

**Performing Arts Report**  
**The Commonweal School**  
**Term Three Feb 2010**

[www.commonwealarts.co.uk](http://www.commonwealarts.co.uk)

Despite the snow we have continued pretty much as usual, bar the odd cancellation or two, which was beyond our control. Big State Theatre Company were due to come in and deliver workshops to GCSE drama students, but as the school was closed on one of our snow days, the date was postponed and will be rescheduled in the Summer term.

Due to a re gig in our faculty PE is no longer part of our faculty and Art has taken their place. This isn't without its complications but otherwise a good move as we all feel this is where they belong!

**The Community Carol Singing for the Prospect Hospice**, in honour of my late mother, was a slow starter. However, we had three large groups go out on a very Christmassy snow filled evening and everyone said they want to do it again next year. I am sure that each year the number will increase. Thanks to all who took part and thanks to Dave King at the Swindon Advertiser for his support and thanks to Jane Kendall, Community Fundraiser at the Prospect Hospice for her help in securing street permits. There was quite a cross section of ages from primary children to old folk like me! Our group sang along The Mall and we raised £174.40. I am waiting to hear the totals from the other two groups, but will keep you posted!

I have been proactive in the development of the **Big Hat Arts & Disability Network** and have been appointed as secretary. So far I have designed a logo and letter head, taken over setting up a bank account and am working on the web site. The Big Hat Cabaret will once again take place at the Arts Centre and the date for your diaries is Friday July 9<sup>th</sup> commencing at 7.30pm. I have emailed all Swindon Borough Councillors so they can flag it up on their busy schedule. Early February I will be manning the Big Hat stand at the Making It Art event at the Wyvern, organised by Reach Inclusive Arts. On the same day students from our school, with the aid of peer educators, will be performing a piece of drama on the big stage alongside Crowdy's Hill School and Uplands School. With my photographers head on I will be taking photos of the event and sharing them with the other schools for their publicity, display boards and web sites. Thanks to Debs Browning, drama teacher and KS3 Coordinator and SENCo Steve Coward for their help in this project.

**Swindon Festival of Literature Youth Poetry Slam** All eleven secondary schools in the borough are signed up for this and a date for your diary is the Grand Slam at the Arts Centre on the morning of Saturday May 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Old Town Festival** Commonweal will once again host the Performing Arts Marquee at The Lawn on Saturday June 26<sup>th</sup>. This will run from 1 – 8pm and after term break I will send out letters of invitation to all performing arts groups and schools in the area. We had 16 different groups from the community take part last year, but with the extended hours this year we hope to accommodate a lot more. If you know of anyone who might like to take part please email me [Josie@commonweal.co.uk](mailto:Josie@commonweal.co.uk)

The carnival project between ourselves and the feeder schools will also take place again and Karen Agambar, Extended Services (Emma's maternity cover lady) and I have discussed the pros and cons of last year and Karen has engaged our feeder schools, so that the event is part of each of the school's calendar of events. Students, parents, teachers and heads are being consulted to see what theme they would like to work on this year. Last year's bee project was simply fab and we hope that Tracey Baker-Stewart will weave her magic once again to create the outfits and props.

### **Sing Up!**

“Over the past 2 or 3 months, a dozen talented singers and singing leaders have been trained in teaching singing to primary school children. These students range from years 9 -11 and have developed all sorts of skills ranging from warm up techniques to classroom management! Last term saw the students take two trips to Even Swindon Primary School to teach them a song about growing up and recording it for the next 'Now Thats What I Call Commonweal' CD. The students have been visiting Lethbridge school this term to teach year 6 a song about everyone being unique and special in their own way. Again, the students will make a recording of this song for the CD.

As part of this project, we are hosting a singing leaders workshop on February 24th with Brenda Rattray "One of Britain's leading jazz gospel singers". Students from across Swindon will be invited as well as those involved in the Sing up project here at Commonweal.” Ali Sutcliffe, head of music.

**Yr 6 Performing Arts Scholarship Auditions** These happened on 14<sup>th</sup> January and Sue Derrick, Head of Performing Arts, and I saw some exceptionally talented children. However, places are limited so sadly there may be some disappointed faces. The standard in general was very high. There was one young girl who is absolutely excellent at dance and I hope that she can come to us to further develop her skills.

**Move It trip** to the Olympiad in London goes out on Friday March 12<sup>th</sup>. All forty places are filled and we are taking a cross section from the school from both key stages. This is a fantastic opportunity and very inspiring, KS3 often get the bug to take up GCSE dance and GCSE students have the chance to talk to colleges of further education.

**French play** This was a cross curricular project enabling GCSE French students to further their understanding of the language via drama. The students watched the play in late January and by their feedback they got a lot out of it. There is a student review in the current edition of Commonweal Matters.

I really love my job and I love the people I work with, so I suppose that it is no surprise that when we have a faculty social I talk very excitedly about project ideas! The **CD song for Haiti** (in the current edition of Commonweal Matters goes into more detail) was a challenge to turn around an original song in week! Nick wrote it, four of our top Yr 11 singers rearranged it and played at a packed concert on the Friday. The time constraint was due to the fact that the head had planned a Haiti fund raising non uniform day on the Friday and the concert tied in nicely with that. Great team work from all who took part in the production of the CD, we beat Simon Cowell to it! I have approached Oxfam to see if they want to sell the song from their online shop as a download. Will let you know the outcome next time.

In our endeavour to use performing arts to enhance other areas of the curriculum we held **Yr 7 Hindu dance workshops** in January as part of the RE syllabus. Shimita Ray from Wise Moves explained how Hindu's use dance as part of their worship and then engaged the students in the dance relating to Krishna. The students who are currently studying this area in RE responded well and evaluation forms once collated will be available to measure their understanding.

The primary school's **Dance Festival**, scheduled for March 11<sup>th</sup> has been postponed until 28<sup>th</sup> June. Louise Harman, Head of Dance and Martine De Carvalho, maternity cover for sports coordinator Polly Long, and I have met up to stream line our objectives into one project. This makes sense and the new date will enable the primaries to have a little more time to work on dances, our dance leaders will also help with this sharing event which is the first day of the Yr 6 tutor days. The event will run from 4 – 6pm. Yr 11s Ella Workman and Lauren Martin, ex Lethbridge School girls, are continuing their Monday night after school dance club at Lethbridge and it is hoped that the girls will put a piece together for the Dance Festival and also perform the same piece at the Old Town Festival.

Debs Browning, drama teacher, has run two trips this term. Both have been to London's West End: Billy Elliot on 28<sup>th</sup> January and War Horse on 3<sup>rd</sup> February. Solomon Theatre Company are visiting the school on 10<sup>th</sup> February, with their PSHE play called The Power of Love which explores bullying, exploitation, domestic violence, intimidation, respect & trust. This will be aimed at all of Yr 8 and Yr 10 GCSE drama students.

### **Forthcoming events term four**

**24<sup>th</sup> Feb** – National Sing Up Day, secondary workshop at Commonweal (all day)

**25<sup>th</sup> Feb** – Evening of GCSE Dance in the dance studio.

**2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> March** – GCSE Dance Exams (day)

**9<sup>th</sup> March** – Yr 9 art trip to the Tate in London

**11<sup>th</sup> March** – Drama trip to the West End to see Lion King (eve)

**12<sup>th</sup> March** – Move It dance trip to Olympiad, London (day)

**24<sup>th</sup> March** – Commonweal Spring Concert, featuring Chris Church Choir and Lethbridge School Drummers, at Christ Church, Cricklade St, commencing 7pm