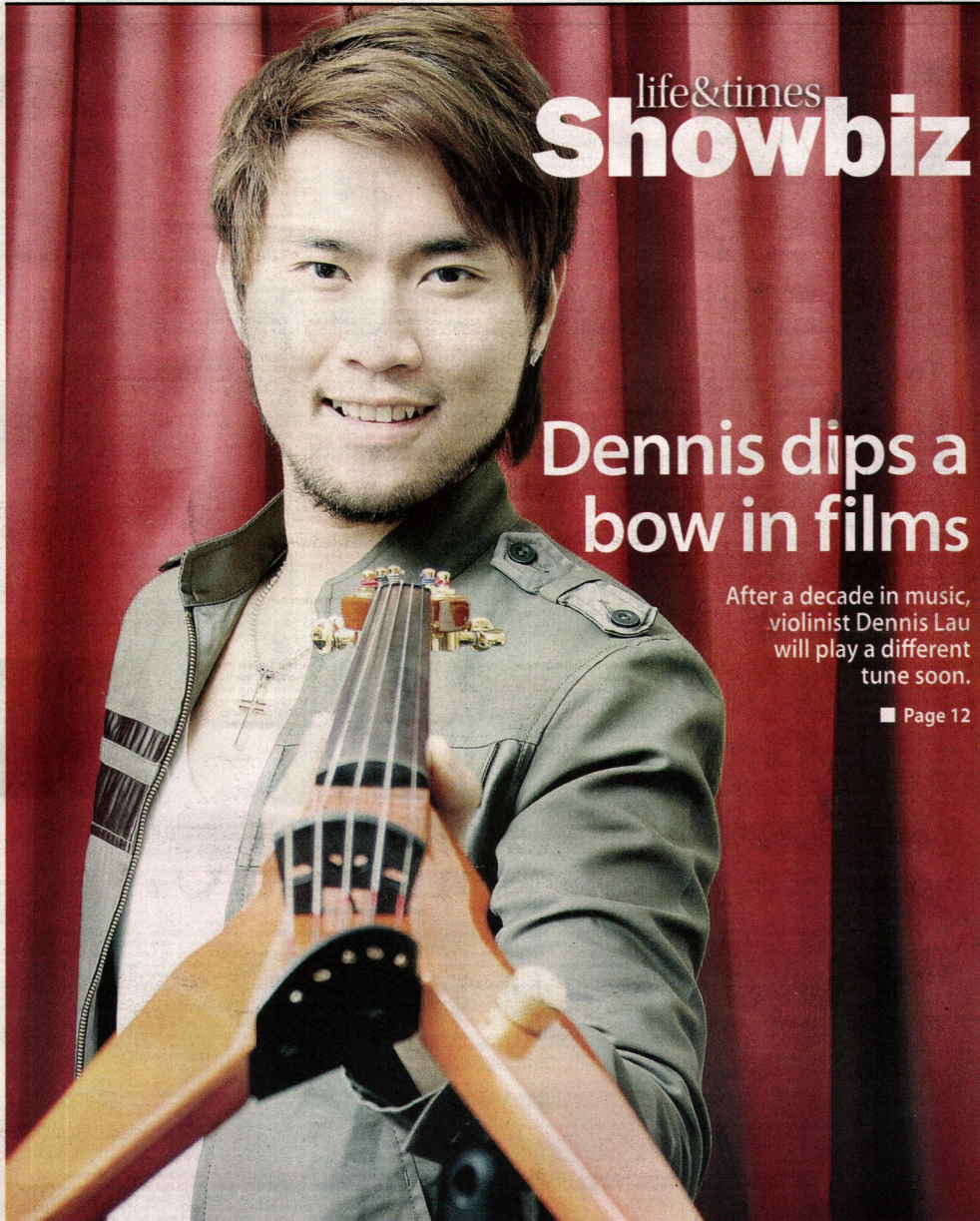


life×
Showbiz

Dennis dips a bow in films

After a decade in music, violinist Dennis Lau will play a different tune soon.

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Picture by MALAI ROSMAH TUAH



From violin prodigy to filmmaker

Violin sensation Dennis Lau tells DENNIS CHUA about his newfound talent as a filmmaker

THE name Dennis Lau has for the last decade been synonymous with excellent entertainment on the violin. A gifted violinist, he also excels at the piano, guitar and drums, besides writing his own music and producing his own videos.

Now Lau has added a new talent to his resume by producing a short film, set to be released at the end of this month.

The film is *Prelude In F Minor* which stars television personality and actress Daphne Keng, Chinese television drama regular Steve Yap, Lau and his seven-year-old student Ena Tee.

Lau says: "The film is 13 minutes and its title is a two-year-old composition of mine. It's a short story about three lives. I play a successful musician whose life hits rock bottom when he is hospitalised.

"Daphne is the nurse who cares for him, and who puts on a brave face when she is physically abused by her husband played by Steve. Ena plays a musically-inclined girl who befriends the musician, and aspires to become a successful musician under his guidance."

Two of Lau's close friends are featured as cameos — his publicist Syed Mohamad Iddid from Media Bond PR and hip-hop artiste and producer Altimet.

The film, which was completed

Lau, who has performed in Shanghai, Beijing, Sri Lanka, Jakarta, Bangkok, Seoul and Hong Kong is currently working with hip-hop star Joe Flizzow and South Korean singer Lee An for a new song in his second album which will be ready next year

in six days, is fast-moving without dialogue, and "as good as a music video" for his composition. It is supported by Lau's alma mater, UCSI, where he graduated with a music degree.

Shot in Bangsar, UCSI in Cheras, his Subang Jaya office, Assunta Hospital in Petaling Jaya and *Zouk* in Jalan Ampang, Kuala Lumpur, the film is directed by independent filmmaker Adrian Lai of Emperor and *Family At War* fame.

Lau says: "It's a short story, told through the scenes and expressions of the characters. The message behind it is that fame is not everything, and that one can find fulfillment in simple things. My character, the musician, thinks he is infallible, but one day, he 'has a great fall', and rebuilds his life through the loving care of the nurse and the girl."

On the title track, Lau says he actually envisioned it as a breakup song.

"It's a violin and saxophone duet, the saxophonist being the talented Jimmy Sax. It was recorded in Kuala Lumpur, but also contains orchestral accompaniment courtesy of the Beijing Symphony Orchestra," he says, adding that it is his second collaboration with the orchestra. I've worked with two of China's world class orchestras, the other being the Guangzhou Symphony Orchestra.

Lau says his love of good

photographs led to his interest in video and filmmaking.

"I also love storytelling, and as a musician, I believe my music gives rise to interesting stories," he says. "While music is my passion, I want to explore different things like filmmaking."

Lau credits Tee as his best discovery for the film. "Ena has been learning violin since she was four and is showing great promise as a fourth grader. She is a natural actress, with expressive eyes. I encouraged her to join the film to overcome her shyness," he says.

Lau is happy to work with Yap whom he describes as a terrific actor and individual.

"Steve's very humble and professional, and his dark, menacing looks make his character stand out," he says. Lau describes Keng as a joy to work with. They have known each other for three years.

"Daphne is lively, full of ideas and very friendly. I'm so happy her career in film is taking off."

The film will accompany a limited edition of his debut album *Diversity* which was launched last November. "The limited edition also includes *Syukur*, a song I did with Altimet and *Reflection*, a new piece I did with Jimmy," he says.

Lau, through his production company Mosaic Movie Productions, has done two videos prior to the film. "One is for Dragon-i in Gurney

Plaza, Georgetown and another for A Cut Above in Macau," he says.

"While I'm starting off with short films, I plan to do longer ones later." Lau, who has performed in Shanghai, Beijing, Sri Lanka, Jakarta, Bangkok, Seoul and Hong Kong is currently working with hip-hop star Joe Flizzow and South Korean singer Lee An for a new song in his second album which will be ready next year.

"Joe and I will be singing hip-hop, and that's a first-time experience for me," he says.

Lau, who comes from Teluk Intan. He took violin lessons during his pre-teens in Ipoh.

While at UCSI, he played at weddings and was part of the Malaysian Philharmonic Youth, National Symphony and Radio Televisyen Malaysia Orchestras.

"I play the violin like I would sing it. You can't just play, you have to inject soul into it."

He plays jazz, R&B and hip-hop music and collaborates with artistes, local and international, whom he can connect with. They include Syafiqaz Selamat and Atilia Haron. Syafiqaz performed the song *Mahkota* in his first album.

"I don't like to play solo. Collaborations make it better because it's not focused on one performer."

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