

From The Principal



Academic activities/alternate junior music programme and Head start—I know people are working very hard on these important whole school programs over these weeks and preparing the ground for year 12 success in 2017. I want to say thank you to all staff and students for your efforts, everyone looks so busy completing this important work. Thank you to teachers Adrienne Ward and Janet McCutcheon for their work organising this.

Year 11 Dance Creative Season –

BONDS OF MOTION Congratulations—The Year 11 Dance Creative Season remains a key event for us as the dance students further flex their creative and choreographic muscles after leading the Year 7-10 Creative Season in the year before. This year the show was joined by a ‘rock opera’ of dance and ‘absurdity’ by Franky (Last year’s choreographic award winner) and a beautiful video by Alec. When we moved to Miles Street this was a key initiative of Tim Storey’s that I thought was excellent. In the beginning it was framed to extend our training year for senior students—dancers after all like to train—but quickly became a vehicle for very mature dance responses to creative ideas. Of course the actual training and development of work overall prepares the students to well for the next challenges, particularly in year 12. Congratulations to Sela Kiek, Artistic Directors Bianca Perrone and Lily Folpp. I enjoyed the performance and the announcement of the Dance Choreographer Award for 2017, which Sela announced after the first show. Congratulations to Lily Folpp – this young lady has had a huge year and taken every opportunity presented to her and she reaps the reward. My thanks as always to our dance team who add so much to the development of our dancers. Thanks to Daniel Holden for all he did to support this successful event.

RAD@VCASS and Cecchetti @VCASS End of Year Performance Congratulations—

The RAD@VCASS and Cecchetti @VCASS End of Year Performance on Saturday was terrific and a full house saw students go through their paces and create some truly wonderful moments – this remains one of my favourite shows each year. I always enjoy this performance, dance stripped bare to focus on the technique of students. Congratulations to the whole team and Janne Blanch and Anne Butler for their wonderful leadership of these programs. A whole variety of awards and bursaries were given out, but I was very proud to see Tom, Josh and Amy get main awards, they looked so pleased. For me there is a delightful pleasure in this show and if you ever want to understand the ballet technique and the foundations that dancers use in their practice this is a show to see. Our school

remains interesting, nowhere else in the world has both these grand programs sitting so comfortably side by side, with so many students undertaking it. The RAD and Cecchetti communities are like a family and that was my strong appreciation as I left on Saturday afternoon. We are now excitedly looking forward to the results of the RAD Genee Competition in Sydney next week.

Instagram-Facebook—If you have not yet followed our Instagram @vcasecondaryschool, please do – we showcase images of things we do on there and it is fun for us to share that. We have 1,366 followers now – which is pretty good for our small school. We have 30,000 impressions each week, reaching about 1500 people, with nearly a 1000 profiles views each week. We have similar activity of our official Facebook page, which is populated through Instagram now. Some posts (dance remains the most engaged element) reach 1500 people. The under 30s tend to use Instagram and the over 30s Facebook. It has been a highly effective marketing device in 2016.

Junior Compositions Concert Congratulations

For a number of years I have commented on the standard of the junior students and their future possible impact on the senior school program. This was underlined again at this year’s Junior Compositions Concert. My congratulations to music staff and students on a beautiful night. The Junior String Ensemble were strong – the Grieg a delight, the Year 9 Compositions showing an incredible maturity and multi instrument confidence with some amazing performances across the sphere off possibilities. The Year 7-8 Collaborative Composition was the third in this ‘story book’ type, and what a smashing success. Great narration, composition, humour, good visuals and audience participation. To say the audience loved it was an understatement. Thank you to Director Jenny Gillan, this was seriously good fun and insightful. The Junior Choir under conductors Jem Herbert and Miro Lauritz was a revelation, such maturity, musicality, confidence and strong works. The Shakespeare and Rutter work lovely (and thank you to Anne Lewitzka) and Jem’s composition ‘I Remember’ stunning. Director Dermott Tutty is to be celebrated.

This week, this performance and this week’s sees a music program at full strength, of such high quality, creativity and maturity I am just so impressed with everyone. My best wishes and thanks to the music staff and students on such a beautiful year of music and joy.

Respecting Others

We work hard to develop a positive school culture. You may have noticed we recently placed a sign on our doors with a Welcome to our school respecting the Kulin nation, who were the original people of this land, and another sign reflecting my ongoing commitment to making our school a safe space for all of us – and in particular for the LGBTI community – but they are not the only part of our school population I want to feel safe.

As an educator my goal is that we become blind to ethnic origins, sexuality, gender, family circumstances or any differences as a way of differentiating between people and all the sub text that may allow – by that I mean discriminate or be cruel. I want us to always celebrate individual differences but see that as an equaliser, and that though different we are all equal and have the right to be respected. I believe this is achievable if we treat all others the way we would like to be treated. School Council knows I am not a principal to completely adopt any one program that is offered to schools, we use a variety of resources to support the development of our students to be discerning contributors and participants in society. In 2017 a new government program called Respectful Relationships in schools and early childhood education settings is proposed to build understandings about, and the best way to, tackle family violence. The recent Royal Commission found that there are unacceptably high rates of family violence, in particular violence against women and their children. Labor MP Emma Husar inspired many people last week with her personal story of domestic violence in her family home, in her case by her father who himself had been a victim of domestic violence himself.

For me it is about supporting young people to handle the complexities in their lives and the community we live in. To also break any negative cycle through offering care and support and other role models. One key is that young people who feel at risk and not safe can speak to us, the trusted adults in their lives, and ask for help. It is also important young people work to break negative cycles in their family and also respectfully work with their parents. I am still surprised in 2016 that so many women are still treated inappropriately by some men.

It seems naive to say it, but a lesson in life of treating everyone as you would want to be treated and how you would want the women and girls in your family to feel in their lives is not a bad beginning. Respectful relationships is not really that hard when you see it that way and you behave with humanity and care.

COLIN SIMPSON



ACADEMIC

Lord Somers Junior School Camp – March 1st -3rd 2017. Get excited!

The Junior School Camp is an annual highlight of the VCASS calendar, and 2017 will be no exception! We have been lucky enough to book the highly recognised Lord Somers Camp in Somers, who are known for their long history of leadership and community building programs; this ties in perfectly with our camp aims of building community and having fun! Junior School Camp is one of the few opportunities for Year 7-9 students to spend extended time with students in other specialisms, and will help to set the year off to a positive and productive start, with it's earlier than usual timing (Week 5 Term 1).

Excitingly, Lord Somers Camp is located on the shore of Western Port Bay, meaning that they offer fantastic water activities such as surfing and kayaking, as well as mentally stimulating initiative games so that all students are challenged in a variety of ways.

I am thrilled to be taking on the Camp Coordinator role for 2017, and have Lee Crossley's big shoes to fill and experience to learn from. We both visited the Lord Somers site last week, and can say that it seems the perfect little getaway for our little community. I look forward to seeing all Year 7, 8 and 9 students there!

Detailed information, along with permission, payment and medical forms will be emailed out to parents during Week 10. All forms and payment will be required by Friday the 10th of February 2017.

It's going to be one to remember!

NICK HEYNSBERGH,
CAMP COORDINATOR AND VISUAL ARTS TEACHER



Incorporating "What's on"

DANCE

Reflection on 'Bonds of Motion' Year 11 Season- Thurs 24th Nov

Last Thursday saw the culmination of weeks of hard work for the Year 11 students with two packed performances of 'Bonds of Motion'. The dancers collaborated in an exceptionally mature way to produce this show, handling the rehearsal and technical staging phases with their trademark dedication and perseverance. Needless to say they danced up a storm and showcased their fantastic skills in the actual performances. Heartfelt congratulations to joint Artistic Directors Lily Folpp and Bianca Perrone for their terrific management of this season.

It was fantastic to have two pieces by graduating Year 12 students in this Year 11 Season. Franky Drousioti entertained us with his hugely complex, collage work to open the show. While there were tangents between the many contrasting sections of this large ensemble piece, it was unified by some terrifically intense and disturbing performances. It was fabulous to see the dancers experimenting with text, and collaborating seamlessly with the acting students. Alec Katsourakis' film work was entertaining and disturbing in equal measure, with contrasting themes of relaxation (for the female duet), and tension (in the male solo) as his focus. It was also wonderful to have two musicians, Maggie Gill and Beck Riches perform a captivating piece, "Midnight", in this season.

Lily Folpps' piece, "L'ombre Suiwant" which won her the choreographic award, was a piece of breezy entwining, entrances and exits. Her opening mirror motif was varied and developed throughout the work to create clear unity. The rippling fabric became both a reflective river, and a barrier between two undulating duets.

Jesse Matthews developed an original vocabulary of angular and quirky motifs in his refined and complex duet "Touch". Like characters from Nijinsky's 'Afternoon of a Faun', the two dancers appeared to be wary, sensitive creatures who slid carefully around one another before finally finding a moment of intense connection.

Alex Miller and Aisha Samat opened their piece "Reverentia" with a solo of intense fear and paranoia, and built on this dramatic atmosphere through dynamic group sections and edgy, nervous duets. The interplay between the individual and the group, and the motif of retreating, heightened the sense of panic and isolation very effectively.

Joel Murphy's piece "Inner Being" reflected male solidarity and agility. Each character revealed animal-like qualities, and the four dancers built a shared movement language of pouncing, clawing and lizard-like scuttling to powerful effect. The athletic use of the props in this piece created some exciting moments of interplay and exchange.

The bound, chi-like energy forces between the hands of the dancers in Eden Kew's "Mercury Rises" was almost tangible. The four super-hero characters appeared to grasp, throw and

meld their individual force fields together to build a scene of dynamic leaps and lifts that left us wanting more. A light, easy and floating feeling evolved throughout Stephanie Halyburton's piece "Serene", the hypnotic running and fast weaving of the dancers' pathways suggesting they were all connected to the same gentle currents. The shimmering costumes and purple tones of the lighting complimented this breezy feeling beautifully.

Bianca Perrone and Holly Frick's piece established a strongly mechanical and other-worldly feel in their work, the dancers' pulsing heads and lightening fast collapses created a robotic movement language. The rebounding, clockwork interplay of duet and trios further emphasised the idea of cyborgs completing a circuit of some sort, as the beginning section repeated over again to conclude the work.

It was refreshing to end with Blake O'leary's playful piece capturing the fun of an Irish Pub in full swing. The fast footwork, male/female banter and hilarious facial expressions made this a work that captivated our attention and ended the evening on a real high.

Huge congratulations to all the dancers on an engaging and really unique show. Their choreographic and performance skills have developed enormously and they are well placed to face the challenges of Year 12 in 2017.

**SELA KIEK-CALLAN,
CONTEMPORARY AND VCE DANCE TEACHER**



DANCE

Congratulations to our Year 11 students on the season "Bonds of Motion". The Creative Seasons are a sign of Summer and the opportunity for our staff and students to combine of years of training and choreographic practice. How fortunate we are to have this wonderful building in which we can provide students with so many experiences that mirror professional responsibilities. Choreographers require dancers to contribute movement ideas and composition skills, and all our students who choreograph, will have that confidence and that extra skill as a point of difference as they move on to tertiary training and professional work.

This year it was exciting to see the year 11s include Franky Drousioti's bold and imaginative work in their season. It challenged the Year 11 dancers in many ways but also meant the season tipped it's hat to inclusivity by involving Theatre Arts students and Musicians, courtesy of Chris Button and Michael Sargeant. Thank you for your support and excellence in arts practice.

The focus and thoroughness which the year 11 dancers brought to their choreography was a pleasure to see and is a credit to the staff and the students' years of composition practice which they have begun to explore. I look forward to their continued development as they move into year 12 and congratulate them on all on such great work.

Last Saturday we hosted the combined Royal Academy of Dance and Cecchetti performance which is another favourite of mine. It is one of the only dance performances where the technical training in the syllabi is the sole content of the show. It highlights the developmental skills of the dancers and the comprehensive work that theses Syllabi cover. I was very proud of the students work and the staff who give so much to their training. It was lovely to have so many guests along with family attending and each year we look forward to the improvements the students make. Congratulations.

In recent news from RAD, we have had the extraordinary result of all four VCASS applicants for the RAD Solo Seal being awarded this honour. Our entrants Olivia Castagna, Luke Dimattina, Holly Frick and Lily Folpp deserve our praise and congratulations as does Janne Blanch for her coaching of these students to the highest level. It is a credit to everyone involved and we are extremely proud to share in their success.

As the Festive season draws nearer I reflect on the years turn of events and I find myself thinking of gratitude. We must always remember how lucky we are to have the opportunity of VCASS. The founders of this school were visionary, and would be amazed at how many schools there are now who combine arts and academic training. We are unique in that we have this building in which we can spend a half day in dance/music/visual arts/theatre/or academic classes. The curriculum is seamlessly intertwined, flexible, challenging, current and professionally oriented. We are not like a normal high school or a non-vocational dance school. We are training for the profession. Our relationships and interactions with students and parents build from the students quality of participation in the studios, where the heart of a dance career beats.

I have been lucky to have had the experience of being acting Head of Dance and am grateful for stewarding out school through some wonderful times these last 6 months. Even the difficult moments have been rewarding as they reveal and teach me more about myself and the people with whom I interact. As Stephen Sondheim wrote in "Into the Woods" "... *Careful the things you say, children will listen, careful the things you do, children will see, and learn.*" This is true for me as a parent and a teacher and I commend it to you as we head into the festive season. I wonder how it is our students all respond so differently to the same opportunities, and come back to gratitude. Gratitude for positive feedback and gratitude for critical feedback. The first builds self esteem and the second builds knowledge, cornerstones on success. Congratulations to all our student on the progress they have made in cooperation with teachers this year..... I want us to make even more next year!

**STEVEN MCTAGGART,
ACTING HEAD OF DANCE**

SCHOOL COUNCIL

The School Council has convened for the last time for 2016 and has finished on a high with the inaugural review of the Visual Arts program. We have also had both the Music and Dance programs reviewed this year. In all reviews, the processes were positive and the panels were very pleased with how the programs are established within our community.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the positivity of the Council members for bringing their skills, their energy and their insight to our discussions and projects this year. I wish to particularly recognise the Executive Committee for the extra input and time that they have all given to the school and School Council throughout the year. School Council and its sub committees have had significant roles in the decision-making processes. Thanks also go to Colin Simpson & Hilary Bland for their solution focussed and new thinking at the helm of our school, the Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School.

School Council would like to wish every student, parent and staff member a safe and happy holiday period until we reconnect in 2017.

**FRANCIE MCPHERSON,
PRESIDENT OF SCHOOL COUNCIL**

CHECHETTI

Congratulations to all the students who performed so well at the annual Christmas Demonstration. A wonderful audience with all warmly received. Thank you to all those who assisted us on the day. Again thank you to all our staff and our pianist Mrs Betty Thompson.

Bravo our to our awardees:

Ben Ho Award – Joshua Hunt, who receives \$600 towards his 2017 Cecchetti fees

Maestro Cecchetti Award VCASS- Amy Lim, who receives \$1,000 towards 2017 Cecchetti fees.

Our grateful thanks to our sponsors Mr Ho and the Victorian Cecchetti Branch, CBA. Both are awarded for excellence and artistry. Both these dancers have shown a strong work ethic throughout the year and have been great ambassadors for the program.

Saturday 3rd December there will be lessons for those who still have private lessons booked for the Cecchetti International Competition 2017. A timetable will go up on the board. Students must bring snacks and drinks as once in the building they will have no re-entry access.

Normal Cecchetti Term 4 classes have now concluded for 2016.

Cecchetti @ VCASS send "Chookas" and best wishes to those students who are performing in Sydney for RAD Genee International and Dance Challenge. Go VCASS!! Thank you to all the students and families for supporting **Cecchetti @ VCASS** throughout 2016

ANNE BUTLER,
CECCHETTI COORDINATOR

Email: anne.butler.a@edumail.vic.gov.au

RAD

Solo Seal

We have today received the fantastic news that all four of our Solo Seal candidates were successful in achieving this prestigious award. Congratulations Olivia Castagna, Luke Dimattina, Lily Folpp and Holly Frick. We are all very proud of you.

Christmas Demonstration

A huge thank you to all involved in our combined RAD and Cecchetti Demonstration - our great dancers who performed beautifully, the PFA for their help before the show and especially our RAD staff, Jillanne Reynolds, Fiona Munroe, Steven McTaggart and Janine Torriero who have been a great support to me throughout the year and an inspiration to our students.

Congratulations **Tom Umseher**, the recipient of the RAD@VCASS Scholarship. This award of \$1000 is given to a student demonstrating an excellent work ethic and commitment to the program and was presented to Tom by Rebecca Hennessy, Victorian Area Manager for Bloch.

Finally, thank you to all students who have represented VCASS at Spring and Autumn Schools, The Kathleen Gorham Memorial Scholarship and the various events. It is very important to participate on these occasions, to keep VCASS in the public eye and to gain valuable performance experience.

Top Exam Marks 2016

Intermediate Girls: Olivia Szentirmay and Zara Bailey

Intermediate Boys: Tom Umseher

Advanced 1 Girls: Sophie McDonald

Advanced 1 Boys: Nathan Pavey

Advanced 2 Girls: Laura Ruether

Advanced 2 Boys: Ryu Homberger

2017

Classes in 2016 will commence on Saturday 4th February. Each student should complete an enrolment form at the beginning of the year and pay their term fees before commencing classes.

Solo Seal, Bursary and Adeline Genee International Competition

All students wishing to participate in these events in 2017 should notify me at the beginning of term 1. Wishing everybody a happy and safe holiday season and thanking you again for your support of RAD.

JANNE BLANCH,
RAD COORDINATOR

Email: blanch.janne.j@edumail.vic.gov.au

MUSIC

The Ring Cycle reviewed

Further to our recent excursion to Opera Australia's Dress Rehearsal of "Das Rheingold", did you know that founding teacher Heather Leviston is also a professional reviewer?

You can read Ms Leviston's review of the Opening night, and many more reviews here:

<http://www.classicmelbourne.com.au/ring-review-das-rheingold/>

KIM BEISSEL,
MUSIC ADMINISTRATOR



VICTORIAN COLLEGE OF THE ARTS SECONDARY SCHOOL

A LEADING VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT SCHOOL AND EDUCATOR AND TRAINER OF SECONDARY AGE GIFTED AND HARDWORKING THEATRE AND VISUAL ARTISTS, DANCERS AND MUSICIANS—THE ACADEMIC SCHOOL FOR THE AUSTRALIAN BALLET SCHOOL, GYMNAS-TICS VICTORIA, AND NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CIRCUS ARTS—THANK YOU TO OUR FOLLOWING SPONSORS

The Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School presents

MERAKI

A Year 10 Dance Creative Season



Thursday 1st December, 2016 @ 6:30pm

Friday 2nd December, 2016 @ 6:30pm

and 8:30pm

Tickets available on

<http://www.trybooking.com/179826>

\$22 Adult \$12 Concession