

# YOUNG AUSTRALIAN BROADWAY CHORUS NEWS

Term 1 - March 2009

## Stars a Plenty from the Class of 2004

A big welcome to Broadway Chorus students, especially those new to the Children's Performing Company of Australia (CPCA). We look forward to an exciting and productive year with you!

We are often asked what our students do after they leave the CPCA. Some students further their education with performing arts faculties including the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA), National Institute of Dramatic Arts (NIDA), and Victorian College of the Arts (VCA). Others embark on a range of non performing arts careers.

The Broadway Chorus class hierarchy, which aims to nurture and inspire students by providing specific criteria for promotion, has produced many professional performers over the years. Our top performing group *Triple Threat* has had a number of success stories - in particular, the class of 2004.

In this issue we talk to three former students from this class, **Josie Lane**, **Luigi Lucente** and **Michelle Smitheram**, about some of their professional highlights to date and what advice they can give to students who aspire to perform professionally.

**Josie Lane** was a member of the Broadway Chorus for eight years and in *Triple Threat* for three years. Since leaving the CPCA she has performed in the Sydney Theatre Company production of *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (June 2007) and the international production of *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert - The Musical* (August 2007 – December 2008).



Josie recalls how different both productions were. "My

first show, *Spelling Bee*, was much smaller. I learnt a lot about myself and what I was capable of as a performer."

In particular Josie reflects on the close knit environment and working alongside stars Marina Prior, Magda Szubanski, and Lisa McCune. "It was so full on the first day. Marina Prior was one of my idols and here I was suddenly working with her. You can see how talented they all are and it is clear why they are successful," she says. "At the end of the day however, you have to remind yourself they are just people and you are all doing the same job."

In August 2007 Josie started touring with *Priscilla* in Melbourne, and then travelled to New Zealand, London, and then back to Sydney during a year long performance season.

"*Priscilla* on the other hand was a really big show. I learnt about the business side of things – the publicity and promotional commitments, the role of Actors Equity, and what touring involved," says Josie.

"My advice to students is to keep working at it. I was lucky enough to get into a show straight after leaving the CPCA. But you need to be prepared to keep working, to keep going to classes and always expect everything – because anything can happen. One moment you can be at the height of a performance, and the next, you may be closing a show early."

**Luigi Lucente** was a CPCA member for four years and in *Triple Threat* for most of that time. He has appeared on *Neighbours*, and in the TV series *Whatever Happened to that Guy* which will be airing on the Comedy Channel on Foxtel this year.

Two highlights for Luigi have been a supporting role in the mini-series *Pacific* and his current role in the musical *Guys and Dolls*.

The mini-series *Pacific*, which stars Tom Hanks (he is also co-producer with Steven Spielberg), was filmed last year in and around Melbourne at the Docklands Film and TV Studios and at a site near Geelong which was transformed into a war zone. The production also took Luigi to Los Angeles in December. Luigi says that working with Tom Hanks was terrific. "He is a really nice guy, very down to earth, and he loves Aussies."



Luigi is currently in rehearsals for *Guys and Dolls* which has an all-star cast including

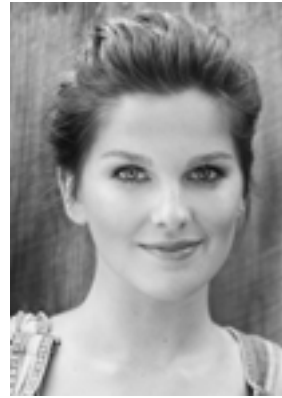
Lisa McCune, Marina Prior, Garry McDonald, Magda Szubanski, and Shane Jacobson.

His advice to students is to train as much as possible and make the most of any performance, whether it is professional or not. "Keep working towards your goal and develop all your skills so you are a well rounded performer. Casting agents look for people who can do it all – sing, dance and act!"

*Guys and Dolls* will open in Sydney in March. *Pacific* is currently in post-production and will air on the Channel 7 network in 2010.

**Michelle Smitheram** has been in rehearsal with the full cast of the 2009 Australian tour of the hit musical *Chicago* for three weeks. She is playing the part of Liz in the ensemble and is enthralled with what she is learning from the production.

At the moment it is the Fosse dance style and how it impacts on the show which has grabbed her attention. The important role of the ensemble and chorus and the way it propels the story forward has also been fascinating.



Michelle is also learning a lot from having big names in the rehearsal space including Caroline O'Connor, Sharon Millerchip, Craig McLachlan and Gina Riley. "They are really friendly and mingle with us all," she says. "It is

different to anything I have done before - everyone is very committed."

It is not however such a big leap from her days with the Broadway Chorus Michelle says. "The CPCA very much prepared me to be in music theatre."

Michelle has two pieces of advice for students. "Don't be afraid to stand out in the crowd and to work hard if you want to – even if those around you aren't as serious as you," she says. "And go with your instinct - your first thought is usually the right one."

*Chicago* begins in Brisbane on 19 March. Following the Brisbane season it will open in Sydney from 14 May with other cities to follow.

### Photo highlights from the 2008 Broadway Chorus end of year performances



## CPCA News

### Students in the News

**Emily-Jayne McLean** (Broadway Chorus - The Show Chorus) has been cast in *Billy Elliot* as one of the ballet-school girls.

**Michael Zinner** (Broadway Chorus - The Show Chorus) went to Sydney last October to compete in the South Pacific Ballroom Dancing Championships. One of the events Michael entered, with dance partner of ten months Taylor Ferguson, was the *Junior 10 Dance Event* which involves having to perform ten dances: five standard (eg waltz) and five Latin American (eg cha cha).

Michael and Taylor won this event and are now going to represent Australia in Moscow, Russia this month.

**Emily Metcalfe** (Broadway Chorus - The Troup) has been cast in a lead role in a short film *Eternal Spring* which will be entered into the Sony 2009 Tropfest Competition.

**Billy Doyle** (The Croydon Players and Croydon Intermediate Youth

Theatre) has been cast in a feature role in 'Problem Gambling' TV commercial.

**Chloe Savanah** (Broadway Chorus - Triple Threat), **Christopher Sciberras** (Broadway Chorus - Intermediate Company), and **Namit Gupta** (Mount Waverley Senior Youth Theatre) have all been cast in a Beyond Blue 'Youth' TV commercial campaign.

Nine year old **Mia Herrick** (Broadway Chorus - Croydon Intermediate Chorus 1) entered the song *Rainbows, Flowers* into the Australian Children's Music Foundation's 2008 Songwriting Competition, that she and another little girl from her school wrote. Mia and her friend won first prize in Category 2 (Grade 3 and 4). The song was performed at the Sydney Festival in January by the Sydney Youth Orchestra and the Australian Youth Choir.

You can listen to *Rainbows, Flowers* on ACFM's web site at [www.acfm.com.au](http://www.acfm.com.au) following the links through to the 2008 Competition winners.

### Teachers in the News

**Mathew Frank** (CPCA Musical Director) has been working as the Associate

Musical Director for the Melbourne Theatre Company production of *Poor Boy* which is playing at the Sumner Theatre until 15 March.

**Petra Glieson** (Drama Rehearsal Director) is performing in 'The Glass Threshold' with the Machination Theatre Ensemble. For more information: [www.machinationtheatreensemble.com](http://www.machinationtheatreensemble.com) Petra also has a guest role in the TV Series 'City Homicide'.

**Andrew Kroenert** is performing with the Australian tour of *Buddy: The Buddy Holly Musical*.

**Talent Company of Australia** Registrations to enter our talent agency will be taking place on Saturday 18 and Sunday 19 April, and Sunday, 26 April at the CPCA head office. More details to follow soon...

### Email us with your News

No student news is too big or too small ([admin@cpca.com.au](mailto:admin@cpca.com.au)).

## Teacher profile – Spotlight on Samantha Dodemaide



### What is your role at the CPCA?

I am a dance and drama teacher for the CPCA.

### What professional training have you done?

After training with the CPCA for six years (four of those years as a Triple Threat) I pursued my passion of the performing arts by undertaking a course with *Patrick Studios Australia* where I train for 8-12 hours a day in all aspects of music, dance and drama. I am currently in my third year.

### Have you worked professionally and if so, what has been the highlight?

Although I have not yet worked in the musical theatre industry I have worked professionally in fashion

parades for *Bonds, Cotton On, Big W* and *Sportsgirl*. I have also danced in the *Countdown Spectacular* at Rod Laver Arena, the *Good Friday Appeal, It Takes Two*, and *Dancing with the Stars*. I have also appeared as a feature dancer/actor in film clips for artists such as Kate Alexa and Ricki Lee. In March I will be travelling to Dubai for my third time to entertain thousands of spectators at the rugby Sevens as an aggreko dynamo cheerleader.

### Who do you most admire in the world of performance?

There are so many people that I admire. I admire Marilyn Monroe, Gene Kelly, Judy Garland (the list could go on) for what they have brought to the stage and screen. But the people who inspire me the most are the people around me; the dancers and singers, the choreographers... These people are the greatest inspiration of all.

### What is your favourite musical?

*Calamity Jane* would have to be my all time favourite possibly because as a child I grew up as a Doris Day fan.

### What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

Since I spend six days of the week dancing and training I don't get much spare time, but when I do, I like to relax, watch a good old fashioned musical, or spend time with the important people in my life. As a treat I enjoy spending time at the theatre - you can never see a live show too many times!

### What do you look for in a good student?

I look for a strong sense of passion for what they are doing. There is nothing more rewarding than teaching a class full of enthusiastic students who are ready to learn.

### What advice can you give students who may like to perform professionally one day?

If you work hard enough and love what you do, anything is possible. Also, a positive attitude and believing in yourself!

## Student profile – Spotlight on Tracey O'Brien



### How long have you been a student with the CPCA?

I have been with the CPCA now for just over three and a half years and I still dread the thought and realization of ever leaving.

when I found out and it was a little bit awkward trying to contain my extreme excitement.

### What other performing experience have you had outside the CPCA?

Broadway Chorus is really my first performing experience and I am only now exploring other possibilities. Up until now I've just done the usual good old school productions.

and spare time isn't really in my vocabulary, but I love writing my own music.

### Which performer do you most admire?

I don't really have one specific person. I really like Beyonce. I think she has it all, and she is so down to earth....I really like her. I also love Meryl Streep and Hugh Jackman.

### What do you enjoy about the Broadway Chorus program?

I absolutely love how the program embraces such a variety of people and talent. You can just be who you are and everyone loves you for it. The people you meet are just amazing!

### What has been the highlight of your time with the Broadway Chorus?

Definitely getting promoted to the Triple Threats. You really have to work to get there and recognition of that work is awesome! As I recall I was on the train

### What is your favourite musical?

Oooh that's tough. OK I know it's a bit predictable but overall it is possibly, probably, potentially almost definitely *Wicked*. From set, to costume, to characters, to the actual music itself; it is exactly what makes a musical a show stopper. I also love laughing so I found *Spamalot* hilarious!

### What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

At the moment I am in Year 12

### What advice can you give to students (and their parents) just starting out with Broadway Chorus?

Don't ever feel like you're not good enough because I look back on how far I have come and I can't believe how I have transformed. It is such a great eye opener to the performing industry and it leaves you on a solid platform to start your performing journey, whether that's professional or not.

## General Notices

### Rehearsal and Performance Schedules

Look out for rehearsal and performance schedules which will be issued in March. This schedule includes all rehearsals, workshop and performance dates for each student. Please put workshop and performance dates into your diary.

### Venue Managers for 2009

Due to our change in structure, we have some new venue managers in 2009. Please take a moment to write down your venue manager and their mobile number for this year. Better still log it into your mobile phone! A list of all Broadway Chorus venue managers can be found on the front page of this newsletter.

### Apologies for Class Abscence

CPCA policy requires that if a student cannot attend a class, an apology should be sent to your venue manager via an SMS message, including the child's name, venue and group.

### Medical Details

Further to any CPCA medical form filled out, parents/guardians are required to verbally inform their venue manager if a student has a medical condition. This process is required each year due to changes in venue managers.

### Uniform

Please make sure you are wearing your uniform to class each week. If you do not yet have uniform, please see your venue manager. The correct Broadway Chorus uniform includes:

- Broadway Chorus T-Shirt
- Black dance pants (or similar)
- Black jazz shoes
- Hair neatly tied back off the face

### Nut-free Policy

The CPCA has a nut free policy at all of our training and performance venues. Children, parents and CPCA staff are prohibited to bring any food that contains nut products to these venues. Parents are requested to inform the CPCA in writing of any allergic reaction that their child suffers to nut products.

### Mobile-free Zone

Mobile phones are to be either turned off or on silent in class.

### Car Pooling

Towards the end of March your venue manager will have a car pooling list available to view. Enquiries regarding car pooling before the end of March can be made to the CPCA head office.

### Upcoming Public Holidays

Please note classes WILL be held on Labour Day, Monday, 9 March and Anzac Day, Saturday, 25 April.

### Costume Hire for Schools

The CPCA has a substantial and varied costume collection from our many performances, such as *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Sound of Music*, *Calamity Jane*, and *The King and I*. Large sets of ensemble costumes (minimum quantity 20), as well as some principals, are available for hire for a nominal fee. Please contact Jennifer at CPCA on 9384-1644 or email wardrobe@cpc.com.au