

TAKING HEART

Sing60 ends on a high note for charity

More than 60 home-grown acts across several genres performed at the two-day music festival

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At the festival, SPH Media presented a token of appreciation to UOB for its support of ChildAid, a charity concert organised by The Business Times and The Straits Times. From left: BT editor Chen Huifen; SPH Media deputy CEO Kuek Yu Chuang; UOB head of group corporate social responsibility Leonard Tan; SPH English/Malay/Tamil Media group editor-in-chief Wong Wei Kong; and ST editor Jaime Ho. PHOTO: TRCL

[SINGAPORE] Grey skies did not stop 11,000 music lovers from gathering in Fort Canning Park over the weekend (Dec 6 to 7) – many of them “elder millennials” introducing their children to the [local musicians](#) they grew up listening to, while also discovering fresh home-grown talent together.

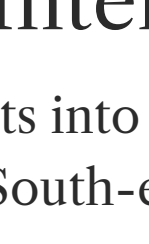
But the Sing60 Music Festival did more than rally nostalgia and good vibes. It uplifted underserved youth through – in the words of organisers The Rice Company Limited (TRCL) and Global Cultural Alliance – “the power of live music, community and creativity”.

More than 60 home-grown acts across several genres performed at the multi-stage concert, including singer Amni Musfirah, an alumna of annual charity concert ChildAid. Organised by *The Business Times* and *The Straits Times*, this year's edition was once again supported by UOB, with the resources set to benefit children and youth under the [BT Budding Artists Fund](#) (BT BAF) and ST School Pocket Money Fund (ST SPMF).

In recognition of the bank's support for ChildAid, SPH Media deputy chief executive officer Kuek Yu Chuang on Saturday presented a token of appreciation to UOB's head of group corporate social responsibility, Leonard Tan.

The feel-good factor that night continued with Gift a Guitar, where it was announced that an instrument signed by Prime Minister Lawrence Wong – who was there, too – [fetched S\\$650,000](#) in a charity auction. Consumer Internet company Sea made the winning bid.

The funds will go towards providing 600 underserved youth with guitars and music lessons, as part of the movement by TRCL and fellow nonprofit The Music Society, Singapore.



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Acting Minister for Culture, Community and Youth David Neo was also at the festival engaging with beneficiaries from Gift a Guitar and BT BAF.

“A creative statement”

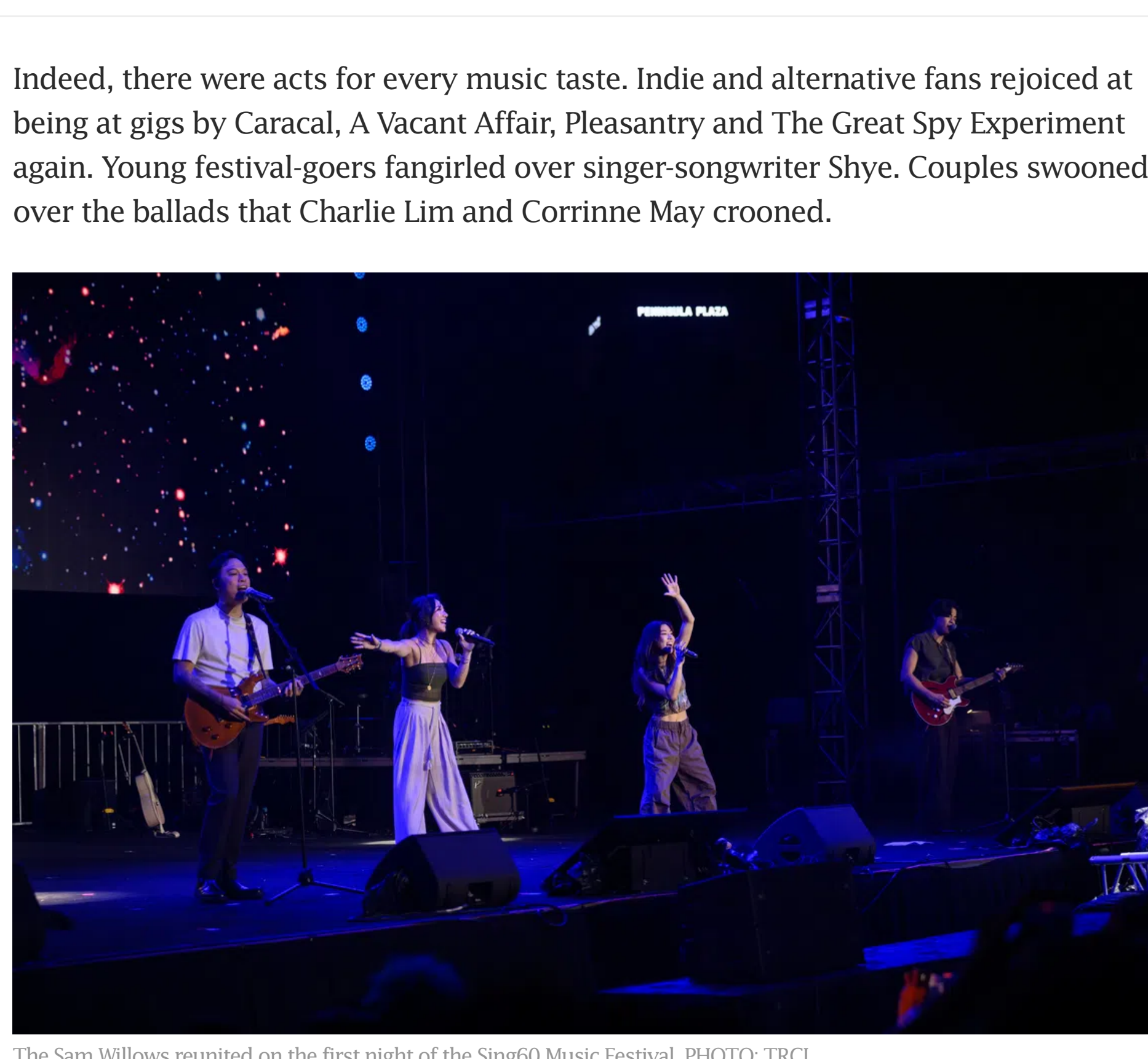
Conceived as a tribute to Singapore's music scene, Sing60 featured both legacy and new-gen musicians across three programme stands: Homegrown Icons, Bandwagon Sessions and Bunker B2B.

Lim Sek, the festival's creative director as well as founder and CEO of Music & Movement, said: “Sing60 is more than a music event – it is a creative statement about who we are as a nation. Bringing together artistes from different eras, genres and communities allowed us to present a true portrait of Singapore's musical spirit.”

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Indeed, there were acts for every music taste. Indie and alternative fans rejoiced at being at gigs by Caracal, A Vacant Affair, Pleasantry and The Great Spy Experiment again. Young festival-goers fangirled over singer-songwriter Shye. Couples swooned over the ballads that Charlie Lim and Corrinne May crooned.



The Sam Willows reunited on the first night of the Sing60 Music Festival. PHOTO: TRCL

And dopamine-seekers were treated to electronic music outfits such as Darren Dubwise, Itch and Sadat in the Battlebox, the historic World War II bunker transformed into an experiential cave.

With the festival village teeming with families, it was perhaps no wonder that the closing act for the first night's Homegrown Icons segment was someone who had endeared himself to millennials, Gen Zs, aunts and uncles alike – [the “elder statesman of local pop”](#), [Benjamin Kheng](#).

He wasn't there just to perform his hit *Not Alone*, though – he also unveiled the reunion of his band, The Sam Willows. (But judging from the audience's reaction, it wasn't much of a surprise – Kheng admitted it was probably “the festival's worst-kept secret”.)

Jeremiah Choy, festival co-creative director and founder of Orangedot Productions, summed it up well: “What is amazing is watching generations perform side by side, experiencing the same joy and connection through music.”

As the audience sang along and danced, the convivial mood held despite the threat of rain – an echo of music's power.

BT and ST were the media partners for Sing60. BT BAF originated from the belief that children with interest and talent in the arts should not be denied the chance to pursue them due to financial constraints. Since 2005, it has supported more than 25,000 beneficiaries through its arts education programmes.

ST SPMF provides pocket money to children from low-income families. Founded in 2000, it has helped more than 220,000 students, and disbursed over S\$100 million in support of their social and educational development.

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