

# These young Malaysians took home medals from the US for dancing



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ENTERTAINMENT

Thursday, 31 Aug 2017 6:02 AM MYT

*The***Star**

Zaidy and Fiqah, both 21, did Malaysia proud at a recent international dance competition. Photo: The Star/Art Chen

Not many would have heard of the World Competition of Performing Arts (WCOPA) which happens every year.



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Held at Long Beach in California this year, it is a competition that brings the best of the best from around the world to compete and showcase their talents in several categories.

Dynamic dancing duo Ahmad Zaidyansjah Ruddyansjah and Nur Syafiqah Najwa Jefri represented Malaysia in this recent prestigious contest.

Zaidy and Fiqah, both 21, did Malaysia proud when they bagged a number of medals in the Senior Dance category, including five gold medals and three Champion of the World Awards, which earned them a spot in the grand final. (The Champion of the World Award is given to the overall winner of a particular style or genre.)

Zaidy and Fiqah first met when they enrolled as Diploma in Dance students at Akademi Seni Budaya dan Warisan Kebangsaan in Kuala Lumpur. (It is an institution of higher learning under the government that provides a learning space for aspiring performers in arts and culture.)

Having danced together for almost three years, the pair couldn't deny their on-stage chemistry. Also, the fact that they both understand each other well as dance partners made them pair up for WCOPA.



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Fiqah.

“Another reason we paired up is because she is my girlfriend!” joked Zaidy.

“As dancers, we have chemistry and a certain understanding. We both know what we want to achieve when we train so it makes things easier.

“Scheduling isn’t a problem since we normally do things together anyway.”

Despite Zaidy’s dance background in hip-hop (he was a member of Walawei, a dance crew that won the junior category in 8TV’s *Showdown* in 2013) the pair did face some challenges when it came to the more traditional Malaysian dances.

“It was initially difficult for us, because I was so used to dancing hip-hop and more contemporary dances.

“It took some time and a lot of effort for me to strengthen my posture and learn the techniques,” said Zaidy.

The dynamic duo shared their experiences in the US, especially on representing Malaysia in WCOPA for the first time.

“WCOPA is a whole new experience for me. I have danced overseas before, but this time, being on-stage at WCOPA representing my country, it was something totally different, and a great honour!” shared Fiqah.

“It was a humbling experience because we never expected to achieve such results on a world stage.

“The competition was intense and there were so many amazing and talented dancers.

“Other than that, I was exposed to different cultures around the world. It was also a great experience because I got to meet people from around the world who share the same love for performing arts.”

As for Zaidy, he said that the experience was overwhelming at first but he felt a great sense of honour and responsibility, representing his country.

“I felt really proud, especially when we showcased our pahlawan costumes during the Opening Parade of Nations.”

Despite the challenges and gruelling practice they have to endure every day, they shared that that is something they are used to, as dancing is their passion and a pivotal part of their lives.



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“We aspire to teach and spread the uniqueness and beauty of Malaysian cultures reflected in diverse dance styles.”

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