



# Music

## Junior Choir

**Mollie Gibson**

Junior choir meets every Monday afternoon from 3:20 – 4:15pm for Years 8, 9 and 10. During this time we learn new songs, arrangements and parts for our main events throughout the school year.

The first of these events is the school Carol Service, which is held on the 20th December at Holy Trinity Church, Banbridge. This is a wonderful occasion when our vocal and instrumental musical groups come together to create a seasonal programme just before the Christmas holidays. This year we performed Stopford's "A Christmas Blessing". Earlier in the week, we were also invited to sing for residents at Seapatrick Care Home where we entertained them with a festive carol programme. This was a first for us and it was lovely to see the joy our singing brought to many, who

may not otherwise be able to get along to music concerts.

Another main event in our school calendar is the Spring Concert towards the end of March. This is another time when we celebrate and showcase the musical talent within the life of Banbridge Academy. This year, we had lots of fun preparing the ABBA classic, Dancing Queen. It was great to be part of the large musical family within our school.

Members of the Junior Choir were given

the opportunity to sing as soloists at our 2023 January Open Night. Choir members brought music to many of our school corridors as parents and prospective pupils enjoyed their visit.

Being part of Junior Choir has helped me to meet new people and I've made more friends since attending Junior Choir. I look forward to every Monday afternoon. Mrs Qua always has lots of new challenges for us, but we have fun along the way. We also meet together to practise our parts at various break and lunch times throughout the week. With a current membership of 45, we are always adding to our numbers. You will be made very welcome if you decide to attend.

## Band

**Sophie McNaulty**

My name is Sophie and I am the lead singer and guitarist of the girl band at Banbridge Academy. There are two bands in school: a girl band and a boy band. Thomas McNaulty, Moby Murdock, Scott McShane and Luke Wills are all part of the boy band. Maja Quinn, Charlotte Hampton, Emily Stronach and myself are part of the girl band. This year has been a very good year for both the boy and girl band, as we have had many fantastic opportunities to be seen by the school and the public. Both bands this year have performed at open night, the spring concert and Buskfest, which took place in Banbridge in June.

All of these have been great opportunities to perform, but my personal favourite was Buskfest. I have never enjoyed a band performance as much as that in my life, as I felt so confident and happy to perform in front of the public as the girl band had never had this opportunity before. It was really enjoyable and such a confidence boost for the band, but both bands could never have done it without



Mr Tom McConnell. Mr McConnell set up both bands in 2022 and we have never looked back! Every Friday the boy and girl band take it week about to practise after school and without Mr McConnell's help, we would not sound half as good! He has been so much help and has put so much effort into pushing us to be the best we can, that we would be lost without him! The bands have been such a good experience for all of us and I am so thankful for the opportunities it has given us.



# Music School Orchestra

Emma Kirkwood - Orchestra leader 2022-2023, member of Ulster Youth Orchestra, Summer 2023



Banbridge Academy orchestra gives young musicians a chance to experience playing in a group of like-minded individuals and experience a wide range of musical genres such as, pop, classical and more. Pupils join together every Thursday afternoon from 3:30- 4:30 to play a selection of music led by Mrs Qua. During 2022 and 2023, we had the opportunity to play at multiple school events.

The first event at which we had the pleasure of performing was our Prize Giving Ceremony in October. We performed Viva la Vida by Coldplay. This was followed by our Christmas performance of traditional Christmas carols with the brass ensemble and choir. We received more praise after our pop-up orchestra appearance in January 2023 during Banbridge Academy Open Night.

A highlight for the entire orchestra, but especially the Year 14 members, was the Spring Concert. In April the orchestra, along with other musical ensembles, was given the chance to showcase the pieces we had been working on all year. The three pieces performed were Viva la Vida by Coldplay, 'Die Moldau' from 'Ma Vlast' by Smetana, and a specially adapted arrangement of Piazzola's 'Libertango'. In this last performance, myself along with four other Year 14 pupils were able to show off our talent with solos. Caitlyn Colgan and I played the violin, Jacob Porter and Jessica Su played flute and Anna Sharpe played the bassoon. Through the dedication of the Year 14 pupils guiding the orchestra through the dynamic tango, we were able to perform an expressive and lively rendition of the piece.

Throughout my seven years of Banbridge academy, the orchestra has a significant factor in my school life. I always enjoyed coming after school to chat and play with my friends. Due to my involvement with the orchestra I noticed a significant progression with my individual musical ability, as I began to play at a higher level. To anyone considering getting involved with the Music Department of Banbridge Academy, I highly recommend you give orchestra a try!



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# Music

## Senior and Chamber Choir

Anna Stronge

Here in Banbridge Academy we have a fantastic senior choir of over fifty members, composed of four different sections. We meet on Tuesdays after school where the whole choir practises together, as well as on a break time throughout the week, where each individual section practises their part alone. No matter how high or low of a pitch you can sing, there is a section that is suited to your abilities. During rehearsals throughout the school term, we revise pieces for various school events such as Prize Day and the Spring Concert, which provides us with the opportunity to develop an increased ability in singing and performance skills. The Carol Service is personally my favourite event as the genre of music learnt is beautiful; I enjoy the atmosphere created and I love celebrating Christmas early so practising Christmas songs in October is perfect for me.

I have gained so many valuable experiences from being involved in choir, even for informal events such as when we sang carols, such as Once in Royal David's City, to the residents of Seapatrick Care Home last December. I really loved the whole event as it was great to serve the community while simultaneously doing something I



enjoyed.

The chamber choir is a smaller amount of select individuals, around twenty-five, who are more serious about singing. The main difference in the chamber choir is that a higher standard of work ethic is expected of each individual, as there is an increased difficulty in the specific pieces we learn. The chamber choir was selected by Mrs Munton based on attendance of rehearsals in senior choir, dedication to learning and also singing capabilities. Most members

of the chamber choir do graded singing, however it is not essential. We rehearse on Mondays after school and on Wednesday breaktimes for various school and also private events. The chamber choir is divided into primarily four groups, which may divide again depending on the particular song. There is a very focused atmosphere, which is reflected in the progress we make on the pieces we learn. I personally prefer chamber choir as I enjoy the stronger work ethos employed and the sense of community created by a smaller group.

## Rebecca Walker ALCM

Rebecca Walker, a Year 14 A-Level Music student, has recently been awarded 'Associate of The London College of Music', having successfully completed the ALCM diploma in music theatre performance. The qualification, which is equivalent to a 2nd Year module of undergraduate study, involved a significant commitment in time and effort, with Rebecca having to demonstrate a very high level of performance skills. Rebecca, who worked under the tutelage of top UK vocal coach Ashley Fulton, is continuing to expand her advanced level performance skills, and is now working towards her Licentiate (LLCM) Diploma. Alongside her A Levels, Rebecca hopes to take her Diploma exam in June next year.





# Senior Girls

Our Girls' Senior Prefect team this year is solely musical based. The girls share their experiences of the music department and the wider benefits the magical world of music has afforded them

## Emily Reid

### Deputy Head Girl & Alto 1 Sectional Co-leader

I remember fondly the plethora of opportunities the music department has afforded me over these past 7 years. I joined the Junior Choir in Year 8 unsure and uneasy as to whether music was something for me, however these anxieties were quickly dispelled as I found my second home nestled in the corner of school... the music department. My time in the department has awarded me many opportunities to grow as a musician - more than I could ever have imagined possible; from being a member of Senior Girls' choir, Chamber Choir and receiving a place on the National Youth Choir of Northern Ireland. Music has developed me in many ways, from allowing me to grow in confidence to having the ability to perform in front of large audiences and my peers, something I rely on heavily as my role of Deputy Head Girl.

Furthermore, as a member of both Senior Girls' and Chamber Choir it has developed my skills as a team player. If one member of the choir doesn't perform or practise, the whole dynamic of music can shift and so the ability to be in a team based environment musically is so important. I have learned how working collaboratively and consistently as a choir, we can turn a piece of music from a page in front of us into a beautiful blend of voices and sounds. Furthermore, my role of sectional leader alongside Beth has developed me into a leader and further developed my musicality, by working with other members of our sectional to create and develop our sound and achieve a fabulous blend of voice, whilst encouraging other members and helping to create a safe environment where they feel respected.

The Music Department has given me so many opportunities, which pushes me as an individual and a musician each and every time. I am indebted to Mrs Munton who has been an inspiration through her clear and obvious passion for music. Additionally, without the belief, care and support Mrs Munton provides to each

pupil who crosses her path, I do believe I would have a lot less confidence in my musical abilities! I will never forget the memories I've made and the craic I have had with the music department, who are always available to have a chat. I will fondly treasure and look back on these memories in the future.

## Grace Hill

### Deputy Head Girl & Alto 2 Sectional Co-leader

Throughout my time in school I have thoroughly enjoyed being a part of the junior choir in my junior years and the girls' senior choir, as well as the chamber choir. Through my involvement in choir I have not only made new friends and progressed my talents musically, but I have been given incredible musical opportunities and leadership opportunities.

Currently, I am a sectional Co-leader for the Alto 2 section of the girls' senior choir. Although daunting initially, this role has taught me many valuable lessons about leadership and it has developed my management skills. To begin, I have learnt how to speak to my peers in an encouraging and motivating manner in order to inspire them and myself to work on the pieces that we have been learning. Moreover, my position of leadership has come with an element of trust and responsibility and has taught me the importance of being reliable and therefore showing up on time and being prepared for the choir session each week. To add, as a leader I am to be a good example to my peers and therefore I try to show those in my sectional and the rest of the choir, my dedication to the choir and passion for music.

Although initially I was concerned about leading my sectional, as I believed I could not help or teach them anything, I have now gained a new confidence and am more assured of my abilities as my fellow Co-leader and I have successfully worked together to assist those in our group whilst creating an enjoyable environment in our sectionals each week. Lastly, I would like to add that having a leadership role in any part of

school is an amazing opportunity and will teach you valuable life lessons and skills that are transferable to working life.

## Beth Cordner

### Head Girl and Alto 1 Sectional Co-leader

From my first solo as a timid Year 8 to now being a sectional co-leader of the girls' choir, a member of the chamber choir and a member of New Irish Senior Youth Choir, the Music Department has given me the most wonderful opportunities to mature my voice, grow in confidence as a singer, and nurture my role not only a sectional leader, but also as a member of the choir. Being a member of the choir has given me numerous opportunities to grow as a leader, which is invaluable to me now in my role as Head Girl. During my time in senior school, being a sectional co-leader has both encouraged and challenged me, as I have learnt how to effectively co-lead sectionals alongside Emily. As well as this, it has helped me to realise how vital it is to listen to others around you and take constructive criticism, which I have learnt only improves our unity as an Alto 1 group. I am continually pushed and grown in my musical abilities each week, and I will be forever thankful for the skills and memories the Music Department has provided me with which I will treasure in years to come.

## Hannah Kennedy

### Deputy Head Girl & Alto 2 Sectional Co-leader

Being part of choir and orchestra has taught me so much, from sight reading music and confidence, to working with other people as a team. The music department has become my second family in school, from first year until now. These last two years, I have been helping lead the alto 2 part and it has been quite a challenge to balance the fun and social aspect with learning the parts well and correctly, but it has taught me so much about what it is like to lead a team of my peers. It has taught me a multitude of skills that I will be able to use when I enter the world of work, like how much you need to listen to others and take other people's ideas and thoughts into consideration, but also how much you need to be confidently prepared because if you don't know what you're doing, no one can follow.

# Music

## National Youth Choir of Northern Ireland success for Banbridge Academy

Banbridge Academy had a superb 33 offers for the National Youth Choir of Northern Ireland. The girls participated in auditions in October, resulting in 15 junior pupils along with 18 seniors being offered places across the Junior Choir, Easter Girls' Choir, Training Choir and Senior Choir. This is an outstanding achievement, and a superb experience.

### Junior Pupils selected for NYCNI Junior Choir and Easter Girls' Choir

Charlotte Hampton  
Lucy Linton  
Jemima Harris  
Francesca Duffy  
Ciara Aiken  
Ruby Connolly  
Kizzy Gley  
Alexandra Duffy  
Leona Lin  
Grace Lilburn  
Alyssa Sommerville  
Katie Maginnis  
Mya Jess

### Junior Pupils Selected for NYCNI Junior Choir

Nicole Fox  
Maggie Parton

### Senior Pupils selected for NYCNI Training and Easter Girls' Choir

Sarah Liggett  
Sophie McNaulty  
Jasmine Magowan-Balfour  
Grace Monroe  
Amelia Kennedy  
Shelly Crawford

### Senior Pupils Selected for NYCNI Training Choir

Ella Scott  
Susannah Redmond  
Emily Reid  
Rebecca Walker  
Charis Walker  
Nicole McCully  
Olivia de la Torre  
Belle Fitsimmons  
Jorja McCabe

### Senior Pupils selected for NYCNI Senior Choir

Caitlyn Colgan  
Catherine Black  
Beth Corder  
Sarah Nesbitt  
Grace Hill



*Junior Pupils Selected pictured with Mrs Tammie Qua (Music teacher), Mrs CLaire Munton (Head of Music) and Mr McLoughlin Principal.*



*All pupil selected pictured with Mr McLoughlin (Principal) , Mrs Claire Munton (Head of Music) and Mrs Tammie Qua (Music teacher)*



*Senior pupils Selected pictured with Claire Munton (Head of Music) and Mr McLoughlin Principal*



# Summer School

Lucy Linton & Kirsten Macauley (Year 11)

A few weeks before school ended last year, we heard about a week-long summer school at Chetham's School of Music. We both decided to apply and were delighted to get offered a place in the orchestra course as a flautist and a cellist.

At the end of July we travelled to Manchester for the summer school at Chetham's. It is the largest specialist music school in the UK and the whole school is devoted to music! This means their facilities include practice rooms, performance spaces, and the Stoller Hall, where we got to perform on the last evening of the course.

The days were very long as there was an extremely busy schedule! Each day started at 7am with a vocal and physical warm up (singing and stretches!) Then we had a full orchestra rehearsal with the conductor Ellie Slorach. We also had instrument rehearsals where each instrument was assigned a tutor so we could focus on the (many!) hard parts of the music. Each afternoon there was social time where we could practise our music or do different activities like sports or crafts. Our evenings usually consisted of more rehearsals, but one night we had a ceilidh! We returned to the Chetham's boarding houses tired every night!

During the week we played a variety of music including Swan Lake, Harry Potter and A Midsummer Night's Dream.

Although we have both achieved Grade 4, we found the music very challenging at the beginning of the week. Luckily with incredible tutors and lots of practice, we learned lots and improved as the week progressed.

The highlight of the week was the concert we held in the Stoller Hall. Our families came to hear us play. It was an incredible experience to be part of such an accomplished orchestra. We also sang two songs which we had rehearsed every morning.

On the whole we had a wonderful time and would love to return some time in the future!

## Music Successes



Congratulations to Emma Kirkwood on gaining a place in the Ulster Youth Orchestra. The orchestra was founded in 1993 to provide tuition and opportunities for young musicians in Northern Ireland. It is open to musicians of ages 14 to 23 who are grade 7 standard or above. The orchestra does not meet on a weekly

basis for rehearsals but meets up for a 10-day residential course once a year and additional workshops and concerts throughout the year. Members are given the opportunity to work with acclaimed conductors and orchestral musicians. For Emma, the audition process involved learning several excerpts from



the chosen repertoire beforehand- a Gershwin Piano Concerto and a Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto, as well as two of her own chosen pieces. She then performed these at Queens University Music Department in front of a panel of Ulster Youth Orchestra tutors.

Congratulations also go to some of Mr Richard Wilson's Banbridge Academy guitar pupils who achieved excellent results in their exams. Well done, Lucy Grossmann, Finn McGarry, Holly Rice and Sarah Hylands on your merit and distinctions!