

Principal's Blog October 2016

On Friday 23rd September 2016, BOA held its first ever 'Alumni Morning' which was a huge success. Aiming to provide advice and guidance to our current year 13 students, 9 of our alumni from across the different pathways were invited back for a question and answer session, with questions focusing upon progression routes and what to expect after leaving BOA.

The alumni were able to offer useful advice by discussing their own personal experiences across the breadth of University, Vocational schools, Gap Years, Apprenticeships and Employment. Questions regarding open days, applications, interviews, auditions, and gap year experience were popular amongst our year 13 cohort, which our alumni were happy to answer and assist with. "In auditions, life experience is very important", "Never take rejection personally" and "In my experience, people invest in people, not in degrees" are just a few of the valuable pieces of advice which seemed to really inspire the audience. The two hour-long sessions were filled with questions, debates and advice which we feel will motivate our students when applying for their chosen progression routes over the forthcoming months. Gaining guidance from people who were in their shoes a few years ago will hopefully give the students a sense of achievement and confidence in themselves when choosing their career paths for the future.

Advice being given on what and what not to include in personal statements, "Never use the word 'passion' and don't start with a cliché comment", how to put a portfolio together, "always be prepared - have a second portfolio ready to go", what to expect in auditions, "You're auditioning them - remember you're paying them" and how to apply for student accommodation were similar debates that will be extremely useful to many of our students as they plan for their futures.

Following the Event, the Alumni were extremely positive about how the morning had played out. Many of them expressed that they wish they could have had something similar when they were in year 13 as the advice and knowledge would have been truly valuable. After hearing this feedback, we are confident that if we planned for another 'Alumni Morning' next year, it would be successful and beneficial to our students. It is also important for us to keep in contact with our alumni and keep them up to date with performances and events that are happening at BOA – "Be creative, be independent! We are the next generation!".

A video link to highlights of the event can be viewed here: <https://goo.gl/MGXB79>.

We'd like to say a massive thank you to our alumni as this event would not have been possible without them. We wish them every success for the future and remind them to keep in touch via boa-alumni@boa-academy.co.uk.



Year 10 Actors had their workshop with the Shakespeare Schools Festival on Friday 4th October. They impressed the Festival staff with their ensemble work and choral speaking for the forthcoming production of Richard III. The Year 10 also enjoyed working with Great Barr Primary School, who Ethan Beattie singled out for real praise in discussion of their Macbeth. This was good to see our students being so engaging, and engaged with, members of the wider community when representing BOA.

Praise too for Year 13 Acting students who travelled to four primary schools with Shakespeare and Wind in the Willows inspired performances and workshops. The work was imaginative, sweet, hilarious and highly creative and the reception at the schools was excellent. The students conducted themselves in a highly professional manner at all times and won some young fans from various assembly halls and story mats across the West Midlands.

On Friday 30th September, 8 Year 13 Acting students were involved in a film shoot with Maverick TV to shoot a 3-minute short film for Channel 4's Random Acts Films. 'Glass Girls' was based about gender equality and giving opportunities for the next generation of girls. The shoot took place at Moseley Swimming Baths and was a brilliant experience for the students to be involved in.

On Thursday 29th September, BOA's Year 12 Musical Theatre and Acting Pathways took part in the Live and Loud Festival to celebrate the great works of Shakespeare. Performing at both the Old Rep Theatre and the refashioned Pop Up Theatre in Moor Street car park, students presented an electrifying evening of Shakespeare-inspired performances with monologues, music, poetry and physical theatre. All students involved had a brilliant time and enjoyed recreating work of the 'greatest bard of all', Shakespeare.

Monday 11th October was BOA's birthday. I remember Friday 7th October 2011 very well; the keys to BOA were finally handed to me. Staff came into work over the weekend to get school ready and our

students (who had been housed in various locations over the city) entered the building for the first time on Monday 11th October 2011.



Composer and singer, Susie Self is creating a new opera called 'Rosa' inspired by the life of human rights activist, Rosa Parks. Throughout September and October, Susie has lined up 6 exciting workshops with BOA students which will incorporate singing and musical theatre to explore ideas for the opera. Students from all pathways have been involved in the workshops which have so far proved a huge success for both Susie and BOA.

25 students were selected to perform at The Patrick Centre in a curtain raiser for 2Faced Dance Company's tour of 'Run.' The performance takes place Friday 14th October.

Over 250 students auditioned for BOA dance companies and 90 students have successfully gained a place in one of the companies. We have launched two new companies; 'Morpha' Classical Ballet company led by Amy Coughlan and 'Fascia' a musical theatre company, led by a range of musical theatre staff, to join existing companies Industria and Versus dance company.

Wednesday 12th October was an amazing evening. Broadcast students took part in a live simulcast on B2 radio and BOA TV and also streaming on Facebook – their first live event broadcast which garnered over six thousand views over the hour of the broadcast.

Broadcast students took on the roles of technical team, presenters and camera operators to get the content out, while music and music technology students provided the professional acts, audio mix and technical support to create an hour of live music television and radio. Technical Theatre arts provided support and staging to make sure the event looked as good as it sounded. A truly collaborative event.

Games and new media pathway students this term have been experimenting with a new piece of equipment – a HTC Vive where they have been able to look at their own 3D and Environment content through a brand new VR device.



On Monday 17th and Tuesday 18th October, 10 Year 13 Acting students were chosen to be involved in a shoot with Koala TV. The students had to act as University Students at several locations around Birmingham, including Birmingham Airport, the Council House and Aston University. This was a great chance for the students to add a professional acting credit to their CV as well as giving them the opportunity to work with a well-established television production company.

Year 13 Musical Theatre and Technical Theatre students recently enjoyed a weekend in the heart of 'theatre-land'...the West End, London. On arrival in London they enjoyed a hearty Italian meal before watching 'Kinky Boots' at The Adelphi Theatre. It's clear that this performance influenced the students as, in preparation for their forthcoming variety performance 'BOA's Got Talent' several of them have been exploring this genre and we invite you to see the outcome in our BOA Theatre on 13 and 14 December 2016. After a good night's sleep students travelled into Covent Garden where the Musical Theatre students enjoyed time to explore the sights and shop! During this time Technical Theatre students were treated to a backstage tour at The Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. After lunch, we were treated to the delights of 'Motown - The Musical' at the Shaftesbury Theatre. After this it was straight to the Kings Cross Theatre to watch the most spectacular 'In The Heights'. The creative setting of a theatre built over existing railway tracks, and being on a traverse stage opened the students eyes to different performance spaces in which they may work in the future, either as performers or as technical crew. Students were lucky enough to have their photo taken with the cast at the end of the performance. We now wait with baited breath for the arrival of 'Hamilton' in the UK, written also by Lin-Manuel Miranda. On the Sunday Musical Theatre students were put through their paces by the Dance Captain and cast members of 'Kinky Boots' learning the song and dance

from one of the key numbers in the show and having a most insightful question and answer session with Musical Directors, the Dance Captain and cast members.



Year 13 MT and TTA students on stage with the cast of 'In The Heights' at the Kings Cross Theatre.

The last week of term saw a very busy open week with lots of prospective BOA students visiting. The Art Exhibition, 'Through The Ages', was also on show. A stunning installation based on the works of Shakespeare.



After half term, BOA will see performances by the Year 13 Musical Theatre Pathway in a production of 'Sweeney Todd', Year 11 Acting students performing 'One Man, Two Guvnors' and Music students playing songs by 'The Beatles', 'The Rolling Stones' and 'Elton John' in 'The Cavern Club' Showcase. It looks to be a promising half term full of performances showcasing the talents of our young creatives. We hope to see you there.