

## Area Students Direct Winter Plays At Proctor

### Proctor Academy press release

All Proctor Academy students are required to participate in afternoon activities, earning performance credits for both competitive athletics as well as engaging in the performing arts. The school's goal of affording each student the opportunity to discover and/or pursue his or her passion through its afternoon activities is clearly recognizable by the breadth of programming offered at the school. While more than 170 students participate in snow sports and another 65 play either hockey or basketball during the winter months, if you walk into the Wilkins Meeting house on a weekday afternoon, you will encounter a dedicated group of students preparing for three student-led theater arts performances that will hit the stage throughout the month of February.

Each winter, theater arts directors Terry Stoecker and Michael Littman hand over the directing reigns to students who desire to embark on the invaluable journey of directing their own play. The student-led productions maintain the same standard of excellence exhibited during the fall and spring shows, as cast and crew rise to meet the expectations of their directors. Few learning opportunities match the responsibility implicit in the role of directing peers in a large-scale production. This year, an unprecedented three sets of students have stepped into the role of director, working alongside each other to produce three separate shows that will debut later this winter.

### The Foreigner

Four year senior, and veteran to the Proctor stage, Canon Brownell ('11, Andover) teams with Yasmine Zinbi ('11, Marachesh, Morocco), who is a gifted performer in her own right, to direct *The Foreigner* on the main stage this winter. Canon comments about the opportunity to direct: "To my knowledge there have never been so many student-directed shows at one time. It's an incredibly interesting experience, as we are forced to backward plan, set our own rehearsal schedule, and work in conjunction with the other directors to ensure we are all able to meet our goals."

Yasmine, too, is ecstatic about the opportunity to lead her peers. "Being both an actor and a director places a heavy weight on my shoulders but is absolutely wonderful." Canon and Yasmine both add that they are extremely proud of the sheer number of students and faculty involved in the three shows this winter, particularly those individuals who are new to the stage and have been willing to completely step out of their comfort zone.

Under Canon and Yasmine's direction, the cast of seven actors rehearsed diligently throughout January in preparation for opening night. The show will have an open dress rehearsal on Thurs-

day, February 17, and then celebrate an opening night on Friday, February 18, and play through Saturday, February 19, in the Norris Family Theater on Proctor's campus.

### The Elephant Man

The week prior to *The Foreigner*, Jessy Lee ('11, Concord) and Cameron Lucas ('11, West Dover, Vermont) will present *The Elephant Man* in the Black Box Theater. Both Jessy and Cameron have gained valuable training on stage over the past four years, playing a variety of roles in both musicals and traditional dramas. While their acting careers are well-developed, this is their first foray into directing.

As they both comment, "Adapting to disciplining our peers can be hard because we don't know how to treat actors when they are late, not paying attention, or not remembering lines, and because we share the same lives as they do, we know what it's like to be stressed out because we're taking the same classes, going to the same dances, and experiencing the same things. It's easy to relate to them."

Jessy and Cameron are both thankful to be currently enrolled in Proctor's Directing Class offered by Michael Littman, as the course provides an excellent forum to discuss the challenges before them and to learn new strategies to help them overcome those obstacles. With the show a few weeks from opening, both Jessy and Cameron are optimistic about how it will all come together. Moreover, they are simply appreciative of the opportunity presented them this winter. "We're so thankful that we have the opportunity to feel like we're teaching - there is nothing more exciting than to see actors discover something about their character or see something in the script that we don't."

### Mixed Tapes and Self-Reliance

Sharing the Black Box Theater, senior Haley Peters ('11, Andover) has also decided to take on the challenge of directing her peers in a theater arts performance this winter. While she is operating as the sole director of *Mixed Tapes and Self-Reliance*, a story of a sophomore in high school replaying the past year of his life through a representation of songs, she should know the play well, as she wrote it herself.

Haley, who has quietly played a variety of roles in performances during her four year Proctor career, has a sincere passion for writing and a creative mind that allows her to bring her writing to life unlike many high school students. Haley comments on the journey she is currently navigating: "I have spent the last year writing this play, and while the process of writing the play was difficult, it is one of the most rewarding challenges I have met. Now I am directing the play, and I am presented with a new challenge, one of turning the words and ideas printed

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Lilly Carlson, Diane "Nanny" Boisvert, and Sierra Provost pose in Mrs. Bent's first grade classroom. Mrs. Boisvert has volunteered in the classroom for many years. The first graders absolutely love reading and sharing their work with her. "I like that she reads and talks with me," says Sierra with a smile. Photo and caption: Jen Bent

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adventures. You can also find blackberries or raspberries. It is beautiful. There are all kinds of animals in the woods."

~ Galen Whitman, grade 2

"I first learned to walk, laugh, and play in Maine. It is also the place where I learned to sing my first words."

~ Kaitlyn Dumont, grade 5

"In Montana I really notice that the mornings smell crisp and clean, and the rest of the day is sweet, similar to a freshly mowed lawn, but better."

~ Chloe Methven, grade 5

"I get to spend time with my family when we go camping. Roasting marshmallows on the campfire is very fun. It is very cozy."

~ Tiffany Poulin, grade 5

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