

By Christopher Seet and Ouyang Youheng

Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine's Charity Musical

"Just Great!"

"Hopefully my music is medicine, some type of antidote for something or some kind of explanation or just to feel good."

Just as how these words portrait the therapeutical benefits of music so will the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine's Charity Musical hope to achieve them. Conceived entirely by current medical students, "Just Great!" is the culmination and end result of many sleepless nights filled with literally tears, sweat and blood.

The story (or as much as I am allowed to mention) alludes to a freshman batch of medical students and the changing mindsets that they have. In an era where what we learn in school, curricular and otherwise' literally translates to our job aptitudes in the future, it is the unspoken and unwritten things that matter the most. Be it in quiet times or turmoil we often overlook and under appreciate, hurting and angering others in the process. No matter how technologically advanced the medical profession can get, the human factor is always the most important. "Just Great!" tells a tale of what ifs and possibilities, an inside look into the troubles the medical student can face and above all, a quest that will unite the actors and audience to find the penultimate decision to make.

Conceptualising the story was not easy and to simplify it in a paragraph will not justify the amount of brain juices that the scriptwriters had to squeeze out. Many ideas were tossed about, thrown into the rubbish bin only to be un-crumpled and used again. Finally the writers decided on a storyline and characters that everybody can identify with. The medical professional as well as the general public will be able to laugh and take home a piece of the story with them. Bringing

concept to life involved imagining the characters in real-life situations and even role-playing the scenes out!

A particular interesting moment is when a certain character thinks of himself as high and mighty; looking down on the *hoi polloi* of medical school students. In essence each character wants to do good in their own way but is being just great enough or do they have to strive to be a good human being too? That is the question that we do not have an answer to. It also enforces the light-hearted yet thought provoking nature of the musical and thus its title – "Just Great!"

Through countless auditions the cast was selected from across the five years of medical student batches and are in the midst of intensive rehearsals and singing practices. Even with the heavy schedules and tests that 'plague' them, no one is daunted by the challenge of balancing school deadlines and memorising dance steps! With such a dedicated and committed cast working to see the musical bear fruit, we just know that it will be fantastic. Do look out for a very famous person who is guest-starring!

A successful musical should always have a superb crew and production team that lays the strong foundation in which the actors can capitulate on. Tapping on the expertise of those who have worked previously on the annual inter-year drama competition "Playhouse", we have amassed a wonderful team whose goal is to create an environment that will transport the audience into our fictional world.

Music is the root word in musicals and as such we needed to pen lyrics, compose music



Christopher Seet (left) is helping to direct this musical with Ouyang Youheng (right) who is also the producer. Both of them are 4th year medical students in the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine and are avid visual arts enthusiasts with experience in the YLLSOM "Playhouse" drama competition. Youheng has also worked on a few theatrical productions prior to this.

and orchestrate the whole score. Saying that medicine is filled with the best and brightest is an understatement because the amount of support and help that we received in the form of talented musicians and composers was just overwhelming. Finding a common theme to arrange all the music around was not easy but they managed to pull it off. From melancholic solos to feisty group songs – quirky actions all included, there is a song for everyone! Indeed we can finally say that medical students are not only ‘muggers’ but ‘artisans’ too! Just listening to the music and vocals being assimilated in syncopation will bring a tear to your eye.

To all our fellow medical colleagues and alumni members we hope that “Just Great!” would bring you as much joy watching it as we did making it! It promises to be a night filled with poignant memories, laugh and surprises as the cast and crew take you through a kaleidoscope of emotions. See what happens when students take to the stage and showcase their talents in a hereunto never seen before production. Be wowed by the singing and let your feet dance along to the beat of the music. As the climax of the story approaches, the lines that clearly define black from white will be erased and you will find yourself pondering about it for days to come!

What do the names Osler, Hippocrates and Alzheimer’s have in common? What are all medical

students afraid of? When was the last time anyone had any success with filling in a feedback form? The answers to these questions and more will be answered come 4 and 5 January 2008 when our very own medical malady musical goes live on stage at the University Cultural Centre, National University of Singapore! “Just Great!” promises to be a night filled with tears, sweat and blood; a twisting tale of unrighteous glory and overt optimism. As the audience embarks on a journey together with the cast, they will come to grips with each battle lost; each struggle won and ultimately realise the truth. Be enthralled by music and vocals that will make your spines shiver! So let us take you where the world is a stage and we are its players. ■

“Just Great!” has its own website at the following address:

<http://medicine.nus.edu.sg/musical>

Tickets are available at \$20, \$30 (for students only), \$50, \$80 and \$100. Please contact Khadijah at 9068 0589 or email her at khadijah.abdulkader@gmail.com for ticketing details and purchases.