

## St Margaret's presents Roald Dahl's Matilda the Musical

***The story of an extraordinary girl who, armed with a vivid imagination and a sharp mind, dares to take a stand and change her own destiny.***

The cast and crew of this year's school musical have worked hard to bring to the stage their rendition of the Broadway sensation Roald Dahl's Matilda the Musical.

Almost 80 students St Margaret's students in Years 7-12 were involved in the cast, the orchestra pit and behind the scene supported by an expert team of passionate and creative staff, who together brought the stage show to life which played to out audiences at four shows in the school's Eton Hall.

Based on the beloved book "Matilda" by Roald Dahl, Roald Dahl's Matilda the Musical narrative centres on Matilda, a precocious five year old with the gift of telekinesis, who loves to read. Matilda overcomes obstacles caused by her family and school helps her teacher to reclaim her life. Year 8 student Luci Sprott played the lead role of Matilda, with Year 12 students Paige Bastian playing Miss Trunchbull and Meleia Richardson playing Miss Honey.

Director and Head of Faculty – Arts and Design Annette Box said the storyline of the musical delivered a powerful message to students.

"Matilda is smart, she backs herself, she has resilience and she exercises her assertiveness when needed – all powerful messages. She also loves school – what a great thing to promote! She is also supported by a teacher who wholeheartedly believes in her potential," said Ms Box.

"The notion that the power of knowledge and determination can transform a young girl's life is so relevant to our students. There are so many great roles for the girls to portray."

Staging a musical production of this size is no mean feat and this year's cast and crew spent just 13 weeks putting the show together, commencing rehearsals in Week 3 of Term 4 last year. The leading cast members rehearsed three times a week, the dancers and chorus rehearsed twice a week. There were also some weekend rehearsals as well as technical and dress rehearsals for the entire cast in the performance venue.

In the orchestra pit, the performers were accompanied by an ensemble made up of 11 students and five professionals (with teachers at St Margaret's) and conducted by Head of Performance and Musical Director Brad King.

Brad said the score involved an enormous amount of underscoring which was used to heighten the drama on stage.

"Once the show started, there was rarely a break for the girls in the orchestra. It was really important for the orchestra to be familiar with what was happening on stage to ensure the right music matched the right staging moment. Of course, Tim Minchin was true to style writing a very quirky score using loads of interesting time signatures and key signatures which kept us on our toes.

"The students performed absolutely brilliantly. The level of commitment shown by every single girl was phenomenal and contributed to making the show such a wonderful success. In terms of the orchestra, we always loved hearing that audience members thought that a professional recording was being used as a backing track, only to be shocked to see all our fantastic young musicians taking a bow at the end of the show," Brad said.

Brad said the school musical is a key event for music students on the school calendar.

"I believe the girls absolutely love being a part of the magic of live theatre – using staging, choreography, music, lighting,

costumes to engage an audience in storytelling. I feel school musicals are a landmark experience. They create very special memories that students can look back on and remember for the rest of their lives. I think for many of us, when we look at our time at school, we remember involvement in school theatre productions. For our music students in the orchestra, it is because the girls get to perform a professional score. The parts aren't simplified for a school setting so they get to have 'real world' performance experience. More than anything, through all of the hours of hard work in creating a shared experience a tight-knit community is formed between the cast, orchestra and crew. Girls form very close friendships across the year leading through the process and for all involved, a musical 'family' is formed. That sense of connection was very evident at the end of the closing night performance – there were a lot of tears knowing it was all over with students not wanting to leave at the end of the night," Brad said.

The set design team was led by Annette and assisted by visual art teacher Hilde Apel and teacher aide Claudia Mazzotta with the help of primary art teacher Kerry Rider and aide Rachel Terry. Jerzey Mogilski from the school's facilities team constructed the set flats and the costumes were sourced by Annette with the help of Rachel Terry and teacher Nikki Anderson, who built and created accessories and extras to elevate the costumes.

Congratulations to all involved in this year's hit school musical!