Pendidik lulusan sastera Inggeris raih ijazah kedua teater muzikal

Selain manfaatkan ilmu seni bagi perkasa pelajar istimewa, Zahrah Syafiah sibuk siapkan diri bagi pementasan dengan latar dunia media, Covid-19

HARYANI ISMAIL haryani@sph.com so

MESKIPUN sudah memiliki jiazah Sari:

MESKIPUN sudah memiliki ijazah Sarjana Muda dalam Sastera Inggeris daripada
Universiti Teknologi Navanga (YTU), aktivis teater Zahrah Syafiah Jailani merasakan
beliau perlu merali limus seni formal yang
beliau perlu merali limus seni formal yang
Lantaran itu, Zahrah, 31 tahun, mengambil kursus ijazah Sarjana Muda Seni
(Kepujian) dalam Teater Muzikal di Maktab
Seni Lasalle dan tamat pengajian tahun lalu.
Berbekalkan ilmu seni, beliau yang kini
pendidik peringgat sekolah rendah di Mind
Champs Academy turut menyumbang kepada pemerkasan minda kanak-kanak berkepertuan khas yang pernah diajarnya di Persatuan Disleska Singapuru CO-Sive Spark
Lasalle dan Anugerah Belia Cemerlang Goh
Chok Yong itu sedang sibuk mempersiap diri bagi satu pementasan The Second Breakfast
Company bagi Pesta Seni Mi Singapore
Fringe.
Buti wawancara bersama Zahrah.



MANFAATKAN SENI DALAM PELBAGAI CARA: Lulusar Maktab Seni Lasalle dan penggiat seni, Zahrah Syafiah Jailani, berpeluang menggunakan kemahiran seni bagi memahami diri sendiri, menyumbang kepada pendidika pelajar istimewa dan bercerita tentang kisah kemanuska – Foto ihsan ZAHRAH SYAFIAH JAILANI

memahami di sendit, menyumbang kesada pendidikan Company bagi pertas Seni Mi Sirgapore Fringe.
Buti wawancara bersama Zahrah.
Soalan (Si: Apakah yang membuatkan and mengambil jizah Sarjana Muda kedua?
Zahrah: Sejak dahulu lagi, saya mahu libatkan diri daham persembahan pertas. Saya susa mengani para sakan sekuliah. Is penaty sang berbaloi. Saya susa mengani para sakan sekuliah. Beraty wang berbaloi. Saya wanganabil mata pelajaran balak kembali ke bilik darjah dan bersikar penatuah pertangkan pengapat tatu meminjan pencerita bagi mengapan tentang drama dan peringkan pengaban bangar perdapat dan peringkan pengaban bangan mengani langkah berani membata perdapat dan peringkan pengaban bangan tentang drama dan peringkan pengaban bangar pengaban bangar pengaban bangar pengaban bangan pengaban bangar pengaban bangan pengaban pengaban bangan pengaban pengaban bangan pengaban pengab

English literature graduate earns a second degree in musical theatre

Although she already has a Bachelor's degree in English Literature from Nanyang Technological University (NTU), theatre activist Zahrah Syafiah Jailani felt she needed to acquire formal art knowledge to strengthen her skills as an educator.

Zahrah, 31 years old, thus enrolled into LASALLE College of the Arts and graduated with a BA(Hons) Musical Theatre degree last year.

Armed with knowledge of the arts, she is currently a primary school educator at MindChamps Academy. She previously also worked at the Dyslexia Association of Singapore (DAS) where she helped empower the minds of children with special needs.

A recipient of the Creative Spark Scholarship and the Goh Chok Tong Youth Promise Award, Zahrah is currently busy preparing for a stage performance with The Second Breakfast Company for the M1 Singapore Fringe Festival 2022.

Question: What made you decide to study a second Bachelor's degree?

Zahrah: For the longest time, I have always wanted to get involved in stage performances. I love acting and hope to become an effective storyteller who is able to convey a narrative or idea clearly. At NTU, I majored in English Literature but also took on other classes such as creative writing, drama and performance.

After working for a while, I decided to take a bold step and made a career transition, enrolling into LASALLE as a mature student in the Musical Theatre programme with much younger classmates. I wanted formal training in theatre and through this programme, I was also able to learn dancing and singing too.

Q: What were some of the challenges you faced at LASALLE?

Zahrah: Every day at LASALLE was eye-opening but tiring. The classes really put your mind and body through the wringer and it isn't as easy as one might think. However, the satisfaction felt at the end of the day, knowing that you've worked hard and created something with your classmates was worthwhile. I also enjoyed how on the flipside, I was back in school but in a student capacity where I had to keep myself open to new ideas and possibilities.

Another thing I found challenging was how I had to learn ballet at the mature age of 28. Many of my classmates started dance at the age of three and thus were a lot more supple than me. I, on the other hand, am a former judo athlete so my muscles are used to being worked in a different way. Ballet is all

Berita Harian, Pg 11, 2 September 2021 Source: Berita Harian © Singapore Press Holdings Limited. Permission required for reproduction

about appearing to float in the air, looking graceful and soft. This form of dance was thus something new to me.

Q: Tell us about your experience as an educator.

Zahrah: Rather than going through the regular journey of becoming an educator at the National Institute of Education (NIE) and the Ministry of Education (MOE), I started out as an educator in the Peer Assisted Learning programme at NTU. This was a way for me to earn an income to pay for my school fees.

I then went on to teach at my high alma mater CHIJ, and now I'm with the MindChamps Academy. I used to run their reading programme for preschoolers, but now I've progressed to teach primary school students instead.

Q: How does art empower you?

Zahrah: Prior to LASALLE, I wasn't able to control my emotions that well. Through acting lessons though, I was forced to study and understand a character's life journey in order to prepare for a role. This has enabled me to read and make sense of my emotions. Art thus allows me to understand myself better. Art has also given me a platform and vocabulary to voice what is in my heart and convey it to others.

Q: You've earned praises for your portrayal of Mak in Yellow Chair Productions' *Off Centre*. Tell us about that experience.

Zahrah: Actually, it was difficult playing the role of Mak when you are only 22 years old. I was a youthful soul then so it was awkward for me to play a mother who had knowledge about things I've yet to experience such as the sweetness and bitterness of life. Because of this discrepancy, I observed my own mother and aunt to better understand the emotions of a mother. Preparing for this character thus demanded a lot of my mental and physical energy.

Nevertheless, I am thankful to have been given the opportunity to act with this community theatre group. Its leader, Mohamad Shaifulbahri, was very understanding and provided me a safe space to creatively explore art and to make mistakes.

Q: What did you learn from teaching children with special needs?

Zahrah: I started out as an educator who taught them in order to earn an income, but have since developed into someone who wants to do more to empower them.

Berita Harian, Pg 11, 2 September 2021 Source: Berita Harian © Singapore Press Holdings Limited. Permission required for reproduction

Initially when I first started teaching them creative writing, I discovered many struggled with keeping up or completing a given task. This encouraged me to undergo more detailed training, helping me understand that children with special needs require more human connection.

I thus had to change my definition of teaching and tried improving their reading literacy through drama. For instance, the children had to act out a scene from the reading material and they appeared more confident and unafraid of the words. This exercise therefore proves that art is able to empower those with special needs.

Q: Tell us about the upcoming stage performance you will be participating in as part of the M1 Singapore Fringe Festival.

Zahrah: With the Second Breakfast Company, we aim to tell the story of those who are working on the frontline to curb the pandemic. I am currently in the research phase and have spoken with numerous doctors and swab workers to learn more about their experiences and struggles during the circuit breaker period. I can't wait to move into the production stage – to create a performance that is based on real-life situations will be a very engaging indeed!