A desolate, ruined junkyard. Our world has crumbled. A tribe seeking survival finds the gateway to a myth, a legend described as paradise. Utopia. Before they are accepted, there will be trials, testing their strength, intellect and morality. But perfection has a price, and not all are worthy. When kinships are tested, who will pay? Brunswick Secondary College presents ‘Paradigm’.

An Interview with Katherine

Q: Brunswick’s Rock Eisteddfods always have a very strong artistic and moral concept. Tell us about what inspired Paradigm?

Paradigm came about in an unusual way. Patrick and I started by asking how we could best transform our sets. This is where the idea of a labyrinth emerged. Next came the idea of characters having to navigate through the labyrinth. We combined the idea of the labyrinth with my vision of a dystopia, a futuristic junkyard. Paradigm explores the idea of Utopia and the perfect human focussing on three concepts – strength, intellect and morality. These are the three tests required to reach Utopia. Yet while we marvel as these are achieved, Paradigm also asks us to reflect on whether Utopia, once reached, is really a better place and to consider if it is really worth the cost of sacrificing everyone important to you?
Q: In terms of dance and artistry, what are the moments in Paradigm that you liked most?

Interestingly, rehearsals are always different to the new perspective that comes with the final performance on-stage on the night. Onstage, I really enjoyed the opening, as we established the dystopic world so strongly. The fact nobody realised that the bedlam pieces would make a cube also made the transition really powerful. But for me, the biggest highlight for this year was the finale because I think it was so high energy and very original, involving the whole cast. This is what Brunswick Rock Eisteddfod is all about, being unique. This is what we try to do every year.

Q: Can you tell us as a teacher what you see students learning and gaining from their involvement in the Rock Eisteddfod?

This is why I always come back to doing Rock Eisteddfod again. It’s because the students learn so much about commitment, respect for each other, performance skills, teamwork, and also what it takes to create a quality performance together. In our school we involve the students with all of the sets, costuming and lighting. This means they learn so much about putting a whole production together and the many processes this involves. I think it gives them a real sense of appreciation of their own and others’ efforts. Each student learns that if you want quality, you really have to work for it.

Q: This year I noticed that there was a lot more involvement of senior students in giving feedback to others. Tell us about their contribution.

This year we had a much bigger cast than before. It included many students who hadn’t experienced Rock before, so it was good for the older students to guide the others and help them understand all that is involved. Many of our senior students are quite accomplished dancers and therefore their contribution was really important. We also had our biggest Year 12 cast ever. As a senior student, Valentin really stepped up with coordinating the backstage crew to make it as efficient as possible.

Q: One of the judges commented on the sets, particularly the way they move as a part of the performance. How important is this?

In Solstice, Cameron Hall, who assisted me at the time, suggested ‘let’s make the sets do their own dance’ and since then they have. It’s like the sets have their own choreography. It’s challenging because you then have dancers running amid moving sets. While this can be difficult to implement, everyone is always on board and despite a lot of trial and error initially, it works collaboratively and well in the end.
Q: As I understand it, there were a couple of set issues to sort out during the runthroughs on performance day? Yes, there were a couple of near misses (actually near hits). However, the backstage crew was quick thinking and able to refine the moves to fit the bigger stage. If a big set makes a mistake it can be very obvious to the audience so the pressure is pretty intense. However, the backstage crew were fantastic in working in collaboration with the dancers.

Q: Paradigm is your ninth Rock Eisteddfod at Brunswick. Tell us about your favourites.

Solstice, a Celtic myth that explored climate change would be one of my favourites because it was so magical, and the performance kept you engaged the whole way through. The colours were beautiful, and we had such elaborate costume and a really clear storyline. Apocalypse, which we did for Vic Movers, was an exceptional piece. It depicted four different ways in which the world could end. I really liked it because it was emotional and original. I think it was our most original piece. The fact that it was dedicated to Glen Bouke, a former Rock Eisteddfod student who died the week before the performance, made it a really special and unifying piece for us all. Submerged was also a standout, mainly because it explored hip-hop to a greater extent and I think we managed to nail the balance of popularity with the music, while avoiding being too commercial.

Q: Katherine, we have discussed the following Nietzsche quote before. “We should consider every day lost on which we have not danced at least once.” Can you tell us why dance is so wonderful?

I think it’s the energy that you get when you dance together. With dance you can really feed off each other and really work together towards one goal. Obviously the fitness component is important and then there’s the adrenaline rush you get when dancing. This is why students get so emotional afterwards. Put simply, I just love dance and how good it makes you feel. When you get it, when you really connect with the choreography, it feels wonderful. I think the students feel the same. It’s about passion and realising your best.

Q: How do you feel on the day and watching the performance? What sort of emotions do you experience?

In the rehearsals I always watch and see aspects of the performance I’ve never seen before. Some seem better, others worse. It’s all because you don’t get to watch the piece from that distance until you get there on the day. This year I sat with Firuze in the audience during the evening performance. I’d never watched it as an audience member before. I was blown away by how well our students delivered the performance. On the night, they did the best they possibly could do. The commitment from everybody was outstanding. I was really proud. It was all I could have ever asked for.

Q: You are clearly the driver and creative mastermind of our Rock Eisteddfod, Katherine, but you also know how to build a strong and committed team. Who are the people that you really want to thank?

Freddy and Patrick, who were both there every Sunday in rehearsals. Their contributions were significant and incredibly helpful. They did the things on the side that I couldn’t have managed to have done. In particular, they took ownership of the set movement which was pivotal. Deb Davis, mother of Niko, yet again made so many wonderful costumes. She has contributed to Brunswick Rock Eisteddfod since our 2005 production. Deb is so good to work with, doing and making whatever is needed. Her talent and attention to detail are greatly appreciated, and without her amazing efforts our Rock Eisteddfod wouldn’t have looked so wonderful.

This year we actually involved a lot of students, for instance, the very talented Lucy Payne in Year 10. Lucy deserves to feel very proud of all she produced and in particular the stunning Utopian Queen costume. Valentin Taburet contributed so much to the set and the production element and Maddy Palmeri stayed back after school every night for weeks painting, while many other students gave up an entire week to paint during their holidays. Maddy also designed the T-shirts for cast and crew. Kady has been an incredibly enthusiastic Dance Captain. Helping on the day we had Tony Lawrence, Firuze Hosseini, Clare Kavanagh and a veteran of many Brunswick Rock Eisteddfods, Marilyn Hardin. All were a great help. I thank them all and every dancer and backstage crew member for their support, effort and talent. I am very proud and grateful.

Interview by Vivienne Telfordson

Themes and Storyline

Paradigm was the 2012 title and theme of Rocka. Months of practice and hard work lead to the production of this amazing piece. Paradigm is the story of a tribe, who live in a junkyard wasteland. Their world has crumbled and they seek to find a new place for themselves. But to get to their utopia, there are challenges the group must face. Their strength, morality and intellect will be tested as well as their loyalties. The statues test their strength with their death stores and intense dancing. Having used their strength and defeated the statues, they move along until they come across their next challenge. The maze and puzzle pieces will test their intellect, with their changing shapes and interlocking puzzle pieces. The tribe overcome them too, and finally make it to their last challenge, morality. They must only choose one person to go through the gates of utopia. The decision is hard and it doesn’t help with puzzle, maze and statues still trying to block them. But one makes it through and walks off into utopia. However as they do, the rest of the tribe are still stuck in the desolate wasteland.

Greta Duff, Yr 9
From our 
Dance Captain

Following the success of last year’s piece Submerged, I wondered at the beginning of this year, how we could possibly make this year even more spectacular than the last? It is now that I realise just how wrong I was to question the spirit of Brunswick Secondary College’s Rock Eisteddfod team in 2012. This year’s piece ‘Paradigm’ has exceeded my expectations by a million miles. Never in my life have I been more proud of our Rock Eisteddfod team, the support of our school, and of course our fantastic teacher Katherine Weatherhead.

When people talk about Rock Eisteddfod, I can always guarantee that their favourite moment as a team is coming off stage after performing, knowing that they have done their absolute best. On Friday night, the feeling I got after performing escalated into so much more than just excitement. I felt intense joy, success and love for the people I was surrounded by.

This moment to me is what defines Brunswick’s Rock Eisteddfod experience. Moments like this when we all stop to appreciate our own work, the work of others, and realise just how much we have achieved in such a short amount of time.

Rock Eisteddfod is such an important part of our school. Not only does it provide an opportunity to learn, but it enables students to form such a close bond with one another. I am sure you will see evidence of this in the photos in this special edition.

This year’s Rock Eisteddfod performance is one that I will never forget, and for this I would like to thank our wonderful team for making it so special. Thank you to students Lucy Payne (costumes), Maddie Palmieri (design), and Valentin Taburet (backstage) for your constant hard work and patience. It all paid off in the end. Thank you to Freddy and Patrick for your assistance in helping our piece grow and become something that we are all so incredibly proud of, and to Deb Davis as well who put extensive time into making our costumes. And lastly, thank you to Katherine. If it wasn’t for you we wouldn’t have had such an amazing experience that we will all cherish for the rest of our lives.

Kady Mansour, Yr 12 – dance captain
The Amazing Katherine

Following the success of last year’s piece Submerged, Having Katherine as a dance teacher throughout my years at Brunswick has been such an amazing privilege. I’m sure the Rocka family will agree with me when I say that Katherine has a very unique gift; the ability to take a significant number of students who have had no prior dance training or performing experience, transforming them into Rocka gods/goddesses and incorporating them to her pieces each year. Katherine’s love for dance and performing is infectious.

Her commitment, creativity, dedication, energy, extremely hard working and kind-hearted spirit are the building blocks for Brunswick’s Rocka atmosphere.

Not to mention her love for all things Astro Boy. The Rocka team and I here at Brunswick are truly blessed to have Katherine as our teacher, choreographer and friend.

Georgia Minarelli, Yr 12

Katherine and Astro Boy
As a thank you for all her hard work and commitment to Brunswick Secondary’s Rock Eisteddfod, the students searched the internet to find Katherine the perfect gift. Katherine constantly talks about her love for Astro Boy. So she was extremely excited when she opened her gift to find a 40cm tall replica of the robotic boy.

The Rocka team cannot thank Katherine enough for all her hard work. She puts so much effort into the production every year but more importantly brings the Rocka family together with her spirit and excitement. In the end, Rock Eisteddfod would not be complete without our outlandish leader Katherine Weatherhead. Thank you!

Mallory Hamid, Yr 11
The Best Backstage Crew by Far

I am in Year 12 this year, and I have to say that Rocka is the best thing of this year. I have been in Rocka for three years, and while some of these years have had awesome backstage crews, this year’s crew has been, by far, the best of them all.

We all worked really hard, stripping, creating and re-enforcing the sets to make them last. Everyone came in at 9:00 on Sundays, almost an hour before the dancers, every single week to work on and perfect the set choreography, and stayed back a half hour after they had left to pack up. It was long, hard work, but the night made it entirely worth it. Everyone was so pumped, and so excited, and the vibe was so awesome, it was just the best experience ever. No words can describe how amazing it was, and for me, the saddest thing about Year 12 is knowing that next year I won’t be able to do Rocka and be part of the mind-blowing experience that is Rocka.

Valentin Taburet, Yr 12

From the fabulous Freddy

After another busy few months of late nights, rehearsals and preparations Katherine Weatherhead, the dancers and backstage crew have again pulled off an elegant performance in the 2012 Premier division of the Rock Eisteddfod Challenge. The performers worked their magic on stage to the sound of massive applause and cheering. There are too many people to thank for their support and help but a few must get a special mention.

Katherine Weatherhead for her amazing choreography, enthusiasm and patience as the dancers and backstage crew learned many new and challenging moves. Katherine has truly done an amazing job to pull it all together.

Patrick Denison for his great support and help with many facets of the show and giving up so many Sundays while doing his first year of study at NICA (National Institute of Circus Arts). Deb Davis and Lucy Payne for their fantastic job creating all the costumes, and Valentin Taburet and Maddison Palmieri for their work in helping to create the stunning imagery on the sets.

Thanks also to Tony Lawrence for putting his hand up to drive the other truck with all the sets and props. I would also like to thank all the past students and the many parents who turned up on a Friday night to support our performance. Well done to all involved with Brunswick Secondary College’s performance of Paradigm.

Freddy Stringer

Before and after the show

The feelings before and after the show were two complexly different feelings. Before the show the backstage crew had to be behind the stage at least two performances before ours. So the moment we got down there every one became so professional. It was really good to see the junior backstage crew step up to this level as well. Then it was Brunswick’s turn! The nerves started to kick in and those 8 minutes went so fast I still don’t remember them. Then after the performance you could just see it in each other’s eyes. The moment we were allowed to talk? Well, we went crazy! We all knew we had done the best job we could have possibly done.

Anthony Campagna, Yr 11

Lights, Camera, Action....

In 2012, for the second year, I did the lighting design for Brunswick’s Rocka piece. This year; it ran a little differently. We didn’t get a chance to actually go to Hisense arena before the performance, so Katherine sent to the lighting official a sheet that said when she wanted the lights to change and what the general feel was supposed to be. Then, on the morning of the performance, every school got three run throughs. During the first two of these run throughs, the lighting official and I designed the specific colours, movements and patterns that we would use during the performance, using Katherine’s sheet as a guide. During the third run through, having learnt when all the changes were, I cued the Hisense official, and I did this again on the night. At the end of the night, we won the award for Best Lighting Design, which made me feel really proud - not just of my own work but how I had supported what was an amazing performance from everyone.

Maggie O’Shea, Yr 10

Designing this year’s Rocka t-shirts was such a pleasure and really fun! Despite the very little time I had to get the design done, I really enjoyed working with Kat to brainstorm and further develop the design. It took a couple of afternoons, which later turned into evenings, to finally finish them. I am so happy with how they turned out, and I know the Rocka 2012 team really liked them and were proud to wear them on the day, which gives me a nice sense of achievement.

Madison Palmieri, Yr 11

Rocka t-shirts

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Madison Palmieri, Yr 11
Our Talented Costume Designers

This year in Rocka our costumes were mainly made of recycled goods. There were three different characters in this year’s performance, Tribal, Maze and Puzzle.

These costumes were produced mainly by the students but a huge effort was put in by one student in particular, Lucy Payne.

This year Lucy has put in a lot of time to help create the mindblowing costumes. Lucy is responsible for the wonderful Queen dress at the end of the piece, which took endless hours of laminating, folding, pinning and gluing, but as you can see was all worth it.

However there were a huge amount of other students this year that gave up after school time to come and help with the production of costumes, giving ideas and sorting items.

On behalf of everyone involved in this year’s Rocka we would love to thank every single person who gave us a hand.

As per usual there has been one parent who always offered her assistance, my mother Deb Davis. This year Deb made pants, tops and dresses for the statues.

Once again a huge thanks to Deb for her amazing work, we don’t know what we would do without you.

Nikki Davis, Yr 11

Living in a construction zone

Some weeks ago strange things started to appear in our house – laminated leaves, wire, golden spray paint and hot melt glue guns.

It soon became apparent that a Rocka costume was in development.

First the dining room table was enveloped in masses of green paper, then the lounge room turned into a laminating factory.

Instead of the sweet aromas of kitchen cooking and percolating coffee the distinctive smell of molten glue permeated our home.

Eventually the whole family could be seen donning safety helmets, protective gloves and respirators as we carefully tip-toed through the hazards of Rocka Costume Construction.

Tony Payne, Parent
Being silver was a very strange feeling. It felt like being in someone else’s body, there were five boys as statues and six girl statues. Connor Krikis was the leader statue, he executed an amazing lift with Kady, a Tribe Leader.

As a statue, it was hard not to laugh until the day before Rocka. You had to tense your whole body and move slowly. My armour plate was hard for me to move in and scraped a lot of silver off. Rocka was really fun and I encourage others to join.

Lucien Dupe, Yr 8
Rocka First Timers

It is the first time for me in Rock Eisteddfod as I am in Year 7. I have enjoyed the experience of being able to attend Rocka. I have never experienced a group that comes together like family, which was the case throughout Rocka. It is something I will do every year until I am a year 12 student. When we walked on that stage I was trembling and full of fear, but when we were in the middle of it I felt more alive, like I could express myself. Rocka is a great family. I love it!

Isabella Jarnet, Year 7

It was a very fun experience and I met a lot of people. There was a great sense of teamwork and I loved the music. There was so much energy and in the end it seemed like it was two different days because so many things happened on the day. I would recommend anyone to do Rocka as it’s a worthwhile experience.

Yhizaira Rodriguez Burge, Yr 9

There are so many reasons why I love Rocka. Obviously I love the dancing, but that’s just a small part of the enjoyment. Being a part of the Rocka family is really special, and so many friendships and memories are made. We have the best possible dance teacher, Katherine, who makes every piece phenomenal and unique. We all put in so much time and effort into making our piece amazing, and on the day it really pays off. I can’t explain the feeling you get when you come off stage knowing you’ve done an incredible performance is like, but that’s what makes Rocka really worthwhile and that’s why I love it. Selina Maia-Wilson, Yr 8

Back for the second year

Year 12 – Our last Rock Eisteddfod

Every year I’ve been a part of Rock Eisteddfod and participating in Rocka has always been the highlight of each year. The thing I will always remember is not the countless hours and effort put into our pieces but the emotions that arise on the actual day.

The best part about Rocka is the feeling you get right after performing where everyone just comes together crying and laughing and feeling like we’re on top of the world. Being a part of Rocka is like having a second family and I will never forget the joy and the irreplaceable memories made as a result of being part of such a special and amazing team.

Siritrin Suwantevakup, Yr 12

Performing at Hisense Arena

The feeling you get from performing at Hisense arena is indescribable. To hear the crowd of thousands cheering for us feels incredible and definitely gets the adrenaline running.

It feels amazing to go out there and do the best performance we could do on that stage. It really feels satisfying to know that all the effort we have put in over the last 6 months has paid off.

Even back in our room after we perform the atmosphere is amazing; we all have a massive sense of achievement and are all proud of the great show that we put on.

Wen Yang Lee, Yr 12
A Teacher’s perspective

Embarrassing as it is to admit, I usually cry a bit watching our Rock Eisteddfod performances. This year I had plonked myself next to a student in the gym, expecting to have to “shhh” him at some stage over the 8 minutes. Instead, we were both mesmerised.

The dancing was powerful and crisp, the acting was focused and the costumes were terrific. This year there were more boys than I’d ever seen dancing at a BSC Rocka, with strength and seriousness that we don’t usually see out in the yard. The student next to me was over-awed.

Then Emma in her green dress appeared, a powerful vision of nature and ambition, and my eyes sprang a leak again. Rocka is yet another example that our students can do anything they put their mind to.

Karlee Baker, Teacher
Rock Eisteddfod 2012 was a success long before the performance at Hisense Arena. To see the commitment and unity of the cast and crew during the preparation was to see a school community at its very best. There was no task too hard, no run through too much to ask and no request denied as the group transformed into a strong and supportive unit. This is the fruit of Rock Eisteddfod that will benefit Mikaela & Amelia in the years ahead.

Carolina & Peter Constable, Parents
Rock Eisteddfod Challenge 3rd Place (Premier Division)
The Edge Award of Excellence for Choreography
Award of Excellence for Stage Use
Award of Excellence for Performance Skill
Award of Excellence for Concept
Award of Excellence for Drama
Award of Excellence for Soundtrack
Award of Excellence for Set, Design and Function
Award of Excellence Costuming Character
Award of Excellence Visual Enhancement
Award of Excellence for Lighting Design
DEEWR Award of Excellence for School Initiative
After the Show
Imagine the most amazing feeling possible, times that by ten, and you’ll have imagined how we all felt after we performed Paradigm. In true Brunswick style, everyone burst into tears. We had just performed something that we had all worked hard on for months, and we were emotional.

We were happy that we just put on the best show we could, excited to hear the judges’ thoughts, and devastated that it was over. After hugs and tears, whilst still in a state of euphoria, we began dancing to Rocka favourites, One More Time and Follow the Leader.

And this is all before we actually find out our placing. There truly is nothing like the feeling we get after performing Rocka.

Liam Jenkins, Yr 10
Principal’s Acknowledgements

Thank you to:

Katherine Weatherhead – for your creative genius, relentless drive and commitment, attention to detail and for bringing out the absolute best in our performers and backstage crew year after year. You are an exceptional talent and teacher.

Deb Davis – for your tireless work not only in sewing costumes but for being an integral part of the Rocka family. Yours is a very special parent contribution.

Freddy Stringer – for your big hearted contribution to ‘everything Rocka’, from stage management to driving trucks to helping senior students with their Mathematics during rehearsals and so much more.

Patrick Denison – for sharing your keen sense of drama and design in the back stage role and in general. As a past student and Rock Eisteddfod veteran, we are grateful for the special understanding and enthusiasm you bring to your role.

The students - Dancers, Back Stage and other helpers – for investing so much of your time and selves to make the eight minute performance of Paradigm the absolute best it could be. Your elation on the night was truly earned. Rock Eisteddfod is a shining example of valuing the team before the individual. We are very proud of you all.

Vivienne Tellefson
Principal