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The Marvelous Arbitrator

A Special Edition of FLAL Newsletter for the Annual Play

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Special Thanks
Photography Team





By
Lily Juan

The penetrating eyes. The decisive tone. And the click-clack, click-clack, click-clack of high heels echoing down the hardwood floor. She is Amanda Liu, the lead actress for The Marvelous Arbitrator, who plays Portia, the arbitrator tackling the problems facing characters of four acts in the annual play.

“In my opinion, Portia is an insightful woman who is capable of dealing with different conundrums. Her thoughts are clearer than anyone’s,” Amanda commented on the first impression of her character. “She is like a super woman.”

“Yet, she is not completely rigid,” Amanda continued. “On the contrary, she remains a girlish craving for love at heart.” Portia’s affection towards her husband, Bassanio, can be found at the beginning of the Act III, where she receives the letter from him.

Cynthia Liu, the leader of the screenwriters, claimed that when carving out this character, she was inspired by the movie Enola Holmes (2020), a mystery story about a young female detective who finally solves the puzzles and finds her missing mother through her intelligence.

Portia

A Marvelous Actress with a Girlish Yearning for Love

“The image perfectly matches that of Portia,” Cynthia gushed. “To make Portia more vivid, we added some amusing sidelights with Bassanio, contrasting with her independence and capability.”

Different from the women in the 16th century, Portia is quick-witted, intelligent, and competent. Likewise, Amanda’s personality and her attitude toward life make her just like what she acts on stage.

Amanda is not only a leading actress, having about 20 rehearsals per month for up to six months, but also a general coordinator of this annual play, in charge of all administrative works. Moreover, she even took 30 credits in this second semester. Furthermore, she has been tutoring a student on English grammar, reading, and writing at 11:30 p.m. for two hours until past the midnight, twice a week, since last September.

“No pain no gain,” sighed Amanda. “As a leading character who connects all of the five acts, I need to sacrifice some part of entertainment, academic work, and volleyball team. Yet sometimes you have to put in the effort in order to get what you want. Now that I choose to be an actress, I must do my best to make sure the performance goes smoothly.”

However, it is obvious that “You cannot sell the cow and drink the milk.” Although she has an excellent time management to achieve what she wants, she has failed to strike a balance with her health and her accomplishments. “I spend about ten hours for the rehearsal every week,” said Amanda. “I sleep no more than six hours a day. Sometimes I just have to persevere by willpower for the classes.”

The lack of rest has almost made her collapse at the backstage when the first rehearsal at the Hakka Cultural Museum, the venue of the annual play.

“I was dealing with some administrative issues until 3 a.m. last night. Plus, I have suffered insomnia since entering university, so I have just slept for only three hours for the official rehearsal,” Amanda mumbled in her stage makeup and costume, curling her body up on a sofa.



The director, Jenny Kao, mentioned that Portia plays a major role in explaining the plot so that the dialogues and scenes of Amanda are more than those of others. “She put lots of effort on memorizing the lines,” Jenny acknowledged. “Before the rehearsal started, she had arrived an hour early at the place where we rehearse to practice her parts.”

Nevertheless, Amanda usually forgot her lines and made mistakes at the beginning. “Whenever she cannot remember her lines, she was prone to burst out laughing, making every actor and actress laugh together,” the director said. “And she was likely to jump to the lines ahead when she was presenting a monologue.”

“Feeling guilty, defeated, and frustrated, I was struggling with long lines at first. I even regretted participating in acting,” Amanda apologized. “Because my fault had a terrible effect on other actors, directors, and those staff behind the scenes. I feel sorry for them whenever I forget the lines.”

However, the boot is on the other foot. She had gotten a tip on how to memorize long lines, that is, she often quizzed herself. “Whenever I came up with a certain acting line no matter which act, I would continue to complete it when I was drying my hair, doing the laundry, or walking back home,” Amanda giggled. “I guess this is why I have memorized other actors’ lines by the way.”

The fluency on her lines, however, became the problem that she needed to overcome. “Amanda was too familiar with the lines, so she would be prone to speaking too fast and too fluently, like speaking to herself, not a conversation,” said Ken Chung, the acting instructor and an alumnus graduated in 2011. “Leaving some spaces for replying to others’ lines is essential for acting, which would make it more natural.”

Ken also commended Amanda’s significant progression, compared to the first rehearsal. “Amanda impressed me after taking the advice. She is good at expressing herself and interpreting the personality of Portia, projecting a high-wattage aura,” Ken exclaimed. “She exerts herself to develop the image of Portia. She is just like her. She brought her character to life.”

The exceptional role interpretation skills of Amanda can be traced back to an acting contest in junior high school in 2014, when she was a playwright and also played a teacher who got involved in a gender equality topic. Educating the audience that early childhood education is equally a significant job for men, she staged the play by herself with the concept of the law incorporated into it.

Winning the best actress and best drama awards, Amanda indicated that she still needed to polish her acting skills in *The Marvelous Arbitrator*. “There is always

room for improvement, not to mention I have not been associated with drama for a long time,” Amanda said. “Although the character in junior high is not so much compared to Portia, the experience has paved the way for me to go further.”

Amanda pointed out that the experience of playing a teacher helped her shape the image of Portia. “Their roles share similarities in setting other’s problems straight,” said Amanda. “The teacher tells people the seriousness of gender stereotypes, and Portia helps her clients solve their problems.”



Desdemona

Embracing the Script Like Mother Adores Her Baby



By
Jen Lin



The orchestra hit the last note of Tchaikovsky's Serenade in C major op.48. They stood up and bowed, disappearing through the door in single file. The scene of the empty stage and dimming lights marked the end of the first half of Yu-Chien Tseng's Tchaikovsky concert with Taipei Symphony Orchestra at the National Concert Hall.

"That performance was mesmerizing, yet my thought kept drifting to wonder if some parts of that piece can be used as the background music in our annual play," said Cynthia Liu, while the concert hall slowly brightened up.

Cynthia, an actress, scriptwriter, and translator for "The Marvelous Arbitrator," always had her mind occupied by the annual play, even at a concert hall.

Though the shortage of participants had most students assigned to multiple sections, Cynthia's case stood differently. She was the only person to have written and performed in the play. Acting in the annual play had been her biggest dream even before the script came out, so she had planned to attend the audition. What she didn't expect was she would eventually act in her own play.

In the summer 2021, months prior to the audition where Cynthia got the role Desdemona, the lead role in Act III who married the paranoid general of Venice, Othello, and found herself in a marital crisis, she was invited to be the head of the script team. Her job covered the gathering of team member's ideas. Writing a draft herself was beyond her responsibility but Cynthia had other thoughts.

Inspired by Enola Holmes, a Netflix streamed film she watched during summer vacation that features a young and witty female protagonist, Cynthia decided to write a play, like the film, about a clever young woman. "I wrote the script thinking this is the one our class will surely adopt," Cynthia said.

When she was writing the script, she expected herself to play Cordelia, the youngest daughter of King Lear who struggles to express her love for the king in Act II, instead of Desdemona. "I've always been offered pitiful roles that frown and sob all the time, even in my church choir," she said. "So I wanted to try roles that are more lighthearted and carefree."

She wrote the role Cordelia for herself with lines that come with rhyme and puns she preferred and the role Desdemona for someone else. After discussion among directors, however, Cynthia was invited to play Desdemona.

"I wasn't disappointed, to put it lightly," she said, continuing to explain that her personality



is closer to Desdemona, in that both believe the best in people around them. The similarity helped her fit the role perfectly. "I've been re-reading the original script of Othello. Now that I'm playing Desdemona, I'm just glad and thankful for myself that I didn't include intimate scenes between Othello and Desdemona. Or else I'd be panicking," she amusingly said.

Cynthia's participation in the annual play began early in July last year. During the most chaotic period where she had to communicate back and forth with members from three different teams, with tasks including rewriting the script, translating the lines, and rehearsing the play—running in parallel—she spent an average of three hours reading the script from cover to cover at least twice a day.

To fulfill duties from school and the annual play on schedule in that period meant giving up about two hours of sleep every night. But even with such an intense level of involvement in writing, tweaking, and reading the script, it still took her three months until she could proudly say she had memorized all her lines of more than 60 sentences.

“Once I started acting, I realized things aren’t exactly the way I imagined when I was writing. It’s one thing to create and understand a story, and another to act it out,” Cynthia said. To nail the jobs as a writer and an actress, she had to switch between two roles to scrutinize the script from different aspects. This laboring process completed her view on the structure as well as the details of the play, further inspiring her to interpret scenes through different approaches.

“She had great advice and new ideas for play arrangements,” said Jenny Kao, the director. “Sometimes she thought of details I couldn’t discern and we would discuss for the best way to put those ideas into the play.” Jenny revealed that it was Cynthia who proposed to utilize stage lighting and costumes to differentiate present from memory in Act III.

Cynthia’s understanding of the story helped beyond her own acting performance. “When I have questions on interpretations of the script, I go to her,” said Cynthia’s roommate Erica Wang, who played Juliet. “She has this precise and colorful picture of the play in her mind.

Her performance, flowing with subtle gestures and changes in the tone of voice, is just intriguing,” Erica added.

While one may take it that Cynthia’s highly appreciated performance came from her solid experience of writing the play, she confessed that she found getting into the role a challenge and had to go through a series of rituals to turn herself into Desdemona.

On rehearsal days, she would wake up early, take a decent shower, cook a hearty breakfast, and dress up meticulously. While performing the morning routine, Cynthia would go through Desdemona’s story in her head. The main purpose of the whole process was to remind her that she was Desdemona, who was of noble birth.

If getting into the role was enough of a task, acting with a male partner would be the real challenge. “Desdemona is a demanding role to play and Cynthia really did an incredible job,” said Amanda Liu, the actress of Portia, the leading role. “The role requires its actress to act as a wife and work with a male actor. Playing this role must have been stressing especially at the beginning.”

Cynthia admitted that being with Othello, played by a talented sophomore fellow, was extremely awkward at first. “We didn’t know how to interact with each other,” Cynthia said.

It took months of practice before they became more at ease around one another. “We found an interesting tip to overcome awkwardness, which is to whisper about random topics like how’s the weather outside, while there’s no line between us and we have to walk and hold hands on the stage. Those meaningless conversations usually break the ice and help a lot,” she noted.

While participants in the annual play all acknowledge Cynthia’s contribution and the unimaginable amount of effort she put into it, she continues to stay humble and open-minded. “Working with Cynthia has been a pleasant experience. She trusts my makeup skill and is always considerate and responsible. We discussed Desdemona’s makeup and stage clothes and developed the look together,” said Cynthia Wei, the actress’s makeup artist and costume designer.

“Handing out the script is like letting go of my baby,” Cynthia joked. “I’d raised her [the script] for a while, and then I sent her to the daycare, leaving her in someone else’s hands. I watched from a distance to see how she was doing, and I think she had a great time with the people who took care of her. At times she seemed unfamiliar to me, but at the end of the day, I’m proud of what she had grown into.”

Cynthia explained that her journey as the writer and actress deeply touched her. “Because of my position in this event, as I watched the play coming together in the end, the intensity of my experience and gratefulness doubled,” she said.





Theater Boss

Acting Out a Theater Boss Who Needs to Carpe Diem



By
Christine Lin

Disguised in a male attire, an actress looked at herself in the mirror and took a deep breath. Then, she walked up the stage and suddenly became a raging theater boss, who shouted out loud to the whole cast.

“It’s very interesting to see our peers as actors and actresses,” said Sharon Ni, who acts the role of theater boss. “Because of this event, we all became much closer than before, and I believe what we had gone through will be the most precious memories in our college life.”

When it comes to the reason why she chose to play the theater boss, Sharon confesses that she joined the cast of the annual play only because the director asked her to give a helping hand.

Initially, she auditioned for the role of messenger, who is a bit-part player in the play, because she was afraid that she couldn’t strike a balance between the annual play and the schoolwork.

However, the script was revised for several times, and therefore the messenger became a supporting role with, of course, more lines and duties. Facing such an unexpected situation, Sharon was worried that she might not be able to do well. As a result, after discussing with the director, Jenny Kao, she changed her character to the theater boss.

Being a boss was not a simple task for Sharon. The costume for the theater boss is a brown suit of clothes with a woven beret. It was borrowed from a senior, who played a clever detector in the annual play last year. Now, dressed in the same costume, Sharon tried to make the character vivid but found that the attire was a perfect fit.

Therefore, during the rehearsal period for five months, she also tried to stay away from sweets, such as scone, roll cake, lemon tart, and apple pie made by her mother, in order to keep her in shape. “It’s really tough for me.” said Sharon.

In the period of preparation, all actors and actresses would attend acting lessons, instructed by Ken Chung, a graduate from FLAL and now a professional actor in the theater. Over four months, pulling out all the stops, they’ve experienced about 30 run-throughs for three hours every week in order to take their best shot on performance days.

Besides the tight costume, for Sharon, it’s quite difficult to perform the roll of theater boss, a person who easily gets mad, in that she is a sweet-tempered girl. As one of her close friends, Jenny Kao, who is also the director, said that Sharon hasn’t been angry since they met three years ago.

This decent trait became an uphill struggle when she had to act furiously in the play. To keep practicing, Sharon even asked her younger brother to rehearse with her at home on the weekends, and thus he could proudly recite all the lines of act 5, which is the leading part of the theater boss.



Aside from rehearsing with her family, as a hardworking actress, Sharon tried many ways to learn how to interpret the theater boss in anger. Stephanie Huang, the assistant director, who initially played the theater boss in the beginning, spent two hours every week teaching Sharon how to perform a role in anger.

They even watched Bridgeton, the current romantic show on Netflix, trying to figure out the method of being enraged. What's more, whenever she is riding a scooter home or taking a shower, Sharon would practice every line loudly and fiercely. "I always believe practice makes perfect," said Sharon.

"Sharon is the most diligent actress," said the director, Jenny. "Even though she isn't a leading character in the paly, she practiced three times more than others do almost every week."

Also, Sharon mentioned her mother, who is good at pissing off and, therefore, has become a role model for her. Every time her mother scolds at her younger brother, Sharon would hide behind the wall to peek at her huffy mother, trying to memorize the volume, the intonation, the gesture, and the facial expression of an angry superior.

Because of the performance, Sharon had to wear contact lenses. For her, who hasn't worn contact lenses before, it was another difficult task. Four of her friends taught Sharon some tips on how to put in and take out contact lenses.

"Use the middle finger of the hand to hold the lens and pull down the bottom eyelid at the same time," said one. "Just look in the mirror, you can do it," said another. She even mentioned that her friends once held her down in order not to let her struggle, for she was afraid of putting a foreign object into eyes. "It really gets easier with practices," said Sharon.

The annual play had also changed Sharon's daily routine and created some joyful memories. After rehearsing at about 9 p.m., Sharon, the directors, and some friends would stay in the performance room to play cards for nearly two hours, so she usually came home later than before.

"The road to home was kind of dark, and I was really afraid of bumping into some freaks," said Sharon. Therefore, when riding a scooter home, she would sing the national anthem out loud, trying to pretend like a weirdo so as to let other weirdos, if there was any, keep a distance from her. "It is such a brilliant way to protect myself, isn't it?"

Is there anything in common between the theater boss and herself, Sharon said, "I think we both like to go by the book, but he seems to be a real stick in the mud. To be honest, I wouldn't make friends with him if he is one of my classmates."

"I would tell the theater boss, a supposedly stubborn, old-fashioned guy, to let go and carpe diem," said Sharon. "Because life will find its way out, so don't be so rigid."





Messenger

A Savvy Messenger with Versatile Flairs

Crouching down on the stage, supervising the sound effect and the stage light, a person dressed in costumes with stage makeup was discussing with the directors. She is Stephanie Huang, the actress and also the assistant director in “The Marvelous Arbitrator”.

“As an assistant director, I did not plan to play the character in the beginning,” said Stephanie, who plays the role of the messenger, one of the leading actresses in the play. “However, what I learned from the play is beyond description.”

The reason why Stephanie chose to play the messenger was a coincidence. The script was modified last October. Messenger, originally a bit part, was turned into one of the leading characters in the play.



By
Lucy Yang

“I was discouraged from taking on the heavy responsibility of the play,” said Sharon Ni, who originally played the messenger but now acts the part of the theater boss. The increased lines and scenes for the messenger made Sharon step back from playing the character. Stephanie was the one who took over the role. For Stephanie, it was a challenge but also a blessing in disguise.

“I enjoyed acting on the stage,” Stephanie confessed. “If I were not an assistant director, I would go to the casting audition.” Stephanie’s passion for acting started in her elementary time when she put on the drama plays every semester in English tutoring class. Although

the huge workload of the assistant director deterred Stephanie from attending the casting in the first place, she decided to accept the challenge.

However, the challenge is greater than expected. Stephanie soon faced a hindrance in interpreting the character. She devoted almost a month to realizing the character. “Messenger is an original character, who doesn’t belong to any works of Shakespeare,” said Stephanie. “All I could do was to think of her as Portia’s goofy assistant.”

Having little information about the messenger, Stephanie even mistook the role for a male character at first. Not until she discussed with the makeup sections this January did she realize that she did not need to disguise herself as a man.

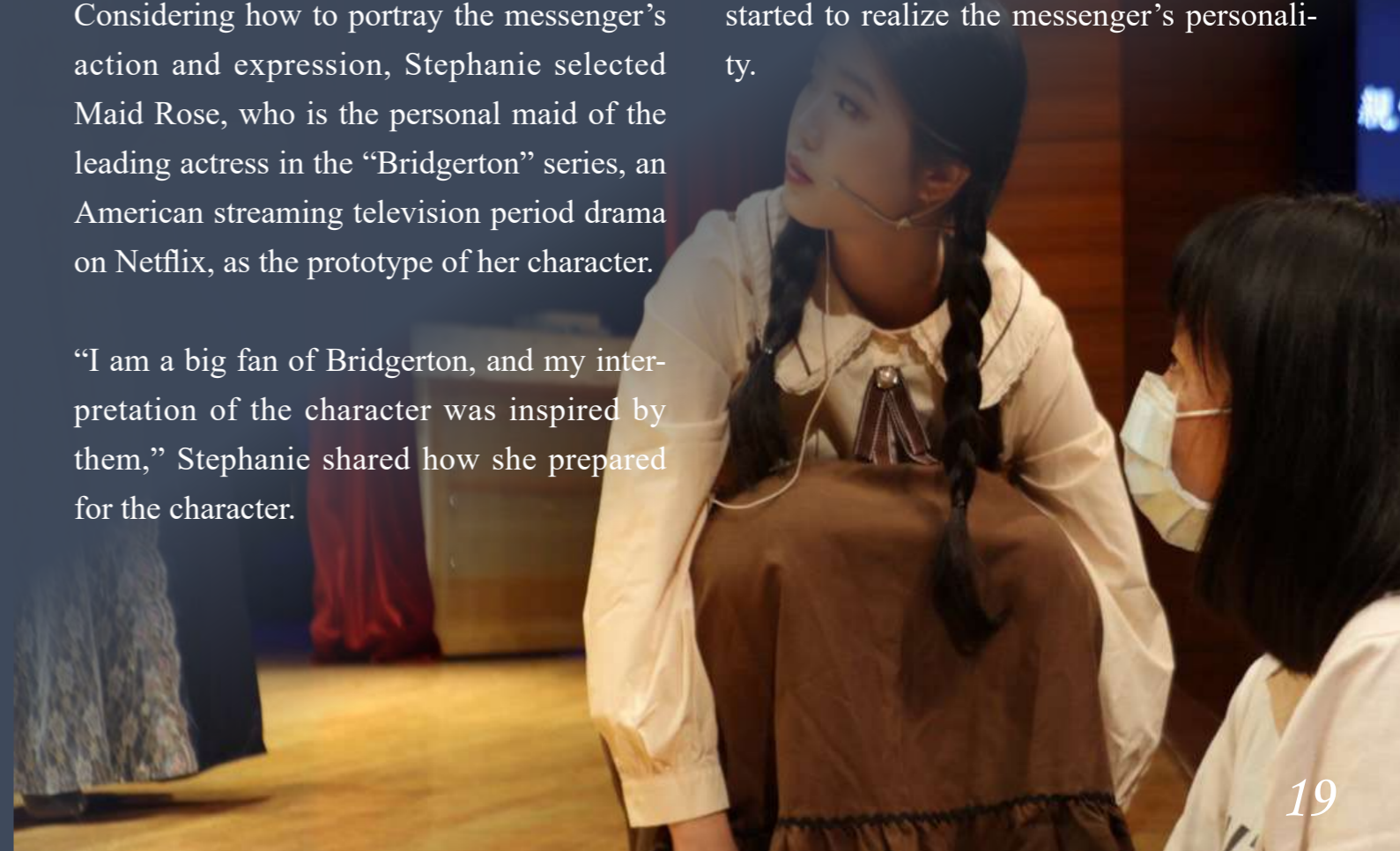
Considering how to portray the messenger’s action and expression, Stephanie selected Maid Rose, who is the personal maid of the leading actress in the “Bridgerton” series, an American streaming television period drama on Netflix, as the prototype of her character.

“I am a big fan of Bridgerton, and my interpretation of the character was inspired by them,” Stephanie shared how she prepared for the character.

The prototype greatly benefited Stephanie from knowing the behavior of an assistant, but she soon found the messenger a complicated character to play, because, compared to other characters in the play, the messenger has a more complex personality.

“It is demanding to exhibit multiple personalities on one character,” said Stephanie. When helping Cordelia amend the relationship with King Lear, the messenger was flustered and nearly screwed up; however, she turned into a gloating medicine seller, who twisted Romeo and Juliet around her finger.

Stephanie was puzzled by the messenger’s mercurial temperament. She couldn’t understand why the messenger reacted differently from scene to scene. After consulting with Ken Chung, the acting coach as well as the eighth alumnus of the department, Stephanie started to realize the messenger’s personality.



“When interacting with different people and getting into different situations, people reveal different layers of themselves, and the messenger is no exception,” Ken explained to Stephanie. With the help of Ken, Stephanie learned to put herself in the messenger’s shoes, imagining how she would react in the same situation, then finding that every word and action from the messenger are reasonable.

“Wearing costumes helps me get into the character,” Stephanie explained how she reaches different emotion states on cues when playing her role. “When putting on my black cloak, I see myself as a mysterious medicine seller. However, once I take it off, I will become the messenger again.”

Clothes play an important role for Stephanie. She pays attention to what she wears every day in real life. The outfit of the day reflects her emotions. “Clothes may make the person, but costumes make the character,” Stephanie said. For Stephanie, costumes help her get into character, and this is the reason why she usually wears costumes during rehearsals.

It’s not just personalities, but a strong presence that complements the character on stage in the role of the messenger. In one scene in the garden, when Cordelia was walking around to come up with a solution, the messenger was coming from the other direction. The messenger’s anxiety and carelessness

made her run into Cordelia. “‘Aww, it hurts.’ is not just a line, it is my genuine reaction,” Stephanie said. To make the scene look realistic, Stephanie chose to collide with Cordelia on the stage.

The actress was also the assistant director. Stephanie wore more than one hat in the play but did not neglect any of them. As an actress, she practiced facial expressions and movements in front of the bathroom mirror for 10 minutes every day, more than one hour a week. Switching to the position of an assistant director, Stephanie came to rehearsals five days a week, for two to three hours each.

However, the overloaded work and duties did not overwhelm her. “Stephanie showed her responsibility for the play,” Jenny Kao, the director, explained. “It’s a 40-minute drive for Stephanie to commute every day, and she did not miss any rehearsals even if it’s not her part.” Stephanie’s efforts and devotion to acting not only built the messenger but also the directors.

“During rehearsals, when I couldn’t explain the feeling to the actors, Stephanie acted as a bridge between me and the actors,” said Jenny. “She offers the specific acting guidance to the actors,” Jenny complimented Stephanie’s contributions to directing. “In the play, Stephanie plays a flaky assistant to Portia, but in real life, she is a reliable assistant to me.”

The messenger and Portia, two indispensable characters in “The Marvelous Arbitrator,” have a mutual dependence on each other. “Stephanie enriched Portia,” Cynthia Liu, one of the playwrights, explained the reason why she modified the script.

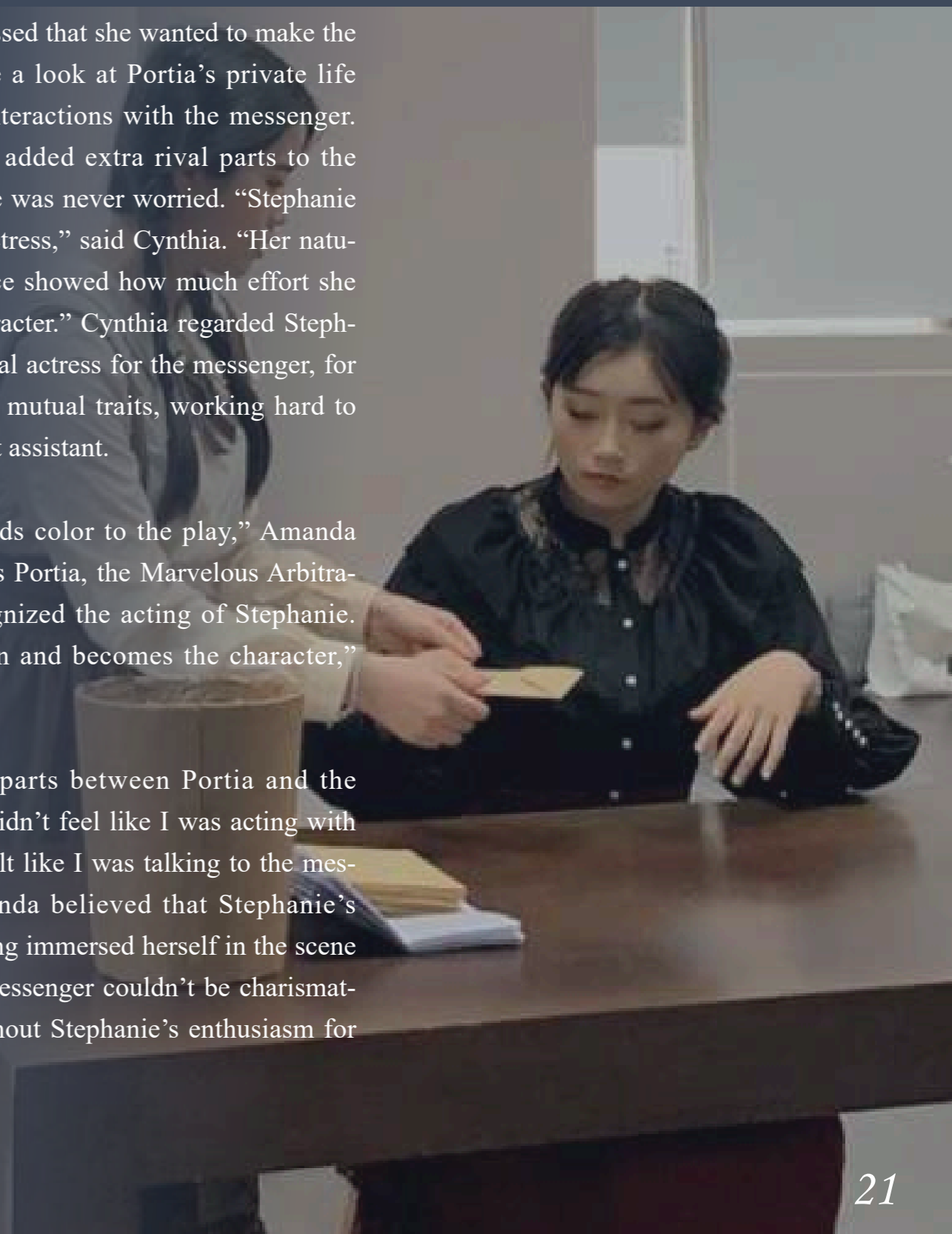
“To make Portia vividly come to life, I pin my hopes on the messenger.”

Cynthia confessed that she wanted to make the audience have a look at Portia’s private life through the interactions with the messenger. Although she added extra rival parts to the messenger, she was never worried. “Stephanie is a diligent actress,” said Cynthia. “Her natural performance showed how much effort she put in the character.” Cynthia regarded Stephanie as her ideal actress for the messenger, for she shares the mutual traits, working hard to be a competent assistant.

“Stephanie adds color to the play,” Amanda Liu, who plays Portia, the Marvelous Arbitrator, also recognized the acting of Stephanie. “She blends in and becomes the character,” said Amanda.

“In the rival parts between Portia and the messenger, I didn’t feel like I was acting with Stephanie. I felt like I was talking to the messenger.” Amanda believed that Stephanie’s infectious acting immersed herself in the scene and that the messenger couldn’t be charismatic enough without Stephanie’s enthusiasm for acting.

“Acting is challenging but interesting,” said Stephanie. “I got loads out of acting as well as directing,” she smiled. “I used to care about the storyline and the plots when watching a drama, but now I pay more attentions to observing actors’ acting through their facial expressions and words.”





Directors

Directing the Play, Two Heads Are Better Than One



By
Amy Zhan

“What’s for dinner?” The question popped up in the directors’ chatting room, as Jenny Gao and Stephanie Huang, the director and assistant director of The Marvelous Arbitrator, had to spend another night in the rehearsal room.

“It was the coordinator, Amanda Liu, who asked me if I was willing to be the director of the annual play,” said Jenny. “Since I had the experience of being an actress in the English Camp and a director for FLAL Night, I thought I could take on the responsibility.”

Contributing to her experience, Jenny tended to have the vision and tone of the plots. When the actors had no idea about expressing their emotions, Jenny could come up with several methods to help them.

Good at textualizing her thoughts, Stephanie, the assistant director, took charge of communicating what the director wanted. “In fact, I did not have any experience of directing,” said Stephanie. “At the beginning, I didn’t know how to lead the actors and actresses to rehearse the play.”

“However, as the acting class started, we learned some professional skills in performing from the instructor, Ken Chung, and then applied them into rehearsals,” Stephanie added.

Rehearsing at least four times a week, the director and the assistant director showed great teamwork in blocking, designing props, and envisioning the whole picture of the play.

“Working on an original screenplay is not easy,” said Stephanie. “Because we needed to figure out what personalities actors and actresses should have.” Since there was no reference for them, what they could do was grope for it time after time.

Full of marks and stage design ideas, the digital script in Jenny’s hands had countless notes for each line. During the rehearsals, the director always gave the actors and actresses constructive suggestions and wrote down notes simultaneously.

“When I was confused by the lines, the director always helped me out, suggesting me to be steadier and more confident,” said Sharon Ni, who not only took on the role of theater boss, but also in charge of the props.

Normally, in sophomore year, they usually went home or dorm at 5 p.m. Ever since they took over the position of directors, spending twelve hours on average at school has become a daily routine. “I tended to have 25 credits for one semester,” said Jenny, “But in order

to have more time preparing for the annual play, I cut it down to 16 credits.”

From Monday to Thursday, actors and directors would rehearse for more than three hours every day. Sometimes, they even came to school to do extra practice. As a result, their leisure time was reduced, while squeezing time for their study and extracurricular activities.

“Jenny used to go back to Kaohsiung once a month, but since they started to rehearse, she seldom left school even though there was a long weekend,” said Lili Lin, one of Jenny’s best friends.



“Although Jenny seems to be naïve and innocent, she is actually capable of managing wide range of things,” said Vivian Kuo, the leader of the translation crew. “For example, by participating in the discussion of translation on subtitles, she helped with the translation of the script.”

One day, when the actors were rehearsing King Lear again, Anderson Shi, the actor of King Lear, suddenly yelled one of the lines, “An attack! Guard” in cracked voice. Everyone in the rehearsal room burst out laughing. That was a bad day for everyone because the rehearsals were not going well, but this incident somehow saved the day.

“I do not have the experience of loving someone so deeply that I want to protect the person at all costs,” said Megan Chen, who took the role of Romeo in a cross-gender acting. That was the reason why she could not fit in the character. “You can try to imagine that you are protecting your most beloved item from being destroyed,” said Stephanie. Stepping into Romeo’s shoes, Megan could therefore be more immersed in the story of Romeo and Juliet.

“In my opinion, the hardest part of being an assistant director is to lead the whole crew,” said Stephanie, “I always had difficulties digesting the comments from teachers and the instructor, and I usually thought that even though we have gone through numerous rehearsals, it seemed that we still had room for improvement.”

With the lines in her head, Stephanie could cue the actors and actresses well during rehearsals. She carefully concentrated on every emotion and pronunciation and, if any glitches came out, she would find out. As a result, “You forgot the line again!” or “Do not sway side by side, it looks like you are a worm!” would pop up in the rehearsal room.

Responsible for stage design, directors needed to list the props required on stage. One day, having lunch with her friends, including Sharon, outside the campus, Jenny found an abandoned bed across the street, which is a ten-minute walk from the school. “It can be used as a prop in a scene of act three, Othello,” said Sharon. As a result, after asking the guard there, they decided to carry this bed back to the rehearsal room. For the whole crew, they could save money on props.

“I think the stairs should be put behind the table,” said Jenny. “Great, then we can let Juliet die on it, so the scene would look more natural,” Stephanie responded. Having cooperated for almost one year with each other, they developed a great mutual understanding. As long as one proposed an idea, the other could quickly make a response.

“For the translation crew, the director and the assistant director meant irreplaceable existence, because they offered many opinions on how to translate the lines,” said Vivian. Besides, the juniors present an original script; as a result, it is much more difficult than before for them to get the translation done.

“Four eyes see more than two,” was one of Cordelia’s lines. It could also be used to describe the situation between the directors. Despite obstacles like unexpected lacking the venue or stage decorations, they both could utilize their wits and effort to solve the problems.





Stage Managers

Stage Managers Are Like Puppet Masters Behind the Scenes



By
Lynn Lin

As the lights go on and off, actors and the props team rush in and out of the stage silently. The whole play goes in an organized way. Scene after scene, one might be surprised by the seamless collaboration among the prop team, sound effects, lights, and actors on the stage. Behind all the orderly transitions are stage managers, who give instructions and arrange every personnel traffic flows. They are the backbone, steering the play behind the spotlight.

The annual play has been a tradition of FLAL for 20 years. On the day of the play, stage managers will be charged with important tasks, with heavy pressures placed on them, demanding the ability to improvise on unexpected circumstances. One may wonder why stage managers, Bobo Wang and Hailee Pan, are willing to take on the challenge?

When it comes to the reason why both of them chose to be stage managers, surprisingly they share the same reasons. They explained that not only because the annual play is such an important event organized by the seniors, but also it is the last event that gather so many people in joint efforts for a lofty purpose.

“The annual play has already been called off for two years amid the outbreak of pandemic,” said Hailee, the front-stage manager. “Hopefully, this time we can hold the annual play as scheduled, leaving no regret in our college life.”

Workwise, stage managers can be divided into two positions, front-stage manager and back-stage manager. A front-stage manager like Hailee has to pay full attention to the play, so that she won’t miss any timing to instruct on music and light to be on. As for back-stage manager Bobo, she has to guide members of the props for placement and the timing for actors to go on the stage.

“Being a front-stage manager, I have to know the script well and remember the timing of sound effects and lights so that I can give correct instructions,” said Hailee. “I must work closely with both the members of sound effect and light who stand by the controller, giving them instruction for which music to be played and which lights to be on.”

“As one of the members of sound effects group, we do have lots of collaboration with Hailee,” said Alice Lin. “She is so reliable that me and my partners have no doubt whenever she gives instructions to us.”

“Many details need to be concerned,” said Bobo, the back-stage manager. “In order to

make full use of the limited manpower to move props up and down the stage, every person’s works must be considered and arranged carefully.”

The works of the back-stage manager can be regarded as the toughest task in the play since she has to keep 13 actors and 12 members of props team in control, a total of 25 people moving around the stage.

As one of the actors, Loran Kao also confirms Bobo’s ability. “Although there are lots of actors and members of prop team run around the stage, she always has the ability to control everyone’s moves.”



“Bobo did a great job on distributing workloads,” agreed Nicole Wang, who is a member of the prop team. “It’s really hard to arrange everyone’s jobs as well as reminding what should be done by whom in great details.”

With massive notes, both Hailee and Bobo have their own script full with marks, and they even made their own note files. Partly because of this, stage managers seemed to always stay in the rehearsal room, as the actors and directors. Rehearsing five times a week, they have to rehearse more than 20 times in total, and each scene’s rehearsal takes one to two hours for practice.

“The work of stage manager can’t be smooth all the time,” said Hailee. “We spend a lot of time to check, to revise, and to coordinate with each team, making me and Bobo stressed out.”

Luckily, we got our own ways to release our stress,” said Bobo. “If you come and check what we stage managers and other teams were doing, you probably would see that we were just lying on the floor, dropping beats and rapping the actors’ lines into the air.”

“It looks kind of silly, but it works.” agreed Hailee.

Besides accomplishing their own share of work, the other half of Bobo and Kailee’s works is to cooperate with each other. When-

ever the backstage is ready, the backstage manager, Bobo, informs the frontstage manager, Hailee, through wireless interphone, then Hailee gives instructions to turn on the light before the next scene.

“To get used to the way of communication by wireless interphones on the day of annual play, usually we use Bluetooth earphone to talk with each other to simulate the real situation when we practice in rehearsal room,” said Hailee.

“However, because of the limited space of our rehearsal room, both of us are too close to each other that Bluetooth earphone does little work,” Said Bobo. “It’s funny that we could hear each other’s voice from ears without wearing the earphone.”

Although they have been practicing many times in the rehearsal room, Hailee and Bobo found that they need to conquer many problems when they actually moved the whole progress to the venue at Hakka Museum on April 23 for the first dress rehearsal.

“Though we have already known that we are in shortage of wireless microphone, we did not expect that the real situation at the backstage would be that messed up when the actors switched their mics with others,” explained Bobo. “That experience made me realize that I have to number every microphone and list an exact order for change of mics.”

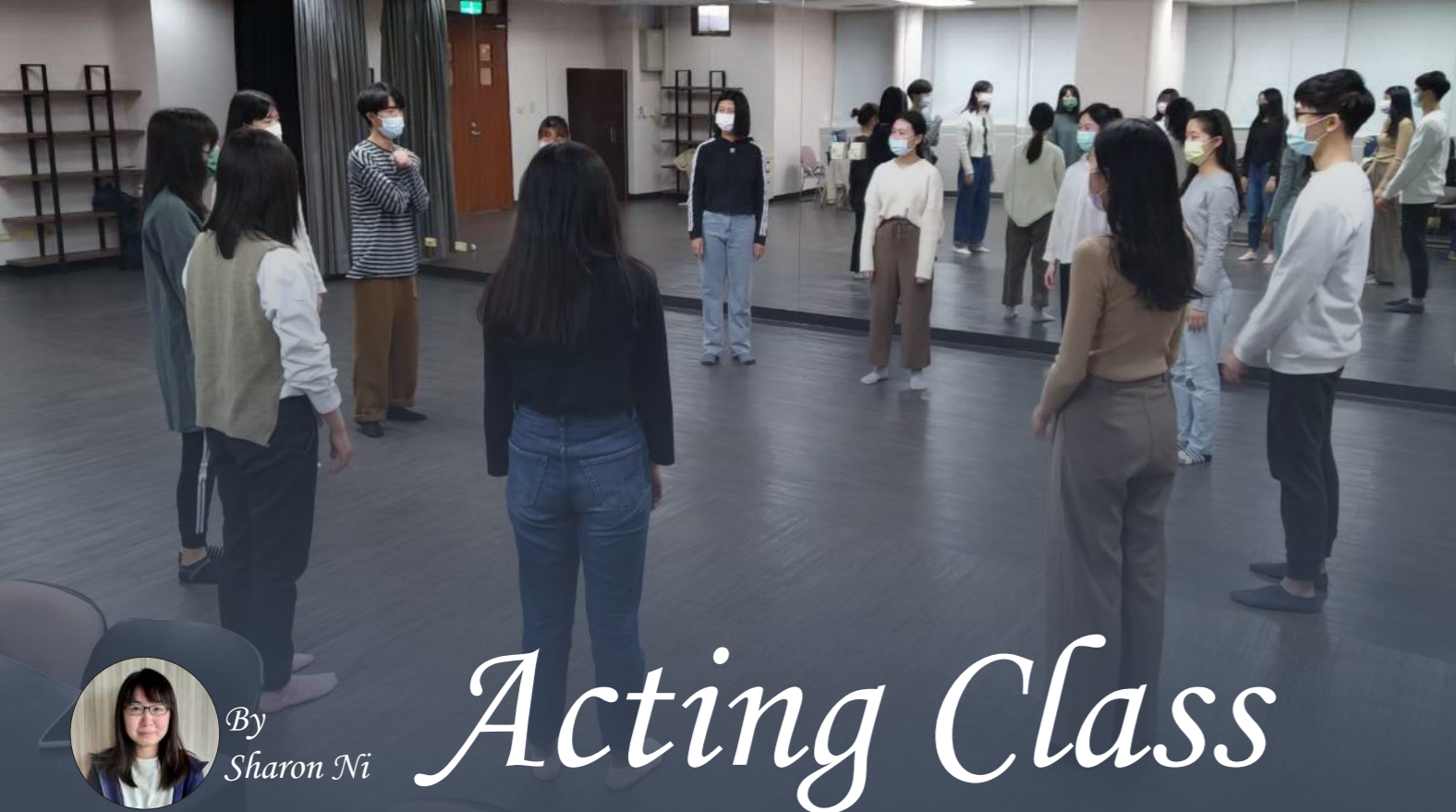
“I’m glad that we could find these few hiccups early,” said Hailee. “There is still time for us to check every detail to put up a perfect annual play.”

Accumulating experiences through practices, our stage manager not only have prepared themselves, but also been looking forward to supporting everyone behind the scene.

“Although the works of the frontstage manager is challenging, as I have to deal with unpredictable situations that would happen anytime, whenever I think of the hard work of the actors, I tell myself that I must do my best and help others in the team,” said Hailee.

“Just as the name of our play ‘The Marvelous Arbitrator’ suggested,” said Bobo. “Hopefully, every problem can be solved, and our annual play can break a leg.”





By
Sharon Ni

Acting Class

Acting on Stage with Hushed Survival Kits

“Light, camera, action!” As most people know, it is the members behind the scenes, such as stage props teams and the directors, that make an excellent play possible. However, do not forget the soul of the play—actors and actresses. As a matter of fact, it is more than just standing under the spotlight when it comes to acting.

“Sun shines on the ground; flowers blossom... I love you!” said Lily Juan abashedly, the actress of Cordelia. “Do not just say ‘I love you’ when you forget the lines!” director Jenny Gao said angrily. The lines are the basis of the script. They are words that are used to move the plot, to portray the characters, and to reflect

the theme. However, too many lines will sometimes be a big trouble for actors.

The final edition of the annual play script was completed on December 24th, 2021. Due to the heavy schedule she had already had, including the 33 credits and the job as a tutor, memorizing 39-page scripts within 53 days had become a huge challenge to Amanda Liu, who acts Portia.

For the purpose of handling the task, Amanda had no choice but to seize any spare time to practice. For instance, to earn more training time, she would spend four days a week, from Monday to Thursday, and arrive at the rehearsal room at five in the afternoon, one

hour before the practice. In addition, she even asked for extra practice which took her over 16 hours a week. As the protagonist of the annual play, she tried so hard to memorize the lines no matter when or where, in order not to be a drag on the rest of the team.

“No kidding! Some lines, anyone’s line, will suddenly come to your mind when you’re doing everything. Like walking or even taking a shower,” said Amanda.

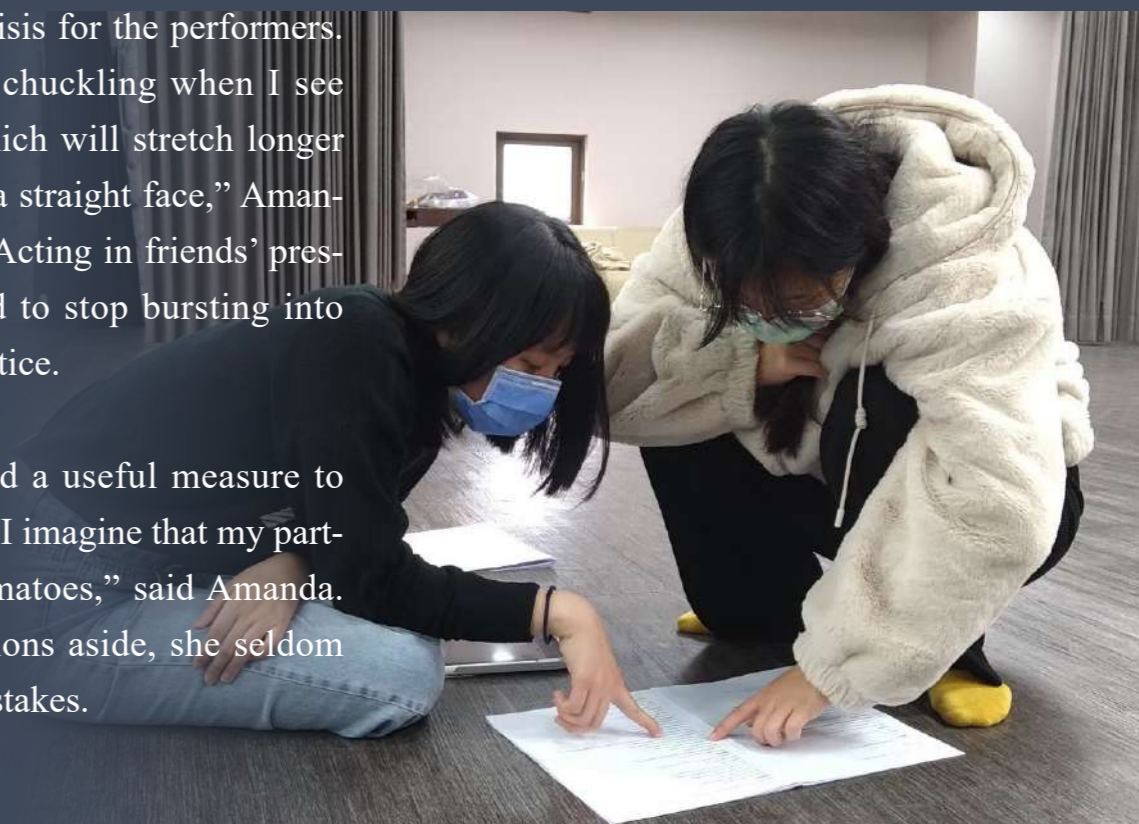
Although the practice ended at 9 p.m. every day, she still had piles of homework to do. Except for the curricular homework, in order to memorize the entire lines, she would read the sentences out loud and make the recording at the same time. In this way, she could listen to the recording and get familiar with the script. As a result, her sleeping time was usually three to six hours a day.

Chuckling is another crisis for the performers. “It is too hard to stop chuckling when I see Antonio’s philtrum, which will stretch longer when she tries to keep a straight face,” Amanda said with a snigger. Acting in friends’ presence, she found it hard to stop bursting into laughter during the practice.

Fortunately, she created a useful measure to deal with the problem. “I imagine that my partners in the play are tomatoes,” said Amanda. By casting the distractions aside, she seldom committed the same mistakes.

Except being serious during the performance, how to convey feelings to the audience is a relatively difficult problem for the actors. “I think the most difficult thing that actors have to pay attention to during the performance is to express your emotions,” said Cynthia Liu, who acts Desdemona in Othello.

For Cynthia, getting rid of some hang-ups is really a high-level challenge. “We actors have to speak the lines loudly to make the audience understand what we are saying,” she said seriously. “Also, it is crucial to take control of our facial expression as well.”



During the acting class, the acting instructor Ken Chung once asked the actors to observe one waiter in a certain eatery one frequents. “I particularly chose a waitress who was really noisy at the breakfast shop called Shinshin Bunch,” said Cynthia. However, it turned out that, for acting drills, Ken played the guest, and the actors had to imitate the waiter they chose in his presence.

It is a disaster for Cynthia. “I’m not a person who speaks loudly because it is rude,” she said. Although this was against her principle, she still tried hard to speak loudly and called the instructor “handsome cutie” over and over, just like that waitress did to the guests. The activity seemed to be cruel, but it truly helped Cynthia a lot.

“Concealing my real emotion? Fat chance!” said Cynthia. In order to act like a real couple with Othello, Cynthia thought of a special way to deal with the problem. Nevertheless, things might sometimes backfire.

It was supposed to be a happy scene when Desdemona and Othello were having a date stroll in the garden. However, it turned out that Cynthia proposed to play idiom solitaire in Chinese in order to pretend they were chatting and having a great time. Unfortunately, this wonderful idea would sometimes be stopped by Jenny, the director, because Cynthia tried so hard to come up with an idiom that she kept frowning in a romantic scene that was supposed to be delightful.

Not only for Cynthia, the emotional expression was also a troublesome situation for Erica when she tried to interpret Juliet, a naive girl with keen affection. “I always dither when talking, which will often be interrupted by others,” she said. “But Juliet is a confident girl who is willing to speak up for herself.”

To solve the problem, Ken asked all actors to play an activity called “Me!Me! Game.” It was a game that required everyone to sit in a circle, raise hand, and speak his lines loudly in turns to catch others’ attention.

“It was embarrassing to pretend that I’m the only spotlight and force people to look at me,” said Erica. However, by doing so, it became easier for her to be Juliet, a 14-year-old lover of Romeo, and express the love for her sweetheart confidently and intensively.

Having a connection with partner is one of the major issues for the actors. The interaction is not a one-way street. “Sometimes they will put focus on the lines but not their partner,” said assistant director Stephanie Huang. The most obvious example is that Erica kept talking and ignoring her partner when having a confession to Romeo.

Luckily, Erica’s situation was getting better when the instructor asked them to have physical interaction. During the acting class, he asked Romeo and her to hug each other before a crying scene in which they were separated by fate. Being a sensitive person who loves pigs so much, in order to act more vividly, Erica started to imagine that she was hugging her lover Mr. Pig. Although it was acting, she cannot help but think of their separation in the future act. Therefore, the crying scene that usually had to be practiced for more than six times finished in just one take.

Despite the difficulty of performing, the tough things during the practice will certainly vanish once the performers stand on the stage and feel the anticipation from the auditorium. Without a doubt, a marvelous performance will soon unfold before our eyes. “Light, camera, action!”





By
Vivian Kuo

God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. Then God made man in his image, in the image of God he made him: male and female he made them. The screenplay crew said, “Let there be laughs,” and there were laughs. Then the screenplay crew made characters in their imagination, in the imagination of theirs: actors and actresses they made them.

Being the creators of a screenplay is like the lonely pioneers in a barren land. As the leading team got the annual play off the ground, the screenplay crew started their mission in the summer break, almost a year earlier than the planned performance day. Due to the pandemic, the group members could just meet on Google Meet in those two months, while the restriction of time and space did not hinder their aspiration for creating a script.

Different from common forms of adapted scripts in the past, the screenplay crew found another possibility. They wrote an original play, *The Marvelous Arbitrator*, on their own.

Screenplay Team

Let There Be Laughs Where There Were Tears



“I want to build a brand-new path for FLAL,” said Cynthia Liu, the leader of the screenplay team. “We have adapted so many plays for so many years, but we do not have any creation that belongs to us.”

The *Marvelous Arbitrator* is about the main actress Portia from *The Merchant of Venice*. She becomes an arbitrator and tries to find loopholes in laws to turn bad endings of classic Shakespeare tragedies, including *King Lear*, *Othello: The Moor of Venice*, and *Romeo and Juliet*, into good ones.

However, when she returns to normal life, the true meaning of adapting these tragedies to comedies becomes a dilemma.

“We choose these tragedies as key elements of our play, because they are practical and real,” said Cynthia. “Unlike those abstract and illusory myths, Shakespeare’s tragedies are close to our lives, specifically during these pandemic years. People nowadays are living their lives like tragedies, aren’t we?”

In fact, *The Marvelous Arbitrator* is not the only candidate that stood in the screenplay election. During last summer vacation, the screenplay team adapted several classic Shakespeare plays, such as *Twelfth Night* and *The Merchant of Venice*.



The screenplay crew also drafted a story of monodrama about a monk. However, the original script still stood out in the final poll and got the majority of votes.

Not a creator is like the almighty God. The screenplay crew encountered countless challenges while writing *The Marvelous Arbitrator*. One of the most intractable problems is coming up with all the lines of each character in just two months.

Creating a screenplay is a difficult long-term project. According to *Shakespeare: The Biography*, a book recording the Bard of Avon written by Peter Ackroyd, Shakespeare usually spent more than one year on each of his scripts.

Take the play *The Merchant of Venice* for example, he wrote the play from 1596 to 1598 before publishing the script around 1600, a span of about five years.

With the help of Professor Sue-Han Ueng, an assistant professor who teaches literature at FLAL, the screenplay team finished the script in two months, during which they met on Google Meet at least once a week, spending more than two hours to make sure the lines are suitable for each character.

However, no place is like a flawless Utopia. After officially publishing the script, they had to face another crisis: the return of the screenplay with several illogical plots. This time they needed to revise the script in two weeks, since there was not enough time to change details of the storylines.

“I almost give up on my midterms just to complete our script on time,” said Ann Cheng, one of the playwrights. “I spent at least one hour revising our script every day in those two weeks. When I had a good inspiration or idea, I would work until three in the morning.”

During the two-week process of revision, Ann racked her brain to make the whole plot more logical and closer to the topic of arbitration in various lawsuits. She was so stressed that she frequently dreamt about some characters saying goodbye to her when revising the screenplay, as she did not come up with a good happy ending to release them from tragedies.

Working around the clock, the screenplay group managed to finish the impossible mission at the end of 2021. After revising the script, the most impressive experience would belong to the mixture of law and play for Lily Lin, one of the main playwrights of the original play.

“The most difficult part is to mix the ideas of modern laws with the classic Shakespeare tragedies,” said Lily. “I even thought I were a law-major student when writing the script.”

In order to insert the plot of finding loopholes into the play, the screenplay crew checked the laws from the constitution, the civil code, and even the criminal code. However, they can only quote less than two rules to the script after reading thousands of pages of law.

The idea of the original play is innovative, but it is also a severe test for the cooperation of the screenplay crew and the directors. After all, to write is one thing, but to act is another.

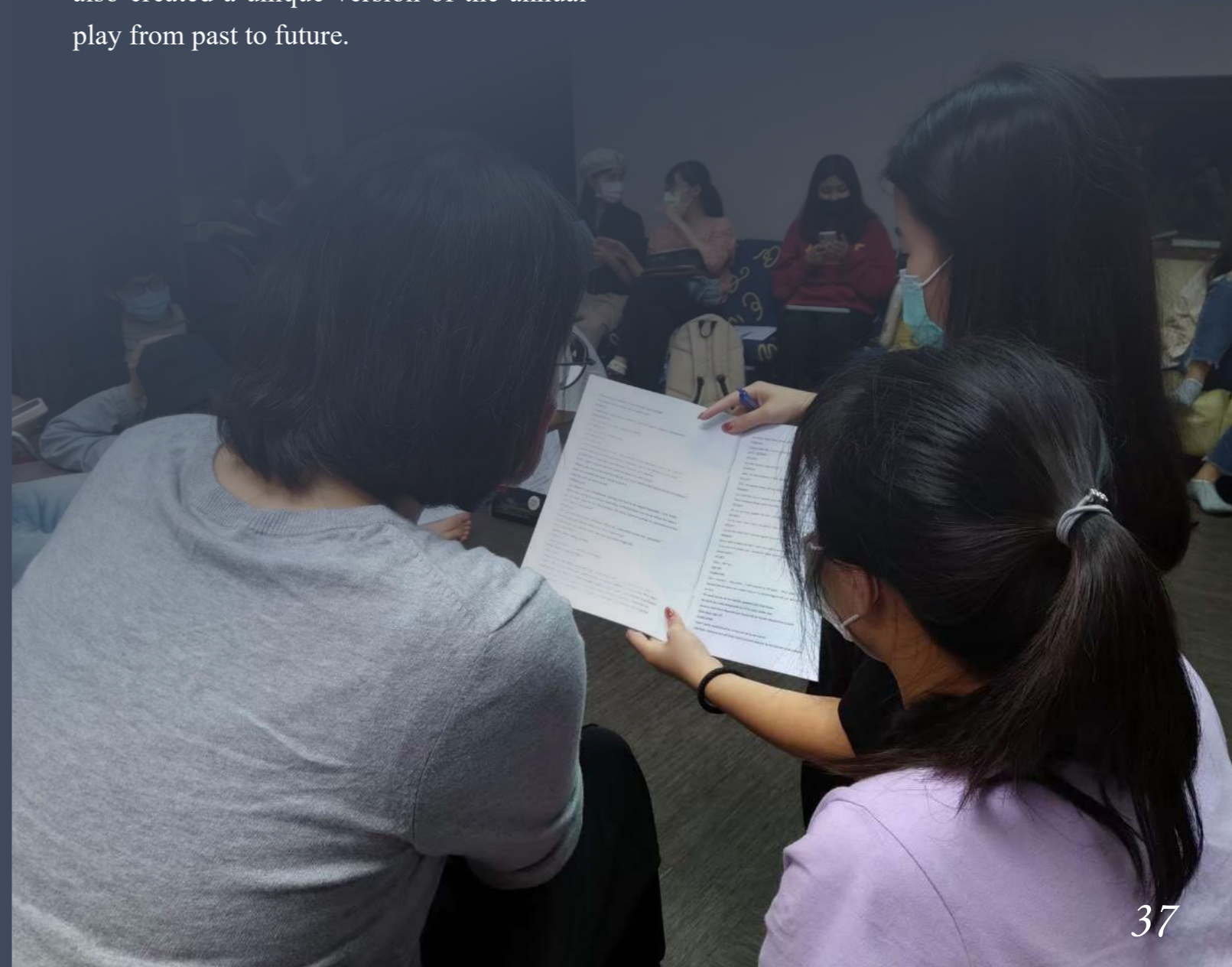
For Jenny Gao, the director, the original script is a double-edged sword. Directing such a creative screenplay is an interesting challenge, while Jenny needs to try to figure out the tones, body language, and lines of each character on her own, but she could not find any resource of relevant performance to this script.

To fully understand the plots and details of the script, Jenny had to ask the screenplay crew about the script. Sometimes she needed to call Cynthia during the rehearsals to make sure they were on the same page.

“The Marvelous Arbitrator is my debut as a director,” said Jenny. “To be honest, even though I already had experiences directing a mini-play, I still feel like walking on the eggshells.”

With cooperation, the screenplay team and the director crew made all the characters alive and vivid from paper to stage. They also created a unique version of the annual play from past to future.

God spent only six days creating the planet, the creatures, and human beings with a couple of oral demands. The screenplay team created The Marvelous Arbitrator for six months. There is no miracle. All they have is a pen to draft, to write, and to revise, and all they wanted is to lead the audience to join them in their dramatic journeys.





Costume Team

Costumes Tailored with Magical Hands and Stylish Minds



By
Cynthia Wei

People don't have to be Coco Chanel to pick up clothes for their daily wear. Just imagine how challenging it would be when a team needs to select costumes for a drama with a backdrop spanning over different eras.

"What we did in the costume team is looking for outfits which represent characters' personalities under a limited budget," said Lynn Lin, who is responsible for costumes and makeups for four characters. "While taking each professor's personal taste of fashion into consideration."

Apart from dressing up King Lear, Lynn is

also in charge of the appearance of the assistant of the theater boss, the servant who supported King Lear by his arm, and a doctor who gave Juliet a magical potion that could send people into a state of false death for a short period of time.

"The costumes with satisfactory appearance are often eliminated from our purchase list, because they are too expensive or not matching the eras of *The Marvelous Arbitrator*," said Lynn.

"I took my design sketch of King Lear's robe of state to draper's shops because I couldn't find any cloth that met the demand," Lynn continued. "However, making a robe at a draper's shop would cost more

than NT\$2,500, which is way above the budget for each character. Overall, I needed to find other affordable options."

While finding apparel, members of the costume team always prioritized factor of expenses. Initially, they attempted to borrow the clothing and accessories from various sources, including asking friends and relatives through social media, to keep the costs down.

People from FLAL, especially those who participated in the annual play before, rummaged through their wardrobes to find suitable attires the costumes the team wanted.

The team received clothing from more than ten sources. Lucky as it may seem, only a few of them met their demand. Therefore, buying new clothes became the last resort. Fortunately, on November 20, 2021, the fund raising team had thrilling news, which was a cosmetics sponsorship worth NT\$10,000 from MEKO, a drugstore brand that originates from Taiwan, which donated the costume team a total of NT\$20,000 last year for the annual play.

With MEKO's sponsorship, the team acquired sufficient makeups and was free to allocate the budget for purchasing costumes for all characters. Aside from financial difficulties the team went through, they also suffered from being short-handed.



"We have nine characters in total, but only eight costume and makeup team members in charge of their apparel and modeling," said Selina Chang, the leader of the costume and makeup team in last year's annual play. "Each team member has to deal with one role's appearance and outfits."

However, this year's annual play contained 14 characters, which was 1.5 times more than last year's cast.

In the meanwhile, the number of juniors at FLAL engaged in the annual play dropped from 50 in 2021 to 40 this year, leaving Amanda Liu, the general coordinator, no option but to assign only seven members to this year's costume and makeup team. This situation placed a heavy burden on the team, as well as the entire annual play crew.

Though facing a huge task, the team still overcame difficulties. Selecting costumes for Shylock, a Venetian Jewish moneylender who plays the principal antagonist in William Shakespeare's play *"The Merchant of*

Venice,” was a disaster at first. Erica Wang, in charge of Shylock’s costumes and make-up, spelled out the process of seeking out a suitable shirt for Shylock.

Due to limited budget, Erica wanted to borrow apparel similar to what she expected. Although she failed after looking for help from friends and classmates, she came up with an idea to sew a gorgeous red dress smaller to become a stunning shirt.

While the dress turned into a shirt after a three-hour transformation, the result was awful when Shylock put up this small shirt with difficulty. Taking the shirt off, as it turned out, was no less an ordeal.

“I should have taken Shylock’s measurements before reshaping that dress,” said Erica. “I can only blame it on my lack of experience.”

This transformed red dress was thus taken out of the table. Erica resorted to another plan: purchasing it from a famous online shop Shopee, spending NT\$165 on buying a plain red shirt and acquiring some black fabric which cost NT\$148 that can be sewed as a decorative design on the shirt.

“I cut the black fabric into waved lines, and sew four pieces of black textile on the shirt. It’s easier than I have expected,” said Erica. With her effort, it worked just fine.

In addition to the problem Erica faced, Megan Chen, who plays the role of Romeo and is responsible for her own apparel and make-up, has also been up against the wall. “Before replacing the previous costumes with new ones, which were made by my friend studying fashion design at Shih Chien University, I could not enter into the spirit of the character,” said Megan.

Tracing back to last October, Megan determined the costumes for Romeo with ease. She thought the cloth from her closet would be the optimum choice for reducing the cost. Soon after putting on those apparels in a small performance in front of professors on March 18, she realized they are below expectations.

In the wake of this issue, she contacted her friend and brought to light the shirt which will represent Romeo’s 17-year-old youthfulness and innocence. In the beginning, they chose white as a base for the shirt but then changed their minds when considering stage light.

At last, they finished the shirt with fabrics in a blue tone. The whole shirt was in mist blue, with a sky blue collar as an embellishment. “It was a relief that we only spent NT\$660 on buying the fabric we need. I’m also thankful to my friend for finishing the shirt in 14 days in a hurry,” said Megan.



The process of picking up apparel has the team members rack their brains. From buying ready-to-wear to sewing laciness to making the shirt on their own, the team devoted themselves fully to attaining their goal, and they finally made it by successfully collecting the costumes for all characters.

“When seeing Shylock wearing the shirt that I sewed with my own hand, I felt the effort I made was worth it,” said Erica. “If I have a chance to choose again, I will still be in the costume and makeup team, because the moment when actors put on the costumes and makeups, the sense of achievement is irreplaceable.”



Public Relations Team

Every Cloud Has a Silver Lining for Fund Raising



By
Alice Hsiao

“I think the public relations team is a must-have for annual play because it is PR team to raise funds, which is essential for holding a successful activity,” said Nancy Hsu, a senior who was a PR team member last year.

PR team members started their work in July 2021. During summer vacation, they collected information about almost 150 businesses through the internet, and then in August called them one by one to ask whether they had an interest in sponsoring the annual play.

After checking their willingness, the team sent e-mails to companies that had an interest in sponsoring and discussed further details. It took them three months from July to September to do this, receiving NT\$50,000 in this phase. However, these funds were not enough to cover the costs of the annual play, which is open to the public for free.

Then, the second phase began in November. PR team started to ask shops around NTPU for sponsorships. Owing to the lack of human resources, everyone who joined the annual play was required to ask shops around the university. The areas that PR members asked for sponsorship were separated into

four parts, including the front gate, side gate, back door, and the Sanxia Old Street area.

“I won’t say that asking shops around the campus for sponsorship is the most terrible or hardest work, but I think it is the most unrewarding,” said Christine Lin, the leader of PR team. “Every time we went and asked for sponsorship, the achievements were inevitably related to that day’s weather, members’ performance, and the shops we approached.”

Krystal Yao, one of the members in charge of the back door area, mentioned that her group went to ask for sponsorship twice. The first time they began at 7 p.m. on a Thursday and continued for half an hour. They almost asked all stores in their responsible area, but most of them were busy at that time, especially those with snack bars. Therefore, they didn’t receive much.

“The second time we decided to go on a Saturday, and it was on Christmas. We adjusted the time to begin at 5 p.m. for two hours. The result was more encouraging than the first time,” Krystal said.

“Some owners can only understand Taiwanese,” said Ian Ho, a member of PR team. “It increases the difficulty of asking for sponsorship because we need to have the ability to explain the plan to them.”

Once during the process, PR team members went to a restaurant that sold Taiwanese salty chicken near the side door. Two men in the restaurant seemed like a father in his forties and his son, a junior high school student. The older man told PR members that the younger boy was the boss. Feeling weird, PR members still briefed the plan to the young boy.

But then, the boy told the members that they still needed to ask the older man. It turned out that the older man cheated on them, because he didn’t want to sponsor. In this case, PR members could not do anything but to accept the situation.

This kind of situation happened more than once. Another time, a group of PR members went to another restaurant. After they entered the store, a woman welcomed them passionately, which made PR team members think that she was the owner. Therefore, they introduced the plan to her without doubting her identity.



After the members introduced the whole plan, it turned out that the one they were talking to was a customer, and the owner of the restaurant just stood beside them, watching them coldly, not saying anything. After the woman left, feeling embarrassed, the PR team members were not able to introduce the plan again. They could only apologize for disturbances and left.

Though feeling discouraged, PR team also met some stores that warmed their hearts. One of the stores is called Miss Energy, which sells healthy meals and is located on Xuecheng Road. When they arrived at the store, the clerk told them that the owner wasn't there, but he would inform the boss about the plan and contact the members later.

Thinking it might be a way of rejection, the members didn't have high expectation about the outcome. However, the store contacted them the next day and said that they were willing to sponsor NT\$ 5,000, which surprised all members and comforted them after encountering many failures.

“Without a doubt, holding activities needs money. Personally, if I have the ability to help, I will support them, especially for students who do not have funds,” said John Jian, the owner of Easy Play Game, who also sponsored the annual play. “On the other hand, I can also gain popularity through

students' advertisements, so we take what we need and make a win-win situation.”

Receiving the sponsorship from the shops, especially during the economic downturns caused by the pandemic, PR team members feel gratitude for all the sponsors. However, they need to spend more time and energy to explain the details of the activity to interested shops, even for just a few hundred dollars.

Considering the time consumed and some awful experiences, Christine mentioned that sometimes students would feel pitiful and inferior to the shop owners when they asked for sponsorship, especially when the owner wasn't very enthusiastic.

“If I have another chance to be the leader of PR team, I want to figure out other ways to collect funds instead of asking shops around Sanxia area like this,” said Christine.





Makeup Team

*To Be King Lear or Santa Clause,
That Is the Question*



By
Krystal Yao

In “The Marvelous Arbitrator”, King Lear is an aged king of over 80 years old. And at FLAL, all boys are in their early ‘20s. Therefore, the makeup team has cast spells on the one who plays the role to look much older.

“The makeup team not only changes actors’ appearances, but also helps them fit into the characters more deeply and quickly,” said Nicole Wang, who designs the style for three characters in the play. They were King Lear, his servant, and the assistant of the theater boss, a modern character.

Actually, putting on makeup is Nicole’s daily life. However, it was the first time for her to do stage makeups, and the techniques for this task was really a challenge for her. In addition, Nicole said she did not often use some makeup tools like contouring and eyebrow. Therefore, she spent about one week getting the hang of it. Also, she was surprised to find that the makeup team was equipped with various makeup tools, including brow pencils, liquid eye liners, lipsticks and blush powders.

When it comes to the process of collecting various cosmetics, Cynthia Wei, the leader of the makeup team who is also responsible for the characters in Othello gave a detailed account of it. “It went better than expected,” Cynthia summed up.

She first created a form, asking for useless and unnecessary cosmetics from people around us as suggested by Amanda Liu, who is the lead actress and plays Portia in “The Marvelous Arbitrator”. After that, Cynthia asked her members to share and post the form on the Instagram. To her surprise, she received over ten responses in a week in the beginning of November last year.

Among them, especially those not from FLAL left her a deep impression. “Stephanie Huang and Hailee Pan are the members of this annual paly. Their friends and teachers donated their brushes, eye shadow palettes, lip sticks, and so on,” said Cynthia. “These are the cosmetics we really need for the stage makeup, and I was extremely grateful to all those people for their help.”

After overcoming the difficulty in getting cosmetics, the challenge of stage-up makeup was still there. In order to present perfect visual effects, Nicole referred to makeup tutorial videos on YouTube, especially on contouring, wrinkle and aged spots tutorial. However, watching the video was quite different from working on the actors’ faces.

She tried to find the most appropriate makeup after more than five experiments on Anderson Shi’s face, who was the actor of King Lear. “That was the first time for me to try the old-age makeup.” said Nicole, “Thanks to Anderson’s smooth skin, I could pay more attention on the parts which I was not familiar with.”

In addition to the facial makeups, how to show the change on King Lear’s hair cornered Nicole and her partner Lynn Lin. “As we knew about the old king, we first chose a white wig.” said Nicole, “After Anderson wore it on, what we saw was not a king but a Santa Claus. We decided to use the silver hair color spray instead.”



Nicole said that they used one bottle, about 150 ml, of spray for every makeup. Before spraying, they made Anderson put on waste-paper to protect his clothes. Anderson said he did not only feel the spray on his head, but also on and in his ears. “It’s a good thing that the spray was not blue, or I may become Avatar,” Anderson said with a smile.

During the first two acceptance checks of “The Marvelous Arbitrator”, Professor Sue-Han Ueng, one of the chief advisors, commented, “The natural wrinkles would not be straight lines, with somewhere wider and thinner.”

She said that when it comes to the forehead wrinkles, the actor could make exaggerate facial expressions to help the makeup teams, and so were the smile lines and crow’s feet.

“When I first saw King Lear’s makeup, it reminded me of one of my previous interesting experience,” said Professor Ueng. “At that play, in order to make the hair become white, we dust the hair with flour. Then, when the actor made a move, the stage was snowy. Therefore, I considered that our students were clever, since they chose a useful tool that works.”

Ken Chung, the acting coach who played prince Fiyero in the eighth annual play Wicked, said, “Actually, before the annual play that year, I had opportunities to perform in some outside-school troupes,” said Ken.

“Most of the time, we did makeup by ourselves, so that I have my own ideas on the makeup.”

Ken considered that the original visual effect of the old-age makeup is outstanding. Yet, it is still a challenge to strike a balance between staying natural and being realistic.

“When putting the old-age makeup, the contouring and wrinkle should be done following the actor’s original facial shape,” said Ken. “Directly applying others’ makeup template was not allowed and I have seen some negative examples. Though they bear visual effects, they lack natural qualities.”

With different kinds of advice, Nicole speeded up during the acceptances. “I felt that Nicole got on track soon. She spent less time on my makeup but having the higher completion,” said Anderson.

“I originally finished the old-age makeup in 30 minutes. However, both professors and directors suggested that I should highlight the features on wrinkles and contouring,” said Nicole. “So that I adjusted and spent more time for about 45 minutes. The total presentation time of King Lear including makeup and costume is about one hour and a half.”

“Thanks to Nicole’s superb skills, I successfully turned into an 80-year-old king,” said Anderson, “The old-age makeup really helped me get into characters. I felt that I gradually made a connection with King Lear.”





Translation Team

What Was Lost in Translation Was Found by Scripters



By
Rock Li

“Is it tragedy, or not tragedy?” The translation team was the bridge between the audience and the performers, making the annual play an accessible entertainment to people in the auditorium, striving to polish the Chinese subtitles to make the performance approachable.

Combing the artistry of the tribute to Shakespeare, the task was especially daunting for the translation team.

For the previous annual plays, the possibility of misinterpretation has been a top challenge for translation teams, while this year the team could focus on sentence structures and figures of speech since the script was written by juniors themselves.

“The supervisors said they would neither intervene too much in the process of translation, nor proofread the context of the script,” said Vivian Kuo, leader of the translation team. “They think the script of the play belongs to students, and the Chinese translation should be as well.”

Professor Sue-Han Ueng, an advisor of the annual play, supported students in drafting the script. She said the script pays tribute to several works from Shakespeare.

“The annual play this year was not an adaptation,” said Professor Ueng. “The script was written by three junior students at FLAL. “That said, we only changed the ending, while adding elements of farce, comedy and other extra characters to formulate a different story.”

“The quotes from Shakespeare were fewer than one third of the script, people would still see the lines from works of Shakespeare, while the majority of the script content is original,” added Professor Ueng.

Professor Ueng believed the different interpretation from students were enjoyable. She recalled the process of proofreading script, saying that in the summer of 2021, when the first translation process ended, she was impressed by the interpretation from different students. “They presented distinct translation, and it reflects the flexible choices of words in the script of Chinese translation,” she said.

“In the end, the play was a comedy with farcical moments and the classic literary quotes, and these were where the originality came from,” said Professor Ueng. “The script of the annual play has been edited until the end of 2021, and I was amazed by the members

of translation team, since the process of composing the Chinese subtitles were really pleasant.”

The process of producing Chinese subtitles was a pleasant experience to Professor Ueng because that was her first time collaborating with students in translating a script with elements of farce, comedy, and Shakespeare’s work. She saw several expressions from students, some of them like lines characters would say in a fiction. The most fascinating part of the process was to exchange thoughts with students to fit the literary expressions in the translation.

A marvelous trick the translation team used this year has resolved a multitude of difficulties as well. “When the scriptwriters are also members of the translation team, the process can speed up and misunderstandings would be minimized,” said Vivian Kuo. “Whenever our team translates a line in the play, we will link the lines with actions of actors immediately.



In fact, there were two script writers in the translation team, making the translation process easier. Cynthia Liu, one of the authors who is also in the translation team, mentioned the tricky part of being involved from both sides. “It is true that we have always had a clear mind of the script and story, until I realized it is completely different when it comes to Chinese translation,” said Cynthia.

When it comes to Chinese subtitles, the process was more complicated. “There was a huge conflict between interpretation and literary expression,” said Cynthia. “We received feedback from professors from perspectives of interpreting: the subtitles must be concise and approachable for the audience, while from the literary point of view, the meaning of each line could be incomplete and confusing, this was where we thrived to strike a balance.”

“We frequently saw loopholes from the lines of characters, and such subtle and weird expression breaks the role building,” said Cynthia. “For example, we found that in Act 1, Antonio was candid to receive his death at first, while he acted like he was very scared of being cut by Shylock later in the scene, which might make no sense to the audience.”

“The lines of Antonio looked totally illogical in Chinese, far more confusing than English,” Cynthia noted. “We added more interactions between the characters to strengthen the personality of every character, so that the weirdness was resolved eventually.”

Cynthia giggled when sharing how she felt about the first draft of the Chinese subtitles. She said when the translation team turned in the first draft of the Chinese translation, one of the advisors proposed a workshop to teach all group members basic principles of translating subtitles, from how to concisely make the subtitles, identify the structure of subtitle, to transforming literary English words into Chinese.

Extending the spirit of working as both the script writer and translator, Ann Cheng raised the pitch to stress the efficiency she delivered while doing her part of translation. She was in charge of translating Act 5 of the play, and with complete understanding of the script, it only took her two days to finish, three hours a day.

Among all in the translation team, Vivian faced the overwhelming workload the most. She said she put over a hundred hours on her work as a group leader. Starting from the day when Vivian received the script, most members in the translation team spent four to six hours on the assigned work, and that was five percent of the time she spent.

Vivian even took fewer classes, having only three more credits than the minimum 16 in order to complete her responsibilities, while sometimes she still needs to spend extra time to make up the homework and her work for the annual play.

Vivian showed a stack of drafts she previously used for the proofreading the Chinese subtitles. Under each line, there were handwritings neatly aligned with the original text and the Chinese translation—the densely packed writing can easily fool one’s eye as if seeing a glossary from a book.

She said she is an average person and definitely not prominent in either translation or managerial skills, but the only thing she thought was trying her best to fulfill her responsibilities, and she nailed it. Her dedication speaks.

Starting from scratch, the Chinese subtitles were created by mutual efforts of advisors and all team members. With the decent Chinese translation and subtitles, the vivid, lifelike acting would not fall into a cold, gloomy tragedy, but come out of the blue, becoming a cheerful, hilarious comedy.





Photography Team

The Trailer and Photos

that Captured the Moment for Enduring Memory



By
Ian Ho

Back and front of the scene they shuttled, holding a camera makes them look professional. The six-people team is responsible for capturing every moment happening on and off the stage. They are the photography team of this year's annual play.

"Producing the trailer racked our brains, as we spent time drafting script to make our trailer intrigue while not spoiling the story of the play," said Krystal Yao, the director of photography. "Also, we had to learn to use professional photo equipment and video editing software to make the trailer as eye-catching as possible."

Indeed, none of the six people in the photography team had hands-on experience in holding a professional Digital Single Lens Reflex Camera (DSLR) to take photos, needless to imagine how strenuous would it be when they had to get all these types of equipment in hand in a short time. Though the tasks were challenging as Krystal described, they still manage to make the best use of the professional camera in capturing archival photos and produce a terrific trailer.

"Though making a trailer might seem to be a tremendous amount of work, the division of work was clear-cut, so they could always finish their work efficiently and punctually," Krystal added.

What the audience saw was a fabulous trailer, but what the audience didn't see is the effort contributed by hidden figures. "Most college students juggle between schoolwork and part-time jobs or clubs, so to hold a meeting and have everyone show up was a trial," said Tony Lai, a team member of the photography team in charge of producing the trailer.

"We had everyone come up with an idea beforehand, so the discussion would be more efficient," Tony added. "Finally, we spent four days of lunchtime perfecting the script of the trailer."

As soon as the script is ready on December 19th, 2021, they began filming. The two-minute trailer took them two afternoons to wrap up. Finally, all filming works were done on December 26th.

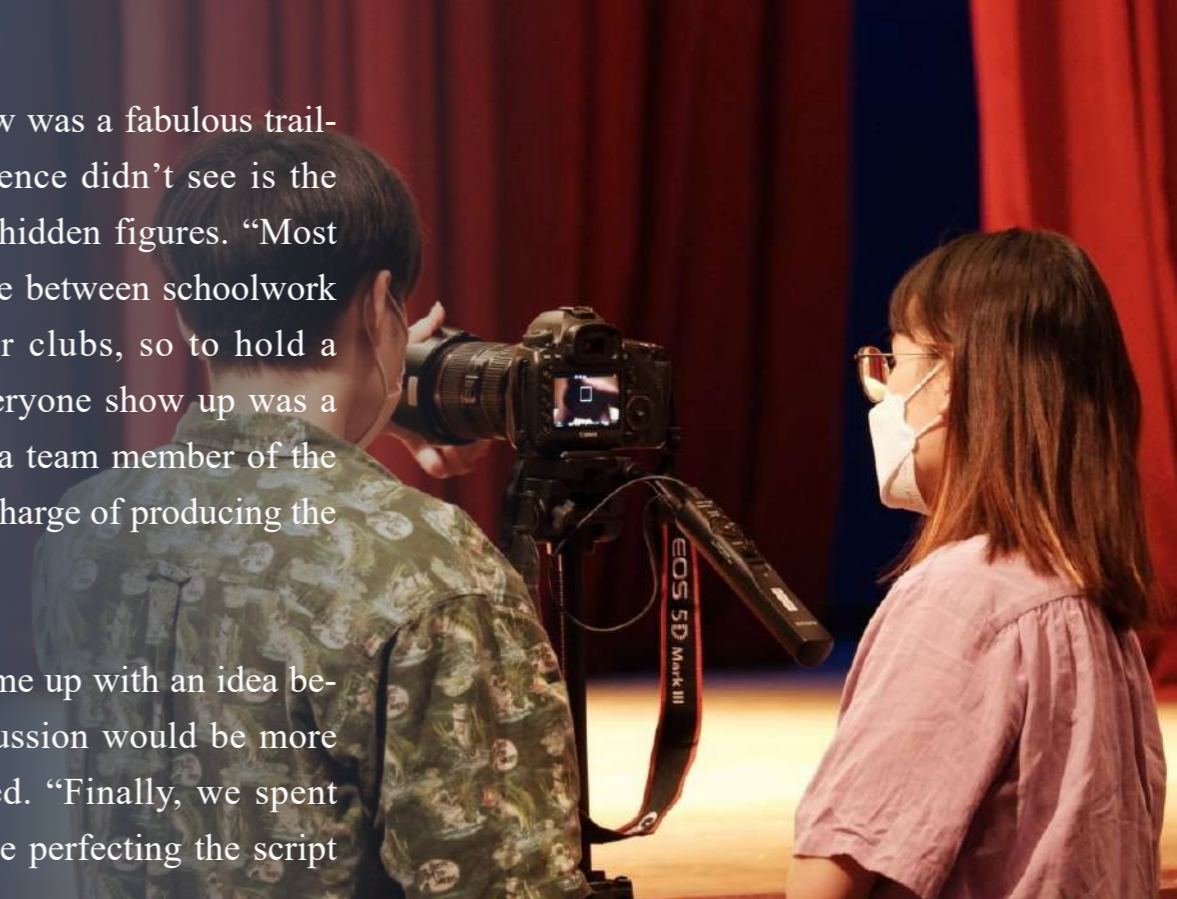
"After finishing all dailies and elements we need was when the real work started," said Tony. "If filming is an acid test on handling the hardware, editing the trailer is putting us through the trial of the software."

"To be frank, this was the first time to present the film I edited to so many audiences, and therefore I felt a lot of pressures," Tony added. "I took references on how others master the video editing software on YouTube and try to make my work as professional as it could be."

From their responses, readers might be astonished by how every detail was highly valued in every work completed by the photography team. Once the audience clicks into the trailer and watches it, they will hear a narration read by Christine Lin, the narrator of this year's annual play.

The reception of the voice is clear enough that many of the audiences might be misled into thinking that they use professional recording equipment to record, but the truth was quite the opposite.

Tony revealed that before they started to produce the trailer, they tried out a few recording equipment at their fingertips, including mobile phones, earphones, and wireless earphones. After rounds of testing, they found earphone enabled them to record the narration with the highest quality with the least



background noise. Their pursuit of perfection led them to successfully complete the task.

The trailer has accumulated about 1,000 views on Instagram and Facebook fans page of the annual play. “I didn’t expect we will be able to reach that number and it was a huge success to our team,” said Krystal.

“1000 views show the efforts of the photography team paid off, and it also means we successfully triggered audience interests in our play,” said Amanda Liu, the general coordinator.

“While browsing the fans page on Instagram and Facebook, don’t miss those posts introducing actors and workers,” said Krystal. Without a doubt, all photos with actors and workers framed were also captured by the photography team. Surprisingly, these photos were simply taken in the photo studio on the third floor of the Humanity Building.

“The reason why we needed to take these photos in a photo studio but not a random place on the campus is because the photo studio offers us a green scene which we can get pure background,” explained Lily Lin, one of the photo crews. “That way, the authentic team could easily remove the background and replace it with the theme color of this year’s annual play for publicity.”

“Besides the pure background it offered, we also achieve the consistency in light, which we could not make it if we took these photos outdoor, as light highly depends on the weather,” Lily added.

“The enjoyable part of our team is just as tiring,” Krystal said in gusto. “Picking out the best photo with the best angle, posture, exposure from the photo pile always gives us a sense of achievement.”

“By the way, many people utilized the chance to be in a photo studio and asked us to take a headshot for them,” Krystal added. “I feel like a professional photographer at that time.”

As the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 went back and forth, every staff, actor, and actress was concerned about if they will be able to present this long-prepared work in front of the audience. If any staff, actor, or actress was infected, the performance will be suspended or canceled. This led staff from the photography team to seize every moment when they can record the preparations leading to the annual play.

“I’ve never been absent once for the rehearsal because I can’t tell if that rehearsal will be the last time we get together,” said Allen Lai, a member of the photography team. To prevent the annual play from being abruptly canceled, the photography team videotaped every rehearsal. Therefore, when

the audience was not able to see them acting on the stage, they would be able to see the moving shadow on the screen.

The photography team has been committed to capturing their growth and experiences in the positions of a friend, a teammate, an actor, and a college student vibrating with youth and energy, while these photos from the photography team will remain on the front page of their lives.





Stage Props team

Painting Bed Frame Can Be Healing for Weary Hearts



By
Eric Wu

Being in the group of stage props makes you harvest great crops. The tasks in this group may not be as plain as initially thought, but they painted their lives colorful and bright, with keen observations in their eyes and dedication in their hearts.

Sharon Ni, the leader of the stage props team, needed to work hard to help the group prepare stage props. The whole group had a total budget of NT\$5,025 for eleven items. Among them, Sharon purchased six items for NT\$4,619: a marriage contract for the part of

Romeo and Juliet; a long red carpet, two maps, and five hint word cards for the part of King Lear; a bunch of roses, and a bed frame which cost NT\$3,467, an item cost the most among all items, for the part of Othello.

The bed frame not only cost more than other items but also challenged the Othello subgroup the most. Tony Lai, a member of the Othello subgroup, remembered how hard when they tried to find a bed frame, “It took hours, but still in vain.”

Tony said that all of the members in the Othello subgroup, including Eric Wu, Tony Lai, and Nicole Wang found it for two hours along the Dade road near NTPU. They asked the security guards in some neighborhoods along Dade road for a discarded bed frame, but were told that a bed frame could not be offered unless one of the residences dropped one.

They left their phone numbers in the neighborhoods to keep in touch, but they did not receive any messages they looked forward to.

As a result, Sharon finally decided to buy one at Shoppee, a website on which people get items that are hard to find in brick-and-mortar shops. After the purchase, Tony himself carried it from Xueqin road to the 6th floor of the department building, for 700 meters with Nicole and Terry Liu, who is not even in the props team. “It was exhausting,” Tony said.

Sharon asked Vivian Kuo, a member of the props team, to help assemble the bed frame. It never occurred to Vivian that she would have that unique experience. “Because I had tools like a screwdriver, I agreed to help,” Vivian said. “The process went smoothly, but I never thought that I would build a bed frame at school. It was a bit absurd but quite impressive.”



“I think it is a painstaking position,” Vivian said. “We work very hard, but audiences cannot see us on the stage. But still, we need to be responsible for our tasks, because stage props are the same as actors as a part of our play.”

“In my view, working in the group of stage props is an excellent chance to learn to be a giver, remembering to be a person who is not under the spotlight but supports everyone, shining like the actors,” said Vivian.

This was not the end of the challenges with the bed frame. As suggested by the professors who watched the rehearsal, the subgroup of Othello had to paint the bed frame a brown color which gives out an old western vibe.

First, they needed a bucket of oil paint. Sophie Huang, a member of the props group and one of the two general coordinators, started by asking about how the ideal outcome of the bedframe will look, then she found an oil paint shop. Afterward, Sharon assigned the task of painting the bed frame to the subgroup of Othello.

Eric and Tony headed to the shop to buy the tools and paint and asked about the method to paint the iron bar. The budget for the items was NT\$500, So Tony and Eric struggled for some time to decide what tools they should buy. Finally, they purchased a bucket of dark brown oil paint, three brushes for Eric, Tony, and Nicole, a bucket of paint diluter, and sandpapers for a total of NT\$359.

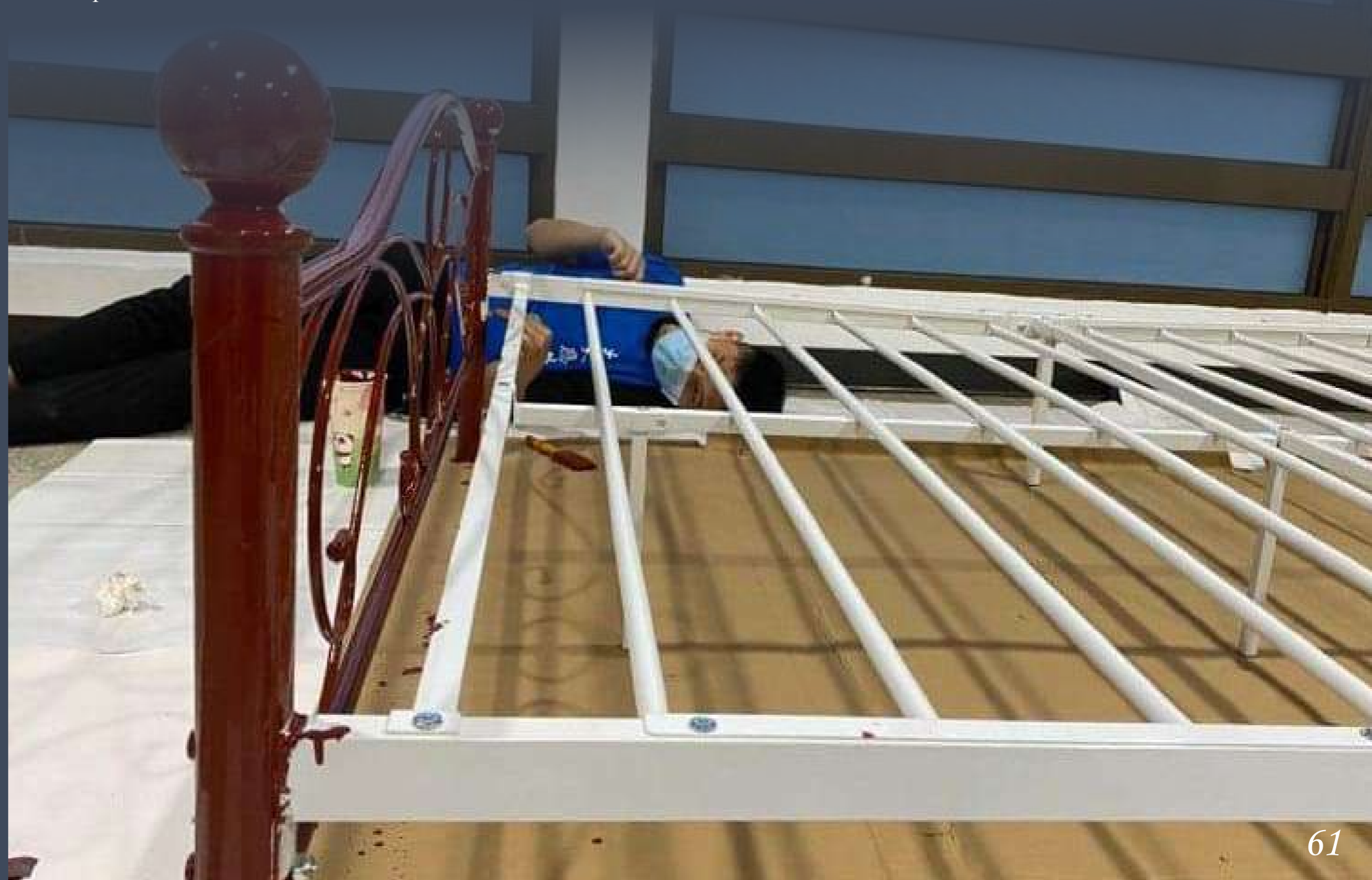
After Tony and Eric finished the purchase, they moved the bed frame to an open space and started the hard work for four hours.

“The paint smells bad,” uttered Tony. “But painting the bed frame and evenly brushing the paint on its surface is stress relieving.” With which, Eric and Nicole agreed.

“To evenly brush those paint on the frame takes some techniques, and the process to unlock these techniques is intriguing,” Eric said.

In brushing the paint, Eric found that some small places are brushed once but still not even. And Eric concluded that painting slightly in the vertical direction of the original brush could fill some gaps that were not painted on the first brush. When Eric found this technique, he felt a great sense of accomplishment.

Being asked about the greatest harvest in the works in the group of stage props, Vivian Lin, the leader of stage props last year, laughed and said delightfully, “The whole group often worked together at the same time, but everyone had their schedule, so being a negotiator was the main job.” As a result, she became more skillful in communicating the needs of both sides.





Playbill Team

Playbill Designed in Style with Shakespeare in Mind



By
Penny Liang

“Details make perfection, and perfection is not a detail,” said Leonardo da Vinci, the Italian polymath of the Renaissance era. Every section of a play, including auditory experiences and especially visual design, are crucial to make it a success.

Before walking into the lobby and getting prepared to enjoy a play, the audience must get playbills from the counter. A playbill must contain a large amount of information to help the audience get a good knowledge of a play. Therefore, spending time, money, and labors on designing the playbill is essential for a memorable play.

To present the original theme of the annual play—that is, transforming tragedies into a comedy—the impression of playbill cannot impart a somber tinge or frivolous pastel colors because of the Shakespeare factors.

Additionally, the director and the assistant director, Jenny Gao and Stephanie Huang, especially convey their thoughts on the design of playbill. Thus, their opinions are emphasized in the design, explaining only their expectation for the playbill being simple and classical.

“The concept is rather abstract, so it is difficult to grasp their ideas at the beginning. The background of the inner page has been revised repeatedly,” said the coordinator and team leader of artistic design, Sophie Huang.

On November 28, during an acting class in the dance room, where everyone should remain shoeless, a pair of socks on one’s feet like a flash of inspiration, Jenny seems to find the perfect theme color. A picture with a pair of refreshing, soft blues on it was posted in the group chat. Then, the members who are responsible for designing the playbill all worked on adding color to the layout.

Unfortunately, blue was abandoned shortly after as this color is too light, not suitable for a Shakespeare-themed playbill. To match the classical spirit, posters, invitations, and banners of Facebook fan page are all designed in dark colors. Thus, the theme color of playbill was changed into dark blue and gold. “The toughest challenge during the whole design process is to cater to everyone’s opinions,” said Sophie.



Tony Lai, a member of the artistic design group, is assigned to do most of the typesetting works. When asked why he choose to join the playbill team, his answers are rather reasonable. “Owing to my possession of the related experiences from my previous club at school, I am able to make good use of it and apply it to the production of the playbill,” said Tony, whose experiences in News Club contribute to his smooth working with typesetting. Dealing with large amount of information monthly helps to defeat tedious, repeating revisions.

“Due to the background and the setting of this annual play, which involved the Shakespeare’s works, we want the playbill we designed to share some characteristics of European classical styles with modern minimalist approach to make the whole playbill look clean but delicate,” Tony said.

The dark blue cover page with elegant patterns and decorations refers to the book style at that time, as the design of the inner pages is made with the reference to the venerable paper texture, which looks yellowed and creased.

Without a doubt, the importance of the style in the design cannot be measured. It affects not only the first impression but also the readability for the audience. “Rather than describing these styles as elements, they are more like expectations that our team prefers the play program to be reader-friendly,” said Rock Li, another member of the playbill team. “After appreciating many works designed by other school’s annual play groups, the architecture of designing the playbill is much clearer and more unanimous.”

“The toughest challenge in the whole process lies in typesetting at the beginning,” Tony said. “To determine the prototype of the title, background, front cover and back cover, it took plenty of time to deliberate with team members every week.”

“It is very impressive for me that Sophie and I once discussed and modified the playbill through Google Meet from ten at night to two in the morning,” Tony continued. Because of the harsh epidemic outbreaks, all of the discussions needed to be conducted online. Without getting knowledge of others’ facial expressions and real-time reactions, it is harder for everyone, since the process of

producing artistic materials require plenty of time and efforts to coordinate.

“The hardest part in the process is to collaborate with other teams, because it requires paragraphs composed by the script group, text contents translated by the translation group, and photos shot by the photograph group,” said Sophie. The procedure involved hard work and seemingly endless waiting. Also, the epidemic is like fuel to the fire, making the situation more chaotic. Fortunately, the members seem to find their way out in the desperation under Covid-19.

Apart from the epidemic, the team also struggled striking a balance between exquisite and simple design ideas. “Personally, the biggest gain is typesetting and cooperation,” said Tony. The final edition came out and it seems great, with sufficient information, contemporary typesetting, and classic ornaments, all mixed and condensed into this handy booklet.

There are totally 30 pages in this play program, not including the front and back covers. Compared with last year’s program which had 21 pages, this program has nine more pages. Consequently, the cost for printing will also increase.

Wiston Churchill once said, “Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.” After completing their job, every member developed their skills in solving problems while inspecting themselves. After all, after rains, the sunshine and rainbow are in sight.





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