

Music

Junior Choir

Alyssa Sommerville

At the start of the new school year Mrs Hamilton put up an announcement calling all pupils in 1st to 3rd year to come join the Junior School Choir. My friends and I thought this would be super fun, so we decided to come along and see what would happen. For the first few weeks Mrs Hamilton focused on making our choir a united voice. This happened by doing some very funny sounding exercises as a big group. In November we were invited to a choir workshop by the National Youth Choir NI led by Andrew Nunn. I must say I thoroughly enjoyed this. As it was

leading up to Christmas we started learning, "The Holly and The Ivy". Due to Covid 19, there were no 'in person' concerts so instead we recorded the performance for an online concert.

In January we began to prepare for the marvellous music week. The two songs we sang were "This is Me" and "Build Me Up Buttercup" and if I do say so myself we were a big hit with the audience. We rounded off a great year of choir with a party. Mrs Hamilton brought in an endless amount of cake, tray bakes, crisps and chocolate.

She knew we liked food because my friends and I would sometimes bring chocolate to choir practice. I'm not sure how pleased Mrs Hamilton was with this!

Even though I only joined choir this year I feel I have formed some great friendships and I have had the best time. I don't think any of this would have been possible without Mrs Hamilton, so therefore I say a big thank you and I can't wait to see what is in store for next year!



Cappella Group

Mya Jess

In April of this school year the new singing teacher, Miss O'Mahony, was introduced to six year nine pupils and myself, with the intention of forming a cappella group. We began by rehearsing the piece 'Lean on me' by Bill Withers without the use of sheets to read from, therefore helping us to listen to each other's voices and the rhythm of the music rather

than constantly focusing on paper. After a couple of weeks there was a suggestion to sing, 'The cup song'. The majority of us were familiar with this piece and really enjoyed practising it. In such a short time we have all learnt to work with each other's voices while enjoying our break time practices to put together pieces of music.



My Experience with Music

Sophie McNaulty

My name is Sophie McNaulty and I am in Year 10. My experience with music this year at Banbridge Academy has been fantastic. I have attended singing and guitar lessons, participated in choir practice and performances. I am also the lead singer and guitarist of the girl band, which was set up by Mr Tom McConnell. This year has been really good and I have had so many different and great opportunities in

music, one of them was having the chance to perform with the girl band in front of the whole school during junior/senior lunch. I absolutely loved the experience and opportunity I was given, and it gave me a great confidence boost for performances in the future. As well as the great opportunity the girl band has given me, it has also been great to make new friends who I share similar music tastes and hobbies with.

I also must thank Mrs Hamilton and the rest of the music department for the opportunities they have given me and the rest of the Banbridge Academy pupils this year! It has definitely been my favourite year of music in Banbridge Academy so far and I hope to have many more great years ahead of me!

Music week 2022

Amelia Kennedy

Music week was a really enjoyable experience for me as I'm sure it was for everyone else. The restrictions in the past two years meant that there were very few occasions permitting live music and I was feeling nervous about playing. Music week provided me with an opportunity to perform in front of a transient audience, which was much

less daunting.

I thoroughly enjoyed listening to the variety of musical talent, for example, Beauty Shop Quartet, choir, orchestra, 'the band' and many solo performances. I found it exciting not only to sing and play for others, but also to hear live music from amazing

musicians throughout the school as I walked by.

Thank you Ms Hamilton and Mrs Qua for giving me this opportunity. Music week rejuvenated my passion for entertaining.

Percussion

Carter Henning

Percussion in Banbridge Academy is a fun way to learn how to play different types of percussion instruments such as: Drums, Xylophone, Glockenspiel etc. The teachers, provided by the Education Authority, are very nice and they provide a good teaching of musical education. I started around November and my teacher has helped me get up to grade 2 already. Mrs Hamilton, our new Head of Department for Music, has been very good at organising and sorting out times for students who are keen on music lessons.



Music

Wind Ensemble

After two years of Covid19 restrictions, musical instruments had been buried at the back of wardrobes and the idea of playing "live" in front of other people was more than a little daunting. A lot of music lessons during this time had been cancelled or were online, so that vital interaction performers have with each other was long overdue. During the first few rehearsals there were lots of nervous faces and pupils were not that keen to be heard. In order to try and get more pupils involved, we decided to change the rehearsal time to Monday mornings from 8.30am. Getting everyone out of bed even earlier was going to be a challenge but it was worth it.



The pupils both shocked and delighted me with their enthusiasm. The numbers started to grow and Banbridge Academy Wind Ensemble was reborn. The ensemble consisted of anyone who wanted to join. Trumpets, euphonium, horn, flutes, clarinets, saxophone, pianos, xylophone all ranging from beginner to grade 8. The parts were adapted for the individuals and we played to our strengths. It was great to have dedicated senior pupils helping out and assisting with introducing the younger pupils to ensemble playing. Their contribution was vital and helped enable the group to perform at Banbridge Academy Music Week in March. They performed Wagon Wheel, the theme tune to

Jurassic Park and Wellerman.

In preparation for this article I chatted to some of the Year 8 pupils about their experience in the wind ensemble. I had thought they might give me some words of wisdom for this article. The answers were certainly interesting, though not necessarily what I was looking for! However, while chatting to them, the laughter from the room was fantastic. These pupils have all really bonded over their triumphs and mistakes. They worked hard on their individual parts and came together as a group to put on a thoroughly enjoyable performance. They have no other connection, they are all in different classes, but playing music together

has had a huge impact on their enjoyment of first year in Banbridge Academy and great friendships have formed. One comment from Georgina Harkness about her feelings on the Wind Ensemble stood out, "Don't be afraid to play!" This really is the theme throughout our rehearsals. Don't be afraid to just join in and give it a go. Georgina is a piano student who came along on the first rehearsal and began performing on the xylophone just for us. Thank goodness these guys didn't leave the instruments buried at the back of the wardrobe. We are now taking requests for next year and we are on the lookout for a drummer and guitarists. If you're interested, get in touch!

Liam Hickmann Nesbitt: Reflecting on music

Katlo Matlhodi

Liam's passion for music was evidently clear during our interview. He explained where his love of bass playing has taken him thus far and where he would like it to take him in the future...

What instrument do you play?

I play the bass and I started playing it in November 2018 and the guitar two years ago. I wanted to play the keyboard at first, but to be honest it looked kind of boring and my friend advised me that I should try the bass. I had never really heard of the bass before I started playing; I think most people don't really know what the bass is and think it's just a guitar.

How has your experience been studying A-level music?

I didn't do GCSE music, so I attempted to 'teach myself' the GCSE music that I was required to know AS Level. This obviously proved to be quite a challenge, so Mrs Munton helped 'bump me up' to where I needed to be. I am obviously very grateful as if it wasn't for her, I don't think I would have been able to do as well as I did and get my A at AS Level. It didn't come naturally but since music is my passion, I was already studying music at home by playing and caring about music

Have you had any 'public performances' yet?

I met a guy named Oliver Miller in Year 14 and after a band practice together, we managed to get ourselves a gig. Unfortunately covid greatly impacted our plans and everything got cancelled. After lockdown, I started going to open mic nights and found that my playing attracted quite a bit of attention and I was asked if I would do gigs with a

variety of different bands.

Do you ever get nervous before you play?

Not so much anymore, but it does really depend on the size of the gig. When I started I was really nervous and terrified but you get used to it. There's not really much you can do about it, you just have to trust yourself and do it. But once you get on stage and get that momentum going, it just feels good.

How did you know music was the right career for you?

I suppose I don't know for definite if it is. But I care about it a lot and have put a lot of effort into it.

What advice would you give to younger people that want to pursue music?

Do everything you can to get experience. Go out and play with people; the one thing I regret is that I didn't do that earlier. Music is about the genuine connection you get with people while playing with people; people who have the same love for music that you do. It's possible to communicate without even saying a word.

To Mrs Munton: how do you feel knowing that one of your students is already in the music industry?

I am absolutely thrilled that I have pupils who are networking in such a way and already playing professionally. I am also always reflecting on how I can best support pupils like that because it's so much bigger than what we do in the classroom, to nurture our pupils' talents and let them be the best version of themselves

