

## Head's Lines - Gerard Booth - Director of Music

Welcome to this first edition of our new Oldham Music Service and Music Centre Newsletter – Music Notes. It's hard to know where to begin, as we have been living through a period so tumultuous that it's completely beyond the vast majority of people's personal experience. However, I am pleased to say that throughout it all, the OMS team have worked hard to ensure that a high quality offer has continued to be provided for our talented musicians. Those of you that have been able to engage regularly with the online offer through our Virtual Learning Environment, YuMu, will appreciate just how individually tailored the provision has been for students and what an amazing job the OMS staff have done in switching from 100% face-to-face delivery to 100% remote learning in such a short period of time. I keep hearing about the amazing and exceptional progress that students have been making through their weekly lessons with Music Service teachers and it's truly pleasing to know that music is being kept alive through this process.



Our Curriculum Team has also made an enormous contribution, with dozens of daily videos for our Musical Beginnings and Musical Explorers being provided via our [website](#), classroom music activities to replace lessons normally taught in schools to whole classes through YuMu and tons more fantastic activities and programmes of learning that you can read about below.

We have had a great response to our online offer to Music Centre ensembles with terrific levels of engagement from OMC members. The provision includes virtual sheet music, recordings to play along with and coaching advice from specialist tutors.

Of course, none of this is a direct replacement for the experience of learning an instrument or making music in the company of others, so we're working flat out to develop ways to safely reintroduce more normal ways of working from September. Of course, this is a really challenging process, especially as there's constantly changing guidance as further research and scientific advice is shared with us. However, there is clearly an ambition to ensure that the current generation of pupils do not miss out from any aspect of their educational entitlement. We are therefore working closely with schools to find unique and bespoke solutions for every one of the almost 100 establishments that our staff work in to ensure that lessons can be delivered safely and with an acceptable level of risk for both pupils and their families, colleagues in schools and OMS staff themselves.

As far as out of school activities are concerned, we will be guided by Oldham Council's Public Health team to ensure that the Lyceum remains a safe space for all those that visit the building and that any desire to restore our Music Centre groups does not come with unnecessary risks for all concerned.

In the meantime, please continue to make music in your homes and have a great summer. I hope to be able to share more positive news with you before the start of the Autumn term and look forward to hearing about more of your musical achievements during lockdown as well as hopefully seeing many of you in person from September.

## Many musicians... one harmony

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## Singing Challenge: Dippy's Explorers

In May, children from across Greater Manchester took part in the GM Music Hub Singing Challenge 2020. The song "Dippy's Explorers" celebrated the visit of the Natural History Museum's iconic Diplodocus cast to Rochdale. Many of you will have been to visit Dippy at the Riverside building. Due to the current situation, we couldn't have our planned massed open-air sing with hundreds of children. However, we did have online events to celebrate this special event.



"Dippy's Explorers" was composed by Mike Edwards who, in addition to being Head of Music at Newman College and the conductor of the Oldham Youth Choir, is also a talented composer.

In his lifetime, Dippy has seen many historical events unfold; men on the moon, two World Wars, many Olympic Games. Mr Edwards composed a special "Lockdown-themed" verse. You can find this on our Facebook page.

You can find all the Dippy the Dinosaur songs on our website and fully resourced dinosaur/fossil-themed lesson plans for EYFS, KS1 and KS2 via this link:

<http://oldhammusic-service.co.uk/dippy-the-dinosaur-resources/>

## Anemoi Wind Quintet Zoom Symposium

A number of our woodwind students have recently been involved in an online Zoom Symposium with the Anemoi Wind Quintet. The quintet members are all students from the Royal Northern College of Music. They discussed with our musicians their own musical journeys, how they got to where they are now and how music courses at Conservatoires and Universities differ. They also talked briefly about the importance of playing music together in a group and the solid friendships that can develop – these friends often end up being friends for life! The OMS students were placed in breakout rooms on Zoom where they could ask members of the quintet questions about their journeys and gather 'real-life' information to help pave the way on their road to Higher Education. The session finished with a lovely recording of a performance by the Anemoi Wind Quintet from their YouTube channel; "Charleston" from the Dance Suite by Hallam.



## Instrumentalists and Ensembles



Playing a musical instrument is usually a very social activity and our musicians of every age enjoy coming together to rehearse and perform. Our Music Centre ensembles and choirs have been working hard using our online ensemble resources. Over the summer, why not organise a performance of your own for your family?

Maybe you could perform outside and tweet us @oldhammusic using #gardengigoldham. Research the composers, make a programme, hang up some bunting and announce each piece. You may like to prepare an encore as well!

## Summer Music Activities

To keep you busy during the summer, we have put together some Music Activities for children in primary school. You can find these by following [this link](#). We would love to see your creative efforts! Tweet us @oldhammusic #oldhammusicathome



## Remote Band: A World Premiere!



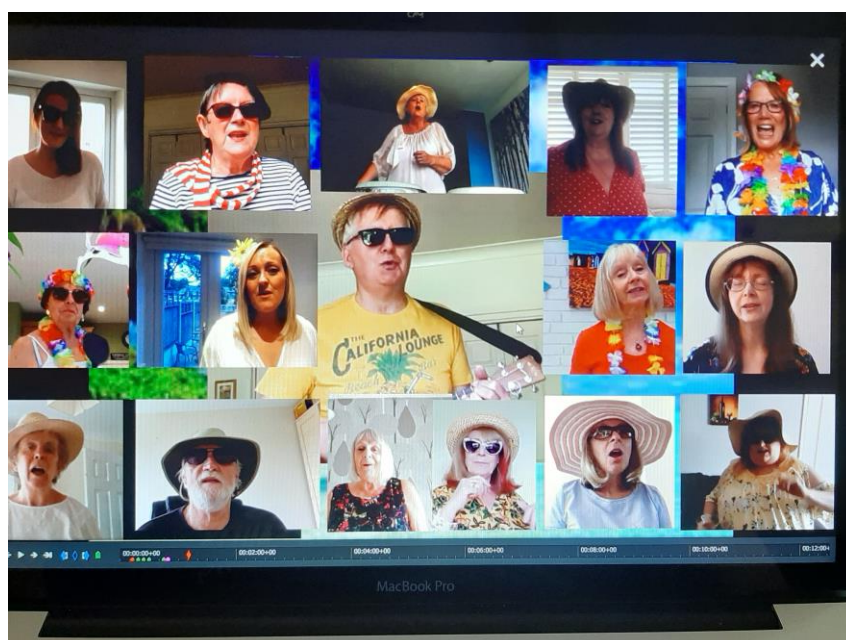
Mr Leedale has been busy composing a piece for our Intermediate and Youth Brass Band musicians. "It's a Mystery" is intended to be a pastiche of a 1970's mystery TV theme. All the students were given was a PDF of their part and a click track to play it with. They had to rehearse entirely independently and send either an audio or video recording to Mr Leedale for inclusion in the final performance. The finished result is amazing and can be seen and heard on our Facebook page.

## Musical Beginnings: classes for 0-5 year olds

Our Musical Beginnings families have been able to access the resources online during the summer term. Additionally, the Early Years Music team have shared daily songs on our social media channels. Follow us on social media for more news about an exciting collaborative project we are working on with Oldham Theatre Workshop, Gallery Oldham and Oldham Libraries during the summer for young children!

## Adult Pop Choir

The Adult Community Pop Choir, under their director Martin Ashurst, have continued to rehearse online during the last few months. They have already produced a fantastic video which is available on our Facebook page and are busy working on their next recording project. Singing has proven health benefits for mental health and, during this time, it has proved to be a lifeline for some of our isolated choir members.



## Farewell to Mr Meaden

As we approach the end of the summer term, we will be saying a very fond farewell to Roger Meaden after an incredible 41 years of service. Dedicated to bringing the pleasure of music-making to children and young people, Roger has inspired thousands of children on their musical journey. We will miss him greatly and wish him every health and happiness in his retirement.



## Leavers and Awards 2020

At this time of year, it is traditional for us to celebrate the dedication and commitment our Year 13 students have shown throughout their membership of the Oldham Music Centre. Unfortunately, we will have to postpone this until later in the year. Many of these young people have been in an OMC ensemble since Year 2. Some even began their musical journey in our Musical Beginnings classes as babies! We wish them all success in their future education and careers. The Music Service teaching team have selected the following students to receive our annual awards:

**The Lyceum Trophy** *for the highest mark in an ABRSM/Trinity Music Examination*  
Tom Ellison – 145/150, Grade 8 'Cello.

**The Gerald Pritchett Award** *for Outstanding Contribution to the Music Centre*  
Adam Saville (Bass Trombone) and Zack Smith (Saxophone and Clarinet)

**The Music Theatre Award** *for achieving the highest marks in a LAMDA Examination*  
Olivia Fitton – 98/100, Grade 8 Music Theatre

## Keep in touch

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