

DRAMA DEPARTMENT NSB

It seems like an eternity since the Drama studio, Green Room and Theatre have been used for anything other than socially distanced Drama lessons. After almost two years of seeing empty rooms and empty spaces, it really did feel quite strange when recently, I opened the theatre for a weekend rehearsal to prepare for the Scratch Night event we held for our young playwrights in October. I cannot explain how eerie and empty The Cripps Hall has felt in the absence of the performances we have all become so accustomed to. Needless to say, it's nothing short of wonderful to see rehearsals and performances beginning to take place. From examination rehearsals to auditions and workshops, like, from a sleepy slumber, the staff and students in the Drama department are getting ready to get stuff done! So, brace yourselves...

Two weeks into the new academic year and the Cripps Theatre opened for the first time in months to welcome an audience to watch the NSB School Production of Matilda, directed by Lindsay Greenaway. We had a larger audience than usual, who couldn't contain their thanks and praise for the alumni cast and KS5 students who brought this wonderful musical to life (and in only two short weeks). Since then, we have recorded and marked a very successful set of GCSE Devised Performances, all inspired by the 13th Amendment and the abolition of slavery in 1865. As previously mentioned, our budding young playwrights have shared the first of several planned Scratch Night performances where family and friends were invited to listen to their scripted work in progress. We had the pleasure of listening to the new and exciting work of Randall Morris, Ella Seymour, Tom Vaughan and Abbie Rowe, supported by a larger cast of Year 12 and 13 students. They were totally brilliant.

In addition, the cast for two new productions are up and underway: the Senior Production of Pink Mist and the National Theatre Connections Programme- Like There's no Tomorrow, written by a group of young playwrights from the Belgrade Theatre, in Coventry about climate change. For this production, we will be performing at NSB and The Royal and Derngate- in the hope we may be selected (from 300 other schools and Youth Theatres) to perform at The National Theatre next year- dates to be confirmed, so keep your eyes peeled and fingers crossed.

During Personal Development week we had the pleasure of seeing a wonderful array of dance and drama performances, junk percussion, set designs and the visually dynamic ceramic and artwork displayed in and around the Cripps. My favourite quote of the week was from a Year 9 student who declared, 'I have learned that I used to be scared of performing on stage, but now I'm not!' It was just so great to see the theatre alive with the energy and enthusiasm of our budding thespians, dancers, artists and musicians.

In the Atrium and Drama Studio, Miss Bason is busily preparing for our first Comedy Store on 11th November, with a whole host of comedic extracts and sketches to make you chuckle and smile- if you like One Man Two Guvnors, then come along and see Abdul Benhayoun, do a cracking performance of Francis Henshall! Tickets are on sale now. Our KS3 Drama club is also up and running and we have the biggest intake ever since the club first started running in 2015. Amidst our budding Year 7 students, we have Brodie Stewart who has been cast to play Frankie Every, in an emotional play about three brothers who go to war called, 'The Every Brothers', set to show at The Deco. Tickets are still available from The Deco box office for the play's Remembrance Sunday return on November 14th at 7.30pm.

Finally, we have the A-Level Year 13 Devised Performances coming up on 24th November with students again rehearsing around the Atrium, Green Room and C26. Their work draws upon a vast range of theatre practitioners and having had a sneaky preview of the performances in rehearsal, are on track to showcase the talent and creativity of the current A- Level students, I can't wait to see them.

So, in short- we have been quite busy over here since September, but it's wonderful to be back and we look forward to seeing you all soon at the forthcoming events. H. Hasan