

# HAIRSPRAY

BY KIERAN COLLINS

"Hairspray: The Broadway Musical" must be one of the greatest accomplishments of Mercy Mounthawk. As a proud member of the 'Nicest Kids in Town', it was an honour to be part of such a fantastic production. With a huge cast of 130 students, the city of Baltimore was spun into life for Siamsa Tire audiences. This production showcased the incredible effort of the student-body, however without the commitment and sheer determination of teachers involved, this show could not have been as perfect!

Passion for the music was rife in the cast. Songs from the show echoed in the halls before auditions even began! Nonetheless, tireless hours were spent practising lines spearheaded by music teachers Caitriona O'Sullivan, Sinéad Muldoon Walsh and Karen O'Carroll. Of course, choreography crafted by Elaine Costelloe, Charlotte Tansley, Shauna Williams, Rachel O'Neill, Jean Browne and Emma Nolan, saw the excitement of the whole cast as they brought the musical to life. The hilarious story was directed by Tony Behan and Christine Ryan. They pushed for the cast to embody the witty charac-

ters. Slowly, after-school rehearsals and surrendered lunchtime practices blazed a trail through December and suddenly, the musical was less than a month away! In my opinion, an unforgettable rehearsal was the first orchestra run. Beautiful harmonies tied in with the live music gave me butterflies.

The first time on stage is daunting for anyone, myself included, but nerves turned to utter elation on the opening night. I still pinch myself when remembering the back flips on stage!! The bright singing and upbeat dancing transported everyone into 1960's America. Period costuming by Mary Barry along with a colourful set constructed by Tadhg O'Sullivan truly set the scene. A surprise video on Friday night from the songwriters of "Hairspray", all the way from New York, congratulating us on our production filled me with a sense of pride. Our closing night was impeccable. The audience matched the delight of the cast as we sang our final song "You Can't Stop the Beat."

Audiences laughed and sang and applauded throughout the shows. That feeling of pure joy we bestowed upon

audiences fills me with pride. People of all ages, backgrounds, shapes and sizes were celebrated. Much like our school's ethos, the message of acceptance and self-belief conveyed in the musical wasn't lost on the cast or the audience. For that reason, I am honoured to say, that I took part in our school's production of "Hairspray". I will always cherish those magic moments on the streets of Baltimore.

## Winner of 'Best Female Singer in National Stagewise Competition

6 National Award nominations:

- Best Visual (Costumes, MakeUp, Props)
- Best Female Singer: Promise Ekwuhama
- Rising Star: Sorcha Ringland
- Best Choral Singing
- Best Director: Tony Behan
- Best Overall Show

