

Director's Note

Many have asked, “Why *Hello, Dolly?*” My apologies to those who received the more stressed answer of “YOU try picking a show that’s appropriate, different from last year, culturally relevant, and realistically doable with our talent, facilities and budget!!” To answer in a more civilized, well-rested manner, after we were denied rights for *five* different musicals, I am so grateful *Hello, Dolly!* rose to the top, allowing us to showcase the brilliant choreography of Page Jenkins and magical skills of Li Dan, our chief costume designer. (But I better stop mentioning people before I go on for three more pages). Truth be told, I could have announced that we were doing *The Little Mermaid 2* and the BNDS theatre nerds would have responded with the utmost enthusiasm. Such enthusiasm in our students has been my fuel, inspiration, and joy.

Every show’s journey is marked with its own struggles and miracles, and our miracle this year was the student leaders. After finally settling on *Hello, Dolly!*, we faced the gaping holes left by key teachers who were no longer here, so we chose eight student leaders to handle what we could not—translating, ordering t-shirts, leading crews, overseeing marketing, making costumes, designing the LED backdrops, visiting the west gate practically every lunch period to pick up more Tao Bao orders...the list goes on and on. What you see tonight is largely due to many committed, capable students, who were willing to give their time and serve behind the scenes. Although only eight students held titles, I saw over one-hundred volunteers and leaders rise up from the BNDS family and amaze me with their talent and passion.

I would like to thank Beijing National Day School, particularly Betty Wu, for prioritizing the Arts and thus allowing students and teachers alike to grow in their skills, expands their horizons, and work together to create something beyond themselves. Cornelius falls in love in a moment, the entire story of *Hello, Dolly!* takes place in a single day, and this production—from start to finish—was created in a year. Curtains close, shows end, and sets get torn down and repainted; but the friendships, the leadership experience, the lessons learned, the memories...they last.

After three years of directing at BNDS, *Hello, Dolly!* has become very special to me as I have seen people change. I’ve seen Katherine play a milkmaid, Snoopy, and now—Dolly. I’ve seen Abby Wight tackle sound, costumes *and* stage managing. I have seen AP mixing with A Level and 12th graders welcoming 9th graders into the cast. I have seen teachers become friends, and students become colleagues that I respect and rely on. I have seen rowdy 10th graders grow up and turn into leaders, who curbed their own disappointment when the cast list went up and said, “Hey. We support you. We’re committed to making this a great show.” Thank you all for letting me be a part of your journey. You have certainly been a large part of mine.

Stephanie Anderson
Director