



# Music

## Junior Choir

*Amelia and Ella Dodds (9G and 11B)*

Junior Choir is one of the many music ensembles in Banbridge Academy. We welcome members from Year 8, 9 and 10. Rehearsals occur twice a week at breaktime and collectively on Monday afternoons.

I attended Junior Choir throughout Year 8, along with nearly fifty other pupils in the school, and we have performed together on many occasions, such as the Carol service, Open night and the Spring Concert. I have enjoyed every minute of it and I am sure our fellow choir members would agree. We attended choir as an extra-curricular music group on Mondays, and breaktimes on Tuesdays or Fridays.

I was lucky enough to have the opportunity

to sing a solo at Banbridge Academy's annual Spring concert, where we sang "Revolting children". I was performing as "Bruce". Siofra Darragh, Kevin Ratheesh, Kyla Fox, Nicole Fox, Isabella Kane, Lily Stafford, Susanna Spence and Vilte Visockaite danced along and stirred up the crowd as "Revolting children". We were accompanied on piano by Year 11's Charlotte Best, who also played with us for the Carol Service. We additionally performed the song, 'Once Upon a December' at the Spring Concert along with the Orchestra, featuring pupils from both Junior and Senior school. In December, we sang 'Every Gift' by Will Todd, and led the carols in the Service.

Isabel Clyde from Year 11 also sang the first verse of 'Silent Night' as a solo. Mrs Qua has led junior choir as our conductor throughout

the 2023/2024 year, making sure we gave our best; we couldn't thank her enough for the time and effort she's put in. We received some additional assistance from Miss Annett; we really appreciated the work she did for us while she was at Banbridge Academy, and Mrs Munton stepped in for Mrs Qua for a short time in December, helping to make our performance even better, and we thank her for that.

In conclusion, Junior Choir have all worked together as a group this year, plus, all our efforts and hard work paid off with the fun and successful sold-out Spring Concert. I am happy to be continuing Junior Choir next year as it is brilliant fun. I am looking forward to seeing more friendly faces joining us next year from across Years 8-10!



## Senior and Chamber Choir

*Jasmine Magowan Balfour Year 13*

Being a part of the Senior Choir and Chamber Choir is one of my favourite things about school. The Senior choir is a fun, rewarding choir in which all singers in senior school are welcome. My favourite event in the school calendar is the Annual Carol Service at Christmas Time where the Senior Choir now traditionally sing, 'O Holy Night'. It is an extremely moving piece that moves everyone

toward the true meaning of Christmas and brings colour to the service.

Chamber Choir is a select group of singers who perform more difficult, but beautiful pieces. Each singer is placed in a section which suits their voice type and range in order to create the best possible sound. The Chamber Choir rehearses a lot as the pieces

require a lot of practice and team work as well as determination. When this takes place we are able to create a magical sound and the piece is brought to life. Last year we performed a stunning piece called 'Even When He is Silent' by Kim Andre Arnesen, where the choir were singing in 8 parts... complex but hugely rewarding!

# Music

## Band

### *Carter McDonald Year 11*

I find being in a band a great opportunity to make friends and develop my musical skill. I've gotten to play in the open night, spring concert and my personal favourite, Buskfest. I think our best song is Black Betty by Ram Jam and after lots of practice with talented musicians like Will Vance, Micah Anderson and Reuben Hill, it's made Banbridge Academy much more enjoyable.



### *Luke Wills Year 12*

The Smoke Signals were formed in 2021 with the help of Tom McConnell. The band members include Scott McShane (guitarist), Luke Wills (guitarist and singer), Moby Murdock (bassist) and Thomas McNaulty (drummer). The band has created many opportunities for us. We entered our first Buskfest competition 3 years ago and have been entertaining crowds in Banbridge ever since. This year we were asked by the ABC Council to perform at the Cider in the City festival. It was an amazing experience, and it was our first live gig together. We hope to have more opportunities in the future so we can continue doing what we love!



# Band

*Sophie McNulty*

Hi, I'm Sophie and I am the lead singer of the girl band in school, Better in Red. In our band we have myself, Maja Quinn who plays electric guitar, Emily Stronach who plays bass guitar and Charlotte Hampton who plays the drums. We have been playing together for about 3 years now and we all love being able to perform and practise together as it's really fun and can be a great

distraction from the busy life of GCSEs and A Levels!

Throughout the year we play at many different events, for example, Open Night, the Spring Concert and also in Buskfest (which is a competition held every year in Banbridge Town which showcases all the local talent of Banbridge.) I think Buskfest, definitely has to be

one of our favourite events to play at as it helps to get us out there to the public and it is also a really fun event to be part of. Some of our favourite songs to play are: Stronger than Me by Amy Winehouse, Everywhere by Fleetwood Mac, Beggin' by Maneskin and Heart of Glass by Blondie.





# Music

## GCSE Music

*Rebekah Jackson Year 13*

So what is GCSE Music really like? Is it as hard and painful and time consuming as the rumours say? Is it fun? When I went into GCSE music, I had no idea what it would be like - I didn't know my teacher, anyone else doing it, or what the course would involve. First, it is completely different to junior school music, but in a good way - you learn things in much more depth and develop a better understanding of music. The music course for GCSE includes 3 components: learning twelve different yet exciting pieces for a listening paper, performing your instrument at whatever level it may be (you don't have to be a prodigy) and writing two compositions in any genre you like. These different aspects made music something to look forward to, as every class brought something new to learn, some friendly laughs and really good food. So even when things got hard, we had the support of our amazing teacher and each other to push us to keep going. So is it challenging? Yes, isn't everything? Is it worth it? Yes, no regrets.



# Music

## *Sophie McNulty*

Hello, my name is Sophie and I am currently studying A level music. As well as this, I am also involved in senior choir, chamber choir, the senior music team and I am also the lead singer of the girl band, Better in Red. Usually my week in school is very busy and includes many different rehearsals and practices each day of the week. In the Music Department, there is always something happening and we are so lucky to have so much on offer to us pupils as there are so many opportunities to perform at school events such as Prize Day, the Carol Service and the Spring Concert.

My week usually consists of Chamber Choir rehearsals after school 3:20 pm- 4:20 pm on a Monday, where we practise our pieces together as a choir and bring the sound of each section together. On Tuesdays afterschool, also 3:20-4:20pm, I attend Senior Choir rehearsals where we rehearse

in our sections, soprano or alto, and we also sing together to help blend the sound between each section. On a Wednesday during break, sectionals are held in the practice rooms for chamber choir to allow each section of the choir work on their parts and to reinforce any adjustments or points that were made at the Monday rehearsal. Also, once a month on a Wednesday at breaktime, a monthly recital is held in the lecture theater to help showcase different pupils' talents for both pupils and teachers to come along and watch. On a Thursday break I have senior choir sectionals, which is the same idea as chamber choir sectionals only on a bigger level as each section is much bigger due to the senior choir becoming more popular year after year! Every other Friday after school from 4-5pm, I rehearse with the girl band - Better in Red, made up of myself, Charlotte Hampton, Maja Quinn and Emily Stronach

where we learn new songs to add to our set list and also play around with fun songs that we all enjoy playing. Out of all my extra curricular activities, rehearsing with the band is definitely my favourite as I find it really fun being able to play music with your friends in a relaxed atmosphere after a week of school!

We definitely have to give thanks to our amazing music teachers in school: Mrs Munton, Mrs Qua, Mr McConnell, Mrs Parton and many more as it's these special teachers who make the music department so fun and enjoyable for us pupils of Banbridge Academy!! I know that I wouldn't be such a big part of the music department today, in terms of in class for GCSE and A level music and also the many different extra curricular activities, if it wasn't for our fabulous music teachers in school who make music enjoyable to learn and play.

# Wind Band

## *Anna Stronge*

The Wind Band is a group of about 35 dedicated musicians who play a range of mainly percussion, brass and woodwind instruments. However this list of instruments is not exhaustive and no matter what instrument you play, Mrs Parton will always find a part for you!

We meet every Thursday morning at 8.30am before the chaos and stress of the school day begins. It is an early rise, but worth it as the playing really does make an exciting and rewarding start to the day. Each rehearsal is filled with music, fun, friendship and the occasional off-tune note that keeps everyone humble. We have a low-pressure environment and Mrs Parton is always a friendly face if we need any guidance, assistance or extra practice.

This year we have been busy both within the school and out in the community. We played at the Remembrance Day services in school, dazzled at the Wizard of Oz school production, spread some holiday cheer at

the Carol Service, impressed at Open Night, rocked the Spring Concert, entertained shoppers at a Farmers' Market in Dromore and even shared the stage with The Band of His Majesty's Royal Marines. I've thoroughly enjoyed every single performance but the highlight must be playing a solo with the Marines Band. It can be nerve wrecking in the build up, but it is incredibly rewarding when all the hard work pays off.

Our programme of music never fails to delight, featuring a mix of fun, well-known pieces. This year we had classics like Country Roads Take Me Home along with the irresistible Ghostbusters theme tune and Take On Me, but my personal favourite has been High Hopes due to the catchy, upbeat tune.

The Wind Band is a great place to enjoy playing your instrument, whatever stage you are at. It is an opportunity for all pupils from years 8-14, ranging from grades 1 to 8. We all work together and are highly valued



members of our group. You don't have to be perfect at the instrument you play, help is always available and our practices are humorous and positive.

The Wind Band is a great place to make friends, grow in confidence and develop performance skills in a safe environment. A place to fall in love with the instrument you play and develop a life-long skill.