

ASPIRE

NEWS

23 February 2021

FROM THE DESK OF THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

It's been a grand start to ASPIRE rehearsals with everyone ready to get their teeth stuck into this ambitious new production 'The Masked DJ'. It has been an interesting journey thus far creatively – whilst the story is there, we have been later than usual confirming all the music and getting to grips with the script. This is to be expected after the rollercoaster that was 2020 and 'The Pecking Order'

But our heads can most definitely be in the game now. I'd like to give a big shout out to the drama ensemble who have been so helpful in the scripting department – your devising exercises and feedback have been most helpful. In other ensembles, the vocalists are sounding fantastic – in COVID safe conditions obviously – the dancers are getting their blue steel faces on and the band are getting to grips with some incredibly funky music. As usual the ASPIRE machine hums along!

I have asked everyone to send me a collage or list or dot points of what inspires them creatively. I am still waiting for a few submissions on this subject (ahem, band!). Thinking about what inspires us and interests us artistically is so important. It's what influences the decisions we make and the artists we are. Please do it, it's honestly a fantastic exercise and it allows us (as in your ensemble teams) to get a good understanding of where you're all coming from creatively. When you start working with a new creative team the first conversation you have is about what you like in terms of theatre/music/dance/art. It allows people to get a sense of you and your creative profile. So please, please send them through! I can't wait to read them!!

Anna



WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE ENSEMBLES

DRAMA

Lots of work is happening in the Drama ensemble already. The seniors have been working on a draft of Act One of the shows already. They have been cast characters and have been discussing the plot and themes and how the show works together. Over the next few weeks, they will be given the opportunity to work on some aspects of their own character. It is really important that they start to think about their character and how they should be playing them. I would like them to find an object that represents their character even in a literal or abstract way and bring it in to rehearsal over the next few weeks. This will help us with some of the character exercises that we will play.

Juniors will also be doing some character work as they will be given some short monologues to prepare for the casting of roles in the show. This will happen over the next few weeks.

In creating character, it is really important that we consider the three critical character questions.

1. Who am I? This goes much deeper than just a name and age. It includes the character's personality, educational status, experiences, history, attitude, beliefs, and relationship with others.
2. Where am I? It is important that we know not only where we are in terms of time, space, place, location and so on; but also, what is our relationship to that place and why. Our relationship to a particular environment can constantly change, consider going to school when you haven't done your homework, when it's your birthday, when you have drama and when you don't. It constantly changes and so we need to know how our character is feeling about the environment they are in.
3. What do I want to achieve? What is the character's motive? Maybe they don't want anyone to notice them, or maybe they want everyone to notice them. Or maybe they want to be in total control, or maybe they want to escape. As actors we always need to examine the script and be fully aware of our motives. Why are we doing that? Why are we saying that?

In working with the script and these character questions, we begin to improve our character skills.

Yours in Drama

Lisa and Jay

DANCE

Ciao Dancers,

Well, we are well and truly into this year's show. You have learnt a lot of choreography already and as you can see...there's still plenty more to go!

Thank you for all turning up ready to work and having practised what you have learnt, it makes it so much easier to move forward.

Lauren and Montana

MUSIC

Let's dance!

The band have received 3 huge hits so far- Vogue, Warp 1.9 and Lola's Theme. Rehearsals are turning into a bit of a party with all the dance hits happening! Last week, the band had sectionals. This is where the band is split in sections, rhythm section and orchestral instruments, so they can focus on learning and rehearsing specific parts. We will be doing this more throughout the term. Over the next few weeks, the band will be receive at least another ten more songs, and the equivalent of 18 (and more!) songs by the end of the term. It is important that each band member is practicing their parts and asking questions when needed. Students are also reminded to bring all their music, water bottle and snack to rehearsal.

Lastly, a reminder about the Aspire Song Competition- closing date has been changed to *Thursday 1st of April*...so you have more time to create!

Jess and Dom

VOCAL

***"Coming together is a beginning.
Keeping together is progress.
Working together is success."
--Henry Ford***

Henry Ford ... do you know what he was famous for? Henry was a very forward-thinking and clever man who invented the Model T Ford ... one of the first cars! He was an incredibly successful, well known, and inventive man who is known worldwide for his innovation and creativity.

His words quoted above, remind me of our journey in ASPIRE each week during rehearsals.

We come *together* each week, meeting new people, sharing our excitement and worries
We persevere and keep working *together* on the songs, learning to sing, dance and act all at the same time
We are working *together*, each week seeing progress, improved sounds, and skills
.. heading towards success as a team ... **TOGETHER!**

It has been wonderful seeing you all engage in our rehearsals ... working *together* to create a cohesive and creative team. Let's keep up the good work!

Don't forget to check out our **ASPIRE VOCAL ENSEMBLE 2021** on your email ... you will find lyrics, tracks, backing tracks, rehearsal notes, schedules etc

Have a great week!

Jeanette and Luke

EXCITING AND IMPORTANT
DATES/NEWS

ANNA RECOMMENDS

Love Letters by Newcastle Theatre Company on Friday 26 February 2021 at 8.00 pm and Saturday 27 February 2021 at 2.00 pm and 8.00 pm at Wiles Auditorium Newcastle

Chess The Musical by The Very Popular Theatre Company on Friday 26 February 2021 at 8.00 pm and Saturday 27 February 2021 at 2.00 pm and 8.00 pm and Sunday 28 February 2021 at 3.00 pm at the Civic Theatre Newcastle

Civic Cinema War Horse on Friday 5 March 2021 at 7.00 pm at the Civic Theatre Newcastle

Wicked by Newcastle Grammar School on Thursday 11 March 2021 at 7.00 pm, Friday 12 March 2021 at 7.00 pm, Saturday 13 March 2021 at 1.00 pm and 7.00 pm at the Civic Theatre Newcastle

DESIGN

In these last couple of weeks our Design team has grown in size a bit and we have been working hard on our big design piece for the upcoming show! We have been experimenting with shapes and materials to help create our pieces.

Each ensemble member has been given a main part from the show piece to design for and we have been in discussion with Lauren on how we will involve the dance ensemble.

We have been researching both online, but also looking at past shows to see where we might be able to gain some inspiration. We also visited one of the storage sheds and got some old costume pieces which we were able to play around with creating shapes and experimented with lighting and reflection of the different materials.

Next week we will be finalising our designs and starting our shopping list, as well as further discussing set design and some other costume designs for other parts of the show!

I would also like to add, it has been wonderful working with the design ensemble and using all their knowledge of the workings of ASPIRE to make up for my naivety when it comes to the production. I have learnt so much from them and cannot wait to continue this journey with them.

Lara 😊

