



DEC. 2023
ISSUE NO. 10

TY TIMES: MUSICAL EDITION

The Davitt College Official Transition Year Newspaper



**Other great reads
in this issue:**

SETTING THE STAGE	02
MAMA! THE MUSICAL EDITORIAL	03
DONNA'S INTERVIEW	11
SOPHIE'S INTERVIEW	14
BEHIND THE SCENES	35
MEDIA SHOTS	18

Rava Boys - Hit It!

Transition Year students of 2023 brought a Greek classic back to the Davitt College stage with this year's production of Mama!

The entire class of over 120 students played their part, with famous roles such as the classic Donna Sheridan, her conflicted daughter Sophie, the ever-cool Sky, the fun-loving Rosie and the seasoned Tanya, the intrepid traveller Bill, the awkward Harry and the smooth Sam Carmichael. We even had some roles that were created on the fly, such as the high-soaring Rava Boys! Every single Transition Year student reached their maximum potential to ensure that an incredible show was put on for all to see.

Setting the Stage

BY CERYS O'MALLEY & SOPHIE EARLEY

We spent the first couple of weeks on official musical business cleaning the art room and returning its storeroom to its former glory. There were about fifteen of us in total. Our first task was to make a Styrofoam camera. We gave our precious camera to Mischa Ginnelly who spent hours doing paper mâché and carefully painting it until it looked amazing. Unfortunately plans changed and it was never used in the play... the first of many props to be cut from the show ...

We (Cerys O'Malley, Sophie Earley, Ellen Shaw, Chloe McDonnell and Mar Deudero) rolled the walls of the set white. This was a challenge, the red and black paint that was on the wood from Grease last year was so hard to cover with the white. We ended up painting over one spot countless times because the red glitter somehow kept showing through. The process of covering the walls white took 2 to 3 days and we got covered in white paint. Luckily, we wore old clothes every day.

Meanwhile, the remaining art crew in the art room were slaving away making props, lathering on layer after layer of glue and newspaper ... to make a comedically large post-box. Sadly, the post-box was never used... it was replaced later on.

The next step was painting the doors blue. Ellen and Sophie worked on the middle door while Cerys painted the side doors with help from Ava McHale.

Painting the middle doors, from my perspective (Sophie) took much too long. I kept unknowingly focusing on the smaller details that people offstage cannot see from afar. Nonetheless, I am proud of the finished result. My experience (Cerys) painting the doors was stressful because I had no idea what to do so I was just trying to replicate Sophie and Ellen's door.

Back to the few people making props, they made a fish by the name of 'James Trout' (credit to Adam Fahey) this was the only prop that they made that was used in the show after a heated custody battle between Adam Fahey, Claire Gillardy, and Petr Samko.

With no time to spare we (Cerys and Sophie) painted the shutters. We also painted the half door and the door to the very right. Then, the set was beautifully decorated with flowers by Chloe and her mother, Heather Fair. After some much needed touch-ups, we drew a mandala tapestry for the bedroom scene. This took longer than expected and was a little messy given that it was so last minute.

Overall the painting of the set was very enjoyable but was hard work trying to get everything done in time with so few of us. Thanks to Ms. Hughes for helping us with everything, she did an amazing job designing the set.

MAMA!

Davitt College Presents: Mama!

BY DAMIEN GALLAGHER (TY TIMES CO-EDITOR)



For the first time in history, or as far as recent records show, the Davitt College Musical production team launched Operation Phantom of the Opera, a mission so secret that not even their own families knew about, in April 2023: Find the next smash hit DC musical. Calling auditions for a TY musical when the prospective cast were still in Third Year was a bold move, however the move paid off and allowed the production team the entire summer season to choose a musical that would suit such a diverse cast. Rumours of writing an entire script from scratch, of visiting a 'nobody puts Baby in the corner' inspired show wired up with hidden cameras and audio devices, and of going all out with an Elf-themed production abounded, yet a small semblance of sanity persevered and early in July, it was decided to showcase a musical with an ABBA soundtrack, locally known as MAMA!



THE AUDITIONS

The production team, comprising of Mr. MacDonnacha, Ms. Kearns, Mrs. Kennedy and Mr. Gallagher (with set support to follow from Ms. Hughes and Mr. Cunningham) arrived in the school library one bright September morning, armed with enough coffee to wake even the snooziest of uncles after a Christmas Day feed of spuds and turkey. We had our list whittled down to some 70 callbacks and began a full day of auditions, a day that merged into the next. Similar to Betty Rizzo (Ava McMorro) from last year, one audition raised the hairs on my arms as our eventual Donna Sheridan, otherwise known as Emily Almawsoei-Prendergast, belted out The Winner Takes It All - she was not to know but that just so happens to be my favourite ABBA song, or perhaps she conducted some prior investigations!

Some other singing auditions that stood out were Helen Murrihy, Lucy O'Brien, Lewis Stirzaker and Laoise Walsh. However, we only had room for roughly 12 roles and it doesn't take one of Mr. Murphy's Maths Mastermind Mentees to know that 70 is about 58 more than we needed. We were able to narrow down that callback list to 40 after the first day. Day Two slapped more problems on our desks: The Acting Auditions!

We gave the chosen 40 a short scene to learn but decided not to tell them which roles they would be auditioning for, instead preferring to see them in various parts. The Wedding Scene was selected as a good balanced scene to audition in and, slotting students into the roles of Donna, Sophie, Sky, the three dads, Rosie, Tanya, and the Priest, we were able to judge acting ability and also to see if some chemistry would materialise. We found a group of dads almost immediately - in fact, one of our main problems was that not enough boys auditioned! We were very close to casting females in some of the male roles, however the lads rose to the challenge later on, when we were on set!



Some students arrived to the acting auditions very prepared and nailed a role almost immediately. Emily Almawsoei-Prendergast shone as Donna from the get-go, however it must be noted that her understudy, Laoise Walsh, was ready to go on stage at a moment's notice. We really had a serious problem and no immediate solutions - we had multiple actors for almost every role but could only select 12. Day Three was even worse - we ran a third callback for the roles of Rosie, Tanya, Ali, and Lisa. Every single actor was probably good enough for the main roles, of which there were four! The reality was that we had 14 girls auditioning for 4 roles - where is the Maths Department when you need them!

Lucy O'Brien was the frontrunner for Sophie, the connection between Sophie and our favourite Sky, Paddy O'Brien, was so good that the show simply would not have been a success if any other pair were chosen. We were also very happy with Donna and the three dads - Sam (Blake Joyce), Harry (Lewis Stirzaker), and Bill (Petr Samko).

NEW PARTS

The conundrum was solved by creating three new roles - Calypso the barmaid who was fond of her drink (played by Hannah Hauttmann, with Kate McElevey as her understudy), Kate (Sophie's third friend, played by Ava Flynn with Melinda Lengyel as her understudy), and Jen (Sophie's fourth friend, played by Ella Garvey with Hannah Hauttmann as her understudy). This allowed us to add extra cast members and understudies.



UNDERSTUDY HEAVEN

Most of our excellent understudies played various roles in the background, with some grabbing extra lines, some of which were given out on Opening Night! We chose our Tanya and Rosie based on their chemistry and stage presence, again their understudies could very easily have gone on stage at any time. With the majority of the female roles assigned, it was time to deal with those pesky lads. The biggest issue the boys faced was their shyness - most of them were clearly intimidated either by all the girls or by Mr. Gallagher's singing and dancing abilities (I'm convinced it was the latter). It took some of the lads up to the week before Opening Night to nail down a role. We assigned the following as understudies to the dads: Sebastian Brodecki (Sam), Ryan Kilbane (Harry), and Stephen Staunton (Bill). Interestingly, Stephen was not originally chosen as understudy but was encouraged to go for it by the first Bill understudy Byron Cleary, who was selected to play Father Alexandrios.

REHEARSALS

The preparations for the musical began months ago, in a toasty warm library during as many free hours as the production team could find. Samuel Buckton (Eddie AKA Salt) and Sebastian Brodecki (Pepper) were fantastic on stage during the live performances, however it was a very different story in the rehearsals. Time upon time we (Ms. Kearns and Mr. Gallagher) directed, instructed, and sometimes even acted out how to play the parts effectively, but the dynamic duo kept forgetting what we told them. Literally seconds later. Sam kept telling me that it will be fine on the night, and I really should have believed him because the pair were sensational. The audience also missed an incredible moment when Seba and Petr assumed the roles of Donna and Sam (on more than one occasion) to deliver a performance of S.O.S - it was very difficult not to include this as part of the show but we felt that some things were better experienced for the first time and never, ever, EVER again. We were first introduced to this particular performance on a cold October afternoon in the basement of the ETB offices, and perhaps it is almost perfect that the memory remains there. In the cold and and the dark.



Lewis Stirzaker excelled in the role of Harry Bright complete with a flawless British accent (I'm still unsure as to what he really sounds like) - his understudy, Ryan Kilbane could be spotted at various moments during the show popping his head out of doors and windows during some iconic songs! Blake Joyce (who became more dad-like as the weeks went on to the point that we thought he actually was a dad, or a teacher, during rehearsals) and Petr Samko (who became somewhat of an idea-man with his multiple line suggestions and additions to the show) played the other dads, Sam Carmichael and Bill Austin respectively.

Thanks to the incredible work of Mr. Cunningham and Ms. Hughes, we were able to get our performers on stage during the October Mid-Term break (yes, they came in when they should have been off!). Rehearsals were moved back to the library for the next week as the stage had to be fine-tuned and safety measures finalised. We took this opportunity to nail down the script and really only had to make minor changes. We were able to slot the understudies in in seamlessly when the leads were unavailable - they were that good. The understudies did such a fantastic job that rumours of them going on stage began to murmur, and, if we had the resources, we might have sent them on to catch the limelight.



THE FRIENDS SCENE

No, not that one! We wrote a new scene for Sophie's friends since they were excellent singers and we wanted to give them a chance to showcase their talent. The scene included a short rendition of Fernando, which is not from the original musical. Helen, Áine, Ella, and Ava did very well on the nights, however the rehearsals were another story as every single time at least one of them burst into laughter. They held it together in the end though!

OPENING NIGHT

The dress rehearsal the Sunday before opening week wasn't a complete disaster but we only got through Act I. Come the first matinée on Tuesday morning, we still had not run through the entire show and the production team were beginning to show a few cracks, we were even wondering if we would have to go on! The matinées went as well as a daytime show could go, however it was Wednesday night when this group really showed what they were all about. I don't say this lightly when I say that it was the best opening night I have ever been a part of. The entire cast and backstage crew pulled together to deliver an inspired performance. It looked to have gone off without a single mistake when Petr spun around at the end of Take A Chance On Me and knocked over the priest's pulpit. I glanced worriedly at Ms. Hughes backstage when I heard the enormous crash of





timber fall to the ground. The audience assumed that it was part of the show, backstage I was wondering how we could get a crew member on quickly to pick up the pulpit when Bryon Cleary, who was playing Father Alexandrios marched out on stage.

Byron was not always the frontrunner for this role. His understudy was in the process of taking the role a week prior as Byron was having difficulty delivering his lines. Our chosen priest appeared to have not learned his lines, however with some last-minute

coaching from Ms. Kearns, he delivered during the dress rehearsal the Sunday before. Byron played his part to perfection and had the entire production team in tears of laughter. Now, about **that** Friends scene. The actor who played Chandler Bing, Matthew Perry, sadly passed away towards the end of October and we decided that, since Friends was a big part of our (the production team) lives growing up, we'd like to honour his memory in some way. Couple this with Byron asking, nay, demanding extra lines for his character, I figured it would be right to include Joey's speech from Chandler and Monica's wedding. You know the one: the giving and receiving as well as having and sharing. We wrote this into Byron's wedding speech for Sophie and Sky, and every night it had the audience in stitches! Now, back to the



opening night mishap. As Byron marched on stage, I was able breathe a deep sigh of relief - there was something about his confident stride as he marched over to the pulpit, dropped his Bible and motioned to the crowd. He proceeded to tut, mutter under his breath and pick up his own pulpit before welcoming the wedding party on, all while staying in character. Byron had, quite literally, saved the show.

RIVERDANCE

This attitude prevailed throughout the entire week. We had leads, understudies, stage crew, set design crew, even teachers backstage all working tirelessly to ensure that the show was a hit. My favourite part of the show was probably the Irish/Greek dancers, which was a welcome surprise to each audience. We had an incredible host of students at our disposal but not everyone could shine on the stage. We tried to get as many students on as possible (there were nights when props did not go on and we had to send students on with the props mid-scene to place them, these students did so in character and unnoticed by the crowds), and, sadly, we couldn't give that opportunity to everyone. However, there was a group of Irish dancers who were so incredibly gifted that I felt we needed to get them on. It came to me one night at about 1 in the morning. I sent a quick text to Cora, our wonderful choreographer, who agreed that it was possible: open the show with a taste of Riverdance. We needed more dancers than we had unfortunately but the concept was realised when we decided to insert the dance towards the end of Act I and bill it as an entertainment event for Sophie and her hen party. The reaction was phenomenal as Sarah Gannon, Amy O'Malley, Sarah-Jane Kilcawley and Zara Cunningham took the spotlight.

CLOSING NIGHT

Opening night's success meant that the show could have gone two ways: flatlining on the Friday night or reaching heights never before seen. It's important to realise that we changed a number of things for closing night, including new lines, and adjustments to dances. To the entire cohort's credit, they achieved what some may have called the impossible - they went above and beyond the best opening night to deliver the best closing night performance I have ever witnessed. This group are magical and I simply cannot praise them enough!





TY Insight Series

Dancing Queen

DONNA

By Mar Deudero & Nicole Fair

We managed to locate Emily in one of the classrooms down in Lucan Street while she was sewing a hole in Sam's (Blake Joyce's) jacket.



Can you tell us a bit about yourself and your background in musical theater?

I can, I have been doing musical theatre and popular singing exams since I was in about fourth class around 10 and then eh, I also played the part of Pepper in the CMDs production of Annie. I've always liked musicals and it was a great thing to be part of. *Emily continues to sew Sam's jacket.*

What inspired you to pursue a career in musical theater?

Emm ... my interest in it, as well as my mother and my singing teacher. *Emily cuts a thread and starts singing a song.*

How did you become involved in this particular production?

As a student of TY I did the audition and ended up getting a call back. I was so excited to be a part of it. *Emily puts some thread through needle.*

How did you prepare for the role of Donna in this musical?

I watched Mamma Mia countless times and studied Meryl Streep. I examined what she was wearing in her scenes and tried my best to replicate it. I tried my best to practice the songs while also trying to rest my voice.

What aspects of the character do you find most challenging or interesting?

I liked how Donna was very straightforward. Some people may regard Donna as being mean, but I think she was the perfect character for me to play. I don't think anything was too challenging, I was more intrigued by her behaviour.

Did you draw inspiration from any particular sources while developing your character?

I did. While I read descriptions of Donna from various productions of Mamma Mia, I also watched a variety of Streep's other films to try to understand not only the character of Donna but the woman who played her in the movie.

Can you describe the rehearsal process for this musical? Any memorable moments or challenges?

Stressful. While it was of course great fun there was also a lot of work to be done. We had our laughs but we also had moments where we had to knuckle down and perfect things. I especially remember towards the end of the rehearsal process Mr. G told me that I needed to change the way I said "you" when I saw Sam in the taverna. I eventually perfected it, but it was fun trying to figure out the right way to be unhappy to see someone. I also remember the day I found out I got the part of Donna, it was in An Sportlann and I found out because Cora wanted to do the "Money Money Money" dance, I'll never forget the feeling and I didn't even have much time to take it in because next minute I was standing up on a table learning the dance.

Did you collaborate with the teachers and other cast members during rehearsals?

Well, the teachers gave us advice and helped us through the whole process. When other scenes were going on characters that were not in them would have time to talk and through this many friendships were created. We also created a strong bond with the teachers in charge through spending so much time with them in the library.

Are there any specific scenes or songs that were particularly challenging to rehearse?

Yes, the song "The Winner Takes It All," which turned out to be one of my favourites, was very difficult at the beginning. It is very emotional and I found myself having to get into the right headspace before singing it. Another song that took some time to perfect was "SOS." I sang that with Blake Joyce, who played "Sam," we spent a lot of time on it, but it turned out to be worth it in the end. There were also a few scenes where I had to struggle not to laugh at particular moments, such as in "Chiquitita" when "Rosie" was bringing out a bra to try and cheer me up and the "intimate" moments.

Are there any specific vocal techniques or exercises you use to maintain your performance throughout the run?

Yes! So in my years of going to singing lessons I have learned all about breath work and I have learned how to make sure I don't lose my voice in the weeks coming up the musical. I sang very softly and was living on Manuka honey.

How do you connect with the audience emotionally during your performance?

I made eye contact with a lot of people. I winked at a few and tried my best to engage in any way I could.

Do you have any routines to help you get into character before going on stage?

Not really as a group, we all sang in the library and practiced our scenes and that kind of did it for me. I feel as though I became Donna for a few weeks coming up to the show.

Are there any specific lines or lyrics that resonate with you personally?

In the song "Dancing Queen" the Dynamos celebrate their youth and that made me realise that I was in the golden years of my life. The song "One Of Us" also showed me that you can't let one person ruin your life. Along with "The Winner Takes It All", these songs made me realise that you have to look out for yourself in life. Guys, that got deep so quick.

Are there any valuable lessons you've learned during the rehearsal and performance process?

Absolutely. I think the main one I learned was that everyone had an equal role in the process. Of course it's a great feeling to get such an amazing role in the production however we all had to remember that everyone was equally as important. I also

learned a lot from Donna who taught me to celebrate my independence.

How do you see your career in musical theater evolving in the coming years?

I'd like to be a part of more productions through the various musical societies. However, in terms of going on Broadway I don't think I'll be able to pursue it, maybe just the odd party piece every now and then.

What advice do you have for the future TV actors?

Emily starts talking to Mr. Gallagher about an unrelated issue.

Enjoy every moment of the rehearsals. I, along with my fellow cast members, of course enjoyed it but it no sooner began than it was over. It's a wonderful experience and I'd encourage everyone to be part of it embrace every moment.

How do you handle the pressures and challenges of performing live on stage?

Deep thoughts time. I didn't experience too many nerves, somehow, I managed to escape. There were definitely times when I was stressed but my wonderful friends on the cast helped me through it. On the first night we were all nervous but the minute I got out on stage and started talking it all went away.





TY Insight Series

Dot Dot Dot

SOPHIE

By Emma Munnelly & Rachel Harney

Sophie Sheridan, or Lucy O'Brien as her family call her, popped along for a quick chat.



Hello, who are we talking to today?

Hi, my name is Lucy O'Brien and I played Sophie Sheridan, one of the leading roles in the musical, who invites her three possible fathers to her wedding, unknown to her mum.

How did you feel when you found out we were doing Mamma Mia as our musical?

Mamma Mia was always my favourite musical and movie from a young age so when I found out we were doing it as our TY musical I was dying to get started with the rest of the audition process.

Did you expect to get a leading role in the musical?

I had always dreamed about getting a main role in our musical, but I did not think I was good enough so getting the lead in my favourite musical was really a dream come true.

How did you find the rehearsals?

I enjoyed the rehearsals. I found them very beneficial as they helped me gain more confidence and experience before going on stage. I felt it helped the cast bond together and grow real friendships. This chemistry really came through on stage.

Did you face any challenges during the musical?

One thing I found difficult at first was singing in front of the entire year in the canteen but after one of two days I got over my fear and was completely comfortable singing because I knew everyone was in the same boat.

Any funny stories rehearsal during the process

Well, we all had some great stories from our time rehearsing but one of my favourite memories is from during the audition process when we were auditioning with the wedding scene and Antonio was playing the priest and he accidentally said, "please be sitted" as opposed to "please be seated" and that is still my funniest memory from the musical.

What was your reaction when you saw the set?

When I first saw the stage, I was amazed that this would be the stage for our musical and over time as it developed, and it got painted and all the decorations got added I was astonished at all the hard work that went in by Mr. Cunningham, Ms. Hughes, and the art & stage crew, and of course a huge thanks to Heather for all her work with the flowers.

How did you find the production team to work with?

I found them extremely easy and friendly to work with and I felt I could approach them with anything. I could come to them with any question or concerns I had, I also found we got to see a new side to the teachers and developed a great relationship. And of course, we are incredibly grateful because this amazing musical would not have been possible without all their hard work behind the scenes and giving up their free time to help us.

Do you think the musical changed you as a person?

Yes, the musical definitely changed me as a person because I am so much more confident now singing and acting in front of a big crowd. I also made loads of new friends that I ordinarily would not have the chance to talk to before and create new memories with them.

What was your favourite scene from the whole musical?

I loved all the scenes from the musical, but my favourite has to be the scene where the dads just arrived at the island and Lewis AKA Harry starts singing "Thank You For The Music" and I walk out and join in. This has to be my favourite scene because I just think Sophie and the three dads singing is so wholesome.

What was your favourite song to perform?

I loved all the songs in the musical and love listening to them all the time but my favourite song to perform is definitely "Honey, Honey", I just love it because it is such a girly upbeat song and I really enjoyed performing it with the girls.

You performed 5 brilliant shows. What was your favourite?

I loved all the shows so much I thought all the hard work had finally paid off, but my

favourite show had to have been Friday night especially during the finale when all the audience were singing, dancing and most importantly, having the time of their lives.

Is there anything you would do differently with the show?

The show went brilliantly in my opinion so there is not much I would do differently, but, oh jeez, if I had to do something differently, I would add another night so no one would miss out on seeing the show and getting to perform it one last time would be amazing.

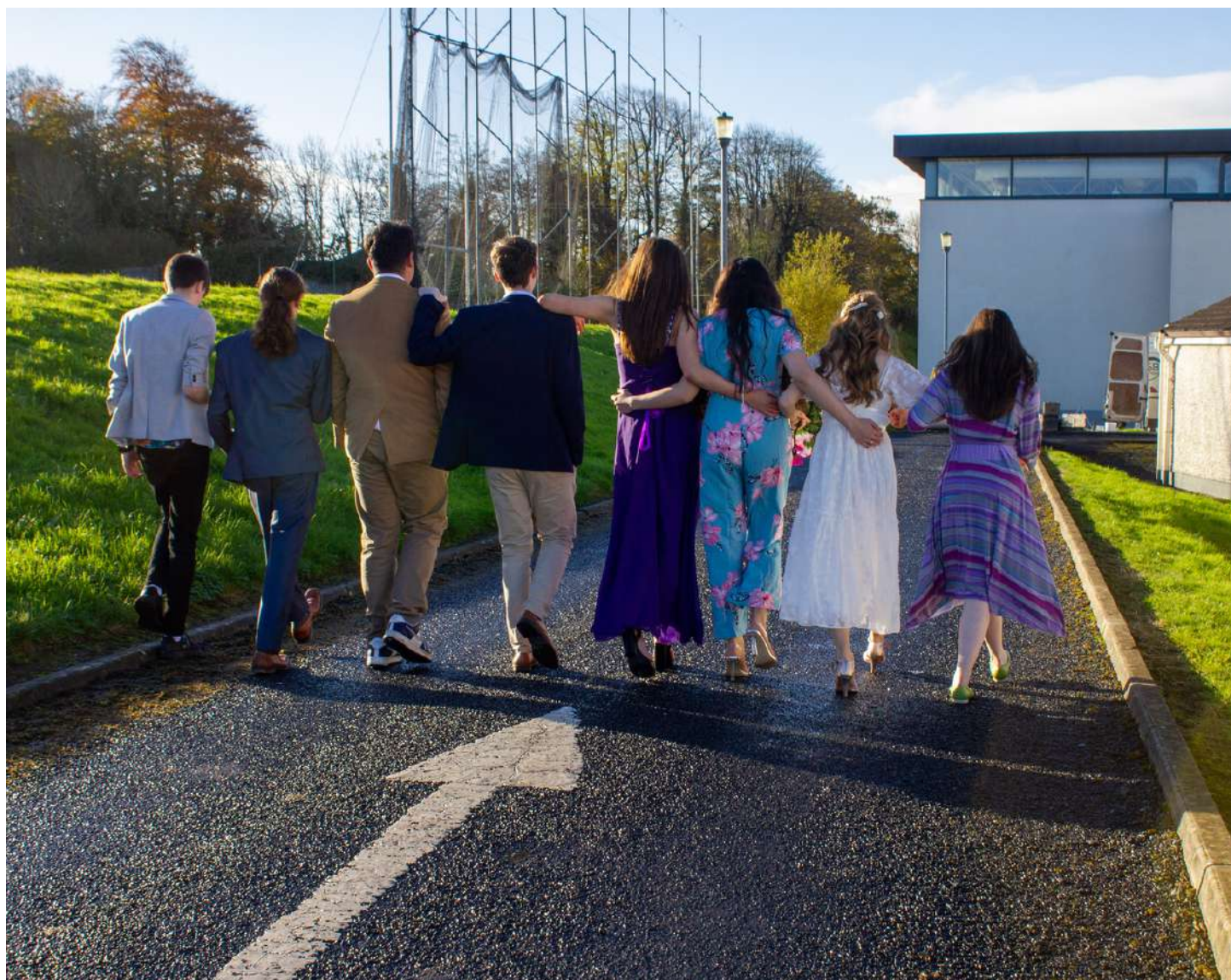
Do you have any advice for next year's musical?

OH, if I had a piece of advice for next year is don't take any time for granted because sometimes the rehearsals can be long, and you can feel fed up but when it comes to the actual shows it will all be worth it.

Our final question we are dying to know is who do you think Sophie's real dad is?

Oh, this is a great question! In my opinion Bill is Sophie's real dad, I think they have a real connection and I have always believed Sophie's real dad was Bill.





TY Insight Series

Lay All Your Love On SKY

By Kaitlin Tonra & Eoin McDonagh

Sky Rymand played expertly by Paddy O'Brien, sat down with us on the floor for a little chat.



Paddy finally spins over in his swivel chair and finds some sacred time to sit and be interviewed about his participation in this year's hit musical Mama!

What's your name and what character did you play in the musical?

Paddy pauses for dramatic effect.
Paddy O'Brien and I played Sky in the musical Mama!

Did you expect to obtain the role of Sky?

No, I really did not expect to get this role. I was quite shocked when I obtained it and I was very happy when I got it because I really enjoyed playing this character.

Did you enjoy the whole process of the musical?

I thought the entire process was very delightful and I thoroughly enjoyed it. It was a great learning experience, and I made a lot of new wonderful friends.

What was your favourite moment that occurred during the musical?

My favourite moment was doing the dance in "Does Your Mother Know" because it was such an energetic dance to take part in. I thought that it was very entertaining and the audience seemed to love it.

Do you feel the musical made you change as a person?

Oh 100%, I became a better person and my involvement in the musical changed me from within. I also became a better friend and I've learned so much from the overall experience.

If you were to do this musical again, what would you do differently?

I would cherish every moment I experienced in this musical as I feel I took it for granted. I would not change anything as I think it was quite perfect already.

Who was your favourite person to work with?

I really enjoyed working with the actors of Salt and Pepper, Sam and Seba, as they were fun to work with, kind and very interesting people to be around.

What was your favourite night of production, and why?

My favourite night of the show would have to be Friday. You could tell something was different, the energy in the air, you could feel that people were excited to finish the show but sad that it was going to end.





**Emily Almawsoei-
Prendergast**
Donna Sheridan



Laoise Walsh
Donna's Understudy



Lucy O'Brien
Sophie Sheridan



Sarah Jo Cresham
Sophie's Understudy



Blake Joyce
Sam Carmichael



Paddy O'Brien
Sky Rymand



Ethan McKeown
Sky's Understudy



Claire Gillardy
Rosie Mulligan



Charlotte Langan
Rosie's Understudy



Petr Samko
Bill Austin



Stephen Staunton
Bill's Understudy



Gabby Kilcourse
Tanya Cresham-Leigh



Lewis Stirzaker
Harry Bright



Ryan Kilbane
Harry's Understudy



Paddy O'Brien
Sky Rymand



Sebastian Brodecki
Pepper
Sam's Understudy



Samuel Buckton
Eddie (Salt)
Pepper's Understudy



Oran Hopkins
Eddie's Understudy



Helen Murrphy
Lisa



Leah Gallagher
Lisa's Understudy



Aine Fitzgerald
Ali



Alisha Gibbons
Ali's Understudy



Ava Flynn
Kate



Melinda Lengyel
Kate's Understudy



Ella Garvey
Jen



Hannah Hauttmann
Calypso
Jen's Understudy



Kate McElevey
Calypso's Understudy



Byron Cleary
Father Alexandrios



Aaron Hopkins
Father Alexandrios' Understudy



Eoin McDonagh
Laurence



Michael O'Sullivan
Laurence's Understudy

MAMA!





TY Insight Series

KNOWING ME KNOWING SAM

By Ciara Loftus

Blake Joyce, who played Sam Carmichael, decided to spare a moment from his extremely busy schedule now that he is a star of the stage and grant us an interview!



What is your name and role?

Blake Joyce, and I played Sam Carmichael, the dashing potential dad of Sophie!

What was your favourite song from the show?

S.O.S. because it was my favourite song to sing with Emily and it portrayed emotions between Donna and Sam.

How did you relate to your character?

I related to the handsomeness of the character and stunning good looks and luxurious hair, the charming wit of Sam Carmichael really came out when I got to play the character.

How was the auditioning process?

For me, it was very exciting but also worrying. It was also a really fun experience since I got to play different characters. It was interesting to see other people act as different characters as well.

Do you feel that you have changed since the musical?

Yeah, I do feel like I've adopted the dad persona and I find myself to be more charming and even more good looking.

How did you feel when you were told you had the role of Sam?

I was over the moon because that was the only role I wanted to play. When we were in the Sportlann and Mr MacDonncha announced it, I held my breath I wasn't sure if I would get it or not. It was an amazing feeling when I found out that I got it and everyone clapped for me because they knew how much I wanted it. It was an incredible feeling.

What scene in the show was most fun to perform?

Gimme Gimme Gimme. Me, Petr and Lewis were brought into a circle and there were girls dancing around us and it was a fun moment of panic, we then broke into a big dance and I had dialogue with Lucy, which was funny, the dance was one of my favourites to do as well. Also, performing S.O.S., but we'd be here a while if I got into that.

What is your favourite memory from the musical?

On the last night, when we were getting ready for a big scene, me, Petr, Lewis, Emily, Gabby and Claire were backstage and we were so proud of each other and we were all so happy. It was very emotional on the last night and I'll always remember the memories I've made with them.





TY Insight Series

Does your mother know HARRY & TANYA

By Emma Cook & Ciara Bird

Our team of interviewers caught up with Gabby Kilcourse and Lewis Stirzaker.



Full name and name of character?

Gabby Kilcourse and Lewis Stirzaker and we play Tanya and Harry.

Do you think that your appearance helped you get a role in the musical?

G: Well, I mean it had to. You couldn't really have someone 4'11 with a shiny bald head playing a tall brunette.

L: My looks absolutely did not help me get the role.

Were you aspiring for any roles, and if so what roles and, if so did you get the roles?

G: When I first heard it was *Mamma Mia* Mama, I wanted Donna. The more I got to know the musical I realised that I probably was Tanya all over. Then that became the role I wanted.

L: To be honest I thought I would be working backstage.

What do you think was the one main reason you got your characters?

G: I'd like to think it's because I'm mature not for the sultry reasons.

L: Two main reasons - I thought it was because I was British and because I could sing.

What part of the set was your favourites?

G & L: The balcony!

What was the biggest challenge you faced with your role and how did you overcome it?

G: Needing to act flattered in a convincing way when the lads' characters had to try

to win me over. You get used to it.

L: Some of the lines were way too obscure. Like, I don't know any person that would say spontaneity.

What was your favourite memory from the musical?

G: The laughs that would go on every time the Dynamos had to squish into a small space together. For example we were like sardines in a tin squished up on the balcony before *Super Trooper* but it made us all closer.

L: It was trying to scale this tiny ladder with this massive suitcase backstage while trying not to curse into the mic.

What was the chemistry like in the cast?

G: As a year group, we are so much closer now than when we began TY. It's safe to say that the leads are now their own family.

L: From the perspective of the 3 dads, Peter had never talked to Blake and it was nice to see the two of them grow so close.

Mr. Gallagher enters the press room and screams "TYS BE QUIET" as we continue our interview.

Was there a lot of comedy in the script?

G: SOOOOOO MUCH! Ms. Kearns was on hand to ensure that the script remained PG while retaining plenty of the jokes. Mr. Gallagher's snappy sense of humour was blindingly obvious throughout the script and it made it more fun to perform on the stage.

Lewis, how about your perspective, was there a lot of comedy in the script?

L: Umm sort of. Like.... yeah. There was a lot of humour in some scenes but by the time they made it to the stage, it had been narrowed down a lot.

If the opportunity came up again would you do another musical?

G: Without question I would happily do it every Wednesday, Thursday and Friday for the rest of my life.

L: it depends on the musical and it depends on who was playing who. I originally didn't want to do Mamma Mia because I had never watched the movie but I grew to love it.

What did you think of the costumes?

G: Fun. Although I'd never wear them in my day-to-day life, my favourite part would have to be wearing the heels. They gave me confidence and helped me slip into character.

L: Although it was quite difficult to find a bright blue suit, I think it was fun and helped me get into character.

Favourite scene?

G: The bedroom scene. I love acting with Claire and I love the joke about the three men.

L: I'd say the bedroom scene again AKA the Our Last Summer scene. I could take a lot of creative liberties with it.

You both have accents. Did you emphasise them any bit?

G: So, apparently I sound a bit posh, so for the musical I became insufferably South Dublin and it went down well with the audience.

L: I had to dull mine down.

Do you think that the audience knew what was happening at all times, were they interactive?

G: The audience on the night shows were brilliant and lifted the atmosphere up to the roof but for the matinées I think some of the jokes went over the kids heads.

Lewis, what did you think of the audience? Were they clued in or out of the loop?

L: I thought the crowds were great. The Thursday night crowd was quiet but the Wednesday and Friday crowds were amazing.

Do you think that there were many mistakes made on or off stage? If there were, which one applied to you and your character the most?

G: On the last night, in the scene before Chiquitita there was meant to be a blow-up mattress beside the bed but the stage crew never brought it out so myself and Claire had to improv something funny and segue back into the scene. It wasn't that noticeable but we felt it.

L: My favourite one was on the last night, Peter forgot his big boots for Waterloo and I had to take mine off as well so he wouldn't look stupid.

Did you struggle to hit any notes in your songs?

G: I can tell you now, my vocal range is bigger after having to sing Dancing Queen.

L: Yes. The first matinée, John played the original key instead of the key that I was used to singing it in, so I didn't sound great.

Were ye nervous about your family and friends watching ye?

G: No, because you can't see anyone on stage and once you're in your own world you forget there's even a crowd.

L: Yes, an old acquaintance of mine came to it and it made me feel quite nervous. The crowd was no problem but knowing there were people I knew in it made me quite nervous.

Was it worth the 4 months?

G: Yes. Every single second.

L: Yes, very much so. Nice break away from the work.





TY Insight Series

Typical, isn't it!

ROSIE

By Ciara Loftus

We caught Rosie while out fishing for salmon one evening and asked her some questions about life before, during, and after the musical.



Can you tell me a bit about yourself and your history in musical theatre?

My name is Claire Gillardy and I've always done a bit of acting in school, I did Irish drama in Primary School and we got to All Irelands. I never did any singing before the musical, never knew I could sing actually, so that was a nice surprise.

What aspects of the character did you find most challenging?

Her weirdness. The fact that I had to stand there in front of so many students while teachers told me 100 times that I couldn't howl like a wolf properly.

What was your favourite song from the show?

Obviously, 'Take a Chance'. The way I got to add so much humour to it, the whole song and dance was amazing, and the audience loved it.

How did you relate to your character?

A lot of people told me I was similar to her because she's a cheerful, fun person. She was such a fun character to play, I couldn't have asked for a better role.

How was the auditioning process?

The auditioning process started when we met Mr. Gallagher in the corridor after school one day looking for people for auditions. My friend put my name down for me and one day we were taken out of class and we had to sing in the library in front of the musical teachers. Next, we had acting auditions in An Sportlann during our dance classes, we were thrown into a room and to learn lines and

act in a group of maybe 5 or 6 of us. Overall it was a lot of fun and it started to get us all excited for the production.

Do you feel that you have changed since the of the musical?

I've definitely gotten less shy. I think now that I've gotten to talk to a lot more people I feel a lot more confident. Especially when it was my first year in Davitt College. It was an amazing way to get to know everybody. I've made so many new friends from this experience.

What's your most memorable moment from the musical?

Probably the first night show that we did and realised that we got a standing ovation. We all went backstage after the bows and the way we looked at each other absolutely shocked like, 'we got a standing ovation!' It was the best feeling ever.



TY Insight Series

Bally ... h ... haunis

BILL

By Eabha Donnelly, Ciara Bird and the rest of 4A

We rescued Petr Samko from one of his classes and interviewed him on a cold December morning.



Petr enters the classroom sporting an impressive grey hoodie and takes a seat at the top of the room ready and willing to field a series of questions from the press room of 4A English.

What is your name and why did you want the role?

Petr Samko. At first I didn't know anything about the musical, we were told to audition so I gave it my all and ended up getting the role of Bill Austin.

What was your favourite song?

Favourite song? Definitely SOS. I had a special bond with SOS.

Tell us more!

Well, me and my dearest friend, Sebastian, our voices worked very well together and we used that song to warm up before the big day.

Did you ever mess up on stage?

I few times. I missed some of my lines – when Sophie came in during the first scene we were in together, I missed an entire section of dialogue and it was quite awkward. I knocked over the altar on the first night during Take A Chance On Me but it played out well because Byron (Father Alexandrios) saved the show.

Was it harder to learn the lines, songs or dances?

Good question. For me personally, the songs. My lines came to me naturally. I'd never sat down and took time to actually read and learn my lines, just over the time of the rehearsals they just came to me.

What is your opinion on all the lines you tried to add in but got rejected as soon as you suggested them?

Good question again. I was very upset because I find myself very creative and my brain goes off on different tangents and the fact that every almost every single time I suggested was declined by someone ...

Petr suggests that the someone may or may not have been Mr. Gallagher.

What was your favourite line?

There were a bunch! The funniest one to me was what the directors changed on the last night – they told Claire (Rosie) and I to say 'we have a fish to fry' and the way it came together was very funny and we ended up with a standing ovation from one joke!

How did you connect with the audience emotionally?

I just did my thing.

Were there any rituals or routines to help you get into a character?

I had a nap in the changing rooms before the show.

Did you feel you had to talk to certain members of the cast more and did you get closer to them?

I think I was already fairly close to a lot of members of the cast, but I definitely did start talking to more people through the musical, such as Blake and Lewis. That's it really, I was already friendly with most people and the musical just kind of brought us closer.

TY Insight Series

Honey Honey!

ALI, LISA, JEN, & KATE

By Hannah Hauttmann



So, Áine, what was your favourite song in the musical? And why?

My favourite song was "Dancing Queen" as it is such a catchy song, I loved how it got everyone up and dancing, even the crew backstage! The upbeat rhythm and catchy lyrics make it a timeless classic. I was most excited for my nanny to see me (in her flares she wore to her own hen party in the '70s) up on stage. An unbelievable feeling was on the Friday night during the last dances. It was the most magical moment and felt so rewarding and all the audience were up on their feet singing along.

Ella, describe your character.

I played Jen, she is a blonde bimbo who pulls on Kate's strings. She is uncultured and stupid. My character is a comic relief character who didn't realise she was being funny half the time. She enjoys fantasy because reality doesn't work out for her.

Ava, What was your favourite part of the musical?

My favourite part of the musical was making new friends and speaking to new people. I liked how the year got so much closer and became more friendly, it was so exciting when me and the friends were hiding up on the balcony waiting to come down to open the first scene it was so nerve-wracking but we enjoyed it. "Fernando" was one of my favourite parts of the musical. I can't describe the nerves before going out on the stage - they were indescribable, but in the end once I was finished the scene I was so glad I done it. Along with all the other great things about the musical my favourite part was in the library dancing before we went on stage.

Helen, what was your favourite scene?

My favourite scene in the musical was "Honey Honey" as it was a very uplifting scene and got us into the mood for dancing, singing and acting. I believe this was an excellent opening as the upbeat music helped us get the audience excited and it also set the mood for the play. This scene also got me very excited, I felt the adrenaline rush and the nerves spread through my body as I was waiting at the top of the stairs. As soon as I took the first step out to walk down the stairs, I felt excitement running through myself. This scene was amazing, it really eased me into the play.

Ava, Do you feel you suited this character?

Yes I feel like I suited this character as I am fun and happy.

How did you find singing, Áine?

I was so excited and wasn't nervous because once the scene had started my nerves had vanished.

How did you feel Ella, when you first went on stage in front of the big audience?

I felt relieved because of all the nerves and anticipation leading up to it had all settled when I finally got to get on to the stage and experience the audience.

How did you feel when you heard you got the part Helen?

I was over the moon. I couldn't believe it and to make it better my friends got the part too.

What did you find the most difficult about your part Ava?

I found the hardest part were my nerves. It was difficult to find the courage to sing as I have never sang in front of anyone before.

TY Insight Series

Giving and receiving

FATHER ALEXANDRIOS

By Ciara Loftus

The resident priest of whatever island this musical was set on invited us round to his parochial house one Sunday after mass.



How did you feel when you were told you had the role of Father Alexandrios?

I was quite happy because my mother had always been on about me getting a role in the musical. It's one of the only reasons that I chose to come to this school.

Did the cast get on well during the show?

At the beginning the cast were a bit awkward, it took us a little while to get the confidence and work well together but it all clicked into place a few weeks beforehand.

Do you feel that you learned anything from the show?

I learned the amount of effort and work that goes into a production like our musical. It's a lot more difficult than it seems. Everyone is doing something at all times, whether its acting, dancing, singing or set design.

What was it like backstage?

Before the first matinée, backstage was a trainwreck. No one would shut up and no one would sing. It got to the point where Mr Gallagher brought in a hurley called Lucille which had 'sing' and 'silence' written on it – this really helped us as we had a clear visual aid.

What scene in the show was most fun to perform?

Obviously, I have to say the wedding scene as it was the only scene that I was really in. I had my time to shine. Especially on the opening night when a lot of improvisation was needed to make the show a success and it was all down to me. When Claire (Rosie) jumped into Petrus (Bill) arms and fell back into the podium, knocking it over, everyone's hearts stopped. I watched the

colour drain from Mr Gallagher's face. I strutted out onto the stage, full of confidence and picked up the podium, working it in as if it was meant to happen. The amount of praise I got for 'saving the show' was absolutely insane.

What is your favourite memory from the musical?

During my speech in the wedding scene at the dress rehearsal, when the production team realised the meaning behind my lines that I was implying. They burst out laughing, it was so incredibly funny because they didn't realise up until then and they made me laugh mid way through it too.





TY Insight Series

SALT N' PEPPER

By interviewer
extraordinaire duo Ellen
Shaw & Alisha Gibbons

Without doubt, the best interviewer in Davitt College gave us a few moments of her precious time to interview both Sam & Seba, who played Salt 'n Pepper respectively.



Who are you and what roles did you play?

Sebastian Brodecki and I played Pepper. Samuel Buckton and I played Eddie/Salt.

In what ways has being a part of this production contributed to your personal and professional growth?

Seba: I became more confident in myself, and I liked how everyone became a team and that made me more of a team player. Sam and I had always been close, but we became even closer due to the show. It's like giving and receiving.

Sam: They taught me to speak loudly, and I think it's good to be able to speak publicly. I had a great time, and it was good. I'll remember it forever.

Do you have any dream roles or specific musicals you'd like to be a part of in the future?

Seba: Ooh this is an interesting question. I was thinking Freddy Mercury in Bohemian Rhapsody (the musical)
Seba sings Bohemian Rhapsody ... horrendously.

Sam: Little shop of horrors, I'd like to be the plant. I like it because it was my first musical I ever went to.

How do you see your career in musical theatre evolving in the coming years?

Seba: I see me becoming one of the greats like Paddy O'Brien or you know yourself the great guy who played the Sky in Mamma Mia or the other one.

Sam: I don't see myself in musical together in the coming years but I feel like if I did, I would have the experience and skills to perform.

What advice do you have for aspiring actors and singers looking to pursue a career in musical theatre?

Honestly I think they should try their best and I know it might be hard but yeah it ain't but let your inspirations take you over.

Sam: Be confident, be quiet backstage. Don't swing off scaffolding. Make sure you know your script.

How do you handle the pressures and challenges of performing live on stage?

Seba: Em ... umm ... em ... there was no stress, just have fun. I went on stage during the matinée and the moment I heard the kids laugh I knew I would be fine.

Sam: It's a secret.

Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experience in this musical or your journey in musical theater?

Sam: The food was really good from the end party. They treated us very well. There were some challenges we faced but in the end, we had a great time and there were memories for life.

Is there anything that you would've wanted to add into the musical?

Seba: There were a few scenes deleted like Yasu cooklamu and the push it dance but what I would've liked the most was a duet with Salt and or a duet with Bill.



TY Insight Series

Behind the Scenes

By Juliet Molloy, Nicole Fair & Sarah Gannon

We caught up with some of our talented backstage crew, Jason Connor, Shane Cawley and Jack Rava.



Jason Connor was part of the set design crew led by Ms. Hughes, which also included Muireann Corley, Vismaya Vinod, Mischa Ginnelly, Cerys O'Malley, Adam Fahey, Charlotte Langan, Sophie Earley, Roksana Kowalczyk, Ellen Shaw, Chloe McDonnell, and Mar Deudero.

What role did you play?

My name is Jason Connor and I was involved in stage crew. I helped paint the set and moved props backstage.

How did you become involved in this production?

I decided to help the art crew and when they needed extra help backstage, I volunteered.

Did you feel pressure?

There was some pressure when it was time to move the props but for most of the time it was relaxed, there was tension backstage.

Do you see this as a future career?

If the opportunity arose, I would like to help in another musical, but I would not pursue it actively.

Did you have a good relationship with the rest of the stage crew?

I did they were all sound.

Did you enjoy the experience?

I did it was fun; I would like to do it again.

Shane Cawley and Jack Rava were part of the backstage crew, led by Mr. Cunningham, which also included Mark Moore (LCA), Cillian Moore (LCA), Teo Arfan, Vitaliy Ramanav, Fran Farago, Michael Irwin O'Sullivan, Tim Silva-Dias, Declan Lavin and James Jordan.

What are your name and what role did you play?

Shane Cawley and Jack Rava – backstage.

Did you feel pressure?

Yes, I felt pressure because I had to change scenes with minimal time. Jack felt no pressure whatsoever.

Jack, did you have a good relationship with the other stage crew?

Of course, I did I love my pals.

Shane, did you have injuries or accidents during the show?

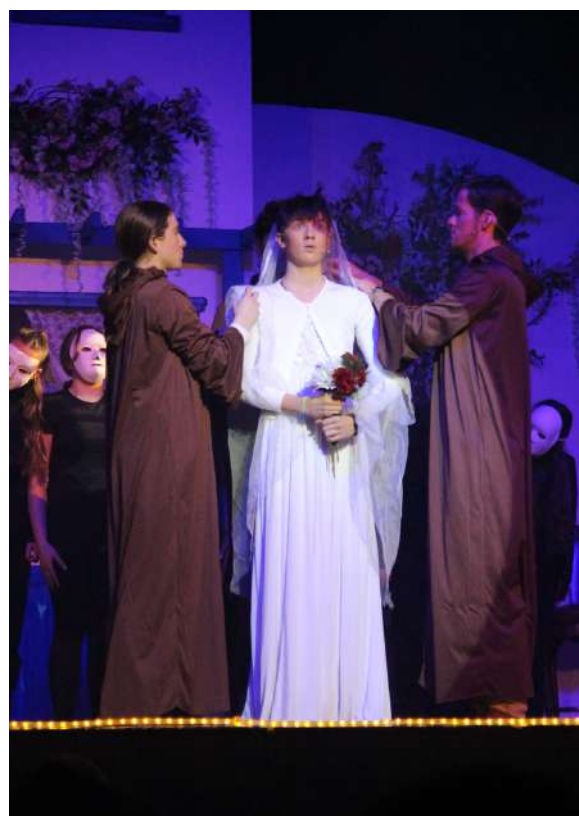
No thankfully nothing major only a splinter in my hand.

Jack, do you see this as a future career?

Yes, as I found this remarkably interesting and I had great enjoyment carrying some playing cards and cups onstage. And since I got a bow to myself, it helped boost my confidence, I feel like it will help me get a good house and have a great family.



























IT'S BEGINNING TO LOOK A LOT LIKE CHRISTMAS

BY OUR TALENTED TY STUDENTS

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas
In every class you go
Take a look at the lights and the sleigh
That Mr. Kilkenney put up today
With candy canes from students that you know

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas
Down Davitt's crowded halls
But the prettiest sight to see
Is Tina's Christmas tree
As the snow slowly falls

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas
The school is ready to close
But the prettiest sight to see
Is no work in front of me
For about fourteen days
Yes it's Christmas once more

