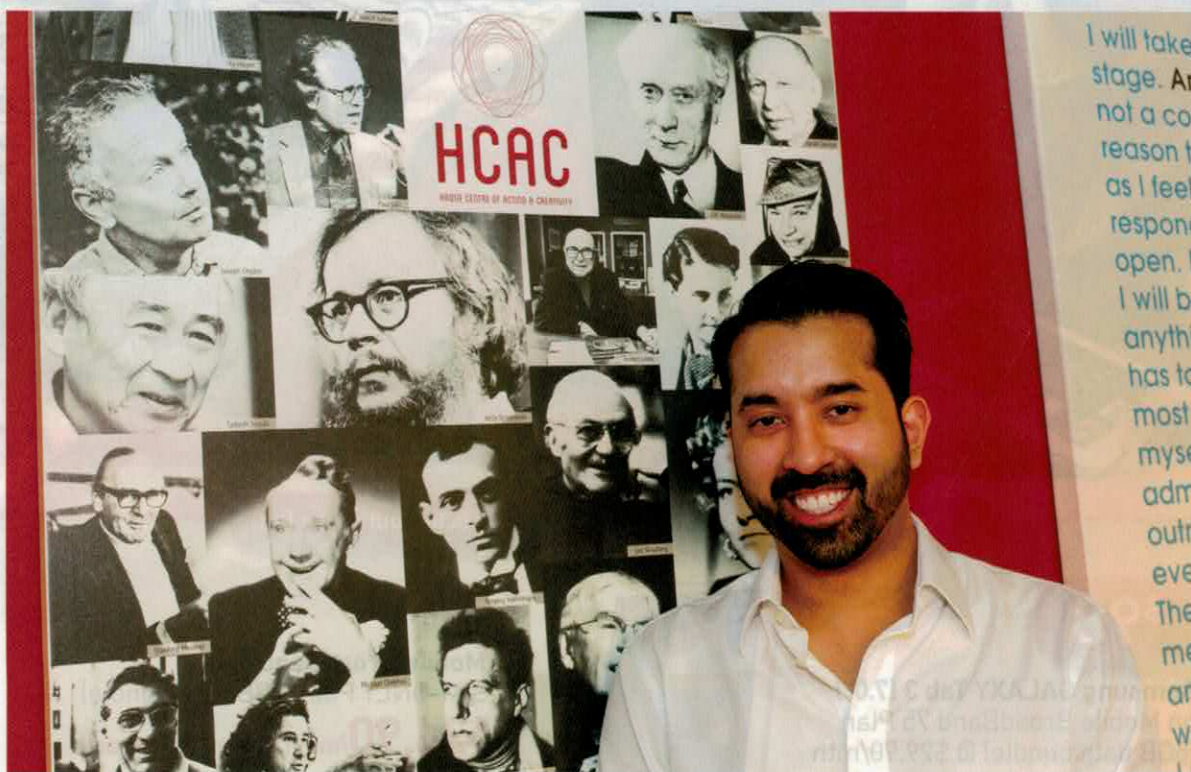


Exceeding Expectations

His parents hoped he would get a “real” job but Kamil Haque aspired to be an actor. Find out how their love and support helped nurture one of Singapore’s most respected multi-hyphenates.



As a child, Kamil Haque caused his parents much concern. He was not interested in school (apart from English Language and Literature). He had to redo secondary three studies. His GCE “A” level results were less than dismal, to say the least.

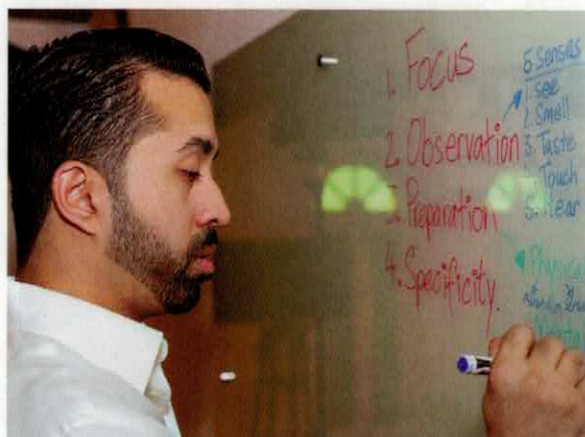
Now 31, the actor-director-producer-entrepreneur credits his parents for their support during those troubled years. “I was one of those kids whose report card always read: He has a lot of potential. If only he worked harder’. I knew that my parents were disappointed even though they never told me. They’d always end off with ‘as long as you tried your best’. I still remember when I was in junior college, my dad met my teachers for nearly 20 times.”

First Act

Seven – that was how early Kamil knew that he wanted to be an actor. It was no fleeting ambition fortunately, as the resolve strengthened as he became older.

“When my parents first found out, they were taken aback,” recalls Kamil with a smile, before admitting that it took “much cajoling and persuasion” to eventually win their approval. “Obviously, it’s not a ‘normal’ career path, especially among Asians. My folks thought I should get a ‘real’ job and a degree”.

Nonetheless, after completing his National Service in 2005, Kamil left for Los Angeles, where he studied at the



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a ton of fun because I got to learn about new cultures and languages, to shoot guns, and use explosives on a film set.”

In 2012, Kamil decided that home was where his heart eventually was. So he took half a year to set up the Haque Centre of Acting and Creativity (HCAC), a multi-curriculum school where he now imparts concepts and techniques of method acting. His workshops have been attended by popular local personalities such as Henry Golding, Liv Lo, Lavinia Tan and Laurence Pang.

Kamil says he owes his success to his parents. “Everything began when my parents enrolled me in acting school when I was a child. They brought me to watch *Dead Poets Society* so I could have my first ‘adult’ discussion with them about the movies. My parents wanted the best for me; they provided nearly everything I ever wanted,” he reveals.

“They never once said: ‘Don’t do it.’ Their open-minded and encouraging upbringing helped me find a balance between left-brain discipline and right-brain anarchy. It was this balance that helped me realise my dream of becoming an artist, and which I now want to share with others.” **PW**



American Musical and Dramatic Academy (AMDA). “They worried most about whether I could look after myself in a foreign land, if I could handle rejection from the intensely competitive entertainment industry, and how I would cope in a new culture.”

These concerns turned out to be unfounded. Kamil, who topped his Bachelor of Fine Arts for Acting (Honours) cohort, became the first student in AMDA’s over 50-year history to receive a Latin Honours for Acting. This opened the way for a teaching position at the prestigious Lee Strasberg Theatre and Film Institute, whose impressive list of alumni include Angelia Jolie, James Dean, Al Pacino and Robert De Niro.

What made this particularly noteworthy was that Kamil was not only the first Asian to teach acting at the school. He was also the first to make the immediate transition from student to full-fledged teacher. It was in this capacity that he was tasked to train newcomer-actors at East West Players, aka the first Asian-American theatre ensemble in the US.

Lights, Camera, Action

Kamil’s eight years in Los Angeles was spent honing his craft – and the extensive repertoire is testament to his passion and expertise. He produced, directed and starred in a string of critically acclaimed productions, such as *The Brahmin and The Tiger*, which earned a nomination at the Ovation Awards in 2012. He also chucked up parts in ad campaigns for global brands like Marlboro and Tacobell, as well as voiceover assignments for Audi and Visa.

“When I started out, I was always cast in ‘unsavoury’ roles...Middle Eastern terrorist, Columbian drug lord...” he reflects. “But I decided to focus on the positive; it was