



SJP FINE ARTS

ARTS NIGHT 2013

Maybe the MFA was offering something nearly as culturally diverse as Saint Joseph Prep on Wednesday, May 22nd, but not likely as well attended. Like the gallery opening for a famous artist or the cult following of an off Broadway hit, SJP was packed with friends, families, supporters and the artists themselves celebrating its First Annual *Arts Night*. Capturing the essence of the visual arts, choral music, theatre and even robotics programs, this event displayed the culmination of a widely varied arts curriculum over the course of Saint Joseph Prep's inaugural year.

Utilizing Phoenix Hall, the school's auditorium (known to many as Room 38), as the main gallery, 11th and 12th grade *Studio Art II* students mounted and curated their own gallery sections within the grand space. The impressive work included charcoal, pencil, acrylic, oil, collage, pen and ink, as well as mixed media. Meanwhile, 9th grade *Intro to Art* and 10th grade *Studio Art I* students' finest work lined the walls of the main stairways and along the 1st floor hallway, home to the studio workspaces. The artwork remained on display until the close of the school year.

When asked about course expectations, Studio Art teacher Caron Chiusano offered an extensive list of criteria. "Students are expected to be actively engaged and on task with art the entire class period—our conversation and class activity center around art," stated Chiusano. "Peer critique, group critique and individual teacher conferences are essential elements of my teaching, aimed at producing high quality work and engaging the students as artists." Explaining that each class functions together as a community of young artists, Chiusano credited this peer supportive environment as a source of tremendous growth and development leading to the remarkable work that they often produce.

Forty-five minutes into the evening, the SJP Choir, under the direction of Damian Shiner, performed selections from their heralded Spring Concert, including two solo pieces. They opened with an adapted version of *Some Nights* by the musical group fun. Their iPad-assisted version performed at an event in March led this particular selection to be considered a hallmark of this past year's choir. In addition to several choral pieces, solos were offered by Annie Cheevers '13 and Emily Carvalho '14, both distinctive voices and vocal leaders among the group.

At the completion of the choir mini-concert, guests were invited to continue perusing the gallery exhibition trail which led ultimately to Café Phoenix, the school dining hall, where the theatre art students awaited their chance to round out the evening performances. Along the way, attendees could stop by a classroom to witness the impressive features of SJP's robotics lab, and meet the robot built by the 2012-2013 team. Robotics faculty mentor Samrah Sameer and student team members were on hand to field questions and demonstrate principles of the team's endeavors.

The final event of Arts Night included unique theatrical performances by students under the guidance and direction of Mariagrazia LaFauci MSJA '08. Over the course of the semester, students in her class studied and practiced Shakespearean monologues, autobiographical monologues (called *Shimmers*), and scene studies from contemporary plays. From their efforts, favorites were selected to be performed. Among these were a piece by Sara Kiritsy '14 about rowing on the crew team (with classmates pantomiming the rowers as she urged them on), Julio Castillo's '15 monologue about his childhood in Jamaica Plain, and Taylor Myers '14 and Akua Okyere's '15 stirring monologues about losing loved ones.

Generally, students recreated scenes from established works used in their study assignments, but some introduced new performances while applying lessons from the course. Mercedes Edwards '14 drew inspiration from Spoken Word artists like Sarah Kay in her *Shimmer*, while Kiritsy and Samantha McCue '14 offered an original take on a dialogue between Buzz Lightyear and Woody from the animated movie *Toy Story*.

LaFauci said of the challenges in dealing with the irregular space where they performed instead of a stage, "With nothing else to distract, the acting becomes the focus." For many students, this was their first experience acting in front of an audience, and they rose to the occasion—turning the cafeteria into a world-class theater.



1 Guests perusing the large gallery space of Phoenix Hall, conversing with the artists standing by their work 2 Paper sculptures produced by the Origami Club 3 Emily Carvalho '14 4 Anthony Malarly '15, Keturah Washington '15, and Akua Okyere '15 portraying a rowing team 5 The artwork of Kyung Bin Kim '13 6 Samantha McCue '14 7 Students rehearsing for *Bye, Bye, Birdie*

Theatre at SJP

The Phoenix Players' successful inaugural season has come to a close after two fantastic musicals. Audiences were treated to two beloved classics, put on by a dedicated group of students and faculty members. Directors Celeste Tutela and Joseph Pasquinelli stood proudly at the helm for both *Bye Bye Birdie* in the fall and *Guys and Dolls* in the spring. Shows were mounted on the Phoenix Hall stage, with the assistance of beautiful sets designed by Kyung Bin Kim '13, while stage manager Courtney DeCarlo '13 worked diligently backstage to ensure that all performances ran smoothly.

In December, *Bye Bye Birdie* brought down the house with Terry Shin '13 in the titular role, Conrad Birdie. This hilarious musical tells the tale of an Elvis Presley-esque rock star in the 1950's who has been drafted for the war. Before leaving, as a publicity stunt, he is to perform in the small town of Sweet Apple, Ohio, and bestow his "one last kiss" upon one lucky teenage girl, Kim MacAfee. Talented actors Joe Coughlin '13 and Megan Peterson '13 starred as Conrad's music producer, Albert, and his secretary-girlfriend, Rosie. Other outstanding performers included Alicia McCormick '13 playing Kim, and Blessing Ajero '13 as Albert's neurotic and overbearing mother. Special faculty guest appearances by Mr. Ward and Ms. McCarvill stole the show in their scene as Mayor of Sweet Apple and his fainting, Birdie-lovestruck wife! Members of the step team entertained the audience with a unique pre-show performance, and Terry opened the show with his band, "Terry & the Shins", playing *Creep* by Radiohead.

Guys and Dolls left everyone humming "Luck, Be a Lady". Set against the backdrop of the New York City skyline, chronic gambler Nathan Detroit (played by Jan Michael Ponti '13) is just trying to set up a craps game without getting caught, all the while avoiding tying the knot with his fiancé of 14 long years, Adelaide (played by Michaela Pepi-Lewis '14). To get enough money for his craps game, Nathan makes a bet against fellow gambler, Sky Masterson (played by Danny Donabedian '14) that he cannot possibly bring a girl to Havana, Cuba on a date—but not just any doll! Sky has to persuade a dedicated young mission leader named Sarah (played by Alicia McCormick). These four brilliant leads had everyone in stitches the whole night. Brenna Hurley '14 also "rocked" in her role as Nicely Nicely Johnson, singing the popular favorite, "Sit Down, You're Rocking the Boat." The ensemble worked double time to make sure that every minute was exciting and action-packed, with students skillfully playing sometimes as many as five or six roles. Kudos to all involved!