



## **BGS Celebrates Speech and Drama**

**By Ishani Patel (Upper Sixth)**

Tom Stoppard said that: “Words are sacred. If you get the right ones in the right order you can nudge the world a little.” It is safe to say that the world, or better yet the lucky audience sitting in the Randle Hall on the evening of Tuesday 25th April, was particularly moved, in the remarkable display performed by students in Years 3 to Year 11, who have each worked hard alongside their school studies to bring the words to life. This evening of Speech and Drama was particularly special as it was Mrs Redford’s (Head of Speech and Drama) last, to whom the students are exceptionally grateful for, as their level in perceptiveness nor would this evening be made possible without her dedication to the art of the word.

Hosted by the Sixth Form, who have all achieved their LAMDA Grade 8 Gold Medal awards, the evening inspired many works ranging from poetry spoken bravely by girls in the Junior School, to compelling dramatic acting pieces, performed with great gravitas by the Senior School students, to share their pieces with parents and siblings alike. The evening was a chance to celebrate the students’ successes of the year. After a victorious exam season in addition to the Bedford Festival; an opportunity for students to partake in a diverse range of classes, all in the passion and love of the spoken word, it was wonderful to have so many students who placed in numerous festival categories performing in front of parents at this celebratory event, to not only make them proud but to also inspire them with their range of style, creativity, and expression.

It began with a welcome speech by Mrs Redford, followed by an exhibition of collectiveness between the year groups with a poem expressing how words would “sing in our minds, long after the book is closed”. This proved undoubtedly true, as each performance that led the evening would certainly stay in the minds of those in observance, which included Speech and Drama teachers Miss Burns and Ms Smith, to whom have also been dedicated to helping the students ensure their voices will carry these stories for many years.

Sienna and Olivia were the first performers in Year 4 who performed as a duet for the first time with their 2nd place festival poem *Rainbow Chasers*. They were followed by Anna and Avni in Year 6, who achieved 3rd place in the festival with their expressive performance of *The Race to Get to Sleep*. There are many challenges that performers must be diligent to face, and Leila in Year 5 was no stranger to this, performing her poem with her strong voice, exuberating nothing but confidence in her diction.

The beauty of speech and drama is not only to challenge the young voices with innovative pieces, but to ask questions and interpret topical messages through the spoken word. Our young Year 3 performer Leah, moved the audience with her sensitive interpretation of the poem *Immigration Trap*, congratulated at the festival for the simplicity of her delivery. She was followed by passionate performer Amber-Lilli, who was praised for her imaginative performance of ‘Lucy’, and Simrah in Year 9, who shared her thoughtful and reflective poem *Hearthquake*, with dynamic duo Eleanor and Esme reading after with their topical poem *Names*. As well as these contemporary pieces, there were also ones which kept the audience laughing long after the show was over. Manpriya in Year 8 shared her alternative interpretation of the character of Miss Muffet, and showcased her skill of comedic timing in addition to the dramatisation of her character’s irrational fear of spiders.

The audience were then treated to a Senior performance from Lily in Year 11, who is currently undertaking her Grade 7 Silver Medal examination, who performed her winning poem from the festival: ‘Interruption at the Opera House’. The evening continued with Nelly, Bella and Jaya in Year 5, who each enjoyed the challenges in perfecting their poem *Dark*, followed by Nivashini, who has been inspired to explore both comic and poignant poems using different techniques, which proved successful in the recent festival. On this night, her creativity continued to flourish as she performed her poem *The Dare*. Preceding the interval were Year 9 students Millie and Georgia, who took to the stage to perform their winning Verse duet, which tells the eerie story of the deserted ship, the Marie Celeste.

A short interval ensued, before Evie and Jessica made the audience chuckle with their performance of the poem *Cakes in the Staffroom*. Next was the extraordinary performance from Senior students Lily and Morgan, who have been LAMDA students for over 9 years, performing an extract from *The Tulip Touch* by Anne Fine. The piece showcased their incredible range of expressions and their everlasting partnership. After this, Year 6 performers, Hattie and Simone, presented *Fred’s Performing Flea*, with Miss Burns commenting on their lovely energy. Next was Lila, Florence and Sanya from Year 4, who each relished performing each of their Verse solos, and the evening continued with Morgan’s versatile voice, reading *The Sea* by Brendan Kennelly. The penultimate performance of the evening showcased the hard work by the Year 9 students, who blended their voices beautifully to tell *The Dreadful Story of Janet*.

The final performance was given by Harriet and Emmie, who have been a part of the Speech and Drama family since the Junior School. They silenced the room with their rendition of *Girls Like That*, which was nominated at the Bedford Festival this year for 'Most Outstanding Senior Speech and Drama Performance', an achievement that marks the end of an era and the stimulating beginning of the next. When performed at the festival, the adjudicator was impressed by their stylised interpretation of this challenging text, as despite being written for several voices, they and Mrs Redford managed to adapt it for just two powerful and potent voices.

To close, the sixth formers performed a piece called *I Believe in Poetry*. In unison, they spoke, "Words have a need to be heard", recapitulating the success of the evening. The students have worked incredibly hard and the evening saw their appreciation for the spoken word; though it is an invisible thing, it is still the most powerful and important force in the universe.