

LOVE IS NO LAUGHING MATER, OR IS IT?

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This year's English drama performance tried something different. For the first time, the Department of English adopted a play by Noel Coward's black comedy, "Blithe Spirit," to entertain theater goers. Their renovation apparently paid off as they won rounds of applause and standing ovation whenever the curtains fell on the three evenings (3/25 to 3/27) they performed.

Although this play explores the serious issues of love, the writer Coward used his sharp and at times sarcastic observations to depict a complex triangular love relationship among a man, a dead woman (his former wife, Elvira), and his wife (his current one, Ruth). Many recent Hollywood movies have dealt with the similar issue of a deceased spouse returning, trying to connect with the living partner, for various purposes and results. However, Coward had written about such a story before people ever heard of movies. And his play had transfixed many people about the absurdity of jealousy and love for many generations before cinema came along.

The Department of English (DE) did exactly that for three evenings in a row. The audiences laughed together with the characters and sighed with the unusual ending when neither Elvira nor Ruth could have the man they love. Was it a comedy or was it a tragedy in the end? You wonder.

Actors of the play, students of DE, were pleased that they were able to bring such a powerful play to people and enjoyed every moment of their rehearsal and performance. Lin Ying-shih, a senior and the director of the play, started her preparation six months before the show during which she made adjustment to the script, recruited actors, and scheduling rehearsals.

"It was a great learning curve, starting from zero to what I know today," she said. Above all, she claimed that she has acquired better stamina and

preservation as a result of the experience. Hong Nu-hsuen, a junior who played Ruth, couldn't agree more, as she, too, had learned very much from the play. She learned how to concentrate by facing the wall so as to get into the character easily. (~Ying-hsueh Hu)