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Printed by **KHL Printing Co Pte Ltd**
MICA (P) 059/09/2011, ISSN 2010-3069
PPS 1781/01/2013 (022913)

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“Music happens to be an art form that transcends language.”

Herbie Hancock, American jazz musician

While gathering together the quotes for the More Than Words page of this Music & Dance issue (p1) I was struck by the number of musicians proclaiming the transformative power of their medium. Music transcends language, they said. It cuts across cultural boundaries, it reaches beyond nationality, race, colour, creed and other tribal barriers; music is a universal language that speaks to us all no matter its origin. And while all that is true, music is also one of the most ephemeral of all art forms – once the music stops, that raw emotion that it tapped, as only music can, has gone.

Still, I wouldn't have it any other way. I'm yet to find a work of literature sadder than Barber's *Adagio for Strings*, and while I can think of many joyful examples in all of the arts, most of them are musical. For me, music's most remarkable property, for good or ill, is its ability to trip the mind. There is no other art form that has this ability to transport one to an earlier time in one's life and recapture the same feeling.

As for dance, well, I must agree with H.P. Lovecraft that nobody dances sober, unless they happen to be insane. Mad though it might be, how beautiful it is.

If music and dance isn't your thing, there's still plenty more in this issue besides. On p52, Asia's first Space Shuttle astronaut, Mamoru Mohri, recalls his two Shuttle missions. I was also happy to attend the recent A*STAR awards (p66) for young student scientists whose array of research projects included quantum physics and frontline drugs in the treatment of cancer and epilepsy – seriously impressive stuff. Congratulations to all the winners and everyone who took part. Keep reading.



JFK Miller
Editor

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