



Hope you all had a wonderful summer break and that all our lovely musicians have been practising hard over the holidays! I must apologise for the fact that it has been a while since you have had a Music Newsletter. The summer term turned out to be even busier than those that preceded it but this does of course demonstrate just how much Music has been going on at Pennthorpe and I hope you have had a chance to experience one of our concerts or productions first hand. Anyway we are already looking forward to the new year and I would like to take the opportunity to tell you about all the exciting things musically that will be happening.



New Drum Teacher

Last term pupils in Year 3 to 7 were given the opportunity to have a 'mini-workshop' on our new set of 'Djembe' (African Drums). They had a great time (and made lots of 'noise') and even members of staff asked if they could have a go! The Djembe will continue to be used in music lessons on occasions but you will notice that as part of the Flexiday provision that if pupils are interested in playing drums more regularly there is now a percussion club after school on a Thursday. We are very lucky to have a new drum teacher joining the excellent team of peripatetic music staff and he will be running the drum club as well as offering individual lessons during the school day on the drum kit. Some pupils have already signed up for these but it is not too late if anyone else is interested – just email me and I will add you to the timetable. This is a great opportunity – playing drums requires good coordination and having lessons is a wonderful way to develop these skills, as well as being fun (and a great discipline!) You do not necessarily need to own a drum kit initially – although it is probably going to be a requirement for pupils who want to really develop as players. Also, the school drum kit will be made available with priority to play it being given to those who are already having lessons.



Choir rocks!

As many of you will be aware the **Chapel Choir** lost quite a large number of its members at the end of last term – but I am delighted to say that the future looks good! We auditioned lots of Year 5 pupils and I am delighted that we have a really promising group from this year who are raring to make their mark – congratulations to all of you, Mrs Skipp and I are already looking forward to our rehearsals this term.

More choir news – as you know Pennthorpe has a great tradition of singing and a large number of our pupils have singing lessons.

It has always been my ambition to offer more opportunities for pupils to sing and this year we really will be taking a big step towards achieving this. We changed the emphasis of our Middle School Choir back in January and adopted a more contemporary/pop direction. This has been hugely popular (the choir now numbers over 50!) and the success of this initiative has encouraged us to extend this opportunity to the Senior School. With the help of Rachel Collinson-James, our wonderfully motivating and enthusiastic singing teacher, we are going to start a **"Rock Choir"** this year for pupils in year 6– 8. This will initially run on a Wednesday morning at 8.00 a.m. (currently a Chapel Choir rehearsal slot). My hope is that all of the Chapel Choir members will take part as this kind of singing will contribute greatly to their vocal development, but we would also love to see anyone else who enjoys singing and is keen to come along and give it a go – it will be great way to start the day!



In the meantime the Middle School Choir will be rebranded **"Rock Choir 2"** and any pupils in year 3-5 should keep coming to Tuesday lunchtime rehearsals

(1.00-1.30) Remember, both Rock Choirs are open to all, there will be no audition process and that, despite the name of the new choirs, we will not solely be singing Rock 'n' Roll – it's just that the choirs will 'rock'! Once these Rock Choirs are established the next step forward will be to run an after school Flexiday activity which could even include everyone from Year 3 – 8 singing together! My plan is to prepare songs for performance with a bit of staging or choreography. I am reluctant to call it a 'Glee'-club but that is the kind of thing! Watch this space for further details!

Brass Group

I am delighted that as a result of our Brass Day back in March we now have five new cornet players in the school who are doing really well having had lessons for only a few months. From September I will be running a **brass group** with these pupils on Tuesday lunchtime (1.30 – 2.00 p.m.). Could this be the start of our very own Pennthorpe Brass Band?!

Instrumental Lessons

Having already mentioned brass and drum lessons I would like to take this opportunity to 'plug' all of our very talented instrumental music teachers. One of my ongoing aims is to increase the number of students having instrumental lessons so if any pupils are interested in learning to play a musical instrument or have singing lessons then please do contact me. There will be a demonstration of the various instruments on offer in a special **"Music Chapel"** at 925 on the 19th September if any pupils want to know more about the different instruments on offer (Any parents interested should feel free to join us too). I cannot stress enough how great it is for young people to learn to play a musical instrument. There has been a lot of research proving how beneficial it is for children's cognitive development, fine motor skills, discipline and social skills. Apart from anything else though it's just great with you for life.

I know sometimes we worry about missing other lessons, but there is suggest that Music lessons actually performance. We are able to fit instrument you can think of and, if teacher, we'll find one! So why not interest in encouraging your child to have singing lessons, I'll be any questions.



the academic impact of plenty of evidence to improve academic pupils in for just about any we don't already have a get in touch if you have any to take up an instrument or happy to advise or answer

Ukulele update!

In my last newsletter I mentioned our plans to set up a ukulele group. We have now purchased 8 new ukuleles and are piloting the idea as part of the Year 4 music curriculum this term. If all goes well we hope to form a proper ensemble later in the year. If you are interested then please do get in touch and remember that Mr Barr would be delighted to take on individual pupils keen to learn this instrument.

Dates for your diary:-

Wed 14th Sept – First 'Rock Choir' rehearsal (8.00 – 8.30 a.m.)

Wed 21st Sept – Choirs singing at St Catherine's Hospice Autumn Fair.(6.30 p.m.)

Thurs 20th Oct – Informal Concert in Pre Prep hall (5.00 p.m.)

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