

MUSIC MAKING AT SHREWSBURY

Almost everyone at some time will derive pleasure from some form of music – choral, orchestral, jazz, rock or pop. We aim to give as many pupils as possible the opportunity to partake of the rich musical life on offer here at the school. There is hopefully something for all tastes, and starting a new school is a wonderful time to perhaps begin a new instrument or take up one that has been put to one side for a while.

SINGING

For those wishing to sing we offer several groups: The Chamber Choir and The Chapel Choir, as well as the annual House Singing Competition and the opportunity to audition for and take part in one of the school's regular musical theatre and opera productions. We believe in positive encouragement, not coercion! We have a fine choral and solo singing tradition and are very keen for more pupils to enjoy using their voices in whatever style they choose.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

We try to get as many pupils as possible actively playing in an ensemble of some sort. Making music in a group is so much fun, and we will endeavour to find the right standard for each individual. It might all seem a little overwhelming at first, but we hope they will soon fit in and enjoy being part of the various musical teams. Next year we will be running the following ensembles:

Symphony Orchestra, String Ensembles, Concert Band, Big Band, Jazz Band, Chamber Choir, Chapel Choir, String Quartets, Clarinet and Sax groups, Brass Ensemble, Percussion Group, Flute Ensemble, Junior Choir.

In addition, pupils also devise and run their own groups, and are able to rehearse using the excellent facilities within the Maidment Building where the Music School is housed. Pupils also run and perform in a series of open mic nights which encourage composing and performing in a contemporary popular style.

TUITION

Now is a good time to start a new instrument or take up an old one! Tuition can be arranged in all orchestral instruments and also on percussion, piano, organ, guitar (classical, electric and jazz), jazz piano and harp. We have four singing teachers, and voice lessons can also be arranged on an individual basis. Coaching in music theory is also available by arrangement with the Music School.

We offer all new pupils the chance to have one trial lesson free of charge on the instrument of their choice, in the hope that as many pupils as can will have a go at something when they arrive, irrespective of previous experience. If you would like your son or daughter to benefit from this scheme, do please indicate on the form which instrument he or she would like to try or contact Mrs Oliver direct. This also applies to anyone wishing to try singing lessons.

All lessons are taught one to one and, during the year, our instrumental teachers aim to provide a complete course of at least 30 lessons. Pupils come for tuition both during academic lessons and at other times of the day or early evening. However, we do our best to ensure that only one 40-minute period is missed from any academic subject per half term, thus minimising the amount of academic work they might have to catch up on. In the large majority of cases lessons in academic time works perfectly well and should not be seen as a reason for not having lessons at Shrewsbury.

Written permission is required for the commencement of music lessons and one full term's notice in writing is required to Mrs Oliver if a pupil wishes to discontinue them.

PRACTICE AND ATTENDANCE

Regular practice is essential to the enjoyment of playing and we do everything we can to encourage pupils to do so as often as they are able.

Regular attendance at lessons is also absolutely vital, and we will let parents know when, and if, problems arise in this regard. If a pupil misses two lessons in a row we will let you know as a matter of course and hope that you will help reinforce the importance of regular attendance.

CONTACT

Good, open contact between yourselves and the department is essential to your son's/daughter's enjoyment of music. If you ever have queries regarding his/her musical studies here, please contact Stephen Williams (Director of Music) or Shelley Oliver (Music Department Administrator - soliver@shrewsbury.org.uk). We also encourage visiting teachers in music to contact you, as appropriate, concerning your son's/daughter's progress, or if there may be something in particular they wish to discuss with you. Do also feel it is appropriate to contact them direct.

We hope this answers some of the questions you may have with regard to music at Shrewsbury and that you and your son/daughter will enjoy their musical life at the school. We also look forward to welcoming you to some of the wonderful concerts, competitions and events on offer.