### AUG-OCT 2013 ISSUE 37

## IN THIS ISSUE Who's Afraid of Ethnic Theatre?

## KEVIN LESTER THE LION CITY BOY

100 YEARS OF T-SHIRTS OUR HAWKER LEGACY A DIRE ENVIRONMENT FORECAST RECREATION INVASION



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WALA WALA 31 Lorong Mambong



## IN THIS ISSUE

### On The Cover

### 20 LION CITY BOY

Get to know our local rapper, Kevin Lester as he roars with patriotic pride.

## 28 WHO'S AFRAID OF ETHNIC THEATRE?

Homegrown ethnic theatre groups do their best to bounce back into the scene and the hearts of local theatre-goers.

## 53 T-SHIRTSTOSTAY

Take a look at the history of T-shirts, which are celebrating their 100th birthday.

## 66 OUR HAWKER LEGACY

Stay proud of our hawker heritage.

## 79 THE WORLD WIDE WHIRL OF RECREATION

The new wave of recreational activities has hit our sunny shores.

## 82 TIP OF THE MELTING ICEBERG

The dangers are imminent if we don't step up to save our environment.

## Music

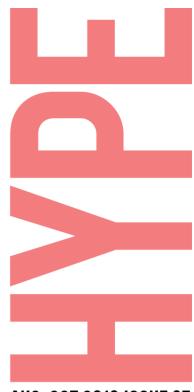
12 The FACE of Success NU<sup>2</sup>EST
13 Fly Us To The Moon Lunafly
15 A Reason to Sing Joe Brooks
16 Hardcore Honesty A Town In Fear
17 Not So Brittle After All These Brittle Bones
18 ShiGGa On The Grind ShiGGa Shay
24 Your Baybeats graduates

## Arts

26 Hungry for Fame

## Print To Screen

34 Spirited Away with Anime36 Who is More Super?38 A Faux Reality



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### Fashion

- 42 Sport-phisticated
- 46 Fairest of Men All
- 49 Self-Made Success, One Stitch At A Time
- 50 Till The Last Thread Breaks
- 56 Shining The Light On Selvedge

### Shop

59 Pocket-Sized Paparazzi60 A Little Tidy Affair64 From Consumer to Prosumer

### Appetite

69 A Tapas Invasion 70 Candy Galore 73 Old-School Delights

### Features

75 Sprayed Into Action
76 Beyond Skin Deep
77 Women Packing Punches
78 Beating The Odds
86 Oppa Obsession

### Wired

89 YouTube: Yay or Nay?90 Levelling Up With Street Fighter92 Money From The Masses

### Nocturnal

94 Monopoly: Singapore's Nightclub Edition

### Opinions

97 No, Really, I'm Fine! 98 You Don't Have To Shout To Be Heard 99 The Price Paradigm of Gifts



# HYPE

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### EDITOR'S NOTE

FOR ALL OUR PAST ISSUES. HYPE HAS ALWAYS FOCUSED ON THOSE WHO DARE TO PIONEER AND THOSE WHO CHALLENGE STEREOTYPES. THEY'RE BOLD. THEY REINVENT. THEY'RE STRONG BELIEVERS IN THEIR OWN POWERS. THEY REVOLUTIONISE.

AND HYPE #37 IS NO DIFFERENT.

THIS ISSUE, WE'RE PRESENTING TO YOU INDIVIDUALS WITH STRENGTH IN THEIR CHARACTERS, AND COURAGE IN THEIR HEARTS. DIVE INTO THE STORY OF KEVIN LESTER (P2O) AND HIS COMPELLING JOURNEY TO PUSH LOCAL HIP-HOP PAST OUR ISLAND'S BORDERS. AND IN THE SAME VEIN, WE'RE BRINGING LOCAL ETHNIC THEATRE GROUPS INTO THE SPOTLIGHT (P28). FOR THEIR RESOLUTION AND DETERMINATION TO SPRING BACK INTO THE SCENE AND KEEP THE LOCAL ART ALIVE.

WE HAVE ALSO SEARCHED DEEP INTO THE HEARTS OF THE TOUGH AND GRITTY INDUSTRIES DOMINATED BY MALES, AND BRING YOU FOUR DOWN-TO-EARTH LADIES WHO OPEN UP ABOUT BEING THE ROSE AMONG THE THORNS (P76, 77, 78).

BUT ROSES WON'T SURVIVE LONG IF WE DON'T HAVE THE COURAGE TO PLAY A PART IN SAVING OUR ENVIRONMENT (P82). SO DO YOUR PART AND MAKE A STAND.

NOW GO FORTH AND EMBRACE COURAGE.

PHOEBE LOW EDITOR



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... And **micken** is proud to present to you **WIND W** 2013! We have revamped the annual HYPEd Up! Flea Market with an extraordinary evening extravaganza at THE CATHAY, ON JUL 27, FROM **4PM TO 8PM**. With our newly implemented facelift, we promise you a visual and aural feast with music and dance numbers as you swing around to take a break from all that shopping and walking in town.

We have a whole line-up of local acts, from homegrown artistes like ASPECTRUM, DROPBEAT HEARTBEAT, SILHOUETTE AND NATALIE HONG, TO THE TALENTED CONTESTANTS OF THE FINAL 1 – all guaranteed to serenade your ears with their musical performances at the fiesta. If you're more of a visual person, fret not – we've got you covered. Dance crews THE SIREN AND URBAN TERRAIN GROOVERS will be showcasing their self-choreographed routines at HYPED Up! 2013, a scene set to excite and electrify. Also, keep your eyes peeled for the sensational stunt by contact juggler, **Nickgel Bellemene** – you would not want to miss a second of his masterful manipulation.

With the eye and ear candy settled, don't forget the arm candy and grab yourself a goodie bag. We've stashed in a whole load of items including body wash and vouchers from Sasa, and

are only 300 available so be an early bird and flock in quickly with your friends or families to get your goodie bags!

And no, we don't stop at the goodie bags. We also have NOUBLY GEVEAWAYS happening throughout the fiesta from Apm to 8pm, and one lacky draw with an array of prizes at the very end to round up the evening. A booth featuring free temporary tattoos will also be there for the inner rebels in you to indulge and run wild with some skin art. At the end of the day, everyone is taking something away with them and we're all winners, really.

There will also be booths from educational institutions, like Curtin University and PSB Academy, to address and answer your queries about universities. We want only the best for you – to be able to clear your doubts about your further education, and to have the best time at 2012 To 2013.

And not forgetting the reason for this celebration, **HYPE** will be launching the 37th issue at the fiesta, so remember to grab a copy of your favourite lifestyle and entertainment magazine! See you there!



## NU'EST: THE FACE OF SUCCESS

South Korean boy band NU'EST comes to Singapore for a full-fledged showcase for the first time. **KIMBERLY FONG** finds out how they stand out from the rookie crowd with more than rookie material.



NU'EST, which stands for New Established Style and Tempo, is not your usual South Korean boy band.

For a start, the band, consisting of members JR, Aron, Baekho, Minhyun and Ren, managed to outshine other rookie idol groups during their debut in 2012. It was a year with a recordbreaking debut of more than 60 groups.

For their urban electro music, NU'EST has already been nominated for a whopping 11 awards —in South Korean award shows like *Seoul Music Awards*, and internationally, like the *Soompi France Awards*—bringing three home for outperforming their peers.

"I fell in love with them the moment I met them...their music style is different from others. I think their songs are important and relevant to youths around the world," says Bhurata Lohanan, 23, who flew in from Thailand with her friends just to watch the *NU'EST L.O.A.E TOUR* here.

Perhaps NU'EST owe their success to

to their focus on social issues that may have resonated with many. Their debut song "Face" was written with the intention of raising awareness about bullying. The music video garnered over 18 million views on YouTube although it made no impact on the music charts. They continue to tackle social issues in their songs.

With their international fame evident just four months after their debut, NU'EST started performing in countries like Thailand, Australia, America, Turkey, Malaysia, Japan and Singapore. A 3,000-seat 'mini concert' in Japan sold out in only 10 minutes, whereas their showcase in Singapore gathered about 1,000 fans.

The fame isn't too much to bear for the youthful group though—all five are below 21—as they continue heaping job titles onto their resumes – titles such as model, radio DJ, and actor.

Not forgetting the ones responsible for their success, NU'EST make it a point to treat their unyielding fans well. "We would definitely like to do activities that really involve the fans, not just a showcase where we're on stage and they're in the crowd ... we want to play games together and things like that that would get them more involved," says English-speaking member, Aron.

Forgoing the age-old 'mini concert' at their showcase here on June 22, they treated fans to games and quizzes in a cozy setting at the Kallang Theatre. A lucky fan even received a prize from Baekho, who delivered the prize right to her seat, while the fans surrounding her stared in amazement at how close they were to the star. NU'EST answered questions that fans wrote on little Post-it notes, making it seem like a personal interview. The showcase concluded with NU'EST performing an English version of the song 'Sandy'-specially altered for the much delighted fans in Singapore.

Undoubtedly, the boys' first showcase in Singapore made a lasting impression, proving that they're here to stay.



## FLY US T THE MOON

With their sights set on the world and nothing less, Korean boy band Lunafly proves that they are not your run-of-the-mill K-pop group. Join **DENNIS LAM** as he discovers how they manage to mesmerise their fans.

Most artistes are able to execute a near-perfect delivery of their own tracks, crafted by a team of composers and songwriters. But Lunafly kicks it up a notch by performing their own compositions in two different languages.

"When we write songs, the English version comes first and the Korean comes second," says Sam "Sam" Carter, 26, leader, singer and guitarist of Lunafly.

He knows this best since he's the reason the band possesses a bilingual advantage over their competition. The half-British, half-Korean leader, who grew up in London, gained popularity through Munhwa Broadcasting Station's *Star Audition 2: Birth of a Great Star in 2011* and was later signed with Nega Network, a Korean record label.

He was later grouped with thenartistes-in-training, Shin "Teo" Taeho, 20, and Han "Yun" Seung Yun, 19, to form Lunafly. With Teo as the drummer and Yun as the guitarist, the singersongwriter trio stands out as a band who plays their own instruments and performs their songs live.

Their debut showcase in Singapore at the Hard Rock Café on May 12 saw them keeping to that high quality of performance as not a single song was lip-synced to the crowd of fans. "We've never had such a reaction to that song before," exclaims Sam, pleasantly surprised by the spirited cheering after performing "Fly To Love", the title track of the band's first studio album of the same name.

Their remarkable showmanship was not the only thing that had the audience screaming. The trio turned on the charm, much to the delight of the fans who travelled from all over Southeast Asia, Japan and England for the showcase which also promoted the group's first studio album.

Released on Apr 3, *Fly To Love* exhibited the band's unique bilingual edge by containing two CDs – one holding 10 Korean tracks, and the other holding the same number of songs in English.

The trio has come a long way since the first release of their iTunes album with two English songs on Sept 6 in 2012. They officially debuted 21 days later with their first digital single, "How Nice It Would Be", and held their first international performance in Japan at Tokyo's FM Hall on Dec 1.

It is no surprise though at how Lunafly garners their international fans with ease. With their strong emphasis on the standard of their lyrics and tunes, the band's bilingual skill is only one of the many factors behind their global fame. Fans may also be attracted to the band's acoustic melodies that make for easy listening. The band's style and personality are a harmony of each member's music inspirations and idols. Yun recalls in Korean, "I listened to John Mayer and Eric Clapton; they made me want to learn the guitar." For Teo, it was Jamie Cullum who inspired him to play the piano in high school.

"There's no need to put more instruments into [it]; we just want to make it simple and let the melodies talk for themselves," Sam elaborates.

And Lunafly will keep standing by that – writing and delivering songs that are as honest and as true to themselves as possible. After all, the world's what they're after.

### **ORIGINS OF THE BAND NAME**

In an interview with Soompi, Sam said that the name 'Lunafly' (fly to the moon) was one that all three members came up with together. He revealed, "We kind of live by the motto that anything is possible, and with man being able to fly to the moon... we really believe that anything is possible."

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## A REASON To sing

Back in Singapore for the second time, Joe Brooks shows **TAY SHU WEI SHERYL** that in music-making, honesty is the best virtue after all.

A thing one can be sure about with Joe Brooks' songs are that they're all genuinely written and composed with the heart of the 26-year-old singersongwriter, who draws inspiration from his emotions and life experiences.

"I think it's very difficult to be respected by anybody when you are not honest in the song because people pick up on it. People aren't stupid, they know if it's real or not," says Joe, who just finished a US tour before coming to Asia to perform in Korea, Malaysia and recently, Singapore

"It's just a subconscious thing we have as humans, to know whether someone's being genuine or not, so all of my songs are as honest and to the point as I can be."

And it seems that practising honesty is the formula for success for the independent UK singer, who is back with a new album, The Boy & The Broken Machine, which he describes it to be more mature than his previous records, Constellation Me, Maybe Tomorrow and A Reason To Swim.

After all, that is Joe's fourth EP in his discography, which includes three other EPs and a full studio album. Starting off as a MySpace artiste at the age of 17 in 2005, he has indeed come a long way – from learning how to play the guitar himself to

#### $\bullet$ $\bullet$ $\bullet$

independently building a successful musical career for the first two years.

"[The Boy & The Broken Machine] has an element of fantastical magic... The songs tell a story, kind of like the last three years of my life in terms of [my] career. A lot of the stories reflect the fight within, to pursue your dreams and get to the place you want to be," says Joe, and highlights "The Island" and "Six String Soldier" – two tunes from the album that Joe feels best describe his life so far.

I think its very **difficult** to be **respected** by anybody when you are not **honest** in the song, because people pick up on it. People aren't **stupid**, they know if it's **real** or not

- Joe Brooks

In the pursuit to his dreams, Joe not only writes and performs his songs, but also attempts to direct. He described his first try to produce the music video of his album's single "Til' My Heart Stops Beating" as both an adventure and challenge.

"I learnt so much... so much that I never want to do it again," laughs Joe as he recalls his experiences vividly.

According to an article in The New Paper, "Til' My Heart Stops Beating" was inspired by the distance between him, while he was touring, and his current girlfriend, Molly, who he introduced to fans via Facebook, earlier in April.

"We met at a party, I was a guest and she was working. She was behind the bar and had never ever made a drink before... There was only one drink on the menu and she didn't know how to make it. I thought that was kind of funny, so I made it with her," explains Joe, of their first encounter.

"So that's how I met her the first time and it wasn't like another couple of years before we got together," he continues shyly with a boyish grin spreading on his face.

With many musicians who remain mum about their love lives, Joe's honesty is not only refreshing, but is also indeed his best virtue. Any future plans for the youthful musician?

"World domination," answers Joe mischievously, without hesitation, and a little too honestly.

## **HARDCORE** HONESTY

Combining positivity with conviction, A Town In Fear's unique approach towards hardcore music will certainly be a force to be reckoned with and **GERALD TAN** explores why.

Mixing brutal breakdowns with heartfelt lyrics, A Town In Fear's (ATIF) sound is a refreshing take on the hardcore music genre. Instead of gritty messages propagating negativity, love and loss, familial ties and perseverance are some dominant themes the Singapore boys are singing (or screaming) about in their latest album "Traditions".

The music of the hardcore outfit's comprising Linus Chan on vocals, Tan Shao Wei (Shao) and Wayne Tan on guitars, Farza on bass, and Bruce Koh on drums—definitely isn't for the faint-hearted. Visceral growls and screams are combined with aggressive instrumentals to face-melting levels, leaving listeners with high-octane fueled heartbeats. Taking command of the stage at live venues such as the The Substation, they deliver non-stop adrenaline, ensuring the crowd ensues into chaotic mosh pits.

Unsurprisingly, their expert showmanship and musicality have had them sharing the stage with A Day To Remember—the very same internationally renowned act that has influenced them—at Fort Canning Park in March last year. Moving forward, in June 2013, ATIF performed at the *Hurricane In Vein Tour MMXIII* in Johor Bahru, as one of only two local bands to be featured in the Malaysian lineup, alongside For Better Endings. Incredibly, behind all the breakdowns and head-banging, ATIF also has a delicate sensitivity to both their melodies and lyrics. Upon a few listens, the complexity of their guitar work begins to stand out, hinting that there is, indeed, a method to their madness. Shao explains, "We want you to feel what we feel when we put something out there."

### WE HAVE BECOME MORE MATURE AS THE RESULT OF WORKING AS A UNIT.

### - Linus Chan, Vocalist

With such an abundance of heartfelt honesty and sheer conviction, it is hard not to feel a personal connection to the musicians behind those songs. Samuel Ong, ex-vocalist of local hardcore band Picture This Perfect and current vocalist of alternative rock band, Giveth, feels that by "utilising successful elements of different genres, their songs are kept interesting, and manages to reach out to their audience". Whether on or off stage, it quickly becomes evident that this band is very much about the music and camaraderie. As they journey through the ups and downs as a band, Wayne feels that they have "learnt from each other everyday" and Linus agrees, adding "We have become more mature as the result of working as a unit."

Keeping their friends and family close, the band hopes to reward them with a stream of new music, and have their fans, who have been with them since they started out, to experience the changes in their playing styles as they continue to strive towards honing their sound.

Exciting prospects lie over the horizon for this quintet, and they are ever ready to embrace upcoming opportunities. Hot on the heels of making a name back home for themselves, ATIF is already locking their sights on the music scene overseas, and share a mutual belief in "dreaming big cause we've got nothing to lose."

While it is indefinite how far they will travel, fans can be rest assured that even after a multitude of voyages, hardcore music remains their utmost passion and, in the words of Farza, the way they started out will be the exact same fashion in which it will end.





## NOT SO BRITTLE AFFERALL

A soulful voice and profound lyrics make the teenage singer Chris Jones stand out, as **ATIKA LIM** finds out.

"Hi, my name is Chris Jones and I go by the singer-songwriter name These Brittle Bones. I'm 14 years old," says the precocious blonde, whose stage name was inspired by a line in a song, "Candles", by one of his favourite bands, Daughter.

"Well I have brittle bones, it seems, I bite my tongue and I torch my dreams," the line in "Candles" which Chris felt that it fitted well with his intimate and melancholy style of music in a "brittle way".

The young musician, who seemed to be more mature than his age implied, surprised the solemn crowd that attended Music Matters Live in Clarke Quay, when he performed his latest single, "Bloom" - a gripping song about starting afresh in Singapore.

"I can't believe that he's only 14. I thought he was 20 or something," says Daniel Berzin Chua, 18, one of the audience members at the event.

Yet, one should not be fooled by the youthful exterior of the singer. At the age of 13, he performed his first gig in 15 Minutes, a local café and caught the attention of his current manager, Jonny Taylor, who had come across his music online the previous year.

"A lot has happened in a year which I am very proud of," Chris says.

Now at 14, Chris is working on his debut album, slated to be released sometime between June and August next year.

#### • • •

Fans can expect more thoughtprovoking songs from the young singer. A quick look at his lyrics shows that he is a big fan of analogies. He explains, "I want listeners to interpret the meaning for themselves."

Chris enthuses that inspiration comes to him from everywhere. "I was born in the UK and grew up in a place called The Mumbles in Wales near a catchment area and the landscape is pretty inspiring.

"Being away from home can do a lot of things to people," he says.

And for him, one of those things is creating "flawless music that stirs even the hardest of souls", according to an article in the local nightlife and lifestyle magazine, JUICE, back in 2012. "I know that some people might say that the music scene in Singapore is not very [thriving], but it's been rather smooth for me," notes Chris, who has been playing the piano since he was seven and has never regretted his decision to be a musician.

His passion is evident in his beliefs in creating and writing his own music.

"I believe that songwriting is an integral part of being a musician... It is an incredible cathartic release, and it helps me release all of the emotions that get bottled up inside," he explains.

So what's next for this grounded and ambitious young talent? "I'm hoping to tour. We'll see how it goes," Chris remarks, with the glint of a sensible musician in his eyes.

Call, the relics hung by low, Of awe you found bestowed.

Don't go, you're falling into the trove, And all but ceiling lone.

Melt, in bloom you found yourself.

" Bloom" by Chris Jones

## **SHIGGAONTHEGRIND**

## Wit and grit make ShiGGa Shay a rapper to be reckoned with, as **DOUGLAS YONG** finds out.

Before turning 21, the rapper had already graced countless local gigs, with a mixtape and an EP under his belt. It is undeniable that he is the face of Singapore's rap and hip hop scene.

His story is like many musicians' — the journey has not been smooth.

"Being a local artiste is always a struggle. You always have to fight for a position to play or get your art out," says ShiGGa Shay, whose real name is Pek Jin Shen.

Better known as Jin to his friends, the rapper, who will turn 21 in September, has a proven success formula. It's all about, he says, "finding your own voice and being yourself, not trying to copy anything that's out right now and following anyone you think is cool. Having the courage to be yourself, it's difficult sometimes,"

#### **TAPPING INTO RAP**

Jin first came into contact with rap at the tender age of nine, when his mother bought him the year's compilation CDs of greatest hits. Among the songs was "Cleaning Out My Closet" by American rapper Eminem, a dark song that portrays his rocky family relationship.

"I was instantly intrigued and got attracted to rap," says Jin.

Eventually, other distinguished rappers such as Tupac Shakur, Nas, The Notorious B.I.G. and Jay-Z drew him into the lyrical world of rap.

Jin then started tapping into the genre by listening to the radio. Whenever a rap song comes on, he'd immediately grab a pen and paper to scribble as much of the lyrics as he can. That way, he could study the format of the lyrics and attempt to change them to make them his own.

By the age of 14, he was already thinking of a stage name. Believe it or not, he found it in a dream.

Although his mother did not object to him pursuing a rap career, she was still worried for his studies. He eventually graduated with a diploma in Media & Communication from Singapore Polytechnic.

#### **GROWING UP**

Jin grew up quickly when his father passed away in 2009 when he was 17.

"I became the man of the family... I had to take care of my mom. It got me more mature as a person."

His maturity soon propelled him into the industry.

Jin caused waves on the Internet when he released his first rap mixtape, *ShiGGa Shay's In The Building*, for free download, in July 2010.

His former manager, Marcia Tan (manager for Electrico), succeeded in getting him to perform at the 2010 National Day Parade. He produced the remix of "Home", alongside famed music director-producer Sydney Tan, as well as local powerhouse musician-producer Don Richmond. "I was more star struck than stressed," Jin describes his experience working with the two producers. "Sydney Tan... was like a mentor and had taught me a lot in music, from mixing to recording and to producing."

#### **ACCIDENTAL INTERNATIONAL FAME**

In 2011, Jin's music video *On My Grind* was featured on World Star Hip Hop, a premier online hip hop platform and community for both established industry artistes and budding rappers. He was the first Singaporean to be featured and with 120,000 video hits, he was crowned the "Unsigned Talent of the Week".

"I was really shocked," he shakes his head in disbelief. "I had a really long night recording the day before and only woke up at 3pm. Lots of text messages came in telling me I was on '*World Star*' and hundreds of tweets were coming in too".

"I didn't know what was happening until I saw myself on *World Star Hip Hop.* At that point in time I had a tenant and I remember banging on his door shouting, telling him I'm on *World Star*," he chuckles.

Till this day, the rapper still doesn't know how his video ended up on the illustrious website, earning him a prestigious title.

#### **ROLLING IN THE HITS**

Jin released his debut EP "*They Call Me ShiGGa*" in May last year, where his lead single Let's Roll landed in 98.7FM's Top 20 Charts.

"It's a big achievement for me, because radio never played my songs."

His EP was a finely crafted concept with a purpose: to re-introduce his music to the world. The process to ensure top-notch quality sound was tedious, but Jin considers it as a milestone in his life. "Every song tells a story about myself. The mixtape was a loosely threaded piece of work I did for fun, but *They Call Me ShiGGa* was a statement."

The rapper is obsessed with making music, skipping meals, working for two days straight without sleep. He says, "When I work on music, I don't like stopping. If I get into the zone, I just keep working."

### **DREAMSOF THE FUTURE**

The rapper is currently serving National Service and is part of the Singapore Armed Forces Music & Drama Company (SAF MDC). He was in Rockhampton, Australia, for the Defence Relation and Goodwill Performance in December last year where they did eight live shows. A YouTube video shows Jin and his comrades serenading ladies on the streets Down Under with an acapella version of "Rock My World" off his debut EP, earning him claps and kisses.

There is no doubt that ShiGGa Shay is helming the local rap game. He credits his fans for keeping him motivated.

"When someone tells you that they are inspired by your song or they can relate to a certain part of the lyrics. [Especially] When I perform at shows, they sing my songs word for word, that motivates me. It makes it worth it."

Having collaborated with various local artistes like Vanessa Fernandez, Inch Chua, Sylvia Ratonel, and The Sam Willows, Jin has big dreams to work with rap mogul, Jay-Z.

"He's one of the most influential guys, not only in hip hop but all over the world. I think his style and my style would really complement each other."

Jin recently embarked on a new project, a song titled "Limpeh" (Hokkien for your father) produced with local YouTube personality, Tosh Zhang (Tosh Rock). The song comprises three languages: English, Mandarin and Hokkien. They performed the song together in March at *Esplanade Presents: On The Waterfront* and the song was released in Jun 25, on iTunes, along with Limpeh merchandises such as snapbacks and T-shirts.

Upon its release, "Limpeh" shot to the top of the iTunes Singapore charts within 24 hours, making it the only top song that has no radio airplay and music video.

"I have a lot of songs, [but] it's about putting the right songs together." Fans can expect in "early 2014" a new free mixtape and another EP.

Jin knows that it's a daunting task to make it big in the local scene, but he advises youths to do what their gut feeling tells them to do.

"In the beginning I had no idea what I was doing. I had nowhere to go, no one to look for. Nothing. I knew nobody at all. But I like to rap and I like to make songs. I just do it."

He adds, "If you're going through hell, keep going."

### GIVEAWAY

Stand a chance to win ShiGGa Shay's autographed EP, They Call Me Shigga by naming his latest single that topped the iTunes Singapore Charts. We only have three to give away so act fast!

Simply leave a comment on our FaceBook page (facebook.com/HYPEsg) and we will inform the winner via FaceBook message. Contest ends on 17 Aug

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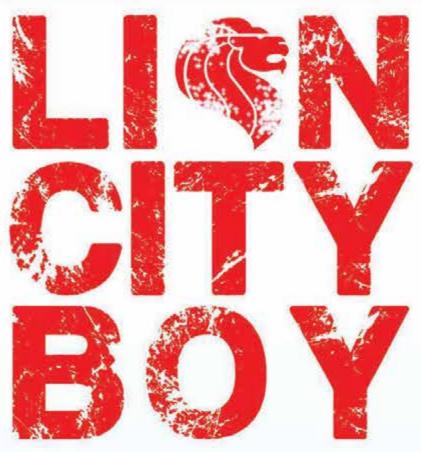
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GO OUT THERE AND EXPERIENCE LIFE,

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## **Roaring Sound Waves Across Shores**

Returning from a triumphant North American tour, Kevin Lester, one of the pioneers of hip-hop in Singapore, isn't catching his breath just yet. **JOEY LEE** and **NICHOLAS YEAM** find out how the rapper intends to bring his music across the globe.

"Don't you hate it when your wife pocket dials you?"

Not something you'd usually hear from a rapper supposedly immersed in the stereotypically wild and unrestrained hip-hop culture.

The newlywed's latest album, Everything You Love You Hate released on April 2013— has done notably well, securing the top spot of the local iTunes charts for 'Best Hip-Hop Album'.

"This was my first conceptual album where the tracks all revolve around a theme. My music isn't exactly very mainstream so it's good to know that it still has a place in Singapore," Kevin reveals about his EP.

"It was tough emotionally writing the album because it came from many stories about heartbreak and difficulties. You might not be able to hear it in a literal sense but I like writing songs that are open for interpretation," he adds. Kevin has since brought his Singaporean flavour of hip-hop past our borders, and into North America. The rapper toured from Atlanta to New York, before his scheduled gig at the South By South West Music Festival (SXSW) in Texas, and a final performance at a radio station in Connecticut.

"It was all about promoting the album and introducing my music to the crowds over there," Kevin says.

### FROM CORPORATE TO CREATIVE

Everybody probably had that one dream of being a famous musician rocking it out on stage before, but for most people, that's all that it is -a dream. Not for Kevin Lester though.

Having completed his National Service in 2007, Kevin had planned to further his studies in Australia or, in his own words, "do something clichéd like that".

However, after mulling over it, he

decided to "do something different" and started a band instead, which was when SIXX, a nine-member band, was born.

He reveals, "I was also working at that time, so I had to juggle music and my day job. Over time, SIXX started getting more recognition and the whole thing started picking up traction. We started getting calls to play everywhere."

At that time, Kevin was a reluctant member of the corporate world, where he worked as a marketing manager in an information technology company and was constantly dreaming of the day he could pursue his true passion.

With a slight shrug of his shoulders, he admits, "Quitting my job was an easy decision. It was a lot harder having to adjust to the music industry, where it isn't as secure and structured.

"The hip-hop scene in Singapore was still in its infancy and people would



### FROM THE TEH PING, TO THE NASI PADANG, TO THE MEE POK, IT S WHAT WILL NEVER LEAVE HOME, MAN

look to me as one of the early pioneers of this genre here so I felt like it was my responsibility to do whatever I can to help hip-hop grow here."

Besides the drastic lifestyle change, Kevin also had to deal with his concerned and slightly doubtful parents.

"Here in Singapore, when you tell people you're a musician, that's still not too bad."

Then, he leans forward and says, "But imagine telling your parents you want to be a rapper.

"They weren't exactly convinced and kept asking me to think about it first but after a while, I think they sort of gave in and accepted it. They're a lot more supportive these days," he adds, laughing.

Of course, being a musician in Singapore is a lot different now than it was just a few years ago.

"I started off at a time when social media wasn't as huge as it is today. It was all about radio and open mics if you wanted to get noticed," shares Kevin.

"Nowadays, you have YouTube, which is a very good platform to share your music. Of course, you also have local music festivals like the Baybeats

22 HYPE

Music Festival and the IGNITE! Music Festival on top of all the existing financial grants and artist schemes that the government is offering.

"Now is a really good time to be a musician in Singapore."

However, with such a rocky path constantly filled with obstacles and difficulties for himself, has there ever been a point when he paused and wondered how life would have been if he had continued in his more conventional and stable position as a marketing manager?

"I've never looked back," he confidently answered with a subtle shake of his head and the hint of a proud smile on his face.

### THE OVERSEAS DREAM

The thoughts of life overseas are nothing short of spectacular. Starting life afresh with nobody to account for; adopting an identity that you probably only figured out a little too late as you grew up; submerging yourself into a culture that you could only dream of living in throughout your adolescent years. For Kevin, that utopian dream lies in the Land of the Free.

"When we played in New York, it was a sensitive thing, because that's where hip-hop grew. It's not just a genre there; it's a culture. People grew up believing in it," says Kevin dreamily.

"In Singapore, it's almost like a scene. Here, people are still finding out how to rap, and what is rap. They think every line needs to rhyme."

Savouring the inherent appreciation for hip-hop, Kevin swept through America and created a decent buzz through his performances in New York and Atlanta, before finally swinging down to Texas for the SXSW, at which point he had already established relations with Sony.

"I was standing on a rooftop performing, and being projected onto a building. It was amazing, no doubt, but there were over 2,000 bands playing; imagine trying to stand out from 2,000 bands," he emphasises.

Hailing from an island that pales in comparison to America in size, – let alone the music culture – one would expect the rapper to be stumped when arriving at such a foreign land where nobody's heard of him or his music before. Strangely enough, that wasn't the case for Kevin.

"There was a conference going on in Singapore that said it's hard to gain trust in Singapore. It takes three people to tell you about a local band before you believe that they are good. In the States, you have people interested to check out new stuff, and the crowd is always livelier and participative, which usually translates to them being more into your music," Kevin admits slightly abashedly.

"In America, if you're new and you want to have a song played on radio, they'll play a song on radio. If it doesn't work, it doesn't work, that's all. But here, there are so many layers to go through," he says.

"Ultimately, wherever the market is, I will go, because, for example, people are very receptive to our music in North America, and that's why we keep going there."

In that case, what's keeping Kevin from just picking up his bags and going over then?

"There's nothing that compares to Singapore food. We played in France, and everything is bread. In New York, it's so cheap to find fattening food and so expensive to find healthy food.

"In Singapore, there's more spice and colour to the food, and it really stands out from these places. I bring Maggi Curry wherever I go, because it really feels like home. From the Teh Ping, to the Nasi Padang, to the Mee Pok, it's what will never leave home, man," he gushes.

Above everything else though, the

rapper still sees something beyond his grumbling stomach.

"Singapore is like my mother. I don't agree with some of the things that she says and the things she makes me do, but she still 'gave birth to me'," he says, nodding, with the slightest of smiles, and a twinkle in his eye.

#### **GEARING UP FOR THE FUTURE**

Being a fervent purveyor of local music, the rapper – who goes by the moniker of Lion City Boy – confesses how he's glad that the local scene is slowly, but surely, improving.

"Baybeats is great. The lineups are solid, and bands all want to be part of its history. Ignite by Republic Poly is upcoming and it's great as well. It's a full show, and they even had a live feed to YouTube. It's good, because you know that even students can be doing things like that."

Still, Kevin thinks that there is a missing spark somewhere that is holding the homegrown music scene back.

"There are promoters, there is money, there is an audience. I mean, look at Laneway. There is a community searching for new music, but there is no synergy for all these little pieces of the puzzle to be put together. Everyone needs to come together for the music industry to get to the next level," he says.

"Artistes at the end of the day, just need to make sure their music is good. If you're a radio DJ, you hold a responsibility, you're part of the community, and not just holding a job. Like when Vanessa Fernandez was part of the radio industry, she was a real advocate of local music, and she was amazing," he adds.

At the end of our two-hour-long interview, we popped the age-old, yet timeless, question.

"So, what's next for you, Kevin?"

Like the seasoned pro he is, he answered our question with nary a pause.

"The focus is still on the album. It's my main thing and I've been performing in the States, but now, I want to give it some legs in Singapore. I'm a big fan of football, and people talk about the Lakers and other sports, so my friend and I wrote a song about the Lion's Cup that led up to the final match.

"Hopefully, it will be the anthem for the city, because, (and he grins slightly as he says this) maybe people are tired of the typical National Day songs."



## YOUR BAYBEATS GRADUATES

Since its arrival in 2002, Baybeats has easily become the biggest local music festival in town which spans over three days. **NICHOLAS YEAM** expounds on how it provides a good springboard for aspiring musicians.



• • •

For years now, the music festival has propelled many local bands to break into the local music scene with ease. We look into the proud list of Baybeats graduates and catch up with three bands – Cashew Chemists, Aspecturm and Caracal – to see how far they've gone since their Baybeats debut.



## ASPECTRUM

Previously known as Godzilla, the group of Tejo D'Cruz, Rino Darusman, James Barker, and Shaun Sloane recently changed their name and are now known as Aspectrum.

Tejo says, "Aspectrum is supposed to represent our entire spectrum of diversity within the band because we're all quite different in terms of culture, background and musical taste."

The band came together two years ago as the result of an after-school interest group and admitted that back then, they "didn't have a clue on what to do".

James says, "We didn't know how to get gigs... so we just kept entering competitions."

It was only after taking part in the Noise Singapore mentorship program that they met their mentor, Saiful Idris from The Great Spy Experiment.

Tejo says, "We owe Saiful everything, really. He was the one who showed us how to go about being a band in Singapore and if it weren't for him, I really think we wouldn't be where we are now."

James adds, that Saiful gave great advice on audition day, which probably helped them to get the gig. In fact, Saiful was present during Aspectrum's Baybeats audition long after the mentorship programme ended.

During the auditions, Tejo also shares that the band was "insanely nervous".

He says, "We were all about 15 or 16 and were easily the youngest band there. It was terrifying, seeing all these bands with big, bearded guys."

Currently working hard to build from the attention they've already garnered from Baybeats, Aspectrum recently launched their debut EP, *Prologue*, and were even asked to open for The Dirt Radicals during their show here back in July.

James says, "We never thought that would happen so it's amazing, really.

"If there's one band that I'd like Aspectrum to emulate, it would be The Dirt Radicals."





## CARACAL

Collectively known as Caracal, Martin Kong, Field Teo, Gabriel De Souza, Henry Velge, and KC Meals started out eight years ago as a group of friends who simply enjoyed jamming together and covering their favourite songs.

The boys auditioned for Baybeats back in 2007 and admitted that it wasn't easy being in the local music scene before they made their way into the Baybeats lineup.

Field says, "We got through the auditions by a stroke of luck, really. Before that, we had to work really hard and we'd play every show, even the small ones at weird timings.

"We would even book two gigs on the same day just to push our music as much as possible. We didn't have the best equipment or a proper form of transport but we made do."

Fast forward five years and the band

has built up a notable following locally, and possibly internationally as well.

Caracal recently toured Japan last year and shared that the experience "was a real reality check".

Henry shares, "Japanese bands are always very professional and humble, plus they write awesome music. After seeing them play, it was like a punch in the face. In a good way of course."

As for their plans for the future, the band reveals that on top of their individual work and National Service commitments, they've been spending a lot of time in the studio working on their upcoming second studio album.

KC says, "We've been writing a lot of new material and are hoping to put something out by the end of the year."

Photo courtesy of Juffrie Friday

## **CASHEW CHEMISTS**

It's hard to believe that rock and roll band Cashew Chemists started out as a heavy metal act, considering that their strong blues melodies and retro sound would probably remind you of the likes of The Beatles and The Strokes.

Consisting of close friends, Yuji Kumagi, Brian Chia, Elliot Sng, and Zachary Chia, Cashew Chemists made their Baybeats debut in last year's edition of the festival. The band has achieved in leaps and bounds since then.

Frontman Yuji shares, "Baybeats really opened us up to a lot of networks and we met a lot of people in the scene. People that we wouldn't have even thought of approaching before Baybeats."

The boys have recently launched their debut *extended play* (EP) and have

also claim that "they're getting more bookings now".

Brian adds, "The best part is that we're actually getting some paid gigs."

The band intends to continue pushing themselves beyond their comfort zones and even have an upcoming Australian tour planned.

Yuji reveals, "It's going to be our first time playing overseas so we're a bit nervous but excited as well.

"We've been doing this for a while now but we still look forward to every show we play and we take every gig very seriously, so this 'mini tour' is really exciting for us."

### **NEW BAYBEATS FRESHMEN TO LOOK OUT FOR**



### Dyeth

Easily the most hardcore band in the list, Dyeth is a death metal band with slightly morbid undertones, considering the fact that they have songs titled Dismembered & Infected. The band also has an EP to their name and are no novices to the live stage, having performed across the border in the likes of Batam, Kuala Lumpur, and Kota Kinabalu. The band is currently working on a new full-length studio album, which, considering their tendencies, is going to be interesting.



### **Dropbeat Heartbeat**

Formed back in 2011, Dropbeat Heartbeat is one of the shining lights of the pop punk genre here in Singapore. The band released their debut EP, titled *Getting' Outta Here*, last year to favourable reviews. In fact, their original material has even graced local airwaves and they've been described as a band with a "fresh young vibe mixed with a nice touch of old school punk rock" by local DJ, Elliot Danker.



With more talent competitions popping up, being famous is no longer a farfetched dream. **JOANNE TAN**, **KIMBERLY FONG** and **SARA JANE ONG** climb the ladder of fame to uncover sacrifices that the once-anonymous have made.

The pursuit for fame is vast and endless. Increasingly, competitions are sprouting up everywhere, and one could easily sign up for singing, dancing or acting auditions at the click of a button.

With the surge of talent competitions in recent years, such as *Star Search*, *Campus Superstar*, *TODAY Movement* and *The Final 1*, more people are participating in competitions, hoping to gain fame and glamour quickly, bypassing the tradition of enduring years of arduous trainings.

**HYPE** surveyed 100 youths and discovered that 75 per cent of these respondents have taken part in competitions, with the consensus that contests are seen as tickets to fame.

With pop culture heavily influencing youths, it is not surprising that they would value fame and see it as a need.

"Everyone has that complex where they want people to care about them, they want people to know about them. Everyone has that neediness," says Lincoln Lim, 19, a contestant on *The Final 1*.

**HYPE**'s survey showed that 55 per cent of respondents would grab at any opportunity to be famous. It is undeniably alluring to be widely recognised — even for a short while.

"There's a small part of me that wish we would be famous to get that exposure with the music industry," says Mohammad Dzul Ridzwan, 19, the rhythmic guitarist from the band Kickstart!. Back then, the path to fame and glory was not a bed of roses. Fame hopefuls underwent long, intensive trainings to improve their skills in a bid to rise above their peers as the crème de la crème. For example, a regular ballet dancer would probably have to go through a syllabus like Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) and train at various ballet schools, before being groomed to be professionals in companies such as the Singapore Dance Theatre.

Everyone has that **COMPLEX** where they want people to **Care** about them, they want people to **KNOW** about them. Everyone has that **neediness**.

> - Lincoln Lim, The final 1 contestant

Today, we see the disappearance of the gruelling training process taken to gain fame. Does this mean that it is easier for one to shoot to stardom or should he or she join a competition? 19-year-old Rachel Chua, better known as Cai Ai Jia, the runner-up of *Campus Superstar Season 3* (2009), says 'Yes'.

"Definitely, because it's maximum exposure for free... It's the fastest way to get famous overnight," she says. Kelvin Soon, 31, a *Project Superstar* contestant, felt that competitions don't only serve as platforms for contestants to shine and showcase their talents. They also "gave him the chance to meet more people in the industry".

### SACRIFICES FOR THE ONE SHOT AT FAME

The transition from being a 'nobody' to being a star may seem smooth to the common folk. But what is untold are the sacrifices made in the process of gaining recognition. For some, their desire to attain fame would compromise their education, as they exchange their grades in school for their aspirations; for others, they give up their well-paying jobs to compete for a title in a singing competition.

A former student of Ngee Ann Polytechnic, Ai Jia dropped out of school in her second year to continue her music venture in China.

"I get to see how big the real market for Chinese [music] is and I get to learn that being somebody in Singapore doesn't mean you can be somebody elsewhere. It actually takes a lot of hard work, a lot of time and a lot of effort.

"Most of the time, I had shows and I couldn't turn up for school... one of the major sacrifices I [made] was my studies... it's like a double-edged sword," she says.

Besides the tough decision to leave their education and former careers behind, competition contestants faced another problem — the struggle to keep their money from leaving. Kelvin was facing great financial difficulties ever since he started pursuing a career in the entertainment industry. He had wiped out his savings completely after dropping singing at pubs to fully concentrate on *Project Superstar*, which paid off as he managed to penetrate the Chinese market by signing on as a host at Hunan TV, one of China's most watched television channels.

Henry Ang, a part-time actor at MediaCorp, chuckled as he reminisced the past, saying, "I used to be a sales executive, and a really good one at that". The 22-year-old had given up his education at the Singapore Hotel and Tourism Education Centre (SHATEC) at the age of 17, and then his three-year job as a sales executive, in order to pursue acting.

"I had to rely on the savings I got from working in sales, and scrimp and save, in order to get by," he adds.

The sacrifices the cheery actor made eventually paid off, as he clinched the main role in J.P. Tan's movie *Time No Enough* in January this year.

Indeed, time is never enough for the fame hopefuls. The intense rehearsals eat away what little time the contestants have every day, taking them away from their loved ones.

"It was tough. I sacrificed time, effort, and skipped schools for rehearsals. My GPA started to drop, and peers started talking about me," said Goh Yongwei, a blogger and contestant at the Guinness Live Contest. "Even though you work in the entertainment industry, it's not really entertainment for you...You are either working at night or you are [exhausted] from the previous night...I think there're a lot of sacrifices in terms of family time," says Lincoln.

#### THE AFTERMATH OF ATTAINING FAME

With their sweat and blood wiped away, the competition winners can alas revel in their stardom and rest on their laurels. Some would enjoy being constantly in the limelight; others might eventually end up shunning it.

"[Some] artistes work all their lives to be recognised, but [once that happens], they wear shades and hats just to not be recognised," says Ai Jia.

Having been in the music industry for five years, Lincoln was more comfortable with the attention he received after he participated in *The Final 1*. He felt that joining the competition provided much publicity for his band, Hariz & Lincoln.

"We walked into Somerset 313 and from the moment we went through the doors, in the mall, there was silence for 5 seconds."

Not one to get his head in the clouds though, Lincoln adds, "We are not milking the fame but it's nice...There's nothing wrong [with] being a little bit well known, but keep your head down."

With the rapid rise and fall of celebrities so evident, it would then be wise to cautiously tread about the cracking floors of fame. How do the renowned keep themselves from falling through then?

Entering *The Final 1* with the mindset of "doing whoever who wrote the songs proud", Lincoln felt that competitions are "shortcuts to fame, but it's what you do after that matters".

He has taken efforts to "build up local presence in Singapore... on social media and [radio]". Lincoln also envisions a music tour to various parts of the world with band mate Hariz in the near future.

The drive to constantly improve oneself would undoubtedly be one's satisfaction after they have attained fame. When asked about her satisfaction towards her level of popularity, Ai Jia says, "staying stagnant is pretty scary for an artiste in [the] media industry."

"Fame is really how you see it [as an individual]," she says, "whether I'm a singer, a public figure, an artiste or somebody on the international [entertainment] platforms, I'm still a human... I do everything that [the everyday people] do. I just have an extra edge in singing."

Superstardom, celebrity, fame — words full of positive connotations that lead one to believe the life of the famous is nothing but glamorous. Who could resist a ticket to fame then? Talent competitions serve as an elevator for the common folk to experience the glamour above. But if they don't get a proper foothold, they might just plunge right back down to anonymity.

Photo courtesy of Li Jie Photography



# Who's Afraid Of Sthnic Theatre?

It would seem that many Singaporeans are, judging by the uphill struggles of Chinese, Indian and Malay theatre groups. **AMIRAH ANUAR**, **DENNIS LAM**, **MELISA LEE** and **RACHEL LEONG** discover how ethnic theatre stalwarts renew their art to cater to youths. Long gone are the days when ethnic theatrical performances drew in crowds, young and old. Today, ethnic theatre has taken a back seat as English theatre moves into the spotlight as the main draw for local theatre buffs.

Although National Arts Council (NAC) reports a surge in theatre-goers, with the number doubling from 615,000 in 2010 to 1.4 million in 2012, ethnic theatre groups are not progressing because of their smaller followings. There is no doubt that ethnic theatre is still surviving with its presence in the local scene, but to what extent?

### ACT 1

"Among the Indians and the Tamil-speaking audiences, we were known," says Mr Nakulan T., 34, a manager from Ravindran Drama Group, which is one of the forerunners in Indian theatre. "But for the mainstream audiences, or even non-Tamil-speaking audiences, they didn't really know what Ravindran is," he adds, stating that there is no distinctiveness in their productions despite the range of genres.

For Malay theatre, the more prominent players are Teater Ekamatra, Teater KAMi, and Teater Artistik, each having over two decades worth of experience. While their productions enjoy a relative amount of fame overseas — like Teater Ekamatra's *94:05* in Malaysia during the KakiSENI Festival 2013 — these established groups try to attract local theatre-goers by consistently incorporating historical and social issues in their productions. One example is Teater KAMi's 2012 remake of *Balada Tun Fatimah* (*The Ballad of Tun Fatimah*), the group's effort to fuse history with modernity, together with the inclusion of some elements from the original debut show.

As for the Chinese theatre scene, Drama Box is one of Singapore's established groups since 1990, and focuses on experimental plays that revolve around social issues.

"There's a lot of misconception about Chinese dramas. The concept of a contemporary Chinese play is not known or understood by the public. We want to bring across the idea that Chinese drama doesn't have to be old and loud noises; it can also be engaging, and thoughtprovoking, and might not be what they think it is," explains Ms Nicole Lim, 42, marketing manager of Drama Box.

Yet, it is no surprise that most ethnic theatre groups are only known among those who understand Mandarin, Malay and Tamil, as English theatre is more popular.

Now, ethnic theatre groups are upping their game to attract the mainstream crowd outside of their small but consistent fan bases, transforming their executions and deliveries of their works to lure the audience in.

### ACT 2

"In the past, we needed more melodramatics, more emotions, more crying, more fighting, more anger, very realistic acting, and a naturalistic approach to any text," says Mr Selvananthan G., 45, founder of Avant Theatre, an Indian theatre group. "Whereas, nowadays, it's more subtle acting, and [modern] lifestyle approaches [are] more appealing."

Ms Grace Ng, deputy director of Sector Development from NAC, believes that ethnic theatre is evolving. Much has been changed and done to attract audiences, especially youths – one of which includes discussing themes and issues which matter to Singaporeans.

And that is indeed true, because in the '90s, controversial productions would be disapproved by both audiences and the society as a whole, but this hostile reception is changing slowly as Singapore grows to be more open-minded and accepting.

Dan Tiga Dara Terbang Ke Bulan (And Three Virgins Fly To The Moon), a Malay play by Aidli Mosbit, startled its audiences with its openness in discussing conservative issues like sex. But the audience is having a more positive sentiment as the play was staged again in March this year. The Straits Times commented in its review that the play has "aged gracefully, its themes of memory and friendship buoying it smoothly from the 1990s to the 2010s". HYPE 29



Language is also another thing that's changing in ethnic theatre, as more groups are taking the direction of incorporating English into their productions, with some of them even doing the entire piece in English.

In March 2012, Ravindran Drama Group staged *After Sex*, their first English play after officially becoming a company. "We had a half-page write-up in The Straits Times, and I thought that gave us a lot of mileage," voices Mr Nakulan.

Despite reviews questioning the boldness of the production, he hopes that this would bring them closer to mainstream English theatre and it will certainly not be Ravindran's last foray into using a common language to better connect with the audience.

"We will certainly do Indian and Tamil theatre, but I think it is also necessary to do English theatre to be mainstream," he adds.

Mr Selva is also taking a brave step into creating English productions from an Indian viewpoint. "My biggest challenge would be to showcase Indian issues in English and getting the mainstream audience to come," he declares. "Avant Theatre is a bilingual company, and it should be bilingual in the sense that we are able to balance both English and Tamil."

However, while some theatre groups decide to perform entirely in English, others have decided to adopt and accommodate for their Englishspeaking audiences, but still keeping true to their roots and not give up their Mother Tongues. NAC's deputy director of Corporate Communications and Marketing Services, Ms Pearl Samuel, says that the NAC encourages a diverse arts and cultural scene in Singapore – across all genres, art forms and disciplines.

"Our works are socially relevant," says Ms Nicole of Drama Box's productions. "In earlier years, our productions are more Chinese-language productions. Now it's more so in other types: English, Malay and dialects like Cantonese and Teochew. We also have surtilles in productions for the show – on the screen, making it easier for the audience."

With theatre, it's an *opportunity* for audience members to *appreciate* and see the *richness of the* 

### language

#### - Mr Roslan Mohamad Daud, Teater Artistik's president

Their recent productions, such as *Senang* and *Project Mending Sky: US*, contain dialogues not only in English and Chinese, but also dialects like Cantonese, Hokkien and Teochew.

Similarly, Dan Tiga Dara Terbang Ke Bulan (And Three Virgins Fly To The Moon) was performed in Malay, but was accompanied with English surtitles to attract more audiences and to emphasise that the play isn't restricted to only the Malay community. "With theatre, it's an opportunity for audience members to appreciate and see the richness of the language," said Mr Roslan Mohamad Daud, Teater Artistik's president, in a recent *The Straits Times* interview, adding that the group places importance on classic Malay writing, albeit the smaller market for such productions with literary works.

"Young people have slowly stopped speaking Chinese. Let's not talk about dialects – [that is] long gone... To be conversant in [Mandarin] is a very rare thing," says Ms Koh Hui Ling, 34, who is the associate artistic director of Drama Box.

As a result, the Chinese theatre group formed a youth wing, ARTivate, in 2007 to encourage more of the young generation to take interest in the Chinese theatre scene. The ARTivate programme aims to provide adolescents a platform to explore theatre, so as to mould them into potential practitioners in the future.

"I realised that at that time, there was a big gap after me; there wasn't a new generation of Chinese theatre practitioners. It was worrying because what's the point of [current theatre practitioners] doing a lot and when we grow old there's no one to take over," says Ms Koh.

They staged *Bus Stop* in 2012 as a 'graduation ceremony' for their pioneer batch of youths, who directed, produced and performed the entire play themselves with the guidance of Ms Koh. These youths joined ARTivate to invite other youths to join them and their love for theatre.

### ACT 3

Local ethnic theatre is slowly but surely evolving to attract more viewers, and for the smaller-scale theatre groups, this cannot happen without receiving support. NAC provides an array of grants for ethnic theatre groups; namely for content creation, presentation, market and audience development, and capability development.

"NAC's support and grants are about developing the arts scene, encouraging the people of Singapore to express themselves through the arts. The arts, after all, informs who we are," explains Ms Grace.

"Major theatre groups are actively involved in reaching out to the youth. Also, NAC's new grants framework, which includes the Capability Development Grant and the Market and Audience Development Grant, encourages theatre groups to find their 'next generation' of artists and audiences."

That 'next generation' that everybody is looking for is the youth population, who are one of the main reasons for the developments in ethnic theatre. Not only are these ethnic theatre groups trying to attract more audiences, they are also specifically targeting youths to play their part in preserving their culture and language – and it seems that some are taking the bait.

"Definitely, there are more youths coming. It's because of the youths, that theatre is surviving now, because gone are the olden days," says Mr Suresh Sabosh, 29, freelance Indian actor. "More elders prefer old-school theatre; they want morals, they want values, they want to be educated. But youths are different, they are more open-minded, [hence it] is up to them what they want to take home."

However, even with the increase in youth theatre-goers, the number is not enough.

Even with the National University of Singapore's Malay Language Society's (PBMUKS) theatre department's annual performance since 1969, Syahidah Mohamed Sodri, 21, says that one of their obstacles for productions is getting people interested, which they are trying to rectify by organising drama camps in secondary schools to develop the students' love for the Malay language, culture and theatre. They even extended their invitations to students to audition for any upcoming plays.

Despite facing challenges, the group loves what they do, and finds it fulfilling and rewarding, especially when they see new faces interested to join the society each academic year.

Siti Adriana Muhamed Rasip, 20, actress for PBMUKS' upcoming play, Kabur (Vague), says, "The Malay language is something close to my heart, so I want to do activities related to [it]," hence using her passion to venture into Malay theatre.

Scriptwriter and director for the play, Siti Aisyah Nordin, 22, adds, "Who else will uphold our roots, if not for us?"

She states that even though the support they get for each play they hold is satisfactory, the group is disappointed that they face money issues as the school does not provide any budget, looking for their own sponsors and holding fundraisers to keep the club going. Chinese theatre seems to fare slightly better on their end, with Ngee Ann Polytechnic's Chinese Drama, or Stage Art Group (SAG). Established since 1969, the club is still going strong with the passions of the members.

Jeremy Lia, 19, SAG's former treasurer, explains that the CCA had many misconceptions about them in the oast. "There were quite a number of people who do misunderstand the word 'Chinese' before the word 'drama'... people thought that we were those guys doing Chinese Opera... or those puppeteers doing the puppet show during these operas - which aren't true. In fact, we are quite a 'modern' CCA, whereby we try to incorporate other performance elements like songs, dance items and improved storylines and plays into our show... to cater to the changing face of theatre modernisation."

Even individuals like university graduate (now a freelance actress) Myra Loke, 23, remembers that her family initially dissuaded her from selecting this career route, who thinks that pursuing theatre is "something to be done in outside time" since it was not "a career of any economic value". However, Myra is determined to explore this career path before looking at other options.

With passionate youths like Myra, it seems as through the future of ethnic theatre will be less bleak. This local art – one of rich tradition and cultural heritage – lies in our hands as we watch theatre evolve with changing times. The progression of ethnic theatre may be with the popularity of English theatre now, but they would soon become their own star on the local stage, where they take a bow for a performance well-done.

## Box Office Savers

If the price tags of the tickets are stopping you stepping into the theatre, check out these special passes for students:

### 1. Esplanade and Vizpro Entertainment's Student Concession Pass

Esplanade offers concession prices for students and NSFs for certain shows, the most recent one being Chinese theatre production *Salute to Pao Kun*, to encourage support for Chinese theatre.

Student Concession Season Pass at \$60 for students to all six The Studios shows.

Vizpro offers student concession discounts for certain shows, such as the recent Korean non-verbal comedy *FLYing*, where a 10 per cent discount was offered to all students.

### 2. Pangdemoníum's Season Pass

Starting this year, Pangdemonium offers a season pass for a set price of \$130 to catch all three of their shows.



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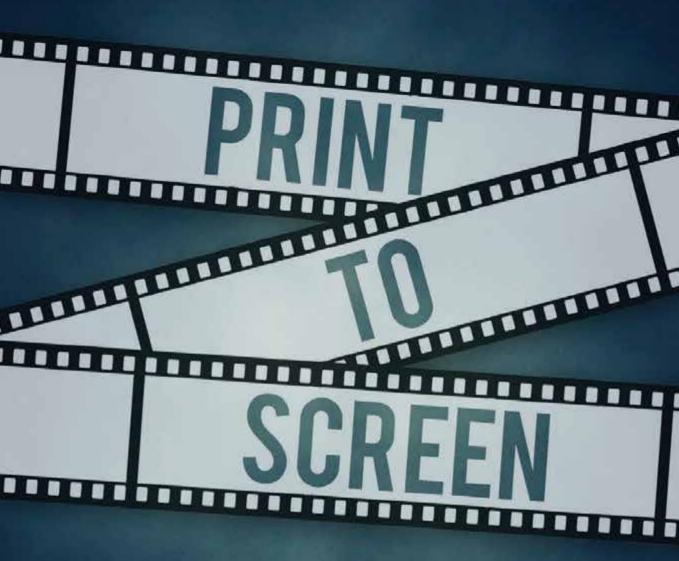
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Tired of happy endings since you don't see yourself having one? HYPE feels your pain. We're bringing to you the darker side of film adaptations with this installment of the Print-to-Screen section.

## SPIRITED AWAY With Anime

Delve into the seemingly whimsical world of Japanese animation as **CHAN YEE CHUN** brings you to the roots of this underappreciated art form and shows you that not all is child's play with anime.

"When I was younger, I used to rent anime (short form for animation) series at the rental shop near my house," reminisces Muhammad Ainul, a third-year animation student in Ngee Ann Polytechnic, who spends an average of eight hours a week watching anime despite having assignments due.

Japanese anime has come a long way since it first made its way here in 1977 with *Candy Candy* – an explosively popular television series targeted more at females – and was later screened again in 1984.

Now, Singapore is no stranger to anime as it holds the annual core convention of Asia's largest regional Japanese pop culture event, Anime Festival Asia. With the announcement of two new films from the reputable Studio Ghibli after a long two-year wait, be ready to be whisked away into anime once again.

#### JUST ENTERTAINMENT IN THE 70'S

"Japanese animation to me, as a Westerner, used to be limited to Saturday morning low-budget animations – it wasn't something that we would take seriously in terms of standard of animation in comparison to the Disney style." says Mr Chris Shaw, 47, the course manager for LASALLE'S Diploma in Animation, citing *Doraemon* and *Ultraman* as examples.

However, the rapid advance of technology in the late '80s saw the standard of animation soaring, and the turning point for Mr Shaw, and many others, was the release of *Akira*, the 1988 cyberpunk and dystopian world animation film, and a landmark work in Japanese animation today.

Mr Shaw still fondly remembers how his colleagues came up to him with a tape recording of *Akira* that had just flown in from Japan for an anime convention in Bristol, exclaiming, "You must see it! It's outstanding!" Their surprise and strong responses, however, were not unfounded, even though people in the industry initially "did not take seriously at all".

"Akira blew us away. It was incredibly outstanding; the sudden elevation of standard that we saw was nothing we've seen before, and we knew that the Japanese had stepped up their game," says Mr Shaw. The way that the creator of *Akira*, Katsuhiro Otomo and his team played with the multi-playing cameras – which was invented under Walt Disney Animation Studios by Academy-Award winning animator Ub Iwerks – as well as parallaxing (having different things at a certain distance moving at different speeds as the subject moves) impressed Mr Shaw and his colleagues.

According to Mr Shaw, the latter technique was used extensively in *Akira*, which resulted in more depth than usual for a 2D (2-dimensional) animation film back then. By crafting the metropolitan landscapes with sharp bright colours, the film was able to achieve the post-apocalyptic environment and feel through the visuals. Coupled with an assortment of shots and angles for the same scenes, *Akira* was dynamic and active – every bit of the stellar animation it was that had Mr Shaw eating his words about not taking Japanese anime seriously.

### WHISPER OF THE CHARACTER'S HEART

Ever got so sucked in by an anime that you were watching that you momentarily forgot yourself? Admit it; you have. Whether it is Studio



Photos courtesy of Studio Ghibi

Ghibli's iconic film, *My Neighbour Totoro*, or films that are slightly more mature such as Satoshi Kon's works, *Tokyo Godfathers* and *Paprika* – these characters succeed in worming their way deep in to the crevices of your heart.

"I took this course because animation was my childhood, and it always made me smile. Animation gives joy to people," says Adrianne Tolentino, 21, a fresh animation graduate from LASALLE, who recently did a sixminute long animation video with her project mates. The simple premise of an unexpected friendship between a young huntress and a seemingly terrifying monster soon got you sucked into its plot.

Aside from the visuals and creative direction of the film, characters are a key factor in animation as well.

"When we watch a film, we'd say 'This person seems nice'. But as we watch, it appears that he actually has ulterior motives and is sinister through his certain actions along the film", adds Mr Shaw. "And we start hoping that he gets his karma, or vice versa like in *Despicable Me* (Gru, the main character who tries to be a super villain but ends up adopting and loving three orphaned girls as his own)."

### **TALES FROM SOCIETY**

Together with the art style and the character development, Japanese anime also tackle themes targeted at children such as coming of age, family, friends and environment. Studio Ghibli deals with environment issues in a symbolic way and this can be seen in Laputa: Castle in the Sky and Princess Mononoke, or Paprika, which follows in the footsteps of Mamoru Oshii's Ghost in the Shell, and shows how technology intersects with dreams and reality. Satoshi Kon is different from most of the other animation film directors as he focuses on content and themes older audiences. His last film, *Paprika*, was a 2006 animation film based on the novel of the same name by *Yasutaka Tsutsui*, which tackled issues such as the nature of reality, split personalities and attempted rape.

Akira blew us away. It was incredibly outstanding; the sudden elevation of standard that we saw was nothing we've seen before, and we knew that the Japanese had stepped up their game.

### - Mr Chris Shaw, Course manager for LASALLE's Diploma in Animation

"These films really takes the social issues, prejudices – very mature content – and handles them in animation. Animation in the West is pure entertainment; it's aimed at families and children. But in the Japanese culture, manga is a very adult thing – you see half of them (the working adults) reading comic books – and the content in there is very mature – so that rolled over to Satoshi Kon's works," says Mr Shaw.

And Kon is not the only one who tackles mature themes in his works. In an interview for the Japanese edition of PREMIRE magazine, Hayao Miyazaki, one of the co-founders of Studio Ghibli and the director of one of the best animated films, *Spirited Away*, explained that his wonderland is not just a fantasy, but actually represents the real world of today's Japan.



"The sex industry is everywhere now in Japan," he says, "...I think the most appropriate way to symbolise the modern world is the sex industry. Hasn't Japanese society become like the sex industry?"

Miyazaki is referring to the underlying sombre themes that the seemingly light-hearted *Spirited Away* hide under the beautifully orchestrated and wellexecuted blend of music, animation and plot. The film, which is about 10-year-old Chihiro who is forced to work in a bathhouse under a female supervisor called Yubaba, has alluded several times to brothels and child prostitution.

In the film, the females in the bathhouse are referred to as 'yuna', which, according to the Jim Breen's Japanese online dictionary, refers to a woman who services men at bathhouses.

No Face, a spirit that initially quietly lingers around Chihiro – or Sen as she is renamed – also shows Miyazaki's symbolism for the modern world, as the spirit continually attempts to give her treats and money in return for her affections, and ends up becoming an uncontrollable and inimical creature.

With *Spirited Away* hiding more than it shows, it would seem that animation takes the popular sentiment that "things aren't what they seem to be" into a whole new different level.

### STUDIO GHIBLI Returns

If you're a Studio Ghibli fan, keep your eyes peeled for not one, but two new exciting anime film releases coming up this year. The hype is on with Hayao Miyazaki (best known for directing classics like Spirited Away and My Neighbour Totoro) releasing his film, The Wind Is Rising, which was based on a manga. His fellow cofounder, Isao Takahata, who has received acclamation for his stunning war-themed film Grave of the Fireflies, will also release his film, The Tale of Princess Kaguya, which is based on a folklore.

Marvel Comics might seem like they're dominating DC Comics in everything – from the box offices to video games – but are they really towering over their rivals that much? Join JOEY LEE as he delves in deeper into the universe of superheroes.

AND DESCRIPTION OF TAXABLE PARTY OF TAXA

It's the ultimate comic book fan's dream - to witness the titanic clash between the Marvel universe and the DC universe.

Imagine a bare-fisted match between Thor, the Norse God of Marvel whose creation was fueled by the need for a superhero that could outmuscle The Hulk, against DC's iconic Superman, who has enough raw strength to hurl mountains.

What about pitting the demented Green Goblin of Marvel, with his pumpkin bombs and goblin serum, against the twisted Joker of DC, whose terrifying arsenal of weapons range from cyanide-stuffed pies to his signature Joker venom?

Fine, perhaps it might just be a comic book lover's wet dream, because although the list of potentially mouthwatering displays between the two long-time comic rivals can run for miles, it's likely that neither of the comics will ever cave in and allow their characters to be on the losing end of the stick. But there's a bigger war to be waged in the box offices, and it is, to say the absolute least, cataclysmic.

Truth is, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out who is dominating the box offices. As of now, films based on Marvel comic books have garnered more than 47 per cent in domestic box-office sales on average than DC movies, with the 28 Marvel films dating back to 1998 having averaged \$190 million, compared to \$129 million for 23 DC movies starting with *Superman* in 1978. Marvel, whose library of superheroes include the likes of Iron Man, Hulk and Wolverine, has been wiping the floor with their comic rivals, DC. It's not even a question nor a debate anymore – it's a cold hard fact.

"Ask any random person on the street, and they could easily name five Marvel superheroes off the top of their head. Try asking about DC superheroes, and all you will ever get is Superman, Batman and a lot of stuttering," says Yuveen Suresh, a fervent fan of both Marvel and DC Comics.

The real question though? How did Marvel Comics, the younger rival by a margin of five years nonetheless, progressively leave DC Comics so far behind in the dirt? Let's backtrack a little.

Marvel and DC both have distinctive styles with every aspect of their comic books. Marvel plays to the inner geek in all of us; the creative variation of superpowers is ridiculous, with everything from Cyclops's optic eye blasts to Colossus's ability to transform into a state of "organic steel". DC, on the other hand, pays less attention to the variation of abilities, but rather, swoops in on diversity in the character backgrounds. Readers looking for detective stories can depend on Batman for dark, gritty street-level crime stories, while Superman pummels mountain-sized monsters alongside occasionally flying to the sun and returning unscathed.

Even the little details such as their settings differ. Ever realised how

DC Comics tend to recreate fictional locations such as Batman's Gotham City and Superman's Metropolis, which are essentially New York City in the night and day respectively, while Marvel Comics just uses New York City as the home of many of their superheroes? It becomes even clearer when directors take the comic books to the screen.

Tony Stark, who is actually plagued by alcoholism in the comics, doesn't show a single hint of it in three movies, and instead, is always ever so keen to fire off quips in the middle of serious fights. No questions are asked when Thor falls in love with the first female human being he ever meets, and Hulk's sudden ability to control his anger midway through The Avengers is merely brushed off when invading aliens threaten wreck the entire skyline of New York City.

This, is what we call, escapism.

Of course, in a regular drama movie, such jarring loopholes in the scripting are cardinal sins. When you, however, toss in a metallic suit containing more firepower than Istanbul and Pakistan combined, or a Norse thunder god with the ability to summon lightning, that is all dismissible.

On the flipside, DC Comics took a rather different route. Not only did they avoid elevating the powers of their heroes and downplaying the serious issues, they eradicated everything from the Joker's acid-spitting corsage to Bane's rage-inducing "Venom", to morph the previously hellish villains into criminals no more insane and warped than any extremists or psychopaths of our own world.

Forget taking a different route, they went in the unswerving opposite direction.

Is it working? Yes, it is.

It did take them a while to refine their angle, but with Christopher Nolan's artistic direction and a gripping rendition of The Joker by Heath Ledger that attracted the eyes of the world, it seems like they may have finally got it.

The Dark Knight and The Dark Knight Rises both raked in a little over a billion dollars each by fully spinning Bruce Wayne's dark tale of loss and insanity, and developing humour through regular and unexaggerated scripting, rather than slapstick "gethit-in-the-nuts" one-time laugh-offs.

Thankfully, Marvel has seemed to have caught on. *Iron Man 3* undoubtedly featured Tony Stark in an entirely different light, with Robert Downey Jr having plenty more screen time out of his metal suit, rather than in it. The up-and-coming Marvel movie The *Wolverine* also seems to be zoning in on the character's story background, and traces back to his days where he wielded the Muramasa blade.

Evidently, Marvel's formula for movies used to be the triumphant one, however, with the novelty value of action-packed scenes married with baseless humour starting to wear off, it could mean that a new age of superhero movies could be upon us yet again.

With *Man of Steel* being the latest placebo by DC to test the waters with their new angle, and *The Wolverine* being Marvel's, we could all just be ready to witness a wave of superhero movie remakes. Again.

### **RICHEST SUPERHERO**

The richest superhero is ... Black Panther. Surprisingly not Batman or Iron Man, of which both of them are billionaires, Black Panther runs the entire country of Wakanda (a fictional African country in the Marvel universe), and the country is filled with all sort of rare metals such as Vibranium. If he wanted to sell all of it, he would be, arguably, the richest superhero ever.

### THE BIGGEST SUPERHERO HIT AT THE BOX OFFICE: THE AVENGERS

Directed by Joss Whedon, this film took four popular superheroes (Hulk, Iron Man, Thor and Captain America) and added in two more new ones to milk out a whopping \$1.5 billion in the global box office, using an estimated budget of \$220 million.

# THE BIGGEST SUPERHERO FLOP AT THE BOX OFFICE: GREEN LANTERN

The much-anticipated film about the Green Lantern, played by Ryan Reynolds, was bashed by critics for practically everything, ranging from cheesy special effects to an inconsistently paced script despite its exorbitant cost of \$325 million. It only went on to gross \$219.9 million worldwide, and ending up with an overall loss of \$105.1 million. Dystopia continues to fascinate and **NG POH HIAN** traverses the darkness of these alternate futures in the film adaptations from three of the best-selling dystopian trilogies.

Photo courtesy of wallis.com

Imagine a dark and desolate world set in the future, where hope is bleak and the citizens are meek as they have no choice but to obediently follow the orders of oppressive authorities.

The dystopian genre is not new but have in fact been around for a long time, with notable works such as H.G. Wells' The Time Machine (1895) and Aldous Huxley's Brave New World (1932). These bleak tales always speak of an imagined world in which everything is unpleasant or bad, typically a totalitarian or environmentally degraded one. However, with the new wave of dystopian fiction comes a new generation of characters: they are no longer passive and compliant, but brave, independent and fiercely determined to survive and overthrow the control of oppressive governments.

For those who indulge delightfully in dark and dismal tales of oppressive regimes, hold on tight to your popcorn boxes, for the whirlwind of dystopian movies this year will sweep you away in its thirst for blood and action.

#### **CROSS MY HEART AND HOPE YOU DIE**

Life was supposed to be all fine and dandy after their combined victory in the 74th Hunger Games, but Katniss and Peeta find themselves back in the arena once again in *Catching Fire*, the sequel to *The Hunger Games*. Slated for a November release, the film probes even further into the theme of dehumanisation as the government and the high society are perversely entertained to watch the pair of 'starcrossed lovers' battle it out in the brutal ring of survival for the 75th Hunger Games.

Although there has been a switch in directors with the second installment of the blockbuster franchise being handed over to Francis Lawrence, director of *I Am Legend* (2007), fans will be pleased to know that Lawrence will keep true to the original book, as he revealed to news site CBS.com that "almost nothing has been excised during the book-to-script transition", but there will be "some additional scenes with some of the characters".

Having to compete with the best of the best, the 24 victors from the line of Hunger Games, prepare for more gruelling action and heartwrenching romance with Jennifer Lawrence and Josh Hutcherson as Katniss and Peeta.

#### **ELIMINATE THE ODD**

With a strong-willed and spirited female protagonist struggling in a post-apocalyptic America, divided by societal factions, *Divergent* may seem suspiciously similar to *The Hunger Games* at first glance. However, a deeper look into its plot reveals themes that are not explored in the latter. For one, the first installment of this trilogy by Veronica Roth muses over the theme of self-identity, as the story follows our heroine, Beatrice Prior, in her struggle to discover herself in a society that sections its citizens into different factions based on their virtue of humanity. Those who fail the initiation process to enter the factions would be considered 'divergent', and we see Beatrice (played by Shailene Woodley of The Secret Life of the American Teenager) grappling to decide to stay with her family's faction or leave home to another faction which suits her more.

Unlike the clear grim tone set in *The Hunger Games* with the enslaved factions working to satisfy the needs of the Capitol, the authorities, *Divergent* starts off as a utopia – a seemingly ideal community that is peaceful and stable – where everyone strives to better the society, only to have the government's deep dark secrets about the supposedly perfect society to slowly unravel in the hands of Beatrice and her mentor, Four.

It has been recently announced that the vulnerable and sensitive mentor, as Woodley had described the character as recently in an interview with MTV, would be Theo James, who is best known for his role as Jed Harper in the British supernatural drama television series, *Bedlam*. Directed by Neil Burger under Lionsgate and Summit Entertainment, *Divergent's* already wild fanbase may just be the next *The Hunger Games* blockbuster descendant in its announced release on Mar 21 next year.

### FIGHTING IMAGINARY FORCES

What happens if a group of boys are left alone on an uninhabited place to survive all by themselves? Perhaps a rabid massacre as the boys are tortured by invisible beasts and driven to insanity by paranoia if this was *Lord* of the Flies, another popular dystopian fiction novel by William Golding.

But *The Maze Runner* is a lot more sinister than reading about stranded children going insane; the setup is intentional for the sole cold purpose of a scientific experiment.

Directed by Wes Ball, *The Maze Runner* has a refreshingly different concept

from *The Hunger Games* and *Divergent*. Played by Dylan O'Brien from *Teen Wolf*, Thomas wakes up in an enormous labyrinth devoid of adults, with dozens of other boys, without any memories of his past life or identity. And the only way out is to to join forces with the other boys to solve the puzzle to the strange maze and escape the lethal trap before time runs out for all of them.

With the film's focus on staying true to oneself, Thomas plays a strong character who struggles to resist the pressure exerted by his peers and sticks to his morals throughout the story.

The screenplay, written by both Noah Oppenheim and original author James Dashner, brings bouts of high hopes as Dashner claims the script to be "so faithful, yet changes enough that it will feel completely fresh and new". With a fast-paced and thrilling plot that is sure to keep you on the edge of your seat, *The Maze Runner* is set to hit the screens in February next year.

The dystopian craze is spreading worldwide at an incredibly fast rate like an infectious virus in a postapocalyptic world, and it is no wonder that this new wave of dystopian fiction is drawing viewers in.

"The plots are sinister, bloody and exciting but yet so realistic that I can almost imagine the violence happening in the future," explains Lucas Ng, 17, a fan of the dystopian genre.

If you stay up till the wee hours of the morning reading about less-thanrosy futures because you can't bring yourself to put the book down, or just relish in watching an epic alternate universe that is so different yet not entirely dissimilar to our own, don't miss out on *Catching Fire*, *Divergent* and *The Maze Runner* for a dive into the world of the scary and unknown.

# DYSTOPIA COME TRUE

Although dystopian fiction often is a speculation about the alternate futures that we may face one day, it seems ridiculously impossible there would ever be a day when we pit children in an ultimate death competition like gamecocks.

But is dystopian fiction really just fictitious? We bring you two dystopian novels that have been eerily spot-on in their predictions.

## Nighteen Eighty-Four (1949)

George Orwell narrates the story of a society in 1984 ruled by an authoritarian Party in Oceania where the people are kept under the constant surveillance of security cameras and watched by the seemingly omniscient and omnipresent Big Brother.

Ironically enough, Orwell never expected his work of fiction to come true with technology being limited to film cartridges and roll films back in 1949. Fast forward to 2013 and we are indeed a society kept under the surveillance of security cameras.

# Fahrenheit 451 (1953)

Ray Bradbury's depiction of dystopia cries of a future world where books are banned and burned on sight. Literature has no value and neither do opinions. Instead, the society of zombie-minded people spend hours watching flat-panel televisions and listening to portable 'seashells' that directly transmit broadcast into their heads.

Today, we are known to be a world too addicted to our plasma television sets and too plugged in with our earphones ... The exact 'zombie-minded society' that Bradbury weaved a tale about.

HYPE 39

# SPORT-SPORT-PHISTICATED

Who says that sportswear is solely for physical exertion in the fields? **GERALD TAN** and **JOLIE GOH** show you how to match your clothes for that perfect sporty and sophisticated look.

STYLING: JOLIE GOH & GERALD TAN Hair and Make-up: Phoebe Low & Anna Isip Models: Aloysius Marcus Lim an Zhi, anta Kesukma Bin Nordin, Charity Chan Kar Mun, Kerlin Koh Jin Jiu, Tricia Tan Jia Qi Photography: Elyss Tai & Gerald Tan

This season, we see sportswear taking over the baton on the runway with their skilful mix of smart casual wear and athletic-inspired elements. Brands have now taken the concept of sportswear and seamlessly integrated them into our everyday wardrobe.

Everyone in the fashion world has caught on to this trend with top fashion house, Yves Saint Laurent's Sahara jacket – a sporty affair made out of reflective materials, with multiple front pockets – and high street British brand, Topshop's 'Number 86 Tee' – a chic and upgraded version of the basketball jersey.

Dive into this issue's fashion spread as **HYPE** shows you how to marry comfort and style in Singapore's stifling heat.

ON ALOYSIUS. HODKED CLOTHINGS @ HOOK & UNION DENMISTRIPE SHIRT, \$19. HOOKED CLOTHINGS @ HOOK & UNION NAVY ANKLE PANTS, \$109. STACK @ HOOK & UNION DUJOTONE BRACELET, \$69. NEW BALANCE ML 574 YCR SHOES, \$115. SUNGLASSES, MODEL'S OWN.

ON KERLIN: 20:TWOTHREE @ PARCO NEXT NEXT CIRCLE SHIRT, \$149. HURS YELLOW TWIST LOCK SLING BAG, \$20. NEW BALANCE MNL 574 Y SHOES, \$105. SKIRT, STYLIST'S OWN.



FOR THE LADIES Who says that sportswear need to be frumpy and unflattering? Not with this season's brightly-coloured panelled pencil skirts and dresses that are guaranteed to streamline your shape into a sleek silhouette. Look out for lightweight materials like spandex and neoprene to help you beat the heat.



# FOR THE GENTS

With Singapore's erratic weather pattern, summer is hardly all shine and no rain. Gear yourselves for the climatic elements with a waterproof jacket. For maximum adaptability, layer the jacket atop a simple plain tee and a pair of chino shorts, allowing you to keep cool when it's hot outside but snug and comfortable when it's raining cats and dogs the next minute. Pick a pair of brightly coloured sneakers to complement those chino shorts and you're ready to face the weather in style.

ON ANTA: TART OPTICAL ENTERPRISES @ HOOK & UNION TWO TONE EYEGLASSES, \$620. SIFR @ ROCKSTAR By soon lee Navy military jacket, \$189. Knowledge cotton apparel @ Rockstar by soon lee Linen tee, \$159. Knowledge cotton apparel @ Rockstar by soon lee Red Shorts, \$139. Sandqvist Messenger Bag, \$269. New Balance ML 574 Kor Shoes, \$115. Bracelet, Model's Own.



# FOR THE LADIES

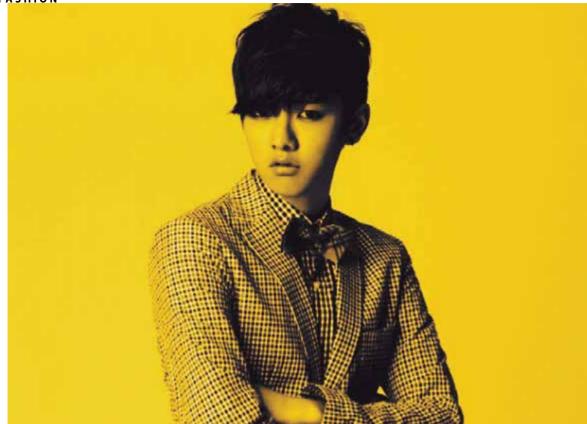
If loud colours are not your thing, you can choose to take on pastel shades of accessories and shoes, like a multi-coloured cap or a simple pair of solid-coloured sneakers. Opting for lighter hues gives you the freedom to experiment with quirky cutting and darker shades.

> ON TRICIA: SUNDAY SOMEWHERE @ HOOK & UNION 6 PANEL CAP, §69. MANDY WU @ Hook & Union Rhodium Necklace, \$170. Max.tan @ Hook & Union Frame Dress, \$259.90. New Balance W 373 MWP Shoes, \$89.

ON ALOYSIUS: UNIQLO LINEN COTTON JACKET, \$149.90. UNIQLO RED LINEN SHIRT, \$49.90. UNIQLO STRETCH MESH BELT, \$34.90. UNIQLO NAVY CROPPED PANTS, \$34.90. ADIDAS ZX 700 M SHOES, \$135. POCKET SQUARES, STYLIST'S OWN

# FOR THE GENTS

FUR THE GENTS The heat is no excuse for sloppy dressing, but thanks to the lightweight properties of linen, you can breathe easy even in the most dapper of clothing. Impress your mates by dressing a chic linen blazer, cuffed pants and a linen shirt down, with a pair of sneakers. Throw in a colourful pocket square to add personality and flair, for a parfect emert eacual outfit flair, for a perfect smart casual outfit.



# FAIREST OF MEN ALL

Cosmetic companies everywhere are rejoicing as men are now joining the women in purchasing makeup for themselves. CHAN YEE CHUN, NORA LEE SOH and LEE JIA LIN explore this new wave.

A 45-minute makeup routine is what Muhammad Amirul Bin Omar, 19, diligently does every single day before he leaves the house. With a light coat of BB (short for Beauty or Blemish Balm) cream, he applies foundation and concealer before finishing it off by shaping his eyebrows and drawing on eyeliner.

"Even if I step out to buy something from the *mama shop* (convenience store), I must have something on for my eyebrows and eyes," says Amirul.

Cosmetics are no longer the conversation topic exclusive to women. More big cosmetic brands like Jean Paul Gaultier and MAC are creating new product lines for men.

Are men getting more conscious about how they look? "Yes" would be an understatement for Korean men who have already begun to fully embrace the typically beauty rituals of women - from applying foundation to drawing their eyebrows every morning.

The Hallyu wave is one key reason for this makeup trend as renowned cosmetic brands work closely with male artistes to endorse their products. According to Euromonitor, a research firm, South Korea's cosmetics market thrived with men spending about US\$836 million (S\$1.05 billion) on makeup in 2012, which is almost a 70 per cent increase from the US\$493 million (S\$621 million) in 2007. This is no surprise since a poll done by Korea Food and Drug Administration (KFDA), who authorise and approve cosmetic products for the country, revealed that one in every 10 men in Korea wears makeup on a regular basis.

And right now, it seems that this new wave has hit our local shores. Ong Jin, a third-year Ngee Ann Polytechnic animation student, says that he started using light and natural makeup every day after attending a workshop on makeup as part of his tour itinerary, during his vacation in South Korea.

"I learnt that makeup can actually aid our skin condition instead of just making it look good. The teacher also said that all the men in Seoul have at least a little makeup on them, because it is a sign of respect to the people that they meet every day," says Jin.

His daily makeup consists of putting on BB cream, sunblock and foundation in that order. He noticed that after using makeup, his oily skin condition improved greatly because of the various skincare benefits in his makeup.

Amirul, caught on to the trend of wearing makeup, claiming that 80 per cent of his friends have never seen him without makeup on before.

"I've been putting on makeup since Secondary 2. My teachers would tell me to wash my BB cream off, but I didn't," saw the engineering student from Ngee Ann Polytechnic.

The same goes for Lee Yang Feng, 24, who never leaves his house without his concealer. "It is a habit and a necessity now. I just feel more confident if I have [it] on me, and I will feel and look good too," says the manager of an engineering company. He feels that "it's not [only] to look pretty, but to look respectable and presentable".

Although some men are still hesitant to admit it, it is undeniable that more people are warming up to the idea of men with makeup.

"A lot of guys don't want to admit, mainly because it can be a bit embarrassing... I mean, it has always been a female thing," says Marcus AC, a male makeup artist and TV producer.

"There was one time when I was doing a shoot in Orchard, interviewing people on the street who were a little bit more stylish and we picked two guys who were really stylish, looking no more than 19 or 20 years old and one of them had makeup on. I privately asked him why he was wearing makeup and he wasn't afraid to admit it, asking back 'Why not?'. He was very confident about it," Marcus says.

"Back in the days, it's taboo for guys to use makeup. People aren't open minded and they tend to stereotype," says Wymond Chee, makeup artist for internationally renowned brand, Tom Ford. "But I think it's great that people are now more accepting because, well, guys do want to look their best and it's good that guys are more open to trying out skincare and makeup."

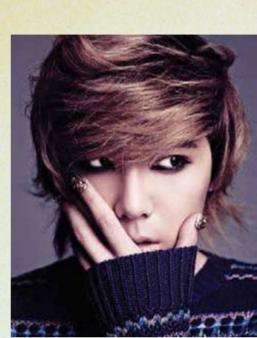
Namrata Tilani, 18, got over her initial surprise of her male schoolmates putting on makeup. She now thinks that it's "pretty cool" for guys to put on makeup.

Looking flawless isn't easy though as those who are regular users of makeup will know. Jin admits that he can take up to 20 minutes for his usual makeup routine, but he never thinks it's too troublesome to make himself look good.

But where is the line between looking your best and being excessive? According to Marcus – who puts on makeup himself for functional purposes – men wearing makeup is not a big deal but what infuriates him is "when the makeup is too thick or when it's not done right".

"I think sometimes guys don't know when is too much. They are just not educated [about it]; maybe because they don't spend enough time at the counter when they are buying the products, but I think a lot of guys don't go into the details, and that is what is lacking," says Marcus.

"The bottom line is, you need to know two things: first, you need to know your skin, and second, you need to know the product," Marcus advises. "Don't just buy blindly, never buy a new product without knowing how you can really use the product to the maximum."



# Is the trend catching up in other countries?

Other than South Korea, it seems like the trend of men using makeup is catching up in other countries too. According to an European cosmetics news website, men in the United Kingdom are getting equally conscious about how they look as well, with one in every five men wearing make up even though they are not willing to admit out loud that they do. The most commonly used product — with a whopping 71 per cent of the male respondents admitting to using it is the concealer.

Over in the United States of America, consumers have spent over US\$5 billion (S\$6.3 billion) on men's grooming products in 2007, with 50 per cent going to skincare and cosmetics, according to Euromonitor International, a firm that conducts market research and analysis for countries and industries. That is almost twice as much as the \$2.4 billion (S\$3 billion) spent in 1997!

However, unlike the seemingly unending variety of high-end cosmetic products that women tend to go for, men are more inclined to go for simpler and more affordable products such as concealers, BB cream and bronzers that do not make men any less masculine. In fact, smart advertisers realise the hesitation in men and have tweaked the cosmetic products to be marketed as grooming products instead. Foundation is now described as an "urban camouflage" or a "sculpting face stick" and the concealer is called the "confidence corrector".





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# **SELF-MADE SUCCESS, ONE STITCH AT A TIME**

In a culture driven by materialism, **GERALD TAN** sheds insight on a local sartorial startup that proves not everyone has to conform to the norm of embarking on a corporate career.

Hidden away in a sleepy industrial estate two minutes away from Paya Lebar MRT, Diana and Gerald Shen have created a brand, beautifully hand-stitched sartorial items, and above all, hope for a new breed of Singaporeans.

In a workshop space more befitting of a sterile hospital lab than of a sartorial clothing brand, the husband-wife team painstakingly handcrafts all their items to ensure steadfast quality and timeless grace with each purchase under their self-owned brand, Vanda Fine Clothing or Vanda for short. Their intricate handiwork has been complimented by the likes of renowned menswear blogger Jesse Thorn, who claims that "once you've worn one (of Vanda's neckties), it's impossible not to get more".

Instead of going out to have fun, the young duo has always preferred to stay in during school nights, sewing pocket squares to sell online. Unbeknownst to them, those nights spent sewing would eventually translate into a career and full-time project.

Exhibiting a sharp eye for curating beauty, Diana and Gerald often go the extra mile (literally), to secure a delightful assortment of unique textiles worldwide, such as pure English printed silk, vintage Japanese kimono silk and even wool spun by the hands of a 108-year-old Japanese weaver. Revelling in the fact that Singapore is a huge melting pot of culture, that accomodates a multitude of races, Gerald jokes, "The fact that we have so many cultures, means we have the freedom to experiment with different fabrics, essentially aligning ourselves with Singapore's *rojak* culture."

Accompanying their great products is a brand that has been engineered with much thought and care. Named after our homeland's national flower, Vanda Miss Joaquim, the duo have translated their nationality into a cleverly designed logo incorporating an orchid and a subtly placed letter 'v'. Perhaps one of their more unique items, Vanda's lapel pins are quirky splashes of colourful clay that have also been moulded into the shape of a lifelike orchid, further exemplifying a sense of national pride. When you look beyond their stellar products to the creators, Diana and Gerald's story is even more impressive. Despite Diana having a stable foothold in a luxury hotel group and Gerald's double degrees in business management and economics, they chose to drop out of the rat race and forge an entrepreneurial venture by themselves. With hard work, talent and supportive family members, they may not have peaked in terms of aptitude, but Vanda Fine Clothing has evolved into a sustainable business.

While citing his greatest motivation to build a startup of his own, Gerald quips, "You may take home less money at the end of the month, but you'll be happier being your own boss." In a culture so saturated by talks of dollars, sense and corporate achievements, Singaporeans often forgo personal happiness for financial security. Thankfully, Diana and Gerald chose to deviate from the norm, and did not allow their past accolades and achievements to determine their paths in the future.

Lawyer and menswear enthusiast, Nabil Mustafiz echoes these sentiments, saying "Menswear in Singapore was in its infancy when they launched their business. But their dedication has put [themselves] and Singapore on the map as well." Being in the corporate world himself, Nabil finds himself wearing Vanda's understated and graceful offerings with "quiet pride".

Evidently, Vanda's story is an inspiration to a generation of Singaporeans who are pursuing dreams in the creative fields. Combining ingenuity and good sense, Diana and Gerald are proof that not all students have to move on to a 9 to 5 job upon graduation.

"There's no easier route. Let go of the need to benchmark yourself against what your peers are doing, because you have to work for your own dreams," Nabil advises from his personal experiences. Hopefully, the burgeoning arts scene in Singapore will see more of such success stories, as we inch towards our metamorphosis from a nation driven by money and into a true blue arts hub.



# **TILL THE LAST** THREAD BREAKS

It is a gripping battle as local street wear brands wrestle with international labels for the hearts of Singaporean youths. MOHD AZHAR BIN AZIZ reports.

Local street wear labels are revving up brand image and design in a bid to appeal to youths and stay abreast of the competition from international brands.

Creators of local labels have seen retail shops here such as Rockstar giving space to giant international labels such as Obey. This trend has diluted the local street wear market, removing its ubiquity in the streets of Singapore.

But, Singapore-born street wear labels aren't quitting just yet. In fact, they are refining the image of their creations.

"You don't go against the brands. You go along with them. Find out what youths like about them, then change certain things to make it yours," explains Azhairul Lazim, 24, cofounder of local street wear brand, Harx.

To keep up with the fast-evolving trend of street wear, local brands are focusing a lot more on design. According to HYPE's survey of 100 youths, 93 per cent ranked design as the most important element in street wear fashion.

Instead of re-inventing the wheel, homegrown brands are taking the cue from international street wear styles, merging these ideas, then transforming them into something uniquely theirs.

For instance, local brands such as Flesh Imp and Harx are incorporating popular African-inspired tribal prints into their product lines - Flesh Imp's Hernan T-shirt series and Harx's SINCITY Native Snapback cap series.

"We have to value design. Brands like Diamond Supply can just have a very simple design [and] people would [still] pay. So, to replace the brand, we have to play on design," adds Nazerah Tahir, 24, co-founder of Harx.

Regional streetwear labels, such as the Indonesian Petersaysdenim, have inspired native street wear labels to engage local celebrities to endorse their creations, hoping to relate to youths better.

Homegrown brands are supporting more Singaporean artistes and bands, apart from setting up booths at music festivals and holding mini album launches.

Flesh Imp, for instance, has been a supporter of local rapper ShiGGa Shay, since 2009 and Mash-up Collective picks female skate-roller group Chilli Padi Girls and Singapore-based fashion blogger Rana Wehbe-Flinter as their models.

"We like to think [that] we have grown together with most of the Singaporean youths that are trendy... We know how tough it is to break out in the market, not just for brands, but also for singers and artistes, which is why we are supporting them," explains Nicholas Cho, 35, the director of Flesh Imp.

It would seem that there is still a lot of ground to cover. Five out of 10 Singaporean youths have either never bought anything from local streetwear brands, or at least in the past for two years. Moreover, 70 per cent of this group said they prefer overseas brands instead.

Divya Barathi, 22, a LASALLE College of The Arts graduate, says that youths here still find "Western icons" stylish. It all boils down to how a brand offers the youth an identity - something local brands have yet to achieve.

Vera Siak, 19, a street wear fan, says that the idea of tying up with local bands and artistes can work as most Singaporean youths attend gigs. Despite the fact that local artistes may not have the star power of their Western counterparts, the Vans junkie believes that the strategy will work better using social media.

As homegrown street wear brands continue to sew the threads of quality and design into their apparel, it seems that they may be seeing a spark of success overseas.

"One of our customers bought one of our shirts and mailed it to Spain as a gift to a friend [and] her friend was overjoyed to receive something from Singapore, and took pictures of it," Azhairul says.

And that little spark may be just enough to ignite the passion to continue to forge ahead.



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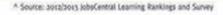
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# **T-SHIRTS TO STRY**

T-shirts are celebrating their 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary! JOANNE TAN. SANGITHA RAMAN and CHARMAINE LIM dig through a century's history of T-shirts and sieve out some of the more iconic ones.

The T-shirt is probably the only article of clothing that anyone - from that little boy next door with his tiny tricycle, to the elderly granny who brings you can wear regardless of anything; age. gender, size, colour, race, religion and country. They are widely adorned by people from all walks of life for their comfort and functionality.

Back in the days of stifling tailcoats and rib-crushing corsets, a T-shirt was a simple and fuss-free affair - a cotton garment with a round neck and short sleeves. But through time, it has been tweaked to incorporate unique characteristics like the V-neck, crew neck, 3/4 sleeves, cap sleeves and so on. But one basic criteria of the T-shirt still stands: it's comfy and versatile.

And this seems to be a universal opinion. A survey HYPE conducted with Singaporeans aged 17 to 29 discovered that they too like T-shirts for they are "comfortable, easy to match and perfect for casual wear' and "simple, laidback and good for Singapore's super hot weather".

A T-shirt also gives plenty of room for the individual to customise and express his or her individuality.

Kyle Geib, marketing coordinator of Threadless, strongly believes that a T-shirt is a canvas that can evolve into a piece of art. The e-commerce website propelled to success by cleverly utilising the creativity of the members of the Threadless community and of course, the popularity of T-shirts.

Designer of local labels Superwhite and Lessthanpositive, Eugene Tay, agrees and also sees T-shirts being well-received as they are "a perfect medium for expression because there are so many different colours and designs and you can pair it up with different accessories", and speculates that T-shirts will hold their reign for the next century.

One of the trends spotted is the statement and graphic tees, and Superwhite and Lessthanpositive saw the opportunity and immediately brainstormed for creative concepts to catch the eyes of T-shirt lovers.

Therefore, Superwhite, whose Chinese brand name (超级白) translates into something uncomfortably similar to an infamous swear word in the Hokkien dialect (if you get the wordplay), has a more light-hearted design with its witty old-school charm that is reminiscent of the '60s and '70s, while Lessthanpositive's designs tend to be more sombre with their monochrome palette and cynical captions.

That seems to be a clever way to cater to the T-shirt lovers at both ends of the spectrum, but Eugene notes that "people have kind of toned down somewhat, so they are looking for something a little bit simpler... They just rather wear something with a caption. Designs nowadays are either very plain, or the graphics [have] to resonate with the people buying it".

42 per cent of our survey respondents agree and favour a basic and plain design over loud and flashy designs. Most designs that youths are customising these days are "similar to the Nike and Adidas designs", which are simple and clean, according to Kenneth Tan, co-owner of Orange Box Corporation, a company that specialises in customising T-shirts.

However despite this shift in design preferences, there are some statement and graphic T-shirts that will never wear with time. HYPE tracks down the history behind them and reveals the origins of these classic shirts.

## FASHION



HEINEKEN, JACK DANIELS, TIGER BEER

Some alcohol lovers enjoy the beverages so much that they have taken to proclaim their love by wearing them on their T-shirts. And non-drinkers seemed to have caught on to this trend as well by donning these garments which bear the prints of Heineken, Jack Daniels, Trear Bear and there deshed labels

Tiger Beer and other alcohol labels.



# **CHE GUEVARA**

The Argentine Che Guevara was a Marxist revolutionary, guerrilla leader, diplomat, physician and the list goes on. With Che showing anger and pain in his undaunted eyes in that picture, it has become one of the world's most influential image, and a pop symbol in fashion. However, the iconic image is ironic as it contributes to the consumer culture which he detested and it is unfortunate that people wear the shirt without knowing much about the legendary Che and his initiatives.



HARD ROCK CAFÉ T-SHIRT

Founded in 1971, the T-shirt sporting the iconic logo of the trendy café is an important contribution to the brand's popularity, and has contributed significantly to the company's profits. Loyal fans will travel all around the world just to collect the various versions available as souvenirs.



**BOB MARLEY** 

Another strong icon that has set a T-shirt trend is the late musician, and cultural and fashion icon Bob Marley. Selling 25 million copies of his albums worldwide, he introduced reggae to the masses. Despite his death on May 11, 1981, people continue to pass on his legacy with shirts featuring his face.



#### **KEEP CALM AND CARRY ON**

'Keep Calm and Carry On' was meant to be a poster campaign in late 1939, created by the British government during World War II to boost public morale. However, the simple and straightforward message, stamped with the symbolic crown of King George VI, was a poster campaign that nobody saw again, until 2000. The owners of Barter Bookstore pinned up the forgotten poster and decided to reprint and duplicate the design, after receiving a lot of the public's attention.



I 🎔 NY

Due to the bad reputation as a tourists' nightmare city in the '70s, the Commerce Department of New York City hired designer Milton Glaser to create an eye-catching logo to revitalise the city's image. Glaser sketched the logo "1 ♥ NY" on a napkin over lunch one day which pioneered a revival and boost in tourism. It has since been imitated multiple times by other countries and cities, who crafted the garments to be one of their mandatory souvenir items. These wildly popular T-shirts prove that this plain garment can also double up as a tool to send messages, and the simpler the message, the stronger the impact. It is the most visible way to show your affirmation and support towards a certain group or cause, and a reflection and expression of one's image, according to Eugene and Kenneth.

"The T-shirt has become an everyday article of clothing that can be used to make a statement, no matter how small that statement may be. At its most basic, the T-shirt is just a couple pieces of cloth with four holes in it, but at its most complex, the T-shirts can be the vehicle for a voice," says Kyle, who is confident that every Threadless T-shirt "will resonate with every individual who browses [the] catalog".

Although the local T-shirt designing scene is a little limited due to high manufacturing costs and insufficient production facilities, there are still many renowned local labels, such as Roof Industries, Praise and OuterEdit, which cater to the taste of Singaporeans.

For our gruelling hot weather, we thank the existence of a T-shirt and may it celebrate more decades to come. Happy 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and keep calm and carry on.

# **T-BACKGROUND**

The name 'T-shirt' is derived from the shape of the shirt which formed the letter "T". In 1913, the U.S. Navy approved T-shirts to be worn under its uniform as underwear. The word "T-shirt" was not seen as an official word until the 1920s when it surfaced in official US dictionaries. One T-shirt is made with 9000m of yarn.

# THE T-SHIRT STORIES

1. Once upon a time in merry old England, in a cottage during wintertime, a husband felt cold and demanded his wife to bring him some tea and his shirt. Tired of his attitude and constant orders, she threw his shirt at him and then spilt the cup of tea all over his favourite shirt. Ta-da, the "tea-shirt" was born.

2. In the past, navy men wore the equivalent of tank tops and were seen as offensive to the British Royal Family. It was insisted that they cover their arms enough to hide their armpits. They were also worn under overalls to conceal the sailors' chest hair. The shirts looked like "T's" in comparison to the old tank tops and hence, dubbed "T shirts."





## Want to make a statement?

Statement shirts start conversations and communicate something about the person wearing them. Mildly subversive, these shirts reflect catchy uniquely Singaporean phrases with a tinge of humour. Check out their newest additions of tote bags and for more on their store, do look them up at statement.sg.

Also, we have an exclusive discount for **HYPE** readers! Simply quote the code, "Stand our from the crowd. Make a STATEMENT." into the website during payment, and stand a chance to win a statement shirt! What better way to celebrate your love for T-shirts and its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday by donning a T-shirt and making a statement today?

## FASHION

# SHINING THE LIGHT ON SELVEDGE

Despite raw denim making waves among trend-hungry youths, there are still plenty of question marks to be addressed. **NICHOLAS YEAM** and **NORA LEE SOH** answer them for those who don't quite understand the hype.



Unwashed, unprocessed, and ridiculously uncomfortable. Yet, raw denim is making waves among trendhungry youths willing to pay top dollar for the perfect pair of raw denim jeans.

Raw denim is not washed after being dyed, unlike most regular denim jeans that are washed during production to soften the fabric and to reduce the amount of shrinkage and dye run-off, which occurs after the wearer's first wash. A pair of washed regular denim jeans would look pretty much the same in the future.

On the other hand, with raw denim, the jeans' first wash will depend on the wearer. Most would leave their raw denim jeans unwashed for about six months to a year, but extremists can literally go for years without washing.

The attraction lies in the fact that after an extended period of wear, the unusually stiff, uncomfortable, and abrasive raw denim jeans would have softened up, picked up plenty of battle scars, as well as lost a lot of that unprocessed cotton dye. In fact, they would've looked nothing like the initial pair of raw denim jeans from the store months ago.

In a nutshell, your jeans will effectively 56  $\ensuremath{\textsc{HYPE}}$ 

become a diary of your life. Whether it's a coffee stain on the right pocket, or a faded outline of your wallet on the back pocket — your jeans will have recorded it all, a rather unique form of 'customisation'.

Aside from the novelty factor, a pair of faded raw jeans is also aesthetically more pleasing compared to your everyday regular denim.

Raw denim jeans can acquire certain patterned fades, namely 'honeycombs' (crisscrossed lines found behind the knee area) and 'whiskers' (lines found around the front pocket and crotch area) after a long period of wear.

However, there is no 'perfect fade' as it's all subject to the owner's lifestyle. For Muhammad Fazrul Bin Rozali, 20, it wasn't easy getting his Naked & Famous Weird Guy Elephant 2 jeans to the state they are in today.

He shares, "I didn't wash them for about eight months after buying them back in 2010. For the first two weeks, I even wore them to sleep to break them in.

"Even now, after three years of frequent wear and four washes, the jeans could still fade even more but Singapore's weather does prove to be a problem. It's way too hot to wear such thick jeans everyday."

This is echoed by most denim devotees, including Alvin Sim, 19, who has spent over \$6,000 on denim products.

He says, "I realised that it's quite fascinating the way your [raw denim] jeans will reflect your lifestyle and the activities that you do. Before I knew it, I fell in love with denim."

Due to the small production numbers, a pair of raw jeans is more expensive, costing between \$150 and \$600. At that price, one would wonder why students, who aren't even working fulltime yet, would be willing to pay.

Bryan Lee, 19, who owns a pair of A.P.C New Cure jeans, claims, "To people who love denim, it's more than just a piece of clothing. It's a lifestyle. These people wear their jeans every single day.

"Look at it this way. When you buy raw denim, you're basically committing to wearing those jeans as much as you can. If you do that, then you're basically making full use of them, which is why I think it's worth it in the long run."

# YOUR TOP THREE RAW DENIM ESSENTIALS



# **SNEAKERS**

*Converse Retail Outlets* (*Across the island*), \$65.90 Everyone needs a good pair of sneakers. The Converse Chuck Taylor sneakers is a classic pair of sneakers that can be worn with practically anything. Arguably the most recognisable pair of sneakers in the world, the Converse Chuck Taylor is also affordable, which is a big plus point considering you're already emptying your pockets for your jeans.

# NATURAL LEATHER BELT

*310 Woodcraft Leather @ Orchard Central,* \$95.00

Natural leather is the leather equivalent of raw denim. It is unfinished and hasn't gone through any tanning or artificial finishing, which explains its pale beige colour. With frequent wear, the leather will darken as it gets exposed to sunlight and the natural oils from your body. Every individual natural leather product is unique to the wearer, not unlike a well-faded pair of raw denim jeans.



# LEATHER WALLET REIN

*Obbi Good Label @ Kandahar Street,* \$69.00 Remember those stretchy rubber springs you had in your childhood that secure your wallet to your pants to prevent you from losing them? Evidently, they're back in style albeit with a leather variation. You'll see plenty of people on the streets sporting these leather key reins in a bid to amp up their raw denim. You've got to admit, nothing looks as good next to denim as leather does.

# A GUIDE TO CLEANING YOUR RAW DENIM

So you have finally decided to clean your raw denim jeans. Before that, do make sure that you have worn them regularly for at least six months. If you wash your raw denim too early, you will not be able to get those sharp high-contrast fades that define raw denim jeans.

Not More Than One Year: Try to not go beyond a year without cleaning your jeans as the bacteria build-up will begin eating away at the fabric at that point, which will lead to fragile denim susceptible to fraying, tears and rips.

Freeze 'em: If you're not quite at that six-month mark yet and you already

can't stand the putrid odour wafting from your jeans, then you might want to try placing your jeans in the freezer for a few hours to kill off the excess bacteria causing the smell. Of course, you should place those jeans inside an airtight plastic bag first.

Hand Wash: You'll be washing them by hand because a washing machine would stretch out your denim and leave you with an ill-fitting pair of trousers.

First, fill up a pail, basin, or even a bathtub with lukewarm water, enough so that your jeans will be completely submerged. Make sure the water is not too hot or your jeans will suffer from excess dye run-off.

Next, mix in a small amount of a light fabric cleaner that won't remove too much dye. Do not use bleach. When that's done, turn your jeans inside out and soak them completely in the water for an hour.

After you're done with the soak, rinse your jeans thoroughly with cool water to remove excess soap before hanging them up outdoors, preferably where there's sunlight, to dry naturally. Once again, do not use a dryer as it could drastically shrink your raw denim to the point when it doesn't fit.



music • film+tv • food • contests nightlife • events • fashion • people tech • books • games • sports



# POCKET-SIZED PAPARAZZI

Leave the telephoto lens at home, because today, convenience is key. JOEY LEE looks at some nifty gadgets that can turn your humble smartphone into a paparazzo's dream. As the hordes of DSLR-wielding 'aspiring photographers' dwindle down to the little few serious ones, a new wave of products has surfaced to whisk away these casual shutterbugs.

Pimping your phone into your very own camera seems to be the latest craze, especially with Instagram and photo-editing softwares recently sending both teens and adults alike into ridiculous snapping frenzies. We've shortlisted some products from Peek! for those that truly prefer the convenient wonders of phone photography over the tiresome bulky likes of DSLRs.

# UNIVERSAL CLIP-ON LENSES

Whether you're craving the distorted ways of fisheye lenses to the broadening effects of wide-angle lenses that make it perfect for group 'camwhoring', these universal clip-on lenses will prove just right. Small enough to fit in the grasp of your palm, these lenses (macro, fisheye and wide-angle) can be clipped onto any phone with ease, and instantly provide you with the wanted effect.

\$35.00 to \$95.00

# 4-IN-1 LENS FOR IPHONE5

Versatility's the word for this one — with a dedicated fisheye lens on the front camera for your 'selfie' needs, as well as a trio of fisheye, wide-angle and macro on the back of the clip-on lens that's interchangeable with just a quick swivel twist mechanism.

\$75.00





Always been plagued by shaky hands? This nifty remote shutter has an extendable cord that lends you the ability to snap photos on your Apple products without even touching the device itself. Say goodbye to quivering hands and blurry photos; say hello to impeccable focus and access to long exposure shots.

# GIZMON ICA FOR IPHONE5

If you really wish to go the extra mile, this will be the final touch on transforming your iPhone into an actual camera. This phone case is made out of polycarbonate, and even has metal screws to ensure security for your fragile iPhone within this film-camera-lookalike casing. With full access to the flash and all your iPhone functions, this casing does the coup de grâce on pimping your iPhone into an actual film camera.



\$80.00

# MASTER YOUR **IESS**

You may be part of the young and wild generation, but chaos does not inspire clarity of mind. **CHAN YEE CHUN** and **GLORIA LIN** suss out the best items to help you micro-organise the study area and bedroom plus tips on how you can travel smart.

The little things in life shouldn't be overlooked.

"It is increasingly important to invest in solutions that maximise every inch of storage space available," says Ms Adeline Poh, the marketing communications manager of Howards Storage World.

"[This includes] areas that might otherwise go to waste such as under the bed or behind the door."

The concept behind micro-organisation is to spruce up the spaces used in everyday life, little by little. And the benefits to be reaped are big.

**HYPE** shows you how to no longer waste precious time and effort ransacking. Life is too short to spend your time looking for that pen anyway.

## by MUJI

Can't see your study desk or floor with all your magazines strewn about? This sleek holder is here to save the day. It's a good size which fits many kinds of magazines and it also features a division to help organise your reading — you can even separate publications that you've yet to read from ones you've already perused. Its minimalistic wooden finish is a plus to any modern study area too.

\$29.00

# by MUJI

The thought process behind the design of this penholder is immediately obvious when one lays eyes on it. With sections that slant upwards with the user's convenience in mind, making it easier to reach for pens inside it, the clear acrylic also acts like a display case for colourful and pretty stationery.

\$19.00

## EXPANDABLE DRAWER ORGANISER

by Howards Storage World

This rustic wood drawer can be expanded to fit the size of different drawers. Originally made for the kitchen to organise utensils, it can also be used in a variety of situations – such as storing stationery of varying sizes neatly.

\$49.95



### BOXES OF STATIONARY by MONOYONO



With these cute boxes, you'll never lose another sketching pencil or paper clip. Customised to fit small stationery like rubber bands and thumbtacks, these little cardboard wonders will keep an eye on the small things in your life starting from the desk.

BOX NO.1 - Paperclips \$9.90 BOX NO.6 - Elastic Bands \$9.90 BOX NO.7 - Pencils \$14.90



by MONOYONO

\$12.90

Revising is a breeze when you study smart

this" and "don't forget", to catch your eye!

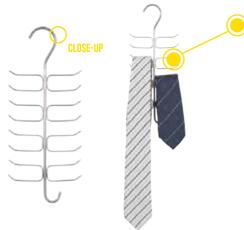
with this set of five revision tags, each brightly

coloured and armed with quotes like "remember

## HANGER FOR KNICK-KNACKS by MONOYONO

Kill two birds with one stone with this multi-purpose room accessory. Besides acting as a bed for all your random knick-knacks that usually find their way around to mess up an otherwise neat room, this rustic wood-and-cloth hanger adds visual interest to any bedroom too. The five pockets are roomy enough to fit multiple items and its transparent material allows you to easily spot what you need and go. And its travel-themed pouches, with names of dreamy cities like Rome stamped on, will serve as a motivation to work towards your next great escape.

\$24.90



## **TIE HANGER**

by Howards Storage World

As Mark Twain once said, "clothes make the man", and with ties being arguably the most noticeable part of a man's outfit, who can blame those who own too many? They can be blamed, however, if their ties aren't organised properly, as accessories like this tie hanger exist to serve this purpose. This one can be used to organise belts as well. Simply drape your silk or polyester neckties or leather belts across the many metal hooks to make your morning spifting-up routine that much easier.

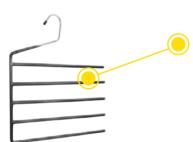
\$23.95

## SCARVES HANGER by Howards Storage World

Scarves are wonderful to keep warm - and stylish - in, but not quite so when you're trying to keep your wardrobe skinny. Tending to be thick and bulky, they take up more space than they should. Downsize your wardrobe by keeping these cuddly pieces of clothing all on one hanger - isn't this ingenious holder what scarf-lovers out there have been waiting for?



\$29.95



# TROUSER HANGER

by Howards Storage World

Maximise your limited wardrobe space with this multi-tasker. Although listed as a trouser hanger, there's much potential to use this organiser to hang other clothing items as well. With the head of a single hanger, it can hold several pants, skirts, or even dresses. Here's to a neater clothes cupboard!





# ACRYLIC HOLDERS

Build your own beauty empire at home with the help of these stackable containers. The tall walls of the sectioned container makes for good storage of taller bottles like sunscreens and BB creams, while the flat container is a handy drawer for keeping compressed items like powders and blushes. Either stack a couple of drawers together, or switch it up as shown – and get creative with filling them up!

Tube Holder \$29.00 Drawer \$19.00

# TRANSLUCENT STACKABLES by MUJI

For storage of bulkier cosmetics, this range of stackable boxes are meant for the job. They provides enough space to neatly arrange these difficult to store items. Choose from boxes with different combinations and contrasting sections, or go for the one without any to keep larger items. The best thing about these? You can stack them as high as you want.

TOP \$5.90 BOTTOM \$4.90

#### ACRYLIC CASE by Howards Storage World

This lipstick-cum-powder holder has the noble aspiration of helping you keep track of your lipstick collection, and it does so while looking attractive too. With its thick-cut transparent acrylic, your array of lip products can be easily seen and what's more, it is pleasing to the eyes too. The holder also does a good job of keeping nail polishes.

\$14.95

Answer this question correctly and stand a chance to win a set of two Fabian Boxes (worth \$22.95) from Howards Storage World!

"What is one organisation product which can be found at Howards Storage World's newest store, #04-43 Plaza Singapura?"

There are three sets to be given away so, send your answer together with your name, NRIC, and handphone number to contests@fmsmidea.com by 27th August.



## Howards Storage World

hsw.com.sg Plaza Singapura 68 Orchard Road, #04-43 Singapore 238839 +65 6238 8048

Daily 10am to 10pm

#### MUJI

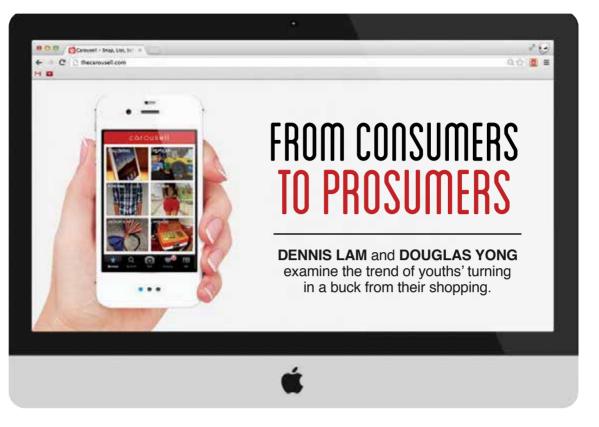
muji.com.sg Marina Square 6 Raffles Boulevard, #02-326 - 330 Singapore 039594 +65 6336 6123

Mon to Fri 10.30am to 9pm Sat/Sun/PH 10am to 9pm

#### MONOYONO

monoyono.com Plaza Singapura 68 Orchard Road, #B1-06 Singapore 238839 +65 6238 8048

*Sun to Wed 11am to 10pm Thurs to Sat 11am to 10.30pm* 



The regular Jane and Joe can now turn into online entrepreneurs when cyberspace makes it that much easier at the push of a button.

Probably inspired by the likes of eBay and Amazon that have capitalised on the Internet's ability to connect the world easily to become multi-billion dollar corporations, youths are dabbling in online retail through pre-existing social networks like Facebook and Instagram – albeit on a much smaller scale.

Anyone can use Facebook to create pages, and update them with photos and write-ups of the products sold. On Instagram, users can create accounts for their business and post snapshots of what they sell along with brief captions and prices.

One Instagram shop — @thexancloset — is owned by Janice Teo Xinyi, 19, who started her business last November. She sells clothes and accessories, most of which are clothes she bought but never wore.

"I have many clothes that were pretty much impulse buys. I never got around to wearing all of what I bought and needed to clear my wardrobe; that's why I started an Instagram shop. And in fact, that's what many shop owners do," explains Janice.

She admits to being an avid online shopper herself, where she first began buying items online in secondary school. Now, she has turned this hobby into a part-time job, earning extra pocket money. She has made more than \$1,000 thus far.

Purchase and payment are easy processes for those who want to order something from @thexancloset. They can send in an order via text or email, and can then choose to either collect the item from Janice personally and pay her on the spot, or wire the money into her bank account and receive the item through mail.

Amanda Jane Andrews, 19, and two friends recently cofounded the blogshop, ofwineandribbons.wordpress.com because they felt the blogshops overpriced their items.

"We just wanted to bring cheap clothes to students," elaborates Amanda. "Our profit margins are not high."

ofwineandribbons.wordpress.com works on a pre-order system. The website contains fashion shoots exhibiting the clothes and their prices. Interested buyers place an order, and the owners will then order the items from the retailer. However, Amanda will consider stocking up clothes when the blogshop earns more revenue.

These financial decisions factor into the survival of a selfmade online shop's survival. Youths have to get their sums right, even if theirs is a small-scale business. Their ability to understand the market and obtain trade contacts will be put into play.

An integral part of the business is to maintain supplies. Online shop owners scour physical shops, wholesalers and even other online shops for goods and materials.

For example, Janice makes her Instagram shop somewhat unique with her handmade braided cloth bracelets priced at \$8.90. She buys chain bracelets and coloured string in bulk, and then mixes and matches them together to sell on her shop.

She says, "They are quite popular; most of my repeat customers keep buying them. Even other Instagram shops place orders!" Online shops also need to be updated regularly to hold on to their followers' attention, because preferences can change quickly with the plethora of rivals in the market. This adds to the burden of youth entrepreneurs as most of them are juggling business and schoolwork, and need to find the time to keep their online shops abreast of trends.

Amanda Sea, 19, set up a website selling contact lenses, accessories and bags when she was 14. However, she closed it down soon after as she wanted to focus on studying for her O Levels.

But Amanda Andrews, 19 is intent on pushing ofwineandribbons.wordpress.com to greater heights. She insists, "If you love something enough, you will definitely make time for it."

And these small online shops rely heavily on trust to function. The customer has to trust the shop to come through with its stocks and the shop has to trust the customer to pay appropriately on time.

According to Janice, the local Instagram shops have formed a community, and share information with each other. If a customer were to go back on his or her word repeatedly after buying items, the shop would warn others by spreading the customer's Instagram profile and ask for fellow shops to blacklist him or her.

She recalls bitterly, "There was once I got stood up by this girl. She ordered something and planned to meet with me for an exchange with money. But on the day itself, she didn't turn up and never answered my calls or replied to my text messages."

Well, these problems may be a thing of the past soon. There is a free smartphone application that allows users to sell items on its online platform.

Launched in August 2012, Carousell is a mobile marketplace where users list their items by snapping a photo and uploading it onto the app. All it takes is a simple sign-up and users can visit the marketplace to browse all listed times.

"When we started designing the app, we had a few principles in mind," says Quek Siu Rui, 25, one of Carousell's creators.

"If you look at the next generation of smartphone users, the

apps they are using are Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. [These apps] share a common trait. All of them are easy to use, beautiful and it's a social network. Essentially what we designed is very simple, visual and social."

The creators were spot on. As of June 2013, Carousell has already gained tens of thousands of users, with over 120,000 items listed for sale. Users can choose to share the listings of their Facebook, Twitter accounts as well as STClassifieds for more exposure.

Users post the photo of their item along with necessary information such as price, product description and location to deal. Other users who are interested can 'like' the photo and make enquiries. Those who want to buy can click on the 'Chat to Buy' button and enter a private chat with the owner to negotiate prices.

On top of the easy functions, Carousell users can search for listed items in their vicinity, ranging from 500m to 200km, to examine the items for sale around them. The convenience doesn't stop here. Similar to Instagram, users of Carousell can 'follow' other users and keep themselves updated on the products that their favourite users are listing.

Chia Chai Ling Grace, 23, is one of the first sellers on Carousell. Grace sells mainly brand new items, such as apparel, household items, consumer electronics and even customised crafts. Grace has accumulated over 300 sales and 800 followers on her account, awesomebuys.

"It is not easy to sell on forums because registration is troublesome, photo uploads [is] troublesome, tracking [is] troublesome," Grace explains.

"With Carousell, I do not need to set up another site to list my products. I don't need to maintain anything other than my photos. This means lower costs for a small business owner like myself, zero in fact, because Carousell doesn't charge for listing," she assures.

Indeed, with the rapid growth of the Internet and social media, youths can kick off small online businesses with ease. It may be a saturated market but the convenience cyberspace offers continues to attract more youths. It may be too soon to say if online businesses will take over physical shop fronts, but one thing's for sure: This is only the beginning.







As our hawkers face the brink of extinction, **JOEY LEE** and **GERALD TAN** grasp onto the glimmer of hope that the new generation will step up to the plate and accept the challenge to preserve our hawkers' legacy.

If there's one thing that us Singaporeans stand united in, it's our nation's food; it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure that out. When Anthony Bourdain, American chef, author and television personality, arrived onto our shores a few years back, he proclaimed that our tiny island might just be the "best place on earth" if you love food.

Once a sleepy fishing island dotted with street hawkers trying to make a living, Singapore now houses them in our iconic hawker centres, where they are still serving up mouth-watering plates of well-known local fare, albeit currently teetering on the brink of retirement.

Unassuming in their ways, unpretentious in their food, and

unrivalled in their craft, these hawkers charge a minimal fee compared to the plush eateries that speckle our island. Newspaper cut-outs that adorn stall displays are their Michelin stars, and their legion of loyal customers stand testament to the consistent standards of their food.

In the recent challenge issued to Michelin-star-spangled chef Gordon Ramsay pitching him against local hawkers organised by Singtel, 'hawker heroes' was the title the major Singapore telco had bestowed upon them, and with plenty of reason to do so. Their decades of real-world expertise and relentless honing of techniques in their dingy hawker stalls are practically what make them the embodiment of authentic Singaporean food.

"There's an unpoetic forced sterility of a restaurant, compared to the accidental unforced beauty of a street kitchen. It's the approximation of ingredients that makes it like home-cooked food. You find menus that are so hyperspecific in street food vendors; they don't sell 80 dishes, they just sell food they're particularly good at making," enthuses James Oseland, the editor-in-chief of Saveur, America's most critically acclaimed food magazine.

Yet, slowly but surely, these heroic "oldies" that our nation of foodies has come to know for their delectable hawker fare are moving on, and their kids would rather trade in the spatulas for briefcases, keen on the lavish lifestyles usually associated with a more corporate career. Unfortunately, this spells the end for many hawkers who have developed their own recipes and unique flavor profiles in iconic hawker fare such as char kway teow, laksa and chicken rice.

Echoing these sentiments in the recent inaugural Partner's Forum, Minister of Environment and Water Resources, Dr Vivian Balakrishnan said that there is indeed a "real concern we (Singaporeans) will not succeed because of manpower".

The World Street Food Congress took place earlier on in Singapore this year in a bid to bring the issue of dying street food to light, drawing big names from the world of food such as Bourdain to the F1 Pit Building, where a street food fiesta was showcased by 37 of the world's best street food masters from 10 countries. "I see street food as a cause. It's a mean of preserving whatever 'authentic' means, and what authenticity that still exists, such as the food your mother or grandmother cooked for you. Chances are, the last line of defense where you can taste such food, is in street food," stressed Bourdain.

Thankfully for our wallets and more importantly, our discerning palettes, our government has recognised the urgent need to remedy the decline. In a bid to increase opportunities for new hawker stalls to start up, the government announced in October 2012 that construction of 10 new hawker centers would be completed by 2017, a move that has been unheard of since 1985. Reassuring the locals who might be worried by the rapidly increasing immigrant population, regulations stating hawkers must be Singaporean citizens and permanent residents (PR) were put in place.

There's an **unpoetic forced** sterility of a restaurant, compared to the accidental unforced beauty of a street kitchen. It's the approximation of ingredients that makes it like home-cooked food.

> - James Oseland Editor-in-chief of Saveur

Prior to this incident, hawker rents have also dipped to as low as \$21 per month after the requirement for hawkers to pay reserve rents to the National Environment Agency (NEA) was removed by the government.

"The government sees the need for continuity. They've even set up a street food academy, and are willing to sponsor up to 90 per cent of the funds. What we need, is participation. All the kerosene tanks are in place, someone just needs to light the fire," said K.F Seetoh, Singapore's most recognised and celebrated food enthusiast, and founder of Makansutra.

However, economic aid is hardly enough to counter the problem of the dying hawker. As Singapore's generation of baby-boomers starts to age, there must be a new generation of young blood to helm the food scene of the future. Just like the proverbial magician and his secrets, the older generations, who pioneered these dishes, are naturally unwilling to divulge their recipes, as they often throw in their own ingredients unique to their stalls. As their sons and daughters enter more lucrative and less taxing professions, these recipes face the risk of extinction after the pioneers have passed away. Some of these hawkers do not even factor in monetary profit, as their recipes and reputation hold far more significance to them.

In the saddening case of Makansutra Hawker Legend Mr Ng Siaw Meng, who used to run the renowned Meng Kee Satay Bee Hoon store at East Coast Food Lagoon before he was diagnosed with Stage 4 stomach cancer, his pride and passion for his reputation and food also signalled the demise of an incredibly delicious recipe. Even after Mr Ng conceded and was willing to sell off his recipe in order to pay for medical bills, he could not find a buyer that aligned with his personal vision of being a hawker.

The 63-year-old complained about buyers who wanted to monetise his recipe by mass production, and said in an interview with Seetoh that he would "rather take his recipe to the coffin".

Nonetheless, there is still a crop of youngsters keen on sustaining our hawker culture. Brought to light by a group



of students from Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information at Nanyang Technological University, these new-age hawkers are not just able to churn out delectable street food, but also engineer with a business mindset, hence the title, 'Youth Hawkerpreneurs'.

One such example would be Kenneth Lin, a 31-year-old hawker at Holland Drive with 2nd Class Honours in Banking and Finance, who abandoned the pursuit of corporate success to bring French bistro style food to the masses. Some might question his intentions on whether it's truly a valiant individual attempt to bolster and add diversity in our hawker scene, but it's precisely our critical questioning that is what has caused our hawker scene is have dwindled down to what it is now.

When we look beyond food as simplistic sustenance, and perceive the incredibly strong social bonds it is able to foster, the unifying effect that rallies our nation together, and even the gratification of buying top-notch food at frugal prices, we start to realise the magnitude of the declining number of hawkers.

In the words of Dr Balakrishnan himself, hawker fare transcends "value far beyond the economics", as it manages to attract people from all walks of life and are "part of what has kept us cohesive as a society".

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The Spanish cuisine, tapas, has found its way onto our island and into our mouths. Join **JOEY LEE** as he explores the new palette these bite-sized morsels have to offer.

There's an unspoken charm about tapas bars.

The décor is dubious and the food is simple. But those are what form the tantalising idea behind tapas – casual dining instead of the typical hefty slab of sirloin with a glass of Cabernet Sauvignon – and it's becoming an island-wide trend that's getting lapped up by Singaporeans.

Just in 2012 alone, 10 new tapas-styled restaurants have opened up, led by acclaimed Michelin-starred Chef Jason Atherton's Esquina, which opened up at the end of 2011. Till this day, the protégé of celebrity chef Gordon Ramsay keeps Esquina as a strictly no-reservations tapas bar, and is one of the hardest dining places to get a seat at in the country.

For starters, there's no fluff about the food served in tapas bars. Tapas bars have the chefs almost always working in an open-kitchen environment, leaving their techniques up for scrutiny. In fact, it isn't uncommon of the chefs to strike up a conversation with multiple groups of diners and explain the dishes to the occasional inquisitive customer. "I just love the interaction with the kitchen from a customer's point of view," says Chef Atherton.

Spain has never been the wealthiest of nations, and has therefore crafted a unique cuisine that is centred around extracting flavour from the cheapest of ingredients. With the quality and variety of produce that is being shipped into Singapore, you've got the winning combination right there.

The best part of tapas bars though, is that every item is created with the purpose to be shared. Food are dished out in the form of three to four bite-sized portions to be shared with a fork and a spoon, and consequently, obliterating any rigidness in the meal.

"We get to share the food, so it's not just about eating, but rather, it's about the whole experience," say Emil Halim and Steven Tjhang, the directors behind fusion tapas bar, East 8.

The baseline? Tapas sell, there's no doubt about that. But with even more tapas-styled venues slated to open up this year, it's only a matter of time before our tiny island gets saturated with tapas bars, and the tapas rage becomes a thing of the past. So it'd be good to enjoy this tasty and casual trend, before we go back to our steak knives and bottles of wine.



# A KOREAN KOLLABORATION

Since its recent revamp to catch on the tapas craze, Sarang takes on the chic casual vibe of traditional tapas bars, while utilising classic Korean ingredients. The bistro dishes out classier versions of the popular Asian cuisine for those who have a craving for the food.

181 Orchard Road, #07-01 Orchard Central +65 67731322 Sun to Thu 12pm to 10pm Fri to Sat 12pm to 11pm



# EAST MEETS WEST

East 8 presents a unique fusion tapas concept featuring Asian and Western influences. Mirroring NYC's melting pot of cuisines, the restaurant is the undisputed choice for those with sophisticated palates.

10 Coleman Street #01-21/22, Grand Park Hotel City Hall +65 63388289 Mon to Fri 12pm to 12am Sat 6pm to 12am



# Photos Courtesy of Joey L

# **PIONEERS FOR PALETTES**

Since its inception 18 months ago, Esquina is recognised as the heavyweight in the tapas wave at the moment. The kitchen crew maintain a no-nonsense attitude towards their food, and serve up favourites that keep their regulars clamouring for more.

16 Jiak Chuan Road +65 6222 1616 Mon to Fri 12pm to 2.30pm, 6pm to 10.30pm Sat 6pm to 10.30pm

# SWEET TOOTH

Well wishes and adorable illustrations never tasted better – yes, tasted. Presented in a wide array of colours and uncommon flavours, the real beauty of rock candy lies in its ability to be personalised for any purpose that one has. Customers can bulk order with customised messages and personalised designs moulded into the candy.

# THE AUSSIE HEIRLOOM

Opened in January 2013, LollyTalk is the latest Australian brand which flew

Rock candy is an Australian recipe that has been delighting the taste buds of youths all over Singapore. **DOUGLAS YONG** speaks to two of our local candy makers who have brought over that world of sugar, even spice and everything nice from Down Under.

into the local rock candy industry. The founders, Ma Keow Yuen and Joy Tan, have inherited their skills straight from Australia where they spent four months under the guidance of Judy Fitzgerald and Ross Breadsell, the second generation of candy makers who have been presented the prestigious title 'Grand Champion Rock Candy' at the 2009 Royal Melbourne Fine Foods Award.

It's a rare opportunity and LollyTalk can safely boast themselves as the third

generation of authentic rock candies.

"100 per cent Aussie tradition, 100 per cent Singapore brand," Ma says, beaming.

The store's bestseller is the 200g Fruit Rock Mix (\$\$10.30), which earned a distinguished award in Australia. The mix contains all 19 flavours of the store's Fruit Series.

Not only do the candies satisfy your taste buds, they also serve as a

# THE PROCESS

Rather than being made and packaged behind closed doors like traditional candies, customers can admire the complex process of making rock candy at the shop front.

The sugar mixture is boiled for hours before being cooled in a metal tray counter. From there onwards, everything will be made by hand. Colourings are carefully added and spread evenly to cool. The lukewarm mixture is then kneaded into dough and stretched repeatedly on a large hook for air to enter. This gives the candy its rock-hard form, rather than a chewy texture. The dough is then cut and rolled, depending on the desired design. It will result in a huge chunky ham-like loaf before being pulled into tiny long strips. The strips are then sliced into small individual pieces.

feast for the eyes. Every flavour is differentiated by their bright colours and designs. For example, the banana flavour is yellow in colour with a banana illustration on the candy while the cherry flavour is coated in bright red with the fruit image on it. LollyTalk also adapted the candies with a local twist, and crafted a Soda Series with Singapore's four popular fizzy drinks – Cola, Ice Cream Soda, Root Beer and Sarsi – which collectively form the Retro Mix.

"These flavours are injected into the [award-winning] recipe. It's more than just a flavour, it's the complete way of handling the candy," Ma explains.

"Most candy makers share the same process [in making the candy]. Little details such as boiling point can affect many areas of the candy [including] its texture and so on."

And this award-winning recipe is the key ingredient to their success.

With the same recipe, the store launched a new series of pillow candies (a pillow-shaped variation of rock candies), known as the Acquired Taste Collection. It carries six unique flavours: Plum Guava, Chilli Lime, Spicy Mango, Menthol Grape, Menthol Honey Lemon and Honey Lemon.

The Plum Guava and Chilli Lime are by far the most popular flavours. The green Plum Guava candy explodes with a strong guava taste and a touch of sour from real bits of plum. The green and red striped Chilli Lime candy is the perfect marriage of tangy lime and spice from the chilli padi extract to give the consumers a little kick – both unusual flavours certainly living up to the name of the series.

At LollyTalk, patrons can customise candies with embedded personal

messages and designs with a minimum order of 6kg (\$270) which fit into 200 bottles of 30g each. LollyTalk already has a wide range of candies with embedded messages, like 'Thank You', 'Get Well', 'Super Mom' and 'Awesome', sitting on its shelves.

"It's tedious to letter the candies, but we still do it. We insist on two colours for 'Thank You' and three for 'Happy Birthday' because customers can choose," Ma says.

# THE NATURAL SELECTION

Sweet Enchantment, one of the two local rock candy confectionaries, opened in 2011 and is the first store in Southeast Asia to serve all natural rock candy.

Without artificial colouring and flavouring, its rock candy colours are extracted from fruits and vegetables such as carrots and spinach. Although the naked eye will not be able to differentiate between artificial or natural colouring, the effects can be seen after consuming.

"All natural rock candy will not stain your tongue," explains sales manager, Serene Seah. "Not even a blackcoloured candy."

The store offers four series of rock candies: Fruity, Floral, Afternoon Tea, and Happy Hour. Its largest series, Fruity, boasts 16 flavours with Japanese Yuzu being the best-selling flavour, due to the popularity of the fruit.

The other series don't disappoint either with their collection of unusual flavours, such as Geranium Rose from the Floral series, Latte Macchiato from the Afternoon Tea series, and Champagne and Calvados Apple Brandy from the Happy Hour series  the most unconventional series in the store. However, fret not. The alcohol-flavoured candies in the series contain less than five per cent alcohol, so indulging in a whole bottle will not make anyone tipsy.

With their proud flavour collection, Sweet Enchanment's strength clearly lies in the creation of unique flavours. The store introduced a new flavour in April, known as Royal Tea. With no real lemon tea flavouring, the candy makers ingeniously blended real lemon and tea extract to form the lemon teaflavoured candy.

Sweet Enchantment has also customised candies for many corporations, such as HDB, Volkswagen and Blackberry.

"Designs are the hardest," says Serene. "For example, [the] logo for Gardens By The Bay is a dragonfly with a curved tail. Our candy makers will have to ensure a similar curve [in the candy]."

Almost half of the store's sales come from customised candies, catering to personal occasions such as baby showers and weddings, as well as corporate events such as product launches.

Both LollyTalk and Sweet Enchantment also offer customisation for the packaging, and customers can personalise a sticker message on the bottle as a cheaper alternative to having words or designs in the candy.

Whether you're a fan of candies or not, these rocky sweet treats will entice both sight and taste with their vivid colours and unique tastes. The plentiful assortment of flavours and options for personalised customisations make these candies the perfect gift for any occasion.















We are a homegrown candy maker trained in Australia who makes our rock candies fresh with love and passion! We do customisation for various corporate events, weddings and parties.

We are trained by by Ross and Judy who won the title Grand Champion Rock Candy during 2009 Royal Melbourne Fine Food Awards. They also won various medals including a Gold medal for Fruit Rock Mix among all the candy makers in Australia! Ross and Judy happened to be the students of the original founder of Aussie-style Rock Candy too! We have an 100% authentic Aussie Heritage yet we are a proud 100% Singapore brand!

Under our masters' guidance, we picked up the finer points in making authentic rock candies that taste and feel good. More importantly, we learnt to have fun and enjoy the whole process of candy-making, and we believe in bringing you a whole new complete experience when it comes to shopping for your lollies!



Handma **Rock Candy** 

Our







Customise Candy

o Wedding o Corporate Events o Birthday

o Baby Shower

Live Demonstration **Available** 

# Packaging..

We believe in innovative and creative Packaging!!! So do let us know your budget and we will try giving you a better alternatives with your available budget!!!

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MIT

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Going back to the idle days spent on playing eraser wars and trading Pokémon cards, **TAY SHU WEI SHERYL** digs up the old-school goodies from those times. Oh, the good old times. Who could forget the days when afternoon tea breaks featured a cup of piping hot Milo with assorted biscuits? A fitting treat for champions — after a day of tirelessly spinning tops, fashioned from rectangular erasers with stapled bottoms, and excitedly trading Pokémon cards after class.

Sadly, those were the '90s; that little kid is now a teenager, and afternoons are now spent mulling over the multitude of projects, assignments and deadlines. Those little joys we enjoy as a child have long passed and it's been too long since the last time we've had an afternoon treat like that.

"I still remember how my grandmother would always buy me my favourite biscuits from the *mama shop* [convenience store] below my house whenever I'm hungry," reminisces 19-year-old Siak Min Vera, a Yishun Junior College graduate.

In a survey **HYPE** conducted with 100 youths born during the '80s and '90s, a whopping 94 per cent of the respondents shared that they missed these childhood biscuits.

Let's take a walk down memory lane to find out what the top three childhood treats that you voted to have missed so dearly are.



#### **ANIMAL BISCUITS**

Starting our top three countdown are the crumbly and tasty Animal Biscuits. We were never able to make head or tail of these ambiguously shaped snacks, which were supposed to feature domestic animals and birds Nonetheless, these slightly sweet nibbles are still fun to eat and best washed down with a glass of cold, refreshing milk.

"I would specially pick out the cat-shaped biscuit because it's my favourite animal out of the lot," reveals 19 year-old Lim Hui En, who is currently studying abroad and is back in Singapore for a short break.

#### XIAO MAN TOU

In second place, we have the *Xiao Man Tou*! Smaller than actual *man tou* (steamed buns), these little balls melt into a sweet powdery paste in your mouth in just seconds. These snacks barely leave crumbs, and are so addictive to continuously and mindlessly pop into your mouth till you've lost count. They are definitely a sweet accompaniment to any part of your day.

Chan Yong Ming, 20, says that his favourite way to eat them is to toss these biscuits into the air and catch them in his mouth — or at least most of the time.

#### **FANCY GEMS**

With overwhelming popularity as the top favourite, there is no wonder that these biscuits have different names. Commonly known as either Ais Gems or Fancy Gems, these iced biscuites are iconic treats that no young-at-heart adult would ever forget.

Even Biscuit King's assistant, May Ong, agrees that this is the top selling biscuit of the confectionary shop, and that her colleagues also loves snacking on them. "I usually savour the sugary icing first before finishing off the brown biscuit," says 19-year-old Chuah Xingjun as she cheekily described the way she usually devours these biscuits.



If you are on the hunt for these childhood snacks and more, here are three traditional confectionary stores that bring the good old times back with their snacks and trinkets.

Heavenly Wang	MunchMunch
nouromy mang	munommunom

*@* Changi Airport T2 Departure Check-in Hall #026-018/19

@ The New Chinatown Point #B2-03 **Biscuit King** 

@ 130 Casuarina Road

# FEATURES

Dive into this issue's installment of Features that are chock-full of stories set to inspire, interest and illuminate you.



### Graffiti artist, Luthfi Mustafa shares with LEE JIA LIN how his ten years were like in this field.

Sauntering into the café decked in a simple denim button-down shirt and khakis, Luthfi Mustafah looked nothing like a graffiti artist. Emitting a serious vibe at first sight, one should not be fooled by his stern exterior. Describing himself as someone who's "impatient, laidback yet adventurous", the 32-year-old is way more than what he claimed to be.

As many would know, graffiti is an art that wasn't well received until recent years. After the big buzz that shook Singapore earlier this year with the 'Sticker Lady' incident, graffiti seems to find its way back into the limelight with more news coverage about the art in Singapore.

"There are a lot of creative people in Singapore but we aren't given a lot of opportunities and avenue to express them," Luthfi says.

This year marked Luthfi's 10<sup>th</sup> year into the field but he is nowhere near the end. Exposed to art at a young age due to his parents, Luthfi always thought he was going to be an architect, just like his father. He later changed his mind, finding architecture "a little too rigid" for him.

"If I went into architecture, I wouldn't have been able to see things I experienced as a graffiti artist," says Luthfi.

Stumbling into the graffiti field while working with a local artist, Luthfi was impressed with how he can cover a huge area within a short period of time, and the adrenaline rush that comes with it fuelled Luthfi to try out graffiti art. "I started out illegally, so that really excites me, doing something [bad] out in the open and not [getting] caught, hopefully, was the thrill," says Luthfi.

What Luthfi always wanted to do was to bring his art out to more people. "My work is always for me to fulfil my itch to do art, to fulfil my inner creativity, and to express myself... It's basically something I want the young to enjoy and the old to appreciate," he shares. And The Killer Gerbil was exactly how he expresses himself. In 2003, Luthfi started drawing his pet gerbil as an alter ego, and pasted his art all around Singapore. The idea was to be a "street rat that goes into empty spaces and killing it with colours", and this incredible idea let Luthfi bag home the Motorola Streetstyle Street's Choice Award in 2005. The Killer Gerbil is also constantly collaborating with big brands like Adidas and G-Shock, bringing his art to a larger audience.

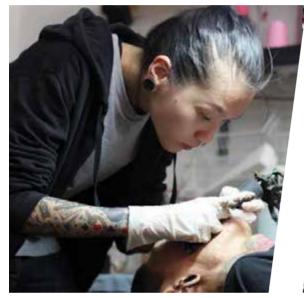
"I am just a normal guy doing art because I love art," shares Luthfi, "and I feel so blessed to have people coming up to me [wanting] to do a collaboration and wanting to have my Gerbil on their products".

Besides graffiti, Luthfi is also a cycling enthusiast ever since five years ago. He is currently working over at Lifecycle, a lifestyle store that caters to bicycle lovers with plenty of gadgets and accessories for bicycles. "It brings me to [different] places and I got to explore a lot of places in Singapore, which is good for me to find places where I can do my art," Luthfi explains.

Ultimately, what Luthfi wants to bring across is simple – street art is not all vandalism.

# Beyond Skin Deep

**CHARMAINE LIM** meets two female tattoo artists who are single-minded in the pursuit of their passion.





#### Travis

Two girls. One dream. One possibly relevant skill.

That is not much to go on when you are two teen girls trying to break into the male-dominated world of the tattoo artist. And all you can count as experience is doodling and drawing since young.

Except that it is one BIG dream.

Meet Orca Woo, 25, and Travis Huang, 24, who possess passion bigger than their dream. Just the right dose to remain undaunted despite the pain and prejudices associated with tattoo artists – even when you're a man.

Says Travis, not mincing her words, "Being a guy or being a girl, at the end of the day it's your work that [is] good or not"

Orca – who's really called Yvonne – named herself after the killer whale, perhaps to hint that she's a fighter beneath that petite physique and docility. Her interest in tattoos was piqued when she saw the Superman tattoo on her grandfather's chest.

Thereafter, she indulged in drawing – and music – before starting her apprenticeship two years ago.

Travis started with doodling before venturing into tattooing at the age of 17.

You would expect this – as if to emphasise her belief in her chosen career: Emblazoned across her chest is Orca's first tattoo. It reads: L'amour Parfait Bannit La Crainte or Perfect Love Casts Out Fear.

For Travis, the tattoo is, strangely also words, rather than image: Pour de Adeline – her mother's favourite song – crafted on her left arm. This tattoo is dedicated to her mother because she embraced her career choice despite objections from the rest of the family.

It has been a painful journey, literally,

Orca

to become a tattoo artist. Practising on animal and synthetic skins most of the time to hone their skills, both actually started tattooing on their left ankles. Sheer coincidence since both had different mentors.

Orca inked Totoro, a Japanese animation character, and Travis, a black lightning tattoo. Orca had to stop the process of colouring Totoro as she had to wait for her skin to recover from a food allergy. Travis, on the other hand, pushed the needle too deep and the wound took six months to heal.

With wounds comes wisdom. Totally immersed they are in their craft despite painful mistakes.

Travis says, ""This is the only thing that really pushes me to do something." Orca says she will tattoo "for life".

Dream fulfilled. That is one big commitment



More women are entering the male-dominated arena of Mixed Martial Arts, and they are proving to be no lightweights. **DOUGLAS YONG** sits in to observe the ladies in action.

Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) has taken the world by storm in the last few years and fight gyms have been popping up around. What used to be a men's playground has seen more women putting on fight gloves, despite the aggressive nature of the sport.

As its name suggests, MMA is a full-contact combat sport, which encompasses striking, grappling and ground techniques from multiple fight styles, like karate, taekwondo, judo, kickboxing, wrestling, boxing and many more.

Farah Suhailah, a third-year Supply Chain Management student from Republic Polytechnic, takes MMA lessons every week. As a child, she has always been intrigued with martial arts and started with Brazilian Jiu Jitsu (BJJ) first when she was eighteen.

"I'm of [a] small stature and [can be] easily overpowered by anyone bigger," says the petite 19-year-old. "BJJ emphasises on leverage and this gives me a chance to defend myself with minimal strength. It's beneficial for me." In fact, BJJ is one of the most common fighting style used in MMA, to grapple opponents into submission.

With passion boosted by talent, Farah took part in the Singapore National Trials for Wrestling and came in second, granting her an invite to the trainings. After a few training sessions, she received a letter of invitation to join the National Female Wrestling Team.

#### I once had a **female** student who flipped a male student and **popped his shoulder.**

#### - Shaqui B, founder of B'Valetudo Fighthouse

"Females seldom take martial arts into consideration because we're a conservative society," Farah explains. "But there has been [an] increase over the past year, they are beginning to see the value of martial arts, not only as a form of exercise but also a stress reliever and a skill for self-defence."

Shaqul B, or better known as the "Killer Bee" in the arena, is the founder of B'Valetudo Fighthouse and conducts lessons at Impakt Academy of Mixed Martial Arts. With 15 years of martial arts experience, he emerged as the Main Event Champion in the 2012 Ultimate Satria Championship, a local martial arts event.

According to the fighter-trainer, who has eight years of teaching experience, there was a slow and gradual emergence of female practitioners in 2010.

"In 2013, there was a sudden eruption," says Shaqul. "I have about 15 female students now, compared to only one or two back in 2012."

The female students who train under the champion mostly want to learn self-defence and at times are even more robust than males.

"I once had a female student who flipped a male student and popped his shoulder," Shaqul laughs.



Female beatboxers are a rare breed **JOANNE TAN** talks to one who is committed to growing the scene and setting the standards

It was nine years ago when she first came into contact with beatboxing. She was chatting with a friend and was intrigued listening to him beatboxing to the sound of a trumpet in an audio clip.

Michelle "Natasha" Quek, now 28, promptly took up lessons and mastered beatboxing in a year. She found it a "great conversation starter" in the beginning. It is, after all, not common to see a female beatboxer.

Beatboxing, described in Wikipedia as "a form of vocal percussion involving the art of producing drum beats, rhythm and musical sounds using one's mouth, lips, tongue and voice", is very much in the male domain.

But Michelle proved that her passion for the art could surpass the challenges. She has been an active participant of beatboxing competitions and performances such as Channel U's Beatbox Asia Championship and the Espirit de Corp (EDC) launch collection.

Talking about the local female beatboxing scene, Michelle feels that the market in Singapore is very small as many female beatboxers "don't really dare to venture out".

The reason could be that certain beatboxing styles are challenging for women because of the limitations of their vocals. However, she adds, "We do have a good number of female beatboxers who actually went on for a lot of competitions."

Nevertheless, she is aware of prejudices, saying, "In a very maledominated scene, there will be people who wouldn't really like having female beatboxers up on stage.

"But in general it is still a very healthy scene where everybody [tries] to motivate and help each other out. It's not a dog-eat-dog world in the beatboxing [scene]," Michelle clarifies.

Today, Michelle is no longer into competitive beatboxing. Being an "avid animal lover", she "[does] beatboxing now out of goodwill [and] for friends" who own pet shops.

Rather than hip-hop music that is usually associated with beatboxing, Michelle prefers slow jazz and rhythm and blues.

She elaborates, "I like to do slower beats because I believe that for beatboxing, you don't have to go out hard and aggressive because it is meant for you to enjoy in the first place... you don't need to sound like the Transformers."

Her love for beatboxing not having waned, Michelle set up Natasha Studio and organised the event "Listen to the Music" to provide youths with the platform to get out of their comfort zones. This event is an open sharing session for people that engage in different genres to showcase their art. It also includes beatboxing where young beatboxers are encouraged to participate in friendly battles.

The challenges for recognition and rewards remain. One such challenge is convincing companies to pay a reasonable price for their shows — a price that would do justice to their talent.

Taking responsibility for the beatboxers under her, Michelle makes sure that they "are getting what they deserve... so at least there is a career path for them".

Michelle also feels that the stiff competition among beatboxers is "unhealthy and will lower the value of the beatboxer... killing a lot of talents this way".

B-Boy dancer and friend Larry Liu, 32, is proud of Michelle. He says, "She has displayed a lot of strength and perseverance in terms of creating a platform and providing opportunities for the younger generation to perform."

Seeing that in recent years many local beatboxers have ventured overseas for competitions and that more exposure is given to them, Michelle is looking forward to seeing a more vibrant local beatboxing scene.

## THE WORLD WIDE WHIRL OF RECREATION

More recreational activities are coming into Singapore, but we're all so busy with our modern lifestyles to have time to try them all out. **HYPE** has picked out three diamonds from the rough that you just can't miss out.

## SOUNDS FROM THE HUMAN BODY

Photo courtesy of Riduan Zalani

Music doesn't only have to come from musical instruments. **SANGITHA RAMAN** explores the art of body percussion with a seasoned practitioner.

"What happens when an artiste is stripped of his instruments, can he still perform?" asks Riduan Zalani, a body percussionist.

For the 28-year-old, the answer is a resounding 'yes'. Trailblazing into Singapore the art of utilising one's body parts to create sounds and rhythms, Riduan started incorporating the form in his performances with his music group, Nadi Singapura, while he experimented with various combinations of the form.

As is the case with every other artistic revolution, a mishap must occur for one to spontaneously save the day with innovation and creativity. For Riduan, a power failure during one of Nadi Singapura's performances served as his moment of ingenuity.

The show could've ended on a disappointing note, but the setback spurred Riduan to jump off stage, in the midst of the confusion, and continue the performance with body percussion, turning the misfortune around.

"I believe music is a way of life. I am still a percussionist even when I am stripped of everything," he says.

Body percussion is limitless and the possibilities are endless. The basic four steps are: Stomp, Clap, Snap, and Tap.

"There are really no rules, it's up to the individual," says Riduan, on the abundant combinations possible.

One pivotal element of body percussion is silence. According to Riduan, the audience need to appreciate noiselessness so that the slightest movement can become audible. Starting from the head, then moving downwards, he would demonstrate the sounds that one's different body parts could erupt.

I BELIEVE MUSIC IS A WAY OF LIFE, I AM STILL A PERCUSSIONIST EVEN WHEN I AM STRIPPED OF EVERYTHING

#### - Riduan Zalani, body percussionist

"There is always something you create on your own, that's how it snowballs into something else."

As the saying goes, 'teaching is also a form of learning'; Riduan conducts body percussion workshops at Community Centres and caters to corporate events and schools. "If you have a hobby, make it a professional hobby, if you have a passion make it a professional passion," he says, "I am just sharing my perspectives as a music practitioner; there isn't a diploma in body percussion or that sort, you know."

Participants in his workshops have ranged from as young as 11, to as old as 55 — though Riduan noted that youths from 15 to 25 are generally more interested in exploring this form.

"The way I speak to students, kids, adults, or drummers, are all different because I need to relate to them."

For him, the pace for body percussion is only picking up. The immense success of the sold out Mosaic Music Makers: Body-Tap! A Body-Percussion Workshop, held recently at the Esplanade , indicates only the start of a sonic revolution.

More information on Body percussion workshops in Singapore can be found at:

facebook.com/RiduanZalani drummingsingapore.com/ body-percussion.php

# Knock And Roll

CHARMAINE LIM has a wheel of a time keeping up with the first ever group of roller derby girls who skated their way into our sunny island.

The screeching sound of four rubber wheels on cement floor, the raging aura of aggression and finally, the frustrated grunts of the players as they attempt to shove their opponents out of the way.

This is roller derby. Clearly, it is no sport for prissy girls.

There are five players in a team four blockers and one jammer. Two opposing teams will begin at the starting point with the blockers in front of the jammers. The goal of the game is simple: Get your team's jammer past the opponent's blockers.

In roller derby, each game is called a bout, which comprises of multiple jams. Each jam lasts for two minutes. In these two crucial minutes, the jammer must skate through the pack unscathed with the help of the blockers who will create an opportunity by blocking and pushing the opponent's blockers away. Every skate-through by the jammer scores a point for the team.

#### **CHILLI PADI**

Singapore's female roller derby team, the Singapore Chilli Padi Derby Grrrls (CPDG) is definitely the first of its kind in Singapore and has approximately 15 derby players.

The newest player, Sarah Amy Martin, 23, has been in-line skating since she was young but is still getting used to the dynamics of quart skates. She expresses her qualms about being a blocker, "Blockers [are] more aggressive... and it's very scary when someone [pushes] you [while you are] on wheels."

Committee member of CPDG and a derby girl since 2011, Loretta Marie, 25, has also been in-line skating for several years prior to roller derby. She titters about her misconception of roller derby when she first put on those fourwheelies, "I thought it would be easy since I have been skating for a long time but it's much more difficult." She explains that the centre of gravity is different and it's almost impossible to straighten one's back on quart skates, as it is strenuous to stay balanced.

Although females dominate the only derby team in Singapore, the CPDG



#### IT'S FOR GIRLS TO SHOW THEIR MASCULINITY, THEIR AGGRESSION.

welcomes anyone with open arms even if you are not raging with oestrogen and progesterone.

Alexander Read-Brown, 27, is more than ready to debunk the stereotypical image of a derby player. He is the only male player on the team and anticipates the addition of more men so that he can start a six-member referee team.

He recalls the first few times he turned up for training and was apprehensive about bumping the girls off the track. He smirks as he thinks back, "At first I was a little worried about hitting some of them... I was holding back a little and [the coach] was yelling at me."

But the girls were ruthless towards him and it was all game and no shame thereafter.

Sarah says, "It's for girls to show their masculinity, their aggression."

The sport intrigues Alex for being "incredibly strategic [with] the amount of blocking, slowing or speeding up of the pack to hinder the team for the jammer to get through the pack". - Sarah Amy Martin

#### **DERBY WORTHY**

The training is broken up into three parts: cardio and strength training, drills and scrimmaging.

Cardio and strength trainings consist of sit-ups, lunges, leg-lifts and crunches to strengthen the core and leg muscles. Strength is important as it is essential for one to be able to ram opponents off the track.

The drills allow players to practise fundamentals of the sport by knocking (with hips, booty and shoulders), weaving in between, and working on their speed.

A scrimmage is somewhat like a bout akin to a friendly match within the team itself. Derby players get a mild taste of what a real bout feels like by pitting themselves against their own derby players.

For three hours of non-stop training, perspiration clings on to the skin of the derby players. They bring their skates to a 'T-shape' and screech to a stop. With a few added bumps and bruises, they are exhausted but satisfied — because that's what roller derby is all about.



### DIAMONDS WELL-CHISELLED

**CHERISSE FOO** meets Singapore's first all-boys cheerleading team and learn that the boys have to overcome not just physical challenges but also wrong perceptions.

Mention 'cheerleaders' and your first thought might not be of a dozen gymnastically-inclined, muscular young men.

Singapore's very first all-boys team, Diamonds, made its debut on May 12 with a performance for the Singapore Badminton Association. Coach and veteran cheerleader Vincent Fok, 26, says "There are other countries that have [all-boys teams] and I think it's time to show that Singapore can have an all-boys team as well."

In fact, the very first cheerleaders were all men. It all started in 1903, when the University of Minnesota created a "Yell Squad" that comprised six men. Texas A&M University jumped onto the bandwagon in 1905 when they formed "The Cheerleading State" – a group of males who led crowds at basketball and football games.

Cheerleading remained a maledominated sport until the 1920s when woman cheerleaders began to gain traction. According to iSport. com, cheerleading is established in over 79 countries with over 4.5 million cheerleaders worldwide.

And the cheerleading craze has found its way here. The oldest team to date is Ngee Ann Polytechnic's Magnum Force, which was conceived in 1988. With the annual National Cheerleading Competition organised by the Federation of Cheerleading, more and more teams have emerged, vying to clinch the top titles. But these are just the competitive teams. The different components of a cheer routine – stunts, gymnastics, dance and cheer – have helped cheerleading expand into sports entertainment. This led to the birth of performance teams such as InVincible Cheerleading, the mother company of team Diamonds.

Besides the novelty of an all-boys team, men generally have a physique that is more cut out for cheerleading than women.

"The physique of a boy is definitely more controlled. Men have better hip control, and they are mentally stronger to do more things," explains Vincent. Team member Bryant Luo, 24, agrees, saying "Our mid-tiers and bases are all guys, our stunts hit more often and are more stable".

Fairul Edham, 26, who has spent 11 years in various mixed-sex cheer teams, greatly enjoys being in Diamonds.

"Being in an all-boys team makes everything more fun. Even if the stunt fails, we just brush it off and laugh about it and do it again... the boys are also more daring than girls," laughs Fairul.

But an all-boys team only now? To Vincent, it's to open up another platform for cheerleading.

"For the past few years, the teams in Singapore have had the competitive spirit against each other and there isn't really anything to bring these teams together. To the public, it opens up an opportunity to show that cheerleading is not just for girls," he says.

When asked whether they are affected by the social stigma attached male cheerleaders, the team simply brushes it off.

"People don't see all-boys as 'normal' and of course, with that comes scrutiny from others. I take it as a motivation to work even harder and as a drive [force] to prove ourselves that we can do better than the rest," says Bryant.

"(We) want to show that cheer isn't about female cheerleaders with their pompoms and acting bimbotic all the time; cheerleaders are athletes," says teammate Hidayat Ariff, 20.

But there are some cheerleaders like Clement Lim, 22, from Wildcards, who would rather stick to mixed-sex teams.

"[I] prefer it conventional – with both boys and girls," explains Clement.

While the dust has definitely not settled yet, the long-term fate of all-male cheer groups in Singapore is perhaps left open for all of us to decide. It is certain though that the stigma and lack of acceptance are issues that must be overcome to pave the way for this exciting new sport.

Vincent says, "If no one has an issue with an all-girls team, why should anyone have an issue with an all-boys team?"

# Tip Of The Melting Iceberg

Thought the haze was bad? Bad news for you for that was just the tip of the iceberg. Join **ATIKA LIM**, **CHERISSE FOO** and **NG POH HIAN** as they uncover how near doomsday might actually be.

If you think that caring for the environment is boring or passé, news flash: there is a real threat at hand, and it's snowballing as you grow older. It's time for us, or what TIME Magazine writer Joel Stein dubbed as the 'Me! Me! Me! Generation', to prove our namesake wrong.

In the article, Stein described the Millennials (those born between 1980 to 2000) as "lazy, entitled narcissists who still live with their parents" – or the 'Me! Me! Me! Generation' – whose habits are, as comedian Stephen Colbert cleverly summarised, "tweeting your Vines, hashtagging your Spotifies, and snapchatting your YOLOs", in his commencement speech to University of Virginia's graduating class in May this year.

The point that Stein and Colbert are both trying to make is that the Millenials, are more concerned with social networking sites and how many 'likes' we have on our statuses and Instagrams than – as Elise Harris says, the Assistant Multimedia Specialist for CNA – "actually doing something with their lives besides move in with mom and dad and work at a part-time retail job with no benefits".

The scary truth is that they might be right. In a survey **HYPE** conducted with 200 youths, 70 per cent admitted that a main reason why they are so passive about saving the environment is because it does not affect their generation now. Some, like Sherwin Koh, 20, blame the Baby Boomers (those born between 1946 to 1964) and feel that individuals alone would not be able to change anything despite their concern for our Earth. "Bigger tangible results can only be achieved if the bigger conglomerates do something to save our planet. I'm just one man, I can't do much," he says.

Some youths, like Selwyn Lim, 19, on the other hand, feel that the lack of care stems from the fact that we "don't know of the consequences".

In the next 20 or 30 years we'll witness one or more of the mega cities actually starving. We've all got smart phones, you will actually see this happening on TV.

- Julian Cribb, science writer

Whatever the reason is, the consequences of our indifference might not affect us right now, but if we choose to just stand by the sidelines and not take any action, we would be the ones who suffer in the years to come.

#### **OXYGEN FOR SALE**

As you walk out of the door, the first sight that greets you is not the house across yours, but a thick cloud of grey shrouding your vision and blinding your eyes. You suit up in a N95 mask and a pair of plastic goggles before making your way to the nearest convenience store to buy a carton of canned air.

Yes, canned air, and this is not 2050 we're talking about.

Just earlier this year, eccentric Chinese multi-millionaire Chen Guangbiao came up with the idea of selling canned air at 5 Chinese Yuan (S\$0.80) each when the Pollution Standard Index (PSI) in Beijing hit a recordbreaking high of 755.

Imagine if the PSI had reached that of Beijing's during the recent haze epidemic in Singapore, and the chaos that could possibly ensue from that. A PSI reading of 401 had already caused a stir, with many urging the National Environment Agency (NEA) to advise Singaporeans to stay indoors or to get hold of the N95 mask.

As an attempt to solve the problem by lowering carbon emissions, our government had already increased costs for the Certificate of Entitlements (COEs) in order to deter citizens from buying cars. However, many still purchase cars every year. In fact, a recent World Bank survey showed that in every five people, one of them owns a car, which is a considerably large number for a small country like Singapore.

These high PSI readings and the carbon emissions may seem just like words and numbers but they can actually cause very serious health problems. These particulates from the polluted air are inhaled through our noses and get lodged in our lungs. Studies have reflected that overexposure to such fine particulates in the air will cause terrible health problems, like chronic respiratory problems, cancer and even premature death, in the future.



Photo courtesy of Jay Janner

#### **THOUGHT FOR FOOD**

As we continue down this path of disregard for the environment, there will be a day when we will whine not about how expensive it is to refill a tank of oil, but about the amount of food we have on our plate instead.

Climate change has disastrous effects, but the biggest threat to humanity is definitely the impending global food crisis. Severe heatwaves have been occurring all around the world. Just last year, the extreme heat in US led to a long drought that damaged crops and produced the worst corn crop in two decades. Serious dry spells had also cut Russia's grain yield by 25 per cent. While faraway agricultural countries are affected by climate change, this doesn't mean that we get off scot-free.

According to the New York Times, "Singapore currently imports more than 90 per cent of the food it needs to feed its five million residents and the more than nine million tourists who visit every year". The nearest supermarket to your house may sell everything you need, from cereal to meat to vegetables, and the choices are endless, but don't be fooled – the global food supply is depleting at a worrisome rate and as we face a fast-growing population, global food production is already failing to meet the needs of the world. Food prices are gradually increasing with every passing year and have "gone up by 240 per cent since 2004", as stated by the United Nations (UN) and Agriculture Organization.

Food is becoming more than precious, but people have lost the notion of appreciating what we have for every meal. 0.68 million tonnes of food waste is generated in Singapore every year, according to the NEA. This means that every person in Singapore wastes about 130kg of food a year.

Empty bellies do not only make people hungry but also angry, and hunger may just be the downfall of humanity, as proven during the end of World War II in Eastern Europe. More than 20 million died of starvation during the war and corpses were left on the streets. Cannibalism was reported as survivors, who had consumed every other living thing like birds, rats and pets, turned to attack and eat people.

"In the next 20 or 30 years we'll witness one or more of the mega cities actually starving. We've all got smart phones, you will actually see this happening on TV," predicts science writer Julian Cribb in an interview with Vice.

"I think the world is in for a big shock because we haven't prepared ourselves. Our cities are not sustainable in terms of their food supply. They're unready for their food supply to be cut off."

Time is running out, and it's happening to all of us. You might be one of the millions that would go hungry by the year 2050.

#### FIRST A HAILSTORM, WHAT NEXT?

It doesn't take a scientist to notice that the temperatures here on Earth are going haywire for the past few years. Even for us in our tiny island, we are feeling the effects of climate change – the weather ranging from "apocalyptic monsoon downpour or blazing hot ball of fire", as quoted from HaikalBlurr, one of the many youths who have taken to social media to express their frustration at our erratic weather patterns.

And the reason why these are all happening is because of the increase in greenhouse gases. Sounds familiar?

Here is a quick trip back to the stuffy classroom for a short Science lesson for those who had forgotten: the increase in these gases traps more heat, causing weather patterns to change. Extreme weather events happen more frequently and severely. Polar ice caps melt, which increases sea-levels and threatens low-lying areas. Earth's biodiversity is threatened.

#### And this is not all.

According to NASA's Earth Observatory, these climate changes affect more than just the average temperatures, but it also increases the likelihood of weather-related natural disasters such as hurricanes, cyclones, droughts and floods. While we have yet to experience droughts or cyclones here, we have already experienced flooding, and most recently, a hailstorm and a few smallscale tornados. The Nature Conservancy has predicted that with "rapid global warming and climate change, one fourth's of the Earth's species could be headed for extinction by 2050".

And 2050 is not that far away. That is merely a few decades away. However, we youths can do something to slow down those frighteningly real consequences.

With more youths applying for a driver's license, take into consideration the amount of driving you'd be doing and be smart about the petrol you'd have to use. Ensuring that you always have a clean filter can reduce the amount of carbon emissions. Alternatively, carpooling is a fantastic way to not only save your carbon footprint, but also ensure that the journey to your destination would not be a dull one. For those of you who aren't driving, you can chip in by remembering little things like switching off electrical appliances when they're not in use. If you're persuasive, why not convince your parents to use energy-saving bulbs or water-saving taps? Starting a compost bin for different types of biodegradable food can also help to break down organic matter such as egg shells and banana peels into nutrients and other sorts of gases that help plants grow. So, technically, you'd be 'recycling' the food you eat.

Remember that as young and abled youths, the power is in your hands. You will be in charge of what future generations come to see and experience so, why not make this world a better place to more generations to come?

## "Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's needs, but not every man's greed."

- Mahatma Gandhi

#### WITHIN THE NEXT 50 YEARS

If what you need is more proof that the world is going to change drastically in our generation then perhaps you'd be swayed by the predictions of what Earth would be like in 50 years' time. What we once knew as an icy, cold home to penguins and polar bears could be gone by 2050. Ted Scambos of the National Snow and Ice Center has predicted that the Arctic could end up being ice-free by 2020, and that's only 10 years from now.

Not just that, the environmental issues could even lead to a World War III. CNN reports that there were strained relations between Singapore and Indonesia over the haze. Therefore, can you imagine the sort of problems that could arise should other more serious environmental issues come into play?

The Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) paints a grim picture with a rise of as much as six degrees Celsius in the global average temperature. Air pollution would also overtake contaminated water and lack of sanitation as the prime cause of premature deaths (estimated at 3.6 million deaths per year). They also predicted that by 2050, 2.3 billion more people would be living in water-stressed areas.

So before the world really ends by countries using nuclear weapons against each and other, and before we are the generation to bear the full brunt of the effects of not caring and saving the environment, we should do whatever we can in our power to prove the experts wrong. If not, we will be the ones to suffer. Who's having the last laugh now?

## **OPPA** BSESSION

They think they are the biggest Korean pop fangirls. They are convinced that the male stars deserve to be their oppas (older brothers), and theirs alone? **FAIZ SUHAIRI** and **GLORIA LIN** meet two girls who've been bitten hard by the K-wave bug.

Eyebrows knitted and eyes focused, she runs through a small stack of magazines of varying languages at the Starbucks cafe. With scissors in hand, the young woman stops flipping the pages only when she spots what she's looking for.

"This here is a really hot picture of Eun Hyuk," she gushes as she proceeds to carefully cut around the picture of the Korean pop (K-pop) boy band Super Junior member, and keeping the cut-outs safely in a file.

You wouldn't have guessed she's a K-pop fangirl, she in a chic black-onblack ensemble and sporting make-up reminiscent of the Hollywood stars in the 1920s. Michelle Kok, 19, a Fashion Communication student from LASALLE College of the Arts, clearly exudes a confidence that others might find intimidating.

You re-orientate your first impressions as she continues to wax lyrical about her idols.

"I buy almost every magazine that I find which has Super Junior in it... especially if there's Eun Hyuk... then I cut their pictures out," says Michelle.

Buying multiple magazines and cutting them up are but one of the "minor things" Michelle has done in the name of her dedication to her idols. In the five years of being an ELF — Ever-Lasting Friend, the name that fans of Super Junior call themselves — Michelle has "invested" huge sums and countless hours to show her undying love.

"I've been to about 14 [Super Junior] concerts, each costing about \$230 and most of which were held overseas... [I've also] spent more than \$4,500 on albums, merchandise, and attending [K-pop] events," says Michelle, her face lighting up with a proud smile at the recollections.

"And I haven't even calculated the money spent on air tickets and hotel rooms," she adds as she ponders. In any given country, Michelle chooses to stay only in the hotel where her idol is, in hopes of running into them there during their free time. As K-pop idols usually stay in fairly expensive hotels in the countries they visit, a night spent in one could easily cost \$300 or more.

Another fan who also spares no expense is Ariel (who declined to give her real name), a fan of the K-pop boy band Teen Top. Like Michelle, the 19-year-old polytechnic student has no qualms about spending freely on her idols in all sense of the phrase.

"I bought many copies of the same album from Teen Top because in each one there's a different photocard. I want to trade with other fans and collect all six [members' cards]... I always buy as many albums as I need to until I have one photocard of each member," she says.

The petite girl, who is barely 155 centimetres tall, is usually reserved and keeps to herself. However when an opportunity to see her beloved idols arises, she goes through a 180-degree transformation.

"I'll travel alone just to see [Teen Top], sometimes without telling my parents," Ariel admits with a guilty expression.





Photos courtesy of S.M. Entertainment

Although she reveals it was scary to be in a foreign country by herself - especially when she first started travelling on her own, a grin slowly creeps on to her face when she thinks about why she even does such extreme acts.

"At least I got to see Teen Top! That makes everything okay and worth it."

Some of the countries Ariel has been to alone for a chance at glimpsing her idols are Taiwan, Thailand, Malaysia, and South Korea. Once again, like Michelle, these escapades have proved to be a hole in the pocket for Ariel.

"I usually fork out about \$800 to \$900 on a single trip for the flight, tickets and accommodation, and also set aside a little bit of money for emergencies or shopping," says the student, who is currently on internship.

To her, it doesn't matter whether her idols are in the country for full-scale concerts or just small events like meetthe-fans sessions; she is all the same willing to spend the same amount of money to see them in person. "If I can, I'll try and find out which hotel they're staying at and book a room there too," she enthuses, brushing aside the mention that these hotels tend to be high-end and expensive.

I've been to about 14 [Super Junior] concerts, each costing about \$230 and most of which were held overseas... [I've also] spent more than \$4,500 on albums, merchandise, and attending [K-pop] events.

#### - Michelle Kok

Seeing how much Ariel is game to spend on her K-pop obsession, it is not immediately obvious that her only source of income is the basic internship allowance of \$500. And even her internship, on which her whole current semester's grade depends on, is not above her idols when it comes to importance.

"I once skipped a week of internship... I took a medical certificate (MC) for three days in the middle of the week to go to South Korea for five days, including the weekends."

Of course, this certificate of excuse required a little fibbing on her part.

"I told the doctor my period hasn't stopped for two weeks and that I was continuously vomiting, and asked him for the MC till the end of the week because my supervisor told me to rest."

Although it takes Ariel so much trouble to fly off in pursuit of her idols, for Michelle, the arrival in those countries is just the beginning of all her shenanigans. For what is extreme fanaticism without the actual chase of these stars?

Having admitted to hiring private taxis to keep at the heels of K-pop stars, Michelle divulges, "It's like a guilty pleasure. It's invading their privacy but it really is quite fun."

#### THE ORIGIN OF EXTREME FANATICISM IN K-POP: SASAENG FANS

'Sasaeng fans' are notorious among K-pop stars and fans for taking their love towards their idols to the extreme. Sam Lansky, a contributing editor for New York and The Atlantic, wrote on grantland.com that "'sa' ('私' in Hanja) means private and 'saeng' ("生" in Hanja) means life, in reference to fans' "all-encompassing obsessions with their preferred artistes".

These fans display destructive behaviour that not only hurt themselves, but other fans and celebrities as well. In February, G-Dragon of K-pop boy band Big Bang was one of the latest idols to face 'sasaeng fans' when they found out the address of his home. More infamously, a media rampage broke out last year in South Korea which involved K-pop's most popular boy bands TVXQ/JYJ and their 'sasaeng fans'.

Many of these 'sasaeng fans' are known to not purchase albums or show any other form of support for the artistes and are thus shunned and not considered as fans by celebrities or other fans.

#### 'Sasaeng fans' have been reported to:

Break into artistes' homes Steal artistes' personal belongings Sexually harass the artistes (groping, touching) Assault the artistes (slapping, hitting) Trail artistes' vehicles in 'sasaeng taxis'\*

\*'Sasaeng taxis' - Taxi drivers who help 'sasaeng fans' trail artistes as a lucrative form of extra income. They charge about \$100 per hour for these services.

# WIRED

With technological advancements moving as quickly as a Twitter feed, we can no longer deny the ever-increasing online presence of our generation. HYPE presents to you Wired, a section dedicated to deliberate about everything in cyberspace.



The introduction of paid subscription model is sure to up content quality, but just how much will it affect the platform's reach? CHERISSE FOO explores.

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Will you pay to watch videos on YouTube? That has been the most frequently asked question when people discuss about YouTube's new paid channels model that was just put into action early this May.

"I think it's like one of those things when ads first came out where it was like kind of the scary taboo thing where you just got to wait till it becomes the norm or till somebody proves that it can be a sustainable model, " remarks Alejandro Manzano, 27, lead vocalist in the band, Boyce Avenue.

Paid channels might still be relatively new on YouTube with only 55 channels such as Ultimate Fighting Champion and Sesame Street offering subscriptions for as low as \$\$1.25 per month, but this model has proven to be a success for certain niche players. A great example would be Cruncyroll's Anime video service that has over 200,000 paying subscribers.

While many first rejected this idea initially, some are opening up to the idea of paying for quality content. "I would pay to subscribe only if the videos are useful or educational to me and not just some random home video," explains student Tai Qian, 19.

Indeed, what determines whether this model will succeed or not lies in the hands of the content producer.

But what about those who started with posting fun videos instead of specifically creating paid content? "For me it's about having to adapt to what YouTube is giving you because it's constantly changing and if that becomes the next big thing then for me I think I would have to jump on it because if you just try to stay [in] your own stubborn world and you fall off that's your own fault," says Ryan Higa (nigahiga), 23, one of YouTube's biggest celebrities.

Chester See, 27, concurs, saying, "As YouTube evolves, I evolve too as a content creater."

"If it's like an e-book or something that would require funding then maybe," comments Martina Stawski, 30, of the duo behind Eat Your Kimchi.

The couple first started posting vlogs (video blogs) about their time in Korea and has now expanded to a company with a studio that was funded by their fan's donations.

However, content produced is not the only factor to gain the hearts of those like Justina Foo, 19. "Why would I pay if there is only one or two videos uploaded per month? I'd rather just make do without it," argues Justina.

Lai Zheng Yong, 20, agrees, "Someone who pays to watch it might just record it or rip it off and upload it elsewhere where I can get access to for free."

Sure enough if paid channels take off and become the new way in which we watch videos on YouTube then consumer habits and the brains behind the content is sure to change. And no one says it better than Wesley Chan, 29, of Wongfu Productions, "As of now I think it would be a change that would take a lot of getting used to."



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## LEVELLING UP WITH STREET FIGHTER

The classic arcade game we used to play when we were younger has grown up by our side. **SARA JANE ONG** finds out how the game has evolved over time as it transcends from arcade machines to worldwide tournaments.

When our younger selves passed by the arcade, we would tug at our mother's hand eagerly and our eyes would widen at the shining lights. Our ears would perk up at what our mothers described as "horrible noise" bellowing out through the glass doors, but to us, that "noise" was a signal; a signal for us to stare pleadingly at our mothers, for any spare change they had in their purses, just for us to enjoy a few rounds of Capcom's renowned arcade fight game, Street Fighter (SF).

#### THE EVOLUTION OF STREET FIGHTER

The game that we used to spend a dollar or two on for about 15 minutes weekly in the arcades has evolved over the years, shifting to consoles such as the Xbox and Playstation (PS).

"Arcades are not doing so well right now, so people have migrated to consoles because the [startup] cost is lower," explains Zhi Liang Chew, a host in Cross Counter Asia, a YouTube channel that posts episodes of SF.

"What you need [is] a special type of monitor, a console (Xbox or PS), and for arcade enthusiasts who want to recreate the arcade environment, they use fight sticks, like the ones you use on arcade machines, which cost only about \$\$150, compared to the machines, which costs \$\$2000 each."

Even though arcades are starting to diminish due to the rise of smartphones and game apps, SF still lives on strong at Local Area Networks (LAN) shops. Many SF enthusiasts find playing at LAN shops easier on the wallet. In a poll done by **HYPE**, 60 per cent of 100 arcade-goers spend more than \$5 an hour in an arcade, and merely \$3 an hour in a LAN shop. "It's a place where people can play SF together instead of going to the arcades, and they enjoy it because they can relive memories here," says 24-year-old Ho Kun Xian, the owner of Tough Cookie, and a committed SF player himself.

#### THE RISE OF TOURNAMENTS

As SF makes a gradual switch from the arcades to LAN shops and consoles, tournaments such as *Evolution Championships* (EVO) and *Community Effort Orlando* (CEO) have sprouted up all over the world, attracting people to come forth and prove their worth in SF. And these tournaments are getting more popular amongst players, with a sharp rise from 1000 participants in 2009 to 5008 in 2012.

"People like to feel the palpitation [and] the adrenaline rush, and that's why tournaments are hosted," Zhi says, with a laugh, "When there is no money or stake on the line, you just play for fun, but when you add the competitive edge into SF, people start getting hyped up for it. And, of course, money attracts everyone."

And Singapore is not lagging behind in the gaming scene. Having hosted the *South East Asian* (SEA) *Majors* from June 21 to 23, a preliminary tournament for EVO, the country saw local player Xian beating 100 over players from Taiwan, Australia, and Japan, successfully breaking into CEO, which is the competition leading to EVO.

Although Xian is known as one of the top 10 SF players worldwide, he does not see himself as a professional.

"I have been playing it since [I was] young, it is more like a hobby to me. A hobby that allows me to travel the world," he says, with a cheeky grin.

#### SINGAPORE'S FIGHT GAME COMMUNITY

Through many people's love for SF and pitting themselves against each other in arcades, LAN shops and tournaments, a community has slowly grown in the world, with Singapore having its very own group of SF players called the Fight Game Community (FGC).

The FGC has its own Facebook group that is used to arrange SF gaming sessions, post tournament results, and organise gatherings for members to support their fellow players in tournaments.

"You go to the arcade [or LAN shops], play games with people, get to know them, then go for a meal and start developing friendships. It's not just about the game alone anymore, it's about the relationships formed through the game," says Zhi, who has been a member of the FGC since 2011.

#### EXPOSING SINGAPORE THROUGH STREET FIGHTER

Though the popular belief — that video games are detrimental to an individual's social life — can never be cemented, it is indisputable that these video games are in fact widening Singapore's very own "social web" through the gaming tournaments.

"There was once in Canada when Xian won a tournament, and we were so happy that we started waving the Singapore flag around," says Zhi, chuckling, "That was seen [by] 20, 000 people, whether live or through streams."

Inevitably, the burden of carrying the country's image now falls on these players' shoulders; they are now representatives of Singapore.

"I always complain that the food [overseas] cannot compare to the chicken rice in Singapore, and that makes people want to come as they think that our food is good," Xian says, with a shrug, "But on the other hand, I also have to watch how I carry myself."

"Now that there are more streams, there are more people watching us, and I guess we have to learn to deal with this newfound publicity," Zhi says, echoing Xian, "If we're going to adopt the old arcade mentality of bashing on buttons, swearing, and cursing on each other's mothers when we lose, it's not going to look good on us."



This year marks a special occasion for SF. As the game turns 25, a website is created so that people all over the world can reminisce their experiences of SF. CAPCOM, Japanese game developer and publisher, had also set up several tournaments to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary to allow players to challenge each other on the different versions of SF. Held across many locations over the globe and included over S\$500,000 worth of cash prizes, the grand final tournament was held on Dec 8, 2012 in San Francisco. Figurine collectors and players can also purchase the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Collector's Set, which includes the Street Fighter games, soundtracks, movies, an 8-inch Light-Up Ryu Statue, an art tribute book, a unique letter of authenticity, collector's case, and the best of all, a full-size, embroidered Ryu belt replica. replica. There is even a "Match Maker" for the anniversary for players to find each other so that they can contact each other, or play a friendly match.

To view the art pieces uploaded by Street Fighter fans, check out streetfighter25.com







# **MONEY FROM THE MASSES**

**MOHD AZHAR BIN AZIZ** and **CHARMAINE LIM** talk to crowdfunding enthusiasts, the wary and the sceptics to find out if this way of raising funds is worthy of the online community's support.

Every girl wants a happy ending, and *Alice Wants A Date* — a self-directed local YouTube comedy series — has achieved its happy ending by being completely funded by netizens via crowdfunding.

In less than a month, the project managed to collect a total of \$\$3,156, exceeding its target of \$\$2,800. With the amount raised, the production team could now clear both operational, and location and music licence costs.

"Interestingly, when people put in money, it's not just about supporting. They have a stake; they think they also own that thing. Regardless of how much they have invested, they are investing in the success of the project," explains Jasmine Teh, the producer of *Alice Wants A Date*.

First introduced in 2000, crowdfunding is a tool used by inventors, artistes and organisations to seek funding for their projects, and it is quickly gaining widespread support from the online community, including Singapore as well. One reason for the increasing popularity of crowdfunding is its interactive feature. For the creators, crowdfunding websites provide them the golden opportunity to pitch their product to thousands of people. The "backers" or people who contributed financially can share the project with their friends via social media.

"People start to raise funds online rather than [use] the traditional investment means because they can have total ownership and control of their products. They can also raise funds to defray production costs and at the same time, gain customers even before their product is launched," explains Mr Bryan Ong, 25, founder of Singapore's crowdfunding website, ToGather.Asia.

Mr Chuah Ah Sun, 28, made his first bamboo bicycle by hand in 2010. Today, he is the proud founder of Bamboobee; a business that sells factory-manufactured bamboo bicycles. Kickstarter, an international crowdfunding website, gave him a huge lift to success when interested buyers around the world pooled in a whopping \$\$63,879.

Ah Sun muses about how crowdfunding is a great concept that allowed him to kill two birds with one stone. Not only did he manage to realise the launch of Bamboobee, but the online publicity also secured him an early position in the market.

"Now people want more unique products... This creates a trend for small entrepreneurs to create their own products," adds Ah Sun.

Timothy Leong Tze Chuen, 23, an undergraduate and a serial backer who has funded five Kickstarter projects so far, agreed with this. He says, "It is about the interesting idea, and how they sell you that idea. I know that some projects may not be able to make it. It is a risk. But the ideas make me believe in the project."

**HYPE** surveyed 100 people aged 30 and below to find what makes them fund a project. "Interest' topped the list with 74 per cent saying that it is most capable in influencing their desire to fund a project.

While the crowdfunding business may be lucrative to project creators, there are many concerns surrounding it, particularly payment security. Crowdfunding was initially used as an online donation medium, before it was legalised to include investment drives for commercial companies under the new Jumpstart Our Business Startup (JOBS) Act in April 2012. This has led to an increase in fear of for-profit entities scamming crowdfunding communities all over the world.

Claire Wong, a Nanyang Technological University student, 20, says, "Even if I see an interesting project, I will not fund it because not everything out there is credible." She explains that it is already a big feat to be convinced face to face, let alone to be won over by online projects which creators are entirely strangers to her.

Edison Ang, 22, full-time National Serviceman, and Gorden Koh, 23, a student with Singapore Institute of Management, have differing opinions between funding a non-profit project and one that reaps profits for the project creator. Edison says that he will donate to a non-profit project because he is certain that the money will not be used unwisely. Gorden, however, feels that charities on crowdfunding platforms may not appeal to many as "there are possibly hundreds of startups looking for funds" and this can be overwhelming for the potential donor looking for a project.

That said, crowdfunding supporters still believe that the system is safe. Timothy says there are measures in place to secure the pledges made by the backers. He explains that the money is "only charged when the project is fully funded". Moreover, the amount pledged will also be refunded in full if the project fails halfway by moderators on the various crowdfunding websites.

From the comedic genius of "Alice Wants A Date" to the fine craft of Bamboobee, crowdfunding provides a platform to kickstart novelty projects and creative ideas. The rare opportunity to be part of a unique or exotic product trumps any form of security flaw. In the end, two dreams are achieved — one that of the creator, and another, the backer.

With over 100,000 projects on Kickstarter alone, it may be a headache to navigate through all of them. We bring you three great projects, and three notso-great ones.

#### **THREE CHEERS**

#### 1. RIDING THE WAVE OF SUCCESS

Get a 15% discount off all accessories on Bamboobee when you type in the coupon code 'HYPExObee' on their website, bamboobee.com.sg! Promotion

ends on 17 August.

With an overwhelming response from backers, Chuah Ah Sun has started Bamboobee, an online platform for buyers to purchase an Obee, the world's first bamboo bicycle.

#### 2. PAINT-STAKING EFFORTS PAID OFF

It may be difficult to make a name in the local arts scene, but Justin Foo, 20 and Yeo Tze Yang, 18, had aised more than S\$2,800 via crowdfunding, which allowed them to be closer to their dreams with their very own painting exhibition at the Goodman Arts Centre.

#### 3. PRESSING THE RIGHT BUTTONS

With a successful campaign on Indiegogo that raised S\$2,800, Ambigram Press managed to get funding for equipment, and can now not only screenprint unique designs on anything — from T-shirts, handkerchiefs, badges, posters, paper to vinyl stickers — but they also conduct live screenprinting gigs for events.

#### THREE JEERS

#### **1. LIKE A COPYCAT**

Some swindlers replicated the brainchild of two budding comic artists, Ken and Robert — a 23-page comic, 'Like A Virus' — and steered the donations away from the original campaign on Kickstarter. Fortunately, the scam was exposed early and the duo managed to collect \$\$7,012 for their project.

#### 2. THE GITTIP SCAM

No profile picture or name. Just a flimsy write up by the user 'Delpan', claiming to make the world better by listening and advising people. Turns out that Gittip (Gift Tip) is a platform for money laundering, where funds of over \$\$500 were extracted from credit cards to a Gittip account

#### **3. MD-PEN CONFUSION**

Launched on Kickstarter in 2012, the 'minimal and durable' (MD) pen churned in over S\$14,000, twice the targeted amount. But the backers never received their pen and the situation elevated to a state of confusion with several people claiming to be the original manufacturer. The backers still never got their pen though.

## MONOPOLY: SINGAPORE'S NIGHTCLUB EDITION

The recent fall of popular nightclubs, and the popping up of various new ones to replace them, hints at a rough playing field oblivious to patrons. **JOEY LEE** investigates.

The sequence of the night doesn't vary much for the initiated. They gather – girls clad in bodycon dresses and guys buttoned up in the best shirts that they'll be willing to risk getting a drink spilt on – ready for a night of adulterated debauchery. "Pre-drinking" is a standard ritual to cushion the damage on the wallet – no thanks to the exorbitant prices of drinks in the club — and they only venture onto the dance floor after the clock strikes midnight.

Two to four hours later, depending on the vivacity of the lot, they'll be lying in the back of a cab. Flushed in the face, loaded with a churning stomach, and eager to blabber all about the night once they awaken from their alcohol-induced slumber later on. Sounds familiar?

Despite clubbing being almost like a rite of passage for many teenagers that hit the exhilarating age of 18, the nightclub industry looks to be less stable than ever. A rampant surge of nightclub closures as well as revolutionary new openings has left club owners on their toes, and youths, absolutely spoilt for choice.

In November last year, Helipad was the first to fall. Located in the heart of Singapore's nightlife scene, the club 94 HYPE boasted a panoramic view of the entire city, and always seemed to be doing fine, which explained the confusion of their patrons. Three months down the road, Zirca tumbled down as well, before most recently, its neighbour, Rebel, followed suit in May.

Needless to say, club owners started panicking. Balance accounts were, and probably still are, being checked and rechecked; the same could be said for their profit and loss statements. What exactly did those clubs do wrongly? Should they be thinking of ways to upgrade so as to compete with the new clubs, and do a reopening? Was it a smart usage of resources to do so or was there another way to get around this? The list of questions flitting through the minds of club owners and nightlife groups were endless. That's where nightlife groups got busy.

Nightlife groups, hired by clubs, have one singular responsibility to get as many people to the club that hires their services. This means masterminding the wildest of parties and coming up with innovative new attractions to clubs, such as UV paint parties, in which partygoers show up to the club decked out in plain white, ready to paint their clothes (and drench themselves) with glow-in-thedark paint. "Clubs are trying much harder by doing crazy deals and offering more entertainment value, making [the industry] so competitive now. It just means that no one's rising, and everyone's diluting the existing base of partygoers," says Mano Kunaseragan, founder of nightlife group Biggest Baddest Parties.

As the nightlife groups were busy planning the perfect way to snag the patrons of the fallen clubs, entrepreneurs also saw potential. Logically, this would be the ideal time to open up a club and bag all the customers of the closed clubs. The only problem was that with the existence of these inventive nightlife groups, their new nightclubs could not afford to be anything less than extraordinary, yet still affordable.

"Every new club opening means the rest of the clubs take a hit. I don't like competing on prices but new clubs are so quick to slash prices and reduce margins; it's just not sustainable," says Kunaseragan. "Clubbers today are becoming too spoilt. They demand a big event for them to make an appearance."

With the new clubs such as Playhouse deploying their in-house team of hostesses to entertain their patrons,

and Kyo serving up Japanese sakes (rice wine) and tapas throughout the night, this means that not only are clubs upping their ante with the extra costs of such amenities, the clubbers are becoming harder to please.

Strangely enough, the big guns, such as Zouk and Avalon, don't seem to be troubled by this trend of clubs trying to stand out, with them still being the perennial favourites, and always having a snaking line of patrons. The former, having sustained their number 5 spot in the prestigious DJ Mag Top 100 Clubs poll last year, has no trouble attracting the powerhouses in the DJ world to their premises, and has procured the likes of Armin van Buuren and Tiesto, the current top two DJs in the world.

"We pride ourselves on being able to continually deliver that unique Zouk experience of world-class programming, top-notch lighting, sound systems and high customer service standards that have kept us at number 5 on the DJ Mag Top 100 Clubs poll for the past two years. We will simply continue to seek (improvement) our overall product in all the aforementioned areas," says Head of Marketing & Events at Zouk, Timothy Chia.

#### CLUBBERS TODAY ARE BECOMING TOO SPOILT. THEY DEMAND A BIG EVENT FOR THEM TO MAKE AN APPEARANCE.

- Mano Kunaseragan, founder of Biggest Baddest Parties

Clearly, this competition lies between the smaller clubs.

In fact, **HYPE** did a poll of over 50 youths that are active in the nightlife scene, to find out which club is their favourite. 35 per cent of the respondents favoured Zouk with Avalon trailing behind with 18 per cent of the votes, leaving the smaller clubs fighting for the remainder of the votes.

"Although they give the club some personality, these special features are just gimmicks. Ultimately, people still go to clubs for the music and crowd. If your music is bad and your crowd is lousy, I don't think these special features would play a significant role in retaining their crowd," says club promoter, Gwen Tan.

Nonetheless, whether the fiercely rapid addition of special features is seen as cannibalising their own base of partygoers or doing what's necessary to stay alive, one thing's clear – with the dominance of Zouk and Avalon, good music and a dance floor just isn't enough anymore.

#### **Clubs that Closed**

#### Zirca

Zirca seemed like it was destined to become another big name in the club scene. Over time, youths began to associate Zirca's crowd with being mostly "ah bengs" and "ah lians". They soon announced their closure a little after four years.

#### When they closed: February 2013 Location: Clarke Quay Blk C, 3 River Valley Road

**Cover Charge:** \$25 - \$28 for men (inclusive of two free drinks), \$20 - \$25 for women (inclusive of two free drinks) **Age Limit:** 18

Music Style: Electro and House

#### Rebel

Located right next to Zirca, Rebel targeted students specifically. Rebel soon realised that the crowd they were attracting did not have the spending power to sustain their expenses, forcing them to close down after five years.

When they closed: May 2013

Location: Clarke Quay Blk C, 3 River Valley Road Cover Charge: \$25 - \$28 for men (inclusive of two free drinks), \$20 - \$25 for women (inclusive of two free drinks) Age Limit: 18

Music Style: Hip Hop and R&B

#### New Clubs in the Scene

#### Куо

"Underground club" takes on a whole new meaning at Kyo. Stocked with Kyo's carefully selected collection of Japanese sakes and whiskeys, the 25m long bar also features Japanese gourmet tapas created by Kilo.

#### When they opened: March 2013

Location: 133 Cecil Street, Keck Seng Tower Cover Charge: \$20 (inclusive of one free drink) Age Limit: 21 for ladies, 23 for men Music Style: A distinct genre and mood on each night

of the week

**Standout feature**: The only underground nightclub in Singapore, as well as its exquisite Japanese theme.

#### Dream

Located at Clarke Quay, the heart of Singapore's party scene, the miniscule 700-capacity club prides themselves on their cutting-edge visuals, with a futuristic theme in both their layout and their music.

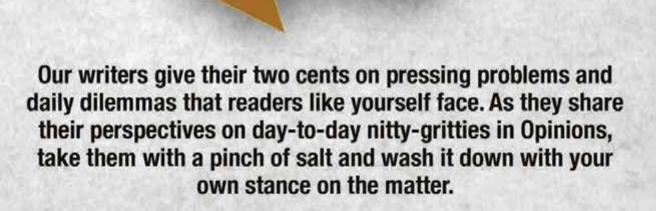
When they opened: March 2013

**Location**: Block 3C River Valley Road **Cover Charge**: \$28 for men and women (inclusive of two free drinks)

Age Limit: 18 for both ladies and men

Music Style: Commercial Electro

**Standout feature**: The first dance club in Singapore to feature video mapping technology, which fuses visuals with their music to amp up the atmosphere.



OPINIONS



# "NO, REALLY I'M FINE!"

## It's time to clear up the misconceptions and set it straight. **FAIZ SUHAIRI** unravels the seemingly stone cold exterior of those who suffer from Chronic Bitch Face and go straight their softer core.

"Are you okay? You seem upset," someone asked for the third time that day. I sighed inwardly, wondering if I should explain that I couldn't help with the way I look.

Cold, stuck up, unfriendly — these are common words people use to describe me, perhaps because of the way I look. If you often are misunderstood as being cold or angry, chances are that like me, you have Chronic Bitch Face (CBF).

CBF is a "condition" where you look angry, bored or cold even when your face is relaxed. It would seems that people with CBF have common physical attributes such as emotionless eyes, fierce eyebrows, or an overall stern appearance. While CBF is used to describe women, men are not spared.

As a sufferer of CBF, I've encountered multiple problems especially in new social situations. Because of the way I look, I am self-conscious about the kind of impression I make on people I meet for the first time and thus I become awkward. The cold look on my face often makes me look unapproachable. At one point, I became very introverted, afraid of new social settings because being misunderstood as an unfriend-Iy or stuck-up person means that people avoid me.

After warming up to each other and after people get to know who I really am, bonds are formed and new friendships are made. Some of my closest friends used to have bad first impressions of me that we laugh about now. While most of them know that my facial expression usually does not reflect the way I'm feeling, sometimes they still misunderstand. "I don't think this would be a good idea," my friend and group member for a project, said about one of the ideas discussed. I looked at him as I anticipated him to elaborate on his point.

He glanced at me and quickly looked away, "Oh, sorry."

Puzzled, I asked, "Why?"

"You look like you were really angry at me so I thought you got offended. And you looked really scary so I apologised." I sighed. My glances end up looking like glares, and my neutral expression makes me look angry.

While this may not seem like a severe problem, it does get frustrating when it happens on a frequent basis. I used to complain to my peers about my problem but it is a futile exercise because those without it find it hard to understand the people with CBF.

"Try smiling," my friend, who does not have CBF, once said.

A common and irritating response, it can be quite offensive even when it comes from well-meaning people.. Telling someone to smile only makes their mood match their face.

Those with CBF should try to be more outgoing as this will make you seem less cold and unfriendly. Also, take the initiative to approach others and introduce yourselves because it is unlikely you will get approached from the way you look.



YOU DON'T HAVE TO



In a world where everybody is trying to be noticed, a meek spirit seems a little disadvantageous. But maybe having a loud voice is not such a big deal after all. **NORA LEE SOH** reveals the good and bad of both ends of the personality spectrum.

Friendly, outgoing and the joker of the group — it's the character we all love. The one who gets all the attention, and all the great job deals. Everybody loves the extrovert, right? Not so...

Psychology.com says that introverts are people who do not need to seek out external stimulation, meaning that we don't need other people to make us happy.

Basically, we like being alone and are focused on the inner world of thoughts and emotions. While extroverts gain energy from socialising, introverts are energised by solitary, often creative pursuits.

In a world where everyone seems to favour the loud-mouthed fast talker, we are forced to step out of our comfort zone and take on the traits of an extrovert. As a child and sometimes even now, my mother has to ask me to go out and hang out with my friends instead of "rotting at home all day" by either reading or watching TV serials.

Well, it may seem like an anti-social behaviour, I was perfectly happy staying indoors, and not having to engage in small talk just to seem polite, or do things that to me, seemed to waste my time and energy.

I was frequently nagged at for bringing a book to family events and was made to interact with others. I don't mind socialising and sharing jokes at the table, but sometimes it gets exhausting and a person's got to have their "me time" once in a while to recharge their batteries. For introverts, we'd like our "me time" to be almost all the time.

It is a common misunderstanding that being an extrovert is great, especially in the corporate world. Companies love pushing introverts into being extroverts, and hiring "megaextroverts" as sales people. Yet, these people often are the worst salespeople as they are sometimes so busy talking and being entertaining that they don't keep quiet long enough to listen or ask the right questions, or any question for that matter.

We don't have to be super entertaining all the time. Instead we need to be just a little more self-aware.

Focus on strengths and weaknesses. For introverts, it's good to get out once in in a while; too much alone time with storybook characters and perfect boyfriends in dramas make us a bit weird. Extroverts, respect our occasional decision to stay indoors and not pester us to leave our sanctuary, and listen to us once in a while.

"Here I am, a rabbit-hearted girl, frozen in the headlights... I wish that I could just be brave. I must become a lionhearted girl ready for a fight," sings the redhead beauty that is Florence Welch, who was quite the introverted person in her younger days and now when off stage.

See? Being an introvert isn't all that bad, just remember to be you. There's really no need to shout to be heard. Even Ghandi says so: "In a gentle way, you can shake the world."



## Gift giving has been the bane of every relationship's existence. Join **ATIKA LIM** as she shares her stance on the tricky issue of matching the dollar sign to the status of your relationship.

"HUH? Only a Nyan cat T-shirt for your birthday and you're okay with that?" exclaimed a former girlfriend of mine rather tactlessly upon hearing what my boyfriend got me for my birthday. "You need to have higher standards!" she continued.

Initially, I thought nothing of the remark but after much pondering, I began to wonder: Does gift giving define a relationship? And why do girls feel the need to compare what their boyfriends got them?

Like other girls, I love shopping. I love the thought of owning a new pair of strappy black wedges and I relish the vision of my hands full of shopping bags. But what exactly is the correlation between expensive gifts and the amount of love my other half has for me?

I know of a friend — let's call her Laura — whose boyfriend constantly showers her with gifts. From a sleek black Givenchy Pandora Continental wallet to a gorgeous maroon Chloe Marcie bag to a bunch of gold-encrusted Yves Saint Laurent rings. Laura's boyfriend definitely spoils her to no end. "And it's not even my birthday!" she quipped.

In an episode of the TV programme House titled '*It's A Wonderful Lie*', the ever wise Dr Gregory House gave his two cents worth about gifts, saying "Gifts allow us to demonstrate exactly how little we know about a person. And nothing pisses a person off more than being shoved into the wrong pigeonhole," he said. That statement truly resonates with me.

Being the lazy couple that we are, my boyfriend and I never really gave it much thought when it comes to buying gifts. It takes up too much time and too much effort. How could anything that takes so much time out of other more enjoyable activities (like eating, sleeping, watching American sitcoms) be fun? The only time we ever think about gifts is when our birthdays come around and even then, gifts are minimalistic like a simple dinner treat. No fancy branded bags, no Thomas Sabo charm bracelet. I mean, maintaining a relationship is already tough enough.

Think of a relationship as an ice cream sundae. The base ingredient is delicious enough. Once in a while though, we add a helping of fluffy whip cream. Pushing it further, we treat ourselves with a helping of Smucker's or Hershey's hot fudge, caramel or strawberry topping. Indulge your palate further with a dash of rainbow sprinkles or crushed nuts and then, for the finale, a bright red maraschino cherry on top.

Sounds like a lot of work just to put together something so simple right? Now, imagine all that in a relationship. Do we really need that maraschino cherry? I don't know about you but I was never a fan of that artificially preserved cherry metaphorically or not.

I remember when my boyfriend told me how his best friend got his girlfriend an expensive watch. The first thing that came to my mind was, "So... the watch is like a reward for being his girlfriend then?"

Ultimately, I know that giving and receiving gifts is part and parcel of being in a relationship and while it's nice to get gifts once in a while; it shouldn't have to define a relationship much less ruin it. Advance to a degree from our premier university partners. It's **pos**sible.

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