



# CHIJ ST JOSEPH'S CONVENT

## SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER

2018

Dear SJC Community, here are highlights from September at SJC.

### LIVING LANGUAGE

After the solidarity and camaraderie of National Day commemorations, SJCians enjoyed themselves at the much loved annual Mother Tongue Fortnight. The 2018 line-up featured the following: **The Voice of SJC 2** (Chinese Language Unit), **Malay Arts and Theatre** (Malay Language Unit), and **Tamil Arts and Culture** (Tamil Language Unit). Here are highlights as shared by our teacher-organizers and student-participants:



Mrs Willman giving the opening address

### THE VOICE OF SJC 2

Following the success of the first season of Voice of SJC 2 years ago, this year's competition attracted close to 40 video entries in the preliminary round. Through this competition, we hope to excite our students' interest in deepening their appreciation of the Chinese Language in a fun and engaging manner.

Through both professional judging and online voting, these 40 were reduced to the Top 10 contestants in the preliminary round, and eventually the Top 6 finalists, who then competed live before an adoring supportive crowd of SJC peers and friends on 30 August, right after the Teachers' Day celebrations.

For a start, we invited our Vice-Principal overseeing lower secondary, Mrs Michelle Willman, a Eurasian, to give the opening speech in Mandarin. Mrs Willman shared her journey of learning the Chinese Language and how she overcame the struggles that she faced along the way. Mrs Willman shared how valuable it was for her to eventually master the language which was practical and useful in her communication to others in her course of work. Mrs Willman's speech provided invaluable insight for our students in realising the value and importance of learning the Chinese Language.

After Mrs Willman's speech, the much anticipated performance from our Top 6 finalists finally commenced. Beginning with a joint singing-cum-dancing item, the 6 finalists impressed the 700-strong audience. After the group performance, the finalists performed individually to the enthusiastic encouragement of their staff and peer supporters.

One of 3D's Form Teachers, Mr Tan Gim Chuan, a double Mathematics teacher, also briefly stole the show hilariously when he ran before the judges and around the performance venue enthusiastically waving a homemade poster board supporting a finalist, Adeline Tan, a student from his class.



The teacher-emcees with finalist, Adeline Tan, who eventually emerged Champion of Voice of SJC 2.

Our 3 local celebrity judges this year were local musicians Mr Marco Zhang YaoTian, Ms Lin SiTong (who was also a judge in Season 1), and Mr Desmond Huang ZhenLong.

The frank, insightful yet encouraging feedback that they provided each finalist after her performance was invaluable in enabling her to improve her craftsmanship as a budding singer.

As a bonus, the judges also graced the stage with individual renditions that showcased their formidable vocal prowess, song-writing talents, and musical sophistication in a range of Chinese music that spanned the gamut from the transcendental *Ode to Mt Fuji* to the infectious pop of *Love ING*.



(From L to R) Judge Mr Marco Zhang YaoTian, VP Ms Berlina Tan, Judges Ms Lin SiTong and Mr Desmond, Huang ZhenLong



Indeed, SJCians were so blown away by the judges' performances that they swarmed them for autographs and wifis at the end of the afternoon's events.

2 other very well-received guest performers were our Top 2 finalists from season 1 of The Voice of SJC - SJC alumnus, Peng Wei Ying, now a performing arts student at La Salle College of the Arts, and Liang Shun Jing, a current student from Secondary 4F. They performed a rocking duet rendition of Huang MingZhi and Wang LiHong's *Stranger in the North*.

The afternoon was a resounding success.



**Voice of SJC 2 Overall Winner:** Adeline Tan Wan Ning (3D)

**1<sup>st</sup> Runner-up:** Mieko Yuen Yi Xuan (2E)

**2<sup>nd</sup> Runner-up:** Claudia Ong Shi Qing (3B)

**Consolation Prizes:** Hong Zi Xuan Cherylene (2D), Oie Shiqing Charlize (1A), Shu Yixin (1E)

**Most Popular Award (based on online voting):** Claudia Ong Shi Qing (3B)



## MALAY ARTS AND THEATRE

The Malay Language unit organised workshops for all Sec 1-3 ML students on 28 Aug. Secondary Ones participated in a Malay dance workshop, Secondary Twos learnt self-defence in a *silat* workshop while Secondary Threes learnt to play the **kompang** and attended a play.

*It was challenging to pick up Malay dance after so long as I had forgotten steps which I learnt in primary school. I learnt that I have to keep on practicing; maybe I could join Malay dance classes outside or learn the steps online. Besides learning new steps today, we also shared our knowledge with our friends by compiling what we have learnt through creating a short video. I learnt to work together with my group members and to do a simple video in Malay. - Nor Insyirah Bte Mohamad Iswan ,1A*



Secondary Ones at their Malay Dance workshop

*The workshop was beneficial for me. I learnt that there are 5 types of Malay dance: Asli, Joget, Zapin, Inang, and Ronggeng, each with their own sets of costume and accessories. It was, indeed, a challenge for me to follow the choreography by the instructor, what more memorising the dance steps! It was worth it in the end because I had a lot of fun learning Malay dance. I wish the workshop were longer so I could master the dance steps under the teacher's guidance. - Nur Halimah Hanis Bte Norashikin / 1C*



Secondary Twos with their Silat instructor, Chikgu Janis, in the dance studio.

*I learnt the history of **silat** and a few steps that I could use as self-defence. Most importantly, I learnt that in doing martial arts, I need to remain focused at all times, especially when I'm in a real situation where I need to defend myself. During practice, I had difficulty kicking and punching without losing my balance. Only after a few tries did I have better balance. As a teenager, I could play my part in ensuring that this art form remains alive by practising it on my own, like taking up classes outside. - Amina Nadya Bte Abdul Rahman, 2D*



Secondary Threes learning the Kompang in the I&E Room

*I learnt that kompang is a Malay traditional percussion instrument and that there are at least 15 ways to play the kompang. Kompang is not only played during weddings but also to mark the birth of a baby. At first, the palm of my hand hurt as I kept hitting the kompang to produce the sounds. Secondly, I had difficulty trying to keep up to the tempo of the music as I was not familiar with it. However, as I continued, I became more familiar with the instrument, so I felt a little more comfortable by the end of the workshop. Next time, I could offer to play the kompang when there is a wedding in my family. - Insyirah Alyaa Bte Shannul, 3F*

In line with SJC's ALP, The Art of Community through Theatre and Debates, Secondary Three seniors had the additional opportunity to watch a Malay theatre performance, *The (Assumed) Vicious Cycle of a (Melayu) Youth* on 27 Jul 2018 at the black box theatre at the Malay Heritage Centre.

Situated in the compound of the historic home of Malay royalty, the Malay Heritage Centre was then known as Istana Kampong Glam (Kampong Glam Palace). SJCians had a taste of the bustling area at night. For most, it was their first time stepping foot into the historical palace. It was a meaningful experience as they got the opportunity to see how the Malay palace could have looked in the past.



SJCians with their teachers at the historic Malay Heritage Centre, the site of the evening's theatre performance



The theme of the play was, *Ambitions. Cita-cita. Aspirations*. It explores the lifestyle aspirations of a Malay youth and the assumption that the aspirations are a vicious cycle. TVCY is writer Anwar Hadi Ramli's award winning script. It was recognized as the Best Theatre Script at 2017's *Anugerah Persuratan* (Malay Literary Awards).

The intimate setting of the black box enabled the play to be staged with a live band providing the moving soundtrack and the audience seated all around. Set in various modern periods, *Cita-*

*Cita* also infused *Randai*, a traditional performance played in a circular manner, to symbolise the life cycle.



*I am glad that I watched the play because I felt that the play was really relatable. I related a lot to one of the main characters, Mimi, as I have similar ambitions as her. I could connect with the play the most when they showed the scenes from when the characters were in kindergarten, secondary school and attended religious class. I would definitely recommend this play to my friends and family members especially because the play is in Malay, hence I feel we can connect better, especially when talking about issues related to the Malay community. - Naylie Afreena Bte Md Sa'at, 3B*

*I had so much fun watching the play! There were hilarious parts throughout the play. I found the most exciting part when the characters had to choose a name for the newborn. I am impressed by Amirah Yahya, who portrayed Mimi, because she could speak very loudly and clearly without being scared or stumbling over her words. I feel that this play is meaningful because I understood better issues in the Malay community. – Nur Izzah Hazirah Bte Jumadi, 3A*



The cast of the play shared photos of themselves when they were in secondary school during this scene. Actress Amirah Yahya (left most character in the picture) is an ex-student of SJC.

*If I could choose to be one character in the play, I would want to be the character named Man. I feel that Man tried his best to fulfil his dreams and aspirations although he was told many times that he couldn't do the things he wanted to do.*

*However, he found alternative ways to go about doing them. To me, he is an inspiration. Through the play, I understand better Malay culture and the Malay community. This has broadened my perspective of the things around me. – Emma Maree Humphries, 3E*



SJCians with their Malay Language teachers and some of the cast of the play taking a photo after the post-show dialogue.

## TAMIL ARTS AND CULTURE

### FLOWER GARLAND MAKING AND HENNA

*The Mother Tongue fortnight activities were enjoyable and enriching as we got an opportunity to learn about henna drawing and flower garland making which are two main things in Indian culture. These important practices mark every festival that is celebrated by the Hindus. Although we had a tough time doing the intricate activities, we enjoyed ourselves in learning more about our culture.*

- Praveena Regunathan, Jessica Joyson and Ravichandran Vaishnavi (1E), Lakshaya Rajakumaran and Baskaran Jenisha (1F)



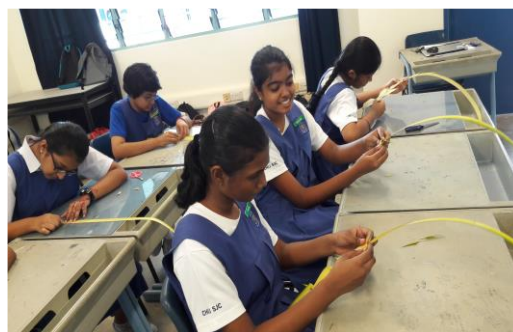
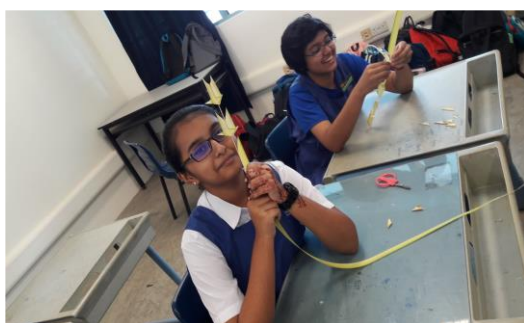
Secondary Ones learning the beautiful, delicate art of flower garland weaving

### THORANAM AND HENNA

This year's activities were, indeed, enriching and educational for the Secondary Two Tamil students. We learnt many new things that we were not aware of, such as the beliefs behind our traditions. This includes traditional crafts such as thoranam making and henna. The thoranam-making workshop was a fruitful session. We never knew how hard it was to make the thoranam until we experienced making it! We learnt the uses of the thoranam and how important it is to our culture.

Did you know that, henna was used for its medicinal values in the past but now, it is used for a final touch-up in functions such as weddings? These activities have given us a deeper understanding of our culture and tradition. It has been an unforgettable experience.

- Malaika Saad Janjua and Shriya Jeevanandam (2F), and Pratiba Revi Shanker (2E)



Secondary Twos having fun learning making Thoranam

## ENCOURAGING STUDENT VOICES THROUGH CREATIVE WRITING

*As with previous years Tamil writing workshops, MT fortnight always has a component that includes essay writing skills. This year's workshop taught us various ways to tackle essay questions to make our writing more engaging and thoughtful. We also learnt how to elaborate on an essay topic using a wide range of descriptive phrases. We were tasked to describe an object using phrases related to the five senses and to apply it in our compositions. Through this workshop, we gained a better understanding of how to build up to a climax and then work through a suitable conclusion.*

*After learning those important skills, we were instructed to split into small groups and asked to continue creative writing from a given scenario. Although it was a classic story, each group came up with unique conclusions. Overall, this workshop was a fruitful learning experiences as it taught us to apply what we have learnt previously in a new way. We are really grateful for this opportunity given to us as it will help us craft better essays during our Tamil Language examinations.*

- James Sharonsusan, Princess Gladia and Thasneem Firdous Mohamed R (3D)



Secondary Threes thoughtfully crafting their creative writing pieces.