

# Operation Santa Claus: Shakespeare resurrected at charity fundraiser

The Bard triumphs at fun debate with Aung San Suu Kyi, Amelia Earhart, Malala Yousafzai and Santa Claus

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The debate contestants (from left) Tim Payne, Kimberley Cole, Angelina Kwan, Clarence Yang and Wendy Wysong. Photo: Bruce Yan

"Cowards die many times before their deaths, the valiant never taste of death but once," according to Shakespeare, who narrowly averted a second death after his resurrection at a charity fundraising event in Hong Kong this Christmas.

The Bard beat Aung San Suu Kyi, aviation heroine Amelia Earhart, young activist Malala Yousafzai and Santa Claus in a debate over whose life would be most worthy of saving in the event of a sinking hot air balloon in which all but one must perish.

"I am embedded in this language," the playwright said, arguing that his contribution to the literary canon entitled him to outlive his opponents, including the fearless Nobel Prize winner Malala and bringer of joy or judgment Mr Claus.

"Never has there been a time when I was more important to the world than I am now," proclaimed Shakespeare, who was in fact speaking through Brunswick partner Tim Payne at a festive debate held by law firm Clifford Chance in tandem with the Women's Foundation.

The debate, in which each lauded figure excluding Shakespeare found themselves unceremoniously bumped from the balloon one round after another, ended with the surprise defeat of human rights and education activist Malala, whom Clifford Chance partner Wendy Wysong had chosen to play because "nobody would kick Malala out of a balloon".

"Let me continue the work I have just begun," she pleaded, emphasising the fact that not only had she endured much suffering at the hands of the Taliban, she was also considerably younger than Shakespeare and not dead to start with.

The audience nevertheless voted in favour of saving Shakespeare, who elucidated with his trademark eloquence how each of his opponents stood – metaphorically speaking – on his shoulders.

Of the other opponents, Santa – played by Angelina Kwan, a managing director of the Hong Kong Stock Exchange – was the first to go, owing to the point made that he had an alternative mode of transport available.

Aung San Suu Kyi, the Myanmar democracy advocate played by Clarence Yang, a director at BlackRock, was next to fall, with Amelia Earhart, as envisioned by Kimberley Cole of Thomson Reuters, following in the next round.

Clifford Chance is a major donor of Operation Santa Claus, the annual charity fundraiser organised by the *South China Morning Post* and RTHK. The HK\$8,000 raised from the event will go towards the drive that is supporting 22 beneficiaries across Hong Kong and mainland China.

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