## Notes from the Studios





# 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 an opportunity to work with many different artists and classes to hone their performance skills over the semester.

In September, the grade 9 and 10 Theatre ARTS students started the year with the *Plays in Cafes* project. Partnering with *Shadowpath Theatre Company* and guest artist Anita Nittoly, the students presented original plays to celebrate the Town of Richmond Hill's *Culture Days* celebration.

In October, the grade 9 and 10 Theatre ARTS students collaborated with the senior Cosmetology class and Pleasantville Public School to present an original performance for Halloween. *Alice Remixed* was a Halloween spectacular that

merged original sound effects and make-up effects with an original adaption of Alice in Wonderland.

In November, the grade 11 dance class completed an African dance unit that culminated in a three-day workshop with African dance specialist Sharon Harvey. The senior students in the dance department also had the wonderful opportunity to complete a classical Indian dance workshop with Sampradaya Dance Creations. This company was founded by the world renowned Indian dancer Lata Pada.

In December the junior dance students had the fantastic opportunity to work with local choreographer Stephanie Bergeron. Over a two-week period, they completed workshops in hiphop and classic jazz. The students were challenged and learned original choreography from the Bob Fosse choreographed musical *Pippin*. Stephanie will be working with the dance department next semester as one of the guest choreographers for Dance Expressions.

Also in December, the grade 11 Theatre ARTS students performed *Kiss Me Kate* at the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts.

Working together with the Music Department, the performance was a highlight of the December performing arts season in Richmond Hill.



## Fun From the Yellow School Bus

We love field trips! We were fortunate to work with inspiring Canadian and International artists. Highlights include:

- ✓ Visit and workshop from Alexander Mackenzie alumni Ramin Karimloo
- ✓ National Ballet's Swan Lake
- ✓ The Darcy's workshop
- ✓ Theatre Gargantua's *The*Sacrifice Zone
- ✓ Backstage tour of Canadian Stage and technical theatre workshop for Needles and Opium

#### **Great Performances**

We love to perform too!

- ✓ ARTS Information Night
- ✓ AMHS Dance Club Remembrance Day Performance
- ✓ YRDSB Special Education Advisory Committee
   Performance
- ✓ Kiss Me Kate
- ✓ Graduate Showcase



Some Additional Notes from Drama Studios

#### **Grade 9 Drama**

This semester saw our grade 9 Open drama students working on a varying number of different types of performances in class. From scripted and unscripted mimes and movement pieces, to mask and ritual performances, our students were able to experiment with different styles of dramatic presentations. Students completed performances of short scripts, and ended the semester by creating their own Anthology performances commenting on people who have made a positive difference in the world. The class performed admirably, and were a pleasure to work with throughout the semester

#### **Grade 12 ARTS**

The grade 12 ARTS students completed a tumultuous semester, rediscovering and being introduced to various styles of contemporary and historical theatre styles from

various cultures around the world. From Greek Tragedy, to Shakespearean Comedy, to Contemporary Realism, the class was involved in three one-act performances throughout the semester, showcasing their new-found appreciation for the similarities and differences between the major influences of modern Western-style theatre. Performed were adapted oneact versions of Sophocles' "Antigone" and Shakespeare's "The Two Gentlemen of Verona", as well as two contemporary pieces. "Runtkiller" and "The Mothers of Invention". Students also completed seminar workshops, where they delivered their own lessons to the class on different cultural/historical/stylistic forms of world theatre. The class may need a break after all their hard work!



#### Some Additional Notes from Dance Studios

As we complete the first semester of the 2013-2014 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 expectations. In October, the students in the grade 11 and 12 classes as well as the AMHS Dance Club represented the dance department during out annual Arts Information Night. These three groups 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 senior dance students also had the opportunity to visit York University and participated in workshops and lectures with first-year university dance majors. Our students were given the day to live the life of a dance student in a post-secondary institution.

Most recently, our graduating grade 12 class just completed with final culminating project known as The Graduate Showcase 2014. 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.

The first semester of the school year had it's challenges and triumphs! 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 4th annual *Dance Expressions* on Wednesday May 21, 2014 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 modern dance performance in downtown Toronto.

### Looking Forward to More Creativity Semester Two...

We are looking forward to following activities in semester two: Ontario Arts Council Artist in Residence program, Sears Drama Festival, performances at the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, workshops and field trips! Follow us @AMHSPA to learn more.



Congratulations to the students for their hard work!

Thank you to all of the parents and guardians for their support of the arts!

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