

A Short Report on the staging of Wuthering Heights

As part of the Centenary Celebrations of the college, the Department of English, St. Edmund's College staged a play based on Emily Bronte's iconic novel **Wuthering Heights** on April 20, 2023 at the College Auditorium.

THE PREPARATION

Wuthering Heights (A Centenary Special presentation), was a project coming to its full potential after ten months of planning. The Play had Sardonyx Herald Myllemngap, Teranshel Tontang and Ralph Lennard Marbaniang, 6th Semester students, spearheading as the Creative Heads. A poll was conducted for the final selection of a story/novel on the 2nd of July, 2022. The options suggested by the 6th Semester students ranged from the tale of *Moll Flanders* to the action adventure of *Spiderman*. However, from ten suggestions, a unanimous decision was made to adapt *Wuthering Heights* for the Centenary extravaganza.

The Creative Heads took the lead in writing the script, and the project formally commenced on the 11th of August, 2022. The first draft of the script was screened by the Department on the 14th of September, 2022 after which the registration for auditions was open. The casting of actors and narrators, as well as the recruitment of musicians and singers was a two-month long process.

After finalisation of the script and casting of actors for the play, rehearsals and preparations began right away from the 28th of January, 2023.

Subsequently, a number of Sub-committees were formed, each with a specific purpose and responsibilities. These Committees included: Stage Management Committee, Music Committee, Costume Committee, Makeup and Aesthetics Committee, Sound and Lights Committee, Stage Props and Decorations Committee, Finance Committee, Volunteers Committee, Food Committee and Invitation Committee. Each of the committees had their own Committee Heads, with members recruited from the three semesters of the Department.

20th April, 2023 was finally chosen as the day to stage the play publicly. Momentum began to built up right away. Nervousness, excitement and a plethora of emotions characterised the days that followed. People dropping out of the project, actors or musicians getting sick, college week, holidays and several other distractions kept us nervous and anxious throughout. But we persevered and focused on the project at hand.

Jubil R. Marak worked on an amazing logo for the event which was incorporated in invitation cards, programme brochures and decoration purposes.

On 19th of April 2023, a final rehearsal of the Play was open as an In-house staging for students of the college. This also provided an opportunity the cast and the Committee Heads to coordinate with the theatrical Sound and Lights system, and likewise with the LED visuals.

20th of April 2023 finally came and we were all set to stage *Wuthering Heights*. Around 450 English honours students along with their teachers from as many as 14 colleges from the city attended this event. Prior to the staging, the formal part of the program was hosted by Ralph Lennard Marbaniang, a 6th semester English honours student of the college. Prof. Malcolm B Tariang welcomed the guests and alumni who were present on the occasion. He informed the audience that the entire event was conceptualised, choreographed and coordinated by the students of the department, right from the script-writing, music compositions, directing and acting. The faculty of the department merely played a supervisory and advisory role. It may be pointed out

that the play features about six songs, five of which were specially composed by the students themselves.

The Principal, Dr. S Lamare in his speech acknowledged the initial apprehension about the project taking off, keeping in mind the complex nature of the novel the students chose to adapt. He however, expressed utter satisfaction and astonishment at the creative genius on display.

The script was written by Sardonyx Herald Myllemngap, Ralph Lennard Marbaniang and Teranshel Tontang, 6th semester English honours students of the college. The cast included Auriga C Massar as Nelly Dean, Mekham Kyrpang Khonglah as Heathcliff, Wandeipor Khongtir as Catherine Earnshaw and Ezra R Kharsyntiew as Edgar Linton besides other minor characters.

The audience was also enthralled by special performances by Denise Noronha, Phila Pynrisa Thangkhiew, Joshua Suchiang and his friends. The programme concluded with a vote of thanks by Vateu Venuh, 6th semester student followed by the college anthem.

Concept Note- Ralph Lennard Marbaniang

When you pick up Wuthering Heights to read, you cannot help but feel the pressure of all those who came before who have, in equal measure, loved or derided the book; forcing us then to venture on our own and discover what lies in the pages. I think it is not unfair to say that no one emerges from the end unchanged and unmoved.

What is this story about, you might ask. Is it a passionate love story, perhaps the greatest in English Literature? Is it a tragedy? Is it a brutal narrative of pain and vengeance? Is it a horrifyingly accurate portrayal of the loneliness and desperation of the human soul? Is it Emily Brontë's exposition of the complexities of love and the battle of the ego within love; where what you feel in your heart must reckon with the reality of the world outside?

I think what we, the writers, intended to do with the story, was to adapt it into a form that is closer to our collective imagination. Our play is about one and a half hours long which necessarily means that we had the difficult task of having to choose what parts of the narrative to show. Even in making this decision, we realised that we each had our own understanding of what is central to the book. Indeed, this book offers so many vantages and lends itself to so many interpretations that every reader may love it for an entirely different reason from another. But we realised early on that the power of this tale lies in the potent, visceral emotions that it evokes.

We do not seek to answer the questions that Wuthering Heights raises because, truth be told, we may never have the answers. We only seek to re-introduce, to re-tell this tantalisingly beautiful tale. So that you may fall in love with it too and it may, in turn, hurt you, hold you, break you and build you anew.

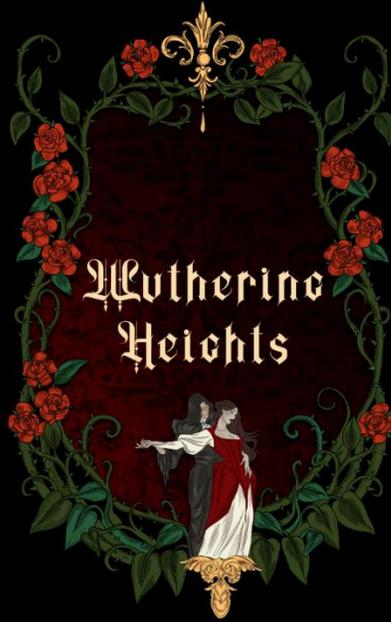
Report Prepared by

Prof. Eric B L Nongkynrih



THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
OF ST. EDMUND'S COLLEGE

CORDIALLY INVITES YOU TO
THE STAGING OF



AN ADAPTATION

AT 1:30 PM, APRIL 20, 2023
IN THE COLLEGE AUDITORIUM

RSVP - ERIC B L NONGKYNRH (9863898355)







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