



MUSIC DEPARTMENT

Staffing

The music department currently has three teachers: one Head of Music and two further music teachers (currently one of whom works 0.6FTE). There is also a visiting Musician in Residence who works two days a week and who also works at Tiffin School. In addition, there are 22 visiting music teachers; the visiting music lessons are administered by the Music Secretary and overseen by the Head of Music.

The music department is housed in a purpose built music suite. This includes two teaching rooms which are equipped with keyboards, interactive whiteboards and Hi-Fi equipment, which by means of a removable wall also acts as the main rehearsal space and recital hall. There are 10 computer work stations in each room which use the Sibelius 8 software. There are 6 practice rooms, all with Yamaha upright pianos; the department has one baby grand piano, and concert grand piano which is kept for concert performances in the hall. There is a large library of choral and orchestral music which is always being added to.

The music department has designated office space and dedicated support from the Music Secretary (part time).

Background to the department

The music department at The Tiffin Girls' School has three areas to its life, all of which intersect with each other namely **teaching and learning**, **co-curricular activities** and **parents and other external bodies**.

Teaching and Learning

The department is very ambitious for its students and is committed to achieving the highest standards of academic achievement.

At KS3, girls are set in classes, in groups of 24 for a single period of 1 hour per week, according to previous musical ability (Foundation, Intermediate and Advanced) to ensure all girls are given both the grounding they require and are fully challenged. There is a particular emphasis on singing in the classroom and the majority of classroom time in Years 7 and 8 is currently focused on teaching music through the Kodály approach to establish, extend and develop the younger girls' sight-singing, aural and listening skills, notation and all-round musicianship. During the summer concert, the whole of Year 7, Junior Choir and soloists from Year 9, perform a cantata written by the Musician in Residence.

At GCSE, the Edexcel course is offered and girls receive 2 x 1 hour periods per week. Currently there are 23 girls in Year 11 and 32 in Year 10. The GCSE results have been outstanding; last year 100% at A*, excepting one A. The composition and performance work is particularly strong and the set works are taught in a way that prepares students for the Sixth Form work if they wish to pursue it.

In the Sixth Form, we offer the Cambridge Pre-U (C.I.E board). This has proved to be very successful with all the girls achieving high grades and nearly all gaining distinctions. The school has had a high success rate in obtaining places for girls to study music at Oxbridge in recent years (many with choral scholarships).

The Musician in Residence has been active in extension work for GCSE, Pre-U and Oxbridge preparation and currently teaches Bach Chorales and the Classical String Quartet for the composition techniques section of the Pre-U.

Co-Curricular

Performance standards are very high and the school has a Symphony Orchestra (55 girls grades 6+), Sinfonia (Strings grades 7 & 8), String Orchestra (45 girls grades 1-5), Wind Band (45 girls grades 3-8), Brass Group (20 girls grades 3-8), Percussion Ensemble (20 girls), Guitar Group, Clarinet Ensemble, Recorder Group, Wind Quintet, Jazz Band. There are also three main choirs Tiffin Girls' Choir (60 girls, year 10-13, auditioned), Tiffin Girls' Junior Choir (105 girls, years

7-9, auditioned) and A Cappella Choir (20 girls by invitation) as well as the Tiffin Schools' Chamber Choir jointly with Tiffin School.

Members of Tiffin Girls' Junior Choir recently sang in the Proms with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and the choir takes an annual residential weekend during the summer term. Tiffin Girls' Choir sing evensong annually jointly with an Oxbridge Choir, most recently Clare College Cambridge, under their Director of Music Graham Ross in 2016 and Queen's College Oxford under their Director of Music Owen Rees in 2017.

There are a minimum of 10 evening concerts a year as well as foreign tours [recent ones have included Prague and New York] and musical productions such as "*Oh What a lovely War*", "*Sweet Charity*", "*Oliver*", "*Into the Woods*", "*The Sound of Music*" and "*The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe*". The music department has also collaborated with Tiffin School on a production of Blow's *Venus and Adonis* performed as part of a celebration of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. It has also collaborated with local junior schools in performances of Britten's *Noyes Fludde*.

The department aims very high and orchestral concerts have included both the *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings* and the cantata *Phaedra* by Britten, *The Lark Ascending* by Vaughan Williams, many symphonies by Haydn, Beethoven's *first* and *sixth symphonies*, Mendelssohn's *Hebrides overture*, Schubert's *8th* and *3rd* *Symphonies* and the whole range of Baroque concerti grossi including music by Corelli, Handel, Marcello, Bach and all of the *Four Seasons* by Vivaldi. The department has made a particular speciality in the performance of twentieth century English composers such as Arnold, Rawsthorne, Gerald Finzi, Howard Fergusson, William Walton, Richard Rodney Bennett and Peter Maxwell-Davies. We have a policy of inviting living British composers into school and working with them.

The department aims to give opportunities to students in the performing of concertos and performances have included the Bach *Concerto for 2 violins in D minor*, Howard Ferguson *Piano Concerto*, Mozart *Clarinet Concerto*, the Saint-Saens 3rd *Piano Concerto*, and the Elgar *'cello concerto*.

A recent and very exciting development has been the setting up of student led ensembles. The *Wind Band*, the *A Capella (close harmony) Choir*, the *Indian Orchestra* and the *Clarinet Ensemble* have all been set up and led by students.

Around 20 of the girls play in the local *Thames Youth Orchestra* or *Thames Youth Jazz Orchestra* which is conducted by the visiting Musician in Residence.

The pattern of concerts is flexible as to timing but, at present follows the following pattern:

- **Year 7 concert** – normally early October.
- **Autumn Concert** – normally in the first week following October half term.
- **2 Christmas concerts** – one junior at school in the penultimate week of term and one at Kingston Parish Church on the Monday of the last week of term.
- **Spring Vocal & Choral Concert** - Early April or late March depending on when Easter falls.
- **Spring Instrumental & Orchestral Concert** - Early April or late March depending on when Easter falls.
- **Sixth Form concert** - Normally in mid-April. This gives an opportunity for Sixth form girls to try out exam pieces before the Pre-U exam.
- **Summer Concert** - Early July.
- **Informal Concerts** – Termly at Lunchtimes.

Parents and external bodies

There is a parental fundraising body, called the Tiffin Girls' Music Society (TGMS) which raises around £5,000 per year for the department, paying for such things as music stands, music, heavy orchestral percussion such as the marimba and orchestral xylophone as well as paying for the running of some instrumental groups such as the String Orchestra. In addition, they provide stewards for the Associated Board Music exams which happen in the last week of the December Term and in the Summer. However, this year TGMS have been pivotal in raising enough funds to purchase a new grand piano – some of which was through a successful bid to the Humphrey Richardson Taylor Trust for £5,500.

Tiffin School is close by and, in the past there have been several close collaborations with both schools benefitting from the mutual interchange of personnel and ideas. The heads of music of both schools meet every term arrange the concert dates, thus avoiding clashes and develop projects of mutual interest.

April 2017