

TO MERGE OR NOT TO MERGE?

A problem for the HK Stage Club and Garrison Players

BY DAVID E. L. WONG

To merge or not to merge—that is the question confronting two amateur dramatic groups in the Colony; and with the forthcoming advent of the new City Hall, the problem is one of prime significance to the Hongkong Stage Club and the Garrison Players.

This idea of amalgamation originated almost a year ago when certain members of these two clubs thought it desirable to pool their talents and resources with the idea of achieving better production standards. It was also thought that with the fusing of the two bodies into one common amateur dramatic society, a united front as it were, would be formed and more interested people would join the ranks without bias.

At a discussion meeting held recently by the two clubs, it was pointed out that a considerable number of enthusiasts and members of both the Stage Club and the Garrison Players.

It was also interesting to note from examples of recent years, that one group enjoyed a season of success by producing more ambitious productions at the expense of the other, which had to resort to minor ones; and vice-versa.

The reason for this "one club flourishing at the expense of the other" was thought to be mainly due to the lack of interested individuals.

The meeting, under the chairmanship of Mr R. E. Lawry, was held to examine whether there was a case for amalgamation.

For and against

Arguments FOR an amalgamation were:

- The pooling together of talents in both production and acting;
 - The elimination of wasteful competition;
 - A strong central panel of administration;
 - An end to productions which were "at the mercy" of temperamental producers as well as actors;
 - The public would benefit from better standards, and the cultural life of the Colony would brighten.
- Arguments AGAINST an amalgamation were:
- The individuality of the clubs would be lost;
 - A lessening in the variety of approach;
 - The lack of competition.

Amalgamation

To put it conclusively, amalgamation is not as strong in practice as it is in principle.

But by all means let amalgamation have a go; for one fails to see many—if at all existent—reasons why it should not occur.

This is a matter where the average Hongkong playgoer could throw in his light, because the two societies in question exist for the enthusiast in drama no less than for the man-in-the-street who wants to see a good play.

China MAIL - October 25, 1960

NO MORE The Garrison Players

WITH the successful launching of the drama season by the Garrison Players, and with particular attention paid to their selection of plays, expert production, and considerable action ability it is time to consider the future of this talented group.

by John Luff

Interests

But the time has come when the committee and the actors should meet with the serious intention of discussing whether their best interests are served by retaining their present name, and whether the selection of a new name might not be better in rallying newcomers who might be put off by thinking that Garrison Players is representative of the Garrison; and in appealing to the public who might imagine that the Garrison Players represent the Garrison.

For in spite of the title, the Garrison Players have had only the slightest relations with the military for years. The General Officer Commanding is President, and this season there is one Serv...

My reason for suggesting this change of name is that in no way are the Garrison Players meeting the objects for which they were formed.

This is the position. Following the re-occupation of the Colony in 1945, immediately the utilities were functioning, the problem of restoring social life was given attention.

The past

In looking ahead, a little looking over the shoulder was performed also, and in trying to obtain an appreciation of past events, it was felt that some aspects of the pre-war Colony days were undesirable for the future.

While this is no place to dis...

the Colony of the future avoided falling into cliques and sets, and the multi-national communities were led to form one community by finding interests in common endeavour, the future of the Colony would be better served.

Intention

So it was that the Army was directly responsible for forming two societies, and it was the declared military intention of maintaining a maximum contribution to these societies.

The Garrison Players, one of the two societies, was to be a Service company of players, performing for the entertainment of the whole Colony. It was felt that much could be achieved by showing that a soldier's talents were not

limited to performing his military duties. The British soldier's place in the community, in those days, was emphasised by a pamphlet which bore the title, "The Citizen Soldier."

Six years

Unfortunately, these notions, born from the successful conclusion of six years hard fighting, have come to nothing. Garrison and the civilians are as remote as ever they were.

So the name, Garrison Players, has become meaningless; its objectives not attempted; its intentions unheeded.

Better all round that the gallant troopers who now troop under the flag of the Garrison Players, find a name for themselves, one more definite in describing who and what they are.

By R. C. Harvey

Bela Siki

A SUBJECT of mutual interest to our two leading drama groups provoked lively discussion at the respective annual general meetings of each organization.

The Garrison Players, followed by The Stage Club, had their respective sessions, and at each there appeared on the agenda the important item of a possible merger.

While personally deploring any plan to amalgamate the Players and the Stage Club, I realise that the reason why the item appeared on the respective agendas of the two groups was chiefly because of finance.

Although The Garrison Players ended the financial season satisfactorily, it is not "making money". And the Stage Club had a small debit balance with its major production of the season.

To merge the two drama groups would reduce overheads, but in so doing the individuality and independence of each would be sacrificed.

It is heartening to note that, all question of finance put aside, neither the Players nor the Stage Club strongly support an amalgamation of resources, but each is wise enough to appreciate the benefits to be derived from working together as much as possible.

Scmp January 7, 1961

This production of "The Heires" was cancelled due to illness of a member of the cast.

Scmp January 6, 1961

Garrison Players Choose New Play

The Garrison Players have selected "The Heires," by Ruth and Augustus Goetz, as their third production of the season. The play, based on the Henry James novel, "Washington Square," will be directed by Timothy Birch.

A casting meeting will be held next Tuesday at 8 pm at the Missions, to Seamen, and the opening performance will be on February 23 at the Loke Yew Hall.

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For if such talent can be mustered, and such audiences can be pulled through the theatre doors, this present group should hold together, not only for their own sake, but for the best interests of drama in the Colony.

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HK Standard July 6, 1960

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