

Charmaine Gibbs Studios

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HELLO AND WELCOME TO TERM 1, 2015...even though we are half way through!!!!

Well here we are, at the beginning of March, which I'm sure we all can't believe! Before we know it, it will be Easter!

Contained in this newsletter is information on Term dates for the year, Masterclasses, Studio Concerts, Exam information, upcoming productions and more. Jennifer has written for us in this newsletter, some brilliant advice on that dirty word... "Practice" ...yes...that necessary requirement for improvement and progress.

TERM DATES FOR 2015

Term 1 finishes 4th April

Term 2 13th April – 26th June (11 weeks) Jen, Laura, Jason & Adam
27th April – 26th June (10 weeks) Charmaine

Term 3 6th July – 18th September (11 weeks) All teaching staff

Term 4 28th September – Friday 11th Dec (11 weeks) Jen, Laura, Jason & Adam
28th September – TBA (Charmaine)



ABRSM SINGING EXAMS: June Session.

Some of Jennifer's students are enrolled for this mid-year session, and we wish you all the very best in your preparation for these. Charmaine, Laura and Jason's students, along with some of Jennifer's students also, will have this opportunity in November and we will speak with you about these in due course.

AND HERE'S WHAT'S COMING UP..... and wow, are there a lot of students in upcoming productions. Chookas and Congratulations everyone!!!!



WHSPA in the WHSPAC : Drama Company

Blood Wedding: featuring students; Nelson Bowler, Imogen Smee, Izzy Milsom, Talia Sigsworth, Chelsea Gould, Lachlan Grogan, Alana McLean, Georgia Tolmans

Opens this Friday, 6th March

Go to;

www.wollongong-h.schools.nsw.edu.au/whspac-box-offic

Arcadians Theatre Group, Miners Lamp Theatre Corrimal

Monty Pythons Spamalot: featuring Dylan Wright

March 13th – 28th Go to; www.arcadians.org.au

Illawarra Youth Arts WHSPAC

Camp Rock: In the leading role; Emma Hatton

April 8th – 12th April

Go to;

www.illawarrayouthartsproject.org and follow the link

ACT: Arcadians Children's Theatre

The Little Mermaid : Featuring Grace O'Dea, Charlotte Turnbull, Jack Zuiderwyk, Hayley Bannerman and Kiya Slockee

May 1st – 3rd

Go to;

www.arcadians.org.au

WHSPA in the WHSPAC

Hairspray: In leading and featured roles; Matt Hearne, Talia Sigsworth, Imogen Smee, Zoe Rose, Nelson Bowler, Caitlin Deen, Erin Hand, Siena Elchaar, Chelsea Gould, Victoria Verhelst, Taliah King

June 18th – 27th June

www.trybooking.com

KIRRAWEE HIGHSCHOOL : KHS Auditorium

AIDA: In the lead roles; Jack Paterson & Zoe Ioannou

June 17th – 20th

MOONGLOW PRODUCTIONS: WIN Entertainment Centre

Mary Poppins: in leading and featured roles; Charmaine Gibbs, Will Skarpona, Katie Pearce & Jasper Lucas

July 9th -11th

www.ticketmaster.com.au



For those of you who don't know, our website is now up and running. You can find information, and studio newsletters. Go to

www.charmainegibbsstudios.com.au

Over the next Term and a half, this will become the main communication vehicle for the studio and our email addresses, which I would encourage you to use from now on, can be found on there.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS UPDATE & MAKE-UP LESSON POLICY

These can both be found on the website and I would encourage you all to look over these once again.

PIANO LESSONS

We welcome **Adam Vujic** to the studio who will now be giving piano lessons on a Monday. You can find Adam's biog on the website www.charmainegibbsstudios.com.au Adam is also available for Theory lessons including Aural & Sightreading work.

One thing I have always been grateful for, is having an instrument to be able to sit down at, have a tinker (quiet all of my students!!!!...those wrong notes I play are intentional!). and be able to read my notes, understand the music and aid in my own practice. I would encourage those of you with an interest in pursuing music in some form, and who haven't had any piano lessons, to consider taking these up. If you would like to have a chat about this further, please don't hesitate to give me a call.



PRACTICE: What's it all about?

Jennifer has written a brilliant piece on “all things practice” Please take time to read this, it is vitally important that you do.

“Practicing is not forced labour; it is a refined art that partakes of intuition, of inspiration, patience, elegance, clarity, balance, and, above all, the search for ever greater joy in movement and expression.”

-Yehudi Menuhin, violinist

Why practice?

You love singing – that’s why you have singing lessons! You are “a Singer”. A singer is dedicated to being the best singer they can possibly be. Without exception, singers who practice the most consistently and regularly are the ones who improve and achieve their singing goals. This is regardless of how much natural talent a student started with.

Singing is a physical activity as much as it is a mental one. It is just like a sport. In order to improve, muscles need to be strengthened, coordination and flexibility need to be developed. This happens with consistent use, ideally on a daily basis.

Hints for practice

“Don’t wait until you’ve finished everything else to then do your practice. This is merely a form of procrastination” J.T.

Make your practice meaningful. Just “going through the motions” is a waste of time and is boring, hard work.

The following does NOT count as practice:

1. “I sang around the house a lot”
2. “I sang in the car on the way to my lesson”

3. "I sang along with songs on the radio"

By all means, keep doing these things, but don't count them as practice!

Set up a practice space

A practice space needs to be uncluttered and free from distractions. Put away the phone and close the door. Your music needs to be organised – don't waste time searching for loose pages of music. Make sure you have the following things handy:

Music stand

Pencil

Water

Mirror

Ipod and ipod dock

Try goal based practice

Rather than thinking "I need to practice for 30 minutes now", set goals for your practice:

eg. In this session, I will really work on getting more beautiful tone in that exercise

eg. In this session, I will memorise the words to that verse

eg. In this session, I will aim to sing this difficult section with more energy

eg. In this session, I will work on really telling the story of the song

If it only takes you 20 minutes, great! Something of value has been achieved.

Avoid mindless repetition

Mindless repetition is a waste of your time. You are probably just making the same mistakes again and again. When you are learning a song, sing it from beginning to end maybe once in a practice session so you can work out what areas need attention. Then spend a focused few minutes on one element eg. tone, intonation, pure vowel sounds. When you know a song well, and you sing it well, it is then useful to sing it through a few times each practice session to build up your vocal stamina and make it ready for performance. This process is called "singing the song in". Practice the

“performance” side of things too: telling the story with your face and your body. Video yourself or watch yourself in the mirror. What works? What needs to be changed? Don’t fool yourself into thinking that you’ll just be able to do these things in the performance – they need to be prepared, just like everything else.

Silent practice

You don’t have to make noise in order to practice! Silent practice is a great way to learn and it can be done anywhere.

1. Listen to new repertoire on your iPod
2. Record your lessons and listen to them – make notes if it helps
3. Sit with your music and sing the song in your head
4. If you are having trouble learning words, write out the lyrics and see them as a poem, rather than words stretched out underneath music

Practice is meant to be fun!

Like anything, the more you practice, the better you will sound and the more you will enjoy it.

When you don’t practice

I always find it amusing when I ask students “What have you been working on this week?” and I get a blank stare. This usually means that very little practice has taken place over the week. The blank stare is often followed by a myriad of excuses as to why there was very little practice.

The following are not valid excuses for not practicing.....

1. “I had too much homework this week”

Almost invariably, this means that you simply weren’t organised enough. You had time, you just didn’t use that time efficiently.

2. “I was really busy over the weekend”

You have 5 other days in which to practice!

3. “I’ve been really busy” (just a heads up, maybe don’t say this one in earshot of your parent or guardian...or your singing teacher...your life will not be worth living...they are always busier than you 😊)

4. "I couldn't find my music"

Believe it or not, I do occasionally get this excuse!

How do lessons fit in with all of this?

Your teacher sees you once a week for a relatively short time. A lesson is a time where you get guidance on what to work on for the next week. Don't waste this time by having the same lesson as you had the week before. It is, in fact, disrespectful to your teacher (they get bored going over the same stuff each week!) and disrespectful to whoever is generous enough to pay for your lessons. Hold up your end of the bargain by putting in work over the week.

How can parents and family help?

Set up a practice timetable

Parents can help younger students establish a practice schedule at home. Some students are very busy with after school activities. Parents can work with the student to firstly map out where practice can take place during the week and, then remind them when it is time to practice, just as they remind the student to get ready and go to an activity.

Perhaps only 15 minutes of practice is possible on some days. This is fine. A lot can be achieved in 15 minutes of focused practice, however this does not mean that 15 minutes is OK for each session.

Respect practice privacy

Some students are not keen to practice while the rest of the household are in earshot. This is totally normal. Try not to be offended! You can support them by helping them set up their practice area which can be sealed off from the rest of the household while they sing. Or, for older students, they can take advantage of times when they are at home on their own. Don't comment on what you heard, even if you have good things to say - they don't want to know that you are listening!

GO TO IT. YOU CAN DO THIS!!!

SAVE THE DATE!



SENIOR MASTERCLASS & CONCERT!

For **Years 10, 11 and 12**...with a particular focus on masterclass performance places for those doing their HSC this year. (Performance places will come as a first come first serve basis and there will be 10 spots available)

There is also A LOT to be said for observation. Infact, the 4 of us feel that sometimes it's the observers who benefit the most by sitting, listening, taking notes and reflecting.

Both the masterclass and the concert will be held in **Excelsior Hall, Thirroul District Community Centre.**

Masterclass: Saturday 16th May 2pm – 5pm

Concert: Saturday 30th May 6pm-9pm with a light supper afterwards.

There will be separate information coming out regarding this, but for now, **please diarise these two events.**

Thankyou for a wonderful Term 1 so far and for reminding us constantly of how much we love our work.

Charmaine, Jen, Laura, Jason & now...Adam!



Don't forget to "like" the Charmaine Gibbs Studios page on Facebook

