

BEGINNERS ON STAGE NEWS



Term 1 - March 2009

Beginners Gear Up for All Things Magical!

Welcome to all our students - especially those new to the Children's Performing Company of Australia (CPCA). We have an exciting program in store for you!

For those of you who don't know, 'beginners on stage' is the term which the Stage Manager uses to prepare performers for their first appearance on stage. This standby call informs the cast that the audience is seated and are waiting expectantly for the show to start. *House lights are down. Take a deep breath. Then you're on!*

The curriculum for 2009 is the result of the growth and development of the Beginners program, which is now a separate division within the CPCA. This program provides a valuable learning experience across dance, drama and singing.

The program this year includes:

- Integrated learning objectives across the disciplines
- Focus on confidence building, cooperation and learning new skills in the Performing Arts

The general aims of the Beginners OnStage program are:

- To increase self-confidence and self-expression
- To work co-operatively and respectfully
- To understand the on-stage and off-stage rules and conventions of the theatre
- To improve concentration

There are now three levels to the Beginners OnStage hierarchy. Students are placed into class groups according to age and ability. The curriculum and repertoire is designed accordingly for each group.

The focus of learning for this semester will include;

- Singing: basic posture and breathing, finding the beat, projection, dynamics.
- Dance: moving to the beat, basic steps, building control and coordination.

- Drama: being seen and heard on stage, working together, and learning lines.

Rehearsals involve practical and playful activities, listening and observing tasks, fundamental performance techniques, and opportunity for practice performances.

Highlights of semester one rehearsals include using percussion instruments, a take-home rehearsal CD for students to practice to, and of course working toward our June concert — "Do You Believe in Magic?" which is themed towards all things magical!

Performance week will be from June 21st at the Union Theatre in Parkville. Students will be involved in presenting a range of "magical" musical items in song and dance, as well as a short play. The concert is fully costumed, with amazing sets and lighting and is not to be missed! Stay tuned for exact dates for your child's group to be announced very soon.

In the meantime, we hope you enjoy some photo's from the Beginners OnStage 2008 end of year performance season!



CONTACT
details

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JAMES CONLAN (0417 326 555): Essendon,
Footscray, Taylors Lakes.

JAN DIXON (0417 326 444): Bentleigh, Berwick,
Frankston, Mount Waverley.

LENE KRISTENSEN (0417 326 222): Bundoora,
Elwood, Hawthorn, Ivanhoe.

SCOTT SANTINON (0417 326 333): Croydon,
Templestowe, Wantirna.



Photo highlights from the 2008 Beginners OnStage end of year performance.



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 Troupe) 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.acmf.com.au following the links through to the 2008 Competition winners.

Congratulations to all our students!

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 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@cpc.com.au).

Teacher profile – Spotlight on Emily Devlin (Head of Beginners OnStage)



What is your role at the CPCA?

My role as Head of Beginners OnStage involves overseeing the Beginners' program; from writing curriculum,

choosing repertoire and organising concerts, to managing staff and students.

What professional training have you done?

I trained at the Ballarat Academy of Performing Arts, gaining a Bachelor of Arts in Music Theatre. I also have a Diploma of Education from Melbourne University, and am a fully qualified teacher. I have been teaching for the CPCA since 2004, and also teach singing at several high schools and privately around Melbourne.

Who do you most admire in the world of performance?

I grew up with Julie Andrews being my hero and I think I have been influenced musically by her! *Mary Poppins* was one my first encounters with Disney/Musical Theatre and I was hooked! And then of course, there was *The Sound of Music*....!

What is your favourite play and musical?

When I was in Grade 6, I saw *Phantom of the Opera* and my life was changed! It was my first time at a big scale musical and I sat awestruck for the whole thing! From then on I decided that was what I wanted to do with my life! Music Theatre!

Nowadays, I am a fan of Jason Robert Brown and smaller off-Broadway musicals.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

My favourite thing to do at the moment is to walk and play with my Jack Russell puppy, Chloe. She is so smart! I also enjoy hosting a yummy BBQ with my good friends.

What do you look for in a good student?

It's always great when someone really enjoys themselves in class and always tries their best. I love it when students encourage each other and are really positive and enthusiastic.

What advice can you give students who love to perform?

Perform because it makes you happy, and because you love it! When I see how much students are enjoying themselves on stage and in rehearsals, it's really special and I think we are lucky to have such a great outlet for self-expression!

Student profile – Spotlight on Jasper Swarray



Eleven year old Jasper started as a Beginner in 2003 and is now working his way through the Broadway Chorus hierarchy.

How long have you been a student with the CPCA?

This is my seventh year.

What did you enjoy about the Beginners course?

I thoroughly enjoyed my song and dance numbers. Everyone was friendly and every week I looked forward to seeing my friends again.

What program did you take after Beginners?

I took the Broadway Chorus program because I love to sing and dance a lot. However, it was a hard choice. I also love to act but in Broadway Chorus, you also get some drama classes.

What has been the highlight of your time with the CPCA so far?

When I was invited to join the Junior Company. It was the first performing

company I had been in. The song and dance numbers were a real challenge. I loved it! It was like nothing I had ever done before. The highlight of this year is that I have now progressed into *Show Chorus* (one of the highest performing groups in the Broadway Chorus hierarchy). We started off the year with a residential camp where I made lots of friends. Now, the songs and dance routines require even more attention and focus.

What other performing experience have you had outside the CPCA?

I was in a Melbourne Theatre Company play called *Cruel and Tender* when I was six years of age. I was the young boy. It was a non-speaking role, but I still had to act and was involved in many of the scenes. Catherine McClements was also in the play. In 2008 I was *Aladdin* in my school musical, 'Aladdin Jnr'. I had so many lines to learn and it was great fun!

What is your favourite musical?

Hard question to answer! I do like many musicals such as *Les Miserables*, *Sweeney Todd* and

Pippin. All of these story lines are so interesting and the songs fantastic. I especially enjoyed the film version of *Hairspray* with John Travolta.

Which performer do you most admire?

Fred Astaire. He sang, he danced, he acted. Was there anything he couldn't do? I enjoy watching all of his movies. His routines are always so well rehearsed and he made them look effortless. I can relate to him because I have been going to tap dancing classes since age five and tap dancing is part of my life.

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

Always try your best and have confidence in yourself. Be friendly to others. Always listen to the teacher (it must be very frustrating if you are the teacher and no body is listening to you!) Lastly, have fun. Song and dance is pointless if you don't enjoy and love what you are doing. Parents, always support and encourage your children. And always clap loudly at concerts. It really helps!

General Notices

Beginners Settling into Classes

As the Beginners settle into their classes for the first few weeks, it is important they are arriving on time for their first lesson. This minimises disruption to the flow of the class and allows everyone to feel comfortable and settled. A routine of going to the bathroom before class is also helpful.

Parents/guardians are not permitted to stay and observe their child in classes. The CPCA has a legal obligation to assure that all directors and administration are covered by a Working with Children Check and appropriate insurances. We cannot provide this cover for parents. It is also distracting for your child and others if parents are present.

To help our students build their self confidence, cooperating and attentive skills, we would also ask parental/guardian cooperation in keeping from peering into classroom windows and doors.

Uniform

Please make sure that your child is wearing the correct uniform as soon as possible. This includes;

- Beginners OnStage T-Shirt with green logo
- Black dance pants (or similar)
- Black jazz shoes
- Hair neatly tied back off face.

Snacks & CPCA Nut-free policy

Students will have a short scheduled snack break/toilet break. Please note that the CPCA has a strict NUT-FREE policy. As the break is only short, we suggest you send a small piece of fruit or a couple of crackers with your children only.

Please also make sure students carry a water bottle with them every week.

Rehearsal & Performance Schedules

Look out for student Rehearsal and Performance Schedules which will be issued in March. This schedule includes all rehearsals, Sunday workshop and performance dates for

your child's particular group for the Semester.

Venue Managers for 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 Beginners OnStage venue managers can be found on the front page of this newsletter.

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.

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.