FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dance Malthouse 2016

I was pleased when a student told me their parent was waiting for my review last Saturday. Well this is not a review but a reflection from me.

Firstly let me thank all of the dance students and staff for a wonderful season. The school just continues to do great work in partnership with generations of dancers. And young dancers continue to work through the pitfalls and challenges of dance to deliver for their peers, families and school. The daily injury management list was enough for me to appreciate that let alone my experiences daily with dancers.

The audiences were warmly appreciative of the performance and loved every part of the show. ‘Studies’ (and Coda) reflected on everything we love about ballet. Thank you to Maggie Lorraine, Tim Harbour, Janne Blanch, Olga Polyetayeva and John Grayling, along with our students for your parts. Fiona Munroe and the junior dancers did beautiful work in Les Petities Saisons. I thought by Saturday night the students had really developed and grown over their time on stage with this lovely work. We had really great dance leadership from Sam Winkler in this.

‘The Wiz’ was fun, with some take way moments. I laughed out loud when the munchkins poked their heads the first time and Kimberley Lamb walked out all sassy. The whole ensemble was strong but Olivia Castagna was so lovely in the solo Home, beautifully lit by our longstanding lighting designer Tim Newman. Congratulations to the dancers and Tanya Mitford with Stacy Mitchell. Luke Dimattina, Alec Katsourakis, Franky Drousioti and Olivia Castagna were fantastic.

I really enjoyed Sela Kiek and Steven McTaggart’s ‘Out of Darkness’ with the dancers. The score so powerful and drawn upon by the dancers with their lights, and stunning and powerful movement - the collectivity of the piece was lovely.

Jonathan Taylors Year 10 work ‘Summers End’ was great and showcased our dancers at this level. Year 10 dancers always feel a bit in between as they wait for the stage in year 11 and 12. Their patience will be rewarded next year. I thought they shone in one of the best pieces of the night. They have Creative Season 7-10 and Creative Season 11 to assure them they will have their time. He is a longstanding mentor of dancers and they are lucky to have worked with him. Thank you to former School Captain Jacob Edmonds for his video work, it added much to the performance.

The year 11 and 12s were wonderful in ‘Chorale’ and ‘Volante’, and how brilliant it is to have Tim Harbour with us as one of our teachers. I wonder if we can also call him our resident choreographer? I liked ‘Chorale’ very much, the music selection a long standing joy of mine with beautiful motifs, pauses and signs delivered with energy. ‘Volante’ retuned to masthead this season and students did a great job revisiting this work. My thanks to Tim Harbour, Maggie Lorraine and again Olga and John playing Philip Glass – never for the feint hearted.

So another season is over; dancers should feel tired but proud as we all are of them. I want to thank them, they never let us down. My thanks to the staff for all their hard work in front of and behind the scenes and Hilary Bland in particular for holding things together overall. Thank you to Acting Head of Dance Steven McTaggart who led the season so well as Artistic Director. Thanks to the physiotherapy team with Mel and Gabby, and our Production guru Daniel Holden and the production crew overall. Special thanks to parents for all they did and in particular being there performance after performances supporting their children, but also loving it as we do. The financial support of buying all these tickets is not unnoticed by the school and School Council in particular. The fact that so many former parents and dance alumni come to see us means a lot to us.

One final note from me is about our special year 12s. We are really going to miss them, and all they offer to our school. They worked so hard for us and delivered AND delivered with good grace, friendship, passion, love, and danced their hearts out. Thank you to them.

This week concludes the term and a very busy time. This week we selected the final students for the school with the second group of Theatre Arts students. Tomorrow we will make the offers for entry in 2017 and this will see our school break the 400 mark. We will disappoint many students and we do not take this lightly. When I commenced in this school we had under 200 students, and to fill our school and create two new programs and continue our close relationship with the Australian Ballet School means a lot to me. Gymnastics Victoria has been a great partnership with us and this continues with the reintroduction of gymnastics girls in 2017.

Thursday night sees our Australian Ballet School students performing in their ‘Showcase’ at the Arts Centre and I am looking forward to seeing them on stage. And the final event for the term is one of our
biggest of the year with our Music Program Performing at the Melbourne Recital Centre in ‘Rhapsody’ on Friday evening. I will reflect on both these events on our Facebook Community Page and in this newsletter next term. We have one week off and then on to the final week of the Spring Vacation when we work hard with VCE students to support them in achieving their goals. I urge all students to rest up after these busy weeks. I look forward to working with you next term and meeting all our new students.

COLIN SIMPSON

ACADEMIC

A few words ahead of the English exam (and prac exam)

Exam season is upon us, just like that.

While it’s essential students stop for a much-needed breather during the September holidays, they should study smartly. This means working out which areas of their subjects require attention and doing some exam-related exercises that will boost their skills and confidence in these areas.

In English, students should consider which of the three sections – Text Response, Context or Language Analysis – are their weakest and write an essay in timed conditions on that section. They should then give it to their teacher for feedback.

A number of teachers will be running revision sessions during the holidays. The following English sessions will be running during the second week. Students can attend one or all sessions (or none). They are optional. Students should email the teacher of their intention to attend and what they’d like help with.

English Revision Sessions during Holidays:

Tues Sep 27 – Ms Coleman – 1-3pm
Thurs Sep 29 – Mr Crossley / Ms Gannon – 1.30-3.30

Finally, the English practice exam is taking place first day back after the holidays. It will start at 12.30 and finish at 3.45. Students should start assembling in the library at 12.15. This will be a ‘dress rehearsal’ for the English exam that will take place on Wednesday October 26.

Any questions about Year 12 English can be sent via email to me.

Happy studying!

LEE CROSSLEY,
HEAD OF ENGLISH
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DANCE

End of term announcements

Thank you to our wonderful VCASS community for coming out in huge numbers to support our dance performance last week. All of the dance staff are very proud of each of the students who put so much effort into rehearsing and performing in our “Volante” season.

It was a pleasure to watch the students grow in commitment and confidence with each show and to have the audience right alongside them every step of the way.

I am very grateful to be able to rely on such a talented and experienced team of teachers, support staff and professionals in the theatre to deliver such a high quality and varied program. It takes flexibility, positivity and a supportive nature to pull it all together in the last weeks and present such professional work on a very tight schedule. Thank you and congratulations.

Thank you also to all our parents and families who supported their children in their long hours of work, and who bought tickets to multiple shows to provide nearly full houses at each performance. I sincerely appreciate the coordination and sacrifices it takes, and you were a wonderful support every night.

This season challenged all our students in many ways, and it is a credit to their efforts over the years that they could perform so beautifully and are ready for more challenges in the coming months! My sincere congratulations and thanks to you all.

The classes running in the second week of the holidays are only for the year 11 and 12 students and those in the Genee Dance Challenge, I expect all other students to have a holiday to rest, repair, grow and connect with family and friends and work out their own preparation for the lead up to term 4!

STEVEN MCTAGGART,
ACTING HEAD OF DANCE

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