



St. Aidan's Church of England High School

Music Newsletter – September 2020

Dear St. Aidan's parents/carers and musicians,

In more normal times, St Aidan's is a place which 'fizzes with music', as an inspection report phrased it some years ago. Clearly, in these far from normal times, it has not been possible for musicians to sing or play together live, nor for an audience to listen to them, and we as a community sorely miss the huge amount of live music-making for which St Aidan's and its musicians are known. We have been monitoring closely the research and guidance, and the recent small and tentative steps back to live music making in wider society.



However, although there are some encouraging signs, we feel that it is not possible yet to re-launch the usual breadth and scale of our extracurricular music-making in ensembles. As you will appreciate, so many of our larger ensembles are made up from multiple year groups, and as such are not permitted. In any case, there is much else to get used to, as school reopens, in terms of new ways of working, moving around, teaching, learning and relating to each other.

During lockdown music has maintained its online presence through various virtual projects, involving the Chamber Choir, Junior Choir, and former students, which have brought fun, joy, hope and even a few tears to many over the last few months. These are still available to view on our YouTube channel.



It is our plan, therefore, to keep encouraging our young people to make music individually and online, rather than in the large multi-year-group bands, choirs and orchestras to which we are accustomed, at least until after the October half-term break. It may be that some live, actual groupings and activities could be possible before then on a much smaller scale, but that will depend on the prevailing restrictions and advice. We're hoping to set up some opportunities for Year 7 to come along and make music together in the next few weeks: look out for a notice in registers! Auditions for Year 12 students for this year's Chamber Choir will also be taking place over the next few weeks, after which limited sectional rehearsals to take place. We are grateful to the parents of St Aidan's Music Association who have pledged to do all they can to assist in getting live music going again and have already enabled us to purchase extra music stands for when our groups can meet again.

"Spotlight on Screen" - Before the summer holidays many of our KS3 performers submitted videos of themselves as part of a compilation video "Spotlight on Screen", as our usual KS3 performing arts showcase was unable to take place in the usual way. The resulting spectacular video, edited by Sixth Formers Jack Thomas and Alex Hamshaw will premiere at 6pm on Friday 18th September on the St Aidan's YouTube Channel. Well worth watching live at that time or any time afterwards!



"Live at Five" - As one way of rekindling the musical community spirit which has always energised our young musicians, we'd like to launch a musical "Live at Five" event beginning on Friday September 18th. In this, we'd invite all our musicians to play or sing at home with windows or doors open at 5pm for a few minutes, and to do so every Friday at that time until October half-term break! This could be done individually or with other members of your own household. If you are happy to do so, please make a video or audio recording of it and send it to us at music@staidans.co.uk, so we can share the magnificent, combined efforts of our young performers!

Music in the Curriculum

Music continues to play an important part in the curriculum and we will ensure that our young people continue to encounter, engage with and make music as much as possible in their timetabled music lessons. To ensure good hygiene, we would ask that all pupils, at KS3, GCSE and A-level, bring their own earphones/headphones to their music lessons. In-ear types are preferable to larger, bulkier, over-ear types, especially as pupils are carrying everything with them during the school day. We will have a stock of headphones and plug adaptors available if this is not possible.

Instrumental and Vocal Lessons



All Instrumental lessons will be taking place online via Microsoft Teams for at least the first half term. If your child is taught by one of our freelance teachers (Mr Else, Mrs Price, Miss Johns, Mrs Bratkowski, Mrs Garside or Mr Dennis) they will be letting parents know, which day they are teaching and an initial timetable. If your child is taught by North Yorkshire Music Services (Miss Doherty, Mr Morgan, Mrs McBriar, Miss Jones or Miss Brown) then they will be informing you of the day that the teacher is in school. All timetables will be displayed on the music dept notice board and pupils will need to check their time.

Lessons will be taking place in two of the practice rooms in the department or the drum cupboard if your child is a percussionist. We would also ask you to remind your child to follow the hygiene instructions, when leaving the room, by wiping down any surfaces touched, such as the music stand, piano and door handle. We ask Brass and

Woodwind players to empty any water from your instrument in the tissues provided and do not empty it on the floor, and to please leave the door open in between lessons for ventilation purposes.

As you will know, students are being asked to carry with them during the day everything they need. This does not apply to musical instruments, which can be left as usual in the secure Instrument Store in the Music Department.

If you would like to start learning an instrument, that is entirely possible. Simply speak to a music teacher in school or email us at music@staidans.co.uk.

Proposed Extra-Curricular Music Programme 2020-21

When circumstances and regulations allow, we hope to re-launch our usual extensive extra-curricular music programme. The plan for this is set out below, but clearly it may take some time before we can put on the whole range of rehearsals and performances.

	Lunchtime	Venue	After School	Venue
M	Boys' Choir (Yr7+) 12.50	MU3	Chamber Choir (Yr12/13) 3.45	Chapel
	Girls' Choir (Yr9 -11) 12.50	MU4	APE (Aidan's Percussion Ensemble) (Yr7+)	MHL
	String Ensemble (Yr7+) 12.50	MU2		
T	World Music Group (Yr7+) 12.50	MU4	Symphony Orchestra (All years)	MU4
	SAJE (Yr7+) 12.50	MU4	Symphonic Wind Band (Yr9+)	MHL
W	Chamber Choir 12.50	Chapel		
	Junior Choir (Yr7-9)	MU4	Swing Band (Yr10+) 3.45	MU4
F	Junior Band (Yr7+) 12.50	MU4		

To contact the music department please email music@staidans.co.uk