

**N**AJWA Mahiaddin is currently the shining star of the International College of Music (ICOM). She has powerful and breathtaking vocals, delivering songs with passion and a lot of soul. Naturally, this third semester student in the Berklee Transfer Programme at ICOM has big plans for her future.

"My passion for singing began when I was a little girl, putting up little performances for my family. I took piano lessons first, but around the age of 11, realising how much I loved singing, my mother decided to send me for vocal training. Before coming to ICOM, I was studying Electronics Engineering in Melbourne. However, I had always known that music was what I really wanted to do. After finally persuading my parents to allow me to study music, I came back from Melbourne and started looking for a music college. ICOM was my first choice, since they offer the Berklee Transfer Programme. It has been a lifelong dream to study music at Berklee and ICOM is the perfect pathway for this."

Najwa continued, "With performances held at the college every week, it has helped me hone my vocal and showmanship skills. It is a very interactive environment where our lecturers offer constructive criticism to help us develop our performance skills that are crucial for a musician. We get to discuss and learn about the best ways to deliver a high note and sometimes learn better and new ways to improvise a performance. Being in ICOM has also helped me improve my song writing skills as we have 'Contemporary Harmony' as a subject. I now see ICOM as a training ground for me to be a complete musician one day."

On finding a balance between studies and performing, she said, "I try to

# Soulful songstress



balance both studying and performing at events outside of college which can be quite difficult at times, which is why time management is very important. I recently performed for Bijou Bazaar at the Youth '09 held in PWTC. I also performed at No Black Tie for their 10th year Anniversary Celebration Series. Performing at the launch of KL Foundation to Criminalise War charity dinner was an experience I'll never forget. We started rehearsing everyday for over a month before the show. It was quite challenging as I had never worked or performed with a large ensemble before this, and towards the day of the show we were practicing until after midnight. It was tough but well worth it as I learned a lot about teamwork and also I've had to learn to be more patient. At the end of the day, we were like family. All the hard work paid off and the show went well. We got great feedback and I was glad to be a part of all that. Being part of a good cause was a plus point, too."

"My aim is to bring Malaysia's music industry to a higher level and I know that sounds like a big dream, but I know that's not impossible," enthused this songstress.

■ For more information on the International College of Music, look out for the advertisement in this StarSpecial, contact 03-4023 6000 or email [admissions@icom.edu.my](mailto:admissions@icom.edu.my). Alternatively, visit [www.icom.edu.my](http://www.icom.edu.my) for details.

**No stopping her:** Najwa wants to record an album once she graduates and if everything goes well, she plans to start her own label.