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指導教授：魏雋展
Derrick Wei

Reflection on Participating in the 2016 Senior Play: *The Secrets in the Wings*

學生：李晉慈 撰
Candy Chin Tzu Li

Senior Play Reflection

Candy Li 402110520

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This is the second time I take part in the play production team. In the beginning, I selected the translation team, but afterwards, when I saw nobody choose the costume and makeup team, I decided to join costume team. One reason is that I was worried that costume and makeup might be a mess because there was no one with experiences can lead new members, another reason is that I really enjoyed last time when I was in costume and makeup team (though I had sworn never join costume and makeup team again XD). Since I am the only senior and the only experienced one, I had to be the group leader. However, last time I simply followed our leader's instructions, I was quite anxious about being a leader this time.

There are five people in the costume team, and nine actors in total. Hence, firstly, each of my team members had to be responsible for two actors, and I am responsible for Kenneth's costume and other integral works. We had group meetings every week, and I asked them to report what they had done each week. In the early stage, we worked on designing suitable costumes for each scene. Next, we went to the theater at school to see whether there are costumes we could rent, we also asked our friends if they had any clothes or accessories that we could borrow, and when I went shopping, I looked for some suitable clothes as well. As for the tail, I would like to thank my parents for brainstorming with me, so I could have the inspiration, and my mother also taught me how to stitch. Besides, my group members also helped me "improve" the tail (to make it curl and harder by putting wires in the tail). Hence, I could not take all the credits for making the tail, so I used my 150 dollars prize to buy some cookies sharing with them ☺



In the process, I have encountered plenty of communication problems. First of all, the director and I usually had disagreements about costumes. We discussed the settings of each scene in the beginning, and I would send her photos whenever I saw some suitable costumes. However, sometimes she wanted something that was nearly impossible for us to find or make, and we both had to compromise and made a decision that satisfied most people. Besides, when she revised the script or deleted the whole scene, I usually learned from other members from the crew. When I asked the stage manager about what happened, she told me that the director was still not sure about the script. I understood that they might not have enough time to rehearse the entire play, but her uncertainty made the whole team hard to operate. Take the costume team as an example. The director was still revising the script about a week before the performance; however, we had already rented and purchased most of the costumes, it was really difficult for us to find other costumes and we also did not have enough budget. In fact, there is a quite amount of money that is wasted because of the constant changes of settings and scenes. What is more, some actors came to me or my group members and said that they did not want to wear the costumes we had prepared because they were too ugly. This is also another communication problem since they should have told the stage manager about their opinions, instead of complaining to us.

In addition, I have trouble communicating with my team members as well. Since we only met once a week, I had to post some information on our Facebook group to inform them. However, they seldom checked the group page, so they would miss some important messages. To solve the problem, I tagged each of their names in the articles when I posted, and I also asked them to click “like” or left a message to let me know that they all got the information. However, sometimes they still missed my messages that I had to tag them several times, and this really bothered me.

Despite the communication problems have brought some inconvenience and unpleasantness, what I have learned most is still communication. I think that in order to make our communication more effective and efficient, the director, stage manager and each group leaders should have more meetings together; this way, we can prevent some problems from happening, like some people might not be informed of important changes immediately, or some people might have wrong information due to misunderstanding or mishearing from others.

Another important thing I have learned this time is being more patient. I am the kind of person that gets nervous easily, so I tend to make myself prepared before deadline. As a result, I started to be fussy since we entered the theater for rehearsal. I could no longer put up with some mistakes that could have been avoided; for instance, some of my team members forgot to bring costumes and hangers even though I kept reminding them; some of them tended to forget when the actors have to change their costumes if I was too busy and did not have time to remind them. Besides, I have my own way to handle things, and sometimes I am a perfectionist and will be picky about something. For example, my group members always put the costumes on the floor. This really made me angry since most of the clothes are borrowed from our friends, and I think it is our duty to regard them as ours, and take great care of those clothes. Moreover, I like the costumes to be hung up by the same side and I have made labels

on every single hanger for us to distinguish the costumes more easily. I kept reminding my group members to keep the dressing room neat and clean, and always remember to hang up the costumes after the actors took off. However, they forgot again and again, and this is why we had to spend extra time looking for missing costumes. Sometimes they even asked me ridiculous questions, like when everyone was still working, a sophomore asked if she could have lunch first; when people were all tidying up after the performance on Saturday, a girl asked if she could leave early because she had a Christmas dinner reservation. Therefore, after the performance, I wrote a post on Facebook to tell them about what they did wrong and how to improve. I sincerely hope that they do listen to what I have told them because the basic concept of contribution, cooperation, and respect in team work is crucial and can be applied everywhere, but there is a lot to improve about their attitude. I hope that they really learn from the experience this time.

To be honest, I get angry easily, but I have never lashed out in front of them. When they made mistakes, I told them what they did wrong, and I would go to the control room, telling my friends what had happened. They always told me to be tougher, otherwise they would not take things seriously. Nevertheless, I really did not like to scold them because I still need to cooperate with them during the performance day, and it is better for us to work in harmony. As a result, I decided to deal with it in a mild way. Every time they made mistakes, I would post on our Facebook group and told them how I felt. Also, when they did something great, I would encourage them. It turned out that as the performance approaching, they have become more and more cautious; they made small notes to remind themselves of when to change the costumes, and they tried to come up with quicker ways to help them dress up. I can feel that they did make some efforts, and that they were trying to catch up on what they had missed before. This makes me realize that I should take my time, be more

patient, do not push them too hard, and give them more opportunities. After all, we all are here to learn.

Respect is also what I have learned this time. To me, I think the top principle when interacting with others is to respect one another. Frankly, I sometimes felt disrespected in the production team. Just as what I have mentioned, when the director decided to make some changes, I was informed by other crew. Besides, some actors did not like the costumes and criticized in front of me and our team. Some of them even asked what they want to wear as if we were their stylists. They only thought about themselves, and never considered our ability and whether we were able to make it or not. I do not mean to complain, but I really think that in this team, we are equal. We are the production team indeed, but we are not professional enough to make everything they want. Besides, even if the costumes are really ugly, I believed there is a better way to tell us. We actually worked hard to look for suitable costumes for the actors, so when I heard them complain, I was furious and also sad; it is rude and disrespectful. I think that it is vital for everyone in the team to understand that no one in the crew is obligated to do their jobs. We work hard because we hope the play can be perfect. It is no doubt that we should all appreciate one another's efforts, and pay some respect to their work.

Furthermore, after the show, my teammates and I planned to take all our belongings back to our department office on the next Monday. However, there are four of them but only one showed up on that day. I was furious because they all said they could come, and no one informed me of why they did not come. In consequence, another group member and I carried all the stuff back. It turned out that they showed up earlier, but they only took their own stuff. Now, I still cannot understand how come they can be so selfish that they did not think of helping others to take something else back (There were still tons of books and props in that room!), and why they can be so

irresponsible that they just stood us up. Again, I hope that they have learn to be more responsible in team work ☹

All in all, I have gained a lot by joining senior play this time. Although I had encountered some challenges and dealt with some people and things unpleasantly, and I had regretted about choosing the position for numberless times, I still made it. When there was no one I could count on, I still endeavored to take the responsibility myself; after all, I am the one who lead the team, I should take full responsibility for whatever happens. I always tell myself that once I decide to do, I have to do it as perfectly as possible. In spite of the crappy stuff, the most precious part is that I have learned from the experiences, no matter it is good or bad. Moreover, I got to work with some people I did not know before, and also became closer with my friends. More importantly, this play really touches the bottom of my heart. When I saw the entire show for the first time, I was moved. I was moved since everyone's efforts finally paid off after working hard for months, and it is incredible that we can turn the lines of the script into a touching story on stage. On the last day of performance, I was unwilling to see the ending. since the power of this play bonds us together and creates so much great memory for us. Thanks for this play, I am in love with the theater now. The theater is so fascinating!

