

MARCH 2017  
EDITION 7

# MUSIC NEWSLETTER

## PIANO RECITAL - STEINWAY MASTERCLASS 2017

London, 23rd February 2017

Following Emma Cohen's trip to Steinway Hall, we had the opportunity to take some of our best performers to London to give a recital in Steinway Hall on Marylebone Lane, London. After a couple of weeks of frenzied rehearsal we boarded the coach to London. Keith Glazebrook, our contact at the Hall, took us on a guided tour of the facilities. In the showroom, we were made slightly nervous by the pricetags on some of the pianos. Keith demonstrated their new Spiro range – a piano which plays itself. The version in the showroom came in a white gloss finish and was finished with Lalique crystals! We then went downstairs to their restoration and refurbishment department where we met one of the apprentices who was restoring the strings on a piano and learnt more about how individual pianos are voiced to suit each customer. We also learnt there are several practice rooms that can be hired for £14 an hour, so if you fancy pretending to own a Steinway then this is the cheapest way. Our final stop was the Hire Fleet room, where 10 pianos are kept for hiring and sent to venues across the world. We were fortunate to be allowed to play on the BBC Proms piano, which had a matte top to avoid the strong lights interfering with the TV cameras. After a rehearsal in the performance space and bite to eat, we got our performance clothes on and were ready to greet our guests. All the students performed very well and it was good to hear new ensembles doing their first performances. Thanks to General Sir Peter Wall for his encouraging words at the end of the recital and to all our staff (Mrs Brazendale, Mrs Nunes, Mrs Medlar, Mrs Dalrymple, Mr Campbell) for their hard work in the lead up to the event. Also to Mrs Byne, who did lots of work behind the scenes and organised delicious canapés, which we enjoyed afterwards.

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Arts Award continues to go from strength to strength. Year 8 students are introduced to Bronze Award in lessons and in assembly time.

There are four parts to the award: taking part, being the audience, researching your arts hero or heroine and sharing your skill.

Having had a bumper crop of Bronze Arts Awards in 2016, we are now finding more and more students wanting to progress to the Silver Award. The Silver Award is more of a challenge as students have to plan their own leadership projects. Looking forward to Gold, students have projects as wide-ranging as directing Shakespeare for Schools, directing the School Panto and organising to take Pipes and Drums.

We look forward to another bumper crop of awards this summer. The deadline for any student wishing to have their work assessed will be mid-June 2017.

#### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**Saturday 13th May**  
Lightwater Fete

**Saturday 20th May**  
Holy Trinity

**Saturday 24th June**  
Annual Parade

**Thursday 29th June**  
Summer Arts Evening

**Tuesday 11th-18th July**  
Music Tour to Salzburg

## WOKING MUSIC FESTIVAL



In November soloists, duos and Gordon's show choir participated in the vocal rounds of the Woking Music Festival. Congratulations to Maddie Torrington who won Best Musical Theatre Performer and Tasmin Martin-Young who won Best Pop/Jazz Performance. Leah Stead and Sophia Fifield also came first in their category with their duet of Starmaker.

Gordon's Show Choir won Best Ensemble with 'Let Me Be Your Star' from the TV series Smash. This year LAMDA students were also represented at Woking Music Festival. Keyur Govender, Marley Naylor and Nate Watson entered the Public Speaking category with Nate Watson taking the award. As well as winning her acting class Darcy won most promising actor for the whole festival and received a cheque for £75. Congratulations Darcy!

*On 4th February, I went to the Woking Music Festival, where I took part as a performer well as being in the audience. Whilst here, I was awarded Most Promising Young Actor, and enjoyed many musical performances. All the pieces were well performed and full of character, but my favourite was a piece named 'Marshmallow' played on the harp by nine year old Jamaal Kashim. It was an amazing piece and incredible for such a young person to play the large instrument so beautifully. Personally, I recommend the Festival because it's not that expensive compared to other concerts, and is an effective way to discover the amazing talent in Woking. This show really demonstrates that drive and determination is all someone needs, and not just in instruments.*

**Darcy Watson, Y8**

## SONS OF PITCHES

On Friday 11th November we took a trip to Basingstoke to see a performance of a cappella group 'Sons of Pitches'. This all male group rose to fame by winning the final of Gareth Malone's series 'The Naked Choir' which was shown on Channel 4 last year. The group wowed us with medleys of boy band and girl group hits which had us singing along. They also performed some of the pieces they made famous on the TV show such as 'Wuthering Heights' by Kate Bush. The highlight of the show for all of us was the beatboxer who took over the stage for one 10 minute piece, all by himself – jaw droppingly good! We were delighted that members of the group came out to meet the fans afterwards and we managed to get a few photos.





*Victoria House may not have won, but they certainly did their house proud, whilst all dressed in Victoria House pink!*



Amongst the most hotly contested Inter-House competitions, Music was once again a real success and credit to the many students who took part.

Rehearsals began early September, with houses determined to beat last years' placing. We were particularly delighted to see new Sixth Formers getting involved, and even leading their houses.

In the past, the competition had been male-dominated, but with the first girls' victory last year a new precedent has been set and they did not disappoint. From the Pretty in Pink performance by Victoria, to the feisty Windsor entry, the girls upped their game. However, the boys' houses gave great entertainment value and some exceptionally well-prepared performances, including a short essay and photographic supporting material from one house!

Our judges for the evening were Gordon's legend Mr Wadey, Steve Goodwin (Director of Music Performance at Woking High School) and Maggie Guilfoyle (retired Head of Creative Arts at Coworth Flexlands School).

This year we extended the competition to include a solo performance. These heats were held the previous week with the marks added to the heats of the group performances, which took place on Monday 18th October. The top five houses through to the final, in alphabetical order, were: Balmoral, China, Sandringham, Victoria and Windsor. Our judges were overwhelmed by the performances. One element of the competition that they all spoke so highly of was the fact that everyone in the room was so supportive of each other, despite it being a competition.

The judges finally decided, announcing: 3rd place to China, 2nd place Sandringham and 1st place for Windsor.

Congratulations to all who took part, we look forward to 2017!



## WORD FROM THE WINNING HOUSE

*We were delighted to come first this year. We had put in so much practice that we were sure we would do well, but first place is amazing! The evening was such a good showcase of all the fabulous music we have at the school.*

**Sophie Chan – Windsor House**







## PIPES AND DRUMS

*The Pipes and Drums have had a busy schedule of events since the start of the year. As well as the usual school based events we have been invited to three large events outside the school gates.*

*We are always delighted to support the Chobham Schools' Prom and enjoy music making with the students from Coworth-Flexlands, Chobham St Lawrence and Valley End. As part of this partnership we followed up the Prom, which was held at St Lawrence Church, with a series of pipe and drum workshops at the primary schools.*

*A small group from the Pipes and Drums planned their workshop sessions and then delivered them at each school, often repeating them six times per school. It was a noisy and exciting event, but lovely to see our students taking on leadership roles and developing their teaching skills. Thanks must go to Mr Ash who helped out during the day and certainly earned his cup of tea and slice of cake at the end.*



*Chobham Remembrance Parade was not as cold as in previous years. We had worked hard in preparation for the event, taking out a smaller band with a number of players who were new to the event. As usual the Parade brought Chobham to a standstill. A very good turn out from the British Legion, local Brownie and Cub groups and the CCF meant it was a well attended event. The lovely ladies of the church provided the players with their customary 'high tea' and one of them was telling us the story of her sister's wedding in 1946 when one of the Gordon boys piped her sister down the aisle. Thanks to Mr and Mrs Fox who helped on this event.*

*It's not all hard work though and the musicians were able to let their hair down by enjoying a Pizza and Film evening.*



## TASMIN LITTLE CELEBRITY RECITAL

University of Surrey, 1st March 2017

As a continuing commitment to develop string playing we were fortunate to get tickets for a celebrity recital by Tasmin Little, a world famous violinist. Tasmin was accompanied on piano by John Lenehan. As this was in a relatively small venue it was fantastic for the students to see a virtuoso performer at close quarters.

The programme consisted of late Romantic and early twentieth century music, including John Ireland, Maurice Ravel and Cesar Franck. The Franck Violin Sonata was a real showstopper, with the last two movements being the most famous. It was particularly interesting to watch the interplay between violinist and pianist, especially in the last movement of the Franck Sonata which begins as a canon between the two instruments.

Miss Little was not going to get away without an encore, and she didn't disappoint, performing her own version of the Czardas. Her fingers were moving so fast they were just a blur by the end.



**Tasmin even stopped for photos with two of our students, Annabel Bygrave and Ann Robinson.**





## PIANO MASTERCLASS

On 11th January, students, parents and teachers were entertained by Richard Meyrick, an internationally renowned pianist. Some students were lucky enough to get the chance to show their pieces in this masterclass with Mr Meyrick providing helpful hints and strategies for playing their pieces as musically and expertly as possible. From posture on the piano stool to playing as quietly as possible, students were put through their paces and all benefitted from his expertise. We were even treated to Mr Merrick's performance of a technically demanding piece by Chopin. From this evening, Emma Cohen and Charly Tyson were selected to receive the 'Pianoman Scholarship' which will mean they will be mentored and will receive free lessons from Richard Merrick himself. Many congratulations Emma and Charly!

## MENUHIN SCHOOL COMPOSITION WORKSHOP 2016

As part of the Good to Great programme, Y12 music students took part in our link project with the Menuhin School in Cobham. The Menuhin School, a specialist school for talented string players which was founded by the string prodigy Yehudi Menuhin, runs a three part workshop to support A level students developing their composition skills. We had already attended an introductory session in the Autumn term. Students had then been working on their compositions in lessons, focusing on composing in the Western classical tradition. Part of the focus is around understanding how to write for string instruments and exploring the playing techniques available on those instruments, such as pizzicato, tremolo and double stopping.

The second workshop was designed to allow students to take their semi-finished composition ideas back to the school and have them played through by the students at the school and commented on by the workshop leader Oscar Calomina. Although slightly worried about the quality of their compositions in comparison to the standards of playing, our students were soon put at their ease as they received many compliments and some excellent feedback on ways to improve.

Our final session, which will take place in March will see the final compositions being recorded by the Menuhin School students. We are delighted that we have been invited back as part of this partnership again this year.



**Our six brave students performing for Richard Meyrick and the audience at the piano masterclass.**

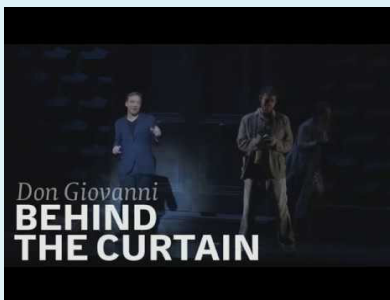


## DON GIOVANNI - BEHIND THE CURTAIN

The reaction of Y12 when told they were going to see an opera was not something I could print in a newsletter! However, even the most cynical were won over by this informal introduction to opera given by Glyndbourne Opera Company, with the Woking Choral Society taking over the role of chorus for the final scene.

Created by Presenter, Paul Rissmann, and The Revival Director, Lloyd Wood, this was a lively educational event. Paul Rissmann bounced on stage to interrupt the proceedings for his explanations and descriptions, including short chats with the singers, director and conductor, revealing the real people behind the roles.

We listened to extracts from the opera, fully staged and in dress, which was concluded with the dramatic finale, which we won't spoil for those of yet to see the Mozart opera. This production has made our students more open-minded towards opera and we hope to see a full production in the near future.



## GUYS AND DOLLS

Camberley Theatre, Camberley,



There's nothing the Music and Drama department likes more than a good school musical and this year's production of Guys and Dolls didn't disappoint. Auditions took place in July 2016 (with some new sixth formers auditioning by DVD from Qatar and other far flung places!) and rehearsals started in earnest in September 2016. In a school as busy as Gordon's, trying to get the whole production team and cast in the same place at the same time can be a challenge, but with an epic rehearsal schedule created by Miss Moore, we just about managed it.

Guys and Dolls is a challenging show for actors and musicians alike, and we were fortunate to have some fantastic lead characters, a great ensemble and several student musicians who stepped up to the challenge of playing in the professional pit band. Set in 1950s New York, the action focuses around the need to find a place for the gamblers' dice game. Two love stories and plenty of comedy means it's an audience favourite and that was certainly how it seemed from the audience reactions. Parents, friends and supporters packed out Camberley Theatre and were laughing and singing along with songs such as 'Luck be a Lady', 'Guys and Dolls' and 'Sit Down You're Rockin' the Boat.'

Already discussions are taking place for our production in 2019 – watch this space!

*"What a treat - a brilliant show! We were so impressed by the professional standard of the production. The performances were really excellent and the whole ensemble deserve huge congratulations. The music, backstage, and tech all worked so well together (we loved the hazer!) Please pass on our congratulations to everyone involved. A great success."*

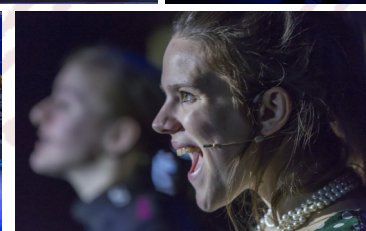
**Pam and John Lea, Audience Members**

*'I just have to say thank you for a great night out at the theatre last night. I can't believe how professional the show is – such a lot of talent and total commitment to the performance. I was right at the front and could see that every person on stage was totally engrossed in their role. I couldn't be more impressed.'*

**Julie Unsworth, Audience Member**

“A huge well done for Guys and Dolls - it was a fantastic production, awesome set, and the hard work of staff and students was so evident.”





## BAND OF THE ROYAL LOGISTICS



Being close neighbours to the Band of the Royal Logistics Corps, who are based at Deepcut Barracks, we were thrilled when they were able to offer us a workshop. We used the event to help polish some new music for Parades (keep your ears open in the near future for some changes!) and also playing through and tidying up the hymns for Remembrance Sunday. Players from Concert Band and Arches Band benefitted from some instrument specific help and advice and our percussionists picked up lots of new ideas for playing techniques. We hope to join together with the RLC Band again in the summer term for a joint fundraising concert.

## CAROL SERVICES

The build up to Christmas is always exciting, but in the Music Department it comes round in July when we start planning the Carol Services. With Mrs Blaine on maternity leave and a new member of staff in place we were treated to some new repertoire in the form of Bethelhemu from Nigeria. This was the first formal outing of our newly formed auditioning choir the 'Semper Fidelis Singers'. They sang two pieces on their own, 'Evening Prayer' by Humperdinck and 'Riu, riu, chiu', a traditional Spanish carol. They were then joined by members of the Show Choir for 'Christmas Lullaby' by Jason Robert Brown. The quality of sounds and part singing was complimented by many and we would like to congratulate all students for their excellent work leading up to the event. We have now moved choir to 8am on a Tuesday morning in a bid to avoid clashes with other activities. If your child would like to join and does not currently attend, please encourage them to come along.



## SPRING STRING EVENT

As a department we have worked hard on developing string playing over a number of years and therefore it is particularly pleasing to be able to present a whole concert devoted to strings. Mrs Dalrymple is our resident upper strings specialist and put this concert together. We also now have a specialist cello teacher in school with 5 students taking lessons. Our Spring Strings evening was a mixture of pieces by String Group and soloists. The string group performed two Scottish dances to start the evening off and rounded off the evening with their favourite piece – 'Medallion Calls' from Pirates of the Caribbean. Our senior players performed a staple of the string ensemble repertoire, Pachelbel's Canon as well as some Tango pieces which they have had great fun preparing. Well done to all students who performed solos; a lot of hard work had gone into preparing them and for some students it was their first public performance. It was also lovely to welcome some Gordonians to share this evening with us.



“The Chitty Chitty Bang Bang performance was fantastic! The actors were amazing and performed beautifully. I felt lucky to go and hope I'll see it again soon.”

Gigi Gough 7B

## CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG

New Victoria Theatre, Woking, 9th November 2016



This is a production with brilliant music, excellent acting and choreography, and a focus on solid fun. Faultless dance sequences are followed by snappy dialogue, clever stage design and great acting. It was also good to see Jason Manford, better known as a comedian, taking the lead role as Mr Potts.

Inventive projections take us along country roads, inside the sweet factory, to the seaside, to the court of Baron Bomburst in Vulgaria, and even through the sewers. We even got to see Chitty Chitty Bang Bang fly!



## CHICAGO

New Victoria Theatre, Woking

Chicago the musical is a splendidly cynical satire on corruption, the power of the press, the greed of manipulative lawyers, all told with music and dance with every song very pertinent to the story.

The excellent fifteen piece orchestra were on stage throughout, very much part of the action. It is the music, the lyrics and most of all the dancing, which are the mainstay of the show, with an excellent choreography uplifting the show to the highest level.

It was fantastic with superb acting, dancing and music. It was humorous and fun to watch professional actors and dancers at work. The music by Kander and Ebb never fails to engage and we enjoyed recreating the Fosse dance moves on the way back to the minibus.



## LAMDA NEWS

The results from our last exam session are in. Students performed for examiner, Angela Newson, in November 2016 and did very well indeed. Congratulations to all who received Distinctions. Our next exam session were held at the school on Monday 6th and Tuesday 7th March; due to the demand for LAMDA lessons we had to request two dates for the exams. We eagerly await updating you with news of the results in our next newsletter.

If any students are interested in partaking in LAMDA lessons please contact Mrs Medlar on [cmedlar@gordons.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:cmedlar@gordons.surrey.sch.uk)



# STUDENT FOCUS

Grace Cottage (Y10, VI) is no stranger to the limelight having been part of many productions and concerts inside school, but as an actor, singer and dancer she has an impressive portfolio of productions to look back on as part of her membership of the British Theatre Academy.

Grace starred in Annie in the West End in the summer 2015 at The Arts Theatre. She performed at the Kenton Theatre Henley Nov 2015, then at the amazingly stunning Minack theatre of the cliffs in Porthcurno Cornwall in Oliver last Easter. Godspell by Stephen Schwartz was her next production at St Paul's church in Covent Garden last summer. Most recently she has sung at Hampton Hill theatre in 'A night at the musicals' and is about to appear there again at the end of February in Monty Python's Spamalot.



## 1. How old were you when you first started performing and what was your first performance in?

I have loved performing ever since I can remember! I started dancing at 3 so I guess then really but before that I definitely showed my mum some dance moves around our kitchen! The first performance I ever did was my first dance show at Camberley theatre. I was about 5 years old and the show was called "The Street". I was the youngest year in the dance school and we did a grade 1 modern number to "baby face". We all wore pink pyjamas with ducks on.

## 2. What first drew you to the Performing Arts?

I would say my mum drew me into performing as she would be the one that took me to dancing classes and would dance around in the lounge with me every Saturday night when Strictly was on! However, when I was 8 or 9, I went and saw Matilda up in London and I was so blown away by these kids that were my age and I turned to my mum and said that this is what I wanted to do!

## 3. What would be your dream role?

My dream role, that's easy! My favourite musical is "13" and I would love love love, more than anything to play Patrice! It has been my dream role for over 4 years now! I just find that she is such a "real" character plus she has the best songs aha!

## 4. Do you get nervous before a performance, and if so how do you control this?

I always get nervous before a performance and it's horrible! I'm honestly so critical about myself and I say things to myself like "maybe you shouldn't go on" or "what if you mess up"! I should really try and be more positive! But, I'd say when I am nervous before a performance I just remind myself how much I want to be here and how much support I have from my friends and family! It's important to remember this because then I know that I can go out there and do it for them! I also find that rolling my shoulders back helps and also bizarrely I sing a nursery rhyme in my head (I don't know why). It makes me able to control my breathing and also distracts me enough to think about something else.

# LAMDA PRESENTATIONS

On Wednesday 8th March, two Year 9 students and nine Year 12 students presented their LAMDA speeches (that they had been examined on the day before) at our very own speech night in the library. Each student spoke for four minutes on their thoughts from fashion to whether footballers are entitled to their high salary. For some students, it was their first foray into speaking in front of a large audience. Year 12 students, having taken LAMDA lessons since September, took their 'Speaking in Public' exam after only six months.

LAMDA results for March 2017: 17 Merits and 16 Distinctions!

## STRING GROUP

The String Group at Gordon's is going from strength to strength. With a concert date in the calendar, our 8am rehearsal slots on Thursdays are getting busier and busier. Led by the very able Mrs Dalrymple, The String Group is open to any player, of any ability, and it is really heartening to see students of different abilities helping and supporting each other.

Particular mention should go to our players in Y7 and Y8, who are making excellent progress in their ensemble playing. Free tickets for our evening of String Music on the 8th March 2017 in the Chapel at 6.30pm are available by emailing [music@gordons.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:music@gordons.surrey.sch.uk).



## MODEL UNITED NATIONS PERFORMANCE

The Semper Fidelis Singers made their first solo outing as pre-dinner entertainment for the Model United Nations Conference which was hosted at Gordon's School on the weekend of 4/5th March. As the theme of the conference was 'Being brave, taking risks' the choir selected two items which they felt had a similarly uplifting message - 'Cross the Line' and 'Don't Stop Me Now.' The performance took place in the Recreation Hall and we were surprised to find on our arrival that, as well as performing to all the MUN delegates from nine other schools we were also performing to the guest speaker for the evening, Vince Cable. Well done to the SF singers and thanks for giving up your Saturday evening.







# SUMMER ARTS EVENING 2016

PHOTO GALLERY

