



Forthcoming Event

Monday 7th February ~ Year 9 Options and Parents' Evening
Tuesday 15th February ~ Year 10 Parents' Evening



A Midsummer Night's Dream

As reported in an earlier Newsletter our production was picked as the festival's best show to perform at Hampton Court by the festival leader against 650 schools nationwide.

A year earlier we had first entered the Shakespeare School's festival, with a rather eerie production of Macbeth and had been so well received by the festival organisers that we found ourselves on the poster for this year's event. After that sort of reward, I wondered where we could possibly go with the show this year. To give the pupils variety and to challenge the amazingly talented pupils at the school as well as myself and the wonderful production team, I decided to go in the complete opposite direction and take on a comedy. Also this production would not be driven by eerie noises and dark lighting but by the quality of the characters and the pupils' ability to make Shakespeare's 400 year old Athenians and Fairies relevant to their modern world.

And so after performing at the Unicorn Theatre on the Southbank we were asked to perform at Hampton Court as a treat to the cast and audience. Mr Welsh kindly supported this and funded the experience in order to enrich students' learning. The feedback yet again was outstanding and everyone involved did a great job, bringing positive praise to Bexley Grammar School and the Drama Department for their excellent adaptation of the play.

This was not the first time 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' had been performed in the Great Hall at Hampton Court; the play was originally presented to King James I by candlelight on New Year's Eve in 1604 shortly after his coronation.

The Hall was set up with tables along the sides of the stage and an enormous throw in the middle; we found ourselves restaging the play in the thrust style (audience on three sides) having previously performed it on a Proscenium Arch (end on stage, with all the audience in front). The cast took brilliantly to this, Puck (Jack Barton) for instance sitting in the audience next



to a young girl and laughing with her about the confusing state of the drugged lovers on stage. Really the secret to the success of the play has been energy and enthusiasm. The limitless energy of the young cast made the play zoom by.

The festival co-ordinator emailed to say "I thought your production was utterly charming. The Lovers were feisty, self-dramatising and louder than life, the Mechanicals dopey and bumbling, the Fairies lively and powerful and the Athenians grand and composed. One colleague described it as "energetic and mischievous" another said it was "magical and charming-it transported me back in time!"

What perfect summaries to a perfect show.

Mrs Mitten



A Christmas Carol

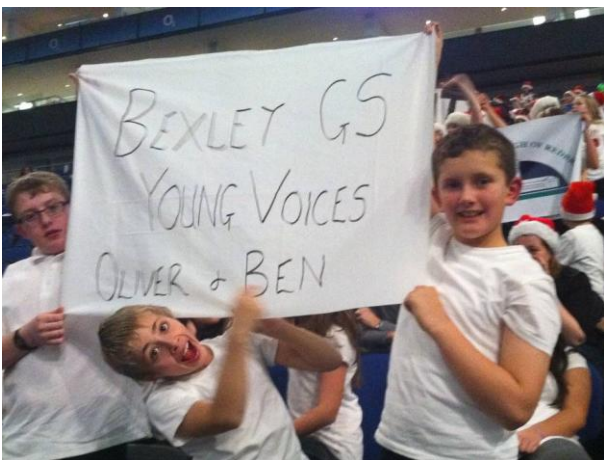
Christmas truly began in the last week of term when 'A Christmas Carol' took to the stage in a flurry of Dickensian festivities. The whole crew had worked tirelessly for months through all adversity – including having had 'God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen' stuck in their heads since October. The teamwork of the cast was inspiring, especially given the huge scale of the cast and the age range from Year 7 to Year 12. After months of rehearsal, the nights of the production came and went and the play remained un-performed. In a veritable avalanche of irony, the play was postponed owing to excessive snowfall; the mimed snowball fights and snow-adorned scenery were destined to wait for a less snowy day. Owing to some heroic rescheduling by staff, students and parents alike it was, as they say, all right on the night. The cast, led by James Fernandes as Scrooge, and a plethora of the talented undead, gave an enthralling and highly professional performance. Both nights of the performance were a huge success. Many thanks go to the Headmaster, the Senior Leadership team, site staff and of course the main production team: Mr Otley, Mrs Mitten, Mr Asker, Miss Bartlett, Miss Palmer, Miss Swadkin and Miss Woodcock. God bless us, everyone.

Mrs Mitten

O2 Young Voices

On Monday 6th December we took 76 students from Junior Choir to perform at the O2 arena. We were joined by 7000 other children as part of the Young Voices concert series. It was a fantastic evening of pop, rock and classical music, as well as some amazing street-dance from 'Urban Strides'. The students sang beautifully (and so did the teachers!) and the behaviour was, as always, impeccable. I was extremely proud of Junior Choir for representing the school so well. Many thanks to all the staff who came and supported the trip.

Miss Medicott



Merits

Congratulations to Oliver Forde, Jusleen Gill (7EP), Zoe Greenwood, Sophie Tyler (7CMS), Katie Harris, Pranita Raveendran, Menaka Santhakumar (7KLB) and Diekonife Awotunbo (7FOM) who have each achieved 50 merits.

Well done and keep up the good work. *Mr Crawford*

Year 9 Amnesty International Charity Work

I am interested in the human rights charity Amnesty International, who campaign for justice and freedom for political prisoners and other groups who have been threatened or harassed because of the vital work they do, helping people in their community. After talking in assembly with the help of some of my friends, each form group in Year 9 was given a person or group of people to send a card to, as part of the annual Greetings Card Campaign that Amnesty International run. We have been writing and designing cards to people from Nepal, Nigeria, Egypt, Guatemala, Indonesia and Turkey, sending them messages of hope and peace, and letting them know that there are people campaigning for their release from prison, help against violent attacks, or just people encouraging them not to give up hope on the vital charity work they do. I have enjoyed organising the campaign in school with the help of Mr Johnson, and am so pleased that everyone in our year has put in an effort too, to help and send messages of hope to all these people around the world.

Ellen Peirson-Hagger 9RL

Notices

Sixth Form Culture Club ~ Cinderella, Wednesday 12th January Tickets for an exciting production of Cinderella, directed by Matthew Bourne, are now available at just £10. A real bargain for this award winning production, offering a well-known tale with a twist. Collect a letter from the English office and take your cheque and slip to the Finance office.

Ms Hanington and Ms Stoddard

Instrumental Lessons ~ ALL start next week (week beginning 10th January). All timetables have gone into form trays, and where possible, have been emailed home. If you have not yet received a copy, make sure you go to MUI to check the noticeboard on Monday morning. Don't forget to bring all music / instruments in on the correct day next week!

Miss Swadkin

Associated Board Music exams ~ We will be having an ABRSM Exam centre in school at the end of February. If you would like to be entered for an ABRSM exam (whether you have lessons in school, or not) please contact Miss Swadkin by 17th January with details of instrument and grade.

Year 7 and 8 Classics Club ~ After a very successful first term, Classics Club will be resuming on Wednesday 12th January. Thanks to all the students who came last term, we look forward to seeing you again! New members are welcome.

Miss Pearson

School Council ~ There will be a meeting for all reps on Wednesday 19th January in H8 at academic monitoring.