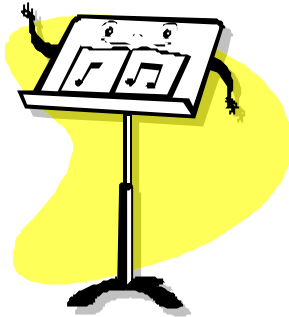


# Music at St Andrew's Concert Review

## GCSE Schools Day 2008 Friday 10 October



Following previous years' successful Study Days at St Andrew's for students of music at County schools it was decided this year, for the sixth Schools Workshop Day, to offer the day to GCSE students instead of A level students. This turned out to be a great success.

On Friday 10 October 103 students and 10 staff from 6 Upper Schools around the County descended on the church for a day of intense musical study. Sessions were led by Heads of Music in various schools and the students also performed together at an informal concert at 5.30pm.

The intention of the day is to enable students to meet other young people from other schools who are studying the same subject and to broaden their understanding of the subject through discussion and performance.

After an initial 'warm up' singing session all together the students were split into 3 groups and sent off to study either Indian Ragas, techniques for improving their own compositions, or understanding more clearly, music periods. By rotating the groups all students went to each session during the day.

Interspersed with this were performing sessions when all the students either sang or played in a large ensemble together.

The culmination of the day was a concert which showed some of what had been happening in the day – the performance of a round 'Bella mama', a piece by Michael Nyman called 'Time Lapse' and an improvisation on an Indian Raga. The very healthy sized audience thoroughly enjoyed the short concert and students went away buzzing from the experience of the day.

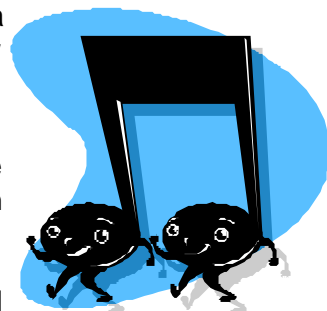
None of this would be possible without the encouragement from the Vicar and Church Wardens. I would like to thank them very much for enabling the students to have a rewarding and informative experience in a venue other than a school. The surroundings are excellent and help to encourage the students to enjoy a learning experience in the church giving many of them, and their parents, the experience of entering a church for the first time. Thank you also to the volunteer members of the congregation for their enormous support in providing food and drink, and who helped clear up after the concert. Thank you to all those who gave up their time on the Friday to help in any way, and an especial thanks to Isabel Burrows who masterminded the whole operation.

A great day was had by all – and another one is planned for **9 October 2009!**

*Ian Smith*

Think of something you have learnt recently; perhaps a new skill, a new area of knowledge, the development of a more informed view about a particular issue. How did you gain this learning?

The chances are that a really important element of your learning was the opportunity to share it with someone else involved in the same learning process. So it was no surprise to observe more than one hundred music students from six Bedfordshire upper schools enjoying a memorable day's learning experience performing with each other and for each other. These fourteen to sixteen year old



students came to their GCSE Music studies from very different perspectives. There were those who clearly revelled in their ability to use their lovely voices to sing the songs of people like Justin Timberlake and Andrew Lloyd Webber. There were those who appreciated an audience to show just where they had got to in their guitar playing, and there were those experienced instrumentalists who were meeting friends from county orchestras to play together again.

Parents and friends arrived at the end of the day to hear performances in the beautiful setting (and fine acoustics) of St Andrew's Church. One student made use of the church organ to perform part of Bach's Toccata in D minor. A flautist and a clarinettist each played lovely solos with the piano and the sound of three tenor horns playing the Londonderry Air was a particular delight.

The whole group came together for three ensemble items which they had prepared during the day. The first was an opportunity for all the participants to feel the joy of singing in a choir. They performed the round 'Bella mama' confidently and accurately. Later the whole group performed a piece called 'Time Lapse' by Michael Nyman which was filled with layers of musical phrases using voices and instruments together. The concert ended with an Indian Raga during which individual instruments and voices had the opportunity to improvise on a central theme.

Whatever their musical motivations, the chance to share in music making with others helped these young people to value their achievements, respect the achievements of others and experience the special atmosphere of performing together in a church. They won't forget it.

*Jim Oliver*