

TY Drama

'And the Winner is.....'

By Sophie Thompson

The main focus of our drama lessons this year in TY was the 25 minute play we would write ourselves and enter into a national competition, which ended up bringing us to Cork for a weekend and coming home with two awards, 2nd Place Overall and Best Original Script.

The year started off with the drama group meeting as a whole to establish the backbone of the story, at which, the idea to base the play on improvisation came about. We developed the plot which ended up being a murder mystery taking place at a film award ceremony. Once this and characters had been developed a short round of friendly auditions were held for parts to be assigned. The next step was to split into our character groups to begin on script work. As part of the story surrounding the award ceremony we had 'live-action movie trailers' written into the play and this formed the groups we used for writing the script.

When writing the individual sections of the script we had to keep in mind that the play we were doing was a parody. This meant that we had to incorporate as many stereotypes as we could from whatever genre of film we were writing a trailer for and that everything we wrote had to be acted out 'over the top'. For example, the one I was a part of was a horror movie based in American high school so for obvious reasons our characters were a jock, a nerd and a cheerleader. Once the 'trailers' had been written the rest of the play began to come together. There were eight suspects, each with a different motive for killing Peter Kenny, the actor who would win the award, and also with a different relationship to him. This is where our plot became complicated and intricate.

From the idea of improvisation, we decided to allow the audience to pick who the murderer would be each time we performed it, meaning the script changed slightly every time we performed it so we had eight different endings written to cover all options. The selection was done by an audience member picking a random number from one to eight, each representing a suspect. This number was shown to the rest of the audience and everybody on stage except for Ross Leitch, who played our detective. The audience then watched as the

detective questioned each of the suspects and analysed the information and tips that the 'feeders' gave in about each suspect. By the end of the twenty five minutes our detective would announce who the murderer was and the sealed envelope with the previously picked suspect in it would be opened and revealed to the audience. We would then take our bow as the audience attempted to figure out just how our detective could get it right every single time.

This year, a lot of people took up drama lessons as an extra-curricular activity, many of them having never done it before. It gave them a new experience but also it meant that a different group of people were being brought together by something that we enjoyed doing. By writing the script ourselves it meant we were working with people of different levels of experience but also some people we wouldn't have spent much time with in school. In my opinion, the best part of writing the play ourselves was the fact that we got to see it go through the whole process from being just an idea to a full production on stage. This is something we don't get very many opportunities to do so I had been really looking forward to drama this year for a long time and it lived up to every expectation I had, and then some.