

Menang anugerah dengan tari Melayu, dua penari S'pura rebut tempat ke Sepanyol

Pelajar LASALLE, Jocelyn Tay dan Natasha Koo raih Anugerah Masdanza di Yokohama Jepun, akan wakili Asia di Festival Masdanza Sepanyol

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MENGATASI cabaran budaya, bahasa dan kecederaan pada saat terakhir, dua pelajar tahun akhir dari Sekolah Tarian dan Teater LASALLE, Cik Jocelyn Tay dan Cik Natasha Koo bukan sahaja berjaya membuat persembahan tarian Melayu di Jepun, malah menarik hati pengadil untuk menjadi wakil Asia di sebuah pesta dansa berprestij di Sepanyol.

Di bawah bimbingan pensyarah dan koreografer mereka, Encik Fairul Zahid, 34 tahun, kedua-dua penari muda itu berjaya memenangi Anugerah Masdanza di Koleksi Tarian Yokohama 2022 baru-baru ini. Bercakap kepada *Berita Harian* (BH), Encik Fairul berkata persembahan selama sembilan minit yang disajikan dua pelajar itu memberi penerangan tentang isu-isu ketua wanita dalam komuniti dan diberi tajuk *Sopan*.

"Tarian ini membangkitkan isu wanita yang menonjolkan kebolehan wanita Melayu menjadi pemimpin dalam sesebuah masyarakat," tambah pensyarah itu yang mengambil masa dua minggu untuk membuat kajian dan menghasilkan koreografi tarian tersebut.

Cik Tay berkata menayakan tarian Melayu adalah satu cabaran baru bagi beliau dan Cik Koo. Antara lain, mereka membuat persembahan dengan kain sarung yang dibalut dari bahagian atas badan mereka yang memamerkan tradisi Melayu.

"Kami mempunyai pelbagai latar belakang tarian seperti balet dan tarian Cina. Mengamalkan tarian Melayu sememangnya mencabar kerana pergerakan seperti tangan berbeza," kata beliau.

Semasa membuat persiapan persembahan, kedua-dua pelajar itu, yang berusia 20 tahun, menghadapi pelbagai cabaran.

Cik Koo cedera kaki dan belakangnya menyebabkan beliau tidak boleh menari selama beberapa minggu.

Manakala Cik Tay pula mengalami kecederaan di bahu kanan.

Walaupun begitu, para penari tertumpu

pada pemulihan dan menonton latihan video mereka dan hadir untuk latihan apabila sudah pulih.

Koleksi Tarian Yokohama, bukanlah pertandingan biasa.

Seramai 200 peserta dari pelbagai negara mengambil bahagian tetapi hanya lapan pasukan terpilih untuk menyertai pertandingan tersebut.

Mendapat peluang untuk persembahan di Koleksi Tarian Yokohama merupakan detik berprestij buat kami semua, kata Cik Koo.

"Kami dilantik sebagai finalis dan berlatih keras setiap hari untuk membetulkan pergerakan kami," ujar Cik Koo.

"Kami diingatkan oleh pensyarah kami, Encik Fairul yang sentiasa melakukan terbaik walaupun beliau sakit."

"Encik Fairul menghidap barah usus pada 2016 namun masih hadir untuk latihan tariannya dan membuat persembahan selepas kemoterapi," tambahnya lagi.

Pengalaman yang dikongsikan Encik Fairul dengan penarinya memberikan dorongan motivasi kepada mereka untuk memupuk disiplin dan meletakkan hati dan jiwa ke dalam tarian mereka.

Semangat ini membuahkan hasil ketika Koleksi Tarian Yokohama, di mana para jurikagum dengan koreografi mereka.

Tanpa diduga, mereka telah dianugerahkan hadiah berprestij Masdanza Award di mana mereka akan mewakili Asia buat kali pertama di Festival Masdanza Sepanyol pada Oktober tahun depan.

"Apabila nama kami diumumkan, kami tidak percaya. Ini sememangnya pencapaian terbesar dan kali pertama dalam sejarah negara, Asia Tenggara memenangi anugerah sebegini," kata Cik Tay.

Buat masa ini Cik Tay dan Cik Koo sedang membuat persiapan bagi persembahan di Sepanyol, juga dengan bimbingan Encik Fairul.

"Kami akan membuat persembahan *Sopan* dan para penari masih boleh mengharapkan lebih banyak perubahan dan penambahbaikan pada koreografi," kata Encik Fairul.



PELUANG BERPRESTIJ: (Dari kiri) Cik Koo, Cik Tay bersama pensyarah dan koreografer mereka, Encik Fairul Zahid, yang sering memberikan dorongan motivasi kepada pelajarinya. — Foto ihsan FAIRUL ZAHID

"Apabila nama kami diumumkan, kami tidak percaya. Ini sememangnya pencapaian terbesar dan kali pertama dalam sejarah negara, Asia Tenggara memenangi anugerah sebegini."

— Cik Jocelyn Tay, pelajar dari Sekolah Tarian dan Teater LASALLE.

By winning an award with Malay dance, two Singapore dancers grab a spot in Spain

Overcoming multiple cultural, language and injury challenges at the last minute, two final year students from LASALLE's School of Dance and Theatre, Miss Jocelyn Tay and Miss Natasha Koo not only succeeded in performing a Malay dance in Japan, they also captivated the judges enough to be picked to represent Asia at a prestigious dance party in Spain.

Under the guidance of their lecturer and choreographer, Mr Fairul Zahid, 34 years old, the two young dancers succeeded in winning the Masdanza Award at the Yokohama Dance Collection 2022 recently.

Speaking to Berita Harian (BH), Mr Fairul said the nine-minute performance presented by his two students shed light on the issues of women leaders in the community and was titled Sopan.

"This dance raises women's issues which highlight the ability of Malay women to become leaders in a society," added the lecturer who took two weeks to research and create the choreography for the dance.

Miss Tay says making the Malay dance a success was a new challenge for her and Miss Koo. Among other things, they had to perform with a sarong cloth wrapped around their upper body to showcase Malay tradition.

"We have various dance backgrounds such as ballet and Chinese dance. Practicing Malay dance is indeed challenging because the movements, like the hand movements, are different," she says.

While preparing for the show, the two students, who are 20 years old, faced various challenges.

Miss Koo injured her leg and back, causing her to be unable to dance for several weeks while Miss Tay suffered an injury on her right shoulder.

Despite this, the dancers focused on recovery and watched their video exercises and showed up for practice upon their recovery.

The Yokohama Dance Collection is no ordinary competition.

A total of 200 participants from various countries took part but only eight teams were selected to participate in the competition.

"Getting the opportunity to perform at the Yokohama Dance Collection is a prestigious moment for all of us," says Miss Koo.

"We were picked as finalists and practiced hard every day to perfect our movements," says Miss Koo.

"We were constantly being reminded by our lecturer, Mr Fairul, who always does his best even when he is sick.

"Mr Fairul was diagnosed with colon cancer in 2016 but he still attended his dance practices and performed even after his chemotherapy," she adds.

This experience which Mr Fairul shared with his dancers gave them the motivation to cultivate discipline and put their heart and soul into their dance.

This spirit paid off during the Yokohama Dance Collection, where the judges were impressed by their choreography.

Unexpectedly, they were awarded the prestigious Masdanza Award, and they will represent Asia for the first time at the Spanish Masdanza Festival in October next year.

"When our names were announced, we couldn't believe it. This is indeed the biggest achievement and the first time in the country's history that Southeast Asia has won such an award," said Miss Tay.

For the time being, Miss Tay and Miss Koo are preparing for their performance in Spain, also under the guidance of Mr Fairul.

"We will be performing Sopan and the dancers can still expect more changes and refinements to the choreography," said Mr. Fairul.