

NORTHAMPTON SCHOOL

for Boys

MUSIC NEWSLETTER

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Big Band & JVG 'wow' the audiences in LA

The February break approached with snow on the roads as Big Band and the Jazz Vocal group headed for Heathrow Airport to fly out to Los Angeles for a performance tour.

The weather in LA was a complete contrast - very warm and sunny (T-shirt weather) - allowing us to rehearse the Jazz Vocal Group down by the beach. Here we sang to a crowd who gathered around to find out what was going on, as well as to Sophie Galpin's mum, who was watching us from home via the webcam stationed at the end of the pier!

There were so many fantastic memories that it is difficult to know where to start. Performances were given at three schools - Hermosa Valley School, Long Beach Poly High and Santa Monica High - as well as Disneyland California Adventure.

The 300 students and staff who packed the hall at Hermosa Valley were very appreciative, with one or two of the boys quickly achieving 'cult' status! At Long Beach we shared the programme with their 3 Jazz Vocal Groups and 4 of their 5 Big Bands! Both of our groups' sets were greeted with standing ovations. Their Chair of Music, Chris Stevens, was very flattering in his praise of

their very high musical standards and sense of professionalism.

At Santa Monica we enjoyed a workshop with Gordon Goodwin and his section leaders - Eric Marienthal (sax), Wayne Bergeron (trumpet) and Andy Martin (trombone). We had already been knocked out by the sound of Gordon's Big Phat Band in concert at The Jazz Bakery, and now they were giving us first hand advice! A fantastic experience, topped only by Gordon & Eric joining us in the evening concert as guest soloists.

More Gold found on Tyneside

Only hours after completing a highly successful run of the Queen / Ben Elton Musical 'We Will Rock You', Symphonic Winds and Big Band boarded coaches to travel north and take part in the National Concert Band Festival national event at The Sage, Gateshead.

Big Band featured the new funk/Latin chart *Search*, Tom Brady (ably assisted by the rest of the trombone section) in *God Bless The Child* and Gordon Goodwin's *Whodunnit?*. The result - a Gold Award. Symphonic Winds featured Adam Gorb's very entertaining *Yiddish Dances*. This was

followed by our encore piece for the year - *Applause*, featuring Mark Halliday on xylophone and Jenny Dyson on piccolo. The result - another Gold Award. Congratulations to all members of both these groups on a fantastic result.

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Dates for your Diary 2007

Term 5

Thursday 10 th May	Big Band & Jazz Vocal Group @ The Black Bottom Club (Charity Concert)
Thursday 17 th May	Big Band & Jazz Vocal Group @ Staverton Park
Friday 18 th May	GCSE Music Listening Exam pm (1hr 30mins)
Thursday 24 th May	AS Mus Tech Listening & Analysing Exam pm (2hrs)

Term 6

Monday 4 th June	AS Music Listening Exam am (45mins) AS Music Anthology Exam am (1hr 30mins)
Thursday 14 th June	A Level Mus Tech Controlling and Interpreting MIDI Data Exam am (1hr + set-up time) A Level Mus Tech Music Technology In Context Exam am (1hr)
Tuesday 19 th June	A Level Music Compositional Techniques Exam am (3hrs)
Monday 25 th June	A Level Listening Exam am (1hr) A Level Anthology Exam am (2hrs)
Wednesday 27 th June	A Little Light Music III (Concert)
Thursday 5 th July	Summertime Spectacular (Concert)*
Monday 9 th July	Wind Band @ Symphony Hall, Birmingham: NFMY*
Tuesday 10 th July	Jazz Vocal Group @ Adrian Boult Hall, Birmingham: NFMY*
Wednesday 11 th July	Orchestra @ Symphony Hall, Birmingham: NFMY* Percussion Ensemble @ Adrian Boult Hall, Birmingham: NFMY*
Friday 13 th July	Symphonic Winds @ Symphony Hall, Birmingham: NFMY*
Wednesday 18 th July	Big Band @ Adrian Boult Hall, Birmingham: NFMY Y7 – Y9 Awards Evening

*** Y11 & 13 students involved in Performance Groups, please remember not to book holidays during these periods as our performance calendar is still running.**

Variety is the spice of life!

The new year started with a visit from **Backbeat Percussion Quartet** as part of our **In Concert series**. What an inspiration this group were. During the afternoon they worked hard with talented percussion students both from our own school and around the county. Our **Percussion Ensemble** and NYPE (containing many students from NSB) provided preliminary music to a wonderfully varied evening concert given by Backbeat. Compositions were influenced by percussion instruments from around the world as well as the more traditional orchestral percussion, many pieces being arranged by members of the group. The concentration and enjoyment on the faces of the workshop participants when they performed two pieces with Backbeat was a delight to see. *A big thank you to Tim Green and members of the County Music Services percussion team for their support, and to Bell Percussion for their display in the Atrium.*

'**Musical Express**', in February, was once again a fantastic shop window for some of our curricular groups, as well as the usual range of extracurricular groups. Work produced in our regular music classes, especially in the earlier years, proved really professional in both sound and presentation. This is all down to the hard work put in week to week by Mrs Davies and Miss Russell. The range of styles of music on display continues to widen. Another sell-out weeks in advance!

'**LA Here We Come**' was our pre-tour concert provided by **Big Band and Jazz Vocal Group**. Obviously very excited about their forthcoming trip (they were leaving next day!), both groups provided top class entertainment to parents, friends and jazz aficionados who attended. It was good to see a full auditorium to wish them well. As described in our front page article, they had a fantastic time while they were in LA. The performance standards were remarkably high, and it was a pleasure to spend the week with such well behaved and motivated young people who were terrific ambassadors for the school and UK educational music in general.

In late February, following last year's very successful event, we had a second visit from **The Swingle Singers**. In the afternoon they worked with our **Jazz Vocal Group**, including preparing a number for a joint presentation in the evening concert. They then worked with our own students, staff, parents, friends and people from the local community to put together two songs. Such was the success that both were sung, augmented by the Swingles, as a prelude to the concert, in the Atrium Jazz Vocal Group provided the warm up act before the Swingles took to the stage who provided a masterclass of professionalism, high musical quality and sheer entertainment. They don't come much better than this. Look out for details of their next visit. Tickets are sure to be snapped up quickly.

'**The Sounds of Music**' was our traditional pre-National Festival concert. Another sell-out in advance. All of the groups who were to feature in the Regional Audition on the following weekend were given an airing. The variety of groups and music was again a tribute to the hard work

of staff and students alike. It must have worked, as we have just heard that six groups have been invited to the National Event in Birmingham this July.

No sooner had the auditions for National Festival of Music for Youth ended than we were straight into our production of '**We Will Rock You**'. Spectacular, scintillating, full of energy, dynamic, inspiring, uplifting, a complete sell-out. What more can we say!

Charity event

We are now into our fourth year of working with Tony Rundle and Northampton Rotary to raise money for **Cynthia Spencer Hospice**. On **Thursday 10th May, Big Band and Jazz Vocal Group** will be joining together with Tony's '**Jazz Junction**' for another '**Mainly Jazz**' evening at **The Black Bottom Club on Mercer Row, Northampton**. The evening starts at **8.00pm** and will be the usual lively mix of jazz and jazz-influenced pop. In the past these evenings have been a real highlight in our calendar – a real informal jazz gig with plenty of opportunity to chat with friends while listening to some terrific music and supporting a very worthy cause. **Tickets cost £10**, available on the door, with all proceeds going to the Hospice. Alternatively you can **book them through school at £7 each**. A real bargain.

Urgent message for Y11 – 13 students

If you are in Years 11, 12 or 13 and have regular instrumental lessons at school this item is very much for you.

With the exam season on us, and exam leave due to start soon, we need your help in ensuring that the instrumental timetables work efficiently. **Lessons and rehearsals do continue throughout the summer term**. We want to enable you to get to as many of these as possible, exam constraints permitting, by arranging them at the most convenient times for you. Teachers do not want to stand around waiting for students who have no intention of turning up for a lesson due to an exam, revision or transport problems preventing you from getting into school.

Please can each of you make a point of visiting the Music Office, bringing with you your exam timetable, so that you can discuss with Sarah how we can help you best in the coming weeks. You will need to visit during the mornings (up to about 12.30pm) in order to catch her in the office. Do not let us have to chase you, as this involves us in extra work we can really do without!

A Big Thank You to Friends Committee members and others of you who manned the refreshment area, or provided cakes for sale, during National Festival of Music for Youth Weekend. As a result of your hard work we have managed to raise **£635** for our funds.

Our next concerts

‘A Little Light Music III’

Wednesday
27th June 2007 at 7.30pm

The Cripps Hall Theatre

All tickets at £3

We have so many groups now that this overflow concert has been rapidly expanding. This year it will feature String Orchestras (Junior & Senior), Junior Brass Ensemble, Brass Quintet, Big Band II, Junior Jazz, Friday Jazz, Voice Male, Percussion Ensembles 2 & 3, Sax Ensemble 2 and Intergalactic Velvet.

‘Summertime Spectacular’

Thursday
5th July 2007 at 7.30pm

The Cripps Hall Theatre

Tickets at £7 (Adults), £6 (Friends) & £5 (Conc)

A chance to hear all of our fantastic groups that will be taking part in the National Festival of Music national event, and to say a fond farewell to those who will be leaving us this year + Low Brass Ensemble, Concert Band, Sax Ensemble 1, Wind Quintet, Choir and Male Force

National Festival of Music for Youth

As mentioned earlier, we have just heard that **six groups from NSB have been invited to take part at the National Event in Birmingham this July**. This will be a new record for the school in the number of students taking part. **Jazz Vocal Group** (Tuesday 10th July), **Orchestra** and **Percussion Ensemble** (Wednesday 11th July), **Symphonic Winds** and **Big Band** (Friday 13th July) all make return visits. They are joined this year by Mrs Davies’ **Wind Band** (Monday 9th July).

Wind Band, Orchestra and Symphonic Winds will be performing in Symphony Hall. The other groups will perform in Adrian Boulton Hall – the main performance area in Birmingham Conservatoire.

Music for Youth will be providing us with exact performance times four weeks prior to the event. Day tickets, which give access to all events on that date, cost £7 (£4 concessions). They are available from the Box Office – 0121 780 3333 or www.thsh.co.uk As soon as we have more precise details we will let all participants know what they are.

New Committee Members needed

Due to the fact that their sons and daughters will be leaving NSB at the end of the year, a number of our Committee will not be continuing next year. Many of these have given of their time and energy since their children arrived in the school. New Committee members are needed in order to continue this fine tradition. A very large part of why we can offer such a wide variety of musical activities to our students is down to the commitment of this group of people. All of your children have benefited from their hard work. It would be great if others amongst you could now step into the breach. It would also be good to keep a balance of male and female members. We are particularly keen that parents of boys in years 7 – 9 who take part in music activities start to get involved.

We have five diarised meetings each year, lasting approximately an hour and a half each. The more who take part, the more we are able to share the load. Please contact Mr Johnson for an informal chat on the subject. Alternatively, come along to our next meeting on Thursday 7th June, at 7.30pm in C5 (the main music room). Entrance is via the side gate on the crescent nearest to Cripps Hall.

New Storage Arrangements

Students need to note that:-

- Larger instruments will be stored in the store room off the music corridor.
- Smaller instruments (flute, oboe, clarinet, cornet, trumpet, violin, viola) and guitars will use the storage area off the Expressive Arts Team Base.
- All instruments must be placed on the racking provided, leaving the walkways clear. If instruments are not correctly stored, we cannot take responsibility if they become damaged.
- Do not leave any books or guitar leads in cases. Always keep them with you.
- Make sure that all instruments are clearly labelled. With a number of people having similar makes of instruments and/or cases this will help to avoid mistaken identity.
- Any guitars borrowed from the music office must be returned to the storage hooks provided and not be left outside the office door. If the office is locked, it is the student’s responsibility to find a member of staff to allow them to return the instruments. No instrument should be left unattended.
- All amplifiers need to be returned to the room marked on their casing. No leads will be provided. You must provide your own.