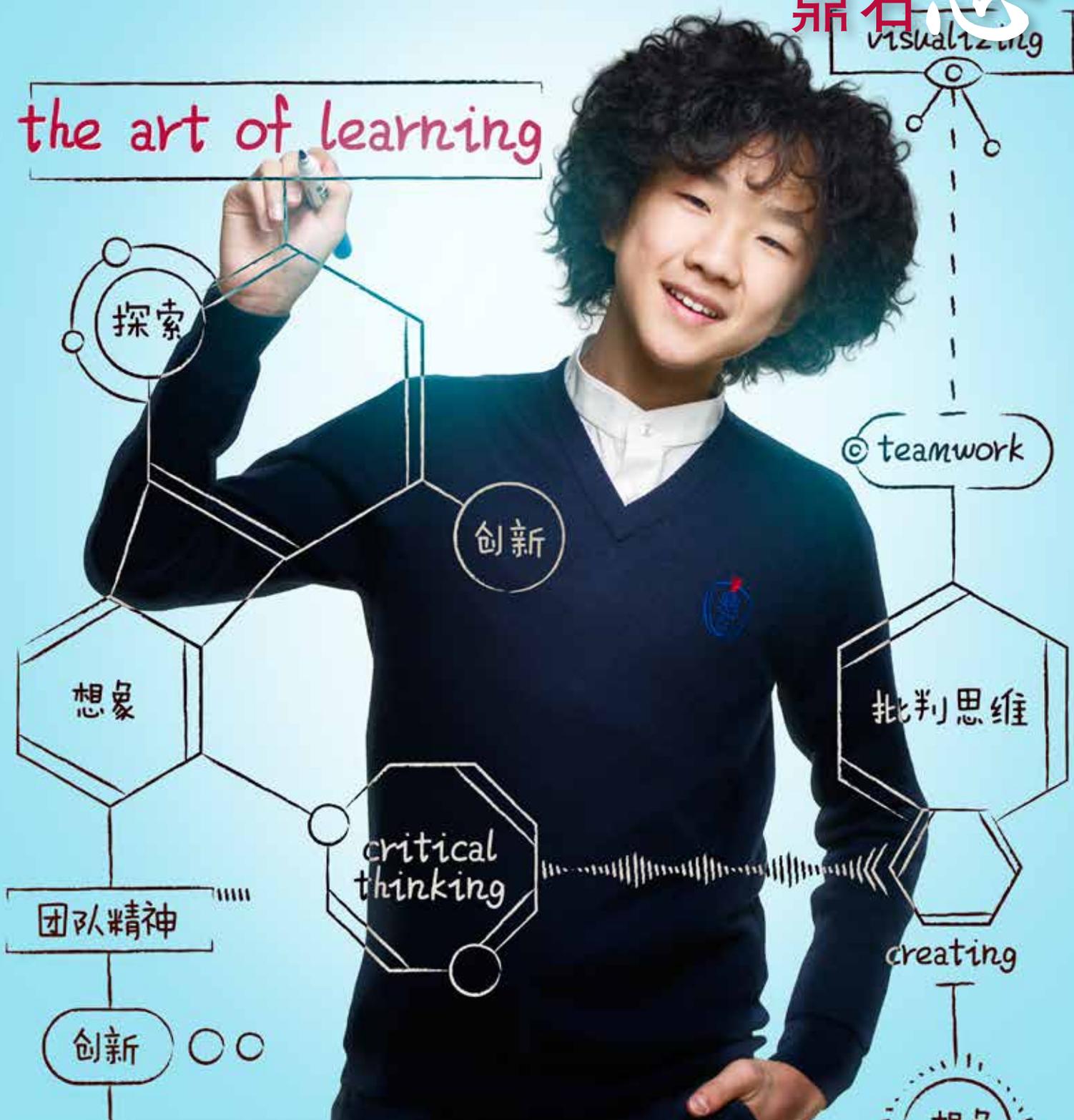


# THE KEYSTONE

Magazine **志**  
**鼎石**

the art of learning





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The Art of Tradition

# BECOMING ARTFUL LEARNERS

**W**hat do we mean when we say that something is an art? We are not saying that it IS ART, but AN ART. Sometimes things that are an art are contrasted with things that are described as a science. But, of course, they can be both. Cooking is an art as well as a science. Learning can be both, too. But here we are concerned with learning as an art, the art of learning. We wish to rectify an imbalance that needs realignment.

There are surely some general principles, scientific if we wish to use that term, which underpin and describe learning. These principles may be common to all, even including in some cases animals. But other aspects of learning are individual, unique to each learner. This is where our phrase 'an art' comes in. Learners learn best if they know what works well for them. And coming to know that is an art.

In 1983, in his book *Frames of Mind*, Howard Gardner of Harvard University put forward his theory of multiple intelligences. He first identified seven different intelligences. That number has now grown to nine. Commentators have dissected these, and queried Gardner's scientific precision, but his central tenet (perhaps an expression of art) has become well established – as individual learners, we possess different styles of intelligence and consequently different styles, up to a point, of learning.

We stress this at Keystone all the time. We encourage a plurality of teaching styles, varying pedagogy to suit changing circumstances and contexts, and we expect a complementary differentiation and variety in learning styles. Our basic curricular frameworks, the IPC, the IB MYP, and the IB DP, all promote reflectiveness amongst other learner



attributes, and this reflectiveness puts learners in touch with their own styles of learning.

This edition of the Keystone Magazine asks many questions. What is the

connection between the art of learning and the art of listening? How do we turn challenge into an art form? How do we construct meaning and knowledge artfully? How do we develop the artistry required to make connections, what Gareth Rees calls 'concurrency'? Are the creativity and the critical thinking that we wish to characterize our learning actually art forms? And many more.

The journey that is our life's learning, which all our students in their different ways have begun with gusto, has an end point that is less important than the travel itself. A secondary school teacher told me that in her first class of this year she showed the class an image of a car being driven on a road that disappeared into the horizon. One of her students said that the car was Keystone, and that he was the driver, and that he would drive in such a way as to contribute to enhancing and improving

the road trip of the school. He was joining together the art of driving and the art of learning.

This art of learning, and the art in learning, draw the best out of us, and draw us onwards to journey creatively and critically, and to construct learning that becomes ours genuinely to own. I'll end by quoting from an art form, poetry. The great British Victorian poet, Alfred Tennyson, wrote a poem about Ulysses, the ancient Greek military and voyaging hero, and an experiential learner if ever there was one. The poem expresses the quest of Ulysses always to continue exploring, discovering, and learning experientially. Ulysses says in this dramatic monologue:

I am a part of all that I have met;  
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'  
Gleams that untravell'd world whose margin  
fades  
For ever and forever when I move.

That's the art of learning in four short lines.

*Malcolm McKenzie*



# LEARNING TO LEARN

*"I never teach my pupils; I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn."*

—Albert Einstein





Children will always learn. They learn early on by play. They learn on the streets and in classrooms and they learn from peers and from teachers. They are naturally curious about cause and effect, and are innately motivated to learn all about the “hows” and “whys” of the world. They do not merely observe the environment around them, but rather experience the world by tasting it, touching it, hefting it,

bending it, even breaking it. If you have ever seen a child playing with dolls, searching through a toy box, or banging blocks together in a seemingly random manner, you will know they’re actually engaging in a quite rational process of making hypotheses, evaluating statistical data, and dismissing prior beliefs when presented with stronger evidence. They also display remarkable psychological intuition and, by observing the actions of other people, can determine underlying motivations, desires and preferences. Learning - it’s in their genes.

But how do learners learn? A rich and growing body of literature argues that learning is more meaningful when learners construct their own knowledge. It further explains that the relevance of the curriculum and pedagogy to learners leads to ownership of knowledge, learning processes and the resulting skills and understandings. When students are encouraged to explore and engage their naturally inquisitive minds, pose questions, identify problems and issues together and are offered the opportunity to debate and discuss their ‘thinking’, it brings them into the heart of both the teaching and learning process as co-participants. As architects of their own learning, these young learners fully embrace the opportunity to be creative and initiate enquiries and explorations on their own.

At Keystone, this is what we strive to achieve. Come to Keystone at any time of the school day, and you will notice a continuous throb of excitement and a quiet hum of activity going on at the same time. The school’s principle of emphasizing learners’ ownership of the learning process, the knowledge to be investigated and the contexts in which teaching and learning take place, form a solid framework for active engagement. Mathematics is made exciting and engaging with new phenomena. Literature and cultural study are experienced

as a set of keys unlocking a whole range of delights and emotional journeys. Science is developed as a passion for enquiry, discovery and experimentation. Technology and Design class provides intensely focused activity involving problem solving, investigation and reflection, and the Arts are valued as opportunities for creative expression. And in this issue of the Keystone Magazine you will find how harvesting of truth, knowledge and understanding through the student-centered approach empowered our students to productively take their learning to the world.

We hope this publication opens up this discussion with students, teachers, and parents about the many approaches to learning at Keystone. It reviews and explores various student-based teaching and learning methodologies, looks at alternative routes to problem-solving, examines how to build specific attitudes and skills, and discusses new ways of understanding and fostering the dynamics of individual and collective learning. This special issue is not a how-to manual, it is not a prescriptive teaching plan, and it is certainly not a quick-fix solution or clear response. Rather, it should be seen as an open invitation to enter into a dynamically changing and evolving discourse around learning which is being propelled forward by a world of forces, ideas and experiences.

That is the beauty of learning as it never ends, only begins. Doesn’t it?

Sabrina Liu  
Director of Marketing and Communications  
Keystone Academy



### *Harvard Business Alumni Afternoon with Malcolm*

On 21 November 2015, Beijing's Harvard Business School Alumni invited Malcolm McKenzie for their afternoon talk series. Focused on the education of the future, Mr. McKenzie emphasized the need for a well-rounded and holistic education. He noted that this should also include a student's character development, which is often forgotten in today's educational emphasis on the development of skills.

### *Olympic Fencing Champion Inspires Students "Not to Give Up"*

As part of Keystone's 'Inspiration Series,' 2008 Olympic fencing champion, Zhong Man spent a few hours with the school community on 23 October 2015. It is hard to imagine a towering Olympian such as Zhong Man failing. But as he shares his life story with a packed audience in the Keystone Academy's Performing Arts Center, he narrated an experience of successes that came from not giving up, and from learning from failures. Zhong Man definitely inspired parents, teachers and students, especially those who learn fencing at Keystone. The aspiring foilists eagerly imitated Zhong Man's footwork and strike poses, as he patiently demonstrated his tactics and strategies.



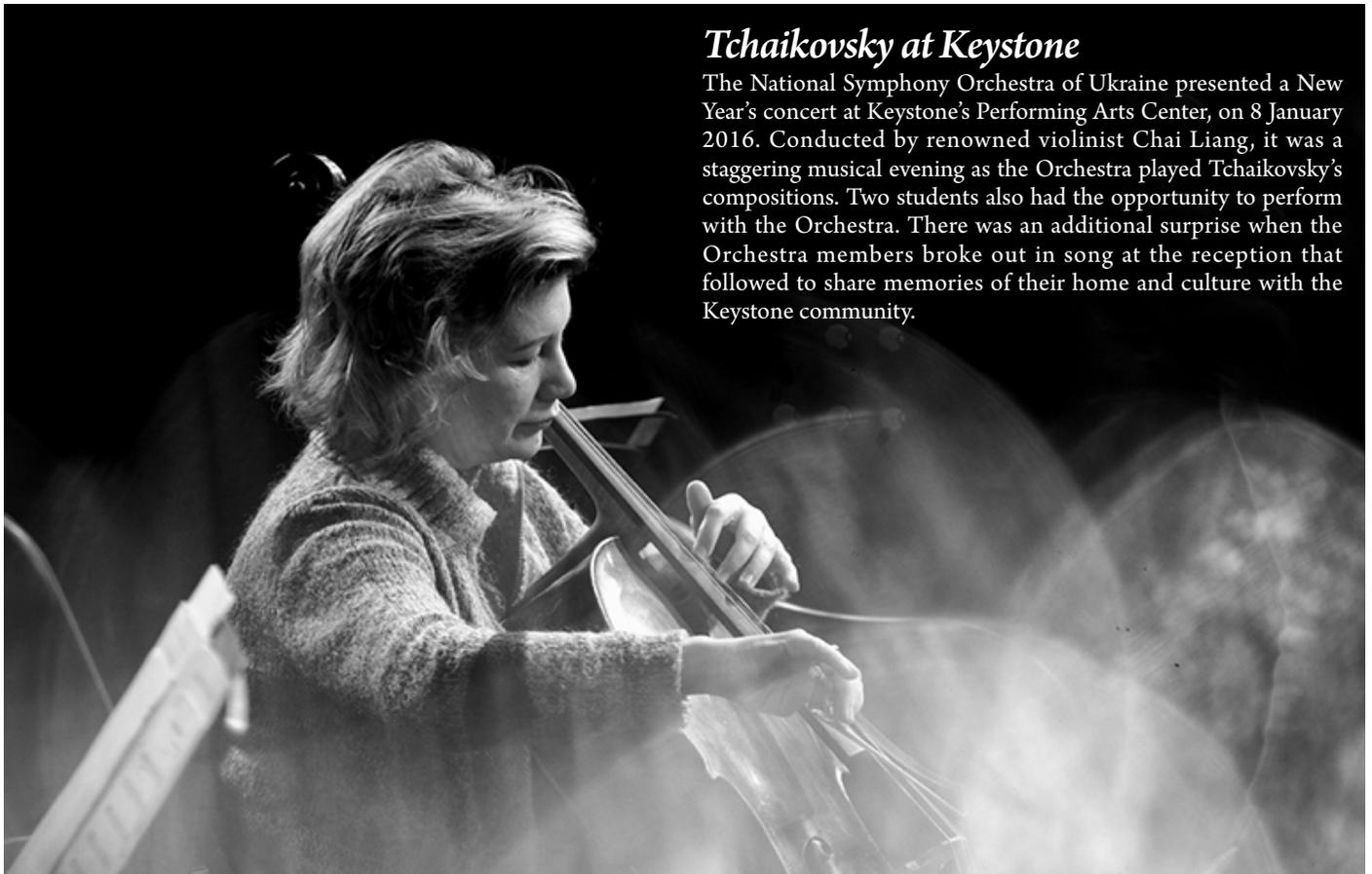


### *Scholarship Program Reconfirmed*

Education must be the pursuit of excellence, and in honoring this Keystone Academy mission the school has reconfirmed its scholarship program. There are two scholarships on offer: Founders' Scholarship and Junzi Scholarship. In honor of the men and women who had the vision to create Keystone Academy, the Founders' Scholarship is granted to students who distinguish themselves both academically, and in character. All applicants are eligible to apply for the Founders' scholarship. Students applying to grades 10 and 11 who have demonstrated outstanding academic and leadership ability in their previous schools will be considered for the Junzi Scholarship. They are merit based, and valid for both years of the Diploma Programme.

### *A Parley with the Pipa*

On 27 November 2015, students from the Central Conservatory of Music took the audience on a soulful journey across centuries in a Pipa concert. Music from a Pipa bears the richness of not only ancient China, but also that of other ancient cultures that it originally comes from. Trained under the renowned professor of Chinese folk music, Hao Yifan, her protégés presented a feast of centuries of melodies and traditions as they played classical Pipa pieces from different ancient Chinese dynasties. Keystone's very own Music teacher and Prof. Hao's student, Yang Xue also joined in the concert.

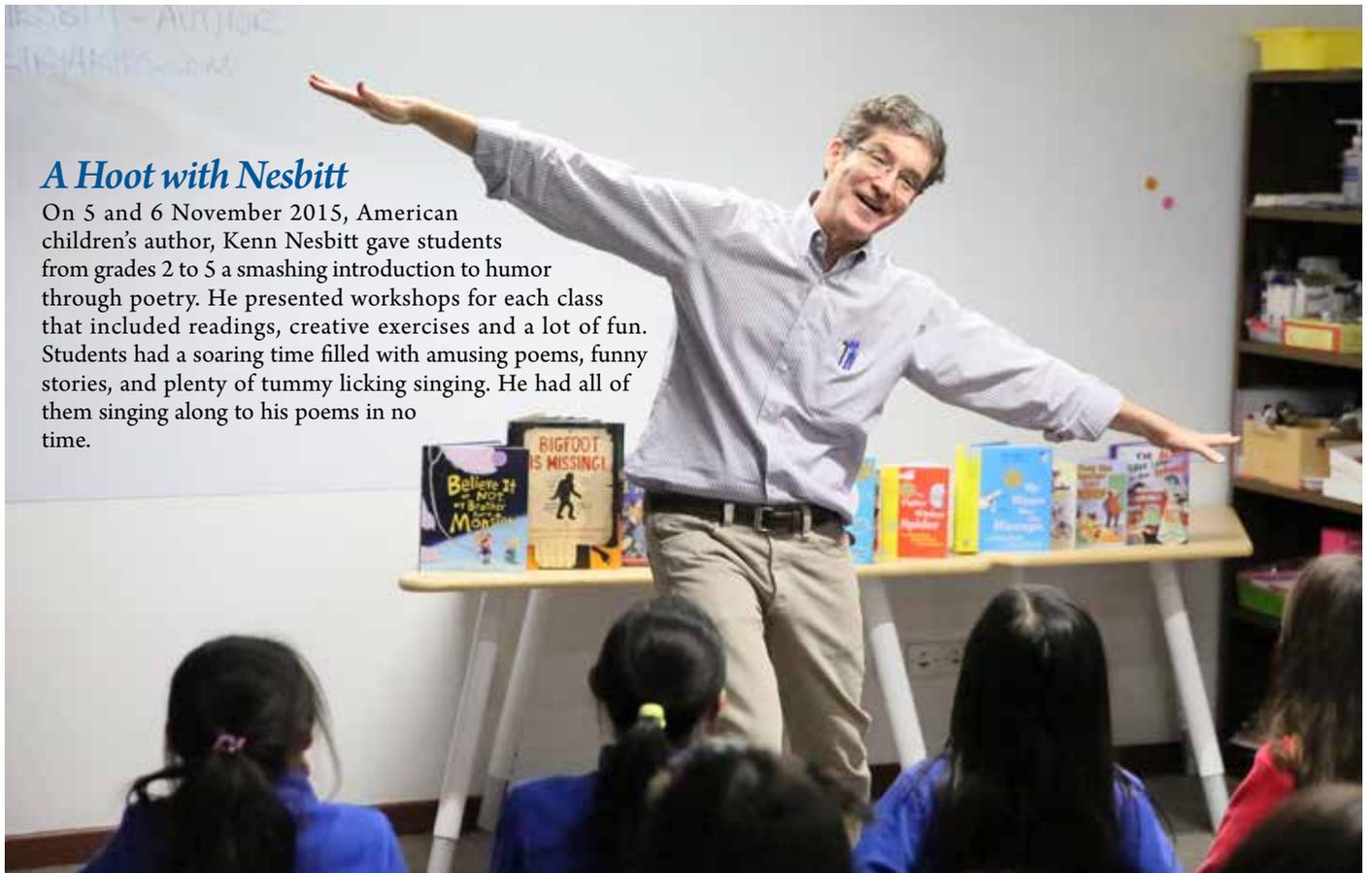


### *Tchaikovsky at Keystone*

The National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine presented a New Year's concert at Keystone's Performing Arts Center, on 8 January 2016. Conducted by renowned violinist Chai Liang, it was a staggering musical evening as the Orchestra played Tchaikovsky's compositions. Two students also had the opportunity to perform with the Orchestra. There was an additional surprise when the Orchestra members broke out in song at the reception that followed to share memories of their home and culture with the Keystone community.

## *A Hoot with Nesbitt*

On 5 and 6 November 2015, American children's author, Kenn Nesbitt gave students from grades 2 to 5 a smashing introduction to humor through poetry. He presented workshops for each class that included readings, creative exercises and a lot of fun. Students had a soaring time filled with amusing poems, funny stories, and plenty of tummy licking singing. He had all of them singing along to his poems in no time.

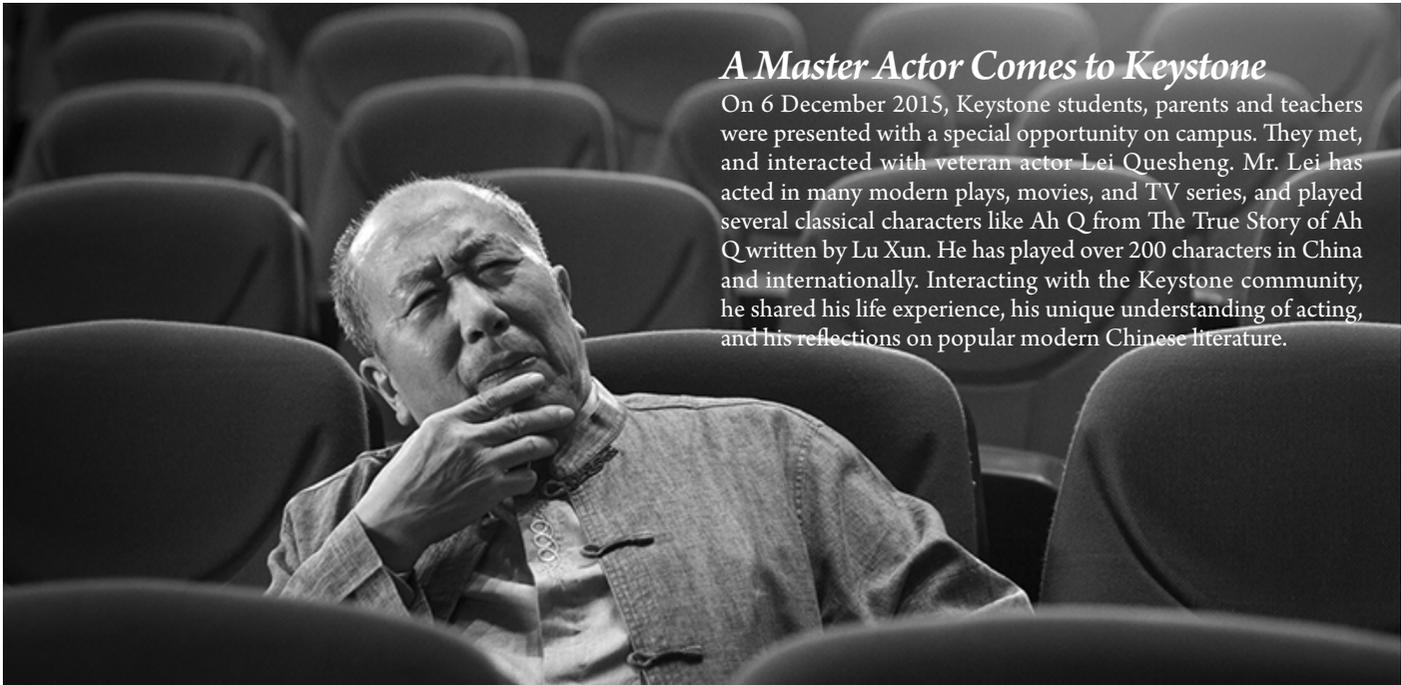


## *A Shower of Awards*

Middle and high school students who participated in the Math League Competition, in association with Stanford University, the National Science Foundation and the State University of New York at Stony Brook, almost all won prizes. Of the 46 students who took the test, four students won first prize, 14 students won second prize, and 25 students won third prize. Their performance was applauded. The Keystone community hopes they continue to enjoy more number crunching opportunities.

## *Listen to Their Voices*

"Loud, young, unique, sharp, and perhaps a little immature. But we wanted something that could project our voices, and it would be from and by us," is how grade 10 student, Evelyn Huang described the student newspaper, The Voice. The debut edition carried articles on the students' camping experiences, a roundup of news within and beyond Keystone, reviews of the latest in music and movies, and more.



### *A Master Actor Comes to Keystone*

On 6 December 2015, Keystone students, parents and teachers were presented with a special opportunity on campus. They met, and interacted with veteran actor Lei Quesheng. Mr. Lei has acted in many modern plays, movies, and TV series, and played several classical characters like Ah Q from *The True Story of Ah Q* written by Lu Xun. He has played over 200 characters in China and internationally. Interacting with the Keystone community, he shared his life experience, his unique understanding of acting, and his reflections on popular modern Chinese literature.



### *Authorized and Accredited*

In the spring of 2016, Keystone Academy received two global seals of trust – one from the International Baccalaureate and the other from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. The school was officially authorized as a world school ready to deliver the IB Diploma Programme starting in the academic year 2016-2017. Coincidentally, Keystone was also the 1000th IB Programme to be authorized in the Asia-Pacific region. Meanwhile, the school has also been fully accredited by the Accrediting Commission of Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ASC WASC) from foundation year to grade 10. This initial accreditation is for a period of three years ending 30 June 2019.

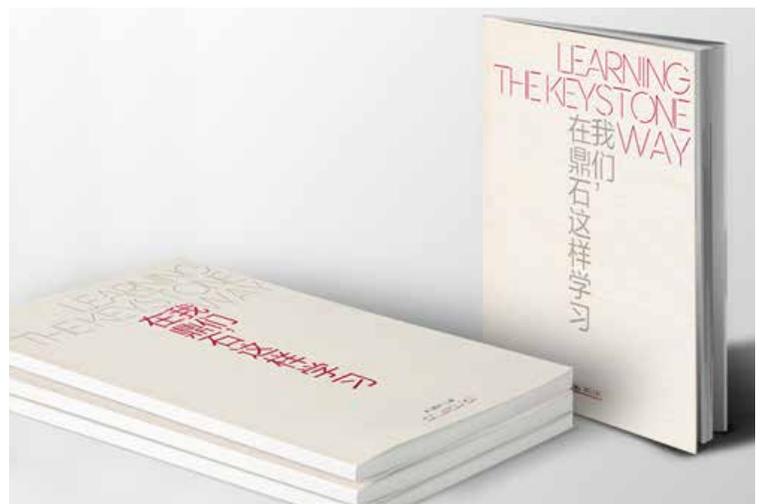


### *On a Musical Conversation Around The World with Kimball Gallagher*

Students, parents, and teachers experienced a piano concert like none other on Sunday, 30 August 2015. Kimball Gallagher, New York-based classical pianist and entrepreneur, engaged and involved students in his signature salon-style performance. Gallagher's musical conversation took his audience through Poland, France, Russia, Afghanistan, and even Antarctica, as he introduced a piece of music from each country or continent. Students remained engrossed in the performance, as well as learning the history and meaning behind each of the musical extracts. He not only inspires as a musician, but also as an entrepreneur and philanthropist. The 88 Concert Tour, his brainchild, which began as a house tour within the U.S., soon transformed into a global campaign. This initiative has raised thousands in funds through musical engagements and education in over 30 countries in seven continents.

### *Many Paths to Learning*

The inaugural issue of one of Keystone's flagship publications – Learning the Keystone Way – was published in the first quarter of 2016. This anthology covers all aspects of learning at Keystone – from the everyday to the extraordinary, from the classroom to the culture of learning, from the precision of practice to personal passions, from History to hip hop, and from Science to Sports. The plurality of approaches to learning is also revealed in the organization of the compendium – starting with a focus on learning in the classroom, the collection moves to how our students continue their learning outside the daily lessons and even beyond the gates of the school through experiential learning and service to communities. A few articles also explore learning within as an individual and a community through leadership initiatives or the advising program, and emerging traditions as a growing school.





### *Theatre Brought to Life*

Over 80 students from nine international schools in China and other countries, 10 professional theatre artists, trainers and educators, three creatively exciting high-energy days, and one location – this is a sure-shot recipe for the most rewarding theatre festival any student could wish for. Keystone Academy hosted this exhilarating group in association with the International Schools Theatre Association (ISTA) from 4 to 6 March 2016. The ISTA festival’s theme - ‘Bringing to Life’ - was conceptualized by Keystone’s founding middle and high school Drama teacher, Chloe Keller. The fully integrated festival – the first of its kind and targeting high school students – concentrated on using all aspects of technical theatre to bring a story to life on stage.



### *Quizzes, Debates and More*

On 19 and 20 March 2016, about 250 students from over 15 schools participated in the Beijing round of the World Scholar’s Cup hosted at Keystone Academy. Quizzes, essay writing, debates and more kept participating students on their toes for two days. Most Keystone teams that participated also qualified for the international round which took place last June in Bangkok where they also performed very well. Several Keystone students and teams also won prizes and other awards.



### *Striking Gold on the Global Stage*

Ten out of the 21 Keystone primary school students who submitted their artwork won gold medals at the Voronezh International Art Exhibition in Russia. For the last 20 years, the exhibition has been organized by the Voronezh Cultural Department, a local art school and an association of international artists. Over 50 international schools participated in this exhibition that showcased the work of students between the ages of 5 and 17. Out of the 10,000 pieces of art that were accepted, 100 were awarded gold medals.



The Art of Learning

Donations

# the ART of Learning

*I think, therefore...*

By Benita Sumita

What is learning? What does it entail? There is no simple or single answer to these questions. However in this issue of The Keystone Magazine, we offer a way to think about it – The ‘what’ lies in the ‘how’. This entails exploring and understanding the art of learning. And we show you ‘how,’ and what this means at Keystone.

“**W**hat did you learn today?” is a question that transcends cultural boundaries, and is a part of many a parent-child conversation in many homes. This is something I ask my son too. And just the other day, this is what he said, “I used paint to make a picture of a tree. Then I read a book about dinosaurs. Then I cut out pictures of warm clothes to stick on a teddy bear. And then we went out to play, and I was the policeman...” He went on and on for a while. Apart from making me wonder if I did too little in a day compared to a 3-year old, his answer was interesting because though I asked him what he learned that day, he told me a lot more about how he learned.

His answer took me back to a philosophy lesson, “Cogito, ergo sum,” meaning I think, therefore I am. This revolutionary statement by French philosopher René Decartes is foundational to any discourse on method – the ‘how.’ Thinking is what makes us human, and education must focus on “how” to think and “what” to know and not on “what” to think. More often than not, what to know and what to think are blurred at the cost of losing thinking altogether. It made me wonder why do we not ask our children, “How did you learn today?” We may ask how was school today, but not how did you learn today.

It is, if not more, an equally important question to ask. At Keystone, the two questions assume equal importance – not only ‘what,’ but also ‘how’ underpins the educational ethos and fabric of our school. It is what we would like to call the ‘Art of Learning’ at Keystone.

## CULTURE OF LEARNING

Each student finds and develops his or her own approach to studying – it is like your shoes that bear the imprint of your feet. It is personal; it is centered on the self. Teachers and educators help students find and nurture their ways of learning, their customized culture of learning. Customized because Keystone has a collective culture of learning, which students draw from, make their own, and sometimes develop further. At Keystone, the key ingredients that are used in forming a culture of learning are: critical thinking, creativity, and, most important, character development. These are equivalent to the mind, body and soul respectively of learning.

## Critical Thinking: Liberating the Mind

“Teaching is not the filling of empty vessels,” remarks middle and

high school Design teacher George Baxter, as he explained how students should not only fill up on information and knowledge, but also understand and be able to apply that which they have acquired. Mr. Baxter feels that students should be able to form opinions on what they have learned, be able to discuss issues around it, and even challenge the knowledge they receive. This is critical thinking; it is not about filling the mind, but about liberating it. The other side of the critical thinking coin is 'inquiry.' Together with guiding students on critically analyzing knowledge, teachers also train them in information gathering through inquiry and research, or as in primary school by first piquing their curiosity.

The primary school uses the International Primary Curriculum (read Gary Bradshaw's article on the IPC in this issue), which is theme based and executed through units and concepts. The start of every IPC unit is inquiry through the first stage – Entry Point. This is inevitably linked to critical thinking as primary school teacher Virva Palosaari explains: "I was very impressed to hear my grade 2 students come to the conclusion that 'living together' meant working together and cooperating. Some even said that they needed to listen to each other, and avoid fighting." These observations were made at the end of a couple of entry-point activities of the unit 'Living Together.' The entry-point activities are mostly collective exercises, which lead them to inquire and think critically together.

Primary school Chinese Teacher, Shi Mei could not agree more: "Critical thinking is very important, and it must be nurtured from a very young age. I try to teach my students that they must understand, reflect and question the information they research. However, I also teach them that people have a right to opinions, which they may or may not choose to agree with." Variety of opinions is something Wesley Wu from grade 10 has also become familiar with: "What stood out for me when researching for my history project on nationalist leaders is how different historians have different opinions about the same leader. This assignment made me think more critically about history."

## Creativity: Energizing the Body

Whether researching in History or following a line of inquiry in Science, critical thinking lays the foundation for creativity. From presenting what students have learned in innovative ways to using the lessons to create something entirely new, students are consistently urged and given plenty of opportunities to create and be creative. "It is a question of getting students to the 'what if' stage," says middle and high school Design teacher Jenny Small adding, "to get students to want to try and experiment instead of just repeating the taught processes."

Creativity is not restricted to the Arts subjects. It is the lifeline of every subject taught at Keystone – from Music to Math and Science to Social Studies. Middle and high school English Language Acquisition teacher Audrey Moh gave her grade 7 students one such opportunity in their unit on poetry: "The unit was 'Poetry and Song,' and students learned about how poetry and song can be used to express one's personal, social and cultural experiences creatively. The aim of the unit is to allow students, at the end, to be able to experiment with language, and come up with different forms of expression. After they learned how to write with structure and how to adhere to some of the conventions of English, this unit created a playground for them to be risk-takers, and experiment with expression," explained Ms. Moh.

## Character Development: Nurturing the Soul

However, all the creative and critical thinking lessons cannot make up for one important ingredient in a person's education – character development. Speaking on 'The Future of Education,' at a Harvard Business School Alumni event in Beijing, Head of School Malcolm McKenzie emphasized this very point: "The future of education is here. Schools like Keystone are blending the best pedagogies and curricula to cater to a changing world. But the real future of education cannot be realized without also focusing on the character development of students."





Character development is essential and integral to Keystone's education philosophy. For Keystone, the essentials to character development are espoused in our school's Shared Values – Compassion, Respect, Justice, Wisdom and Honesty. These are not just the intricate inlay work on the educational pillars of Keystone, but they are the pillars – the social norms – that define the parameters of social coexistence not only for students, but also for teachers, staff, parents, and the entire Keystone community. These values are holistic, inclusive and concrete as they draw from Chinese and non-Chinese cultural traditions, and from the curriculums in primary, middle and high schools. For instance, compassion is equivalent to the IPC value of thoughtfulness and adaptability. A student's parent sums it up well: "The utmost crucial task of education is to help students incorporate learning and their way of thinking into their very core value systems and beings."

Institutionally, one of the programs in place to ensure constant and intentional individual care of students is the Advising System. Each teacher in the secondary division is responsible for six to seven students or advisees. This formalized relationship – as an advisory group and individually with the advisor – helps students look up to an adult at school as a mentor, develop trust, and rely on the advisor for academic, social and emotional support. Character development

is also a founding keystone of the school that is realized through the residential program (read David Beare's article in this issue). Living in a residential community not only helps each student and faculty to grow as individuals, but also as a community.

### COMMUNITY OF LEARNING

Yes! A community is an essential element to education. Though individual scores and attributes have their place in the art of learning, it is incomplete without a community. Each student's individual journey of education at Keystone – their cultures of learning – is rooted in a community of learning. A community of learning is composed of many foundational stones, but three are highlighted here: teamwork, open-mindedness and giving.

### Teamwork: Cog in the Wheel

"For me drama was about reciting memorized dialogues, but this play made me realize how much more complicated plays are. I especially admire, and am impressed with, my peers who worked backstage to make this play possible. Nobody sees them, but they are the real stars," reflected David Sun from grade 10 who played one of the main protagonists in the school play, *Elements: A Love*



Wesley Wu, Grade 11

"Critical thinking has also become an essential technique in the revision of my notes."

Story. Teamwork must be part of an education; it helps students understand the importance of working and living together. They can learn from each other, support each other to learn and improve. Teamwork can also lay the foundation to success as Tony Ma from grade 10 noted after winning one of the group competitions at the 2015 North East Asia Math Competition: “I cannot make a mistake. If I make a mistake then my teammates will also make a mistake. It was true teamwork.”

Teachers also work in teams, at times, from planning each IPC unit in primary school to designing special projects within or across subjects. For instance, when middle and high school teacher George Baxter designed a project where grade 7 students had to conceptualize rubber band cars, he collaborated with middle and high school Science teacher Amanda Narkiewicz on teaching students the mechanisms needed to execute their ideas. The beauty of education emerges in teamwork, in the lightheartedness of brainstorming, in the cusp of collaboration, in the clash of ideas, and in moments of completion. There is no better feeling than this.

### Open-mindedness: Cultural Cross-connections

The excitement of learning does grow when learning extends beyond our gates, such as through experiential learning trips, service to communities, or even global peer learning. Visual Arts students from grade 10 engaged in a peer-learning project with a girls’ school in the UK. “At first, I was nervous but also quite excited about the peer-learning assignment. This was a rare opportunity, and I wanted to share my best work with the peer school. I really wanted to see the peer school’s work, and how they would assess us, especially because they are culturally different from us,” said Vincent Liu from grade 10.

Cultural openness, however, begins with knowing one’s own culture well in black, white and all shades of grey. For Keystone this culture is China, as home country for our local students and host country for our expatriate students. Promoting Chinese culture and identity in a world context is one of our three keystones, and embedded in the school’s philosophical and academic structure through Keystone’s signature framework – The Chinese Thread. For instance, when grade 7 students research Confucian and Taoist philosophies in their Chinese History lesson, their World Civilizations lesson focuses on ancient Greece. “Sometimes, I can draw historical comparisons when the lessons are aligned,” said grade 7 student, Makar Cherepanov. As an international student, Makar also feels that the Chinese Thread curriculum gives him a deeper understanding of China’s history within a global perspective.

### Giving: The Learning Continues

There is one perspective that brings learning and the art of learning into sharp focus, that of giving back. This forms the heart of education at Keystone – the Service Learning Program. Service learning enables the development of empathy and compassion in our students. Learning is also about “education of your heart and mind,” as Head of School Malcolm McKenzie often says. It is not only about fund raising and donations. Service is about giving yourself – your time and effort – to the community. Students from middle and high school also volunteer at local animal shelters and other charitable organizations such as the Roundabout Project, every weekend. Even the youngest students at Keystone were eager to help a local community school by organizing a charity sale in the summer of 2015.

Nancy Li, Grade 11

“With each lesson, I gradually started to discover the importance of individual thinking – critical thinking, creative thinking and divergent thinking, as well as individual styles in writing, drawing and performance.”



Betty Guo's Mother (grade 8 student)

"Most Keystone teachers are very generous with their praises and are happy to fill the campus with positive energy."



"We ensured that the foundation year students did not experience this activity as "us" and "them,"" explained foundation year Chinese teacher Hope Che. "It was important that our children understand that what they are doing is helping friends," she added. Giving is the lifeline of learning and education. You must give to get, and this is how the cycle of learning keeps going, and is kept alive.

### **LEARNING IS A PROCESS, NOT JUST AN OUTCOME**

Learning by definition is a process, and this process is also an outcome in and of itself – a process that needs to be kept alive even after school. So by implication we should ask our children "How did you learn today?" This will not only give you a peek into what your children have learned, but also give you the pleasure of reliving the

learning experience with them. A change in attitude and perspective is needed as Betty Guo from grade 8 reflects since she moved to Keystone: "I grew to realize that our perspective on scores is far more important than the score itself." So, let us not fret as one of the teachers in Dr. Seuss's book *Hooray for Diffendoofer Day!* says:

"You've learned the things you need  
To pass the test and many more –  
I'm certain you'll succeed.  
We've taught you that the earth is round,  
That red and white make pink,  
And something else that matters more –  
We've taught you how to think."





**AN  
UNFORGETTABLE  
EXPERIENCE**

By Evelyn Huang

Camping is an annual Keystone tradition that takes students and teachers to various outdoor destinations every fall. In the fall of 2015, grade 10 students camped near Mount Xiaowutai after an exciting and unforgettable hike. Evelyn Huang, one of the students, reflects on this camping trip and tells us how it was a journey of discovery for her and her peers.

“**W**ith my mind set on a destination ahead, I will get there rain or shine,” wrote Wang Guozhen, the poet who inspired an entire generation with his passion for life, his devotion to his dreams, and his love of the unknown paths and potential hardship and trials ahead. For the tenth-graders at Keystone, in the early autumn of 2015, they set off their very own journey filled with hopes and excitement as well as trials and hardship. As a participant and an observer on this amazing journey, I would like to look back at the unforgettable experience and share this article with all our readers.

### THE JOURNEY BEGINS

It was a day we all looked forward to – 9 September 2015 – as all the students and teachers from grade 10 set off on our camping trip. It started to rain when we reached our destination at the foot of Mt. Xiaowutai. With the temperature plummeting to below 10 at the campsite, we had to wrap ourselves up with the warmest clothes we had packed. As the drizzle persisted, the towering mountain range softly transformed, as if mysteriously, into a scene from a traditional Chinese painting by the thin veiled layer of mist.

On that first afternoon, we had our first home-cooked feast, played a variety of warm-up games, and learnt a lot about the outdoors. With everyone enjoying the laughs and the laid-back atmosphere of our time in the wild, nobody seemed to be paying any attention to the dark clouds gathering.

Getting up early the next morning, I noticed even thicker mist that signaled more rain. The original hiking plan was put off due to the

weather. Yet to my surprise, no one seemed to be discouraged by the coming rain. A lot of us students urged the hiking coaches to set a definitive time to start the hike. Despite their concerns for the weather, the coaches eventually made a joint decision with the teachers to proceed with the 5km backpack hike into the mountains in the afternoon.

It was still raining when we set off at 1pm. Carrying heavy backpacks, wearing raincoats and holding tightly on to our hiking staffs, the hiking teams, stretching over a few hundred meters, followed the path into the mist-covered mountain. Everyone was extremely careful walking over slippery rocks and muddy ground. Some people started to boost morale with a song, and soon everyone sang along. The teams gradually got into a rhythm and gained momentum. But we had to give in to the increasing downpour, and walk the five kilometers back to the campsite. The mountain range gradually faded into the evening sky and the stream resonated with the freezing rain, sounding like the prayer for a new dawn. Feeling exhausted, we drifted into sleep with the sound of raindrops as our lullaby.

When the first rays of the morning sun pierced the mist and illuminated the mountain peak, all the greenery seemed to have woken up fully refreshed. We picked up our backpacks and set off again. For me, the backpack is now filled with a sense of mission, the determination to finish the hike and perhaps the courage to challenge myself. On 11 September, we got back on the path to climb Xiaowutai. We were determined to reach the finish line.





### DISCOVERING YOURSELF: THE RESILIENCE OF LIFE

“I loved it!” said one of my friends, Ma Shixuan, adding with sparkling eyes, “For me, it was such a precious and unforgettable experience that I never had before. It is something I will always treasure.” Despite the rough terrain caused by the unexpected weather, many of my classmates felt the same.

She is definitely not the only one who felt that way. The trip to Xiaowutai brought us pain and injury, but more importantly the courage to carry on. With the help and guidance from the hiking coaches and the stunning nature as the backdrop, we carried on and completed the hike with our perseverance and determination.

Zhang Hongqing reflected on his experience as having unique significance to him: “We were enjoying ourselves until the hail suddenly started to come down heavily, making it difficult to go ahead. We struggled through the cold wind until we were too exhausted to continue. And when I finally reached the campsite, and beheld the magnificent beauty of Xiaowutai the following day, I couldn’t help feeling overwhelmed. I quickly forgot how difficult the previous day was. Despite its fragility, life has its own resilience and flexibility. We will experience a lot in our life, good and bad, and I would rather focus on the positive side of these experiences.”

This was not a camping trip to conquer na-

ture, for it is impossible to conquer the source of life to which we belong. However, we can feel, recognize and experience our fragility and great determination as human beings. Every time we make a courageous decision, we are discovering a brand-new self, a better and stronger self, determined to push ourselves further.

### TEAM SPIRIT: A SENSE OF BELONGING

During the trip and as we faced the forces of nature, we felt the maturing of our bonds with each other and a strengthening of our team spirit – something we seem to take for granted in the routine campus life. Almost invisible in the day-to-day city life, these bonds came unshackled in natural surroundings when we devoted ourselves to discovering our true selves. It is during these moments, such bonds and long-lasting friendships are born and revitalized, seeping into the innermost part of our hearts.

On the last day of our trip, the biting wind and snow gave way to a beautiful day. The windows of the farmhouses framed the snow-covered mountain ridge. We finally climbed up the ridge and took a group photo in front of the peak; words fail to capture the excitement and relief of the moment. As we returned to the campsite at the foot of the mountain, we all teared up. The dumplings we made were steaming up in the gentle sunlight, and the aroma filled our hearts with comfort.





This camping trip was an adventure of many firsts. We reached our finishing line with a deeper understanding of ourselves, and greater maturity in our own perspectives and behaviors. In our lifetime, there will be so many passing memories. Yet it is the milestones documenting our growth and development that will be treasured forever. We were born to be social beings in groups. We learn from, and give back to these groups we belong to. Looking back at the camping trip, the group and team spirit are no longer mere concepts, but priceless memories to be cherished. It can withstand any hardship, ups and downs, and only gets stronger and ecstatically beautiful. It is friendship and the embodiment of the compassion, integrity and kindness in the heart of every Keystone student. Our commitment to friendship, groups and team spirit will also be the guiding force when we are interacting with other members of society, the international community, Mother Nature and the universe.



# The Art of Listening

The role of a teacher can be summarized by words such as teaching, guiding, instructing, mentoring, advising, and so on. One word that one might not often associate with a teacher is listening. But that is exactly what Nita Pettigrew says is central to being a good teacher: “The teacher’s task, then, is to listen to that dynamic, to be an informed and open-minded witness to her student’s explorations—and to be genuinely interested.” Nita Pettigrew joined the Phillips Exeter Academy’s English department in 1986, and served as the department’s chair from 2001 to 2005. She retired in 2006, and has since been a much sought after teacher trainer and consultant. In the spring of 2016, Ms. Pettigrew conducted a workshop for Keystone’s middle and high school faculty on how to inculcate this pedagogy of listening. This article by Ms. Pettigrew originally appeared in *The Exeter Bulletin* of 2007. *The Keystone Magazine* is grateful to Phillips Exeter and Ms. Pettigrew for the permission to republish.

One of the hardest things about learning to teach is learning to listen. It’s also one of the most essential.

**In** 1985, when I first came to New England, I had been teaching English for 20 years. Within the accepted practice of the time, I had reason to believe I was a successful teacher: I built my classes around discussion, and I saw to it that those discussions were lively, that every student participated, and that most of them saw the “relevance” of all our reading and writing. In those days, I never entered a classroom without knowing my goals, without knowing what I wanted the students to understand by the end of the period. I thought carefully about the steps by which I would bring my charges from point A to point B or C or D. I thought of myself as a coach, but in fact I was a pretty good example of Teacher-as-Choreographer. The students did the dance, but I controlled the music and the steps they took. My job, from my perspective (and from the perspective of the schools in which I taught) was to bring the students into my relationship with the literature we studied. In that scenario, I was active and my students, though lively, were passive—“little pitchers”<sup>1</sup> into which I poured all my bright ideas.

A teacher-framed, teacher-centered classroom, I have come to realize, may be well intended, but it misses the point: to deliver information is not necessarily to build knowledge or understanding. Over the years, what I’ve learned from experience has been supplemented and supported by research going all the way back to Piaget and Dewey. My present practice is based on several fundamental insights:

<sup>1</sup> Charles Dickens, *Hard Times*

Learning is a personal journey, guided by each individual’s unique way of thinking, and colored by each individual’s unique perspective.

When we understand something, we own it, and the pleasure of ownership is visceral—not merely intellectual.

The ideas that are dearest to us, that become internalized and useful, are the ones we have struggled personally to build.

But I am getting ahead of myself.

## A STUDENT ONCE MORE

In 1985, mid-career, I came east to go to Harvard. The year was an awakening for me; it initiated a profound shift in my understanding of what it means to be a teacher. Working with Eleanor Duckworth, in a course titled “Teaching and Learning,” I began to redefine my role in the classroom. My practice moved from a teacher-centered pedagogy to a student-centered pedagogy.

By the time I left Harvard to resume the responsibilities of my own classroom, I still had a lot to learn, but I knew this: I had to sit down with my students and begin to listen. And when I did that, when I began to practice a listening pedagogy, the level of student engagement in my classes changed dramatically; my students became self-directed, active learners. And they began to feel a pride of ownership.

We came into Eleanor’s class from widely varied backgrounds. We were teachers and we were administrators. Many of us were seasoned veterans, and some were in their very first year of teaching. We took the course for a variety of reasons, but we had this in common: we were interested in the link between teaching and learning. We were interested in how people learn, and we wanted to refine our own teaching skills, or, as administrators, we wanted to help others become more effective teachers.

We were a large class, maybe 40 people, and we all came

with our own private goals and brought with us our own histories and experience. All this variety became fundamental to the collaborative work we did. Eleanor did no lecturing, but she did do a lot of role modeling. The course was structured around a series of experiences that encouraged meta-cognition. We learned to observe carefully; we learned to ask (no matter how “trivial”) the questions that emerged from our observations; and we experienced the thrill—I can think of no better word—of constructing our own understanding.



JAMES NUBILE

### WATCHING THE MOON

Our most dramatic assignment required that we watch the moon for an entire semester. (I assure you that at first there were complaints about the assignment. Who ever came to Harvard to look at the moon?) Every day we recorded our sightings and shaped questions. It was astonishing to discover how pitifully little most of us knew about the moon.

At first our questions were simple: When does the moon rise? Where does it rise? Wait, does it rise in a different place sometimes? Why was it still in the sky this morning at 8:45? How does that happen? We drew pictures in our journals; we reflected in writing on what we saw. And then we brought our jottings to class, sharing observations, sharing information, and sharing our confusions. We worked together. Eleanor listened.

Her utterances were invariably inquisitive and

open-ended and completely nonjudgmental; she was singularly focused on understanding the meaning we were making. Her focus seemed to be on how we were building our understanding rather than on what we understood. I wonder if you could say more about that, she might say. Or, I’m curious about what you see happening here.

Over the course of our first semester, my classmates and I experienced a change: our observations of the moon became more subtle and our questions became very much more complicated, more sophisticated. And while our understanding of the moon deepened, so did our appreciation of how we, ourselves learned.

One night, late into our second term, I came into class with a question about the rotations of the moon as it revolves around the Earth. Eleanor brought me—and my question—to the front of the room. She let

*“The Harkness table is the first thing a visitor notices, and I can’t overstate its importance to the tone and conduct of the class. The students and their teacher sit down as equals. The table itself reminds us that this is collegial work, and its great smooth plane physically connects us; we look directly into each other’s faces, engaged in mutual investigation.”*

<sup>3</sup> William James, *The Principles of Psychology*, Chapter 9: “The Stream of Thought”.

me explain the problem. I drew pictures on the board, thinking out loud. She and the class listened hard; I could feel them listening. I can't tell you how affirming such listening is. And then, when I seemed to hit a wall, a dead-end in my process, Eleanor asked, "Would it help if you used this flashlight and this orange, and before long, I was the sun and a classmate was the Earth, and another classmate rotated the orange as he revolved around the 'Earth.'" I was directing the action out of my own body of understanding, and I could feel myself moving toward a solution.

It took time. It felt like a few minutes to me, but it must have been much longer because Eleanor, sensing that I was on the brink and knowing that learning is a series of "flights and perchings,"<sup>2</sup> put her hand on my shoulder and asked me if I'd like to let it rest a little.

I went back to my desk in the far rear of the darkened room and pulled out a notebook in which I began to draw, still noodling the problem. I could feel that my solution was imminent; I could feel it. One of my classmates, sitting in the dark on the floor next to me, whispered urgently that he knew the answer to my question. He could tell me. And he began to explain. He wanted to be helpful, but resentment and self-protection rushed up inside me: here was a robber entering my house. He would steal from me an understanding that in a minute or two, by my own efforts, would be mine. I was desperate. I leaned down and hissed into his face: "Shut up!" And he did.

I began then, for the first time in my life, to solve a problem by laying out an algebraic formula (I don't know where that impulse came from), and as I constructed the formula, the pieces fell, breathtakingly, into place. It was an "aha" moment. I knew, perhaps, for the first time, the euphoria of discovery.

I walked home that night with the knowledge that there would be a fundamental change in my teaching.

### A TEACHER'S TASK

I joined the faculty at Phillips Exeter Academy immediately following my year with Eleanor. I found at Exeter a school culture that valued student-centered, discussion-based teaching. Let me say here that all discussion-based classes are not student-centered; witness my own early teaching—students talked a lot, but I saw to it that they talked in the "right" directions. And people teach out of who they are, so there was—and still is—much variation in how the discussion-based classroom is conducted at Exeter. But what was going on in the English department when I joined the faculty seemed a particularly good fit with what I wanted my teaching to become.

The Harkness table is the first thing a visitor notices, and I can't overstate its importance to the tone and conduct of the class. The students and their teacher sit down as equals. The table itself reminds us that this is collegial work, and its great smooth plane physically connects us; we look directly into each other's faces, engaged in mutual investigation. The physical fact of the table seems to encourage and facilitate collaboration. I am at eye level, not above them, not apart from them. I am face to face, and I am listening. I try to do nothing that will take the attention off the students and their investigations. I do not even stand to use the board (though sometimes they use the board). A visitor to my class might get (and sometimes does get) the impression that I am doing nothing. But appearances are deceiving.

My students and I may sit as equals, but our jobs are not the same. My job is to present the students with a challenge that will suitably engage them and push them toward their own "horizons of understanding."<sup>3</sup> In English that means assigning readings, for instance, that are not merely age appropriate but will also pique the students' curiosity and give them something with which to wrestle intellectually and emotionally: Julius Caesar, *The Old Man and the Sea*, *Heart of Darkness*, Mrs. Dalloway, *Hamlet*, a poem by Auden or Plath or Simic or Komunyakaa. In a listening pedagogy, the teacher thinks carefully about each challenge he offers his students. It is a delicate decision, based on a close (and fallible) reading of the evolving skills and interests and needs of each group of students. And it is a crucial decision because the essential dynamic in the classroom is centered there, in each student's engagement with the text.

The teacher's task, then, is to listen to that dynamic, to be an informed and open-minded witness to her student's explorations—and to be genuinely interested. In English, as in every other discipline, each student comes to the assigned problem with his own store of knowledge and experience. Ninth graders will read Julius Caesar with a very different perspective than seniors do. So we let the students lead the way. They make the observations; they raise the questions. When the teacher is focused on how the student is making meaning, the student is empowered to explore those issues that capture her imagination. The students can feel the teacher's respect for their ideas; their learning environment is nurturing and safe, and the emphasis is on their own thinking process: an "answer" is merely one solution to a problem, one result of a thoughtful process.

The students come into class having prepared individually, but once seated at the table, they work collectively.

<sup>3</sup> Shay Mayer, conversation October 2005 in reference to classroom observations relevant to her dissertation, *Analyzing Agency and Authority in the Discourse of Six High School English Classrooms*, Harvard University, 2006.

Last winter, for instance, my ninth graders prepared Faulkner's "Barn Burning" for discussion. At home, they read the story and used their journals to record observations and to raise questions they would bring to class. Meanwhile, I prepared by rereading the story, refreshing my memory on detail and structure so that my ears would be freshly tuned to the day's discussion. The table is also my workplace, so I am usually sitting there when the students arrive. That was the case on this particular day.

Eric and Tom are the first to enter. Before they even sit down, one asks the other, "What is wrong with this Abner guy? Is he a pyromaniac?" They laugh, but they have opened up a possibility. By the time every seat is filled, the initial questions—addressed to each other—have transformed into observations.

Abner is clearly the center of the story they read. They want to know what makes him act the way he does, and they begin to gather details: Look here, Mitch says, he strikes his son without emotion. Mitch reads the passage, notices the language. His classmates are listening hard. I am listening, too. This is a dance of their own making. Yeah, he hits Sarty just like he hits his mule. They turn to that page and compare the language of the two passages.

Together they have defined their project: to make sense of Abner Snopes. And because it's their project, they are engaged in its progress. He doesn't seem quite human, Rebecca observes, He's always described as dark and flat, like a silhouette and expressionless. Where is that? Tom asks. There is more flipping of pages, more reading from the text. Ella leans forward: I'm thinking about those little fires he builds whenever they're camping, she says. Do you think they're related to his coldness? Before long, several classmates agree that Abner is terrified of his own emotion and keeps it tamped down—like those little fires. They talk about how controlling he is, how cold-blooded. And then Lilly asks, Do you guys think he's envious? And she reads a line in which the narrator tells us that Abner is envious.

Toward the end of class, several students have suggested that Abner Snopes is a man outside society who lives by his own rules. By the time they leave the room they have serious concerns about his humanity; they still have questions they want to pursue. They'll be back. And since it is their project, they'll be prepared.

### **A LISTENING PEDAGOGY**

In my old, teacher-centered classroom, I would have been the one posing all these content-oriented questions; I would have been calling their attention to the details of the text. My assumption would have been that the students' interests were the same as mine, and I would have been badly mistaken.

Sarty is the character who catches my interest in this

story. Why wouldn't he catch theirs as well? He's young, they're young. In my early practice, I would have come into class with questions and passages ear-marked so that we could have a thorough discussion of the character of Abner's son. I would have given them my reading of the story and I would have missed theirs altogether.

So where was I in this, most recent, discussion of "Barn Burning"? I was there, of course: I had work to do. I was trying to listen to them in the way that Eleanor had

When I'm working well, I speak maybe four times in a 50-minute period. Such teaching requires continual self-discipline: my own enthusiasms are sometimes hard to contain. Put another way: my ego is always ready to get between the students and their explorations.

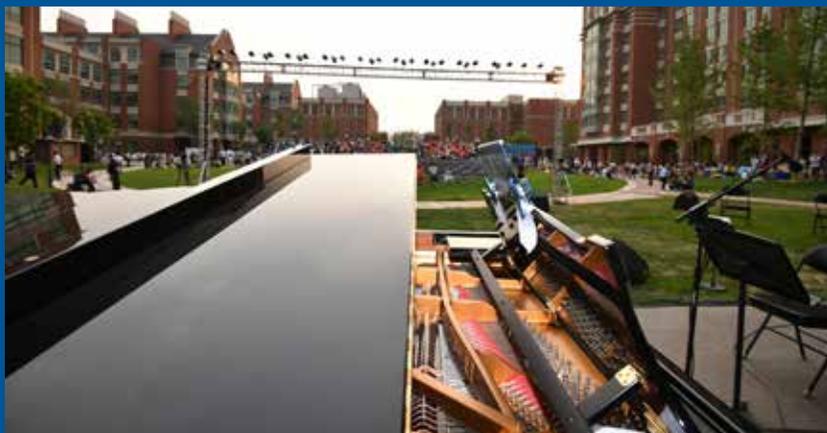
listened to me: I was inquiring into their thinking. My remarks may have sounded something like this: Pyromaniac? What makes you think so? Or, Can you say more about those small fires? Or, Help me understand what you mean by "emotionless." I was giving them time, too, and the freedom to slip into silence. My students and I are comfortable with silence. Often, a classmate's luminous remark will send us all searching, noodling in the dark. Perching before the next flight.

When I'm working well, I speak maybe four times in a 50-minute period—and I try to make those remarks brief. Such teaching requires continual self-discipline: I will admit that my own enthusiasms are sometimes hard to contain. My interests and interpretations—my understanding—continually threaten to burst into the open. Put another way: my ego is always ready to get between the students and their explorations—like a robber breaking in upon their thoughts. I must be vigilant. To practice a pedagogy of critical exploration, a listening pedagogy, the teacher must be ready to stand out of the way.

The important story is the one constructed out of the relationship between each student and the work at hand. If you listen closely, you can hear it being built.

## First Open Air Concert

*Li Yundi, Chai Liang and Warren Mok shared the stage at Keystone's first open air concert on 22 May. Together, they brought the magic of spring to their audience through music and song.*







### *Echoes of Learning*

*Through Keystone's experiential learning program, students experience echoes of what they learned in class. In the 2015-2016 academic year, Keystone students traveled to various Chinese provinces to explore, experience and understand China.*





### *Service Learning: Three Destinations, One Purpose*

*From working in an elephant village in Thailand to helping with restoration efforts in an earthquake-torn village in Nepal, and building homes in Chengdu, 50 Keystone students served communities and learned, as they worked in response to others' needs.*



### *Winter Celebration*

*Students, parents and teachers enjoyed a day of fun, food and festivities before the annual winter break.*





## End of Year Festival

*Celebrations and ceremonies closed Keystone's second year filled with milestones and memorable moments. We became an IB authorized world school, WASC accredited, and most important, grew in numbers and strength.*

## *Macbeth on a Contemporary Stage*

*Led by founding Drama teacher Chloe Keller, Keystone's middle and high school students brought Macbeth into a contemporary setting, enabling students to reflect on their own spheres of social existence. It was a commemoration of 400 years of the Bard's death.*





# CREATIVITY IN THE IPC

By Gary Bradshaw, Assistant Head of Primary School and IPC Coordinator

Creativity is as important in education as literacy, and we should treat it with the same status.

– Ken Robinson

When you think about creativity in schools you cannot help but think about the most viewed ‘Ted Talk’ of all time. I am not sure if you are familiar with the ‘Ted Talk’ series, but these are talks by leading thinkers, creatives, artists, designers and alike. Professor Ken Robinson’s Ted Talk entitled ‘Do Schools Kill Creativity?’ has been viewed over 36,102,995 times! I alone have watched it about five times. It is a truly inspirational and funny speech, and if you get a chance please view it.

In this talk, Prof Robinson challenges the way we educate our children. He pushes for a radical rethink on how we develop creativity. He speaks about the emphasis schools and society generally place upon mathematics

and languages, which push humanities and the arts down the ladder of importance.

## LEARNING HOLISTICALLY

Prof Robinson also advocates for education that meets the ‘holistic’ needs of the child. The building of skills, knowledge and understanding in all areas, and not just a few that will be needed as we deal with the issues of the future. Concerns such as poverty, climate change, political and religious unrest, population and equity issues, will no doubt all need creative and innovative solutions. Preparing our kids today for what to expect in the future is essential.

A wonderful story of a young girl stood out for me from the Ted Talk. She found tradi-



tional schoolwork difficult, and couldn't sit still or focus. Her parents sent her to a specialist as they felt she might have had a learning disorder. After some observation the specialist told her parents that their daughter did not have a learning disorder, but was a dancer and they should send her to dance school. This young girl went on to lead the Royal Ballet in England and work on projects such as *The Phantom of the Opera*.

This delightful example demonstrates that each child is unique, and has a unique set of skills, talents and passions. For our children to grow up to be successful they will need opportunities to explore who they are, and they should be able to tap into their strengths while extending their talents and interests. The unique skills of every child mean they must be given an opportunity to draw on these in the real world, giving them a real advantage. In developing a company, isn't it important to be unique and creative? As a doctor isn't it essential to think outside the box in order to provide the right diagnosis? Aren't we expected to make use of all of our skills, creative and otherwise to deal with the issues of the day?

Prof Robinson is one of a number of significant voices that champion for educational change, and call for the arts and creativity to be a significant and essential part of any curriculum. However as is often the case in times of educational crisis, where standardized testing shows failings in mathematics or languages, the arts is usually the first to be cut. Financial and funding issues in schools take their toll on the arts first and foremost. This decrease in time allocation in the classroom and the withdrawal of funding is often seen as the solution. This is a serious mistake and really works against the development of the 'whole child'.

### THE IPC APPROACH

When the IPC was first developed over 25 years ago, it was done so knowing that we had little idea of what the future would hold. Despite this, the challenge was, and remains to prepare students academically, creatively and socially for whatever they have to deal with. The IPC approaches creativity and the arts differently than most standard curricula, and being a predominantly humanities and arts curriculum it does seem to redress the subject hierarchy Prof Robinson refers to. Also while it may be easy in local or government schools to cut back on the funding for the arts, reduce teacher numbers, or reduce classroom time dedicated to arts, the IPC has it embedded within the structure of the program itself.

For example in a unit such as 'Living Together' for grade 2 where students examine community, it is easy to see the importance of subjects such as society, history or geography. The arts and more particularly the role of artists are also seen as being particularly significant. Using art as a means of representing what community





means to each student, as well as examining the role artists have in creating an understanding of what that community is and represents are fundamental. Through this IPC unit, art and creativity are not only a product (something created at the end of a process), but also part of the process itself.

IPC also has units that are solely arts focused. Units such as 'Paintings, Pictures and Photographs' for grade 5 or 'They See the World Like This' for grade 4 are rich units that look, not only at the role of creativity and expression, but also of the creative process. Through these units students explore the role of artists, examine the creative process, and put the function of artists into a historical and societal perspective. Not everyone is going to be a famous rock musician, master sculptor, or famous actor; however it is the skill development, creative flexibility, and the ability to express oneself through the creative process that are essential.

IPC is fashioned on the 'inquiry-based' model of learning. Inquiry is widely defined as the seeking of truth, knowledge, information or understanding through questioning. Today this methodology is

not uncommon particularly in the realm of international curricula, but it is much more than just finding answers. True inquiry also involves converting that information and data into something useful or applying that knowledge in new and interesting ways to bring about deeper understanding or change. Embedded within this inquiry process is consideration for the outcome of learning itself. Why do we learn? What is it all for? Preparation for what is ahead is significant, but surely we are much more than passive actors in our future? Are we not agents for change, charged with molding the world and society into something with purpose and intent?

If you are familiar with Blooms Taxonomy, then this should be evident to you. Over 50 years ago Benjamin Bloom and others developed a framework that focused on objectives and activities that promoted higher-level thinking. The lowest level of thinking and at the bottom of the scale is 'Remembering,' which involves being able to remember and recall data or information). This is deemed important; however to be productive we need to move our thinking up through this stage and beyond. At the



top of the framework is 'Creating,' which requires students to put their knowledge into action through a process of interpretation, analysis and evaluation. It is here that we become active and creative with our ideas, and can bring about change and growth. This creative action is significant throughout the IPC, and here at Keystone. Having students build upon their knowledge, explore, inquire, research and present information and develop their ideas are fundamental to our learning process.

### **CREATIVITY ALIVE AND WELL AT KEYSTONE**

Creativity is inexorably linked to the arts, though not exclusively. While one may think about being creative in dance, in art, in drama or in music, it is also a fundamental part of science, mathematics and language. At Keystone, we want our students to reach well beyond the knowledge and remembering phase. We want them to construct and create meaning, explore and seek answers and creatively problem solve. A student who studies through the IPC should also have the IPC Personal Goals embedded in who they are and who they become. Qualities such as the ability to inquire,

compassion and an understanding for society and a moral compunction to bring about positive change are not only important, but also essential.

Children are fundamentally creative. They play, draw, act, sing, dance and move at any given opportunity. They take risks, make mistakes, and trust their instincts, but along the way many of these qualities are slowly quashed. Praise is often reserved for the right answers, mistakes are stigmatized, and people are frightened of being wrong.

A creative curriculum built upon inquiry and the development of a culture where we learn from our mistakes and are praised for doing so, is the way forward. To go back to Prof Robinson's question 'Do schools really kill creativity?' one needs to look at educational priorities. Are Math and Literacy at the top of the hierarchical ladder and how does a school redress that balance? A sound curriculum is certainly a start, and the core values and goals of the IPC is just that. More than that, we need to redress the priorities and develop an education system where creativity, arts, innovation, and acceptance of failure are at the heart of all learning, just like at Keystone.

If you are not prepared to be wrong, you'll never come up with anything original.  
– Ken Robinson

IN CONVERSATION WITH





# BEING SUCCESSFUL IN THE IBDP





Keystone Academy's college counseling program will be up and running soon. Gareth Rees is one of the consultants supporting and advising the school on the matter. Mr. Rees holds undergraduate and postgraduate degrees from Exeter University and has taught previously at De Montfort and Leicester Universities. Most recently he was the Vice Principal of Atlantic College where he has been the IB Coordinator for six years and an Economics teacher for twenty. He also has a wide range of examining experience, and is a workshop leader in all IB regions. Mr. Rees speaks to *The Keystone Magazine* about the IB Diploma Programme, its merits, and what it means to be a successful IBDP student.

**Q: This is your first visit to Keystone Academy, what are your first impressions?**

A: I love it. I have worked with Malcolm before, but it was in a school that was very mature, a school that had been running for many years before he and I arrived. So in that way, Keystone is special because everything is new. But I am astonished how mature it seems though it is rather new. The school seems to have assembled a very talented and experienced group of teachers. It seems also to have a remarkable social chemistry. For instance, I went to a class at the end of last week, and I was astonished at the way the students support each other, although the particular class was designed to have them argue against each other. They managed to do that with a mixture of hostility and friendship as though they knew each other really well. It was social chemistry working in an extremely good way. Of course a very talented teacher had put them in that situation.

**Q: Why is the IBDP a good high school or pre-college international curriculum compared to the several others out there?**

A: I have taught it since 1983. My wife has taught it since 1985. Our children took the IBDP so we were able to see the impact it had on them. I do think the people who designed the IBDP many years ago were extremely clever, in that they produced a system that somehow involves concurrency of learning. The students leave one class with their head full of ideas, which they then take to the next class. So it might be that the teacher of one subject might hear the end of a discussion from the previous class, and pick it up. So the history and physics teachers are not in separate boxes any more than the students are. They carry their learning around with them.

The other aspect is that students like to have their teachers in a box. That teacher is a physics teacher. But because of the community service programme, and because of the extended essay and theory of knowledge, no teacher is limited to one box. So the students see them in different capacities, and come to know them better as a result. So the teacher-student relationship is quite unique and inspiring. And I do believe that a boarding program, such as the one at Keystone, goes very well with the IB because what happens in the classroom can continue in the evenings.

**Q: How important do you think is creativity and innovation when it comes to being successful in the IBDP?**

A: Let me talk about thinking here. The theory of knowledge course is supposed to tie together all of the loose ends of all the subjects, and take everything further. And all of the textbooks, and teacher support material that goes with the IB encourage that. In my subject, which is Economics, we have had many occasions even in one week where what

looks like a specific question will turn into something that the students may realize has incorporated an assumption or values that might be discussed further. For instance, in my old school I was very friendly with the Physics teacher. And Physics and Economics are not close. We would often argue about the underlying nature of our subjects as friends, and we decided that we would do this in class. So sometimes I would go and sit at the back of his Physics class and say something rude and critical. He would do the same in my Economics class. The students would look around thinking we didn't like each other. They thought there was feud between the two of us and between Economics and Physics. This was enormously productive from the students point of view because they started to trade off the underlying value of our subjects – the rigidity of laws in Physics against the adaptability of laws in Economics. The students really enjoyed that.

I can see this happening at Keystone, because the Theory of Knowledge course is being carefully planned. But in the end of two years, there is a test. And yet as an examiner quite frequently I see the answer that I want to see from the limits of my subject. But then I see something else that comes from a discussion or argument at which I was not present. But I can see the reflections of the student in the writing. They would have to be risk-takers to do that. Students are probably thinking, "Oh! The Economics examiner will only want to see this!" But I want to see more. I want to see ideas related to the context as well. Let me give you a silly example. I went to get a haircut at a local salon here, close to Keystone. And when I went to pay, the person saw my Keystone name card and asked me, "Are you a teacher?" When I said yes, I immediately got a discount. As an economist, this is fascinating. It seems to imply that teachers have a greater value in Chinese culture than in my country.

There is also the curious nature of the IBDP structure. Students would usually choose subjects they are interested in at the higher level. But at the standard level, students may be forced to study subjects they might not necessarily be good at – there is a slight level of involuntariness. For instance, a student who is interested in Humanities or Language, would have to study Math at the standard level; they have to. The programme is configured in such a way – three higher-level subjects, three standard subjects, one first language, one second language, one Arts subject. So in a way the depth of thinking does not come from individual subjects, but from the space between them, from the perception of the overall education they get. And we must not forget that the exam takes place only at the end of the two years, when they are at their best.

**Q: What does success look like in the IBDP?**

A: In one word, it would be contestability. I would like to think that if

a Keystone student were to hear something in class that they wanted to engage with further, he or she would feel confident enough to say to the teacher, “Can we talk about that further? Is that always the case?” And a teacher in a good IB school would say, “I know I have a set agenda for this class but let us spend some time talking about what the student has raised. “That is pre-examination.

In the examination, I hope students can say, “This is the theory I am supposed to explain. However I am not sure that it always works. For example, in my culture or in my town or in my economy, here is an example that undermines the theory a little.” Now this student is going to get top marks. That would be the bit of the answer that would enable me as an examiner to give marks. IB examiners never deduct marks for errors and omissions. What they do is to think, “What can I see, what can I reward?” And so the marks will build up. So a perfect answer in the IB could be many different types of answers. But it would have allowed the examiner to award the marks. Even within the tight confines of one discipline, I hope to see other ways of thinking.

Afterwards, IB students do take that contestability and confidence that they get from their learning into their later lives. Sometimes, they follow very conventional paths. They go to business school, or become bankers. But in my former school, we noticed that when students become very successful, and were in their early 30s, they’d think, “What am I doing? I am going to do something completely different now.” I love seeing people do this. I think its because they keep thinking, and I consider these as the successful students.

**Q: In your experience, is there a particular approach to learning in the IBDP?**

A: The IB has produced an online resource called Approaches to Teaching and Learning. I know that some of the Keystone teachers have implemented some of these practices that have been recommended by the IB. It contains plenty of videos and other resources that demonstrate ways of learning in class and elsewhere. It was encouraging to know that some of the Keystone teachers have already adapted some of the approaches. But, it is not possible to point out one single learning style; there are many different approaches for individual students. Students usually find it themselves as they go along; they develop an understanding of how they learn.

I also think the careful production of the coursework calendar for the two years of the diploma is quite critical. And Keystone’s IB coordinator is quite experienced in this, and will ensure that it will not get too intense and gives students room to breath with enough time for college applications or finishing the extended essay or working on a presentation. There will be a balance. This is important because the pace of learning, and the changes of pace in the school year will probably help the student find their method of learning.

**Q: What would you say are the advantages for Keystone students to having the additional Keystone signature curriculum – the Chinese Thread?**

A: It is so difficult to identify the elements of your own culture when you live in it. So I don’t really know what it means to be British, unless I go somewhere else. Then people ascribe things to me. So I think it is really important. It is something they will take with them to help them with a sense of who they are. The pace of change in China is so great that it is even more important for Chinese students to have a thread of

perception about where they came from, and what brought China to this point, and what is more or less culturally significant. It gives them a lens through which they can look at the world, subsequently which will throw some things into highlight, and make other things greyer. It is really important that they have that. Although it may mean that it involves some work that is beyond an already configured programme, it is well worth it to do that.

**Q: How do students make their subject choices for the IBDP keeping their college choices in mind?**

A: For the U.S., it is a 4-year program and most courses have a liberal arts flavor to them. So the idea is that students don’t have to know precisely what it is that they want to major in on arrival. Indeed it is desirable that they keep an open mind. But it is likely that a student who is going to be a scientist will take two group 4 subjects because they love science. But for the UK, because the university system designed the school system so that students would arrive to study one subject only, there is a far greater need in school to be pointing in a particular direction.

So British universities will expect international students, just like British students, to take courses which are aiming them to take one, maybe two, university-level subjects; they will be narrowly confined. So, if students want to apply to Britain, students should start thinking about their subject choices very carefully even now. For students who are unsure, there are broad tendencies that they could look at. For instance Math and Physics for those who want to become engineers would be a good choice now for a university such as Cambridge, or most other British universities. For someone who wants a career in the humanities, they might choose two subjects from group 3 at this stage.

**Q: What advice do you have for parents on how they can support their children?**

A: I have one important piece of advice: if a child has a particular interest in traditional Chinese culture, such as in music or art, parents should seek to preserve that. This makes an applicant to university more interesting, especially when they bring an authentic reflection of their own culture. This makes a difference. I have seen this over the years, especially in the U.S. They always compose each class looking for students who bring something unique. If it’s a Chinese student, they will ask themselves, what does this student bring that is Chinese that is special, that the other students will benefit from knowing about. I have a very slight sense that parents think that to go to American universities, you need to start to become American. This is not true, you don’t! The value is in understanding and bringing what is authentic about your own culture.

**Q: You are helping with Keystone’s college counseling program. What are your plans for it?**

A: Together with Martha Lyman, I will support the counselors to identify universities that are best fits for Keystone students. We will look at how we can contact these universities, and getting their Deans of Admission to take an interest in Keystone, even before the first batch of students graduate. This will let them know what is special and unique about Keystone. We want them to visit Keystone. It is a case of putting Keystone on the map. It also helps that Malcolm McKenzie is a significant educational figure, and a lot of people know him. So there are informal ways of getting the word out to the right circles. Once the college counseling program is up and running, we will continue to be a resource for them.





# THE ALCHEMY OF ACTING

*Chloe Keller*

*Founding Middle and High School Drama Teacher*

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Flair and finesse are not words that entirely do justice when writing about Keystone's founding middle and high school Drama teacher, Chloe Keller. But if you have not met her, it is a good introduction to the energetic and elegant Ms. Keller. Trained in the U.S. and Russia – home to some of the best drama schools in the world – she has over four decades of experience in acting, directing, producing and teaching drama in the U.S., England, Belgium, Cyprus, and even China. However, Ms. Keller says she is not here to train actors, but “to enable the transformation of students into themselves.” Meet Chloe Keller, the actor, the director, the teacher.

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“I REALLY WANT TO TEACH ACTING BECAUSE I LIKE THE PROCESS.”

“Poetry and hums aren’t things which you get, they are things which get you. And all you can do is go where they can find you.” And there she was sitting at the local high school in her hometown watching a production of *The House of Pooh Corner*, from which this quote is taken, when it found her. “I remember very distinctively sitting in that dark theatre with my whole little 5 year old body resonating with this overwhelming feeling – resonating with an absolute knowing, and I remember thinking, I want to do that. I want to act, and make plays!” said Chloe Keller with an expression that can only be described as the same joy she felt sitting in that high school theatre knowing for the very first time that she belonged to the world of theatre. Yes, Keystone’s founding middle and high school Drama teacher was born for it, and it found her.

#### TEACHING TO EMPOWER

But it would seem that destiny had only revealed part of Ms. Keller’s plan. There was another part yet to find her. And it did, just after she graduated high school. Before beginning university, Ms. Keller taught drama at an independent private school in Maine. The Head of School knew her acting repertoire, and asked her to join as a Drama teacher though she was not trained to teach. “When I told the Head of School that I knew nothing about teaching, her only response was “You’ll be great!” Once again, just from instinct, I started teaching. I had no training. I went into that school on the first day knowing nothing, teaching whatever I could think to teach, and I walked out having very seriously fallen in love,” smiled Ms. Keller.

Her love for both drama and teaching drama continues to this day. To avoid the dilemma of having to choose between a career in theatre, and teaching drama, Ms. Keller taught acting, but never passed up a chance to get on stage, or direct or produce plays. But it is perhaps the teacher in her that she loves more, “I really want to teach acting because I like the process,” Ms. Keller said, adding, “It is an interesting process for me to teach my acting instinct to someone else who does not already know from instinct how to act. This means that I have to teach students to follow their own instincts. This leads me to what I like best about being a Drama teacher – showing people their own highest potential. I love it.” More than anything else, Ms. Keller loves the self-realization – the moment that a student sees the potential she sees in them.

“Theatre is an incredible tool. Teaching it is so little about theatre itself, and more about using it to empower children to find within themselves that aspect of themselves they all secretly hope is there, and don’t dare to wish for,” Ms. Keller explains. She recalls an instance about one of her students in the U.S. whose reticent teenage years were transformed through a single play. As she remembered this student’s transformation from being a reclusive shy teenager to a person with confidence who could get up on stage, and even perform a solo number, Ms. Keller’s eyes welled up with joy.

She reiterates that teaching theatre is about helping students develop emotional intelligence, empathy and sympathy. Students will also learn self-confidence, effective communication, good eye contact, optimum use of their own voice, and eloquent speech. “None



“Sometimes I feel I enable the transformation of students to a newer form of themselves. At other times, I feel I enable their transformation to their original self..”

of these skills can be overrated, especially in today’s world. They will be useful through their years in university, and will come in handy professionally and personally. Sometimes I think I am re-teaching students the importance of human connections because they only understand eye contact with their mobile devices. They have to recognize and understand that human interaction is part of life, that being believable is part of life,” she asserts.

#### EMPOWERING TO TRANSFORM

These life skills are taught and honed through a well-structured and planned IB curriculum in middle and high schools. For instance, grade 6 focuses on the foundations of play writing and character development, while grade 7 employs global traditions of oral history as stimulus for exploring process drama techniques and strategies. Meanwhile, grade 8 deepens their knowledge and understanding of theater skills and processes, grade 9 delves into texts from bards such as Shakespeare, and grade 10 works on texts from ancient Greece to modern realism. So, Ms. Keller’s lessons are embedded in history, literature and theory, making it cross-cultural, interdisciplinary and multifaceted.

Ms. Keller believes that drama is more than a subject, it is more than art; it is life itself! It is a subject that presents many teachable moments, which creates moments of transformation in students. “This is the alchemy of acting. Sometimes I feel I enable the transformation of students to a newer form of themselves. At other times, I feel I enable their transformation to their original self – a rediscovery of their pure self. People often believe acting to be a form of lying, but it is just the opposite. I teach students to be truthful and honest. Without these, you cannot be believable as an actor,” she reflected.

Yes, one could describe Chloe Keller as one of Keystone’s founding alchemists. She not only reveals life in its many manifestations and transformations when on stage or writing for stage, but also helps students make their own transformations in life. These transformations are not always individual; they are collective too. Ms. Keller hopes there will be a myriad of opportunities for Keystone to grow and evolve as a community. Whether seeking the best of oneself, or the becoming of a whole, the alchemy of it all lies in recognizing and revealing what already exists. And if anyone can find and enable such a transformation, it would be Chloe Keller.





# LET ME SEE WHAT YOU SEE



*Lu Nan*

*Primary School Art Teacher*

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Some say that you cannot make your passion your profession because of practical and financial pressures, remembers primary school art teacher, Lu Nan. So, she went ahead and did exactly that. Not only is Lu Nan following her dream career in teaching for nearly a decade now, but she is also following her passions – art and teaching art. Here, she explains to us how she blends her passion into her profession calmly, and always with a smile. As she speaks, the glow of a strong and determined teacher shines through her serene composure.

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"I believe that art is ultimately about the expression of ideas and sentiments, and less about the physical object that has resulted from the expression of your ideas and sentiments."



talized due to illness, and my father had to spend a lot of time at the hospital. So, with nowhere to go after school, I turned to my first art teacher who taught me for six years, and lived on campus. She was very kind and generous to me. She opened her home to me. I would spend most of my time at her place. She took care of me, and taught me how to draw. She was more than a teacher to me, and her love kindled my interest in art. It is this warmth and interest that made art education a natural career path for me," Ms. Lu reminisced. She extends this generosity and kindness to her students too, as she helps them explore and express themselves creatively and consciously.

#### A BLANK CANVAS?

"The creative process is essential to art," notes Ms. Lu as she excitedly begins explaining her teaching style. But she stresses that drawing is not about delivering perfect artwork: "I always tell my students to relax, and let me see what they see. I believe that art is ultimately about the expression of ideas and sentiments, and less about the physical object – be it a painting, a sketch, or a sculpture – that has resulted from the expression of your ideas and sentiments." Ms. Lu focuses her teaching on not just giving students the skills needed in art, but also on giving them the confidence to express themselves through art. She remembers a grade 1 student from her first year at Keystone who told her that he did not like drawing or art because he was not good at it. "I immediately realized that he is one of those students who usually assesses his work against results. What I needed to do in response was to encourage him more, and boost his confidence. And that's what I did. By the end of that semester, as soon as I would walk into the classroom, he would say to me with sparkling eyes, "Ms. Lu, I love art class now, and I have been looking forward to it for an entire week!" As an art teacher, these are words Ms. Lu lives for.

Trained as an artist and a designer, Lu Nan is also an amateur musician. Her instrument of choice – the trombone. The mix of the delicate nature of art, and the not-so-gentle character of the trombone, tells you a lot about our primary school art teacher. "Very few girls played trombone when I was in school due to its weight," said Ms. Lu, quickly adding, "But that is exactly why I liked it, because very few girls chose the trombone, and carrying it around made me feel strong. In fact, I remember my teacher once told me that I was the first girl to play trombone in any school orchestras in Beijing. I was always the chair of the trombone section in our school. Our orchestra even performed at the Beijing Concert Hall during my junior year in high school. It was challenging, yet one of my best performances." As you can see, Lu Nan is not one to turn away from a challenge.

Even on her pathway to the profession of her dreams, there were challenges. "Back when I first started school, my mother was hospi-



On the other hand, the moment she dreads as an art teacher is when a student turns in a blank canvas. This has not happened to Ms. Lu yet, and she hopes it does not come to be. But a blank canvas is a reflection of a student's lack of originality, and a failing art education, she believes. However, worse would be to suppress students' creativity by "providing too many detailed images and instructions," warns Ms. Lu. "I prefer to discuss my students' ideas with them, before moving on to specific techniques and methods. This helps them better express their original ideas, once they have learned and honed the necessary skills."

Deliberation and reflection are essential parts of Ms. Lu's classes. Not just with her, but students can also discuss their ideas with each other. "In my classroom, students are free to interact with me and each other, to choose and experiment with different tools, and decide on how to create their own work. I try my best to ensure that my students do not have any reason to turn in a blank canvas."

### THE WORLD IS THEIR CANVAS

Lu Nan's approach to teaching is ideal for Keystone's model of education that emphasizes reflection, inquiry and innovation, especially for primary school that is framed by the bilingual immersion program. Experienced in both Chinese and international art and art education, Ms. Lu offers students plenty of opportunities to learn and understand art from China, and around the world: "One of my lessons involves learning a Chinese cultural topic via western methods. I designed an art project based on the daomadan (a female warrior character from the Peking Opera), in which students are required to first carry out detailed research on the daomadan through inquiry-based techniques common in international education. Their research will help them find specific costume patterns, types of theatrical makeup used, and other elements.

Students are then required to analyze their findings in order to assess how these can be presented using art techniques and skills, and reproduce them in a cohesive manner."

She cites another example from her grade 3 lesson on learning the technique of block printing where students drew inspiration from African tribal culture. Ms. Lu reiterates that students learn techniques and basic brushwork from a world of inspiration, some more conventionally than others. But the students' creativity, vision and expression always come through. "Take the fish paintings on the wall," she points, adding, "I only showed them how to complete a single fish; it was the students who decided how they would represent the movement and interaction of schools of fish."

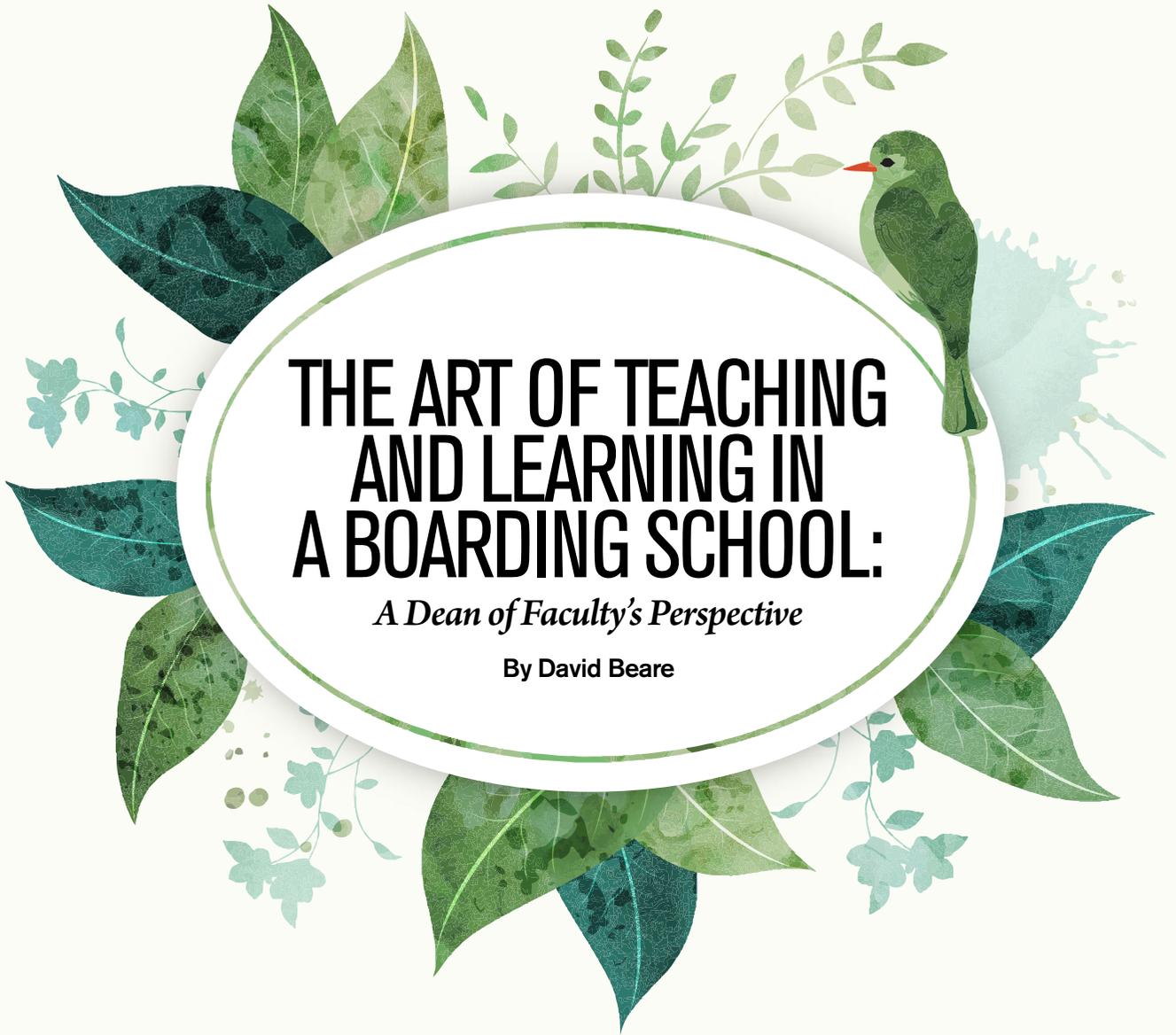
### LET THEM FOLLOW THEIR HEARTS

As Ms. Lu goes through all the paintings of Chinese fish on her wall, she says pausing in parts, "No two children will have the same reflections or reactions to what I have taught them ... I just show them some basic techniques, so that they can follow their heart." She insists that art cannot be restricted to rigid rules and criteria. She also hopes parents can help their children explore and enjoy art by encouraging them to draw or paint as they like at home or wherever they choose to.

Well, at Keystone if you walk onto the fifth floor of the primary school building, the buzz of creativity followed by the silence of creation that you hear from the Art Room is definitely the sound of students following their hearts. "This is my true calling," beams Ms. Lu, and it definitely is.



"No two children will have the same reflections or reactions to what I have taught them... I just show them some basic techniques, so that they can follow their hearts."



# THE ART OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN A BOARDING SCHOOL:

*A Dean of Faculty's Perspective*

By David Beare

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The Keystone way of learning continues beyond the classroom, and extends into one of its fundamental cores – the residential program. It is one of the main reasons I have chosen to teach and work at a boarding school, such as Keystone Academy. Let me show you my perspective of the Keystone way of learning and living.

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On a Sunday evening last autumn, I poked my head around the library stacks looking for a conference room tucked away in the back of the Middle School library. Kacy Song, one of our teacher librarians and now Director of Libraries, had invited me to a discussion of Chinese and Western poetry, and I eagerly looked forward to the conversation. Nothing in my previous experience in boarding schools, though, prepared me for what I was to find that night: a bright room filled to overflowing with members of the Keystone community, students and teachers together, reading poems aloud in unison, earnestly discussing their meanings and contexts, and telling stories about the great Chinese Poets. I had never seen anything like it – not at Phillips Exeter, not at Loomis Chaffee, not at Hotchkiss – and it was then that I felt for certain that our boarding program, and our school, was going to be something uniquely successful.

Certainly having the right physical structures sets the stage for a great boarding school. Keystone Academy students are fortunate to have large, well designed dorm rooms, comfortable common spaces and close proximity to faculty apartments right on their corridors. Our academic buildings and sports facilities are marvelous. But it is the people that live and work in those wonderful spaces that create a lively social and intellectual atmosphere. That night, it was Kacy Song and our Chinese language and literature teachers Li Haiyan and Pei Lu, along with a couple dozen of their students, who made our boarding program sing.

No one was required to be there on a Sunday evening. There were no assignments given, no assessments required or expected. The group came together because they loved poetry, and wanted to explore it together. This is exactly why my wife Rachael Beare, the Dean of Admission, and I have chosen to be part of a boarding school. Great boarding institutions allow for the development of a rich school community that can only exist when creative, intelligent and committed teachers, students and administrators are willing to share their energies and talents beyond the classroom setting. This, I can tell you, is one of the pleasures of being a teacher at a place like Keystone. Living as a community with this group of adults and students is a privilege, and a joy.

As Dean of Faculty, I am very keen on continuing to improve the quality of our classroom settings. It is my experience that encountering students in a variety of ways outside of class always reflects back in improved teaching. When I see a student competing in a basketball game, or dancing on stage in the school play, or hard at work during study hours on a particularly tricky math problem, I come to understand more about their particular strengths or weaknesses. Bit by bit, we as teachers learn about our students' commitments, intellectual and otherwise. There are moments on a hike or a shopping trip when we can connect with the kids as persons – and they with us – rather

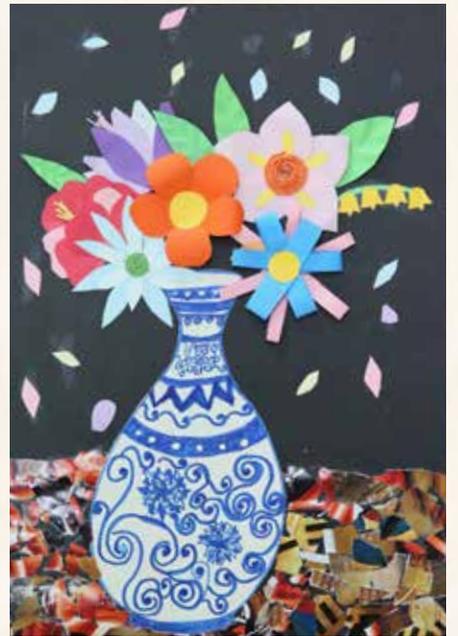
than only as students in a class. It is this being seen and being known that encourages students to go farther in their studies, and take intellectual risks in class. When they feel that their teachers truly care about them and their thoughts, students blossom and are less afraid to make mistakes. This is when teachers can begin to engage those open minds with true rigor, and students can make substantial rather than superficial progress. Of course, this can happen in all sorts of school settings. I am convinced, though, that for secondary students it happens more quickly and more deeply in a residential community.

It is also just plain fun. A boarding school is a great environment to be a student, to be sure, but it is also a great environment to be a teacher. Meals in the dining hall afford an opportunity to see friends and colleagues. The faculty kids run around and play in the quad after supper, while the adults have a chance to chat and to catch their breath. One group of teachers swims in the early morning – they call themselves the “Keystone Carps,” a pun that has more resonance in English than in Chinese – and another meets every evening to enjoy the pool with their families after the work of the day is done. There are spontaneous Ping-Pong matches with the students, dessert evenings with friends, book discussion groups that bring together Chinese and expatriate faculty to examine literature available both in Mandarin and English, community football matches – any number of opportunities for community members to form bonds of admiration and friendship. What this means for our students at Keystone is that they will enjoy, over time, the heady atmosphere of bright, talented, and accessible adult mentors who have come to love the place and commit themselves to its success and to the success of the students with whom they work.

One specific instance comes to mind. Imagine the impact on a student's education of going out to lunch with a group of teachers to a local Japanese restaurant to participate in a discussion of Yasunari Kawabata's *Snow Country*. The book appears on our IB Diploma Programme reading list, and the teachers had gathered to explore some of the book's themes, imagery, and spare language. Right next to graduates of Beida and Columbia, Harvard and Tsinghua, the student took her place at the table: listening, yes, but also offering ideas, questioning and laughing with the rest, an essential partner in the conversation. I think that this lunch outing shows Keystone at its best – inclusive, supportive, and respectful of the talents that all our members bring to the school.

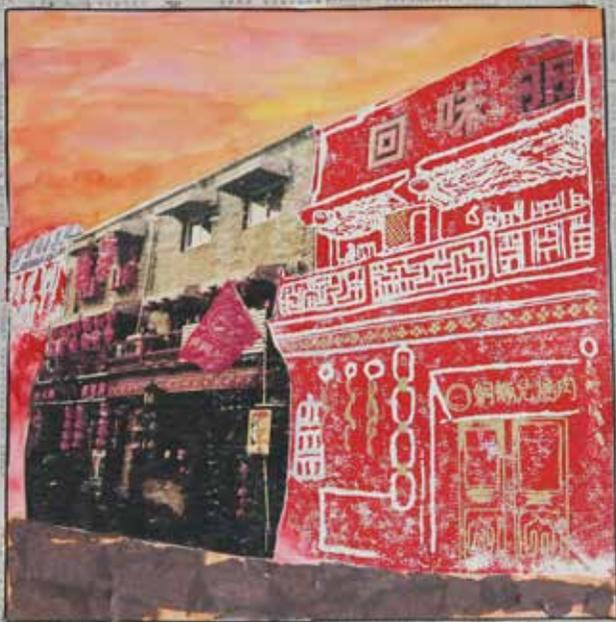
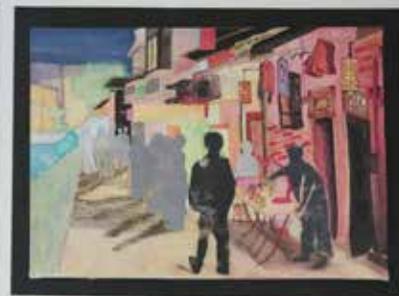
In the end, our boarding community develops both the head and the heart. From Friday night in the Design Technology space constructing trebuchets with Mr. Baxter, to engaging veteran actor Lei Quesheng in conversation, to a memorable evening in the library reciting classical poetry, life here at Keystone is incredibly rich for students and adults alike. This, then, is the art of teaching and learning in a boarding school: together we commit to discovering and developing the best in ourselves, but more importantly, in one another.













# GIVING WAY TO YOUR CHILD'S DREAMS

Creativity manifests in many ways in children. It could be in art, music, or dance – their first doodles, their first dance moves, or twiddling on piano keys. What do you do when you are the parent of an artistically gifted child? How do you strike a balance between art and education? Or are they one and the same thing? We invited our own art prodigy Xu Ziqi (Maxwell, also goes by his artist signature Orange Peel) from grade 10 and his parents Xu Shijun and Li Shujian to share their experiences with us, and what it means to nurture a child's dream and passion. His father, Xu Shijun, and mother, Li Shujian, work for a listed company in Inner Mongolia, as director and vice president and board secretary respectively. These proud parents have even self-published Maxwell's drawings and paintings in a compilation called, *Drawing Pad*.



**Q: Maxwell is a talented artist. How did you discover his talent, and encourage him to pursue his passion?**

**Father:** We have always encouraged our son to see more and experience more. When he was very little, we picked out the very best picture books, comics and cartoon classics for him and took him on nature trips quite regularly. When he got a bit older, we took him to famous art galleries and historical attractions, including the Louvre, the Pompidou Center, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the National Art Museum of China, the CAFA Art Museum, and the 798 Art District. Regular visits to these venues have played a great role in reinforcing his appreciation of art.

We believe that it was important to give him approval when it came to his creativity and paying attention to his work, and appreciating it. We listen to his description of his works, and give our feedback. When he is busy drawing, we try not to disturb him because we know that he is concentrating on his work. We also encourage him to participate in extracurricular activities and student societies.

**Q: Does any specific memory stand out for you when you think of your son, the artist?**

**Mother:** I remember an incident when Ziqi was three years old, and was watching 'The Mole,' a popular cartoon series. Seeing the little mole saddened by the loss of its close friend, Ziqi couldn't help tearing up. I realized that he is a very sensitive child, and a keen observer of the world around him. After that, I bought him pens and paintbrushes. Soon Ziqi fell in love with the world of art, and started to use his paintings as a medium to express his perceptions of the world and his emotions.

In Ziqi's works, the Titanic and steam locomotives are recurring themes. In order to create better paintings, he delved into relevant historical works and became informed about the historical development of steam locomotives and the Titanic disaster, including the design and structure of the colossal ship, real figures on board and the gentlemanly heroics shown to aid the rescue of women and children. He even created a humorous captain character with distinct characteristics and completed a comic series called "the New World" based on historical facts. He is also a big fan of Charlie Chaplin, from whom he learnt his sense of humor and mission. The Chaplin in his works bears a great deal of re-

semblance to the master artist.

**Father:** When I think of our son's artwork, I think he is an environmentalist, and loathes behavior such as spitting and littering. The animated character, Wall-E and garbage vans are common subjects in his work.

**Q: In your point of view, how does studying art benefit a child?**

**Father:** Some say the pursuit of art comes from a beautiful mind, an idea we can fully relate to. Ziqi is a shy and compassionate child with his own perspectives, and a free spirit. His gift in art makes him more confident and driven. Furthermore, through the study of art, he gets to explore a more diverse and colorful world with freedom of spirit and the ability to appreciate art.

**Q: Could you tell us why you chose Keystone Academy? Was Maxwell involved in the decision-making process?**

**Father:** Our generation is a generation based on the combination of traditional and modern perspectives, influenced by both Western and traditional Chinese cultures. The immersive bilingual education offered at Keystone aims to help students internalize both global perspectives and the traditional Chinese wisdom, which is what we wanted for our son. So the choice was easy.

For Ziqi, his experience at the open house day at Keystone made him decide to pursue his dreams here. But after the first interview, he was put on the waiting list due to his command of English. This did not dampen Ziqi's spirit. With his mind set on getting into Keystone, Ziqi decided to take a 20-day intensive boarding program at New Oriental school to improve his English, participated in the summer camp to know more about the curriculum at Keystone, and spent half a year designing and editing his comic work portfolio. We were amazed by his determination, and are very proud that Keystone admitted him in the end.

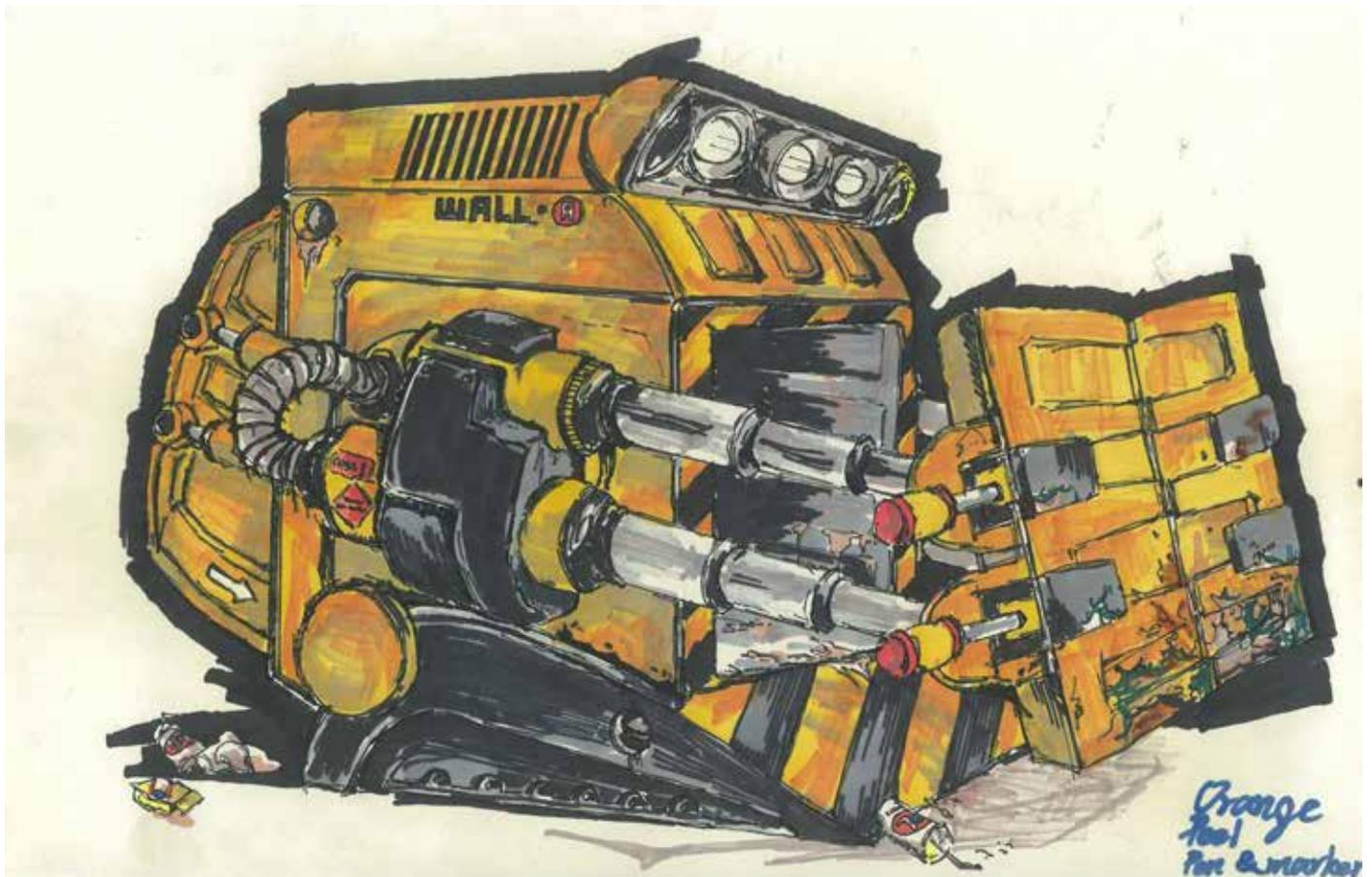
**Maxwell:** I was in the affiliated middle school of the Inner Mongolia Agricultural University, until my parents mentioned Keystone Academy as a new opportunity. After a campus visit, they asked me to make a decision myself. Before coming to Keystone, I read the Keystone Magazine about 50 times. The curriculum and the wide variety of activities offered at Keystone really appealed to me, especially the visual arts, liberal arts and Chinese classes.



**Q: How do you think a Keystone education will benefit the future of your child?**

**Father:** There is a debate over whether the ultimate objective of education is to aid the healthy development of children or to drive them to achieve success through hard work. We believe that Keystone favors the former, and aims to encourage children to improve and develop themselves naturally in a nurturing environment. The mid-term report card is a perfect illustration of Keystone's educational theories. We sat down with Ziqi to analyze his strengths and weaknesses reflected in the report, and attached importance to his own opinions with regard to possible solutions.

Self-reflection is a vital step towards a better and stronger self. We often tell Ziqi, "You are not comparing yourself with others, but your old self." As long as you reflect on the past, and work out a suitable path to progress, you will eventually get to your goal. The journey you take to pursue your dreams is in itself a pleasant one. Children's dreams should take precedence over parents' expectation. For Ziqi, I think his biggest dream would be to



pack his paint brushes and explore the world with a free spirit.

**Q: In your opinion, how has Maxwell adapted to, and grown in Keystone's residential program?**

**Father:** The biggest change I have noticed is that he became much more independent, not only in his way of thinking, but also in taking care of himself. I remember my excitement when I saw him hanging up his uniform after hand-washing it for the first time, even though there was still a distinct scent of the detergent left on the clothes. I also remember listening to him about his first group debate regarding whether Lu Xun's essays should be included in the secondary school textbooks. Despite his team's defeat, I could truly feel the pleasure he experienced through independent thinking.

Moreover, Ziqi has become more considerate. A few months into the boarding program, he started to offer to help his mother carry her bags and serve tea to elders. I know these are little things, but I can truly see some changes in him. We hope that, through the boarding

program, Keystone can help our children become more independent, well-adjusted and grateful individuals with compassion, the spirit of teamwork, and a sense of honor.

**Q: Since you don't live in Beijing, how do you usually keep in contact with Maxwell? How do you keep up to date with his school life and studies?**

**Mother:** We message each other through We-Chat after his afternoon classes, and between 9 and 10pm. Ziqi is still a teenager, and hasn't been in Beijing for long; it is essential for him to feel the love and care from his family. We are only an hour's flight away from Beijing, so we try to spend every weekend in Beijing with him, listening to him talk about school life. At times we visit art exhibitions together, when we are in Beijing.

**Q: Some parents find it difficult to choose between their child's interest and scholastic development. What is your take on this?**

**Father:** We believe that, compared with material gains, one's own interest would serve as a more powerful and long-lasting drive. The

key is offering guidance. Ziqi is not very keen on science subjects and sometimes would argue that artists do not have to be versatile when he gets less-than-satisfactory grades. We would first try to understand him and communicate with him, helping him realize that knowledge in different fields is linked. At the same time, we encourage him to take a step-by-step process, working our way from easy to more difficult points and trying to enable well-rounded development.

**Q: Do you have any suggestions for other parents on how to nurture and encourage children as talented as Ziqi?**

**Father:** The world is a diverse place where everyone has his own strengths and weaknesses. The key is to encourage and develop their strengths and accept their weaknesses, inspire them and allow them the freedom to explore themselves and enjoy the pleasure brought by things they are truly interested in. Meanwhile, I really hope that Keystone Academy can provide children with a nurturing and inclusive environment to develop their creativity, and act as the effective organizer and guiding light in children's development.

# MEET MR. ORANGE PEEL: THE ARTIST



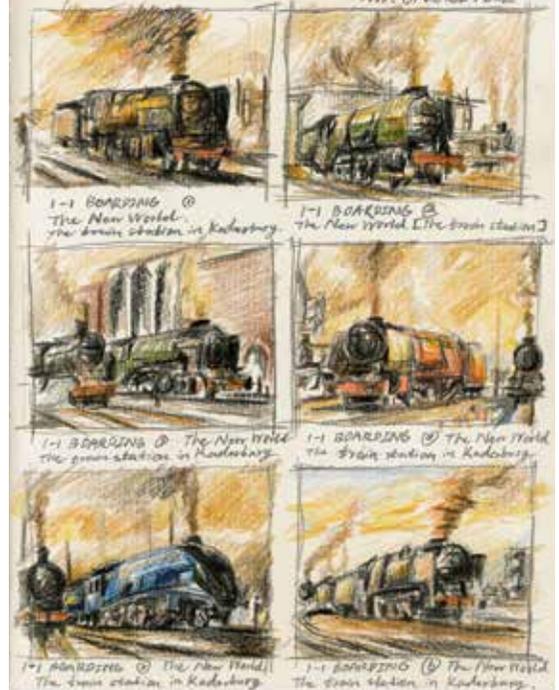
Never without his sketchpad, Maxwell shows us his favorite work – History and Future. It is captioned, “My first attempt at pastel.” It turned out quite well.” The piece shows two contrasting ships, the Titanic representing the Industrial Revolution, and a giant spaceship hovering above, indicating the future. At just age 15, Maxwell’s flair for the classical brushwork combined with sophisticated techniques is truly admirable.

In a short conversation with *The Keystone Magazine* he tell us of his art journey that began with the encouragement of his parents, and art teachers. He started to learn from, and copy, the works from books on cartooning and illustration techniques. He then continued to study painting from a local artist in Inner Mongolia. “Compared with the passing fad of the moment, I appreciate the real classics

that have stood the test of time,” Ziqi said. You can see this in his work as well. Inspired by comic works, history books or films, his self-published book *Drawing Pad* consists of four series: a series based on his favorite film *Wall-E*; the *New World* comic series based on works of master filmmaker George Méliès; the *Shizhen* collection of his favorite steam locomotives, ships and comic portraits; and his earlier comic series *A Day in the Life of a Garbage Van*, a work focusing on environmental protection.

His works are filled with creativity and imagination. However, to Maxwell, there is more than creativity to his art, “Although art is based on imagination, it is still anchored on facts in its own way. So I read plenty of history books, and delve deep into the meaning behind the facts.” He says that this is his approach to learning most subjects: “Instead of trying to memorize facts, I try to understand the topic first. There are assignments that require observation and description, two valuable skills in painting. So when I write, I would first visualize the scenario, and then turn it into words. I find this technique very helpful.”

His skills of observation and description have also



accompanied him on many a travel. Instead of a camera, he travels with his sketchpad and documents any moment that moves him. Sometimes, he would recreate the scene based on the original sketch after

the trip. As Maxwell flips through his *Drawing Pad*, we notice that the last third is empty. We look forward to seeing more of his work, and his growth at Keystone.

# THE ART OF TRADITION

What should we understand when we think of the art of tradition? Is tradition an art, or is art a tradition? In fact it is both, as Chinese Opera Director extraordinaire, Li Xiaoping explains to *The Keystone Magazine*. Having traversed these interlinked spectrums for over four decades, Director Li, who also conducted a cultural salon on Kun Qu at Keystone Academy on 25 October 2015, brings clarity to the debate from the cusp of art and tradition.

**Q: Let's start with art. In recent times, the depth and potential of art was perhaps most revealed in Ang Lee's filmatic depiction of the *Life of Pi*. There is a scene where a lone boat rests at sea at night, and the milky way in the sky and the luminous jellyfish in the ocean form a spectacular space of infinity. The young boy in the boat, Pi, looked up and thought he saw god. This soul-clasping scene almost seems to imply that art has a near-divine capacity. What do you think is the role of art?**

A: In my view, art gives you something to lean on, and resort to when life's demands are more challenging. It allows you temporarily to forget reality, and makes you feel that what you hold true is recognized. The world of art could help you transcend the everyday and find your own balance. Like the scene in Ang Lee's film, you know that in this huge world you still have your own purpose, and your own sense of existence.

In the West, most people who devote themselves to art do so because of their own artistic passion. It is perhaps not always so in China. I fear that most young children dedicated to the learning of Chinese Opera are driven to do so because of so-

cial and economic marginalization. As for me, life has not been a walk in the park. To this very day, I still feel a certain sense of void and helplessness. It is what I do as a profession and with passion, which grants me the sense of self-value.

**Q: Are traditional art forms as soul freeing as depicted by Ang Lee? Artists from different fields (dance, music, film, theatre, etc.) believe that innovation can be drawn from traditions. What is your view on this?**

A: Personally, I have never equated tradition with 'outdated,' so I have never been one to overly praise 'innovation.' I have always strived to bring these two concepts together naturally. In my opinion, tradition is a treasure trove, filled with all kinds of precious objects. I have always emphasized that one's heritage and traditions will seem constraining if you regard it as a cross to bear; or it could be one's solid cultural roots if regarded as a form of nourishment. It all depends on one's perspective.

For instance, freestyle narration can be found across many Chinese classical art forms. Our forebears have laid the groundwork with written



words for expression of emotions and the creation of artistic ambiance. Traditional Chinese opera can be seen as a performative art derived from such expressive and freestyle aestheticism. Chinese art forms, from the movements of water sleeves in traditional opera, the unprohibited instantaneous transitions between different time and space and background settings, to classical paintings, sculpture and calligraphy, all serve to cement such aesthetic preferences. In other words, we prefer the overall creation of ambiance and freestyle narration to strict plotlines and scenarios.

History shows that classical aestheticism in China has always enjoyed freestyle creation to its highest potential. Western theatre has

also always allowed creativity, as long as it is based on narrative expressions in a theatrical setting. I grew to realize that, while Western theories constructed my perspectives and notions, it has always been classical Chinese aesthetics that gave my characters flesh and blood. By combining the two, I strive to bring tradition to the present without diluting its original essence and charm. And the modernity in my works is not expressed in its formality, but in its emotional connection with the modern audience. In my opinion, the tradition of Chinese opera is not static; it undergoes ongoing evolution and accuracy.

Even the audience recognizes the ongoing artistic pursuit. This is clear in the 600 years of Kun Qu history; it was not only a form of entertainment. However, at times there have been developments that have more entertainment than artistic value. For instance, few Kun Qu plays that were created based on specially-created characters, such as the xiaosheng (young male), xiaodan (young female), and xiaochou (clown) are indicative of the commercial development of the traditional art form. Globally speaking, the Noh Theatre in Japan and opera in the West are also witnessing developments that are more specific towards the needs of the market. So evolution is inevitable, despite the 600 years of history of Kun Qu, or 200 years of Peking opera. It is perhaps naïve to think that traditional art forms will remain in their nascent forms.

**Q: What is the role of tradition in Chinese Opera? As a director, what is your approach to it?**

A: As a director, I feel it is my responsibility to ensure that the audience can recognize tradition, even if they see it through modern eyes. In the creative process, I always make sure that my choice of content and all sources of creativity stay absolutely focused on stage. Any content that does not add to the flavor of acting, or is not based on traditions is discarded.

In my experience, works of opera have their own set models and traditions. Arguably, it is more difficult to create and innovate within set conventions than in those without. At times, directors use tradition as artistic elements or linguistic symbols to aid their own perspectives. But, having been trained as a Peking opera performer, I know all too well how long it takes for a performer to internalize traditional training and how much that effort deserves to be cherished and recognized.

Take the Butterfly Lovers for example. I could have used the story as a medium and context, and veiled the stage with a lot of translucent screens and layers as a way to distance dream from reality; performers will be surrounded by dancing butterflies, chasing their dreams and one another. This extravaganza for the eyes might meet the needs and expectations of the audience, but at the cost of reducing the performers to insignificant and faint background. Here the focus is on the director's notions rather than the acting itself. This is not a director's role.

I feel I have fulfilled a director's responsibility in the new Kun Qu version of the Butterfly Lovers by focusing both on the flavor of acting and tradition. For instance, the act that seemed to move audiences the most is the one where Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai (main characters) marry in a dream. In this scene, specially created to underpin the entire storyline, the performers and their choreography are the only elements that demand attention. When he places his hands on her bridal veil, so delicately as if not to disturb the dream, it moves the audience to tears. It is such simplicity that is both artful and traditional that can trigger a common resonance among the audience, perhaps rooted in their own stories and emotional experiences.

**Q: Moving closer home – one of the three keystones that underpin our school is the Chinese Thread. We strive to inspire local students to identify with, and find pride in their rich cultural heritage, and encourage international students to gain a deeper understanding of their host country. You have been devoted to encouraging young people to get to know traditional Chinese Opera. In your point of view, what is the significance of traditional culture, and how does it impact the development of students today?**

A: From the cultural salon on Kun Qu that we conducted at Keystone, I was encouraged to realize once again traditions are alive, and people, including students, want to learn about them. I have high expectations of the students at Keystone, because the tradition and heritage will be carried on through them and generate new life and blood. My emphasis lies in defusing the misunderstandings of tradition among young people.

Chinese aesthetics remains quite intangible. We have lost a lot of our tradition in recent

## About Li Xiaoping

Knowing that he was devoted to Chinese opera since the age of nine, gives you an almost monk-like view of Director Li Xiaoping. Yes, you could envision him as one of the high-priests of this ancient art form, which is now as close to him as his own shadow. Trained as a wusheng (martial role) in Peking Opera till the end of his teenage years, followed by a Masters degree in Directing from the Taipei National University has armed Director Li with both the traditional and the modern perspectives of opera. "I started to revisit my "second nature" that formed through years of training, only to find out that by adopting a new perspective I could see all things familiar in a new light – subtle yet surprising," said Director Li, adding, "I began to think that the use of modern theatrical context is not to intentionally distinguish between Chinese and Western culture, but it is a common narrative space, something I like to call the commonality of theatres." This operatic genius started his career with the Guoguang Opera Company. He has breathed new life into an ancient art form, created fresh new works, using Chinese opera's rich traditional legacy in exciting and innovative ways.



history, and are in the process of retrieving these lost legacies. Understandably, there seems to be a certain eagerness to prove that our tradition hasn't lost its original shimmer. As a result, a lot of the effort in promoting tradition seems to be focused on formalities. I would suggest slowing down, and reaching a state of serenity before we can hear the true essence and calling of our rich heritage. In my view, it is also impractical to promote traditional art through mass-produced mainstream media.

**Q: Are traditional art forms difficult to relay to an international audience? How would you promote Kun Qu, for instance, to an international audience?**

A: An interactive performance style presentation, similar to the cultural salon at Keystone, would be ideal. It requires the audience to explore another's tradition by connecting to one's own cultural background. It is not only about presentation, but also about performance. For instance, I remember the first time I performed on an interna-

tional stage; I was not confident. During a performance of Macbeth in the UK, I felt uneasy because of the utter silence of the audience; I thought maybe it was not good enough. But, between the acts when lights went dim, and at the final curtain call I was immensely humbled by the thunderlike applause that filled the Royal National Theatre.

I still remember the amount of rose petals that embraced all the performers when we came out for curtain call. I thought it was a brief formality and would stop soon, but the shower of rose petals just kept going, until the whole stage was completely buried in them. The high respect we received from the audience was enough to move us to tears. The director of the theatre said the flowers were a demonstration of the highest acclaims for our performance. Gradually, I started to understand and appreciate other cultures too. Then during curtain call, I would keep smiling and looking back into every pair of eyes in the audience with my truest willingness to communicate. Tradition and art does not end with a performance; it continues after.



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