

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

指導教授：包磊思老師

Dr. John Basourakos

真善美聖

**Reflection on Participating in
the 2020 Annual Play: *Frozen***

學生：聶誠佑撰

Dino, Cheng-Yu Nieh

406110669

Dino Nieh

LOD – 2020 Annual Play

Dr. John Basourakos

Reflection of 2020 Annual Play

In the 2020 Annual Play, Frozen, I played Ralph, a serial killer who abducted and killed many young girls. This character was one of the main characters in the play, and I was grateful and honored to act this year. Before I participated in this, I did not have much experience in the theater. As a newbie actor who was also the main character, the whole preparation and practice were sometimes harsh, but it indeed teaches me lessons for life and also makes me feel even more interested in performing.

Everything starts from the first time I watched the Play of English Department. It was in the freshman year, and the play I watched was called "All in the Timing." It left me with a great impression of how amazing and professional that my seniors were capable of in terms of acting on stage. I set a goal to myself in awe that I wanted to be an actor in one play before graduate. As a result, I pump up my courage and apply for the audition this year. The audition was full of students, and it made everything even more competitive when professor John mentioned that there are only four roles in this play. Everyone showed their monologues as demanded. I was shocked again by how students in the English department have such

talented originality and creativity just by seeing how they performed their monologues. I could never have imagined students could perform a single monologue in such a dazzling way. I was lucky enough to be chosen as the actor in this play, but the most challenging time came after I knew I would play a serial killer.

The story was mostly in monologue, with only a few dialogues. The four characters in the show are Ralph, Nancy, Agnetha, and Ingrid, respectively (Some of the characters were only mentioned in the play without actual performances by actors and actresses). Ralph was the serial killer who abducted and killed several young girls; Agnetha was Ralph's doctor after he was arrested in jail; Nancy was the mother of Agnetha and Rhona, one of Ralph's victims. As most lines were in monologue, the plot design made the audience easier to see the growth and the mental change from their young to their old age. Yet, it also challenges the performers' skill in acting as well since there was no dialogue. Without dialogues, the actor had to fully understand the character's mindset and interpret well all by himself/herself, which had undoubtedly made everything even more challenging. I remembered that even the director of this play, Natasha, who had acted in most of the English Department's dramas, said that this play was not easy for actors to interpret. Therefore, the process of understanding the character and also acting was frustrating. Still, everything was worthwhile when all three performances ended.

When it comes to how I prepared in acting this character, we will have to start with

Ralph's story and background. Ralph had suffered from domestic violence throughout his childhood. Both of his parents would abuse him or even call him in a terrible name, which was indeed the last thing any child would want to undergo. This result in parental love traumatized, which made him hard to get along with others, but he was fascinated by young little girls since the young girls would be less likely to protect themselves. Besides, he was sophisticated and intelligent. Ralph designed every crime perfectly as the police had not caught him for a long time. He can also remember every detail of the tattoos on him, for example, when he had it, where he had it, or how he felt when he had it. With all that, Ralph was not a criminal without any kindness. After Nancy came to the jail to visit Ralph, he felt guilty and committed suicide at the end of the story to show his apology.

In the preparation phase, I learned how to analyze a character deeply by many teachers and school seniors. I learned that nothing is more critical than fully understanding the script since we could know everything about the characters and the settings. As a result, it was essential to read through the script multiple times and make notes without any preconception until we can grasp the story's idea. To be honest, it wasn't easy since there would be words that we as a student cannot comprehend. Hence, we would have to put effort into reading through the story profoundly and thoroughly. Afterward, we would have to collect all the notes we had about the characters and puzzled up all clues to make this character from the script. We would have to understand what made this character act like this

and why he acts like this. For example, why he aimed at the young girls but not teenagers, or why he hated all the adult females near him, including Agnetha, the tattooist who helped him, and even his landlord. All these reasons could be found in the script; it was just a matter of whether we can find it. However, all these notes would be the easiest part; the real deal comes to how the actors interpret the character. In other words, how I am supposed to present this serial killer is a great difficulty I had.

Since I was the only actor in this drama and that the serial killer was the core of the whole story, I will have to act well, even though I was a newbie in the theater. I had a hard time getting into character and interpreting this character even though I had made all the script notes. I failed to deliver Ralph's feelings in each scene properly. It was rather frustrating since I did not want to be a burden for other actors and those who worked hard behind the scene. Then I started to watch many criminal movies, including *American Psycho*, *The Silence of the Lambs*, and whatnots. I imitated these actor's expressions and how they acted in such a ruthless but sophisticated killer every day as I practiced in front of the mirror. As mentioned, since most lines were monologues, I did not need any help from others but to figured out my lines myself. These practices no doubt paid off as I become more confident in acting. Although there would still be some time that I failed to reach directors' standards, I found my own pace in improving throughout practices.

In theater week, which was one week before the performance, all actors and crew

members, who worked behind the scene, had to stay in the theater to practice intensely. Most people were stressed out of nervousness, not to mention the newbie actor like me. We all practice hard during that time, aiming to give our best performances to the audiences and bring out this criminal's story. It was indeed intense, but every practice worked out well in the end.

The results worked out well after all three performances, or I would say it worked out better than expected. Our feedback from the audiences was mostly positive regarding our performances and the stage design. I felt nothing but a sense of accomplishment and was especially pleased because my parents, brother, and friends watched the drama and supported me. I want to thank every crew member who worked behind the scene. Were it not for their hard work, the play cannot be as successful. I also wanted to thank professor John and all my friends and family because they encouraged me and gave me support when I was frustrated when practicing. This stage play experience was undoubtedly memorable, and I feel more confident next time if I have a chance to act.

Figure 1. Directors, actor & actresses, crew members



Figure 2. Directors, actor & actresses



Figure 3. Ralph in the play



Figure 4. Ralph with Agnetha



Figure 5. Ralph with Nancy

