

Speech for Christmas concerts - Nov 24/25, 2021

It gives me enormous pleasure to say good evening everyone and welcome to the second night of our Christmas concert! A special welcome to any parents of Y7 or Y8 students, who are attending their very first AGGS concert. It has been 20 months since our last live concert here at AGGS – which was the Spring concert in March 2021.

Since then, our students have shown remarkable resilience. They have continued to play their instruments and sing during both lockdowns at home and have recorded virtual musical performances.

Last year during the time we were in school, we completely redesigned our extracurricular offer to be year group led because of the imposed aerosol safety year group bubbles.

Students flourished in their year group orchestras, playing in small groups and singing outside at times on our front lawn. Our Chamber Choir, Jazz Band and String Orchestra continued to meet but spaced 2m apart, which did limit numbers and often proved challenging it was often difficult to hear each other to blend/tune.

Despite this we recorded 2 virtual concerts at Christmas and in the Summer and over £600 was raised through donations which were sent to musical charities.

In the summer term last year things started to improve as our Y7s enjoyed a live brass workshop out on our front lawn. Our Y8s loved watching the annual opera workshop – again outside on the front lawn.

So we are now very excited to be a bit more 'back to normal' - with our many extracurricular music groups taking place across the year groups. Our student ensembles are now back too, which is a joy to see and musical friendships are once again being formed because of this. Although you are not hearing every student perform we are proud that 188 students have been involved this term in making music in one or more of our ensembles and hope this number continues to grow as the students grow in confidence.

We are sorry you can't all see every performance live tonight but hope you understand the safety reasoning around this, with spacing an issue. It's good to see that you are wrapped up warmly too given we have all the doors open!

Once again many thanks for being here and supporting our students. We hope you enjoy the concert!