



Music at Nottingham Girls' High School Junior School – a very good place to start

Music at Nottingham Girls' High School is hugely popular and successful, and with the recent opening of £9M performing arts centre 'the space' there is now an amazing theatre in which to rehearse and perform it. With dedicated music staff and expert peripatetic teachers, music lessons are quickly taken up and a love of the subject starts at the very beginning – the Junior School.



Every girl at the Junior School is encouraged to take up an instrument, or if not musically inclined, to get involved in the technical side of musical productions such as learning about the lighting and sound; there really is something for everybody. This has proved so successful that 85% of girls in Years 2 – 6 now play an instrument. Everyone studies something, and at least 50% study two things. The younger girls in Years 1 - 2 are part of a special in-house music scheme called 'Da Capo' (Italian for 'from the start') in which they

rotate between piano, percussion, brass and woodwind over the two years, culminating in a Da Capo graduation ceremony which showcases the amazing progress made.

Laura Fowler, Head of the Junior School, said: "Music is such an important part of school life at NGHS and I am proud of how many of the Junior School girls play at least one instrument. Possessing the ability to play music together, in a group, provides such fulfilment."

On Friday 9 June the Junior School musicians took part in 'Ten Pieces', an initiative of BBC Teach which aims to open up classical music to a new, young audience as part of the wider BBC Music Day project. Children from three local schools (Cantrell Primary School, Edale Rise Primary School and Edna G. Olds Academy) joined the girls from Nottingham Girls' High School Juniors to rehearse and perform two pieces of music

chosen from the ten pieces of classical music specially arranged by the BBC for this age group and this event. Commenting on the whole concept, music teacher Mark Rolfe said: "I was first introduced to the idea a few years ago in its inaugural year, and then later met up with the people who run it in London. I felt excited by the way they spoke about the idea and their vision."

Speaking specifically about the BBC, Mr Rolfe added: "I feel there are a lot of organisations putting in a genuine effort to promote classical music as something 'cool and exciting', but I feel that BBC Teach in particular, have got it right; the media and resource materials are brilliant and very extensive."



As part of the school's ongoing outreach work too, the day highlighted true community spirit as children worked and practiced together playing a range of instruments in the two chosen pieces of music - Stravinsky's 'Firebird' and Bernstein's 'Mambo' from West Side Story. After a long day of rehearsals, the combined orchestra performed the finished pieces, excerpts of which were streamed live via the school's twitter feed and also uploaded to the BBC Ten Pieces website which you can view here: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p055qgj8>.

Delighted with the outcome of the day, Laura Fowler said: "Ten Pieces provided many pupils, from across Nottinghamshire, with the opportunity to come together and play in our amazing performing arts facility under the guidance and support of our talented teachers. Well done everybody."

A passion for music at the school is identified and built upon from the earliest stages. During an average week at the Junior School there are around 240 music lessons. Three different orchestras are run each week, two choirs, two rock bands, a flute choir and a steel pans club, with plans to introduce a clarinet/flute choir and percussion club next year, and even a European music tour for Years 5 – 6.

The talented young musicians at the school regularly take part in competitions and perform at informal and formal events. They have also raised huge amounts of money for charity through busking events around local shopping centres and city streets. With the girls becoming interested at such an early age, the levels of skill and talent are sure to continue and be reflected throughout the whole school and its thriving music community.

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Notes to Editors

About Nottingham Girls' High School

Nottingham Girls' High School is an independent day school for girls between the ages of 4 – 18. Part of the GDST (Girls' Day School Trust) Nottingham Girls' High School is one of the largest schools within the group with over 800 pupils.

About the GDST

The Girls' Day School Trust (GDST) is the leading group of independent girls' schools in the UK, with nearly 4,000 staff and 20,000 students between the ages of three and 18. As a charity that owns and runs a family of 24 schools and two academies in England and Wales, it reinvests all its income in its schools. Founded in 1872, the GDST has a long history of pioneering innovation in the education of girls.

For more details about GDST schools, please go to www.gdst.net and follow us on Twitter @GDST