

Performing Arts Highlights 2014-15



Back to the 80s (Upper School Musical)

Our upper school musical this year was *Back to the 80s* which is a fun musical based on an American school and the upcoming school president elections and is filled with classic hits from the 80s. The cast and musicians performed three evening shows and the three matinee performances were shown to our own Year 8s and over 300 pupils from local primary schools and Downs View Special School. The musical director and technical team were made up of our own 6th form students. A real team effort!

'Voices' at the Dome

Over 350 performers came together at the Dome in June to celebrate the joy of singing! The concert involved singers made up of our own Year 7s, pupils from 5 local primary schools, Gospel Choir, Soul Band, Big Mouth adult choir, Doo Wah Diddies, guitar and ukulele group and other vocal groups. The singers were accompanied by Blatchington Mill's Orchestra and Big Band 'The Millstones.' The evening included wonderful Beatles and Lion King arrangements performed by the massed singers and some amazing soloists. A new feature this year was two boy bands. A fantastic evening!

We Will Rock You (Lower School Musical)

Our annual lower school musical was a great success. *We Will Rock You* is a fun musical including some fantastic Queen songs. The cast of year 7 – 9 students performed incredibly well, and it was thoroughly enjoyed by the audiences. Again we were able to invite over 300 students from local Primary Schools and Downs View to watch the matinee performances as well as our own Year 7 students. We had fantastic support given by our 6th form Stage Management students and our Performing Arts technicians. The show was accompanied by a student-only band with Charlie Harrington from Blatch Six as the MD, and Bethan Heard and Emilio Crescenzo from Blatch Six as the Assistant Directors.

The Crazy Sexy Cool Girls' Fan Club

Every year we enter the National Theatre Connection drama project with our Gifted and Talented Year 9 students. We have a reputation for producing high quality drama and the feedback from the National Theatre directors is always excellent. This year was no exception and the cast of 30 Year 9s performed at the Windmill Theatre and the Capitol Theatre in Horsham. The show was a great success and the technical crew were made up of our own 6th form students who worked in both the Windmill Theatre and the Capitol Theatre in Horsham providing an excellent experience for them.

Evening of Dance (Dance Show) and Let's Dance (Brighton Dome)

In November we hold our annual dance show which features performers from Year 7 to year 13. The Windmill Theatre was full and the show was thoroughly enjoyed by the performers and audience. Our student-run street dance group performed extremely well as did the Year 10 and Y12 exam classes. It was a great night. Blatchington Mill dancers also performed at The Brighton Dome as part of the 'Let's Dance' festival of Dance. The standard was very high and the students loved the experience of dancing at such a prestigious venue.

Rock Night

The Windmill theatre was host to our very own Rock Night and the standard of performers was amazing. Many of the groups were trained through New Rock Generation (NRG), run by Chris Hamilton, and there were some fantastic soloists. We have a great deal of talent at Blatchington Mill! Mr Walmsley did a fantastic job as compere.

Stars in Their Eyes

Stars in Their Eyes is an opportunity for Year 7 – 9 students to dress up and perform as their favourite performers and supported by student dancers. This year, the standard was extremely high and included singers for whom this was their first public performance. The night featured Ed Sheeran, Birdy, Christina Aguilera, Amy Winehouse, Adele, the Spice Girls and Katy Perry. Kim Chandler won the best singer as Beyonce and Leah Gardiner won the best solo dance category.

Winter Concert

This year's annual Christmas Music Concert contained a huge variety of musical items. The programme included a staggering 9 vocal acts, supporting our Music Department's commitment to increase singing in school. Gospel choir continues to go from strength to strength and our community adult choir 'Big Mouth' and junior choir 'Doo Wah Diddies' also performed. The Millstones and Orchestra ended the show with 4 fantastic pieces showcasing the excellence of our instrumentalists and vocalists.

Christmas in the Quad

A new addition to the Performing Arts calendar this year was a week of Christmas celebrations in the Quad which included performances from small ensembles, carols from our brass players and some impromptu performances from some of our members of staff!

Strictly Duets

Strictly Duets is a thoroughly enjoyable evening where sixth form students and staff perform duets together in the Windmill Theatre. The evening is great fun and we get to see another side to many of our teachers. It was a very close competition this year with Mr Reeves and Mrs Field winning the top two places. Judges were Mr Greville, Mr Russell, Miss Mitchell and Mr Lindfield. The staff band performed at the end and Mr Fitzpatrick was the fantastic compere.

Other performances and enrichment

At different times throughout the year the students work alongside specialists such as Dance Companies, Actors, Directors and Musicians. We have also taken the students on theatre trips. This year included memorable trips to see *Miss Saigon*, *Matilda* and *Billy Elliot* at the West End. Millstones Big Band performed at the Hove Bandstand in September and put on their own concert in July and students enjoyed music, and dance performances in assembly. Activities Week included Performing Arts workshops in Drama, Dance and Music including a rock school workshop and learning how to use the recording studio.

Arts Leaders

These are a group of students from all KS3 year groups who work alongside the Heads of Year and the Director of Performing Arts to help monitor and develop the Performing Arts provision at Blatchington Mill. This year they supported the extra-curricular Performing Arts enrichment programme and provided a 'student voice' for our Performing Arts Curriculum and Extra Curricular content. They worked alongside Miss Fawcett to put on *Stars in Their Eyes* acting as mentors and coaches. They also acted as ushers for the many Performing Arts events at the Windmill Theatre and at the Dome for the 'Voices' concert.