

SECONDARY SCHOOL ENROLMENTS AN ADVERTISING FEATURE

College nurtures creative spark

PREPARATIONS are in full swing at St Mary's College for this year's highly anticipated school production, *Beauty and the Beast*, which will be staged at the Playhouse Theatre from August 15-18.

Thirty-five Year 7-12 students with skills across a range of performing arts disciplines have dedicated themselves to bringing the classic fairytale to life, including Year 8 student Cecilia Hutchinson as the loveable, headstrong Belle.

Produced by St Mary's College, the musical is a collaborative effort between students and staff, with 11 St Virgil's College students rounding out the cast.

Senior drama teacher Leah Smith said there was a wealth of talent to choose from with more than 80 students from both schools auditioning.

"Musical productions give young people the opportunity to express themselves in a different way and to find their creative spark," she said.

"Not only do students benefit from and enjoy the thrill of being part of a full-scale production, but they are encouraged and inspired to take creative risks; to think on their feet, work as supportive team members and set achievable goals."

The college's newly refurbished Drama and Music

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facilities, unveiled in 2017, offer students a suitable environment in which to refine their craft.

St Mary's College music co-ordinator Scott Weston said students appreciated being able to rehearse in a professional space that closely mirrored a "live theatre" setting.

"It gives them the confidence to create a product that they can be proud of and which the audience will enjoy," he said.

Mr Weston said students' involvement in the musical was not limited to singing, dancing and acting.

"Students have input in all production aspects from set design to costume and prop development, and backstage co-ordination," he said.

The production will be supported by the College's 16-



ON STAGE: St Mary's students, from left, Cecilia Hutchinson, as Belle, and Grace Boxall, Taylah Lowry, Fay Burke and Lucinda Smith, seated, as the "Silly Girls", will perform in the school's musical, *Beauty and the Beast*, in August.

piece musical band and choreographed by St Mary's College alumna Georgie Taskunas.

Principal Helen Spencer said the school's musicals were always of a high calibre, with students performing each show with professionalism and passion.

"Arts education is a highly valued component at St Mary's College, and the opportunity to collaborate with St Virgil's is welcomed," she said.



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