

THE CREATIVE AND PERFORMING ARTS 2023

As we flip through this section of the 2023 Yearbook, we are transported to a world where creativity knows no bounds, and artistic expression takes centre stage. The Creative and Performing Arts Department at Merici College has always been a hub of innovation, imagination, and talent, and this year has been no exception.

Throughout the year, our students have poured their hearts and souls into their craft, honing their skills, and pushing the boundaries of their creativity. They have taken risks, embraced challenges, coming together to create art that reflects the diversity of their experiences and the depth of their passion.

This year was HUGE for the Creative and Performing Arts here at Merici, with many hours dedicated to our extremely successful musical, *Alice in Wonderland*. Our students impressed us with their stirring melodies and awe-inspiring performances. The talent showcased here was nothing short of remarkable. Senior students were mesmerised as they ventured to Sydney, enjoying the professional performance of *Beauty and the Beast*. AND not to mention we are in the planning phase for our overseas tour (the first in 6 years!) to New York and LA. The Arts know no bounds!

As we turn the pages of this yearbook, let us be reminded that the creative and performing arts are not just disciplines; they are a way of life. They are a means of expression, a source of joy, and a force that brings people together.

Thank you to all who have contributed to the magic within these pages. May the memories captured here continue to inspire us, and may our artistic journeys continue to flourish in the years to come.

With heartfelt appreciation,

Ms. Ali Fogarty

Creative and Performing Arts Coordinator

Dance

“Dance is the hidden language of the Soul” – Martha Graham

In the dance studio and on the stage, our talented performers have dedicated countless hours to perfecting their craft. They have shared their dreams, pushed their limits, and created moments of pure magic.

Years 9 and 10 Dance students focused on developing their technique and appreciation for Musical Theatre, First Nations, and World Dance. Throughout both semesters students have been exploring how to compose using the elements of dance and creatively apply choreographic devices. Students demonstrated through their Performing Arts Process Diaries their knowledge and understanding of these styles, exploring musicals, pioneers, and companies. From Chicago to Hamilton, Bangarra Dance Company to Bollywood. This is key for students to develop their capacity to appreciate the Arts through the written form. A highlight for our students was their World Dance Composition Task. Their choreography took us on an exhilarating journey across continents and cultures, where students

transcended boundaries through the universal language of dance. As diverse as our student body, the compositions were a true celebration of global unity and artistic expression.

The Year 11 and 12 Senior students completed units that focused on context and collaboration in Dance. In Semester 1, the Dance in the context unit served as a dynamic and engaging means of exploring the rich tapestry of human culture and history. Students composed solos routines that allowed them to reflect on their own context, creating a work based on self, place or time. The Semester 2 highlight was Dance Festival. This student-driven unit is an opportunity for students to showcase their knowledge of choreography, production elements and how to collaborate to ensure it all comes together as a polished end product. This was a challenging but rewarding experience for all, as the students honed their collaboration skills. The class developed the theme of 'Trance'. This work explored how society is in this state of 'Trance' where the boundaries of reality blur, intense focus merges with moments euphoria.

As we reflect on the past year in Dance, we are grateful for the boundless creativity that dance brings into our lives here at Merici. It is a testament to the student's artistry, dedication, and unity that defines our dance community.

Ms. Ali Fogarty

Creative and Performing Arts Coordinator

Drama

"Theatre is a form of knowledge; it should and can also be a means of transforming society. Theatre can help us build our future, rather than just waiting for it". Augusto Boal

As Arts educators, one of the most gratifying aspects of our profession is witnessing students embark on a journey with a fundamental concept, whether it's a script, a theme, or an idea. We observe them tirelessly refine, sculpt, and sometimes even discard these concepts entirely to craft a polished performance. This creative process serves as an arena for our students to nurture their capacity to embrace risks, collaborate seamlessly within a team, overcome obstacles, and uncover hidden talents they may have never recognized within themselves.

In 2023, we welcomed a new cohort of aspiring artists, all eager to cultivate their artistic skills and express themselves through their craft. The year began with the Year 9/10 classes exploring four different types of comedy: slapstick, farce, satire, in their unit 'Comedy Chaos,' with a particular emphasis on Commedia dell'Arte. Developing their skills in these four comedy forms required them to hone three distinct abilities: improvisation, interpreting play scripts, and writing student play scripts. Meanwhile, the Senior Drama class experimented with Kabuki, Kathakali, Commedia dell'Arte, and Greek styles of theatre in their World Theatre unit.

Once again, both the Year 9/10 Drama classes and the Senior Drama classes participated in this year's ACTUp Festival. They explored the stimulus images provided by Canberra Theatre and, following numerous workshops and visits from industry professionals, successfully created original works. Each student seized the opportunity to perform on the Playhouse

Stage, entertaining not only their peers from other participating schools but also their families, friends, and a public audience. The performances from all three classes received exceptional acclaim and became crowd favourites.

In the second semester, the Year 9/10 class explored the genre of Horror. We delved into the darker aspects of human existence through Gothic Theatre, enabling students to gain insight into societal issues, challenge norms, and develop their creative and expressive abilities in the drama room. Additionally, students were introduced to Butoh, a form of Japanese dance theatre that emerged around 1969 after World War II. We also examined the work of Antonin Artaud, who had a profound impact on the Theatre of the Absurd and the conceptualization of the Theatre of Cruelty. In the realm of horror performance, the class skilfully employed the fundamental elements of Drama to evoke tension and suspense. Through meticulous use of plot development, character portrayal, setting, sound, and lighting, students created an immersive experience that captivated the audience and elicited visceral reactions, heightening the overall impact of our haunting production.

In the Senior's unit 'Adaptation in Drama,' students examined a range of spoken, performed, visual, and written texts to understand how universal themes and perspectives are represented through adaptation. They took classic children's stories and transformed them into Audiobooks for a visually impaired audience using a variety of methods, mediums, and techniques to achieve their transformation and adaptation. They finished the year by focusing on slam poetry, where they harnessed the power of slam poetry as a creative vehicle to delve into complex and thought-provoking topics. Through the rhythmic cadence and passionate delivery of their verses, they effectively tackled issues like identity, social justice, and personal struggles, sparking deep and meaningful discussions within the group. Slam poetry has become a dynamic tool for self-expression and empathy-building, fostering a vibrant and inclusive learning environment in the drama class.

As we bid farewell to our current Year 12 Drama students, and our current Year 11s step into their shoes, I extend my heartfelt best wishes to all of them as they embark on their remarkable journey in the world of performing arts. I eagerly anticipate witnessing where their journey, love, and passion will take them on a global stage.

Ms. Carly Johnson

Drama Teacher

Music and Co-curricular Music

In the ever-evolving landscape of education, one facet remains timeless, resounding through centuries and across cultures as an essential pillar of human development: music.

Music is more than just an art form; it is a profoundly influential tool that enriches the educational experience in myriad ways. From fostering cognitive development to enhancing emotional intelligence and promoting creativity, the importance of music in education cannot be overstated when considering the transformative power of music and its enduring relevance in shaping well-rounded individuals.

2023 has been an enriching year for Music at Merici due to the implementation of the new Merici instrumental program, music enrichment opportunities and growth of co-curricular music ensembles.

The Merici College instrumental music program has seen an influx of students eager to learn various instruments including piano, violin, cello, flute, clarinet, saxophone, french horn, trumpet, guitar, bass guitar, drum kit and voice through weekly private tuition. The dedication of the eleven music tutors, who provide personalised guidance to each student, has made this program a resounding success. Personal milestones have been achieved by our Merici Music students in a variety of ways and this has also included obtaining impressive results in AMEB exams.

Enrichment opportunities have been influential in the growth of Year 9 and 10 MYP Music, Year 11 and 12 BSSS Music and for the first time, Year 11 IB Music which commenced at Merici in 2023. Each program has allowed students of all levels of musical experience to find their place, growing not only as musicians but as a close-knit musical family. Year 9 and 10 students have remarked that one of the highlights of their year was taking part in a Balinese Gamelan Music workshop at the Indonesian Embassy, whilst Year 10–12 Music students enjoyed the wonders of the musical 'Beauty and the Beast' at the Capitol Theatre in Sydney.

Beyond the classroom, Co-curricular Music has not only grown in student numbers but also in the array of performance opportunities. The Merici Vocal Group, Concert Band and String Ensemble have flourished through performance opportunities including the CAPA Showcase, Merici Masses, Anzac Day Assembly, Open Day and Floriade on Stage 88, in addition to many vocalists taking part in the College Musical, 'Alice in Wonderland'. Co-curricular Music students also enjoyed attending a preconcert talk delivered by Canberra Symphony Orchestra (CSO) staff, followed by a performance of 'Electric Blue', a compositional program aiming to encompass and portray the ever-present blue of the skies above and the oceans below, with music by Rimsky-Korsakov and Alexander Scriabin and a new commission from Miriama Young performed by the CSO at Llewellyn Hall (ANU).

Our school's Music program has experienced a year of extraordinary growth and achievement. The Merici Vocal Group, Concert Band, String Ensemble and instrumental lessons have not only expanded in student numbers but have also created more performance opportunities than ever before. This program has united students through the universal language of music, empowering students to explore their musical passions, celebrate diversity, fostering a sense of community and artistic excellence whilst creating a lasting musical legacy at Merici College.

Mrs. Heather Lloyd

Music Teacher and Music Co-Curricular Facilitator

Performing Arts

"Performance art is about joy, about making something that's so full of kind of wild joy that you really can't put into words" – Laurie Anderson

Ms. Ali Fogarty, Mrs. Heather Lloyd, Ms. Carly Johnson, Ms. Nicola Bartasek and Ms. Georgia Combes taught the performing arts curriculum to our Year 7 and 8 students this year. Within this unit students experience Dance, Drama and Music through an interdisciplinary unit. This very practical unit sees students learning all about the elements of Dance, Drama and Music and then applying this knowledge through creation and performance activities. This allows students plenty of time to practise and refine their technical skills, whilst utilising their creative brains.

Tasks included students collaborating to create their own interpretation of a fairy tale with a modern twist. They also have opportunities to perform songs and dances from other cultures and to experiment with learning various instruments. These tasks require imagination and resilience, they help to develop their communication and problem-solving skills and encourage them to take risks with their performances.

We hope students enjoy this unit and it inspires them to select one of these performance subjects for their electives in Year 9 and beyond.

Ms. Ali Fogarty, Mrs. Heather Lloyd, Ms. Carly Johnson, Mrs. Nicola Bartasek, Ms. Georgia Combes

Performing Arts Teachers

Media

"The act of creation – a visual language so impactful it carries & conveys the perfect message" – Unknown.

The year 2023 was a journey filled with creativity, exploration, and the art of storytelling through various media forms. Throughout the year, our students not only honed their technical abilities but also developed a keen sense of media literacy. They learned to critically analyse the media's role in shaping our perceptions and worldviews.

Our Senior Media students embarked on a thrilling adventure through the media landscape. In the first semester, they delved deep into the "Media in Context" unit, where they explored how historical, social, and political contexts shape the media products we encounter daily. The insights gained here paved the way for a more profound understanding of the media's impact on our lives. The second semester was all about 'Narratives in Media'. Our students explored unconventional, nonlinear storytelling techniques, pushing the boundaries of creativity and challenging traditional norms. The results were nothing short of remarkable, as our Senior mMedia students once again showcased their talents by producing original and engaging short films that captivated our hearts and minds.

Our younger Media enthusiasts had their own exciting journey this year. In the first semester, they ventured into the world of early forms of media and discovered how various techniques are used to communicate with broad audiences. The highlight of this semester was the creation of polished and engaging podcasts that allowed our students to express their unique voices. In the second semester, our aspiring Media artists explored media representation and animation. They unleashed their creative energies to produce a variety of original animated short films, each a testament to their growing skills and their ability to convey powerful messages through the medium of animation.

As we look ahead to the future, we can't help but feel excited about the incredible potential of our Media students. They are the storytellers of tomorrow, armed with the knowledge and creativity to make a lasting impact in the ever-changing world of media.

Mr. Matt Reynolds
Media Teacher

Visual Arts

"Creativity is inventing, experimenting, growing, taking risk, breaking rules, making mistakes and having fun." - Mary Lou Cook

In the realm of creativity, where imagination takes shape and colours dance upon the canvas of our minds, the Visual Arts have continued to be a profound source of inspiration and expression. The Visual Arts program at Merici in 2023 has served as a canvas of its own, painting a vivid tapestry of talent, growth, and passion. We are proud to celebrate our artists that have flourished over the past year.

Our talented Year 7 and 8 students explored the fundamental elements and principles of art, laying the foundation for their artistic endeavours. Year 7 students embarked on an introspective journey as they completed mixed media artworks that resonated with the theme of 'home'. Meanwhile, Year 8 students dove into the world of animation, wowing us with their Claymation creations that celebrated the theme of 'positive and respectful friendships'.

Our combined Year 9/10 Visual Art classes have been busy re-purposing wastepaper, plastic and aluminium cans into Art forms inspired by well-known Mobile and Glass artists as well as Installation artists. These will be seen hanging and installed at site specific places around the College for the Arts Showcase. Our Art rooms have been buzzing with students cutting, gluing and engineering forms that suspend and move in space. The lantern task gave students to create forms that are both sculptural and useable, again displayed and illuminated during Showcase. These colourful and innovative projects are a fine reflection of the sustainability focus of our IB Learners at Merici College.

In Semester 1, our Year 11 and 12 students explored the topic of art as a narrative. They focused primarily on ceramics, skilfully recreating well known stories with clay. In Semester 2, their journey continued with the focus on context in art, where they explored various ways to represent themselves within historical and cultural contexts, utilising mixed media to evoke powerful statements.

The students have consistently demonstrated their ingenuity, creativity, and commitment to the world of visual arts, reminding us that art is not merely a subject; it's a gateway to understanding, self-expression, and reflection.

Ms. Carly Johnson, Ms. Brittney Pimm, Mrs. Liz Igoe-Taylor and Ms. Olivia Bundic

Visual Arts Teachers

Photography

"The two most engaging powers of a photograph are to make new things familiar and familiar things new." - William Thackeray

In Photography this year, the class has gained new insight into the way we perceive and understand photographs. Beyond the idea of freezing moments in time, they have discovered the importance of context and meaning in every snapshot. Students have shown that a photograph isn't merely an image; it's a narrative waiting to be told. They have explored how a single frame can tell a story, with emotions, memories, and hidden messages. Their keen eye for context and their ability to instil meaning into every photograph has encouraged them to delve deeper, to question, and to uncover the intricate detail woven into each photograph. We are reminded that photographs aren't merely reflections of reality; they are gateways to understanding, empathy, and the human experience.

In addition to recognising the importance of context and meaning, our class explored how photographers can manipulate the visual narrative to influence the viewer's perception of events. They've demonstrated that Photography is not just about documenting reality; it's also a tool for persuasion. Through carefully chosen angles, lighting, and composition, they've presented work exploring how photographers can shape our understanding of moments in time, swaying emotions, and viewpoints. Whether it's emphasising the heroic aspects of an event or revealing its complexities through poignant details, they've proven that Photography has the power to evoke empathy, challenge assumptions, and inspire change. In an era where images flood our lives, this class has imparted a critical lesson: every photograph we encounter may carry a purpose beyond what meets the eye.

Ms. Brittney Pimm

Photography Teacher

Design & Graphics

"Every great design begins with an even better story." - Lorinda Mamo

Design and Graphics have covered an extensive range of topics this year to enhance their understanding of the impact Graphic Design has on the world around us. In Semester 1, class embarked on an inspiring adventure, crafting eye-catching graphics for various projects. From the Rail Safety Poster Competition for Transport Canberra to promote safety across our city's tram system, to the Annual Drain Art competition aimed at adding a burst of colour to our urban landscape, and the whimsical posters for the College's enchanting production of 'Alice in Wonderland,' this class left an indelible mark on our visual landscape of both the school and the wider community.

In Semester 2, the class ventured into the digital realm producing designs for the screen. They began this semester by diving into the world of Emojis. Their first task was to identify gaps within the ever-expanding lexicon of emojis and develop new characters or objects they felt were missing. Additionally, they honed their skills in meeting client briefs, demonstrating a keen understanding of the art of design as a communication tool.

The class has not only showcased their artistic skills but also their ability to adapt, innovate, and utilise design as a means to create impact and connect with audiences on various levels.

Ms. Virginia McLeod and Ms. Brittney Pimm

Design and Graphics Teachers