

PSHA's speech at Shakespeare4All's "The Taming of the Shrew" opening programme (English only)

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Following is the speech delivered by the Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs, Mrs Carrie Yau, at Shakespeare4All's "The Taming of the Shrew" opening programme today (October 5):

Professor Lai, Board of Directors, Principals, Teachers, Parents, Boys and Girls,

It is a pleasure to join you all this evening for the fifth production of Shakespeare4All, *The Taming of the Shrew*. In our days when we put on a play like Romeo & Juliet or Julius Caesar, we normally could only do it in our classroom. With a bit of luck, we could borrow the little stage at the assembly hall. This evening, we are all going to experience and witness the power and magic of the real stage. We all know that the stage that we are going to explore very soon is nothing ordinary. This is a professional stage on which local primary and junior secondary school students are going to show us how professional they can be given the many hours of rehearsal they have had since August.

In the past five years, Shakespeare4All has nurtured over 3000 young intellectual minds through the use of drama. With the aims of improving local students' English fluency and self-confidence, Shakespeare4All has also accomplished in developing the students' generic skills and raising their awareness of the significance of perseverance and commitment. The eagerly anticipated production of *The Taming of the Shrew* will surely prove this. While we are still living at a time when processes are not as highly appreciated as outcomes, Shakespeare4All has broadened our horizons in the local cultural scene by showing us that disciplined and quality training in the arts at a young age are part and parcel of cultivating standards, standards in which the actors are able to do their best without being afraid of hard work.

Shakespeare, in one of his comedies, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, said through the character Pistol: “Why, then the world's mine oyster, Which I with sword will open.” The world is our children’s oyster and in Shakspeare4All, they are allowed to freely experience the world with their “swords”, their unfathomable potentials. Dear boys and girls, I envy you all for having so many dedicated teachers and mentors to guide you along in such exciting ventures. The team work and the friendship won in the process would be deeply engraved in your mind in the years to come.

Finally, I would like to thank all the principals, teachers and parents who are here tonight. Despite the heavy downpour, this has not deterred your attendance. After all, who would wish to miss the excellent adapted Shakespearean work of Stephan Spurr! I would like to congratulate Shakespeare4All for another successful year. I sincerely commend Shakespear4All for its excellent work and I am sure the performance this evening will be a great success.

Thank you!

Ends/ Sunday, October 5, 2008