



ST PHOTO: NG SOR LUAN

Embracing mother’s love

More than 15 mothers gathered at Orchard Road for “Latch on for Love” yesterday afternoon to breastfeed their babies and toddlers in a flashmob exercise to promote breastfeeding in public.

The group gathered for about five minutes to breastfeed their children in the event that was organised by Breastfeeding Mothers Support Group, Association for Breastfeeding Advocacy and Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative Committee.

Housewife Chin Wee Kean (front row, right), 36, who participated in the event with her daughter Tabitha Ingram, 2½ years old, says she hopes that when her daughter is a mother, breastfeeding in public will be “as common as us drinking water”.

Battle to revive a softening beat

Vocal percussionists’ convention aims to harmonise community

Eisen Teo

The bar Tab in Orchard Road was filled with thumping beats, but there were no musical instruments or tracks involved.

Instead, the tunes came from the mouths, lips, tongues and voices of 26 beatboxers who were competing in the finale of Singapore’s first-ever beatbox convention yesterday.

The “battle”, as it is known in the community of vocal percussionists, brought to a close four days of beatboxing workshops and jam sessions.

Penang-born self-taught beatboxer Cody Foo, 20, took the first prize, wowing the judges with a high-energy performance that earned the loudest cheers from the 60-odd-strong audience.

He said: “The competition was very tough. I didn’t expect anything when I came here. I just wanted to learn and have fun.”

The convention is the brainchild of two local beatboxers who set up 808, a group to unite beatboxers in Singapore, last year.

Mr Jacky Lam, 24, and Mr Bryant Koh, 25, were dissatisfied with the absence of such an organisation, and hoped that 808 would serve as a resource for senior beatboxers to share tips with younger practitioners, and for the more experienced to consider the skill as a viable career.

To date, the group’s Facebook page has more than 4,200 “likes”; a separate Facebook group the duo manage has about 90 members.

Mr Lam, a part-time dancer and mobile app developer, said that they wanted to create “a home and a family” for fellow beatboxers.

At the same time, such a group would allow the duo to “monopolise the local beatboxing scene, so events companies will have to approach us for talent”, he added.

Beatboxing first came to Singapore about 10 years ago. In 2005, the first Singapore Beatbox Championships, organised by radio station 987FM, was held.

Since then, Mr Lam said, the beatboxing scene has declined. “It’s the mindset of Singaporeans. Everybody is competitive. People are unwilling to share tips. If they develop good techniques, they won’t meet up with others and jam with them. It becomes a solitary activity.”

He hopes that this convention, which took months to organise, and other jams and “battles”, will reverse this trend.

Swiss Cottage Secondary 3 student Brian Ng, 15, one of the participants at the convention last week, said he appreciated efforts by Mr Lam and Mr Koh to unite the community of beatboxers.

Mr Dharni Ng, 25, one of the “battle” judges yesterday and one of the earliest to perform beatboxing in Singapore, said he was heartened by the quality of the competitors.

“This will do the community good. When I began (beatboxing 10 years ago), there was no scene. Now, the scene has grown, and for the better.”

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