



KUMPUL SEBERAPA BANYAK ILMU: Md Al-Hafiz Hosni ingin jadi anak seni yang mahir menerusi menyanyi, berakting, terlibat dalam dunia perfileman dan perniagaan fesyen bagi mengisi masa mudanya agar tidak membuang begitu banyak. — Foto: ILMU MAKTAB SENI LASALLE

Dari tari Melayu ke teater muzikal, bisnes fesyen jalaran

Lulusan baru Lasalle bina semangat 'kerja jalan terus' dalam pandemik

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ANAK seni yang tidak kenal erti penat lelah dan duduk diam, Md Al-Hafiz Hosni, tidak mudah bergusur hati hanya dengan malarikan diri dalam tari Melayu di bawah kumpulan Azpirasi.

Setelah tamat Perkhidmatan Negara (NS) dan bekerja selama dua tahun, beliau membuat peluang membara sepulung ijazah dengan kepujian dalam bidang teater muzikal di Maktab Seni Lasalle.

Harapannya ingin mempelajari seni kontemporari moden di luar zon tradisional kesenian Melayu yang diharap dapat memperkaya selok seni yang disalurkan buat Azpirasi, projek filem atau muzikal Melayu yang ingin dijana.

Dalam kesibukan mengagap kemahiran menyanyi, berakting dan menari sekali gus, Hafiz, 27 tahun, turut meluangkan masa mempelajari cara menuliskan rebusan dan mana-mana di bawah Nadi Singapura.

Bersama seorang rakannya yang meminati fesyen jalaran, mereka turut menggerakkan bisnes pakaian lelaki dalam talian A.VOID yang mempunyai pelanggan sejati Amerika dan United Kingdom.

Apakah yang memberi semangat buat Hafiz melakukan beberapa perkara serentak dengan jaya?

"Ikuti wawancara bersama anak bongsu tiga beradik ini yang sebelum ini mempunyai kelulusan Diploma Sebaran An dan pada Politeknik Negeri Aini."

Soalan (S): Ceritakan perjalanan seni anda. Mengapa ia begitu menabih mencorak jati diri anda?

Hafiz: Sejak kecil lagi, saya suka membuat persembahan di khidmat rama-rama tetapi tidak begitu yakin.

Sebagai pelajar sebaran am dengan tumpuan pada perfileman, saya lebih selesa berada di belakang kamera seperti menguruskan projek filem biografi buat Yahoo.

Namun, saya terfikir, alangkah baeknya kalau saya berada di depan kamera. Dari situ, saya juga dapat mempelajari cara menjaja pengarah filem yang baik sebab dapat bayangkan apa yang dirasakan mereka di hadapan kamera.

Saya mengambil bidang teater muzikal di Lasalle kerana inilah peluang keemasan malarikan diri dalam tiga seni sekaligus - menyanyi, berakting dan menari.

"Jadi, posnya selepas tamat pengajian di Lasalle, saya akan mencari ruang membuat kerja amal dalam bidang seni," ceritanya yang pernah memenangi Basiswa Bakat Yayasan Lee.

"Saya tidak fikir seseorang harus ditersekap kerana tubuhnya yang besar juga, beliau akui dalam dunia lakonan peranan yang sering diberi adalah yang stereotip seperti sebagai ibu atau wanita kelakar.

S: Bagaimana anda mula terlibat dalam tari Melayu?

Hafiz: Saya mula agak lewat juga dalam bidang tari Melayu, ketika berada di tahun pertama politeknik.

Saya merupakan kru balik pentas pesta tari Melayu Muara. Saya ditugaskan menjaga keperluan kumpulan Azpirasi.

Memandangkan ramai rakan sekeliling saya terdiri daripada belia Cina, saya ingin teroka jiwa dan identiti Melayu saya menerusi satu bentuk kesenian.

Saya tertarik dengan konsep Azpirasi yang menggabungkan tari Melayu tradisional dengan unsur kontemporari.

Tahu-tahu, minggu selanjutnya selepas pesta Muara, saya datang ke ruang latihan Azpirasi, melahirkan hasrat saya berlatih bersama mereka.

Pelajar celik, dah hampir 10 tahun saya bersama Azpirasi.

S: Apakah yang anda pelajari daripada menjadi penari Azpirasi?

Hafiz: Saya belajar erti kerendahan hati dan bersabar. Apabila saya memasuki kursus teater muzikal di Lasalle, saya lebih dikenali sebagai penari selangkin kenalan menyanyi itu lebih menonjol dalam kursus ini.

Kadangkala, saya rasa resah dan kekurangan berbanding pelajar lain sepanjang tiga tahun di Lasalle kerana masih perlu buktikan saya juga mampu menyanyi dengan baik.

Bagaimanapun, latihan dalam tari Melayu mengajar saya agar lebih bersabar dan bertekun, ia mengajar saya nilai bekerja keras.

Saya dapat diri saya masih gigih berlatih selepas tamat sekolah sekitar 5 petang. Latihan muzikal makan masa sampai 11 malam. Balik rumah, saya perlu siapakan esel dan lakon projek video.

Dua tahun lalu, saya sertai Nadi Singapura kerana tertarik bermain alat gendang seperti kompang, rebana dan marwas. Seni jalan terus.

S: Apakah keseronokan terlibat dalam dunia seni, Melayu dan kontemporari Barat?

Hafiz: Ia lebih memperkukuh jenama saya sebagai anak seni yang arah tuju saya lebih 'fusion' (gabungan Timur dan Barat, gabungan tradisional Melayu dan bukan Melayu).

Saya pernah memikirkan kemungkinan melanjutkan pengajian seni ke Amerika atau United Kingdom tetapi fikir mungkin kesenian Melayu tidak begitu dikenali di sana.

Saya melihat jurutari Singapura, Nurfaizal Akam, sebagai sumber inspirasi utama saya. Sebab beliau mampu menggabungkan unsur seni tradisional Melayu dengan moden. Beliau ke luar negara dan majukan seni kita.

S: Bagaimana pengaruh artistik Azpirasi, Azmi Juhari, memberi anda semangat meneruskan bidang seni?

Hafiz: Saya banyak terlintang buli kepada Cikgu Azmi. Beliau adalah bukti nyata, seni boleh diceburi secara sepenuhnya masa. Beliau sudah berumah tangga dan menyara keluarga dengan seni.

Hasil perbulatan itu bapa saya dengan Cikgu Azmi, mereka lebih lega saya berada di landasan yang selamat untuk ceburi seni.

S: Ceritakan pengalaman terlibat dalam persembahan tamat pengajian anda di Lasalle.

Hafiz: Saya sangat berpuas sewaktu NS lebih mencabar, rupanya ia lebih terasa ketika berlepas-pula berlatih bagi persembahan tamat pengajian saya ini.

Di NS, kalua penat berlari, boleh berjalan tetapi bagi teater muzikal ini, stamina diperlukan dari awal hingga akhir.

Berbeza dengan persembahan bagi tahun-tahun sudah di mana beberapa pelajar dipilih menyajikan muzikal, setiap pelajar kini diberi peluang membuat persembahan individu kerana perintah jarak selamat sewaktu Covid-19 yang harus dipatuhi.

Saya menyanyi dan menari lagu dari muzikal *Footloose, I Can't Stand Still*.

Apabila penat, saya memikirkan tentang warga Palestin di Gaza yang melatui tempoh lebih mencabar. Seluarang-kurangnya, saya dapat berpuasa. Mereka tidak makan atau tidak. Ingatan sebegi menjadikan masalah besar menjadi kecil.

S: Anda tamat pengajian dalam tempoh mencabar Covid-19. Namun, apa yang memberi anda keyakinan banyak ganjaran diperolehi dalam persembahan lima anda?

Hafiz: Saya terendah pada banyak isu kemanusiaan dan pergolakan emosi ketika menelaah lima teater muzikal dan menghidang skrip muzikal.

Sebagai jurutari Azpirasi bagi persembahan *Akar Sialok*, saya kembali meninjau semula kerja seni tentang arwah mesra saya.

Saya selalu lihat beliau merenung di katil dan memandangi di luar jendela. Ia mungkin rakanan rasa rindu terhadap arwah datuk dengan mereka ingin bersatu di syurga suatu hari nanti.

Saya juga pengaruh fotografi filem tentang kesihatan mental yang lokasi pada kitab pengasuh warga emara dengan demensia.

Filem ini antara 10 filem terbaik dalam pesta filem mengenai kesihatan mental, baru-baru ini.

Dari segi perniagaan A.VOID pula, ia hasil kerjasma saya dan teman yang begitu stakan fesyen jalaran.

Kerana saya juga memulakan Diploma Tamat dalam Perniagaan, saya ingin malarikan lima yang diraja bagi menguruskan sesuatu yang baru.

Saya belajar mengurus masa dan mengutamakan perkara yang harus didahulukan.

Sebelum pandemik, kami banyak kendalikan dan lokasi lain tetapi semuanya harus digantikan dengan kempen dalam talian selepas Covid-19 melanda.

Apa-apa pun, semangat positif harus diteruskan.

S: Apakah pun, semangat positif harus diteruskan.

— Nurulhuda Hassan.

"Kerana saya juga memiliki Diploma Tambahan dalam Perniagaan, saya ingin memanfaatkan ilmu yang diraja bagi menguruskan sesuatu yang baru. Saya belajar mengurus masa dan mengutamakan perkara yang harus didahulukan. Sebelum pandemik, kami banyak kendalikan stor 'pop-up' di Resorts World Sentosa dan lokasi lain tetapi semuanya harus digantikan dengan kempen dalam talian selepas Covid-19 melanda. Apa-apa pun, semangat positif harus diteruskan."

— Md Al-Hafiz Hosni

Lulusan Lasalle hargai pengalaman 'bidan terjun' masuk opera Jerman

Di kala lulusan baru Maktab Seni Lasalle, Nurulhuda Hassan, gigih berfikir dengan dua rakannya tentang kemungkinan membangun projek muzikal mereka sendiri, langkah keselamatan Covid-19 pula diperketat bagi Fasa 2 (Kewspadatan Diperingkat).

Sedikit sebanyak ia menghambat semangat tetapi Nurulhuda, 28 tahun, enggan tembakkan perkara itu menjadi halangan menyumbang kembali kepada masyarakat menerusi ilmu seni teater muzikal yang diraja daripada Lasalle.

Malah, sebelum pandemik melanda, banyak projek yang disertai di luar zon selesa seperti opera Jerman *Der Zauber*.

Beliau juga pemain penderang, perala bunyian dan pelakon Pesta Seni Antarabangsa Singapura (Sifa) bagi pentas *Ways of Wandering*.

Justeru, beliau yang memiliki Diploma Teater daripada Akademi Seni Halus Nanyang (Nafa), menyokori setiap ganjaran yang diraja daripada pengalaman berseni yang mendedikasikan.

"Saya akui banyak rancangan saya menyalakan projek seni bebas terpaksa ditunda atau dibatal kerana pandemik Covid-19.

"Saya kini mencari pekerjaan sepenuh masa bagi menampung kehidupan keluarga. Namun, saya tidak akan abaikan misi saya menyumbang kepada masyarakat dalam cabang seni.

"Sebab, keibhahan itu adalah sesuatu yang murni dan mampu 'menjangkiti' secara baik naluri orang lain.

"Kalau tidak kerana bantuan kewangan Mendaki, Nafa dan Yayasan Lee, saya tidak mungkin dapat membara cita-cita saya memperkasa diri dalam seni di Lasalle.

"Biasanya, selepas kita dibantu, akan ada keinginan untuk kita pula membantu memberi sinar hidup buat orang lain yang memerlukan.

"Jadi, posnya selepas tamat pengajian di Lasalle, saya akan mencari ruang membuat kerja amal dalam bidang seni," ceritanya yang pernah memenangi Basiswa Bakat Yayasan Lee.

"Saya tidak fikir seseorang harus ditersekap kerana tubuhnya yang besar juga, beliau akui dalam dunia lakonan peranan yang sering diberi adalah yang stereotip seperti sebagai ibu atau wanita kelakar.

Kerana tubuh yang besar juga, beliau akui awalnya menghadapi cabaran di kelas menari yang intensif dan menuntut stamina yang banyak dan bertali arus.

"Saya tidak fikir seseorang harus ditersekap kerana tubuhnya yang besar juga, beliau akui awalnya menghadapi cabaran di kelas menari yang intensif dan menuntut stamina yang banyak dan bertali arus.

"Secara kebetulan, dalam persembahan tamat pengajian saya, saya berpeluang menyanyikan lagu *Jenny's Blues* daripada muzikal *It Shoulda Been You* yang menceritakan tentang bagaimana wanita bertubuh besar dapat keluar daripada labai orang terlampau.

"Ia satu persembahan yang memperkasa jiwa saya. Malah, kini ada banyak kumpulan teater belia yang membuka ruang bagi penonton sama-sama meninjau dan berbincang tentang isu sosial di Singapura atau sejagat," katanya lagi.

Terlibat dalam seni juga membolehkan Nurulhuda agar mahir melakukan pelbagai tugas serentak. Beliau seronok merolek proses mereka bentuk bunyian, cahaya dan prop.

Ditanya mengenai pencapaian peribadinya, beliau mengangap terlibat dalam opera Jerman yang dipentaskan kumpulan opera Singapura, The Opera People, sebagai yang menarik.

"Saya tiada pengalaman langsung dalam nyanyian opera atau klasikal. Saya setakat mencuba nash secara spontan.

"Tak duga diterima selepas sesi uji bakul. Ia bagai tawaran bidan terjun di mana saya harus perhatiakan sebutan dalam bahasa Jerman bagi setiap dengarkan.

"Boleh dikatakan, ia membuka laluan jeraya baru buat saya," katanya lagi.



KELUAR DARI ZON SELESA: Aktivis seni muda Nurulhuda Hassan, tidak membataskan penglibatan seninya hanya pada pentas-pentas Inggeris malah pernah mencuba dan diterima bagi opera Jerman, 'Der Zauber'.

"Kalau tidak kerana bantuan kewangan Mendaki, Nafa dan Yayasan Lee, saya tidak mungkin dapat membara cita-cita saya memperkasa diri dalam seni di Lasalle. Biasanya, selepas kita dibantu, akan ada keinginan untuk kita pula membantu memberi sinar hidup buat orang lain yang memerlukan. Jadi, pastinya selepas tamat pengajian di Lasalle, saya akan mencari ruang membuat kerja amal dalam bidang seni."

— Nurulhuda Hassan.

Their zeal for musical theatre led these two artists to diligently pursue a BA(Hons) in this field at LASALLE College of the Arts. As they graduate this year, they recount the hopes they harbour for the arts in Singapore during this difficult period facing the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

From Malay dance to musical theatre, street fashion business

Fresh LASALLE graduates build up the spirit of 'the show must go on' during the pandemic

An artiste who does not know the meaning of fatigue and resting on one's laurels, Md Al-Hafiz Hosni was never satisfied with the dancing skills he developed in traditional Malay dance with the Azpirasi dance troupe.

After completing National Service (NS) and working for two years, he seized the opportunity to pursue a BA(Hons) Musical Theatre at LASALLE.

His aim is to learn modern contemporary art which lies outside the domain of traditional Malay arts. With this knowledge, he hopes to strengthen each creative piece he works on for Azpirasi, whether it is a Malay film or musical project that is being produced.

While busy working on his singing, acting and dancing skills at the same time, Hafiz, 27, also spent time learning how to beat the 'rebana' and 'maruas' with Nadi Singapura.

Together with a friend who loves street fashion, they also launched A.VOID's online menswear business which has customers as far away as America and the United Kingdom.

What inspires Hafiz to do several things at the same time successfully? Find out in our interview with this young man, the youngest of three siblings who previously held a Diploma in Mass Communication from Ngee Ann Polytechnic.

Question (Q): Tell us about your artistic journey. Why is it so influential in shaping your identity?

Hafiz: Since I was little, I liked to perform in public but I was not very confident. As a Mass Communication student with a focus on filmmaking, I was more comfortable behind the camera, such as working on a biographical film project for Yahoo.

However, I thought it would be nice if I could be in front of the camera. From there, I was also able to learn how to be a good film director because I could imagine what was felt by those who were in front of the camera.

I took up the field of musical theatre in LASALLE because this was a golden opportunity to gain mastery in three arts at once namely, singing, acting and dancing. I have to thank Mendaki for the financial assistance they have given me for this course.

My parents at first were not so sure that the arts would give me a bright future. All praises be to God, looking at what I have achieved step by step, they now understand better why art is my soul.

Q: How did you start working in Malay dance?

Hafiz: I started quite late in Malay dance, while I was in the first year of polytechnic.

I was a back stage crew at the *Muara Malay* dance festival. I was assigned to take care of the needs of the Azpirasi group.

Given that many friends around me consisted of Chinese youths, I wanted to explore life and my Malay identity through a form of art. I am interested in Azpirasi's concept which combines traditional Malay dance with contemporary elements.

Before I knew it, the week after the *Muara* festival, I came to the Azpirasi training room, expressing my desire to train with them. In the blink of an eye, I have been with Azpirasi for almost 10 years.

Q: What did you learn from being an Azpirasi dancer?

Hafiz: I learned the meaning of humility and patience. When I enrolled into the musical theatre course in LASALLE, I was better known as a dancer whereas singing skills were more prominent in this course.

Sometimes, I felt restless and deficient compared to the other students during my three years at LASALLE because I had to prove I was capable of singing well.

However, the training in Malay dance taught me to be more patient and calmer. It taught me the value of hard work. I found myself still practicing hard after finishing school around 5pm. Musical rehearsals go on until 11 p.m. Back home, I still had to complete essays and make my video projects.

Two years ago, I joined Nadi Singapura because I was interested in playing percussion instruments such as *kompang*, *rebana* and *maruas*. My artistic journey continued onwards.

Q: What is the fun of getting involved in the world of the Malay and Western contemporary arts?

Hafiz: It strengthens my brand as an artist who is inclined more towards 'fusion' art (a combination of East and West and a combination of traditional Malay and non-Malay).

I had thought about the possibility of studying the arts in America or the United Kingdom but felt that Malay arts was not so well known there.

I see Singaporean dancer Norhaizad Adam as my main inspiration because he was able to combine traditional elements with modern art. He went abroad and advanced our art.

Q: How did Azpirasi's artistic director, Azmi Juhari, inspire you to pursue art?

Hafiz: I owe a lot to Cikgu Azmi. He is real proof that the arts can be a full time venture. He is married and supports his family with the arts. As a result of my parents' conversation with Cikgu Azmi, they were more relieved that I was on a safe foundation to pursue art.

Q: Tell us about your experience getting involved in your graduation presentation in LASALLE.

Hafiz: I thought fasting during NS was challenging, however I struggled more while practicing for my graduation performance. In NS, if you are tired of running, you can walk but for musical theatre, stamina is required from start to finish.

In contrast to performances in past years where several students were selected to perform together, each student is now given the opportunity to make an individual performance due to the safe distancing measures during COVID-19 that must be followed.

I sang and danced to a song from the *Footloose* musical, *I Can't Stand Still*.

When I am tired, I thought about the Palestinians in Gaza going through far more challenges. At least, I can break my fast. They cannot be certain of having a meal. Such thoughts turn my big problems into small ones.

Q: You graduated in the challenging period of COVID-19. However, what gives you the confidence such that you have attained many rewards in your pursuit of knowledge?

Hafiz: I was exposed to many humanitarian issues and emotional turmoil while studying musical theatre and digesting musical scripts.

As the Azpirasi dancer for the *Akar Subuh* show, I revisited the art piece about my late grandmother. I used to always see her daydreaming in bed and looking out the window. It may be her expression of a longing for my late grandfather and a desire to be reunited with him in heaven one day.

I am also the director of a film about mental health that focuses on the story of an elderly caregiver with dementia. The film was selected as one of the 10 best films in the recent Singapore Mental Health Film Festival.

In terms of A.VOID's business, that's the result of my cooperation with a friend who loves street fashion. Since I also have an additional Diploma in Business, I wanted to take advantage of my knowledge to work on something new. I learned to manage my time and prioritise. Before the pandemic, we managed a lot of 'pop-up' stores at Resorts World Sentosa and other locations but all that has been replaced with online campaigns after COVID-19 hit. In any case, we have to carry on positively.

LASALLE graduate appreciates 'jumping into the deep end of the pool' as she takes on German opera

While LASALLE College of the Arts fresh graduate Nurulhuda Hassan was busy discussing with two of her classmates about the possibility of developing their own musical project, COVID-19 safety measures were tightened for Phase 2 (Heightened Alert). To some extent, it dampened their spirit but Nurulhuda, 28, refused to let the matter become an obstacle for her to contribute back to the community through her knowledge of the art of musical theatre gained from LASALLE.

In fact, before the pandemic hit, she took part in many projects that were outside her comfort zone such as the German opera *Der Zwerg*. She is also a drummer, sound designer and actor at the Singapore International Arts Festival (SIFA) for the staging of *Ways of Wandering*. Thus, Nurulhuda, who holds a Diploma in Theatre from the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA), is grateful for everything she has gained from the artistic experience that has developed her. "I admit that many of my plans to run independent art projects had to be postponed or cancelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I am currently looking for a full-time job to support my family. However, I will not neglect my mission to contribute to society through the arts. Because, kindness is something that is pure and able to 'infect' other people's nobler instincts."

"If not for the financial assistance of Mendaki, NAFA and the Lee Foundation, I would not have been able to pursue my ambition to empower myself in the arts in LASALLE."

"Usually, after we are helped, it will arise a desire in us to help give a ray of hope to others in need."

"So, for sure after graduating from LASALLE, I would find space to do charity work in the field of art," said the Lee Foundation Talent Scholarship holder. As a plus-sized woman, she admits that in the world of acting, the roles that are often given to her are usually stereotypical ones such as being a mother or a funny woman. Due to her size, she acknowledged having to face initial challenges in dance class which is intensive, relentless and demanded a lot of stamina.

"I don't think a person should be stereotyped because of her large size. Plus-sized women deserve to play any role which is capable of inspiring others."

"I admit that when I recently entered this musical theatre degree course, I was reluctant because the dance classes compelled me to change my fitness routine so that I could stay energised at each training session."

"Coincidentally, in my graduation performance, I had the opportunity to sing 'Jenny's Blues' from the musical *It Shoulda Been You* which tells about how plus-sized women can escape other people's labels against them."

"It's a show that empowers my soul. In fact, there are now many youth theater groups which have opened up spaces for the audience to explore and discuss social issues in Singapore or globally," she added.

Being involved in art also requires Nurulhuda to be skilled in performing various tasks simultaneously. She enjoys exploring the process of designing sounds, lights and props. When asked about her personal accomplishments, she considered being involved in the German opera staged by the Singapore opera group, The Opera People, as engaging.

"I have no direct experience in opera or classical singing. I just tried my luck. Unexpectedly, I was well received after the audition session. It's like accepting an offer to dive into the deepest end of the pool. I had to pay special attention to the pronunciation of German words for each verse."

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"It can be said that the experience has opened a new career path for me," she added.

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