

Doing it together

BY NASA MARIA ENTABAN

WHEN Arivind Abraham was younger, he wanted to be an astronaut, an archaeologist and a palaeontologist. Then he realised he liked those things so much because he saw them in the movies and it was actually the movies that he loved.

But what really made up his mind about filmmaking was *Jurassic Park*.

"Sitting there I knew, 'I want to tell really big stories like that,'" says the 22-year-old guy, who studied writing and direction for digital film in Britain, and is now freelancing for TV and film productions there.

Years after *Jurassic Park*, he roped his four best friends into making a movie about, well, five best friends and their lives. The story was written, produced and distributed by their very own company, Perantauan Enterprise.

S'kali is their first production, which took four years to complete while juggling their studies and part-time jobs.

The five have big plans for Perantauan: Film, music and theatre; at the moment the soundtrack for *S'kali* is in the works and they will be filming a comedy next year.



Bahir Yeusuff and Arivind Abraham.

"I knew that I wanted to be in a company where we could one day have everything in-house. Each department is headed by someone who is very familiar with what the department will need," explains Arivind.

Here's the breakdown: Arivind runs the film department, Jason Lim runs the record division, Keith Leong the publishing, Samantha the performing arts section and the business bits are run by Bahir Yeusuff.

Now here's the other breakdown: Jason studied maths and statistics and is now in business management consulting, Samantha is in performing arts, Bahir went into commerce and Keith is an English lecturer.

All of them went to school together and were born in the same year, except Samantha who is two years their junior.

The four boys have always worked on projects together, and understand each other inside and out, which is why they work so well together.

"We've been doing things together since secondary school, and were even in a band together. The band is called 12 Storeys," says Jason. (They were jamming in an apartment building at one time and someone told them they could be heard all the way from the pool, 12 storeys down.)

They had always known they would inevitably be separated, and the company is the "glue" that has held them together.

"The company has given our friendship a purpose," says Bahir, who always knew he

would go into management, running the business end of things.

On achieving dreams, all of them know that it is possible, no matter how young or inexperienced you are.

Samantha is currently training full-time in dance, singing and drama in Britain, until she graduates next year and becomes, as she puts it, a "struggling poor artiste attempting to get a job in the West End".

"I fully believe that anything is achievable as long as you are prepared to work for it. There is nothing that is beyond anyone's reach if the right amount of passion, dedication, ambition, self-belief and maturity is present to make the right choices and shape your own path for yourself," says Samantha. To filmmaking enthusiasts, Arivind is optimistic but realistic at the same time.

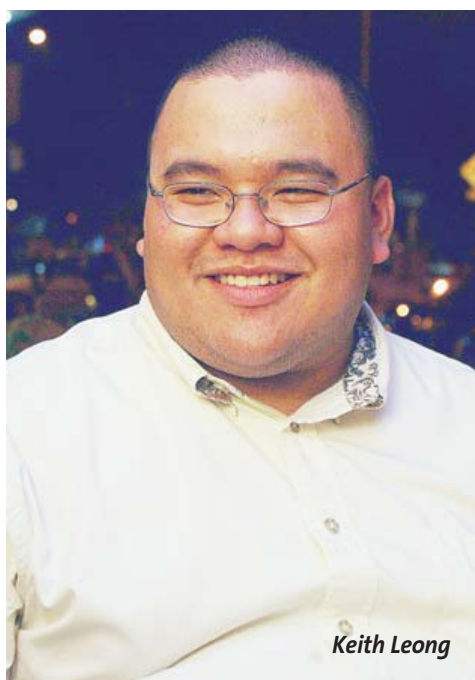
"If you're going to get into this business you have to be tenacious, thick-skinned and totally committed to your vision.

There have been times when I have had to just work awful jobs to pay the rent, endure criticism of your work and so on," he says.

But all will be well and good in the end, as long as you pull through and keep learning, every step of the way. At least, that's worked for this bunch of friends.



Jason Lim



Keith Leong