

An Interview with Mr David Siow

Co-Founder of ASEAN Music Showcase Festival and Bassist, MILDLIFE (Singapore)



David Siow

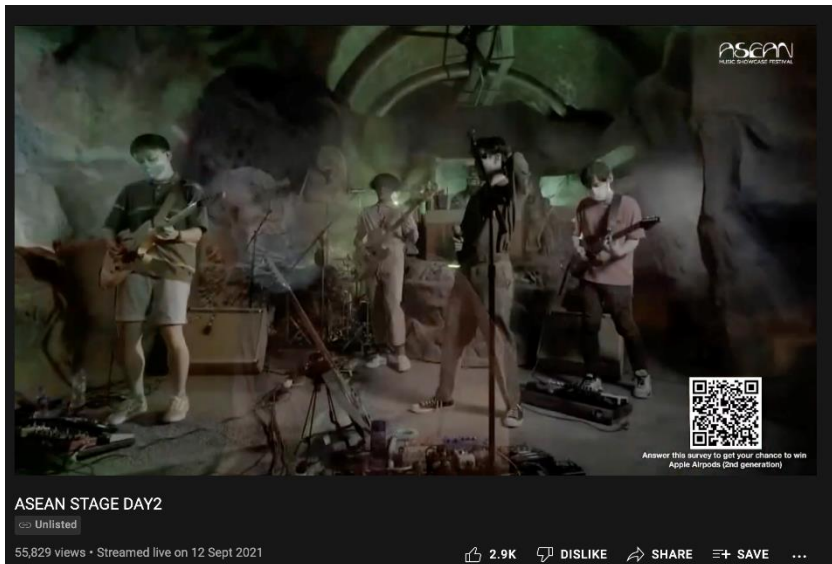
Image Credit: Nik Voon

Culture Academy	Hi David, could you introduce yourself?
David Siow	<p>Well in the daytime I run a music consultancy called Steady State Records that tackles local developmental programs with SCAPE, music export programs that send bands overseas (digitally as well) to showcase and consumer festivals such as SONIK Philippines (PH), Bangkok Music City (TH), ZAshare (TW) and more.</p> <p>At night, I play in indie-pop band M1LDL1FE and produce dark-pop music under the moniker DSML.</p> <p>This practically means I don't sleep!</p>
Culture Academy	Could you tell us more about the ASEAN Music Showcase Festival?
David Siow	<p>The ASEAN Music Showcase Festival (AMS) was started by like-minded individuals in the region who came together to decide to do something for the then-stagnant/COVID-hit music industry. The consensus was that we could present a digital showcase festival (AMS was the first in the world) and build a platform for which ASEAN talent could be put on a pedestal.</p> <p>Each country was responsible for curating 4 acts, securing funding for their production/pre-recording, and we would jointly market and promote the festival, as well as pull in delegates, industry professionals and talent buyers to watch the showcase. Each AMS then had speed dating to matchmake the artists to industry folk, so as to secure future opportunities and grow their careers.</p>
Culture Academy	Could you share one or two memorable experiences you and your team have had organising a new virtual regional music festival in 2020 and 2021?

David Siow

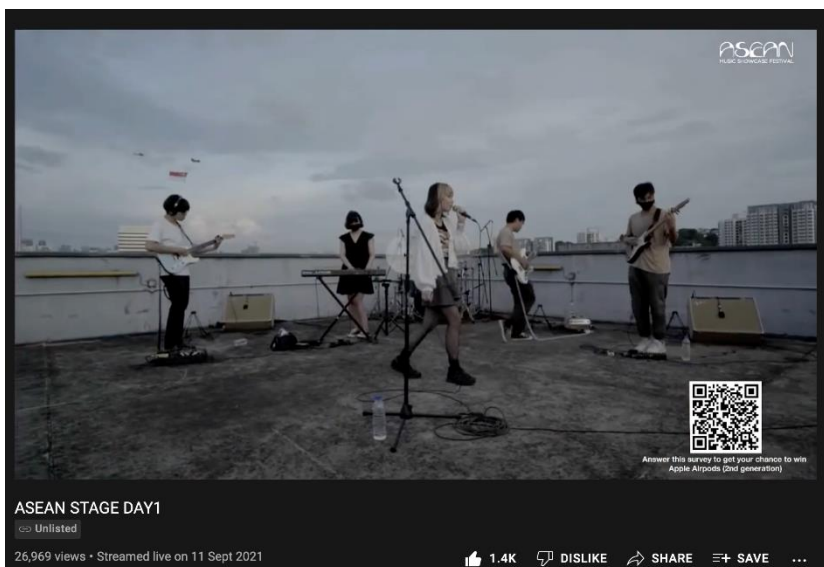
One thing that shocked us was the amount of support we had for Cambodian artist VannDa, we had more than 5,000 people watching his set at any point in time! The overall numbers for AMS were great too, with 20,000 unique viewers in 2020 and 40,000 unique viewers in 2021.

As for the Singapore showcase for AMS 2021, we filmed M1LDL1FE and .gif in Haw Par Villa's Hell's Museum that made for some crazy vibes, whilst Kitty Purnnaz did her set in a vintage BMW in ABM building's event space. Meanwhile, we timed the filming of Sobs' set just right, so that in their first song, the NDP chinook flyby with the Singapore flag was captured as the backdrop of ABM building's rooftop. It was such a patriotic moment!



Indie-pop band M1LDL1FE @ Haw Par Villa's Hell's Museum

Image Credit: David Siow



Dream-pop band Sobs @ ABM Building's rooftop

Image Credit: David Siow



Culture Academy	What are the opportunities in the present that you feel would continue to shape music festivals in the future?
David Siow	The Singapore showcases were supported by the Arts and Culture Resilience Package grants - Digital Production Grant (2020), and Self-Employed Person Grant (2021), which allowed us to truly showcase our Singapore talent in the right setting, whilst looking and sounding good. I am eternally grateful for the support from the government, and as our borders open up, I do hope that there is support for the internationalisation and commercialisation of music and IP, as I believe they are the key to making Singapore a cultural center in ASEAN.