The creative and expressive arts at Junior College

The Junior College is the obvious choice for most students as it offers a high-quality, personalised, inclusive and holistic education. It is without doubt a unique experience, different from that offered anywhere else. There are many reasons why students decide to go to Junior College, not least because they can choose from the widest possible range of subjects. Students can study any combination of subjects which are offered by MATSEC, both at Advanced and Intermediate levels. The College has a very strong faculty in all areas of study, so students are assured that they will get the best from whichever subjects they study.

An area of study that is becoming popular with students is the creative and expressive arts. These include art as well as theatre and performance. This should not come as a surprise as historically the creative and expressive arts have always been an integral part of life. We can see evidence of this in paintings on caves, pottery and other artefacts which depict scenes of people dancing and playing musical instruments.

At Junior College, students can choose to study Art, both at Advanced and Intermediate levels. The primary aims of this course are creativity, exploration of themes and ideas through research, investigation of art processes, as well as the critical evaluation of works of art within a historical context. The course encourages the use of a wide range of media and the acquisition of skills to be able to create work that responds to various themes and relevant issues. The research process is crucial and students will be expected to keep a visual journal and a portfolio of work.

In addition to the formal academic program, students will be encouraged to participate in collective exhibitions as well as to work in teams on murals and other works of art. Students can also join the Manga Club. "Manga" is the Japanese word for comics, also used to describe the Japanese style of comic art. Students who join this club will be able to learn the basics of drawing manga, exhibit their work, discuss manga and advance their knowledge of this popular art style.

Another avenue for creativity is the Photography Club which aims to promote an interest in photography among students. Students who join the club will be given the opportunity to follow a basic course in photography by no previous knowledge is required. The course includes practical sessions. The group meets on a weekly basis during which various topics related to photography are discussed. Students will also have an opportunity to exhibit their work.

Students can choose to study Music and/or to practise their preferred musical instrument by joining the Junior College Orchestra. Music is an art form whose medium is sound, and as such, it must be both emotionally appreciated and intellectually understood. The academic programme covers musicianship, harmony and counterpoint, history of music and analysis, as well as performance and composition.

The Junior College Orchestra is composed of budding musicians, the majority of whom are College students who are not necessarily studying Music at the College. It forms an integral part of the cultural calendar of the Junior College throughout the year. Lyrical singers can also join the Orchestra and will be able to perform with the Orchestra. The Orchestra has a vast repertoire, comprised of popular instrumental and vocal music. Members of the orchestra meet regularly to rehearse and prepare for upcoming concerts.

This year, the Junior College Orchestra won first prize in the Concorso Internazionale per orchestra Scholastica Musicale – Categoria Istituti Superiori. The orchestra released its first CD album in 2013 to mark its 15th anniversary. It will be launching its second CD album in 2018 to mark its 20th anniversary.

Students who prefer other genres of music, such as rock music, will also find space, support and encouragement. Over the years, the Junior College has organised the Battle of the Bands, and participated in rock festivals abroad aimed at students.

Theatre and Performance was first introduced at Intermediate level a few years ago, and as from last year also at Advanced level. As a subject, it explores the aesthetics of theatre arts and the performative nature of human behaviour. It introduces students to a practical and theoretical study of theatre history and performance practice as well as the major theatre milestones, starting with the Greeks to the 20th century. The course is aimed at training students to evaluate live performance and to experience collective and solo performance work.

All students can join the Junior College Theatre Group which was established to give students a first-hand experience in theatre and performance beyond the lecture room. Theatre is a discipline where hard work, perseverance and punctuality are required, but it is also about having fun and forging life-long friendships.

The Junior College Theatre Group is open to students who want to act, sing, dance, write scripts, direct, design, work backstage or front-of-house, and to those who are able to operate sound and light systems. Involvement in the Group gives students the opportunity to practice different skills and to cooperate and work together as a team. Students can display their talent in the College Christmas Concert and the Soiree, as well as by participating in local and foreign events. Productions by the Junior College Theatre Group are directed by the Mascagni School for the Performing Arts.

During the past four years, the College has organised Heqa – a European Theatre Festival for Students. Student theatre groups from different countries, including Malta, give performances, participate in workshops and enjoy a cultural programme during the festival. This festival has proved to be an amazing experience for all involved and students look forward to it every year. The festival will be organised again in March 2018.

Junior College offers an experience to students like no other. It firmly believes in the importance of all subjects and areas, not least the creative and expressive arts. The above is testimony to this belief. More information can be found in the Junior College Prospectus 2017, the College website, or by sending an email to administration@junior.edu.mt