

# GRACENOTES

Summer 2021

*Welcome to the latest edition of **Gracenotes**, the newsletter of Haberdashers' Adams Music Department. Find out about what has been happening in the Music Department this term.*

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## What a year!

This has been another challenging year for a department like Music as we have not been allowed to do what we do best – make music together! It has been too quiet and we have missed the constant buzz of rehearsals and students coming down to the Coach House to practise or just to enjoy playing or singing together. Music lessons have continued on Zoom when school has been closed, and virtual concerts and performances have replaced all the events that would normally take place. We extend enormous thanks to our twelve peripatetic teachers for their hard work in helping us to keep the lessons going, even when they have struggled with unreliable WiFi connections and with the challenge of trying to teach an instrument over Zoom. Our thanks also to Mr James Band for the many hours of recording and editing he has done to enable us to produce virtual performances and in particular, the House Music Competition. Most of all, we would like to thank all the students involved in music at Haberdashers' Adams for adapting to what has been the 'new normal' this year and for embracing it and carrying on to ensure music has been kept alive.



## Recording the end of year assembly



## House Music 2021

Staging one of the biggest events in the school calendar under the restrictions of Covid was certainly a challenge! However, as always Haberdashers' Adams rose to this challenge and a great day was had in a closely fought competition. All the performances were recorded in advance and then played to the whole school on Zoom as if it were a live competition. Our independent adjudicator, Dr Tom Pankhurst, recorded his comments in advance, so performances were interspersed with adjudication, as they would be in a 'normal' year. We are hugely indebted to Dr Pankhurst for adjudicating and recording his results and sending everything back to us in a very short time so that everything was ready for the day of the competition. Special mention must also go to Mr Band for all the time and hard work spent on the recordings and making the video for competition day.

The results were streamed live and Mr Hickey presented the cups to the winners. For the first time in the history of the House Music Competition, there was a tie for first place. Darwin and Webb Houses came out on top and both blue and green flags were flown from the flagpole.

Congratulations to all the students who took part and especially to all the winners.



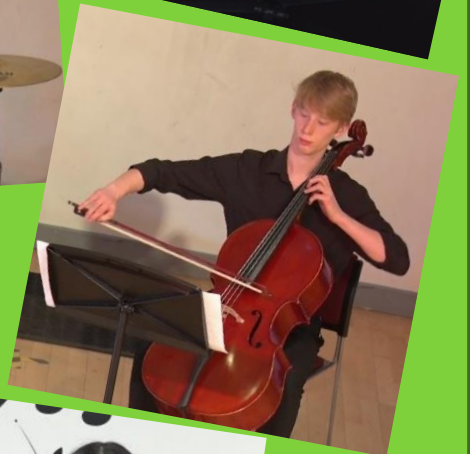
## Music Captains 2021-2022

We are delighted to announce that our Music Captains for the academic year 2021-2022 will be:

Sam Beyer  
Isabella Blackburn  
Ben Jensen

Dr Upton, Mr Wosome and Mrs Coomer are looking forward to working with them.





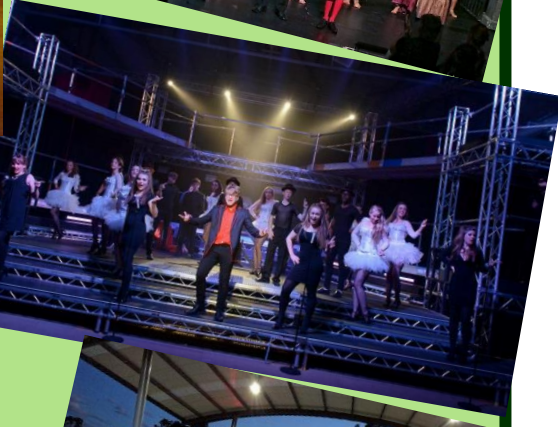
## A final word from Mr Brown.....

The last eight years have been the happiest of a teaching career spanning 34 years. Haberdashers' Adams is unlike any school I have ever taught in before and it has been an incredible journey! Mrs Coomer asked me what the highlights are from my time as Head of Music here, and there are so many but I would have to say the summer musical productions and the three music tours I have taken, twice to Australia and most recently to Vienna, Prague and Salzburg. The shows and the tours offer something similar to the students who take part – an opportunity to do something completely different, to be part of something amazing, to join a team that works together as one for the end goal, and to have a great time. However, there are many other highlights and here are some of them:

- Developing the department from being spread out in various unsuitable rooms to where we are now in our lovely building, The Coach House.
- Developing the curriculum for Key Stage 3, which has prepared everyone who wants to for carrying on with Music at Key Stage 4. This has led to the biggest GCSE groups ever, and strong numbers at AS and A Level, and has resulted in outstanding results at all levels.
- Seeing some of our students go on to study Music at universities, conservatoires and music colleges.
- Introducing Taiko drumming to Haberdashers' Adams, which led to a performance for Prince Edward when he opened The Coach House in 2015, taking part in the National Taiko Festival, and performing on the top of a bus when our senior Taiko players took part in the Lord Mayor's Show in London.
- Introducing the instrumental programme into Year 7 and Year 8, giving every student the opportunity to have a go at playing an instrument. This has been a great success, with some students going on to have individual lessons and achieving high grades in ABRSM and Trinity College exams.

It has been an absolute pleasure to work in a school where I have been supported by staff, the Senior Leadership Team and the Haberdashers in making music such an important part of the school. I am delighted that my work will be built on by Dr Upton and Mr Wysome.







## Lessons & extra-curricular

After 18 months with no extra-curricular music, we are hoping to start all the groups and ensembles again in September, and we can't wait! Here at Haberdashers' Adams there is something musical for everyone, whatever your taste in music. From Orchestra, Show Band and Choir to Marching Band, Taiko and Bandmaker. In addition, our peripatetic teachers run smaller ensembles, such as the Guitar Ensemble, and new for next term is a folk group, run by our Upper Strings teacher.

One of the major events returning to the school calendar next year is the summer musical production. We will be staging the classic love story, *West Side Story*, in July 2022. Auditions will take place on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2021 and Dr Upton will give more information about the show in an assembly early in the new term. Rehearsals will take place after school from October, and on certain Sundays. Our musical productions have become known for their high quality, and if you have not seen one of our shows before, you will be amazed by the stunning performances from our students. The Sports Hall will be transformed into an auditorium, with a professional set, lighting and band. Our outstanding choreographer, Mrs Amie Mills, will once again work her magic with the students over the year. (For our last production, *Anything Goes*, she taught the whole cast to tap dance!). With Dr Upton directing the music and Mr Hickey directing the drama, we have a winning production team who are looking forward to getting started on rehearsals in the autumn.

Individual instrumental lessons will start in Week 3 in September. We offer tuition on most instruments: piano, woodwind, brass, strings, guitar, drums, singing. We also run a music theory class for students taking theory exams. If you would like more information about instrumental lessons at Haberdashers' Adams, please contact Mrs Coomer. Existing students need to renew their contract for the new academic year. This was sent to you via MCAS; please email Mrs Coomer if you need another copy.

### Adams' FM

No, it is not a radio station - Adams' FM stands for 'friends of Music', a group of parents and friends of the Music Department, who volunteer to support music at Haberdashers' Adams. They provide bars and refreshments at music events, raise money to benefit the students, repair costumes, and volunteer whatever other help they can to promote music at Adams.

If you would like to get involved in helping the Music Department and the students, Adams' FM would love to hear from you. Please speak to Dr Upton, Mr Wysome or Mrs Coomer and they will pass your details on to the Adams' FM committee.



Mr Brown leaves behind him an outstanding legacy. He introduced not only the Year 7 and Year 8 music programme, but also the annual Hamilton Concert, when we celebrate music at Adams by inviting Old Novaportans and staff to join our musicians, and Music Colours Evening, to celebrate the impressive achievements of our talented students. He set up Adams' FM, which has been an invaluable support in putting on our many events. Mr Brown introduced Taiko drumming to Adams, led three music tours, directed six musical productions and took countless students to West End theatres, the Royal Albert Hall and Symphony Hall so that they could experience live professional performances. He developed extra-curricular music to ensure there really is something for everyone to enjoy, and has given up countless hours in evenings and weekends to run the many events we have staged over the time he has been Head of Music. As a curriculum subject, Music goes from strength to strength, with outstanding results and a growing number of ONs who have gone on to study Music in some form at university, conservatoire or drama school.

For all of this, we say 'Thank you, Mr Brown'. Enjoy a well-deserved retirement! However, Mr Brown will not be cutting his ties with Haberdashers' Adams completely and will continue to teach Taiko drumming and will be helping with the summer production.

## The handover of the baton

When Mr Brown joined us, he took up the conductor's baton left by Mr Nick Moor, Director of Music at Adams' Grammar School until 2012. Mr Brown has now handed over that very same baton to our new Head of Music, Dr Rob Upton. Dr Upton is an Old Novaportan with a wealth of musical experience, and has most recently been a lecturer at the University of Nottingham. He is looking forward to leading the department, re-introducing extra-curricular music and rehearsing next summer's production of *West Side Story*.

