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NEW ISSUE



# nipe

THE  
BRAVERY!!

PARKING  
LOT PIMP!!

CHRISTOPHER  
LEE!!

GROWING  
PAINS!!



**SUPERHERO  
SLUGFEST**  
THIS ISSUE!





# S.M.A.R.T.S

SPACE MISSION - A RECIPROCAL TREASURE SEARCH

A quest for the lost treasure of the Vorkian moons

A question of how much you care

A question of how much you know

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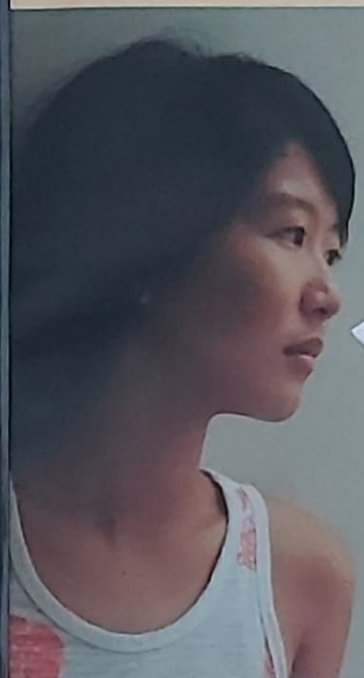
Date: 7 & 8 Jan 2006

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Who gives Wins

# EDITORIAL



Like how getting on a bus marks the first step of a journey, **hype**, too, embarks on our own little journey. We're at the end of innocence, at the beginning of a new tomorrow. Say hello to our 21<sup>st</sup> issue!

If you think about it, the bus is an awful lot like life. You get on the bus. Sometimes the ride is pleasant, most times it's not. You meet loads of people on it. Some nice, others horrible, and some you wish would just make the world a better place by buying their own car. The journeys can be long, some are short but ultimately, everyone ends up getting off at the last stop. Transport does imitate life.

What are the prime stops on **hype**'s bus ride this time?

1. Get all the beef on burgers in **The Burger Battle Bonanza** (pg 56). We've got Mr **Makansutra** KF Seetoh to help sniff out the most underrated burgers so you don't have to think BK or McDonald's all the time.

2. Movies based on comics... You'd think it'd be the best of both worlds but there's a fuller picture on what's hot and what's not for this new trend in movies, and we've got it.

3. And if all the fast-paced superhero action has got you tired, chill out with us as we check out podcasting, one of the more interesting additions to the music scene.

Stick around and we'll try to make your ride as pleasant as possible. You'll get to know about different people (like **Mr Midnight** and his spine-tingling new movie... more on pg 51) and read about issues that concern you, such as premarital sex. Your journey can be a long or short one but we hope you'll part company with us with the magical last page.

Best of all, this ride's on the house.

Thanks and cheers,  
Cheryl Lim

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## EDITORS

Fazilah Abdul Gaffa, Cheryl Lim,  
Candace Zhou, Tan Ningxi (Chinese)

## DESIGNERS

Lee Weicong, Kimberly Shen

## PHOTO EDITOR

Low Youjin

## A&P EXECUTIVE

Jamie Tan

## REPORTERS

Chen Siya, Mae Chong,  
Alisa Chopard, Daniel Hakim  
Ridzuan, Hajar Manal, Andrea  
Azorene Heng, Anita Lo,  
Matthias Phua, Bryan Ong,  
Claudia Pok, Kimberly Shen,  
Jamie Tan

## ADVISORS

Robin Yee  
Choy Kok Kee (Design)  
Kwek Chin Ling (Chinese)

## CONTRIBUTORS

Joshua Cheung, Justin Daimen,  
Lee Fengnian, Lin Shilong, Mas  
Atikah Ju, Darryl Ng, Amelia  
Tan, Judith Tan, Mark Tan

## PRINTER

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hype magazine  
SCHOOL OF FILM & MEDIA STUDIES  
BX 52 #07-01  
535 Clementi Road  
Singapore 120499

Tel: 6460 8448 (for editorial & advertising queries)  
Fax: 6463 6218  
Email: hypemagazine@gmail.com

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## WOMAD'S BACK

Featuring a more diversified cultural line-up, **WOMAD** (World of Music, Arts & Dance) is back for the eighth consecutive year in Singapore. According to the press release, the prestigious event will feature "outstanding artists from 14 countries and five continents". Five stages will be constructed, dedicated to performances, workshops, appearances and club sets. Arts and dance performances, workshops for deejaying and more will commence from 6.30pm, while groovy club music by DJ R-H and "World Future Funk", described by the release as "the pioneers of global beats and world/dance music cross-over", will entertain viewers to the wee hours of the morning. Set to provide a different perspective of arts and culture in three days, **WOMAD** will be held at Fort Canning Park from Aug 26 to 28. - **BRYAN ONG**



Tickets \$33 and up. Log on to [www.womadssingapore.com](http://www.womadssingapore.com) for more information.

## THROW ME A LINE!

Arguably Singapore's first professional comedy group, **The Madhatters Comedy Company**, introduces their new show - **Throw Me A Line!** straight after the move to their new home at the Arts House. **Throw Me A Line!** is similar to comedy TV series, **Whose Line Is It Anyway?** They may not be able to match the improv comic inventiveness and musical talent of Ryan Stiles, Colin Mochrie and Wayne Brady, but Roger Jenkins, Alison Lester, Christina Sergeant, Raymond Tan and Ken Ngo on keyboard have been entertaining audiences with funny scenarios and impromptu songs, building on suggestions by the audience during the 75-minute show. - **BRYAN ONG**



and full-time students will enjoy a discount of \$5. Laughter starts at 8pm on Sep 13 at the Arts House at No. 1 Old Parliament Lane.

## A DBS VISA PLATINUM EVENING WITH ELAINE PAIGE

Singing for 5,000 people a night would qualify most acts as a major draw, but for Elaine Paige's only performance in Singapore, it's only considered an intimate performance.

Then again, Paige has performed and made her mark in the original cult favourite West End and Broadway stage musicals such as **Evita**, **Les Miserables**, **Jesus Christ Superstar** and **Cats**. Besides being a hit on stage, winning numerous awards such as the "Society of West End Theatre Award for Best Actress in a Musical" and the "Variety Club of Great Britain Award for Best Actress of the Year" in 1978, she has also seen 12 of her 16 albums achieve gold and multi-platinum sales, acted on TV and hosted a weekly BBC radio show. This is will one memory you won't want to miss making. - **MATTHIAS PHUA**



A DBS Visa Platinum Evening with Elaine Paige will be on Oct 29, 8pm, Singapore Indoor Stadium. Tickets are at \$35, \$55, \$80, \$105 and \$135 from SISTIC.

## SEPARATION 40

Another way of looking at our independence is the 40 years of separation of Singapore from Malaysia. To celebrate this milestone, local drama company **The Necessary Stage** and Malaysia's **Dramalab** have collaborated to produce this charming production.

Directed by Alvin Tan and Zahim Albakir, who worked together on theatre production **Mardi Gras**, **Separation 40** features homegrown and familiar talents Chua Enlai and Yeo Yann Yann as well as Soefira Jaafar, Jo Kukathas, Aidli Mosbit and others.

The Padang festivities and the fireworks may be over, but the soul-searching and the humour don't have to be. Answering questions like, "What if Singapore never separated from Malaysia?", this hilarious show will present comic situations that are bound to leave you howling with laughter. Beyond this, you'll also see the history of both countries, as well as how Singapore has developed in its economy, culture, arts and politics, to become the modern and cultured society it is. Held Sept 16-18 at the Esplanade Theatre Studio and Sept 22-24 at Marine Parade Community Building Theatre. - **CANDACE ZHOU**

Tickets at \$24 and \$18, are available from all SISTIC outlets. For more information, please check [www.necessary.org](http://www.necessary.org).

## SINGAPORE FASHION WEEK 2005

For the first time in its 18-year history, the Singapore Fashion Week (SFV) will showcase the entire process involved in making clothes, from raw materials to textile machinery to the finished products in retail and runway creations.

The event is not only a magnet for ultimate fashion gurus and junkies, but will also serve as a playground for exchanging ideas between industry players such as manufacturers, tailors, fashion designers, distributors, importers, agents as well as international fashion merchants and buying houses.

SFV's highlights include **The Designers Show**

## PETER PAN

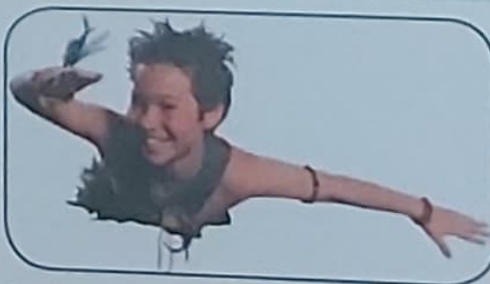
**Peter Pan**, a musical by Faust International, a theatre-education services company dedicated to providing an appreciation of stage performing arts in Hong Kong, will fly to our shores from Oct 7 till Oct 16. The diverse cast of mainly children unite to tell the well known tale of a young boy who refuses to grow up, preferring to seek his own magical adventures in a fantasy world. The musical also features a cast of 20 children from Singapore. In January and February, the musical played to full houses at the 1,181-seater Lyric Theatre in the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts. The spell of this musical drama adaptation of JM Barrie's classic should be no less strong at the Esplanade Theatre. - **CHEN SIYA**



(TDS), Singapore Fashion Awards at Zouk and the Asian Fashion Designers Contest.

Also not to be missed is the **Dare To - The Fashion Bash** at Zouk and School Connection, an event that will showcase works by students from Raffles Design Institute and LaSalle-SIA College of the Arts. Fringe events include a public exhibition at Raffles City Shopping Centre and **Fashion-Tech Solutions Seminar**. - **ANDREA HENG**

The Singapore Fashion Week begins Oct 17. Details correct at press time, for more updates, log on to [www.singaporefashionweek.com.sg](http://www.singaporefashionweek.com.sg).



Tickets can be purchased from Sistic at \$58, \$68 and \$88. Student concession tickets cost \$48, \$58 and \$68 respectively.



If you think nothing ever happens in Singapore, **hype** shows you some events you can choose from.

Based on the book by Harold Pinter, which was made into a 1983 movie starring Jeremy Irons, this play presented by the Singapore Repertory Theatre brings you face-to-face with a typical love triangle. This story about a woman having an affair with her husband's best friend is filled with deception.  
 Aug 18 - Sep 10, 4pm, 8pm, DBS Arts Centre  
 Tickets: \$30, \$38, \$42, \$43, \$48 from SISTIC

Celebrating The Substation's 15th year, this year's programme will ditch the usual exhibitions and performances in favour of conferences and events encouraging the public and the arts community to meet, talk and share, thus bringing them closer.  
 Sep 2 - 30, The Substation  
 Details on tickets and show times not available at presstime

With a new blue and yellow Big Top, Canadian troupe Cirque du Soleil is back in Singapore after two fantastic productions. This group of talented entertainers from 10 countries looks set to entertain and to amaze you with their dramatically staged acrobatic antics, musical entertainment and extraordinary feats.  
 Sep 8 - 25, 1pm, 4pm, 5pm, 8pm, Grand Chapiteau (corner of Beach Road & Orchard Road)  
 Tickets: \$69, \$79, \$89, \$99, \$120, \$130, \$250 from SISTIC

If you're familiar with the **Just For Laughs** comedy series on TV, you're bound to enjoy this one. Part of the largest travelling comedy festival, **Just For Laughs Comedy Tour**, the **Singapore Comedy International Festival** is bound to leave you tearing with laughter. Performers the world over come together to produce a show of non-stop laughter and top comedy acts. Past comedians on the show include famous stand-up comedian, Russell Peters and Carl Barron.  
 Sep 11-14, 7pm, 8pm, 9.30pm, Victoria Theatre  
 Tickets: \$38 - \$88

The \$10-million production and Mandarin update of the original Cantonese musical staged in Singapore in 1997, **Snow, Wolf, Lake**, tells a tragic but familiar story of lovers: a gardener and his love. Torn apart by differences in backgrounds, the star-crossed lovers commit suicide by drowning in the lake. Stars Jacky Cheung, who's also the director and stage designer, Yvonne Hsu and Nnadia Chan (taking over the role originally held by Kit Chan).

hype 6

Sep 16 - 17, 8pm, Singapore Indoor Stadium  
 Tickets: \$98, \$148, \$188, \$228 from SISTIC

The cast of **STOMP** returns with a forceful performance of dance and theatre set to an infectious beat, crash and bang. In the hands of these innovative international performers, brooms and spoons turn into percussion instruments. You'll look at these everyday objects around you differently after this show.  
 Sep 27 - Oct 2, 8pm, Esplanade Theatre  
 Tickets: \$50, \$70, \$90, \$110 from SISTIC

The six-hour concert marks the end of the **Listen Campaign 2005** launched June 6 to raise awareness of disadvantaged children in the world. Music stars the world over, including Parking Lot Pimp (see pag 12), will unite to perform and the event will be broadcast "live" in more than 80 countries. Five short feature films about war, disease, poverty, AIDS and exploitation will also be screened. This global entertainment charity event is a chance to contribute and help the needy.  
 Oct 1, 7pm, National Stadium  
 Tickets: \$97 from TicketCharge

Talented street performers ply Orchard Road and Marina Bay to show off their skills. Mimes, contortionists, street theatre practitioners, comedians and magicians... they'll all be there. **A Buskers' Grand Parade** will unfold along the former on Nov 13 when buskers walk down the street showing off their skills.  
 Nov 13 - 21, 6.30pm - 10.30pm, Marina Bay, Orchard Road  
 Free Admission

Voted **The Best Musical** of 1997 by the **Singapore Theatre Awards** and restaged in 1998, this musical comedy staged by **Singapore Repertory Theatre** returns to charm audiences again with its intelligent twists, humour and suspense.  
 Nov 18 - Dec 4, Esplanade Theatre  
 Tickets and show times unavailable at presstime

Some of the world's best short films, animations and music videos have been put together in this curated programme that will tour 40 cities, starting from New York city. Fans of **The Chemical Brothers** and **RJD2** will get to catch their new videos, while others have their imaginations tickled by animations that make them go, "Hmm?"  
 Nov 25 - 27, Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts  
 Tickets and show times unavailable at presstime

## 戏剧盒的《快乐》首次在海外“打开”

陈宁曦报道

《快乐》是一种生活中会体验到的感觉、一部关于施与受的新加坡舞台剧、也是一部能把本地艺术推广到海外的戏剧表演。

《快乐》是由新加坡戏剧团“戏剧盒”呈现的戏剧。里头结合了著名英国作家Oscar Wilde的作品，《快乐王子》、《莎乐美》和《狱中记》。这三个不同形式的文学作品，包括童话故事、戏剧剧本以及情书都围绕施与受开展情节。

在《快乐王子》里，可以看到王子无条件地为人民做出奉献。《莎乐美》说的是莎乐美这个渴望得到爱情的公主。在《狱中记》里，收录的是Wilde的人生故事，他是个很有才华的人，不过为了情爱，他牺牲了名气，最后还被关进牢里，一蹶不振，颓废消沉。

戏剧盒的艺术总监郭庆亮，看了Wilde全部的作品后就改编了这一部苦乐剧。本地音乐制作人与作曲家黄仁、和词曲家小涵，都参与了《快乐》的制作。

今年五月份已在滨海艺术中心上演了十场的《快乐》，每场都有不少观众成为剧中人物，成为故事情节流下眼泪。在这轮演出中，戏剧盒兴奋地发现观众都很用心地填写意见表，把许多感想以及意见都写了下来，与往日的冷漠态度大为不同。

戏剧盒把《快乐》的景象带到上海后，就受到上海有关当局的高度重视，受邀到上海参与戏剧节的演出。上海戏剧节在亚洲地区是个名声响当当的大型艺术活动，每次都吸引了不少国家的戏剧团体前来参与演出。其中包括了来自台湾、香港、日本、韩国和马来西亚的戏剧团体。新加坡是首次受邀参与演出。拥有十五年历史的戏剧盒也就成为了第一个受邀参与演出的本地戏剧团体，同时这也是戏剧盒首次以专业戏剧团体的身份在国外表演。

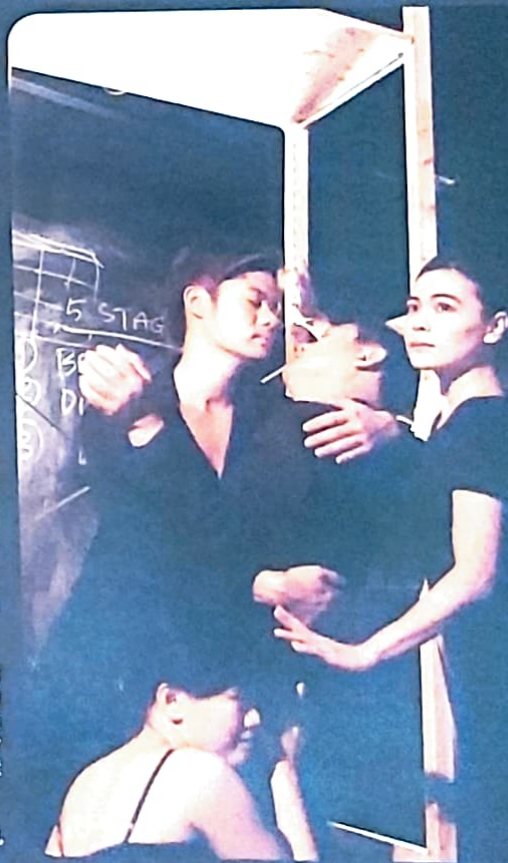
这一次的国外演出，戏剧盒得到了国家艺术理事会的支助。不过戏剧盒面对的最大挑战还是到上海演出的资金。因为上海的邀请只包括住宿以及戏剧表演场地，身为一个非盈利戏剧团体，戏剧盒都得靠捐款来付机票、运送器材的费用。在这一方面，戏剧盒希望能得到商业机构的帮助。

戏剧盒的十位台前幕后工作人员将会在九月八号到九号在上海戏剧节举行两场演出。

其中一名演员是在新加坡媒体界有了一定的知名度的杨君伟。杨君伟演的其中一个角色是《快乐王子》里的王子。不久前刚出过书的他表示：“这是我从1994年参加戏剧盒，演了这么多舞台剧以来，觉得最有挑战性，让我最感动的一部戏。”

杨君伟也透露在《快乐》的排练过程当中，好多演员都轮流失控，只有他还显得很冷静，导演常说杨君伟太理性了。直到有一次彩排，当演到燕子快死了那一幕时，由于歌词、情节及气氛非常感人，杨君伟感触很深，结果轮到他失控，哭了大约半个小时。他觉得当时的他进入了角色中，小燕子的死，深深地触动了他的心。

想知道捐款的更多详情，请电 6324 5434，到戏剧盒的办公室查询。



照片: Drama Box



## No Fear

While the band was here for a one-night-only concert, **DANIAL HAKIM** sits down with The Bravery's vocalist Sam Endicott, who discusses taking vocal lessons over the phone, edgy moments and the future.

Looking like a cross between the late James Dean and actor Paul Rudd, singer/guitarist of electro-rock band, The Bravery, Sam Endicott wandered over to the couch with a casual "Is that my seat?"

Black painted fingernails flashed briefly as he pointed at the cushy grey sofa. Dressed in the typical rocker's leather jacket and a pair of faded jeans ripped at the knees, he introduced himself with a curt handshake and sat down.

Based in New York, the quintet was in town to promote their debut self-titled album and staged a one-night concert at the Singapore Indoor Stadium on Aug 5. They had plunged into the hard, brash world of rock in 2003 and were born from Sam Endicott's dream to take his music to another level.

"I've been into music since I was a kid. [It] was the only thing I liked doing, the only thing I was good at," Sam said, gazing broodingly at the floor.

His hunger for music had sent him across his hometown Maryland, Washington, jamming with whomever he could.

"I played everything from country to metal," he laughed, recalling the Star Wars-themed ska band called "Skabba the Hutt" that both keyboardist and best friend John Conway and he used to belong to.

In 1999, he packed up and headed for the Big Apple. After joining several bands which ended up in the gutter, the bassist finally decided, "F--- it. I'm just going to do it myself."

He was determined to do something more than trivial club gigs. Captivated by the local electro-clash dance genre that had engulfed the city, Sam wanted to create something similar yet completely original. He wanted to play "not just for fun [but for something] really good" and was ready to pursue music as a serious career. While vacationing in Italy with his girlfriend, Sam had what he called his "epiphany moment". He had been previously consumed by his "fears and anxieties of the world", paralysed by its tragedies to move ahead with his life.

"At that moment, it hit me... There was no point living in fear," he said firmly, a note of determination

in his voice.

Having known John since college, the two got busy by messing around with their sound on Sam's limited equipment, namely an iMac. Together, they pieced together The Bravery's first few songs before roping in the rest of the band: Anthony Burulcich (drums), Michael Zakarin (guitar) and Mike Hindert (bass).

According to New York Magazine, which recently dubbed them "New York's most serious bid for music dominance in a decade", Mike had never played the bass guitar before. Then again, before The Bravery, Sam had never sung as much as a note either.

"I was too scared to actually sing," he confessed. His epiphany had refreshed his spirit and given him the bravery, pun intended, to take up vocals, and he promptly phoned an old friend for lessons. Conducting singing lessons over the phone may seem a little strange but from the sound of things, they've certainly paid off.

In case you're wondering about the feud between The Bravery and The Killers, Sam resolutely states, "We're over it."

As Sam muses about the band's future, it's clear he hopes to increase the "human element" in the music while still remaining true to the synthesising sounds of electro-rock.

Unlike most bands, The Bravery is very hands on with the production of their music to the extent of recording their tracks at home on their computers. As for their music videos, Sam explained that they'd come up with the general look and feel of the video before searching for a director who would accept the idea of producing it. Even the cover of their album was an art piece done by an old friend.

In taking on daunting new challenges like learning bass and vocals and handling much of the production themselves, this young band has truly shown bravery.

## Upsy Daisy

Probably best remembered as the noisy neighbour in local hit comedy series **Under One Roof**, Daisy Irani is about to hit the big screens as a purple-haired alien in a movie based on **Mr Midnight** books. **ALISA CHOPARD** chats with the actress and finds out more about her revolving head and Halloween makeup.

"I'm scared of being absolutely alone in the night. As a kid, I always slept with my parents," confessed Daisy Irani, who's slated, ironically, to act in a \$1 million budget horror movie based on the **Mr Midnight** children's books, due to be released early next year.

The "40-something-year-old" isn't a new player in the horror industry either. She is also the director and executive producer of the hit local horror series, **Incredible Tales**, showing on Channel 5.

The animated TV exec spoke enthusiastically about her role in **Mr. Midnight**, where she plays a wild, purple-haired alien called Doris Dread. "The name alone excites me. I'm out in the forest chasing these kids and my head gets to revolve 180 degrees!"

Imagine how exhilarated she would have been if she had only had the chance to celebrate Halloween as a child, growing up in then Bombay, India.

"I was involved, however, in my kids celebrating it. They assumed that since I was in the media and production industry that I could make them look really... demonic. I used to take out all my makeup and they would queue up to get painted."

Since they brought in a big haul from trick-or-treating, she can probably add make-up artist to her list of credits, that include being executive producer of **Under One Roof** and **Incredible Tales 2**. "I couldn't throw it all away like that, and obviously I couldn't let my kids eat it all in one day. I just didn't know what to do with all the different types of sweets - there were so many!"

The easy going producer is not only ecstatic about her quirky character, she describes the film script as "a roller coaster ride". Irani also lets on modestly that her part revolves "around those of the children. I like to think that we play the supporting cast."

Tentatively titled **Mr. Midnight the Movie: My Haunted Holiday**, based on the **Mr Midnight** books of local author and ad-man Jim Aitchison (see pg 51), is set to be released internationally and has even been



Photo: Daisy Irani

reported by Hollywood trade magazine **Variety.com**, but that's not why the Managing Executive Producer of Production 5 at MediaCorp Studios chose to accept the role.

"For me it wasn't about that, it was about knowing that the people at home were doing it and they want to reach out," she explained. She also sees Geoff Malone, founder of the Singapore International Film Festival and the movie's co-producer, as "someone who has been in Singapore for some time now... The actors and crew are all from here and it is truly an adventure film."

Even though the bulk of the filming for **Mr. Midnight** will be in Singapore, they will be going to a resort in Bintan when filming starts in November.

"It's like a break for me, because the pressure on me as an actor is different from the pressure I face in the office," said Irani.

"It's going to be so much fun... the notion of being moved to Bintan. It's truly a work holiday, and a chance to get to be with a young crowd. What's more, it will be interesting to bounce off the other foreign actors."

Her expectations are simple. She also looks forward to being directed for a change, in this case by Australian Geoff Burton, who had directed countryman Russell Crowe in **The Sum of Us** before Crowe became famous.

The multi-talented Daisy is more than prepared to take on the role of Doris Dread, having already had behind-the-scenes experience with **Incredible Tales**. "I knew the challenge for me was to go out and add the scary elements [into **Incredible Tales**]. To do that, you have to be someone who sees the supernatural in a different way. Recently, I had to shoot in a cemetery until 3am and I just thought how peaceful it was."

"It made me realise that everything that scares us is all in our head, and there's really no reason to be frightened at all."



# Big Pimpin'

After months in the musical closet, Parking Lot Pimp is out taking over the world with their debut album, giving **FAZILLAH ABDUL GAFFA** a reason to whip out her notepad and chat with the members about living life rockstar-style.



Photo: Parking Lot Pimp

They're Singapore's first band to be featured as MTV Asia's Advance Warning Artist of the Month. Their first two singles "Blow" and "Letter from Dreamland" are regulars on local radio and the debut album **Welcome to Our Frequency** has been released in Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia and soon, Indonesia. The band is also slated to perform at the launch of the second season of MTV Asia's **Whatever Things** on Sep 17. But make no mistake, Parking Lot Pimp are far from divas throwing their celebrity status around.

The four out of the five Pimps were comfortable sitting by the side of the road to answer questions from **hype**. The band, at Jam 'n Hop, a gig at the National University of Singapore (NUS) featuring local bands including EIC and Electrico, has also been performing at promotional gigs at just about every place— from at Ngee Ann Polytechnic's school bazaar to NUS's outdoor concert to even the launch of Harry Potter's latest book in Borders in mid-July. Their guitarist Syed Munir, 30, said with a grin, "[The only place] we won't pimp ourselves is at Desker Road", referring to the infamous red light district.

## ABOUT THE ALBUM

Unlike individuals who win reality TV competitions and get their debut albums out within a month or two, others have to practically shed blood to put together an album. The five members — Syed Munir, Terry Lee, 27, Vanessa Fernandez, 23, Trisno Ishak, 26 and Jeremy Green, 27, took 18 months to put the album out. Munir, Terry, Vanessa and Trisno were originally from the local hip hop group Urban Xchange, brought to fame by a Coca Cola ad they did.

Terry, producer and vocalist of the band said, "[We recorded the album because] we wanted to do something that for once would really, really show music in a different light, in a light hearted manner. [We wanted to] show people that music is just for fun, no serious agendas, no personal grudge. We wanted to show that music itself is a powerful form of expression and it makes people change in certain ways."

"We took so long 'cos we couldn't make up our minds and we wanted [the end product] to be something we would be proud of," explained Vanessa, the sole female member of the band.

The time taken has paid off, with their album talent-spotted and made available on iTunes, the largest legal download store online, even before it was launched here in late June. Vanessa piped, "It was so strange because nobody asked them (iTunes) to do it... I guess that makes us even more excited. The fact that someone heard our album and not even know [who we are] and want to put it up on iTunes."

Terry added, "It surprised us. It surprised EMI Singapore. I think it surprised everyone."

Their first single "Blow" has also been released in Malay and Mandarin. Their Malay remix is a chart hit on local Malay radio station Ria89.7FM. Munir said, "We all come from different racial backgrounds and

we wanted to affect as many people with our music as possible, right down to the very last individual."

## ABOUT PERFORMING LIVE

While sounding good on record is high on their agenda, being great live performers is just important. Jeremy Gopalan, 27, who's been to several of Parking Lot Pimp's gigs including the launch of their album at Velvet Underground in early July, quipped, "I think they have amazing energy on stage and every performance seems to be better than the last. You can never get tired of the bunch!"

Trisno, who'd been quiet throughout the interview, grinned and let **hype** in on their secret. "We rehearse before shows and the trick is to go crazy. If you're just full of energy, the audience will enjoy it."

Vanessa agrees, "Performing live is much more fun because it's so spontaneous, unlike hearing yourself make mistakes in the recording studio. You definitely get more of a rush doing live shows."

Leanna Tan, 21, an NUS undergraduate at Jam 'n Hop said, "They (Parking Lot Pimp) have got fantastic charisma. They really knew how to work the crowd."

Their growing reputation as being a must-watch live act is garnering them quite a few gigs in the coming months. They will be belting their tunes on Sep 11 at Riding for Life, a charity bike event organised jointly by the Malaysian AIDS Foundation, Malaysian AIDS Council and Action for AIDS, Singapore. Parking Lot Pimp will also be performing at the road shows for Listen Live, the charity extravaganza that aims to reach out to the global audience to raise awareness to the needs of disadvantaged children. As of press time, four Asian acts, David Tao, Wang Lee Hom, A-Do and Kit Chan have confirmed their participation in the concert. Vanessa said, "It would have been nice to be a part of the concert itself since it's a big event, but we're still quite excited about it."

## ABOUT WHAT KEEPS THEM GOING

As though their schedules aren't packed enough, the rock stars lead mortal lives as well. Vanessa is pursuing a Mass Communication diploma in Ngee Ann Polytechnic, although currently on a break. Terry runs Chynahouse Recordings, a local music recording company. Trisno and Munir sing in pubs like Blue Bar Bistro and Jeremy is working as a computer engineer home in the US. Terry got his high school friend Jeremy to join the group as he added a different sound to their music.

Munir nods when **hype** pointed out that most local bands don't make much money in the industry. As they laughed off cheesy endorsements by those brought to fame with the help of mass marketed singing competitions, the band agreed on why they have been through all these obstacles for. Vanessa affirmed, on behalf of the group, "As clichéd as this sounds, [we're in this] for nothing more than the love of music."



# 重温十年的精彩



自《才华横溢出新秀1995》新传媒阿哥-李名顺,已入行十年。当时李名顺不是冠军,但今天的他却交出了一张比当年冠军,沈倾谈,还漂亮的成绩单。

李名顺畅开心胸,与hype谈起了他是怎么踏入演艺圈,他的失败与成功,当然,还有他的恋情。hype记者陈宁曦带你重温李名顺十年的精彩。

hype 12

## 踏入演艺圈

出生于马来西亚的李名顺,18岁那年来到了新加坡找工作。当时,李名顺打算半工半读,不过,来到了新加坡之后他发现:“新加坡的钱(比马币)大,可是学费也是很大。”因此,手头不宽裕的他就在工厂工作,一做就是四年。那时候,李名顺也抱着“玩玩”的心态接了一些模特儿的工作,可是他觉得男模特儿在新加坡出路不好,赚的钱不多,所以对这工作并不很热衷。这是的李名顺准备回国发展,找个比较有前途的工作。这时候他却被一位监制发掘,但当时的他从来都没有想过要进入演艺圈。李名顺回国后,还会收到监制的电话,但他还是不愿意。直到后来,监制叫他去试试《才华》,而经过多日的考虑,李名顺终于答应。他并没有想到这竟为他打开了演艺之门。

## 《才华》亚军得主

由于不需要背负冠军的光环,李名顺觉得压力没这么大,开始的路还挺顺利的。身为新人,各方面都得进步,李名顺就用了约三年的时间来适应演艺圈。李名顺很庆幸在那首三年内,自己有一些运气以及成绩,才能在演艺圈的道上路走到今天。

## 事业的不顺利

1999年是李名顺的演艺生涯中最不顺利的一年。李名顺觉得:“那时要面对的东西太多了,难免有压力。对外界的东西没有这么敏感,譬如说,可能心情也比较紧张,(就导致)外界觉得我比较骄傲。”

《红星大奖》里,李名顺也曾经落选,没有入围“十大最受欢迎男艺人”。大家都以为他受了很大的打击。李名顺也承认那晚的确很伤心。虽然难过,当时李名顺还是非常快地让自己振作起来,不去多想。其实对李名顺而言:“这就当作是人生的一个波折。对我来说是个很好的经验。”后来,李名顺也再次没有入围十大,不过他已学会了以轻松的态度去面对。“因为我觉得奖项的东西是给你的鼓励。你要在这行持久的话,不是因为人家给你奖项,是因为你对你自己的表演,你的工作的认真。如果你有成绩交出来,你没有拿奖,观众(还是会)喜欢看你的戏。”

## 最喜欢的作品

本以为李名顺只会说出一部,但他却说了好几部。对他而言,每一部较喜欢的戏都带给他不同的感觉。

### 第一部:

《和平的代价》让他得到“最佳男主角”荣誉,也让他感觉到他会演戏。

### 第二部:

《神雕侠侣》让李名顺和范文芳红遍全亚洲。“我觉得很幸运能接拍这部戏。因为,不要说在新加坡,在整个亚洲能够有机会演金庸的著作的机会是很难得的。这部戏也让我成长了很多。我真正尝试到拍戏的辛苦,它也让海外的观众有机会认识我。”

### 第三部:

《星锁》,因为他觉得《星锁》的概念很前卫。新加坡很少拍偶像剧,这几年拍较多的是环境剧。另外,因为剧情,李名顺也有到日本的机会。

### 第四部:

《如来神掌》是李名顺第一次挑战比较活泼的角色。这部戏让李名顺开窍,他所谓的开窍是说:“因为以前演戏有时会不确定。会问导演‘这样子可以吗?’,会怀疑自己的表演。《如来神掌》之后,我会觉得对自己的表演比较有信心了,比较收放自如。”

### 第五部:

《二分之一缘分》的角色,Simon,让他抛弃了以前所有表演方式。他说:“Simon这种角色你要越放越好。你越收,你这个人物就不出来。”成绩方面他觉得还蛮满意的。

### 第六部:

《有福》的这个角色给李名顺一个很大的发挥空间。播出以后,反应不错,给了李名顺很大的信心。

# 回头看自己的作品



## 最不满意的作品

对于这个问题,李名顺的反映非常快。《陆小凤》就是他的答案。他表示希望有机会再演西门吹雪这个角色。当时是第一次演哭戏。李名顺也说道:“哭,不是因为演出来的,哭是要从内心出来的。一个人的感情要发自内心,你演出来是看得出的,你的眼神肯定看得出来。”

李名顺也表示:“这十年我都得到很多不同的尝试,很多不一样的角色。这对我表演的成长方面有很大的帮助。我会遗憾,不过我不会觉得后悔。”

## 最想演的角色

“我最近是蛮希望自己能够演一些比较'man'(有男子气概)的角色。”《无间道》里的角色就给人这样的感觉。“譬如说报父仇的戏,从一个单纯的人演到一个很阴险的人,是一个挑战,所以你要拿捏得很准,我现在就很想演这种戏。”

## 最不想记者问的问题

李名顺最不想媒体追问的话题就是关于他的感情世界。李名顺表示,他非常不愿意使到亲朋好友遭受媒体的纠缠。“我唯一希望保留的就是我的感情和我的家人。我觉得这是应该保留的一个空间,让我和他们聚会时,在一起时,不会有人来干扰。”

在感情方面,李名顺表示如果已结了婚,情况会和现在有很大的不同。在婚后,双方都已非常清楚两人将会一起走的方向,所以公开感情不会使他们感到不自在。李名顺说道:“还在男女朋友的阶段的时候,我觉得还是希望有个空间在。”

当时李名顺和女友范文芳决定公开恋情,两人都抱着随意的心态,觉得让大家知道对他们并没有什么不利。不过如果媒体继续追问细节,李名顺不愿回答。“我觉得这是我们自己隐私的东西,希望有所保留。如果真的有那个缘分,机缘到了话,那才会特别嘛。我还没结婚就讲了那么多,那结婚了还有什么特别呢?”

李名顺表示不会‘秘密结婚’因为结婚是件喜事。他也认为现在的观众比以前较成熟,绝对不会因为艺人已结了婚而不支持他。

## 最重要的十个人

在访问结束前,我们问了李名顺这个问题:如果你可以把十个人或物带到一个荒岛上,你会带的会是什么人或什么东西呢?

李名顺说:“我带我的朋友,带我的家人。我家人加起来才六个,在加我的朋友。”他表示,他一定会带朋友与家人的原因是因为他们都是他精神上的支持,一个都不能缺少。在荒岛上,如果什么都有却少了亲人与朋友,他会生不如死。不过,如果身边有家人和朋友的存在,他则会有动力要活下去。

在追问下,李名顺拐弯抹角地回答道:“我知道你会问我有没有带女朋友啦...我就尽量塞满(空缺的位子)喔。”



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# TRIBUNE

Ngee Ann Polytechnic's campus newspaper

SEPTEMBER ISSUE: OUT NOW!

who: produced by third-year print journalism students

where: found campus-wide in ngee ann polytechnic

when: twice a semester, four times a year



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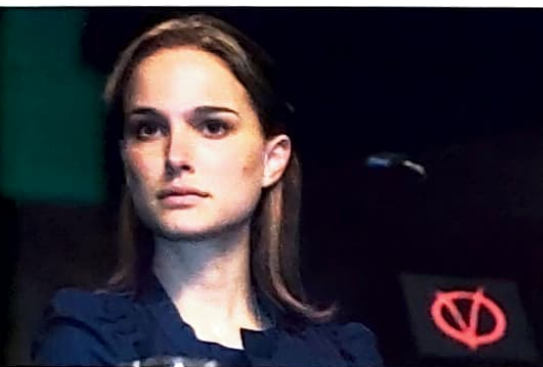


**LEGEND OF ZORRO**

Following 1998's **The Mask of Zorro** that grossed over \$250 million in world box office receipts, **Legend of Zorro** is about to carve the legendary letter Z on our skins again. Alejandro de la Vega (Antonio Banderas) promises his wife Elena (Catherine Zeta-Jones) and son Joaquin that he'll lead a normal life, and be rid of his secret identity of Zorro.

Unfortunately, like **Mr Incredible**, he finds that being a hero in retirement never comes easy. Armand (Rufus Sewell), the new nemesis and former beau of Elena arrives, unleashing a threat 500 years in the making, that may change history forever.

The magical pairing of Zeta-Jones and Banderas, as well as the return of director Martin Campbell makes this action-packed, romantic adventure a must-see sequel. - MAE CHONG

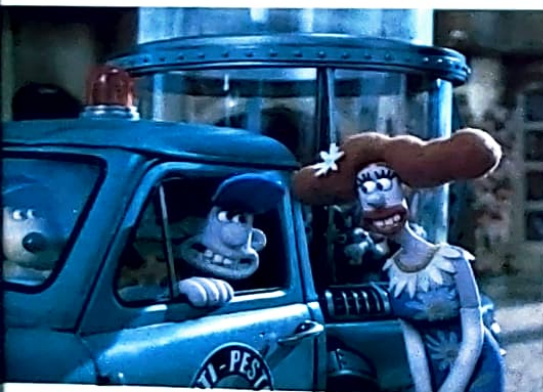


**V FOR VENDETTA**

Hugo Weaving steps out of his evil Agent Smith persona in **The Matrix Trilogy**, to take on the mantle of an unsung hero known as V in **V for Vendetta**, produced by the same team of Joel Silver and the Wachowski Brothers and directed by a newbie director James McTeigue.

In the movie, which recreates the graphic novel of the same name, an British Orwellian government lulls its citizens into a voiceless apathetic lot. A masked V tries to galvanise them to fight for their freedom, and gains the help of Evey (Natalie Portman), whom he saves from a life-and-death situation.

Whether having joined the bandwagon of comics-turned-movies bonanza like **Batman Begins**, **Spiderman** and **Fantastic Four** will spell box-office success, the Verdict is still unknown. - HAJAR MANAF



**WALLACE AND GROMIT**

Five years in the making, Dreamworks Studios (**Shrek**, **The Incredibles**) and Aardman Animations (**Chicken Run**) present the critically acclaimed claymation duo **Wallace and Gromit** in their first feature film.

The pair are kept busy with their new pest-control set-up, Anti-Pesto. As the town's annual Giant Vegetable Competition draws closer, the threat of a veggie slaughtering beast arises.

The hostess of the competition, Lady Tottington (Helena Bonham Carter), commissions Anti-Pesto to nab the culprit. However, this challenge proves to be more than a match for our heroes.

Peter Sallis continues to voice Wallace and Nick Park, the original creator of **Wallace and Gromit** will direct, lending an assuring continuity and allaying fears from fans that the film will become too "Hollywood" by straying away from its British roots. - JUSTIN DEIMEN



**HARRY POTTER AND THE GOBLET OF FIRE**

Whoever coined the expression "growing pains" must have known that Harry Potter (Daniel Radcliffe) will see tough times get tougher in his fourth adventure, **Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire**.

This time, Harry is involved in a wizardry competition hosted by Hogwarts, promising the highest of glory to the winner. The only problem is that he's underage, and the competition proves to be more dangerous as the levels increase.

Evil Lord Voldemort (Ralph Fiennes) and the usual cast made of Emma Watson (Hermione Granger) and Rupert Grint (Ron Weasley) promise a better flick, with Harry's eventful coming-of-age journey that includes his new crush Cho Chang (Katie Leung).

This Harry Potter instalment is director Mike Newell's first in the series, and we can't wait to see how magical it will turn out to be. - HAJAR MANAF



**ZATHURA**

If you haven't learnt not to touch weird-looking game boxes after watching **Jumanji**, then **Zathura** will drum home the lesson. Based on a book written by Chris Van Allsburg (who's also behind **The Polar Express** and **Jumanji**), the movie tells of two squabbling brothers hurled into a parallel universe, thanks to the space board game called Zathura that they were playing. To finish the game by reaching planet Zathura, the boys take on intergalactic pirates, evil robots and meteor showers. Fail, and they'll be trapped in space forever.

Starring Academy Award and Golden Globe winner, Tim Robbins, this unimaginative flick seems to be a remake of **Jumanji** in outer space.

Catch this film with your little brother only if you're in the mood for a great outer space adventure - or if you're just quite sick of his board game-playing habits. - MAE CHONG



**SKELETON KEY**

**The Skeleton Key**, a supernatural thriller written by Ehren Kruger (**The Ring**, **Scream 3**), delves deep into the practice of voodoo rituals.

Hospice nurse Caroline (Kate Hudson) is hired to take care of an ailing Ben Devereaux (John Hurt) at his old Louisiana mansion. After acquiring a skeleton key to the entire house, Caroline finds blood, bones and voodoo spells in the attic. She's determined to stop the evil that threatens the lives of its inhabitants.

With voodoo references, Cajun culture and the menacing surroundings of Louisiana's backwoods, it's easy to draw comparisons with **Angel Heart** and its protagonist's struggles with the religion. It might be a tough proposition to be in the same league, but if the overall package is anything like **The Ring**, Universal Pictures will have a box office hit on their hands. - JUSTIN DEIMEN



While we've enjoyed our doses of onscreen spandex, comic book movies aren't simply about fist-fighting tinsel town-folk fighting off arch nemeses and saving the world. **HAJAR MANAF** takes a time-out to explore the hits and misses of these movies that seem to be hogging the limelight recently.

# SUPERHERO SLUGFEST

Comic book movies are all the rage, and no wonder when the most successful all-time comic book adaptation, Sam Raimi's *Spider-Man* (2002), grossed a staggering US\$418 million (S\$688.9 million) at the international box office, surpassing noted director Spielberg's *E.T.*'s US\$400 million, according to [movieweb.com](http://movieweb.com).

Before comic book movies became the latest trend in movie-world, earlier comic book adaptations weren't much to be raved about.

Ngee Ann Polytechnic's Film, Sound & Video lecturer Andrew Millians commented, "All the movies back in the 80s based on comic books were just terrible because they [Hollywood] didn't trust their source material— they didn't think that 'obviously [since] people that follow this [comic books] and liked this for years, there's got to be something to it' ... the [special effects in the 1960s] old *Batman* movie were tongue-in-cheek."

1978's *Superman*, however, was an exception to previous slipshod comic books adaptations, and proved to be successful in the box office.

"*Superman* definitely was quite revolutionary in that it really looked like he was flying, they spent a lot of effort making that believable," explained Millians. It sold more than US\$150 million worth of tickets internationally, effectively creating a foothold for a then fledgling genre of movies.

Since then, the likes of *The Mask* (1994) and *Men in Black* (1997) had been lacing the silver screens, and the onslaught of comic book movies to take the movie industry by storm is only a matter of time.

"They [Hollywood] take the source material much more seriously now," added Millians.

True enough, *X-Men* (2000) signalled the breakthrough red carpet entrance for comic book adaptations. It was taken seriously as it delved deep



into the issue of discrimination between mutants and humans despite having fairly unknown cast members like James Marsden and Famke Janssen.

The special effects, an array of good-looking cast members like *Sin City*'s Jessica Alba and Kirsten Dunst in *Spider-Man* and its sequel, and an already huge fan-base of comic book lovers dying to see their heroes materialise on the silver screens all make for a good formula for a quick buck.

Its booming popularity has translated into the economics of merchandising. Die-hard fans go from merely collecting movie memorabilia such as posters and figurines for a possible shrine-in-the-making, to the extent of purchasing the limited-edition authentic Batmobile that includes a Certificate of Authenticity—and the best part of it is that there are only 2,600 of them in the world.

#### ADAPTATION: THE GOOD AND THE BAD

Bearing in mind the huge fan following that comic books boast, the release of a new comic book movie is entrusted with the most holy grail of responsibilities, to "stay true to the essence of the story". After all, fans have "grown to love comics [and] grew up loving the story," said 19-year-old movie buff Shaiful Sawaluddin, a reviewer for local site *Movieexclusive.com*.

The adoration is a double-edged sword. Just as fans can lead the movies to become box office smash hits, they can just as easily turn their backs on the letdowns, sending them into oblivion "faster than a speeding bullet".

An example this year would be *Constantine*. The shameful adaptation of *Hellblazer* that starred Keanu Reeves could be attributed to its deviation from the DC/Vertigo comic creation. Explained Shaiful, "John Constantine [main character] isn't a brunette, he's a British guy and he's blonde. In the movie, it [story details] changed."

He continues, "Perhaps this is why Neil Gaiman is directing *Sandman* [the comic he wrote] himself."

"The story need not follow the comics exactly, though, as long as they are believable. Some fans are very adamant that the movies follow the continuity of the comics exactly, but that's not exactly possible, is it?" said Lestor Wong rhetorically. The 30-year-old Admin Executive is a member of SG Collect ([www.sgcollect.com](http://www.sgcollect.com)), a local website for collectors of merchandise from *Star Wars*, *Harry Potter*, *Lord of the Rings*, *Star Trek* and other cult favourites.

Lestor continued, "A good comic book movie explores the ideas of the comic, and always tells a message. *Spider-Man* talks about responsibilities. *X-Men*, discrimination. *Batman Begins*, conquering fear – this is why *Fantastic Four* is only an okay movie to me. You watch it, enjoy it, but it doesn't make a lasting impression on you."

Millians counts a comic book movie as good if it, "has a good grasp of character and realises that

inevitably that if you don't deal with the character and you don't like the character, it doesn't matter or not if you identify with the superhero, it's not going to work ... [and] if it works as a character piece, it becomes that much better a movie."

He continued, "You get a good director, you get a solid story, you capture it, you take the time to write a good script [as opposed to] *Daredevil* [which] to me was one of the worst movies I've seen in the last 5 years, even though I love the source material... but it's just a bad movie. It's badly scripted, it's rushed, [and] the effects are overwhelming and badly worked."

Perhaps that's the reason why *Batman Begins* did well in the box office. In fact, in just five days, *Batman Begins* garnered an impressive US\$72.9 million in the international box office, as reported by *boxofficemojo.com*. In addition, it received favourable reviews from critics as opposed to *Batman Returns* (1992) with the infamous nipples that shoot bullets. This time around, Christopher Nolan interprets and translates the plot in an engaging and arresting manner. Explained Lestor, "I always like... [when they] establish the origins of the characters extensively. *Batman Begins* spent an entire hour doing that, and I like it."

"A good villain [such as] Magneto [in *X-Men*]... is also paramount to a comic book movie's success. A good villain means an explanation of why this person becomes a bad guy."

This proved the length of time a good comic movie has dedicated to creating character pieces that enhances the movie to be more impactful – "Spider-Man is a good character piece in a lot of ways. Tobey Maguire is a good actor," explained Millians.

Speaking of characters, Millians acknowledged that it's tougher, "for a comic book movie because you're saddled with an existing character and obviously if you don't ever explain in any depth each character, it can be really bad... it's not just an action character. The character [has] to mean something, why the character is doing this, you know the weaknesses of the character, you know what motivates the character ... [forging] a connection with these characters that you've perhaps grown up with and know the story behind the characters."

"And then of course there's the geek-factor. *X-Men* is very high on geek-factor, that you go, 'Hey that's Hank McCoy, he's going to become the beast.' They're putting in these [elements] for the geeks to kind of latch on to... so that helps," continued Millians.

"*X-Men 2* to me was the best comic book movie ever made in the sense that it had a very strong drama, very good characters yet it was so full of geek factor that it was mind-boggling," he said.

Self-proclaimed *X-Men* fanatic and freelance web designer Samuel Sia, 24, gushed about his love for the modern-day technology that enhances the appeal of comic book movies. "The action-packed [fighting sequence], sound effects, the music ... all the visual effects, the special powers are all important."

Lestor agreed, "Of course, special effects are also very important. For example, there was a scene in the first *X-Men* movie when Wolverine's claws were shown popping out of his flesh, and I was going 'Cool!'"

#### MORE THAN JUST A PRETTY FACE

The overly-artistic Ang Lee's rendition of *Hulk* was described as "cheesy and campy" by Shaiful, despite the presence of heavyweight actors such as Eric Bana and Jennifer Connelly.

20-year-old reviewer for *theurbanwire.com* Mary-Ann Russon said, "it doesn't matter what flashy actors you put in... the audience [aren't] guinea pigs... it has to be worth their while."

As if acknowledging this, in the upcoming *Superman Returns*, slated for release next year and directed by Bryan Singer, the genius behind *X-Men*, virtual unknown Brandon Routh will play the Man-of-Steel. "I saw his picture, and he bears a strong resemblance... does have his [Superman's] features... and that's important. At the end of the day, it's all about the fans," Shaiful explained.

The pragmatic manifestation of a comic book hero is important in a comic book movie because in the midst of the running spandex and the shooting webs out of wrists, flying off buildings and the elaborate gadgets, "it had to be watchable and nice" so that those who "aren't fans enjoy it, and become fans," elaborated Mary-Ann.

#### FASCINATION WITH COMIC BOOK MOVIES

Samuel Sia, who is an avid reader of graphic novels (not to be confused with erotica), finds them "addictive, but in a good way... you keep going on and on [reading comics]."

He continued, "it plays into the mind, bringing you into the world of fantasy, away from reality... [you can] visualise them [comic characters] with special powers and you wish you can do it."

49-year-old Joey Tan, SingTel's Senior Manager in Consumer Business has found joy in comic books since the age of 14. For him, comic book movies give him the thrill of watching "super heroes come to life". "It gives ... a sense of achieving something which may not be possible in real-life... to defeat and overcome your enemy," he said.

Shaiful feels that "heroes are a symbol of hope". Never mind the rapid advances of technology that makes special effects a marvel to watch, he says, "incidents that are happening around us... [makes] people search for escapism".

#### THE NEXT CHAPTER

"It's more of an issue of overkill now. For every good comic-adapted movie, like *Spider-Man*, we've a dud like *Hulk*. That said, I'm still generally excited about some new projects that are upcoming, like the new *Superman* by former *X-Men* director Bryan Singer, and even *X-Men 3* itself."

"But I'm not too sure about the likes of *Ironman* [to be released in 2007] and *Ghost Rider* [to be released in summer 2006]," mused Lestor.





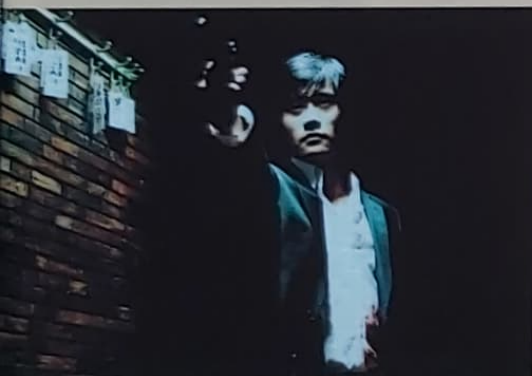
陈宁曦著



3个好人

梁智强导演再次推出本地新作品《3个好人》。《3个好人》反映着现代社会问题,同时也是一部关于亲情、友情的电影。这是对新加坡政府在不久前宣传《黄丝带计划》的回应。新加坡樟宜监狱第一次开放允许媒体在新的樟宜监狱大厦进行拍摄工作。李国煌再次担任电影的男主角,他扮演的角色是曾友煌。曾友煌为人又爱吹牛、又爱撒谎,因此而犯罪坐牢。当时的女朋友张美宝(洪乙心饰演)怀了他的孩子。六年后,服完牢狱,改过自新的曾友煌,想和张美宝和女儿(金马奖童星-郑智允饰演)和好如初却发现美宝在他服牢狱时,交了另一位要好的男朋友(陈鸿饰演)。故事也描述了曾友煌和其他两位刚出狱的朋友(陈建彬和程旭辉饰演)遇见的种种挑战和温馨感人的经历与趣事。

上映日期:九月二日



A BITTER SWEET LIFE

在电影A Bitter Sweet Life里头,李秉宪再度散发韩国男性魅力。他饰演的是完美主义者Sun-Woo,一位已为Kang董忠心服务了七年的得力助手。冷酷无情的Kang董是个从不手下留情的老板。只要犯了错的手下,就得受到制裁。Kang董有一个不可告人的秘密-就是他有一位非常年轻的爱人,Hee-Soo。Kang董怀疑Hee-Soo在外有另一个恋人所以派了Sun-Woo跟踪Hee-Soo,并且吩咐事实如果真的如此,就把她给杀了。在跟踪Hee-Soo的第三天,Sun-Woo真的看见了Hee-Soo与另一个男生约会,而按照命令当场捉奸。但一时心软的Sun-Woo在紧要关头放了Hee-Soo与男友。本来以为神不知鬼不觉的Sun-Woo,隔天却发现原本的好兄弟,现在都变成了追杀他的人。

上映日期:九月八日



神话

Jack(成龙饰演)的好友,科学家William(梁家辉饰演)邀他一起到印度研究传说拥有漂浮能力的秦朝宝石。见识宝石的魔力后,由于William的贪心,两人被追杀,兵分两路,失去了联络。Jack幸运被一名印度少女(Mallika Sherawat饰演)收留。从发现宝石的存在后,Jack 就做了许多关于他前世的梦。梦里,Jack看见两千年之前的自己。当年,他是个叫蒙毅的将军,而爱上了秦朝的玉漱公主(金喜善饰演)的他,必须在爱情和尽忠报国之间做选择。为了脱离梦的纠缠与解开心结,Jack决定到秦朝的首都-西安走一趟。在西安又意外碰到了William,不过因为两人信念不相同起了争执。后来两人不小心发现了进入“悬浮天宫”的隧道。Jack再次与玉漱公主重逢...

上映日期:九月二十三日

# royal seduction

by red earth



## Pucker up

For a kissable pout that no one can resist, the Lacquer Lip Color (\$22) allures and attracts. A fluid lipstick that gives intensely pure and dense colour in a semi-matte and longwearing formula, it comes in five shades - Crimson, Fuchsia, Mauve, Nude and Regal. It contains silicon, so the color goes on with the lightest touch, leaving lips smoothed and never dry. Also comes with sponge-tip applicator to ensure that each application creates plump, picture-perfect lips

## Eye Wonder

Smoldering and bold, the eye are the windows to the soul so they say. Define peepers and have the men melt under your lustful watch. In four colour combinations, the velvet Trio Eyeshadow (\$32) blends like a dream, for an arresting come-hither gaze. Each compact features two main colours and a universal highlighter to give eyes a beautiful, luminous finish. Choose from Blushing Orchard (pastel pink/ lilac), Jade Masquerade (green/ brown), Prodigal scarlet (purple/ mauve) or Spicy Courtesan (orange/ plum)



To add definition, the Precision Eyeliner (\$19) provides that meticulous finishing touch. Available in two deluxe metallic shades, Bronze and Plum, it goes on easily and with its easy-to-control fine brush tip enables precise and smooth drawing. And in our hot, humid weather, the quick drying, non-smudging and waterproof formula is a Godsend!

Available from 19 August



Instantly successful **School of Rock** bands can learn a thing about perseverance from Camra. The indie rock band is releasing its first album, **Normally Open**, after playing together for 14 years.

The band, whose musical influences include Led Zeppelin and Pink Floyd, consists of copywriter Marvin Das, 28, on vocals, guitarist Daryl Chow, 27, a church counsellor, drummer Mervyn John, 28, who declined to talk about his day job, and bassist Robin Ng, 29, a marine engineer.

Camra took time off from public gigs for three years to improve themselves before returning to the music scene in March at an indie music event, **Another Indie-Pendent Weekend** at the Esplanade Outdoor Theatre.

The band had decided to record an album seven years ago but were delayed by other commitments. Marvin claimed, "At that time it was a tough phase because we were all going through National Service and all of us were going through it at different times... it didn't give us a lot of opportunities to work on it." However, National Service was not the only reason for the band's overdue debut album as the vocalist also candidly admitted, "there's no excuse 'cause NS was only two and a half years... after that we sat on it a bit... we were just slacking off lah."

Their last gig before the break was in 2002 at the Hard Rock Café. Explaining the band's disappearance, Marvin added, "We didn't really like what we did [at that gig]... we totally didn't enjoy it... and so we told ourselves that we have got to go back to the studio and really work on it and make sure

we're good enough before we come out again."

Most of the recording of the album was done in the home of their co-producer, sound engineer Randolph Arriola who has a recording studio. During the recording of **Normally Open**, Camra learnt a few lessons. "One of the key things we learnt from this recording is to keep it simple," Marvin shared.

However, the band knows that the hard work put in doesn't necessarily mean sales. Marvin said, "It was a veritable achievement... So it didn't really matter if it didn't sell lah."

As if all that time incubating has got them more productive, you won't need to wait long before the band's next CD, with the working title of **Science of Providence**, is released by the end of this year. It will consist of four original tracks.

Marvin said, "The EP [is] like a peek into what we're going to do for the next album."

Before that, the band's slated to perform on Sep 23 and 24, during another indie music festival **Bash and Pop**, again at the Esplanade Outdoor Theatre.

"We are going to play a mixture of our really old songs and a few of our new songs from the album," chimed Mervyn.

All four members have grown up together since their school days at St Gabriel's Primary and Secondary schools and have loved music since then. Mervyn still feels that the band is "amazing after all this years".

He said, "It's when we play or jam together, sometimes Robin does a bass or when Marvin sings a certain chorus that mixes together with Daryl's guitar, my hair stands... I still have a lot of that."

## Candid Camra

If you think being best friends with someone for 10 years is a long time, try playing in a band and staying together for longer than that, says **AMELIA TAN**.



(L-R) Robin Ng, Mervyn John, Daryl Chow and Marvin Das.

## Successful Hybrid Band

Metalcore we've heard of. But add a tinge of Emo, and you get Hamartia. **ANDREA HENG** learns what keeps the band going in Singapore's fickle music scene.



Confidence doesn't always translate into noses up in the air. It can also be conveyed through Hamartia, a local band that plays Metal and Hardcore music "with a little touch of Emo", explained drummer and full-time National Serviceman Muhammad Farik, 21.

"We like all three genres and we also like performing in all three genres. So when we sign up to play at a Metal gig, our repertoire will include more songs that have heavier sounds similar or even equivalent to Metal music. If we plan to play at Hardcore or Emo events, we'll arrange our repertoire accordingly. So in that case, we're very adaptable and it's lucky for us," said vocalist Ian Shareef Dority, 19.

"But we're more careful when it comes to metal gigs [because] the audience doesn't really like our original sound, so we play metal songs to please them. Unlike Hardcore or Emo gigs, we can play anything and the audience will still accept us," he explained further.

Hamartia has been playing at about 10 established gigs over the past two years, gaining respect and recognition from Metal, Hardcore and Emo audiences – something that many other hybrid bands such as Dyna Turmoil and Dear Arson, consider a feat. Though Hamartia claims that Metal fans aged 20 and younger, aren't very supportive of their musical blend, they feel that they still garner strong support from 40 to 50 percent of metal listeners – most of whom are friends, fans or contacts they've made at their performances.

Hamartia was set up in 2003 by Ian, a business management student at Nanyang Polytechnic. Then, band members kept coming and going, but the current line-up is permanent, with five members aged from 18 to 21.

Hamartia's sound isn't the only thing that makes them outstanding in the local music scene. Their fans are open to the band's music and find their songs more entertaining than others. Hamartia feels part of the reason is that they are more energetic than other local Metalcore and other hybrid bands, and their songs are more straightforward than the typical 6- or 7-minute renditions others play.

"We'd rather go for simplicity than technicalities," said Muhammad Nashrique. The 18-year-old is an accounting student with Management Development

Institute of Singapore.

Another of Hamartia's answer to surviving in Singapore's music scene is its versatility. The band claims to dislike competition among other bands like Dyna Turmoil and Dear Arson, and "prefer[s] to integrate with other bands and genres instead", Muhammad Farik clarified. He also said that there is a lot of "fighting over sub-genres" that Hamartia prefers to stay out of.

Hamartia's versatility impresses not only their audiences but also those new to their music, such as this reporter.

Although most people have expressed concern about the lack of a market for local music in Singapore, Hamartia isn't that worried. They explained that as much as they'd like to see and hear more programmes catering to local music, "We know [that] it's not going to happen; not anytime soon at least," said Muhammad Farik, 21.

Nonetheless, Hamartia has big things in store in the near future. The band's producing their first EP and is planning to release it by the end of the year. They already have four songs penned, one of which was played recently on **Rock Ria Rock**, a programme on MediaCorp Radio Malay station Ria 89.7FM whose DJ supports local underground music.

To show how serious they are about seizing every opportunity that comes their way, Hamartia is also armed with video footage of their live performances, and is scheduled to record a professional music video that will be produced by three local independent filmmakers. Those three have produced a music video for an underground Thai rock band.

The future looks bright for Hamartia – a local band that is unafraid to expose itself to Singapore and the world beyond.

With their versatility and humility, our bets are that Hamartia is likely to continue to adapt and survive in Singapore's ever-changing music scene.



# Breaking Out of Second Spot

While all eyes were on 3-dash-1, winners of the first **Straits Times School of Rock** competition, **AMELIA TAN** and **BRYAN ONG** think it's runner-up Audio Break'Out that deserves the limelight for overcoming obstacles.

Although they weren't offered any contracts by **Music & Movement**, this second-placed band unquestionably displayed the strongest sense of confidence and jamming skills during the finals of **School of Rock** Competition and looks set to create some waves on local music scene.

Said David Tan, a judge in the competition, of Audio Break'Out, "They didn't go on stage and just perform. They are one of the few bands which showed that they had a good time, good confidence-level and the vocalist was good." David is the vocalist of one of Singapore's premier rock bands Electrico.

Not bad for a band that came together merely one month before the competition.

For Rossalina Nasir, Audio Break'Out's songwriter and lead singer, the compliment by David was "sweet". The rest of the group – guitarist Simon Lai, 19; drummer Andrew Anthony, 18, both from Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP); bassist Jonathan Saiman Ciputra Pesa, 19, an NP graduate and keyboardist Nick Wong, 19, a Singapore Polytechnic graduate – was equally pleased to receive recognition from a professional artiste.

The name Audio Break'Out was put together from the names of the members' other bands. Andrew explained, "'Audio' comes from [the band] Audio Insanity where Jonathan, Simon and myself are in, 'Break' comes from [the band] Breakfast Club where Ross and Nick is from and 'Out' come from Soul'd out, where Jonathan is also from."

Compared to her current band **Breakfast Club**, Rossalina feels that Audio Break'Out is "more radio-friendly" while Jonathan thinks that the band is "just about having fun and enjoying ourselves".

Simon also shared his opinion about the band's musical style, "It is more of progressive funk rock... two of our originals are mostly funk-oriented."

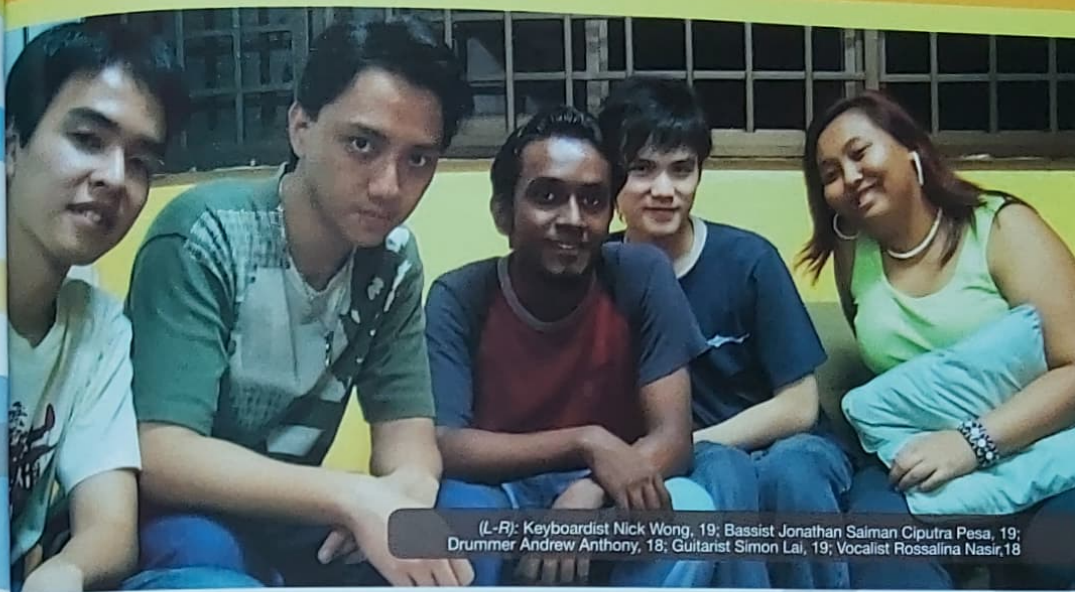
Despite their short association with each other, these teenagers have a whole load of musical experience, and they started playing seriously way before their early days of secondary school.

With two to nine years of experience under their belt, performing at places such as the Youth Park, Chijmes and NP, jamming almost looks too easy for them. For instance, Jonathan, who is a piano teacher with nine years' experience, has no problem switching from the keyboard to the bass guitar. He's still learning more instruments to bring his musical talent to a higher level.

Rossalina, one of only three females in the finals, was passed over at the **Singapore Idol** auditions for the top 100. The LASALLE-SIA student felt more comfortable in this band competition and it definitely showed. Her strong presence on stage commanded attention when she introduced her band members in mid-performance. She said, "To be immersed in the music is one thing but to allow the audience to be immersed in the music that you are immersed in as well is another thing."

The reason the band did not join the **School of Rock** competition with members from their other bands is because they were too old for the competition, which is only open to teens.

To show the importance of the **School of Rock** Contest to them, Rossalina penned two singles titled "G in the Groove" and "Wannabe Rock Star" within a span of one month, to be performed by the group during the semi-finals and the finals respectively. The



(L-R): Keyboardist Nick Wong, 19; Bassist Jonathan Saiman Ciputra Pesa, 19; Drummer Andrew Anthony, 18; Guitarist Simon Lai, 19; Vocalist Rossalina Nasir, 18

band came together to practise for the competition on most evenings, jamming at Ngee Ann Polytechnic's Song Composing Club room. Soft spoken drummer, Andrew shared, "We usually meet 4 to 5 days a week and about 4 to 5 hours a day... practice usually drags till over 11pm."

Performing a live gig during the interview is almost too easy for Audio Break'Out, as they jammed confidently and with high entertainment value. It's easy to deduce why this group is among the highly anticipated young rock bands in Singapore. And the future is bright for them, since the industry seems to offer more opportunities for homegrown performers, with more popular competitions to discover local talent. David said he "foresees the local music industry to flourish more in the near future [with crowd-pullers like **Singapore Idol**], as there is a more recognised 'platform' for local talents to be discovered."

## SERIOUS MUSICIANS

Unlike Nick and Jonathan, who are both waiting to go into National Service, the rest of the band has to juggle school and band practices.

Rossalina faces bigger pressure – she not only sings in the band but also uses her voice at singing and acting classes at school.

However, she does maintain a positive mindset to give her 100 percent for every practice with the band, declaring that Audio Break'Out doesn't deserve any less than full determination to make every practice worthwhile. To cope with her ever busy schedule, she said she always use the time in school for extra sleep, citing boring warm-up lessons in her singing classes

at the top of her list to skive and rest.

## ROADBLOCKS TO SUCCESS

The road to success definitely isn't easy for Audio Break'Out. The band was nearly disqualified from the **School of Rock** competition for not turning up for a preview show of the semi-finalists held by **The Straits Times** at the East Coast Park. They arrived only after the show ended.

"An unfortunate series of events caused us to be late, and we couldn't perform... that was a really down moment for us," Andrew revealed.

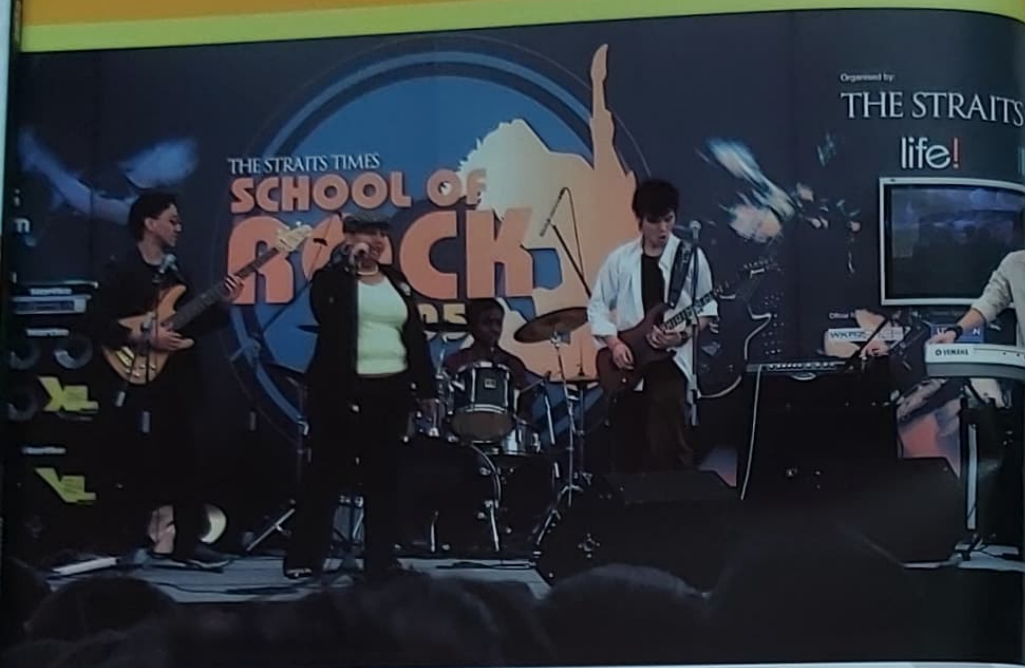
The band suffered the consequences as keyboardist Nick added, "We got points deducted even before the semi-final competition." Yet, the incident did not bring down the spirits of the members but instead, made them stronger as vocalist Rossalina said, "That for us made us want to improve ourselves in a way, because we had to clean the slate."

During their performance at the finals, the members had to face a dire situation. Simon's guitar went silent because of a glitch with the sound mix. Rossalina commented, "I was standing in front of Simon, and he's playing his solo and I'm like 'Where's the sound?' I cannot hear the sound. You know, you practice so much and you can't hear... it was frustrating."

The band maintained their cool and continued playing their final song, 'Wannabe rock star'. Simon shared, "I could still hear myself very vaguely, so I just continued... I just acted cool!"

Problems plagued them even before this. Being strong devotees of music, Audio Break'Out takes their practice sessions seriously. The lack of sleep is a result





of long hours of jamming; therefore the group resorted to Red Bull, coffee and tea to keep them awake.

However, there was once the combination became a little too much for guitarist Simon's stomach. He told **hype**, "Before the semi-finals, I didn't sleep the whole night. I actually vomited the next day after drinking Red Bull... I just sat there and I went bonkers after vomiting." This also explained the state he was in a day before the finals where he dozed off while he played the chorus.

"I fell asleep on a chair but my hands were still moving for a while before the band stopped and looked at me... I was really, really, really tired."

Dealing with negative comments from the media is also another obstacle the group has to overcome. Jennifer Lum, 38, Artiste Manager of Music & Movement, feels that "they are quite good put together but the whole band needs packaging, in terms of their image and appearance as a whole band" and Rossalina "still needs some polishing" in her voice.

Nonetheless, the group takes the criticism in their stride, as Rossalina says coolly, "It's all good, [and] it's all constructive criticisms... It's something to work with." After all, the best means to improvement begins with taking criticism from others.

On a comforting note, Audio Break'Out also has their share of positive comments. Fadzil Zainuddin, 21, a friend and supporter of the band said that the members have "better stage presence" than the other bands and was "wonderful".

The **Straits Times** also commented positively on Simon's looks, giving him the 'Jailbait Award'. The

Aug 2 article mentioned Simon's "boy-band good looks and a cool sneer that shows attitude when he is onstage".

Amused by the praises but clueless about what 'Jailbait' meant, Simon disagreed with the 'boy-band good looks' but feels flattered by the comments.

"I could still hear myself very vaguely, so I just continued... I just acted cool!"

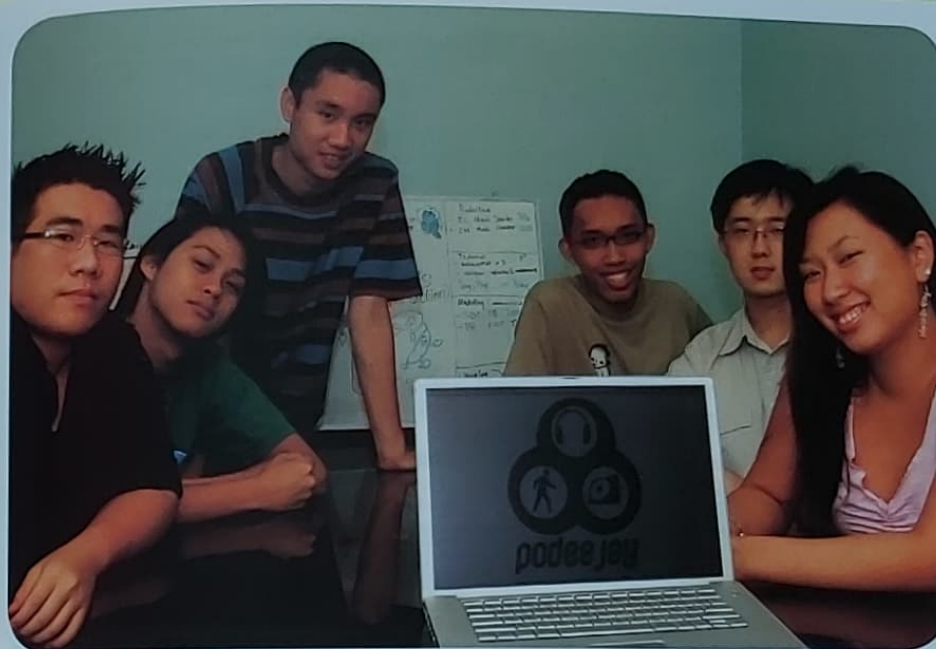
SIMON

#### THE FUTURE

Rating the band seven out of ten, Nick feels that the band definitely has room for improvement, whether in terms of jamming techniques or the style of the band. After signing an understanding with **The Straits Times** to appear for gigs in the near future, the band is taking things slowly. Perhaps because the pace of the competition was too fast, they hope to take a break and enjoy a moment of "no-pressure" music.

Nonetheless, Andrew, who specialises in sound in his Film, Sound & Video course at NP, hopes to record the two singles they performed in the competition.

Although the members aren't sure whether Audio Break'Out will stay together for greater heights or break up like other bands, they firmly believe that, somehow, they will stay in the local music scene for years to come.



Photos: Low Youjin

## A new radio station?

**CANDACE ZHOU** tells you more about podeejay, a new generation radio station that promises to give you what you want, when you want it.

What blogs, those online journals, did for amateur and aspiring columnists, podcasting technology has been doing since late last year for thousands of people who want to be heard instead of being seen.

A podcast can be made by anyone with a microphone, a computer for recording and editing and the Internet to upload the content onto a server. Listeners see the content they want to listen to and download these free sound capsules to a computer or supporting mp3 player (such as Apple's iPod) or just stream it online.

podeejay, launched in August, is a new station and one of only a handful using the technology in Singapore, alongside the **mrbrown show** and the **Pilot n' Jo Show**.

Run by a group of recent graduates from Ngee Ann Polytechnic's School of Film & Media Studies, this 'radio' station mainly offers podcasts covering youth-centred content from movie, gaming reviews to event coverage for gigs.

When it comes to music, we hit on a podeejay distinctive— all the music they play is local fare.

Simply click on a link to download or stream the clip you want to listen to and you'll be tuning in to podeejay. Why does this have an edge over local radio programming? It's commercial-free and it's you, and not the station, who decides what you want to listen to and, most importantly, when. Said Brendan Ang, 20, CEO of podeejay, it's a combination of three elements: "Radio jour[n]alism, the technology of podcasting [and an emphasis on showcasing] local music."



It's the journalism that's probably going to win them the notice of serious listeners. Their feeds aren't just people blabbing and ranting over the mike. Unlike the majority of podcasts out there, these are scripted and planned, so they can focus on a topic and give their listeners good information. For example, they interviewed Christopher Ng, GM for EA Games regarding the xbox game, **Burnout Revenge**.

To get a team together for poddeejay, still a relatively new concept here, Brendan had to pitch the idea to his friends, get them to read an article on podcasting and bug them for a few days. But after all the prodding and persuading, he has a team of 15, including a photographer, marketing team, videographer and Chinese presenters.

Apart from looking for a strong team, scouting for bands to feature was also a major problem when they started out, said Peter Li, 24, English Programme Director. Unlike radio stations that can count on recording companies going to them, local bands haven't heard of poddeejay. Most local bands also don't have quality recordings for poddeejay to use, thus making it difficult for their material to be broadcast. poddeejay is trying to overcome the problem of sound quality by working with a couple of recording studios to provide facilities for better recordings. They have worked with Home Studios who "recorded some [free] station IDs and trailers" for them. They also recommend WEM Productions to "Bands that want to be heard, but don't have good recordings" for cheaper recording rates, Brendan added.



poddeejay is very passionate in its support for local music. What moved Brendan was that local bands were "playing their hearts out" and yet no one cares about them. Peter also added poddeejay aims to show that local music can be as good as the foreign music Singaporeans are consuming.

Some local bands they have featured in their podcasts include The Observatory, Chou Pi Jiang, Ronin, Electrico and Fatskunks.

Besides being a radio station that promotes local music, Brendan and Peter agree that poddeejay is a great platform for youths to get heard. They will "take in anyone who's passionate about presenting and getting their views heard," said Peter. Brendan believes, "Almost anyone can be a presenter, a decent presenter... with a bit of training."

Passion for poddeejay aside, Brendan said they have to be realistic. "People still need to feed themselves, people still need their day jobs. We're trying to put 100 percent focus into this, but yet we have to keep ourselves alive by doing other stuff." Peter added, "We need to find decent day jobs to support poddeejay for now." However, the team has talked to investors and people in the music industry and plans are already afoot to commercialise poddeejay in about "three to six months' time", said Brendan. This will mean being able to buy better equipment, settle their bills and, of course, pay their presenters.

So kick-start your career as a broadcast journalist online or just check out their upbeat youthful content, videos and photographs, at [www.poddeejay.com](http://www.poddeejay.com).

## JAMIROQUAI

Dynamite



Retro is back in a big way with Jamiroquai's 11-track offering to the disco gods. The album opens with "Feels Just Like It Should", Jason Kay's call to arms after a four-year absence. "The groove in that song is absolutely filthy... If you haven't released an album in four years, you want to return with an impact. This song says 'I'm back with a vengeance'", said Kay in an interview with **Billboard.com**.

Fans of the band can expect more of their signature electronic-funk-dance hybrid. And this is no backhanded compliment. While sterner musicians busy themselves with message-laden lyrics, Jamiroquai is consistently laying on effervescent and groovy basslines.

Judging by the increasing standards he sets with each album, pretenders to Jason Kay's throne would do better by staying away from the deck, and on the dance floor. With tracks like "Hot Tequila Brown", the fuddy-duddy's excuse to break out the disco paraphernalia has never sounded more legit. — LIN SHILONG

Photo: Epic Records

## BACKSTREET BOYS

Never Gone



One-time poster boys, Brian Littrell, Nick Carter, Howie Dorough, AJ McLean and Kevin Richardson are back with their fifth album, **Never Gone**, after a five-year hiatus. The long break after seven to eight years of touring allowed each member to "catch up, grow up and gain some perspective on the whirlwind of fame", according to the band's website.

While the 12-track album contains a mixture of sweet ballads and mid-tempo numbers, it lacks the vibrancy of their past songs. The only fast track, "My Beautiful Woman" has an energetic music arrangement, giving the album the only edgier sound. The boys sounds like Westlife-meets-Lonestar on tracks like "Crawling Back to You" and "Safest Place to Hide" but still manage some saving grace with their powerful harmonies.

Although the title track, co-written by Richardson, is different from their past pop albums, the change in musical direction to more mature Adult Contemporary fare should give music lovers a refreshing change from the overrated hip hop influenced music. — CLAUDIA POK

Photo: Jive Records

## FOO FIGHTERS

In Your Honor



In the eyes of his naysayers, Dave Grohl was to Nirvana what Yoko Ono was to The Beatles. With this album, a much-maligned Grohl directs their fixation from those glory days to his undeniable talent as a songwriter. Fans of Foo Fighters' punk-rock sensibilities will enjoy the aggressive verve on disc one of **In Your Honor**.

The second disc is for the aficionados of their more melodic pieces like "Walking After You", where Grohl's vocals shine through. It also features John Paul Jones of Led Zeppelin fame on the mandolin.

Just so you know, the title track was really addressed to the President of the United States. According to an interview by **Spin Magazine**, Grohl, "was personally offended that George Bush was using [Foo Fighters] 'Times Like These' at his campaign rallies. We were trying to think of a way to get him to stop... I'm gonna send the president a cease and desist order." — LIN SHILONG

Photo: RCA



COORDINATORS

Fazilah Abdul Galia  
Jamie Tan

PHOTOGRAPHER

Low Youn

STYLIST

Joshua Cheung

FASHION ASSISTANT

Mae Chong

MAKEUP ARTIST

Judith Tan

MODELS

Crystal Rays  
Elyas Dzulkifli

THANKS TO

Lee Hinglian  
Dany Ng

# Denim Boulevard

On her:  
Levi's® Denim Long Sleeve Shirt.  
Belt by Aldo.

On him:  
Levi's® Denim Suit Jacket and  
Stone Washed Jeans.





On her:  
Levi's® Checked Long Sleeved Shirt and  
Knee Length Denim Skirt.



On her:  
Levi's® Pagoda Blue Long Sleeve Shirt and Square Cut Jeans.  
Snake-skin bangles from Quintessential Gifts  
Pumps from Sole2Sole

On him:  
Levi's® Black Graphic Tee and  
Nevada II Jeans.



On him:  
Levi's® Check Short Sleeve Shirt and  
Nevada II Jeans.



On her:  
Levi's® Simple Taupe Graphic Tee and  
Square Cut Jeans.  
Pumps from Sole2Sole.

On him:  
Levi's® Black Graphic Tee and  
Stone Washed Jeans.

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## Cool and Collected

Can't do graffiti, and you're running out of doodling space in your notebooks? Frustrated artist, meet **Trexi**, your new creative outlet. By **Mas Atikah**.

This toy might only be as tall as your middle finger, but it gained a global reputation even before it was launched last April. Say hello to Trexi, an 8cm hot designer item that's the latest creation from local toy design company, Play Imaginative.

Of the response to Trexi Series 01 so far, creator Darren Gan told **hype**, "It is quite overwhelming actually, being a toy with its first series coming out and almost sold out. Also, having Coca Cola as a brand partner in the series gave us a lot of 'street cred[ibility]'."

In fact, Trexi is so popular that a search engine can get you more than 14,000 results. While nowhere near the 224,000 results for another Singaporean toy – Stikfas, that has the benefit of high profile collaborations and a three-and-a-half-year headstart, most of Trexi's online presence is owed to blogs raving about Trexi displaying their purchases. Trexi is also discussed on practically every toy-related or design-related website you can surf these days.

Darren explained how his brainchild was born: "Trexi came about when we wanted to design a canvas toy, but different from the other canvas toys."

Canvas, in this case, doesn't refer to the toy's material, but the fact that like a blank canvas, it invites you to express yourself by customising it the way you

want, either yourself, or by picking up one that's been designed by an artist or designer.

It is this key point about Trexi that has taken over the online world of toys and design – from the reviews seen at **VinylBoutique.com** and discussion boards like **Toydigger.nl**, especially because of the unlimited design possibilities on the rotating head of Trexi.

"We then came up with the rotating-head concept and from there, Trexi started to take form... like a pudgy little dough boy," he added.

To bring the toy to the next phase, until Aug 31, there was a contest where buying a Trexi Doodle pack (from major collectible toy stores for about \$34), which contains two plain-bodied Trexis, would allow anyone to doodle a design on the Trexi for submission.

If your design is attractive enough, it can be listed as part of the next Series of Trexi, due out possibly in September, according to Darren.

He said, "You can customise the d'n'n thing, do a 2D graphic version of it or even 'transformer' the little fellow to a different shape," referring to physically breaking down a blank Trexi and recasting its shape to make a whole new look.

One local street artist, whose works have been displayed on his blog and other design websites, has created a unique version of Trexi that may well be commercially successful.

Nicknamed PhuEk!, he said of his design, "Well, I'm into Sci-Fi stuff lately, after my first customised TREXI, PhuEkoZoid!, I decided to design an astronaut out of

a blank Trexi figure. The idea happened in an instant, so it took me just less than a week to finish building the figure."

Explaining the appeal of Trexi to the masses, PhuEk! said, "The head of Trexi, which can rotate 360 degrees, makes it unique, along with its other features like the legs, hands and body. Darren Gan did a tremendous job in designing it. Kudos to him."

Another local street artist, better known within the street design community, is theKillergerbil. His designs have spread to street and design magazines and he was one of the artists who contributed at the launch of Trexi at Cineleisure, along with Australian artist Jeremyville and local designer Draawer.

Killer, as he likes to be known, said of Trexi, "Personally I think the idea behind the freedom for artists to custom or express their art on Trexi as 'canvas' is awesome... Mad props to Darren Gan, the mastermind behind Trexi and being a Singaporean product is the attraction itself. It's about time our local people shine and do this island proud. Oh not forgetting its cute shape too."

Darren acknowledged how much he has gained from these endorsements saying, "Thanks to talented people like PhuEk!, others are starting to show off their talents. Street artists like PhuEk! are a 'rare breed' in Singapore and I hope to see more artists try the Trexi canvas, with it being 3D and all."

What's better news is that the international design community seems to have embraced Trexi too. At

the time of its worldwide launch on Apr 16, some 15 designs from the Trexi Series 01 were released. These came from all over the world, from Australia, Belgium, Denmark, Netherlands, the United States of America and the United Kingdom.

In addition to these, there are also four limited designs to be collected. They are Coke by Tracey Tubera, as well as versions by Flesh Imp and Singapore Tourism Board (STB), Trexi's co-partners. The last of the four exclusive designs comes from Dotcon Zero 2005, a SGCollectible.com event that aspires to bring Singapore to a new level in the collector's market.

If you're itching to lay your hands on these collectibles, head down to Action City, at The Heeren or Plaza Singapura or Simply Toys at Far East Plaza. However, you might not be able to get hold of Series 01 because Series 02 would have begun production, leaving Series 01 in the hands of people who were lucky enough to buy it earlier.

Doris Chong, the marketing manager of Action City, described the people who have bought Series 01 of Trexi as "toy collectors who really like to collect these types of designer toys".

While Action City declined to reveal the number of Trexi sold, she said that the response had been "good". Doris added they are likely to stock Series 02 as well. Trexi can be bought at Action City for \$9.95.

To visit the official website of Trexi, go to [www.playimaginative.com/trexi.html](http://www.playimaginative.com/trexi.html).

Photos: PhuEk!





# Growing Pains

Youths, constantly judged by their parents for their grades, recently got to turn the tables and rate them. **KIMBERLY SHEN** explores the issue that has caused many a local child to whoop in delight, and parents to frown.

Your exasperated mother tells you that you, as her child, have caused her enough distress to halve her lifespan. You're reminded the umpteenth time of a Chinese saying that the elderly have consumed more 'salt' than the young have rice, meaning the older you are, the wiser you'll be, effectively losing you any argument you may have with her.

Perhaps being a youth is harder than most parents think it is. In Singapore, especially, youths often feel like their school grades, from an A to an F, determine just what 'quality' a child they really are.

Finally, gleeful youths in Asia could grade their parents instead in a **Reader's Digest** survey: report book style. The issue certainly raised some eyebrows when it was published in July, and surprised many Singaporean parents, who were ranked third last out of eight Asian countries, topped by Thai parents.

While Singapore didn't come out at the very bottom, unlike Taiwanese parents, the results have caused alarm bells to ring, especially for a developed country that prides itself on many firsts.

But just how accurate do most youths reckon the survey results are? One out of 10 whom **hype** spoke to, Zenia Sim, 15, thinks it was pretty accurate, saying, "My parents love to compare me with their friend's children when it comes to exam results and achievements. In return, whenever I get to meet my friend's parents, I would compare them with my own."

Associate Professor Habibul Haque Khondker of the National University of Singapore's Sociology faculty believes the results wouldn't have differed much if the survey was carried out years earlier. "In my view, it is hard to tell what children in the past generation would have thought, but my sense is that many would give a 'don't know' answer. Modern society has [just] made us more conscious of relationships," he said.

However, if these results are an accurate indication of what local youths really think of their upbringing, parents in Singapore have some serious soul-searching to do.

A family counsellor at Fei Yue Family Service Centre, Chua En Harn, 30, feels Singaporean parents fare poorly comparatively because most of them are too occupied with work. "They seldom spend time with their children. When they are together, they talk about

schoolwork, exams, and 'areas of improvement' they observed from their children," he suggested. Hardly joyful conversation.

Teo Geok Khim, 40, a Chinese tutor who has been teaching primary to tertiary school students for the past two decades believes our local parents are too *kiasu*. In a mixture of both English and Mandarin, she said, "They pay too much attention to the child's academic progress.

"The parents here don't let their child express his or her opinions and views. I've met many youths who are like this, they don't have a say. I have a student who didn't want to take Higher Chinese as a subject but his parents insisted that he did. Now he's suffering in silence and can't cope with the syllabus," she said.

Is this a cause for concern especially when most Singaporean parents think they're really doing a good job parenting? Diana Tay, 22, a youth counsellor agrees that parents should worry, adding that "Reading parenting books doesn't make one a good parent. It is really all about the effort and time to grow up together with the children, which makes a lot of difference.

"This is what Singaporean parents lack— That kind of energy to motivate, encourage, lift the child up with lots of love."

However, she is quick to point out that Singapore parents don't have it easy either. "They have a hard life. Generally, most parents in Singapore have problems managing their own work life and family. This is when big problems arise. [The] Stress level is also high in Singapore and this adds weight to parents, contributing to negligence to their family. But when asked about their children, most parents have love for them and would want to do more for their children."

Chua thinks parents are possibly so blinded by wanting the best for their children that they neglect areas of the child's personal development that don't contribute to bettering the child's education and potential salary, yardsticks of success in Singapore.

"Parents may think that the best they could give to their children is enrolling them into the best schools, providing monetary satisfaction and etc. What they seldom realise is that character development can last forever, not money."

Agreeing that local parents tend to have a narrow definition of performance, Teo said, "Most parents think education is your only route to success."

Youths such as Eugene Teh, 14, can't help but hope his parents will not be as demanding when it comes to his studies and understand that As aren't everything. "When I become a parent, I won't... [dictate] what my



# Growing Pains

child can't do."

However, Eugene isn't ungrateful, and grades both his parents an 8 out of 10. "Because they brought me up and treated me well," he simply said. Similarly, Bianca Lim, a secondary school student gave her parents a 7/10. "They have taken care of me, although they're pretty naggy at times, I still thank them for whatever they've done."

Even though most of the 10 youths **hype** interviewed agree their parents care for them and love them wholeheartedly, they are vocal about what they see as their failings. "I do not like them when they get really picky over the time I get home. Sometimes kids need their freedom too," says Bianca.

Most of the youths are also concerned about their lack of privacy. Many of them yearn for the liberty to indulge in activities away from their parents' prying eyes, equating freedom with being an adult. A boy who only wanted to be known as TY said, "I think privacy is very important. If I were a parent, I'll give my children more freedom, but to a limit."

Frustrated at not being respected as an individual, another youth who declined to be named, said, "I would like my parents not to accuse me when they have not hear[d] my side of the story."

Wu Sini, 15, a student says, "They don't care what your feelings are and just scold." Both of them echo the views of youths who, in the **Reader's Digest** survey, wished 'their parents listened to them, no matter what else was going on'.

To aggravate the situation, Chua says, "[Youths] often feel criticised by their parents, hence, they do not want to talk to them. Subsequently, the gap becomes wider."

Communication is a vital aspect youths unanimously agree needs improvement. Fewer than half of the local youths surveyed claimed their parents can't manage a conversation without blowing their tops.

With the exposure to Western media, children of the present generation have also conjured ideals and moral values of their own. Even their expectations of their own parents are being formed by what they watch on television. "New conceptions of childhood and parenthood have emerged," agrees Associate Professor Khondker.

It's also possible that because of our conservative Asian values and traditions, local parents demand a lot from their children. Professor Khondker explains, "As families become smaller with family planning, expectations change. In Singapore the value of

economic success is dominant. Parents want their children to work harder and harder to do better in school so that they get high paying jobs. Other priorities are ignored. I know in one case, a mother of a junior college student forced her daughter, who was resting with a fever and cold, to wake up so that she could do her homework."

The issue isn't entirely bleak though. It's really only dads getting an average of C-, while mothers here faring better, getting an overall grade of A-.

Tay agrees, saying, "Mums spend more quality time with their children. The typical Singaporean dad speaks less than 10 sentences to a child in the day and it is usually after a long day of hard work!"

Maybe this is a sign for dads to be more proactive, unlike their own undemonstrative role models, and not just be contented to bring home the bacon.

Chua said, "They (fathers) hand the parenting and nurturing job to their wives. Hence, whenever children have problems, they talk to their mothers as most of the time, their fathers are unavailable, because either they are not at home or too tired to talk... children feel closer to their mothers than to their fathers."

Zenia, however, feels grateful for her dad's efforts and understands he has an extremely busy schedule. "He always makes sure we go out as a family for lunch together on weekends."

Tay agrees that the best remedy is for parents to spend quality, not just quantity, time with their children. They should be genuinely interested in the child's life to be able to know what it's like to be in his or her shoes. She suggests parents gain the trust of their children so the family will be the first people the youths turn to when problems arise.

"Parents should take more time out for their kids," Teo suggests, "But whether their kids want to spend more time with them, well, that is another issue, especially when their children choose their friends over them," she added.

However, TY insists that if he were a parent, he would spend time talking to his children no matter how busy he is. A heart-to-heart talk is probably what youths everywhere need from their parents.

Family will always be family, although no one has a choice in parents, we long to love and accept them. As Tan Yinyuan, 15, a student declares, "I don't wish to change my parents. They are what they are, I can't change them."

Perhaps there would be fewer problems if parents also felt the same way.





Photo: Nokia



## MEGA STORAGE ON THE GO

Nokia's in the news again with its new N-series. Rolling out in September is the **N70**, a 3G phone with a two-megapixel in-built camera. According to Nokia.com, the **N70** weighs a rather heavy 126g, with a width of 5.3cm and a thickness of 2.18cm. But you can forgive the bulk as the **N70** allows you to print pictures directly to a compatible printer. Also, with RealPlayer installed, you can catch your favourite music and movies on the move. If you're fretting about the mere 30MB inbuilt memory, the Nokia 64MB Multi Media Card is your solution for more storage space. While **N70** may seem the perfect companion for a constant dose of entertainment on the go, you may want to compare it with existing models like the **N6610**, which has specifications only slightly inferior to **N70**. - BRYAN ONG

Price unavailable at presstime.

Photo: Apple



## DREAM IN VIVID COLOUR

As if the original iPod wasn't dream-worthy enough, Apple is further tantalising us with its newest offering- the 65k full-colour display, podcast-ready (see pg 29) iPod. Apple has bought heart share largely through aesthetics and design rather than price or even functionality, and so it shouldn't be surprising that it should deliver this for those of us who are spoiled by fancy mobile phone screens.

If you're trying to turn eyes green with envy as you play games and browse through playlists, album cover art, calendar, and even photos in their full colour, say hello to your new toy. It even has 25 full-colour display thumbnails on its 220 x 176 pixel colour display screen.

Users still get to enjoy the multi-tasking storage capacity of 20GB and 60GB models. Never go without your favourite music again, as the battery lasts up to 15 hours, against 12 hours for the last generation iPods, recharging in just two hours. - JAMIE TAN

Price: From \$528 onwards

## ARMoured CORE: NINE BREAKER

**Armored Core: Nine Breaker** is a must have for all **Armored Core** or mech fans. It brings the series back to the simpler times of arena-based combat. But what gamers will really love is its warrior customisation process, with over 400 different parts to assemble piece by piece. While earning mech parts and completing missions are not necessary, limitations in the amount of weight a certain frame can take are inevitable.

Strongly rendered effects and exceptional 3-D graphics make even tinkering in the garage fun, because of the visual experience. The game's weak link is its sound, which is reminiscent of old arcade games.

The controls are easy to get used to with the PlayStation 2's handheld console, and enables gamers to easily keep the enemy in sight while blasting away at their armour and shields. - MARK TAN



Photo: FromSoftware, Inc

## CRIME LIFE: GANG WARS

With **Grand Theft Auto (GTA): San Andreas** being banned here, **Crime Life: Gang Wars** due to be released for PC, Xbox and Playstation 2 in September, may not even make it to our shelves. The free-roaming mission-based action/adventure game is another violent, hip-hop-themed gangster-lifestyle-promoting, third-person shooter game that Konami has made available for our pleasure. Much like **Rockstar's GTA: San Andreas**, the game is set in Grand Central City, a rough and tough 'hood where you play Tre, a young thug in a gang called the Outlawz. Fans of the GTA series will find this familiar as you've to work your way up the gangster ladder by earning respect and protecting your gang, killing anyone who gets in the way and doing anything else the missions require of you. The game tries to set itself apart from the GTA series by incorporating popular rap group D12 into the game. D12 will be the main players in the Outlawz rival gang and will perform songs for the game. With decent graphics, a consistent frame rate, whack haircuts, gleaming bling bling and lots of shooting, this is one that fans of the GTA series might want to look out for. - MARK TAN



Photo: Konami Corporation





KEEP OUT  
*beat it*  
GET THE MESSAGE



# Condom or Condemn?

Come November, results for Durex's fifth global sex survey will be available. In anticipation of that, **JAMIE TAN** looks into the attitudes of youths today towards premarital sex.

The 2004 Global Sex survey conducted by leading condom maker Durex, showed that most people start having sex at the average age of 17.7 years old.

While the equivalent figure in the survey for Singapore is 18.9 years, it still suggests that premarital sex is prevalent in Singapore, since men here marry only at a mean of 30.2 years and women marry at a mean of 27.2 years, according to the 2003 statistics of the average age of first marriage figures taken from Wikipedia.

Mdm Farah Mahamood Aljunied, Head of Islamic Education of Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura (MUIS)

is not the only one concerned with the statistics, as they have "a lot of ramifications on family life, personal life, education of young people", if indeed, people are starting to have sex in their teens, out of wedlock.

**TO DO OR NOT TO DO, THAT'S THE QUESTION**  
Despite Singaporean teenagers' traditionally conservative Asian upbringing, religious institutions' efforts at persuasion, and also the Ministry of Education's (MOE) best efforts at education, attitudes of the young towards premarital sex seem to have

become more liberal.

According to an email reply to **type** by Mr Wilson Ng, Guidance Officer at MOE's Psychological and Guidance Services Branch, the ministry has made efforts "to inculcate values in and equip pupils with essential knowledge and skills to make responsible values-based choices on sexuality matters and issues", through its sexuality education programme.

However, Mr Ng wrote in his email that the "perceived impact" of the programme was still unconfirmed although "a study conducted on the lower secondary series in 2003... showed significant positive changes

in pupils' knowledge and attitude towards sexuality matters..." He felt that the study "shows that the programme has been well received by teachers and pupils," although MOE hasn't "completed [their] study on the impact of the programme on the other levels".

Religious institutions like MUIS and the Singapore Buddhist Federation (SBF) have also reported efforts at inculcating the right sexual values. In fact, Mdm Farah commented that MUIS has increased efforts at "speaking the youths' lingo" and organising specific seminars at the mosque that directly address premarital sex issues so that the young will "imbibe



the right sexual values and highlight what they should be thinking about before [having premarital sex]."

Contrary to what MOE's study results showed, Mdm Farah thinks that youths have become more liberal with regards to premarital sex, although she was quick to point out that it was "not so much as that values have changed" than peer pressure and media influence have increased.

One of the youths **hype** interviewed was Cecilia Chow, a 21-year-old local undergraduate. Cecilia holds the view that premarital sex "is not wrong... [but] it's not correct either, actually, [it's] really up to the individual". She is clearly, not the only young person who is morally relativistic when it comes to premarital sex.

Statistics support the above assumption, if information provided by Jerry Ong, a 29-year-old facilitator for No Apologies, is anything to go by. The programme is designed to motivate young people to pledge to save sex for marriage. He says, "Generally, research shows that quite a low percentage of Singaporeans, [about 19 to 21%] actually believe that sex should be saved for marriage."

The views of another interviewee, 20-year-old Aaric (not his real name), a polytechnic graduate waiting to enter National Service echoes Mdm Farah's take on the increasing pressure and influences that youths face these days. He thinks keeping sex just for one's spouse is "rather outdated, because it's really hard, in this day and age, to stick by these principles". He continues to illustrate what he thinks is a prevalent attitude in youths today, "Look around now, and you'll find that it's hard to find someone who's not 'done it yet'."

Ong sheds light on why he disagrees with **hype** interviewees' general stand. He champions abstinence because he believes that, ultimately, "marriage is the best chance that a [boy-girl] relationship can have at succeeding". In response to unmarried couples having sex as a means to bring the relationship to another level, Ong still maintains that "only within the safety net of marriage can couples be assured of the sense of permanency", although he admits that there's "no guarantee that marriages don't fail".

#### THE MORNING AFTER

Despite some youths' throwaway attitude towards it, the consequences of premarital sex linger long after the fact.

There's cause for worry when one takes a look at the widely publicised newspaper reports of the 30% increase in new AIDS cases in Singapore from 2003 to 2004. As many as 54.7% of all infected in 2003 were singles, according to Ministry of Health (MOH) statistics. Teenage abortions made up 13% of all abortions in 2002, according to figures from Ministry of

Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS).

Ong warns that apart from physical effects mentioned above, and the risk of sexually transmitted diseases, premarital sex comes with its own emotional and psychological problems. Emotional consequences are in store for both parties should a relationship fail.

"Emotional bonds are formed during sex, like it or not, each person takes away something with them should the relationship break down." He adds that often, following the failure of a relationship, both parties feel "a sense of guilt, loss of self respect" and more importantly, a "lack of trust in future partner".

Reverend Kwang Phing, Director of SBF is concerned about the grave consequences of premarital sex on a larger scale. He says that with premarital sex, there are issues like the increase of single-parent families.

In a 2003 speech Mr Willie Cheng, Chairman of Committee on Family (COF), these families increased by nearly nine percent, a third of which was contributed by unmarried mothers. This increase might lead to the eventual collapse of what is seen as the 'normal' family structure and social problems like the abandonment of unwanted babies.

#### HIS VIEW

Aaric experienced the emotional and psychological effects of premarital sex last year, at 18, when he recalls the trepidation he and his then girlfriend faced as they were "scared whether [he] got her pregnant".

Michael (not his real name), 19, a final-year polytechnic student thinks that whether parties feel the emotional effects of premarital sex, especially after a relationship breaks down, depends on the individuals' view on sex. To him, sex is just another way of expressing his love for his partner, but he acknowledges Ong's view that to certain people, sex has an "attached emotional value and is a spiritual union".

Ultimately, Michael believes that premarital sex is fine as long as "both parties come out of it knowing they were consensual". However, he admitted there are girls who interpret sex as a sign of commitment and that's where the emotional effects for the girl start to set in.

"It's really hard, in this day and age, to stick by these principles. Look around now, and you'll find that it's hard to find someone who's not 'done it yet'."

AARIC

#### HER VIEWS

It seems as long as the girls knew what they were getting themselves into, most escape unscathed, although a handful regret their actions.

Waitress Amanda Leck, 20, said most of her friends who'd had premarital sex "regret it" afterwards, but quickly added that many others didn't because they knew that they put "their all" into their relationships.

Cecilia thinks that although premarital sex is okay, if one is "about 17, or 18 years old, it's not right" because one would be too young to know "whether it was really what [one] wanted in life".

Reverend Kwang Phing, however, is convinced of the contrary, stating that SBF has not relaxed its stand about premarital sex as it's obvious that "the girl gets harmed by the consequences... if the men are not responsible" and it's important to "protect the interest of females".

#### KEEPING IT FOR 'THE ONE'

Cecilia thinks that while sex is a "spiritual and emotional connection", and should be "more than sheer gratification", wanting to keep sex for 'the one' is overrated. This is because "marriages these days don't last long anyway, and divorce rates are high".

Such is the cynical climate that many youths have grown up in, suggesting that one can hardly be blamed for thinking that marriage was merely "a formality", and thus the 'premarital sex' became a non-issue, as long as two people felt that they formed a family unit of sorts.

When probed on her views on keeping sex for 'the one', Amanda thought it should depend on whether any partner in a relationship minded if the other was not a virgin. "If you expect your husband to be a virgin, then it's only fair that you stay one too, and vice versa," she says. Amanda added that she was unsure if she would continue to keep her virginity for her husband.

"If the feeling is right, I probably would [have premarital sex], though it would be beautiful to be able to keep it for 'the one'," she said.

Aaric and Michael said they don't regret having engaged in premarital sex, despite Aaric's earlier fears. These interviews appear to reinforce stereotypes about how premarital sex is viewed differently by both sexes.

#### FROM A RELIGIOUS STANDPOINT

Although all interviewees admit that society still places strong judgment upon premarital sex, they agree that it's often from the older generation and religion. Their general approach to avoid facing such censure was simply not to tell elders and religious leaders outright about these actions and attitudes. To put it in cliché terms, what they don't know, can't hurt 'em.

When given a choice to pledge their virginity or lock down their sex lives till marriage, none of the four took up the offer, with Michael saying that programmes that encourage movements like that "assume [incorrectly] that sex is a spiritual and emotional connection for everyone".

Looking at the issue from a religious standpoint, Reverend Kwang Phing felt that the Buddhist stance is clear owing to the five precepts of the faith, one of which was "No adultery", which according to him, was tantamount to a similar "no" to premarital sex.

Mdm Farah also emphasised that "MUIS's stand has always been to promote abstinence." She said that although abortion and teenage pregnancy figures released by MCYS were worrisome, at the end of the day, everybody's concern should be placed on prevalent attitudes and individual self control and not what a religion teaches, for all religions are guidelines on how to live a good life.

On making the decision of whether to take the plunge, Mdm Farah says, "At the end of the day... spiritually, emotionally and morally you are going to be affected. Think if you're really meeting the real purposes of sex in the first place."

"If the feeling is right, I probably would [have premarital sex], though it would be beautiful to be able to keep it for 'the one'."

AMANDA



# WORLD CYBER GAMES

The World Cyber Games in Singapore in November will bring radical changes to the local gaming scene, much to the delight of gamers here, predicts **KIMBERLY SHEN**.

Networking with fellow gamers while zapping enemies in **StarCraft**, whizzing around the soccer field with **FIFA** or craving for burning tyres and twisted metals in **Need for Speed** is no longer child's play, when a whopping \$714,000 in prizes is up for grabs.

All this happens from Nov 16 to 20 at the World Cyber Games (WCG). Dubbed the Olympics of the cyber-gaming world, this year's battle will be waged in Singapore, making us only the second Asian country to do so after Korea. Held since 2000, WCG invites gamers from all over the world to fight it out with the flick of a thumb and a swish of the mouse in thrilling cyber game tournaments.

Thomas Lim, Operations Manager of Rapture Gaming, the organiser of the Singapore WCG Finals, believes that WCG 2005 will profoundly affect the local scene.

He says, "This year's format of WCG will definitely change the way Singapore's gamers feel about competitive gaming. The changes we have made in this year's format will encourage more gamers to experience the adrenaline rush that competitive gaming gives and also will also make current competitive gamers... more professional."

Elaborating on the changes, Mr Lim says, "We have added two games with one of them having a totally different genre from the available game[s] out there." This, in turn, has offered a wider range of game genres for the participants.

Cheung Zhihang, 19, a competitive player who marshalled for WCG, says "Adding more variety of games will create more opportunities for people who want to take part."

Before the King of Cyber Gaming is crowned at the WCG Grand Finals in Singapore, avid gamers previously took part in National Championships in their own countries before being shortlisted to enter the finals. This year, approximately 70 countries are taking part in the National Championships, with only about 800 players being able to proceed to the prestigious Grand Finals.

Local gamers are certainly gearing up for it. "Knowing... that other top players of the world are coming, Singapore gamers will work harder," Zhihang reckons, elaborating on how pressurising this makes the games.

He is, however, looking forward to a change in the gaming environment, expecting a certain Singaporean-ess to be infused to it.

Mr Lim says enthusiastically, "The aim of this year's

event is to create a bigger awareness to the general public that gaming can also be treated like a professional sport. The training, the dedication, the efforts and the results produced by professional gamers are no less than that of a professional sportsman."

To build the momentum, instead of holding one National Final event this year, Rapture Gaming incorporated a series of preliminaries that stretched from March to August, leading up to the National Finals in September. This allowed them to reach out to a previously ignored group of casual or semi-professional players and add to the hype.

He continues, "This group of gamers have been longing for a taste of action in competitive gaming but held back because previous year's format of a one-time WCG event and its atmosphere might be overwhelming for them and does not cater to their needs."

He believes that starting from a smaller scale with different preliminaries will certainly attract more gamers and also increase the awareness of WCG.

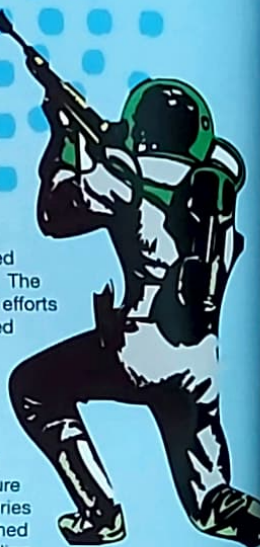
Currently, the Cyber Cafe and schools' preliminaries are over, leaving the remaining challenge – the National Final preliminaries.

This year, the eight official WCG games are firm favourites – **Counter Strike: Source**, **FIFA Soccer 2005**, **Need for Speed**, **Underground 2**, **StarCraft: Brood War**, **War Craft III: The Frozen Throne**, **Warhammer 40,000: Dawn of War** and Console games, **Dead or Alive Ultimate** and **Halo 2**. These games were chosen based on the feedback from a worldwide poll.

"Singapore can look forward to a prosperous gaming scene in future," declares Mr Lim.

"Having the WCG 2005 Grand Finals in Singapore will bring all the focus on Singapore."

This is a great chance to showcase Singapore to international gaming communities and industries that we, too, could be one of the major gaming hubs for this region and even for the world."



## The Witching Hour

Popular humorist writer Jim Aitchison chats with **CLAUDIA POK** about his bestselling local children's books series, **Mr Midnight**, and its film adaptation, to be shot in December.

Before Harry Potter mania took over the world and Singapore in the early 2000s, **Mr Midnight** books were counted among our favourite childhood reads. Kids here will tell you excitedly: **Mr Midnight** is your source for terror and spooky tales.

Filming will soon begin on the series, scheduled for a June 2006 release in Asian cinemas. Six local kids are starring in the show with some local and overseas stars, including previous Ch 5 sitcom **Under One Roof's** Daisy Irani (see pg 9). Though, earlier this year, **The Straits Times** reported that local stars like Pam Oei, Gerald Chew and Corinne Adrienne will appear in the film, this is unconfirmed. Producing the \$1 million movie is founder and chairman of the Singapore Film Festival, Geoff Malone.

The creator of the children's series is 61-year-old Jim Aitchison, known as James Lee to his young readers. The Australian-born Singapore Permanent Resident tells **hype** in an email interview, "I hope it [**Mr Midnight** the movie] becomes a legendary movie... the first movie for and about Asian kids, and that it sets the standards for similar movies in the future."

The goals don't seem that far-fetched since frightening children on the big screen has become an increasingly lucrative business especially when more and more books are being adapted into films. In 2001, the number one box office hit, **Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone**, was an adaptation of the book of the same name by British author JK Rowling. And last year, the Jim Carrey movie, **Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events** was adapted from American author Daniel Handler's first three books of the Lemony Snicket series.

According to a press release by **Time Warner** in 2002, **Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone** beat **Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace** in worldwide box office earnings. **Harry Potter** earned US\$926.1 million (S\$1.531 billion) against the latter's US\$922.8 million. And **Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events** topped **Ocean's Twelve** with US\$30.2 million in its debut weekend in the United States box office, according to a BBC report.

Recently, Roald Dahl's **Charlie and the Chocolate Factory** was released for the cinemas and cast Johnny Depp as the title character, while **Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire** is in production.

**Mr Midnight** started when the Flame of the Forest publisher, Alex Chacko approached Aitchison to write books catering to Asian children. Aitchison was a scriptwriter for television comedies in Australia and Executive Creative Director with Batey Ads. Since retiring from the advertising



Photo: Copyrighted to Flame of the Forest Publishing

scene in 1996, Aitchison has begun writing books.

In less than 10 years, he's published 36 books, including serious advertising and marketing ones, and has shot to fame with the infamous **Sarong Party Girl** series that he wrote with Theseus Chan in the early 90s.

Aitchison's experience in the obviously pays off when it came to launching the **Mr Midnight** series.

He says, "Books, like anything else, are brands... so we [Aitchison and Chacko] spent a lot of time looking at the way the books would be structured and designed; the kind of cover illustration they would have; the fact that kids could win prizes by contributing their ideas for stories, thus building a sense of 'ownership' by readers."

The title of the well-loved series also plays a part in its success. Aitchison says, "As in any marketing/branding exercise, you have to look at the competition. **Goosebumps** was the top-selling series when we launched **Mr Midnight** in 1998. Yes, we could have used a word like **Shivers** or **Terrors**, but it sounded too generic. We opted for **Mr Midnight** because [firstly], midnight is supposedly a very scary time of night, and [secondly], 'Mr' implied that there was a spooky person writing them."

Whereas Rowling didn't even write the screenplay for her bestselling books, Aitchison is writing the movie adaptation's screenplay himself.

The **Mr Midnight** film will not be based on any of the current **Mr Midnight** stories, though he maintains that he will be "using some of the villains from the books".

Aitchison is also keeping mum about the new title of the film adaptation, which was originally titled **Mr. Midnight the Movie: My Haunted Holiday**, though he says it's "something shorter and crisper".

Don't expect him to release details of the film's plot either. All he will disclose is "... it's about 3 girls and 3 boys who go to their school's camp on an island. Where strange things happen..."



## THE GLASS CASTLE

Jeanette Walls

Author Jeannette Walls creates a heartfelt retelling of her childhood in her latest book, **The Glass Castle**, when she and her three siblings led a nomadic life. Like something out of adventure clips from the **National Geographic Channel**, they pitched tents in the mountains and slept underneath the skies as they made their way through the desert towns of the American Southwest.

Walls and her siblings were brought up by unconventional parents whose values and ideals were too idealistic for practical living. Mother, Rose Mary, would paint, and read Shakespeare aloud as she justified her hatred for domestic chores. Rex, her father, was no prize either. An ingenious liar and a hopeless alcoholic, he blamed his inability to keep a job on his claims that mobsters were running the corrupted electrician's union.

**The Glass Castle** is filled with hilarious but dubious moments. Rose Mary encouraged her children to do toe-touches as she believed better circulation lifts a person's outlook. It's a touching real life page-turner of this gossip columnist to 24-hour news channel MSNBC that sheds a heartwarming light on family ties. - HAJAR MANAF

Available at Books Kinokuniya at \$47.41

## THE HISTORIAN

Elizabeth Kostova

The Dracula lore tells us he's the undead. Well, he's just been resurrected in a dark, suspense-filled historical mystery by first-time novelist, Elizabeth Kostova. In 1972, a 16-year-old girl in Amsterdam uncovers an ancient book hidden in her widowed father's library. Blank except for a drawing of a dragon, the word 'Drakulya' and a secret stash of yellowed letters addressed to "My dear and unfortunate successor", the book piques the young girl's curiosity. She approaches dad, a historian-turned-diplomat for answers, and learns that he has been obsessed with researching Dracula.

Through flashbacks, we are led on the quest for the truth behind the legend. Spanning several continents and comprising of a cast of colourful characters, including a bloodsucking librarian who's a vampire enthusiast, **The Historian** unfolds through a rapid narrative filled with suspense and insightful bits of historical information, drawing readers into a world where the line between fact and fiction is blurred. Touted by Amazon.com as one of the big-buzz books this year, Kostova's debut is sure to keep readers hanging on and bloodthirsty for more. - CHERYL LIM

Available at Borders Bookstore for \$26.80

## THE UNDOMESTIC GODDESS

Sophie Kinsella

If you haven't heard of Sophie Kinsella, you're probably a guy. The bestselling author of the Shopaholic series has finally taken a break from writing about what girls do best and come up with **The Undomestic Goddess**, which has been made into a movie due next year.

The chick-lit novel is extremely easy-to-read, but there's a twist. The heroine, Samantha Sweeting, is a high-flying English attorney. When she botches a major chance at making her firm's partner, she impulsively leaves. Eventually taking a train and ending up lost in the countryside, she finds herself in front of a beautiful house where she's mistaken for the new housekeeper. Unfortunately for Sweeting, although she may be able to handle tough clients and wads of cash, she's clueless about running a home. Samantha's swamped with the new responsibilities, but the household's gardener-turned-boyfriend makes her ride a lot sweeter. The plot progresses slowly, but the novel's filled with enough of Kin-sella's trademark, if watered down, humour and quick wit to spur you to finish it in one sitting. - ANITA LO

Available at Borders Bookstore for \$28.35

## BABYLON SISTERS

Pearl Cleage

**Babylon Sisters** covers the relationship between a mother and a daughter, international politics and an endless love story in a household in Atlanta.

Single-mom Catherine Sanderson seems to have a perfect life - a successful career (she runs a consultancy called Babylon Sisters), a lovely home in the good neighbourhood, and a charming daughter who's on the road to college. But soon, curiosity takes hold of the young lady, Phoebe, who starts to poke around to find out who and where her father is.

The man in question, B.J. Johnson, is a newspaper correspondent. After returning from Africa, he quizzes Catherine about the female slavery trade on the streets of Atlanta. She's keen to help him in his research, but afraid to reveal to him that he has a daughter.

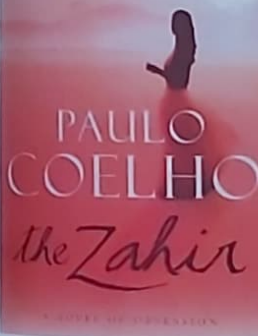
**The New York Times** bestselling author of **What Looks Like An Ordinary Day**, Pearl Cleage is known for her fresh ideas. **Babylon Sisters** is a beautifully written novel that is emotionally gripping and fast-paced. - MAE CHONG

Available at Borders Bookstore for \$42.95

## THE ZAHIR

Paulo Coelho

INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF  
THE ALCHEMIST AND ELEVEN MINUTES



In his latest novel, the best-selling author of **Eleven Minutes** and **The Alchemist**, Paulo Coelho, talks about the intriguing and widely-felt emotion: obsession. The Arabic word, Zahir, means something present and unavoidable, which is like an obsession. In this book, the lead character is a well-known author whose wife, Esther, mysteriously disappears.

Esther becomes his Zahir, forever present in his thoughts. Besides chasing strange women around corners to make sure they aren't her, he battles with his wounded pride and sense of abandonment. In the end, the author realises that he loves his wife more than himself, and it's perfectly okay to obsess over her because he's following his heart - something he believes will lead him on to true happiness.

Not only is **The Zahir** a heart-string tweaker, as Coelho expresses in great detail his emotional experiences, it's also a poignant story which will make you stop and think about what you really want and how you're going to get it. - ALISA CHOPARD

Available at Borders Bookstore for \$20.95

## ISTANBUL: CITY AND MEMORIES

Orhan Pamuk

In his latest autobiography, **Istanbul: City and Memories**, acclaimed author Orhan Pamuk cleverly weaves in vivid imagines of Istanbul with great depth as he guides the reader like a companion through his journey as an artist.

He paints the city in a riveting fashion: "1950s Chevrolets that would be museum pieces in any Western City but serve here as shared taxis, huffing and puffing on the city's narrow alleys and dirty thoroughfares; of the buses packed with passengers; of the mosques whose plates and rain gutters are forever stolen, of the city cemeteries that seem like gateways to a second world and of their cypress trees."

Pamuk writes beautifully, portraying the melancholy, reminiscent of the city, and his life in the Pamuk Apartments, in equal balance. Landmark images of dilapidated mansions, lost paradises of the Ottoman Empire and the harbours of old are sporadically positioned in the autobiography, depicting eccentric elements of a country at the crossroads between East and West. It is in such writing that neither the artist nor the beauty of his city is overshadowed by the other. - HAJAR MANAF

Available at MPH Bookstores for \$31.45

SOPHIE KINSELLA  
HER NEW BESTSELLER  
*The Undomestic Goddess*





# Holding Out

Rosie Milne tells **CHEN SIYA** about her second book, **Holding the Baby**, and how she hopes it will inspire readers considering parenthood.

"People think that authors of pink-cover books are the Britney Spears of the literary world," the frizzy-haired, lanky woman before me quipped.

That woman is Rosie Milne, the author of **Holding the Baby**, which comes in a neon pink book jacket. Her second novel took the 36-year-old a year to pen. For almost 10 years, the University of Bristol Philosophy graduate was an editor of a scientific journal and self-help book series before working on her first fiction novel, **How to Change Your Life**, five years ago.

**Holding the Baby**, a drastic departure from her maiden book, revolves around the lives of four sisters—Jo, Caroline, Annie and Liz in their pursuit of love, happiness and motherhood. Despite a cover that can't be taken seriously, **Holding the Baby** is a comforting, engaging and reflective read. It also touches on serious, thought-provoking issues like adoption, infertility and infidelity. These topics, which have become less taboo in recent times, have even become the agenda of some popular TV shows.

"The inspiration for the characters came from different places. The book is about four different women who have very different ideas about motherhood. My philosophy in life is to try to make sense of life, and the characters in **Holding the Baby** are trying to do that," said Milne.

Jo, 34, a banker in New York has to bear the consequences of an affair with her married boss, Brett, while housewife Caroline seems happily married to her college sweetheart, Simon, with a pair of lovely twin boys. However, like the desperate housewives on TV, she's sick of staying home.

Liz has been married for five years, but the strain of trying to conceive is getting to her, and she is worried that she might remain childless forever.

Annie, the baby of the sisters, finds herself engaged to a man she does not love. Deep down, she's still yearning for ex-boyfriend Ming Kwan.

"I would definitely not have written this book if I wasn't a mother," Milne added.

The book, peppered with light humour, includes some smaller, eccentric characters like Henrieta and Penelope, who happen to be Milne's favourites.

Henrieta is Annie's prospective mother-in-law who is the "president of the National Association of Flower Arrangers", while Penelope happens to be Annie's fiancé's former lover. Both of them shamelessly scheme to try to knock William back to his senses and get back with Penelope instead.

This year, due to her husband's work commitments, Milne and her family moved to Singapore, after having lived in New York, Hong Kong, Sydney and Tokyo.

Although this book is largely about motherhood, Milne said it "was not an autobiography in any way".

"I want people to think about luck in life when they are reading this book. I am very lucky."

Photo: Low Youjin

# KoReal Cuisine

11 Mosque Street  
5-minute walk from Chinatown MRT  
station exit E  
Tel: 6221 0830  
Opens 11.30am-2.30pm and 6pm-10pm  
Closed on Sundays

The highly-rated Korean drama, **Jewel in the Palace**, showing since July on cable, is a reason why our obsession with things Korean hasn't abated after earlier cult dramas like **Autumn in My Heart** and **Winter Sonata** have long ended. One benefactor of this are Korean restaurants.

Stepping into the cosy **±OGI** (pronounced togli, but the supposed 'T' is actually 'tu', which means sand or mud in Chinese), you'll be welcomed with warm smiles. Cups of chilled Korean tea, said to be good for your throat and eyes, are served as soon as you sit down. The regulars' favourite is **bibimbap** (\$9), a hot stone bowl of steamed rice with stir-fried mixed vegetables and meat, resembling Chinese claypot rice. Six free refillable side dishes of various vegetables are served with every main dish ordered (like in any Korean restaurant). Owner Julie Kim, or her local helpers, willingly spice up your rice bowl with added chilli paste. A good stir will allow you to savour its special sweet, sour and spicy tastes. **±ogi's** sweet Korean Apple Juice (\$2), with crunchy apple bits, is a great drink to go with any dish.



±OGI

Photos: Claudia Pok

# CHO-WAN GARDEN



2 Peck Seah Street  
#01-01 Airview Building  
Tel: 6225 1317

6-minute walk from Tanjong Pagar MRT station exit B

Opens daily 11.30am-2.30pm and 5.30pm-10pm

Patronised by most of the Korean community in Singapore and people working nearby, Cho-Wan Garden is very busy during lunchtime. Only after operating for a few months did the owners realise their prices were very affordable for a restaurant offering an authentic Korean eating experience, complete with private rooms and floor seats.

By then, they'd already established a group of regulars and it was too late to up their prices. One must-try dish is their Ginseng Chicken Soup or Sam Gye Tang (\$15) which can be served to two to four people. Their set lunches (\$8++) are a great deal too if you want a simple Korean meal.



# THE BURGER BATTLE BONANZA

ANDREA HENG enlists the help of Mr Makansutra, KF Seetoh, and a burger diehard to taste-test burgers and discovers they can actually be good for you.

Those of you who swore off burgers after Mc Attack documentary **Supersize Me** can feel less guilty now. Burgers aren't all that unhealthy, nutritionist Ms Linda Nellis from Nevill Hospital at East Sussex, England, tells **hype**. At least not if the beef used isn't too fatty. The 47-year-old nutritionist, who has worked and lived here prior to her move to England, reveals the truth about burgers.

"Generally, burgers can be seen to be healthy as long as the portions are reasonably small, with the addition of a side salad and small portion of fries. What makes burgers unhealthy is if very fatty meat is used, or they are eaten more than twice weekly or that the portions are bigger than usual

fast-food servings," she said in an e-mail interview.

In fact, when taken in moderation, "Nutritionally, they can be a good source of iron in a world where anaemia is widespread especially among young women, Singapore included." She added that the "burger culture [has been wrongly blamed] for our 'sick' society".

But if you're not sold on the health benefits of your fast food favourites, **hype** put three burger places to the test, with the help of self-confessed "makan guru" Mr KF Seetoh, 42, host of popular local TV series **Makansutra**, and Chia Nafia, a 21-year-old National Serviceman who eats burgers twice a week.

## BEEF PATTY

KF Seetoh: "Very beefy, but a tad cartilage-y. [The beef] was not sieved properly, so it gets stuck in between your teeth. But it's got good taste."  
Chia Nafia: "The beef is really tasty, but [a] little tough. It's chewy and tiring after awhile."

## BURGER BUN

KFS: "They're generous with the sesame seeds on the bun, and they're not mass produced. It's not robust; it's a little wimpy. Good bread should hold [the meat]."  
CN: "The sesame seeds are nice and toasty, but the bread very limp and thin. It tears apart easily. [It] doesn't bite well with the beef and everything else."

## VEGETABLES

KFS: "The vegetables are okay, normal. But... bad aesthetics."  
CN: "The vegetables are horrible. It's soggy and wet, and cucumbers don't really go well with burgers."

## \$ PRICE \$

KFS: "Quite expensive, but there's a double patty in it. That's what you're paying for."  
CN: "It's very expensive for a burger and some fries. But the beef is worth it."

## 3 MONKEYS CAFÉ

#01-01 Orchard Towers  
400 Orchard Road  
Tel: 67333707

Mon to Sun (11am - 3am)

### CHEESEBURGER (w/ fries)

\$15.60



WAITING TIME  
4 mins

**hype's**  
overall rating



## CARL'S JUNIOR

11 Orchard Mall Square  
6 Raffles Boulevard  
Tel: 6733720

Mon - Thu (8.30am - 11am)  
Fri - Sun (8.30am - 11am)

### FAMOUS STAR (BURGER w/ fries & drink)

\$6.90



WAITING TIME  
6 mins

**hype's**  
overall rating



## BEEF PATTY

KFS: "The texture of the beef is good, but the taste is not there."  
CN: "The nicest beef patty for me. You even have an option of how to have it done and this one was medium rare, it's just right."

## BURGER BUN

KFS: "The bun is good. The bread [is of] good quality and the sesame seeds are really good too."  
CN: "The bun is just right. It's not too toasty, but gives a 'together-bite', meaning that everything in the burger is included in that one bite. They're generous with the sesame seeds."

## VEGETABLES

KFS: "Vegetables are good. They're fresh and pack a good crunch. It's like a salad in there."  
CN: "I don't think they should have used red onions but it's really crunchy, and it goes well with the burger. No mess."

## \$ PRICE \$

KFS: "It's a little cheaper than the first burger. But for a good burger like this, I wouldn't mind paying for it."  
CN: "It's a good burger that I don't mind paying for."

## BEEF PATTY

KFS: "It's very dry, not enough fats. It's more like mass-produced [beef patties], so in the end it tastes like marinated cardboard."  
CN: "This tastes like a regular burger, but bigger. That's a plus for me. The taste is rather bland and thin."

## BURGER BUN

KFS: "They give very little [sesame seeds], but it's probably because it's mass-produced. But the bread bun itself is better than the first one."  
CN: "It's stronger, because it holds the whole thing together like a proper sandwich or burger."

## VEGETABLES

KFS: "The vegetables are quite good."  
CN: "This one has good vegetable complementing the burger. It has a nice crunch."

## \$ PRICE \$

KFS: "This is a little more expensive than your regular fast-food outlet burger, if you buy the meal. I'd come here again because it's more affordable than the rest."  
CN: "Very affordable burger, since it comes from a fast-food outlet."

## HARD ROCK CAFÉ

### HRC CHEESEBURGER

\$13.90

#02-01/003-01 HPL House  
50 Cuscaden Road  
Tel: 6235 5232

Opening hours:  
Sun to Thu (11am - 2am)  
Fri, Sat & Eve of Public Holidays (11am - 3am)



WAITING TIME  
7 mins

**hype's**  
overall rating



## Hollandse Club

22 Camden Park (off Adam Road)

Tel: 6464 5225

Opening hours:

Mon to Sat (8am - midnight)

Sun (8am - 11pm)

The Club Burger costs \$9.50 and even has a fried egg with it - something different from the regular fast-food version. The only downside is the club's inaccessible location.

## Brewerkz Singapore

Riverside Point

30 Merchant Road

Opening hours:

Mon to Thu & public holidays (noon - midnight)

Fri, Sat & Eve of public holidays (11am - midnight)

Tel: 6438 7438

This restaurant has the most expensive burger we've found. The King Brew Burger sets you back \$22.99, but Mr KF Seetoh claims it's the best tasting burger.



Big spenders out there know burgers don't have to be humble fare.

**hype** sniffs out three for those with deeper pockets.



# Say Eau La La!

JAMIE TAN goes ga ga over affordable Mediterranean food.

Think Mediterranean food has to have insanely expensive Olive Tree or Original Sin price tags? Casual dining **Eau La La**, set in the back of urbanised Gallery Hotel will change all that. Open since June, the fully al fresco restaurant impresses with its impeccable ambience. Expect smart table settings with not a fork out of place, complete with crisp white napkins and romantic setting. Start off with appetisers priced from \$3.50 and don't forget to try the Chorizo sausages (\$8.90), a Spanish specialty made by the restaurant's chefs, one of whom is Said, from Morocco.

For the main course, a must-try is Paella Valenciana (\$22.90), which will easily satisfy three. The Spanish saffron-flavoured rice dish, offers plump moist grains simmered for hours in chicken and fish stock over a slow fire and accompanied by healthy amounts of seafood, chicken, capsicum and sausages.

Other worthy mentions are the Chicken Tagine, tender drumsticks baked with lemon pickles and olive (\$13.90), and Al Granchio (\$14.90), crab-meat pasta in creamy tomato sauce. If you've got money to spare, try the Turkish specialty, Lamb Kebabs (\$24.90), recommended by Eau La La's marketing manager, Mathew. If the prices seem a little high, they are compensated by generous portions - one main dish can feed at least two persons.

Of course, no meal's complete without dessert. The restaurant's traditional Moroccan sweet, Almond Date Tart, or exquisite cold dessert, Pear Gelati (both are \$6.90), which boasts fine craftsmanship (it really looks like a pear) and thin chocolate covering the vanilla ice-cream will have you exclaiming "Eau La La" in no time.

**Eau La La**  
The Gallery Hotel  
76 Robertson Quay  
#01-12  
Tel: 6887 5568

Hours:  
Tuesday to Friday (and eve of public holidays) 3pm-11pm  
Saturday, Sunday (and public holidays) 11am-11pm  
Closed on Mondays



## The Simple Life

You don't have to be Paris Hilton and Nicole Richie to ditch five-star room service and cushy tours. **DANIAL HAKIM** throws on his trusty haversack and takes you on a rough ride through the dusty lands of Cambodia.

The red land of Cambodia isn't your typical holiday destination. Void of five-star resorts, boisterous theme parks and boutiques, it nurtures a beauty of a different kind. In most areas, it's managed to stave off the hand of technology, retaining its natural sceneries while the rest of the world hurtles towards an increasingly fast-paced future. The sight of open paddy fields beneath an azure sky is a refreshing change from the grey drudgery of city life. Backpackers relish in this purity and visit Cambodia, previously known as Kampuchea, also for the good food and cheap bargains. Polytechnic lecturer Desmond Wee, 33, says it's the fact that Cambodia isn't a typical tourist destination that appeals to him.

Buried deep in the northeast is one of Cambodia's lesser-known provinces, Ratanakiri. Its name can be broken down into two words: 'ratana' meaning 'gem' and 'kiri' meaning 'mountain'. Surrounded by rolling hills that separate Cambodia from Vietnam and Laos, the province offers visitors quiet solace.

Banlung is one of the few towns in Ratanakiri that even has a landing strip, though the runway is nothing more than a dirt road. Only one flight runs each day, taking off from Phnom Penh, the Cambodian capital. When not in use, locals zoom across the runway on their tuk tuk, the Cambodian version of a moped, stirring up the reddish brown dust.

Like most small towns in Cambodia, Banlung is a sleepy village ignored by most. Another lecturer who went with Wee and some students on a study trip to Banlung, Peter Tham, said, "Cambodia is like any vibrant city: the commercialisation, the variety of activities and the feeling that you need to control yourself from all the distractions around you. When one reaches Banlung, it's different. Now, it's sort of laid back... and if you are at first worried of the fine dust, your [worries] soon disappear. You will grow to live with it and accept it as part of the ambience."

Locals recognising its use as a base by travellers around Ratanakiri have set up some hotels and guesthouses. Some are well furnished, complete with air conditioning and Internet while others allow travellers to experience the simple life, to say the least.

Charging about US\$5 (S\$8.25) a night, the Ratanak Hotel is quite popular. Most rooms are offer air conditioning, hot water, a queen size bed and even a television set, which is a blessing after a hard day's of travelling. The ground floor is separated into a lobby and a restaurant, serving Western, Cambodian and Chinese cuisines.

For a more authentic type of lodging, the Mountain Guesthouse is a typical wooden lodge that's another hit with budget travellers. Offering services like free laundry, each room is equipped with a fan, though some travellers may have to share bathrooms with others. Rooms are priced as low as US\$2.



## GETTING AROUND

While moving around Banlung is easy due to its small area, comparable to that of Bedok, visitors can still rent *tuk tuks* to get around. Each ride usually costs around 1,000 riels (S\$0.40) per head unless you are travelling out of town. It's highly recommended that you hire a guide with a decent command of the English language when travelling around or outside Banlung. It's also possible to rent a motorcycle (US\$5) or a bicycle (US\$1) for the entire day, and hotels and guesthouses can arrange that for you.

On the other hand, Wee simply advises you "take a walk". There's no better way to truly experience Banlung than to wander around the town and discover little surprises in the small streets.

## LEISURE

From the mere look of the town, it's obvious that Banlung doesn't have much nightlife to offer, so don't expect to uncover a secret club stashed away in the heart of the jungle. When the sun sets, villagers get ready for bed. After a weary day in the fields or at the market, they welcome the night and settle in for a good sleep.

What exactly do they do for fun? Without electronic devices like Playstations and iPods, the people there resort to a natural form of recreation: swimming.

Scattered along the outskirts of the town are several waterfalls that locals frequent for a refreshing dip. One of the most accessible is Ka Chhoung, a short yet satisfyingly wide waterfall. A set of wooden stairs runs all the way down to the bottom and into a rock pool. During the dry season, it's possible to walk across the span of the pool without getting the knees wet.

The tallest, Chaa Ong, may prove a little hard to locate. Past a maze of rubber trees, northwest of Banlung, it features a spectacular 20-metre drop.



To get to the bottom, visitors have to manoeuvre spiny bushes of bamboo and around slippery rocks, but the sight that awaits them is worthy reward. A rock overhang allows visitors to clamber behind the cascading sheet of water for a surreal view, though the deafening roar is another matter altogether.

"I have seen many falls. This was spectacular not because of its implicit beauty, but because of my extended experience in this particular context: how the legends grew out of the water and the locals thriving in them give this element a special embodiment," mused Wee, who was in the village with a Ngee Ann Polytechnic team to help preserve some of the heritage of the people there.

Animism is practised among most of the ethnic minorities in Banlung. We were told that a boy had drowned in Chaa Ong, falling to his death and, now, some of the locals stay away from the waterfall for fear of encountering his spirit or angering the spirit of the waterfall any further.

Waterfalls are not the only water source around in Banlung. A few kilometres southwest of the village lies one of Banlung's biggest attraction. The Yeak Laom Lake is a volcanic lake spanning over 800 metres in diameter and about 50 metres deep. This ancient lake has survived the test of time, standing strong after an amazing 700,000 years since its formation. A circular 3-kilometre track stretches around the perimeter of the lake, offering visitors, who pay US\$3 to enter, a breathtaking view whenever the

foliage breaks occasionally.

"Yeak Loam is still stunningly beautiful. This lush landscape is one of the most beautiful spots in Banlung. As this is a place where the "spirit" resides, I am sure this place holds even greater significance to the Tampuan people. I am glad... this place has held out against commercialisation," said Tham.

On weekends, Yeak Loam is filled with the shrill laughter of children and adults alike. Various makeshift stalls offering snacks and drinks line the path leading from the entrance to the lake. Very much like any tourist attraction anywhere, the goods sold there are often overpriced, like the entrance ticket.

Somewhere along the trail lies the Cultural and Environmental Centre of Yeak Loam Lake, which contains exhibits of local craftwork, like flutes, baskets and hand-woven cloth. Opposite the centre is a small dock where locals love to jump off. Reeling from the adrenaline rush, some even climb the neighbouring trees and dive into the water below.

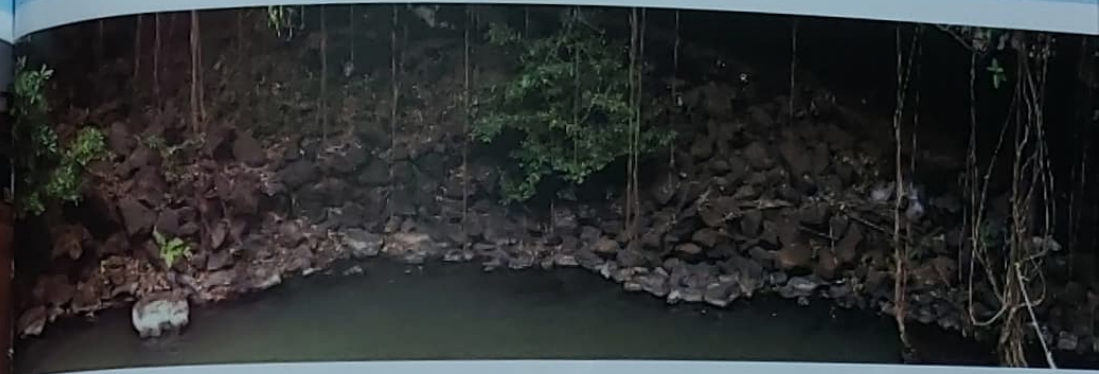
Wee, who also took part in this half-crazed stunt, said, "You see a different shade of green; the kind you cannot see in places like Singapore because the act is considered too dangerous."

## FOOD

As typical Singaporeans, food is of utmost priority to us. Cambodian fare is an eclectic mixture of its neighbouring countries, namely China, Thailand and Vietnam. Western influence is also present in restaurants. Cambodia stocks up on French baguettes and sells them by the bunches.

Mornings are always a riot at the marketplace, Phsar Banlung. Much like our local wet markets, Phsar Banlung offers produce in similar fashion, though of a lower hygiene standard. Wandering around the perimeter of the market are pigs as big as coffee tables, poking their snouts in heaps of rubbish strewn across vacant patches of land.

Butchers and fishmongers display their wares proudly on sheets of newspaper and in buckets. None are happier than the flies. They buzz around the raw meat, enjoying the feast. This lack of cleanliness may

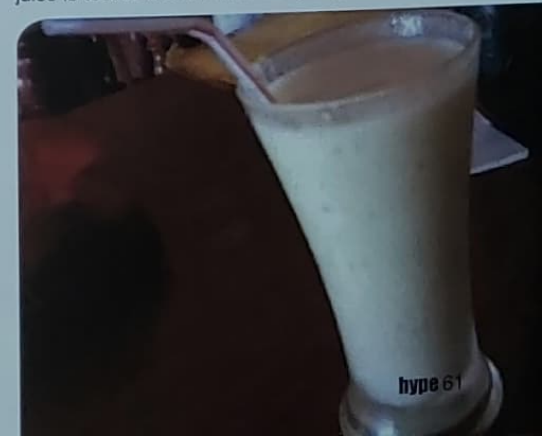


come across as a culture shock and may take some getting used to.

A typical Cambodian breakfast would constitute of a bowl of noodles, *you tiao* (fried dough fritters) and coffee. The Breakfast Restaurant is a popular eating-house just a few metres from Phsar Banlung. Equipped with four television sets, each on a different channel, the restaurant serves a variety of breakfast dishes, including omelettes and beef noodles.

For a heartier lunch, drop by Ratanak Hotel where the *a la carte* menu boasts an array of Asian and Western dishes. Relatively inexpensive, the restaurant is quite empty in the afternoons. You may have to call out to get the attention of the staff hidden in the back rooms, relaxing. The service isn't exactly five-star quality but the food makes up for it. Singaporean student Leong Kah Yan, 19, recommends the fruit shake. Milk and ice are blended together with a variety of fruits including bananas and pineapples and served in a tall glass for 2,500 riels.

Distributed all across town are small pull carts that sell a local favourite: sugarcane juice. Unlike the bland stuff we get here in Singapore, the sugarcane juice in Banlung bursts with a tangy sweet flavour. The cart owners manually grind the sugarcane shoots by rolling them through two metal cylinders. The juice is collected and a dash of freshly squeezed orange juice is tossed into the mix. Everything is packed into





a plastic bag and sold at 500 riels.

Coffee lovers mustn't miss the local café *tenako tekok*, or "ice coffee with milk". At 2,500 riels, this beverage is good enough to put Starbucks and Coffee Bean to shame. Black Vietnamese coffee is first brewed. A glass is filled to the brim with coarse ice shavings. It is then half-filled with condensed milk and the coffee is then added. A simple and fattening recipe, but the taste is phenomenal.

#### SHOPPING

Shopaholics will be disheartened to know that there are no 'fancy schmancy' malls in Banlung. Instead, this town adopts the typical style of a *pasar malam*, or night market. From screwdrivers to shoes to even jewellery, the market holds practically all of the locals' necessities.

The marketplace is a brilliant place to get the best bargains. Something essential to save your lungs, a simple *krama*, a piece of cotton cloth used to prevent one from inhaling dust and sand, costs about 2,000 riels. Handmade jewellery can go for as low as 1,000 riels a piece. We also found *batik* cloths at 11,000 riels. There are several handmade artifacts like gourds, baskets and bags that can also be found outside

Phsar Banlung.

Semi-precious gems are abundant in Banlung but visitors are advised to know a little more about them before buying. The gems mostly found there are peridot, obsidian, zircon and amethyst. Just opposite the runway is a well-stocked gem store with several glass display cases. A gemstone can cost between US\$1 and US\$5 depending on its size. Their usual sizes range from 2 to 5 carats, but some have been known to reach an unbelievable 25 carats!

If you're thinking of exercising your parent's credit card, we'd suggest you look elsewhere. In Banlung, only cash is accepted, though some hotels may accept traveller's checks.

Simplicity is king in Banlung. It's evident in both the land and the people. It allows us city dwellers to slow down and revitalise our spirits while reconnecting with nature. This is not an experience for the faint-hearted, but an adventure for the brave. As you leave behind the comforts and distractions of a technologically-enhanced world, Banlung shows you that there really is life beyond computers.

"When you are in Banlung, you feel you have... moved back in time and that you are able to see a small section of the past. How fortunate to experience history itself!" Tham summed up.

# CONTESTS

Congratulations to:

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(Please circle your answer)

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# LAST LOOK



Where's Harry Potter when you need him? While we mere mortals can't seem to get that magic wand to work, **MATTHIAS PHUA** conjured up the kind of spells Hogwarts' denizens would have if only they lived in the real world.

**Curfewo Disappearo!**

Get out and stay out, for as long as you like

**Assignmentue Automaticue!**

Banish homework, and while we're at it, exams too.

**Multiplymeba!**

Ever watched the movie Multiplicity? It's sharing your allowance with your four clones that's going to be tough.

**Acneris Vanishes!**

Move over, Clean & Clear – we've got a winner!

**Financa Apparita!**

Making money's a snap

**Hangoverus Awayus!**

Boozing without a hangover is always a charm.

**Lovero Bemineno!**

Or you can always buy a voodoo doll or concoct Love Potion No 69

**Alarmus Destroyus!**

Which wizard is expected to be up at 8am anyway?

**Hainty Colouraty!**

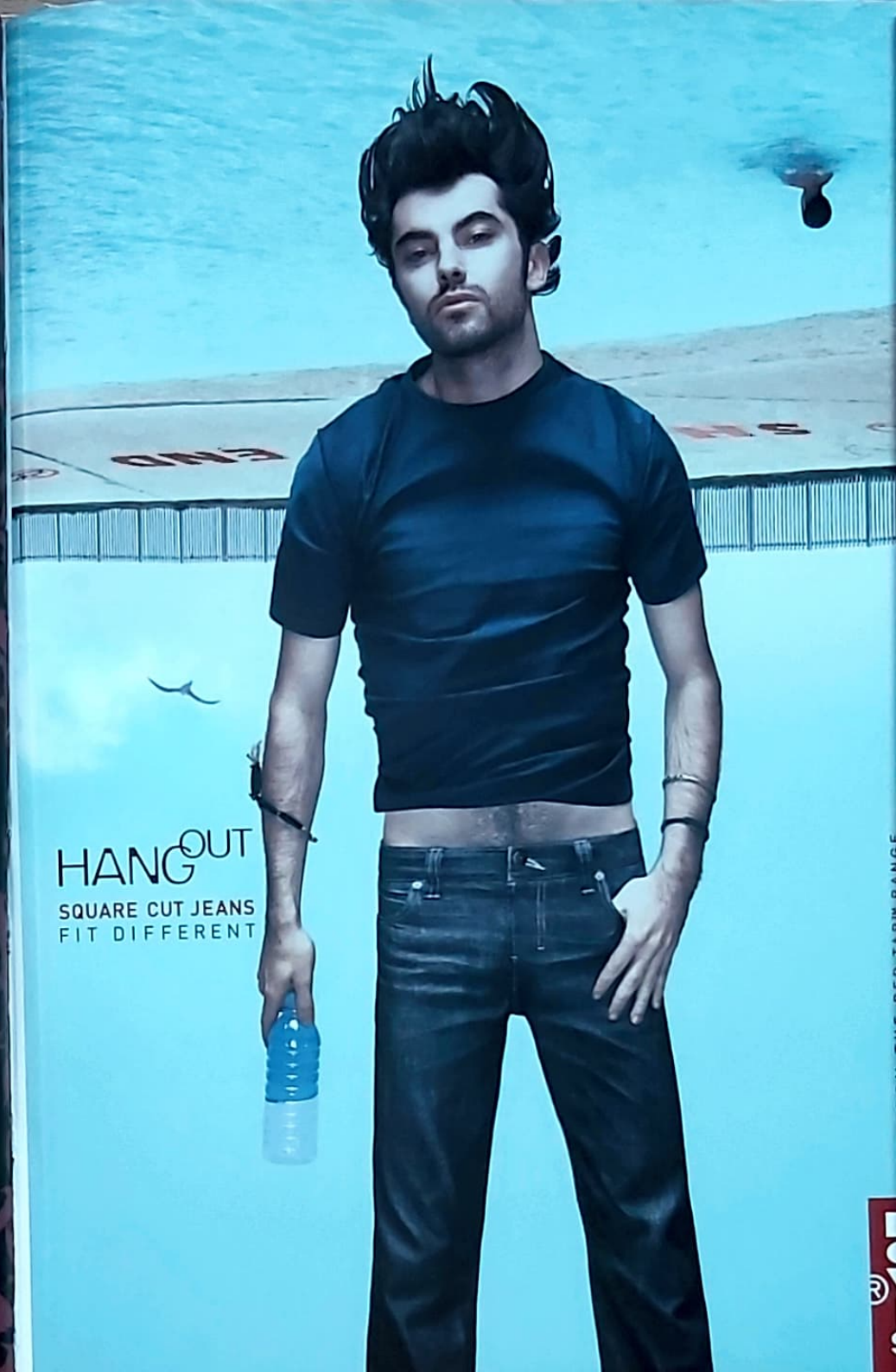
You'll always look coordinated from head to toe.

**[Insert road name here] Teleporto!**

Never be late for another appointment.

**Mobilus Changus!**

Who needs skins when you can cram recorder, telescope and P.A. system functions in a jiffy!



HANG<sup>OUT</sup>  
SQUARE CUT JEANS  
FIT DIFFERENT



# AM

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- **Bachelor of Sport Media** (3 yrs)



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- **Bachelor of International Hotel & Tourism Management** (2 yrs)

### Admission Requirements

(Quarterly intakes in January, April, July, October)

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