

Music @ St. John's



Issue 21, April 2026

Music of the People!

Pupils in F1 learn about the culture of 'Folk Music' - music which is for everybody!

Violins from Italy

Geneva Bernard, one of our promising young violinists, explores the history of 'Who made the best violins?'

It's the Wizz!

Mr. Fowkes joins us at the Senior School to direct the summer show and bring some much needed new energy to our productions.

Letters from the Department...

Dear Reader,

As I think about what St. John's have achieved recently, it brings the Music Department great joy.

This year, the walls of St. John's once again echo with musical accomplishments, which are resonating louder than ever. From triumphant solos to fabulous ensemble performances, our pupils have flourished, not only as young musicians but as dedicated collaborators and spirited ambassadors of the Arts.

I beam with pride when I see you perform. I think of how we got there - the rehearsal process, the dedication and commitment to learning lyrics and lines with the energy and effort necessary to give in order to achieve that final, fine-tuned performance. But it is the quiet triumphs that fill me with the most pride - the Prep. One pupil who found their voice this year, or the recorder player who struggled at first but who worked so hard to master the necessary dexterity and strength required to play.

These achievements remind us that music is more than performance - it is growth, expression, and the joy of shared success. As we look forward to the next academic year, let us continue to nurture these sparks of creativity and champion every child's musical story.

To all our budding virtuosos: Bravo! I can't wait to see where your music will take us next.

P. Bowman (Mrs.)

Head of Music -

(Lower Prep. School)



Dear St. John's reader,

There has barely been a moment to stop and to think about our musical successes of this past year, because as a department we are always creating, thinking, and making preparations for the next wondrous experience to inspire the pupils in the magical world that is music.

As a practitioner in and out of St. John's, it has come to my attention that the expectations of young musicians has risen, owing to exceeding standards and to competition from young people from around the world wanting to study in the UK and spaces in top institutions becoming oversubscribed. Never has it been a more exciting time to study music to a high level, however, with diversification of courses at colleges and universities, never has the need to be ahead of the curve, self-disciplined, discerning and ambitious been more apparent.

I often hear from parents that they just want their child to 'enjoy' music. This is of course our fundamental goal and why we all work so hard to make St. John's a centre of excellence for musical learning. Enjoyment is always the end goal of any project and previous successes of ours have shown that in the end, after all of the struggle, the enjoyment from such hard work, or a performance surpasses any other enjoyment. There is only a limited amount that can be learnt through instant gratification. Sure, not all children want to be the next prodigal musicians like the professionals that we work with once were, but as a practitioner of specialist experience, it is my role to extend this to all and to ensure that every child has the opportunity whether they want it or not. In my experience, enjoyment from music rarely comes instantly, unless it involves extending the ability to listen and appreciate what is happening. The best and only enjoyment can only really come depending on how far one is willing to commit and the effort to contribute. Music is for everyone, which is the theme of this magazine, but while it is possible to involve yourself in music at all levels, regardless, there are expectations, standards and etiquette to observe.

I am happy to report that St. John's continues to strive for the highest standards and alumni of the school who return to play for our events are a testament to what we achieve year after year. I am always moved by the purest joy and enthusiasm that our pupils have. As ever, I am here to help and at your service!

Thank you for reading!

R. J. Tunnah (Mr.)

Head of Music -

(Upper Prep. School)



In This Issue...

- 4 The Power of Practice!
- 8-9 F.1 Pupil Presentations
- 10-11 Chapel Choir at the Festival Hall
- 12 Music in the Lower School
- 13 F.3 Curriculum - 20th Century Music
- 14-15 F.2 Pupil Presentations
- 17 Lower School Summer Concert 2025
- 18-19 A St. John's musician would say...
- 20 Instrumental Teacher Welcome
- 21 Autumn Music Tea and Recital
- 22-23 F.3 Pupil Presentations
- 24 Summer Show - It's The Wiz!!



Senior School Welcome

From Mr. Tom Fowkes

It has now been just over a year since I joined the St. John's community, so it is probably time for me to say 'hello' and introduce myself! My name is Tom Fowkes, and I am the now not-so-new Director of Music at the Senior School.

As a freelance conductor, Musical Director and instrumentalist, my work varies from running choirs and musical projects in churches (including two in the Enfield area of Edmonton Diocese), running and directing a North London choral society, providing arrangements and orchestrations for multiple clients, and MD contracts on productions in both London and regional theatres.

Within education, I have been an MD, vocal coach, and lecturer at specialist theatre schools, not only working with existing youth casts on shows such as The Lion King and Matilda but also training and mentoring older students who have subsequently gained West End careers as adults, so I am very glad to add St. John's to my current portfolio. My focus over the past year has been predominantly concentrated on vocal studies and performance technique, not least due to our large-scale production of The Wiz last year, but also in terms of expanding liturgical repertoire for the St. Mary's assemblies. In September, the St. John's Chapel Choir was created; an SATB vocal ensemble that not only covers traditional church music but also continues to explore Musical Theatre repertoire alongside other more popular and contemporary material.

Over the coming year, my intention is to develop an instrumental ensemble, drawing on the wealth of talent the school already possesses whilst expanding the uptake of instrumental tuition. I therefore look forward to seeing you at future concerts, services and productions at St. John's – please come over and say hello!

Tom Fowkes

Musical Director



Why Practising Is So Powerful

How *Practice* makes progress:

Mrs. Bowman explores!

Have you ever watched someone play an instrument beautifully, score the winning goal, or solve a tricky puzzle like it is no big deal? Here is a secret: they didn't not just wake up with those skills. They practised. A lot!

Why Practising Matters

Practising an instrument helps your brain and body to get better at things - just like training muscles at the gym. Each time you try something again, you are teaching your brain, "*Hey, this is important!*" and the more you do it, the easier it feels. Practising builds confidence, it helps you learn from your mistakes and it makes you proud of what you can do.

Recorder Practice in Key Stage One

I ask my Prep. Two and Lower Transitus recorder players to practise every day for at least ten minutes. There is no substitute for regular, targeted practice because it builds finger strength, dexterity and confidence over time. It is those pupils who have committed to a practising routine who always make the most progress each year with their instrument and who are asked to perform in our Recorder Ensembles at the Summer Concert.

How to Practise Like a Professional

Here are some simple tips to practise smartly:

- **Make a plan:** Set aside time each day, even if it is just 10 minutes. Stick to your routine.
- **Break it down:** Do not try to do everything at once. Take small steps - maybe one line of music at a time, or even one bar if it is really tricky (see below).
- **Be patient:** You might not get it right at first, and that is okay.
- **Stay positive:** Celebrate progress, however small.
- **Have fun:** Turn practice into a game or challenge to keep it interesting e.g. *'in the next five minutes I am going to sort out the tricky bit in bar 5 and I will keep going until it is much more secure. I will win!!!'*

Remember, you do not have to be perfect—you just have to keep going. Bit by bit, you will get better, faster and more confident.

So next time you are learning something new, give it your best shot—and then try again. Your future self will thank you! 



The Greatest Violins

By Geneva Bernard



Famous Violinists and what they play :

Nicola Benedetti - was recognised as a child when she featured on Britain's Brilliant Prodigies at the age of 14. She then won BBC Young Musician of the year when she was 16. She works with orchestras in Europe and America as well as with Alexei Grynyuk her pianist. The violin that she plays is a Stradivarius violin.

Tasmin Little - She is famous for being a Concerto soloist and also performs as a recitalist and chamber musician. She was presented with an OBE in the 2012 Queen's Birthday Honours for services to music. She was presented with her award by H.M. The Queen at an investiture in Buckingham Palace, on the 21 November 2012. She plays a 1757 Giovanni Battista Guadagnini violin

Nigel Kennedy - Performs classical and jazz music. As well as playing several customised 5-string electric violins, Nigel Kennedy plays a violin made in 1732 by the great violin maker, Carlo Bergonzi of Cremona.

Maxim Vengerov - He is a violinist and conductor. Classic FM radio has called him 'one of the greatest violinists in the world.' He plays a Stradivarius violin.

Augustin Hadilch - He is a classical violinist from Italy and Germany. He plays a Guarneri del Gesù violin. He previously played the Kieselwetter Stradivarius violin.

Italian violins are renowned for their exceptional quality, craftsmanship and unique sound. The traditions of violin making in Italy, which began in the 16th century, has produced some of the most celebrated instruments in history, with masters like Antonio Stradivari and Nicolo Amati setting the standard.

These instruments are prized, for their tonal qualities, beauty and historical significance, making them hugely sought-after by musicians and collectors. Italian violins represent a pinnacle of musical instrument craftsmanship, combining artistic beauty with exceptional acoustic qualities. Their legacy continues to inspire musicians and collectors worldwide. Some violins are 400 years old, which is a testament to how the craftsmanship has lasted without degrading. Many renowned violin makers called Italy home, Cremona specifically being known as the world's capital of violin making, followed by Brescia, Maples, Milan, Venice and Mantua.

Antonio Stradivari was born in 1644 and died in 1737 at 92 years old. He was an Italian luthier and a craftsman of string instruments such as violins, cellos, guitars, violas and harps. He is estimated to have produced 1,116 instruments. Approximately 960 were violins of which 650 survive. The estimated value of these violins is approximately several million to over 20 million US dollars equivalent to over £14 million.



Notable Pieces

The Lark Ascending by Vaughan Williams was inspired by a poem by George Meredith. It uses English folk styles to paint a picture of the British countryside.

Schindlers List by John Williams is the theme of a 1993, epic historical drama which features an iconic solo violin melody.

Vivaldi Four Seasons. A group of four violin concertos by Antonio Vivaldi. Each concerto gives musical expression to seasons of the year.

J.S. Bach: Concerto for two violins. This a unique baroque violin concerto which features two solo parts.



Our Christmas show this year, 'Polly Polestar', was a fabulous evening.

Polly decides that she is bored being the only star in the sky to shine the way to the North Pole, so she leaves her post and goes on a visit to the Elves and Fairies. But this means that the Christmas Postman cannot find his way to Santa with his one final letter and Sophie might not receive her presents!!!

Weeks of work produced an amazing evening's entertainment and the process starts right back in September with auditions. Once the show has been cast Ms. Coumas, Ms. Gamester and I work separately with each year-group on the acting, dances and songs. After Half Term, we put it all together like a big jigsaw puzzle and bring the show to life. We always work the children VERY hard, but that gets the amazing results that we see every year.



We are very privileged to stage our shows at The Wylllyotts Theatre. Young children learning stagecraft in a professional working theatre like this discover a whole new way to express themselves, blending imagination with practical skills. They begin to understand how lights, sound, props, special effects and movement can transform a simple idea into storytelling. They learn how to collaborate and they gain confidence and communication skills without even realising it. Creativity thrives, teamwork blossoms, and every child finds a role that helps them to shine.

Bravo tutti!!



Music of the People

F.1 Curriculum study

When pupils enter the Upper Prep. School, music lessons move beyond the foundations of performance, basic theory, and simple notation to explore wider musical cultures and styles from around the world. At this stage, emphasis is placed on understanding music within its cultural context, preparing pupils for senior school, where global musical traditions become a key focus. Learning to recognise distinctive sounds and techniques — and knowing when it is appropriate to join in by singing, clapping, or chanting — is not only a musical skill but also an important part of social awareness and confidence.

During the Spring Term of F.1 (Year 4), pupils embark on an exciting journey through a range of musical styles chosen to spark curiosity and discussion. One of the highlights of this journey is the study of Folk Music — a tradition that is both deeply rooted in history and wonderfully accessible as a less-formal convention. Pupils are fascinated to discover that almost every country, region, and community has its own folk music traditions, and that much of the music we know today has grown from these origins. The Upper School learnt at Christmas that many favourite festive songs began as folk tunes before evolving into the formal versions we recognise today.

Folk music is particularly special because it invites participation from everyone, regardless of musical ability or experience. Built on memorable melodies, simple harmonies, and strong rhythms, it is music designed to bring people together. Through listening, singing, and discussion, pupils explore how folk music in different cultures fosters community, storytelling, and shared identity. They discover that music can emerge in everyday situations — from gatherings in village squares to moments of companionship in unexpected places.

A familiar example is the singing of “Auld Lang Syne” at the start of the New Year, a song that expresses goodwill, remembrance, and friendship across generations. Exploring such traditions helps pupils appreciate how music connects people across time and place.

From pentatonic melodies and instrumental drones to humorous lyrics and songs of protest, folk music offers a rich and varied musical landscape. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on folk traditions from their own cultural backgrounds, prompting lively discussion and independent research. Later in the term, they present projects demonstrating their understanding of the styles studied, often resulting in enthusiastic performances that invite everyone to join in.

Through exploring folk music, pupils develop listening skills, cultural awareness, creativity, and confidence in performance. Most importantly, they experience music as a shared human activity — one that celebrates community, heritage, and togetherness at the heart of our life.



FOLK MUSIC!!

Folk Music of Britain by Amraj Fi

What is British folk music?

Every country around the world has its very own traditional folk music. Here I am focussing on English folk music which is a tradition-based genre and it is rooted in the musical heritage of the common people.

Songs and tunes of folk music often lack a known composer or exist in multiple, community-adapted versions.

Folk music will differ from regions across the country and are inspired by long standing cultural styles.

- **Historical Origins:** The tradition traces back to the medieval period, with music historically passed down orally rather than through notation. Notable early forms include Robin Hood ballads and communal dance music.
- **Key Genres & Forms:**
 - Ballads: Narrative songs detailing love, tragedy, or local legends.
 - Work Songs: Functional rhythms such as sea shanties or farming songs used to coordinate labour and create a repetitive rhythm.
 - Dance Music: Including Morris dancing (pictured below) and various social dances.



Morris Dancing

Pictured above : Poster by Valentino Avraamides F.1

Folk Music

Folk music is a special kind of music that people learn and share by listening to each other. It's often played by everyday people, not just professional musicians. People would learn the music by listening to other people playing it and then copy them. This is called learning music orally. Think of it like a story or a game that your grandparents taught your parents, and then your parents taught you!

It is music created by ordinary people within a culture, that's been played or sung to one another, for a very long time.

Folk music is for everyone to enjoy, whether they are playing or listening.

Folk music exists all around the world. For example there's English folk music, Scottish folk music, American folk music, Russian folk music and so on.

Long ago, folk music was a way for communities to relax and have fun together. People in villages or families would often play and sing music. They might even make up new songs or change old ones.

Other folk instruments can include: a set of bagpipes, an accordion and a mandolin.

bagpipes
Scotland

Instrument that is played by blowing into it, squeezing the bag and covering the finger holes.

sitar
India

A stringed instrument.

balafon
West Africa

A type of wooden xylophone.

guiro
Caribbean

A percussion instrument played by scraping.

guitarron
Mexico

A six-stringed bass guitar played in Mariachi music.

mbira
Zimbabwe

An instrument played by plucking the metal keys.

balalaika
Russia

A stringed instrument that comes in six sizes.

banjo
USA

A five-stringed instrument that came from Africa and is played by plucking.

erhu
China

A two-stringed instrument played with a bow.

Bob Dylan, a famous folk singer, changed music in the 1960s with songs that combined storytelling with social issues. He (born May 24, 1941, Duluth, Minnesota, U.S.) is an American folksinger and songwriter. He mixed traditional folk songs with rock and roll sounds.

"Blowin' in the Wind" (1963) is a very famous protest song that asked questions about peace and freedom.

Laminoria

What Is a Composer? 🎹

A **composer** is someone who **writes music**, kind of like how an author writes books, but instead of words, they use musical notes! Beethoven wrote music for orchestras, pianos, and big concerts. His pieces can sound **dramatic, powerful, and exciting**. Sometimes it feels like the music is telling a whole story, with a beginning, a middle, and an ending!



Orchestras 🎻

Big groups of musicians performing his powerful compositions together.



Piano 🎹

Beethoven was a brilliant pianist and wrote many famous piano pieces.



Big Concerts 🎵

His music filled the largest concert halls, and still does today!

❏ Fun note: Unfortunately, composers don't get paid in chocolate... which is a real shame!



Peter and the Wolf : By Toyosi Aruna
From the F.1 topic:
'Music which teaches about music!'

Credits above: Jaiden Cela F.1



What is Concerto?

A **concerto** is a musical composition that usually has a solo instrument alongside an orchestra. The soloist and the orchestra often play together in a dialogue, with the soloist showing their technical skills. Concertos usually have three movements: fast, slow, and fast.

What is Symphony?

Symphony is a lengthy form of musical composition for orchestra, which normally has several large sections, or movements, at least one of which usually is sonata form (also called first-movement form).

What Makes a Symphony Orchestra Special? Slide 3

A **symphony orchestra** usually has 50–100 musicians.

By Zayn Bewley (F.1)

It has 4 main sections:

- **Strings:** Violins, violas, cellos, double basses
- **Woodwinds:** Flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons
- **Brass:** Trumpets, trombones, French horns, tuba
- **Percussion:** Timpani, drums, cymbals

Why it is special:

- Many instruments playing together
- Huge range of sound (very soft to very loud)
- Led by a conductor to keep everyone together



Mozart – Symphony No. 41

Florence Price – Symphony No. 1

Beethoven – Symphony No. 9 ('Choral')

Mahler – Symphony No. 2 ('Resurrection')

Dvořák – Symphony No. 9 ('From The New World')

Ludwig van Beethoven:

Symphony No. 5 in C

Minor

A Journey from Struggle to Victory

Presented by: Xidun Yang

February 2026

Who was he?

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 -1827) was a famous German composer and pianist who is considered one of the greatest composers in Western music history. He was a crucial figure in the transition between the Classical and Romantic periods.

A Whole New Kingdom to Explore

by Kamron Quiling and Skyli Saravanapavan

with contributions from the St John's Chapel Choir choristers

On Thursday 29th January, the Chapel Choir spent the day in Central London with Mr. Fowkes and Mr. Tunnah for activities at both the National Theatre and Royal Festival Hall.

Our journey started at Cockfosters Station from where we took the Piccadilly Line to Leicester Square which was the start of a whirlwind tour around the West End with Mr. Fowkes acting as our tour guide. Having assured him we could all walk quickly, we certainly got our morning work-out as we went through Leicester Square itself, where the Odeon was already preparing for a film première that evening, through Lisle Street and Chinatown to the Sondheim Theatre, home of *Les Misérables*. Our walking tour took us through Soho past shows such as *MJ the Musical* at the Prince Edward, *Harry Potter* at the Palace and *The Mousetrap* at St. Martin's which has been running for an incredible 74 years!

Along the way, in addition to numerous theatres, Mr. Fowkes pointed out some famous London hostelrys including The Ivy and one of London's oldest pubs, and showed us Coutt's where the King has his bank account. We walked through Covent Garden Market and stood outside the Royal Opera House before emerging on the Strand to go down Villiers Street and across the Charing Cross footbridge to our destination, the South Bank – all in 50 minutes!

Our first official engagement of the day was a backstage tour of the National Theatre which included both the Olivier and Dorfman Theatres and the warehouses for props, set building and backgrounds. We saw part of a rehearsal for *Ballet Shoes* and some of the props and sets for *War Horse*, *Ballet Shoes* and *Pinocchio*. As Lauren explained, "They showed us the rooms in which they created the props and backgrounds, and told us where they store them after shows, and what was used to substitute real things on stage. For example, Yak hair was used to make beards, and instead of drinking real beer, they substituted it with Appletiser by sliding it into a beer can with a mould." Alana told us that she 'liked the tour and it was interesting to see how all the props and backgrounds were made for the shows', whilst Sam reflected, "I found that looking at how they create the props to be quite spectacular and I have taken it into account that I will be going back in the future, if not to watch the performances, then to be part of them."

Once we had finished our tour at the National Theatre, we headed over to the Royal Festival Hall for some lunch before the highlight of the day: watching conductor David Temple rehearse his outstanding and amazing interpretation of Edward Elgar's oratorio 'The Kingdom' with the combined forces of Crouch End Festival Chorus and Hertfordshire Chorus with the London Orchestra da Camera. This was an amazing opportunity to see a live professional orchestra, a choir of over 250 people (including our very own Head of Choral Studies at the Prep. School, Mrs. Bowman) and four incredible soloists perform.

The rehearsal was for the evening album launch concert of 'The Kingdom' which Temple and CEFC recorded for Signum Records last year with the same soloists, so we knew it was a special treat to hear it before the audience arrived. This huge and powerful oratorio had previously been released on commercial record only four times, so it was a real honour to be part of recording history and this début performance of which Kamron said that he thought the performance was 'amazing' and that the experience deepened his 'love for music and was truly inspiring'.

Skyli enjoyed watching the rehearsal and described it as 'an amazing opportunity to watch professional opera singers in their place of work' and Anna said that she 'learnt how the professional orchestra works', calling the experience 'magnificent'.

Madison told us, "I found the performance to be very inspiring and it was amazing to see the opera singers belt to their full potential."

Part of the publicity campaign for both the recording and concert performance was David Temple's call for people to 'convert to Elgar' and discover this new 'Kingdom' with him. Of the Chapel Choir choristers who were joined by their families to stay for the evening concert, perhaps the greatest convert to Elgar and his music was Benjamin who finally confessed, "I quite liked the show and it was interesting to watch the whole choir sing the 200 page score!"

All of us in Chapel Choir had a wonderful day out, and hope to have many more trips and opportunities like this in the future!



Music in the **Lower School**

Curriculum:

The St. John's Music curriculum is built around three interconnected strands that help young children grow as confident, expressive and thoughtful musicians. These strands—performing, composing, listening and analysis (or, put more simply, musical appreciation) — provide a balanced foundation that nurtures creativity, coordination, communication, and cultural awareness. Although the expectations for pupils naturally deepen as children move up the year-groups, the core purpose remains the same: to help children explore sound, express ideas, and develop a lifelong relationship with music.

Performing is often the most immediate and joyful part of early music education. In Pre-Prep. and Prep. One, pupils experiment with their voices and bodies, discovering how sound can be used for expression. They sing simple songs, explore steady beats, and use percussion instruments to accompany stories or movement. The emphasis is on confidence, playfulness, and developing a sense of musical identity. By Key Stage One, performing becomes more structured. Children learn to sing with increasing accuracy of pitch and rhythm, developing breath control and awareness of phrasing. They begin to play tuned and untuned instruments with greater control, learning how to start and stop together, follow a leader, and maintain a steady pulse. They start to learn the recorder, reading traditional notation from the Treble Clef. Performing in groups helps them build teamwork, listening skills, and the ability to respond to musical cues. Importantly, performance remains inclusive—every child has a role, whether through singing, playing, or contributing to ensemble work.

Composing:

Composing allows children to become musical creators rather than just participants. This begins in Pre-Prep. with free exploration: tapping, shaking, scraping, and vocalising to invent sounds and patterns. Children learn that they can make choices about sound—loud or soft, fast or slow, high or low—and that these choices can express ideas or feelings.

By Key Stage One, composing becomes more intentional. Children create short patterns, rhythms, and melodies, often using simple notation or symbols to



record their ideas. They learn to organise sounds, choose instruments for specific effects, and structure their compositions with a clear beginning, middle, and end. Composing encourages problem-solving, imagination, and ownership, giving children the chance to shape music that is uniquely theirs.

Listening and Analysis:

Listening and analysis underpin all musical learning. At St. John's, pupils listen to a wide range of music—classical, contemporary, world music, and songs from their own cultures. They respond through movement, drawing, or simple discussion thinking about note length, dynamics, tempo, and so on.

This builds early auditory discrimination and emotional connection.

Focus increases by Key Stage One. Pupils learn to identify the musical elements (tempo, pitch, rhythm, etc.) They compare pieces of music, talk about how music makes them feel, and begin to recognise instruments and styles. Analysis at this stage is not formal or technical; instead, it encourages curiosity and thoughtful engagement. Children learn that music can tell stories, create moods, and reflect different cultures and traditions.

By encouraging them to perform with confidence, compose with creativity, and listen with discrimination to a wide range of musical styles and traditions, the music curriculum at St. John's aims to inspire pupils to develop a lifelong love of music and performing.



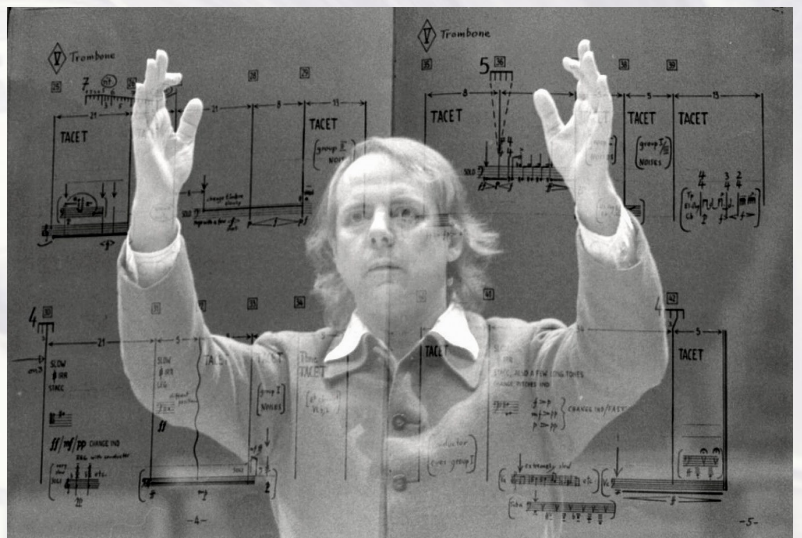
Innovations of Music in the 20th Century

F.3 Curriculum Study

As part of our Upper School journey through the various key developments in Music History, the F.3 pupils learn about Music of the 20th Century. Actually, this area could span whole years worth of study, but this is condensed into a term of lessons so that the pupils continue to gain a broad and varied curriculum. Activities in this topic discover the many huge innovations which occurred during this amazing 100 years in music.



As a young musician growing up in the 90s, I was indirectly exposed to a rise in technology. At school we had an 'Experimental Music' group - one particular area that the 20th Century brought, was a particularly amazing opportunity to play with and 'break down conventions'. That brings us to the fun topic of 'Avant Garde' (Karlheinz Stockhausen-pictured) which is about pushing the established rules of music and questioning them. Perhaps the earliest form of 20th Century music that I experienced was that of Blues and Jazz Music through Jazz piano lessons, the former created in the most oppressive circumstances, but creating hope and spanning a huge movement and culture of music which lives and has evolved into today. Beyond this, we have the minimalists, composers such as Steve Reich, who would take just a small idea and take it to the limit of what could be done, for example, taking two pianos playing the same melody and then phasing the speed of one of them to create a resultant new melody and harmony.



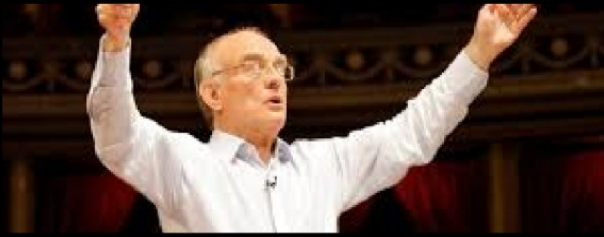
Most recognisably perhaps, we have the composers of many of iconic films. Composers such as John Williams, Howard Shore and Philip Glass to name a few. The iconic theme of E.T. The Extra Terrestrial and the cinematic space phenomenon of Star Wars. I cannot say that innovation always brings about good results, but it is certainly fun to try and discover new ways to make music!

TONES

14 F.2 – BRITISH COMPOSERS

SIR JOHN MILFORD RUTTER CBE

By Isaac Shaikh F2



- Born: 24 September 1945
- Nationality: British
- One of the most famous living choral composers



WHAT MAKES HIS MUSIC UNIQUE?

- Beautiful and memorable melodies
- Rich harmonies that sound warm and uplifting
- Clear and expressive vocal writing
- Blends traditional church music with modern harmonies
- Accessible and emotional for audiences

John Powell

Film Score Composer
By William Dolman



His Music

- John Powell is famous for writing the scores of films.
- He was born 18th September 1963 in London, England.
- He is famous for composing music for the How to Train Your Dragon films, Kung Fu Panda and the Wicked movies.
- John Powell composes music that makes the action in films more exciting.
- He is an important composer because his music helps tell the story of the movie.
- For example, in How to Train Your Dragon, when Hiccup flies on Toothless, the music makes the scene feel more exciting.
- For example, in Kung Fu Panda, it made the scene with Po and his dad seem soft and gentle.



FUN FACTS ABOUT JUDITH WEIR:



1. APPOINTED IN 2014, SHE SERVED UNTIL 2024, COMPOSING FOR ROYAL EVENTS LIKE THE CORONATION OF KING CHARLES III AND QUEEN CAMILLA.
2. BEFORE COMPOSING, SHE PLAYED THE OBOE AND WAS IN THE NATIONAL YOUTH ORCHESTRA OF GREAT BRITAIN, ALONGSIDE THE FUTURE CONDUCTOR: SIMON RATTLE.



BY: PENELOPE AVRAAMIDES

Daniel Pemberton

By Ithiel Serieux F.2

British Composer and Songwriter



- ✚ Composes scores and music for film, television and video games
- ✚ Genres – electronic, rock, jazz and funk
- ✚ Instruments – piano, keyboard, synthesizer, bass, guitar
- ✚ Started creating scores for television at the age of 17 before moving into composing scores for films.
- ✚ He was named 'Film Composer of the Year' in 2021 and has since been nominated numerous times for other awards.
- ✚ He wrote scores for films such as Spider-Man: Into the Spider Verse, Bad Guys and Enola Holmes.



Favourite Scores:

- ✚ The Bad Guys – 'Good Tonight'. I really like this score as it's funky and makes you want to dance.
- ✚ Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse – 'Start a Band'. I really like this score as I like rock music. The drums bring the beat and makes it epic.



The *Surprising* History of Carols



Christmas is a most wonderful time of year and while it is easy to complain and moan most of the rest of the year, I find it is one something that we actually do quite well in the UK. Great tunes are rolled out and you can't help feeling at least a little optimism and joy in the air. Also, good food is less scarce to find!

Owing to length and Last year's concert being a somewhat reduced

Christmas concert, Mrs. Tardios and I came up with a plan to include more of the traditional magic and storytelling back to our offering to enable more pupils the opportunity to be involved. A suggestion and desire of Mrs. Tardios was for the pupils to explore the history behind the traditional carols that we sing every year. It has always shocked me every Christmas, how many of our children do not know and or are aware of the traditional songs that are sung by millions during this period. Even more considering nearly every Christmas movie which centres around a Christmas concert or Christmas themes include renditions of their own of these particular songs. Even Christmas radio drags out old dusty copies of Nat King Cole and Frank Sinatra singing Hark the Herald Angels Sing and O Tannenbaum.

During the summer, I therefore visited Buckfast Abbey in Devon where I sought the answer within their large bookshop specialising in liturgical texts and the music of the church. (They also sell lovely plants and their own special wine, but that is a little bit of an acquired taste). It is here though, that I came across the composer and author Andrew Gant who has written books for mere muggles like us telling the stories and history of our nations and others famous Christmas and Church hymns.

I immediately snapped up some literature for my own library (still not finished) and set about writing something suitable for a St. John's stage - based on Mr. Gant's informative writing. The surprising aspect and the fun element of the story came from the fact that while I was brought up singing and playing arrangements of famous carols and chorales, while we are led to believe that these songs are traditional, sacred and that our traditions are traditional... and have come from centuries old practices... this is not necessarily the case at all and have developed in more recent years over a spanning of little more than a century and a bit. This really fascinates me, because as a devotee to St. John's and quite a particular individual, I am rather fond of a tradition and creating traditions. The story

this year told of how these carols have spanned from Folk songs and adopted by the church and re-invented along the way.

The pupils enjoyed putting their own interpretations to the words and as usual, found their own meaning within the written word. The magic always appears when the lights go down and the orchestra begins to play. In that moment, we are in a truly divine state and there simply is no greater feeling.



Lower School Summer Concert ¹⁷

By Mrs. Bowman

There is something uniquely special about our Lower Prep. School Summer Concert. It is not just the music — though that was certainly impressive — but the sense of shared achievement that fills the church on the night. Last year's concert was no exception, when pupils from Pre-Prep to Upper Transitus came together to celebrate a year of musical growth. The result was an evening full of warmth, confidence and genuine delight.

A number of pupils stepped forward for solo performances. These moments are always full of pure joy at whichever level is displayed - be it a delicate piano piece, a bold vocal solo or a confident violin performance - each child showed courage and individuality. For some, it was their first time performing alone; for others, it was a chance to demonstrate how far they have come with their study. Every soloist received warm applause, and rightly so — their hard work and dedication shone through.

For me though, my proudest moments are hearing each year-group perform together, be it singing or in their instrumental groups. When I see and hear pupils singing together with enthusiasm and confidence, it cannot help but put a smile on my face because it is a reminder of how music builds community — every voice contributing something essential.

As the final ensemble brought the evening to a close, I was filled with a sense of pride. The summer concert showcased not only the children's talent, but also their resilience, teamwork and love of music. It was a wonderful reminder of what young musicians can achieve when they are encouraged, challenged and given the chance to shine.

Every year, I see the concert as a marker of progress and it is a joy to watch and celebrate each child's musical journey. A huge well done to every performer — you made the school proud.



Sia Ramanandi :

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

Amazing, so you are a musician! What do you play?

I play the violin and I am currently working on Grade 4.

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

I received a gift from my uncle for one lesson at the London School of Violin. I really enjoyed the pieces that the teacher gave me. It made me feel ecstatic.

What is life like for some who likes music at St. John's. How much music do you do at school?

I am in the school orchestra and I used to do three years of violin with Mr. Robinson at school. I also play in the church for concerts.

Do you have a favourite piece? When did you last play in a concert?

My favourite piece to play is 'Lake of Ice' by Shruthi Rajasekar. The last time I played in a concert was for the summer assembly at the school, but I am also due to play at St. James's Church.

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

Whilst it is hard to keep motivated, it is very enjoyable to play, so this balances everything out.

Do you think Music is important in school?

I do think that music is important in school, because everybody can be a part of it.

Do you have any funny musical stories?

For fun, I do some 'crazy violin' and this makes everybody dance!



Rosalise Shaikh :

Hi Rosalise... What musical instrument do you play?

I play the piano and the violin

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

My mum encouraged me to play the piano, but my friend Geneva inspired me to learn the violin.

What would you say life is like for musicians at St. John's? How much music do you do?

I have two music lessons a week and I also have some extra music clubs. At St. John's, we get to participate in choir, music theory club, orchestra and violin club. We can also write articles for the school music magazine which is why we are here!

How do you keep motivated and on top of practice?

I get extra pocket money and a magazine if I play the piano for a whole week. I need no motivation to play the violin as I like it too much!

Do you think Music is important in school?

Yes, as music is linked with other subjects like maths. Music is very mathematical.

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.

Do you have any funny musical stories?

Once my Dad had loads of musical DVDs that he wanted to show me. We set some time to watch them, but then I realised "Daddy, you don't have a DVD player!"



Isabella Lewis:

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

Great, so you are a musician! Which instruments do you play?

I play the piano and the violin. I am in the Prep. School Choir and I have recently joined the school orchestra

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

My mum inspired me to learn initially as we love music in our family. I then wanted to have my own lessons after I saw my nephew play the piano in a concert.

Do you have a favourite piece? When did you last perform?

My favourite piece is called Fur Elise, by Ludwig van Beethoven. It is thought to be a piece which Beethoven wrote in honour of a student of whom he regarded very much. I recently played an adaptation of a very famous piece called 'La Campanella' at the Christmas Carol Concert (pictured below).

How do you keep motivated to practise?

I love all the pieces that I play and this makes coming to the piano very natural. Therefore, I do not have a problem going to practise.

Do you have any funny musical stories?

The piece Fur Elise often causes a lot of confusion, because nobody is sure who 'Elise' actually is. A likely story is that it was a mistake by Beethoven's assistant who mistook Beethoven's really bad handwriting and missed that the piece was actually meant for somebody called 'Therese'



Felicity Fang:

Hi Felicity! Which instruments do you play?

I play the piano and the flute

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

When I was small, I loved to sing so much that my mum thought I should learn the piano. The flute, well I just wanted to learn it myself and so that came next!

What is musical life like at St. John's What music do you do at school?

Music at St. John's is peaceful and flowing. In lessons we either learn about how to play the violin, to sing, or we have lessons learning about different styles of music

Do you have a favourite piece? When did you last play in a concert?

My favourite piece is 'Rage over the lost penny' by Beethoven. Last time I played in a concert was in September. I like this piece because I find it accurately describes what it is like to lose something and then you are trying to find it!

How do you keep motivated to practise?

Well, I know that if I don't practise regularly, I won't get any better. So I make sure to practise every day!

Do you think music is important in school?

I think music is important in school because it teaches you how to enjoy and appreciate life itself!

Do you have any funny musical stories to share?

When I was practising piano at home, I got to the final note and lifted my hands up ready to bring them down for a dramatic finish, but then I completely missed the keys and came crashing down over the edge of the piano instead!



Instrumental Teacher **Introductions:**

At St. John's, we offer instrumental lessons in a variety of disciplines... notably: Flute, Clarinet, Saxophone, Piano, Drum Kit, Violin, Viola, Guitar, Bouzouki, Cello and Double Bass.

"Lessons occur at set times during the school day, so that important academic lessons are avoided. Teachers schedule music lessons on rotation and keep an open dialogue with parents, ensuring there is a clear line of communication to maintain stable consistency in each child's learning. Learning outside school is an option to consider, however, it is our belief that learning a musical instrument should be accessible to all, so if you do choose to learn in school, we are able to offer you a team of vetted and experienced instrumental specialists who work with the school to raise the standards of musical learning and actively encourage participation within the many events that we do!"



Mrs. Cheung - Piano

Catherine Cheung is an experienced piano teacher with over ten years of teaching behind her. She enjoys helping students of all levels develop their skills, whether they are playing for fun or working towards exams and performances.

Before becoming a teacher full time, Catherine had a successful career as both a pianist and composer. She was awarded BBC Young Composer of the Year and has performed at renowned venues such as the Royal Festival Hall, Purcell Room, and St. James's Palace. She studied at the Royal College of Music, where she completed both her Bachelor's and Master's degrees with the support of a prestigious award.

Catherine's teaching style is approachable and encouraging, focusing on making lessons enjoyable and helping students play with confidence. She is passionate about helping young musicians explore a wide range of music, from classical music to film scores and beyond.

Mr. Rivière - Double Bass, Cello, Piano

Mr. Rivière came to teaching at St. John's after joining us and playing the double bass for our Upper School Christmas Concerts. For many years, we knew him as a talented and versatile orchestral musician, but he is also a phenomenally talented jazz musician, playing with our previous drum kit teacher Mr. Hale, in the 'Reiss Ellis Beckles Group' and 'Family Band.' Mr. Rivière tours and performs within the industry as a pianist cellist, Double Bassist and composer. Within his performing work Mr. Rivière has received accolades from the likes of BBC Radio 3 and Jazz FM. Mr. Rivière therefore not only has the performance pedigree to inspire the next generation of our young musicians, but he also writes music and is able to share first-hand experience of the music industry - sharing his wonderful experiences of playing some of the country's favourite jazz and performance pieces.

Mr. Rivière currently teaches piano at St. John's but has openings to teach the cello and double bass - two highly interesting instruments which provide the bass of the orchestra and share some of the job of the rhythm section. As a department which specialises in stringed instruments, being able to learn with Mr. Rivière is an ideal opportunity and opening to learning something truly unique and amazing. As an added incentive, being larger and lower pitched instruments, the Cello and Double Bass are more forgiving - more likely sounding great from the very beginning and can also be played with some very exciting slap and plucking effects which are particular to these instruments. Playing the double bass also is a route towards playing the electric bass, which is essential within band ensemble playing, modern jazz, funk and pop music.



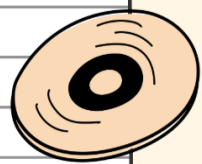
MUSIC TEA AND RECITAL



At the beginning of every school year, St. John's promotes and marks what we do in the Music Department with a Music Tea for parents. This is to showcase our up-and-coming young stars and also to give our instrumental teachers a platform to demonstrate what they do alongside a selection of their pupils. It is a most valued event and a huge opportunity for parents and teachers to network together - establishing connections with one another and for us to share crucial advice, such as where to purchase an instrument, music and which equipment to buy. As a National Nurturing school and with our focus this year on 'Resilience,' we are able to empathise completely with the theme of the year and encourage these strengths within the pupils through their practice, performance and exam preparation by giving them a taste of what it is to practise regularly and show commitment, followed by the joys received from a

job well done! Following the Music Tea, we hold a recital evening, which takes place at 19:00 in our Senior School Hall. The evening event is where the true performing lies and pupils need to audition for slots to play. Both events are formal St. John's performances, however, the children and adults are always treated to drinks and refreshments by Mr. Tardios afterwards, the happiness from which fosters an incentive to work hard and commit to what they are studying for.

Performing opportunities are so very valuable for our young musicians, so that they can learn the craft of performing on stage, even down to something simple as knowing to take a bow. It has become surprising how many young musicians do not have this opportunity in other schools, however it becomes very evident each time we stage one of these events at how much the standard improves with the right education and encouragement!



F.3 - MUSIC

of the 20th century

By Meyzi Cakir



Arnold Schoenberg or Schönberg was an Austrian and American composer, music theorist, teacher and writer. He was among the first modernists who transformed the practice of harmony in 20th-century classical music, and a central element of his music was its use of motivic processes as a means of coherence.

But Schoenberg did suffer from triskaidekaphobia -- the fear of the number 13. There are some who believe he misspelled the second name in his opera Moses and Aron to avoid having 13 letters in the title. On Friday the 13th, 1951, he lay in bed fearing the end was at hand.

what vocal style did Schoenberg create?

A German term meaning "speaking voice," Sprechstimme refers to a vocal technique developed by Arnold Schoenberg, in which a singer produces a sound halfway between speech and song.

LOUIS ARMSTRONG

THE FIRST GREAT JAZZ SOLOIST

BY SIENNA MISTRY

KIND OF MUSIC

Louis Armstrong mainly created jazz music. His jazz was:

- Full of strong trumpet solos
 - Fun, lively, and rhythmic (often with "swing")
 - Emotional and expressive
 - Focused on letting one musician shine
- He helped make jazz more about creativity and personality, which influenced lots of modern music.



IMPORTANCE

- Louis Armstrong was very important because he changed the way jazz music was played in the 20th century.
- Before him, jazz bands mostly played together as a group. Armstrong made it popular for one musician to stand out and play a solo. This changed jazz into music where people could show their own style and creativity.
- He also influenced the way people sing in jazz by using scat singing and putting lots of emotion into his voice.
- Because of him, jazz became more exciting, expressive, and focused on individual talent — and this influenced many other types of modern music, including pop and swing.

Benjamin Britten by George Fish

Operatic Master: Revitalized British opera, with notable works including *Peter Grimes*, *Billy Budd*, *The Turn of the Screw*, and *Death in Venice*.
Famous Works: *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra* (1945), *War Requiem* (1962), *Simple Symphony* (1925), and *A Ceremony of Carols* (1942).

Partnership: Had a lifelong personal and professional partnership with tenor Peter Pears, for whom he wrote many vocal works.

Musical Style: Known for being emotive, accessible, and deeply skilled in setting English words to music.

Legacy: Founded the Aldeburgh Festival and was the first composer to be made a life peer.

Early Life: Born in Lowestoft, Suffolk; studied under Frank Bridge.

For more than 35 years the composer Benjamin Britten and singer Peter Pears lived together. Their work together as musicians was underpinned by a deep and fixed working relationship that the two men described as similar to a marriage.

Sergei Prokofiev

By: Arianna



Born : April 12th
1891

Died : March 5th
1953

He became a
conductor in
1920

FACTS:

1. He was a prodigious composer
2. Passionate chess master
3. Had two sons
4. Famous for writing children's tales
5. Wrote complex piano pieces

Dance of the knights	Romeo and Juliet	Peter and the wolf
Cinderella's waltz	Death of Tybalt	Battle of the ice
Piano sonata	The love for three oranges	Alexander Nevsky
Concerto No.3	Prelude in C major	Symphony in C major

“It’s the Wizz”

24

With everybody in Wicked fever, following the world success of Wicked Part 1 and this year’s Wicked: For Good, St. John’s takes a look at a re-imagination of the land of Oz, through the style of the 1960-70s and Motown.

This year’s summer production eased on down the road to success in July back through music history to the tunes and sounds of Motor City and ‘that Motown Sound.’ The Wizz brought blaring horns (from our 16 piece orchestra), slinky guitar passages, matched with punching basslines and tight drums retelling L. Frank Baum’s classic tale of The Wonderful Wizard of Oz.

The Wiz is a re-adaptation from the 1900’s original and was revolutionary in 1975, bringing together communities and providing livelihoods and a voice to workers from the great depression of Detroit. The 1975 remake by William F. Brown and produced by Ken Harper, with iconic music and lyrics by Charlie Smalls created a contemporary twist on the classic tale - Kansas being replaced by a 70s Harlem and the Winkie people representing the working-class struggles of the time.

In perhaps St. Johns’ most ambitious project to date, both Prep. and Senior School pupils had to go on a high-stakes voyage of learning and discovery in order to be able to carry the rigours of the musical score and the sharp wit of the revised characters in the script. Musically, the pupils had to learn how to listen and take cues from the orchestra without prompting (which requires a certain amount of concentration and stamina) and eye contact with the conductor while also focusing on an independent melody or harmony part - working together to create that all immersive wall of sound so critical for this style.

Singing harmonies and part work which interact with one another while keeping firmly on pitch and following the beat, pupils had to work very hard to pick up technique and truly get into the spirit of the music in order to create the necessary effect. The orchestra was an amazing experience and certainly something that the people of Potters Bar were not quite ready for as the reaction from members of the public was quite something. People were actually stopping what they were doing to try and get a glimpse of our band playing! Equally, the pupils had never experienced anything quite like it! Our next production will be the school fashion show—taking place on the senior school site, watch out as our pupils eagerly create pieces, study fashion choreography, stories and display their chosen themes on our dazzling catwalk.

