



Drama

Treasure trove of talent

Faust International Youth Theatre is bringing the story of *Treasure Island* to Hong Kong with a theatrical performance, and YP junior reporters **Christy Cheung** and **Cynthia Chiu** talked to the cast

Robert Louis Stevenson's classic tale *Treasure Island* is a whirlwind of mayhem, money and mutiny. The story pretty much wrote the book on pirate lore – everything from peg-leg pirates to “X marks the spot” owes its origin to *Treasure Island*'s timeless influence.

A thrilling hunt for booty

A riveting and exhilarating adventure, the plot is filled with twists and turns that will keep you on the edge of your seat. Based on a critically-acclaimed adaptation that premiered at the National Theatre in London last December, the performance by Faust International Youth Theatre is staged by a group of passionate actors aged from eight to 18.

Having worked on the script since September, it would be understandable if the actors were a little fed up learning the lines, but they show an inspiring maturity, and they are more than excited to finally perform onstage.

“Even though we were rehearsing with the same script for months, and as the same characters, someone always brought something fresh to the rehearsals,” said 15-year-old Ellie Amias, who plays Doctor Livesey. “When we work together, it is clear that all of us are very passionate about acting and the play.”

“The rehearsals were full of energy, and that makes it so much more real,” added Laith Phillips, 17, who has the role of the villain: the one-legged pirate, Long John Silver.

'Born to act'

The actors are mostly teenagers, yet they are completely level-headed about taking part in such a big theatre production. It's as

though they were born to act. When asked about how they had found their passion for acting, 16-year-old Finn Drumgoole, who plays Squire Trelawney, recalls her first role: playing Little Red Riding Hood in Year One at primary school. “I loved the feeling that I had afterwards, so I just kept performing,” she said.

Mathis Ekkebus, 16, also knew from his first time on stage that he wanted to be an actor. His first role was as Snowman Number Four in a school play, and he realised that if he loved being a minor character like a snowman so much, it would be “10 times more fun becoming someone else”.

The actors chatted effortlessly throughout the interview, so it's not hard to see why they got their roles in the play. It's impossible not to be drawn towards such bubbly, amiable people.

The future of acting

In Hong Kong, most students (and their parents) put a lot of focus on Stem subjects, and usually ignore the arts. When we asked the cast whether they were considering a

future in acting and the performing arts, Finn was quick to answer. She said she would love to pursue a career in acting, but needed to have a Plan B to fall back on. Mathis, meanwhile, commented on how competitive it is to have an acting career.

The students' worries are understandable, but it's encouraging to see talented young people that are realistic, and yet still so driven about their craft.

Treasure Island will be staged at the Drama Theatre in the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts from December 11-13. Tickets are available at www.hkticketing.com

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Young Post has tickets to give away for Treasure Island on December 12!

For the chance to win a family ticket (2 adults and 2 children), please send your name, age, school and contact number to reporters.club@scmp.com with the subject “Win tickets for Treasure Island” by tomorrow.

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Back row, from left: Finn Drumgoole, Laith Phillips, and Nihaal Singh
Front row, from left: Darcy Goulston, Jamie Houghton, Ellie Amias
Photo: Faust International Youth Theatre