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School's out

School holidays have never looked so fun, discovers Linley Wilkie

In days gone by, the anticipation surrounding school holidays was all about what you weren't going to do (digest homework and soggy sandwiches), whereas these days the excitement is based on what kids are going to do. Next week's school holidays will give local school kids the opportunity to replace maths with magic and spelling with singing.

Roola Boola

Luigi Zucchini is no ordinary Italian. Flames leap out when he opens books and he's able to make seven doves and their cage disappear. Zucchini (otherwise known as Anthony de Masi) has been performing magic his entire life and next week, his show, *Spaghetti, Spaghetti* is part of the line up at the City of Stonnington's school holiday program, Roola Boola.

The inaugural event is a fresh approach to holiday programs, incorporating magic shows, musicals, circus acts and puppetry.

"Roola Boola is a one stop shop for parents who want their kids both entertained and inspired to use their imagination and

creativity," the event's artistic director Anthony Crowley says. "All the shows are interactive and chosen for their ability to provide simple creative strategies for parents and kids to follow up at home."

Zucchini will be joined on stage by his housemates Brian the rabbit and Chico the guinea pig. "It's going to be zany, fun, very magical," he says in an interesting Italian accent (he must be from Naples). "Luigi is someone you've never met before, he's unbelievable."

Zucchini says kids make great audiences, especially during school holidays. "The kids wanna be entertained, they want to have a lot of fun and it's their opportunity after working so hard at school to just relax, have some fun and learn some different activities," he says. "It's a great opportunity to meet some people in show business and enjoy some magic for the holidays."

Specifically aimed at five- to 12 year olds, Roola Boola runs from June 29 to July 2, from 10am to 3pm. Each day includes two interactive

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shows and a concert and tickets can be purchased for any combination of the three.

For the full program or to buy tickets, call Chapel off Chapel on 8290 7000 or visit stonnington.vic.gov.au/roolaboola

Australian Arts Alive

Best known for their Australian Girls Choir and those picturesque Qantas commercials, the Australian School of Performing Arts runs a school holiday program designed to get kids' creative juices flowing.

Held at Kew's Genazzano College, Australian Arts Alive is two days of performing arts such as singing, dance, drama, craft and puppetry, for students from prep to year 8 (the program is shorter for younger attendants). Deepdene sisters Grace and Jessica Harries have participated in the past two Australian Arts Alive holiday programs and are also members of the Australian Girls Choir. "I liked being in the group for drama and doing the Three Little Pigs play, it was really funny," Grace, 8,

says. "I liked making the balloon animals, too."

Jessica, 13, recalls singing, acting, dancing and a visit from a professional make-up artist in previous years. "I liked the singing best because we were working with professionals who gave us feedback on our singing," she says. "It was lots of fun. I think the teachers are really nice and happy to help (and) the activities are all enjoyable."

Australian Arts Alive is on July 7 and 8. For more information, call 9859 6499 or visit aspagroup.com.au/a3

The City of Boroondara's school holiday program, There's a Scare in there, runs from June 28 to July 9 and incorporates puppetry, magic and storytelling with a spooky twist. Being held at a number of local libraries, visit boroondara.vic.gov.au/library and follow the links for more information. Be quick though, as bookings opened last week.