

This is my final blog of the 14/15 academic year. A new experience for me! Rather than sending a lengthy end of term newsletter, I thought I would experiment and try to capture the vast array of activities throughout the year. I hope you have enjoyed the blogs.

Well we are finally here; the end of term and the summer holidays. It is less than four weeks since my last blog but, as ever, it has been a busy 'run up' to the end, with lots of final showcases and residential trips. Actually, as I am writing this, the current year 10s are heading off on their Drayton Manor rewards trip. I hope they have a lovely day.

Year 10 Actors executed their first performance at the Old Rep. On a warm summer evening we all watched a super performance of *Antigone*. Well done to all year 10s on a super first year at BOA. Year 12 Acting students completed their year by performing the 'Devised Political Theatre' unit in the Amphitheatre at the front of BOA, much to the interest of the passers-by.

The Dance Pathway have had two hugely successful shows in the past couple of weeks. Year 10 students wowed the audience with their show *Opposition* which offered an evening of high quality, thought provoking work. The Year 12s performed fantastically in the BOA Theatre with their showcase *Suspension*. The atmosphere was buzzing with the sell-out audience.

Students from Year 13 Dance Pathway have achieved excellent success. Students have gained places at: Rambert School of Ballet & Contemporary Dance, Trinity Laban, Bird, Laines, London Studio Centre, LIPA, The Urdang Academy, Masters Performing Arts, Northern School of Contemporary Dance, Morea Performing Arts College, Shockout Arts Academy, Chichester, Coventry, Edge Hill, East London, Kingston, Roehampton, Salford. Good luck to the students for their onward steps.

The Musical Theatre pathway have also had a hugely exciting term. The Year 12 *Best of British* showcase was absolutely outstanding, with a 100% sell out of The Old Rep on the closing night. There was an incredible atmosphere after the show, as the street outside was packed with performers and audience alike. Musical Theatre students are now looking forward to the musicals they will be performing at The Old Rep next year. Without giving too much away, something thoroughly modern will be heading our way in the autumn! Musical Theatre students have just returned from a wonderful 3 day trip to London, and returned inspired after watching *Bend it like Beckham*, *High Society* and *Memphis*. We were also lucky enough to enjoy a Q&A with some of the cast members of *Memphis*.

Production Arts students and staff have been as busy as ever...no 'winding down' towards the end of the year, more a 'gear change up' as we worked alongside Musical Theatre, Dance and Acting pathways on their end of year shows. Outgoing Year 13 students clearly proved they did not want to leave us by returning to work on Year 10's Musical Theatre showcase *Stars and Stripes* and the Year 12 Musical Theatre showcase *Best of British*, both at The Old Rep. It was rewarding to watch our graduates work with such authority and independence in their roles as stage management crew, lighting designers and sound technicians. Current Year 12 students have also proved how far they have grown this year through undertaking work on the final Year 12 Dance production of the year *Suspension*, ensuring all back stage practices ran smoothly and that all aspects of lighting and sound were 'on point'! Alongside demonstrating the skills that they have developed in terms of stage

management and technical theatre, Year 12 students have continued to develop their creative work through exploring mask making with some stunning work in progress.



Example of a Year 12 mask, and student working the desk at *Suspension* dance show

Particular highlights for our Year 12s this term have been students work placements on the 'Download' Festival and the wide range of productions upon which they have worked. They are currently deciding on the roles they wish to specialise in next year and are busy attending open days for vocational schools and universities in preparation for further study after what we hope will be an even more successful year for them.

Tuesday 2nd June was a momentous day for BOA: our first Geography GCSE field visit. Year 10 students visited the Peak District National Park. Their task was to investigate the impact that tourists have in a Honey Pot Village and along the River Dove. During the day ducks were fed, ice creams were eaten, the river burst its banks flooding our route and only a couple of students fell over in the caves (Georgia and Sian). Most importantly all Year 10 students were exemplary throughout the day and collected a wide variety of data that will ensure they succeed in their Geography Controlled Assessment. They truly were brilliant Geographers and to top it off they had glorious sunshine.



Year 10 Geographers in the Peak District

This year we have enjoyed trips to the WWI Battlefields in France and the Birmingham Back to Backs. More recently, our GCSE historians were fortunate enough to attend a talk given by a specialist in medieval history, or more specifically, medicine in the Middle Ages. Kevin Goodman from 'Bows, Blades and Battles' showed his vast repertoire of medieval weaponry and showed students how barber surgeons would treat the afflicted in simpler times. His knowledge and expertise offered excellent support to the students as they prepared for their exams.

BOA Humanities language students have produced some excellent work this year. This term was a unique opportunity to attend a meal in a popular Spanish restaurant in town, Amantia. A typical evening of tapas and Spanish specialities, such as albóndigas, jamón serrano, croquetas de bacalao

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and many more. For dessert, they had the chance to try out some yummy churros with chocolate, which was delicious!!

Our Year 10 French students attended an evening of French cuisine at the quirky restaurant Le Truc, where French culture and gastro-food mix at the very heart of Birmingham.

We are very sad to see our lovely language assistants leave this term. Apart from being a fantastic support to the students, Elia and Emilia were absolutely brilliant this year. They produced some amazing listening resources and revision posters for our students to use and revise over the summer break. It has been truly excellent to have real native speakers to practise speaking skills and develop confidence, spontaneity and fluency in French and Spanish. A big thank you to Elia and Emilia for their help this year!

All the music showcases took place earlier in the year. I look forward to the new year and the exciting plans for a choir, orchestra and new bands.



(Left) Art students enjoyed a photoshoot at BCU (Right) Lovely art section at the Digital Art showcase

The final two Fridays in June saw our year 11 and year 13 students looking as glamorous as ever to attend their prom. There were some interesting modes of transport to Fazeley studios for year 11s; an ice cream van, a limo and even a horse! The year 13 prom was held here at BOA. Students transformed the Atrium into a Las Vegas themed venue. Both evenings were truly entertaining and it was lovely to see all the young people enjoying themselves.

On Tuesday and Wednesday of this week, I was blown away by our first digital showcase. The Atrium, Theatre and Lecture Theatre were transformed to display a range of games, artwork and film. This was a truly inspirational event.

Our performing arts pathways naturally have a significant amount of exposure, just by the nature of the subjects. Gaming, Broadcast and Art can be less visible but are still a most valued part of the academy. The wealth of talent and tremendous work was on show for all (including some key industry professionals) to see. Thank you to Jonnie Turpie (High Sherriff for the West Midlands and Founder of Maverick TV and BOA) for his speech. Keep looking at the website as we will be uploading the films and possibly the games for you to view and play!

A special thank you to Luke Furmage for his goodbye/thank you video. I feel immensely proud and sentimental every time I view it. You can see the video here: <http://tinyurl.com/pnxfy6>.

The BOA TV team were asked to cover the Birmingham School Games. Duties included videography, photography and social media. The event was part of the national Sainsbury's School Games

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programme and was an exciting, fully inclusive competition programme for school children in England. The team got up close and personal with the organisers and some of Great Britain's top athletes.



The BOA TV Team at Sainsbury's Birmingham School Games. BOA Gaming student showcase.

Saturday 4th and 11th July were busy, long days as we held the first auditions for our Christmas production of Treasure Island. I can't say too much yet as we will be having a press release in September. Thank you to all the students who tried for a part. The professional actors will be auditioning on the 25th/26th August. Watch this space!!

We are continuing to develop our links with the BBC and on Wednesday producers from CBBC were at BOA talent spotting, recording VLOGS and offering student's feedback on their presenting skills. This was a pilot project and we should be flattered the BBC chose BOA for this initial piece of work.

I am going to finish now by wishing everyone a very happy holiday. I will be taking a short break and look forward to the first exam results mid-August. Please check the website for the A Level and GCSE results dates. A newsletter has also been posted home containing all of the relevant information for the new year.

Enjoy the sun!