

STARS IN THE MAKING

Sunday Mail

14th April 2013

Talent. According to Simon Cowell, you've either got it or you haven't. From *The X Factor* to *Britain's Got Talent* the public have been gleefully tuning into the spate of talent shows that have graced our airwaves in recent years. Who could forget Paul Potts, the shy mobile phone salesman from Wales who brought Britain to its knees with his rendition of 'Nessun Dorma', or church chorister Susan Boyle, who rocked the world with her hauntingly beautiful version of 'I Dreamed A Dream'?

Where the world leads, Cyprus follows, and the schools on the island have been quick to jump on the bandwagon, with almost every educational establishment now hosting a competition for its students to showcase their abilities. From hammering out 'Chopsticks' on the piano to drumming in the garage, kids everywhere are pursuing their dreams. But what if your child really does have a unique talent? What if he or she really can go the distance – how then, when we live on such a small island, do you get them noticed on a world-wide stage? The answer lies in The Limassol Theatre Arts School, whose Open Talent Show is being judged this year by a panel of professionals – from West End Musical Theatre or the UK Music Industry.

The driving force behind the competition is Lucy-Jane Georghiou, Course Director at The Limassol Theatre Arts School. Herself a talented performer, she's performed with the Cambridge Footlights, and has a whole host of theatrical credits to her name. From the age of six, when she debuted as Marta in the West End production of *The Sound of Music*, Lucy-Jane spent a large part of her childhood working in theatre, television and radio, in later years training at The Royal Ballet School and joining the cast of Andrew Lloyd-Webber's *Cats*.

"The world of performance is so competitive now – much more so than when I was younger. There are so many good people out there – and you have to be of an amazing standard to make it," she says. "We're lucky at the School to have such professional teachers, all dedicated to bringing out the best in the students." Very passionate about her calling, Lucy-Jane and her team are renowned for nurturing talent to its potential, and the Talent Show is a great jumping off point for kids to be recognised, whether they attend the School or not.

"When it comes to the Talent Show, there's absolutely no differentiation between the kids who attend the School and those who don't," says Lucy-Jane firmly. "It's very important that all the entrants have equal standing; the judges won't even know their names, just their number and age to ensure anonymity. It's a totally fair competition." In 2011, the Talent Show was won by a complete unknown, 12-year-old Alison Ioannou: "She stood in front of the microphone and opened her mouth and the most amazing sound came out!" enthuses Lucy-Jane. "I would put money on the fact that she's a future recording artist."

This year, the judging panel consists of three renowned performers from the world stage: Richard Roe, Jo Davies and Laura Meaton. All three are experts in their fields: Richard – who has choreographed a number of West End productions - is taking a break

from working on the Olivier Awards to fly out to the island to judge the show, and also present a musical theatre workshop on the following day. Jo is a renowned musician and accompanist who travels the world working with stars such as Kanye West, Muse and Andrea Bocelli, and Laura is a talented young actress who has already performed in and choreographed many shows at the Royal Holloway University of London.

In previous years, the Talent Show has boasted every sort of act from pop songs to rhythmic gymnastics, to comedy routines: "The bar is set very high," says Lucy-Jane of the standard. "Although the judges will not be looking for professional acts, the kids do need to have a finished and polished piece. And anyone who needs help will be given lots of positive feedback at the technical rehearsal beforehand." Previous contestants have gone on to record albums, secure scholarships and have been offered places at renowned Theatre Schools in London, and the prizes this year are similarly coveted: the main sponsor, Soundscape Studios, is offering all winners the chance to record their own fully-produced cover song and video, while the child who judges believe personifies musical theatre will be offered a full scholarship to attend the Summer School this year at Pineapple Studios in Covent Garden.

With limited places available, acts need to declare their entry by April 16 at the latest to try their chances at being the next big thing. Sure, everyone deserves their moment of fame, but some talents are destined for a lifetime of recognition. If you think you've got a star in the making, sign them up and let them shine!

Limassol Theatre Arts School presents the 3rd Annual Open Talent Competition for young singers, dancers, musicians and entertainers

Organised into three age categories – Juniors aged 4 to 8, Intermediates aged 9 to 13 and Seniors aged 14 to 18 years old, the deadline for registration is April 16th. To enter or to book tickets, simply call 99 784 927 or check the website www.limassolarts.com.

All competitors will be called for a technical rehearsal in the week leading up to the competition.

Workshop by Judge from the West End:

The well known West End performer and Dance Captain Richard Roe will be in Limassol to judge this year's Talent Show at Limassol Theatre Arts School. He will also be giving workshops on Sunday 21st April for all promising young performers between the ages of 8 – 18 years where he will work on material from his last West End production: *The Wizard of Oz*. The workshops will run for 1 hour and 30 minutes and to secure your child's place, please email limassl.arts@gmail.com There will be a fee of 12 euros per child and places will be offered on a first come, first served basis.

10 – 11.30am 8 – 12 years

12 – 1.30pm 13 – 18 years

