



/ International Bulletin ////

Stage Machine Lab creates system to let actors 'fly'

The Stage Machine Lab run by Prof. Chin-yuan Yang from TNUA's Department of Theatrical Design and Technology earlier this year developed a device to let people "fly," enabling the Ping-Fong Acting Troupe to stage a play of the "modern martial arts" genre for the first-time ever in Taiwan.

The device – a programmable flying track machine – for the play, "The Underworld Code," was developed in the form of industry-academic collaboration between the lab and the troupe, with help of 13 undergraduate students, Prof. Yang said.

As there was a tight schedule for developing the device, he said the project was incorporated into the syllabus of the "Technical Design" course for the first semester of School Year 2010, moving the classroom to the real-life stage to let students take advantage of the project to receive first-hand working experiences of theatrical design.

He said he had never seen such crazy ideas from any other directors about letting actors and actresses fly on

stage in the ways they have been seen in movies. Transposing the film logic to stage applications posed a big challenge, he said.

He said that when he was offered the project, he was exhilarated and excited, hoping it could improve the standards of Taiwan's theatrical design and the capabilities of making its own stage machines.

Although the system was custom-designed for "The Underworld Code" to support its fighting scenes where actors had to maneuver in multi-directional stunts, it was funded by the Teaching Excellence program. It means TNUA now owns the unique "flying" system.

The system has passed all safety tests and its amazing effects have been witnessed by theatergoers to "The Underworld Codes" in Taoyuan and Taipei.

Caption: Students work on the Stage Machine Lab-developed flying-man system.

ArtsCross Taipei 2011 at TNUA



TNUA's School of Dance, ResCen Research Center of the UK's Middlesex University, and China's Beijing Dance Academy jointly arranged "ArtsCross Taipei 2011" gathering 10 choreographers from the three areas to create works in a three-week event starting on August 1.

The event engaged dancers, artists, performers, educators, policymakers and audiences from different cultural backgrounds in a dialogue through various activities, such as forums to investigate the differences between the East and West in content, creativity and development of knowledge and skills.

Prof. Ping Heng, dean of TNUA's School of Dance, said that this international project was initiated by ResCen and Beijing Dance Academy in 2009. They hope that though this project can systematically introduce the achievements of contemporary Asian dance to Britain.

It is also meant to serve as a platform to promote collaboration between artists from the East and West to enable more extensive and substantial exchange.

Prof. Ping said preparation for the 2011 event started with project founder Prof. Christopher Bannerman, head of ResCen, hosting a series of meetings in Taipei, Singapore, Beijing and London to lay down guidelines for selecting choreographers. Taipei was selected as the host of this year's event for choreographers from various parts of the world to present their art.

Apart from the stage performances, critics, researchers and choreographers from Britain, China and Taiwan were invited to forums on August 20 and 21 to analyze and discuss the works presented at the event, as well as related subjects such as educational and cultural issues.

Almost 100 candidates from Taiwan, Beijing, Hong Kong and the US competed for a chance to be dancers for the works created at ArtsCross. Only 42 of them passed the audition, with 30 of them being TNUA students and alumni.

Caption: Dancers rehearse for ArtsCross Taipei 2011.