

To be or not to be

Theatre buff Hwa Yue-Yi tells the gist of it.

SCATTERED throughout the world are people who repeat the same words and gestures for hours at a time, several days a week.

They believe what they do is very important. They even dare to hope that one glorious day, people will pay them to do it.

We have a name for these people. We call them actors.

Not your Jessica Albas and Abhishek Bachans, but rather the film star's starving artist cousin, the stage



actor, the thespian (depending on whether you want to sound poetic, or like you come from Star Trek).

William Shakespeare

What do *10 Things I Hate About You*, *She's the Man*, *West Side Story*, *Romeo Must Die* and *Chicken Rice War* have in common? They're all based on this dude's plays.

Countless other Shakespeare plays and adaptations are performed in theatres yearly, and if you think about the star-crossed lovers, hands and tongues chopped off and cross-dressing that fill the drama, it's no wonder why. Shakespeare was anything but *kolot*. Plus, he had a great (and often dirty) sense of humour.

Other dramatists who have undergone modern makeovers include George Bernard Shaw, whose *Pygmalion* inspired the musical *My Fair Lady* and the romance flick *She's All That*.

The Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Centre also recently staged Gavin Yap's adaptation of Edgar Allan Poe's short story *Tell-tale Heart*, a skin-crawling thriller combining film and live acting to recount insanity



"Theatre is in your face and active," said Aaron Teoh, 18, from the Sunway *wayang kulit* group. "Instead of movies where the camera dictates what you see, theatre lets you interpret things however you want."

and murder.

Wayang kulit and Cantonese opera

Yes, we are looking at old things again, but, as Sunway University College performing arts student Erica Tham, 20, said: "Many things in modern theatre stem from traditional forms."

Erica was one of the students who recently put up a *wayang kulit* performance of *Hikayat Sri Rama* at the Sunway Roof Top Theatre under the tutelage of Tok Dalang Pak Nasir Yusoff.

But this was no *prosa tradisional* affair: in between fighting Sri Dewi's captors, the lackeys bickered about the WWE Undertaker, Mawi and the correct way to laugh.

Reading aloud

For theatre practitioner Mark Teh, 26, it all started when an A-Level Literature lecturer at Taylor's College assigned him to watch and review plays. "The stories and the theatrical forms really engaged me, they had a sense of immediacy and 'live'-ness."

Today, Mark shares this buzz with others as an actor, director, teacher (at The One Academy and Sunway University College), researcher and publicity manager (Five Arts Centre).

"[Working in theatre] does mean juggling multiple roles and jobs, but that's okay because it's the nature of the work."

His counterparts venture into television, radio, advertising and emceeing, or hold day jobs to pay the bills.

"You will never become rich doing theatre in this country, or most other countries, but more people are able to do it full-time now," Mark noted.

"Who pays those weirdos, anyway?"

We do. That's right, people like us who love entertainment and are willing to spend a bit of money on it.

Just a bit, really: many productions offer student rates of RM20 or less. Rather than giving your next RM10 to a money-making film conglomerate, why not contribute it to your friendly neighbourhood actors who can tell one heck of a story?

Take your pick from the billings at www.kakiseni.com, which range from hilarious musical comedies to spine-chilling tales to abstract performances that make you think harder than Additional Math did.

If you really catch the theatre bug, Kakiseni also lists auditions for performers and backstage crew.



start TIPS



BLENDERS

To make smoother gradation with pencil or charcoal, the artist uses stumps, tortillions, or just plain cotton balls to achieve the desired effect. Highlights and corrections can be picked out with a kneaded eraser, or a plastic eraser stick.

a series of art tips from the art materials people

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A better option

by Khoo Hong Yee

IF you are interested in the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) courses, then the Financial Training and Management Services (FTMS) College is one place you want to check out.

Established in 1986 with campuses in Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore, China, Vietnam, Cambodia and Africa, FTMS College is one of the largest ACCA course providers in the world.

FTMS College also provides business, engineering and computing sciences, and English Language-related courses.

According to its general manager Sajjal Divakaran, the college will be introducing two new degree programmes in affiliation with the University of East London (UEL) in October — the Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Software Engineering and BSc in Computer Game Technology.

"Such specialised Information Technology (IT) courses like Computer Game Technology will attract more students, since general IT courses have gradually lost their attraction."

He added that the final year lectures in the college are given by lecturers from the United Kingdom (UK), which is an opportunity for stu-

dents to experience the UK way of studies.

The college is also affiliated with De Montfort University, where BSc in Business IT and Bsc in Computing Science are provided.

Online learning is available at FTMS College for working people who are not able to go for classes in the college.

Divakaran said the college is currently negotiating with universities in the UK and Australia to launch Master's courses in Business Administration and IT by the end of next year.



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