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10 November 2026, Page 8
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借音符传递疗愈力量　本地首批音乐治疗硕士毕业

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过去教孩子弹奏乐器，庄启恩（31岁）发现，音乐带给他们的收获，远不止学会一首曲子。

孩子们不仅能锻炼肢体协调能力，也在音乐活动中学会与人合作。这段经历让她开始探索音乐的另一种可能：用音乐帮助有需要的人，甚至改善他们的心理健康。

曾兼职担任学前音乐教师的庄启恩，在2024年得知拉萨尔艺术学院推出本地首个音乐治疗艺术硕士课程后，毫不犹豫地报名，希望进一步了解如何通过音乐帮助不同群体。

两年求学期间，她先后在圣安德烈社区医院、竹脚妇幼医院，以及新加坡心理卫生协会完成临床实习，并在去年的创意艺术治疗研讨会上，展示一项从音乐治疗角度分析国庆庆典歌曲的研究。

如今顺利毕业，她希望投身社区心理健康领域，运用所学帮助不同背景、有不同需要的人。

庄启恩是我国首届音乐治疗硕士课程的12名毕业生之一，也是上星期四（11月5日）获新加坡艺术大学颁发硕士学位的100名毕业生之一。

毕业典礼在拉萨尔麦纳利校区的新加坡航空剧院举行，近500名毕业生、家属及嘉宾出席。

据校方介绍，拉萨尔的首批12名音乐治疗硕士课程毕业生在两年学习期间，于医疗及社区机构累计完成1万零800小时的临床实习，多数人目前已就业，从事专业治疗工作。

除了音乐治疗，本届毕业生也来自艺术教育、设计及美术等九个领域。

其中，荣获“研究生卓越奖”的艺术教育与实践硕士毕业生林汀文（35岁），是一名剧场编导。多年的工作曾让他感到倦怠，一度失去对剧场的热情。

在拉萨尔深造期间，他通过与非专业创作者共同创作剧本，重拾创作热情。他代表毕业生致辞时说：“他人的故事让我深受感动、启发与触动。我们聚在一起，纯粹是为了在面对不确定、动荡与困境时，做一群坚持创作艺术的人。”

新艺大校长郭建文教授指出，研究生在学习过程中深入探讨艺术实践的社会意义。他说：“我们期待毕业生未来成为新加坡及其他地区的反思型实践者与文化领袖。”



▶本地首批音乐治疗艺术硕士毕业生庄启恩，立志将音乐治疗引入社区心理健康领域。（周国威摄）

Using music as a medium to help others: first local cohort of 12 students graduates with master's degrees in music therapy

Cassandra Chng, 31, one of the first local graduates with a Master of Arts in Music Therapy, aspires to integrate music therapy into the field of community mental health.

While teaching children to play musical instruments, 31-year-old Cassandra Chng discovered that the benefits they gained extended far beyond simply learning to play a piece of music.

Beyond developing physical coordination, the children also learned how to collaborate with others through musical activities. This experience led her to explore another dimension of music: using it to support those in need and even improve their mental well-being.

Having previously worked as a part-time preschool music teacher, Chng did not hesitate to enrol when she learned in 2024 that LASALLE College of the Arts had launched Singapore's first Master of Arts in Music Therapy programme, a move driven by her desire to learn how music could be used to support diverse groups of people.

During her two-year programme, she completed clinical internships at St. Andrew's Community Hospital, KK Women's and Children's Hospital and the Singapore Association for Mental Health. Additionally, at last year's Creative Arts Therapies Symposium, she presented research that analysed National Day Parade songs through the lens of music therapy.

"Completing this programme has given me a deeper understanding that when music is applied with clear, targeted objectives, it can yield tangible, meaningful results," she says.

Now that she has graduated, she hopes to enter the community mental health sector, applying what she has learnt to assist individuals from various backgrounds with diverse needs.

Cassandra Chng is one of 12 graduates from Singapore's inaugural Master of Arts in Music Therapy programme, and among the 100 students who received their master's degrees from the University of the Arts Singapore (UAS) this Thursday, 5 November.

The graduation ceremony was held at the Singapore Airlines Theatre at LASALLE's McNally Campus, with nearly 500 graduates, family members and guests in attendance.

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10 November 2026, Page 8
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According to the institution, the 12 graduates from this first cohort completed a combined total of 10,800 hours of clinical internships across various healthcare and community organisations during their two-year studies. Most of them have already secured employment and are now practising as professional music therapists. In addition to music therapy, this year's graduating cohort represents nine other fields, including arts education, design and fine arts.

Among them is 35-year-old Thomas Lim, a theatre director and writer who received the Postgraduate Excellence Award upon completing his Master's degree in Arts Pedagogy and Practice. Years of professional work had once left him feeling burnt out, causing him to lose his passion for theatre.

During his postgraduate studies at LASALLE, he rediscovered his creative drive by collaborating on scripts with non-professional creators. Delivering a speech on behalf of the graduating class, he remarked, "I have been deeply moved, inspired and challenged by the stories of others. We were gathered simply as people making art right in the face of uncertainty, disruption and precarity."

Professor Kwok Kian Woon, Vice-Chancellor of UAS, noted that throughout their studies, postgraduate students delve deeply into the social significance of artistic practice. He stated, "We look forward to our graduates becoming reflective practitioners and cultural leaders, both here in Singapore and beyond."