

FLAL

NEWSLETTER



The Dinner Times

2017 ANNUAL PLAY SPECIAL EDITION

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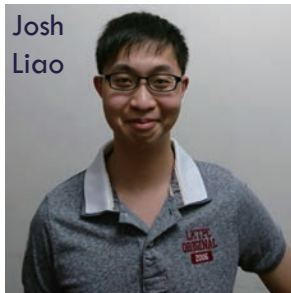


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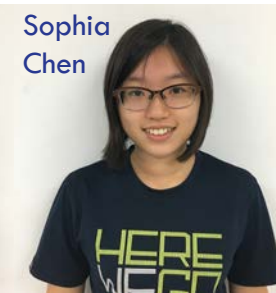
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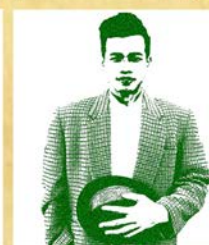


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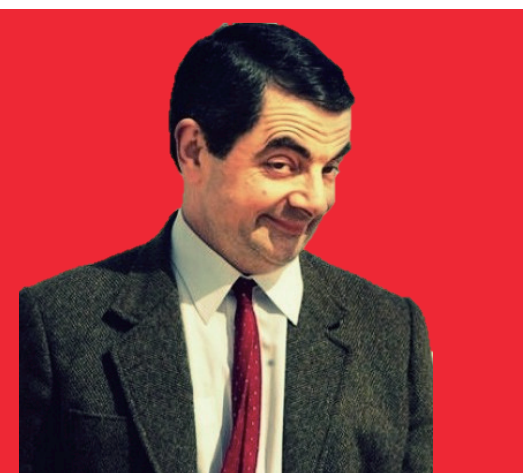
THE MAN WHO CAME TO DINNER
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I came, I saw, I chuckled

By Shelly Chen



Whiteside said could be interpreted in two different meanings: the first one is that he will read it immediately, while the second one is right the opposite. It literally means that he shall “waste no time” reading it, which connotes that Mr. Whiteside thought reading that manuscript is totally a waste of time, and he won’t spend even a second on it. What Mr. Whiteside meant was, of course, the latter, but Dr. Bradley took it as the first one and felt happy about it. This ambiguity in the wordplay shows the wittiness of Mr. Whiteside as well as Dr. Bradley’s artlessness. Example as such brings humorous element into the play.

Another scene when Mr. Whiteside lied to Dr. Bradley and told him that he would work with him on his book, the overjoyed doctor inquired about the time available for their discussion and said, “I’ve got just one patient that’s dying and then I’ll be perfectly free.” What the doctor said may bring out an image of him sitting next to a sick-bed, staring at an hourglass, and waiting for the patient to die. And once the patient breathe the last breath, the doctor will jump up and smile, just like what students do when they hear the school bell rings. The death of a person seems nothing more than ordinary to Dr. Bradley. What the doctor said may make him sound heartless, but he has also unintentionally created black humor.

Joy Is In the Air

The atmosphere in the rehearsal room is as jubilant as that in the play. Where does this vibe come from? “When someone forgets his or her line, or makes mistakes, we don’t blame them. We laugh at them,” said Carina Chen, the queen of humor in the rehearsal room, who plays Mrs. Stanley in the annual play. “Once someone started to laugh, well, in a kind way, everyone will follow. Laughter is the best thing to soften tensions, and it also helps brighten our mind. As to for how to be humorous...well, just be yourself and be optimistic. Humor usually comes unplanned.” Indeed, laughing is contagious, we often see

this in our life; however, you have to laugh in the right way so that the person being laughed at won’t feel embarrassed.

“Hahahaha...,” this is the laughter of Andy Lin, who plays Doctor Bradley in the play, demonstrating what he, considered as a humorous person, usually does. “We have to show our real selves while doing it, just like this I believe humor is something that no one can copy. If you try too hard to be humorous, you will definitely fail. Humor is something we are born with. You can’t fake it.”

Stay Real

Just like what was said, things that brighten our mind usually come naturally and unexpectedly. In the play, other characters that surround the main character’s life have some natural qualities which make those otherwise unfunny things funny. They provide Mr. Whiteside a space to display his satirical humor.

Take Miss Preen and Metz, two of the characters in the play for example. Miss Preen is a forgetful, panicky, yet loyal nurse who takes care of the grumpy Sheridan Whiteside. Because she never talks back and is always nervous, when Mr. Whiteside depicts her appearance as “worse than his 102-year-old diseased grandmother” and elusively said that Miss Preen’s look can’t compare with Marilyn Monroe, which is true enough, she dares not argue but focuses on her work. The reaction of Miss Preen is not what we usually expect to see when someone gets being ridiculed, but because of her awkwardness and Mr. Whiteside’s bluntness, it creates an indescribable comicality.

Metz, the overenthusiastic entomologist in this play shows his love for *Periplaneta Americana*, a.k.a. American cockroach. Even when people show disgust at his peculiar love for insects, he is unimpeded. His oddity brings comedy.

“Miss Preen and I have many things in common. We both are forgetful, panicky, and clumsy. When I play this character, I feel like I’m just being ME,” said Linda Wang, who plays Miss Preen in this play. “I am the kind of person who is very warm-hearted towards friends and enthusiastic about things I like. I can talk about the things I’m interested in all day long, just like Metz,” said Jack Wu, who plays Metz in this play.

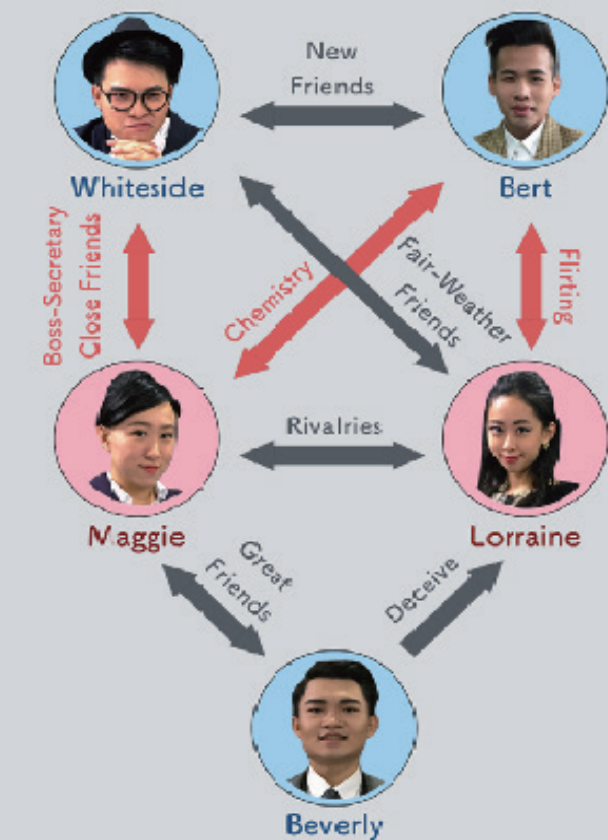
The two characters both reveal certain parts of their true selves while playing onstage and the naturalness shown on the stage is what can be relatable to the audience, thus making them smile. Just like in the real world, what we feel funny are always things that come spontaneously and touch our hearts. Be it wittiness or sheer stupidity, what makes people laugh should be true and original.



Love: the spice of life

By Joey Wei

Relationship Chart in The Man Who Came to Dinner



When the four main characters shared the spotlights rehearsing on the stage, director Carlos Tsai seemed to have mixed feelings with a frown on his face. "Maggie, I cannot feel the whole-hearted love you have for Bert. Bert, you can be more interested when Lorraine flirts with you," he said. All these irrational decisions, complicated relationships, mischievous jokes are all in play in this year's *The Man Who Came to Dinner*.

Sheridan Whiteside, a brilliant and famous radio celebrity, was invited to Mr. Stanley's house before Christmas. However, accidentally stepping on a patch of ice on their doorstep, Whiteside unfortunately got injured and was being looked after by his faithful secretary Maggie Cutler, who has been working for him for over ten years.

"Whiteside considered Maggie a devoted and helpful secretary. He fully trusts her and relies on her, and he is willing to share all his inner feelings with her," said Mack Mao, playing the role of Sheridan Whiteside. "They also share the same personalities. Both of them are efficient and clever, and they have mutual understanding of each other."

"The most interesting and nuanced relationship is that between Whiteside and Maggie. There is genuine love there," said Jeff Catanese, who directed this play at Asheville Community Theatre, North Carolina, on April 8th through 24th, 2016, "In another world, one could see them as a couple. Despite his brashness, Whiteside knows he would struggle without Maggie. Conversely, she doesn't need him to survive, but

she has a real affection and loves how he handles the world around him."

Journeys end in lovers meeting

However, this working relationship no longer existed when Maggie first saw Bert, a local newspaper man and aspiring playwright, in Mr. Stanley's house. Bert took Maggie to go ice-skating, giving her presents and surprises in the time they spent together. Maggie enjoyed the love paradise that Bert gave him, and their relationship developed so quick that Maggie even planned to leave her job.

"Before meeting Bert, Maggie never thought of having a romantic relationship. All she thinks about is to dedicate herself fully to the pursuit of her career," said Ivy Jou, who plays Maggie Cutler, "What Bert attracts Maggie the most is that he is a gentleman with passion and dream, and he is considerate to her. He asked Maggie for a date, and Maggie experienced many new things which broadened her horizon."

Realizing that his secretary is planning to leave, the noted radio personality decided to invite the glamorous and elegant actress Lorraine Sheldon to throw a bomb between Maggie and Bert. Lorraine was not only known as a well-known celebrity, but also known as a flirtatious player.

"The reason why Lorraine will show up after Whiteside called her is that he will introduce her to many top-notch directors and producers, and she wants to seize every opportunity to climb higher on her career. They are actually just fair-weather friends, but it

is a win-win situation for both of them since Maggie is willing to help Whiteside to get a well-known movie role in return," said Christine Cheng, who plays Lorraine Sheldon.

Scheming, seducing, sabotaging

Maggie soon discovered that Whiteside masterminded to send Lorraine to lure Bert from her; therefore, she planned to trick Lorraine before she became the other woman of Bert. Learning that her friend Beverley Carlton can do a great impersonation of Lord Bottomley, Lorraine's ideal husband, Maggie asked Beverley to call Lorraine and prank her by pretending Bottomley's voice.

"Maggie is really insecure when it comes to love, and she always feels inferior to those beautiful women like Lorraine. With this time a perfect man showing up, she does not want to let go, so she implements this fraud," Ivy said.

Mimicking Lord Bottomley's voice, Beverly nervously and sincerely proposed to Lorraine. Overwhelmed with surprise and excitement, Lorraine immediately told this great news to her family and friends, and she was even about to head back to her home in New York. However, just when Maggie thought that she successfully got rid of Lorraine, Whiteside saw through her plan and told Lorraine. Furiously, Lorraine took revenge by seducing Bert to break Maggie's heart.

"Lorraine did not successfully delude Bert," said Alan Lin, acting Bert Jefferson. "Deep down in Bert's heart, he knows that Lorraine is trying to entice him. However, he won't fall for Lorraine simply because he is not

into flirtatious women. He keeps this relationship going just because he wants to know more about this distinguished actress, so at times he ignores Maggie's true love to him."

To love and to be loved

With the love triangle among Bert, Maggie and Lorraine, decisions between an earnest friendship and a dash of love, and difficulties to face in a relationship, *The Man Who Came to Dinner* brings audience to reflect on the concept of love. "This play encourages people to love and to be loved," said the assistant director Esme Chang, "Although there might be obstacles and criticism in your relationship, you should never give up on someone you can't live without."

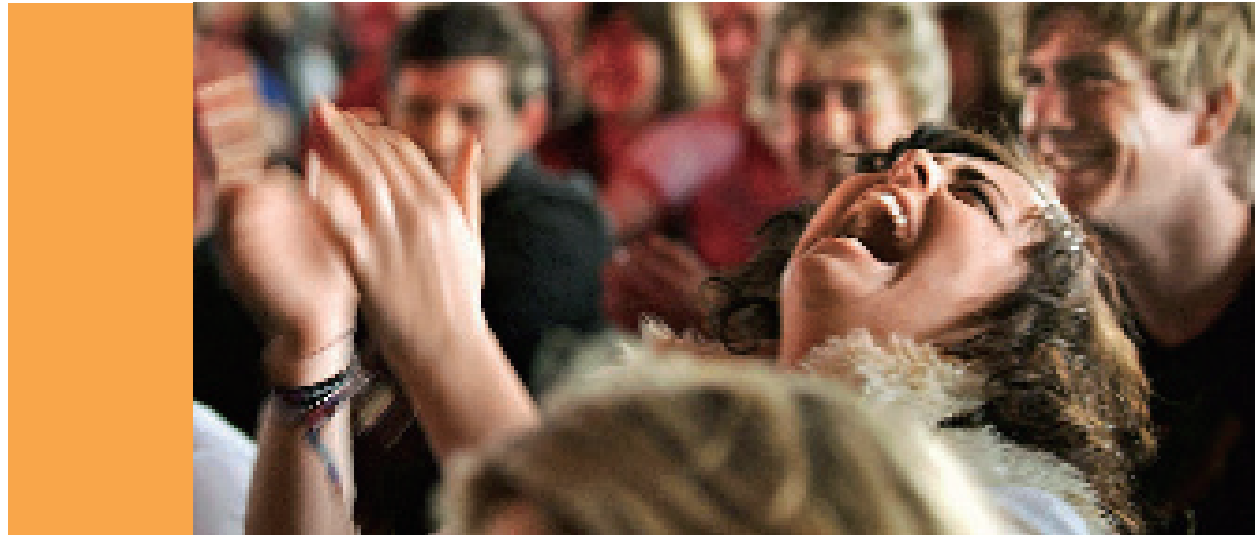
"To summarize the theme of love in the play, it will be the many forms that it takes," said Jeff Catanese. "Bert 'loves' being a small-town newspaperman despite knowing he is capable of loftier heights. Whiteside 'loves' that his position attracts admirers and gives him opportunities for constant learning. Maggie 'loves' Whiteside as a father figure and Bert as a lover."

"Our passions and crushes come from many unexpected places and manifest themselves in unexpected ways," said Catanese

The Man Who Came to Dinner is surely a play filled with laughter, fascinating character roles and intricate relationships. What will happen after Lorraine seduced Bert? Will there be more vengeance? Will Maggie insist on leaving Whiteside and embrace Bert? The sparkle in their relationships will definitely bring fireworks to this iconic Broadway show.

Learning behind **laughters** and between the **lines**

By Elias Luo



Many drama-related courses teach college students to appreciate tragedies. However, students at FLAL have opted to play comedies in the past years for a reason.

"Life is boring enough," said Peter Chen, chairman of FLAL. "We have to look for some enjoyment. The comedies can make people laugh and learn how silly people are in their lives."

Comedies are reflections of our lives, reflecting people we meet and things that happen in daily lives. However, in order to fit in with the real lives, there are some difficulties actors and the director have to overcome.

One is about the script setting itself, while the other is the age of the characters.

Because of the difference between script setting and nowadays, it may take so many sleepless hours for the director and the actors to imagine and imitate what kind of lives the characters led in the

script. "It is difficult for college students to imitate the lifestyle of people who live in the 20th century," said Dr. Chen. "Luckily, The Man Who Came to Dinner has been played several times at other theaters, so there are many examples to help the acting crew of our annual play to understand the background setting of the script more clearly."

The other difficulty is imitating the characters in the script with huge age gaps. "Imitating everything about the characters is difficult because all of the actors of annual play are college students," said Carlos Tsai, the director. "However, the characters in the script are middle-aged."

The only connection between the characters and the actors is their personalities and their behaviors in specific situations. "I think what happened to the nurse in the play is the same as what happened to me in the daily life," said Linda Wang, who plays Miss Preen. "Because I am also a careless person like

her, so I choose to play this role." "If someone provoked me, I will be very angry like Mr. Stanley." "Life is like a stage. The audience watching the drama can think about how silly the mistake they make in their real lives," said Sophia Chen, a member of the art design group who likes to watch the drama.

Besides, being faithful to the spirit of original work is also important. "Although the background setting of the script is different from that we live, we still have to make efforts to imitate the setting of the script," said Sue-Han Ueng, a professor at FLAL. It will take hours for students to think about how to

the interpretation of the play more clearly. "We do not have to follow all of the details of script, but the spirit of the script has to be revived," said Professor Ueng.

Another reason to choose to play comedies is to learn to appreciate the difference between script and the textbook. "When we play the script, we can make the lines and the words alive," said Professor Chen. "That is why I encourage students to 'play out' the script." He hopes that after the annual play, students not only bring laughter to the audience but also learn to appreciate different styles of drama.



The director is like an obstetrician

By Daphne Wang

The director's role in a theatrical play is like an obstetrician. When something goes wrong, the director's clinical intervention is to correct it. He also determines whether the child will thrive or suffer, live or die. The metaphor is quoted from Frank Hauser, a famous British theatre director, explaining what a director is.

In other words, the director does not control the whole play, but makes sure that the play accords with the playwright's expectation; the director ensures that the play meets the audiences' delight; the director assists the actors to figure out their best interpretations.

"The Man Who Came to Dinner is definitely one of the largest-scale performances since FLAL has held annual plays", said Carlos Tsai, the director. A director bears the challenging task of bringing together all the complex pieces of the play--the script, actors, costume and makeup, set and props, light and sound--into a unified whole. Therefore, this heavy responsibility lies on the shoulder of Carlos.

A good show needs a good director to assist its actors, especially when the roles in The Man Who Came to Dinner have various unique characteristics. How a director leads his team will also influence how the play is performed.



Some directors will lead the team with dominance; however, for Carlos, he persists in leading the team with "freedom". For instance, when an actor has different understanding in the role, Carlos tends to discuss it with the actor over and over again in order to reach mutual recognition.

"Lots of work should be done beforehand", said Carlos. Before he actually directs the play, he has read the script carefully and thoroughly. Not only does he need to know each role, but also how the characters tend to interact with one another. Moreover, every slight facial expression of an actor can convey an entirely different interpretation to the audience. Therefore, "It is never too careful to read the script. It's all in the details," stated Carlos.

Whenever an actor or actress cannot successfully perform the perfect version of the role, the duty then comes to the director. The most commonly used method by Carlos is called "hidden". He would ask the actors to imagine what has happened to the character before he or she gets on the stage, in order to link his or her emotions coherently.

Once, Ivy Jou, who plays Sheridan Whiteside's secretary Maggie Cutler, cannot figure out how to express her feelings of a scene that Maggie is pissed off when she sees Loraine Sheldon visiting Whiteside at the Stanley's. Ivy imagined that she has just left Bert, her lover, with a romantic and pleasant mood. "When I saw Loraine, I am not just simply angry but my emotions are much more complicated," recalled Ivy.

What if "hidden" does not work? Carlos has another secret weapon to work out this predicament. "He would ask us to repeat the same line again and again, but each time, with different emotions", said Mack Mao, who plays the main role, Sheridan Whiteside.

When applying this method, the actors should jump off their roles. This time, actors are playing themselves. "Eventually, I will try out one way that both

Carlos and I believe it is the perfect version", Ivy complemented. It is quite clear to see the harmonious association and good relationship between the director and actors.

Besides directing, the play also faces multiple difficulties. However, no matter what plight lies in the front, Carlos will lead the team to conquer it.

"First step is always the hardest," Carlos sighed. "FLAL students do not have regular acting related courses or trainings, so the beginning is difficult not only for actors, but for all groups behind the screen".

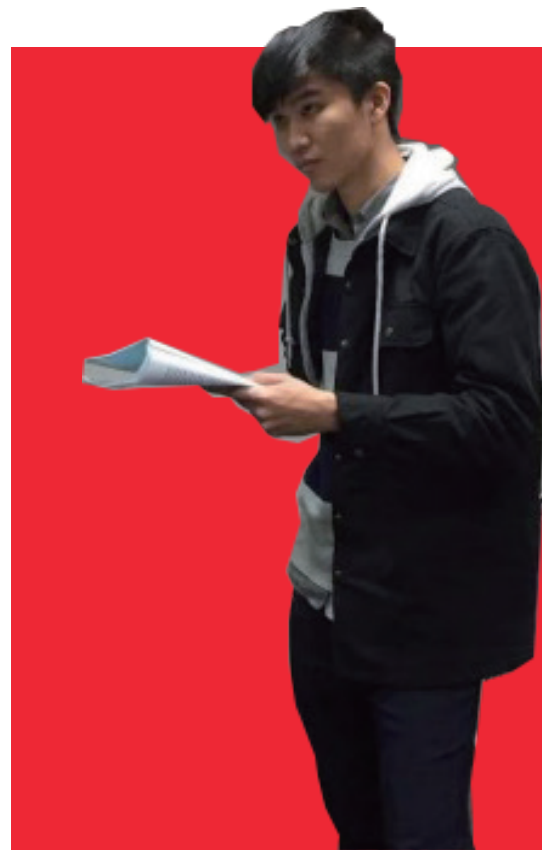
Annual play is nothing like extracurricular activities held by student associations; it is much more formal and on larger-scale. As a novice at directing, Carlos indicated that he fumbled and tried out tens of thousands ways to direct and thumbed through books about directing and acting.

Whenever an alumnus of FLAL, Ken Chung, now a professional play director, managed to guide the rehearsals, Carlos seized every opportunity to learn and jot notes. "Every time Ken gave me some reminders, I have to spend lots of time reflecting on them because I have too much to learn," referred Carlos.

In addition to lack of experiences, another difficulty is to gather every member of the department to help. Director has no right to demand every classmate to participate fully into it. Furthermore, "there is no way to pay substantial salary or rewards to those who part take in the play," said Carlos. "Those who are willing to help the annual play are investing their time and efforts for the team. They can only receive the sense of accomplishment and friendship". One last difficulty is lack of resources. In other words, a good show needs lots of fund. The Man Who Came to Dinner is free admission. Carlos said the show can only depend on the sponsorship Public Relations has received.

"My original intention of taking over the director is hoping everyone can accomplish the one last activity for us in university. Be sure to be happy in the process," said Carlos.

Carlos always hoped that no matter what frustration or problems the crew of The Man Who Came to Dinner will encounter, everyone would work them out as a team. "It is much more important than whether the performance is good or not," Carlos insisted. Well goes the proverb--your efforts today will pay off in the future".



Act to unleash your greatest potentials

By Mack Mao

Ken Chung is the acting coach of this year's annual play *The Man Who Came to Dinner*. His acting dream started with Disney soundtracks. He would impersonate and recreate the characters in Disney movies and upload videos on YouTube. After graduating from high school, Ken finally took a brave step and began his acting career. When he was junior at FLAL, he was the director as well as leading actor in *Wicked*. He's joined acting crews and performed on stage ever since his freshman year. He is currently in the acting crew of *Dramacapella Ensemble*.

Mack Mao: Could you tell us some of your acting background?

Ken Chung: I've been interested in dramas, theater and acting ever since high school, especially musicals. I love to watch shows, but I never got the nerves to actually become an actor.

The first time I really step into acting was my freshman year. I was struggling with an opportunity of an audition, thinking about whether I should go. Luckily, my friend was interested as well. We signed up for the musical audition

and got in. I was pretty surprised owing to the fact that I did not have any acting background back then. I began to take a lot of acting lessons such as body languages, intonation and dancing. Moreover, I performed many musicals and I learned and grew so much. I participated in a lot of acting workshops as well.

Mack Mao: Can you introduce your current acting crew *Dramacapella Ensemble*?

Ken Chung: The previous acting gigs I did are mainly English musicals. Since they are English musicals, the scripts, of course, are usually from foreign countries. I want to do something in Chinese. Therefore, when I entered the graduate school, I joined *Dramacapella Ensemble* and started doing original Chinese acappella musicals. We have our original acapella songs and our own stories. For now, I'm still in *Dramacapella Ensemble* and keep performing Chinese musicals.

Mack Mao: Some people might say that the annual play is time-consuming and unnecessary, what do you think?

Ken Chung: Actually, I learn a lot from being an actor these years. I do think that I am not just performing for the sake of performance. I learn so much more than just acting skills. Everybody can play different roles in the annual play in this department. It is not just about the actors.

Therefore, I think that in every job, we can all learn different lessons. Take actors for an example. Being an actor can help people in a lot of ways. You can improve your intonation and body languages. You can learn to observe people around you and apply that into your acting.

Some people might be too shy to talk or don't know how to express themselves, but they can definitely learn to be more open and self-promoting through acting. So I think that acting can absolutely help you in so many ways in your daily life. As for other groups in annual play such as designing or stage-managing, I do think that it's a rare opportunity for you to learn through the process.

Mack Mao: Do you think that annual play could benefit the juniors in other ways as well?

Ken Chung: You can explore yourself and find your potentials. I understand that some people want to focus on school course or other things, but annual play is a once-in-a-life-time chance. You don't have to view it as an accomplishment or an achievement, but rather to learn something from this process and it will definitely be useful somehow in the future.

Mack Mao: Since there are no acting-related courses at FLAL, how do you coach and guide the actors to be one hundred percent ready for the stage?

Ken Chung: I think that's inevitable. Every English-related major has a play or a drama. We all start from zero experiences. But I do think that acting-related courses are not really necessary. Like you just said, some student might not be that interested in acting courses so it could be a burden for them. However, I do think that annual play is a very good way for the juniors who want or try to be an actor because they will have acting coaches like me to teach and train them and learn more about acting.

As an acting coach, I am not actually striking for perfection or absolute professionalism. Our time is limited, so our goal is to present this play on stage as much as we can. I will observe everyone's status and adjust my way of coaching. I think that based on my experiences, I can more or less see someone's potential. Thus, sometimes I will want to push you more because I know you can get there, you can do better.

I'd like to encourage you to explore more about yourself and let your potentials shine. I will not ask for perfection because I myself am not perfect as well. For me, acting needs a long time to accumulate, to learn and grow from experiences. And of course, if you are really interested in pursuing an acting career, you can definitely go find acting-related courses to take.

Mack Mao: Besides the acting class and practices, what can we do in daily lives to improving our acting skills?



Ken Chung: Observation is the easiest way and could be very helpful and useful. You can observe other people in your daily life to help you get into the character. Find someone you can project on.

For example, if you are playing an old man, you can go to the traditional markets and find an old man to observe. Follow him to learn how he walks, how he talks to others or how he uses his body languages. Through the process of observation, you might be able to find new ideas to improve your character such as new habits, new gestures or new body movements. For instance, if you are playing *Sheridan Whiteside*, you can find someone who has similar tempers to observe and to improve your acting skills. Observation is less stressful and easier to do in daily lives.

Mack Mao: Finally, can you share some words for this year's annual play?

Ken Chung: I understand that some juniors might struggle with being fully committed in this annual play, but I do encourage everyone to enjoy the process. Don't try to achieve a perfect or great outcome, but really, enjoy this once-in-a-life-time process.

Most people will never step into this kind of activities in the future. So just try to enjoy the process. Learn from the process. Don't add too much stress on yourself because that's not the vibe we want. Learn to adjust yourself and grow from this experience.



Becoming Harriet

By Sophia Chen

Acting out the oldest and most frantic character in *The Man Who Came to Dinner*, Lillian Lin had to face some obstacles. Despite her previous experiences and talents in stage performance, Lillian needed more time to impersonate this complex character of Harriet Stanley. During the months preparing for the annual play, Lillian strived to balance the conflicting characteristics of the protagonist. With the help of the directors and the teachers, Lillian was eventually ready to rock and roll in the 2017 annual play.

"After reading the play, I had a feeling that Harriet might be the most difficult character to act out," said Elias Luo, a member of the multi-media promotion team. "She is frantic and full of paradoxes. Her age conflicts with her inner personalities."

Ashley Huang, the Head of the Art Design group, regarded Harriet as a character of mysteries. "She's a buffoon that can bring her audience laughter," said Ashley. "I believe the challenge in playing the role of Harriet is to put away all overhangs. That

Linda Wang, who plays Miss Preen, said that Harriet is a character who acts like a child despite her age. "Harriet seems to combine both the innocence of a child and the appearance of an old lady," said Linda. "She seems like an elf living in her own fantasy world."

The reason for Lillian to take up the challenge to act as Harriet was interesting. "I acted as a frantic character in the sophomore Mini Play. In *The Wedding Funeral*, I played a sensitive boyfriend heartbroken to find out that his ex-girlfriend cheated on him," said Lillian. "It was at that time did I realize my talents to play such characters."

The Director, Carlos Tsai, also mentioned why he picked Lillian to be Harriet. "After reading the playscript, I had a sense that Lillian suitable for Harriet," said Carlos. "Lillian has some characteristics that match Harriet's. Like Harriet, Lillian seems to live in another world."

Despite Lillian's talents, she admitted that



she faced many difficulties in acting out Harriet. To begin with, to act the way how an old woman walks and speaks was anything but easy. "I had to mimic the low, hoarse voice in order to be more like Harriet," said Lillian. "However, I have a high-pitched voice." Besides, Lillian was overwhelmed by the complexity of the character. "I need to express the anxiety of the character while also being frantic and naïve. Harriet is a complex character, it requires the actor be as crazy as possible," said Lillian. She explained that the most difficult part is to think differently from normal people. "I still feel hard to be in the mood of being exactly crazy. There are still many things where I could improve."

However, Carlos was amazed by Lillian's performance. "She is an exceptional actress who worked very hard to break through," said Carlos. "She never failed to find a way to surprise us." Carlos mentioned that she even tried different ways to approach the role of Harriet, "Every rehearsal is a surprise."

Lillian felt also grateful for people who helped her grasp the character of Harriet. "The director taught me to observe how old people act and Professor Ueng taught me how to walk and speak like an old lady. Other actors also helped me out in being insane and acting like a really abnormal person," said Lillian.

Other than helps from others, Lillian's experience in preparing for the annual play was also crucial. During her junior year, she engaged herself in stage performance knowledge, including acting techniques, abdominal breathing, emotional expressions, and stage make-up. "I've learnt so much in the annual play," said Lillian. "It is a fruitful journey to understand more on acting. I feel proud to participate in this grand activity."

This is our song, after all

By Josh Liao

For the FLAL annual play, students and professors have to rack their brains to come up with new ideas and elements to entertain the audience. At a normal afternoon in the practice room, people could hear somebody practicing basic voicings just a few steps away from the door. To correspond with the originality of the play, a bridge of singing has been orchestrated to stageThe Man Who Came to Dinner.

The barricade

"Something doesn't sound quite right after a few practice sessions were made," said Carlos Tsai, the director. "Maybe it's the timing or the intonation, but something has been going wrong.". Having been vexed by the unusual and unclear melody lines, Andy Cheng, casting Beverly Carlton in the play, seems to struggle over his part of the play. Andy was easy to get into nervousness when facing the crowd. His pitch and intonation differed from where he practiced. The volume of his singing was fine when soloing, but when singing along with the recording, his classmates could tell the awkward dissonance and timing. Since the crew members are in pursuit of perfection, even minor blemishes have to be eliminated before the debut.

None of the above engendered the utmost impact on the preparation. The song did. For the production group, going through the hindrance while involving the audience is their first priority; the lack of accompaniment of the piano then comes second.

Musical or original

It was not easy to distinguish the melody note by note, although it was written by the famous composer Cole Porter. Classical music harmonies and arpeggios were implemented in the original recording, implemented in the original recording, and most people are not familiar with it, since they were born in the era of pop and rock music.



Students and professors are coping with the song in a more ideal way for both the performer and the audience. The melody has to be something everyone is familiar with, somewhere around the 1970s and 1980s, and there should be an available off-vocal backing track for the singer.

At a regular student-professor meeting about a month ahead of the performance, the issue was brought up to the table, discussing about whether to keep the song in its original or make it into something musical. Few names of the great composers in the 1980s were nominated, like John Lennon and Elton John, with the idea that their works might be the substitution for "what am I to do." "It has to be something soothing, with solid time signature and groove," said Andy.

"Love is central to the song, but by love I did not mean the Roman candle, fireworks, Hollywood hot-pink love. It also cannot be like the heartbreaking kind of love," said Andy. "It was mild, expressive with emotions and rhythmic. The better would be having the audience singing along with Me."

Your Song

Your Song was the one. After several back and forth discussions, by digging into the lyrics that best fits the part. It was wonderful to see how Elton John put his feelings into words. Implicit but thrilling, that's what people say about the lyrics. The original song "What am I to do" had Beverly in the play singing about his feelings towards Maggie, and Elton John has the exact same song emphasizing on that matter. The production group wants this kind of feeling that will contract the audience into the play, by presenting them the melody that they're familiar with. Finally they have made the decision to let Andy sing the chorus.

"And you can tell everybody this is your song

It may be quite simple, but now that it's done

I hope you don't mind, I hope you don't mind that I put down in words

How wonderful life is while you're in the world"

The song is about his feelings--he wants that person who he has been reaching out to tell everyone what he has done--it is simple and it doesn't matter because it is done. He hopes it doesn't bother him or her if he just puts it in words, and his life turned around since his love is being in the world with him.

It is a tune with memorable lyrics and lovely melody, but still it was not easy for Andy. The song has reached what the production group has wanted in all perspectives. It served as the clincher that captures the eyes of the audience.

More than a song

Andy's part of the play is indispensable. The song would have a positive impact on the performance, making the play distinct-

tive. The sound and effect group leade contributed effectively for being the instructor of Andy in their latest practice session, as Andy has reached his final process - adjusting the timing and pitch.

The annual play seems relatively important to the junior students during their remaining college years; it is a showcase that epitomised their ability and expertise of what they have learned for the past three years. Everyone has gone full throttle and put in extra efforts to perfect their skills. The song and the play, and all the preparation has always been much more than what they seemed to be. It represents collaboration, chemistry and common understanding. Each of them represents a tiny piece of the puzzle; it cannot be considered a whole if missing a piece. Everyone is indispensable.



Money talks, but selling pizza does the trick

By Stefanie Ho

For FLAL annual plays, money has been the answer to many headaches. From props group to the training courses, everything needs money. If there is not enough money to foot the bills, the annual plays will be impossible. Therefore, public relations group, in charge of the task for fundraising, has become the staunch backing of the annual plays.

Fundraising is the most important job of public relations team. Most people don't want to be in the team, because paradoxically it usually entails low sense of accomplishment. There are many ways to raise funds, but all approaches are the same you have to request others to donate money. Linda Wang, a member of the team this year, called more than fifty companies to ask for donations. It is a job which needs lots of patience. They have to explain their purpose to everyone again and again, and most of the time, they were rejected. "When some people heard that we are raising money for students' activity, they thought it is meaningless and rejected immediately. That is really upset," said Catherine, Hsieh, also a member of the team.

"It is a big challenge to raise about

NTD65, 000 as our target. But in the end, our team made it to NTD90, 000," said Joey, the leader of public relations team.

What makes this year so successful in raising money? Joey Wei said that there are two major reasons. First, this year we have a new course related to theatrical performance. For the course, the teaching professor invited a manager from a famous company to give a speech about promotions for public relations. Many new ideas came from the speech. For example, the PR team made the different plans for different kinds of companies. For the food company, for example, they helped the pizza company to sell pizza on the campus. But they help overseas affairs service agencies to hold seminars.

Second, the PR team helped those companies to organize feedbacks. Therefore, those companies are willing to cooperation with our PR team and give them more chances. "I admire Joey very much because he has a strong insight and an acute outlook," said Linda. "He knows what companies want."

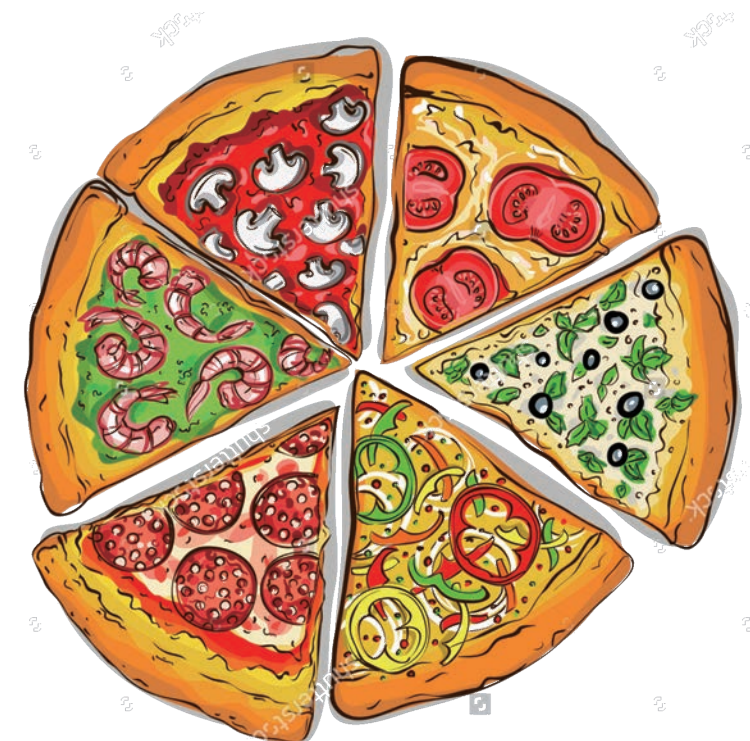
Take overseas affairs service agency for

example, Joey organized the feedback from students of FLAL. In the feedback, overseas affairs service agencies could clearly know what topic interested students more and what students care about. The response of the company is great, so overseas affairs service agency cooperated with the PR team to hold five seminars this year. In the past few years, overseas affairs service agency usually held only two or three seminars.

"The most interesting things in PR team is that you will have many wonderful experiences. I will never forget that day many people helped us to sell pizza. What a hard-won experience," said Joey. "How many people will have the experience to sell pizza in campus? So, it is not just a job, it is a good chance to become closer to our classmates."

Linda noted that there is kindness to be found everywhere during the process of raising money. "One night, Vivian and I visited all the shops around Shianxia old street but we didn't get anything. Thus, we decided to go to a far-off area to give it a shot. When we got into a Teppanyaki restaurant and explained the reason we visited them. The boss gave us NTD2, 000 directly and cook a delicious meal for us," said Linda. "I was so touched."

"I learned many communication skills in PR team," said Vivian Wu, a member of the team. "In PR team you can't sit back and wait. You have to take the initiatives. Money doesn't grow on tree. The skill of persuading people is important." She



knew how difficult it could be to let a stranger even want to spend time to listen to you. "We have to learn to tell a touching story and make people want to donate money for a worthy cause. I believe that all the members of PR team have good skills to communicate with others now," said Vivian.

Without PR team, there will be no budget to buy beautiful costumes and make props. To be a member of PR team is to face great challenges, but they also gained many memories and skills.



Dressed to kill and to tickle

By Andy Chang

Suppose you have a dinner date at 7 p.m., at what time would you start getting ready? According to an online survey posted on FashionGuide.com in July 2014, women spend about an hour and a half to prepare before they head out, on average. They spend 15 minutes to shower, 30 minutes to do the make-up, and another 45 minutes to search for the perfect dress or outfit and the matching accessories.

When it comes to the theatre, before the actors and actresses appear on stage, the preparation work falls on the team of costume design, and it can take up to six months. Annie Chen is the head of costume design team for this year's FLAL annual play-The Man Who Came to Dinner. "Oh my god, this is such a huge task," said Annie Chen, head of the costume design team for

The Man Who Came to Dinner, when she first took up the position.

What is the earliest type of costume? Simple masks worn by ancient Greeks during the production probably are.

The mask is known to have been used since the time of Aeschylus in the 6th century AD. Masks were made for the actors and for the chorus, who help the audience know what a character is thinking. The chorus wears the same mask, because they represent the same character. As theatre productions and characters became more involved and complex, so did costume design, hair and make up. Costume designers, hair and make up artists transform actors and actresses to the characters in the play. They are painters; actors and actresses are the canvas.

The team of costume design began their search for the perfect dresses at the earliest stage of the pre-production. The team had to read through the script before most of the people did. "We tried to capture the time, the background, the fundamental essence, the "feeling" of the play through the costumes," Annie added.

What does a perfect dress do?

For The Man Who Came to Dinner, the costume design team put a lot of emphasis on creating the contrast, the contrast between the conservative countryside and the glamour of the Hollywood.

There are intense arguments between the two main female characters Maggie and Lorraine. "Through the contrast of the colors and the distinction of the outfits, I hope the audience can spot the difference between the two women on their first appearance on the stage," said Carlos Tsai, the director.

In most cases, realistic costumes

should fit the period of the play. For instance, if the play takes place in the early 1950s, then the costumes, the hair, the make up of the actors and actresses should be able to reflect that. A perfect costume should also be able to reflect the actor's mood.

An excellent example is Muriel from last year's annual play- Plaza Suite. Being a married woman having a "rendezvous" with her old lover. Muriel put on something lovely but not overly seductive. Duncan Ma, the director of Plaza Suite said, "Only when the costume fits the character can the actress relate herself in the scenario. "In short, we tried our best to make the play look complete and sincere," said Doris Fan, the head of costume design team of Plaza Suite.

The search, and the struggle

"I have way too many clothes in my closet, and I thought finally they could be put into good uses," said Daphne Wang, a member of the costume design team. "But it turned out none of my clothes fit the actresses." The main struggle they face is that, often when they look at a piece of cloth, dress, or even accessory, they thought, "Oh this is perfect." However, when they try it on the actor or actress, it does not match the feeling they had imagined in the first place.

The search for the perfect dress is exhausting. Doris said, "The director gave us a vague idea about how the dress should look like. He has an idea in the mind about how the dress should look like, but he could not describe it through words. It is like finding a specific needle in the ocean, but you don't even know what that specific needle looks like. We spent weeks wandering at all the shopping area in Taipei. When we thought we had found something suitable, we took pictures, sent them



to the director and waited for his reply. Often his answer would be just as vague. And then we kept on searching. I love shopping, but this is the first time I hate shopping so much."

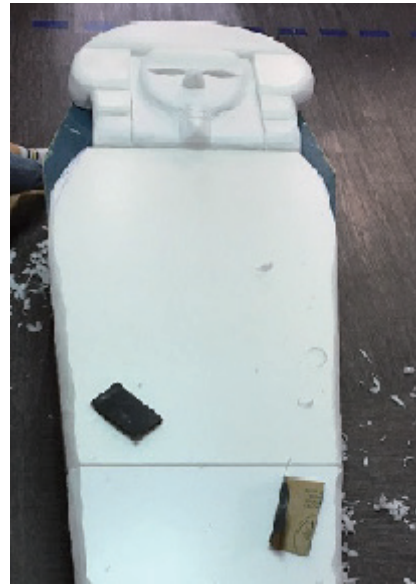
Different people have different opinions about the perfect dress. Annie said, "We were bit frustrated after receiving comments from the professors after they saw the characters for the first time. Take Bert the reporter for example; his outfit is simple and plain, but some of the professors think he should dress more gentleman-like. Costume design team spent months reading the scripts over and over again, while the professors only see the play for one time only. "We take their advices, but not all of them. It is also our team's job to find the balance between all the advises and opinions we get."

A perfect dress helps actors and actress shine through, but the search of it can be time-consuming and enervating. The team of costume design may never appear on the stage, but they definitely deserve a standing ovation.



New ideas for making an Egyptian antique

By Ashley Huang



"It really took us a lot of discussions and brainstorming to make a decision on how to make this beautiful but complicated mummy case," said Bonnie Chu, leader of the props group. "All the members including me have searched on the internet, asked the professors, and even attended a lecture to dig out the best ideas. Then we finally figured out a perfect plan after all those exhausting discussions."

Walking into the workroom, you saw some people carving the Styrofoam with art knives in their hands while some were painting the fascinating pictures on the woods with their full hearts. They worked hard but rarely argued or complained. This group of people spent days or even weeks to carve, to paint, and to make the props perfect. Their mission was to help the performance successfully presented to the audience with their elaborate props. They were the members of the props group who were also the supporters behind the scene.

Starting from a good plan

Among all the props, the mummy case was the most surprising one, but it also took the most time and energy for the members of the props group to make. During the process of making mummy case, they faced several tasks. The first task they confronted was coming up with fresh but practicable ideas and plans to create the mummy case. There was a saying that all things are difficult before they are easy. Thus, it was definitely not easy for them to think of a good making plan in the beginning.

In the process of coming up with ideas, Bonnie said that the members almost had a fight over different opinions. Some of the members stated that the mummy case should be elaborate and gorgeous because only those who had high status in ancient Egypt could be buried in a mummy case; however, some thought that the mummy case in this year's annual play was an antique so it could not be that gorgeous. Rather, some argued, it should be shabbier. After an aggressive process of discussion, they reached a consensus. The patterns of the mummy case would be gorgeous and complicated, but they would add some materials, such as sand, to make it look shabby.

Drawing, carving, painting

As soon as they had a great plan, they began to put the idea into practice. Starting from drawing the draft on the wooden box, which was used to make the mummy case, to carving the Styrofoam which was prepared to shape the face outside the mummy case, all the steps were followed carefully while each step was really time-consuming. According to Vivian Wu, who was responsible

for drawing the draft on the wooden box, she spent a lot of time modifying the lines she drew because it was not an easy thing to draw on a three-dimensional box. It took patience and concentration. "I even wanted to give up for a time," said Vivian. Gladly, she completed the task well in the end.

Another member Gary Chiu, who was in charge of carving the Styrofoam, also had a hard time. "It was really hard to carve the facial features of human on the Styrofoam for me because I was not good at adjusting my strength while carving. However, I overcame my weakness through practicing over and over again. Then I made it," said Gary.

While carving, some members even accidentally cut their fingers several times. Looking at their fingers, there were still bandages and wounds on them. For those who were responsible for painting the mummy case, they had a lower possibility to get hurt, but they always ruined their clothes when painting with oil color. "I had thrown away one T-shirt and two pants for the paint on them," said Nana Jian, who played a role in painting the mummy case. Although some of them got hurt and some had thrown away numerous clothes, none of them complained. Their attitude of hard-working and determination has made them create the most amazing mummy case.

Maintaining and repairing

Eventually, the mummy case was done. Then, it was the most difficult process of maintaining the quality of it. After the props group finished making the mummy case, the director asked to use it while the actors and actresses were rehearsing. In the process of moving, there was some collisions. Then the broken mummy case had to be repaired immediately. The members would observe the damaged areas and conditions of it first and try to find out the best way to repair it. "It was quite hard to do the repair job because I needed to repair it and made it look like the same as what it was originally. I didn't want to destroy the work of my partners, so it became harder," said Stanley Du, one of the members of the props group.

Although the actors and actresses were always the focus of the audience, there were a group of people working diligently to make the whole performance more amazing through the props they created. They didn't ask for the spotlight, but they ask for perfection and the sense of accomplishment. From the mummy case they made, they showed how creative they were and what they were capable of. They were the props group, the artists behind the scene.



Same tool, new strategies, different accomplishment

By Jerry Chang



(lucky draw ;
photo credits: 15th annual play's fan page)

Nowadays, online marketing not only reverses the way we promote products or services but step by step substitutes traditional media- newspaper or advertisement on television. The promotional tools on social media like Facebook, Weibo in China and Twitter sprung like mushrooms. One of the benefits of it is the low-cost and easily-traceable management. For years, from enterprises to street stores, having a fan page has become a must.

Almost every year, the team of the annual play set up its own fan page on Facebook. However, none of them can do as well as this year. According to the data shown on the page, the Online Branding team this year has already broken the record to gain the most attention on their fan page on Facebook.

Starting from January 27, the fan page of annual play successfully received more than 930 likes, which is 1.5 times the number received two years ago. More surprisingly, the crew attracted over 310 users in total to leave their comments, while there were only two last year and zero the year before that. Now, people are wondering how they made this? "I believe it has something to do with our innovative strategy and tools this year," said Andy Lin, the leader of branding team.

The team still chose Facebook as their main platform to advertise the show for this semester. However, its target group is a generation born with multiple social media such as Instagram, Facebook, No Name (無名小站) and so on. Thus, a question became one of the issues the team had in their very first meeting- "How can we be special and different from others." They thought if

they still do the advertising in the same way as former crews, they are doomed to fail, with no breakthrough.

To learn the know-how, the team started to learn and see how other successful fan pages did. "Imitation is the best way to learn," said Mark Chao. Hence, they have took pages such as "Power 鎰", "ET-TODAY" and "士女時代" for reference. And they found that these models have something in common...

New digital tool--videos

"Users on Facebook got no time to waste on bunch of words. Only 3 seconds left for the post to draw their attentions," said Andy Lin. "But for videos, users tend to be more patient and are willing to spend more time," Carina Chen supplemented.

The first thing they learned is to CATCH the viewers with videos. For this, they made short tapes of a lightning round of fans questions by main actors and actresses. Quickly and easily, people can get a glimpse of the story or imminent marketing event in a video less than 90 seconds. Till now, they have produced 9 tapes about characters, makeup, stage prop and even something behind the scenes. Meanwhile, these videos won more than 6200 clicks for the team.

Time strategy

Another thing they discovered is about the timing when the pages are posted. Based on their observation, they found other pages usually send posts between 9-12 at night. Does it mean those editors of the page are all "night owls"? Absolutely not. They do it for a reason. Based on the big data, 9-12 at night is a peak of the number of user to get on-line. It means that posts launched during the period will be more possible to be seen by the target groups.

"We have tested the discovery with control group by editing posts in daytime and experiment group at night between 9-12," said Mark Chao. The result of the test turned out to be amazing. The likes and clicks at

night are almost 2 times those in the morning. Inlight of this, they decided to have all their posts shown at night.

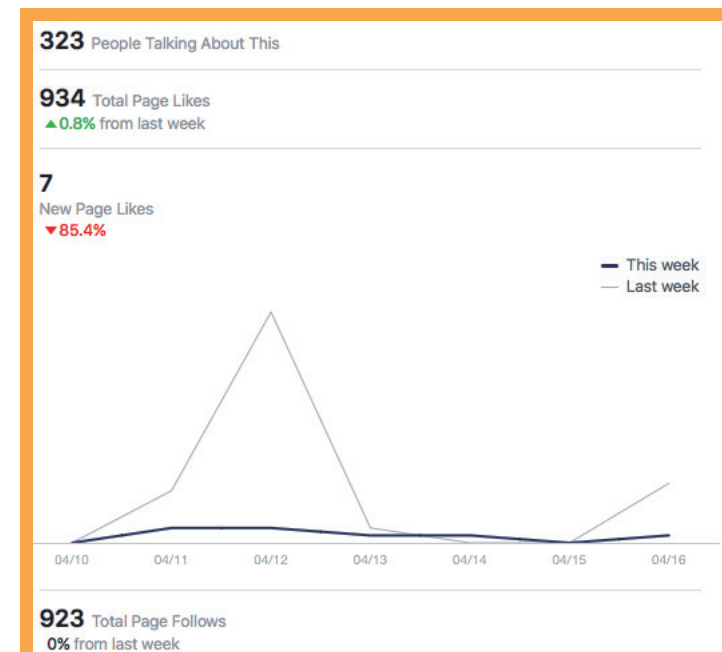
Experience from the past

In addition to learning from others, the branding also took lessons from former teams. "Like before, we have lucky draw activity and provide lots of give-aways. But one thin differenc is that we tend to extend the period of the activity," Said Carina Chen.

Losing attention from followers is one of the flaws of the former fan pages. The team believes it is because after the lucky draw, fans got the prizes, such as movie ticket or something from sponsors. However, on the other hand, some of them may lose the motivation to follow the information or events closely. With the time getting closer to the date of official performance, the team has weaker connection with fans. This may result in a decline of the number of attendants on the performing day, which is one of the goals for branding crew.

Therefore, this year the team decided to extend the period lucky-draw from the beginning of April to a week before debut by end of May. "I hope the strategy can help us keep users stayed with us every minute before the annual play this year," said Andy Lin.

The audience has alwas been the indispensable part to a play. The branding team put with up creative strategies by learning from others to achieve its goal- gathering attention from the public. The outcome proves what they tried did work and make potential attendants expect more about the play The man who came to dinner. This year, the team has set up role model for other teams in the future. Their accomplishment proves that marketing work can be a cornerstone of the annual play.



("likes" analysis of 17th annual play's fan page)



A cheerful learning curve for everyone

By Bryant Chiu



The actors and actresses have already practiced for months, assimilating with the souls of the characters and pretend they are the characters. In the process, disappointments and trials may emerge, but they work hard to overcome those difficulties to give the audiences a wonderful performance. In addition, they also learned something from this play.

Frustration is what makes us mature

Hank Lee mentioned that lots of frustrations came from the annual play. He had many role play experiences, but most of them were for high school clubs. "It was completely different from the annual play so I must change the performing style," said Hank. "Although it was very difficult, I spent many hours trying to figure out the spirit of the character."

However, everyone thought the character Hank performed was similar with Hank him-

self, because his personality is similar with the character so that he can preform the character easily and natural. However, Hank said that he started to learn how to improve himself under pressures, and he loves challenges and asked himself to be the best every time. Therefore, he wanted to improve himself and live up to the expectations of others. In addition, Hank also hopes that the annual play will be successful, with everyone who participated leaving with a wonderful memory.

Acting is to make believe you are the character

Christine Chang said she spent a lot of time watching Broadway video and try to learn from them before the audition, but she didn't do well in her first try. She was scared that she can't get the character she wanted, and after some hard working she finally got it. During practice, she felt nervous at first because she had to work with someone she didn't know well yet. "However, we are good friends now, so the biggest challenge now is to be the character instead of acting like the character," said Christine. She also mentioned that she learned lots of things along the way, especially from taking the acting lessons from Ken Chung, the acting coach. She also changed her conceptions about acting. "A play isn't only the character performance, it is a cooperation among all who participated in this play, and also include the audiences," said Christine. "Everyone plays an important role."

When she talked about acting skills, she said it is not to pretend you are the character, it is about being the character, so the character will be alive. She

also learned how to be in contact with her partners, while acknowledging it could be the last chance everyone got together and work like a team.

Many difficulties won't defeat us

Coco Chien said that although there were many difficulties but there wasn't anything that we couldn't solve. She said she had more knowledge about acting and did everything well and accurately. The biggest difference from before was she knows how to bring everyone together. "Although bringing everyone together is the hardest part but even the hardest part was easy because most of the people in our class are such fun to be with and so it's been a delight to work with them," said Coco.

Words can't tell the characters

Ivy Chou said that she used to think acting seems easy. "I used to think that if someone had the sense of humor then he or she could be a pretty good actor," said Ivy. "However, I change my mind now, believing that acting is such a logical thing."

When she first got the scenario, she

thought the character was not completed because the words couldn't tell everything about the character itself. "You must complete the character by tapping into your imagination, because the words are lifeless while your emotions can make them alive," said Ivy. However, this is also the most difficult part, with lots of gap filling between words and words. "A simple word can have many ways to express in many different emotions, backgrounds and motivations," said Ivy. Therefore, she learned so much about acting and now learned to express her emotion in many different ways. In addition, she also learned to cooperate with others and had lots of fun during practice.

Low budget but a perfect product

Angie Lee mentioned that we all hoped everything to be the best, but our budget was limited. Therefore, many things we need are made by ourselves. "We had to find the cheapest materials so that we could cut the costs to the lowest," said Angie. In addition, Angie believes that it's a pretty good experience, comparing things that were handmade with things we bought from the stores. "We saved so much money, yet with low budgets, we still perform the best play," said Angie.

