

Prep Music Department

2011 - far from being a quieter year than its predecessor, the 125th jubilee year in 2010 - has proved to be equally busy and productive for the Music Department at Prep. It has been demanding, but challenging and rewarding, as always, with our boys and girls making us proud in many areas of music making and performing.

Our core staff complement remained unchanged. Margie Laing continues to teach piano and violin to a large number of boys, and her Trinity Guildhall exam results from the boys are always impressive with a 100% pass rate, several merits and distinctions. Martin Twedde has remained as our very competent drum teacher, with equally impressive Trinity exam candidates. Dave Glover has been a popular and very busy, guitar teacher, with a large number of boys learning the instrument on an individual level, and in the afternoons he teaches several group sessions. We regretfully bid him farewell at the end of this year, as he takes up full time studies at Rhodes next year. Dorothy Holder took on two 'cellists this year as well as continuing with two promising flautists. Tim Abel joined us half way through the year to pick up a waiting list of young pianists, and Ross Hoole has continued this year with the bagpipers. Sandra Remsing joined our part-time teaching staff, helping out with 'cello teaching in the second term as well as taking on three young flautists. Hilton Borerwe has directed the Prep Marimba Band, which has been an outstanding one this year, as well as teaching group marimbas in the afternoons. Carmen O'Donoghue teaches piano lessons, and runs with class music, choir and stage productions. Junior Prep music continues to flourish under the capable and talented guidance of Cheryth Robertson, with Peter Weldrick providing piano accompaniment for assemblies and stage scripts for a dazzling Junior Prep show every year. Gill van Rensburg directs the JP choir.

The Marimba Band has performed widely this past year, and the boys have been wonderful ambassadors for Prep. Sazi Sandi (Leader), Tim Bloem, Thoz Botha, Vuyo Ketwa, Anda Siganga, Peter Tharratt, Ubuntu Mayi, William Marx and Mark Cunningham were an excellent team under the talented guidance of Hilton Borerwe. It is with great sadness that we say goodbye to "Mr B" after seven years of teaching marimbas at Prep, and we thank him for his invaluable input over those years. The Band excelled during the Winter Tour to Gauteng this year in July, where they performed at St John's, The Ridge and at WHPS, to great acclaim at each venue.

In sharp contrast to last year's "*Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream coat*", the Grade 7's selected Gilbert and Sullivan's timeless and much-loved musical, "*The Mikado*" as their annual production. It was extremely challenging from both musical and staging points of consideration, but a talented and enthusiastic group of boys threw their hearts, voices and abilities into a wonderful, memorable musical production. Noah Hanmer took on the extremely challenging role of the Lord High Executioner, Koko, and carried it off with great aplomb. Nic Kroon was Nanki Poo, delivering an excellent performance with elegance and talent. Con Worrall was a delightful and completely believable Yum Yum, along with her two

“sisters”, Kelvin Boateng-Aidoo as Pitti Sing and Robbie Fietze as Peep Bo. Tim Bloem was a wonderful Pooh Bah and Mumbuwa Sitengu played an excellent Pish Tush. Ryno Scholtz brought his strong voice and imposing presence to the role of the Mikado, and Sazi Sandi delighted audiences with his unique, flamboyant interpretation of the part of Katisha. The chorus contributions brought vibrancy to the musical score as the gentlemen of Japan sang and danced, the Mikado’s guards marched, and the Japanese maidens were stunning! A great deal of hard work was rewarded after just six weeks of rehearsals with several polished and highly entertaining performances, and many congratulations go to the Grade 7 boys of 2011 for their fine efforts and wonderful attitude.

The annual Art and Music Evening this year took on a different look from past years as the DSG Junior Choir joined the mix! The themed supper theatre presentation took the form of a Rock ‘n Roll evening, and over two evenings audiences were entertained as the Choirs sang songs from the ‘50s through to the ‘80s. They sang a re-worked version of Elvis’ “Love Me Tender” to bid farewell to Graham Gooden. Graham later delighted the children and audience alike by donning a wig, sunglasses and being a very believable Neil Diamond, singing, “*I’m a Believer*”!

All Preppies benefit from a well resourced Music Department. In addition to the facilities offered at Prep, we are able to draw on the teaching talent of the DSG Music School, where boys have flute, clarinet and saxophone lessons. Several Prep boys have enjoyed the rich experience of playing in the DSG/Prep Junior Orchestra this year, under the dynamic direction of Daniel Hutchinson. They recently completed a most successful tour of the Cradock area, where they gave three performances.

A new innovation at Prep this year has been the start of a Brass Ensemble twice a week in the afternoons, under the enthusiastic, expert tutelage of Johan Pretorius and Kingsley Buitendag. This has proved to be popular, with a large number of boys subscribing to the group, and creating loud and interesting sounds from the upstairs Music Room!

The following boys were entered for Trinity Guildhall music exams in November, the results of which were not available at time of going to press : Peter Garfath, Sazi Sandi, Ryan Kabwato, Ovo Ntsham, Chris Higgins, Thoziso Botha, David Fick, Mark Cunningham, Kieran Skae (Drumkit); Ben Kroon, Daniel Davies, Nicholas Kroon, Xanti Gqiba, Wezo Gqiba, James Davies, Mitchel Pienaar (piano); Liam Reynolds, Ubuntu Mayi, (violin). Last year’s results were extremely favourable, with 100% pass-rate for all our boys, including two distinctions and five merits.

Class music at Prep encompasses a wide variety of musical skills and techniques. The boys are exposed to playing marimbas and recorders, as well as being part of djembe drumming groups. Singing, history of music and different genres of music are also taught. All Junior Preppies sing in the JP Choir, and they never cease to enthral audiences of parents and grandparents at their wonderful concerts. We feel privileged to work in a school where

music is such a vibrant and meaningful part of the curriculum, and where every boy is able to participate in some area of music making. 80+ boys meet twice a week as a Choir. This Choir forms a core for Assembly singing, Chapel Services and Family Services, as well as presenting a traditional nine-lesson Carol Service at the end of the year. Boys are exposed to a wide variety of musical experiences, with emphasis on excellence and mastery, but above all on participation.

At the time of writing this report, the Choir is busy rehearsing for the 2011 Carol Service at the end of November; the Trinity entrants are furiously practising scales, exercises and pieces for their exams; the bagpipers are practising on Top Field for Feast at the end of term; the Marimba Band is practising for a concert in the Botanical Gardens next week, and the Junior Orchestra is preparing to perform in Memory Hall next Thursday; the Junior Preppies are rehearsing daily for their musical production later in October. All this happens in harmony with sporting fixtures, preparing for Formal Assessment and looking forward to the Grade 7 Social. What a happy school, where music co-exists so comfortably as a vibrant and essential part of the curriculum. This is the time when we reflect and look back on a year of remarkable musical achievements, and we look forward to 2012 , which will come with new challenges and opportunities.

Carmen O'Donoghue

HOD Music