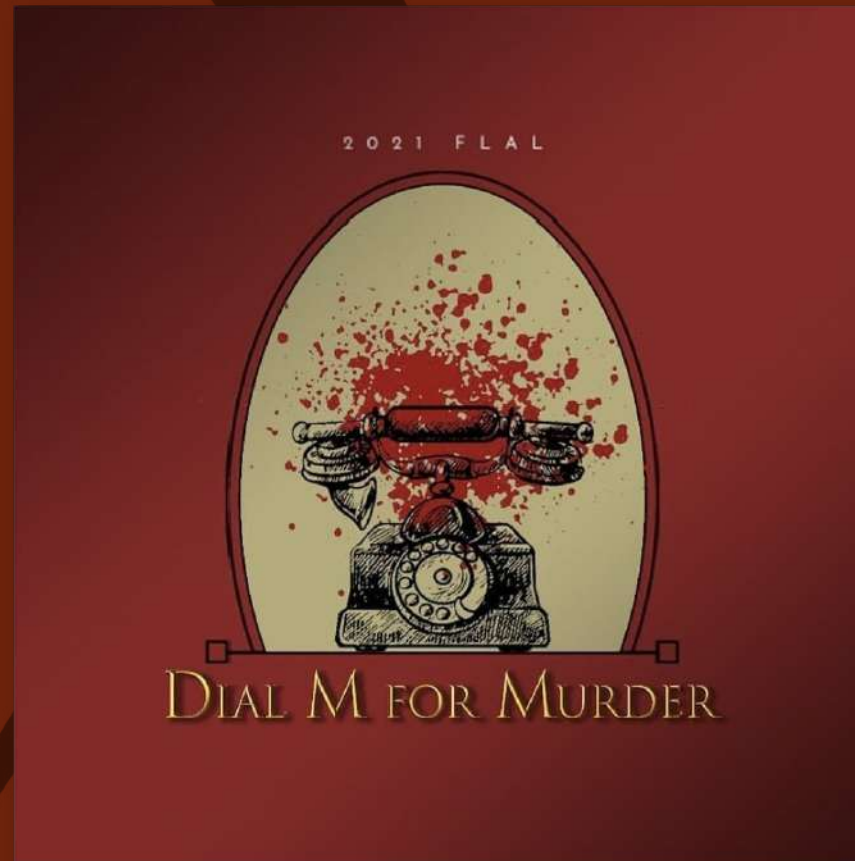

DIAL M FOR MURDER



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HOW KING LEAR LED A BETRAYED WIFE GONE

ASTRAY By Michelle Kuo

“Acting always fascinates me,” said Selena Wu, who plays Tracy Wendice, the lead actress for Dial M for Murder. “Because there is a strong connection between reality and acting.”

The reason Selena chose to play Tracy can trace back to an acting experience at High school, when she participated in Shakespeare’s play King Lear, acting the king’s elder daughter, Goneril.

Selena Wu pointed out that this character shared similarities with Tracy. “They are both pious,” said Selena. “For personal intentions, they pretend to be kind, nice, and faithful.”

However, Selena believes that Tracy is even more difficult to interpret, because, compared to Goneril, Tracy is more sophisticated and shrewder. “Tracy hides her hatred, anger and pains so that she can manipulate her plans,” said Selena. “Unlike Goneril, who exposes her evilness immediately after she gets what she wants, Tracy hides her secret through the whole play.”

Selena indicated that the long period of lying makes the character hard to play since she has to show audience both inner and outer part of the role. Otherwise, it is possible that audience would mistake Tracy’s real motives. Nevertheless, the difficulty doesn’t turn her away. “The demanding requirement intrigues me since I can connect this character with the past character I played before. It is really amazing,” she said.

Vivian Chen, the assistant director, saw the difficulties Selena faced with.

“Tracy has a more complex personality than some other characters and is more difficult to portray, especially for Selena,” she said. “Selena is a very friendly and kind-hearted person who never thinks of hurting anybody’s feelings.”



“Selena is not like Tracy at all,” said Kineta Lai, the event general coordinator. “She is a kind and naïve girl who is always willing to help classmates.” Kineta emphasizes that Selena’s personalities are far from Tracy’s. “Unlike Tracy, who is much older and more scheming. Selena is simple. The difference may make it difficult for her to play out Tracy.”

“Selena found out the connection between her own personalities and the character’s,” said Nita Huang, the group leader of script team, who is one of the members realizing the images of the character the most since she is in charge of adapting the whole script. Nita said that actually Selena’s performance is beyond her expectation.

Selena knows that her personality is far from that of Tracy. Fortunately, she has another experience that makes interpreting her role easier—her recent personal life is similar to Tracy’s in the play coincidentally.

Although it is a little sad, Selena indicated that through the experience, she can put herself in Tracy’s shoes. Her story happened at the end of last semester, when she had chemistry with a person who she is willing to develop romantic relationship with.

They share their feelings, emotions, and life together. When Selena considered to have another step further, the boy fell in love with another girl without any warning. “I have no right to interfere with his decision since we are not in the relationship officially,” said Selena. “However, I felt that I was betrayed.”

Selena said she could hardly be angry at Marven and Alice in the beginning, since they are kind people and also partners for this play. “But after the incident, I started to transfer the experience to the character Tracy, who has a disloyal husband,” she said.

“It is interesting that I started to view Marven as the guy in real life,” said Selena. “Looking at Marven, I can feel that there is a burst of anger in my heart. My eyes will be sharp and ferocious. Furthermore, the experience makes me understand Tracy’s hardship, including the sorrow and struggle which turned a traditionally good wife to a cruel murderer.”

Selena has four rehearsals, for two to four hours each. “I spend about 12 hours for the rehearsal every week,” said Selena. “And the hours will be increased, which is kind of tiresome, especially during the mid-term week.”

Although Selena considered the rehearsals to be overloading, Kineta said Selena was diligent and never lax. “Selena is a self-disciplined person,” said Kineta. “Her character has more lines than others, so she often read her scripts.” Kineta added, “Despite the difficulties, Selena never complains.”

Aileen Okeke, an actress who plays Swann, also attached the diligence label on Selena. “Selena is diligent, using a systematic note-taking to organize the skills,” said Aileen. “She writes down lots of details, including gestures, emotions, or poses, especially on the long dialogues, together with the director’s requirements, other actress or actor’s advice and her own reflections.”

In addition to reciting the scripts, Kineta also mentioned that Selena pays attentions to the lecture and trainings from the acting coach.

“The instructor told her that characters should be alive. Actress has to bring herself into the character,” said Kineta. “She always keeps the advice at her heart. But I hope Selena can be less harsh to herself, because she often told me that she fears that she is lagging behind.”

Selena also shared a short story. At the beginning, her gestures and poses are tedious and awkward when she has the long dialogues with Swann. Therefore, acting instructor asked her and Swann to sit on the chairs separately so they can only perform by their limbs and heads.

“The stillness of our body forces me to focus on my expression and subtle gestures,” said Selena. “It is quite useful.” Afterward, Selena found that she has grasped some skills about performing. “After I got the tips, I noticed that everyone would raise their head in the dialogue part.” Selena said excitedly, “It was unforgettable that everyone focused on us. It just like, you know, my performance was recognized by the audience.”



A LITTLE BOOZE MAKES A PERFECT MAN IN ACTION

By Sharon Wen



On stage, the charming gentleman on the fence over two lovely women, would momentarily find himself paying the price for the extramarital affairs, which led to unexpected consequences for his irresoluteness. With at least 30 years' age gap, it is not easy to act like a man who is middle-aged, so playing such a role needs both preparation and courage. Gerald Chang is the one who rises to the challenge.

"I didn't even attend the audition," said Gerald. Last October, when the directors started enlisting the crew, students applied for the audition, but not Gerald. He had never considered becoming one of the actors. "I was worried that I'm not good enough and cannot perform well," said Gerald. "I could become the liability for others."

For Gerald, anxiety over falling short of a perfect performance is the first hurdle Gerald should conquer.

"I didn't have any experience performing on stage," explained Gerald. "Even though I know there are acting classes for us, I still didn't think I could do as well as others in such a short time."

Gerald, in fact, did some minor roles before: one for the role play during the freshman year, and the other was for a comedy in the summer camp. In both cases though, his roles were no more than just passersby.

In any case, he didn't feel like he is the best person to play Marven, the leading role. "Those were just for fun. I'd never participated in a play which has a deadline and would be watched so seriously," Gerald noted. For him, the annual play is a totally different game, because it will be staged in a big hall while every nuance will be watched carefully. So, instead of fun, this is pressure.

While the lack of confidence on the part of Gerald became a hindrance to step forward, directors and other actors spent three weeks calling him, convincing him to take part in the play. Finally, although worries remained in his heart, Gerald nodded, not wanting to disappoint the directors and other actors. He decided not to be on the sideline, formally becoming Marven.

Even though it took time, Sara Hsu, one of the three directors, had never worried. "I always believed that he would join us eventually," said Sara. "Gerald is not an aggressive person, this is exactly why he is the perfect candidate for Marven, a character who is irresolute." As for the character, Marven is a little bit greedy and an irresolute person in the relationship. He found himself torn between Alice and Tracy. The age gap, the experience an adult male should have, and the different characteristics and background were the difficulties that Gerald was facing

"It's hard for me to express the emotions," Gerald said. "I cannot express my feelings and act out what I was imagining." In the acting class, an activity called wandering is one of the impressive activities for him. "The teacher gave us an adjective as instruction and asked us to imagine what we would do or how we would react," recalled Gerald. "I think this is the hard part for me, because I cannot just depend on my imagination without clear instruction."

"I think writing acting diary is a good way of helping me to assert myself into the character," Gerald shared how he prepared for the character. In the acting diary, actor penned the life and what the character would think. Through the acting diary, Gerald can get over his weakness and understand the background of the character better.



"During the first rehearsal, even the audience and professors told me that I looked nervous," said Gerald. "But my nerves did not come from acting in front of people. It was from the worries of not doing well."

"I think that he is that kind of person who is highly self-demanding," said Selena Wu, who played Tracy. "He wanted to put in all efforts to do every part well."

Gerald recognizes the weakness of himself, and he knows how to deal with it. "The only way to fix this problem is to be one hundred percent well-prepared, like practicing before presentation at school."

Along the way, Gerald kept finding his own way to achieve a better performance. One is the fighting scene, one of the climaxes of the play and his favorite part. It only lasts for about one minute, but for the sake of completing the whole series of action, it is important to have great camaraderie between two protagonists. Every move and all actions had been adjusted many times.

"This part had been revised so many times, but the point is that every time we got totally different results from the previous one," said Gerald.

"We couldn't figure out how to act panting with the fight," Sara shared. They tried different ways like climbing on stairs and running, but still couldn't find a solution. "One day we called him to come to practice after he drank some alcohol, we surprisingly found that he could perfectly act out being short of breath, presenting the fighting scene better."

"I don't know whether others notice it, but he is a good observer of acting," said Aileen Okeke, who plays Swann. Behind his nervousness and self-doubt, Aileen still sees his advantages.

"I found that it was not hard for us to cooperate with each other," said Aileen. "I think it is because he is good at observing, and he can give the right reaction back to us. Besides, even when he had no line, he still gave a good reaction and listened carefully to others, rather than standing there and doing nothing."

To improve his acting skills, Gerald said he always needed to watch videos of rehearsal after getting home. "It is hard for an actor to imagine how audiences feel under the stage," he added. At home, he would read the script again and again to mark the differences and to develop into his acting.

"Though the annual play took me a lot of time and there are rooms for improving," Gerald said. "This is a special experience for me, and I did learn many things from it." 04

A VERSATILE ACTRESS INSIDE A DISSOLUTE CHARACTER

By Selina Chang

The story of Hua Mulan, a woman who disguised herself into a man for joining the army in replace of her father, has been a household anecdote for most people. In “Dial M for Murder,” an actress is going to present a male character with no disguise. She is ready to convince the audience that she is a man with her superb acting.

Charlie Alexander C.A. Swann, a dissolute man, is a supporting character in the play. All his sets seem normal, but what makes him out of the ordinary is that—he is going to be interpreted by an actress, Aileen Okeke.

“As an actress, how I present a male character will provide the audience another perspective to see this role,” said Aileen. “I could describe Swann with three key words: opportunistic, shady, and driven.” Aileen explained, “Before we start acting, we should get familiar with our characters. My method is to assume his life in college.”

“Swann was born with a silver spoon in his mouth,” said Aileen. We can imagine that he grew up under pressure. It is because of his background that he was forced to do wicked deeds. “To some degree, Swann deserves sympathy,” Aileen noted.

When it comes to the difficulties interpreting the role, as a woman cross-dressed as a man, Aileen has many to share.

“I spend time on my movements,” she said. The position she stands, the pace she takes, to the posture she sits, all the motions are meticulously designed. During this process, Aileen also finds some differences between females and males. “For example, men tend to have a larger range of motion. It is the way to how they show they are masculine,” said Aileen.

Besides movements, clothes and makeup are also keys to a successful woman cross-dressed as a man. A good look will also help Aileen act as a man from the interior to the exterior. An impressive image-building gives credit to our make-up and costume team.

“We put a great emphasis on contouring when putting up makeup,” said Grace Lu, in charge of Swann’s makeup. “We want Swann to have an angular face. Another obvious feature is his eyebrow.”

Women tend to have a pair of eyebrows in the shape of arch. To decrease the feminine look of Aileen, Grace makes her eyebrows with a sharper angle.

“We also tried putting on false eyelashes to make her eye look bigger,” said Grace, giving a wry smile. “But the false eyelashes only make her look more womanish, which end up being a backfire.”

This embarrassing situation didn’t happen to Marven, a male character played by a male actor. As a result, Swann is the only character being on the stage without false eyelashes.

Swann’s shoes are in a bigger size, compared to the size which fits him. Suit with thick shoulder pads is also indispensable. While most actors wear watches as accessories, Swann has a watch with a bigger dial. From head to toe, all his components aim to give him a rugged look.



When it comes to the performance, Ivy Sun, the director, has a special tip—She holds a meeting with actors and actresses. They discuss the characters toward the motivation behind his or her actions. She further helps the actors and actresses to get a thorough understanding of their characters.

It may seem that the process of rehearsal goes smoothly, but there are still difficulties they encountered. “Compared to the actions, the thinking modes of men are harder to emulate,” said Ivy. “For instance, it’s easy for Aileen to imitate a man’s action, but she has no idea when she should apply it to her performance.”



Another challenge is voice. Obviously, women talk in a higher pitch. At first, Aileen tried to lower her voice, making her voice sounds husky, which in turn affected her performance. “When Aileen lowered her voice, we can sense her feeling awkward,” said Ivy. “It makes her feel less self-conscious about her performing, which is the last thing we want to see.”

This predicament is also challenging for Tracy, the character who puts on a rival show with Swann. Selena Wu, the actress as Tracy, said, “We had a hard time deciding whether Aileen should lower her voice or not. For me, it is hard to imagine it is a man talking to me, with Aileen’s original voice. On the other hand, it is not easy for Aileen to act in an uncomfortable condition.”

Selena also mentioned that it was hard for her when she needs to imagine Aileen to be a man. “There is a scene where Tracy has to seduce Swann,” said Selena. “It is quite challenging for me at the beginning. Since I have known her for a long time, I can’t help but viewing Aileen as herself. But when we all get into characters, this problem was gradually solved.”

However, the acting instructor provides Aileen with a different idea. “Instead of focusing on how to act like a man,” said Ken Chung. “We should focus more on how to present the characters, which has nothing to do with what gender the character is.

“For example, we all agree that dissolute is a feature of Swann, but it’s not because he is a man that he is dissolute,” Ken explained. “A characteristic of a person usually has a direct link to the person himself or herself. That is, we should step backward, take a look at the story behind the character, and figure out what makes the character this way.”

As for how to analyze the character, Aileen finds her own way. Being fond of watching movies, she is good at evaluating characters with different backgrounds. Moreover, finding similarities between different characters is also helpful for her to interpret the character better: she has her original idea toward roles in the play.

“Take Hazel for example,” said Aileen, “she is quite similar to Jordan Belfort, the main character from the movie *The Wolf of Wall Street*—both of them are apparently oppressive while calculating in their minds.”

Acting involves a great versatility in different aspects. For instance, body expression, plot presentation, and role interpretation. It is even harder when the actor or actress has to overcome the obstacles of gender differences. However, Aileen shows us her ability through her assiduous efforts, because she knows her way around acting.

A SUPPORTING ACTRESS PLAYING A LEADING ROLE OFF STAGE

By Annie Chen

Annie Tsai, who takes the role of Alice Halliday, must be one of the most anticipating actresses for “Dial M for Murder” for two reasons. One is that she is not only enthusiastic about but also outstanding in acting, and another is her personal traits.

Annie has always been interested in acting. Her experience in acting can be traced back to the time when she was in senior high school, when she played two small roles in the English drama contests. In addition to acting on stage, she was one of stagehands in costume design. What’s more, she was the director of the role play at FLAL. Therefore, it is easier for her to understand how to perform and what the expectations of the audience are.

This time, Annie decided to play the role of a supporting actress. In contrast to the leading actress, Alice is more active and emotional. Before knowing whether Marven is innocent, Alice tries to save her lover with whatever means they may be. “Alice is a special character in the play,” said the head of stage props. Besides her American identity, Alice always wears bright-colored clothes, rather than dark costumes that other protagonists wear.

“I think my personal traits are like Alice, and I am very imaginative,” said Annie, noting her way to play the role. First, she read the script carefully over and over, and then she started to imagine the tone, the movement, and the gesture of each scene. The passion and experience in acting made all the difference.



“From the beginning of our rehearsal, we barely needed to tell her what to do because she seemed to have the ideas already in her mind,” said Sara Hsu, an assistant director. In a scene, Marven and the leading actress Tracy talk in the front, and Alice and Sophie, a police officer, stand behind. The director did not tell Annie to do anything, while she went to Sophie and started to talk to her, letting Sophie write and draw something down like they were discussing the case, increasing the richness of the scene.

However, Annie has some difficulties when it comes to show the audience her relationship with Marven. “It’s pretty hard for us to perform like a couple at first,” said Gerald Chang, who plays Marven. At the beginning, Gerald and Annie cannot get in the character, and Gerald even wanted to laugh whenever he looked at Annie, feeling awkward and embarrassed.

“We’ve tried many gestures and positions to be more like a couple, but they all look weird and funny without emotions in us,” said Tsai.



In a scene, Marven sits on a sofa, and Alice need to take away a mug from his hand. At first, Annie just walked towards Gerald and took it away. However, the director thought it would be boring and suggested Annie to stand behind the sofa and reach out to Gerald's hand. In this way, the picture might look like they are having a back hug. Annie tried it, but this gesture only made her look like a gibbon, rather than a woman passionately in love.

Fortunately, Annie is open-minded and not coy. When the director gives her suggestions, she is always willing to try. "Compared to Gerald, Annie is more active—like Alice in the play—when it comes to acting like a couple," said Ivy Sun, the director.

Annie said the expressions of her character through her eyes is difficult. In scene one, when Marven and Tracy talk, Alice is envious but cannot tell through the dialogue. What she can do is to stare at them with envy to let the audience know, but at the same time, she needs to avoid getting Tracy's attention.

In the middle part of the script, Alice needs to persuade Tracy into saving Marven. Again, the dialogue is simple, so the two actresses must show their tension and confrontation through eye contacts and their tone. For this, Annie spent a lot of time practicing.

As for the character in the team, Sara and Gerald both agree that Annie is fun to be around. "Though she is busy, she gives me the feeling that she is always vigorous," said Gerald.

In addition to the annual play, Annie also joins the volleyball team and needs to assistant the school swimming team. Actors and actresses practice on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Sunday. Every Monday and Thursday, Annie would be late for practice since she needs to go to the swimming team for three hours first. As for Friday, she plays volleyball.

Nonetheless, when everyone looks tired and low-spirited, Annie would be the source of energies. "She does not need to act like a clown or do something intentionally to make us happy. Her temperament is naturally contagious," said Sara.

Annie often sits on the floor or sofa reading her script, and then she just laughs out loud suddenly and cannot stop. Or, sometimes, she sits in the corner and starts to play air guitar, lift her legs, and scrunched her face. These actions make others feel baffled and odd at first but then amused, starting to laugh, pulling themselves together. After all, Annie is a positive, active, and eye-catching character, on or off the play.



FEMALE HOLMES AND WATSON ADD SPICE TO AN ABORTED MURDER

By Sunny Chang

Hazel and Sophie are indispensable characters in “Dial M for Murder”. They are like Holmes and Watson who do their best to find out who is the murderer; however, during the practicing time, they have been forced to overcome various difficulties, such as whether they should speak in British accent, even though they got used to speaking the American accent.

Irene Wang, who plays the role of Sophie, is hilarious in her real life, so sometimes she could not help laughing at some funny stuff even though she is acting. They seem effortless on the stage, but they face different and new arduous tasks behind the stage every day.

When it comes to acting skills, one of the most important factors is to act like the roles they play. Sometimes they cannot pick up a role they like, but they need to do their best to play the role.



This is really a challenge to maximize their acting skill. “Hazel is the character who should have seemed immensely powerful to control the situation as soon as she enters the scene,” said Eden Wang, who plays Hazel. “In the beginning, I thought I am not the right person who has enough confidence. Because I did not think my personal traits match the role.”

Sophie is a new character, not in the original script. She is also a detective, helping Hazel to solve the case. Irene thought she desires more lines to act out the role. “Although I got just a few lines, I got to stay on the stage as long as possible like Hazel,” said Irene.

“I am struggling with how to play the character of Sophie with just a few lines, because I should not look awkward on the stage when I have nothing to do,” Irene said.

One of the main script writers is Nita Huang, who is in charge of the script section. She changed the gender of Hazel and Sophie, hoping to project an effect that can explore the female difficulties in that age of the society. Therefore, she decided to set up Hazel as female and added a new character into the revised script.

“In the beginning, I thought Eden would have played the role of Hazel as a bossy and controlling police officer,” Nita said. “Apparently, Hazel is not the character like that.”



“But Eden tried her best to adjust her accent, tone and emotions so that I like her show more and more,” said Nita.

The director is like an engine, making sure things are working. Not only the acting parts that the director needs to control, but also things like lighting, costume and music.

Ivy Sun, the director, believes that Eden Wang is a person who is good at keeping things organized, while she is also good at observing. Ivy said that Eden is suitable for playing the role of a keen detective. On the other hand, Irene is a person who is warm and adorable. Ivy said that Irene’s personal trait fits Sophie, as she expected.

“Hazel is set up like Holmes in the beginning,” Ivy said. “Eden thought she is not in any way like an outstanding detective like Holmes, so she had to overcome some obstacles.”

“Sophie has just a few lines, but the show time for her is as much as Hazel,” Ivy said. “It is a tough task for Irene to play well on the stage with just a few lines.”

Promoting Hazel and Sophie is the key to attract the audience. “The most difficult part is how to highlight their characteristics by using a few words in some apps like Instagram,” said Andy Liao, who is one of the script promoters on the internet. “Therefore, I have to read over the script about the two characters in the adapted story.”

One who plays the “bad guy” can be a climax of the play. Selena Wu, who plays Tracy, thought that the most difficult part is that she needs to consider how to pretend to support Marven and pretend to be innocent in the play.

“Hazel and Sophie are exasperating with their suspicious expression and movement,” Selena said. “I am supposed to be a professional hypocrite, but it is extremely difficult for me to interpret the role.”

In the beginning, Hazel was not the character that Eden wanted to play. She thought she does not match the personal trait. Ivy did not think so. In the end, she decided to invite Eden to play Hazel.

“This is a huge challenge for me to play Hazel, because I am not the person who can control the stage setting like Hazel in the script,” Eden said. After a few months though, Nita and Ivy thought Eden could play Hazel perfectly.

Taiwanese learn to speak in American accent in English class since they were kids. Therefore, transferring to British accent is no doubt a challenge for actors and actresses. “I do not remember how many times I was told to do my best to change the accent problem,” Eden said. “I think more than twenty times.”

An actor is different between in the real world and in the play. Irene thought Gerald Chang, who plays Marven, the main character, is a shy person in the real world. His face turns red easily when he is in the real world.

“In rehearsals with Marven, I could not help laughing at him,” Irene said. “He always seems awkward, but in the formal rehearsals, he becomes a serious and is good at acting.”

Psychological dimension in each character is one of the difficult parts of this play because the imaginations in the character’s mind is supposed to be shown in their faces. “I have been trying very hard for so long now,” Irene said. “It is extremely difficult to act out that by imagination.”

LEARNING TO QUACK LIKE A DUCK IN BRITISH ACCENT

By Annie Tsai

Be well seated, close your eyes, switch to a channel randomly, then feel the voice, breath, and pause of the speaker on the Gogglebox, can you recognize if it is “Friends,” “Sherlock,” or “Lupin” that you are watching?

In all audiovisual works, the actors’ accent is the first thing that catches the audiences’ eye, or, you can say, ears, dragging their mind into the fascination of the plot.

For a play like “Dial M for Murder” written by Frederick Knott, there is no doubt that the use of British accent plays an important role, grabbing people’s eyes as well as embellishing the plot with the power of its attractive accent.

“Different from American accent that sparks for its connected speech,” said Eden Wang, who plays the role as Hazel the inspector. “British accent is clear, sonorous, and firm, with the special flow and patterns that stand out.”

In fact, all of the ten actors hold American accents, turning out that most of them must acquire British accent to interpret the roles authentically. In the process of learning, some really encountered difficulties, for the actors have been speaking English in American accent for years.

“Not a chance,” said Selena Wu, who plays as the main character Tracy Wendice, when she first heard that she has to interpret her role in British accent. “By no stretch of the imagination can I understand and speak out the words in British accent in such a short time.” Unlike Eden, who in her life has been into a lot of British drama on her own interest, Selena seldom get in touch with the sources that contains British English.

In this case, it is no strange thing that Selena doubted if she could change her accent overnight, not to mention the change of accent was decided in the middle of the process of rehearsals.



As Selena puts it, although this challenging task is crazy at first, and it is really hard to get the accent in place, after following the advice from David Wang, assistant professor at FLAL, to listen to BBC News and record her voice afterwards, she gradually grabs the know-how of British accent, especially the intonation that puzzles Selena the most, and can apply it in a way of emphasizing the key points. “

And one important part is that because all actors should influence each other on the stage,” said Selena. “We must help each other by concentrating on ones’ own language interpretation to better the performance.”

Gerald Chang, playing the Marvin Wendice, to this point, mentioned that he has been learning British accent since six years ago, because he thinks of this accent as elegant and high-class. As stereotype as it may sound, it is shared by one of the two assistant director, Vivian Chen.

Vivian also believes that British accent sounds more well-educated. “But I think the pitch of different types of voice decides whether a person sounds good when he or she speaks in American or British accent,” said Vivian.

Gerald remembers one interesting story concerned with British accent. That is when Professor Wang told him at the first acceptance check of the play that his accent is not British at all, but sounds more Texan.

“I was shocked,” said Gerald. “Sure enough, I learned that there must be someone else listening and checking if you speak in the right way, if perfect accent is what you pursue.”

British accent is certainly a far cry from American accent. The oral resonance position, intonation, and tone are the most obvious aspects. Therefore, great efforts for the actors are needed to change accents alternatively.

As a matter of fact, each of the actors has their own ways of practicing British accent. “I speak to myself in the shower,” said Gerald. “I imagine how the accent works and say some sentences as well as the lines out loud, so that I can assimilate this accent into my life to be natural enough to speak out.”

It is riveting to see all the actors keep practicing, fix their tone, and speak like a British. No man is perfect, but as they continue to fail and fix, they are on the road, nearing to what they wish to be.

Still: It's British accent.

“You hear the first line of the actors,” said Vivian. “And you know we are in London, or in England, if not too specific.”

A good shape of voice helps the audience learn the background of the setting, and grasp the audience into the storyline. As biological anthropologist Helen Fisher writes in her book “Anatomy of Love: A Natural history of Mating, Marriage, and Why We Stray”: The human voice is like a second signature that reveals not only your intentions but also your background, education, and intangible idiosyncrasies of character that can attract or repel a potential mate in moments.

From Prof. Wang's perspective, imbued by a friend who studied the accents in Ireland, he learned the differences of British accents.

“Accents from different areas in the UK present various social status of people,” said Prof. Wang. “Therefore, if you can speak British English well, once you speak, your audience knows everything of your background, which makes it much easier immersing into the play.”

Of course to achieve this, high intensive rehearsals are absolutely essential. The director team arranged the practice of each cutting at least four times a week, hoping the actors can reach better familiarity and professionalism to the scripts and actions. “To peruse, understand, and know each of the body functioning,” said Ken Chung, who coaches performing skills. “It is also important for the pursuing of a good voice.”



RECYCLED STUFF REFITTED IN THE MAGICAL HANDS OF PROPS

By Nora Chen

As the lights go off, a group of people wearing in black rush out from the back stage, running hither and thither through the stage silently. Scene after scene, you can hardly notice them while you have a fancy watching the play. Who are those unnoticeable characters? They are members of the props team—the meritorious statesman behind the spotlight.

The play “Dial M for Murder” is based on the background of the 1970s society. There are three scene settings: Tracy’s home, restaurant and the court. The play uses large amount of props to change the scene with little modification and it also simplifies the process of changing scenes.

The story is about a murder case and the affair between an American writer Alice and the master of the house Marven. Tracy, the betrayed wife, is plotting how to murder her husband in revenge on his husband’s cheating. A secret murder takes shapes step by step.

The play is set in England, so finding props that meet the need is more difficult.

“Because of the setting of the background, some little things like rotary phone, some photos had to spend time to find,” said Vivian Lin, director of the props section. “Otherwise, most students don’t have those things so they refit the props or just buy a new one. Anyway, in the process of finding suitable props, they always have to make sure the materials would be like in 1970s.”

After World War II, 1970s’ England is the synonym of economic distress, inflation and strike. However, a historian Minic Saundraburin thought the most families’ life quality is better than anytime. In his opinion, people pay attention to fashion, the culture is dynamic and diversification at that time.

And the depression didn’t seem to have reduced people’s love for decorating their house. In this era, glass, aluminum and glasses—these kinds of new materials became popular. Most important of all, blotch printing became everywhere. As we can see in the play, for example, the sofa in the play is the blotch printing style.

The process of finding the props may not be smooth, so refitting becomes important. “I knew that there are some props been refitted, and one of them is the phone desk I provided which was white in the beginning, then sprayed into grown,” said Alice Hsiao, a member of props group.

“The process of spraying is really smelly, and because sprayed part could not touch the under paper, so we have to spray in two phases. This is my first-time doing spraying, so I think the final product is not as expected,” Vivian said.



The work in props section is not always so downbeat. There are some props that make everyone impressive and the process of finding them is funny. There is one scene in a restaurant, which is the twist before the climax of the play. The setting of the restaurant has a certain degree of difficulty because the scene has to be set up in the interval of screen change in just over 30 seconds. Therefore, to find some light and suitable props to fit in the play is really a hard nut to crack.



“What impressed me the most is the dining chair. At first, we found so hard but we just couldn’t find it. However, one day when we finished our lunch and were on our way backing to school, we found that there was a chair to be recycled but still integrated, so we decided to move it back to school,” said Vivian.

“We even left a note just in case the chair is not really abandoned and belongs to someone,” Vivian continued. “Luckily, we don’t receive any phone calls. Anyway, I feel magical in the process of finding our dining chair, I would never have thought of finding our props like that.”

Besides the process of finding those materials reminiscent of the 1970s, props section has another significant mission: moving props up and down the stage.

This is not an easy job because they have to put those props to the right place in the interval between two scenes without any light. That really test their eyesight and their agility.

“I think the procedure of putting props on and off the stage is a little bit complicated at first. However, after remembering all the moves, it become much easier,” said Emily Chen, another member of the group.

As for the audience who watch the play, the props crew may not be the most eye-catching ones and their existence are also hard to be noticed. However, they are the most indispensable small screws of the annual play. Why are these people still willing to devote themselves to the supporting roles in the play? There are different reasons for the group of eight.

“When I was putting my group willingness survey, I put props section in front of others because I think the stuff will be relatively less. Moreover, I know props section will rehearse with the actors and actress, I thought it would be funny,” said Jason Chiang.

“I don’t want to be an actress and I would love to join the process of rehearsals, so that is why I choose to join props section,” Emily Chen said.

“Because I thought I am not good at heart designing and they told me that props section does not need the ability for designing, so I put props section on my list. However, I still did some refitted of the props, so I am kind of entering in props section accidentally,” said Vivian.

There are so many details in props section, that call for consideration and agility. With the rehearsal day after day, they become more familiar with the running position than the first time. The process become smoother, and they also learn the lesson of the importance of cooperation along the way.

CLOTHES MAKE THE MAN, COSTUMES MAKE THE PLAY

By Niki Zhuang

Not a few people have trouble picking clothes for daily wear. Just imagine how hard it would be when selecting costumes for a drama with backdrop set in 1970's of Britain.

Trying from Chanel, Audrey Hepburn, Margaret Thatcher's dressing style, the costume team racked their brains to present an authentic 1970's British style for the performance. They came to realize one thing: picking the costume was not as easy as playing house. The unpredictable challenge, was on its way.

Selecting costumes which are in line with the story background is not difficult. In effect, accessibility is the point. In many cases, team member could not borrow the apparels similar to what they expected. Buying a new clothes is the last resort since it would be economically inefficient for using just for once.

"Many details need to be considered," said Kineta Lai, who serves as event general coordinator. The specifics include stage setting, season, prices, historical background, and sources of costume—all need to be aware of. The inspirations are hidden, probably holding everyone under the stage in awe.

Initially, the team decided to adopt a Coco Chanel's dressing style on female characters. The fashion combined vintage, elegance and nobility in its iconic tweed and suit jacket, which has been a hit in fashion industry.

However, the style was originated in 1990, a 20-year gap with the time in the drama. Lacking coherency with fashion trends, the incompatible Chanel's style was eventually taken out of the table.

Subsequently, they turned to the alternative: Hepburn's style, reputed as 1970's women fashion icon, that seems never going off the trend.

Avoiding clichés is the principle that followed; people can wear in simple element but still look vogue and one of the kind. Black dress, gingham trouser, headscarf, hairband and ballet flats are the typical components.

Even though the style is graceful enough to exhibit in the annual play, things did not go well as expected.

"Female's costumes were the trickiest one. We tend to find clothes in Hepburn's style, but it turned out that the style was not prudent enough to align with character's personality," said Amanda Chen, in charge of arranging outfits for Tracy, a 40-year-old British woman in the drama.

Finding Tracy's garb was said to be the toughest task among all the characters. After reconsideration, the costume team resorted to another plan: Margaret Thatcher's style. Costume radiating sense of majesty and grandeur could be quite a match with Tracy.

The Thatcher's clean cut dressing had earned a lot of attention especially when she held Prime Minister Office from 1979 to 1990. Tailored skirt suits with shoulder pads, pearls earring and leather bags usually appeared in her wardrobe.

Sometimes the ideal is light, but what people see is night. Considering Thatcher's style as the last silver lining to find Tracy's costume, Amanda still could not borrow any from our department. After all, this kind of style is seldom seen in Taiwan. Even if it could be found, it is not easy to find the suit perfectly fits Tracy's figure.

Selena Wu, who plays the role of Tracy, was not surprised that the process was prolonged. "Each member has opinion towards the costumes, and probably they have inconsistent recognition of background knowledge," said Selena.

“The Hepburn's style is great, but Tracy is not supposed to dress provocatively,” said Selena. Tracy is reserved and her world is hard to break in. As her husband has an affair with another woman, she schemed a murder to take revenge for those ruined her life.

“Part of costume should be in red and black, which respectively represent outrage and sophistication,” said Selina. And whether Tracy successfully commit the murder would be the climax of the annual play.

Contrary to Tracy's apparel, accessing Alice's costume was a breeze. Alice, an American sweet girl, was given a bright and lively dress in the drama. The style is more close to modern people's wearing, giving chance for team to borrow in a short time.

The problem of finding costume for Tracy haunted the team. “It was a great challenge to find the costume with strong period feel and simplicity,” Said Selina Chang, the leader of costume team.

Although an obvious barrier existed, the overall results are statistically better than previous years. Bertha Wu, one of staff from General Affairs Department, provided with revenue and expenditure table. The report indicated that the whole expenses on costume and cosmetics was about NT\$8,000, which was NT\$3,000 lower than the average in years.



Another delightful news for the team is that, public relation team raised a lot of funds from sponsors, giving each group a bigger budget. “Therefore, we decided to allocate an additional NT\$5,000 to the costume team,” said Bertha.

As the budget increased, purchasing a new costume becomes acceptable. In their final decision, they determined to buy a wine-red lace dress on the online shop. Crystal hairpin, which is perfectly compatible with the dress, goes well with Tracy.

In the whole drama, Tracy always wears in red, though she would change the dress after first half of play. She wears the other wine red dress borrowed from a professor. “Dressing in red all the time actually is the hint of murderer,” said Selena. Probably some of well-spotted audience would notice.

Finally, they made it. They completed a huge task, and successfully collected the costumes for all characters.

The team just accomplished half of their work though. The other half will be on the day of annual play. At that day, they would have a race against time

Aside from selecting suitable apparels and accessories before the play, they are also in charge of putting makeup for actors and actresses within limited timeframe on the day of annual play. “Resistance to great pressure is definitely required if joining us,” Amanda forced a smile.

Selina said, “The moment when actors were put on costumes and makeup, I felt everything I did was worthy.” After the second acceptance of annual play, Selina was finally relieved—it was such a weight off her mind.

“Anyone participating in annual play is indispensable,” said Kineta. Even though preparation required lots of efforts to put in, Kineta indicated that she barely heard of complaints. Solidarity takes essential role in this activity, steering the team to higher efficiency and better performance. The odyssey of preparing annual play was bounded to be rough and winding, but it is a testimony whether the team members could overcome together with unity.

DOING CROSS- GENDER MAKEUP THE COSPLAY WAY

By Jaime Wang

Doing regular stage makeup for the annual play is not too difficult for the makeup team. However, turning a college girl into a middle-aged man by makeup is a different story.

During the past 18 years, from 2003 to 2020, there were examples of using makeup to turn a female actress into a male character. The 2019 annual play *And Then There Were None* is a good example.

One of the makeup team member of the annual play that year, Alice Feng, said she forgot most of the makeup parts since it had been two years. However, she remembered clearly about the details of turning Crystal Chiang, the actress who played a male character that year, into a handsome dandy role.

“The contour is the most important thing. Crystal’s chin is a little chubby, so in order to make her look more like a playboy, we indeed put efforts on sharpening her face line,” Alice said.

“Our teammates are all girls. Some of them might have experience of helping others on makeup,” said Selina Chang, who leads the makeup team for *Dial M for Murder*. “But turning a 20-year-old girl into a middle-aged man is a rare chance for them.”



“We tried different ways to build her face outline sharper. Our teammates indeed put many efforts in this challenge,” said Selina. The structure and contour of face have significant difference between men and women. Therefore, details need to be noticed to make sure that the actress will not expose.

Selina also mentioned, “I think the eyebrows are very important, since girls’ eyebrows have different styles. For example, thin and arch, thick and straight, thin and sharp, etc. while men’s eyebrows are simpler, which is thick and with sharp arch. In order to make our actress look like a man, we emphasized the eyebrow.”

For more objective point of view, reaching to a cosplayer can be helpful. She is Wen, a 19-year-old Taiwanese student. Her hobby is doing cosplay, often acting as a male character. As an experienced male cosplayer, she said, “What needs to be highlighted the most is the makeup and expression of our eyebrows and eyes. Men’s facial features are quite different from those of women, so we have to pay special attentions to them.”

Speaking of the difficulties, Wen stressed the height. “Height often is unable to reproduce the role, but this is not a big problem. There are many height-increasing pads and shoes, but I still hope that I can have broader shoulders and guards when I play a male role. Long legs can really add a lot of points to the role.”

The largest difference between the makeup for men and women is that the brow ridge of men’s shifts backer than women. Moreover, the part of their eyebrow tail goes a little bit up to their temple or goes straight forward.

In contrast, women's eyebrow tails will go down whether the arch is obvious. "We worked really hard on Aileen's eyebrows and contour since these are the parts that needs to reinforce most," said Grace Lu, who together with Yvonne Lian are in charge of Aileen's makeup. "Especially, men's foreheads are more obvious than those of women."

Aileen Okeke plays the role of Swann, one of the male characters in Dial M for Murder. "I think the most difficult part to fix is my skin. It is a bit too dark for normal foundations," she said. "If the foundation color is too white, my skin will not turn white but grey, which will look dirty, like some mud on my skin."

Grace also said, "Aileen's skin color is darker than others as well, so no regular foundation fits. So we have to mix by ourselves to make it closer to her original skin color which will not make it look weird."

"The foundation color we mix is different every time. After hundreds of times trying, we determined that the proportion of the foundation is set to be 70% of color 40, which is the darkest, 20% of color 20, medium white, and 10% of color 10, which is the lightest. This tone is the most suitable for Aileen's skin," said Grace, while working with Yvonne.

To understand more about man's makeup, Selina said they did a lot of research, "We referred to The Queen's Gambit since the background of this TV series is also 1970's and the story took place in UK. The retro style really fits our style and tone for this annual play," said Selina.

The character Benny Watts is a good reference for the makeup team because the makeup team also struggled while making up for Thomas Brodie-Sangster because Thomas looks way too young for Benny Watts. They added goatee to his face to make him more mature.

Grace and Yvonne said they did think of adding some wigs or mustache, since Aileen's hair is very curly. "We did think of that before. For example, her hair quality, length, or the utensils we used. At last, we did not use wig because our director think it is too fake and funny."

In the original script of Dial M for Murder, Swann was a female character. However, not long before the audition, it was decided that Swann would be changed into a male character.

"When I was told by the director that I got the character Swann, I took it," said Aileen. "Because the director said it was the right choice at that moment."

Aileen has never played a male character, nor has she the habit of putting on makeup, so this is a cool experience. "For me to try out different things is cool. Also, I think I am more like a neutral looking girl, so I would like to see what I will look like as a man," said Aileen.

"During rehearsals, I am afraid my actions will blur my makeup so I slow down my moves and act gently, avoid touching my face," said Aileen. "I think I have to get used to it soon cause putting on makeup really helps me get into the character."

"Our makeup team has meticulous care and superb skills, so no matter when they put on makeup or test foundation, I feel so comfortable without any foreign body sensation. I can see a brand-new me through the mirror and am amazed by it. I want to convert the hard work of our makeup team into the motivation of acting," Aileen noted.



A TRIO OF DIRECTORS JAZZES UP A VINTAGE PLAY

By Hannah Jhan

Lighted up, placed with props and set with a large sheet of mirror, a rehearsal room on the sixth floor of College of Humanities building has been where students practiced for the annual plays. This year, when actors and stagehands work there, the biggest difference is at the front, where two seats are substituted by three—for one director and two assistant directors.

Known for their telepathic teamwork, Ivy Sun, the director of “Dial M for Murder,” Vivian Chen, and Sara Hsu, the assistant directors of the play give their advice from different angles to actors and actresses.

“They usually focus on different aspects during rehearsals,” said Annie Tsai, who takes the role of Alice Halliday. “Ivy usually tells us whether the whole part is smooth or not. Sara and Vivian usually find out our improper habitual movements, unsuitable intonation and other details.”

Rehearsing five times a week, the director and two assistant directors have built a solid bond and can complement among other.

Scattered with a mass of notes, the printed-out screenplay on Ivy’s hands were full of marks and instructions for each lines. Holding the scripts, Ivy stood up and walked to the sofa, one of the props in the room, telling Marven Wendice, the leading actor, and Tracy Wendice, the leading actress, to be firmer and more confident.

Ivy always knows how the whole picture and the atmosphere of a scene should be like.

“The hardest part of being a director is to have good communication skills,” said Ivy. She gave actors many chances to express a scene even though they sometimes could not meet the standard in her mind. Instead of forcing with demands, Ivy helped them with patience. Once holding a banana doll from claw machine, Ivy pretended it as Marven and herself as Tracy to demonstrate how a plot should play out.

“Vivian has a built-in music library in her brain,” said Ella Hsieh, from the sound effect group. Accumulating various genres of music in her brain, Vivian opens her music app containing over 300 songs to show the team what type of music the director wants. With music sensitivity, Vivian offers various types of music like classical music for reference when Ivy wants a scene to have specific background music.

“Finding out details is one of a key element to be an assistant director,” Vivian said. Vivian is good at observing details. The hand gesture to hold a wine glass, the subtle change of facial expression, and the timing of sound effects—nothing can escape from her eyes.

Vivian’s sensibility can also be found in everyday lives. Once Vivian had dinner with Ivy and Selina Wu, who takes the role of Tracy Wendice, Vivian was the first person finding the order and the amount of the bill were wrong.



Knowing the script well, Sara can almost memorize all the lines of the play. This is how she pays attention to details. Tripping over their tongues has been a common phenomenon for actors. Sara becomes a physical teleprompter whenever actors forget their lines. Some specific words or numbers in the scripts are adjusted by translation or script team to fit the background of the play. Sara can find out errors when actors forget to change the original lines.

A deathly silence occupied the rehearsal room. Nobody thought of a way to let the very first scene of the play to look not that awkward as the curtain rises. Sara is like a bulb lighting up the room when everybody thinks of no way to solve a problem. What Alice should do and where she should stay became a problem for the people in the room. After a few moments of affliction, Sara figured out a solution, which was to let Tracy go behind the sofa first and get a book to read.

“They have helped me a lot,” Ivy said. With two assistants, Ivy can let actors build up her imagination more easily. In “Dial M for Murder,” there is a scene where Tracy threatened Swann. When Aileen Okeke, who takes the role of Charlie Alexander C. A. Swann, did not have enough nervous emotion, Vivian and Sara started to help Aileen to imagine Swann’s emotion.

“For me, there is only a reason urging a person to do a thing,” Aileen said. However, behind Swann’s nervousness, three reasons, which were money, love and his creditor, forced him to be uneasy. “Why do you go to college?” “There must be more than one reason,” Vivian asked. “To study,” said Aileen, “that’s all.”

“How about learning Japanese?” Aileen was reminded. “Alright yes,” Aileen responded, “Learning Japanese then I can exchange to Japan and communicate with Japanese.” Gradually understanding directors’ views, Aileen began to know more about the reasons that Swann’s nervousness was complicated and deep.

Three heads are better than one. Instead of two brains as normal, three brains make things with more possibilities. Discussing where Tracy should stand in a scene to make the whole picture look more balanced can storm the brains.

“I think she should stand behind the sofa,” said Ivy. “Nah, standing beside the table is better,” Sara responded. “Well, I suppose she should stand far from Marven and other people since it is too crowded there near the sofa,” said Vivian. With three opinions, three methods are allowed to try and the best one can be picked.

One of the biggest advantages of the trio of directors is that everything comes with a solution when they meet problems. Take choosing costumes for Tracy Wendice, director team spent time discussing which color was suitable. In the event of tie, one comes down to casting vote. Red dress won by a score of two to one.

The deep bond among them not only shows during rehearsals. Ivy and Vivian take the same physical education class to learn Tai Chi together. Ivy and Sara participated in the FLAL Sports Day to have volleyball game. Their relationship is built not just from the rehearsal room but from their daily lives. The more time they spent staying together, the deeper their affections became.



FAN PAGE BECOMES A NEW ENGINE FOR RAISING FUNDS

By Andy Liao

A group of students from FLAL started their mission. Walking into a restaurant not for a meal, Selina Chang, one of the public relations team members for “Dial M for Murder”, started her eloquent promotion on the annual play in order to raise funds. As the students waited for an answer, the restaurant said, “Yes,” agreeing to sponsor this event.

Strange as it may seem, but asking shops for sponsorships is a common resolution to underfunded activities like this. In addition to plucking up enough courage to ask for funds, there are more challenges for rookie college students fundraisers to overcome.

Gaining a sponsorship is a lengthy process, filled with uncertainties. Therefore, members need to do research before hitting the road. “Before embarking on seeking sponsorships, I tended to look information up about the shops that used to sponsor related events like our annual play,” said Nora Chen, another public relations team member.

Eloquence and courage are the keys when asking sponsorships. In order to make fundraising not as bumpy, members extend the annual play’s proposal to the target shops. “It is important to emphasize that our event is non-profit with the goal of making contributions to our community,” said Nora. “We emphasize the idea of mutual cooperation.”

“Getting a successful sponsorship is like looking for a needle in a haystack,” said Grace Lu, director of the public relations team. “Sometimes we do a lot of work in vain, with stores turning down our request.” Waiting for a firm’s reply also takes a long time—for as long as two months. The team, in pendulum, may end up giving up, as it is a very difficult task.

“Time is also a main point,” said Selina. “In order to get patronages, we choose group action as a strategy to make our plea more convincing; however, we have difficulty coordinating our members’ time because some members have to fulfill the duties of other teams.” Selina noted that they also needed to avoid rush hours of restaurants, further diminishing available time for members to seek potential sponsorships.



Raising money is not enough for completing the mission, PR team would cooperate with the fan page team, maximizing the influence of sponsorships.

Using a sponsorship copywriting on the fan page has been a regular tactic, as the owner of the fan page can distribute information associated with patronage enterprise, gaining the mutually beneficial relationship. For college students, especially for those who lack sufficient funds, it could not be better to have sponsorship copywriting on the fan page.



Running Facebook to promote the popularity of the event has been used by FLAL annual play to reach the target audiences. With the preference of social media among college students, who tend to use Instagram nowadays, in February 2021, the fan page group set up “Dial M for Murder” Instagram account for the first time.

“Now our members have to curate two social media,” said Kelly Yang, who is a member of the fan page group.

Making a good sponsorship copywriting is a skill that has to be acquired. “Not only should one raise the popularity of the enterprise, but we also need to mention the positive side that makes an association with the target group—students,” said Kimberly Hsu, who is responsible for supervising the final version of copywriting.

As a copywriting creator, Kelly thought that creators had to narrow the gap with the target audiences. Making copywriting more appealing, she spiced up the content with emojis. “Rigid typing style is not an option for crafting an advertisement, because you need to make it conversational and visually attractive.” She browsed the many fan pages to have a grip of it before making her first copywriting debut.

Sometimes, hard work does not pay off. The publicity effect would not be positive if the promotion activities do not grab the students’ attention. In March, “Dial M for Murder” fan page cooperates with UKEAS, a British education agency, wanting to hold a lecture at NTPU. The result is not very positive, because only few people signed up to attend this lecture.

“I had to force all my members to attend the lecture as if they were interested in studying abroad,” Grace recalled. “Since the time for promoting this lecture was short, and the lecture was not closely related to majority of our students.”

But this time, the promotion article makes a stark difference. A pie piqued the students’ interest.

It is by no means easy to resist the lure of dessert especially when it comes to having a lucky draw. In the first round sponsorships article, Facebook fan page “Dial M for Murder” cooperates with a pastry shop “Lazy Patisserie” for the purpose of boosting the popularity of the fan page and increasing the sales of dessert.

“It is the biggest success so far. Posting two advertising articles on the fan page before, I found that the feedback is underrated. I was overwhelmed by a sense of embarrassment when I saw no one leaving comment below to take part in the lucky draw, especially when you already racked your brain for giving a good copywriting,” Kelly recalled.

“Originally this pastry shop gave us coupons only. Thanks to one of my members, she made further contact with Lazy Patisserie. The shop asked whether we had interest in selling pies. This precipitated the success of mutual cooperation,” Grace said.

The article has been accumulating over 200 comments from NTPU students, reaching over 15,000 views, attracting more than 150 people to “like” this fan page. “It can be said that the dessert sponsorship is fruitful, breaking many records. And I think this is the true essence of making sponsorships,” Kelly said.

Requesting funds from shops, team members met a special challenge in return for money. City Burger, a breakfast shop near NTPU, assigned team members a mission before giving sponsorships funds: giving PR team NT\$2,000 if they can collect receipts accumulating to NT\$14,000 from NTPU’s students.

NTPU Freshman, a Facebook group, is an avenue where one can post dining information around Sanxia district. Team members took advantage of this to promote City Burger. “Most students want to explore good dining places near the campus, and NTPU Freshman has over 1,5000 members, so it is a good place to receive huge amount of feedbacks among students,” Kimberly said.

It is not enough to ask sponsorships by visiting the shops in person. With the burgeoning development of social media like Facebook and Instagram, heralding the new sponsorships method for students proves promising. The cooperation between the public relations group and the fan page group exemplifies this trend. 22

TRAILER FOR A THRILLER IS MEANT TO INTRIGUE CURIOSITY

By Charlotte Ho

None of the six people on the camera crew had any practical experience in shooting videos. How difficult, then, would it be when they had to shoot a trailer?

The head of camera crew, Robert Lin said, “The trailer should have a sequence and a clear understanding of where the strengths of the production are or where the key moments are so that we can know where to put the highlights and which scenes are suitable for the scenario.”

He also mentioned, “It is also necessary to think about what kind of message the trailer intends to reveal to the audience, so it is essential to understand who the audiences are and what kind of images they expect.”

Ivy Sun, director of the play, responded, “It is also important to leave the audience with some images of the plot. But you have to point out some but not too much, nor can you just pass by without telling anything.”

After the director and script team provided some suggestions and gave an overall direction to the camera crew, they watched the video provided by GQ on how to make a good trailer before they designed the shot. Then, they felt that they agreed with what it was said, so they moved forward to shoot our trailer in this direction.

“We also watched many movie trailers for references and observed how those were shot, including the technique of shooting and the length control on shooting,” said Robert.

Then the camera crew became concerned on whether there will be too many key elements revealed to the audience. After discussions among themselves, they decided to reveal part of the main plot, allowing the audience to understand the general outline. However, they tried not to reveal too many spoilers with the chronological order and sound effects.

“We have taken the previous trailer of the film as the guide and added some elements and scenes related to the stage play,” said Oscar Yu, a member of the camera crew. “We grouped the highlights together and set each shot to a very tight length in order to increase the tension and excitement during watching, allowing the audience to stay focused and interested.”

Oscar also said, “By combining the excitement and tension in two and a half minutes, I believe our trailer will certainly do its great job of capturing a large audience.”

After the direction of the trailer is determined, the crew met another difficulty in choosing the filming location. The crew originally planned to rent a studio to shoot the trailer that can demonstrate the feel of the play, but it was difficult to seek a venue that met the requirements of the British era in the 1970s with insufficient funds.

“As it was very expensive to set up outside, we ended up choosing to finish the trailer at minimal cost and build the scene in the public performance room with existing props for shooting,” said Ivy.



Due to financial constraints, they made the decision to shoot on campus, but it took them a long time to adjust the angles to keep the audience from noticing it was shot at school. “We chose to rely on angles and the post-production to adjust the shot,” said Teresa Lin, a member of the camera crew.

For the props, it was extremely challenging in a tight budget to build a phone booth that matched the one in the original film version. So, it took quite a lot of time to borrow the desk lamp and sofa. Those and other problems, such as the studio or lighting devices, were solved by the director of the photography club, whom they know, and the props relied on friends and relatives nearby to search for suitable ones.

“The difficulties in renting props and filming equipment had made me feel that connections are really important, because they can effectively solve many problems,” said Robert. In addition, tight schedules and unexpected situations also affected them while working on the production. As the six in the crew did not have any previous shooting experience, the lighting process was a bit challenging, causing the shooting day to take some time in figuring out the best lighting angle.

And the time for shooting the trailer was squeezed into two days, causing the shooting progress to be rushed in a tight schedule. Also, some extra shots that are not in the script were added during the shooting, causing a little confusion when setting up the scenes and props.

Compared to the problems encountered, editing is the biggest challenge they met. The camera crew found that when they combined all the previously conceived and filmed scenes, they were incoherent and tedious, resulting in a situation that the editor needed to figure out how to deal with the inconsistent lighting and the incoherence of the film.



The crew decided to use the filters and sound tracks to fix the problem, and the result turned out to be great. “We put the scene of Tracy on her way home to the front before Marven was strangled by Swan. It makes the audience feel that Tracy is worried about Marven’s safety, so she rushed home. However, in fact, Swan was sent by Tracy to kill Marven,” said one of the crew members.

They also deliberately made the shot less visible and made it impossible to see the victim’s face, giving the audience enough curiosity and imagination as to who was on the ground.

It gives out the main lines of scenes but lead the audience to imagine the opposite side of the story so as to give the audience confusion in the scene and wondering who the real killer is.

The six in the camera crew did an incredible job with a minimal cost of only two bottles of black tea to finish the trailer and solve all the challenges in the process.

