

Samantha scores again



IN AUGUST 2011, a friend alerted me to a website and the opening paragraph read:
"My name is Samantha Tan, and I recently became the first Malaysian ever to be accepted into the three-year Masters in Fine Art (MFA) Acting programme at the prestigious Actors Studio Drama School in New York. I'm thrilled of course, but now comes the hard part: paying for it. This website has been created as one of many avenues I am using to raise the tuition fees I need, and as a means of presenting all the information that interested parties have been requesting into one easily accessible organised page. I'm 26, born and bred in PJ, have been working in dance/musical theatre in London for the past four years and am currently in a perpetual mental state of screaming excitement mixed with extreme stress as I attempt to raise the money I need for the biggest opportunity of my life.

A few days later, this lucky young lady sat in front of me in a London pub, outlining her plans and ambitions.
 She was featured in this column and in a matter of weeks, generous Malaysians rallied to her cause and donated almost two-thirds of the fees. Last year, another column detailing her trials and tribulations in New York was published.

The Actors Studio was founded in 1947 and is not a school, but an exclusive non-profit organisation for professional actors, directors, and playwrights to hone their craft in private with master moderators and close colleagues.
 It is best known as the birthplace of the modern American Method acting technique. Its headquarters is in New York City with a branch in West Hollywood, and its total membership since 1947 stands at about 1,100.
 We stayed in touch, meeting her

during the London Olympics the following year where she was performing at the closing ceremony. In 2013, she returned to Malaysia to fulfil a promise made to donors that she would pass on her knowledge and skills to fellow citizens.

She held two acting workshops - free of charge. Participants ranging from ages 21-53 were given an intensive five-hour introduction into some of the acting techniques she gained in New York.
 On Monday, I received an email. It read: *Hi Nades, Hope you're well and 2015 has been good to you so far! Just thought I'd share a general press release that just went out, if you're interested to talk more about it let me know.*

It was no ordinary release and it should make every Malaysian proud. It should encourage every one to doggedly pursue an ambition despite the financial constraints faced.
 Samantha became the first Malaysian full-fledged Lifetime Member of the Actors Studio itself. Samantha was accepted hours after her audition at the West Hollywood



Samantha ... first Malaysian Lifetime Member of Actors Studio.

Rourke, Dustin Hoffman, Melissa Leo, Whoopi Goldberg, John Malkovich, Sally Field, Jessica Chastain, and fellow drama school alumnus, Bradley Cooper. For a

Malaysian to be in such eminent company comes with passion, hard work and determination to succeed. These qualities were apparent when we first spoke almost four years ago and she has not lost any of them.

For someone who yearned to reach the pinnacle, she had waited on tables in cafes in New York during her free time to pay her fees. It was her fortitude and the will to make it big that took her to these great heights.

She is a role model for many young Malaysians in similar predicaments. At the end of it, what matters is achieving your goals and overcoming the obstacles with sheer hard work and reaching the peak.

R. Nadeswaran is elated with Samantha's success and hopes it will spur more Malaysians to work with the same fervour and enthusiasm. Comments: citizen-nades@thesundaily.com



branch of the Studio, where she impressed a panel of judges including Oscar winner and Actors Studio West artistic director, Martin Landau.
 Samantha now joins a prestigious club led by presidents Al Pacino, Harvey Keitel and Ellen Burstyn, with Landau and Mark Rydell as co-artistic directors in Los Angeles. Fellow members include a string of famous names such as Robert De Niro, Jack Nicholson, Mickey