

We are now over half way through the academic year and there is a real focus on final exams for year 11 and 13's. This week is aptitude week and we welcome all prospective students to BOA. I am pleased to say we received over a thousand applications for the 2017/18 academic year. An 11.7% increase on new applications from last year.

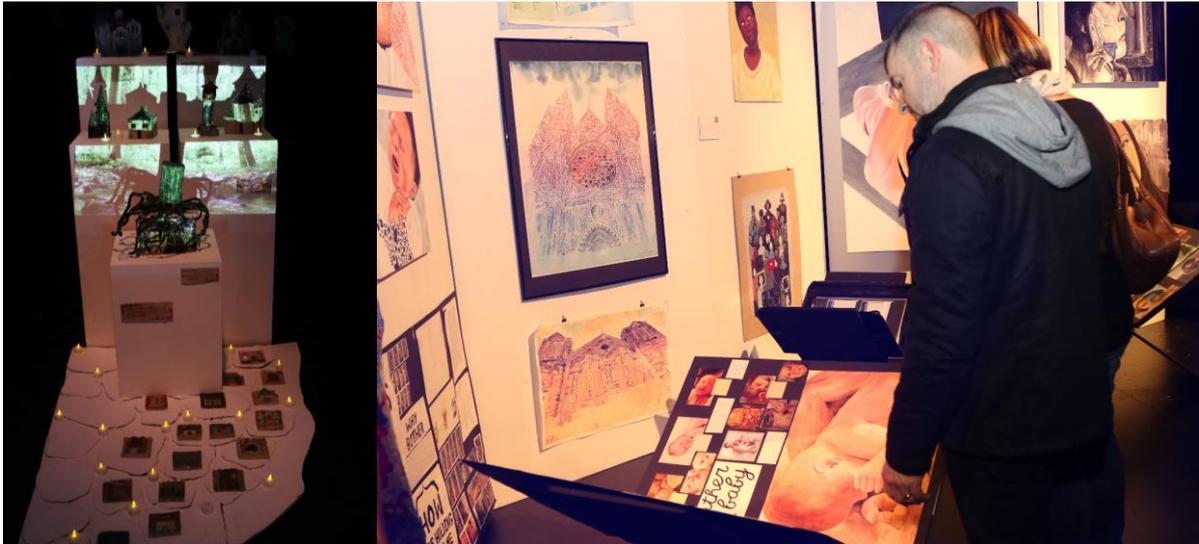
On Friday 6th January 2017, BOA's alumni were invited back for a 'Coffee and Catch Up' afternoon, giving them the chance to pick up their BTEC and A Level certificates and have a catch up with old friends and their past teachers. Over 50 of our Alumni turned up from across the different pathways. It was great to see some familiar faces back in the building!



BOA Alumni

In January, the Year 11 Dance students showcased their talents in their production of 'If the Shoe Fits', based on Cinderella and her quest to find Prince Charming. The performances displayed highlights from across several dance genres including Jazz, Urban and Contemporary. Congratulations to all students involved, including the Technical Theatre Arts students who designed the lighting and sound sequences.

Also in January, the GCSE and A Level Art and Design students exhibited their work in the BOA Theatre, displaying pieces of their work and showcasing the talents of all students involved.



VAD Exhibition

BOA Dance students have been working closely with Motionhouse Dance Company this half term, with them leading workshops in the dance studios with a number of students watching their performance of 'Scattered' at the Old Rep Theatre on Wednesday 1st February. This partnership will continue over the year with further workshops and performances.

On Thursday 9th February, a group of Dance students performed at Birmingham Hippodrome for the Matthew Bourne's 'Red Shoes' Curtain Raiser. The students took the time to rehearse the performance on evenings and weekends for several weeks before the show, showing great commitment to their passion of dancing. It was a brilliant opportunity for our students to display their talents to a wider audience and to perform in a professional venue.

Hip-hop duo 'Misunderstood' were invited to BOA on Friday 10th February to be interviewed by our Broadcast students on the B2 Radio before performing to a group of Year 12 Dance and Music students. Year 11 CDMP student Elliot Woollett gave a very professional showing when he interviewed Misunderstood, Elliot was composed and asked all the right questions live on air on B2 Radio. This was followed by a segment led Samuel Hughes and James Withington Y12 Broadcast students.

Their visit marked the final step of Stephan and Jeffrey's school tour, in which they were performing singles from their first album. All students really enjoyed being involved in the performance, with a dance-off being staged between four Dance students. We would like to wish 'Misunderstood' every success with their music career.

Year 11 Musical Theatre students performed 'The Other School' in the last week of half term, with two casts performing over four evenings. Writer and lyricist of the play, Dougal Irvine was invited to the opening night of the production, which was a real honour for the students to perform to him. Well done to all students involved, including the Technical Theatre Arts students for the designing and production of the lighting, set and props.

Congratulations go to Andrew Exeter (Year 13, Technical Theatre Arts) who gained an exciting lighting placement with PRG and worked on the Brit Awards.

Preparation for the next term continues in TTA including costume, props, lighting, stage management and set construction for shows including 'How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying', Acting productions at The Old Rep and Music concerts.

'Versus Dance Company' performed at The Mac on Sunday 19th February. The performance was for U.Dance regional competition, competing against other local dance companies for one of the two places available for the U.Dance national competition. The students are having to liaise with industry professionals and are gaining further performance experience in a theatre.

This term has seen the entry of high-achieving students into the Intermediate and Senior UK Maths Challenge. These are prestigious national competitions which challenge KS4 and KS5 students to use problem-solving skills. This year saw our best ever results in both challenges. The Senior Challenge resulted in our students achieving 2 silver and 14 bronze awards and the Intermediate Challenge resulted in 2 gold, 11 silver and 16 bronze certificates. Particular congratulations go to Year 11 students Amelia Cummins and Nico Houldcroft, who both achieved gold awards - this places them in the top 7 percent of entrants in the country.

On Sunday 12th February, 11 BOA students took part in the CBSO's final performance of the 2017 Project Remix at Symphony Hall. In the orchestra, there were Molly O'Keeffe (Viola), Emily Goode (Cello), Lauren Hill (Trumpet), Noa Dewally (Percussion) and Hannah Lindsay (Saxophone). In addition, following auditions, six of our students were chosen to be the frontline singers. They were Okeam Briscoe, Rosanne Hamilton, Holly Wright, Vinnie Waldrom, Tash Blundell and Aliyah Wiggins.

The project involved 60 students from across Birmingham coming together in the orchestra over four rehearsals with professional CBSO instrumentalists to work on specially commissioned arrangements of pop songs associated with Birmingham. These included 'Hungry Like The Wolf', 'Sing to the Moon' and 'Come on Eileen'.

The sound was fantastic and the students really enjoyed the experience of working with professional musicians. It was an amazing opportunity for the singers to perform in front of a full orchestra and the sound in Symphony Hall was absolutely perfect.

We are delighted that our Christmas production at The Old Rep Theatre, 'The Wind in the Willows', has been nominated for Best Home Produced Show in the What's On Readers Awards. Also, having won the Best Small Theatre Award 2016, The Old Rep has been nominated again for this category in 2017. Please show your support for BOA by voting at <http://whatsonlive.co.uk/readers-awards-2017>.

So far (with more to come in) £861.30 has been raised for Barnardo's in personal development time. Students, as part of their charity themed projects, raised money for a cause voted for by students. Activities that have taken place include sweet sales, candy cane deliveries, games and photo booth.

Welcome back to all the students who went on the New York trip. They experienced ascending the 102 floors to the observatory deck of the Empire State Building to see sunset over the Hudson River and the city light up. The first full day was spent visiting Grand Central Station before attending a workshop with Broadway performers and a question and answer session with cast member Nick Gaswirth from the new musical 'Natasha, Pierre and the Great Comet of 1812.' This was followed by

a trip to see the Statue of Liberty and the 9/11 fountains memorial and museum. The first day ended with watching Nick in the musical, which also starred Josh Groban (the group also saw the musical 'Waitress' during the trip!). Students took part in a dance workshop at Steps on Broadway, visited Central Park Zoo and shopped on 5th Avenue and in Times Square. There was a guided tour of the Lincoln Centre for Performing Arts and of The Radio City Music Hall, which included meeting a Rockette. The students were exceedingly well behaved and a credit to the Academy during the busy week.



New York Trip

Finally, well done to Harry Brown (Year 13, Musical Theatre) who reached the semi-finals of 'Let it Shine'. An amazing experience.



Harry Brown