They are all under the age of 25. And all are on their way to putting Singapore on the world map in eclectic fields.

Many have beaten off foreign competition or scored firsts far away from the usual Singaporean registers of academic excellence.

Welcome to this year’s shortlist of young achievers, who have excelled in areas as diverse as baking, robotic soccer, film-making, and even pen spinning.

Such as 15-year-old Kathleen Seah, who hopes to fly the nation’s flag high in horse show jumping one day. Or 21-year-old dancer and two-time Funkamania winner Lam Gin Chia, who gave up eight years of ballet training to pursue her hip-hop dreams.

Also meet Secondary Three dropout Mohamed Anwar Rafie, 25, who won a regional design competition despite having no formal design training.

And 24-year-old Darren Lim, who decided to start a scholarship in his parents’ names out of his first pay cheque. The budding philanthropist was singled out by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong in his National Day Rally speech this year.

Saturday Special Report first began compiling this list of under-25s who are blazing a trail in fields from piano, photography to pipa on Children’s Day last year. It placed the spotlight on these alternative heroes and their winding journeys off the beaten track before they tasted success.

Since then, many have proven themselves eminently worth watching.

Soprano Janani Sridhar, then just 15, the first Singaporean to win an award at the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod festival in Wales, went on to wow the audience at ChildAid, a two-night fundraiser organised by The Straits Times and The Business Times last year. She helped raise $335,000.

Singapore’s Charlotte Chorth, who loves chilli, hates maths and picked up opera by watching TV, also held her first solo concert in May.

Others like budding chef Jimmy Lim, then 23, who started off helping out at his parents’ Taman Jurong hawker stall, went on to win the WA Oceana Fest culinary competition in Perth last year.

Last year’s shortlist also drew many responses from the public. Reader Rudy Herman Sinen wrote in to commend the youngsters for proving that “success can be acquired not only through conventional ways”.

Others wrote in to recommend friends, acquaintances, even their own children, and asked for it to be made a yearly affair.

So, by popular request, here is this year’s shortlist.

It was whittled down from interviewing at least 120 young people nominated by their schools, youth organisations and beat reporters across The Straits Times.

All 25 featured here were selected for their achievements, track record, interesting choices and ability to bounce back after failure.

The list, once again, is by no means exhaustive or definitive. But it is definitely inspiring.

Enjoy.

Arti Mulchand