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THIS TIME LAST YEAR, ACTORS CHAMPIONSHIP ANNIVERSARY

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If 2020 had gone ahead as planned for Sydney Eisteddfod, the conclusion of our five-month festival would be fast approaching right now.

Sunday 30 August would have been the day of the Sydney Eisteddfod Actor's Championship for our junior and senior groups.

Since it could not go ahead this year, on the anniversary of the Championship, we caught up with the Senior Winners from last year - Maeve Cox, Kiri Jenssen and Mimi Kind, to hear what they've been up to.

Maeve Cox, now 16-years-old, was the First-place Winner of our senior Actor's Championship last year. This year, Maeve has had several performance opportunities cancelled due to COVID.

"Early in the year I was thrilled to be cast as Mary Warren in an adult production of "The Crucible" by Arthur Miller. Unfortunately, it had to be cancelled due to social distancing rules". "I have been so used to having rehearsals at least twice a week so it has been strange ... but it has given me space and time to focus on my skill development and exams as I am aiming to one day get my Diploma of ASCA, so I can both teach and adjudicate! I have made so many drama friends from my years at both the Northern Beaches and Sydney Eisteddfods, so it was disappointing to not be able to support them this year ... but it's only fired me up more for next year!"

Second-place Winner of the Actors Championship Kiri Jenssen, 17 years, has also been affected by the pandemic, missing out on a couple gigs and music exams which has affected her motivation levels during this uncertain year.

But despite COVID-19, Kiri has still found ways to perform and learn new performance skills in 2020.

"I did an online concert on Zoom with other members of 'The House That Dan Built' back in July, where we show-cased our own original songs. Prior to the concert, we also had done songwriting workshops through Zoom for several weeks" Kiri told Sydney Eisteddfod.

Maeve has also been very busy despite the circumstances, being selected for the World Monologue Games, an amazing incentive started by Australian Peter Malicki.

"It's an interesting process to try and do a 1-minute monologue sitting still in front of a computer."

My skills have been really tested as the format is very different for me, as most of my acting has been on stage and needing to perform in front of a small screen is unlike anything I have even done before! It's a skill I have loved being able to start honing.

16-year-old Callum Treanor who received the Australian Theatre for Young People Gift Certificate at the Championship last year, has also been selected for the World Monologue Games Regional Finals!

Callum told Sydney Eisteddfod that he will take with him many of the lessons he has learnt from his previous few years of performing with us at our annual Festival.

"I've certainly taken on board all the valuable feedback I've had over the last few years doing the Sydney Eisteddfods. I've learned not to 'overplay' the characters, and that being 'natural' is the key to a believable performance", Callum said.

[Callum

Treanor performing at the 2019 Sydney Eisteddfod Senior Actors Championships]

Sunday 30 August would have been the date of our Actors Championship Final for 2020 so we asked last year's winners to reflect on their experiences in the event to give other performers an idea of how things went.

"Last year I came into the Senior Actors Championships excited and wanting to learn from the older more experienced actors. I was so nervous, even after my win the year before.

In my earlier years it was the one event that I gained so much from seeing other's performances.

I found the calibre of the performers really professional and it really pushed me to work hard and perform more at an even more focused and adult level", Maeve told us.

Third-place Winner from 2019, 17-year-old Mimi Kind, reflected on her positive experience last year despite it being a little nerve-racking being up on stage in front of a crowd.

"The experience was great and unique, having to perform for a long time was an obvious challenge. However, it was a very enjoyable project to work on and I loved finding links between the pieces I had chosen. It was a great honour to win 3rd place".

The girls have found that their performance experience in the Final equipped them with an increased sense of confidence and performance skills for the future.

"I always learn so much every year seeing all the different performance styles and pieces and usually I pick up new ideas and items that I try to use in my practice for the following year! Confidence wise, it boosted my trust in myself and secured the knowledge that when I put my mind to it and work hard, I can do anything!", Maeve proudly told Sydney Eisteddfod.

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To finish off, they've left some great advice for aspiring young actors who missed out on the Actors Championship this year due to its cancellation.

"I would suggest they diversify their repertoire to increase knowledge and to experience going out of their comfort zone and look forward to future opportunities", Kiri recommends.

"Enjoy performing and choose pieces you LOVE. If you do this, the audience will feel it too.

The pieces I have had the most success with are the ones I am most passionate about and have emotional investment in