

**It would be hard to imagine a busier year. For at least one of our number, work started well before the Autumn Term began, with Laura Wright in London recording her first album with All Angels.** This would lead on, in the course of a hectic few months, to an appearance at the Bank of England, opening the Classical Brits at the Royal Albert Hall (where the group were nominated for Best Album), and the record for the fastest selling classical CD 'of all time'. The second All Angels release looks like repeating this success.

The rest of us were busy too. After living under the Chapel for two and a half terms whilst the Athlone Hall and Music School were remodelled, we moved back just in time for the Autumn Concert, the first proper event in the Headmaster Porter Theatre. The Orchestra played Bizet and some striking Beethoven; the Chamber Choir sang some very moving music by Chilcott, Hutchings and Tallis; and the Choir sang a charming arrangement of Afton Water. There were also fine performances from our two Theatre Vocals groups and the Windbags, as well as reprises of two of the best Part Song entries from the House Singing Competition – Garrett (runners up) singing 'Blue Moon', and Moreau (winners) singing 'When I Fall in Love'.

Of course, it's not all performance in the Music department. One cold and frosty November morning, Mr Hutchings and a group of various Sixth Form students (both Music and Oxbridge applicants) embarked on the long road to Oxford, where they toured Christ Church College, the work of whose first organist, John Taverner, features as part of the A Level Music course.

For much of the Autumn Term, Les Miserables took over our lives, and yet we still found time to play our part in a very moving Remembrance Day service and, of course, the traditional Carol Service. The latter boasted some exceptional singing, most notably, perhaps, from the ladies of the Chamber Choir with their performance of three movements from Benjamin Britten's Ceremony of Carols.

The Spring Term saw us settled in the Music School, but still as busy as ever. The Chamber Choir gave a stunning concert in

St Bartholomew's Church, Orford, once a haven for performances of works by Britten. Here they covered a range of material by Morales, Tallis and Gershwin, with promising performances coming from some of our younger scholars, in particular Lucy Clouting, Olivia Castle, Anna Rous, Imogen Webb and Rosie Bullen.

Amidst all this were rehearsals by almost every musical person within the College for the Spring Term's big event: Latino Night. Food, wine, music and dance all came together to produce a superb and memorable night's entertainment. Rupert Moffatt gave a fine 'Girl from Ipanema', the Year 10 GCSE Music group formed a Samba band and gave an interpretive performance of the Mexican Hat Dance, and as the evening progressed, the College's own 'Salseros' – a collection of various pairings of students – danced the salsa.

Next the newly refurbished Recital Hall made its debut, with a concert by members of Years 10 and 11. Open to both GCSE and non-GCSE students, this saw a wide range of excellent performances. Rolon Lai's imaginative interpretation of a Mozart Piano Sonata sat next to Olivia Kingsley singing songs from the shows; Josh O'Connor's Dowland song shared space with Imogen Webb's avant-garde works for 'cello, and Rebecca Kerridge's sultry saxophone solo rounded off yet another marvellous evening.

Opening with the College Orchestra playing Dvorak's Eighth Slavonic Dance, lead impeccably by Jess Evans, May's sell-out Summer Concert, held in St Michael's, Framlingham, showed again what high musical standards College pupils can achieve. Laura Wright's Mendelssohn solo was an obvious highlight, but so was the rendition of Lotti's Crucifixus led by leavers Laura Bridgstock (Head of Choir), Claire Bush, Jess Evans, Ed Goodin and Josh O'Connor. Mention must also go to the first public performance of Adam Darroch-Thompson's moving composition 'Variations on Amazing Grace' for piano and strings. For the finale, the College Choir was thrilled to be joined by Brandeston Hall Chamber Choir to perform Vivaldi's perennial Gloria. The professional

orchestra and 80-strong choir made a fantastic sound and sent everyone home happy.

Only four days later, the Chamber Choir, clad in black, processed into the ancient Lady Chapel of Ely Cathedral singing 'O filii et filiae', the Fifteenth Century Eastertide hymn. This was the opening of what was to be a memorable concert of the Choir's finest singing, in this most glorious of all English acoustics – one we hope to be able to provide on CD in the future. Laura Wright, Oliver Poole and Laura Bridgstock sang solos and Chamber Choir gave the kind of knock-out performance that comes once in a quarter-century for most choirs – the sounds of Morales' Parce mihi, Domine reverberating through the ancient space of Our Lady's Chapel will remain with us for a long time to come.

But that was not the end. There was still the House Music Competition, kindly invigilated by Jonathon Dodd, Director of Music at Taverham Hall. For the record, Moreau beat Garrett by one hundred points, but more importantly, the evening was another opportunity to witness the broad spectrum of talent at the College. As was the Year 9 Concert a mere week later. We are always very lucky with our informal recitals – performance is voluntary, yet swathes of students grab the chance to perform in front of their parents, peers and staff. Notable performances this year included solos by Rosie Bullen, Olivia Castle, Anna de Grave, and some memorable samba music!

As well as the pressure of performance, our students also cope well with the rigours of music exams. Our results this year were amongst our highest ever – five distinctions and nine merits, including a very impressive 139/150 by Eleanor Shallow, and 91/100 in the Grade 5 Theory exam for Rosie Bullen. It is clear that our talent is improving, and appearing even earlier in our students.

Finally, the Midsummer Concert: there is something bittersweet about this annual event – parents, pupils and staff sit relaxed in the tent on the back, well watered and fed, listening to our students perform their favourite music, some for the last time.



As the thunderous weather rained down upon us, Oliver Poole's singing of various numbers brought tears to our eyes; the sounds of singers and saxophonists added to the relaxed summer atmosphere, and as the night gathered in we bid a final musical goodbye to those stalwart performers in the Music department without whom none of the above would be possible.

*Mr Jon Hutchings, Music Teacher*

- 1 LAURA WRIGHT AND THE ALL ANGELS ON STAGE AT THE BRITS
- 2 THE SUMMER CONCERT
- 3 MR NORTON AND MR GOODRICH AT LATINO NIGHT
- 4 OLLIE POOLE GIVES IT HIS ALL AT LATINO NIGHT
- 5 BRASS AND WOODWIND ON LATINO NIGHT

