



# BACKSTAGE NEWS - AUTUMN 2018

- THEATRE - DRAMA - MUSIC - DANCE -

## WHAT'S ON

### November

15

Macbeth and Much Ado  
About Nothing

### December

18 to 20

Christmas Concert

### February

12 to 16

Anything Goes

### March

National Theatre:  
Flesh

### June

25 & 26

Summer Concert

### July

10 & 11

Year 7-9 Production

Welcome to the first edition of 'Backstage News' our new format newsletter, keeping you up-to-date with exciting news about forthcoming events and our latest plans and performances. We are currently updating our website so please do have a look at [www.rsaf.co.uk](http://www.rsaf.co.uk); you will find lots of useful information and also links to our Facebook and Instagram pages. We are doing all we can to ensure you are kept informed!

In this Autumn term issue, we look back on the year so far and the amazing productions of Beauty and the Beast, Annie Jr and the Summer Concert. How wonderful it is to see, year on year, such talented students enjoying, excelling and taking full advantage of these fantastic opportunities. Performing musical theatre, acting Shakespeare, singing and playing in concerts... these are the memories that they will take with them and they will remember these experiences and friendships long after school is over.

Being part of RSAF is a really rewarding way to support the students; many of us on the committee have children in the upper years who will soon be leaving (or have already left!) so we need more parents/carers to join us both on our committee and as volunteers to continue the good work established by John Trapnell, so please do get in contact by emailing [hello@rsaf.co.uk](mailto:hello@rsaf.co.uk).

Bex Carey  
RSAF Chair



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## Ringwood School Perform Beauty and the Beast - C'est Magnifique!

The enchanting fairy-tale, recently re-released by Disney, was met with jaw-dropping appreciation during the 6<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> February run at Ringwood School.

Upon entering the theatre, the scene was set by an overbearing gothic castle which dominated the stage and a spotlight fell on a single red rose.

Sparks flew, as the fairy-tale unfolded, when the Prince refused to provide shelter to a beggar woman he was magically transformed into a hideous beast, right before the audience's eyes!

A total of 180 pyrotechnics specifically adapted for the school theatre were used, illuminating the stage spectacularly during 'Be Our Guest' and during the transformations. An angry mob of

villagers stormed the stage armed with real fire when hunting the Beast in Act 2.

The ingenious set transformed from a castle complete with library to a lively tavern full of tankard-clinking young men and some very giggly girls. The magic rose mysteriously lost petals throughout the performance, and as its final petal fell the spell was broken and the Beast transformed back into a Prince.

Some of the principal characters, like Belle, were double cast and over one hundred students were involved in the production. Most of the cast were on stage for the unbelievably complicated choreography of 'Be Our Guest' including an irritable clock, dancing cutlery, a sassy feather duster, a soprano wardrobe and a loveable French candlestick.



The whole company enjoyed deserving standing ovations from audiences after each entrancing performance.

*"The cast, stage crew and orchestra were sensational and worked tirelessly learning lines, practising complex choreography and bringing to life the poignant characters within the tale. Beauty and the Beast is a fantastic musical to showcase the talent we have in our school."*

Ian Hawkins  
Head of Performing Arts

Pictured: Nathan Gwynne, Abbie Hudson, Fraser Dart, Gina Elward and the amazing cast of Beauty and the Beast.



## AUDIENCE REVIEWS



“What an absolutely fantastic performance of Beauty and the Beast! The singing, the choreography, the music, the special effects – just EVERYTHING! My hands hurt from all the applause!”

“What a show – a real spectacle – so full of energy, enthusiasm, commitment and joy! The audience were smiling from the beginning to the end. A fabulous evening’s entertainment.”

“Absolutely amazing! As always such a high standard and such amazing talent.”

“It appears incredible hard work and talent has gone into the rehearsals, with extremely brilliant singing, choreography and music from start to finish. All students performing fulfilled their roles superbly”

“Congratulations on an amazing show! The cast, crew, costumes, orchestra, all so professional ... couldn’t believe I was watching a school production”

*Thanks to Andrew Sheerin for the amazing photos*

## Summer Concert Smash Hit: Music from the Movies

In July, the Summer Concert celebrated music from some incredible movies. One of the highlights was a tribute to the film 'The Greatest Showman' - and it was spectacular! The stage went dark, then flashing lights illuminated acrobatic dancers as they tumbled and danced across the stage to the rousing introduction. The familiar silhouette with a top hat and cane appeared on stage, spoke and then the choir burst into song and... WOW! It was just incredible!



Fraser Dart as *The Greatest Showman*

This was followed by an equally powerful and emotional performance of 'This is Me' with a solo performance by Jade Goodfellow that was simply stunning. Standing ovations are not uncommon at Ringwood School, but the audience literally sprang to their feet and burst into applause. The energy in the room was electric!



This year's concert included an unbelievable range of talent:

The show began with a medley of James Bond themes including solos and duets of 'Goldfinger', 'Goldeneye', 'Nobody Does it Better' and full choral performances of 'The Writing's On The Wall' from *Spectre* and the theme to *Skyfall*. The audience also enjoyed a medley of Disney songs and solos from *Toy Story 2* and the 2017 film of *Beauty and the Beast*.

The Big Boys Breakfast Crooning Club performed 'New York, New York' with panache and a Movie Medley with their usual wit and a few surprises



including a particularly good impression of a windswept Kate Winslet during the *Titanic* theme!

Musicians gave us renditions of themes from *Schindler's List*, *American Patrol* from *The Glenn Miller Story*, *Hawaii Five-O*, and 'Another Day of Sun' from *La La Land*. The Jazz band played

classics from *The Blues Brothers*, *Rocky* and the theme from *Star Wars*.

The Year 11 Performing Arts class gave us a lively performance to 'Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious' and if you think it is difficult to say, you can imagine how complicated the dance routine was! It was devised by Helen Hawkins with many contributions from the students.



A new dimension was added this year with two films:

An award-winning film by Media Student, Isaac Skirton which was made to 'Lego House' by Ed Sheeran. It was a powerful story of brotherly love with the impact of a movie in just one song.

Jordan Steeds, Production Arts and media student, took the audience behind the scenes of *Beauty and the Beast*. It was amazing to see the hard work, by so many people, that goes on behind the scenes. It really is a team effort and it was great to see the work of those students who don't share the limelight with the performers but are just as essential to the production.

*Pictured Jade Goodfellow and the choir, performing arts students, musicians and the jazz band*

"This concert was so much fun to put together, the students rose to the challenge of performing very difficult music in a short space of time, alongside their exams. I think everyone could feel the buzz at the end of the concert - *The Greatest Showman* was a fantastic ending! Well done to all involved."

Lindsay Himmel, Head of Music

# Lower School Steal our Hearts with Annie Jr.



**I**n July, a grubby ensemble of orphans woke up and swept us away as they helped little Annie search for her parents. Colourful villains entertained as their devious plan unfolded. Meanwhile, orphan Annie won hearts in the Warbucks household. The uplifting rags to riches tale was set against the bustling back drop of New York City with some clever location switching between the orphanage and the mansion.

Musical numbers included a boot stomping tap number of 'Hard Knock



Life' by years 7 & 8 girls and the excitement of seeing New York for the first time was captured by year 9 and the boys with the song 'NYC'.

125 Students from years 7 to 9 were auditioned and were cast in the production as orphans, servants and citizens of New York.

One additional cast member was a little unusual... Annie's faithful hound! So, how did the school meet the challenge of casting 'Sandy' the dog? With a REAL dog of course! You might have thought that a canine professional was drafted in, but no... first-time animal actor Max is a local and he made his debut on stage at Ringwood School after weeks of being trained to come to the command "Sandy".

Helen Hawkins and Gina Elward worked together to create the amazing choreography for the show and Craig Newton and Dylan Reynolds took on the roles of assistant director, often running rehearsals with 70 young students

completely independently and looking after them throughout show week.



*"We do like to challenge ourselves and this year we decided 90 students wasn't quite enough so we introduced a live animal into the show! Max was an absolute joy to work with and all the students that worked with him were totally professional and respectful."*

*Helen Hawkins  
Director and  
Choreographer*



*Lottie Serle as Annie, the fantastic characters and cast from years 7-9 and Max the dog with Helen Hawkins.*



## 2019 Production Launched: Cole Porter's Anything Goes

Join us for a madcap voyage on board a luxurious ocean liner set amongst the glitz, glamour and free spirit of the 1930s. When upper class ladies and outrageous young socialites mix with sailors, criminals and the odd stowaway who knows what will happen?

Be prepared to be dazzled by spectacular costumes and incredible, toe-tapping dance numbers to classic showtunes by Cole Porter including 'You're the Top', 'I Get a Kick Out of You' and, of course, 'Anything Goes'. It's a first class ticket to a great night out and entertainment all the way.

Auditioning is always a difficult process and this year 160 children took part, from these 120 were selected for round two based on their acting, dancing, singing and performance skills. At the second round the students were assessed for their individual singing and acting skills and in the end 80 students made it into the final cast list. At the same time auditions were run for the principle roles for years 12 and 13.

# ANYTHING GOES



Tickets will go on sale after Christmas, Ringwood School productions often sell out within days, but priority booking is available by joining RSAF.

*"The launch of Anything Goes has gone well. There is always a sinking feeling when we have to turn away so many talented and enthusiastic students in the audition process but sadly, the boat isn't big enough! Rehearsals are going swimmingly and the students willingly take on board all the direction and instruction we give them. Although we have to be stern with them, it will all pay off when they take their final bow."*

Ian Hawkins  
Head of Performing Arts



Students cut the wonderful celebration cake

## West End Star Returns to Ringwood School

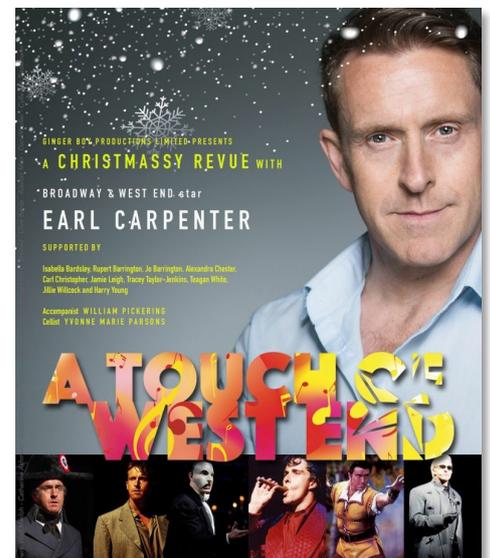
Come and join a truly exclusive, unique and of course, 'Christmassy' evening with one of the world's most successful musical theatre performers, Broadway and West End star, Earl Carpenter as he returns to his former School in Ringwood for an evening of much musical merriment.

In a 90 minute show, accompanied by piano, cello and special guests with many naff Christmas jokes (and not a Cliff Richard number in sight), Earl will share stories and songs from his

early years at Ringwood School to playing some of the greatest leading and title roles in musical theatre; from 'The Phantom of the Opera' to the role that brought him international recognition - 'Inspector Javert' in Cameron Mackintosh's Les Misérables.

Sunday 23rd December 2018

Book your tickets online now at [www.gingerboy.me](http://www.gingerboy.me)



# An Evening of Shakespeare

Following on from last year's successful Shakespeare productions of *The Tempest* and *Midsummer Night's Dream*, the Drama team is presenting another Evening of Shakespeare on Thursday 15 November in Ringwood School Hall at 7pm.

The evening will feature two reduced versions of Shakespeare's classic plays: *Macbeth*, directed by Mrs de Lancy Green and performed by years 7-9 and *Much Ado About Nothing*, directed by Mrs Nixon-Young and performed by years 10/11.

*"We are excited to explore Shakespeare's work, enabling students to develop new skills in stage combat and comedy to bring to life Shakespeare's beautiful language through voice and movement. Clare and I have been having tremendous fun working across year groups. The students are really focused and working very hard and luckily, we are ably supported by our Drama student leadership team."*

Elise de Lancy Green  
Head of Drama.

The play is being staged in its original format - known as 'thrust'. This means that the audience surrounds the performers on three sides, which creates a more intimate theatre experience. Because the performance is viewed from multiple aspects, careful consideration has to be given to the scenery, props and precise staging of the actors to ensure no perspective is blocked.

Tickets (£5) can be reserved by emailing Helen Hawkins : [helen.hawkins@ringwood.hants.sch.uk](mailto:helen.hawkins@ringwood.hants.sch.uk)



Pictured above: the cast of *Much Ado About Nothing*, below: the cast of *Macbeth*

## Much Ado ABOUT NOTHING

Set in Sicily, a Prince and his soldiers return from war in merry spirits to the hospitality of a local nobleman and his two daughters.

Witty soldier Benedict becomes locked in verbal combat with the razor-tongued Beatrice, whilst his friend Claudio falls in love with gentle Hero.

A masked ball is arranged and thus the scene is set for Shakespeare to weave his magic amongst a plot full of tricks and scheming, deceptions and misunderstandings... but will love prevail in the end?



*"One challenge specific to Macbeth is that it is deemed bad luck to say the name of the play in a theatrical space and I actually tend not to say it at all, which makes for interesting directing!"*

Elise de Lancy Green  
Head of Drama

## MACBETH

A brave Scottish general learns of a prophecy from a trio of witches that one day he will be King.

Fuelled by political ambition and encouraged by his wife to further his career, Macbeth takes fate into his own hands by murdering King Duncan.

The consequences of this act are far reaching – to what lengths will Macbeth go to protect his reputation and at what cost?

# An Exciting Partnership with The National Theatre

In the summer, Ringwood School was successfully selected to take part in the National Theatre's highly prestigious Connections Programme. Each year the National Theatre commissions ten new plays for young people to perform, bringing together some of the UK's most exciting writers with the theatre-makers of tomorrow.

In mid March 2019, Ringwood drama students will be performing the premiere of 'Flesh' by Rob Drummond (at Ringwood School). This play is brand new and, in October, Elise de Lancy Green had the incredible opportunity to work closely with the playwright himself along with professional directors at the National Theatre.



*"If the performance goes well and if we meet the criteria there is a chance that our students will be selected to perform at the Royal National Theatre itself.*

*Wherever we perform, it will be an amazing experience!"*

*Elise de Lancy Green  
Head of Drama*

The drama department is now also working in partnership with The Chichester Festival Theatre and in early April, with their help and guidance, Ringwood students will be performing the play at The Alexandra Theatre in Bognor Regis. The students involved will work with professional directors, technicians and be treated like working actors in a professional venue which seats 400 people!

*"I can't express strongly enough how happy the RSAF is to continue supporting the students and teachers with these fantastic opportunities."*

*Bex Carey, Chair of RSAF*

## MUSIC & DANCE

### Christmas Carol Concert

On the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> December we invite you to a joyful evening of celebration at our annual Christmas Carol Concert. This festive event is a wonderful opportunity to experience the musical talent from across the school and join in with some classic Christmas carols too!

As has become our tradition, the first part of the evening is formal with carols and Christmas music interspersed with poetry and readings by students of all ages,



staff, governors and parents.

In the second half our talented students showcase our rich musical heritage. There is something for everyone as we present diverse musical styles from traditional carols and choral classics to gospel, musical theatre and jazz.

An immense amount of preparation and practice goes into each concert and it takes many months to reach the high standard that has become familiar to our regular audiences. Students and staff have to juggle rehearsals around many other commitments, but always do so with tremendous dedication and enthusiasm.

We hope you can join us in taking a welcome break from all the busy preparations and share with us

the spirit and joy of Christmas! Tickets will be on sale soon and Friends of Ringwood School Arts Foundation will receive priority booking. Remember to check our website for details of our events [www.rsaf.co.uk](http://www.rsaf.co.uk) and follow us on Facebook and Instagram for the latest news.



## A Spotlight on... Choreography

Helen Hawkins gives us the ups and downs, ins and outs of choreographing a Ringwood School Production...

**Why is it you love choreography so much?**

Within a musical, choreography is the only element that has little to no limitations. The music and lyrics are written, the script holds stage directions and you must tell the story through the dialogue - but the choreography needs to be completely fresh and created specifically for the students.

**How do you put together all the elaborate choreography?**

People often ask me that and my answer is always the same: just listen to the music, it is all in there!

**What was it like working on Beauty and the Beast?**

Choreographing Beauty and the Beast was incredible fun. 'Be Our Guest' was the most challenging number in the show.

**What made this number so challenging?**

What made this number such a challenge was that I could do

anything I wanted with it - it is a fantasy moment in the story, so the choreography could be focused on spectacle rather than storytelling. It was nearly nine minutes long! It was hard work, but the students in the cast, the orchestra and the BTEC team working the lighting cues and pyrotechnics made it the visual feast it deserved to be!

**How long did it take?**

I began planning the number in March 2017 and it had to be ready to be performed by 80 dancers with costume, lighting, orchestration and even pyrotechnics by February 2018.

**What can you tell us about Annie Jr?**

Annie was a collaboration between myself and Gina Elward. We worked closely to create every choreographic number.

**How was it working with over 70 year 7 and 8 girls in tap shoes?**

Well, that seemed like a wonderful idea at the time - not so much at 8.30am rehearsals! But they were

brilliant... the spirit of the young students involved in Annie allowed us to push the choreography to challenge them - including adding buckets, cloths and bed sheets! We had enormous fun working out the steps of Easy Street, wondering how we could incorporate a chaise longue into it.

**And you have a new role for Anything Goes?**

Yes, I have now stepped up my role to director-choreographer for next year's production. I am very grateful and excited to have been given this opportunity to gain experience in more creative roles for musical theatre.

**How is it going so far?**

I have exciting and ambitious plans for this show (no spoilers!) but I have no worries that the team and the entire cast will be able to pull off yet another fantastic production. Watch this space...

## New Extra-curricular Classes

The RSAF exists to support and promote the performing arts in Ringwood School, which includes investing in our talented young students and helping them to develop their skills to achieve excellence in their chosen disciplines.

RSAF is pleased to be able to supplement the school curriculum by subsidising a programme of extra-curricular



classes run after school, the remaining cost is paid for by voluntary contributions by parents.

These activities are led by professional specialist teachers in drama, music and dance. Students are invited to attend classes as spaces are limited. We currently offer classes in Acting (LAMDA), Ballet, Performance Technique in Dance and Jazz music.



## Excellence Achieved!

**R**ingwood School has been recognised as Centre of Excellence for Performing Arts by school partnership organisation Challenge Partners. Challenge Partners is an education charity that enables schools to collaborate and share best practice across a network of 400 schools nationwide.

Ringwood was singled out as excelling in providing a multi-disciplinary approach to performing and production arts; including drama, art, music, stagecraft and dance skills.

The review team was impressed by the scale of the expertise within the school and the outstanding skills displayed in student performances!

They described performing arts as being at the very heart of our school and recognised the positive impact the department has across the whole school. And if that's not the icing on the cake, they also felt that Ringwood is one of the leading state schools for performing arts in the UK! Now that deserves a standing ovation!

## Investing in Performing Arts Talent

**T**here are now around 45 students in Year 9 and over 50 students in Year 10 who are taking the BTEC in Performing Arts (Musical Theatre). They join the existing Year 11 group of 19 students. Last year, 75% of the Year 11 students who took the course achieved Distinctions or Distinction\*s.

Many of these students are now enrolled in the Sixth Form, taking the

BTEC National Diploma in Performing Arts (Musical Theatre). More news about this in the next newsletter – including their performance for Children in Need, featured on BBC South.

These courses are a welcome addition to the already successful GCSE, A Level and BTEC courses in Drama and Theatre Studies, Music, Music Technology and Production Arts.

## Bellway Builds New Home for Seating

**W**ith help from generous donations by RSAF supporters, Ringwood School was able to invest in new tiered seating for the hall which has transformed the way the space can be used and enhanced the experience for people watching their fabulous productions.

The tiered seating packs away at the touch of a button but there was nowhere suitable to store the new flat seating.

Bellway Homes generously solved this problem by building a brand new

store room adjacent to the school hall. Now the chairs can be safely stored away to ensure they remain in perfect condition and ready for easy access.

*"We owe the team at Bellway Homes a massive thank you for their amazing generosity."* Bex Carey, RSAF Chair



**Winter Ball Cancellation:** Please note that there will not be a Winter Ball this season. It will return next year and we would love to hear your ideas and suggestions. If you would like to be involved please email [hello@rsaf.co.uk](mailto:hello@rsaf.co.uk).

## RSAF

Ringwood School Arts Foundation was established by John Trapnell to promote excellence in the arts at Ringwood School.

Today, Ringwood School is recognised as a national centre of excellence, providing an integrated approach to teaching musical theatre, drama, music, dance and production skills.

Support from RSAF is vital and positively impacts students across the school through investment in facilities, talent, teaching and performance opportunities.

Visit our website for donations, news, information and links to Facebook and Instagram.  
[www.rsaf.co.uk](http://www.rsaf.co.uk)

Help us to spread the word by telling friends and colleagues and following us on social media.

Please email any queries, suggestions or comments to: [marketing@rsaf.co.uk](mailto:marketing@rsaf.co.uk)

Thank you for your support.

**rsaf**

Ringwood School Arts Foundation  
supporting excellence in the arts