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指導教授：包磊思

John Basourakos

真善美聖

Reflection on Participating in the 2016 Annual Play: *If We Were Birds*



學生：吳梓瑄撰

Maggie Tzu-Hsuan Wu

If We Were Birds

By Erin Shields

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Dr. John Basourakos

Annual Paly

Reflection

Stage Manager

402110623 Maggie Wu

Reflection on the Annual Play: If We Were Birds

As one of the students in FJU English Department, I feel proud and honored to be one of the member in the 2016 Annual Play since our Department is not only famous for literature but also drama courses. Under no circumstances will I forget such amazing experience working with students from different grade since this is Annual Play not Senior Play. In other words, I have the chance to work with school brothers and sisters. Although I have encountered many difficulties in producing this Play, I still survive and did well on the three performances of the Play.

First of all, I want to thank you Professor John for giving me this opportunity to be the stage manager of the 2016 Annual Play. To be honest, I once had had thought to drop the course because I have a really tight schedule. However, with perseverance, I keep telling myself that this is not the end of the world and there are ways to find out the solutions. Due to my tight schedule, I have learned more about how to do time management. This semester, I am responsible of holding two big events, the first one is the singing contest of Foreign Language Institute and the other one is the Graduation Ceremony of English Department. Aside from these two big events, I also have a part time job of teaching English in Cram school. Therefore, I realized that time management is really important and we have to think twice before act. Actually, I stay up late every night after 3:00 a.m. to finish tons and tons of work. Consequently, my body cannot afford this kind of situation keeps happening for a period of time. I went to see doctor, and the doctor ask me to take a medicine which can help me to have more energy when staying up late at night. If I could have a second chance, I would have not taken that much work at one time. However, I still feel grateful to have the opportunity to perform such an inspiring Play.

Second, I have learned how to deal with stress. I can still remember, there was a night I have to hand in my RP 3, and I also have to come up with the schedule of the

graduation ceremony, I cried while working on these two projects. Nevertheless, I still did not give in to huge pressure. Although it is really hard for people to multitask not to mention such heavy workload, I still did not give in to huge pressure. Besides, I have come up with a wonderful solution in dealing with stress which is to hypnotize myself that the efforts and hardworking I put into the assignments would be useful after graduating from college. In short, the pressure I have underwent through the experiences in college makes me much stronger and tougher.

Third, it is important to understand that sometimes there is no choice for you to pick someone you want to work with, instead, we have to adjust our ways of doing things to act in concert with other people. Honestly speaking, I really had a hard time working with my partner which is the other stage manager. It is his attitude that makes me angry. Aside from the Annual Play, he was one of the coordinators of the singing contest of our Department; however, he did not become responsible for the event. Moreover, as the vice president of the Student Association, I am the one who cleaned up after his mess. On the other hand, at the very beginning of the semester, he did nothing for the Play. I am the one who finished all the tasks for half of the semester including division of tasks, supervising technical crew, follow up all the latest blockings, and all the compile contact information, and so on. I understand that we may have problems communicating with each other for over pursuing perfection; however, it is not an excuse for not doing anything for the play or handing in sloppy assignments to professor. Fortunately, after having an appointment with Professor, he finally gets back to the right track. Thanks to the Play, I could have the experience working with different kinds of people, and to realize that you cannot ask more from people like this but to try your best to make everything on track.

Last but not least, the script of the Play this year is probably one of the most inspiring ones I have ever read in recent years. It reminds me of *A Thousand Splendid*

Suns written by Khaled Hosseini, a book centered on two women's wretched lives in Afghanistan. I was inspired by the way Erin Shield depict the role of Chorus by endowing them with different women's conditions in different wars and places. I especially like the pious. When Tina is speaking her lines to ask the boy to get up, it is a really powerful scene. The author of the play is trying to convey that there are still many cases of sexual violence happening around the world, and people need to pay attention to the phenomenon and to make changes. Most importantly, girls should know how to protect yourself. Moreover, I cried when I first finished reading the script. The play further examines how wars and violence can bring great harm to people especially women. Although people have advocated the importance of non-violence, there are still people suffering from terrorist attacks and wars. By watching our play, I truly hope that our audience will realize violence cannot solve any problems and that war is really a frightful tragedy.

In conclusion, I really appreciated all the hard work and efforts of the cast and crew. I have received great responses from the audience. Not only professors but also students like the Play. Furthermore, thanks to the Annual Play, I have broaden my horizons and strengthen my abilities through the process of producing this Play. Besides, I have gained a sense of achievement by the end of the performance day. The positive responses from the audience proves that the time and efforts I have put into the Play worth it.

Word Count: 1060

If We Were Birds is an excellent play to assist victims to speak up against violence and beg for change and justice to protect others from sexual assault. A contemporary retelling of the Metamorphoses myth of sisters Philomela and Procne, If We Were Birds is unique in bringing a classic Greek tale and putting it in a modern-day scenario. When performed, If We Were Birds can be a breathtaking theatre experience. Similar to reading the script, the reader could even feel the chest-crushing tension and the close sisterly bond the female leads have throughout the play. Shields's writing is very raw and fearless in presenting both the good and worst that take place in the play. If We Were Birds by EDT, released 15 December 2013

1. Prologue
2. Hymen
3. The Unexpected
4. Bird Song
5. Pandion's Waltz
6. Bacchanal
7. Epilogue

written and performed for Lorem Ipsum's production of If We Were Birds by Erin Sheilds. written and performed for Lorem Ipsum's production of If We Were Birds by Erin Sheilds. credits. released December 15, 2013. If We Were Birds was initially inspired by reading that I was doing about the mid-90s conflict in the former Yugoslavia. I heard a newscast about rape used as a weapon of war in that conflict and that led me to a book entitled Mass rape: the war against women in Bosnia-Herzegovina edited by Alexandra Stiglmayer. This collection of essays and testimonials of Bosnian women enraged me to the core and I widened my research. Book after book, conflict after conflict, I discovered that rape has been used as a weapon of war from the beginning of time. I wanted to write a play that explored the personal viciousness of sexual violence and spoke to the tragic history of perpetual rape as a weapon. I needed a large container. Greek Tragedy is about the largest theatrical container there is. If We Were Birds is a shocking, uncompromising examination of the horrors of war, giving voice to a woman long ago forced into silence, and placing a spotlight on millions of female victims who have been silenced through violence. A deeply affecting and thought-provoking re-imagining of Ovid's masterpiece "Tereus, Procne, and Philomela," Erin Shields's award-winning play is an unflinching commentary on contemporary war and its aftermath delivered through the lens of Greek tragedy.