

School of Ambition

Music Company

Setting up the music company has had a big impact not only on the department but also throughout the school. Below is a list of the main items the music company has purchased, following that is some explanation about how the equipment was used and the impact it has had.

- **Sound Equipment for Stage**

The largest purchase by the company was undoubtedly the sound equipment which we bought for the stage. Before we had this equipment we had a huge number of students involved in concerts but the sound was awful without mics and amps etc. This was the case for all performances put on in the hall, not just music concerts. The shows were poor due to voices not being heard, awards evening were also difficult without mics. We therefore spent approximately £20,000 on the best quality, near professional equipment. This involved:

20 SM 58 Vocal Mic

1SM57 Instrumental mic

Full PA: desk Yamaha 3500 amp, Graphic EQ, FX and Yamaha AW16 Recorder.

All speakers including 2 monitors

Full drum mic set inc: AKG D112 kick drum mic, Tom mics Sennheisere 604 x3. X6 Radio mics (4 clip on / 2 hand held)

Multicore to allow desk up the back of hall.

With the arrival of this equipment we were able to set up a studio area with an IMac and recording facilities, as well have high quality equipment for the stage. All of this meant we were able to open up the Higher Music with Sound Engineering course and train students up to use it. Although the numbers for the sound engineering course have been fairly small, there is a lot of interest from students who have heard about it and, although they don't want to perform, want to help out back stage with sound. When we now do concerts or shows there a two students who man the sound desk up the back of the hall and a small group who stage manage the sound equipment on stage, set up mics, stands etc.

As our shows are now a great quality we have been able to have two or three nights worth of performances instead of the usual one plus many more students who aren't in the department for classes have come along to join in. This has raised the confidence of students and staff and has definitely added to the mass participation element that was a main objective for Schools of Ambition.

- **Supplement existing musical instruments**

Before school of ambition the music department was equipped but the instruments were very old, in need of repair and some not suitable for modern music education. For example, we had a lot of keyboards and tuned percussion but no

guitars, basses, drums or vocal repertoire. We purchased 10 classical guitars, 2 bass guitars a fantastic bass amp that is great for shows and 5 electric guitar packs which include amp, case and leads. We also bought 5 high quality glockenspiels which give a better quality sound. On top of the classroom instruments we've bought above we also got some orchestral instruments with the view of getting an orchestra up and started. We bought a French horn, Bb orchestral trumpet, alto sax and a double bass. All of these have contributed considerably to the orchestra. Starting the orchestra has been fantastic and the students are really gaining a lot, we have rehearsed every week since the start of this term and attendance has been almost perfect. The students are really enjoying it and we're looking into the possibility of going away on an orchestra camp at some point in the future.

- ***Collaboration with Local Musicians and Artists in Residence***

Another aim of the music company was to open up links with local musicians and in the third year of SOA get a vocal artist in residence. Dunbar Traditional Music Festival is a large event which happens every year in Dunbar and for the past three years Dunbar Grammar has taken part in a concert the weekend of the festival. This has introduced us to excellent local musicians who play traditional Scottish music. Similarly, we have met parents who have an interest in music and are keen to come in and help out with concerts and shows. In the final year of school of ambition the music company got a vocal artist in resident. This was for an 8 week period with the main aims to be: Opening up singing to the whole school, especially encouraging boys to sing and making cross curricular links with departments. The work that Polly did with students was used at the homecoming event in June 09.