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CAMPUS WATCH: Spreading music, one state at a time

2011/04/30

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A student exchange programme to Sabah proved to be an eye-opening experience for the UCSI University Concert Choir

UCSI University Concert Choir is sharing its talent with the rest of Malaysia, one state at a time. The 35-member group recently flew to Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, for a four-day cultural exchange and performance at Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS).

During the visit, the choir gave a concert at the UMS School of Arts recital hall to an audience of 300 students, local choirs and the public.

The group, the university's premiere vocal ensemble, performed a wide range of music including works from Mozart, Thomas Worley and Eric Whitacre.

This was the team's first non-competitive performance and visit outside of Kuala Lumpur.

The choir, which has a diverse repertoire ranging from the European Renaissance and Malaysian folk songs to contemporary music, participates regularly in both national and international music competitions including the Malaysian Patriotic Song Competition, Malaysian Youth Music Festival and Voyage of Songs International Choral Competition in Thailand. It won a gold award at the International Choral Festival Orientale Concertus III in Taiwan last September.

Choir director Ian Lim Kean Seng said the trip was an opportunity for students to "gain professional singing experience and familiarise themselves with a different culture and education system".

"It's (also a chance) to showcase the talents of our students," added Lim.

Apart from UMS, students also visited Kian Kok Middle School where they performed alongside the school's choir group.

University choir member Koh Tian Yi said the exchange programme enabled students to better understand their peers from East Malaysia.

"When we go on trips, we like to use music as a tool to communicate. Even though it was the first time we met each other, we felt close to (the hosts) after performing together," added Koh.

The group also sampled the local culture via a tribal cultural show and an overnight stay at the foot of Mount Kinabalu.

The students also visited Green Connection Wildlife Park where they were able to get up close to snakes, turtles and sharks and learn about animal preservation.

Concert Choir vice-president Gan Hui Wan said her first time to Sabah was an eye-opener.

"It was like putting things you see on TV right in front of you," she added. The Sabah exchange programme took place amid UCSI's silver jubilee anniversary and highlights the institution's "25 Years of Creating Experiences".

It illustrates its commitment to providing students with a comprehensive, blended learning experience to develop its Graduate Attributes, including traits such as leadership skills, interpersonal skills and being engaged, global citizens.



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This month, both Well Lit. Sessions in Klang Valley & Penang will have Umapang Ampilapakan discussing the works of Jane Austen. Check the Well Lit. pages every Wednesday in Life & Times for the dissection of books related to her.

Klang Valley: Wednesday, **Sept 28, 8:30pm** at Shalini Ganendra Fine Art, 8, Lrg 16/7B (section 16), Petaling Jaya (03-7960 4740)

Penang: Thursday, **Sept 29, 6:30pm** at Aqua restaurant, 6th floor of Straits Quay on Jalan Sri Tanjung Pinang, Tanjung Kokong, Penang

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