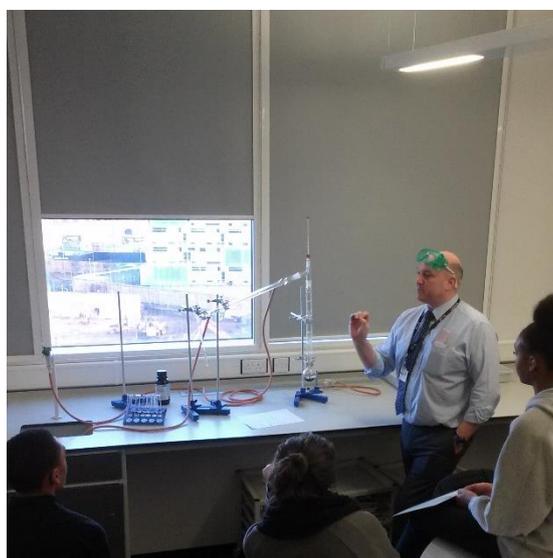


Students and staff alike have been enjoying a busy and successful half term, with exciting developments, events and productions taking place all over the academy, in both academic subjects and our vocational pathways. In fact, we've packed so much work into this half term that I can't believe it's nearly Christmas already! I would like to thank all of our students, staff and parents for their hard work and support this term, and wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a well-deserved break.

The Music students and performances really shone through as we returned after half term. The Year 12 and Year 11 Music evenings with the new format enabled students to have longer on set and allowed the audience to connect better to the performers. The performance level was very good indeed. All these shows were facilitated by our Music Technology students and Technical Theatre Arts students. What a professional and slick job they all did.

I am thrilled to announce Birmingham Ormiston Academy has been awarded The British Council International School Award. The awards panel stated "Birmingham Ormiston Academy has had an enviable track record for its international work. The partnerships that have been established since 2013 are commendable and compliment the clear vision and ethos of the Academy." We have also been awarded the Creative Skillset Tick which recognises our creative courses for the professional skills taught.

The Science department has been awarded a grant from the Royal Society of Chemistry to buy a new fractional distillation system. See below for a picture of Mr Pitt using it during a lesson.



Currently, 14 talented year 12 students from the Dance and Musical Theatre pathways are performing with Paul O'Grady and Bradley Walsh in *Cinderella* at the Barclaycard Arena from 20th-24th December. They have been working with the choreographer and director of the show over the past few weeks and will feature in the 'World's Biggest Pantomime.' The students involved have been praised for their professionalism, dedication and hard work. Our Broadcast students are also supporting and filming the event.

Music students performed at the Lichfield Christmas Market on Sunday 6th December. Performers braved the damp conditions to entertain the crowds at this popular Christmas event. Music students also sang as a choir in the Square Shopping Centre on Friday 11th December. The choir also treated students and staff to a spectacular performance of some Christmas carols during a lunch time this week. This was thoroughly enjoyed by a large audience and lifted Christmas spirits!

Students from the Musical Theatre pathway had an amazing opportunity to sing in concert with Josh Groban at The Symphony Hall on Sunday 29th December.

A vast number of BOA students performed this year at Free Radio Live at the Genting Arena on Saturday 28th November. Students from BOA opened the show by dancing on the main stage, musicians performed on five dedicated BOA stages at the venue, whilst a host of students stage managed, broadcasted live, recorded, and facilitated the event. Students had spent two weeks at Free Radio working on the production, social media and event management of their show.

The Year 11 Acting pathway took audiences to Wonderland with an immersive, promenade production of Alice. They followed either a traditional Alice, a Geek, Goth, Rocker or Kill Bill Alice down the rabbit hole. The audience loved this quirky, surreal production. The Technical Theatre Arts pathway students designed and constructed the set, costume, props and lighting. They also led the management of the performance. Gaming and New Media students created the amazing digital Cheshire Cat. Well done to everyone.

Alongside this, the Technical Theatre Arts department are also preparing for a busy term ahead in January, with productions coming up from Music, Dance, Art and Design and Musical Theatre's production of 'Seussical'. We will also be welcoming a Make-up Artist to the department, who will be working with students to develop their skills in make-up design, application and special effects.

Staying with Technical Theatre Arts, Year 12 and 13 students have recently enjoyed networking and exploring possibilities for their future at 'TheatreCraft' held at The Royal Opera House in Covent Garden, London. Students undertook workshops in their chosen area of work, such as tours of the wardrobe department, back-stage areas and the set of 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory' at The Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. It was here they saw the fully automated stage, famous glass elevator and the amazing set 'choreography', exploring how it worked from underneath and back-stage. Some chose to attend seminars led by industry professionals at the top of their game and took away valuable advice for working in the industry. Students were able to speak to representatives from universities and vocational drama schools, as well as speaking to representatives from theatres, unions and theatre organisations. After this, they watched one of the longest running plays on the West End, *Woman in Black*, with most of them constantly jumping out of our seats and several covering their eyes and ears to lessen the effect of one of the scariest plays they've seen.

Y10 Creative Digital Media Production attended a business & enterprise day at Thomas Vale where they took on a brief from the Mayor to design and make a model of a new tower-like building for the city's skyline. The event culminated in an exciting 'Dragons' Den-style' presentation where the volunteers acted as judges to decide the ultimate winning team of the day.

Year 13 Acting volunteers took a sensory Christmas piece to Mayfield School for children with severe learning needs. The Assistant Principal of the school commented:

“Once again thank you to you and the students for what they did on Friday. It was so lovely to see our kids getting such an enthusiastic, exciting, professional session. It was spot on and the reactions from pupils and staff were amazing.”

On Thursday 18th December, we were present at the BBC Music Awards at the Genting Arena. As one man said to me, “BOA students are everywhere!”



The 20th November saw the launch of Treasure Island at our second campus; the Old Rep. This is our first major production that has been home grown - an original adaptation, original music, dance, costume and scenery. The show has five professional actors supported by three casts of BOA students. The show has been receiving excellent reviews.

Many thanks go to your Gaming and New Media students for the website and game to support the performance. Also a huge thanks to the performers who are managing a run of 78 professional shows, as well as keeping on top of their school work.

The show closes on Sunday 3 January, so book your tickets now at oldreptheatre.co.uk or 0121 359 9444. The Old Rep are offering 50% off tickets for BOA students and their families - enter the discount code TREASURE50 at the checkout to get your tickets half price!

It has been a busy term and I know I will have probably forgotten to mention something either very important or spectacular. If I have, I am sorry!

Do all have a really lovely Christmas and I look forward to seeing you in 2016.

