

youthspeak

#04

February
2008

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It's more than
mere entertainment

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The Jakarta Post

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A little about...
Music



Photo editing/research: Suyoto, Adi Purnama Yulistawan, Hery Suyoto, Budhi Triprihanto

From Mozart to music in education

A few years ago while hosting a daily music appreciation program on a local radio station, a listener called in and asked what music they should play for their newborn baby. They had read that classical music – or more specifically, music by Mozart – would make their baby smarter.

"The Mozart Effect", as this is often called, is a popular subject. When browsing through music in a record store, we will find a variety of compilation CDs based on the Mozart Effect, with titles like *Mozart Mathematics*, *Genius Baby*, *Mozart Baby* and other such titles. (More often than not, however, we also will find that the music is not by Mozart at all.)

We will not embark here on a discussion about the truth of the Mozart Effect, but about music as part of the education process.

Music is an art, a language. It requires emotion, cognition, aesthetics and, as a music player, it develops individual and group skills. Above all, it develops the brain's auditory system, which is too often overlooked in our present-day "visual" education system.

All of these aspects must be developed and synchronized, and the result is a kind of mental stretching that, in general, will help an individual in learning other things.

According to some research, the notational skills in music correlate positively with achievements in mathematics and reading.

Larry Scripp of Harvard Project Zero has identified that the ability to process musical symbols and representations is a leading predictor of music's association with learning in other subject areas. This research

also found that musical pitch is more predictive of mathematical ability while rhythm is more predictive of reading ability.

Of course, education is not only about being successful in school, but about becoming a better person. While most of the core academic subjects (language, reading, mathematics, science and social studies) emphasize individual development, music education involves playing and interacting with others, which, in turn, prepares an individual to be more active and successful in society.

As mentioned earlier, music enhances the brain's auditory system. Personally, I think this is the greatest benefit of music.

At an early age, we learn to speak by imitating sounds that we hear, and eventually we are able to express ourselves through speaking.

For some reason, however, at a certain point in our education, the "learn by listening" system is dropped in favor of a "learn by looking" system. This visual system is then developed over the years through school and beyond.

Sadly, the present curriculum at schools is based mostly on a visual approach, and the student forgets how to listen. They have to write down what the teacher has said to remember it.

The problem is that people hear and do not listen.

To listen is to pay attention

to what we hear; and when we pay attention, we remember.

Through music, we stimulate and enhance this listening ability, and an obvious benefit is that we are able to learn and remember everything much faster.

Again, serious research has been made on the subject, in particular, research published on Sept. 20, 2006, by Dr. Laurel Trainor, Prof. of Psychology, Neuroscience and Behaviour at McMaster University and Director of the McMaster Institute for Music and the Mind in Canada.

The results show that after only one year of learning how to play a musical instrument, children performed better in memory tests that correlate with general intelligence skills such as literacy, verbal memory, visio-spatial processing, mathematics and IQ.

A small auditory exercise that anyone can do is simply to listen to the sounds around us. To do this, we merely sit in a comfortable chair, close our eyes and listen to the surrounding sounds for about 1-2 minutes. We will be surprised to discover how many sounds there are, even in the quietest environment.

Eventually, we will be able to even define these sounds as colors, and suddenly, the world bursts with color.

Plenty of articles and research on the effect of music in education exist, all



Eric Awuy

courtesy
Twilite Youth
Orchestra

showing positive results in enhancing our learning capabilities.

I highly recommend reading these, but also to start playing music, as aside from its beneficial effects on

"...music enhances the brain's auditory system...this is the greatest benefit of music."

our brains, it is fun to learn.

After all, the child prodigy and genius composer Mozart was having fun with music – and so should we all.

In closing, I will leave you with a quote from the 35th U.S. president, John F. Kennedy: "The life of the arts, far from being an interruption, a distraction, in the life of the nation, is close to the center of a nation's purpose – and is a test to the quality of a nation's civilization."

Eric Awuy

The writer is Program Director and Conductor of the Twilite Youth Orchestra and a professional trumpeter who has performed with the Twilite Orchestra and the Capella Amadeus ensemble.

A graduate of the Montreal Conservatory of Music in Canada, he has performed internationally with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra, the National Arts Center Orchestra, the Quebec Symphony Orchestra and the acclaimed Brass Five chamber music quintet, and as a soloist with the renowned Montreal I Musici ensemble of Canada.



PROGRAM COORDINATOR
Rita A. Widiadana

EDITOR
Chisato Hara

REPORTER
Kurniawan Hari

DESIGNER
Donny Haryadi

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
Raditie Ayu Sekarmirah (Ditie)

nie@thejakartapost.com

CHIEF EDITOR
Endy M. Bayuni

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NIE Partners & Sponsorships
GENERAL MANAGER OF
MARKETING
Yulia Herawati
yulia@thejakartapost.com



Teens and music: Enjoyment vs. appreciation

A boy was observed recently putting on a pair of earphones as he walked beside his father in a hardware store. A music player was in his hand. Like many other teenagers today, the boy seems to listen to music at any time, anywhere he can.

We can easily see teenagers plugged into their walkmans or iPods at malls, bookstores or even a hospital. Music (and music players) has clearly become part of the teen lifestyle.

Director of the Jakarta International Community Choir (JICC) Ivonne Atmodjo said that the younger generation is now exposed to a wider variety of music than previous generations. She also says they are more aware of what is going on musically in other parts of the world.

"Music festivals are always packed with youngsters who are eager to hear live music. A lot of (local) bands are performing and producing albums and a lot of young talents are emerging," said Ivonne, who is also a professional pianist and singer.

She has also noticed that today's pop music is perpetuated by modern technologies. Downloading and sharing MP3 music files has never been easier, not to mention viewing just about anything on YouTube, she said.

Jan Djuhana, senior director for Artists and Repertoire at Sony BMG

Indonesia, sees these trends and developments as a sign of increasing enthusiasm for music among teenagers.

"We are happy with that. Some of them do not just listen. They make their own music with their creativity," he said.

Jan said that Sony BMG Indonesia encourages newcomers to develop their original music. By doing so, he said, the company was able to offer alternative music to the market.

Among the popular bands promoted by Sony BMG are Sheila on Seven, Padi, Cokelat, The Groove and Riff. "Generally, they compose pop songs with lyrics carrying the themes of love, hate and relationships," he added.

Meanwhile, Dewi Rahmayanti of Musica Studio's promotion team said that teenagers form the biggest market in the music industry today. Given this reality, she said the studio had been working with bands and singers to cater to the musical demands of the teen market.

"We target the teenage market, which is growing. We work with bands like Letto,

Nidji and PeterPan," Dewi told *youthspeak*, referring to three bands that are highly popular among local teens.

So popular is PeterPan that its latest album, *Hari Yang Cerah* (A Shiny Day), sold 300,000 copies and won a Double Platinum Award last November.

Teens' enthusiasm for music may be high, but their sense of music appreciation – recognizing and understanding music as a form of art and culture – is a different matter.

Ethnic jazz guitarist I Wayan Balawan is among those who doubt the level of music appreciation among teenagers.

"I think teenagers' appreciation of music is very low. They see music simply as entertainment," Balawan said.

He blamed the condition on television stations that compete against each other to feature the same popular bands on their shows.

"TV stations feature the same bands with no alternatives. They give no opportunities for new musicians to perform. Under this condition, new musicians have to create their own 'stage' so

they can perform," said Balawan.

Separately, Ivonne noted that while the younger generation was exposed to a wide variety of music, the

"...it is everyone's responsibility to educate the next generation never to ignore the importance of learning about the history of mankind."

problem seemed to be that they were not aware of music history.

Ivonne, who gives piano and vocal lessons, said that she always encouraged her students to explore different genres of music and to examine their histories.

"Only in doing so do my students and I truly learn about and live music as a whole," she said.

"In the end, I believe it is everyone's responsibility to educate the next generation never to ignore the importance of learning about the history of mankind. Classical music is a part of music history, and it is a part of our history," said Ivonne.

Senior high school students browse cassettes and CDs at a music store in Blok M, South Jakarta, in this file photo. While music can be enjoyed as pure entertainment, knowledge of music history is needed to appreciate music as a form of art and culture.

Jepi Leo



Send your comments to: youthspeak@thejakartapost.com

or **youthspeak** – NIE
The Jakarta Post, Jl. Palmerah Selatan 15
Jakarta 10270

ChatForum Topic
Appreciating music

Let us know your thoughts and reactions to reading the Cover Story, or respond to one (or more) of the questions below:

Do you think teens today enjoy music mostly as entertainment and not as a form of art/culture? Have you found that music history courses are generally unavailable, except music schools? Does your school have a music class or art class that includes music history? If you've studied music history, has this helped expand your enjoyment and understanding of music?

Write to:
youthspeak@thejakartapost.com
(The best responses will be published in youthspeak #051)

– Editor

Music and life

Music is something that is very important in the daily lives of most people. Without music, this world would seem empty and boring.

“...music is something that we should never be without, as if it did not exist, life would be very boring and empty.”

Music is formed when groups of tones are combined together, so even a conversation between people could be called “music”. Different kinds of music

have their own characteristics that appeal to different kinds of people. I tend to think of music when I hear a sound, and also play music on the piano.

Music played on the piano has its own character, style and period. It can be sad, happy, cheerful or brave. It can be played softly, loud, moderately or calmly, but there are still many other moods and styles of playing.

Musical periods can be Baroque, Classical, Romantic or Modern. Each musical period has its own pianist. For example, in the Baroque period, Bach and Haydn are the most famous pianists; Mozart and Beethoven for Classical; Beethoven and Chopin for Romantic; and Rachmaninov and Debussy for Modern.

Even though one pianist usually exists in only one period, Beethoven is the only

one that has existed during two periods: Classical and Romantic.

I think Baroque, Classical and Romantic are better than Modern, as the Modern style of music is complicated and difficult to play. Even today, although I have studied the piano for several years, I still have difficulties in playing the Modern style of music.

For me, music is something that we should never be without, as if it did not exist, life would be very boring and empty.

– Rut Novitia Hikmaya
Grade 8
Temasek International School
(Bandung, West Java)

Young writers take up pen in conservation contest

Ani Suswanto, Muara Angke, N. Jakarta

The usually quiet Muara Angke Wildlife Reserve, a 25-hectare wildlife sanctuary in North Jakarta, welcomed many guests on the morning of Feb. 2. That day, Jakarta Green Monster was running a series of competitions for school students and the public to commemorate World Wetland Day 2008.

Participants pose for a group photo during Muara Angke's World Wetland Day contest.



Third-place winner Khusnul Khotimah, Ani Suswanto

Jakarta Green Monster is a non-governmental organization (NGO) that promotes wetland conservation in the capital.

The competition, themed “Conserving Wetland to Protect Jakarta”, offered contest categories in feature writing, painting, waste recycling and photography.

The three winning senior high school students in the feature writing category were: in first place, Ozora Kharunia of the Labschool

because of flooding and Herdiman left early.

Khusnul's winning piece is titled *The Protector of Jakarta*, about the Muara Angke Wildlife Reserve. The reserve is also a mangrove forest, an ecosystem that is environmentally important for a metropolis like Jakarta.

Mangrove forests absorb excess rainwater, prevent floods and coastal erosion, and support various forms of marine life.

Unfortunately, Muara Angke – Jakarta's last native mangrove forest – is threatened by the rapid construction of housing complexes in the area. Many malls and trade centers also have been built in open spaces, which help cause severe flooding in the capital.

The plant species that live in the reserve include *pidada* trees (*Sonneratia caseolaris*), mangroves (*Rhizophora ssp*) and *nipah* (*Nypa fruticans*).

The reserve is also home to animals such as monkeys, marsh birds, monitor lizards, crocodiles, snakes and hundreds of insect species.

The deteriorating quality of the forest harms these animals' lives and survival rate.

The Muara Angke sanctuary also faces another big problem: The Ciliwung River and Angke River carry all kinds of garbage to the estuary, where the reserve is located. The volume of waste that flows down these rivers to the sea is huge and endless.

The garbage comes from the communities located along those rivers, as well as from Jakarta residents who litter on the streets. In heavy rains, the litter is carried by rainwater into the rivers. The garbage, aside from contributing to flooding, also pollutes the water and harms the animals living there.

The Muara Angke Wildlife Reserve is not only beautiful, but also holds great value for the welfare of Jakarta and its human residents. However, it is unclear how many of the capital's 12 million population are aware of the existence of this reserve, and how many have

ever visited the reserve.

“My encounter with Muara Angke Wildlife Reserve began some time ago, when my school went on a field trip there,” said Khusnul. “Since then, I've come back several times for bird-watching.”

Khusnul likes writing poems, short stories and short articles, often on issues important to teenagers such as herself. She shares her writing with her school friends and also has been published in the school magazine. She believes writing is a powerful tool to communicate her ideas to others.

Now, she is determined to use her writing skills to protect the Muara Angke reserve.

“In the present, even when we still have (Muara) Angke and other, small forests in the city, we face massive floods. What will happen if we no longer have Angke? We do not want Jakarta to be under water, do we? I will definitely plan environmental topics in my future articles,” said Khusnul.

The Muara Angke Wildlife Reserve is not only beautiful, but also holds great value for the welfare of Jakarta and its human residents.

Kebayoran in Central Jakarta; in second place, Herdiman Harianto of Tarakanita 2 in Pluit, North Jakarta; and in third place, Khusnul Khotimah of YMIK I Manggarai in South Jakarta. Unfortunately, Ozora was unable to attend the event

What is love?

Love is something that troubles almost all youths around the world. Hence, I've tried to define love. After doing some extensive research and spending sleepless nights thinking about what love is (of course, this is an exaggeration), I've come to an extremely long definition.

Love is something magical. It blinds you, it changes the way you think, the way you dress, your attitude, your tastes, your priorities and ... well, love can change tons of things in you.

Then we have love as a feeling. It is a feeling that gives you an “F” on your report card in high school, a feeling that very NEARLY kills you, a feeling that makes you cry, a feeling that makes you sigh without a reason, a feeling that drives you crazy, a feeling that makes you do

That is the bad side of love, but at the same time, IF (this is a BIG “if”) you love “the One” and that too, with perfect timing, then may God bless you.

If that happens, love is a feeling that creates those butterflies in your stomach, a feeling that suddenly makes the world look so beautiful, a feeling that makes you feel special, a feeling that makes you look forward to another day of your life, a feeling that makes you jump and down on the couch like Tom Cruise did on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, a feeling that will make you smile without a reason (and make people think you are crazy).

There's so much more that love can do to you, and these are just mild examples of how powerful love is. People say love is chemistry. It's a strong thingumajig that happens between two people, and science doesn't know how it is created or what creates it.

But love as a feeling doesn't last forever. There will be a day when the world

won't look so beautiful anymore, when you won't be jumping up and down on the couch like Tom Cruise, when you won't be smiling for no reason.

At some point, love won't blind you anymore. At some point, Prince Charming and the princess with the missing shoe won't exist anymore. You will discover all your loved one's imperfections and their shortcomings. You will get frustrated at what they do, and you will sometimes doubt that they're the right person for you – but if it really IS love, you will emerge from this phase.

You will go through all the rough times and emerge from this stage of love. When love becomes more than just a feeling, it evolves your way of thinking, the way you behave, the way you try to understand and the way you act. If it is love, you will stop smoking or drinking just because your loved one doesn't want you to, you will stick up for them, you will believe them no matter how unbelievable they sound,

you will forgive them and you will care about that person.

You will not hurt their feelings intentionally, you will not be selfish, you will not disrespect them, you will take into account the effect that your actions might have on them.

You will listen to them – even if you don't really care about the topic – you will cherish the moments you have with them, you will remember all the tiny little things they have said or done because that's how much you love that person. And this isn't the end of the list.

Finally, I would like to quote a line from the movie *A Walk to Remember* – but I have been told it comes originally from the Bible: “Love is always patient and kind. It is never jealous. Love is never boastful or conceited. It is never rude or selfish. It does not take offense and is not resentful.”

– Sung Eon Kim
Grade 11
Gandhi Memorial International School

Love is something magical. It blinds you, it changes the way you think... well, love can change tons of things in you.

the stupidest things on Earth, a feeling that costs you, as you can't stop texting or calling your object of affection, a feeling that depresses you, and so much more.

Reading & Comprehension

Read the story above and answer the questions:

- Where does this story take place? _____
- What is the event introduced in this story? _____
- What organization held the event? _____
- What is the main activity of this organization? _____
- What is the theme of the event? _____
- Name the three winners of the feature writing contest for senior high school students:
 - First place: _____
 - Second place: _____
 - Third place: _____
- List the three environmental benefits a mangrove forest provides:
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
- What are the two main threats to the wildlife reserve that are presented in the story?
 - _____
 - _____
- The story gives three negative effects garbage has on the environment. What are they?
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
- According to the first-place winner of the writing contest, what might happen to Jakarta if the wildlife reserve disappears? _____

Answers: 1. Muara Angke/Muara Angke Wildlife Reserve; 2. A competition; 3. Jakarta Green Monster; 4. Wetland conservation; 5. “Conserving Wetland to Protect Jakarta”; 6. a) Ozora Kharunia b) Herdiman Harianto c) Khusnul Khotimah; 7. a) absorbs excess rainwater b) prevents floods and coastal erosion c) supports marine life; 8. a) flooding b) water pollution c) harms river animals; 9. a) flooding b) water pollution c) supports marine life; 10. I will be under water.

For the full story on wetland conservation see DISCOVER Feb. 24, 2008



DJ-ing is very popular these days as a form of expression and entertainment, covering all musical genres. And while many DJs are guys, more and more gals are stepping up to the mixer, too!

Many DJs, before they ever got to, well, DJ-ing, played instruments such as drums or guitars in local bands and found that playing, mixing or reconstructing recorded music was somehow more satisfying to them.

Hey, but just because you can't play an instrument doesn't mean that you can't be a DJ!



Interested in becoming a DJ or taking it to the next level? Here are a few key tips on getting going.

▶ The first thing you should know in learning how to DJ is to know the music. There are many genres out there. Some are popular for dancing, such as house, hip-hop and R&B. Knowing the tracks well and what mood or message they send to people is basic. And pay attention – some tracks have been crafted to fit certain hours of the day and atmosphere.

▶ If you love a particular artist or DJ, it's good to observe and emulate the style of their music, body movement and records in creating your own style. Listening to a DJ's session tapes or CDs will give you an idea on how they play out certain tracks or sound effects.

▶ Now get your hands on a mixing board. The latest technology enables people

to play music on a computer instead of turntables (for LPs) or CD players. I learned how to DJ when the turntable was still king and digital music still sounded "flat". These days, many DJs bring their laptop packed with digital music files to clubs or parties instead of carrying heavy cases full of LPs or CDs.

▶ I recommend using "real" (analog) mixers instead of digital mixers to begin with, as it's easier to convert from analog to digital than vice-versa. For those who want to learn mixing with CD players, LP turntables are a good starting point. It would be great if you can get – or have – your own sound system and turntables so you can practice at home. (You might want to sound-proof your room, though!)

▶ A mentor or a friend with

experience in DJ-ing can be great help. It's kind of like learning how to drive a car. There are many tricks DJs do on the mixing board. They can teach you basics like matching the sounds of the bass and the beat.

▶ It's a good idea to make demo CDs or tapes on your own. The demo should contain the type of music you would play if you were going to perform at a party or event. Creating mixed CDs is no easy feat, as some audiences aren't satisfied easily. And a mistake anywhere on your set means you'll need to start recording all over again from the beginning. Practice, as they say, makes perfect!

▶ If you want to play in front of crowds, the hardest part is to work on your networking. Getting a gig can be hard, even for some old-hand DJs.

Join a DJ school or organization that has good connections and can get gigs for some of their members. One DJ school is Spinach (Tel: 021-7190584), owned by DJ Riri. Making multiple copies of your CDs and distributing them for free also can make good references for you.

▶ As you grow along with your skills and music, be as open-minded as you can to diverse musical genres. A DJ can learn about composing their own music from a classical record. A jazz or a Motown album may be sampled for potential hits – many dance tracks today got their samples from records released in the 1970s and '80s!

That's about it for the basics. So, get mixing!

Alvin Darlanika Soedarjo

Essential items for DJs

Headphones

Headphones come in many sizes and models. Many DJs usually use Pioneer or Sony headphones for their quality and reliability.

Mixer

There two main kinds of mixers. We call them "sliders" – the kind you'll find in most clubs – and the more elusive "rotary" mixers. The main difference is that the volume control for a slider is vertical (it goes up and down) while the rotary mixer has a volume control that's adjusted in a circular motion. The most popular brands are Pioneer, Allen & Heath and Rane.



Players

Technology has come a long way in the music industry. Many DJs have been converting from playing on LP turntables to CD players, and to laptops with DJ-ing programs running on them. For turntables, look no further than the Technics brand. CDJ from Pioneer is a popular CD player while Traktor and Rane produce digital DJ-ing programs.

Alvin Darlanika Soedarjo



Making music: Recording studios

The lobby of Daffa Music Studio was quiet when youthspeak recently visited the music studio, located in the commercial area of Jl. Fatmawati in South Jakarta. It was 10 a.m. A staffer came over and asked if they could help youthspeak with anything.

After a brief introduction, the staffer showed the way to the recording studio, located in the basement.

Unlike the lobby, the studio was packed with about 10 people, including written musicians and a singer. In the mixing room, a man who introduced himself as Ikram was checking the sounds.

"I am setting the balance between vocal, bass and treble. I have to coordinate with the musicians inside the studio to achieve a harmonious sound," Ikram told youthspeak.

He said several professional bands and singers, such as Kla Project and Glenn Fredly, recorded at Daffa Music Studio. Often, less well-known bands also came to record their demo CDs. Such bands usually distributed their demos to cafes and clubs to promote their music – and perhaps for a chance to be "discovered".

That morning, youthspeak had the chance to see a singer rehearse before her recording session.

The singer, 24-year-old Desty, and her band members went over some songs to harmonize her vocals and the instrumentals. Desty, a former vocalist of the Tangga Band, had written these particular songs herself.

"I hope this album can be finished this year," she said during a break in rehearsals.

Like Desty, many other musicians and aspiring musicians come to Daffa Music Studio to record demos and albums. After the CD is dubbed, they will take it to a major music label and try their luck at getting a recording contract and eventual release.

The music label's evaluation of their demos will determine whether they will "make it" as professional musicians – or not.

Aside from professional or aspiring musicians, what about people whose hobby is singing?

Singing enthusiasts need not worry, because several music studios in the city offer recording facilities for

them. One of these is Wanna-B, an "instant" recording studio and lounge in Kebayoran Baru, South Jakarta.

Upon arrival, customers will be asked to select the songs they want to sing – from the studio's collection of more than 6,000 songs!

"Each customer will be given opportunity to rehearse before they record their voices," said Desi, who works at Wanna-B.

She says the recording fee depends on how many songs they want to record. Recording four songs will cost Rp160,000, while six songs costs Rp200,000.

At the end of the recording session, said Desi, "They will get a CD of their recordings with their photo on the cover."

There's also a bonus for students: Wanna-B offers discount recordings for students every Monday.

So, instead of just singing in the shower, why not hear how good your voice really is – on CD!

Kurniawan Hari



Singer Desty takes a break during rehearsals before her recording session at Daffa Music Studio.

Daffa Music Studio
Pamulang, Ciputat
Tel: (021) 3036 9540

Wanna-B Studio & Lounge
Jl. Ahmad Dahlan No. 26
Kebayoran Baru
South Jakarta
Tel: (021) 7279 9627

GAMEREVIEW
BY: KRISTOFORUS KEVIN

MAKER	PLATFORM	RELEASE	RATING
CAPCOM	Wii	NOV'07	★★★★★ out of ★★★★★

Resident Evil

THE UMBRELLA CHRONICLES

The famed survival-horror game turns rail-shooter. This is Resident Evil from a different point of view. But is it worth the change?

The central storyline of the *Umbrella Chronicles* retells the events of *Resident Evil Zero*, *RE1* and *RE3*, with side stories that explain events running parallel to the central storyline. In addition, there are collectible hidden files that chronicle more events and characters of the *Resident Evil* saga.

The graphics is a bit of a letdown. It's nowhere near terrible, but it is toned down compared to the previous *Resident Evil 4*.

The characters move automatically as if on rails – hence "rail-shooter". The Wii-mote is used to aim and shoot, swing a knife and throw a grenade, while the nunchuk is used for camera control. The counter-attack and interactive dodge systems are back, with a two-player co-op as an addition.

Umbrella Chronicles is a revolution for the *Resident Evil* series. While the game play may not appeal to everyone, *RE* fans will find this addicting.

It is a short game, but collecting the extra files certainly bumps up replay value.

CAUTION: CONTAINS GRAPHIC VIOLENCE AND GORE

UCOK MUNTHE

raps it out in Medan

Ardiansya Ginting Munthe, who goes by the name Ucok Munthe, is a 29 year-old rap artist from Medan. He has just released an independent album of original songs, called *Aku dan Diriku* (Me and Myself).

This album of 12 hit songs is still in limited distribution in the North Sumatra capital and its surrounding areas.

On a lower corner of the cover is written: "Struggles of a Local Rapper". Ucok explained that this note held a deeper meaning, and covered the journey of his musical career.

Aku dan Diriku is Ucok's debut album, and the result of his 14-year dedication to rap.

The Medan native began his experience as a rap artist in 1994, as part of a band

called Deli Tua Rapper Crow (Rapper Crow's Old Deli). At that time, he was still a senior high school student.

His parents supported his passion for rap music, and without a doubt in his mind, Ucok made use of his parents' support to further his musical pursuit.

After a year with Deli Tua Rapper Crow, Ucok and his fellow musicians attempted to offer their rap music to a well-known recording studio in Jakarta. However, the studio rejected their offer, because Ucok and his

friends didn't have enough funds to cover the recording fee.

Although saddened, this did not break Ucok's spirit. Armed with his abilities, Ucok mustered the courage to go from one gig to another as a solo vocalist. The wealth of experience he gained as a solo rap artist only strengthened his belief in himself to create music.

As a result, Ucok completed his first album in 2007 for release in early 2008.

Apriadi Gunawan Medan, N. Sumatra



Medan rapper Ucok Munthe poses with his debut album.

Medan correspondent **Apriadi Gunawan** caught up with Ucok Munthe on Feb. 8 to speak about the rap artist's feelings upon the release of his first album, and on the course he took that led to the birth of *Aku dan Diriku*.

AG: How did you feel after the release of your first album?

UM: Very happy, because I had dreamed a long time about releasing an album and it has just been realized. I don't know how else to express this joy. I'm sure every rapper who has ever released a first album has felt this way.

Do you have any plans for a follow-up album?

I do, but I don't know when that will happen. I still need some time to prepare the songs, as well as the (recording) fee.

What are your thoughts on rap music?

Rap music – or hip-hop – tends to be fun. It seems that we don't think about anything else aside from rap as entertainment. (But) Many messages also can be delivered through rap music – from relationships to having a good time, and from religious to socio-political messages.

How did you get drawn to rap music?

In the beginning, I started performing rap because this music is powerful. Later, I was

impressed by the words sung by individual rap artists.

So rap isn't identical with "partying"? Actually, the music itself can be cheerful, and the majority of fans are of the younger generation, so there is an impression that it's "party music".

It's been reported that many rappers take drugs to heighten their sensations.

I'm not one to judge, but I personally don't want to get caught up in that. Anyone can get hooked on drugs – it depends on the individual. On the path I have followed, I've tried to be more positive.

Do you think there is a positive or educational value to be gained from rap?

Absolutely. Every rapper has to be able to write their own lyrics – this is a given, and the responsibility of a rap artist. In connection with that, a rapper strives to master Bahasa Indonesia, especially if we use parables (in our lyrics). When performing publicly, a rapper plays with the lyrics, plays with words, so we must master the language.

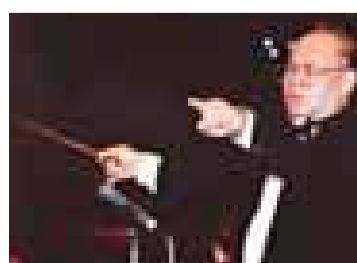
Do you feel that you have mastered this?

Not fully, because I'm still learning. I hope rap music will be my life's path, one through which I can share joy and happiness.

Want more?

Look for these musicians' profiles in the Feb. 24 issue of **DISCOVER**:

It's more than just the "old-fashioned" music your elders like. Read about Solomon Tong, the conductor of the Surabaya Symphony Orchestra, who says classical music is an all-around workout – for your mind and body both!



Meet the acclaimed youth percussion troupe of Bandung, Jendela Ide Percussions, who have drummed their way to fame on a rather unusual instrument – the Djembe drum from West Africa.



Express yourself!

More and more teens are expressing themselves online these days. According to one U.S. survey, teen blogs have increased by 60 percent in the last few years. On these blogs, teens talk about their feelings about themselves, their peers, parents and teachers, expressing both negative and positive feelings, but especially anger and frustration.

But blogs are public domains, and when teens say hurtful things about their peers, teachers and parents online, they do have lasting effects. The feeling may be momentary and although it may go away, your pent-up anger will still be online. It is there in bold letters for anyone to read when they click on your blog.

On one hand, peers, teachers and parents are likely to be hurt by negative things written about them online. On the other, however, teens need to express themselves -- keeping negative feelings shut away inside yourself doesn't do any good.

So let's talk about rediscovering the FUN and HEALTHY way to express your feelings. Yep, you guessed it: keep a diary. A pen and notebook will do. If you have a creative streak, then perhaps keeping a scrapbook will be a better way for you to express yourself. Are you ready?

1 Buy a diary/scrapbook

Find a notebook/scrapbook you like, lined or unlined. These days, there are so many kinds to choose from, you're sure to find one that suits your character/style!

Remember, this is your personal book, so there's no right or wrong way – only your way.

The main difference between a diary and a scrapbook is that a diary is all writing; a scrapbook is a diary that also has pictures, ticket stubs and other fun mementos pasted in it. And you don't need to stop with a notebook – use pens, colored pencils, crayons, markers and colorful scraps of paper and fabric.

2 Find time and space

Finding the time and space to write in your diary/scrapbook is important. Where do you feel most comfortable writing down your innermost thoughts? Is there a time during the day when you have a moment to yourself? Do you have a favorite room/place?

Pick a spot where your ideas flow and you feel safe about expressing your feelings – both positive and negative.

3 Get started!

Opening the cover of your diary or scrapbook to begin writing down your thoughts and feelings might be a challenge. Since it's your own private journal, there's nothing to fear – the sky's the limit!

Sometimes the hardest part is just ... writing. You may be tempted to put off starting your diary/scrapbook until you feel really happy – or really sad or angry. But you might be surprised at what will happen when you put

pen to paper. Try it!

4 Make it a habit

Have you heard that people can make a habit out of anything if they continue it for 21 days? If you can try and write every day, it'll become easier for you to express yourself and to keep track of your changes.

Keep a pen and paper handy wherever you go for bursts of thoughts and ideas. You can jot them down as brief notes – these notes will refresh your memory when the time comes to really write.

5 Keep it safe

You don't have to lock it in the family safe, but you'll want to put your diary or scrapbook away in a box or hide it, since it holds your innermost thoughts and feelings. Unless, of course, you actually want others to read what you have written!

Easy, right? Yep, it's actually not that difficult to keep a diary or a scrapbook.

Keeping anger and frustration pent up inside may be hazardous to your health: Negative emotions trigger negative reactions inside your body that can leave you tense and stressed, give you a headache or stomachache, or make you feel weak and ill.

Get it out of your system – on paper – and keep it safe so you don't hurt those people who matter the most in your life.

So, what are you waiting for? Self-expression is just around the corner!

Good luck,
Livia

P.S. Write to me and let me know if this worked – or didn't work – for you. I'd love to hear how you're doing!

Do you have questions about yourself? Worried about a friend? Bothered by a sister or brother, or even a parent or teacher? Let's Talk About It. Send your letters to: talkaboutit.youthspeak@gmail.com or post it to

Talk About It - **youthspeak**, The Jakarta Post, Jl. Palmerah Selatan 15, Jakarta 10270

Talk About It reserves the right to edit letters for content, length and clarity. All letters, their contents and their writers' identities are protected by the confidentiality of the code of ethics of the counseling profession.

Eating right: Slow food vs. fast food

Just like air and water, we cannot survive without food. It can do both harm and good to our bodies. This is especially true for teens that are growing, since physical growth greatly depends on our daily nutrition intake.

This is one of reasons why it's worth thinking about the kinds of food we are consuming.

No child or teen will ever say no to French fries, cheese burgers, hamburgers or fried chicken when their parents take them out to fast food restaurants during a trip to the mall. Parents could also take you out for a quick dinner at such outlets when they don't have any time to prepare meals at home.

It's okay to eat these junk

foods or fast foods once or twice a week, but it's a no-no to have them three times a day, every day.

Why?

The complete answer to that question would take up pages of **youthspeak**, but in short, we can say this is because such "food" usually contains processed or preserved food ingredients and not the real deal: real potatoes, fresh beef, salad vegetables or fresh chicken.

True, ever advancing

technologies have made it possible for farmers to keep their vegetables or meat in such a way as to preserve the maximum nutritional content of raw ingredients.

Inevitably, though, chemical additives will be used during the preservation process for vegetables and meat to enhance the ingredients' flavors or appearance. In any case, our bodies do not need such additives, which can have a negative impact on our bodies.

Here are some other points to consider:

- At fast food restaurants, frozen French fries and chicken are deep fried to make them crispy. How much cooking oil do you think is used in this process? And how many batches of fries or chicken are cooked in a vat of oil before it is changed?

- Aside from the very uncomfortable fact that the teen years are also the high time for pimples and zits, our bodies need minimal oil to function. So bear in mind that fresh vegetables are always the best – whether raw, steamed, boiled, sautéed or baked.

Enough with the dark side of junk and fast foods – the question is, what should we have?

Well, actually there is "slow food".

The term is a counter to the ever growing fast food industry.

Check out your neighborhood or drive around downtown with your parents

or friends.

It's easy to see that fast food restaurants are mushrooming, offering any kind of meal so long as it's cooked and served fast.

Now, what's slow food?

- Slow food is actually a movement that first arose in Italy, introduced by Carlo Petrini as a resistance against fast food. The movement that has now spread around the world intends to preserve traditional cuisines, which are threatened by the sprawling fast food industry.

- Meals are called slow food if they are cooked in traditional ways using traditional appliances. It usually takes time to cook such meals – hence, "slow food".

- Nova tabloid said Indonesia's traditional cuisines, like West Sumatra's *rendang* (beef stewed in spices and coconut milk) or Yogyakarta's *gudeg* (young jack fruit cooked in coconut milk) can be categorized as slow food.

- It doesn't count as slow food if these dishes are cooked using pre-prepared spice packets and pastes, most of which contain monosodium glutamate (MSG) – a chemical flavor enhancer and additive.

That's just knowledge for our benefit. What can you do on your part to ensure that you can get the nutrients you need to reach your maximum height and potential?

- At the very least, you can ask your parents (nicely) not to go out for fast food every time they take you out to lunch or dinner. Get something fresh, or perhaps ask to be taken to a restaurant that serves home-cooked fare: i.e., traditional dishes cooked like your grandma makes them.

(It's an adventure in itself to learn about the variety of traditional foods available

across this country of ours, with over 17,000 islands and more than 350 ethnic groups and subgroups!)

- Or, the more brilliant way is: When you are taken along on the monthly grocery shopping trip, don't avoid the vegetable section and head straight for the comics/magazine rack.

Instead, browse the shelves and baskets. Pick out some of your favorite vegetables/fruits and go

with your mom to select fresh fish or shrimp, chicken or beef.

- And the most brilliant: At home, rather than lounging on your couch with your face buried in a new *manga* or glued to your Facebook screen, why not go into the kitchen and help your parents cook dinner?

Aside from being healthy, these meals will have an added flavor: Fun, fun, fun!

Now, that's an additive we could all use!

Two or more students can use a Little Tikes computer at the same time.
Susanna Tjokro



Teacher Nurhaida Saragih poses with her students at Abata Islamic Kindergarten.
Susanna Tjokro



KidSmart 'games' teach through play

Fourteen kindergarten students were glued to computer monitors early this month, playing several different video games – in school.

One of them is 5-year-old Nida. "I'm making a boat," she announced after an animated bee on screen invited, "Let's make a boat!" Nida put the pieces of a boat together, from hull to chimney, and then colored it. When she finished, the boat set sail and emitted a loud "Toot, toot!" from its chimney. The bee appeared again and exclaimed, "Terrific!"

Filled with easy-to-play edutainment games, KidSmart teaches reading, mathematics and English language skills in fun, creative and interactive ways. KidSmart, created by computer giant IBM, is intended for children from 3 to 9 years old.

The KidSmart edutainment series contains five software: *Bailey's Book House*, *Millie's Math House*, *Trudy's Time & Place*, *Sammy's Science House* and *Thinking Things*.

These programs (or "games", as the students call them) feature lots of colors, shapes, letters, numbers and sounds with multiple levels of difficulty.

"My students haven't lost their enthusiasm for learning with KidSmart. Actually, they are always excited at an opportunity to use it," says Nurhaida Saragih, a teacher at Abata Islamic Kindergarten in West Jakarta. Every Tuesday, the students "play"

KidSmart for 30 minutes.

While most of the students have computers at home, they say that the KidSmart games are more interesting than theirs. They also say they never get bored of "playing" KidSmart, because they always learn something new, from mathematics to science.

"I can also learn English in a fun way, and I like it," says 5-year-old Alfath.

Abata is just one of over 250 schools across Bali, Java, Kalimantan, Sumatra and Sulawesi that have been participating in KidSmart, which is also the name of the education Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program run by IBM. IBM installed the KidSmart series for free on Abata's computers in 2004.

Although IBM did not donate these computers at the kindergarten, they did donate a Little Tikes *Young Explorer* computer.

Little Tikes is a kid-friendly computer made by IBM. At least two students can use Little Tikes at the same time – it comes with a stand that has a bench wide enough to seat three small children. It has integrated speakers, so they can hear the sounds and songs from a "game" without any headphones.

The students appeared to be more excited when they

were using the Hobbit-sized, colorful Little Tikes computer – they cannot wait to have their turn!

Unfortunately, each Little Tikes *Young Explorer* – which comes complete with the five educational "games", from *Millie's Math House* to *Sammy's Science House* – costs US\$2,125 (Rp19.5 million), too expensive for most schools in Indonesia.

IBM hopes to improve public education through its KidSmart CSR program. It shares its innovation and technology in the community by donating Little Tikes and installing educational software for free, as well as training teachers.

"...students haven't lost their enthusiasm for learning with KidSmart..."

Asked about any possible negative effects of KidSmart, Abata teacher Nurhaida replied: "I don't think there is any negative effect of KidSmart, as long as the students use it for a reasonable length of time."

She smiled and added, "Sometimes, some students do not want to stop playing the games when time is up."

Susanna Tjokro



Abata Kindergarten students learn with KidSmart in class.
Susanna Tjokro



Abata students gather around a Little Tikes computer, which was donated by IBM.
Susanna Tjokro

Students speak up!

Here's what the children at Abata Islamic Kindergarten had to say about IBM's KidSmart "games":



"I can learn English, and it's fun."

Muhammad Thirafi Alfath

"I can learn and play at the same time."



Iffatunniswah Fadhilah

"It's good fun and I like all the games."



Tazkia Hafianida

"I never get bored. There's lots of fun stuff!"



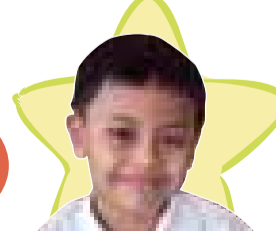
Reyhandi Pradana

"The games are more interesting than mine at home."



Muhammad Razan

"The games make me smarter."



Yuerezki Rangga Falahta

Susanna Tjokro

Why Run from the Sun

Muh. Hamzah Zaidin
SMAN 2 Makassar, South Sulawesi

I twin the rainbow at quiet twilight
I spin the dream over silent night

Why r u n from the sun to hide beyond your artificial fun
Why moan from the moon to wander around your narrow room

I twist your wish when you fall into loneliness
I weave your desire when you fall into boredom

Why not gather your motion to wreck all the blocking walls
Why not gather your breath to break down the binding chains

Sailboats move fast and faster toward the future
Powerful hands row and row until the end

U n f o l d t h e s a i l s
U p h o l d t h o s e i n t e r c o n n e c t e d s t r i n g s o f y o u r s

Direct the helm to the right destination

Look at your fingers,
there reflects the portrait of your future

- August 2006, Melbourne, Australia

Are you passionate about the written word?

Do you have a literary streak that just won't quit?

Send in your original short story or poem to youthspeak@thejakartapost.com and see if you can make it into print!

Guidelines (MS Word and handwritten material)

- Short stories: minimum 400 words, maximum 700 words.
- Poems: minimum one A4 page, maximum two A4 pages (single space, 12pt Times New Roman).
- Mark each page with your full name, grade level, and school address

Send it!

As an attachment to:

youthspeak@thejakartapost.com

By post (handwritten material only) to:

Written Word-NIE
The Jakarta Post
Jl Palmerah Selatan 15
Jakarta 10270

Questions? Write to us!



February 19–March 20 *Pisces*

Yes, it's sad that during the month that most of you Fishies celebrate your birthdays, you're going through a rough patch with a close friend – rough enough that you might not pick up where you left off. On the other hand, planetary alignments also promise jolly good times with your other friends. The balancing act here is more challenging than Madame Frou-Frou holding the Dog pose in her 9 a.m. Sunday yoga class, but be brave, be strong! Good luck, sweetie.



Irrawaddy dolphin
(*Orcaella brevirostris*,
E. Kalimantan)

Aries **March 21–April 19**



Katjang goat
(*Capra hircus sp.*)

For some reason, the returning sun brings too much hot air around you this month, so tread carefully and remember that although a power showdown might LOOK cool, sometimes you'll just end up looking like a bunch of diaper-wearing tots fighting over plastic toys in the playground. Use the planetary alignments on the 11th-13th and the full moon on the 21st to shop around and get yourself some new friends.

April 20–May 20 *Taurus*

Uh-oh...! Not to dampen your Spring Break spirit, daahlink, but as Mars moves into Cancer, traveling may not be your best bet this month. Also don't rush into anything new. Try "maybe" instead of "yes" – even if your buddies try getting you into the cool skateboard group, or that cute basketball team captain suddenly starts SMS-ing you, wanting you to be his new lab partner.



Asiatic buffalo
(*Bubalus bubalis carabanesis*)

Gemini **May 21–June 21**



Nakula & Sadewa (twin Pandawa brothers,
Ramayana and *Mahabharata* epics)

If you wanna impress anybody, this is your time! The first week of the month, you'll have a burst of energy and feel like you'll do everything just right, so go ahead and do it. Madame Frou-Frou also sees you making friends with possibly an older and wiser crowd that'll open your eyes beyond your usual comfort and conquered zone. Hey, you're not too big to learn something new, eh, are ya hotshot?

June 22–July 22 *Cancer*

Mars dashes into your sign on the 4th, which gives you an energy boost to do everything, go everywhere and talk to everybody. Considering your typically introverted self, Madame Frou-Frou thinks the change of wind is all good for your sweet, young soul. But you gotta remember to stop and kick back sometimes, say hi to your sis, dabble with the new PlayStation, or smell the freshly baked choco-chip cookies. Yum!



Fiddler crab (*Uca sp.*)

Leo **July 23–August 22**



Sumatran tiger
(*Panthera tigris sumatrae*)

Remember the old saying that money doesn't buy happiness? Well, sometimes it's because someone forgets to ask Madame Frou-Frou where to shop, but other times it's because this is the truth. Besides money, other things may not look too rosy for you this month, either. But hey – chin up, chest out! You know what makes royalty different from commoners? The regal, steely determination. This, too, shall pass.

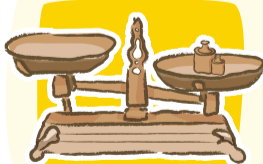
August 23–September 22 *Virgo*

You Virgos are always good at holding the purse strings tight, and that skill may come handy this month as temptations rise along with the temperature. Unless it's to help a friend for the eco project, Madame Frou-Frou hopes you'll reconsider splashing out. Springtime may also bring you plenty of good times, and you'll meet new friends that may bring you later to the other side of your usual court. Let it roll!

Balinese maiden



Libra **September 23–October 22**



Traditional scale

Always wanted to be the class president or the cheerleading captain? The first week of the month gives you that golden shot, champ! By mid-month, some new crush may appear and flood your Inbox with cutesy texts. All this will make you feel like a shining star by the time the full moon rises on the 21st, and your old pals may complain that you're too busy. But sometimes you gotta do what you gotta do, eh? ☺

October 23–November 21 *Scorpio*

Your schoolmates may be rather pesky at the beginning and end of the month, so what about staying home and enjoying the new big screen TV Dad got for Christmas? New seasons of *Heroes* and *American Idol* are in, y'know. If you must step out, mid-month is your best bet, especially after the Venus alignment on the 11th – you may even charm that totally adorable, newly transferred student. Clear your throat. Smile. Talk.



Asian scorpion
(*Buthus martensi Karsch*)



Arjuna (Pandawa brother,
master archer & hero,
Mahabharata)

Sagittarius **November 22–December 21**

Looks like it's gonna be a good and busy month, dear Archer. Your home will be almost like party central, with friends coming and going, and the whole family hanging around. This may not be the usual path for travel-hungry Sags, but let them come to you while you store up energy for the next adventure. Just be careful, as the full moon in Libra on the 21st may bring tension between you and your honey.

Capricorn **December 22–January 19**

Things to do, places to go, people to meet! Someone is on the go! Madame Frou-Frou only throws you one caution: Kiddo, make sure you pause to be with your inner circle from time to time to avoid misunderstandings or making them feel like you've forgotten them. Mars enters Cancer on the 3rd to clash with Sun and Pluto, and may thus wreak havoc on how you communicate with others.



goat
(*Capra hircus sp.*)

January 20–February 18 *Aquarius*



Terracotta water jug
(Majapahit Kingdom,
1293-c. 1520)

Venus is in your house through the 11th and Mercury through the 13th, making you everybody's darling, daahlink! Now, now, don't get cocky – use it to smooth out the last spat with your brother or smooth-talk the drama teacher into giving your BFF another shot at the school play, but NOT to charm Mom outta house chores, ok! But after the full moon hits on the 21st, the table turns, and you gotta double-check what you say. Oops!

Get ready for the sun!

Ohhh, how time flies!! Madame Frou-Frou coulda sworn that New Year's celebrations were just, like, yesterday. Now it's March already? Ay, ay, ay...

But okay, let's not get too wound up over what has already passed. Let's get excited about what awaits us!

March in four-season places, like some of Madame Frou-Frou's former favorite Earth hangouts, would mean blooming flowers and singing birds. But since we're here in one of the best tropical paradises in the world, it's more like kissing rainstorms and floods good-bye, and throwing a homecoming party for li'l miss sunshine. And if you're lucky, it's also Spring Break partying time! Yay!

Now, now... before you young bloods get too psyched about Spring

Break and start getting misguided by some creative ideas, let's just all remember that a certain silly Spring Break DVD show remains, ultimately, just a show. So stop fantasizing about breaking open your piggybank and hitting every beach from Anyer to Lombok, ok?

And while the sun might be coming out to play, be careful of lingering storm clouds – a little caution goes a long way. It's all a balancing act.

But a beach party, Madame Frou-Frou still recommends!

Sun, sand, music and your great pals... What else? Madame Frou-Frou herself will don her hostess beach hat and throw a sundowner, soiree and hey, even a weekend BBQ.

Yes, all to celebrate the return of the sun. See you all there – or be square!

Madame Frou-Frou