

# BEHIND THE SCENES



Faust International - The Snow Queen

Talking to three of DB's top performing-arts teachers, *Sam Agars* discovers that the benefits of learning to act go way beyond mastering stagecraft

Photos courtesy of Acting Antics, Faust International and Performers Studio

A few minutes chatting to an expert about the impact drama and theatre can have on the lives of young people, and it quickly becomes evident that there is much more to it than meets the untrained eye. While onlookers are often stunned by the ability and audacity of young performers on stage, they rarely take into account just how they got to be at that point in the first place.

Becoming 'stage ready' certainly

doesn't happen overnight – it's a long process and through this process, youngsters are constantly learning, not just about the discipline they are mastering but also about life itself. Being trained in the performing arts not only shapes a child in the here and now, but for many years to come.

### Loving the limelight

If there is one thing for certain for children joining a drama class for the first time, it is that before long they

are going to have to step outside their comfort zone in a pretty major way. Keon Lee, of Faust International, says he is constantly amazed by the way some children take to performing like ducks to water, while others need a gentle push.

"I have met the bravest four to five year olds, you'd be bowled over by how articulate they are and how confident they seem, and I have seen really shy teenagers who barely speak a word," Keon says. "We do a lot of activities



Acting Antics International - Filbert the Dragon

where the whole group does something together, so if you are shy you are able to do it with the crowd. But, slowly, we will ask a child to step out and lead in various ways."

Into its 18th year, and now providing drama and theatre classes for DB kids at Discovery Bay International School, Faust prides itself on introducing children aged three to 18 to a fun world of drama and theatre. The idea is that they grow in confidence, while developing skills that will help them across all facets of life.

"In drama you are not just engaging your body but you are also engaging your brain," Keon says. "What we provide is a really fun workshop space where children are imagining and using their creativity in expressing those ideas. Everybody uses that in everyday life, whether they are making a presentation at school or at the office, whether they are working in a team and having to engage others with their ideas. It's a great way of testing your skills in delivering that creativity and those ideas."

### Putting it out there

Emma Tielus-Ward from Performers



Performers Studio - Peter Pan

Studio, which started in DB in 2008 and offers professional performing arts classes to all ages, is a big believer in the benefits of performing live.

"I don't believe it boosts confidence unless you are performing it," Emma says. "Playing games and doing role play in the classroom is brilliant but if kids want to take that next step, theatre is about performing. It's about putting it out there and allowing people to judge it and look at what you're doing."

### All the world's a stage

For Deborah Percy of Acting Antics International, which has held performance-based drama classes for kids aged four to 13 at Discovery College and Bayview House of Children since 2009, the performing arts play a vital role in ensuring children receive a balanced education.

"Educationalists around the world recognise that a balanced education is one that not only meets a child's