

THE MUSIC DEPARTMENT AT HABERDASHERS’ ASKE’S SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

The Music Department is strong, inclusive and vibrant, involving large numbers at most levels. The concert life in particular is held in high regard amongst pupils and staff and the department enjoys considerable support from the SMT and the Bursary. Whilst pursuing excellence and high quality musical experiences, as many girls as possible are encouraged to take part in music-making. The Director of Music is supported by one full time and three part time members of staff and these four are responsible for all the curriculum teaching and a large proportion of the extra-curricular activity in the Senior Department. 25 self-employed, visiting music teachers (some of whom direct ensembles) and the academic staff are accommodated in superb, modern, specialist accommodation including two large classrooms, two music technology studios set up for whole class work, two large rehearsal/concert rooms, a recording studio, a library area, staff rooms and dedicated storage areas. The department is supported by a non-teaching assistant.

The Director of Music is responsible for music through the whole school but a full-time Head of Junior Performing Arts manages the junior school music provision, teaching all the curriculum music up to KS2 and conducting most of the junior ensembles including a large orchestra, wind band, and choirs. Music in the junior school is very strong and the musical links between the two sections of the school are excellent.

Among extra-curricular groups meeting regularly in the Senior School are three choirs, and a chamber choir, the St Catherine Singers; two orchestras and a chamber orchestra, a large wind band, senior wind orchestra, two jazz bands, and smaller ensembles such as the clarinet and flute groups. The Symphony Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra and Choral Society perform works at the top end of the repertoire. Recent works have included Poulenc’s Gloria, Sibelius’ 3rd Symphony, Schubert’s Mass in G, Bach’s Magnificat, Mendelssohn’s Violin Concerto and the Second Piano Concerto of Rachmaninov.

The annual pattern of concerts includes major events every term, which involve all the school’s musicians. Whilst certain key events are fixed (i.e. the Carol Service at St Martin’s-in-the-Fields), the department aim is to provide a flexible series of concerts which give the girls the widest possible musical experience. A highlight of the department’s work is the biennial Music Tour – 60 girls and 8 staff performed in five concerts around Salzburg in July 2016 and the next Tour is travelling to Barcelona in October 2018. Performance at every level is encouraged and valued and opportunities are always sought to encourage girls of different ages to perform together (e.g. Cantabile (Year 8 and 9 chamber choir) and the St Catherine Singers performing together in the Carol Service). A recent innovation has been the introduction of a Jazz Café concert featuring the Jazz Band, solo items and various ensembles. There is a growing interest in pop music – the Year Nine girls write a pop song as part of their course which is recorded and performed live at a lunchtime concert, whilst the ‘Battle of the Bands’ involving both Boys’ and Girls’ Schools is a very popular event. Many girls perform at both formal and informal concerts throughout the year.

The pattern of Junior School concerts includes an Autumn Concert, an Infant Production and Carol Service in December, a Spring Concert and a Chamber Concert in June. There are several lunchtime concerts given by Junior girls throughout the year. The main production in May often involves a considerable musical input including, in recent years, productions of ‘The Wind in the Willows’ and ‘Bugsy Malone’.

The Music Department works very closely with the Drama Department, with girls and staff providing original music for the last two senior productions. The recent adaptation of Romeo and Juliet, *‘RnJ’* included songs written by the girls and was a great success. Another area to see growth in recent years is collaboration with the Boys’ School ‘over the wall’ and this has included a joint orchestral concert in July 2007, and a Barbican concert in March 2009 and 2014. The next Barbican concert is due in 2020. Girls and boys sometimes perform together at chamber concerts in both schools and there is scope for joint music making as part of the L6 General Studies programme. The Jazz Bands of both schools have worked together on a NYJO workshop, whilst a joint Chamber Choir performed at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge in March 2012 and at Balliol College, Oxford in 2013.

As one of the seven schools of the Worshipful Company of Haberdashers, there are occasional opportunities for joint endeavour, e.g. the Millennium Service, in the presence of the late HRH the Princess Margaret in St Paul’s Cathedral, when pupils from all seven of the schools performed in 3 choirs. We are also invited occasionally to provide musical items at the wonderful new Haberdashers’ Hall in the City and also for the Old Girls’ Association. The Chamber Orchestra recently took part in a concert featuring all of the Haberdashers schools, celebrating Handel’s 250th anniversary.

The Music Department teaches girls up to Oxbridge scholarship level. KS3 classes are taught in half sets, with 12 girls in each group. Lessons in Year 7 and 8 include some experiences in Samba and African Drumming. Post Key Stage 3, we offer GCSE groups (Edexcel) and A2 level Music (OCR) there is an average of five or six.

**The position of Bassoon Teacher from January 2019**

We are now looking for a dynamic, charismatic and experienced teacher of the bassoon who are interested in furthering the progress of pupils at all levels of achievement. The successful candidate will join a well-established team of visiting teachers and a department where there is ample scope for pupils to get involved in ensemble playing in all aspects. The current number of pupils learning the bassoon is four, but there will be every encouragement in terms of provision of instruments and support to encourage young bassoonists.

Each post is a self-employed one, subject to a term’s notice by either the Visiting Music Teacher or the School. The School offers ‘facilities to teach’ and there is a small rental charge for the room per year.

The rate for instrumental lessons is currently £235 for ten individual 30 minute lessons.

The current rate for taking an ensemble is £56 per hour. The current rate for piano accompaniment is £48 per hour. There is also a concert fee for directing a group in a concert, currently £110. There are opportunities for assisting with orchestral/band rehearsals on an occasional basis. Any extra professional playing work at the School currently receives a fee of £110 for a short rehearsal and concert.

Visiting Music Teachers are asked to write reports on their pupils once every year in the Summer Term. Parents are welcome to visit instrumental lessons during ‘Open Week’ in October. Visiting Teachers organise their own timetables and most pupils’ lessons work on a rotation system. Informal concerts run by visiting teachers which promote performances by their own pupils are most welcome. Visiting Teachers are also involved in coaching chamber groups.

***As a School we take Safeguarding issues very seriously. Our recruitment process is very thorough and references are taken up and verified prior to the interview stage. The successful candidate for the post will be subject to an enhanced DBS disclosure and all staff are expected to receive Safeguarding training once every three years. Visiting Staff will also be required to undertake online training in areas such as Fire Safety and Prevent.***

Please send in your application form on paper or as an attachment to an e mail. A short covering letter outlining your reasons for applying and your aspirations for the post is also welcome. Please see the address details below. All applications will be acknowledged by e mail. Shortlisted candidates will receive further communications in due course.

Interviews will take place shortly after the closing date for the applications as advertised. The interview will include a performance of a short piece of the candidate’s choice and a sample lesson of up to 20 minutes with a pupil. Further details will be given to candidates invited for interview.

A.J. Phillips, Director of Music

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