

Performing Arts Report
Term One Oct 2009
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Despite the building work which is gradually creeping its way around the school Performing Arts continues to flourish. This is the first year that a cohort has passed through from Yr 7 – Yr 11 as a designated Performing Arts College. The results currently stand at:

5 x A* - C	69%
5 x A* - C (inc English & Maths).....	58%
5 x A* - G	98%

“Performing Arts will have impacted on the education of all the students in this cohort. **ALL** the students during their five years at Commonweal will have experienced the Arts at some stage, with our SSAT status contributing both on a curricular, cross curricular & extra- curricular level and **MANY** of the students benefited quite considerably, with the arts playing a big part in enhancing their education. Of course it is difficult to assess the exact impact of SSAT status on this cohorts very pleasing exam results, but all evaluation documents and data show very positively,” commented Sue Derrick, Head of Performing Arts.

We have reviewed our objectives for 2009 – 2010 and a programme of events has been drawn up to fulfil these. Thank you to all students, staff, parents, governors and patrons for your continued support.

One of this terms highlights has been a very successful Clubs Fair, where a lot of students signed up for a wide range of clubs. Music, drama and dance clubs all feed into performances within the community and already this new academic year we have had requests! In September music were asked to perform at Holy Rood Church, set within The Lawn, Old Town, as part of National Heritage Week. Miss Zylinski and her string quartet played two beautiful sets in the afternoon, comprised of a selection of classical pieces. “The Quartet has come on leaps and bounds this year and Saturday's performance highlighted just how beautiful and yet exciting chamber music can be. The church setting was perfect for acoustics, enabling warm and sonorous harmonies. A great way to start the academic year!” Miss Aniela Zylinski, music teacher.

The following week the Music Department provided a range of musicians for the Christchurch Fete. This saw the string quartet back in action, a selection of pianist played their favourite pieces, Nick Weaver performed a set of his own songs, Mrs Sutcliffe gave a fab solo on her double bass piece and Miss Zylinski brought the piano to new heights!

The Boys Dance Group were asked to perform at a very prestigious event, the NALGAO (National Association of Local Government Arts Officers) national conference, which was hosted in Swindon earlier this month. "The boys were brilliant, thank you so much for bringing them along," said Helen Miah, Head of Culture, Swindon Borough Council.

Salsa Fit, aimed at people in the community, started again in September with our community partner Claudia Stroud. This takes place in the dance studio on Thursday evenings from 6.30 – 7.30pm. To tie in with this we have arranged a Salsa Dance at school on Friday 6th November. This will see Latin Fiesta, a five piece band from South America entertain, and Claudia giving dance lessons throughout the evening. There will be prizes for the most colourful outfits and the ticket price of £10 includes a Tapas supper.

As a member of the Swindon Borough Council Arts Renaissance group led by Helen Miah and her team, I have joined the planning committee for an exciting summer event to be staged at Lydiard Park in the summer, entitled Swindon Village Fete. Following a meeting with Helen Miah, plans are unfolding and we are going to sponsor a music stage and help project manage a music competition with Paul Ashman from Swindon Rock School.

I am also on the network group for Big Hat Inclusive Performing Arts which plans to stage another cabaret evening next July at The Arts Centre. Richard Wileman, representing Music Alive, are the latest group to join us and we welcome them onboard.

One of our objectives is to offer a local business the opportunity to develop a staff choir. Nationwide have taken up this idea, which will be delivered by Chris Body who runs Thamesdown Ladies Choir. This will culminate with a carol singing session in Nationwide's atrium on the lunchtime of Wednesday November 11th. Our own choir will also be performing at this event and funds raised will go to the local Prospect Hospice.

Thanks to Dave King one of our patrons and editor of the Swindon Advertiser for sponsoring our Performing Arts Award which was given to Jordan Ginger at our recent prize giving event. Jordan is a highly talented young man in music, drama and dance and we wish him well in all his endeavours.

Commonweal School Radio continues to broadcast, not just in school, but once a fortnight on Swindon Community Radio's, 'School's Out' programme. Thanks to our patron Shirley Ludford for giving us the opportunity. Thanks also to Nick Weaver, Meena Arora, Sharon Blackmore, Herman Boston and Chris Garlick for their input. The Speakers Club and Writers Club, run by the Chris and Herman, feed into these programmes.

Drama teacher Debs Browning has planned nine drama trips for the year, please see the latest edition of Commonweal Matters for further info, or view on our web sites. The first was the excellent play, 'Is That A Bolt In Your Neck?' delivered by the Gonzo Moose Theatre Company at The Arts Centre on 2nd October. This was well attended mainly by GCSE drama students. Thanks to Debs for her hard work and commitment and well done to all the students for being fine ambassadors of the school.

Our community partners Reach Inclusive Arts have funding for a new programme for students with disabilities entitled, 'Making It Art.' This entails workshops in our school, Uplands and Crowdys Hill schools, which culminates with a performance after Christmas in the Wyvern Theatre. 45 students at our school, divided into three workable groups, have been identified by Debs Browning.

Ella Workman and Lauren Martin, both Yr 11, are once again going into Lethbridge school to deliver dance workshops on a Monday after school. The group will perform at the Evenings of Entertainment, staged next term. Yr 11 Dance Leaders are active in our cluster delivering dance sessions at Lethbridge, King William and Even Swindon up until Christmas.

We continue to fund perri music lessons at our partner specialist school, St Lukes. We aim to invite St Lukes to join the Big Hat Disability Performing Arts network.

Commonweal, along with Churchfields and Isambard Community School have signed up to the national Sing Up initiative, led by Swindon Music Service. This entails a selection of secondary school students delivering singing lessons in our feeder schools culminating with a celebratory event. Lethbridge and Even Swindon have taken us up on this offer and the result will be especially commissioned songs written by Nick Weaver, which will appear on our popular Now That What I Call Commonweal CD and a performance opportunity in our Spring Concert.

INSET sessions, delivered by performing arts staff at Commonweal, have been offered to our feeder schools and we await uptake to see this move forward. Polly Long, Sports Co-ordinator, suggested we also run a twilight dance INSET session for all schools in the Churchfield and Commonweal cluster. Sue Derrick suggested that we extend this to teachers of Yr 7 and Yr 8 as well as Yr 5 and Yr 6. We aim to deliver this after Christmas and as yet a date needs to be confirmed. Yr 6 after school clubs, delivered by our specialist staff, will also be offered at Commonweal, after Christmas.

Family days at our feeder schools are fully embedded in our feeder schools via Extended Services and this is proving very popular. As we would be targeting the same audience with our Family Sunday workshops, we have decided not to offer these this year. However, I have another exciting plan afoot to engage the wider community and I will report on this next term, once plans have been discussed.

The Evening of Entertainment take place on the evenings of 25th & 26th November and all Yr 6 from our feeder schools are invited to come and watch the matinee dress rehearsal on Tuesday 24th November. Last year was highly successful and saw all Yr 6 coming to watch!

The next SSAT steering group meeting is in the school library on 9th November, 4 – 5pm.

Forthcoming events for term two:

- 4th November – Hey Babe, evening drama trip to the Arts Centre.
- 6th November – Salsa Dance with live band Latin Fiesta, open to the wider community.
- 9th – 13th November – Gambia week where a host of activities are on offer from trampolining, to cheerleading, music, drama and cross country in order raise funds for the Gambia. Yr 7 Gambia Day takes place on Tuesday 10th November.
- 16th November - Reach Making it Art workshop, 1 – 3pm session 5.
- 17th November – A Taste Of Honey, evening drama trip to the Arts Centre
- 23rd November - Reach Making it Art workshop, 8.55 -10.55am session 6
- 24th November – Evening of Entertainment dress rehearsal 1 – 2.30pm to all Yr 6
- 24th November Motionhouse – evening dance trip to Swindon Dance
- 25th – 26th November – Evenings of Entertainment
- 27th November – Yr 10 & Yr 11 Language GCSE to watch a Spanish Play in the hall in the morning.
- 30th November – Last Orders, PSHE performance in the hall to whole of Yr 9. All day.
- 4th December – Sing Up Youth Singing Leaders workshop at Isambard Community School 9.30- 2.30pm TBC.
- 14th December – Bath Rd Church Carol Service, evening.
- 15th December – Blood Brothers trip to the West End, evening.
- 16th December – Carol Singing Tour inc Nationwide
- 17th December – Carols in the gym