



Music Department Report 2015 - 2016

Mrs D Robinson

The Music Department has enjoyed a very interesting and rewarding year during 2015-2016.

Prize Day is always a highlight of the year. The ceremony was held in Holy Trinity church on 23rd October and proved again to be a lovely setting for the occasion. A small orchestra (led by Jessica Lindsay and featuring prize-winners only) began the proceedings with a processional for the Board of Governors and staff; then after singing the hymn 'Praise my Soul', the more formal proceedings of the day began with the speeches. The Girls' Choir and orchestra performed and were very much enjoyed by the audience. After the distribution of prizes, the orchestra performed their recessional piece of the day to enable the Board of Governors and staff to leave the church.

Our next event was the annual Remembrance Services held this year in Year Assemblies from 9th - 10th

November. Louis Kennedy (Year 9), Hannah Cartmill and Laura Bradford (Year 14) performed the Last Post and Reveille with great professionalism. Very well done Louis, Hannah and Laura!

On 26th November the school played host to the African Children's Choir performing alongside P7 pupils from local primary schools and some of our own Year 8 pupils. This was a truly inspiring evening. The African children explained their lifestyles and how important these concerts were to raise money, so that more children would be able to benefit and receive an education. The performance displayed such energy and the music was truly amazing!

'The Sound of Music' literally graced

the school when the Drama Society put on Rodger's and Hammerstein's musical from 7th - 11th December. This production would not have looked out of place on the West End stage! Both actors and musicians gave such professional performances, playing to a packed assembly hall each evening. Hopefully I will be able to see a few in other musical productions soon!

Our annual school Carol Service on 16th December proved to be a great success and it was lovely to see so many former pupils attending as in other years. This year the full orchestra attended and once again made a wonderful difference to the atmosphere.

On 7th January, Dr Linley Hamilton, director of music at the University of Ulster, came to give a presentation to pupils studying GCSE or A level music. Linley has been a part of the Irish music scene for over twenty years and

Music



since then he has juggled a career as a trumpet player with being a BBC Jazz Broadcaster and an educator with Making Music Workshop.

There have been many career highlights in the past with significant performances or recordings with Paul Brady, Van Morrison, Foy Vance, Eleanor McEvoy and Jacqui Dankworth, to name a few. Dr Hamilton is now in charge of a dynamic team at the Magee Campus, teaching Jazz Harmony, performance, musicology, placements, music in the community and he is also responsible for recruitment to the 1st year courses and events staged by the Music Department.

After the school exams rehearsals recommenced for our annual Spring Concert, which was held this year in the school assembly hall on 16th March. Although the date was much earlier than usual, the pupils rose to the challenge and once again displayed just how much diversity and talent that they have to offer.

A very special note of thanks must go to Year 14 pupils for all their dedication and commitment to the Music Department during their time at the school. It was all very much appreciated (and enjoyed!)

In April, First Minister Arlene Foster visited the school and some of our pupils performed for her. Special thanks must go to the pupils from the GCSE Music class who were doing their practical examination the following day.

May suddenly appeared and we were into practicals, exams and listening tests etc, but as with every other year, our pupils did us proud and the results were excellent!

On 17th June former pupil and 'The Voice' contestant Daniel Duke, came to school with his band (including his brother James) to perform some of his own material and of course his wonderful rendition of '5000 miles', the song that enabled him to work alongside Sir Tom Jones. Unfortunately Daniel was unable to secure Sir Tom's phone number for me!



The evening, although small in audience numbers, was absolutely fantastic and we are so proud of both Daniel and James and wish them every success in their future musical careers.

So once again, we have enjoyed a very busy but rewarding year for the department.

Sadly, at the end of June, we had to say goodbye to Mrs Catherine McNeilly as she left us to take up a post in another school. My sincere thanks go to Catherine for all of her hard work over the last 10 years, not only in the

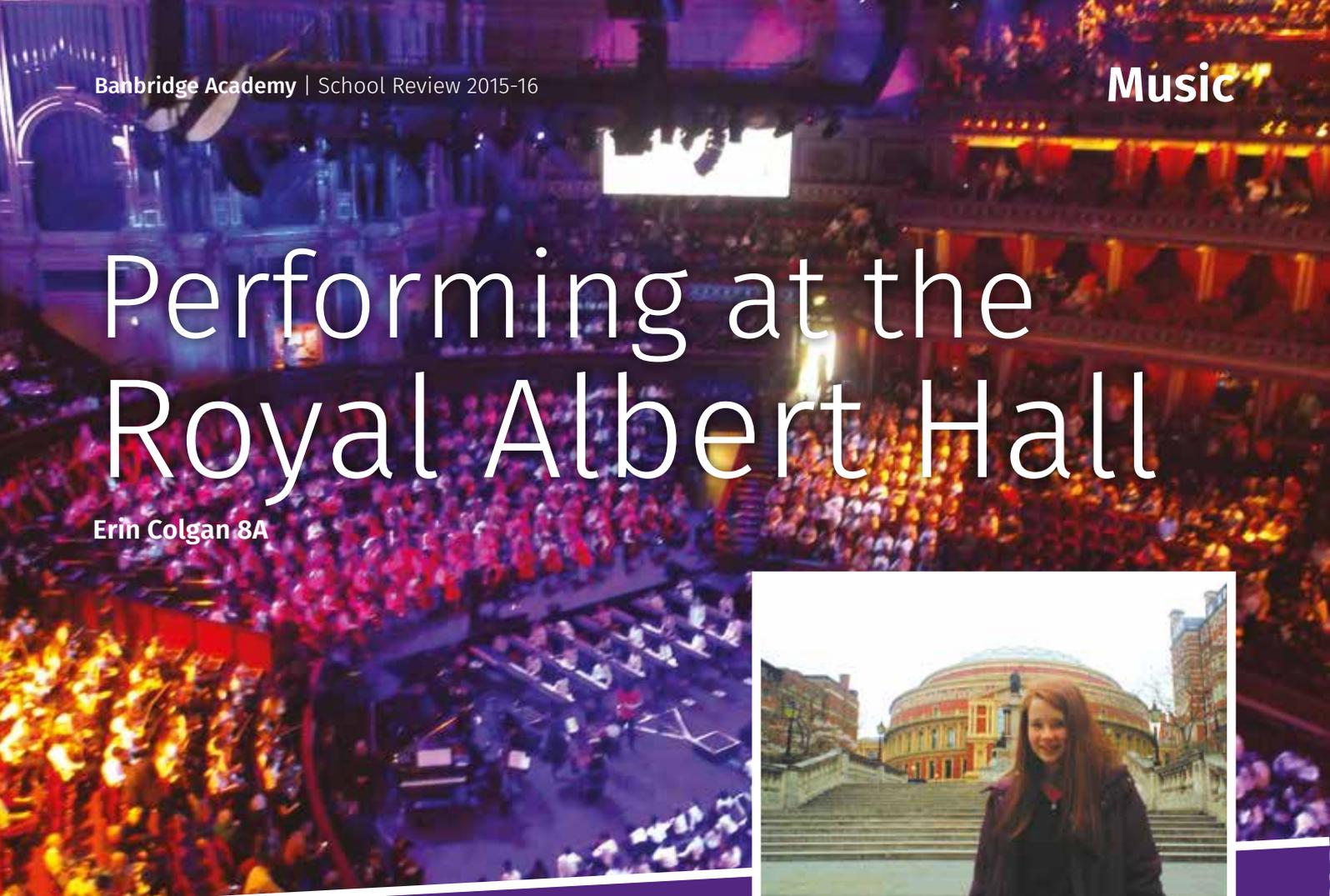
classroom but also with Chamber Choir, musicals and teaching singing. She will be very sadly missed.

I would also like to express my sincere thanks to all other staff involved in the Music Department, including music tutors from the SELB (without whose help my job would be a lot more difficult) and also to Mrs Lynda Parton and Mr Richie Parton. But as always, my greatest thanks go to Mrs Sandra McCurdy and Mrs Catherine McNeilly for their unfailing support and excellent teaching. As always, I can never thank you enough.



Performing at the Royal Albert Hall

Erin Colgan 8A



On Easter Sunday, I was thrilled to be part of an ensemble of 1300 children from 27 countries around the world, assembled in the Royal Albert Hall in London. The concert lasted two and a half hours and ranged from simple folk tunes to complicated concertos, all played from memory.

Everyone playing had learnt through the 'Suzuki method', invented by the late Dr Shinichi Suzuki of Japan who believed that every child could learn to make beautiful music, regardless of ability. In his travels around the world, he noticed that every child is able to speak its own 'mother tongue' through listening and repeating. He decided to apply this same idea to his music. His vision was that from the age of three or four, children would listen to good quality music and attempt to repeat it. Then, after only playing a few years they would be taught to read music, in the same way that toddlers learn to speak before they can read.

As all children taught by the Suzuki method learn the same repertoire, it was possible to put together this amazing gala performance with only a short rehearsal the day before and a technical performance on the morning of the performance.

When the first notes of the first tune began, the hairs stood up on the back of my neck; violins, violas, cellos, harps, flutes, recorders, guitars, mandolins and 18 keyboards all played beautifully together.

It really was a privilege to be part of this exciting, once in a lifetime experience that I will never forget.

