



Notes from the Studios

February 2016

Department Head: C. Clarke



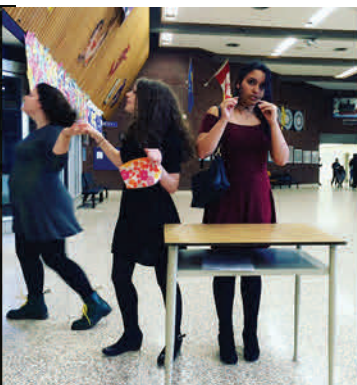
Performing Arts Department (Theatre ARTS, Drama and Dance)



A Semester Full of Inspiration! Performances, professional workshops, and field trips support a semester of creative activity in the Performing ARTS Department

The Performing ARTS students had a busy, successful semester working in various studio spaces. Highlights include: Creative Process/Felt Making Workshop, ARTS Night Performances, Halloween, Boal Image Theatre, Laban Movement Work, Remembrance Day assembly (Dance Council), Rogers TV York Region Remembrance Day Broadcast, performing on the Stratford Festival Studio Stage for the Student Players' Festival, Cinderella, embracing inner Disney mascots, Winterfest Assembly, Junior Showcase and Graduate Showcase.

Semester two will bring multiple performance opportunities for the Performing Arts Students, including *Dance Expressions*, *Sears Drama Festival*, and spring performances from Theatre ARTS in April and May.





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Fun From the Yellow School Bus

We love field trips and workshops! Highlights include:

- ◆ Ash Knight playwriting and narrative story elements workshop
- ◆ Julie Tepperman acting workshop
- ◆ Aaron Wills Shakespeare and directing workshop
- ◆ Bailey Woodman movement and staging workshop
- ◆ Melanie Siegel Creative Process workshop (with Visual ARTS Mackenzie)
- ◆ Trip to Stratford Festival To See Camelot, Hamlet
- ◆ Participation in Stratford Student Player Festival
- ◆ Rogers TV York Region Remembrance Day Ceremony and Student Interview: <http://bit.ly/RogersRemembranceDay2015>





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Grade 9/10 Dramatic Arts

This semester, our grade 9 and 10 Drama students explored what collaboration, creativity, and empathy really mean by applying these skills to their development and interpretation of dramatic work. In this general survey course, where we utilize the basics of image, movement, and voice to create living characters and stories, students learned how to work inclusively and supportively with their peers. Drama provides students with an authentic opportunity to develop collaborative skills while fostering a greater sense of personal responsibility as they learn how to work with a team in order to develop powerful and entertaining performances for their classmates.

In our first unit, students learned how to isolate key elements of a story and summarize them using meaningful and carefully-crafted stage images. In our second unit, students learned that performance is about much more than speaking on stage in front of an audience, and that we are performing each and every day just by using our body language and facial expression to communicate who we, what we want, and what we value. After that, students develop their script-writing and vocalization techniques to help support their literacy and presentation skills. Finally, students work in small ensembles to put image, movement, dialogue, and a little bit of technical magic together while creating uniquely inspired productions for their peers.



ESL Drama

This semester saw our ESL Drama students using drama as a medium to aid in the acquisition and development of new English language skills. The class has had multiple opportunities to perform a varying number of different types of performances in class, utilizing their developing language abilities. With students new to English, and even many new to the country, the class explored much of the fundamentals of creating performances and working collectively and cooperatively with peers from various cultural and language backgrounds.

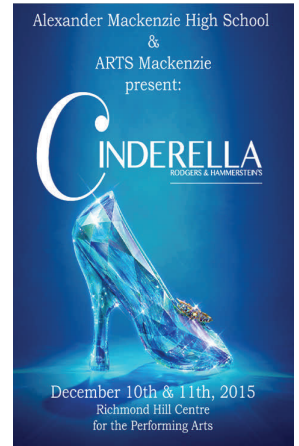
From unscripted movement pieces, to mask and ritual performances, to even language-level appropriate monologues, our students were able to experiment with different styles of dramatic presentations. Students completed fairytale tableau storytelling, as well as performances of short scripts of school-based situations. They ended the semester by preparing and memorizing short group-scene performances on the subject of ESL students coming to terms with life in a new and foreign social and school system. The class performed admirably, and were a pleasure to work with throughout the semester – they came a long way, metaphorically and literally.



Cinderella



Theatre ARTS Performance



On December 10th and 11th, the musical theatre grade 10, 11 and 12 classes presented Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Cinderella* at the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts. This full-scale, spectacular featured an outstanding orchestra, stellar cast, and incredible technical elements. The production included over a hundred students from across multiple departments, creating a magical, creative and innovative student-driven experience enjoyed by audience members both young and young at heart.





Dance ARTS Mackenzie

Department Head: C. Clarke



Performing Arts Department (Theatre ARTS, Drama and Dance)



As we complete the first semester of the 2015-2016 school year, it is evident that the dance department has been quite busy! The students in the department have put on some outstanding performances with their own original pieces of choreography, participated in workshops with major contributors to the world of Canadian dance and continue to put dance on the map as a legitimate art form within the Alexander Mackenzie school community. In the first few months of the school year all grades worked on solidifying their technique in both ballet and modern dance. Students were challenged with both practical and theoretical assignments and consistently went above and beyond ex-

pectations. In October, the students in the grade 10, 11 and 12 classes represented the dance department during our annual ARTS Information Night. These three classes also did an outstanding job performing at the ARTS Information Night for potential grade 8 students at the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts. The dance students demonstrated outstanding levels of organization and professionalism and for that the teachers of the dance program are so very proud of them. In November, students had the opportunity to complete a workshop with the artists of TOES for Dance. The contemporary workshops were led by Toronto-based dancer Scott MacCabe. Later on in the month, students went on a fieldtrip to see critically acclaimed Toronto Dance Theatre's performance of *Echo at the Fleck Dance Theatre in the Harbourfront Centre*. *AMHS' dance students also participated in a modern dance workshop with members from the company. The grade 11 dance class also completed an African dance unit that culminated in a three-day workshop with African dance specialist Sharon Harvey.*

The AMHS Dance Council has also been working very hard and has contributed to the dance program in many ways. This council has been a part of many school initiatives encouraging school spirit as well as giving back to the local community. The students have held weekly meetings and social gatherings to continue and solidify the bond between the students within the program. The Dance Council's mission is to increase the presence of dance within the hall of AMHS and this was definitely the case when they choreographed and presented a piece for the school's Remembrance Day assembly. Dance Council members have contributed to AMHS' Spirit Days such as the Halloween Festivities that included line dancing in the front foyer. More significantly, the Dance Council started the initiative and raised OVER \$450.00 that will be donated to Dancers for Cancer which is an organization helping to build an Arts Therapy Room at Toronto's Sick Kids Hospital. When the dancers reached their fundraising goal, they choreographed a holiday dance for staff members that was then performed at AMHS' Winterfest Assembly. It was a performance many will soon not forget!

Most recently, our graduating grade 12 class just completed with a final culminating project known as The Graduate Showcase 2016. The senior students were each responsible to choreograph a piece of modern contemporary dance using student volunteers from the grade 9, 10 and 11 classes. All of the students' hard work culminated in a truly successful evening at the Vaughan City Playhouse. Congratulations to the grade 12 students on all of your hard work. Your choreography was absolutely beautiful and was a true testament to all of the hard work that you have completed over the last few years. A special thank you and congratulations goes out to all of the student performers who volunteered their time to make the performance what it was. As we look towards the upcoming second semester, we are sure that it will also be filled with excitement. Students can expect to work on original pieces of choreography with their teachers as well as working with guest choreographers for the 6th annual Dance Expressions on Monday May 10, 2016 at the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts. Students will also be participating in other inter-disciplinary workshops as well as going to see a professional ballet performance by the National Ballet of Canada in downtown Toronto. Congratulations and thank you to all of the dance students as well as their parents for all of their hard work and support. It has been a wonderful semester and we are sure that 2016 will bring the same successes!





Music

Department Head: E. Hudspith



Music Department



The AMHS Music Department would like to congratulate all of the music students who have worked so hard this semester and taken part in many different concerts and events.



We started off the semester in October with multiple performances at the Arts Information Night. In November, our violin, cello, and piano trio along with members of the Chamber Choir were in the Rogers TV studio, recording a segment for their Remembrance Day show. Later the same month "Showcase 2015" featured 250 music students performing in concert bands, choirs, orchestras, and jazz ensembles at the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts. The Music Department's annual musical, "Cinderella" was a huge success in December (with more details on a separate page). Finally, our Music Council hosted successful events for the music students, including a grade nine barbeque, a movie night, and the, always popular, Holiday Party.

In second semester, we would like to welcome Ms .C. Alexander back from maternity leave. We are looking forward to another busy performance schedule including concerts, music festivals, and our annual extended trip (this year to Chicago, Illinois).

Performing at Rogers TV



Holiday Party



Grade 9 BBQ

Upcoming Confirmed Dates:

- ◆ April 15-18, 2016 – Extended trip to Chicago, Illinois
- ◆ May 11, 2016 – *Fanfare 2016* at Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts (Band, Jazz, small ensembles)
- ◆ May 19, 2016 – *Spring Celebration 2016* at Richmond Hill United Church (Strings, Vocal, small ensembles)
- ◆ June 2, 2016 – Music Banquet
- ◆ June 16, 2016 – Pops Concert





Visual Arts

Department Head: A. Bhatia



Visual Arts Department

The Here and Now....

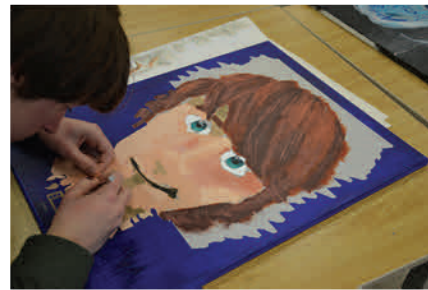
Our art students have been very busy exploring their creative ideas and technical skills. Their accomplishments can be viewed throughout the school on the walls and in the Foyer. Our grade 9 students embellished their masks with hand made felt under the direction of Melanie Siegel, a local artist who uses fabric to make art pieces. A team of grade 11 students went outside the classroom to make art with other students from York Region at 'Artonomy' at the Quest International Education Conference. An interactive piece was completed and is now on show in the Markham library. The grade 11 Arts students spent most of November and December designing and painting the set of our school's production of Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella. What a task! It was worth the time and effort as the sets looked fantastic on-stage at the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts. In the fall, Mother Nature cooperated with our outdoor sketching endeavours. Mill Pond was a favourite spot for our students to draw. A highlight for many students was our trips to the Art Gallery of Ontario to view the *Camera Atomica* and *Turner* exhibits. Students found the documentation of atomic energy and works made in response to it, very interesting. They enjoyed learning about the Turner's technique and about his somewhat unconventional approach to life.

What's Next....

We look forward to seeing and selling what our students create for our annual AMAC Gives Back fundraiser for cancer that is held at school in March. Last year, sales of drawings, photography and prints were quite popular. In April, our Arts and Culture Council will be hosting our annual Java Night, which showcases a variety of multi-discipline performances. In May, our grade 12 Arts Mackenzie visual arts students will be curating our annual art show at Boynton House, located on the Richmond Green grounds. This art show will be a part of Doors Open Richmond Hill. In June, more Mackenzie Art will be on display on the walls of the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts as part of our annual Art Show. Here's looking forward to an exciting semester!



Willow Barker Jones painting a set piece for Cinderella



Evan Sadler working on his expressive self portrait



Ariel Goldberg's mixed media piece, Jacqueline with Earrings



Evelyn Inglis' social statement painting "#NoFilter"

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