

# FANTASY ISLAND

The technology highlight of both the fall and spring productions was the outstanding lighting, both installed and designed by lighting designer **Chris Fournier**. Mr. Fournier has worked in lighting for many years, designing for theater, events, and architecture. With ample experience in high school theater lighting design, working with programs like the Weston Drama Workshop, Fournier's lighting design transformed Phoenix Hall into the fictional Caribbean paradise of *Once On This Island*. In our adaptation of the production, Fournier faced a unique challenge: the show was to be performed in the round. Lighting a theater in the round requires tremendous precision and careful planning. Any lighting structures must be high enough to avoid obstructing the audience's view, but low enough to reach the faces of actors even on the outer edges of the stage, and at just the right angle so that they do not glare in the eyes of audience members. These are not problems that designers have to face with more traditional staging

arrangements, but Fournier leapt to the challenge, bringing in "lifts"—two giant, ceiling-height aluminum structures to support the lights. These lifts gave us the flexibility to stage the show in the round, allowing the cast more room for the large dance numbers and more creative staging; it also echoed the feel of an island, as the audience was invited to spectate from the shore.

Fournier also used "movers" in both productions, large swiveling lights that could rotate to any corner of the stage and change colors and qualities of light, giving the **Phoenix Players** maximum flexibility to create a sunny golden morning, a piercing blue night, or the orange glow of a Caribbean sunset.

## Senior Develops His Own 'Passage'



**Mariagrazia LaFauci**, MSJA '08 and director of the Phoenix Players, believes that Saint Joseph Prep is a place that fosters the arts for and of students, no matter what their specific interest or talent may be.

According to LaFauci, "We want students to know that there is a platform here for their work to be produced, and for them to be leaders in our theater community." Enter **Daniel Donabedian '14**. No stranger to the theater, Donabedian approached LaFauci in the fall of 2013 about his idea to write a pirate musical, and upon approval by the administration, his idea was quickly launched into a full-fledged writing frenzy and production process!

Donabedian progressed significantly as a member of the theater community at Saint Joe's Prep. "I grew the most during the editing process," Donabedian said. "I tend to overwrite and had no idea about how to format it." With the help and support of his faculty mentors, what began as an off-the-cuff idea became a complete and entertaining script and production effort. There were at least five faculty members and more than twenty students who brought this story to life, not to mention professional lighting and choreography collaborators. In addition to the popular music re-worded to align with the story, Donabedian also collaborated with art and music teacher, Mr. Shiner, to compose an original piece of music included in the production.

*Passage to the New World* debuted on March 28 in Phoenix Hall as the spring musical offered by the school. It was so well received that Donabedian has hopes of pursuing its reproduction sometime over the course of his four years of study at Harvard College.



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