It’s always a daunting task putting together a Proteads Newsletter - what theme, who to contact, will they help out, is there time, what to include, will anyone read it? Then once I get started it just seems to flow, or at least I hope the finished Newsletter appears like that to you!

Rock Eisteddfods were always a popular event at the College between 1985 and 2001, from the first team of approximately 32 students performing ‘Desdamona’, to the last ‘The Fifth Wife’ with over 140 cast and backstage! Throughout this time there were also many staff and parents, and later ex-students, who helped to co-ordinate, choreograph, sew costumes, assist with hair and makeup, construct sets, drive buses, organise backstage crew, set lighting, check music, and provide a helping hand wherever and whenever needed.

The article by Katrina (Eley) Burke is great account of the atmosphere enjoyed by those involved and as she says the chant of “Mountie High will ROCK YOU!!” is still drummed into her brain!! So take a trip (or dance) down memory lane and enjoy this ‘ROCK through the EISTEDDFOD archives’!

In 2015 the College celebrates 40 years of education and it is proposed that a Rock Eisteddfod/School Production Reunion also be held, which I’m sure will excite many of you.

Thanks also go to contributors Sam Carroll, our first Proteads Award winner, and sister Jacqui (Carroll) Proud who both also enjoyed being involved in not only Rock Eisteddfods but also a number of school productions.

Now perhaps that’s the theme for our next issue and I might just be contacting you sometime soon!

Cheers,

Lynn
Editor

Uniform Changes

The Mount Eliza Secondary College uniform has undergone a major change for the second time in the 39 year history of the school. Those students attending between 1975 and 1997 will remember the ‘oh-so-brown’ uniform which reflected the colours of the school emblem Banksia Ericifolia. In 1997 a new ‘green’ uniform was proposed and at the time was apparently “the BIGGEST change in the school’s 23-year history”. There were slight changes and additions to this over the years, including a VCE jumper and later the Year 12 jackets. Today, in 2014, a third uniform is now being worn by all of the current Year 7 students, with a two year phase in period which will see all students in this new uniform by 2016.
“Mountie High will ROCK YOU!!!! Mountie High will ROCK YOU” is still drummed into my brain after my first Rock Eisteddfod Challenge.

I remember looking out from the very back of the floor in Rod Laver Arena thinking WOW! There was a sea of colourful, half costumed, half painted, sugar filled performers jumping up and down to the presenters “warm up” (which mainly involved us dancing around to the latest songs like ‘Teenage Dirtbag’ and ‘Lets Get Loud’) in anticipation for the performance that evening. Prior to all this, was months of preparation that went into getting the team to this event and even the teachers were letting their hair down in celebration (while of course making sure that none of us disappeared in the crowd, or god forbid, lost our costume).

The auditions for the Rock Eisteddfod were first or second week of term one, and I was freaking out. I was in Year 7 and had come from a primary school where I was the only one that decided to go to Mount Eliza. WHAT IF I DIDN’T GET IN??? I had done Rock Eisteddfod in primary school and one of the main reasons that I wanted to go to MESC was to continue doing them. Basically my whole 12 year old life would be over if I didn’t get in! I don’t remember all that much about the audition, except for the faces of Ros, Marcia, Sam, Jeff, and some other girls, watching my group with great intent to see if we had what it took to be in their Christmas themed extravaganza – ‘Bring It Back’.

Luckily I got in (along with a few other Year 7s) and we were to dance the role of the Elves. From here the rehearsals began on Monday’s and Thursday’s after school, and towards the end we also rehearsed on a Sunday afternoon. It was a huge feat getting 80 or so students together in the one place, at the one time, and even more of a challenge to get us to be quiet AND dance in time. Eventually the performance came together. It was so exciting when we got to do our first dress rehearsal with costumes and props. Everyone could see how amazing this could be, and we were all buzzing with excitement!

On the day of the competition we all arrived at school, at some hideous hour to head off to Rod Laver. The bus was full of nervous energy, which translated into lots of yelling, screaming, and chanting “MOUNTIE HIGH WILL ROCK YOU!” I had never experienced anything quite like it. When we arrived at Rod Laver we found our dressing room area and headed to the main arena to be introduced to the presenter/host and probably be briefed on safety measures, but none of us were interested in that. We just wanted to get on that stage for our rehearsal and show what we had to offer this year. I don’t remember if the rehearsal went well or not, so it can’t have been too bad. After this there was some time for us to “relax” and “rest” so we were ready for the huge night ahead. So obviously we all hit the Melbourne shops and went mental buying lollies and things to remember our amazing day!

When we arrived back at Rod Laver it was time to get ready and “get in the zone”. The feeling was different. Not only within our school group, but you could tell that everyone had realised that this was a competition and no one was prepared to let all the months of preparation go to waste. We started getting our make up on and considering the era, we all doused ourselves in glitter hairspray. The other Elves and I began to put on our costumes. I remember having an absolute fit of laughter with Eloise as some of the pants had laddered and had great whopping holes in the crutch!!! Luckily my costume was still in tact. ‘Aunty’ Marcia (Claringbold) hit ‘turbo mode’ and before we knew it all the pants had been stitched up and not even Thor himself could not have ripped them apart then. It was probably at this point that we all realised that 1) this was a huge team effort and 2) with the power of adrenaline you can pretty much achieve anything.

Getting to perform on the Rod Laver stage is something that most people would never forget. I felt so immersed in lighting, sound, and energy, that I thought I might combust. The deafening roar from the crowd was unbelievable, and so surreal, as when I looked out to the audience all I could see were glow sticks being waved around!! After our performance the excitement was at boiling point, we all jumped around and cheered (quite rudely in the wings) with the backstage crew and the teachers, feeling like we were the only ones in the world.
Throughout the years I spent at MESC the Rock Eisteddfods and Productions are the moments that I have the most vivid and cherished memories of. We were so lucky to have such great support from the teachers to be able to do this. The support that filtered down from the teachers, transferred to the older students, who then inspired the younger students. This culture is what promoted such great camaraderie within the performing arts sector at the school. I can attribute some of my professional success as a Dance Teacher/Choreographer to opportunities given to me whilst I was at MESC. As I reached the later years in high school I choreographed Aerobics routines and Productions, which gave me great experience in dealing with a range of ages and abilities within an environment that I loved. When I was applying for jobs outside of school, I’m sure the reason I got them was because I had this experience. Everyone knows how challenging it is to get in excess of 100 students to dance the same way, at the same time! And….5, 6, 7, 8!!!!!

A little bit about Katrina and husband Anthony (also an ex-MESC student 2000-2005).

I have been working at NICZ Dansation as a Dance Teacher for the past 9 years. However, this year I have lightened my load to teaching just 2 classes, as I am 4.5 months pregnant. I have also been working with The Peninsula School in developing their extra curricular dance program. Anthony works at VMWare in Melbourne as a Systems Engineer within the Network and Security business unit. He specialises in networking and he builds cloud networks that deliver services such as Facebook, Twitter, Spotify and Tumblr. We have been married for 2 years and live in Frankston with our 3 adorable cats!

Thank you Katrina for sharing your memories of Rock Eisteddfod and we send best wishes to you and Anthony for the birth of your first child later this year.

And...5,6,7,8... continued
The concept began in Sydney, Australia in 1980 and was known as The Rock ‘n’ Roll Eisteddfod, a NSW Arts Council sponsored-event developed by Sydney radio station 2SM, and included high schools at the historic Hordern Pavilion. With support from Coca-Cola, the NSW Arts Council promoted the event as an example of local youth culture in action. Other states soon joined in and saw an opportunity to deliver the “Quit For Life” anti-smoking message to secondary school students. At the same time, Kerrie Hayes and Peter Sjoquist AM (Hayes & Sjoquist Productions) took over and revitalised the event which became known nationally as The Rock Eisteddfod Challenge. Each school had 8 minutes on stage in which to use dance and drama to tell a story, with between 10-120 students on stage, not to mention the many students, staff and parents involved backstage with sets, costumes, makeup, etc.

MESC entered their first Challenge in 1985 with 21 students on stage to tell the story of ‘Desdamona’, a girl who was being fought over by two boyfriends. Unfortunately, in the knock-out heats, the students missed out on competing in the finals by one point, but did receive an ‘Honorable Mention Award’.

Ten years later in 1995 the National Tennis Centre rocked to chants of “Go Mounties!” as the team took the crowd, not to mention the judges, by storm with a memorable performance of “The Magic of Camelot”. They were announced the WINNERS of the 1995 ‘Be Your Best’ Rock Eisteddfod - Open Division Grand Final. It was a performance “filled with energy and enthusiasm, with all the motivated cast performing magnificently and leaving us with a sensational display of professionalism, magic, fun, excitement and teamwork” (Kate Holder, Ripple 1995).

There were many, many dedicated and enthusiastic students, staff and parents working together throughout the 15 years that MESC was involved in Rock Eisteddfods. We hope that the stories and images in this newsletter bring back a few memories of those times.
Since leaving MESC all those years ago my life has been a whirlwind adventure. After being accepted into Swinburne University, I decided that I was not yet ready to dive headfirst back into study and thus left my Fire Technology course to work full time. At this stage, gaining life experience and a range of skills was something I felt important in determining what it was that I wanted to do. Over the next 8 years I worked in hospitality on the Mornington Peninsula, and in northern Queensland I worked as a landscape gardener and spent most of that time as a volunteer firefighter for the CFA. During this time I also managed to travel and see some of this amazing world. In 2005 I landed a job working for the then Virgin Blue (now Virgin Australia), travelling the country and parts of the Pacific and Asia. This was a fun time however; it was still not my true calling.

Over the past 10 years I have worked in outdoor recreation on a casual basis. Thinking back, this is probably where I discovered a love for what I am about to spend the rest of my life doing.

In 2010 while at the wedding of a close friend, I was “re” introduced to probably the most inspiring, motivated, determined, caring and loving person I had ever met. Libby is her name and now as my beautiful wife she and I reside in Elsternwick with our beloved Ash (a Border Collie). Interestingly, we went to Mt Martha Primary School together and can thank Kate Ryan (formally Whittman) a former MESC student and close friend for the “re” introduction and match making!

In getting back to what I’m doing now, it was Libby that helped steer me in the right direction. I am currently in 4th Year at Deakin University, about to complete a Bachelor in Education (Primary). After years of searching for what it was that I wanted to do, I never thought stepping back into a classroom would be the thing I loved doing the most!

If I were to be honest, looking back on my time at MESC there were some amazing teachers that I really feel helped me in deciding to choose teaching as my career. Their passion, determination, willpower and love for the profession has truly inspired me and I thank those teachers for this.

Sam was involved in many aspects of school life during his time at MESC which resulted in him receiving the inaugural ‘Proteads Award for Citizenship and Overall Contribution to the College Community’ in 2001. He was a most popular winner with both his peers and teachers.

Thank you Sam, and we wish you well in your new career ‘back in the classroom, where you are sure to inspire a class full of students yourself.'
When I graduated from primary school in 1999 and the beginning of secondary school was just around the corner, I was so excited to be attending a school with a brilliant performing arts reputation. Having an extensive art program was my main focus when choosing a school, and Mt. Eliza was the only school offering this at the time. The school offered endless opportunities from Rock Eisteddfod to aerobics and school productions. I just knew this was the school for me.

During my time at Mt. Eliza I was lucky enough to be part of 2 Rock Eisteddfods, 4 productions and numerous dance aerobics teams, each being unique and memorable. It was however the productions that became a huge part of my life and where my passion for performing arts was ignited. I vividly remember the day I was cast as Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth the Rock Opera* (2002). I had spent hours working on my audition piece with my singing teacher. I was so nervous standing in front of Mrs Williams and numerous other teachers for the audition. I was only in year 9 when this all took place and couldn’t believe it when I landed a lead role. It was a lot of work and lots of after school rehearsals but worth every minute!

As the years went on, I played ‘Tiffany’ in *Back to the 80’s* (2003), ‘Kathy’ in *Disco Inferno* (2004) and lastly ‘Rusty’ in *Footloose* (2005). Footloose was my favourite show and the highlight of my final year of school. Not only was I a cast member in Footloose, I was also involved in set design and construction. While studying VCE art, Katrina Burke (formerly Eley) and I were fortunate enough to have our set work recognised as part of our VCE.

Taking part in all these extra-curricular activities took up a lot of time however I wouldn’t have changed it for the world. During each show I made many new friends across all year levels and developed great relationships with many brilliant teachers who also donated a lot of personal time to make the productions successful. Ros Williams and Marcia Claringbold are the two teachers that for me were by far the most passionate and dedicated in presenting an outstanding show. The relationships I formed over the years with both teachers are ones I have always been grateful for. I’m lucky to still be in contact with both teachers all these years later.

After graduating from Mt. Eliza in 2005 my passion for performance art remained however Footloose was to be my final show. I went on to study International Tourism and worked as a corporate and leisure travel agent for quite a few years before trying my luck in real estate. It was there that I met my husband whom I married mid last year.

As I no longer dance or sing, our wedding was the first time my husband Andrew had ever seen me in front of a microphone. Milly Moodie (formally Edwards) also a past Mt. Eliza student, was a bridesmaid at our wedding and sang when we took our first dance as a married couple. In true Milly style she dragged me up to the microphone to sing with her. That moment took me right back to when we performed together in the production *Back to the 80’s* and is something that I will cherish forever.

Andrew and I have recently welcomed a beautiful baby boy into the world named Orlando. Growing up around music will be an important part of his upbringing and who knows, maybe one day he will take to the stage just like his mum!

*Thanks to Jacqui for sharing her memories of the performing arts and life after school. We shall certainly be watching out to see if Orlando does indeed take to the stage!*
MEHS/MESC 1975-2014

STAFF REUNION

Why should students have all the fun!

When: Saturday 26th April, 2014
Time: 7.00pm - No rsvp required - just come along and have a catch-up with friends
Where: Bruce Park Hall, Margate Avenue, Frankston
BYO: BYO Drinks & Plate of Food
Who: Staff members of MEHS/MESC 1975-2014

Please pass this invitation on to others and partners are also welcome

Contact: 0407553771 - Susan/Denise/Jan

“Whoever tells the best story wins!”
Amistad (1977) - John Quincy Adams (Anthony Hopkins)
MESC Rock Eisteddfod 1985-1992
MESC Rock Eisteddfod 1994-1997
MESC Rock Eisteddfods 1998-2001
Congratulations to all the dedicated cast and crew who made each Rock Eisteddfod event happen. You certainly did the College and the community proud.

You can also follow current MESC news and connect with others via

Mount Eliza Secondary College Official Page—http://on.fb.me/MXqca9
Mount Eliza Secondary College (Proteads) Group—http://on.fb.me/ACZhUB
Mount Eliza Secondary College https://twitter.com/MtElizaSC

Please contact us if you would like to join Proteads and be added to our database in order to receive information about future events proteads@mesc.vic.edu.au

Previous Proteads Newsletters can be found on the College website above.
We welcome news from all past students, staff, parents and community members.