

I am writing to officially leave this brilliant company, I realise that I said that I would stay after Miss Saigon but I think that what prompted me to say that was my reluctance to accept that this wonderful chapter of my youth is over.

I cannot begin to thank each and every one of you for all the hard work, sweat and tears you put into this company and I hope you realise just how much it means to all of us and the community also. Centre stage is not a youth club (as Mark has so often reminded us!) it is a company with responsibilities and expectations which gives youths the opportunity to develop in ways our peers at school would never have the chance to. Yes, sometimes it was tough and it made us moan and complain, but I personally never questioned why I continued to turn up. Centre Stage has no doubt been the redeeming factor of my early teen years, with it being my haven away from a school life I detested and being able to go every Tuesday, Friday and Sunday offered a great relief and a safe, stimulating environment for me to not worry about the common insecurities of adolescence. Joining this company has been the best thing I have ever done and not only has given me a wealth of experience in an area I love (the theatre) but has provided me with memories and friendships that I will cherish for a lifetime. I think the fact that I have delayed writing this letter for so long is due to me being reluctant to accept that I am leaving this family and indeed the stage behind. I may never be lucky enough to be a part of such high quality, legendary musicals again and that is why I think that centre stage is utterly invaluable to its brilliant members. I feel lucky to have been opened to this opportunity by my sister and to have got as much out of it as she did. Ultimately, Centre Stage is immortal in that it has given young people a voice and a chance to show their talents for the past 40 years and I'm positive that it will continue to for the next 40.

Show week is always the most phenomenal week and is the reason we all work so hard for the rest of the year; however it is the rehearsals that I find I will miss the most. Being able to meet your friends, do something you love and be productive at the same time is something that I cherish and I have often pitied others my age who don't know how to work as a team towards a collective goal. Centre Stage has taught me so much that it would be impossible to list, but mostly it has allowed me to be confident in who I am as an individual and not apologetic for the fact that I may not conform completely. It has taught me to present myself well, allowed me to be a good public speaker, I've learnt how to follow directions and use initiative as well as take responsibility. These are all invaluable skills that I will need throughout my life; most importantly however, it has taught me that hard work pays off!

So, I'd just like to say, that I wouldn't change one second of Sue's shouting or Simon's 'Cow hitting Nelly' or putting up raised seating in the rain or Saturday leaflet drops because that is what made my experience of centre stage what it was and I thank you all immensely for the best memories of my life. This has been such a positive influence at a time when one is so impressionable.

The other day I was at a Rotary meal and someone was talking about Miss Saigon and what a talented company Centre Stage is and it was with great pride that I said that I had been a member of the company and bragged about my peers' talents and our unbreakable work ethic. I'll end with one more massive **THANK YOU** for the past 5 years and I look forward to experiencing the spectacle that will be Starlight Express (hopefully Grace will let me help with make up or something!)

I'm already looking forward to the 50th Anniversary!

Yours sincerely,

Megan Wilson.