

WEXFORD WOMEN IN THEATRE WORKSHOP

By Malavika Manoj

On Wednesday the 16th of November, Mrs. Whelan's drama class had the opportunity to attend a workshop for fourth years, that encouraged more girls to join the theatre and arts industry in the many different careers they displayed to the students during the day.

The students took the bus to get to the Wexford Art's Centre (a lot of them for the first time) and had a field trip on that bus ride itself. Upon arrival, the class was informed that, luckily for them, they were the only school there that day, so they'd have a far more interesting and personal experience.

After they reached their destination, the students were allowed to examine an art exhibition that was being displayed that day and had a quick snack break before being led up to the ballroom.

This is when the class met the four women that would be teaching them that day. Calo was the women who would be training them in acting and stage direction, Sheila would train them in sound design and two third year college students studying in the arts would be helping them in lighting and stage management.

The class was split into groups of four since it was so small, and each group got the chance to spend at least twenty minutes at every workshop station. The first station my group went to was Calo's acting station. Personally, this was one of my favorite stations! We did many exercises that would improve our image on stage and help us portray different characters we may have to play at some point. The exercises were completed on the stage that was in the ballroom, and there were often many wanted distractions taking place because of the sound and lighting stations changing different parts of the performance.

After the first twenty minutes, we would switch to another station, so everyone had the chance to experience every part of the workshop in a fair amount of detail. Students also enjoyed the sound, lighting and stage management stations because of how hands-on they were. Many of them were allowed to play around with the equipment and change the mood of the stage, which was very exciting.

At the end of everyone's twenty minutes with each group, the girls had the chance to go to their preferred stations for a final run-through of the script that they had been building on the whole day to rehearse! Some girls chose to go to acting, whereas the others strayed to sound, lighting and stage management. The script performance ran a couple of times so that everyone could get a chance to act, manage the stage, twiddle with the sound and change the lighting. This last performance was the most enjoyable thing for me, I thought it was a fantastic way to showcase everything we learned that day and the girls clearly enjoyed it too, with everyone firmly staying in their stations to continue rehearsing the scenes over and over again.

As it drew near to the end of the day, I realized how important these workshops were. They of course nurture growth and interest, but they also help empower women. Throughout the day, it was highlighted to me how male dominated the industry the girls worked in was, and it made me better appreciate all the work they did.

I want to pass on a huge thank you to everyone involved in the making of this event. Their handwork clearly paid off when I saw the smiles on my friend's faces as they discovered their own favorite part of the day. It was truly a wonderful experience, and I'm very glad we all went.