

# Monroe's life a challenge to stage

Students prepare to perform in final

By Liz Wylie  
liz.wylie@wanganuichronicle

Wanganui Girls' College had a final dress rehearsal for their Stage Challenge entry *Striving For Perfection* on Wednesday and will head to Palmerston North to compete in the regional final tomorrow night.

The show has a cast of 99 students and 10 others will be working backstage with Girls' College Deputy Principal Nita Pond and dance teacher Caroline Rhodes.

*Striving for Perfection* portrays the life of actress Marilyn Monroe from the time she was a child named Norma-Jeane Mortenson and deposited at an orphanage by her mother.

Helena Hazlehurst plays the child Norma-Jeane, Lochie Murray is her adult self and Amiria Ririnui portrays the Hollywood star Marilyn Monroe. Throughout the production Marilyn is pursued by her insecurities — a group of dancers dressed in grey, her mental illness — a group of dancers dressed as demons, and her ambition — a group of dancers dressed in classic white dresses. Platinum blonde wigs that will be worn by Marilyn and her alter-egos were stored safely in wardrobe until



**AMBITION:** Amiria Ririnui as Marilyn is surrounded by the clones of her quest for perfection.

PHOTO/ STUART MUNRO 270515WCSMSCHOOL2

the main performance. A group of photographers in braces and trilby hats, a platoon of soldiers carrying her photo and her remorseful mother were also in pursuit.

The annual Stage Challenge event is part of a nationwide tour involving 16,000 participants from 200 schools

and Girls' College will be representing Wanganui as Wanganui High School is not competing this year since focusing on the production of *Annie*.

Stage Challenge aims to motivate young people to engage in positive and healthy lifestyles while providing an opportunity to be part of a professional

performing arts event. Wanganui Girls' College students audition at the beginning of the year to be placed into the various dance and drama groups that are involved in the story. They learn and perfect their specific dances and are kitted out in costumes and inventive props cleverly put

together by Mrs Pond. The sets are also constructed by the team and the elements of dance, design and drama are woven together to tell the story. Students participating in Stage Challenge can gain NCEA credits in subjects such as dance, drama, woodwork, art and textiles.