

School of Drama Monthly Events February - March 2014

School Productions

The School of Drama's primary focus is the training of actors and directors, making students 'ready' for a professional career in Hong Kong and beyond. The summative assessment of each of these majors is performance in production. The School therefore seeks as many opportunities as possible for its students to gain professional practice on internal productions, internships and collaborations with professional companies.

February and March 2014 therefore saw students in a range of productions both internal and presented at the Academy and also with professional companies Chung Ying Theatre Company and Theatre Noir at Kwai Tsing Theatre and Yuen Long Theatre.

The production of Alfred Jarry's *Ubu* directed by alumnus Desmond Tang Wai-kit performed to acclaim in the Academy's Studio Theatre (24th – 28th February) whilst Tom Stoppard's *Dogg's Hamlet, Cahoot's Macbeth* was given at Kwai Tsing Theatre directed by MFA in Drama Directing major, Shu Chi-yee. This production in collaboration with Chung Ying Theatre Company gave an opportunity for 6 Acting major students from 4YD2, BFA 2 and BFA 3 to gain professional experience with the Company offering them the challenging opportunity of performing in a well-known public venue for the first time. The students acquitted themselves well and found the experience extremely rewarding.

BFA Directing major students' graduation projects also come to fruition during this period. Two students, Chung Siu-hei and Tang Wai-ho, have to direct productions with their peers in the Academy Studio Theatre. Both chose classics of heightened naturalism as their plays of choice: a challenge both for them and their actors.



Eugene O'Neill's Pulitzer Prize winning first full-length play *Beyond the Horizon* was Chung Siu-hei's choice and it was given a darkly atmospheric production in the Academy's Studio Theatre featuring impressive performances from BFA 3, BFA 2, 4YD2 actors.





Whilst Tang Wai-ho's production of August Strindberg's ground-breaking classic *Miss Julie* continues in rehearsal with production in the Academy's Studio Theatre in early April.

Studio 3 – *The Happiest Day I Lost* by Paul Poon wai-sum and directed by Roy Szeto began rehearsals (this play was previously produced as part of exchange collaboration with Taipei National University of the Arts from 8th to 17th November). The current production in rehearsal will take place in the Academy's Studio Theatre from 19th to 24th May.

Meanwhile, the Inter School Collaboration 30th Anniversary Production of William Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* began rehearsals. Featuring 29 students from the School of Drama as well as students from Chinese Opera, Dance, Music and TEA this interdisciplinary collaborative production will be performed on 9th and 10th May at the Academy's Lyric Theatre. It will feature the work of current students, faculty and alumni in one of Shakespeare's most popular yet challenging plays.

Whilst working on the Inter School production of *The Taming of the Shrew* a number of School of Drama students have the opportunity to study and perform Shakespeare's original play in spoken text form in Cantonese, giving them a rare opportunity to encompass the complete text of Shakespeare's battle of the sexes drama. Directed by the Chair of the School, Prof Ceri Sherlock, it will be performed in the intimate but intense space of the newly refurbished Drama Black Box during the week of 26th May.

Internship

13 students who can sing act and dance auditioned and gained an unique internship opportunity in musical theatre. For the second year running Theatre Noir has partnered this internship opportunity with the School of Drama to enable capable and talented students in 4YD 2 to be exposed to rehearsing and performing a musical – something the School is unable to do by itself at present. Last year's students performed chickens, hens and pigs in a musical version of *Animal Farm*, this year they performed classmates, a diva and a 'piglet' in *My Daddy Long Legs* with two students Wong Suet-ip (Piglet) and Jessica Wong (Princess) taking lead roles. The production was directed by alumnus William Yip, Artistic Director of Theatre Noir and featured Melodee Mak (School of Drama graduate in 2012) in the main role; the show was choreographed by MFA alumnus (TEA) Peter Lawrence and singing coach (and cameo role) was taken by School of Drama singing teacher and alumnus Owen Wong.

School & General Activities

Academic Review:

In the regular cycle of review, assessment and benchmarking of the School's programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, it welcomed two External Academic Reviewers in February and March. For the MFA in Drama (playwriting major) Prof Lin Yu-ping, Chair of the School of Drama from TNUA (Taipei National University of the Arts) and for BFA & MFA programmes (Directing major) Mr Anthony Chan, former Head of Directing & Playwriting at the School of Drama, Fellow of the Academy and Artistic Director of Hong Kong Repertory Theatre.

Whilst undertaking EAR duties Prof Lin Yu-ping gave a talk to School of Drama students on his particular academic specialism namely Japanese Theatre.

Co-presented Event:

Each year the Hong Kong Arts Festival collaborates with the School of Drama to host and 'international artist event' connected to visiting festival productions at the Academy (in 2012 Gao Xinxian; in 2013 David Henry Hwang) and this year it was an 'in conversation' with National Theatre of China Director Tian Qinxin who talking about her production of *Romeo & Juliet* playing at the Lyric Theatre. The talk was held in the Academy's Studio Theatre on 2nd March and hosted by Terence Chang (Lecturer in Directing). School of Drama students also benefitted from a special arrangement with the HKAF for 'student tickets' to this production and others at this year's festival.

Open Day:

This year's 30th Anniversary Academy Open Day saw the School of Drama connect current student activities with those of the alumni, both as teachers and current practitioners in Hong Kong. Open master classes were given in each of the School's disciplines Acting (Lo Koon-lan), Directing (Roy Szeto), Playwriting (Poon wai-sum) as well as classes in Voice (by Li Wing-hong and Seesy Chow) and talks about the School's programmes and history were given by Estella Wong. Graduating directing students also presented excerpts of their work in progress.

The day culminated in a **Sharing Forum** - co-presented by the School of Drama and Dionysus Contemporary Theatre in which a graduate from the first cohort of students of the School of Drama, Anthony Wong, shared with public, students and guests about his current project *Equus* to be performed at the Academy's HKJC Amphitheatre in May. The event was hosted by School of Drama alumni Joyce Cheung and Roy Szeto, joined by Alan Mak Siu-fai, Olivia Yan Wing-pui and a featured guest, Hins Cheung.



Exchanges:

Tony Wong, Lecturer in Acting was on faculty exchange to LaSalle College of the Arts, Singapore directing a production of *Descendants of the Eunuch Admiral* by Kuo Pao-kun.

Li An-chi from TNUA joined BFA 2 Acting major whilst Chiu Lo-yin exchanged from BFA 2 to TNUA.

Cheng Nga-chi (BFA 2 Acting major) became the first School of Drama student to exchange with Purchase College, NY where she will spend this semester of study.

Guests:

The School welcomed 3 Guests from Guildford School of Acting (GSA) with whom fruitful discussions were conducted about their musical theatre programme.

Prof Chien Lee-zen, Dean of School of Theatre Arts, TNUA and distinguished lighting designer visited the School and saw rehearsals and classes and discussed the possibilities of further collaboration and joint degree programmes.



Visiting Artist Prof Joe Winston guest teaching for MFA Drama and Theatre Education from 19th to 23rd February and held a public lecture hosted by Prof Ceri Sherlock for the community on 23rd February.



Student/Alumni Activities

BFA alumna Rosa Maria Velasco and current MFA students in Playwriting student Li Wing-lui wrote and performed *Girl Talk* during 2014 Hong Kong Arts Festival at the Hong Kong City Hall's Theatre from 5th to 9th March.

Whilst Wang Haoran (2012 MFA graduate with distinction) had his second production, *Red Chamber in the Concrete Forest*, with the Hong Kong Arts Festival at the Hong Kong Cultural Centre's Studio Theatre from 28th Feb to 3rd March. It was commissioned by the HKAF for this year's festival and like last year's festival play *Blast* written by Wang Haoran was directed by alumnus Chan Chu-hei.

Current MFA students in Playwriting have made an exceptional presence with productions for HKREP Reader's Theatre shown at the Hong Kong City Hall's Recital Hall in February:

- *Euthanasia Coaster* written by Chan Yan-yue
- *The Sound of Evolution* written by Wong Hio-kuan

Faculty Activities

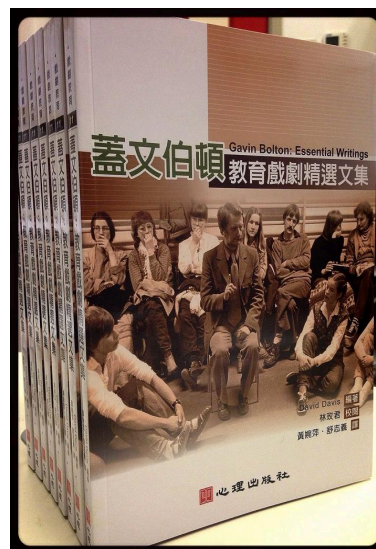
Roy Szeto was the Director of *Shed Skin* (Rerun) produced by the Hong Kong Repertory Theatre at the Hong Kong Arts Centre Shouson Theatre from 15th to 28th March.

Terence Chang was the Director of *daddi* produced by Class 7A Drama Group shown at the Black Box Theatre, Kwai Tsing Theatre from 20th to 23rd March.



An online interview programme hosted by Yip Wan-Keung invited Estella Wong and some MFA Drama and Theatre Education students and graduates to share about the MFA DTE programme and the learning experiences of them on 15th February.

The Chinese version of Drama Education reference book written by Prof Gavin Bolton and edited by Prof David Davis (*Gavin Bolton: Essential Writings*) was published in late February and is available from early March. As co-translator of the book, Estella Wong hopes that more Chinese reference books in the field can enhance the development of drama education in Chinese Communities.



Nominations

The 23rd Hong Kong Drama Awards:

Again this year's nominations reflect recent School productions as well as those by its faculty. Nominations of Academy alumni are of course ubiquitous.

HKAPA's productions:

- The Best Costume Design – CHEUNG Wai-see for *The School for Scandal*
- The Best Sound Design – Chan Cheung (2013 Graduate of Sound Design) for *Electronic City*

School of Drama's Faculty:

- Best Director (Tragedy/Drama) – Roy Szeto for *The Emperor, his Mom, a Eunuch and a Man* produced by Hong Kong Repertory Theatre
- Best Director (Comedy/ Farce) – Tony Wong for *The 39 Steps* produced by Chung Ying Theatre Company
- Best Script – Paul Poon Wai-sum for *The Emperor, his Mom, a Eunuch and a Man* produced by Hong Kong Repertory Theatre
- Best Actor (Tragedy / Drama) – Terence Chang for *Gross Indecency : The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde* produced by Pants Production