

Boston Arts Academy newsletter

From the Theatre Department

Dear Parents, Caregivers, Students, and Friends,

People often ask, “Ms. Rodrigues must theatre always have a message or can it just be entertainment?” “What is the actor’s responsibility for how her art impacts society?” “Nita, why do you teach high school?” The best way to answer is to paraphrase writer director Augusto Boal, “...We must know why a person (society) is moved, what is the nature, the emotion (experience), ...the causes – not limit ourselves simply to how. We want to experience phenomena, but above all we want to know the laws which govern these phenomena. That is the role of art – not only to show how the world is, but also why...and how it can be transformed.” This is why I do what I do. Theatre is my voice, my way of speaking to and transforming the world in which I live. Equally important is to help young people find their voice so they can touch their generation and challenge ours. Thus, actor’s training for social change and Soul Element,

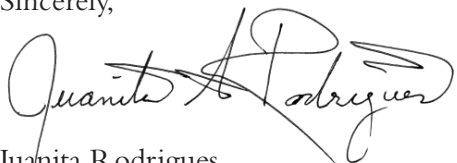
An artist needs to develop a voice, to be able to look at society and figure out what his opinion is on an issue. Then he needs to answer, “How can I artistically speak to this situation?” This is artistic voice, a combination of a view on society and an artistic aesthetic. Soul Element helps to develop a small group of theatre students by challenging them to look at difficult issues and speak to them. Examples are isms such as racism, sexism, heterosexism, capitalism, or class, education, violence, and gender. Students are challenged as playwrights and actors to explore the issues and to craft a sound artistic work that will take the audience on a journey. As actors, they have to go inside of themselves to places that are usually kept in the dark, and wrestle with demons to bring forth truth that will affect others.

Theatre is an amazing tool for addressing these issues. The actor is able to place herself into a specific circumstance as though it is happening now. The actor must be present and inside of every emotion, goal, choice and situation of his character. If the actor does not know the experience of the character she is portraying, she has to research and find ways of entry. Rehearsal is a way for the actor to challenge and explore herself, and the means for the ensemble to challenge and feed off of each other. For the actor this challenge is where real growth happens.

The audience comes prepared to watch something that is not real, yet somewhere early on they suspend disbelief: They forget they are watching is fiction and begin to attach themselves to the characters. Hopefully, the audience is not only on the same journey as the characters, but reaching the same catharsis. This is safe because a connection between audience and artist develops, yet with enough to relate to the topics of the play without feeling threatened.

Young people who can grapple with difficult issues in an honest way can then reach an audience. They can continue the conversation, and maybe, just maybe, we transform the world one show at a time.

Sincerely,



Juanita Rodrigues
Chair, Theatre Department



Juanita Rodrigues, Theatre Department Chair.

Boston Academy Strings

In addition to our high school students, Boston Arts Academy continues its outreach efforts through an instrumental music program in three BPS schools in Dorchester. Under the artistic direction of George Simpson, former BAA music teacher and now director of the Roland Hayes School of Music, and master teacher Susan Jarvis, nearly 200 students in grades 3-8 receive violin instruction throughout the year as a part of their regular school day.

Thanks to our partner schools: the McCormack School, the Dever School and the Murphy School who recognize the value of the arts and continue to support this program. There will be a culminating performance on June 11 at the Roland Hayes School of Music. Look for details in our May newsletter.



A young violinist from the Boston Academy Strings Program.

Annual Schoolwide Community Service Day

On February 15th the student body will travel to various locales around the city performing community service. Last year's volunteerism covered a wide range of activities. Advisory groups gathered items for care packages to send to soldiers in Iraq, others assisted with K-8 art classes at the Mission Hill School and one group created journals for a women's shelter. Community Service Day is one way that we encourage our young people to become engaged citizens. Keep an eye on the school website for photos of BAA across the city.

Senior Dance Performances

Senior Dance Concert will be held at the Mass College of Art & Design Auditorium on February 12th at 7:30 pm. There will also be a matinee performance for both BAA students and the general public that same day at 4:00 pm.

The Senior Dance Concert is a graduation requirement for all dance majors where dancers perform choreographic projects developed from research and many phases of critique and revision. Tickets may be purchased for \$5.00 at the door and BAA students may attend for free. Please check the school website for more information.

We thank the Massachusetts College of Art & Design for hosting our Senior Dance Concert this year.



The class of 2008 BAA Dance Majors.

Senior Dance Concert

Tuesday, February 12, 2008
4:00 pm & 7:30 pm

Mass College of Art & Design
621 Huntington Avenue
Directions: www.massart.edu

Co-Headmaster	Linda Nathan
Co-Headmaster	Carmen Torres
Artistic Dean	Fernadina Chan
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BOSTON ARTS ACADEMY is a collaborative project between the Boston Public Schools and the ProArts Consortium, an association of six internationally known institutions of higher learning. Each specializes in the visual arts, performing arts and architecture:

Berklee College of Music

Boston Architectural College

The Boston Conservatory

Emerson College

Massachusetts College of Art & Design

School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

BOSTON ARTS ACADEMY

A Boston Public Pilot School

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Important Dates*

Monday, January 28[†]

All 9th Grade students report to BAA 8:00-10:00 am. Wellness Seminars in Self Identity, Mind-Body Balance and Personal Growth.

All 10th Grade students will complete a Seminar activity independently off site.

All 11th Grade students report to BAA 10:30 am-12:30. Wellness Seminars in Social Justice/Service to Community in preparation for Senior Grant Proposal.

All 12th Grade students complete a Humanities 4 assignment independently off site.

Wednesday, February 6[†]

Term II Honor Roll Assembly
9th & 10th Grades 12:30-1:20
Parent/Caregiver Mtg.
BAA Assembly Hall, 6-7:30 pm

Thursday, February 7

Term II Honor Roll Assembly
10th & 11th Grades 12:30-1:20

Tuesday, February 12

Senior Dance Performances
4:00 and 7:30 pm
Mass College of Art
(See page 2 for details)

Wednesday, February 13[†]

MCAS Reform Lobby Day
(See page 3 for details)

Friday, February 15

Community Service Day
All Day at Various City Locations

February 18-22

February Break Week
No School

Tuesday, February 26[†]

Parent/Caregiver Mtg. focus on 9th&10th grade curriculum, MCAS, and arts benchmarks

March 3-7[†]

MCAS Retesting

* Calendar events are subject to change.
Please call to confirm times and dates.

† Important Parent/Caregiver date!

An image from Vice/Virtue II



"Convenient Coincidence" by VA student Jade Thacker, is part of the 11th Grade Inferno Exhibition: Vice/Virtue II, currently on display in BAA's Sandra & Philip Gordon Studio Gallery (4th Floor). The gallery is open for viewing during school hours (8am-4pm) and the show will end on March 28.

Important News for Families

Teachers, parent/caregivers and students have been focusing on improving culture and climate at the school. In addition to a letter sent to all families in late January, the following meetings and events will specifically address important topics for a safe, healthy, and productive school community. All parent/caregivers are encouraged to attend:

February 6th

Parent/Caregiver Council meeting from 6-7:30 pm in the BAA Assembly Hall. This meeting will focus on Wellness, particularly nutrition and school lunches. We will discuss how to improve our lunches (making them more appealing and healthy) and look at ways that other schools have creatively addressed this challenge.

February 13

MCAS Reform Lobby Day at the State House. BAA's Parent/Caregiver Council and student government members will join a number of organizations to speak out against current MCAS laws and encourage lawmakers to consider other measures of student performance.

February 26

A special meeting for 9th and 10th grade families to discuss curriculum, MCAS and Arts Benchmarks at 6-7:30 pm in the BAA Assembly Hall.

Luz Maldonado, Family Coordinator, serves to support all BAA families. Please contact her if you have any questions, needs, or concerns. She can be reached by telephone: 617-635-6470, ext 102 or by email: lmaldonado@bostonartsacademy.org.

Our first all-digital Science Symposium



In aligning with our commitment to Digital Portfolios, January's Science Symposium switched to a digital interface. Students presented their exhibitions using multimedia presented on laptops. Thank you to the The Harold Whitworth Pierce Charitable Trust for supporting Science technology at BAA.

A PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL
FOR THE VISUAL AND
PERFORMING ARTS
*Boston Arts
Academy*

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