

This year must rank as one of the busiest years for the Music Department in recent times, especially as we were moved from our home next to the Athlone Hall to underneath the Chapel, in order to allow new building work to take place. Colin the Harp and Jon Hutchings joined us in the Department, Jon having been an organist at Lincoln, Portsmouth and Chichester cathedrals, and also a teacher at Portsmouth Grammar School. Already they have been put to the test with Fiddler on the Roof, BBC broadcasts and various concerts.

The House Singing Competition proved as fierce as ever. Clare Weston, a former principal at the English National Opera, came to be our judge. After rousing entries from all Houses, Garrett's rendition of I'm a believer won the unison section, and there was stiff competition between Victoria, Garrett and Moreau for the part-song section. After skilful yet varied performances, Moreau's mellifluous harmony in If a picture paints a thousand words beat Garrett's impressive arrangement for male voices of The Bare Necessities - all the more surprising for Peter Clarke's exquisite tenor singing.

The Autumn Concert followed on - the Chamber Choir subdued the audience with their singing of Stanford and Bairstow, the main Choir revived pieces sung in Chapel throughout the term - Ireland's Greater love hath no man (for Remembrance Sunday) and Ives' Listen, sweet Dove (for Harvest Festival). This, combined with Bette Midler's The Rose, showed our Choir at its best. Typically for a Framlingham concert, the programme was varied to include Windbags, Theatre Vocals, duets and solos, and a rendition of the two finalists of the part-song section of the House Singing Competition.

Mr Hutchings throughout the year has been heard to say that 'the music at this college is extraordinary' - nowhere else was this more evident than in Laura Wright, Year 11, winning the BBC Radio 2 Chorister of the Year competition in London during the October half-term: she managed to beat off all other competitors amidst strong competition. Various radio interviews and newspaper articles soon told the rest of the

world what we already knew - we may be a comparatively small college, but we have some of the greatest talent in the country.

As the term ploughed on, so did rehearsals for Fiddler on the Roof, alongside which pupils still somehow managed to prepare for examinations and write essays. The run up to Christmas was faster than anticipated, although Chamber Choir still managed to fit in a BBC Look East recording of Darke's In the bleak midwinter on the last day of term, followed by an musical feast of Christmas music by Tavener, Britten, Carter and many others at the Carol Service.

In typical Framlingham style, that wasn't the end of term at all - Christina Johnston went on not only to get a characteristically stylish Grade 8 distinction in singing, but in the same week won an unconditional offer to study soprano at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London - no small achievement for such a committed scholar. The remarkable Henry Dunham secured a tenor choral scholarship to Southwell Minster in Nottinghamshire for his gap year placement - a very fine choir in a very fine building. This was matched by Stuart Foulston's achievement of a place to study at the Leeds College of Music, widely regarded as the finest for studying jazz in the country. Amelia Hudson decided to take a gap year to allow her rich contralto to develop into an even fruitier voice before going up to music college. These four fine, young musicians have been stalwart supporters of College music, and it is only as they leave that the loss of their unflinching contribution is truly felt.

The Spring term saw the removal of the Music Department to under the Chapel; Laura darted around the country giving various performances for BBC Radio 2 and 4; the Chamber Choir sang at a Bishop for the Confirmation Service, and then made the trip to Oxford to give a stunning concert in the much-sought after venue of St Bartholomew's Church, once a haven for performances of works by Britten. In between choral works, music scholars gave performances of the very highest standards, featuring faultless performances by our new scholars Lucy Clouting, Anna Rous

(featuring Colin the Harp) and Imogen Webb and alongside more challenging works by sixth form scholars, including Christina Johnston's rapturous performance of Haydn's With verdure clad.

The music never seemed to stop: for two nights running, students throughout the College performed the marathon event 'Soul Night' to capacity audiences in the Dining Hall. Whilst based around Soul music, the nights featured music from Diana Ross, Josh Groban, Michael Jackson and Alicia Keys - a wide variety of artists from throughout the College gave exceptional performances over a period of three and a half hours. Wine flowed freely and there was a real jazz club atmosphere in the school hall by the end, with some exquisite dancing from various members of staff: this included the 'Dance of One Thousand and One things to do with a Pashmina' during Will Poole's rendition of Soul Man, which pinned us to the back of our chairs with his powerful baritone voice.

As one of the gifts of Laura's winning the BBC prize, Clair Jaquiss and her team from BBC Radio 2 came to the College in early May to record not only Laura and the choir, but the whole school singing eight varied hymns for two programmes of Sunday Half Hour, the themes being on God's Protection and St Benedict. Mr Goodrich and Mr Hutchings spent the Easter holidays setting the hymns: choirs returned to rehearse various smudgy harmonies and stratospheric descants.

Miss Jaquiss examined us all in our hymn singing, telling us not once but twice that our voices weren't raising the roof high enough. The College responded, and the sound made was so loud that the use of Mr Hutchings' organ wasn't enough - two professional trumpeters plus our own Ollie Poole from Year 11 were brought in to add lustre to the occasion, as were various items of percussion - timpani, snare drums and occasionally Mr Goodrich's feet. The Chamber Choir and Laura recorded a few extra items, and the broadcasts in May and July showed not only the high standards of singing in the College, but moreover the

volume and gusto of the congregational singing right across the board.

With all this merriment and music-making over, it was hard to believe we still had more music to make! The Summer Concert contained fine performances of music heard by a capacity audience in the church. Mr Goodrich and Mr Hutchings once again set about arranging music for the professional orchestra to accompany the soloists and choir, including Wesley's Wash me throughly and a stunning duet by Mozart for two sopranos, sung by Christina Johnston and Laura Wright. The highlight of the concert was a performance of Henry Purcell's Come ye sons of art, which featured six of our own pupils as soloists - a fine achievement for any school.

Year 9 gave a concert of stunningly high standards: performances ranged from harp to flute, rock band to piano; the music ranged from Bach to one of Beethoven's difficult sonatas (played with a particular air of virtuoso by Anna Rous), from Black Sabbath to a group performance of Nina Simone's Feelin' Good. It was all performed with the greatest sense of community - students cheered on other students to perform, no matter what mistakes occurred.

And so to the final event - the Midsummer Concert. Will we ever be able to forget Mr Hutchings and Amelia Hudson not only duetting, but swapping parts halfway through, displaying some very serious musicianship? The more relaxed nature of this concert is a fitting end to the academic year, allowing the performers great flexibility.

What an exciting year this has been for music. It makes you start to wonder what next year might have in store for us..

*Mr Jon Hutchings*

TOP: LAURA WRIGHT, RADIO 2 CHORISTER OF THE YEAR. CENTRE LEFT: ANNA ROUS PLAYING THE HARP AT THE ORFORD CONCERT. CENTRE RIGHT: GCSE MUSIC COMPOSITION. BELOW: FULL CHOIR AT THE SUMMER CONCERT IN ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH

