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**Music Department**

**Staffing**

The staff comprises of the Director of Music, the Head of Academic Music, one full time and one part-time teacher of music, the Director of Music at the Prep School and the Music Administrator. There are approximately twenty-five visiting instrumental staff covering all orchestral instruments: including harp, as well as piano, guitar, singing and percussion.

**Accommodation**

The Preparatory School (Reception to Year 6), is located on its own site in Wheathampstead and has recently had new music facilities constructed. The Music Department in the Senior School occupies Ringwood: a large, detached Edwardian house which also has recently been significantly extended and in 2012 refurbished as part of the new arts complex. It now contains a fully-stocked percussion studio plus 11 other teaching rooms. The department is well-stocked with an extensive collection of orchestral instruments as well as a Viscount church organ. The new Performing Arts Hall (Jubilee Hall) is capable of mounting orchestral concerts, and caters for the 70+ Symphony Orchestra. There are three dedicated class teaching rooms on the senior site, each equipped with a suite of PC computers.

**Academic Music**

This is a strong department. Normally between 18 and 24 girls take GCSE each year and between 4 and 6 take up music at AS/A Level each year. Results are high, with often 100% grade A or A\* at GCSE and over 85% grade A at AS and A Level. In recent years, often 100% of girls in the A Level set have gone on to Music at higher education, including Cambridge.  Choral scholarships and Instrumental awards to Oxbridge are frequently awarded to leavers.

**Co-Curricular Music**

The school has a lively extra-curricular music scene. Choirs open to all are on offer for girls from Years 3 up to Year 13 and are organised by age group.  There is also an auditioned Junior Chamber Choir for Years 5-8 and auditioned Senior Chamber Choir for Years 9-13.

Membership of instrumental and orchestral groups is determined by standard rather than age.  Each Thursday after school the following groups rehearse at the St Alban’s site and are conducted by members of the department:  Townsend Band, Ringwood Band, Concert Band, Intermediate Orchestra, Symphony Orchestra and Chamber Orchestra.

Other groups that rehearse during the week in the Senior School include the Intermediate and Senior Flute Choirs, Lower Strings Ensemble, Guitar Ensemble, Brass Ensemble, Saxophone Ensemble, Early Music Ensemble and Pop Band. Chamber Music is strong and there are currently eleven string and wind quartets and trios, manned principally by scholars as part of the Scholars’ programme, which meet weekly.

**Individual Music Lessons**

Over 510 extra weekly lessons take place in school on individual instruments. The School enters candidates for Trinity College London and ABRSM examinations each session of the year. Every year, an instrumental scheme runs in the Prep School, currently alternating between brass and strings in order to encourage girls to take up these instruments. Girls are prepared for Grade III and V Theory in lunchtime classes, free of charge.

**Concerts and other performances**

There are six major concerts a year for the instrumental groups and choirs which take place in the Jubilee Hall (the school’s purpose built concert hall). The choirs sing in St Alban’s Cathedral in termly services during the year including a candle-lit Carol Service.

Joint with St Albans School is the Choral Society, which runs in Lent Term and performs in St Alban’s Cathedral. This large choir (sometimes 220+) involves students, staff and parents and performs with orchestra and professional soloists in the Abbey. The two schools also host a joint piano masterclass & recital every year in memory of Lady Rosalind Runcie with Ian Jones leading and performing this year.

Groups often perform away from St Albans and the school promotes regular concerts in St John’s Smith Square and the Barbican.  Choirs and orchestras have reached the finals of the national Festival of *Music for Youth* and have performed on the South Bank (RFH and QEH) on several occasions.  The Senior Chamber Choir was placed high in the finals of the International Eisteddfod in 2009 and 2012 and recently undertook tours to the Mosel Valley and Vienna. Three professional CDs have been produced and foreign orchestral and choral tours have been mounted to Bonn/Prague, Heidelberg/Salzburg and Lüneburg and the Mosel Valley.

As well as concerts for large ensembles, pupils also participate in regular solo recitals which are organised by the academic staff as well as by the visiting music teachers.