Taste of science

Food fun touches on more serious issue for girls, writes Jane Howard

THERE will be no such thing as too many cooks spoiling the broth at Mentone Girls’ Grammar next week. The school will take part in Cook for a Cure, a national event from August 10-18, which educates students about the importance of healthy and medical research.

Schools across the country are asked to hold a cooking event that month. It may be a soup or cake stall, a students-versus-teachers cook-off, or any fun, food-related activity.

Research Australia runs Cook for a Cure, inviting school communities to learn about leading Australian research projects while cooking and sharing healthy food with peers.

Mentone Girls’ Grammar principal Fran Reddan says Cook for a Cure has great benefits; the girls love it. “It gets them on a scientific path and shows them how to make a difference.”

“It’s showing the girls there is a whole network of women who are interested in science and scientific research,” Mrs Reddan says. “It taps into their curiosity and shows them how to make a difference.”

“It gets them on a scientific path and reveals that there are very real benefits, the girls love it.”

Mrs Reddan says the school’s program begins in the Early Learning Centre, where girls start with basic numeracy skills and scientific concepts through a play-based curriculum.

At year 3 students undertake their own research problem and experiments to demonstrate scientific principles. Sharing the Planet explores the responsibility of individuals, community, the environment and government for the conservation of species.

The EnviroKids program expands the study at year 4, while at years 5 and 6 STEM courses are taught in science laboratories by expert teaching staff from Senior School and students explore key scientific concepts.

These specialist classes are complemented by classroom units on the world of invention, technology and simple machines, plus numeracy programs such as financial literacy.

In Senior School, there are several STEM offerings from year 7 through to VCE.

Enduring grace in magical play

VCE text review

English

Cosi, Louis Nowra

COSI is set in Melbourne in 1917, at a time of mounting pressure against Australia’s involvement in the Vietnam War. During this time of political upheaval and social change, the protagonist Lewis, a young university graduate, takes the job of directing a production at a psychiatric hospital. As the rehearsals progress, Lewis finds himself increasingly drawn into the lived reality of the patients and away from a view of the world imposed on him by others. Lewis initially appears to be a character with no real identity. All we know is that he is so desperate for work, he has been forced to take the job at the hospital.

As a consequence, he has no real vision of what he might be able to achieve. Roy, dreaming of a full-scale production of Mozart’s Cosi Fan Tutte, makes it clear Lewis is an immense disappointment. Consequently, while Lewis may be the official director, Roy takes over. He not only drives the choice of production and play-casts, but also directs Lewis who is taking the role of director so badly. Much of what Roy says may not be literally true, but his words speak another kind of truth about the importance of art, music and love. In contrast, for Lewis’s girlfriend, Lucy, and friend, Nick, language is used as a form of disguise and a way of keeping people at a distance. Nick’s words, in particular, narrate life’s possibilities. Lewis learns from all of the actors, but Roy is the one who activates this process of learning.

Through the power of his performance, he helps Lewis and his fellow inmates to share his dream and become transformed by it. The magic of Cosi is that this damaged group of people can work together to create something that can only exist if everyone is given the confidence to contribute. A significant aspect of the transformative magic of performance is that it breaks down differences and distinctions between the individuals involved. It is in the end there is a lesson for Lewis to learn from the opera Cosi Fan Tutte. The show is set in Melbourne in 1917, at a time of political upheaval and social change. The protagonist Lewis, a young university graduate, takes the job of directing a production at a psychiatric hospital.

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