

School of Drama Monthly Events January 2015

Winter Term

2015 Winter Term excelled in its offer of complimentary practical activities for undergraduate students. Each level engaged in practical work, workshops and master classes that broadened their knowledge and experience and ‘stretched’ them in ways beyond their regular activities. At the School of Drama both Winter and Summer Terms aim at expanding student experience and knowledge.

This year’s international guests included the Dean of Theatre at the California Institute of the Arts, Travis Preston; the renowned Italian teacher of *Commedia dell’arte* Valeria Campo; Scott Williams, American Meisner teacher; Acty Tang South African/Hong Kong physical theatre artists and Guthrie Yip master of Wing Chun.

Each undergraduate level and discipline (acting and directing) explored new possibilities of theatrical expression and performance techniques which through ‘intensive teaching’ offers a different immersive environment for learning than the regular iterative teaching process over a semester. It is indeed ‘intense’, often painful, always demanding, sometimes life changing.

First years were pushed by Acty Tang to explore performative expression through the physical and introduced students to the roots of contemporary physical theatre practice in the nexus between Grotowski and Pina Bausch. Third years had an insight into the traditional performative disciplines of *Commedia* and *Wing Chun*. Although from different worlds and context connected through their codes, rigour and discipline. Whilst final year students enjoyed the freedom of Stanford Meisner’s technique developed from the Stanislavsky system in the work of the much respected, and now frequently returning teacher, Scott Williams (himself a pupil of Meisner).



For the second year running the privileged few directing students had ‘intensive’ master classes with an internationally renowned director (and teacher). This year Travis Preston introduced students to the symbolic world of Ibsen, through his *Masterbuilder Solness*. Dean Preston, who had visited the School of Drama some twenty years ago to direct Genet’s *The Balcony* whilst at Yale Drama School, engaged faculty who were in his cast then, now teachers at the Academy, in informal staff development sessions that were greatly appreciated.



School Productions & Projects

Creative Week *Being Offal* \$20.15

Second year student 4YD2 took over the Drama Black Box during Winter Term (January 15th – 17th) to express their artistic creativity, to show their skills and to surprise. A ‘free flow’ expressive exercise-technically supported by alumni and volunteers for the School of TEA, this event offers a unique ‘no holds barred’ moment for students who have progressed into the second year of study. It is always a ‘marker’ for teachers and faculty to ‘spot talent in action’ and to encourage their individual creative potential. This year’s theme was ‘Offal’!

Studio 2 *Happy Family*

School of Drama is set to kick start its second semester productions with *Happy Family*, a script written by Academy Drama graduate Or Ka-kee for the 2012 Playwright’s Scheme. The cast includes students from the graduating year as well as from 4YD3 & 2. Sze Shuk-ting, Li Ho-wang, Ko Ki-yan, Cheung Man-che, Mok Ka-yan, Chan Wing-shuen Mak Chi-lok, Yim Kui-kin, Ting Tung-yan and Wong Tsz-ching. It is directed by Terence Chang, Lecturer in Directing and alumnus. Performances in the Academy Studio Theatre on February 9th – 14th.



BFA Directing major student graduation project *Rashomon*

Akira Kurosawa’s film version *Rashomon* is perhaps the most well-known iteration of the stories by Ryūnosuke Akutagawa. They famously tell the story of a murder from multiple perspectives and ask the audience to think about truth and lying, fiction and reality. Chow Wai-chuen, has chosen to create his own stage version of these stories as his graduation directing project. Performances in the Academy Studio Theatre on March 18th – 21st. The cast includes Lai Lok-hang, Ng Pui-lung, Wu Tsun-ho, Leung Chung-hang, Ng King-lung, Jessica Wong, Kwan Chi-kit and Zhang Yan.



Auditions for Drama 2, Studio 3 & Project 2

During the first week of the new semester the cycle of auditions for School productions began again with Guest Director Chan Chiu-hei (alumnus from the first cohort of students in 1985) and Tony Wong, Lecturer in Directing, auditioning and recalling students respectively for Drama 2 (Maeterlink’s *The Blue Bird*) and Studio 3 (Kuo Pao-kun’s *Descendants of the Eunuch Admiral*).

Project 2 Chekhov’s *Three Sisters* (Drama Black Box production) directed by Prof Ceri Sherlock also held casting sessions.

School & General Activities

Special Alumni Event:

Travis Preston Dean of Theatre and Head of Directing at the California Institute of the Arts held an Open Masterclass and Q & A for alumni, faculty and students in the Studio Theatre on January 11th. This, like the School of Drama's regular sharing of guest artist open classes, with our alumni and the professional community was greatly appreciated.

School Assembly on 22 January:

Alumna Fu Yat May (May Fu) of the first year of School of Drama students in 1985 addressed the School's Assembly on January 22nd. May Fu has been a student, then a teacher and Visiting Guest Artist (Acting) at the School of Drama and has made a great contribution to the School's development. Last summer May Fu (affectionately known as Mayje), after a serious illness, had to retire from teaching in the School, but is now fully recovered she gave an inspirational address to the Assembly and it was fitting that the School was able to pay tribute to her and her tireless work on behalf of students and the Academy, and her beloved School of Drama.



Student/Alumni Activities

Ng Lok-wai, Acting major student from Degree 3 took part in the government's International Youth Exchange Programme 2014-15 to Singapore.

Faculty Activities

Roy Szeto is currently in rehearsal for the Hong Kong Arts Festival with a new play by alumna Wong Wing-sze. Called *The Amahs* it features three generations of School of Drama graduates. Performances will take place at the Hong Kong City Hall from February 28th – March 15th.