

Pentas teater untuk perkasa wanita, kaum minoriti

MENERUSI seni pementasan teater muzikal, Cik Sofie Shahrin Buligis, berupaya melatih dirinya berfikir secara kritikal dan menjadi penggiat seni yang penuh empati.

Kerja seni yang dilakukan pemilik ijazah Sarjana Muda (Keupujian) Teater Muzikal daripada Maktab Seni Lasalle ini berlegar di sekeliling usaha menaiktarafkan kedudukan wanita dan golongan minoriti di samping membawa impak sosial yang berkesan buat penonton.

Ikuti wawancara *Berita Harian* bersama Cik Sofie, 21 tahun, guru pertuturan dan drama, muzik dan pergerakan serta teater muzikal, yang baru-baru ini menerima Anugerah Cemerlang Mendaki.

Soalan (S): Apakah yang membuatkan anda melalui perjalanan seni memilih bidang teater muzikal sebagai pengajian?

Cik Sofie: Saya hampir-hampir tidak memilih teater muzikal sebab saya pemalu dan merancang belajar sejarah di Universiti Nasional Singapura (NUS).

Namun sejak usia lapan tahun, saya gemar membuat persembahan dan menyanyi bagi koir sekolah.

Sewaktu di Maktab Rendah Victoria (VJC), saya mempelajari teater dan itulah subjek kegemaran saya. Saya selalu memberikan lebih untuk teater dan memang ia minat semula jadi.

Selepas tamat pengajian, saya tahu ada pilihan untuk mendalami bidang teater. Saya jalani sesi uji bakat, diterima Lasalle dan segalanya kini adalah sejarah buat saya.

S: Bagaimana teater memperkasa anda?

Cik Sofie: Seperti kebanyakan teater di Singapura, penggiatnya menggunakan seni persembahan untuk mendapatkan semula suara mereka khususnya apabila mereka belum berpeluang berkongsi cerita mereka.

Saya dapati ini satu kebenaran buat penulis naskhah Melayu yang muda. Kalau tidak, mereka tak dapat merebut peluang berkongsi jerih payah yang mereka lalui.

Teater sebagai wadah meluahkan rasa dan berkongsi kisah merupakan sesuatu yang saya senangi. Ia membantu anak seni bersuara dan suara kami berhak didengar.



TEATER 'SUARA' MASYARAKAT: Cik Sofie ingin lihat lebih ramai penulis naskhah dan pelakon Melayu khususnya wanita tampil menyuarakan kisah atau isu yang dekat di hati mereka.

S: Kebanyakan kerja seni anda bertujuan mewujudkan sesuatu yang positif dan perubahan sosial. Ceritakan tentang usaha anda mengemukakan suara wanita dan kaum minoriti.

Cik Sofie: Saya satu-satunya wanita Melayu dalam kursus saya di Lasalle. Apabila saya diterima masuk, saya berasakan tanggungjawab besar untuk memperjuangkan wanita Melayu lain, bukan untuk menjadi suara mereka tetapi untuk memastikan takrifan wanita Melayu tentang sesuatu isu sekurang-kurangnya dapat diketengahkan.

Sebagai seorang anak seni yang menjalani sesi uji bakat, kebanyakan daripada mereka yang mencari bakat ini tidak mencari wanita Melayu seperti saya. Sebab mereka sudah ada dalam fikiran kaum atau identiti tertentu yang mereka inginkan.

Justeru, apabila berdepan dengan pengarah dan penulis naskhah yang mencari bakat untuk diketengahkan, saya biasanya akan mengusulkan kepada mereka agar mengemukakan pelakon Melayu atau tulis watak untuk orang Melayu kerana saya rasakan ia sangat penting dengan perwakilan dari segi pertuturan juga mustahak.

Ada ramai bakat Melayu yang harus diberi peluang menunjukkan bahawa mereka hebat di pentas.

Saya juga menulis dan menerbitkan karya teater. Pastinya saya

usahakan untuk wujudkan peluang bagi penulis naskhah dan pelakon Melayu khususnya wanita untuk terlibat dalam proses menjana seni agar bakat mereka juga boleh dilihat ramai.

S: Kongsi pengalaman anda dalam penggal tiga tahun sebagai pengarah kreatif di The Runaway Company.

Cik Sofie: Pada 2019, saya jalani sesi uji bakat bersama mereka tetapi saya tidak menerima peranan itu.

Namun, mereka minta saya seritai mereka sebagai penolong pengurus penerbitan dan dari situlah, saya mengetahui bahawa Runaway Company adalah kolektif teater yang tidak mengautung dan dipimpin serta dibangunkan belia.

Selepas tamat pengajian maktab rendah, belia ini membangun kolektif teater ini sebab mereka menyedari tiada ruang di Singapura untuk lulusan maktab rendah atau politeknik untuk berseni sebelum memulakan pengajian universiti.

Tidak banyak ruang membangun teater masyarakat. Pada 2020, mereka minta saya menggalas tugas pengarah kreatif.

Justeru, sepanjang tiga tahun lalu, saya berusaha membangun kelompok anak seni yang masih muda tetapi banyak idea yang ingin dilaksanakan tetapi mereka tidak mempunyai sumber atau tiada akses mendekati golongan berbeza atau tenaga manusia. Mereka perlukan sokongan masyarakat. – HARYANI ISMAIL

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Theatre to empower minority women

Through the art of musical theatre performance, Miss Sofie Shahrin Buligis is able to train herself to think critically and become an empathetic art activist.

The artistic work carried out by the holder of a Bachelor's degree (Honours) in Musical Theatre from LASALLE College of the Arts revolves around efforts to improve the position of women and minorities while bringing effective social impact to the audience.

Catch *Berita Harian's* interview with 21-year-old Sofie, a speech and drama, music, movement and musical theatre teacher, who recently received the Mendaki Award for Excellence.

What made you take up the path of art by choosing the field of musical theatre to study?

I almost didn't choose musical theatre because I was shy and had made plans to study history at the National University of Singapore (NUS).

But since I was eight, I have enjoyed performing and singing for the school choir.

While at Victoria Junior College (VJC), I studied theatre and that was my favourite subject. I have always given more to theatre and indeed it is a natural inclination.

After graduation, I knew there was an option to study theatre. I went through an audition, was accepted by LASALLE and everything is now history for me.

How does theatre empower you?

Like in most theatre in Singapore, activists use performance art to regain their voices, especially when they haven't had the chance to share their stories.

I found this to be true for young Malay manuscript writers. Otherwise, they cannot seize the opportunity to share the hard work they have gone through.

Theatre as a vehicle for expressing feelings and sharing stories is something I enjoy. It helps children express themselves and our voices deserve to be heard.

Most of your artwork aims to create something positive and social change. Tell us about your efforts to present the voices of women and minorities.

I was the only Malay woman in my course at LASALLE. When I was accepted, I felt a great responsibility to fight for other Malay women, not to be their voice but to ensure that Malay women's definition of an issue could at least be highlighted.

As an artist who has gone through auditions, most of those who are looking for talent are not looking for Malay women like me, because they already have in mind the race or identity they want.

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Therefore, when I am faced with directors and scriptwriters who are looking for talent to be featured, I will usually suggest to them to present Malay actors or write characters for Malays because I feel it is very important for representation in terms of speech as well.

There are many Malay talents who should be given the opportunity to show that they are great on stage.

I also write and publish theatre works. I am definitely working to create opportunities for Malay screenwriters and actors, especially women, to be involved in the process of generating art so that their talent can also be seen by many.

Share your experience in your three-year term as creative director at The Runaway Company.

In 2019, I auditioned with them but I didn't accept the role.

However, they asked me to join them as an assistant production manager and from there, I learned that Runaway Company is a non-profit theatre collective that is led and developed by youths.

After graduating from junior college, these young people formed this theatre collective because they realised there was no space in Singapore for junior college or polytechnic graduates to do art before starting university.

There is not a lot of space to develop community theatre. In 2020, they asked me to take on the role of creative director.

Thus, over the past three years, I have tried to develop a group of young artists who have many ideas that they want to implement but do not have the resources or manpower or access to approach different groups. They need community support.