



Future Perfect consisted of three intertwined stories that explored the ethics of concepts such as designer babies, the sale of stem cells and eternal youth. It was performed by actors Joshua Lim, Sharda Harrison and Eleanor Tan (not pictured) from The Necessary Stage. PHOTOS LIM YAOHUI FOR THE STRAITS TIMES

## Playing with ethics

Should people have "designer babies"? Is it okay to stay young forever?

Biomedical ethical questions such as these got a fun twist at Balestier Hill Secondary School last month when students were treated to a play performed by actors from The Necessary Stage.

The half-hour-long play, titled Future Perfect, was staged on July 29. It consisted of three intertwined stories that explored the ethics of concepts such as designer babies, the sale of stem cells and eternal youth.

For example, one of the characters considers engineering his baby's genes so that it would not have genetic disorders such as Down's Syndrome.

Said Ryan Goh, 15, of the play: "There was comedy in the play which captured our attention while getting us to think about serious ethical issues."

The play was co-developed by the Centre of Biomedical Ethics (CBME) at the National University of Singapore's (NUS) Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine and The Necessary Stage in 2011, with the aim of making young people more aware of such issues.

Professor Alastair Campbell, 75, direc-

tor of the CBME, said during a question-and-answer session after the play: "We don't want just the doctors to be the ones doing the thinking and making all the decisions."

Future Perfect was performed by a three-member cast comprising thespians Joshua Lim, 28, Sharda Harrison, 26, and Eleanor Tan, 37.

Since last year, it has been staged multiple times at the Science Centre Singapore and in various secondary schools.

Said Ryan of the slightly open-ended play: "It was really thought-provoking... I think it was good that students could come up with their own conclusions."

Toh Wen Li



Yakoob Khan, 15, said the play was an innovative and creative way of presenting the normally dry topic of ethics to students.