break-ups, or emotional trauma inflicted on the victims as a direct result of this article.



"I'm about to projectile express myself all over your Hush Puppies."

If you find yourself subjected to constant displays of nauseating lovey-dovey affection between couples, forget telling them to "get a room". Instead, couple this with gagging motions and pretend like you're about to expel your half-digested lunch onto them. If that doesn't get them moving, shove two fingers down your throat and do it for real. There, double whammy!

When I was your age, they

Chances are, that years from now, when the nuclear dust clouds have settled and the zombie horde is driven back (isn't the future exciting!), you're going to have kids of your own. When that happens, you can expect them to bug you incessantly for a movie on weekend nights. Instead of heading to the theatres, why not show them the best movies from our time? Put down what you're doing now and power up that hologram viewer instead, because here's a list of movies (in no particular order) that you must show your kids.

By Bibek Gurung

Up (Pete Docter, 2009)

One of the most brilliant animated film by the magical people at Pixar. A misanthropic old man (voiced by Christopher Plummer) ties balloons to his house and flies away to South America to fulfil his wife's unfulfilled wish, which was to move her "clubhouse" to a cliff overlooking Paradise Falls. Along the way he connects with a young boy in need of a father figure, ultimately forming a bond of mutual trust and friendship. Now if you'll excuse me... there's something in my eye... Sniff.

Avatar (James Cameron, 2009)

In the future, pretty much everything will be in 3D so why not show your kids the movie that first set the standard for all future 3D films. Get immersed in the stunningly realistic world of Pandora where every lush blade of grass and every gorgeous floating mountain is gloriously rendered in three-dimensional detail. Tell your kids that this movie took 12 years to make, and watch their eyes fly wide open in amazement.

Lord Of the Rings (Peter Jackson, 2001)

The word 'epic' gets thrown around a lot, but there is no other word to describe the trilogy which took eight years to film with a budget of US\$285 million, and includes names like Ian McKellen, Elijah Wood, Orlando Bloom and Liv Tyler. Lord of the Rings is a perfect specimen of the fantasy genre, with all its breathtaking fight scenes and myriad mythical dragons, elves and dwarfs.

March of the Penguins (Luc Jacquet, 2005)

Documentaries aren't everyone's idea of fun but this one's different. The film follows a group of Emperor Penguins in the Antarctic as they brave the frigid snow to find love, have families and feed their young ones. The organic narrative and adorable penguins will captivate your kids and hopefully, make them care about fighting global warming (if it's not too late by then, of course).

made movies like these...

Where the Wild Things Are (Spike Jonze, 2009)

This movie has a fairly simple plot, which is really no surprise, considering that it was adapted from a classic children's book of the same title. However, it is this simplicity that makes the movie such a joy to watch. Plus, the little tykes will definitely identify with the lead character, an over-imaginative eight-year-old boy named Max (played by Max Records), who dreamt up a mysterious forest where the Wild Things dwell. Adventure and mayhem ensues.

Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban (Alfonso Cuarón, 2004)

The first two films of the series starring Daniel Radcliffe, Rupert Grint and Emma Watson were ... well, uninspired. Then Alfonso Cuarón came along and brought back the magic that made the books such captivating reads. J.K. Rowling managed to single-handedly tear children all over the globe away from their Playstations and computers for a few days whenever she releases a new book, so what better way is there to get the little tykes interested in reading?

The Phantom Menace (George Lucas, 1999)

Goes without saying, doesn't it? I'll say it anyway: Every kid should discover the magic, the story-telling and the sci-fi mythology that encompass the *Star Wars* universe. So, begin with the first film in the six-part saga! Sure, it's not as great as the original trilogy (there are two trilogies in total) but you have to save the best for last.

The Dark Knight (Christopher Nolan, 2008)

Remember how you used to tie a towel around your neck and pretend that you were Batman? Remember how awesome that felt? That's what I'd want my kids to experience. I want them to watch this movie and have their tiny jaws drop to the ground in unadulterated awe, then jump from the furniture and get bruises. Ah, childhood.

Spirited Away (Hayao Miyazaki, 2001)

The first anime film to win an Academy Award, this movie is considered one of Japan's best exports. The modern fairytale centres around a girl who gets lost and eventually finds herself in an alternative world filled with monsters, witches and other equally bizarre creatures.

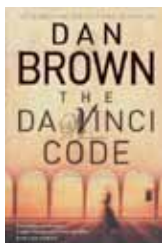
WALL-E (Andrew Stanton, 2008)

This is more than an animated film about adorable robots. The underlying message of environmentalism and the risks inherent in technological dependency will be important for the future. Unless we've conquered other planets by then, in which case ... who cares? We can just live on Mars or something.



I CAN READ YOU

The eyes are not the only windows to a person's soul. There are books too. Browse through the library below as **Chong Si Min** shares how to decipher a boy's personality based on the books he reads, and **Aaron Toh** decodes your mystery Juliet.



The Da Vinci Code (Dan Brown, 2003, Doubleday Group)

The Conformist

Written at the level of a *Nancy Drew* mystery, this “suspense” novel is really just a book for boys who rarely read. A *Da Vinci Code* boy will be the last one to point out that the emperor isn't wearing any clothes because he just wants to fit in. However, he can be the Ken to your inner Barbie, a vacant mind that can be likened to that of a conformist sheep. Baa~

Best match: The Happily Delusional Girl



The Perks of Being A Wallflower (Stephen Chbosky, 1999, MTV Books)

The Wallflower

The title says it all. Just like the protagonist in this coming-of-age novel, a boy who reads this is probably painfully shy and self-conscious. Before you know it, your maternal instincts are awakened and you're cooing over him and smothering him with bear hugs. Try to spot him in a class photo and you'll unintentionally miss him.

Best match: The Overachiever



Chicken Soup for the Soul (Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen, 2001, HCI)

The Sensitive New Age Guy

While the inspirational stories in this book can be an acquired taste, a boy who reads this probably thinks that nice is a positive personality trait. He is most likely a SNAG (Sensitive New Age Guy) who appreciates tearjerkers, and one of those elusive creatures from the male species that actually buys your womanly items for you during that time of the month. What a snag!

Best match: The Die-hard Romantic

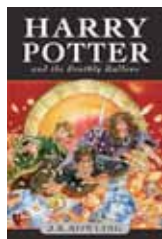


Naruto (Masashi Kishimoto, 1997, Viz Media)

The Class Clown

This manga series about a loudmouth ninja who goes 'Dattebayo' (a gratuitous phrase that doesn't mean anything) every five seconds is definitely not a brainy read. This is especially evident in the nickname describing a fan, 'Narutard', a combination of the title and an insult deriding your intelligence. A boy who reads this is the one who has not grown out of tugging at the pigtails of the girl he likes.

Best match: The Daydreamer



Harry Potter (J. K. Rowling, 1997, Bloomsbury Publishing)

The Smart Geek

A boy who reads this wildly popular series about a teenage boy wizard in a magical world is probably a geek – complete with black-rimmed glasses. He is usually found in his room surrounded by the latest gadgets, some of which he has modified. Just be sure not to mention *Twilight* (or Cedric Diggory, for that matter), or he'll go all nerd rage over you.

Best match: The Idiot Savant



DO YOU LIKE A BOOK

Twilight (Stephanie Meyer, 2005, Little Brown)

The Happily Delusional Girl

Like witnessing a car crash, *Twilight* girls find themselves unable to peel their eyes away from the brain-suffocating mash-up of fluffy werewolves and sensitive bloodsuckers. She is put off by traditional (read: real) vampires who suck human blood and turn into bats, truly believing that sparkling skin is actually attractive; and is blissfully oblivious to Edward Cullen being a vampire aged 109 who, creepily enough, has nothing better to do than repeating high school over and over again.

Best match: The Conformist

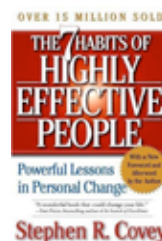


7 Habits Of Highly Effective People (Stephen R. Covey, 1989, Free Press)

The Overachiever

Packed with tips to help you succeed in life, this book can be found in every overachiever's neatly packed bag. A girl who reads this is probably president of the debate team, head student councillor, and an honour roll student – all at once. No boy even dares to go near her immaculately groomed self... even if she can be seen beneath that aura of accomplishment.

Best match: The Wallflower



The Notebook (Nicholas Sparks, 1996, Warner Books)

The Die-hard Romantic

This sappy boy-meets-girl-but-can't-be-together story is written specifically for the over-emotional female. A girl who reads this probably likes the equally sappy, clichéd plots of today's Korean dramas, but can't be bothered with the Korean language. She curses the world because she can't find the "perfect man". Here's a hint, girl: he doesn't exist.

Best match: The Sensitive New Age Guy (SNAG)



Totto-Chan (Tetsuko Kuroyanagi, 1984, Kodansha Publishers Ltd.)

The Daydreamer

A children's story about a loud and strange little girl who finds happiness in grade school, the Totto-Chan-reading girl couldn't care less about her school grades - she sees the school certificate as it is: just a piece of paper. Likely to be found daydreaming and watching the clouds pass by as earthworms dig holes nearby, she is the antithesis to the The Overachiever.

Best match: The Class Clown



The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time (Mark Haddon, 2003, Doubleday Group)

The Idiot Savant

This book, about a 15 year-old autistic kid who investigates the death of his neighbour's dog, is not a conventional read. A girl who reads this separates her burger into buns, patty, veggies and sauce before eating them in order with a knife and fork. In anger, she doesn't see red, she sees purple, and she doesn't feel blue when she's sad - she feels white.

Best match: The Smart Geek



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- Bachelor of Early Childhood Studies
- Bachelor of Arts in Psychology
- Bachelor of Arts with double majors in Psychology and Marketing Management

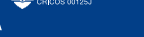
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- Bachelor of Science (IT) with double majors in Business Information Systems and Computer Science

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LOCAL MUSIC SPECIAL

THE GREAT SPY EXPERIMENT
A VACANT AFFAIR
BAYBEATS 2010
INCH CHUA
B-QUARTET





PHOTO COURTESY OF CHER HIM

THE GREAT SPY ADVENTURE

Though it's been three years since their first album, The Great Spy Experiment are ready to break new grounds with their second.

By Jotham Lian



PHOTO COURTESY OF MIKE SEE

Beneath The Great Spy Experiment's stage persona lies a tightly knitted group of friends with a typical Singaporean brand of humour and charisma that will set anyone at ease.

Comprising of frontman and guitarist Saiful Idris, guitarist Song, bassist Khairyl Hashim, keyboardist Magdelene Han, and drummer Fandy Razak, the group started out by joining Powerjam in 2006, a competition organised by radio station Power98 aimed at showcasing local music.

The group came in fourth. Not allowing this minor setback to deter them, the band relentlessly gigged themselves with their electrifying live performances to success.

Following their hit debut album *Flower Show Riots* released in September 2007, their sophomore album is set to deliver a richer alternative sound, while keeping the dance element that brought them to fame.

The band jokingly describes their upcoming album *Litmus* as "Lady Gaga mixed with Slipknot. Lady Slipknot".

"We took a slightly different approach from the first album, hoping for a variety because we really don't want to sound like before. We put in our best effort, and no matter how it sounds, we're going to be very proud of the album," says Fandy.

"This second album is a must-buy because I feel that the journey that we five took together is directly translated into our each and every song," adds Magdelene as she reflects on the production process of the new 10-track album which is slated to be released in the third or fourth quarter of the year.

Besides that, the band has visibly matured throughout the years with four out of the five members already married and parenthood drifting nearby.

Being in their late twenties and early thirties, their greatest fear is aptly described as the "loss of (their) youth".

If that brings worry to their fans out there, Saiful says, "Marriage is a big deal, but the reason why we do what we do is because we love it, so marriage and parenthood are all just happy distractions."

In addition, they were the first local band to represent Singapore at the South-by-Southwest Festival in Austin,

Texas, USA, in 2007, which was a glorious bonding experience for them to grow up as a band and gain recognition internationally. These trail blazers opened up the way for more Singaporean acts to perform in the festival.

Although the band dreams of playing at international festivals such as the Glastonbury Festival, they still remain very much rooted in Singapore.

"Our first ticketed gig at the Esplanade was really special. It was a very big night out for us and we were really touched by the response," notes Saiful.

The band is also strongly supportive of the local music scene. Even their myspace page reads "One common goal: To change the face of Singapore music".

Saiful says, "I don't know if we've changed it completely but we added another layer to it, so that nobody can say that

Singapore music is boring or stale. I think as new bands come in and they add in another layer and another layer and another layer, it will just continue to build up from there."

Talking about the difficulties of breaking into the local scene, the band does not hesitate to say that it seems like Singapore fans are the hardest people to win over.

Saiful explains, "We've got some very good talent here that cannot be denied but it's just a matter of convincing the rest of Singapore to see that as well, so that's still a battle we're fighting."

While being considered as one of Singapore's best bands, the members haven't allowed the fame and success to get to their heads.

"Before success and after success, I'm still the same old Fandy."

While The Great Spy Experiment continues to experiment with their upcoming album and gigs in the next few exciting months, the group also has a few words of advice for aspiring musicians.

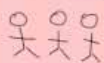
"Keep on going at it. Be patient. We see a lot of young bands with potential but they get frustrated easily. With a little bit of patience to let their music and themselves grow, I think that would help a lot more," says Saiful.

"I don't know if we've changed it completely but we added another layer to it, so that nobody can say that Singapore's music is boring or stale."

- Frontman Saiful on whether the band has changed the face of Singapore music

DAYBEATS 2010

Basement In My Loft



Enchantment - Melodic, lyrical, and awesome

Strengths: Highly intense about everything

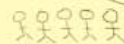
Weaknesses: Slightly obsessed about perfection, and most certainly not morning people

Power boost: Their own music

Special powers: A peaceful mind is required to work their telekinetic powers, and you'll find that in abundance among them!

Members: Adrian, Zhongren, and Dzaf

Postbox



Enchantment - Random, emotional, happy

Strengths: Eating prata

Weaknesses: Random urges to moon strangers and inability to be on time

Power boost: Recuperating at coffee shops

Special powers: Their X-ray vision makes it useful for committing nefarious deeds, so their ability to teleport comes in handy whenever it's time to run!

Members: Samantha, Isa, Ariff, Hadlal, and Wan

Run Neon Tiger



Enchantment - Jeng jeng jeng and din din din

Strengths: Songwriting and Paddy's voice

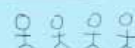
Weaknesses: Covering songs

Power boost: Ice cream, coming up with new tunes for songs and jamming

Special powers: They have a super sense of smell and a mega stage presence. We're not sure how those two are linked to one another, but take our advice... Don't ask.

Members: Paddy, Ben, Jude, and Christian

Duxton Plains



Enchantment - Inspired by sincere emotions

Strengths: Their brotherhood and passion for music

Weaknesses: Overflowing love for each other

Power boost: Taking extended power naps and doing their super secret special band chant

Special powers: The ability to fly, travel through time, influence people's mood and read their minds. Yes, they are that awesome.

Members: Zan, Sulaiman, Iman, and Aidil

GOTTA CATCH THEM ALL!

With Baybeats 2010 coming up this August 20 – 22, HYPE presents the top eight bands that made it through the Baybeats Auditions this year for your reference. You're welcome. By Clare Isabel Ee

Cockpit

☺☺☺☺



Enchantment - Epic and awesome

Strengths: Being awesome

Weaknesses: Being too awesome

Power boost: Quality time with groupies

Special powers: The ability to de-humidify surroundings. Useful in a tropical climate country like Singapore!

Members: Sludge, Johnny Danger, Psyence Fyktion, The Collapse of Uncertainty

meltgsnow

☺☺☺☺



Enchantment - Dark, dynamic energy

Strengths: A sexy David and the synergy of their personalities

Weaknesses: Overstressing about things, and being late!

Power boost: Fruit juice!

Special powers: Their super powerful insanity helps them to come up with super ideas because they're a super band, and they have super skills and... You get where I'm going with this, don't you?

Members: Lord Insanity/Dannie, Zach, Benox, David, and Adrian

The Zozi

☺☺☺☺



Enchantment - Comical Fusion Quartet

Strengths: Their easygoing personalities and a strong bond between them

Weaknesses: Being punctual and managing their money

Power boost: Creating sub-bands and playing each other's instruments

Special powers: The ability to turn invisible or transform into a vampire at will. Unable to kill easily as they are immortals ... Or so they say.

Members: Naz, Atiq, Syak, Ridzuan

Trella

☺☺☺☺☺



Enchantment - T hits the spot

Strengths: Their family and fans' support

Weaknesses: Pressure

Power boost: Huddling together and emitting a war cry

Special powers: The ability to control time. If the war cry wasn't enough to scare off their enemies, they'll do it again and again... by going back in time!

Members: Safith, Leon, Joey, Weiwen, and Bong



Arguably one of the more popular bands in Singapore's music industry, A Vacant Affair is more than just about the music as Zachary Neal Wickeremasuriya uncovers the driving force behind the music – camaraderie.

Ask A Vacant Affair how they met each other and the answer will catch you off guard. Although some of them met through online forums and Internet Relay Chat (IRC), their cohesive sound is the result of a strong, lasting friendship.

Formed in late 2003, the band consists of front-man Matthew, guitarists Rudi and Joshua, bassist Shen and drummer Hafyz, all in their mid-20s.

The past seven years was not a walk in the park for them. Each of the band members had different musical inclinations and was drawn to different musical styles.

"Naturally when you put a bunch of people together, everyone has his own notions on what the music should be," explains Rudi.

However, when preparing the launch of their Extended Play (EP) in 2006, the band managed to break down the barriers and that led to their sophomore album *Reasons to Leave*.

At a glance, one might associate their genre of music with angry, rebellious youths but it may surprise many that the driving force behind their success is their friendship. More specifically, it's the love they have for one another.

"Even though the band isn't without differences, we know each other's strengths and we try to build upon that", says Joshua.

"We feel strongly about our music", he continues. "We feel important making music and being in this band".

Despite performing on stage countless times at different venues since the start of their musical career, they still get the jitters before every performance.

"We all take some time, quiet down and get in touch with our inner selves", says Matthew. This is in addition to the brief pep talk before taking on the stage.

Their passion for music also paid off when they were the opening act for Funeral For a Friend, a UK post-hardcore band, in 2007, which they said was A Vacant Affair's main musical influence. They also opened for The Red Jumpsuit Apparatus, an American alternative rock band, in 2009 which was one of their best performances.

"About 30 per cent of the crowd knew our songs and were singing along," Matthew recalls.

Other than securing opening acts for the various big names, the band also toured four times in various neighbouring cities such as Kuala Lumpur and Manila. One thing to note though, out of the four times that the band has played overseas, they have never once played with their full lineup.

"It's like England's goalkeeping curse," Matthew says with a grin.

However, the band agrees that this supposed "curse" will not hinder the band from accepting any opportunities to play overseas. "At the end of the day it's all good. We're all friends, and we'll find a way," says Matthew.

Taking the road less travelled

Bani Haykal of B-Quartet shares with Siti Nafisah Bte Mohd Alias his insights on the band's eclectic sound

Most bands would kill to perform at iconic performing venues like Madison Square Garden in New York City or at The O2 Arena in London, but not Bani Haykal, the lead vocalist of local band B-Quartet. "I've never really thought about that," the 25-year-old admits. After a long pause, he finally decides on his dream stage – a lighthouse. "It's just interesting to be [away] from everywhere else... gather people around, and watch ships pass by."

Then again, B-Quartet – a sextet, really – is no stranger to unorthodoxy. Their unique blend of jazz, alternative rock and pop is relished as a breath of fresh air in what most music buffs feel is a stagnant local music scene where indie rock prevails.

The original quartet started out in 2000 with two pairs of brothers, who happen to be cousins as well – Haykal (also the principal songwriter), Bani Hidir on drums, Bani Raizan and Bani Faizal, both on guitars. Siraaq Kumar, who specialises in sound effects, and Luqman Hakim came on board in 2006. They also incorporate unconventional instruments such as the pianica and xaphoon into their songs.

And their secret in their decade-long foray into music, as HYPE discovers after an-hour long chat with Haykal, is their chameleon approach to every musical venture.

The title of their debut album, *Tomorrow is our Permanent Address* was borrowed from an e.e cummings poem, portraying more of an abstract sound.

Their sophomore album, *conformity has replaced consciousness*, however, was taken off a lecture by the German philosopher and musicologist, Theodor Adorno.

The 10-track album explored social issues such as modern culture, consumerism, and dogmas and marked a shift from the electronic sounds in their first album to a more organic one and showed more structure.

"People keep recycling the same thing over and over again. As a musician, I feel like I need to have a certain form of development. I've got to learn new things and apply them so that it becomes something new for myself."

As to whether their music is too deep, he says, "I see no reason to limit myself to what a certain kind of audience would want to listen to," he says. "I believe in knowing yourself first and understanding what you stand for before you actually intend to express something [and share it with people]."

This non-conformist attitude in B-Quartet's sound has also brought critical acclaim, given the four out of five stars The Straits Times Life! awarded consciousness. Haykal was even touted as "Singapore's answer to Chicago improv master-producer Jim O'Rourke".

He hopes that ten years from now, B-Quartet would still be playing together and possibly, beyond Singapore's shores.

"Everyone [in the band] has got their ideal country," Haykal says. "But as long as we're out there playing stuff, I'm good."



PHOTO COURTESY OF AGING YOUTH

the wallflower beckons

Here is Inch Chua, a girl with big dreams for local music and the voice to back it up.

By Bibek Gurung



PHOTO COURTESY OF AGING YOUTH

Inch Chua really doesn't like to stay put. Less than a year after the release of her first solo album, *The Bedroom* and returning from the South By Southwest music festival in Texas, this bubbly 21-year-old is already about to release her sophomore album, *Wallflower*.

"Imagine if you were to tear pages off my diary, it's all going to be in this album," says Inch, who describes *Wallflower* as a more sensitive and introspective effort as compared to her first album.

Even before her solo music career took off, Inch was already active in the local music scene as the lead singer for the rock band Allura. Unfortunately, the band has now gone on temporary hiatus with the boys serving National Service. Inch is just the kind of girl to seize life by the jugular, using this opportunity to take on the music industry on her own.

She launched into her solo career in 2009 after some spurring on by her mother and one powerful emotion- "Boredom," says Inch with a laugh. "It's a mixture of boredom and a place to have an outlet for all my feelings as well."

With her own style of music- a blend of folk and electronica that she calls "folktronica", Inch has gone from strength to strength.

Her debut album, *The Bedroom*, released in August last year received rave responses from fans and critics. She was also the first female solo artist to perform at the renowned South By Southwest music festival at Austin, Texas, in March this year.

After travelling literally halfway around the world, Inch returned home to work on the second album, *Wallflower*, accompanied by her trusty Shih Tzu, Mr Ricky, who was there throughout the whole recording "One of the tracks (hidden in all the songs) is just him doing his thing- scratching himself, sitting down, lying down, sleeping." she tells us.

Surprise surprise, even before the full completion of *Wallflower*, Inch already has plans for her third album. "It's going to be a little bit heavier electronic-y and just a little darker" she reveals.

But there is a reason for her, some would say, hectic pace - her passion for local music.

"I truly, truly, truly want the local music scene to grow," says Inch "and I don't know if I can make it happen. But even if I don't, I would still continue to make sure that someone else does. The only things that can make this happen are passion and perseverance."

After the release of *Wallflower* on Jul 7, Inch hopes to perform at least once a month.

And who knows, with all her passion maybe this petite girl can change the world. Or at least, our part of the world.

Inch's sophomore album, *Wallflower*, can be downloaded for free at her site, www.inchchua.com





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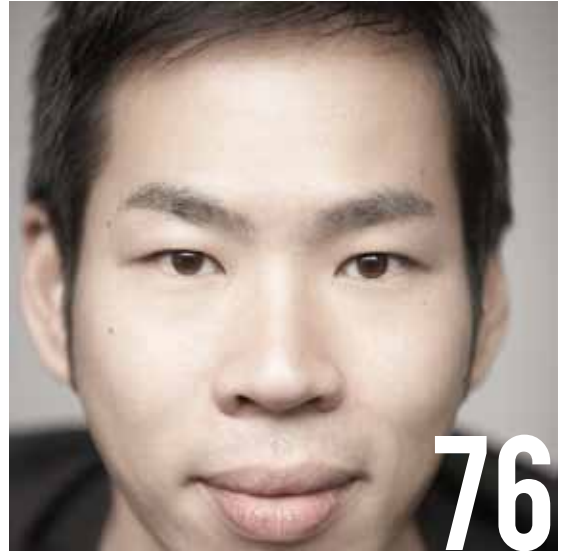
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OUTSTANDING OLIVIA ONG

By Dhevarajan Devadas

Olivia Ong, 24, is a local singer who first became famous as part of the J-Pop girl band Mirai. Talent-spotted at just 15, she released her debut album, *A Girl Meets Bossanova*, four years later. Olivia became widely known locally after singing the theme song of the popular Channel 8 drama, *The Little Nyonya*. She is now signed on by Taiwanese label HIM Music, and has released her latest album, *Olivia*, in March this year. Olivia opens up to HYPE on her musical beginning, experiences and hopes for the future.

I understand that you were signed on to a Japanese recording company, at the tender age of 15. How was the experience like? Was it very difficult for you while you were in Japan?

My studies were very much still the priority then. My work schedule revolved around school. That was a prerequisite of being part of the girl band Mirai, so I wouldn't say I missed loads at school. It was an interesting experience though. I realised it is not all about the glitz and glamour as my once naïve mind thought! I would say my time in Japan was definitely a pretty tough time. I probably did most of my growing up while I was there.

What was the initial reaction from your loved ones when you said you wanted to sign up to audition for your recording contract?

They have always known that I enjoy being on stage. It was during a break in my drama class that I chanced upon a magazine, flipped through it and saw the headline for an application that read, 'DO YOU WANT TO BE A STAR?' Without a doubt, I tore out that page and filled it in. The application was nearing the deadline so I quickly headed down to a Neoprint machine and took a photo to send in with the form. Once home, I told my mom about it and she looked through the application and decided that I could give it a try.

Did the time spent in Japan help to propel your career forward?

Perhaps 'propel' wouldn't be the right word. But what happened was that recording and releasing the songs brought me to the attention of the masses.

Where do you get inspiration for the songs you write?

The inspiration for "You And Me" came from the 2009 animated movie *Up*. The scenes of the elderly couple were very inspiring. As for "Bittersweet", the inspiration for the lyrics came from something that happened between my

friends, and the melody came from listening to the base line in Santana's "Maria Maria" and Bjork's "Isobel". Haha, don't ask me how they all came together. I think sometimes inspiration finds you. At other times, you have to find inspiration.

The song "Ru Yan" (Like Swallows) for *The Little Nyonya* was a big hit here. Has life changed for you in Singapore now that you're so much more recognised?

One thing's for sure, more people are starting to know me. This song sort of introduced me to the Chinese music scene here. I just came back from China and *The Little Nyonya* was showing in China at the moment and "Ru Yan" is becoming a very popular song. I want to share this with everyone 'cause the writer of the song is Chen Jia Ming. He deserves the credit.

How do you balance your personal life and work?

I think both are very much part of one another. I try to stay focused when it comes to work. But sometimes, you need to remember to spend time with your loved ones too.

Is there a message for your listeners you hope to bring across with your songs?

I just hope that for the cover versions, they are able to continue appreciating those songs. As for the original songs, I hope that they will be able to feel the lyrics and the melody, and to feel what I feel, be it encouragement, love, feeling uplifted, sadness or happiness. Sometimes songs can also inspire them.

Lastly, where else do you hope to bring your music career?

I think what's great about being in this career is that when your album is released in a certain country, you get to travel there to perform and meet with fans. I certainly hope to travel to more places!



PHOTO COURTESY OF HIM INTERNATIONAL MUSIC



The funny everyman

An “everyman” charm seems to be the key for Chua Enlai’s decade-long career, as **Chong Si Min** finds out.

While other professionals might give motivational speeches to aspiring actors, Chua Enlai advises them to add random aunties on Facebook.

He found this unorthodox advice particularly useful during a recent bad experience with an auntie sending him a friend request on the social networking site.

“I didn’t dare to decline it, so I just left it there.”

“And then she went to message someone else in the industry and called me a bloody jerk for not adding her!” Enlai adds with mock hurt.

The 31-year-old entertainer seemed unruffled and was perfectly at ease during the hour-long interview with HYPE at Fly Entertainment, his management company.

Having said that, the interview felt more like a chat with an old friend – one that was punctuated with random anecdotes and the accompanying outbursts of laughter.

This “everyman” charm of his – one that allows strangers to warm up to him – is, perhaps, the true secret to his decade-long career in the local entertainment industry.

Previously known as “that funny guy” in productions like *Parental Guidance* and *Sayang Sayang*, his hammy personas like B. B. See in parody show *The Noose* propelled him to be one of the most recognised faces on TV.

A complete departure from the formulaic programmes on Channel 5, *The Noose* was an instant hit with one of the clips titled “Taxi Drivers Learn French” uploaded on YouTube reaching up to 100, 000 hits.

He spent 12 years in New Zealand due to his father’s job and over there, he discovered acting as he attended weekly drama classes in his university.

After his return in the late 90s, he joined the Singapore Armed Forces Music & Drama Company – a famous stepping stone for household names like Gurmit Singh and Sebastian Tan.

Unlike the aforementioned names, Enlai wasn’t content with sticking to his comfort zone of theatre work and went on to join the silver screen.

This unusual move for theatre practitioners resulted in an

impressive portfolio, one that reveals his dedication to be an all-rounded entertainer, actor, host and comedian.

But make no mistake by dismissing him as a jack-of-all-trades, because his awards will tell you that he’s a master of at least one trade – acting.

Just early this year, Enlai won the Life! Theatre Awards Best Supporting Actor Award for his role as Gwendolen Fairfax in Wild Rice Production’s remake of the Oscar Wilde classic, *The Importance of Being Earnest*. This is his second win, following a Best Actor Award in 2002 for his role as a rent boy in *Shopping and F******.

Even so, Enlai maintains a rather zen outlook over critical acclaim.

“It was really nice getting recognition. But, that doesn’t mean that I’m better than anyone else in the play.”

However, Enlai does acknowledge the uncertainty of the entertainment industry, in particular, acting.

“Actors are probably the most insecure people in the world. There’s no benchmark. I mean, you can’t just get a grade like A+ after every episode right?”

Describing his job as perfect for those with a short attention span like himself, he’s thankful that he hasn’t got the time to regret.

“I’m lucky to get regular work that has kept me not just busy, but interested.”

And so, in an industry where change is constant and Lady Gaga-esque reinventions the norm, one can’t help but arrive at the inevitable question that looms around every artiste: What next?

“That... is a very scary question,” says Enlai before exclaiming, “I want to host a travel show. I want to get paid to travel!”

But for now, the multi-talented thespian is going to concentrate on his current projects like theatre production *Cindere-LAH!*

With a cheeky grin, he says, “Come and watch, because you’ll get to see the most stunning and drop dead gorgeous stepsister ever. But don’t actually die lah.”

No Ordinary Tom, — — — —, or Harry

36 years and 26 albums later, the multi-talented Dick Lee reveals the man behind the passion and brilliance in this interview with HYPE.

By Jotham Lian

Given the opportunity, Richard Lee Peng Boon – or Dick Lee, as we know him – would re-live every single moment in his life again. The only difference is that it would all be “better” as he revealed in a 15-minute phone interview.

Dick, in fact, constantly revisits his previous works in an effort to improve them. And the upcoming *Fried Rice Paradise*, which features a revised script from the 1990 edition together with a star-studded cast including Taufik Batisah, Lim Yu-Beng and the legendary Rahimah Rahim, is a case in point.

The *Fried Rice Paradise* 2010 edition, commissioned by the People's Association to commemorate its 50th anniversary, is actually a prequel to the 1990 edition. The earlier version features the owner of a successful fried rice restaurant deciding which of her daughters would succeed her; the current version explains how it all came to be.

“(The cast is) a fantastic group that will really bring the show to life with their personality and talent,” says Dick.

The singer, composer, playwright and also fashionista, who has devoted 36 years of his life to his passions, associates these titles to different phases in his life when he plunged himself into these different passions.

But for all his talents, Dick, who set up an entertainment company Fantastic Entertainment in 2009, hopes that public will best remember him as a musician.

“I am happy to say that for most of my life, I have been a musician and even though I am not doing a lot of music right now, I still consider myself a composer and that's how I would like to be remembered,” he says.

Although he started his music career in 1974, his breakthrough came when his eighth album, *The Mad Chinaman*, got noticed overseas in 1989.

Through the success of the album, Dick took a leap and signed with Warner Japan in 1990, leaving behind his event-management business and moving to Japan. From there, he went full-time into the music industry.

His more famous works include *Forbidden City: Portrait of an Empress* (2002), *Snow.Wolf.Lake* (1997) and *Beauty World* (1988), the latter of which was also restaged in 2008.

Not one to rest on his laurels, Dick believes there is much



more he can do in the future, such as gaining recognition for his works in the West, just like how *The Mad Chinaman* did in the East.

Although he aims to make it in the West, Dick has not forgotten about his roots.

“As they say, you can't be successful overseas if you are not even accepted in your own country, so I am very grateful that I have a place to work in Singapore, a place where I can actually stage musicals, for example.”

“At the end of the day, I am a creator and I will just have to create something that someone will notice, and that's what I'll be continuing to do.”

Fancy taking a trip to the 70's? Just answer this simple question and you'll stand to win a pair of tickets worth \$126 to watch *Fried Rice Paradise*!

When was the first edition of *Fried Rice Paradise* written?

Send in your answer along with your name, IC number, and contact details to hype.midea@gmail.com. Contest closes 13 August 2010.



AWESOME THREESOME

Four chords. That was all it took for Axis of Awesome to come up with a quirky medley that took the Internet by storm. Formed in 2006 by Jordan Raskopoulos, 27, Lee Naimo, 28, and Benny Davis, 24, these funny men shot to fame with their ingenious medley which used four chords to showcase the best of pop music. BJORN TEO speaks to the riotous trio.

Benny's a classically trained musician, Jordan's a comedian, and Lee's an iron chef enthusiast. Coming from such diverse backgrounds how did the three of you get together?

In a similar way to the Spice Girls, we were put together by the record studio executives, or 'Music Industry Fat Cats'. They saw Jordan doing stand up, Benny singing and me cooking and knew we'd be a great combination.

Where do you get inspiration from?

We usually just open the Bible at a random page and pick three words and write a song about that. That, and stuff we see around us every day.

What is the worst thing that can happen to you while on stage?

Probably a light falling onto the stage and igniting the entire room in a fiery inferno, incinerating everyone in the theatre in a horrible blazing deathtrap. That, or having our pants fall down.

What happens when the audience is unresponsive or does not get a joke you've just told?

It's considered unprofessional to yell at them and call them stupid for not getting your jokes. So we don't do that as much anymore. Usually we just move on and try to say something funny, like "Pizza Hat".

You guys stopped by Singapore recently to perform Infinity Rock Explosion! at the Esplanade. What's your next stop?

Singapore was great, and in July we head to Montreal for the Just for Laughs comedy festival, which is very exciting, then on the Edinburgh Fringe Festival for the third year in a row.

Does Axis of Awesome have any songs they're working on right now? Could you tell us more about what you have in store for us?

Plenty, we're writing our brand new show for the Edinburgh Fringe. Some of the songs include a boy band parody, a dance track you can play from your car and a cover of Elton John's "Rocket Man". Not all of those ideas will make the final show, but I'm pretty sure Rocket Man will be in there.

Where do you see yourself in five years' time?

In five years time, we hope to be performing regular shows on the moon – it's such a hard market to break into, but we're confident we can do it within the next five years.

And finally, we saw a tweet on Jun 10 that you guys were looking for a new lead singer. Were you serious?!

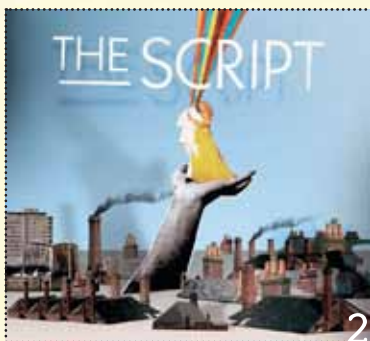
That, unlike all the answers provided in this interview, was a joke. Lee wrote that in a tantrum because Jordan bought the last hot dog at the hot dog stand. He has since been forced to apologise to Jordan and accept him back into the band. We also had to turn down a lot of applications for our lead singer that day, with most of them coming from Mariah Carey.

PHOTO COURTESY OF AXIS OF AWESOME





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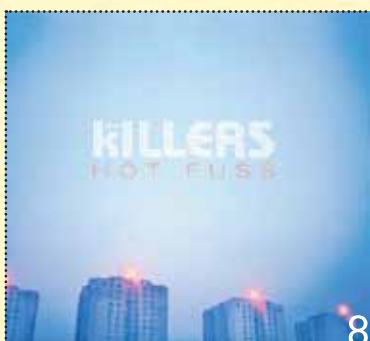
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Music defining moments

With all its ups and downs, life can feel like one huge drama, so you might as well have a rockin' soundtrack to go with it. **Melissa Tan** picks 10 tunes to cover anything the universe decides to throw your way.

HYPE UP!
Red Hot Rocker

I just received a piece of good news and I shall celebrate by headbanging like a rockstar!

Muse – Supermassive Blackhole (2006)

Headbanging isn't just for fans of heavy metal music, so if you're happy and you know it, blast Muse's "Supermassive Blackhole" on your speakers and go crazy! The UK trio has been making music since 1994 but only really shot to fame in the US when this song was featured in the movie *Twilight*. Still, don't be quick to scoff at them. Log on to YouTube, do a search for the 2007 Wembley Stadium performance of this song, and you'll see why Muse was featured three times in the 2007 release of *Guitar Hero III: Legends of Rock*. They are set to appear once again in *Guitar Hero: Warriors of Rock*, to be released in September this year.

I wish I knew how to CTRL + Z you.

The Script – The Man Who Can't Be Moved (2008)

Love can turn even the smartest of men into fools – just take the protagonist of the song for example. After the love of his life broke up with him, he camped at the corner where he first met her in the hopes of bumping into her again. Even though this song was written from a man's perspective, ladies, don't think this song isn't for you either. The popular CBS series, *The Ghost Whisperer*, has used this song as a recurring theme throughout the season when the lead character, Melinda Gordon, awaits her husband's return.

Love me, love me not. Love me, love me not.

Colbie Caillat – Fallin' For You (2009)

Crushes will always be remembered because of the uncertainty and anticipation you go through just wondering if the object of your fantasy fancies you back. With her sweet voice and radio-friendly music, Colbie Caillat's "Fallin' For You" summarises the initial process of a courtship perfectly. According to the bubbly singer, the song is all "about falling for a guy I was friends with," so don't think that there's no hope for you because you're "just friends"! For all you know, he or she could also be "fallin' for you" as well!

I really wish you were here with me

Owl City – Vanilla Twilight (2010)

After its up-tempo first single, "Fireflies", Owl City did a 180-degree turn with its melancholic second single, "Vanilla Twilight". This song about the void you experience when someone leaves you deserves the thumbs-up because it manages to capture that heartbreaking, whimsical feel without being excessively whiny. The simple yet powerful lyrics, coupled with Adam Young's gentle voice, against the synthpop tune that he is famous for makes this song a good listen when you are lying awake on your bed at 3 am, thinking about that special someone.

I belong to me and no one else.

Beyonce – Single Ladies (Put A Ring On It) (2008)

Ah, the pop culture phenomenon that has spawned many cringe-worthy parodies. Girls, Beyonce has taught us that it is perfectly fine to demand a ring from our men. Just keep staring at your ring finger forlornly and jab at it repeatedly. If you think this song is just about female empowerment, think again. For all you guys out there, just check out the parodies featuring Justin Timberlake or Joe Jonas and you'd see why even the men are putting a ring on it.

There's no school tomorrow, so let's go drink some more Red Bull!

Sugar Ray – Mr. Bartender (2003)

There's nothing like knowing you don't have school (or work) the next day to cheer yourself up. What better time to head out to the clubs to party the night away and paint the town red? While this song may have received a lukewarm reception when it was first released, the tune is pretty infectious and it's most certainly good enough for you to sway your body to. And when that happens, isn't it "so easy to rock it all night"?

Just when I thought the day could not get any worse

All-American Rejects – Move Along (2006)

There are days when life really sucks. We've all experienced it. Remember that day when it rained cats and dogs so you got drenched, reached school late, and then realised you'd forgotten to bring your laptop? Or how about that day when you were late for work and missed your train stop because you were too tired and fell asleep (and even drooled)? Sometimes, days like these just happen because life isn't fair. Let the All-American Rejects put it in perspective for you, because "even when your hope is gone, move along, move along, just to make it through".

I thought you were a friend of mine, but I was wrong.

The Killers – Mr. Brightside (2004)

There are two types of friends: the ones who will lay down their lives for you, and the ones who will turn around and stab you right in the heart (ouch!) just when you least expect it. They'll abandon you when you need them, or steal your special someone. The Killers have written a brutally honest song about friends like that in *Mr. Brightside*, with the lyrics going, "Swimming through sick lullabies / Choking on your alibis / But it's just the price I pay." The next time your trust gets misplaced again, take a deep breath, play this song, and remind yourself that some people just aren't worthy of your time (or friendship).

Let me emo in a corner by myself

Matchbox Twenty – Unwell (2003)

Sometimes, you just want to be left alone. Hanging out with friends who can usually cheer you up doesn't work. Life seems bleak and dismal. When this happens, realise that what you really need is a little 'me' time for yourself. Don't worry about it, there's nothing wrong with you. It's perfectly fine to take some time out to clear your head every once in a while. Just don't forget to sing along with Rob Thomas, lead singer of Matchbox Twenty, while you're emo-ing the night away. "I'm not crazy, I'm just a little unwell / I know, right now you can't tell."

Parents will never understand the tortured soul that I am

Simple Plan – Perfect (2003)

Let's face it. Most of us have quarrelled with our parents at least once at some point in our lives over our grades, our behaviour and the choices we've made in life. There were also times when we felt sorry for not living up to our parent's expectations. This song has been hailed as the perfect (pun intended!) song for when you need to release all that pent-up frustrations over your parents. So the next time your parents yell at you about your abysmal grades, repeat these lyrics to them, "I'm sorry I can't be perfect!"

You Tube's A* scorers

Video-sharing site YouTube has seen heaps of talent emerge from obscurity to find fame internationally, unexpectedly or otherwise. HYPE went in search of those who first got their big break through it. By Kon Xin Hua

The Charismatic

Jailbait

Justin Bieber

YouTube channel: <http://www.youtube.com/kidrauhl>

Barely 16, he already has posters of himself adorning the walls of millions of tween fangirls worldwide. Yes, we are talking about the teen phenomenon, Justin Bieber.

In a short span of time, the Canadian pop crooner who sings and dances has achieved international superstardom and recognition, among the ranks of Taylor Swift and Miley Cyrus.

His mother started uploading videos of him when he was 12 performing at a singing competition in Stratford, Ontario, back in 2007. His renditions of Ne-yo, Aretha Franklin, and Alicia Keys got him noticed by R&B superstar Usher, who then took him under his wings.

His two-part album, *My World & My World 2.0*, released in 2009 and 2010 respectively, sold more than two million copies worldwide. He is most known for infectious radio-friendly hits like "One Time", "Baby", and "One Less Lonely Girl".



The 'Umbrella' Girl

Marié Digby

Youtube channel: <http://www.youtube.com/user/MarieDigby>

It is disheartening to be signed on to a label and not get any promotion or support from them. Well, that was what happened to Marié Digby in 2004.

Instead of giving up, the 27-year-old turned to YouTube and posted covers of hit songs regularly for self-promotion.

The video that had her hit pay dirt? A casual, acoustic rendition of "Umbrella" by Rihanna. The California-based singer-songwriter's interpretation of the song – which has 16 million views to date – has even been featured on MTV's reality show *The Hills*.

The half-Irish and half-Japanese girl released her debut album, *Unfold*, in April 2008 and her sophomore album, *Breathing Underwater*, in 2009. She has also performed in Singapore for a one-night only promotion gig back in July 2009.

Kudos to her for standing her ground all these years, because Marié can cause an "Avalanche" if she wants to, she's just waiting for the right time.



The Unsmiling Songwriter

David Choi

Youtube channel: <http://www.youtube.com/davidchoimusic>

Most well-known for not smiling in his videos, David Choi defied conventions the day he smiled in one of them, and is currently the ninth most subscribed musician on YouTube with an average of 200,000 to 300,000 views for each videos he uploads.

A songwriter/producer with Warner/Chappell Music in Los Angeles, the Korean-American's road to recognition began after he uploaded "YouTube (A Love Song)", about his love for the video sharing site, and it got featured on its homepage.

At 24, he has also self-produced two albums of his own originals, *Only You* (2008) and *By My Side* (2010). Sharing about his recording process in an email interview with HYPE, he says, "It's hard, but it's not something that's impossible to do. I see it as more of an opportunity to share music with a built in audience who appreciates your music and is interested in what you have to say."

However, he remains unsigned despite his immense popularity. To that, he states, "Where I am right now, I'm happy. I don't want a company telling me how to dress or how I should write. I like doing things my way and I don't want to become someone that I'm not."

David will be playing at a free concert organised by the Esplanade as part of Baybeats 2010 on Aug 21.



Asia's pride and joy

Charice

Youtube channel: <http://www.youtube.com/user/charice>

Filipino Charice Pempengco's journey to fame is one that aspiring singers can only dream of.

She joined a Filipino talent show, *Little Big Star*, in 2005 but was eliminated after the first round. However, a fan of hers uploaded her amazing performance videos on YouTube in 2007, and the rest, as they say, is history.

In 2009, she made three appearances on *The Oprah Winfrey Show* where she was introduced to 15-time Grammy winning record producer David Foster. Since then, the 18-year-old has appeared in many different concerts and television shows, performing alongside famous singers like Andrea Bocelli and Celine Dion.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ANDREW MACPHERSON

The petite singer's abilities have been compared to Mariah Carey and Celine Dion, to which she humbly says in an email interview with HYPE, "I grew up listening and singing songs from [them] so I'm honored to be even compared to them." Her American debut album, *Charice*, rose to #8 on the Billboard 200 in its first week, making her the first ever Asian to ever enter the Top 10 of the Billboard charts. The album has spun off hits like "Note to God" and "Pyramid", the latter featuring label mate, Iyaz.

She reflects upon the past three years and says, "Fame and negative publicity is still relatively new to me. I'm still getting used to it, and just taking it as it comes. It's like a crazy rollercoaster ride for me so far."

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Fruit frenzy

Sweet, colourful and packed with vitamins, it's hard not to fall in love with fruits packed in crispy pastry crusts. HYPE trawls the island and picks four swoon-worthy fruit pies and tarts.

By Kon Xin Hua, Janine Ong & Yeong Kar Yan

Crostata ai Frutti di Bosco

\$10.80 for a whole 13 cm pie (200 g), \$26 for a whole 18 cm pie (550 g), \$36 for a whole 23 cm pie (1 kg).

Where: Perla's Pastry Boutique
9 Jalan Bingka (near Mayfair Park)
Tel: 6462 2760

Branch: Perla's Pastry Boutique
Takashimaya, Basement 2, #08-4A
Tel: 6836 7712

The Crostata ai Frutti di Bosco is a custard-based fruit tart, topped with a delightful mixture of blueberries and raspberries. It tastes just as good as it looks, with the sweet smooth custard offsetting the slight sourness of the berries without masking the taste of the berries. The crust reminds us of the base used for egg tarts; more crumbly than flaky. However, this crumble works well with this tart, as it adds more texture to the smooth custard and juicy berries.



Classic Baked Apple Pie

\$6.80 for a slice (265 g), \$35 for a whole 30 cm pie (approximately 1 kg).

Where: The Marmalade Pantry
Ion Orchard, 2 Orchard Turn, #03-22/28,
Tel: 6734 2700

Served cold, this classic creation isn't stingy with its apples, which have been caramelised to near-perfection. What's different about this apple pie is that firm slices of apples are used, instead of the usual diced filling, which gives you a crunchier bite. Raisins and cinnamon also give the pie an extra burst of sugar and spice. However, the thin buttery crust lies between flaky and crumbly. It's slightly flat, when it would have been better flaky.



Chocolate Strawberry

\$7.80 for a slice (130 g), \$50 for a whole 20 cm pie (1.2 kg), \$80 for a whole 28cm pie (3.2 kg).

Where: Fruit Paradise
Raffles City Shopping Centre, 252 North Bridge Road, #B1-44F (Tel: 6333 4849); Tampines 1, 10 Tampines Central, #03-16 (Tel: 6789 4385); Orchard Central, 181 Orchard Road, #05-51/53 (Tel: 6509 9920)

Fruit Paradise, like its name suggests, is a heaven for fruit lovers. It boasts a wide variety of fruits, such as Thai honey mango, banana, mixed berries, orange and grapefruit. Topping that is the impressive range of 12 types of tarts that come with cheese, custard or chocolate bases. One such tart that you will definitely go back for is the Chocolate Strawberry. This decadent dessert comes with six layers worth of strawberries, dark chocolate sponge cake, fresh cream, and a dark chocolate mousse base. It may sound cloyingly sweet, but the slightly sour tang of the fresh strawberries balances the whole dish out nicely.



Lemon Meringue Pie

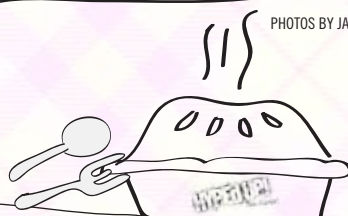
\$8.90 for a whole 8 cm pie (150 g)

Where: Double Bay Restaurant
Raffles City Shopping Centre, 252 North Bridge Road, #01-22A
Tel: 6334 6530

A perfect mix of lemon curd, meringue, strawberries, blueberries and raspberries, the Lemon Meringue Pie is a good choice of dessert after a heavy meal as it helps to cleanse the palate with its light lemony taste. The smooth lemon custard and meringue is complemented well with the thin and delicate layer of pastry crust underneath, while the three types of berries serve to balance the sour lemon taste. Unlike your normal pies, which are round, this light dessert is square shaped, and also comes with two chocolate pretzel sticks.



PHOTOS BY JASMINE CHONG



BACK TO BURGER BASICS

The word “hamburger” may make one think of fat-filled, processed meat patties slapped between bland buns but the recent influx of gourmet burger eateries is starting to change that perception. HYPE visits three new joints that create a balanced meal out of a burger. By Liu Xing, Marinne Santiago & Melissa Tan.

R Burger

This Japanese franchise has a very ambitious name and an equally ambitious mission. R Burger, which stands for Revolution Burger, aims to show its customers that there can be a “healthier and tastier” version of the hamburger.

Mission accomplished, it seems. One look at the exterior of their hamburgers and you know you are in for a totally different dining experience.

Hamburger buns usually play second fiddle to the patties, but with R Burger, their unique steamed collagen buns are truly the stars of the show.

Each white bun is injected with 1000 mg of marine collagen, a substance that stimulates collagen production, which encourages skin renewal and helps fight wrinkles.

That said, the meat patties are not a letdown. The health-conscious will definitely appreciate the pan-fried patties, which results in less oil used in the cooking process.

While the structure remains the same, the folks at R Burger are giving the good old hamburger a refreshing Asian twist, with exotic flavours such as Chicken Ume and Teriyaki Chicken Burger (\$3.80 each). If you are spoiled for choice, just go for the best.

Also replacing the usual lettuce and tomatoes are *shiso* (perilla) leaves and pickled daikon (radish), thus creating a distinctive flavour and texture that separates an R Burger from the others.

A combo meal, including a drink and a side dish, is priced



R BURGER

PHOTOS BY JASMINE CHONG

between \$6.80 to \$8.60.

Skip the Tofu Nuggets and pick the healthier Green Stick Salad instead, which is packed to the brim with carrots, cucumbers and lettuce, and topped with rice vermicelli before being wrapped tightly in a sheet of rice paper.

For the drink, we recommend their hot or iced teas, which includes the Roasted Green Tea, Oolong Tea and Buckwheat Tea.

Looks like R Burger has succeeded in creating a revolution.

Taste:



WHERE:
ION Orchard
2 Orchard Turn
B4-56/57

WHEN:
Daily from
11.30 am - 9.30 pm

WEBSITE:
www.r-burger.com.sg

PRICE:
R Burger - \$3.80



HYPE SPECIAL! Flash this page at R Burger to enjoy a 10% discount on all items. Discount is valid from 31 July 2010 till 31 August 2010.

The Handburger



The Handburger prides itself in “gourmet burgers crafted from the freshest and finest ingredients”, that is to say, everything on the menu is painstakingly handmade, with no added fillers, artificial flavourings, or preservatives.

Their signature dish, The Handburger Original (\$7.80), is a must-try. The soul of this burger lies in its 100 per cent all-natural New Zealand ribeye beef patty that comes generously coated with melted Cheddar cheese and handmade barbecue sauce. It is then put on a bed of coral lettuce leaves and sliced tomatoes to be served up on golden brown caramelized onion buns that are spread with sweet onion jam.

Top up \$4 to complete your meal with a side dish and drink. We recommend the Chilled Stuffed Tomato, which consists of a poached tomato filled with coleslaw and served with a carrot sesame dressing, and homemade Iced Lemon Tea for that extra vitamin boost.



THE HANDBURGER ORIGINAL

Taste:



WHERE:

313@Somerset branch
313 Orchard Road
#B2-17/18/19

Raffles City branch
Raffles City Shopping Centre
#B1-77/78

WHEN:

Sun-Thu: 11.30 am-10 pm
Fri-Sat: 11.30 am-11 pm

WEBSITE:

www.thehandburger.com/

PRICE:

Handburger Original - \$7.80

Fancy yourself enjoying a free meal at The HandBurger? Just answer this simple question and you'll stand a chance to win a free voucher worth \$5 redeemable at The HandBurger!

Which country is the ribeye beef patty found in The HandBurger Original from?

Send in your answer along with your name, IC number, and contact details to hype.midea@gmail.com. Contest closes 27 August 2010.



SAUTÉ MIXED MUSHROOM BEEF BURGER

WHERE:

Cathay Cineleisure Orchard
8 Grange Road
#01-02

WHEN:

Daily from 11 am - 11 pm

PRICE:

Sauté Mixed Mushroom
Beef Burger - \$8.20



Taste:



Burger Bench & Bar

We had high expectations as we stepped into Burger Bench & Bar. After all, it's helmed by Mr Willin Low, a lawyer-turned-chef who also owns three other established eateries, namely Wild Rocket, Wild Oats and Relish.

Not bad we say, for a complete meal that sets us back by about \$10 per person.

The saying, “Mothers know best”, is best exemplified with their bestselling Sauté Mixed Mushroom Beef Burger (\$8.20), which was adapted from a mushroom recipe by Mr Low's mother.

Here's the winning formula for the three-inch thick hamburger: Fresh, succulent, and well-marinated beef doused generously in a tangy homemade sauce, packed with plenty of fresh greens such as lettuce, onions, mushrooms, tomatoes, and topped with melted Cheddar cheese.

The only gripe we have is that they only serve soft drinks and didn't provide any alternatives with lesser sugar content, but all is forgotten after trying their homemade dark chocolate soft serve ice cream (\$3), which will have even the harshest critic raving.

PHOTO BY DAVID LIM HONG WEE

Sugar, flour, and everything nice

Gone are the days where men aren't allowed in the kitchen! HYPE visits the homes of three men who proves that cooking is not just a woman's prerogative.

By Amala Kannan, Bjorn Teo & David Lim Hong Wee

The Pastry Man

It is obvious to anyone that Dennis Ng's passion lies in baking, as the meek and reserved guy lights up whenever the topic of baking comes up in any conversation.

Dennis, 23, who is currently studying for a Diploma in Pastry and Baking at Shatec where he learnt pastry arts and baking treated HYPE to three delicious teatime delights – Apple Filo pastry, Pear and Cranberry cake, and Tiramisu cake.

Throughout the whole two and a half hours, Dennis persistently sought criticism of the cakes and dessert, although we had nothing but praise to offer.

"If people say your stuff is good, there's nothing to improve on so I prefer people to give criticism instead of praise," explains Dennis, a perfectionist who's willing to recreate a dish several times in order to master it.

When asked about his specialties, Dennis confidently replies without hesitation, "Mousse cakes."

He recently made a Tiramisu cake as a present to his parents for their anniversary.

He says, "I just wanted to do something for their anniversary because if they're happy, I'm happy."

Through observing his maid cook and bake for years, he finally caught the baking bug when he was 20.

His pursuit of baking only officially began a year later, when he had completed his National Service. He started with a course on traditional

Chinese cakes at Jia Lei Confectionery & Training Centre. With the encouragement of his mother and sister to pursue a career in this industry, he now works towards his dream of becoming an executive chef.

He adds, "It has to do with pride. Since I joined this industry, I want to do extremely well for the things I like. It's as if the more I learn, the better I want to get!"

Listening to him speak of his aspirations, one will remember him not only for his lips –smacking cakes and desserts but also his optimism to see the possibilities of the future.



The Health Fanatic

The Passionate Asian Chef

On a typical Saturday evening, Sathiyasivan Balakrishnan (Siv for short) would be busy setting the table at his tastefully furnished and decorated Asian-styled home. He would also be whipping up Asian influenced dishes, which is his specialty.

"Every meal I prepare is mostly made up of Asian cuisine but since I try to incorporate the styles of other cultures into the meal, it tastes different every single time," Siv, 21, says.

HYPE visited Siv one Saturday evening and was treated to a simple yet scrumptious dinner of grilled eggplant followed by honey roasted mock chicken rice. The meal ended off on a sweet note with a slice of his home-baked mango cake.

With his shoulder-length hair and various piercings, the 1.84m final-year Business Management student in Nanyang Polytechnic doesn't look like someone who would find pleasure in cooking.

Growing up in a traditional Indian family, he was never allowed into the kitchen by his mum and could only watch her work from afar despite his fascination with cooking at the age of 10. He only started cooking when he was in Secondary School and took up Food and Nutrition as an elective subject in Secondary Three.



PHOTO BY SITI NAFISAH

After graduation, he worked at various places such as Ulu Ulu Safari Restaurant, O' Gambinos Bistro Bar, Sakura (Clementi) and Shangri-La Banquet where he took the effort to mingle with the chefs and picked up different cooking styles and skills.

Already familiar with Indian cuisine, Siv was at ease with mixing and matching dishes from the different Asian cuisines.

"Cooking is just something I enjoy doing so much that it has just become part of my life," he says.

Siv considers cooking something more than just preparing meals to satisfy one's hunger pangs. He defines cooking as a creative way to express his love for friends and family.

"I cook for family and friends' gatherings. On several occasions I have cooked for the ladies I have had crushes on or wanted to date," he says.

As the old saying goes, the best way to a man's heart is through his stomach. Siv and the other new age gastrosexuals have created a new saying with their love for cooking.

HYPE visited Wilson Tan, 20, a second-year Business Studies student in Ngee Ann Polytechnic, one Monday afternoon at his apartment, who immediately puts us at ease with his firm handshake and genuine smile.

His interest in cooking started three years ago when this romantic guy wanted to bake cookies for his then-girlfriend.

"I tried experimenting and asked another friend to help me out (with the baking). I thought it was really interesting, because she told me that I could do whatever I want with it. She said I could mix around ingredients and that I didn't have to follow any specific recipes because baking is just so flexible that way", he recounts.

As he has been living on his own near Holland Village since one and a half years ago, he had to learn to cook for himself.

"Food became an issue because I had nobody to count on for dinner. It's also troublesome to keep eating out every day, so I had to start learning to cook for myself," he says.

The speciality of the Iron Chef fanatic is Italian food, with Aglio Olivo being his best dish.

"I like to cook Italian-based [cuisine]. I actually wanted a healthier meal, and Aglio Olivo is a good example of that. It's easy to cook, requires basic ingredients, and it's healthy," he says.

He makes sure that all the ingredients he buys from Cold Storage are high in nutritional value.

On why he is so particular about the nutritional aspect of the food, he explains. "I have to make sure I cook healthy because I'm cooking not just as a hobby, but also to ensure that I have a healthy lifestyle."

When it comes to creating a new dish, he takes a hands-on approach to learning new techniques and recipes.

"I like to try new ways, new methods to cook a dish. I'll go to different restaurants, talk to the chefs there and ask them about their recipes. I watch them sometimes as they cook and I note down any special ingredients or ways of cooking along the way."

It seems like this self-taught cook is more than willing to get his hands dirty in order to create a perfect dish.

chasing chinatown

In any major country, there will surely be a Chinatown that is specially dedicated to the Asians. HYPE goes on a journey to discover four Chinatowns, each with a different feel and character!

MELBOURNE MAGICAL ASIAN MIX

Melbourne's Chinatown is not just about Chinese food and culture. This rustic area is the mash-up of all things Asian, as people and businesses come together to celebrate their Asian roots and more.

By Ranon Yu

Little Burke Street, identified by two red beams and an inscription of the words "Chinatown" on the board above, is the home to many Chinese in this multicultural city.

While most restaurants located here still serve traditional Chinese fanfare, one can find food from other cultures here as well.

Kaneda Japanese restaurant, which is situated right in the heart of Chinatown in Mid City Arcade, serves delicious Japanese food. At AU\$12 (\$14), the Katsu-don set is extremely value for money as it comes with crispy chicken and fresh sashimi.

A little further down the street sits Sawasdee Thai restaurant which serves delectable Thai food. Besides enthusiastic service, the Phat Thai (pronounced as Pad Thai) they serve is about as authentic as it gets. It is a dish mainly made up of fried Thai noodles, topped off with shrimps, bean sprouts as well as crushed peanuts, which all make a fantastic texture. Although it is a little pricey at AU\$18.50, the taste of it makes up for the price.

Specialising in Singaporean and Malaysian food, Golden Orchids restaurant, which is situated next door, is the place to go if you are feeling homesick. The wide selection includes Seafood Fried Rice (AU\$10.50) as well as Chicken Curry (AU\$15). Although prices are not as cheap as the usual hawker fare in Singapore, they are worth every bit of the money.

For the girls (and maybe some of the



PHOTOS BY RANON YU



PERTH KARAOKE CORNER

By Valerie Chua

Situated right beside the CBD in Perth is its version of Chinatown, known affectionately by the locals as Northbridge. During regular school days, high-school and university students chilling out at the various hangout spots in Northbridge is a common sight.

Contrary to the general impression of Chinatown (think: crowded, and always crowded), the one in Perth is quite the opposite. It is abnormally quiet throughout the day despite numerous backpackers' hotels aimed at tourists.

On any given day, most people who visit Northbridge are the locals and the majority of them are the Chinese youths.

The main attraction for youths is the karaoke rooms going out at S\$5/hr per person at Utopia, a restaurant selling Chinese vegetarian food, and light pastries, located at 109, James Street.

For an affordable price like this, it is no wonder Asian youths are always spotted around the area. Or rather, heard belting out catchy tunes. From popular Chinese songs by Fahrenheit to Korean songs by Wondergirls, customers are entertained for a long time as most people spend up to four or five hours there.

Formosa Café, with a concept similar to Utopia's and located at 58 Francis Street, was set up with youths as their target customers. Besides the usual food and drinks, one can also catch up on the latest TV shows, play computer games, read manga, play cards or snooker.

A big plasma TV screens recent Jacky Wu variety shows at a fixed time belt and many youths are choosing to head down to Northbridge instead of going home, just to watch the shows as all of the TV channels in Australia only telecast English programmes.

Formosa café also allows people to use their facilities to study during the summer break while enjoying the air-conditioning. But really, who wants to study when there are such brilliant facilities to take advantage of?

As in Singapore, bubble tea shops are aplenty in Northbridge. With prices starting from S\$5, you get to choose from close to 50 different flavours and select your favourite toppings such as sago, jelly or pudding.

To youths in Perth, Northbridge is like a second home.

guys too), there is no lack of shopping haunts. Located on Swanston Street, inside Curtin House, is Metropolis Bookshop. The quaint little bookshop houses books on design, films, music as well as photography. It also carries little souvenirs such as letterpresses as well as postcards designed by local artists.

Those interested in vintage shopping will find treasures in Retrostar Vintage Clothing which is just a stone's throw away from Metropolis Bookshop. The shop is littered with eye-catching, quirky and colourful clothing and accessories for both girls and guys. Vintage-lovers will definitely not leave empty-handed.

Melbourne's Chinatown is a collection of different Asian cultures, with all its diversity brought into one single place. You will be surprised with what you can find here, because at every corner you turn, there is something waiting to be discovered!

HOW TO GET THERE

Here is the lowdown on Metropolis Bookshop, one of the coolest places to go to in Chinatown.

Address: 252 Swanston Street, Curtin House Level 3.

To get there, you can hop onto trams 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 64, 67 and 72, and stop at the station on Lonsdale Street near to MacDonalds. Curtin House is just a two- minute walk away.

Website: <http://www.metropolisbookshop.com.au/>

Email: books@metropolisbookshop.com.au

INFORMATION

Address: Shop 14/109 James Street, Northbridge, WA 6003

Opening Hours: Mon to Fri 11 am – 12mn,

Sat to Sun 11 am – 3 am

Take a bus or a train to Perth's CBD, and Northbridge is just a five-minute walk away from the train station.

VANCOUVER

BARGAIN BAZAAR

From authentic Chinese cuisine to bargains at the night market, Vancouver Chinatown has something for everyone.

By Erica Rae Chong

Where else can you find Chinese antiques, Vietnamese cuisine and lingerie along the same street except in Vancouver's Chinatown?

Stretching across West Pender Street to East Pender Street, it is the second largest Chinatown in North America. This is no surprise as the Asian community make up 30% of Vancouver's total population.

New Town, Old Flavours

New Town Bakery & Restaurant, situated on East Pender Street, smells and feels like an actual tea house in Hong Kong.

The mouth-watering aroma of freshly steamed buns coupled with various menus plastered along the walls, this small eatery is as authentic as it gets, with its lady boss randomly orders the staff around in sharp Cantonese.

Their signature steamed buns has two separate menus dedicated to them, one offering a list of sweet buns and the other a list of savoury ones. If you are bowled over by the staggering number of choices, the classic savoury pork bun (\$1.90) is always a safe bet. Larger than the size of a tennis ball, the fluffy bun, which is generously packed with savoury fillings, is a melt-in-your-mouth goodness.

If that isn't enough to whet your hunger, take your pick from a wide array of Filipino-Chinese pastries behind their glass display. Or you could opt for their Western cuisine, which includes dishes such as apple pie, sausages and omelettes.

Thrills and steals along Keefer Street

Open every Friday to Sunday in the summer from May to September, the Vancouver Chinatown Night Market along Keefer Street is often packed with people browsing the colourful stalls in search of great bargains.

From 6.30 pm till 11.00 pm at night, you can shop to your heart's content. Ranging from traditional Asian handicraft to cashmere scarves and maxi dresses to shades and even brassieres, there's something for everyone along the 200-metre stretch.

Street snack stalls selling takoyaki balls and noodles are conveniently located along the road too. There are also street performers and live singers crooning Cantonese tunes entertaining passersby.



PHOTOS BY ERICA RAE CHONG

HOW TO GET THERE

New Town Bakery & Restaurant

Location: 158 East Pender Street

HYPE Recommends:

Steamed Pork Bun (\$1.90) as well as the Filipino-Chinese pastries, which start from as low as \$1.60 a piece.

After 6 pm, all buns and pastries are sold at half price!

Opening Hours: Open daily from 6.30 am to 8.30 pm



SINGAPORE

DARK DISCOVERIES

PHOTO BY DENISE HENG & HO MIN YUEN

At night when most people have surrendered to slumber and are snoring away in La-La-land, Chinatown springs to life. Lydia Yap trolls through the dark alleys to uncover the light in the dark.

In the day, Chinatown is bustling with tourists shopping for *qipao* in silk and satin and wooden handcrafts despite the sun searing their backs.

But when night falls, one can stalk through the gritty back alleys in search of thrills and grub.

Tak Po, a casual dim sum restaurant that is situated at the end of Smith Street, dishes out dim sum at \$2.80 - \$3 a plate, claypot rice and porridge. At an average of per dish, diners get to have the usual dim sum fare of rice rolls, glutinous rice, shrimp dumplings, chicken feet, egg tarts and a wide selection of porridge of over 10 flavours. The Yu Sheng (\$3, \$5, \$8) which has more chunks of tasty raw fish than lettuce shreds is a dish that is value for money.

Just down the street is Mei Heong Yuen Dessert, a traditional Chinese dessert shop that is known for its mango sago dessert (\$3.50). This tart mango concoction balances its sweet sago puree counterpart drizzled on top, teasing wanting taste buds to come back for more. The almond, peanut and walnut pastes are equally good as well as the uninterrupted smoothness of the paste brings out the strong natural flavours of each, a sublime experience at \$3. However, do avoid the lunch and dinner crowds, as there are limited seats.

On the second level of People's Park Complex, home to some of Singapore's best wok food, one is able to find imported clothes from South Korea and Hong Kong at prices that rival the heartlands. There are also textile shops that stock rare lace and Gucci-inspired fabrics.

However, be warned that a few of these shops sell imitation designer apparel, so avoid getting carried away with the bargains and always shop with a discerning eye. As the evening gets inkier, it is the perfect opportunity to experience the debauchery and dark history of Chinatown.

Organised by World Travel Guide, *Singapore Chinatown's Night Walking Tour* (\$27) is a guided tour that showcases the night life in Chinatown. Happening almost every Friday, a guide leads a small tour group of about nine people on a journey through the red light district, Street of the Dead where the guide tells chilling stories of the place before concluding with supper of wanton mee.

Be warned though, one might see functioning brothels and experience the leering eyes of sleazebags.

Visiting Chinatown in the night may just lead you to view it in a different light, or lack thereof.

DETAILS OF CHINATOWN'S NIGHT WALKING TOUR

Book your tickets online at
<http://www.worldtravelguide.net/>

Location:

Starts at Chinatown MRT station, Pagoda Street exit, ends at Keong Saik Street

Time: Every Friday, 6.30 p.m. to 8.30 p.m.

Price: \$27

Eat your ~~Heart~~ Guts Out!



Fried Potato Croquette topped with Shandong Ants



Imperial Herbal Restaurant

VivoCity, #03-08, Lobby G, Singapore 098585

When:

Daily from 10.30 am to 3 am

Tel: 6337 0491

Price: \$4 per dish

From afar, it looks as if those black dots might be caviar. But they are really deep-fried with ants specially imported from Shandong, China,

The ants are crunchy and taste faintly of chicken, crumbling into powdery-like bits after a few chews. The weirdest part of eating this was the feeling as though the ants were crawling in my mouth!

Thank goodness for the potato croquette, which helped mask the strange bumpy texture of the ant bits.

Verdict:

These caviar-lookalikes may be supposedly good for your health, but we say give up on the idea of growing your own ant farm to reap their benefits!



Horse sashimi



Kazu Sumiyaki

#04-05, Cuppage Centre, 5 Koek Road, Singapore 228796

When:

Daily from 6 pm to 10 pm

Tel: 6734 2492

Price: \$35 per serving

Think of sashimi and the things that come to mind are foods like salmon and tuna, for example, and most certainly not horse sashimi.

However, tucked away on the fourth floor of Cuppage Centre is Kazu Sumiyaki, a yakitori store that serves raw horsemeat for those adventurous enough to try it.

Served in thin slices on a bed of ice, the horse sashimi, also known as basashi, is slightly sweet and tastes a little like beef, except softer. Don't let it thaw out though, or the basashi will end up degenerating into stringy pieces of raw, bloody meat. Eurgh.

Verdict:

While the horse might be treated as a pet in most parts of the world and thus considered "taboo", let go of any prejudices you might have and you'll find that it's actually not so bad after all!

Yu Jiawei Ranon takes you on an extreme food adventure right here, uncovering innocuous restaurants and food stalls. Be warned.



Pork Trotter Jelly



Lao Liang Cold Trotters & Shark's Meat (老两猪脚冻沙鱼肉)

Stall 37, Jalan Berseh Food Centre, 166 Jalan Besar, Singapore 208877

When:

Tues to Sun from 11 am to 3 pm

(Closed on Mondays)

Tel: Nil

Price: \$14 per plate

While the dish may look somewhat frightening upon first setting sight on it, it is one that has been made with much effort by the owners of Lao Liang Cold Trotters & Shark's Meat stall.

According to them, the cold trotters take at least two days to be prepared, with at least eight hours needed to set the dish overnight. The jelly was silk tofu smooth and went down very well, when paired with the special plum sauce handmade from preserved plums that have been aged for at least two years.

Verdict:

Despite our initial assumptions, the jelly is odourless and tastes really good! However, the plum sauce that goes along with it is the real star of the show – it is so good that an extra 20 cents is charged for each additional plate of itW!



Sea Cucumber Intestine



Chikuyotei Japanese Restaurant

5th Floor, Meritus Mandarin, 333 Orchard Road, Singapore 238867

When:

Daily from 12 pm to 2.30 pm; 6.30 pm to 10 pm

Tel: 6738 1990

Price: \$15 per serving

If you're a real fan of seafood, then this icky dish will be right up your alley. In Japan, the guts of sea cucumbers, also known as *namako*, are considered to be one of the three major delicacies (*chinni*) of Japan.

The intestines are first extracted from the slimy, elongated creatures and then washed, drained, salted, and finally – fermented for one week before being served to you at the Chikuyotei Japanese Restaurant!

The only way to describe perfectly the overwhelming taste of this gutsy dish is *iso*, or, taste of the sea.

Verdict:

Not for the faint of heart or those with a weak constitution! The taste of iso is so, well, overpowering that you might feel as though you've just downed a gallon of seawater. It takes guts, literally, to eat this.

PHOTOS BY RANON YU

CONTESTS

HYPED UP! flea market

To celebrate our inaugural **HYPED Up! Flea Market**, we're having a treasure hunt contest! Stand a chance to win a pass worth \$28 to The Butter Factory when you spot correctly the number of times the **HYPED! Up** logo appears in HYPE. (Hint: It can appear in **ANY** form...)

Send in your answer along with your name, IC number, and contact details to hype.midea@gmail.com.

Contest closes 27 August 2010.

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- ☐ Grab a copy of Tokio Hotel's Limited Edition CD!
pg 22
- ☐ Win a pair of tickets to watch Fried Rice Paradise!
pg 78
- ☐ Win a voucher worth \$5 to eat at The HandBurger
pg 86

TO-FU GIVEAWAY

Win a TO-FU Oyako! hamper (worth \$43.95) consisting of a Play Imaginative membership, a TO-FU Plush Clip-On and a notepad in a cute gift bag! Just email your name, IC number, and contact details to hype.midea@gmail.com.



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Photo by: Roy Sari Putra Gunawan, TMC Photographers' Community

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BA (Hons) Hospitality Industry Management

University of Greenwich, UK

MSc Information Systems Management
BSc (Hons) Computing
BSc (Hons) Games & Multimedia Technologies
BA (Hons) Business Studies
BA (Hons) Accounting & Finance
BSc (Hons) Psychology with Counselling
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