



HOBBIES/INTERESTS:

- World Music
- Inter-cultural exchange
- Indonesian Gamelan
- Singing in Bulgarian/world folk music choirs
- Playing tabla and sitar
- giggling occasionally

ART FORMS

- Saxophone
- Gamelan
- Erhu
- Sitar
- Vocals
- Tabla

LAURA JANE HUIRONG YEE

What drew you to arts education, and how do you practice the arts in your own life?

I have practiced art and music in my life from a young age, thanks to my parents who encouraged a well-rounded education. I believe in the importance of education as the key to shaping generations to come; and I hope to make an impact by working to increase equal access to arts education, so that every child may benefit from the arts as I have. My upbringing across the globe (Malaysia, Argentina, Singapore, and now Los Angeles) inspired my interest in understanding cultures, which eventually drew me to the study of world music and cultures through Ethnomusicology. My exposure to other music cultures has convinced me that there is beauty and legitimacy in the artistic practices of every race, ethnicity, and culture. I therefore hope to increase the diversity of arts included in our arts education curricula, to better reflect the multi-cultural, multi-national population in LA County.

Tell us about an impactful experience or association with the arts from your youth.

When I was about 8 and living in Penang, Malaysia, I participated in a heritage workshop focusing on educating youth about the culture, history, and arts of my hometown. As part of the program, we learned to play Malaysian gamelan and wayang kulit. The experience made me more of a multi-instrumentalist (though I already was), and broadened my scope of musical learning beyond western pop or classical music.

Unknowingly, the experience impacted me so profoundly that it influenced me to eventually study Ethnomusicology and world music in college, and to pursue a career that I hope will allow me to spread awareness of and respect for other cultures and art forms.

Is there anything you would tell your 15-year-old self with regard to the arts, if you had the opportunity to do so?

If you're wondering what you should do with your life (which I know you are), my only advice is, do what you're good at, and what you're passionate about! You will excel because you enjoy it. You know you love music, so why let what other people's opinions discourage you? If you're worried about finding financial stability with a career in the arts, then trust me, there are so many opportunities waiting for those who look. You'll find a way to shine your brightest.

In your opinion, what are the biggest barriers to equitable arts education access in Los Angeles?

Two-thirds of students in LAUSD schools have free or reduced lunch, or are in financial need. That really shocked me. And it saddened me to see the data reinforce that students in lower-income schools receive less or lower quality arts education.