

MTWS In to the Woods
Progress Feedback and Update
10th May 2019

Last week on the 4th May I asked the class to sing through an ensemble number and I was very disappointed to find that so many of the cast still did not know the lyrics for this number. There are only three ensemble/choral numbers in our show and the task to learn lyrics was given out before the Christmas holidays, with a deadline for the lyrics to be learnt by January 12th as per the rehearsal schedule. This was really not good enough, as we are now in May - to which I sat down and spoke to the students, hence this update.

The 'spoken' word, line learning had a dead line of just before Easter break Saturday 6th April and at that time I gave the students some extra time, another 4 weeks, by extending this deadline to a later date 4th May – Again many of the cast still don't know their 'spoken' words either. (this does not include the individuals who have been given additional parts/work handed out later – they know who they are)

Learning lines is not something I can do for the students – that is their responsibility and we give plenty of time to achieve this task and meet the deadline. Unfortunately, it seems, there is a pervading attitude among, several/some of this group, that they either don't need to do the work? or they don't care? And tend to rock up each week not making any progress. The whole group in general are being far too laid back, they are without a sense of urgency or understanding of each student's responsibility in working towards the whole. I have explained to them that **all** individuals needed to step up their game, increase their effort, in order for this show to be ready on time, to a standard we can all be proud of. We also explained before rehearsals began, that this was a challenging show and that extra commitment and homework above normal, would be both expected & vital for its success, emphasising that each individual's efforts, have a knock on effect on the rest of the group.

In addition, before Christmas the students were asked to become familiar with the songs/music of the show – Homework, has clearly not been done as asked. Some people appear not to have moved forward as they should. Progress & improvement is very slow, suggesting the listening and practice at home, has just not taken place, out of class.

We are very reasonable, understanding and flexible over school & other commitments – this is why we issue tasks/homework with plenty of time to meet deadlines and achieve what has been asked and in order to make the right progress in the time. Presenting homework from the beginning when students agree to take part, and having deadlines early on in rehearsal, is so students can manage their time and get on with one of the most basic stages of acting 'learning lines' – so students can organise and balance all their commitments. Leaving homework to the last minute does not work and is not in line with our expectations at this level and what we are aiming to teach for this course. Learning lines/lyrics is the very first task and is expected to be achieved early on in the rehearsal process, so that the real craft of acting and performance can be practiced and perfected.

Unfortunately, as this isn't like preparing for an individual exam – the speed, effort, & commitment of each individual, their preparation, ability to self organise, complete homework, and progress, effects the whole piece/performance – As all performers rely on each other.

I really need to see a real improvement in this. I don't wish to be in a situation where I have to remove roles from people, because they haven't done the homework as they should, holding back progress, and therefore effecting the whole piece.

Theatre is about collaboration and **all** the students right now, whether to a greater or lesser extent, need to do *their* part, as it's a two way commitment.

I will speak again regarding this tomorrow. Please ask your child to read this letter and re read the the requirements for this course – attached. Anyone who doesn't understand the commitment required or who are not prepared to do the homework, should not be on the course – this course is for 'keen' individuals, who have the ability to be organised, show self motivation and be able to self study outside of class and rehearsals and importantly 'want' too.

As parents, please talk to your child re the above and please remind them of the part they play in this process and help to reinforce the need for good organisation skills, homework and preparation to take place between rehearsals. That this is required not only to be on this course but importantly in order for each and everyone to feel confident and therefore able give of their best when performing.

We will see how tomorrows rehearsal goes and I will go from there and keep everyone updated.

Thank you for your support

Have a good weekend.

Ali

Alison Tompkins