



STAR-POST (MUSIC)

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TEACHING LIVING LEGENDS

Chua Siew Ling
Programme Director &
Master Teacher (Music)

On National Day, as we sang community songs we were reminded once again, how, as diverse people, we can come together as one community, one people. And Singapore is home, because of you and me.

For the Music teaching fraternity, we can celebrate even more, as this year, we welcome National Day 2014 with our new resource and professional development curriculum, 'Teaching Living Legends'! 'Living' because the identified music traditions are still thriving in Singapore; 'Legends' because there are stories and narratives behind these music traditions that delineate their identity and their place in Singapore.

For over a year, music teachers from schools, music officers from MOE HQ, musicians, arts practitioners and colleagues from the National Institute of Education, National Arts Council and National Library Board have come together to co-create resources and an understanding of how our music heritage can be taught in our General Music classrooms. With their generous contributions, history has been made, to the benefit of our future generations. **Through this journey, our identity as music educators has been strengthened, and our children's understanding of our music heritage will be deepened.**

Learning about different music cultures and practices also help develop our children's musical understandings more holistically, and better prepare them for lifelong and life-wide engagements. As much as we are diverse, our music traditions are diverse, our musical thinking are diverse. A critical appreciation of these differences, which are shaped by socio-cultural contexts and function, helps develop an open mind. When we pay attention to uncovering these differences in musical thinking and practices, we are uncovering an understanding of cultural and human practices. In the process, we expand the vision and perspectives of our children!



DESIGNING LESSONS ON MUSIC IN SINGAPORE

In designing our music lessons, it is important that we pay attention to not just the substance of what we teach but also to think deeper about how best we can engage our students through student-centric pedagogies to facilitate their learning. Here are three tips to consider when you are designing a music lesson on music in Singapore:

1 Make music!

Are you using powerpoint slides and lectures to introduce and talk about music that is new to our students? Hold it! Why not get students to experience the music first, even if just tapping a beat or rhythm pattern with a recording or just singing some portions of the music.

2 Tell the stories behind the music we teach

By providing the historical and socio-cultural contexts of the music we teach, we help students to make meaning of the sounds they hear. If we can't get students to sing the National Anthem, what about telling the stories behind the National Anthem and the composer's journey?

3 Consider prior experiences of students and how the new tradition could be received

First, be aware of biases and preferences. As teachers, we must first value the music we teach before that can be caught on by our students.

Second, consider that a different tradition could have very different notions of music elements and classifications which we have taken for granted. Using thinking routines, students can be facilitated to think critically about the music and view it from diverse perspectives.

Third, consider issues of authenticity. Be aware that music is transmitted differently in different traditions. Yet, it may also be useful to start our students with familiar materials or concepts before moving on to the unfamiliar.



Under the Teaching Living Legends project, STAR has designed several resource packages which include lesson ideas, interviews with artistes and recordings of performances for use in the general music classroom. These resource packages have been uploaded onto the MOE OPAL portal for teachers to access and use. Here is an overview of what's available:

Resources available on OPAL

Resources developed for the "Teaching Living Legends" professional development curriculum include lesson ideas, interviews with artistes, recordings of performances for usage in the classroom, and links to literature and artefacts available at the National Library or National Archives. In this section, we share with you a snapshot of some of the resources that we have developed for TLL and made available on the MOE OPAL portal. However, the experience of browsing online resources is never a substitute for face-to-face, hands-on learning in a workshop setting, and we highly encourage you to sign up for the subsequent runs of the TLL milestone programme organised by STAR in the coming years.

Indian Orchestra

Indian classical music has had a long history, but the notion of having a group of Indian music instruments perform together like an orchestra, is only a more recent development in the 20th century. Singapore is one of the few countries in the world with established and permanent Indian Orchestras.

Lesson Ideas on Indian Orchestra: [CLICK HERE](#)

- INSTRUMENTS OF THE INDIAN ORCHESTRA (PAGE 4)
- THE VISUAL INDIAN ORCHESTRA (PAGE 5)
- TALA AND CYCLES (PAGE 6)
- CULTURAL FUSION: WHAT IS SINGAPORE MUSIC? (PAGE 7)

Indian Orchestra Performance of "Rupini" composed by Ghanavenothan [CLICK HERE](#)

Xinyao

The term Xinyao 新谣 comes from the phrase 新加坡年轻人创作的歌谣 which refers to songs composed and performed by the youths of Singapore.

Lesson Ideas on Xinyao: [CLICK HERE](#)

- CHILDHOOD (MID TO UPPER PRIMARY)
- STORY OF SINGAPORE IN XINYAO (UPPER PRIMARY AND LOWER SECONDARY)
- ARRANGEMENTS OF XINYAO SONGS (UPPER PRIMARY AND LOWER SECONDARY)
- INFORMAL LEARNING IN XINYAO (SECONDARY)

Malay Rhythms

The five core Malay rhythms – Inang, Masri, Zapin, Joget and Asli – are widely used and performed in the Malay music tradition in Singapore.

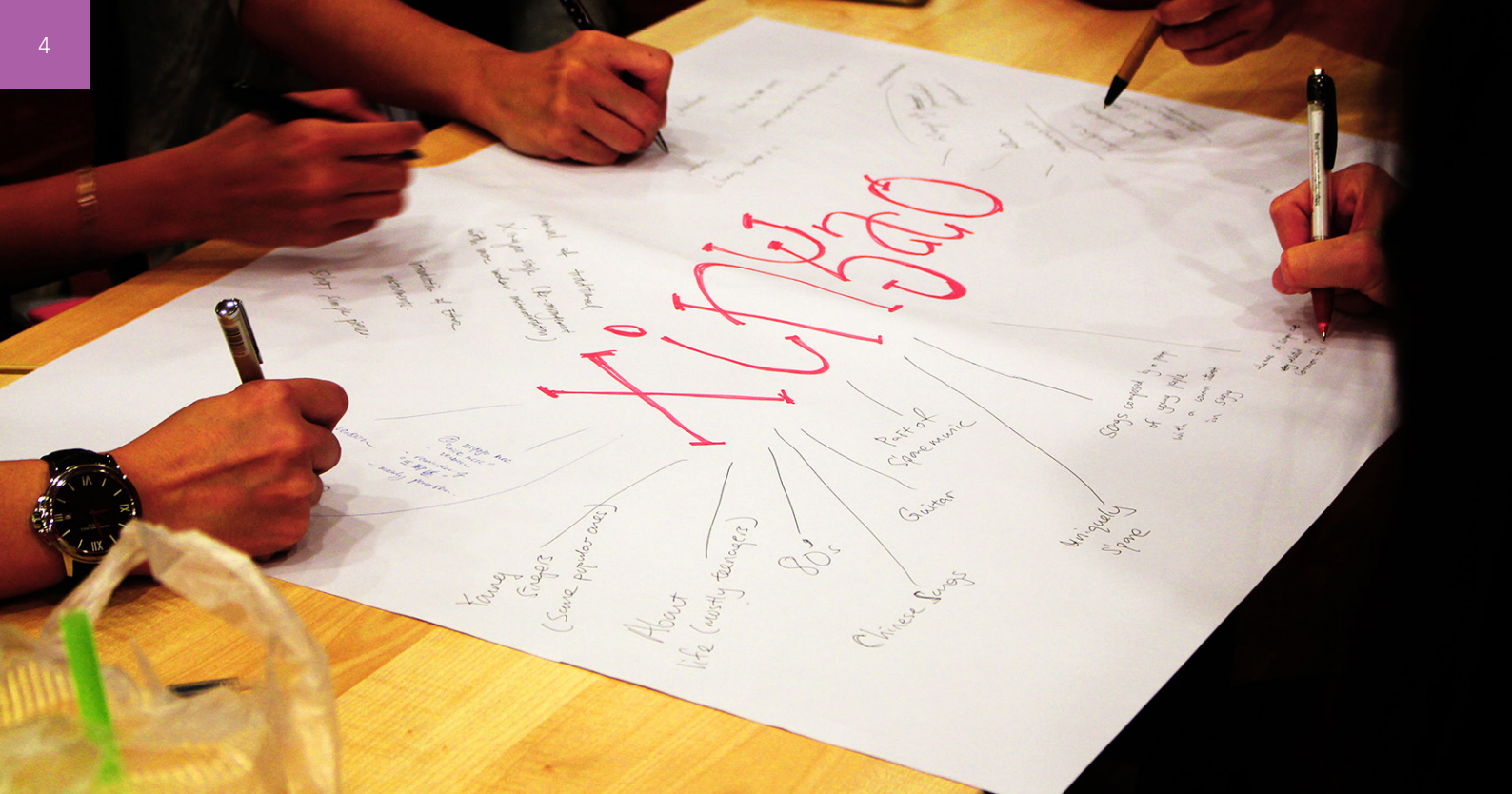
Lesson Ideas on Malay Rhythms: [CLICK HERE](#)

Dondang Sayang

Dondang Sayang is a form of singing poems originating from the Malay community, and has become a shared cultural practice between the Malays and the Peranakans.

Lesson Ideas on Dondang Sayang: [CLICK HERE](#)

- PLAYING THE RHYTHM
- USING GRAPHIC / BAR NOTATION
- TEACHER-DIRECTED LISTENING AND DISCUSSION
- INTERVIEWS AND DISCUSSION
- CREATING AND/OR PERFORMING



CREATING A DISTINCTIVE ACADEMY CURRICULUM

A perspective from
Dr Lum Chee Hoo

The Teaching Living Legends (TLL) project is a big step forward for STAR in developing its own distinctive academy curriculum. We are privileged to have Dr Lum Chee Hoo, Assistant Professor at the National Institute of Education and the Head of UNESCO-NIE Centre for Arts Research in Education (CARE) to carry out a research study on our TLL journey. We had the opportunity to have a chat with him after the fourth day of the five-day Teaching Living Legends workshop.

Q: The Teaching Living Legends (TLL) project is about the concept of "Singaporeanness", our identity in the midst of diversity, and the relationship between tradition and change. What is your interest in these themes and how do you respond to them?

A: I think the idea of the multicultural has always been significant to me. As Singaporeans, we are always wondering about who we are and where we come from. Trying to identify something that is uniquely Singaporean is something that artists and musicians have been constantly trying to evolve. I believe that the TLL project is a good platform to push this forward.

I don't think that anyone is looking for a specific answer but the fact is that a conscious reflection of these themes is something that hasn't been dealt with so much in schools, be it in terms of more ethnic perspectives or beyond. It has always been rather superficial, in the sense that (if you sing a song, you just sing a song) and you don't really go into the notions of identity and start questioning and reflecting.

This platform allows it to happen through the various student-centric possibilities that have been culled out in terms of the pedagogies that the STAR team has consciously put forward, allowing the teachers to respond in their own ways and not to make up their minds for them.

What are some positive outcomes that you see for students?

For one, there will be a deeper understanding. Even if we don't talk about the notions of identity, the various musics that have been introduced in TLL, where each component has been contextualised and packaged, coming from a very grounded perspective that has been



researched thoroughly by each STAR member in collaboration with the artists, is something the students need to have. TLL provides a platform for contextual deepening.

What's your observation about the workshop design process that STAR has put in?

I really appreciate how the STAR team has gone outside their comfort zone and tried to engage with something more deeply. It comes out in such a passionate way. One of the culture bearers (practicing artist) even said that if he didn't know, he would have thought that the STAR member that he was working with had years of experience in the art form instead of learning it recently. Kudos to the team for making that real effort and passion towards wanting to know. I think that is quite a wonderful thing.

Beyond that, there is also a very conscious consideration of pedagogy. It is not just learning about content but also deep thinking and working with teachers on the ground to try out the ideas to ensure that they work in classrooms. It is not just based on thinking frameworks that you can't explain in the classroom. There is concrete evidence in the package to show that these lesson ideas have also come from the ground. Working with teachers to develop the anatomy of this workshop is important because you will have the buy-in of teachers who are working it out together, as they understand that this is co-construction and collaboration rather than a top-down approach.

After observing reactions of the teachers for the past four days, would you be able to give

us some insights on how they are receiving this package?

The general feeling is that there are many things they weren't aware of and their reactions seem to suggest that they are having a deepening experience of each genre. They are consciously thinking about it from a beginning point of reflection to a slow deepening through the 4 days. For example, today, we ended with Socratic questioning which culminated in the larger question of identity. It was well-paced, allowing teachers to have the time and space to get at that. What we don't know is how these things will eventually be used in class. I do think the teachers will use a lot of the content but how they shape that in terms of thinking about identity, we will see it in the next few months.

Has there been an observable change from the first day?

The written reflections do show that there is deepening understanding of content and pedagogy, but that is anecdotal. Very often, we will write something and not do it. It is in the real application that we will find out (if there is a change). But as with all professional development, this is the part that is meaningful for research to trace.

I believe that the learning from TLL will last a long time compared to other little workshops because it is a full 5-day workshop. While it covers many topics, it revolves around one central theme, giving teachers time and space to think deeper. If it had been short and sporadic, I am not sure if they would have gained as much.



TRANSFORMING PERSPECTIVES

“Teaching Living Legends” Milestone Workshop

From 2 – 9 July 2014, STAR held the inaugural “Teaching Living Legends” milestone workshop, with 20 Primary school and 20 Secondary school teachers embarking on a fruitful 5-day journey of learning, reflection and growth. Covering diverse topics such as “Indian Orchestra”, “Dikir Barat”, “Xinyao”, “Singapore Composers”, “Malay Rhythms” and “Our National Anthem”, our teachers explored Singaporean identity and musical culture. Here is what some of the participants have said of their experience:

“I used to think that crafting innovative and engaging lessons were tedious and challenging. Now I think that it is a MUST to conduct hands-on activities because it is so exciting and engaging for students and promotes lifelong musical learning.”

**JWEN LIM,
WOODGROVE SECONDARY SCHOOL**



“It is exciting that we are in the midst of making history, and that the music that we create in our classrooms may become Singapore’s own original folk songs 100 years down the road!”

**CHANG HUI MIIN,
JIEMIN PRIMARY SCHOOL**





"The ensemble performance was engaging and helped me to internalise the Xinyao tune. I must remember how much I enjoyed performing because I want my pupils to feel the same way."

**SITI AISHAH,
PUNGGOL PRIMARY SCHOOL**



"I am pleasantly surprised to learn that we have our very own 'Singapore sound' and are keeping the 5 traditional Malay rhythms alive."

**VINO,
GAN ENG SENG SCHOOL**



"I feel that only through the understanding of the passion behind these stories can our pupils truly appreciate the music."

**GRACELYN ONG,
STAMFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL**



"I'm more confident now to teach Indian music... The key as a music educator is to use suitable pedagogies and resources to make Indian music easily understood and learnt by our pupils."

**JOLENE,
ROSYTH PRIMARY SCHOOL**

UPCOMING PROGRAMMES

MILESTONE PROGRAMMES

Key mandatory programmes at key stages of the teaching career to achieve professional renewal, reinvention and positive transformation in teaching beliefs and practices.

| TITLE OF PROGRAMMES | DETAILS | PARTICIPANTS |
|---------------------|--|---|
| Kodály Workshop | Pri & Sec: 3 – 7 Nov 2014 (full day) | CS1, 2 & 3 Primary & Secondary music teachers |
| Orff Workshop | Pri: 3 – 7 Nov 2014 (full day) Sec: 10 – 14 Nov 2014 (full day) | CS1, 2 & 3 Primary & Secondary music teachers |
| Dalcroze Workshop | Pri: 10 – 14 Nov 2014 (full day) | CS1, 2 & 3 Primary music teachers |

In 3 - 14 November 2014, STAR will be organising the inaugural "Singapore Arts Pedagogical Seminars", which will incorporate the Kodály, Orff and Dalcroze Milestone programmes into an integrated two week seminar series.

Look out for registration details which will be emailed to schools and music teachers by September.

SUPPORTING PROGRAMMES

Programmes to provide new areas of learning and broaden perspectives.

| TITLE OF PROGRAMMES | DETAILS | PARTICIPANTS |
|---|--|---|
| MOE-NAC Master Artist Series- <i>Talk by Singapore Cultural Medallion Recipient Mr Jeremy Monteiro</i> CLICK HERE TO REGISTER | 17 Sep 2014 2:45pm – 4:30pm Theatrette, Blk J Academy of Singapore Teachers 2 Malan Road S109433 | CS1, 2 & 3 Primary, Secondary music teachers & Allied educators (Priority will be given to teachers) |
| Collaborative and Creative Music Making for Classroom Music Lessons CLICK HERE TO REGISTER (PRIMARY) CLICK HERE TO REGISTER (SECONDARY) | Primary: 30 Sep 2014 Secondary: 1 Oct 2014 2:00pm – 5:00pm STAR Recital Studio, Blk K Lvl 3, Singapore Teachers' Academy for the aRts 2 Malan Road S109433 | CS1, 2 & 3 Primary, Secondary music teachers & Allied educators (Priority will be given to teachers) |

SUPPORTING SCHEMES

In collaboration with the National Arts Council.

| TITLE OF PROGRAMME | DETAILS | PARTICIPANTS |
|--|--|---|
| Briefing on the Artist-Mentor Scheme (AMS) and Arts Pedagogical Research Fund (APRF) CLICK HERE TO REGISTER YOUR INTEREST | 30 Sep 2014 (TBC) 3:00pm - 5:00pm (TBC) More details will be sent to your schools in due course. | Interested Art, Dance, Drama & Music Teachers |

COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE (COP)

Programmes that are premised on collaboration and sharing to collectively improve music skills and/or teaching practices.

| NAME OF COP | DATE |
|-----------------|--|
| Teachers' Choir | 4:00pm – 6:00pm, Tuesdays STAR Blk K Lvl 3 Recital Studio |

*We welcome all teachers and allied educators to participate in the CoPs. Please contact our Programme Executive Ms Tan Bee Ngoh (Tan_Bee_Ngoh@moe.gov.sg) and let her know your area of interest.

