

## A performance of DEPTH & GRACE

MENTAL HEALTH took centre-stage for a production that saw the entire school community take part.

It was a team effort for a string of magnetic performances of Vivienne Franzmann's *The IT*, which documents a young person's mental breakdown.

From the actors, directors and stagehands to the artists exhibiting their work inspired by the play, to the catering students supplying the food, there was a role for everyone.

All the music was composed, recorded and performed by Haggerston students, while our performing art teachers directed the production.

The performance was shown to our students, their families and friends, and to students from other CST schools, putting the spotlight on mental health in the trust.

Staff invited counsellors from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) who were deeply impressed by the play.

Head of Performing Arts, Ms Powell, who co-directed with Ms Ray-Choudhuri said: "It is important to us that students have the opportunity to perform pieces that link to their lives and the world around them. It is also important that we teach them how to do that really well through the arts.

"The students told Grace's story through powerful and professional acting, song, dance and music. We feel incredibly proud of how hard they worked in rehearsal and the focus, confidence and skill in every performance.

"The feedback from mental health professionals who saw the production was really positive. They were so impressed by the depth and maturity of the performances.

"Our students showed that drama can entertain but also address serious social issues and have a positive impact on the lives around us."

❑ For more on the school production, see pages 2 to 5





# THE IT CROWD



BASED on the play by Vivienne Franzmann, the Haggerston School performances of *The IT* tells the story of Grace, who suffers from a mental breakdown.

The darkly comic state-of-the-nation play explores adolescent mental health and the rage within.

Written specifically for young people, the play formed part of the 2021 National

Theatre Connections Festivals and was premiered by youth theatres across the UK.

It was named Best Play for Young Audiences at the Writers' Guild of Great Britain Awards 2023.

## Delivering a stellar score

**The production's musical director, Mr Woods, on the students creating their original work as the live musical score.**

We let the students have the opportunity to write and record their own music.

Using MacBooks, our students composed their own electronic music, recorded it and then played it or performed it throughout the production. Some students were given specific tasks to play things at

certain cues but for others we could give them a broader task to mix and adjust.

Often the performers get a lot of exposure but we wanted to get our composers more directly involved to take ownership in it. Not only was their music used in the production but it was played in the foyer and during the exhibition as well. It will be available on Soundcloud too.

The music has helped to grow students' interest in music with many additional students keenly interested in attending our music club.







# A cultural community



SET designer, Ms Haynes, said the best thing about the production was it was a whole community project.

She said: "There were a total of 40 students involved in the production."

"But it's really about a culture of involving the entire Haggerston community."

"It's important that everyone wants to get involved in it and create a language to describe what is happening to a person inside and how they can express it."







OUR art club were inspired to create a fabulous exhibition as an accompaniment to the production.

The IT looks at how young people experience emotions such as anger. Art club students created an artwork exploring their feelings.

It is a mix of student painting, photography or drawing, creating a collage depicting emotions.

Art teacher Ms Peryer said: "Our students worked tirelessly to produce the artwork for the show. It was a true collaborative journey from start to finish.

"The drama production was based on a

very emotionally charged piece, The IT, and we asked students to depict emotions in their artwork.

"The pupils expressed feelings of sadness or anger or a mixture of emotions in the form of painting, photography or drawing."

Art club meets Tuesday lunchtimes.



## 'Brave choice'

**Parent Emily Benson said:** "I was blown away by the school production of The IT.

"It tackles the many issues young people face today: climate, social media, pressure, friendship, identity. It was a brave choice.

"The production was not only slick and professional, but it was beautifully put together: the lighting, the ribbons, the music, the blocking, the set. The performances were so strong. So many of them were connecting with the text. Seeing those students up there tackling massive issues with maturity, humour and grace was genuinely inspirational."







# Amazing Grace

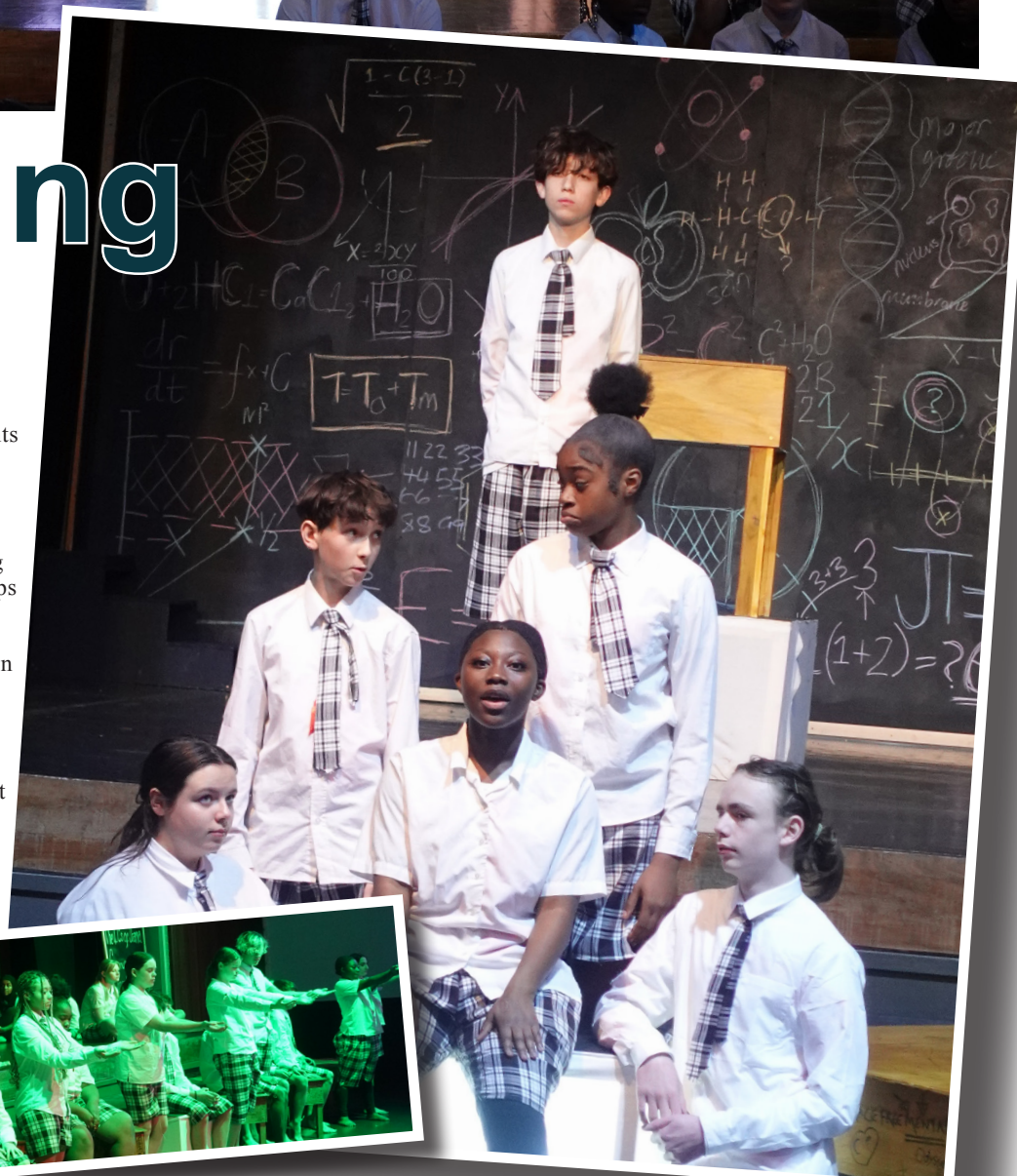
BUDDING star Lanilde, one of the students who played the character of Grace, said: "Acting in the play made me understand how it feels to be overwhelmed. Grace passes out in PE when she has an anxiety attack because of so many pressures going on in her life from school to her friendships and family."

"I think the play really got the message across that mental health issues can happen to anyone."

Year 10 Henriette also played Grace.

She said: "It's a really good portrayal of how anxiety can build up in a person and seeing it was a real full-circle moment for me."

"Some of my family members came to the performance and, while they know about my anxiety, I feel like the play helped them understand it better."







## On the boards

STUDENTS will have their artwork displayed on six steel panels along Globe View Walkway, along the River Thames as part of a City of London project.

Students took part in a workshop planning the project alongside a primary school and the congregation from a church. The intergenerational project is being led by social enterprise Artbash to brighten up the waterside location.

Year 10 and 12 students created collaborative art inspired by the school production of The IT.

# Clarinet and compositions

BUDDING musician Fione took part in workshops taught by tutors at The Royal Academy of Music.

The year 11 student (*inset*), who has been playing the clarinet since she was seven, was invited to join Composers Club after submitting an application. There were two daylong sessions across successive Sundays where attendees were taught about composing music.

Following the workshop, Fione was asked to write a piece of music for the clarinet, which will later be recorded as part of an ensemble piece.

Fione said: "It was an amazing experience to be able to learn alongside experts at the Royal College of Music. Obviously, they know a lot about the subject.

"It was my teacher who told me about the course and they helped me apply for it. The school has an amazing music department.

"You are given lots of support in expressing



yourself musically and they are always helping you get involved in free courses and competitions."



## School's first time at the fair

INDUSTRY professionals gave up their time to speak to our students about their futures at our first Creative Careers Fair.

There were representatives from art, design, architecture, dance, acting, costume and fashion design, musicians, TV, radio and music. Many were former Haggerston students.

Year 9 Tallulah said: "I learned how subjects are closely related, for example drama and English."

Tiago said, "The professional dancer and choreographer said 'don't follow others, do your own thing', and it made me think about how we can sometimes feel pressured."



**LAUGHTER SCHOOL** Our students are being encouraged to find their funny at our new Year 7 and 8 clowning club. It takes place Wednesday lunchtime.



# Football fever

YEAR 10 and 12 followed the England football team's exploits under Gareth Southgate in Dear England at the Prince Edward Theatre.

Mr McSorley said: "While our lions and lionesses long to bring football home, our students have brought home a more profound

and deeper excitement for theatre."

Meanwhile Year 12 students went to see the 30th anniversary revival of Jonathan Harvey's play Beautiful Thing at Stratford East. The performance sparked conversations about social class, Section 28 and poverty, which were referenced in their reviews.



**INFLUENTIAL TRIP:** Students learned who influenced top artists in a show hosted by poet aYomi Sode at the Hackney Empire. The First Five show saw Yomi talk to writers, musicians and artists to discover who inspired their creativity.



## City sketches by the river

STUDENTS sketched famous landmarks as part of a central London riverside art project this term.

Year 9 pupils were inspired by buildings such in the St Paul's area along the Thames. They followed up their learning with a drawing workshop run by their art teacher back at school.

Student, Harper, said: "It was a very cool experience seeing all of these famous buildings along the Thames. It really inspired my art work."

Student, Zainab, said: "It is difficult to not be inspired by the amazing architecture along that part of the Thames."

"You have lots of very famous buildings such as St Paul's and the Tate Gallery but there are also lots of other lesser-known buildings."

## Get in the act

YEAR 11 drama students are rehearsing for their scripted performance exam.

They created mature and humorous interpretations of contemporary scripts including Colder Than Here by Laura Wade and The Unreturning by Anna Jordan.





## Getting on the dancefloor

STUDENTS took part in a masterclass from choreographer and dancer Shakeil Jones from Skadeuces School. Students learned dance skills and created their own sequences.

We hope to introduce GCSE dance as an option next year to build on this learning.



## Cooking for Christmas

OUR 10 students working with education charity ASDAN made and served Christmas lunch to their peers and staff.

They learned a wide variety of cooking skills while working with a professional chef from the Shoreditch Trust.

## All change

STUDENTS watched Lemn Sissay's adaptation of Kafka's Metamorphosis at the Lyric Hammersmith.



## In the spotlight

THE school is working in partnership with The Old Vic Theatre as parts of its Schools Club.

Haggerston is one of four school in London to be invited into the programme, which includes workshops with theatre

staff. The first session was a lighting design class with industry professionals.

For the programme, students got the chance to watch a performance of A Christmas Carol led by actor Christopher Eccleston.