

天主教輔仁大學英國語文學系學士班畢業成果
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT, FU JEN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY
GRADUATION PROJECT 2021

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**Reflection on Participating in
the 2020 Senior Play: *Cleansed***

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2020 Senior Play - Cleansed

In 2020 Senior Play, I was the leader of the sound effect team. There were five people on the sound effect team at first, but then one sophomore dropped out because of personal excuse. I didn't really know how to be a leader at first, and the script definitely made everything more difficult. However, I'm glad that the play went well in the end.



The first problem I encountered was the process of negotiating with the director. Since the play was very subjective, it was hard to find a balance between what the director wanted and what I wanted. I then decided to follow the director's guidance and suggestions because she was the one who had the complete structure of how the play would be displayed. I tried my best to create the elements that she wanted, and then my team worked with me along the way. There were two major parts in the sound effect team, to find the right music or sound effect for the play and to write some music on our own. So I thought about how my team could work together, and then I gave them different jobs according to their strengths. For example, Nicole was the leader of the jazz piano club, and she showed interest in writing songs, so the director and I asked her to work on the melody for Grace's monologue on scene 20. And since Ellen had no experience in this area, I asked her to find as many sound effects as possible for us to use, and she did a great job! As for Kate, she was a fast learner of the software we used for playing music, Qlab, so I asked her to help me design the cues for some part

of the play. I also encouraged them to share their thoughts freely because I didn't want to be the dominant of the team, and we built a strong friendship because of this play.



The second difficulty was to make sure our team communicated well because we all went to the rehearsal on different days for different scenes. The last time I joined SP, we didn't have a great system for communicating, so everything was a bit messy and only the leader knew all the details. In other words, I couldn't help much when my leader was not there during the rehearsal. In order to avoid this problem from happening again, I created a file on Google Drive for everyone to edit according to the adjustment or the reminder of that particular scene. It was quite efficient for us because we wouldn't miss the details, and we could also adjust the cues based on those notes. One benefit my team shared was that we all had MacBook from Apple, so it was very easy for us to send files to each other. It saved us a lot of time.



There was a terrifying accident on a Sunday night after the rehearsal. When we finished the second full rehearsal that afternoon, Ellen and I stayed for the practice at night. When we were at the Iron Forest, Ellen had a seizure right next to me. I didn't know what happened to her, and I thought she choked on her drinks. Her whole body was stiff, and no one was around us, so I ran into the practice room and cry for help. When a few boys went to help her, I felt like passing out, and I sat in the practice room, wondering what I could do at that moment. Everybody was terrified. When I calmed down, I thought we need to call her mother and Julie. I asked other classmates to call Julie and try to find Ellen's mother's phone number. When I went out and took Ellen's phone, she was unconscious. We unlocked her phone with her fingerprint, and I called her mother to tell her what just happened. The ambulance came and did a few checks on her, then they asked someone who knew what happened to accompany Ellen to the hospital. Since I was the only one there when she had the seizure, I went to the hospital with her. When we arrived at the emergency room, she woke up and started to talk to me. It was such a relief. I stayed there with her until her parents came, and I called to make sure others to make sure they felt fine. That was the scariest thing in my whole life.

A few days before the debut, we entered the theater for technical adjustments and formal rehearsals. The most stressed team was definitely because their time in the theater was so limited. They had to think fast and act even faster. As for the sound effect team, it was very high-pressure as well because there were lots of details we needed to pay attention to. We had to have very specific cues, and we needed to work simultaneously with the actors and every technical team. The process of adjusting required a lot of patience and communication with the director, and sometimes we spent over an hour on just one scene. After the rehearsal, we still needed meetings to solve the problems we

found in the theater. When I stayed and met with other leaders for solving problems, I offered a few suggestions that could fix the bugs, and it felt really great to help. I bonded with other leaders when we made something seemingly impossible possible.



Apart from the technical difficulties, we also spent some time negotiating with the professors and faculties of the department. Since this play was quite controversial, some people may find it hard to digest. We arranged pre-show warnings and explanations for the audience, and we had QA sessions after the second and the last show. When we did all three shows, we were asked to have a conversation with Father Bauer. I was a little intimidated at first because I didn't know him very well, but after talking with him, I learned something. The English Department has always given us all the freedom we need to create art and to express what we think freely, but sometimes this privilege is taken for granted. When it is taken for granted, what is at stake is the reputation of this school and even this department. We have the freedom to choose the script of our own senior play, but we need to take the department into consideration because we represent the English Department. We as students need to find the balance between demonstrating the art and giving credit and honor to the place that nurtured us.

Making a play is like becoming a bridge between the play and the audience. When the world I saw in my head while I was reading the script became real in front of me, that was one of the best feelings in the world. I am blessed to be a part of Dissocia and Cleansed, and though I may not have another chance to work in theaters anymore, my passion for it will stay the same.

