

THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF PERFORMING ARTS

Arts are for Everyone

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Good afternoon, Principals, Teachers and honourable guests. I'm Terence.

To me, delicacy and persistence are my 2 mottos in my life.

Drama as a connection tool

I had worked at an NGO known as Teen AIDS in the past, using games and art to teach Sex/AIDS Education in HK. Each year we held a drama festival. Youth from schools and youth centres would go through a series of workshops and then write their own script and rehearse their own plays. In the workshops we always heard the young people saying: "I..I have a story in my mind. But it is a story ... of my Friend, not mine." We listened quietly and carefully in the sharing. We did not challenge the source. We hope that they can share themselves in the context of drama. In other word, we want to bridge up with young people, using drama to connect them more, understand them more.

Drama as an educational and reflective tool

In the Devising class of our BFA and MFA programme, we also guide our students to reflect on their past life. We do not need the original stories but we guide them to show us the feeling here and now in terms of movement and soundscapes.

Through the process of building up a story, young students from BFA programme would face a problem and foresee the consequence in the context of drama and hope in the future, they will have a second thought before any risky action. For MFA students who are teachers and social workers, they can learn the skill and they can try it out in their own schools or social centre settings.

Example: Documentary Theatre

Just now, I have shared some imaginative stories building. On the other hand, we have documentary theatre that records and reflects about incidents happened in the past, the real past.

I remember in rehearsing *Fantasia on Fathers and Sons*, actors had to interview their own fathers or other actors' fathers. In those interviews, the same incident recalled by the sons may be remembered differently by the fathers. And they never thought about the memory of fathers had got strong pictures, expression and emotion. In the final product, the sons may take the role of fathers and speak the lines of the fathers in exact wordings recorded in the interview. You can imagine how they feel more about their fathers and their families as well. That kind of reversal of roles raises the awareness about different perspectives on a same incident in our same society. And it is the power of documentary theatre to collect

opinion from different roles and people in our same society. In the coming academic year, we would have a one-year production time to make a new documentary theatre with our BFA students and hope to reflect more about their lives and their society.

Drama as an experiencing tool

Artists and sociologists did a lot of theatrical experiments on disability. I found site-specific performance authentic and theatrical. Doing theatre site specifically means putting up a performance, for example at a temple or a church to explore more in religion. How about letting audience go through wheelchair paveway or crotch runway to experience the “mountain-climbing” difficulties from the entrance of the building to a specific venue inside? Then the audience can further listen to the monologue or dialogue of the disabled presenters. They will start to understand more.

Example: Project sponsored by Creative Project Fund

Our Drama School students has successfully applied the Creative Project Fund from HKAPA to work on project related to disability in this year.

Actually, Arts with the Disabled Association Hong Kong and HKAPA have signed a memorandum of Understanding to explore more possibility on arts with the disability together. We had made an accessible performance at Amphitheatre. This is the first time in Hong Kong that visual interpreters were trained to act and move on stage with a lot of the accessible features and artistic elements blended in together.

We would like to share a video clip here and see how the production goes. The drama is talking about the growth and development of a disabled artists. Let’s have a look.

(Showing video clip)



Conclusion

Arts can be performed or appreciated by different people in our society. And we found that arts can let me revisit reality, reflect from our reality and, the last but not the least, to create our reality for tomorrow.

Arts are for everyone. Thank you very much.