

Music



@ St. John's

Instruments... which play themselves ? !

Issue 20, July 2024

The children go to 'The Musical Museum' to experience a fantastical world of unique musical instruments, some, which can even 'play themselves!'

Magical Musical Words

The children learn about the Italian language in music and the instructions that composers give us to help put on a convincing performance.

Cinder-Ella!

Back together, the Prep. and Senior schools join forces to put on a sparkling and joyous production of the Rodgers and Hammerstein's hit - Cinderella.

Music Department News...

Dear Reader,

Throughout the year you have given some wonderful performances and you have demonstrated your ability to adapt your performance style to any occasion, be it the upbeat energy of giving thanks at Harvest (*'The Big Blue Tractor' and 'Harvest Samba' were a particular highlight for me*), or the sombre respect necessary for Remembrance and Easter. One of my favourite assemblies is the Mother's Day Service because it gives you the chance to say thank you to your mum for all she does and I know that all the mums absolutely loved the assembly this year. Another highlight for me is always the Christmas production and this past year's show *'The Night Before Christmas'* was no exception. You learn so many different skills when rehearsing a huge production like this in a professional theatre and you are very fortunate that St. John's values music and the arts so much that you are given this opportunity.

Instrumental playing is thriving at St. John's. Prep Two have made a really good start with the recorder this year and Lower Transitus have continued to develop their recorder skills. Many of you performed solo at our recent Recital Evening or the Summer Concert and it is very exciting to see the talent that is being nurtured in our younger instrumental pupils. It means that we can look forward to a very high standard of solo performances in the future as those younger children move up through the school. If you would like to take up a musical instrument, why not discuss it with your parents? You should think hard about whether you could cope with the extra study in addition to your current academic workload, but if you are certain that you would be focused and would be committed to practising every day, ask your parents to contact me and I can add your name to our waiting list.

Finally, I would like to thank those of you who are in the choir for your commitment and energy this year. I know that I work you very hard - and I make no apology for that - but you are always dedicated to doing your very best and you are great fun to work with.

Practise those instruments!

Mrs. Bowman

Head of Music -
(Lower Prep. School)



Dear Parents, Pupils, Teachers and friends of St. John's,

No two years at St. John's are ever the same, and I am pleased that this one has been no different. I am also happy to declare that we can never 'just have a quiet year' at St. John's for this reason!

All pupils this year have been given opportunities to sing or perform on an instrument for at least one special event, be it on their own study or as part of a class ensemble. All pupils have either sung, or played the recorder, violin or viola, which goes some way towards reaching our aims! Recent reports have therefore been that our productions are possibly now containing 'too much music!' Naturally to a musician then, this is wonderful news, and leads us well-towards pushing higher standards of music-making and opening up further opportunities, be it offering different instruments to study, competitions and events to enter outside of St. John's, or creating further events and clubs that we offer at the school.

Last academic year saw the rise of the singing sensation of 'acapella' which literally means 'without accompaniment' and therefore stretches the pupils' ability to sing on-pitch and in harmony. This requires a huge amount of focus and musicianship to tap into, but saw the Prep. School strike a win at the ISA national acapella competition and a special invitation to the Grand Hotel in Eastbourne for the ISA national headteachers' conference. This year therefore, we have been exploring new avenues for our instrumentalists and has even seen me working with ex-St. Johnians to include them in our events and maintain longer-lasting relationships with our musicians past and new.

As this year has focused on new musical opportunities and experiences and how that can enhance your life, the pupils' academic curriculum has echoed this by teaching the children how to appreciate the music that they hear, by listening quietly and understanding the musical language that is happening within. Part of a new curriculum change which happened last year saw pupils versed in 'musical appreciation in context'. Trips this year have taken our pupils to the Royal Albert Hall, enabling the children a glimpse into what it takes to become a professional musician.

R. J. Tunnah

Head of Music -
(Upper Prep. School)



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Senior School Welcome

Dear St. John's family,

I am thrilled to introduce myself as the new music teacher at St. John's Senior School. My name is Mr. Dimitris Varytimosoglou and over the years, I have had the privilege of teaching music to students in both primary and secondary schools, which has only deepened my passion for music education. With a background in music pedagogy and practical experience in playing and teaching guitar, bass guitar, ukulele and piano among many other instruments, I am excited to share my love for music with your children. My aim is to inspire and support each student throughout their musical journey, fostering not only a lifelong appreciation for the arts but also nurturing their growth in confidence and personal development.

I am committed to providing a supportive and enriching environment where students can explore their musical interests, develop their talents, and experience the many joys and benefits that come from engaging with music. I look forward to working with you and your child as the year progresses.

Please do not hesitate reach out and get in touch if you have any questions or feel that you have something specific that you wish to discuss.

Dimitrios Varytimosoglou

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Head of Music - St John's Senior School

*Mr. Dimitrios
Varytimosoglou*



Recorder

Music in the Lower School



Most of Prep Two and Lower Transitus have made some great progress with their recorder playing this year. Pupils have worked hard on their finger dexterity and breath control and they have a good understanding of the notes in the Treble Clef. Some pupils have made such great progress that they performed solo in the Summer Concert. Those who made the most progress practised regularly - little and often is best, so ten minutes of practising every day is much better than one longer session once a week.

Early Years Foundation Stage

The emphasis for learning in this age-group is learning through play, with lots of teacher-led games that expand pupils' musical understanding. As well as having access to musical instruments in their own classroom, which allows for spontaneous experimentation, we also have a great number of percussion instruments in the Music room. We regularly experiment with the instruments, thinking about how different sounds can represent different characters or feelings. Pupils listen to and respond to music - sometimes by talking about the music they have heard, and sometimes with physical movement that helps to develop their own expression and creativity.



Key Stage One

Key Stage 1 Music considers the aims and attainment targets of the National Curriculum, as well as non-statutory guidance provided by the Model Music Curriculum, with the three main areas of focus being performance, composition, and listening and responding to music. Music at St. John's goes well beyond these requirements and expected levels, with the teaching of traditional standard notation skills and the First Access Scheme, through which children in the lower school learn to play the recorder. Throughout the Key Stage, pupils develop musical skills and techniques in a range of ongoing activities.



Lower School Summer Concert 2024

The summer concert took place at a different venue than usual this year, which brought all sorts of new challenges, both logistically and acoustically. It was a huge success as always, because we encourage the children to be bold, expressive and determined to succeed. We were treated to some expressive group singing, fabulous instrumental and singing solos and ensembles, as well as some very entertaining readings. All pupils had worked so hard for weeks to make the concert a success and it was a lovely evening of excellent music – very well done and be proud of yourselves!



The study and performance of Music at St. John's develops pupils' personal expression and creativity and introduces them to the very best of human achievement. By listening to world music and music from the Western Classical tradition, pupils are given the skills to understand the world better by reflecting on the different cultures around us and the society in which we live. Besides being a creative and enjoyable activity, taking part in singing and musical performance has psychological benefits that stretch beyond that of any other subject. It can be a highly academic and demanding subject, but Music also teaches valuable life skills such as the ability to perform confidently in front of an audience, to work independently and with a high level of concentration, and to work within a group with a common goal.



^ Year 3 Upper Transitus children playing the violin as part of Mr. Tunnah's Strings First Access Scheme

The Night Before CHRISTMAS

Lower School 2023-24 production

Oh what a night! Singing, dancing, acting - all in a professional repertory theatre! The experience of performing at The Wylllyotts is invaluable and some of you may not realise quite how fortunate you are to be given this opportunity. There are few schools that would take on the challenge of staging a full-scale theatrical production like ours, let alone with such young children. And yet, over the years, not one pupil has failed to rise to the challenge. By taking part you learn to move, sing and speak confidently and expressively, overcoming any fears about performing. You learn to work independently and with a high level of concentration. And you learn a valuable life skill - how to work with and support each other as part of a team with a common goal. Well done to all pupils involved. It was spectacular!



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Dance, Dance, Dance!

Dance lessons with Ms. Gamester



Every year, St. John's pupils produce two stage shows for performance, either at theatre or for a major concert. In recent years, some children have found it difficult to tell the difference between moving to their right or moving to their left. Being able to move with energy, poise and finesse is something of a basic requirement for life, however you would be surprised at how much our modern lifestyles make it difficult for children to develop the dexterity and self control required to hold themselves or move with a particular purpose in mind. This year, we have welcomed Ms. Gamester, owner of AG Dance Company, who has taken up the post of our regular dance teacher and choreographer at St. John's. Key to every production that we do is coordination and being able to be in the right place at the right time - being able to move with purpose, conviction and following the sounds of what is happening around. Our productions have gone from strength to strength, with movements that excite the action and provide shape and artistry. In addition to weekly lessons, Ms. Gamester also offers weekly clubs, including Ballet Club, which has achieved some beautiful dances this year.



Music Technology Today

By Max Mukerjee

My job on the tech team:

My role on the tech team is to help set up the systems that we use for concerts, shows and assemblies, which includes the microphones, their stands, wireless microphones and the mixing desk. Anything that needs to be heard clearly around the venue needs a microphone. For concerts, I also help with illuminating the stage. Plus, there is a lot of untangling cables !

What I have learned being on the tech team:

Teamwork is always the best, and on the tech team it makes things so much faster, and easier. I have learned how to try and avoid those mishaps like squeaky feedback and realise how much the production on stage really rely on the team backstage.

We need more people on the tech team!!

There is a surprising amount of work to do in order to prepare for assemblies / productions and often not much time beforehand so more hands on the team would be helpful. Plus, more hands would help untangle all those cables! It really is a case of getting involved and staying until the job is done. There are always funny stories and experiences of spectacular tech malfunctions to share, (such as catching local radio through the sound system mid-performance), which makes the job much more fun! Speak to Mr. Tunnah if you would like to learn more. Any help offered at the end of assemblies is also really appreciated!

This year we will need people from both Prep. and Senior to be on the tech team....

There are a wide variety of events that happen across the Prep and Senior School so a good mix of year groups on the team would mean there was always a team on hand to help the show run smoothly.

Plans for the tech team:

As well as growing the team, we hope to start using more complex lighting effects, with the option for dimmable and multi coloured lights to make productions even more exciting.

Most memorable moment on the tech team so far:

The Lower School summer concert. This was the biggest production I helped on, I worked alongside one of my friends which made the experience fun and everything ran smoothly. At the end of the evening, I felt proud of what we had achieved. Additionally, one can never have enough batteries or Duct Tape!





COMPOSER OF THE ISSUE

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Ludwig van Beethoven *by : Felicity Fang*

Early Life

Ludwig van Beethoven, (or as we more commonly refer to as 'Beethoven') was born on the 17th December in Bonn 1770. He started to compose when he was only eleven. His first piece was called 'Nine Variations on a March by Dressler' WoO 63 and he wrote seven hundred and twenty-two pieces in his lifetime, such as the Pathétique Sonata Opus 13, Waldstein and the Appassionata Sonata.

His most famous piece was Symphony No.5. The only opera that he wrote was Fidelio. Sadly, Beethoven gradually lost his hearing when he was age 28, and this was a source of much frustration for him. Czerny (another key composer of the time) remarked that Beethoven could still hear music and speech properly until 1812. In his final years, he was unable to hear low tones, or sudden loud sounds.



Beethoven
Beethoven was born on the 17th December in Bonn 1770 and he started composing when he was eleven. His first piece was called 'Nine variations on a March WoO 63' and wrote seven hundred and twenty-two pieces in his lifetime such as Pathétique sonata Op.13 Waldstein and Appassionata sonata and his most famous piece was Symphony No.5. The only opera he wrote was Fidelio. Sadly Beethoven became deaf at the age 28 after a heated quarrel with a singer but never became totally deaf. Czerny remarked that Beethoven could still hear music and speech properly until 1812. In his final years he was able to hear low tones and sudden loud sounds.

Beethoven left Bonn for Vienna in November 1792 amid rumours of war spilling out of France. Over the next few years he responded to the widespread feeling that he was a successor to the recently deceased Mozart by studying Mozart's work. His first music teacher was his father Johann van Beethoven. Even though Beethoven was deaf, he could continually write music. His last piece before his death was String Quartet No.16 in F Major Op.135. Beethoven's last recorded words were when the music publisher Schott's sent him a case of wine. The dying composer whispered "Pity, pity - too late!"

Travels and Later Life

Beethoven left Bonn for Vienna in November 1792 amid rumours of war spilling out of France. Over the next few years, he responded to the widespread feeling that he was a successor to the recently deceased Mozart by studying Mozart's work. His first music teacher was his own father Johann van Beethoven. Even though Beethoven was deaf, he could continually write music. His last piece before his death was String Quartet No. 16 in F Major Op. 135. Beethoven's last recorded words were when the music publisher Schott's sent him a case of wine. The dying composer whispered "Pity, pity - too late!"



The majority of words found in music originate from the Italian language. There are other musical words of course from around the world, but the most common are found in Italian and can be quite daunting to a young musician who not only has to get to grips (quite literally) with a new musical instrument, notation and discovering new skills in dexterity, but they also have to learn the scripted words within the music too. My earliest memories of taking performance exams involved a test of some set musical words, and I remember myself and other worried looking candidates reciting their meanings in the warmup room. Today, I try to use as much of this language as possible within everyday musical speech (and some musicians take this even further), however this can sometimes mean that you are left with blank stares or end a conversation rather abruptly as the other person or group that you are talking to draw a blank as to what you mean. It is for this reason therefore, that last year, we began to take notes of these important words and create our own musical glossaries, giving pupils a place where they could record these words and their meanings to check back later if ever they need to. I often find it is important to write things down and getting into the habit of noting the meanings of things - thereby prompting things to memory. Importantly, these words that we see at the top of the music, tell us exactly how to play the music and this is crucial if we want to give a truly solid performance, or as a composer wishing somebody to play your music exactly as you intended.

So why then, are musical words written in Italian? and if we are already reading notations which tell us which notes to play, why do we need to have extra words? These are

questions which often arise when I am preparing students for exams as the higher tier marks are only really offered if the details and musical character are really felt within the performance. In around 1000 AD, Guido of Arezzo developed the earliest form system of notes with stems on staves that we know and read today. This has become a universal musical language which is read throughout the world. The Italian language has stuck with it, gradually flowing into other languages and becoming known worldwide as musical. Some terms are simply musical and some just sound quite musical, simply in the way that they are said and pronounced. Fortunately, this often makes it easier to learn the words as you play the music, but following these written instructions really brings you closer to the music and makes for a more convincing performance. Composers such as Gustav Mahler, have used German words to describe their intentions to the performers and this can arguably help to better describe exactly how he wanted his music to sound or be understood. Nowadays, it is up to the performer to interpret this language and therefore is a whole skill and area of study in itself - to understand music in its historical or cultural purpose. This is where the most well-prepared musicians do very well.

So... my advice, as with I do with a lot of words I am trying to learn, try to sneak them into your everyday conversation and see if anybody notices! What is more, can you identify the words above? Nowadays it is even easier than ever to discover whole new worlds of music and meanings of things. "Hey Google?..."

Journey to the Musical Museum



Ever since the Martin Scorsese film 'Hugo' I have been fascinated by clockwork and automata. Some years later, I discovered a mystical musical museum which sadly no longer exists in a lesser-known village of the Cotswolds (away from the crowds of tourists), but which served to tell the story of early recorded music and how it was enjoyed in the home. Tragically, the proprietor of the museum passed away and therefore visitors could no longer be taken on a guided historical tour through the earliest examples of recorded music and the mechanical age of inventions that enabled home entertainment. It really was a spellbinding experience (crammed into two small tiny from floor to ceiling) of gramophones, phonographs, music boxes, organs, pianos and even violins that could play themselves or recreate note-for-note performances from famous musicians long passed.

Cut forward to now and on exploring musical points of interest for the children, I stumbled upon 'The Musical Museum' in Brentford - West London, run by a team of volunteers who are extremely passionate about keeping this area of music making alive and beating. Oh how it is! and wonderfully upon entering, you are met with an early example of a Wurlitzer cinema organ and barrel organs that you can actually play by cranking a handle. Long forgotten are these instruments—some of which require completely different skills to be able to play. Ride a carousel at a fair nowadays and you will likely hear only digital music. This is nothing compared to the magical mechanical clicking, thumping, or impact of an organ and its various sound effects played by valves, pistons, springs, pins and

pneumatics. These days with microchips and computing technology, we just assume and take-for-granted that instruments can play things back to us, however the technology originated here and rarely nowadays does anything actually move, or show us how it works. The amazement of seeing keys go down, music spooling through special coded rolls of parchment, drums sticks beating or glockenspiels chiming themselves is wonderful to say the least.

It is safe to say that the children were not quite expecting this magic as they walked into the large concert hall and settled down with their bags. Suddenly the lights went down and from the stage there erupted the sound of a thump, thump of a steam train! - as if the whole auditorium was moving! Then, through the smoke and lights and up out of the pit of the stage, slowly rose a Wurlitzer organ (the type that was once commonplace in cinemas up and down the country). The day comprised of a tour of the museum galleries (and lots of opportunities to interact with the instruments) and a talk through the inner workings of the theatre and concert hall. This year, the Upper Transitus and F3 children will visit the Musical Museum in the Spring, where the children will experience the Musical Museum's newest Korg exhibition - learning about synthesizers (machines that recreate sounds electronically). The musical museum serves as a homage to music-making in its most unique form, the very roots of music technology itself, to preserve musical performances by legendary performers, committed to paper rolls, and the art of playing musical instruments unlike any others found today.



Christmas Carol Concert 2023

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Every Autumn, when we return from the summer and after the initial settling down period, it never fails to amaze how quickly the seasons change and we are into Christmas. While the preparations are being made for Christmas 2024, I take time to think about the year beforehand and what was uniquely special. The theme of last year's Christmas Carol Concert was 'What if the nativity was to happen now? Today? Right in the world that we live in?' This has always been an intriguing thought of mine, because, well... who knows what would happen and how people would react to biblical stars of wonder appearing in the sky? Therefore the children had fun imagining the situation and how modern-day happenings could cross over into the traditional Christmas story of the birth of Jesus. We even had fun adapting the story to Enfield and then somehow ending in Bethlehem, *Wales!* Every year, on imagining what to write, it is a conundrum whether to follow the traditional or to write about something more homely or family themed. Well, this year, the answer was to do both. The Christmas Carol Concert is our opportunity for children in the Prep. and Senior Schools to explore the meaning of the festive season through the singing and instrumental playing that we do at St. John's. Poetry, Dance and traditional carols all play a part in equal measure to add up to a truly magical event, sending us all home smiling.



Senior School News

with Mr. Kovacevic



Performances that stood out from the seniors throughout the academic year:

Diyala singing 'I feel good' by James Brown at Music Tea and Recitals, accompanied by Mr Kovacevic on saxophone and Mr. Hale on the drums.

Oliver's flute performance of Greensleeves accompanied by Mr. Kovacevic on saxophone and Mrs. Bowman on the piano at Harvest.

Skyli's fabulous electric guitar playing and singing of 'Perfect Gift' by Joshua Basset at the christmas concert.

Nimai's drumming at the easter assembly.

Kamron's piano playing at the Young Musicians' Recital evening.

The whole of first form singing 'This is Amazing Grace' and 'Because He lives' conducted by Mr. Kovacevic.

The MFL choir singing Hosanna, conducted by Mrs. Graham and accompanied by Mr. Kovacevic on the piano.

Senior choir performances at the Easter assembly, conducted and led by Mrs. Bowman.

Daniel's, Cameron's and Nimai's drumming accompanied by Mr. Kovacevic on sax, at West Bromich Albion Stadium to support the first formers' 'Playstation Schools' Cup Final.

Furthermore, the superb production of 'Cinderella' in July.

Mr. Varytimosoglou joins us this year to head the Senior School music department, we wish him well as he leads the department and all the best to Mr. Kovacevic.



Languages Choir

The Easter Assembly saw a debut of the new Languages Choir, which was significant event for the senior school. The choir sang 'Hosanna' in French with a wonderful sense of confidence and joy. Mrs. Graham conducted the choir beautifully, accompanied by Mr. Kovacevic on the piano making it a truly wonderful performance to remember. Language and music are closely connected in several ways, as they both involve communication, expression, and various uses of pitch in the voice. Both language and music are auditory processes that involve the perception and interpretation of sound. This is why we are urging more pupils to join the MFL choir to extend their language learning, whether it is in French, German, Spanish or Latin. This way the MFL choir can grow and be a true force to be reckoned with, highlighting its cultural importance at the school and beyond.



A St. John's musician would say...

Daniel Tyulyubaev :

Which instruments are you currently learning?

I am currently learning the drum kit with Mr. Hale at school.

How long have you been learning?

I have been learning since Prep. 2. Now I am in Upper Transitus.

How much practising do you do?

I practise twice a week. I know that I should play more, so I am trying to play more and make more progress.

Favourite piece that you have played so far?

I really enjoy playing 'We Will Rock You' - especially the loud part at the beginning!

Why did you choose the drums?

I love the fact that the drums are LOUD!

What is your favourite thing about this instrument?

I like playing for an audience to show other people my skills.



Fodiana Constantinou:

Which instruments are you currently learning?

I am learning the drums with Mr. Hale

How long have you been learning?

I have been learning since Prep 2. Now, I can play a few different pieces.

How much practising do you do?

I practise a little bit most days. It is just something that I do.

What is your favourite piece?

I have really enjoyed playing 'Gold Lion' by the Yeah Yeah Yeah's

Why did you choose to play the drums?

I like the sound of all of the different drums and how they fit together with the music. The drums help the music to sound more exciting.

What is your favourite thing about playing this instrument?

I really enjoy playing in recitals. I really enjoy it when people enjoy my performances!



Elisabella Tang:

A St. John's musician would say...

Which instruments are you currently learning?

My main instrument is the piano, but I also play the flute

What made you want to have your own lessons? What inspired you to learn?

I was inspired to begin lessons when my older brother started to play the piano. He started to play and the house was full of the sound of notes coming from this new and exciting instrument.

Performances are an integral element of life at St. John's - How do you prepare for a big performance? Do you have any tips for others?

I think about 'what is the worst that could happen' or 'the worst case scenario' and I try to prepare for this in my practice. In the end, because of this preparation, if I do make a mistake in the final moment, it is not that bad.

How do you keep motivated and on top of your practice?

I am motivated to be praised by my piano teacher. My teacher is very strict and difficult to please. When I am praised and achieve the next skill, I am motivated to play more. Then, what was difficult becomes not difficult any more and a joy to do.

Why do you think Music is important in school?

Music is a life-skill, and something that everybody should be able to join in with, such as singing. Therefore, if everybody could join in with the music, get-togethers and concerts would be so much more powerful.

How do you make practice fun?

I give myself a sweet every time I play a scale correctly.



Kenneth Chen:

Which instruments are you currently learning?

I am currently learning the drum kit and the piano, my favourite is the drums though.

What made you want to have your own lessons? What inspired you to learn?

My friend showed me a video of somebody playing the drums, and I really wanted to learn the same skills.

Performances are an integral element of life at St. John's - How do you prepare for a big performance? Do you have any tips for others?

Practice and more practice. If you are doing anything else, why are you not practising? Also, before the performance, take a deep breath and breathe.

How do you keep motivated and on top of practice?

I imagine the applause and appreciation from the audience and this spurs me on.

Why do you think Music is important in school?

Music is so important that without it, the world would fall apart. Music teaches you timing and observation, and most importantly the joyful moment you had when playing.

How do you make time for practice?

You set a goal for yourself, when you have reached your daily goal, you can give yourself rewards.



Skyli Saravanpavan

Q. Which musical instruments are you learning?

A: I am learning to play popular tunes on the electric guitar and just took my Grade 6 guitar exam. I am also practising Grade 6 singing at the moment.

Q. Why do you think music is important in school?

A: I think music is important in school since it brings out a creative side in people and it also allows people to try something new and see if they want to take it up.

Q. How do you prepare for a big performance?

A: When I have a big performance whether it's singing or playing the guitar, I always make sure that before I turn up at the venue, I have practised my song so that I am ready for the actual performance. I also tend to practise my piece in the venue itself so that I can get a feel of how I need to perform.

Q. How do you motivate yourself to practise and progress with what you do?

A: The way I make sure I practise and progress is mainly when my mum reminds me, but my motivation is knowing that my little brother is now learning and I need to get through my grades to be able to teach him how to play. This helps to motivate me since I was really excited to teach him, but I had to finish my learning first.

Q. What do you want to do in the future with your musical studies?

A: In the future there are two things I want to do with my musical knowledge: Number 1 is to become a singer/songwriter because I love writing songs and I would love to be able to produce music around the world. It has been my lifelong dream to be a musical artist. Number 2 is, if I cannot be a musical artist then I would like to be a music teacher. This is so that I can show my passion for music to the younger generations and hoping to persuade them to take up an instrument to start making or playing music, especially if they have a talent.



Anaiya Bhagat:

Q. Which musical instruments are you learning?

A: I am learning the piano and the drum kit.

Q. Why do you think music is important in school?

A: I think music is important in school because it is a way to express your feelings in a different way. It also exposes students to different cultures and historical periods, which promotes cultural awareness and appreciation.

Q. How do you prepare for a big performance?

A: I practise my piece performance lots of times, especially in front of people like friends or family to help me gain confidence.

Q. How do you motivate yourself to practise and progress with what you do?

A: As I am doing music GCSE, practising and progressing in my music is a necessity for me. I like to explore the different ways I can present an emotion through my music, which motivates me to want to progress my musical knowledge and skill.

Q. What do you want to do in the future with your musical studies?

A: In the future, I hope to keep learning piano and drums, as I do not want to lose my musical talent.



Q. Which instruments are you learning?

A. I am a grade 6 drummer and I have loved the drum kit instrument ever since the age of 7. I am a percussionist at heart and enjoy playing all different types of drums. I had my first kit at the age of 3. Recently, I have started to teach myself piano at home using YouTube videos and music theory with Duolingo Music.

Q. Why do you think music is important in school?

A. I believe music is a very important part of a school. It is a curriculum subject, but at the end of the day I think it is so different from other subjects like maths and science. It helps to balance out a day of learning.

Q. How do you prepare for a big performance?

A. I have performed in bands at lots of different places including The Camden Club, The Bull Theatre and frequently at Chickenshed and The East Barnet festival. Before big performances like these, there are not many things I do, because I like to know that I have practised as much as I can. About 5-10 minutes before I go on, I just pray for 30 seconds, take a deep breath and for me, it works every time.



Q. How do you motivate yourself to practise and progress with what you do?

A. When I need to practise for these events or even making my own songs using 'garage band', it is hard to motivate myself to practise especially when I could be watching TV. What gets me up is remembering the smiling faces of family and friends that come to support me when I perform, whether it is acting on stage or playing the drums in bands.

Q. What do you want to do in the future with your musical studies?

A. In the future, I would like to excel in my musical studies and would probably edge towards producing and composing, as I enjoy writing my songs and lyrics to new beats, which is where my drums and piano come into action.

Oliver Goulding:

Q. Which instruments are you learning?

A. I am currently learning both the flute and the guitar.

Q. Why do you think music is important in school?

A. Music is important in school because it allows students to express themselves in a way other than words. Some people express this through sport, or art, and some through music.

Q. How do you prepare for a big performance?

A. In order to prepare for a big event, I practise, practise, practise! If I understand the piece enough, I can usually remember it so that I only need the written music as a basic guide, allowing me to perform without worrying about being a perfectionist.

Q. How do you motivate yourself to practise and progress with what you do?

A. My main motivation to play music is the feeling of achievement when I finally understand a piece, and I love it when the random notes I play turn into something recognisable, even if only for a second.

Q. What do you want to do in the future with your musical studies?

A. I don't particularly see myself having a career in music, but I will definitely continue practising so that I can play the latest tunes!



Guitar at St. John's Senior School

Dear St. John's Family,

Having been raised by a pianist mother and a church organist father, I was always destined to end up doing something musical! The first instruments I picked up were trumpet and trombone at the age of 7. I had seen the trombone in a school assembly and immediately fell in love with its low raspy sound. I asked my parents if I could start lessons and they said yes. This 'yes' had an enormous impact on my life, as it started me on a pathway I have followed ever since. I am incredibly grateful that my parents were willing to let me try my hand in music.

At 11, I started playing guitar and bass guitar because of a workshop at a youth camp I attended. I was very lucky to have an incredible music department at my school growing up, where the staff truly embraced music as a culture and provided a brilliant platform for any and all students, to pursue music how they wished to. The impact it had on me growing both musically and personally means so much to me still to this day. This department is what prepared me to go on to do my Music Degree, and continue on working solely as a musician for 14 years now. I want this for all students who have any interest in music and is what I hope to help the music department at St. John's become.

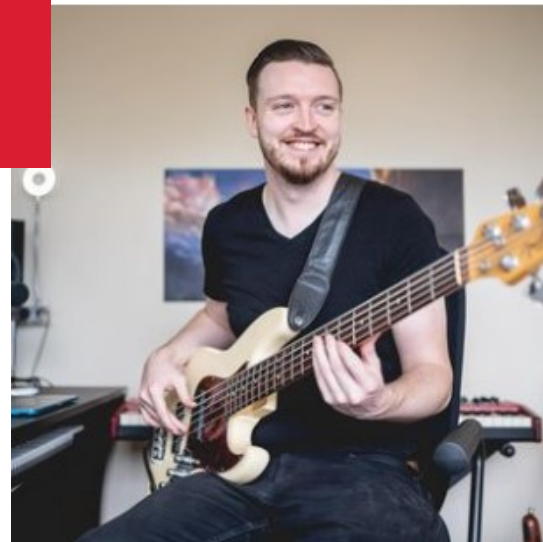
I have worked closely with three different Heads of Music at St. John's to encourage the department to continue to grow. Each one has brought different things to the table and the musical family at the school is a great community now, thanks to each of them. I have been at the school now for 4 years and I must say it has been a pleasure to have so many wonderful students come through my classroom! They have all shown great dedication and interest in their art.

The instruments I teach are Electric Guitar, Acoustic Guitar, Bass Guitar and Ukulele. I have performed and studied everything from Pop to Metal to Jazz to Folk. No matter the genre your child wants to learn we can cater for it at St John's. I am happy to be able to boast a 100% success rate in enabling every student I have ever entered into an exam to achieving a Merit or Distinction. (Please note that I do not always insist on children working towards exams and will encourage many students simply to play music for the enjoyment!)

I hope some of you will consider signing your children up to start learning one of my instruments in the 2024-2025 school year so that we can start or continue them on their own versions of the journey I have been so lucky to take!

Kieran Dougall

Guitar/Bass/Ukulele Teacher at St John's Senior School



Drum Kit Lessons at St. John's Senior School

My name is Mr. Adam Edgeworth and I am the drum kit teacher here at St John's Senior School.

As a working musician, I pride myself on teaching applicable skills to all students that I work with. Lessons with me are designed around your ambitions and goals and are specifically tailored, according to the learning styles and music that best suits your needs.



There is so much more to playing the drums than the rhythms and beats that you'll learn. Drumming is also a excellent opportunity for self-expression, stress reduction and motor skill development.

Why not get started? I will have you performing your favourite songs in no time !

Exam Route

Exams are a fantastic way for you to progress on the drums. Both 'Rockschool' and 'Trinity' exam syllabuses are designed to help you become a well-rounded drummer, with a great knowledge of musical styles, coordination, technique and timing. With over a decade of teaching experience and using both of these exam boards, I will make sure that my students walk into an exam feeling fully prepared and confident, allowing them to perform to the highest standard possible.

Casual Learner

Not interested in taking exams but still keen to learn? Great! We will take time in your lessons to discover the topics that are most important to you. Whether that is learning songs by your favourite bands / artists, improvisation skills or even creating your own grooves, fills and solos. We will also be sure to cover a wide range of genres and techniques to equip you for all musical situations.

Cinder-ELLA!

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Mice, Pumpkins, a ball, glitter, sequins, glass slippers, a golden carriage and a humongous food and drinks bill... This is the story of the night of all nights!



Summer Term at St. John's always brings with it a sense of uncertainty. The academic year is drawing to a close and the children are starting to become anxious about exams and tests, while they are also worrying about what is happening next year when they move schools - either to St. John's Senior School or on to new adventures. Ms Coumas and Ms Gamester then enter to bring everybody together and set the stage, with songs, dancing and shaking off their inhibitions in our end of year show at the Wylllyotts theatre - Potters Bar. Every year it is hard to describe the last few days of term and quite how the year manages to draw to a close with such spectacular fashion, catchy numbers, bright costumes and always an AHH factor when the younger Prep. Schoolers do so well! Both schools come together to work in the theatre for a week and the Prep and Senior school students are encouraged to work together. At the start, nobody is sure of what to expect and the theatre is full of children, but by the end of the week, when the teachers have said everything they need to, the seniors really step up to help and support the production. The Prep. School children in turn look up to the older students who fulfill many roles including setting microphones and stage handling. The Wylllyotts provide a team of expert stage managers to guide the directors and literally show the children the ropes of how everything works in the theatre. Cinderella is a timeless story which has enjoyed a lot of acclaim amongst directors and audiences in recent years. Therefore the children were able to engage with the story perfectly and end the year on a high!

