



Playback your memories

Everyone has their own unique story. Playback Theatre provides a platform for people from all walks of life to connect with each other by sharing their personal stories.

Playback Theatre is improvisational theatre. Audiences are invited to tell their stories on a particular topic and performers will then improvise this story immediately, sometimes with background music and songs.

Living Stories, a playback theatre group founded in 1998 by amateur actors, has performed outside Kubrick bookstore at Yau Ma Tei every month since 2003.

First-time audience member Eric Yim Ka-fai said it was interesting to see his own story being put onstage. "When your role is played by someone else, it seems that your feelings and thoughts can be understood by others," he said.

Every year, Living Stories decides on a theme from which they elaborate a topic for each performance. Broad themes like jobs, tastes and objects had been used in the past

few years. The theme of this year is "a person".

The topic for the Theatre's October performance was "I don't want to be alone". A tale about a girl who had a lonely childhood prompted Wallace Wong Man-nai to share a story about his son and himself.

Wong, who worked in the Mainland, said he seldom had time to look after his son. He felt very bad that he had to leave his son alone all the time.

Using their imaginations, the actors performed a scene in which the son would like his father to bring him out of the bounds of his daily life. Wong was particularly touched by this scene.

"It made me realise that adults may not be able to see things from a child's perspective. We may not understand their feelings and thoughts," said Wong.

Exist Ho Pak-chuen, the actor who played the role of Wong's son, said the connection between each story is what makes Playback Theatre so interesting. "You may be inspired by others' stories and recall your own memories and feelings."

Everyone has different feelings on the same topic; these bring up all kinds of associations. Angel Lam Chung-ping, a founding member of Living Stories, recalled that a topic about food inspired a young man to share his love story.

The young man remembered his ex-girlfriend's favourite dish. He missed her so much that he wanted to cook that dish for her again even though they had broken up.

Playback Theatre is not only a diversion, but also a way for the disadvantaged to express their feelings. Living Stories once performed with a group of developmentally delayed people.

"Learning the stories and feelings of different groups of people can help us develop empathy for them. It is valuable in the current society," said Raphael Woo Wai-Hung, a Living Stories actor.

Living Stories performs on the first Saturday of each month from 7:30 pm to 8:30 pm. It is free of charge and no reservation is needed.

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