

Term 3 - August 2009

## From the Head of Drama, Beth Thomson



Welcome to Semester Two! Congratulations to all students involved in the mid-year performances. I have received an overwhelming number of compliments from audience members who were astounded at the talent and performing ability of our students. I was particularly impressed with the high level of professionalism and dedication demonstrated from all levels and age groups. Our top level performing group, The Actors Studio, were well received and their 'impro' sets were a special highlight of the Youth Theatre 'Magic, Myth and Mayhem' season. Thanks must go out to our committed rehearsal directors who put in time and effort to ensure the students are performance ready.

Rehearsals are in full swing and we are really looking forward to the end of year shows. Students this semester are going to be working on plays which will promote growth in areas such as character development and vocal technique. Students will be encouraged to take responsibility for their own performance and to take ownership of their character/s. Our performance repertoire for Semester Two includes selections from Shakespearean classics, poet/author Lewis Carroll and other well-known children's short stories. We are looking forward to a fabulous term, which we know will result in terrific end of year shows.

## Improvisation, Semester One

Three of the members of the Senior Actors Studio share their reminiscences of their semester with special guest director Jason Geary from Impro Melbourne.



### Stacey Townsend

Jason took us back to the very basics of improvisation, teaching us the vitality of making your scene "offers" clear to your fellow improvisers and always working to make the other people in your scene, look good. As the semester progressed we began to gather and understand the necessity behind the techniques Jason taught us, and began applying them skillfully to our scenes. By performance time, we were producing scenes that we were really proud of and we felt good getting out there each night and trying to impress the audience with what we had learnt. Of course, being impro there were still the occasional scene that didn't always work out, but we used these scenes to our advantage, analysing mistakes so that they could try to be avoided in the future.



I must be honest, the thought of having to get up on stage almost 48 times over 12 performances had me weak at the knees. But I continued to push myself to shove aside the nerves and offer to be a part of a scene when we master classed something as a group. Though I had more confidence by the time it came to the performance I still got very nervous. And all though I felt a little gutted when a scene failed, it was all about just getting back on the stage and throwing yourself back into the spotlight. The adrenaline and buzz you felt when you exited the stage after a scene that had soared made every failure worth it. This semester with Jason and the Actors Studio has really developed my confidence and has taught us all techniques that will assist us with life in general and I am honoured I was able to a part of it all. There was nothing better than hearing the audience laugh when you hit the nail right on the head!



### Declan English

Improvisation is making it up as you go along - everyone can do it - but doing it in another character is something else entirely. Working for a semester with the fantastic impro teacher Jason Geary in the Actors' Studio has really built up our impro technique. Jason was great and he had heaps of techniques that he taught us (very patiently) over the 5 or so months. We learned fast and started putting together some very funny or very meaningful (I write with a chortle) scenes. Memory aids such as CROWS (Characters, Relationships, Objective, Where, Status) and 'whose story is it?' helped us right through to the end. Improvisation is a fabulous dramatic skill to have and really helps in all those difficult moments on stage when things don't quite go as planned. All in all, it was a fantastic experience and I hope to see Jason again, as well as thoroughly looking forward to next season.



### Ruby Hughes

Working with Jason was one of the best experiences of my life. He taught us the ins and outs of improvisation and showed us we could create wonderful stories right before our eyes. Jason taught us so much more than just improvisation. He showed me to appreciate every moment of the story, telling us that every character is important and to always have fun and enjoy yourself. One thing I will take away from this semester which is a valuable skill not only in improvisation but in life is to truly trust my fellow actors, to know that they have always 'got my back'. I have learnt so much from this journey from the performances, other members of the group and Jason, and I will always remember the adventures we took in that little classroom.

#### cpca head office

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#### venue managers

DENIZ AKDENIZ (0429 326 017): Taylors Lakes

KATE CONLAN (0417 326 666): Essendon, Hoppers Crossing

LENE KRISTENSEN (0417 326 444): Berwick, Frankston

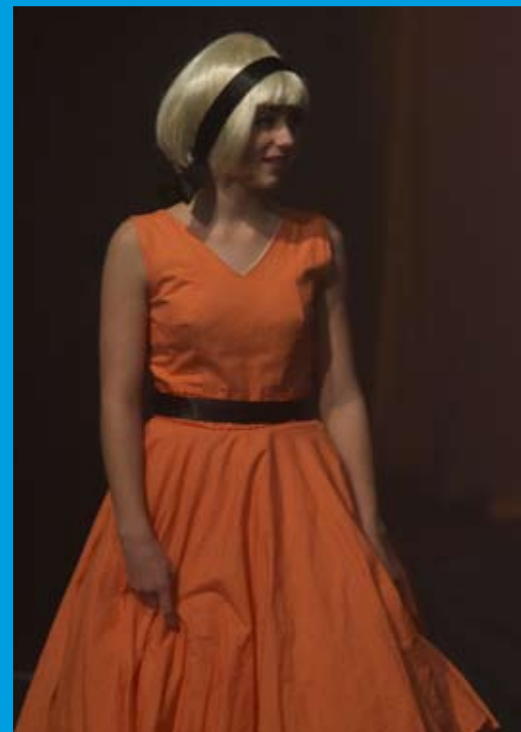
RHIANNON FISH (0417 326 777): Hawthorn (Wed & Thu)

ELIJAH MAKONI (0417 326 222): Bentleigh, Bundoora, Hawthorn (Sat)

JESSIE METZ (0429 326 020): Templestowe

SCOTT SANTINON (0417 326 333): Croydon

DAVID STUDLEY (0429 326 018): Mount Waverley, Ivanhoe



2009 Semester One Pe





Performance Highlights



## Teacher profile – Spotlight on Katherine Tonkin



Katherine joined the Youth Theatre team this year and teaches at our Bundoora and Templestowe venues.

### What training have you had and what was the best part?

I trained for 3 years at WAAPA (Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts) doing the Graduate Diploma

in Acting. The best part was having the opportunity to focus on acting so intensively for an extended period of time, while being exposed to so many different acting styles and methods. Studying at an institution like WAAPA can open many doors for you, both professionally and personally - you really become part of a community.

### Do you have any tips for aspiring performers who would like to work professionally?

I have many! But I think a good place to start would be to see as much live theatre as possible. In Film and Television you have a lot of technical aspects helping to tell the story - special effects, camera angles, live locations, editing, soundtracks... in the theatre it's much more about the actor telling a story. I find

you can learn so much just by watching how someone chooses to do that. It's also a good reminder that being an actor isn't just about being a celebrity - it's about putting in a whole lot of hard work!

### What are your top 3 audition techniques?

Be prepared, arrive early so you're relaxed, and find a way to really like the character you're auditioning for. If you're enjoying yourself chances are the director will too!

### You're in a show at the moment, what's it about and what's your favourite thing about the role you are playing?

I'm actually working on two at the moment and the two characters are very different which is great! I'll be playing the part of Stella in a version of *A Streetcar Named Desire* by Tennessee Williams for the Melbourne Theatre Company, then a character called Sonya in *Apocalypse Bear Trilogy* for the Melbourne International Arts Festival. One is a classic text set in 1940's New Orleans, the other a new play by local playwright Lally Katz, but both deal with

ideas around fantasy and reality, our hopes and our fears. I love that I have the opportunity to work on two projects that are so diverse.

### Has anything embarrassing or awkward ever happened in a show you have been working on?

My first professional job was with the MTC in a play called *Cloud Nine*. One of the characters I played got married and I had to wear this HUGE wedding dress. I was running onstage after a really quick costume change and my dress got caught on a guitar in the wings - I dragged it all onstage with me - the guitar, the stand.... pretty funny, but EXTREMELY embarrassing at the time. The audience loved it though - we forget that these are the moments that make live performance so enjoyable!

### What is your favourite part of performing?

I think it'd have to be the opportunity to walk in someone else's shoes for a while. It's a wonderful thing to have to imagine the world from another person's point of view.

## General Notices

### Rehearsal and Performance Schedules

By now everyone should have received both a hard copy (in class) and an electronic version (via email) of their rehearsal and performance schedule. This schedule includes all rehearsals, workshop and performance dates for each student.

Please put workshop and performance dates into your diary. If performing in multiple performances, please ensure these dates do not clash. If there are any problems, please ring the office 9384 1644.

### Arrivals and Apologies

Please remember to arrive at the scheduled class time. Rehearsals commence promptly so please allow a few minutes to get to class so you don't miss out on anything.

Apologies for absence or lateness should be sent to your Venue Manager, not phoned through to the office. Please check the contact details on the front of this newsletter as some details have changed.

### Uniform Reminder

Students are reminded to wear correct uniform to rehearsals each week. The Youth Theatre uniform consists of:  
- Victorian Youth Theatre T-shirt

- Runners or similar (no thongs or sandals);  
-Black rehearsal pants (track suit, shorts or leggings - no skirts or dresses).

### Lost Property

We still have a large number of uncollected lost property items from Semester One and the mid year performances. Lost property will be on display at our Hawthorn Venue (Swinburne Senior Secondary College - 505 Burwood Rd, Hawthorn. Melway: 45 E 10) on **Saturday 19 September** from 10am - 3:30pm.

Lost property from Term 3 will be held by your venue manager until the end of the term. At the end of Term 3 all lost property will be donated to charity.

### Programme Donations

Every semester the Children's Performing Company donates a portion of programme sales to charity. Semester One saw **\$2836.00** donated to each of the Starlight Children's Foundation and the Saving Lilly Robyn Foundation.

The total donation to charity was **\$5672.00**. Thank you for all the families who purchased a programme during our last performance season!

## Talent Company of Australia (TCA) Updates

The Talent Company welcomes Nerissa Jayasingha as the new Talent Agent for TCA. Nerissa comes to the company with a wealth of knowledge and experience in the entertainment industry. We welcome her to the team!

The TCA is continually sourcing work for it's members and most recently successfully placed talent in the third series of Disney's *As The Bell Rings*, short film *Taj*. Also three TCA members managed to get to the final round of auditions for the next series of *Are You Smarter Than A Fifth Grader?*.

## TCA Workshops and Registrations

The TCA will be running Screen Acting Workshops in the second week of the school holidays that will cover TV scenes, monologues, TV commercials, professional casting, professional headshots and every participant receives FREE annual membership with the Talent Company. Workshops are for all CPCA students aged 8-18 years and will run 9:30am - 4:15pm over two days. More information will be distributed to all students over the coming weeks.

## Email us with your News

No student news is too big or too small so please email us at [youththeatre@cpcpa.com.au](mailto:youththeatre@cpcpa.com.au).