

# A night of Laughter

Expect an evening of raucous fun from Singapore comedians

By Corrie Tan

Performing at the Esplanade Theatre has always been a big dream for 24-year-old student Munah Bagharib.

That distant dream will soon become a reality. She will share the Esplanade stage with 11 other comedians later this month, in Dream Academy's stand-up show, Happy Ever Laughter.

Munah is one half of the comedy duo Munah and Hirzi, whose video sketches have garnered tens of thousands of views on the video-sharing site YouTube since they started uploading their humorous snippets in 2009.

Their success came as a surprise. Munah says: 'We'd always liked doing stupid things. We didn't intend for it to be anything big.'

Their repertoire includes pranking unsuspecting members of the public and creating caricatures such as the domestic helper and singer wannabe, Leticia Fierce.

In the upcoming stand-up performance, they will be rubbing shoulders with comedy stalwarts - the likes of Gurmit Singh, Najip Ali, Michelle Chong, Moses Lim and Kumar, who will be performing their own acts.

Munah says: 'We've met some of them and they're actually really nice in person. Hirzi is a big fan of Chong. For me, it's Najip and Siti Khalijah. We were nervous when we met them but they were so humble and supportive of what we do. We're really honoured to be working with them.'

Munah is a third-year undergraduate studying new media and theatre studies at the National University of Singapore. Her partner in comedy, Hirzi Zulkiflie, 23, will be starting school at the Chapman University Singapore later this year. They met when they were studying in Temasek Polytechnic in 2006.

Actress and comedienne Selena Tan, 39, co-director of Happy Ever Laughter, had stumbled upon their videos and invited them to be part of the line-up.

Tan first conceived of the show about a year ago. She was inspired by comedy nights such as those at the annual Edinburgh Comedy Festival, where comedians take turns to do their acts on stage.

She says: 'I wanted to have the same kind of thing with Singapore. I thought it would be nice to have a night where all the best comedians came together and gave it their best. I just told them: Make people laugh.'

Helping out with the script is popular blogger Benjamin 'Mr Miyagi' Lee, who gave actress Judee Tan feedback on her scriptwriting.

Tan, 30, has performed to howls of laughter in the long-running comedy sketch show Chestnuts. She has also made regular appearances on the Channel 5 news parody, The Noose. But this will be her first time scripting her own performance.

In Happy Ever Laughter, Tan reprises her role in The Hossan Leong Show - a country bumpkin traditional Chinese physician. She usually squares off against actor Chua Enlai for this act but in Happy Ever Laughter, she will be going it alone.

Citing one of her hit characters in Chestnuts, Ivory Low Ai Kiu, she says: 'I think it's inevitable that you have your own voice when you're playing a character. Like for Ivory, I'd think, she'll generally say this or that. But to actually script something out was quite different.'

To her surprise, Lee enjoyed her script. Tan says: 'Sometimes humour is like that. What you find funny, others might not. A lot of times I think something is funny and my friends are like, no, it's not funny. And I think, what's wrong with you? What's wrong with me?'

'And then sometimes I say something, and I'm not even trying to be funny - and they think it's really funny.'

She adds with a laugh: 'I do get goosebumps and it can be stressful, but I think it's healthy.'

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