

THE LONDON ORATORY SCHOOL

MUSIC DEPARTMENT

STAFFING

There are four full-time members of teaching staff in the department. In addition, there are 43 visiting music teachers, covering tuition on all orchestral instruments, guitar, organ, piano and voice. There is a full time Music and Arts co-ordinator who supports teaching staff and the management of concerts and Arts events.

CURRICULUM MUSIC

All pupils study music at Key Stage 3, with two timetabled periods per week in first and second form. Pupils in third form have three periods of Music over a two-week timetable. The syllabuses and schemes of work allow for a broad and balanced curriculum covering a wide range of musical contexts. In the first three years, these cover the requirements of the National Curriculum, while taking into account the school's commitment to a rigorous education in the European classical tradition and Roman Catholic liturgical music.

In the fourth and fifth-form and in the sixth-form music is an optional subject which may be studied for GCSE and A Level. In recent years, many pupils have gone on to read music at university.

SPECIALIST MUSIC COURSE

Since September 1996 the school has admitted 20 Music Scholars each year at the age of seven for a specialist music education, with an emphasis on Catholic liturgical music. There are over 200 Music Scholars in the school. Boys admitted at the age of seven continue through the school to the sixth form, as does the specialist choral and instrumental music provision, together with a contextual general musical education.

Up to half the boys admitted are probationers in the Schola, although the total number of boy trebles and altos in the choir is not usually more than between thirty and forty. All pupils are required to learn the Piano and an Orchestral instrument. Music Scholars rehearse as singers and instrumentalists each day from 8am and are involved with rehearsals at lunchtimes and after school on occasion.

The criteria for admission at the age of seven are similar to those which currently apply at eleven, except that applicants are tested for vocal, musical and general ability to ensure that the boys are suited to a rigorous musical and, in the case of choristers, choral education.

The Junior House pupils are accommodated in a purpose-built building, adjacent to the Arts Centre. They are taught in classes of 20, with access to specialist teachers and facilities, such as science and computer laboratories, technology rooms, a swimming pool and gymnasium and a theatre.

CHORAL MUSIC

The renowned LOS Schola Cantorum sings for the Saturday Vigil Mass at the Brompton Oratory Church, and has made acclaimed recordings of Sacred polyphony on the Hyperion record label. The School Choir and the Chamber Choir are open to all pupils with choral ability, the Chamber Choir specialising in more demanding music, particularly the traditional liturgical music of the Church. The Girls' Choir is drawn from the girls in the sixth form, and performs music in a wide range of styles. The Choral Society is open to parents, staff, former pupils and friends, and, with the School Choirs performs a large-scale work with professional orchestra each term in central London venues. Works recently performed include Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Mass Settings by Haydn and Mozart, *Requiem* Masses by Verdi, Faure, and Mozart. Pupils also present musical productions, recently *Beauty and the Beast*, *Singin' in the Rain*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, and

operatic works such as Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*. Junior School productions have included *Oliver*, *Pirates of Penzance*, *The Wizard of Oz*, and *Joseph*.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

Over 800 individual lessons take place each week, delivered by some of London's leading professional musicians in a wide variety of instruments. Pupils are entered for the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music practical examinations at school each term. A number of pupils are members of the Junior Departments at the London conservatoires. The School Orchestra and various ensembles provide pupils with an excellent introduction to group music making. All orchestral instrumentalists are encouraged to join one or more of the groups such as the Senior Orchestra, String Orchestra, Wind Orchestra, Big Band, and several chamber groups. Symphonic concerts are held each term in the Arts Centre Theatre. The school has three practice organs and a growing number of pupils taking lessons.