

DRAMA



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NEWSLETTER: March 2024



What a term for the Drama department! We have lots to celebrate with the success of our LAMDA exam results, our fantastic Senior School production of Monty Python's Spamalot directed by our LGS Head of Drama and LSF Music's Head of Singing, and our first experimental mixed media collaboration, bringing together the creative talents of the LHS drama team and the LHS Art Department, for our Middle school production of 'Shout Out' devised with pupils from across the foundation.

Our Drama GCSE and A level students have performed the Component 2 element of their exams to external visiting examiners. We are very proud of how hard they worked ahead of these performances (more from our students on this later).

As always, we are grateful to our supportive staff from across the foundation who have served refreshments, opened drama studios for Sunday rehearsals and have eagerly joined us in the audience this term supporting our students in their endeavours. The pupils enjoy knowing their teachers are keen and interested in their extra curricular activities, and the cast of Spamalot were pleased to hear some very loud and familiar laughter.

Don't forget that we have a very active X/Twitter account with regular updates on our rehearsals, productions, trips and more so please follow us: @LSF_Drama

Sally Bruton
Head of Drama LGS

Sally Boon
Head of Drama LHS

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MONTY PYTHON'S SPAMALOT

A new musical lovingly ripped off from the motion picture
MONTY PYTHON and the Holy Grail



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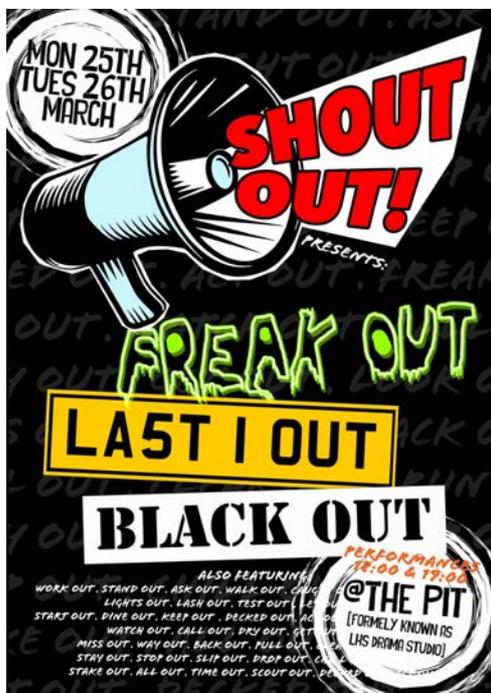
In March, our Senior School pupils from across the foundation performed the musical Spamalot. Rehearsing twice a week since the auditions in September, under the guidance of Director Sally Bruton and Musical Director, David Morris. It was a great success with the final night a total sell out. Well done to the cast and crew, who handled the Monty Python humour, the dances, epic songs, over 100 props and multiple costume changes like true professionals.



“An amazing performance from the cast and an incredible production led to a wonderful show. When I arrived at the drama studio, my jaw dropped at the eye-catching set. The use of the smoke machine added to the electric atmosphere, as the audience waited in anticipation for the show to start. Monty Python is always weird and wonderful, and the cast fully played into the weirdness of their characters and the plot. There were many hilarious moments throughout, and all of the characters had their own special moment to shine. The characters often broke the fourth wall commenting on the play, leading to some amusing moments, which had the whole audience laughing. Also, there were many surprises, I never really knew what was going to happen next.

My family tells me that there are a lot of moments taken from the Monty Python film, for example the French Taunter, giving them a sense of nostalgia. However, even if I didn't know all the references, it still made me laugh out loud multiple times. It was a great night out!”

Freddie Swann, Yr10 LGS



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This week pupils from the middle school performed Shout Out. Here Sally Boon explains a little about it:

The inspiration for Shout Out came from watching a performance at the Edinburgh Festival of an experimental theatre company who combined live music, projection and song in an immersive experience in the depths of the Summer Hall Art Centre. During the performance it struck me that we should be encouraging our multi-talented students to explore the exciting possibilities of cross collaboration between the art forms offering them autonomy within the creative process.

Why Shout Out? The title was just that – a shout out – a shout out to all students in Years 9 and 10, across the three schools, to get involved in a collaborative arts project. Back in September we didn't

know what the project might end up being called but eventually we realised that it perfectly summed up what our young performance makers wanted to do – shout out!

The approach we took to the creative process, using the combined skillsets of myself (movement director and experimental theatre maker), Mr Broughton (musician and visual artist) and Miss Smith (fine artist), is what drove the performance forward in every respect. Making creative choices by chance via random experimental tasks. We encouraged the students to write their own text using the spontaneous prose technique, a writing technique that emphasizes the importance of letting the words flow freely and spontaneously, without stopping to edit or censor oneself. This approach allows writers to capture their thoughts and experiences in a raw and unedited form and can be a powerful tool for unlocking creativity and spontaneity in their writing.

Each participant stepped out of their comfort zone through a transformative experience which I hope will help them grow as creatives. I think I can safely say that is also true for the staff involved!



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Our team of LAMDA tutors have seen some excellent results this term, entering 27 pupils into exams ranging from Speaking in Public to Acting. Our pupils achieved 22 distinctions and 5 Merits in total, we're extremely proud of them.

Nicola Dax is one member of our team of four LAMDA tutors, here she explains a little more about its aims and benefits:

Founded in 1861, LAMDA is the oldest drama school in the UK. They started offering examinations in Speech and Drama to the public over 130 years ago. Since then they have developed an enviable reputation for excellence in the provision of Communication and Performance examinations in the UK, and they have now extended their reach internationally.

The process of preparing for and succeeding in a LAMDA Examination helps learners, whatever their ages or aspirations, to develop a broad range of skills that will serve them throughout life. The examinations develop a Learner's ability to:

- Read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- Expand vocabulary to improve powers of self-expression
- Improve confidence in speaking and listening
- Memorise and recall information
- Research and create persuasive formal presentations
- Create and defend arguments
- Engage in constructive informal conversation
- Work both on their own and participate as a member of a team



No matter what direction Learners choose to follow in the future, the examinations provide the opportunity to nurture their natural abilities. These critical skills will enhance their self-confidence to engage and contribute fully, whether at school, in further educations, at work or in the community. In other words, to fulfil their potential.

We asked some of our pupils what their thoughts were on participating in LAMDA lessons and exams, here are a few of their responses:

“Lamda helps to boost my confidence in acting and improves my skills and knowledge in the subject”

Alex Year 9 LGS

“I do LAMDA because it's just overall fun and helps develop your confidence and helps improve the daily conversations you may have”

Kyle Year 9 LGS

“I started LAMDA lessons at Fairfield 3 years ago and continued when I joined LHS. I really enjoy my lessons. I'm currently working with Mila on our Grade 4 Acting exam. I find the skills I learn in LAMDA can be applied in everyday situations and this gives me more confidence with communication”

Chrysanthe Year 7 LHS



“LAMDA offers such a wide range of support from helping me to build confidence by performing in an environment void of judgment, to develop my acting skills through 1 on 1 guidance, as well as a wide range of theory based content including breathing techniques and famous theatre practitioners. Not only have I learnt so much from my time spent doing LAMDA, my grade 8 qualification has assisted me in securing all of my university offers”

Victor Year 13 LGS

“I always look forward to my LAMDA lessons. I have learnt that there is more to acting than simply performing. I’ve started to understand how to emotionally connect with my characters at the same time as appreciating the importance of physical characterisation and movement around the stage. It’s always easy to learn in a fun and relaxed environment”

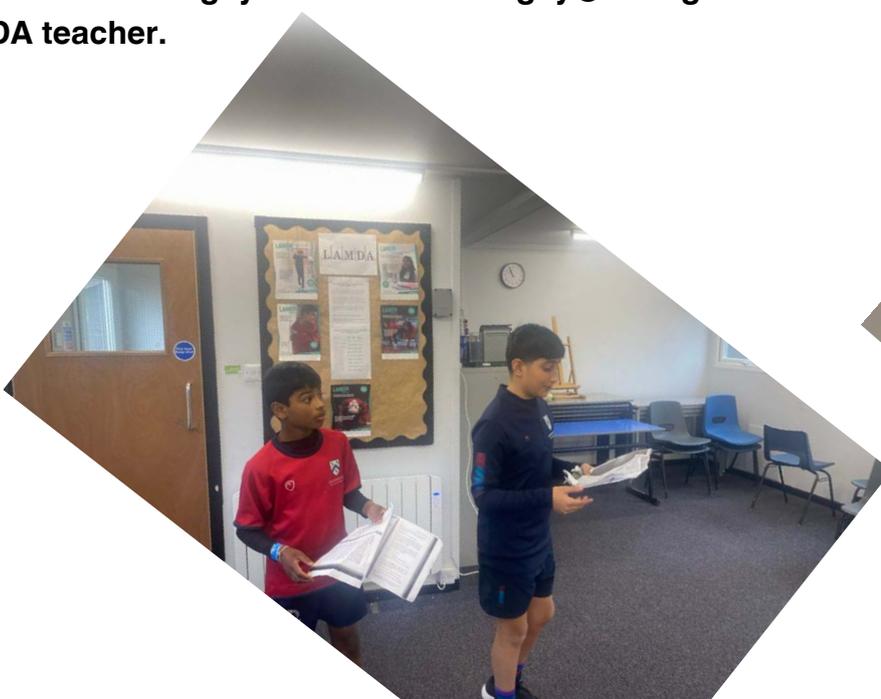
Erin Year 8 LHS



“I first chose to start LAMDA in year 7 and continued to do it after joining LGS in year 9. I started simply due to finding performing fun. I have followed it up to grade 8 and found it not only very enjoyable giving me a nice 30-minute break from weekly lessons to act but also helpful hugely developing my confidence in performing monologues, as well as my ability to perform them. I feel that they have had a huge impact on my skills as a performer thanks to the frequency of lessons and good tutoring. The LAMDA exams have also prepared me generally for taking exams, which has helped doing A level drama and out of school opportunities such as university interviews”

Ryan Year 13 LGS

If you are considering LAMDA lessons for your son or daughter, please contact our Drama Admin Assistant Mrs Bungay via email: m.bungay@lsf.org so that she can pass you onto the relevant LAMDA teacher.



GCSE & A Level Component 2

Ahead of our GCSE and A level students' final written exams, they complete a practical component. Here are some thoughts from three of our pupils as they finished this important section of their course:

Early this term, my fellow A level drama students and I completed component 2 of our examination, an experience that was entertaining, invigorating and like all exams, a little bit stressful. This part of the A level focuses on the element of performance involving both monologue/duologue and group pieces so it was a great opportunity to work as a team with an individual focus. As a group, we were always really encouraging which reduced the nerves considerably and allowed us to give and take constructive criticism from our peers which ultimately improved our character portrayals. Practical lessons provided a nice break from the classroom as we worked on the physicality and vocals of acting. Although I found the process a good challenge, it ultimately proved great for getting experience and building confidence to address an audience of people (including an examiner, of course). Thanks to Mrs Bruton's hard work and expertise in directing, the 10 performances were all a credit to the schools and made for a lovely evening of drama.

Josephine Year 13 LHS



For drama GCSE every student has to do two performances in front of an external examiner, these pieces can be a monologue or duologue. For my performances I chose 2 monologues from Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*. Our class were given around 8 weeks to work on the pieces, and during the Christmas holidays we learnt our words - which in my opinion really dampened the festive spirit, waking up every morning and thinking "I've still not learnt those monologues". However, luckily in the end the performances did get learnt! I think if I was to give one piece of advice it would be that you just have to totally embody your character, it's not what people call 'becoming a character' it's forgetting who you are and rewriting your memories until there is nothing but that character you've not 'become' but instead always been.

Spike Year 11 LGS



GCSE drama component 2 was not only exciting, but mind-opening; educative; and challenging. This was the second practical part of our GCSE drama course, requiring us to perform 2 pieces (either 2 monologues, 2 duologues, or one of both) from a play. I appreciated the fact that we had the autonomy to choose our performance play from a unique range. I'd never seen the plays before and really enjoyed exploring them. For example: I chose the caged birds, which isn't just a play about birds trapped in a cage, but they represented women trapped in society. From this I realised just how broad drama really is, and how it teaches us to appreciate society's issues and challenges, gaining insight into people's various personalities - shown in the idiosyncratic qualities of each bird. When performing, I adored playing the self-indulgent; medicine-obsessed bird I was in my monologue, along with a shy; conflicted bird in my duologue. We were examined on elements like vocal, physical, and characterisation skills along with how well we could convey a message to an audience. Playing these characters taught me to be empathetic as well as a nuanced actress. If anything - I loved this component!

Sanjana Year 11 LHS

Celebrating our Pupils



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We are very proud of our pupils as they continue to excel in performances outside school. Congratulations firstly to Katie (Year 11) who was in the Ensemble of Wizard of Oz at the Loughborough town hall recently, along with Josephine (Year 13) who played Dorothy. Also huge congratulations to Josephine who has accepted a place at Laine Theatre Arts, to study for a BA (Hons) in musical theatre.

Well done to Izzy (Year 13) who has followed her performance as Patsy in Spamalot with a role as a featured dancer in Disco Inferno at the Mountsorrel Memorial Centre, directed by LGS Head of Drama Mrs Bruton. Also congratulations to Katie, Annabel, Abigail and Charles for your performances in Addams family last week.

It is not just our pupils taking to the stage, LGS Drama and English teacher Miss North, will be taking on the role of Urleen in Footloose over the Easter break, at the Loughborough Town Hall.

Finally congratulations to Estella (Year 7) who has been asked to stay on in the role of Matilda in the West End until October, what an achievement to play the lead role for an entire year.



Spotlight on our Drama team

With our ever growing numbers of pupils wishing to take LAMDA lessons, we recently appointed a new team member - Beth Daniels.

Beth's interest in the Dramatic Arts began at the tender age of 10, after she took her first leading role in her primary school play! Since then, there has been no stopping her dramatic development and flair, winning major awards as she pursued her passion for acting in her home country of South Africa, where she completed a Drama degree at the University of Stellenbosch, Cape Town.



Beth's love and passion for performing has always played a huge role in her life, where she has acted on the stage, in adverts and as extras in films and commercials. She has been involved in children's theatre, community theatre, and directed many musicals and plays. She also has a great love of working with children, and teaching drama has been a wonderful way to incorporate the two. Beth owns and is the Principal of Drama Kids North Leicestershire and Rutland (previously Helen O' Grady Drama Academy) and has been running the business for 14 years. Prior to this, she was the Vice Principal of the Cape Town branch.

Beth has also taught LAMDA in a number of schools across Leicestershire and Nottingham. "I believe strongly in developing children's confidence and communication skills from a young age. LAMDA examinations develop excellent life skills, giving children the ability to be effective and articulate communicators, both when performing and for effective public speaking."

Upcoming productions



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Alice in Wonderland

12th and 13th June

Rehearsals have started well for our Lower School production of Alice in Wonderland. Alice is being played by 5 pupils and Miss North has started to work on the transitions between their scenes as well as blocking the entire show ahead of the Easter break. After Easter, all the cast will be attending every Wednesday evening rehearsal and we are looking forward to bringing them all together as we work towards our June performance.



The Edinburgh Festival fringe

6th - 10th August 2024

Rehearsals for the Edinburgh Fringe Festival have begun and we are excited to announce that old girl and published playwright Zahra Jassi is returning to LHS, to write a bespoke play especially for our one week run at Greenside in Edinburgh. Zahra Jassi's play Honour-Bound was premiered at VAULT Festival, London, 2023. A powerful solo show about family, anti-Blackness, and what we're willing to sacrifice for love. We can't wait to see what Zahra has in store. We are experimenting with drafts before Easter and we are looking forward to sharing more in our next newsletter.

We are looking for budding directors from years 10-13 to apply to participate by July. Auditions for anyone interested in performing, from all age groups across the foundation will be held in September ahead of performances in November.



Wishing you all a relaxing Easter break, from everyone in the LSF Drama Department

