

campus life

Hitting all the right notes

Everyone loves a good talent show, and the annual Stars in their Eyes contest at Island School might just be the best in Hong Kong, writes junior reporter **Bakhita Fung**

Twelve-year-old Natascha Netz was crowned the winner of this year's Stars in their Eyes talent show at Island School on November 22. Her performance as Alicia Keys singing *Girl on Fire* wowed the crowd, and gained the most votes. Natascha was one of more than 160 students who had auditioned for a spot in the live final, and her explosive vocals proved the most popular with the 300 members of the audience.

Approximately 200 students took part in the show this year, singing, dancing and performing in the orchestra. The choir sang popular hits such as *Shut Up and Dance* and *Can't Take My Eyes Off You*, with the show's compère

Natascha captured the audience's attention right from the start

Beth Hall enthusing that "the quality of performances [were] outstanding".

The yearly event was set up in 2003 - when talent shows were starting to become very popular on TV - and the school had hoped that, as a music teacher had that year fallen ill and they were short-staffed, the workload of producing a talent show "would be less demanding than a big school concert", as Phil Tudor, a music teacher at Island School, put it.

The show turned out to be the complete opposite: Tudor dubbed it "Frankenstein's monster" because what had originally been

conceived as a small-scale production has grown into an annual Island School tradition. At one point, the show was so popular that it was completely sold out for two nights.

Natascha says that she really enjoyed performing, and that she wants to be a singer when she's older. "The stage is my home," she said.

Joseph Travers, head of Music at Island School agreed with the audience that her performance was excellent. "Natascha was really impressive," he said. "She knew what she was doing and she

responded well to feedback." He also complimented her on her choice of song, as when she was performing, he said that Natascha really seemed like a girl on fire.

Jonathan Fan, a fellow competitor, said that, "Natascha captured the audience's attention right from the start, and everyone thought that her performance was fantastic."

Tudor stressed that having school events like Stars in their Eyes is good for everyone, as "it's important for students to have a voice - not only because they sing, but because they choose the

material and they get to make their own artistic decisions."

Students from all year groups and classes are represented, he added, from the new Year Sevens to the more experienced Sixth Formers. Students are happy to get involved in the project, as they learn about everything that goes into putting on a talent show. They also picking up leadership skills, as well as time management skills.

Travers only joined Island School in August, and he said he was astounded by the community spirit at the school, and students' talent.

"This was my first big show here and it's been a privilege to get to work with such an outstanding group of students."

Tudor agreed and said that he wanted to thank all the students for the hard work that they've done. "Teaching is a stressful job, but when you work with such a high calibre of students, the stress simply melts away.

"I'm privileged as I get to work with such great kids."

All the acts from the live final also performed at the school's 50th anniversary Arts festival, the Island Five-O, which was held December 3.

The others acts in the final were:

- Esther Clement, Cheung Man-wai, Toby Wyatt, Raphael Tsang, Garbo Ting, Priya Thomas, Esha Gidwani and Janice Cheung singing *Where Is The Love* by the Black Eyed Peas
- Jared Smithers, Jasper Wong, Caleb Fu and Vanessa Gdowski performing *Don't Speak* by No Doubt
- Venus Lam and Ethan Saunders singing *Stereo Hearts* by the Gym Class Heroes
- Jonathan Fan and Claudia Lau as A Great Big World & Christina Aguilera singing *Say Something*
- Hilary Li, Serena Yoon, Yanisha Chung, Hannah Mok, Jennifer Wong, Beatrice Thomas, Aileen Bai Yang, Eimisa Ishizuka, Lily Sheary, Ellie Chung, Sophia Fournier, Aarshi Majumder and Elizabeth Lapham as the Pitch Perfect team singing *The Cup Song*
- Jorja Townson, Gwennie Tan, Chan Wing-kiu and Anja Herrmann singing *Dear Future Husband* by Meghan Trainor
- Hani Rasool, Smayan Soni, Shivank Kotkar, Nicholas (Ayahiko) Usui and Ethan Rajanayagam singing *I Want It That Way* by the Backstreet Boys
- Niamh Neville singing *Total Eclipse of the Heart* by Bonnie Tyler
- Megan Chan, Ng Wai-nung, Hui Yu-hang and Alysha Wells-Daswani singing *Black Magic* by Little Mix

The Stars in their Eyes talent show has been held every year at Island School since 2003.
Photo: Bakhita Fung

