



**50** YEARS OF  
EXCEEDING  
EXPECTATIONS  
1968 2018



MUSIC  
Department  
**NEWSLETTER**  
SUMMER TERM 2019





ROB HALL

# FROM THE DIRECTOR OF MUSIC



With the end of another academic year fast approaching, our latest Newsletter celebrates the many achievements of our BSAK students over the past term, many of which have been achieved alongside the academic pressures of school or public exams. Once again the commitment and devotion of the students has been truly exemplary and I would like to place on record my heart-felt thanks to everyone who has been involved in music-making, in whatever capacity this term.

It would be amiss of me not to start by reflecting upon the fabulous Gala Concert which came early in the term; it simply was an outstanding evening and one which will no doubt live long in the memory of everyone who was there. The breadth of musical talent on display was a fitting testament to the department and a real celebration of 50 years of Music at BSAK. The 300+ students conducted themselves impeccably throughout and the results were simply breath-taking. Bringing the whole school together and incorporating the wider community certainly created a very special atmosphere that embodies the BSAK ethos. Alas, opportunities such as this do not come around too often, but I certainly hope that we have given our students an insight into working in a professional arena a stunning auditorium, with excellent back-stage facilities and incredible support from the NYU team. I am sure it will not be our last visit to NYU or indeed to other amazing venues in Abu Dhabi and beyond...

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More recently we have had, in the final weeks since the Eid holiday, a number of smaller, more informal concerts which have ensured that our musicians have been kept busy! The Beginners' Concerts are always a real highlight of the termly calendar, giving our younger musicians the chance to perform in front of a hugely supportive audience. Invariably students are giving their very first public solo performances in these concerts and the atmosphere is simply electric as you can feel the audience willing each and every performer to play or sing to the best of their ability. I wonder how many of our 6th Form Leavers remember playing in one of the Beginners' Concerts?

This term's Unplugged Concert - soon to be renamed 'Plugged' - was a truly spectacular event which took place in the Theatre. Once again the variety and high level of talent on display was superb and the singers captivated the audience with their performances; it really was an entertaining evening from our Rock n Pop singers. It is clear that, in addition to the fabulous work undertaken by our amazing singing and guitar teachers, the influence Paul Phoenix had on some of our singers during his visit last term has been immense; The communication and the emotive story-telling really came across more than ever before. My thanks as ever go to the band and all the teachers who give the students these amazing opportunities!

The Small Ensembles Concert was a new addition to the calendar this year, brought about partly by Primary and Secondary musicians already having joined forces for the Gala Concert. Nonetheless, it was a wonderful concept and the concert featured an array of chamber ensembles - duos and duets, trios, quartets, and other small groups. It was particularly special to see siblings performing together in small groups. It may have been the first such concert but, given its success, almost certainly won't be the last!



### **ABRSM results**

Congratulations to the students who sat their ABRSM exams this term. Once again the results made for immensely pleasant reading with over 60% of students achieving merits or distinctions. I would encourage any students who are preparing to take an exam next term to maintain a regular practice routine over the summer, including using the time to learn all the scales, arpeggios and other technical exercises. These really do make a huge difference to the likelihood of achieving those higher tiers!

### **Trinity results**

At the time of writing we are still awaiting the Musical Theatre results and some of the Classical results, however once again, those that have come in are simply outstanding. The Rock n Pop students enjoyed particular success with 8 distinctions and 7 merits from the 17 entrants. Three of these were Grade 8 - Cora passed with Distinction, Alex with Merit, and Marcus achieved a notable pass also.

The 27 Classical candidates achieved 5 distinctions (including Daniella in her Grade 8 Singing) and 18 merits (also including Eilidh's Grade 8 singing). Congratulations to all the students and indeed their teachers too!



50TH ANNIVERSARY  
**GALA CONCERT 2019**









## Staff News

Unfortunately at the end of term we will be saying goodbye to two outstanding members of the Music team. Molly Carter has been at BSAK for 6 years, initially as Cello Teacher and more recently, as our Head of Strings. Her attention to detail and willingness to go way beyond expectations have been invaluable and she has built up an incredible rapport with her students who hold her in very high esteem. As a colleague, she has been a real delight to work with and we will miss her enormously; she has fully immersed herself in all sorts of different school events and activities, not just restricted to the music department. How fitting that in her final term, Lucie, a long-standing student of Molly's achieved a distinction in her ARSM Cello Diploma.

Congratulations to Lucie, but also to Molly for giving Lucie the instruction, encouragement and motivation to fulfil such a fine achievement.

Sacha Kilgour leaves us after two years as a part-time Singer Teacher. Her infectious enthusiasm has rubbed off on students and staff alike and she has taken musical theatre to another level. The department is now awash with distinction-achieving drama queens (and kings!) Sacha leaves us to take up a new role in the Future Centre, an organisation with whom we already have close ties, so we very much hope to work together on future projects.

On behalf of all the staff and students, I would like to thank them both for their contributions to the department and indeed the wider school community.

Congratulations to our Head of Keyboard, Alex Tchobanov, who married his fiancée Pamela during the Eid holiday. We wish them every happiness in their lives together.

Congratulations also to former colleague and Head of Singing, Tanja Stefanovic on the birth of her daughter, Talia. Mother and daughter are both doing well.



## Reflection and forward thinking

At the time of writing this introduction, we are busy preparing for the Annual Music Awards Evening which takes place at The Club. The evening opens with a short speech during which I reflect on the year's achievements but also look ahead to the forthcoming academic year. A successful department needs to constantly assess and seek areas for development or improvement and ours is no different. Every year we get together as a department and discuss what went well, what perhaps didn't go so well



and what can we do to make things better in future years. Whenever possible we also ask the students what they think and we also value input from parents.

A few new initiatives will be launched next year which will include a new Primary Orchestra and a Primary Singing Competition. With regard to giving students and parents more choice, we will be offering the opportunity for students to take part in an exciting 7-day performance tour to Salzburg and Vienna next summer, in addition to the annual YMoG trip which takes place in late January. More details on all of these will be available in the near future.

### ***Russell Group Universities Advice - good news for Arts Subjects at last!***

We are delighted by the news that the Russell Group universities have scrapped their controversial list of 'facilitating A level subjects' which was originally drawn up to help students choose A-levels that would 'open doors to more degrees' at the most selective universities. The list has had a devastating impact on the uptake of students taking arts subjects such as Music, especially at A level; indeed A level Music is the fastest disappearing subject in UK schools according to Deborah Annetts, chief executive of the Incorporated Society of Musicians. This has also impacted uptake of Music at GCSE as students felt that the EBacc suite of subjects would be the only way to get into the top universities.

It is however becoming increasingly clear that the message from employers is that they are looking for creativity in the workforce and therefore students taking creative arts subjects may well fare better in the jobs market than those relying solely on 'traditional' STEM subjects.



Sarah Stevens, the Russell Group's Director of Policy, said a new website 'will give pupils, teachers and parents the opportunity to test out many different combinations of subjects based on their interests to find out the degrees that may be open to them.' It will certainly be worth students accessing this website early so that they are in a good position to make informed choices.

### ***Thank you!***

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the students for their hard work, dedication, resilience and unwavering commitment to the department and their teachers. It certainly makes our job even more enjoyable when we see the students' willingness to take on-board the advice and constructive criticism that they receive - the results speak for themselves. I would particularly like to thank those students who are leaving us at the end of the year, many of whom have been at BSAK for many years and have made considerable contributions to the musical life of the school. We hope that we have gone some way to equipping you with the skills and passion to continue your music-making in your next chapters. Keep in touch and good luck from everyone in the department.

Thanks also to you as parents for the support you give to your sons and daughters and to the department.

My final word of thanks goes to all the staff in the department; we genuinely have a fantastic team working here at BSAK and we would be unable to offer half the opportunities we do if it wasn't for their willingness to go far beyond expectations to make a substantial difference to the students' lives.

Have an enjoyable summer holiday!





# MUSIC AWARDS 2019







Photo © to Kelcey Willson



## INTERVIEW WITH **MRS DODDS - PRIMARY MUSIC CO-ORDINATOR**



### *Why did you become a Music teacher?*

When I was 6, my teacher, Mrs Oxley, would read a story at the end of the day and always play her guitar and we'd sing a song. She asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up and I said "I want to be like you!". She inspired me at such a young age and that was that. I trained as a Primary class teacher with Music as my specialism. I didn't actually teach music full time until I worked for Hampshire Music Service 15 years into my teaching career. It is the best job in the world and I feel very privileged and lucky to be here at BSAK.

### *What qualifications do you need to be a Music teacher?*

To become a teacher you need a teaching degree or a degree with a teaching certificate obtained post graduate. I have a Bachelor of Education Honours degree with a Music specialism - BEd(hons). I studied for four years at Bretton Hall-University of Leeds. Most of all you need passion, enthusiasm, a willingness to change at any moment and endless energy. Music is a performing Art, I perform everyday to the most critical audience there is Children.

### *What do you love most about your job?*

For me it is enabling others to express themselves through Music and witnessing their enjoyment; happy noise as I like to call it! I have wonderful colleagues who enable me to indulge my passion and support me everyday.

### *Who are your favourite musicians?*

I enjoy all Music especially live. I really enjoy listening to albums and often ask people what their top five albums of all time would be, so here are mine:

Graceland - Paul Simon

Rumours - Fleetwood Mac

Violator - Depeche Mode

Diva - Annie Lennox

The Jazz Singer - Neil Diamond

(This is a secret, don't tell anyone - I have seen him live 3 times too!)

I love Mozart's Clarinet Concerto, which I played when I was at school and Ravel's String Quartet, which I studied at A Level many, many years ago.

### *Is music a part of your life outside of school?*

I have been a member of a choir since I was at school. I love the feeling when it all comes together, the harmonies all around me and being part of something very special. I have sung in cathedrals, marquees, desert camps, Naval dockyards and shopping centers to name but a few. I have been a member of women's choirs as an adult- The Wide World Voices- singing songs from all over the world (we even made a CD and sent it to Nelson Mandela!) and Africa pella a choir consisting mostly of women of African and Caribbean origin. I loved this choir and had the privilege of leading them for a year too.



I am now a member of "The Sand of Music", a women's choir here in Abu Dhabi. In absence of family here in the desert, these ladies are my "Choir Sisters", we hold a passion for singing and support each other.



### **Lucie's Cello Journey**

*'I first started playing the cello at the end of Year 3 by coincidence. Back then, there were not many cellists at BSAK, so when I found out I couldn't play the clarinet because I'd lost my front teeth all at once, I thought I would give the cello a go... And I am so glad that I did! I'm so privileged to have learnt to play the cello at BSAK because from the first years of playing, I was involved in ensembles like Junior Strings and in the past couple of years I have been able to help Miss Carter lead a similar ensemble: Cello Time. I cannot stress enough that some of the most rewarding parts about playing the cello is playing in a group and playing beautiful pieces of music in venues which not many people get the chance to play in. The fact that I have been able to play at NYUAD, The Louvre Abu Dhabi, Manarat Al Saadiyat and the DU Arena is just amazing. I think another major part of music at BSAK manifests itself in around January time every year. I have only been to YMOG 3 times and I have never won anything, but the experience as a whole is so gratifying and humbling. Being surrounded by such astounding musicians and cheering on our musicians in the first rounds or in the finals is one of the times of the year that I look forward to the most. It is so enjoyable that you forget how many hours of extra rehearsal time you complained about in the months leading up to the competition and the waiting around at St Christopher's school without any WIFI.*

*For any young (or older) cellists at BSAK, put in the hours and the effort throughout the year so that when ABRSM or Trinity exams come around you are not frantically trying to join an aural class or sign up for accompaniment sessions. However, the most important part of playing a musical instrument is having the passion and drive to learn, practice and develop your musicianship. Being a good performer and musician doesn't come easy. I have learnt that "talent" won't help you in an exam or in a concert if you haven't practised, so take the time out of your day, even if it is only 20 minutes, to pick up your instrument and play.*

*I will miss the music department and all the BSAK musicians when I go to uni and I hope that the department continues to excel and win prizes all over the region. I want to take the opportunity now to thank all the teachers and students that have helped and supported me throughout my musical journey at BSAK.'*



## HEAD OF BRASS

### ALI BRYCE SHORLAND

It would be impossible to reflect on the last term in the Brass Department without mentioning their fantastic performances in the Gala Concert in May! Community Brass and Al Khubairat Brass massed together to perform Olympic Fanfare to begin the concert. This is challenging repertoire and I was so impressed with how they all worked together on limited rehearsal time. Junior and Senior Funky Brass also massed together and gave a fabulous performance that had the audience clapping along enthusiastically! We also had a strong Brass section in Concert Band, Orchestra and for John Miles "Music" which ended the concert. I am extremely proud of everyone who took part and it was a highlight in my musical journey to date! Thank you.



I must mention the day we spent with Her Majesty's Band of the Royal Marines, Plymouth. Our Concert Bands had the amazing opportunity to work alongside these world class musicians and the sound they produced together was fantastic! I was particularly in awe of the sound made by the trombone section and brass in general. Such an amazing and inspiring day. We really are so lucky to be able to give our students these experiences and it is a wonderful part of my job







As ever, there are always things going on in the Brass Department. We had 12 students take ABRSM exams with 4 high passes and 6 merits. Particular mention must go to Ryan and Emma who both got distinctions for Grade 3 and 4 respectively. All students must have a big pat on the back for such excellent results! We had 5 take Trinity Classical exams so await with bated breath for those results to come through soon.....

Community Brass have just played in an informal concert to end their term and first full year of playing together. This ensemble is made up of students and adults from Abu Dhabi schools and there are always spaces for more people to join. You need to be around Grade 3 standard and rehearsals are on Saturdays 12.45-2.15 every two weeks. We start again in September. If you would like to know more about the ensemble then please email me [AShorland@britishschool.sch.ae](mailto:AShorland@britishschool.sch.ae) It is lots of fun.

Funky Brass gave a fantastic performance in Unplugged on 18 June and our Horn Ensemble sizzled on 19 June in the Small Ensembles Concert. Junior Brass are also in demand and will be performing in final assemblies on 4th July. A huge thank you to all of our Brass players for their hard work and dedication this year. Their progress and enthusiasm are a delight to witness.



We have a few sad farewells to say too. John, Ben and Henry are all leaving BSAK at the end of this term. I want to wish all of you well as you move on to new experiences, and thank you for your commitment to the Brass Team. Good luck!

We have quite a long list of students who are taking ABRSM and Trinity exams in November and December so please, please take your instruments and practise over the summer holidays, especially if you have an exam coming up. 8 weeks of no practice is a disaster for brass players and we will have to start all over again when you return. Not ideal when you may only have 11 weeks to prepare for an exam.... Please do your best!

All that remains is for me to wish you all a wonderful summer and thank you all for your support this term, as ever. Bravo to everyone and see you next term!!

Ali Bryce-Shorland

A big thanks to Paxman Musical instruments for sponsoring this year's Brass Prize.





## HEAD OF GUITAR KALANA DE SILVA

We are delighted with another term and there were many exciting performances and achievements throughout this term. The guitarists have made us all proud and we are blessed to have such amazing talent in this school.

### **Gala Concert**

Almost 50 Guitar and Ukulele students performed together for our 50th Anniversary BSAK Gala Concert. Guitarists' from years 3 to 13 have performed together and we are so proud of their stunning performances.

### **Goodbye and all the best!**

We would like to wish these fantastic guitarists farewell and wish them the best of luck in their future endeavors. We will miss them all very much; almost all of them started learning here in Year 3.

Aden, Abdus, Danny & Saleh



### **Awards Evening**



### **Beginners' Concerts**

We are so pleased to see so many guitarists making their mark at the Beginners' Concerts and their performances have been brilliant. Many thanks to Mr Lopez for all his efforts too!





## Ensemble Concert



Congratulations to Marcus on achieving his Electric Guitar Grade 8 Rock and Pop Exam this year! Again, he has been learning guitar at BSAK from Year 3 and he has made fantastic progress over the years. Now he performs Rock Anthems such as "Sweet child of mine"

## Unplugged Summer Concert (Guitars)

It was great to see so much talent on display in the recent Unplugged. Electric guitarists performed some really challenging music and it was fantastic to see so many younger students also taking to the stage. The future of Rock n Pop guitar is looking very bright indeed.



## Music Exams

Nearly 35 guitar pupils have taken their ABRSM, Trinity classical or Trinity Rock and Pop exams. The results were fantastic across the board. We are so proud of them.

Huge thanks to Musician's Corner Abu Dhabi Mall for sponsoring the Guitar Award at the Music Awards 2019.

Finally we would like to say 'Happy Holidays' to all our talented guitarists and to all you amazing parents. It has been another fantastic year for the guitars and we look forward to another exciting year.

Kalana De Silva / Dennis Lopez





## HEAD OF PIANO ALEX TCHOBANOV

It has been a busy and exciting term at our Piano Department. The 50th Anniversary BSAK Gala Concert in New York University was an immense accomplishment, which included a number of music staff and students working together as a team. We would like to acknowledge William, who took part in this remarkable event performing a challenging piano part as a member of "Funky Brass". In addition, we have had some great results at the recent ABRSM Music Examinations. We would like to particularly congratulate our high achievers: Eva and Hector (Distinction Grade 1), Daniel (Distinction - Grade 2), and Rayan (Distinction - Grade 3).

There have also been a number of pupils performing piano duets, trios, and a quintet at the Small Ensemble Concert on June 19th. Congratulations to all for their hard work and dedication!





## SINGING

To celebrate BSAK's 50th year we all had the privilege to be part of the 50th Gala Concert at NYU. This was undoubtedly a resounding success, and both our Primary Choir, and our Secondary Choir, supported by the Al Khubairat Singers, made up the chorus of over 100 for Karl Jenkins's moving work, *The Peacemakers*.

The piece was an apt choice for our times and particularly in this Year of Tolerance. It will provide our students with some wonderful memories for years to come.

### ***Infant Singing Day Thursday 20 June.***

This was a lovely uplifting day of music making, with 3 other schools coming to join our BSAK year 2 singers and singing 'Songs From Around The World'. The day was organised superbly by Mrs Dodds. We had a day full of warm ups, rhythm games and song sharing, culminating in a short concert celebrating the songs we had learnt together, as well as individual performances from our visiting schools: Repton, Cranleigh and Al Mamoura.





## UNPLUGGED CONCERT

### Summer 2019

Well, the Unplugged team were pretty sure it probably couldn't get any better after our last blisteringly good concert way back in March but just to see, we plugged everything in and turned the lights on..... and Guess What???

#### **Unplugged-Plugged-In: The Theatre 25-06-19**

The theatre stage shook under the sheer Rock & Roll vibrations of Bon Jovi's classic anthem, *Sweet Child of Mine*, as it chimed out under the flashing lights, and what had been an insatiable, unassailable two hours of Rock and Pop excellence drew to a close. The audience filed out, some shamelessly playing their air guitars, others picking up the pieces of hearts decimated by the sheer emotional intensity of the performances of a few of our most talented BSAK musicians, and all of them aware that Yes, another slice of Unplugged magic had occurred and just for a while the earth within the small, seemingly irrelevant space of BSAK Theatre had shifted!

It's easy to forget the power of a bass guitar turned up to maximum to get under our skin and into our bloodstream, the beauty of a guitar solo played loudly and well, the jugular heartbreak of a vocal line delivered perfectly with passionate precision. But this evening we were reminded.

The night started with the raucous and brilliant melodic whiplash of our beloved Funky Brass, welcome first timers to Unplugged. Then came our first singer as the groove of *Maroon 5* and their ever popular, *Sunday Morning* kicked off and the band kicked in with Californian feel-good and it just kept rolling BABY! With singers covering a breadth of material from Miley Cyrus's *The Climb* to Rage against the Machine's *Wake up*, from Alicia Keyes's *Fallin* to John Lennon's *Imagine*, suffice to say there was something for everyone.







Our youngest Rock band hailed from the mean streets of Yr3 and took to the stage with a level of bravado and confidence that had the bravest amongst us quaking in our boots while laughing in the aisles at their sheer, brilliant audacity. And more importantly nodding our heads at their killer version of *Wild Thing*.

The evening rolled on, showcasing talent from lower primary level all the up to Yr 13 and everything in between. Performers came from every level of music at BSAK and each one of them impressed. It's impossible to choose one performance above another.

The show was hosted by our now veteran Unplugged hosts, Samar and Alex who ensured the evening ticked along while at the same time providing vocal and instrumental back up for various singers and musicians from the younger years (annoyingly talented, the pair of them...). Throughout the concert, singers provided backing vocals for other singers and lead vocals for guitarists, while our musicians provided instrumentation for singers with the music staff providing the bedrock with the now familiar dream-team that is *The Unplugged Band*. It was a hotchpotch of ages and excellence blending and working together to create compelling performances with the students front and centre. The level of performance was unquestionable, the urban backdrop of brick walls and corrugated iron fencing blended with the huge visual projections, commanding the air above each act, lending atmosphere and framing the musical action taking place below to great effect.

Many have spoken since about leaving that evening feeling "inspired", "joyous", "carefree", "elated". The focus and dedication of these young musicians felt inspiring because it is inspiring. A snapshot into what is possible when belief and passion collide. But perhaps also it may be something to do with the way Rock and Pop reminds us of the wildness buried within each of us. Of the need some days, to let music get under our skin and connect us with our emotions in the way that only hearing our favourite love song or most beloved rock anthem allows us to.

And as the lights went down and the musicians packed up the gear, hung up our stars, dispersed and headed home to get some much needed shut eye, we drifted in to dreamland with the comforting words of Ms Wolfe's final goodnight ringing in our ears "No need to worry about the future of Rock & Roll.....from what I've witnessed tonight, it is alive and well and kicking it here at BSAK!"





UNPLUGGED CONCERT  
Summer 2019







Photo © to Adrian Cambridge



## HEAD OF STRINGS MOLLY CARTER

It has been an incredibly busy time in the String Department this term, with students preparing for the epic 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala Concert at New York University Abu Dhabi, the Strings Concert, ABRSM examinations which challenged students from Grade 1 to Diploma Level, Beginner's Concert, Small Ensembles Concert and our Music Awards Evening. Needless to say, all of these events have undoubtedly enriched our String Students' learning experience! A HUGE Thank You must go to Mrs Hanneke Willson and Mr Roger Norkie for all their hard work teaching our young violinists and viola players, as well as coaching the numerous ensembles we have within our wonderful Strings Department.

### **Strings Recital**

The Strings Recital on 20<sup>th</sup> March was a fantastic occasion, and a memorable one to boot! I wrote the last newsletter just before our concert had taken place, so wanted to add some more photos from the concert itself. We had students of all ages performing solos as well as in larger ensembles. Junior String Orchestra was conducted by violinist Andrew, one of our 6<sup>th</sup> formers; and a wonderful debut performance it was for him, too! The Junior String Orchestra played brilliantly. Beginner Violin Time also performed, and made a great sound together with Mr Norkie playing the piano. Well done to all!



### **Lucie's Mock ARSM Cello Performance**

#### **Diploma Exam**



In preparation for her ARSM Cello Performance Diploma, Lucie performed a Mock recital exam on 25<sup>th</sup> April to Mr Bowler (previous Head of Performing Arts at BSAK, and former ABRSM Examiner). This experience gave Lucie the opportunity to gain

some invaluable feedback from Mr Bowler, in order to make final adjustments to her pieces prior to her exam in May. It was also a wonderful opportunity for friends, family and staff to hear her full programme, and support Lucie through this part of her musical journey.

Lucie was very relieved and excited after her ARSM Cello Performance Diploma Exam, and performed fantastically, achieving a high Distinction for this qualification!

More information about Lucie's musical journey can be found in her full-page spread!

### **Gala Concert - New York University Abu Dhabi**

Preparation for the Gala Concert began in February, and involved approximately 40 string players. We were immensely proud of all of them for their performances in String Orchestra, Orchestra, Orchestra for Peacemakers, and the 'Music' Ensemble. This selection of photographs is taken from the Preparation day and dress rehearsal at NYUAD.







### **Strings Concert**

This was a particularly memorable concert for me, as my final Strings recital as Head of Strings, and I was immensely proud of all the string players who performed; as soloists and ensemble members. Students performed pieces from beginner to Diploma level; many of whom were preparing for ABRSM examinations. Bravo to all who performed! Many thanks to Hanneke Willson for her support, ensemble coaching and accompanying.



### **ABRSM Examinations**

Congratulations to all the String Students who took ABRSM Examinations this session!

*Well done to: Sophia, Jaden, Jac, Gigi, Katie, Breah, Evie, Alice, Rashed, Eva, Savannah, Omar, Sura, Khadija, Amelie, Hector, Kenodh, Munachi, Adam, Taraz and Lucie.*

Our String students performed brilliantly in their exams and the level ranged from Grade 1 to ARSM Performance Diploma, including all the grades in between. The average ABRSM Mark for String players was 122.6 (Merit), and 48% of those students taking an exam achieved a Distinction!

Bravo to all our string students and a big Thank You to all parents for your continued support - it makes a huge difference!

### **Beginner's Concert**



*Well done to violinists Marianne and Ruby, and cellist Aya.*

*Thank you to Mrs Willson for her students' performances and for organising this concert!*



### **Small Ensembles Concert**

Bravo to our string ensembles, and a huge Thank You to Mrs Willson who rehearses the violin groups who performed in this concert – and for organising such a wonderful concert for our budding String Musicians!



**Cello Time:** Amelie, Tigerlily, Sura, Munachi, Cristina, Kenodh, Sam, Omar, Sam, Amara and Sophia

### **Music Awards Evening**

We are immensely proud of those students nominated for awards, and it was a delight giving students the recognition they deserve for all their dedication and hard work. String musicians from across the school were nominees and winners of the various awards, including the Upper Strings Prize and Lower Strings Prize on 25<sup>th</sup> June at The Club. We were very fortunate to have our prizes sponsored by Stringers London, for the second consecutive year. For those of you visiting the UK in the summer, Stringers provide exemplary quality instruments, ranging from beginner to professional level, as well as all strings, accessories, cases and set-ups. They have shops in London and Edinburgh.

*Stringers*  
LONDON





We would also like to thank and congratulate Jonathan for performing at the Music Awards Evening - your performance was spine-tinglingly good!

Jonathan is one of our post-grade 8 violinists and has improved so much in recent years; he is now tackling repertoire by Bach, Mendelssohn and Wieniawski.



It has been a huge pleasure and privilege to be part of so many young string musicians' journey here at BSAK. Over my six years here, I have seen students develop in so many ways; both musically and personally. I have always been impressed by how confident students at BSAK are, and how this develops over time. In seeing our senior musicians grow from being members of the Junior String Orchestra to now, as members of the Chamber Orchestra and other larger ensembles tackling challenging repertoire, I have seen so many of them develop into warm-hearted, well-rounded, confident and extremely musical young people, and this is something we can all take pride in.

Wherever their musical journeys go, I hope our budding string musicians continue to appreciate and love music.

I would like to thank you all from the bottom of my heart for your support over the last six years - it has been an incredible personal and professional journey for me, and I will never forget what a wonderful experience it has been to work alongside your wonderful children. Thank you.

I wish you all the very best of luck for the future and hope you will keep in touch. As I have told my students, 'once your cello teacher, always your cello teacher'. I will be working as Manager of the Cello Department at Stringers in London so if any string players are looking for their own instrument, or an up-grade, I would be more than happy to help select the right instrument and / or bow with you and your child.





## HEAD OF WOODWIND CLAIRE DAY

Well here we are at the end of yet another academic year; as we move on it is good to reflect on the achievements and highlights during Term 3. I think you would all be very surprised if I began this newsletter with anything other than a rave about the superb Gala Concert which took place on May the 1st in the Red Theatre, NYUAD. The commitment to rehearsal shown by each and every woodwind student really paid off, creating the most amazing atmosphere and spectacular music. Thank you parents for your support of this concert - lots of to-ing and fro-ing was required, new black clothes and shiny shoes were adorned and without you our students couldn't avail themselves of this golden opportunity (yes I did that on purpose!)







Congratulations to all our students who took their ABRSM exams in May - fabulous results for all. Bravo everyone your hard work, determination, bravery and wonderful musicianship really did pay off...

Flutes: Sehansa, Iason, Cristina, Eugenie, Eva, Abi, Pearl, Claudia, Munachi, Akaylia, Cassady, Sophia, Isabella

Oboe: Freya, Lara

Saxophone: Dautari, Ryan, Lewis, Eva, Jude

Clarinet: Viraj, Stefanie, Milo, Famke,

Big praise to all students who participated in our Beginner, Informal and Ensemble Concerts. Our Year 7 and 8 students played for the opening of The Senior Awards in the foyer of the Dusit Thani and performed beautifully in yet another spectacular venue

A big thank you must go to Howarth of London and All Flutes Plus who provide excellent support for the purchase of new instruments and music throughout the year and have sponsored our Woodwind and Flute Awards again this year.







### **Spotlight on a Scholar**

*Cassady Lovell is a Year 5 Flute Scholar who has just passed her Grade 3 flute with Distinction....*

#### **What do you enjoy about music Cassady?**

*I love that there are so many different types of music...slow, fast, legato, staccato. I mostly choose music that's fast and lively even when I'm feeling sad as music lifts my mood.*

#### **What difference has being a Scholar made to you?**

*Being a Scholar has given me lots of opportunities - to play along with different instruments but also older more advanced students - this can be a bit scary but in a good way - it makes me want to be better.*

#### **What do you like about the flute?**

*I love the variety of the flute - I can trill, make whale noises, do ghost notes and I love stretching through the octaves and chromatics!*

#### **Do you play any other instruments?**

*Yes, I play the piano and am preparing for Grade 3. It is hard to read 2 clefs at the same time and to coordinate both hands but I think scales are easier as I can see where I'm going!*

#### **Where will music feature in the future?**

*I want to be an author when I grow up and hope to write Harry Potter type books but I will always have music in my life - it brings me so much pleasure.*

It is always a difficult moment for us teachers - saying goodbye to so many students who are leaving BSAK is never easy. We grow very attached to your children in the time that we spend with them over the years. Goodbye and good luck goes to:-

Kathryn, Sophia, Sarah, Amelie, Pearl, Sasha, Lara, Louise, Imogen, Katie, Eva and Milo keep on enjoying your music, you shall be greatly missed.

Happy holidays to all - if you hope to take an exam in December please remember to keep on top of scales as well as your pieces during the summer break!







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