Support has been there to help achieve great things

As I sit here compiling the Academy’s 2nd newsletter, I look back over the year that was 2015, the inaugural year of The Rockhampton Grammar School Dance and Musical Theatre Academy. What a year it has been. Who could have imagined the success we have all shared in this momentous year? It has been a pleasure to work with each and every one of my talented and dedicated staff and we have all enjoyed working with the students and working in partnership with the parents of these amazing individuals.

It is wonderful to be part of an Academy and School where the support is there to help achieve great things. Thank you to the RGS Board of Trustees, the Headmaster, senior staff, staff, parents and families of The Rockhampton Grammar School and the DMTA. Without such a wonderful team, we would not have achieved so much in our first year of operation.

We look forward to 2016 with much excitement. As I write this, the RGS Theatre is undergoing a major upgrade with its audio and visual equipment which will certainly give us an amazing space to rehearse in next year. The three new dance rooms are undergoing major work at present and will be completed before classes resume next year. We are incredibly lucky to have all four spaces in one building with access to storage areas for children’s belongings, space for warming-up and even a room set aside for children to study or complete homework whilst waiting for their classes. I look forward to sharing this amazing space with everyone at our Orientation Day on Monday 25 January at 5:30pm in the RGS Theatre.

On behalf of my staff, I would like to wish every DMTA family a safe and wonderful Christmas and a relaxing holiday time with friends and family. I look forward to working with you all in 2016 when official classes begin on 1 February.

Michael Robertson
Head of Dance & Drama

The year in review

When Rockhampton Venues and Events announced their 2016 musical, Mary Poppins, over 150 local people signed up to audition. Of these an impressive number of students, staff and parents of DMTA auditioned for the show’s production team led by Sydney based couple Katie Kermond and Wayne Scott Kermond.

Two of our young students were incredibly successful in landing the lead role of Jane Banks. Sharing the role over two weekends, Ella Kibblewhite-Claus and Maddison Scharer will delight audiences with their talent in this challenging role. Also successful in auditioning for the show were the following staff, parents and students of the Academy.

Jan Kennedy, Lisa Kibblewhite, Melanie March, Ella Giles, Isabella Hanson, Jessica Knuth, Abbey Miers, Trinity Hoolihan, Elijah Hoolihan, Elizabeth Clarke, Roxanne McDonald, Fynn Moran, and Georgiana Russell. DMTA parent and RGS staff member, Elisa Williams is the Vocal Director for the production.

The show sets to stun local audiences over two weekends: 11–13 March and 18–20 March. To book tickets, please visit www.seeitlive.com.au.

Congratulations everyone, particularly to Ella and Maddison!
Musical fever!

Mary Poppins is just another show in a line up of musicals that DMTA members have been involved in this year. DMTA students Jessica Knuth, Kole Kingston, Brooke Lawrie, Zali Burr, Elizabeth Clarke, Sophie Berry, Trinity Hoolihan, Isabella Hanson, Genavieve Cooling, Mia McDonald, Roxanne McDonald and Meg Wilson, were also involved in the RGS production of Disney's Beauty and the Beast with Mrs Jan Kennedy directing and choreographing the production with Mrs Nola Smith and Mrs Elisa Williams being Vocal Coaches.

Earlier this year, Mackenzie Evans was involved in The Cathedral College's production of Xanadu playing the role of Aphrodite, Isabella D'Arcy was involved in Grease, Mikaela Webb starred as Mrs Darling in the Heights College production of Peter Pan, Mrs Nola Smith starred as Grizabella in the Yeppoon Choral Society's Production of Cats and in October DMTA members Jessica Knuth, Kole Kingston, Caitlin Dennis, Mrs Jan Kennedy and Mr Michael Robertson were involved with the Rockhampton Musical Union Choir's production of Anything Goes. This was capped off with some DMTA members' performances in the Rockhampton Musical Union Youth Choir's production of Jack and the Beanstalk and Rockhampton Carols by Candlelight.

In 2016, we look forward to seeing more of our DMTA members in upcoming local productions including the RGS productions of 42nd Street and The Wizard of Oz.

If your child has been involved in any musical productions or competitions, please let us know at dance@rgs.qld.edu.au so we can include them in our semester newsletters.

Students learn from Australia’s best

Throughout the year, many students from the Academy have had the opportunity to work with a variety of professionals in the performing arts industry. Seminars have allowed the students to learn new choreography, work with examiners on fine-tuning examination work and learn new skills in a variety of dance styles. All of this coupled with the fun of learning from someone new!

Seminars included RAD Classical Ballet students working on their examination work with Sydney-based Marie Walton-Mahon, ADA Tap and Jazz students working with Sydney-based examiners Natalie Khoury and Frances Fontana, senior jazz students learning choreography from Brisbane-based choreographer Demi Jenkins, choreography sessions with past RGS students Marnie Hungerford and Elizabeth Perez and a fun classical ballet workshop with past RGS student David De Verelle Hill.

Students and staff enjoyed these amazing experiences allowing them to keep up to date with current dance trends and styles. In 2016 more workshops and seminars with industry professionals are planned including sessions with Marie Walton-Mahon, Natalie Khoury, Frances Fontana, Zaimon Vilmanis, Dianna Laska, Zan Kermond, Natasha Window and Ellen Somerville to name a few.
Outstanding examination results

This year saw our Academy enter students in four examination sessions in the second half of the year. The exam sessions began in August with over twenty students sitting for their RAD Classical Ballet Examinations from Primary up to Grade 5. Students excelled in these examinations with Miss Lita Hegvold being very pleased with the students’ results with a large number of Distinctions being awarded.

These examinations were followed only two weeks later with the NDAA Highland Examinations. Highland Teacher, Mrs Aimee Robertson was very happy with the students’ performances on the day and this was supported by the excellent results achieved by the students, with most students receiving Honours.

October saw a large number of students enter their ADA Tap and Jazz examinations. Teachers Dr Emma Killion and Mr Michael Robertson were ecstatic with the students’ results with most students receiving Honours Plus or Honours with Distinction. Two senior students, Zali Burr and Alyssa Hiroi sat their Advanced 1 and Advanced 2 RAD Classical Ballet Examinations respectively, at the Gold Coast with both girls receiving Distinction. Miss Hegvold was impressed by the work the girls had put in all year and this wonderful achievement particularly at these levels of examinations.

All staff commented on the hard work that the students had put in during class throughout the year and this paid off in students being excellently prepared for their examinations. Congratulations to all students and their teachers on extraordinary results!

2015 Examination students (clockwise) included Jessica Knuth, Mikaela Webb, Isabella Yore, Trinity Lowe, Caitlin Yore, Stephanie Fernando, Jeremy Fokas, Ava Tregea, Madeline White, Heather Maitland, Maddison Scharer, Ella Giles, Benedict Wright and Andrea Pennisi.
After our recent success at the 2015 Rockhampton Eisteddfod, some students entered into other competitions including the Rockhampton Dance Festival and Highland competitions in northern Queensland and even in Scotland! At the recent Rockhampton Dance Festival, Heather Maitland took out 1st place in her Contemporary Improvisation, 2nd place in her Demi Character Solo, 3rd place in her National Solo, Highly Commended in her Classical Ballet Improvisation and was awarded the Junior Ballet Encouragement Award. Kirsty Maitland continued the family’s success by being awarded 2nd place in her National Solo, 3rd place in her Classical Ballet Solo, 3rd place in her Classical Ballet Improvisation and Highly Commended in her Contemporary Improvisation.

Elia Giles and Abigail Scotney took out 3rd place in their Jazz Duo under 10 years at the Festival. Congratulations to these students who represented our Academy well.

Chloe Cowan, Kirsty Maitland and Heather Maitland all visited Scotland during the June/July Holidays where they participated in various dance classes and competitions. Chloe competed in a Highland Competition in Dunblane, north of Glasgow receiving 1st place for the Trophy Fling and 2nd place for each of her other five Highland dances. She received the runner-up aggregate trophy. Congratulations Chloe!

During the Christmas Holidays, sisters Kirsty and Heather Maitland were successful in securing auditions for The Australian Ballet School Interstate Program. If successful the girls will attend various sessions throughout the year in Melbourne working with world-renowned choreographers, teachers and dancers at The Australian Ballet School. Heather was successful in her auditions in early 2015 which saw her attend sessions throughout this year with the school. We wish the girls the very best of luck.

Madeline White competed in the October Mackay Eisteddfod taking out 1st place in the Highland Fling, Flora and Sword Dance. She also took out 2nd place in the Lilt and the Seann Truibhas.

Heather Maitland, Caitlin Yore and Isabella Yore also took out awards at the South Queensland Regional Committee of Highland Dancing Competition which took place in Brisbane in October. Isabella was very successful taking out 6th place overall, with 5th place in the Trophy Highland Fling, 3rd in the Flora McDonald’s Fancy, 2nd in the Strathspey and Highland Reel, 4th in the Scottish Lilt and 3rd in the Seann Truibhas. Congratulations girls!

Certificate in Dance offered

As of 2016, The Rockhampton Grammar School will offer RGS students and DMTA students the chance to study Certificate in Dance courses through the Australian Dance Institute (ADI). The ADI being the Registered Training Organisation (RTO), has partnered with The Rockhampton Grammar School to offer these two courses to extend the training students have already undertaken through their normal weekly dance classes and to offer them a chance to gain nationally recognised qualifications.

Details of each course are below. For more information please contact the Head of Dance & Drama.

Certificate III In Dance (CUA30113):
- Two year course of study usually taken during Years 9 and 10
- Students must have attained two examination qualifications such as their ADA Bronze Star Tap/Jazz or RAD Intermediate Foundation Classical Ballet (or equivalent Dance Society)
- Currently take at least two styles of examination classes per week (tap, jazz, ballet)
- Attend a 1½ - 2 hour tutorial session each week

Certificate IV In Dance (CUA40113):
- Two year course of study usually taken during Years 11 and 12
- Students must have attained two examination qualifications such as their ADA Silver Star Tap/Jazz or RAD Advanced Foundation Classical Ballet (or equivalent Dance Society)
- Currently take at least two styles of examination classes per week (tap, jazz, ballet)
- Attend a 1½ - 2 hour tutorial session each week
What a night of entertainment our Academy produced on 18 September when over one hundred dancers aged from three years took to the Pilbeam Theatre stage to present our inaugural production *That’s Entertainment* featuring *Disney Aladdin Jr.* A crowd of over 840 enjoyed a range of performances in Act 1 covering the various facets of Classical Ballet, Tap, Jazz, Highland, Musical Theatre, Contemporary, Hip Hop and Drama with Act 2 presenting an entertaining version of Disney Aladdin Jr.

Past RGS student **Marnie Hungerford** (2014) flew over from Perth where she is studying at The Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA), to perform a specially choreographed item for the evening. The evening was compered by 2015 RGS Dance Captains **Chloe Cookson** and **Kate Brennan**.

The show was an outstanding success due to the hard work of the talented students, staff, parents and many other people who made the night possible including set and costume designers, backstage crew and theatre staff to name a few.

Photos: Michael Kennedy
Cocktails & Canapés at Willby’s Restaurant
Canning Street Rockhampton
Saturday the 5th March, 6pm

Cocktail Dress please!

Canapés, cocktails, champagne, beer and wine will be served from 6.00pm. 
Supper will be served at 9.00pm. Entertainment provided.
An auction will be held of various luxury items.

Tickets ($85 each) must be purchased by Monday 29 February.
Tickets available from 4 January
The RGS Administration Office
4936 0600; M-F 8.00am to 4.30pm

Proceeds to support the Academy’s 2016 Sydney Tour