



## APRIL NEWSLETTER

2018

SJCians had a very rich term 2 pursuing their various interests and talents in sports, languages and performing and culinary arts, pushing beyond their comfort levels, challenging themselves to pursue excellence, before they directed all of their attention to their mid-year examinations. In the April and May issues of our newsletter, we will highlight our girls' Joy of Learning.

### SJC CONCERT BAND: THE BAND THAT PLAYS TOGETHER, STAYS TOGETHER



**SJC Percussionists**

As part of annual enrichment, 10 band members volunteered to learn percussion and participated in assessment by the NUS Yong Siew Toh Music Conservatory. They garnered 3 Distinction, 5 Merit and 2 Pass for Grades 2 to 5 (Individual Percussion). Congratulations to the recipients!

*As percussionists, we are very proud of the hard work we put in. Initially, we found the exam pieces challenging due to their complex dynamics and rhythm. We did not have that much of time to practise the three pieces due to our involvement in the band camp and concert. Eventually, we mastered the pieces by practising every day and commenting on one another's playing. We were nervous about making mistakes during the assessment. However,*

*our lovely seniors, Seoyoung, Danelle and Jodie, kept encouraging us and told us to calm down and give our best shot. They pushed us to practise harder, corrected our mistakes and gave us useful tips on how to improve our skills. We grew closer as a section through many challenges this year. Such achievement wouldn't have been possible without the hard work everyone put in. We learnt how important it was to help one another and to work hard towards our goals. Lastly, we would like to thank our section members, teachers and Mrs Goh, our band director for their loving support throughout this experience. – SJC percussionists.*

Apart from being one of the 4 performing groups that performed at our 17<sup>th</sup> Awards Ceremony, Concert Band also made time to perform at the Punggol Community Arts Festival one Saturday evening alongside other youth artists. Here are reflections by our musicians:

*Our performance for the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Award Ceremony is one that I'll never forget. Besides being able to showcase band and our musicianship, it was also our last performance with our Secondary Four seniors. I had a great time, especially during the last few practices when reality hit me that the seniors are leaving. At first, it seemed unreal, but I knew that we had to step up and face reality. This made me appreciate my seniors more as in band they were a pillar of support but after this performance, those*



**SJCians performing at the Punggol Arts Festival**

familiar faces would no longer be there. The song we performed, 细水长流, really resonates with me as it seemed to portray our feelings that day. The song is about how Friendship lasts forever like water. This reminded me of how I want my relationship with my seniors to be. It was definitely a very memorable song. This experience highlighted the importance of communication and encouragement. Knowing that the seniors would not be able to help us in future performances, we had to familiarise ourselves in playing major parts and could not hide behind our seniors anymore. Being the only secondary three member in my section, I carried a heavy responsibility and there was definitely a lot of pressure. I had to be able to play well as well as guide my juniors should they have any doubts. I was very worried at first, but with the encouragement of my seniors, I gained courage and faith in myself. I was proud of our performance and thankful for wonderful memories that night. I hope that we have more opportunities like this to further improve our skills and deepen our love for our music. — Arianne Lim, 3D

This AC was very enjoyable and memorable even though it was tiring. I saw myself improve; it was my first performance when I played my instrument properly. Previously, I was not able to play all the notes and only joined in during the easier parts. I felt encouraged and motivated to improve further, especially in learning to master the running notes. I feel that the band has come a long way from last year and improved a lot so I hope that we will keep improving and strive for excellence in future performances. — AndreaTang, 2F

### **LIVING HERITAGE, LIVING LANGUAGES: MOTHER TONGUE FORTNIGHT 2018 (PART 1)**

Chinese language translation competitions, Xinyao concerts and meet the writer sessions were just some of the activities that the MT department organized for students in semester 1.

In collaboration with the CCE NE Team, MT colleagues organized for Secondary Twos a learning journey to *The Projector* theatre at Golden Mile Complex to watch the documentary “The Songs We Sang” on the 27 March. Set in the backdrop of 1980s, the film revealed how *Xinyao*, commonly referred to as the genre of songs composed by young Singaporeans in Chinese, initially emerged from the campuses but soon gained momentum and found its way into the heartlands, capturing the attention of the nation with its elegant melodies and meaningful lyrics revolving love, family, friendship and the everyday life of Singaporeans. Steeped in history and authenticity, this detailed documentary captures the spirit of a Singapore culture that has since become a significant part of our nation’s collective cultural heritage. Through this movie appreciation, our students got a glimpse into our society in the eighties, and were provoked to re-examine their identity as Singaporean youths of today, to think of how to connect to their mother tongue languages, just like how the youths in the past did.

*I was pleasantly surprised by the interior decoration of the cinema. I vividly remember how the iridescent light bulbs outlining the photo-frames gave the surroundings its antique look from its wine red glow. The posters on the wall and the layout of the cinema created a very classic and vintage atmosphere. The aesthetics of the cinema was like a blast from the past, making me want to visit again. The dusty and bohemian feel set the mood for the documentary which we watched. The documentary was riveting. I learnt much about the history of Singaporean folk music ‘Xinyao’. The fact that young people created*



**SJCians enjoying a Xinyao concert**

*their own genre of music and influenced the public because of their passion and determination really blows my mind. It helped me realize that despite our young age, it does not hold us back from changing and creating whatever we want. This documentary contains so much information about the rich history of Xinyao and how it influenced and sparked a fire in youths across Singapore. It showed their hardships from the sudden language barrier in their studies and how they valiantly overcame it with their music. I was amazed by the deep meaning behind the lyrics. I felt like it was a waste of their capabilities and talents for their schools to close down because their Chinese was simply top-notch. That has motivated my friends to*



*improve their Chinese language abilities. The tradition of Xinyao is too precious and powerful to let die. No matter what language, I hope that the tradition of making such music stays alive. – Zoe Torres, 2D*

*Seeing the huge turnout at the reunion concert decades later as shown in the documentary, all the nostalgic smiles from the audience and them singing the songs by heart really touched me. My friends were surprised that I cried during the ending. I understood how important Xinyao is to them, that the fire of passion is still alive within them, was such a powerful message. I hope that through this experience, we, as youths of today, will take the baton and treasure this special Xinyao tradition. – Heidi Lek, 2F*

On 11th April, our Sec 1-5 students were treated to a feast for the ears as our school hosted the *Xinyao* music appreciation session in the school hall. The programme was organised by the Committee to Promote Chinese Language Learning (CPCLL) Culture Group to promote the learning of Chinese in a fun and interactive manner, as well as to acquaint our students with *Xinyao* which forms an integral part of our nation's collective cultural heritage. The session featured the performance of a selection of *Xinyao* songs and local compositions by four talented artistes from the TCR Music Station, a well-known player in the local music industry. The artistes shared with the audience interesting stories, anecdotes and even their own life experiences related to the songs that they were performing. The humour of one of the male artistes certainly brought much laughter. The session ended on a very high note with everyone singing along to the evergreen *Xinyao* favourite "Xi Shui Chang Liu 细水长流".

*To date, two of our students 3B Claudia Ong and 2E Mieke Yuen have registered to participate in the National Schools Xinyao Singing and Songwriting Competition. We wish them success in the upcoming competition!*

#### **MT COOL – "LEARNING FROM CELEBRITIES" SEMINAR SERIES 2018**

On 2<sup>nd</sup> April, our Sec Ones gathered excitedly at the school library for a seminar to be conducted by a local renowned picture book author and illustrator Ah Guo (Lee Kow Fong). Students had read the award-winning book, "*The Search*" weeks before the seminar. They finally got the chance to meet the author in real life.

*The Search* tells of a story of a little boy and his penguin friend who embarked on an adventure up in the mountain in search of something special – Lonely Not. Along the way, they found Smallness, Eternity, Freedom, Tranquility, Trust, Waltz of the water, Songs of the mountain and eventually, each other. This simple yet poetic picture book was inspired by the idyllic landscapes of outskirt Wonju, Korea, where the author stayed for close to three months while on a residency programme sponsored by the National Arts Council.



**Meet the Writers**



During the seminar, the speaker shared vividly with our students his experience of living overseas in a rural area, how he drew inspiration from his surroundings and paid attention to the details in his everyday life to come up with the storyline and illustrations for his picture book. Our students displayed interest and enthusiasm while listening to the captivating descriptions by the author. At the end of the seminar, our students grabbed the chance to get the author to autograph their books and did not forget to take a picture with him for keepsake.

*After listening to Mr Lee Kow Fong's talk, I feel that he is a role model. Despite the many challenges he met during his seven to eight years journey as an author*

and an illustrator, he successfully illustrated and published his books in not just one but four different languages. This shows that perseverance is one of the keys to succeed in life. Although many picture-book authors publish their stories with the mindset that only young children and toddlers read their books, Mr Lee does not think that way. He believes that his book has no age restrictions, no matter if you are a teenager or even an adult, he feels that people of all ages would enjoy reading his book. To me, the most meaningful part of his talk is when he shared that in order to illustrate and at the same time, write his storyline, he had to live in Wonju, Korea for two and a half months. What made me impressed is the amount of focus and determination he had during that two and a half months. He resisted the temptation of having fun in Korea and instead, worked hard every day by waking up at five to six in the morning to discover many hidden places in the area he was living in for inspiration just to illustrate every drawing in the book. He even came up with a storyline he had not thought of before arriving in Korea. By incorporating the many animals, insects, sceneries and weather he experienced or saw in his daily life in Korea, he successfully completed and published his book. This left a great impression on me and makes me feel extremely inspired to be a person like him. – Tan Rui Yin, 1D



The author is very open and friendly. He keeps up with the times and has Instagram and Facebook. He writes his own books and illustrates them himself too. He speaks with expression and is very fluent. He shares about the process he went through to create his book. First, he applied for a permit to stay at a Heritage Centre in Korea for two and a half months. In Korea, he went around the area he was staying in and took many photographs to use as inspiration. He told us that he used watercolor paints to paint his picture and that he painted one picture every day. One of the things he got his inspiration from was a balsam plant. He showed us a

picture of a balsam plant with its seed pods that explode when squeezed and its beautiful pink flowers. He used water from a nearby river that was very clean and pure for his watercolor paints instead of tap water to save water. He took many photos of the nature surrounding him to use as inspiration such as a sunset, a full moon, and even the room he was staying in! He also described what he heard when he was exploring outside the Heritage Centre. "A woodpecker pecking" he said. He mentioned making acquaintances with others staying in Heritage Centre, especially other writers. Although the book he shared with us was a very simple picture book, it was meant to be directed at teenagers and even young adults. He later found out that young children at five years old understood the book and could even relate to it! He was saddened by the fact that there are such lonely young children. – Sarah Ng, 1E.

### **NATIONAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS TRANSLATION COMPETITION 2018**

SJCians took part for the first time in the National Secondary Schools Translation Competition since its inception 12 years ago. The competition was organized by Nanyang Junior College, *Lianhe Zaobao* and the National Translation Committee. The intent of the competition is to promote students' bilingual effectiveness and develop cross-cultural awareness. Our students had a morning of fun putting their translation skills to use as they went around the NYJC campus completing a range of activities from identifying mistakes in daily translation practices to translating food recipes. Prior to the competition, the students also attended a workshop to understand more about the different types of translation and interpretation, as well as their basic skills and techniques.

*This activity was interesting and fun because it was not just about writing and reading but involved a lot of*



*in-depth thinking and processing of words. Since the activity also involved different stations around the school, we could stay active most of the time and explore NYJC while searching for answers. I think this competition enlightened me about what Chinese is about and used for in our daily lives.*

*Through this process, I learnt quite a lot of skills and values.*

- *Enabling myself to think on the spot: We were required to think of suitable synonyms and translation of the word we had to translate and how to phrase the whole sentence*
- *There is more than what it looks: Translation is not just the literal translation of the sentence but the meaning of the word used should be considered if it fits the context and the structure of the sentence too.*
- *Teamwork: Since we worked as a team, we helped one another by giving the choice of word to use and suggested what would be better and worked together solving the translation.*
- *Skills to apply in Oral/Exams: prediction, developing of ideas, creativity, thinking, processing of thoughts, thinking of the answer when a question is asked*
- *Types of interpretation: simultaneous interpretation, consecutive interpretation, whispering and relay interpretation*

*I think it was a great out-of-school experience where it was linked to the context of learning and getting to know about a new context of translation and interpretation. It was interesting to watch other schools compete and also learning from their high level of language skills. – Laura Lim, 3E*

*Through this competition, I learnt to appreciate Chinese more. I got an insight into the translation profession which was something not very well-known among people. During the competition, we felt a little discouraged as many of the other schools' competitors were better than us in translation skills. However, we did our best in the competition and completed it with no regrets. I watched the finals with admiration as the other students were all so good and confident. After the competition, I felt that I am able to appreciate translators more as I understand that their job is not as easy as it seems. I am very grateful that I was chosen to represent the school to participate in this competition and I hope to have more of such opportunities in future to broaden my horizon. – Joanne Lai, 3D*



**Front row (left to right): Reiko Yeo (3E), Madeline Lau (3D), Laura Lim (3E).**

**Back row (left to right): Joanne Lai (3D), Lynn Ong (3D), Chang Zi Ning (3D)**

#### **NATIONAL SECONDARY AND PRIMARY SCHOOLS CHINESE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE COMPETITION 2018**

8 of our Sec 2 and 3 students represented the school to participate in this year's National Secondary and Primary Schools Chinese Language and Culture Competition organised by Temasek Junior College. The competition provides a platform for students to meet new friends from other schools and test their knowledge of the Chinese language. Languages are not simply examinable subjects but ways of living - SJCians gained exposure to different aspects of Chinese learning beyond the classroom, worked together with their peers in a team and more importantly, gained deeper insight into what learning Chinese entails.



**Left to Right: Valerie Oh (3E), Clara Ang (3F), Koh Yi Shan (3F), Rena Tay (3E), Evelyn Chin (2E), Charmaine Soh (2E), Trinity Tan (3F), Leong Xin Tung (3E)**

*Upon reaching the competition venue, I felt a little stressed as the other students spoke Chinese fluently and there were many more students competing than I had expected. This competition was beneficial as not only did I get to know more people from our school as I worked with them as a team for the competition, I also learnt many new things related to Chinese such as the names of famous Chinese novels which I have not heard before. The VP at TJC shared that Chinese is a way of life. I agree. I live with my grandparents. They only speak Chinese. To interact with them, my Chinese has to be good enough to be spoken fluently and coherently. Chinese*

*is a way of life to me not only because it is my mother tongue, it is also the key to my close relationship with my grandparents. – Trinity Tan, 3F*

### **CULINARY ADVENTURES AT SHATEC: A FOOD AND NUTRITION LEARNING JOURNEY**

*The workshop at SHATEC on 3 April allowed graduating Food and Nutrition (F&N) students hands-on opportunity and experience with food presentation and styling. When we first learn about the workshop from our teachers, we expected to be just doing food plating and observing food demonstration by SHATEC chefs. Prior to attending the workshop, many of us had different expectations of the program. Although our teacher told us beforehand that we were required to do simple food preparation, many of us began to worry, thinking that we needed to prepare dishes from scratch in a foreign setting with little help. Whatever it was, we know for sure that the F&N girls were simply excited for a culinary adventure!*

*Initially flabbergasted, we then turned our attention to the kitchen set-up in a cooking studio. With a setting of a theatrette, it was a thrill to witness the cooking demonstration on the first dish, "Chicken Roulade", by the skillful chef as he whipped up magic with his choiced ingredients. As for the second dish, "Chocolate Brownies", our creativity will be out to test in plating the delightful dessert.*



**Food and Nutrition students from the Secondary 4 and 5 cohort with the helpful SHATEC chefs who conducted the workshop**





### **The culinary delights that we modelled our work after**

*The kitchen setting was a lot different from the kitchens we have in school. SHATEC kitchens are modelled after industrial kitchens with immense burners and fanciful kitchen equipment. Each workstation is wide which provided us with plenty of space to work comfortably. The pots and pans are very heavy to work with. It was both quite hilarious and challenging for us to lift the utensils while we went about our practical session. Lucky for us, our teacher, the chef and his assistant trainer were around to render help.*

*The main trainer, Chef Nicholas Yap, was a nice person. He was clear in his instructions and was also very engaging. He joked with us yet effectively brought across his message of prioritizing safety in the kitchen.*



**Shadika Shree and Joanne Roy (5A)**

*Many of us were not able to roll the chicken well and this caused the filling to spill over. Chef Nicholas and his assistant trainer were very patient in guiding us in every difficult step we encountered throughout the cooking processes. They walked around to ensure that we were safe and doing fine in executing the dish. At the same time, they patiently answered our queries on techniques of food preparation and even shared tips on food handling.*

*In the second half of the workshop, Chef Nicholas demonstrated the plating of "Chocolate Brownies". His style was refreshing as he took on a garden theme for the dessert by using both custard and chocolate sauces and an array of berries.*

*The experience we gained in creating plating our food was priceless. We also tried out fusing two cooking methods for chicken, which are poaching and searing. We also learnt that one*

*simple basic sauce could be made into different sauces such cream, mushroom and black pepper sauces with slight twists of additional ingredients.*



**Cassandra Khor and Hazel Tang (4H)**



**Mikiyo Seah and Jay Mang Yu (4H)**

*On top of acquiring fresh food preparation skills and techniques through this workshop, one crucial value we learnt from this workshop is that cooking is an art form. Without this realisation, we would not be able to prepare our dishes with our hearts because we would instead constantly worry about the methods and completing our cooking on time. This food presentation and styling workshop has taught us the importance of perspectives and elevating prepared food to another level.*

*We had an amazing experience and definitely recommend this workshop to the other Food and Nutrition students. The workshop gave us a glimpse into professional food presentation and styling techniques. It helped us to get first-hand experience from professionally trained chefs and we believe that other students will learn as much as we did.*

*The workshop was, indeed, enjoyable. We would like to thank the school for giving us this opportunity to step out of the classroom to have this unforgettable learning journey.*

*– Tan Jia Xin (4H), Terese Tok Wan Li (4H) and Steffi Chew (5A).*