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**Reflection on Participating in the 2017 Senior Play:**  
*All in the Timing*

學生：張詠宣撰

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2016 Senior Play  
LOD

### 2016 Senior Play

The 2016 Senior Play was the best thing that has ever happened in my life so far. Not only because of the fact that I got a chance to stand on the stage and perform for two hours with all those cute actors and actresses from our department but because I finally found something I truly love. It was a long way, to be honest, the two months of no-stopping rehearsal was extremely tough for a beginner like me. I gained some weights and my period was all messed up because of the pressure, but it was all worth it. Everything paid off the moment I stand on the stage including the troubles I encountered when I was searching for my characters' identities and the anxieties I had while rehearsing, the difficulties our whole team had to cooperate and solve in terms of the miscommunication between crew members, the technical problems and lastly the extreme nervousness during the three days performance.

When I saw the script, I spend 0.1 second deciding whether I should sign up for audition or not. I love this play. I love how every single story was connected with a scene of an ogre proposing to a little girl. I love how all the short stories originated from dark fairy tales but they all have deep meanings behind. I especially love the character "Princess who wouldn't laugh" and hopefully I was lucky enough to have her as one of my characters. I was also lucky enough to have the two of the most extreme characters with probably the most sickening personalities in the play, nursemaid and princess who wouldn't laugh. I have never dreamed of being a princess, not even when I was a child, but I have dreamed of acting as a really, really mean girl who always threatens, mocks and set people up just like those evil villains in soap operas that my grandmother used to watched at eight o'clock every night. Those evil

girls were always my favorite characters in the episode, probably because they get to do things that I could not do in real life and most importantly, most of them tend to get away easily no matter what they had done. As much as I like those two characters, they were also the characters that I struggled with the most and spend most of my time on.

I have five characters in total so I divided them into three sections according to their traits: the first section is the section of evil including nursemaid and princess who wouldn't laugh, the second section is the section of naïve and innocence, son and Alleliera's companion while the last character is the one that does not need much acting and emotions comparing with my other characters, the singer in Snake Leaves Princess. I struggled with distinguishing the nursemaid and princess a lot because the two characters' personalities are very similar, both sickening and full of hatred. Our student director told me that I tend to act the two characters in the same way, with the same style and of the same tone when speaking the lines. She asked me a very crucial question when she pointed out my problem, "How old are the two characters?" This is a question I had never thought about and had a very serious trouble on afterwards. We came to a consensus that the nursemaid is about 35 while the princess is about my age. However, I had trouble acting old because I could not seem to imitate the gesture, the tone and most importantly I could not act like I have a lot of experience, especially experiences in taking care of kids, doing household chores and running the house. Because of the time limit I do not have the time and the energy giving in all my efforts in this one character. Then, I decided to lower the age of princess who wouldn't laugh and remain the way I act for nursemaid to distinguish the characters. Although this is easier, it does not work either. It does not work because I tend to lower the age of the princess too much making her look like an idiot, a clown, but not a princess. So I started writing characters' autobiography (I was very lazy and only

wrote the nursemaid's) and this helped me a lot in forming characters' identity. I realized that setting the age is only one way in helping me forming the characters but not the only way. I started to find difference in the two characters and practice them both on my facial expressions and on the gestures every day in front of the mirror. I started to see the details in both characters. I squeezed my eyebrow a little for princess while relaxed it for nursemaid. I often gave extreme evil smiles for nursemaid as a contrast to princess. I enjoyed finding all those tiny details and practiced them every day.

After the characters' images finally became clear in my mind, another problem occurred. We arranged the time of our rehearsing schedule; however, there are nine actors and actresses in the play and every one of us had different schedules. Some of us have part-time jobs, some of us had to work on their paper and tests while others had other businesses to do. We could not possibly rehearse the scene when a major character is missing, for example it would be useless to rehearse the princess who wouldn't laugh scene when I am not there. So we often had to rearrange the time every week and this made the schedule delay. I was very anxious about the schedule even though I am not the director. We only have about one and a half months before the play and we would often stuck in one scene for two or three weeks. Not to mention that we had one scene that needed a lot of practice on singing. Fortunately, most of the audience enjoyed the play.

One of the most difficult challenges in this year's play was the make-up. Every actor had five or six different characters and the leader in the make-up team decided that every character should have its own style. However, due to the time limit in changing the scenes, we did not have time to both change the costumes and the make-up. We did not come to a consensus with the leader that all of the actors should have the same make-up throughout the whole play. It was not until the last minute that

I told my own stylist to secretly change all my make-up to the same one but only alter my hair style for different scenes. I think this is one thing that all of us could communicate at first and should have thought about in the beginning. In addition to this, the setting of the stage was very dangerous. Actors had to be really careful with the stairs which was piled up by blocks. I had three scenes either standing, sitting or walking around on there. It was dangerous simply by stepping on those blocks from the front, not to mention climbing the iron stairs from behind. The danger would often distract me while I was acting. I tried several times to raise the problem but in vain. Last, I had to get used to the stairs and conquer my fear. This is a new experience for me, when communication fail, the only thing I can do is change myself.

One thing that really eased my nerves during the play was crying. I cried every time during the praying time before the play and felt relaxed and comforted so that whenever I was on the stage, I gave my best and perfect performance to my audience. They deserve my perfect performance because they paid to watch the play. This method worked very well on the first day but gradually became useless on the second and third day. I really enjoyed and cherished the time I had while I was standing on the stage. I like how every single audiences' eyes were all fixed on me attentively in contrast to giving presentations in classes. I like hearing their laughter when they think something is funny as well as hearing them sobbing when they see something that touches them. Their reactions means a lot to me because getting responses from them means I succeed in interpreting the character and that they are fully indulged in the play.

Last but not least, those two months of rehearsing were very enriching and meaningful to me. I learned how every single move on stage is a huge thing in life, how every single second can blast the whole universe on the stage, how the audiences' attention can be drag from this side of the stage to the other, how the theater is such an

amazing place bring all those cute people together to create our own play. To me, every single member in the play is very significant. If we lose one of them, this whole play would be different. I would like to give my thanks especially to the backstage crew, the property team, make-up team, costumes, translation, stage design, lighting, sound effect and publicity. They were the ones that did a lot of complicated works but still tried to act like it's nothing and gave us huge smiles encouraging us. I would also like to thank our student director, assistant directors and stage manager. I was especially touched by our student director when she told the actors one day during rehearsal that we do not have to worry about anything, just enjoy the process of rehearsing and she will take good care of the rest. I feel extremely fortunate to have her as our student director. Lastly, thank you 2016 Senior Play, for bringing me such a magnificent experience and wonderful memories which I will never forget in my life.