

This first half term of this academic year has been incredibly busy, as always. I have been particularly impressed by the amount of industry links forged by pupils and teachers alike, which give our students an invaluable opportunity to gain real work experience that will help them in their future careers.

The Year 12 Visual Art and Design Pathway had their first exhibition called 'Wonderland', in which they recreated a scene from Tim Burton's adaptation of Alice and Wonderland using cardboard. It is life size, interactive exhibition made completely out of recycled cardboard. The students worked collaboratively to produce this incredible installation, which took them about three weeks to create.

There was excitement in St Brigid's Primary School in Northfield as Year 13 students from the Acting Pathway went in with specially commissioned pieces to both educate and entertain children from Reception right through to Year 6. The work focused on increasing literacy and exploring creativity using a range of authors from Oliver Jeffers to Michelle Magorian, and from Roald Dahl to Michael Morpurgo. The student-actors were an absolute credit to BOA in both their performances and aboard the West Midlands buses used to travel to and from the school! The school staff, children and parents were exceptionally complimentary about the quality of the work and the professionalism of all of the students involved.

Year 12 Acting pathway wowed prospective students with their Performance Workshop Unit work at open evenings in this last week of the half term. There were many comments about how advanced the work was and how friendly and talented the students were.

Year 11 students are busy rehearsing for their Christmas production of Alice In Wonderland. This will be an ambitious and immersive piece of theatre where the audience will follow one of five very different Alice's down the rabbit hole and into a promenade wonderland through the BOA theatre, tickets are available now.

Year 10 also have a big performance opportunity at the Palace Theatre in Redditch as they perform their production of Julius Caesar for The Shakespeare Schools Festival on November 10th. If you are local to the area tickets are available from the Palace Theatre website. Hail Caesar!

With the National Theatre Connections project in rehearsal and students from the acting pathway involved in the Treasure Island production, BOA Acting continues to push boundaries in performance through outstanding teaching and learning.

For Broadcast, Year 12 students have recently finished making two induction film projects, one entitled 'Hopes & Dreams' about their aspirations for their careers and another entitled 'BOA-TV Sessions', wherein BOA musicians cover popular chart hits in acoustic session videos. The most technically proficient and creative can be viewed on our online platform here: [www.boa-digital.co.uk](http://www.boa-digital.co.uk).

For Year 13 Broadcast, students are working with external clients such as Sports Birmingham, Free Radio, Cow, Electric Cinema and more to create promotional content for their businesses. It is a truly vocational and professional experience of dealing with a real client.

Games & New Media learners attended the EGX gaming expo at the NEC this term, where they were able to see some of the latest titles released and upcoming from major publishers. EGX also has a large section for small and indie game developers and the students spent a lot of time there learning from the game makers and looking at the innovative new work on show.

Games & New Media and Broadcast Year 12 students had a strong start to the year – they collaborated together during their induction project to create some special effects shots, combining computer graphics and filmed elements.

It has been a very busy and productive first half term on the Dance Pathway. BOA Dance students have once again been selected to perform on the main stage at Free Radio Live, with a further group of 12 students being selected to perform in Cinderella – the first pantomime to take place at the NEC.

Industria, the dance pathway's urban company, are currently working on a project with professional dance company ZooNation, whilst also preparing for additional performances at Free Radio Live.

On Saturday 7th November, Year 13 Music Technology students will be hosting a day of music and music technology workshops for members of a Youth Club. Sandwell Youth Club for the Sensory Impaired was set up to bring together young people with a hearing or vision impairment, to enjoy social activities and to be able to support each other.

Our students have been planning a range of exciting workshop activities, taking into account the young people's impairments and planning how to use technologies in an accessible and innovative way. For example, students will be able to manipulate and control beats and loops using hand-held gyroscopic devices, or learn how to be a Foley Artist creating sound effects for film.

Our students met with the youth club leaders this week as part of their planning to learn more about the young people they'll be working with. This will be a challenging and rewarding event and forms part of the assessment of Unit 21, Music in the Community.

We have just enjoyed the first BOA performance of the year at The Old Rep: Thoroughly Modern Millie, presented by Year 13 Musical Theatre students. Following a challenging week with a very busy rehearsal schedule, both casts rose to the occasion and impressed packed houses with their professionalism and talent. We are particularly grateful to the Production Arts students who facilitated the show.

Free Radio Live takes place at the Genting Arena on Saturday 28th November and will feature BOA students performing and working backstage. BOA students will once again open the main stage dancing. This year we had three rounds of auditions and the selection process for the Free Radio judges was made extremely difficult by the high standard of all who participated. We also have a selection of our BOA students at a work experience placement with Free Radio for two weeks where they are taking on roles in marketing, social media, radio production and events management.

Year 11 History students have recently enjoyed a trip to Kenilworth Castle, a favourite palace of Elizabeth I and her courtier Robert Dudley. They experienced a tour of the guided tour of the castle, including the beautifully restored Elizabethan gardens, and all in all had a lovely day.

BOA has just gained an award as a Bronze standard Top Cycling Location due to our provision for cyclists. If you wish to cycle to BOA we have a range of free locks, bike lights and reflectors to keep you safe this winter. Please see Mr Penn for more details.

The last week of term saw lots of visitors and prospective students in BOA for our Open Week. My thanks go to all the students who gave up their time to be guides and showcase their work.

Throughout the next half term, we will be looking forward to Treasure Island at The Old Rep. A group of BOA students begin their rehearsals for a variety of lead and ensemble roles next week, and they are all looking forward to appearing on stage alongside the professional cast of actor-musicians. Tickets for Treasure Island are now on sale via The Old Rep, on 0121 359 9444 or [www.oldreptheatre.co.uk](http://www.oldreptheatre.co.uk).