

### Principal's Blog - February Half Term to Easter 2017

High profile is how I would describe this term. A visit to Downing Street plus three visits from the BBC. BBC News, Radio 4 (not sure when it will be broadcast) and our Broadcast and Gaming students spending the afternoon with the BBC Academy as part of their #BBCgetin drive to recruit BBC apprentices, giving BOA students useful insight into the industry.

In March, the Music, Music Technology, Broadcast and Technical Theatre Arts (TTA) pathways collaborated on the Live Lounge and American Legends showcases, bringing together classic and new material over a series of performances. Not only were the performances watched by a large audience in-house, the shows also hit a large digital audience worldwide! The Broadcast students worked alongside Music students to create video packages, a full online live streamed multi-camera production and live B2 Radio stream from the venue for the three Live Lounge shows, people were able to watch and comment from home or mobile and audience figures were in the thousands of views for each event!



Photo - Live Lounge



Photo - American Legends

March was also a busy month for the Year 13 Dance pathway, who were working towards their final showcase, 'The Maker: Think Outside The Box', about the magical process of how toys are made come to life through the medium of dance, including a variety of genres such as Jazz, Contemporary, Urban, Tap and Ballet. Well done to all BOA dancers and the TTA students for their hard work!

Following on from acting workshops that took place at BOA after Christmas, on Friday 10th March 2017, a group of Year 12 Acting students went on a trip to The Globe Theatre in London. The students were involved in another acting workshop with industry professionals before watching a performance of 'The Taming of the Shrew' at the world-renowned open-air theatre. Following the performance, the students were involved in a panel discussion linked to the HeForShe campaign surrounding Gender Equality. The panel included Emma Rice (Artistic Director of the Globe), Jacky Defferary (Director of The Taming of the Shrew), a UN ambassador and two cast members from the production.

Over the same weekend, BOA Dance companies 'Industria' and 'Versus' performed at the 'Move It' Exhibition at the ExCeL Arena in London. The annual event sees hundreds of professional schools, colleges and dance companies showcasing their potential to visitors from all over the country. Alongside the dance groups performing, the BOA Admissions team and Mr Penn were on hand to answer any questions, giving advice and guidance on how to apply for BOA. Well done to all students in both 'Industria' and 'Versus' for representing BOA at the exhibition and thank you to the other students who helped out at the BOA stall.

Due to the success of the auditions last year, on Monday 20th March 2017, ITV Talent Show, 'The Voice' were invited to BOA to audition our Music and Musical Theatre students. All the students performed really well and the judges were impressed by the talent shown. Following this, students who are selected to go further in the competition will be able to bypass the initial A Cappella stage of auditions and will be invited to the Birmingham auditions in June 2017. This process gives the students a brilliant opportunity to gain audition experience, which will help them in their future careers.

Year 13 Acting students have been working with the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) on a project to prepare them for their Final Major Project of their BTEC qualification. This project involved a series of workshops and a performance at the Swan Theatre in Stratford. On Tuesday 7th March, a company of actors from the RSC came to BOA to deliver a workshop to Year 13 Acting students. This was followed by a trip to Stratford on Thursday 23rd March where more workshops were conducted, the final section of the project involved the students watching a performance of 'Snow in Midsummer' at the Swan Theatre on the evening of Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> March.

Year 13 Musical Theatre students worked hard on their final ever BOA production of 'How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying', performing four shows over 3 days at The Old Rep Theatre. The show was vibrant, exciting and really challenged the students. Congratulations to all the students involved in producing a wonderful production!

Students from Technical Theatre Arts have worked extremely hard to realise the production. Year 13 learners took on a variety of design and management roles in their specialist area of interests, ranging from set designer to stage manager and everything in between! Year 12 have developed many production skills over the last year in scenic construction, lighting operation and assistant stage management. Every production element on stage was developed, designed and constructed by the TTA students. They have yet again exceeded themselves and produced a fantastic final product.

The production process has provided many design and technical challenges, mirroring a real life working environment, enabling the students to gain experience of a production process.



Photo - How To Succeed In Business Without Really Trying

The History Department took Year 12 and 13 A-Level students to London to visit the Houses of Parliament. As they're currently studying English Civil War it was a fantastic opportunity to further their understanding of the workings of Parliament and its relationship with the Crown. They were also fortunate enough to visit the British Museum and the Banqueting House in Whitehall, the site of the execution of King Charles I, and. We look forward to more exciting History trips in the near future!



Photo - History Department visit to London

In April 2017, due to the success of the last few years exchange programme with the Danish students from Balletskollen, BOA and in particular Year 10 Dance, welcomed a further 10 Danish students, making this the 3rd year of their visits.

The students and staff spent the weekend exploring Birmingham and various museums that the city has to offer. The group also got the chance to visit the Old Rep Theatre to watch a performance of the Year 13 Musical Theatre students 'How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying'. The Danish students spent the Sunday evening with their BOA partners' families, enjoying traditional English food and culture whilst making friendships, which we hope will continue after the exchange!

After their busy weekend, the Danish students spent the following few days shadowing their BOA partners during the school day, being involved in Dance lessons and other activities around the building. On the final evening of the exchange, BOA hosted a 'Pot Luck Dinner', allowing the students to celebrate new friendships and say their goodbyes. The evening was a lovely end to a busy week and all students involved had an excellent time.

Plans are now in place for 10 BOA students to visit Denmark in May 2017, allowing the students to experience education in a different country with a specific focus on dance, participating in several dance workshops with Danish students, and will also be visiting the Danish families for an evening.

On Tuesday 4th April 2017, industry professionals from 'Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts' came to BOA to conduct a full day of workshops and question and answer sessions with the Year 12 and 13 Performing Arts students. The sessions covered Dance, Acting, Musicality and Group Singing, and students were able to sign up for one of the many workshops that happened throughout the day. Working with professionals in the Performing Arts industry is a brilliant opportunity for BOA students to enrich and embed their learning.

Excitingly this term, we are in the process of recruiting a new B2 station manager, applicants will be selected to take B2 radio forward into next year with lots of exciting new content and a new presenter line up!

Year 11 and 13 students are facing those all important exams. The Easter holidays will involve a good deal of revision with certain sessions happening here at BOA.

Have a lovely Easter break.