

UCSI's musical tour de force

AS Malaysia's leading private music school at tertiary level, UCSI University's Institute of Music (IMus) has been consistently raising the bar when it comes to teaching standards.

Its faculty includes internationally renowned and award-winning soloists, chamber, and orchestral musicians who work closely with their students.

Compounded with a challenging curriculum and numerous opportunities to perform, students at UCSI enjoy a learning experience like no other.

"A music school is only as good as its faculty and I'm proud to say that ours is of the highest calibre in this country," said Professor Dr P'ng Tean Hwa, director of IMus.

"Our teachers represent the highest standards in scholarship, performance and teaching, and they sustain a culture of excellence that places students at the very centre."

Joining the line-up at the faculty is Assoc Prof Dr Goh Chia-Chien, the youngest founding member of the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra (MPO) at 21 years old.

An award-winning violinist, he performed internationally, including Carnegie Hall as a soloist and a concertmaster for several orchestras.

Assoc Prof Goh's first major teaching venture came a year after he joined MPO when he founded Kampung Strings,

a critically successful string orchestra for young local musicians, most of whom occupied principal positions in the MPO and won international music competitions.

Assoc Prof Goh himself accepted several teaching stints at universities and music schools in the US as well as in Malaysia.

"The environment here at UCSI is such that we are free to teach how we want to teach, and because of that freedom, we are able to offer our students the very best," said Assoc Prof Goh.

Some of the university's alumni have returned to assume teaching positions, like pianist Carolyn Lo May Yeeng who read her bachelor's degree in music at UCSI before pursuing postgraduate studies in the US.

In 2015, she was the first and only Malaysian awarded the Fellowship diploma in Piano Performance (FRSM) from the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) in London, achieving distinction on her first attempt.

"UCSI is unique because it caters for each student's needs and provides every opportunity for an all-rounded learning experience," said Lo.

Like Assoc Prof Goh, Lo believes that an educator needs a flexible teaching style to give each student the best guidance in developing their talents.

"It brings me satisfaction to hear how they have improved and matured throughout their

years of study," she said.

"There isn't anything more satisfying than witnessing students make breakthroughs," agreed fellow lecturer, classical vocalist Tan Chee Shen who sung many times under the baton of Maestro Joshua Greene of the renowned Metropolitan Opera.

"Malaysian students tend to be more reserved and demure when it comes to emoting," he said, explaining that he strove to create a safe environment for students to feel free to express themselves.

UCSI also collaborates with many leading local and international artiste-musicians.

The university has hosted visiting professionals and academics; this month, it will welcome visiting professor Dr Andre de Quadros from Boston University.

These opportunities enhance learning and teaching outcomes.

"As teachers, we are responsible for creating platforms for our students to explore their passion and grow," said Prof P'ng.

Founded in 1990, IMus has established itself as Malaysia's foremost music force in both the classical and contemporary fields.

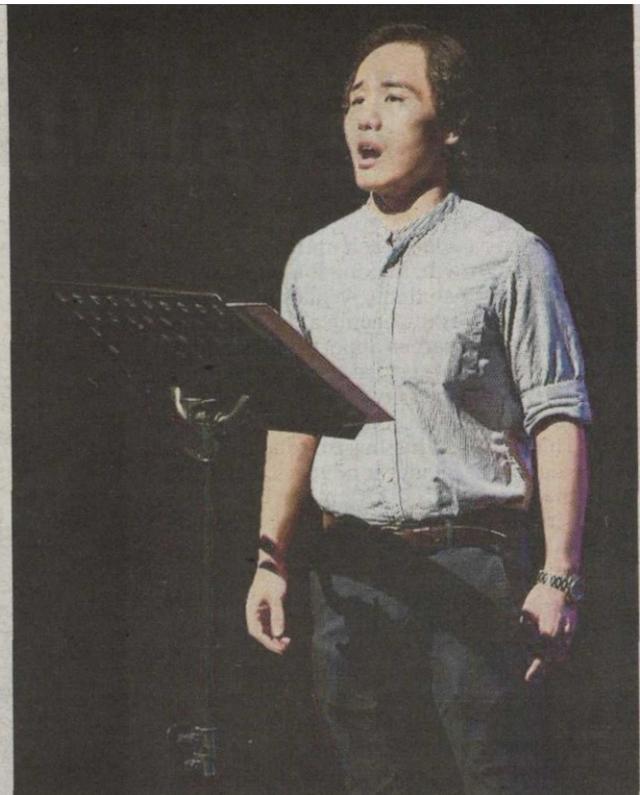
■ To find out more about UCSI University's Institute of Music, call 03-9101 8882 or log on to www.ucsiuniversity.edu.my/onlineenquiry. The KL campus is open daily for extended counselling sessions even during weekends and public holidays.



Award-winning pianist and chamber musician Carolyn Lo May Yeeng has students who have received admission into universities and conservatories like the Birmingham Conservatoire and the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama.



Performing and teaching go hand in hand for Associate Professor Dr Goh Chia-Chien. Performing moulds a better teacher while teaching allows exploration and breakthroughs to the next level in performance.



Classical vocalist Tan Chee Shen specialises in operas and art songs of different languages. He says that musicians need to be open-minded in coping with industry demands.