



**Autumn Minutes for the Music Educators Group
for Secondary Schools in Walsall**

Venue: Blue Coat Academy

Date: 17th October 2024

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4. Darbar Music – Teaching Northern Indian Classical Music in the Classroom
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1. Acceptances and Apologies

Present:	
Stephanie Dufty (SD) – Chair	Walsall Music Education Service (WMES)
Jess Harvey (JH) -	St Thomas More
Charlotte Okunlola (CO)	Grace Academy
Lisa Wilson (LW)	Hydesville
Stewart Gardner (SG) - host	Blue Coat Academy
Apologies:	
Lis Fitzpatrick	St Thomas More
Jack Pierce	Brownhills Ormiston Academy

2. Minutes

2.1. The minutes were accepted from the Summer meeting – May 2024.

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3. Matters Arising

- 3.1 CO & SG commented on how good the singing festival was in June and encouraged others to book next year.
- 3.2 JH & SG enquired about Girl Grind and if they had got back in touch yet. SD replied they had not and she had asked to revisit things with them in the Sept. SG shared details of another organised called Amber for SD to follow up.

4. Darbar Music Academy Presentation

4.1 A summary of notes below:

- A scheme to learn Indian Music on the keyboard (or Ipad) plus a second scheme to learn keyboard/piano as a whole class
- Started as a Primary school resource and now extends to KS3 – very good vocabulary
- Web based programme – 66 lessons
- Darbar are a large arts media organisation specialising in Indian music and have recently expanded into the education sector. Their resources are high quality video tutorials building on their long history with Sky Arts media productions.
- Looks at technique and posture for piano/keyboard playing as well as ‘the notes’
- Has a visualiser on screen as well as the video of playing.
- Great option for playing piano (one scheme) – can be used on tablet apps if no keyboards in school.
- ALSO teaches Northern Indian Classical Music with another scheme – Introducing the Raga – understanding what a Raga is at the same time as learning a western scale. Includes improvisation. More creativity than a straight performance piece.
- Includes examples of Indian Music played on Indian instruments and western (e.g. sax)
- Ragas have different qualities/characteristic and the ragas that have been selected in this scheme are the most relaxing ones to link in with mindfulness and calm.
- PRACTICAL SESSION 😊 – omms, singing raga scale, playing scale, rhythm exercise and transferring to piano, using two hands.
- Very well thought out scheme culminating in a fixed composition performance of which pupils can complete as much or as little as they are able. Recordings of final performance is on the website on piano as well as on saxophone and also an interpreted performance on sitar as well as an improvised version.
- Cost - £99/yr licence for schools; £4.99 for parents for year sign up (so students can use at home) – very good to set a limited task to work on at home.
- Can do free sessions on Teams with Darbar Academy to train all your staff also.
- **FREE trial on website THIS TERM: email harpal@darbar.org if you would like to sign up.**
- Darbar would welcome feedback and suggestions on their product for future development
- In conversation with Charanga – may go into partnership with them (Charanga are currently a partner of WMES and WMES offer a discount on their licences).
Darbar can offer workshops and assemblies – half days and full days on keys or tabla– probably around the £150 mark for whole day. Inc instruments too for 30 plus students. Contact harpal@darbar.org

5. Curriculum Review

- 5.1. SD explained the current Gvt review: [Curriculum and assessment review - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)
- 5.2. Group went through the first three questions highlighted on the document sent round as a pre-read. Comments centred around amount of time for KS3 not being mandated for 1 hour a week so some schools do far less music teaching that MMC states; and instrumental

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lessons being the privilege of those who can afford in most schools or outside school (privately) if the instrument is not offered

5.3. Deadline 22nd Nov. **Action: please do complete – the more voices the better**

6. Events

- 6.1. SD outlined key events in the meeting as below and signposted staff to the tab on WMES website “Upcoming Events”
- 6.2. **Singing Festival** – June:
 - 6.2.1. Schools felt very positive about the delivery and vocal work achieved in the workshops and performance day in June.
 - 6.2.2. **Date for next year: 19th June 2025 (Thursday)**
- 6.3. **Piano Spotlight** – LW & SD shared the highlights of this evening and discussion around doing another one next year or year after on another instrument or family of instruments.
 - 6.3.1. LW said she would have welcomed the RBC views on conservative life as well as their tutor.
- 6.4. **Xmas Past & Present** – 26th – 28th Nov – 3 secondary schools involved this year (Streetly, St Thomas More & Blue Coat) – SD offered two comp tickets to Grace if they would like to see what it is all about. SG & JH reported rehearsals were going well.
- 6.5. **Composing to Pictures/Picks to Pics** – January - March – Just 2 school places left on this. Hugely subsidised composition programme that supports a terms work at either KS2,3 or 4. See website for booking form (has already been emailed out to all in Sept).

7. Hub Update

7.1. BCMH

7.1.1. SD updated group on the Service’s new name and logo tweak (see top of document). No ‘Hub’ anymore as now part of The Black Country Music Hub. So Walsall is now: *Walsall Music Education Service*

7.1.2. Joint opportunities available for secondary school pupils and staff as have been emailed out already: Jazz pianist workshop (free); Challenging Voices Training (free)

7.2. **MUSIC CENTRE** - 3rd Music Centre on Thursdays @ Blue Coat; Ensemble times – all free – on website

7.3. SLAs

7.3.1. SD is reviewing for Sept 2025. Explored ideas from staff on numbers of weeks taught, most Services do between 33 – 36 weeks; tiered charges on type of delivery; would discounts on services for schools who do have SLAs appeal? Etc....

7.3.2. Suggestions made from group for free CPD; discounts on events very welcomed

7.3.3. Discussion on rate variances across the regions.

7.4. Capital Grant

7.4.1. SD explained the government Capital Grant for instruments is on its way to us. WMES will hold the stock on behalf of BCMH (they will not be Walsall instruments but can be used as Walsall instruments) and asked school for ideas/needs.

7.4.2. Group requested world music resources, electric and bass guitars.

7.4.3. **Action – any schools who would like to contribute ideas or have a 1:1 chat with SD about this please email or call ASAP.** Phase 1 spend is happening this term in terms of creating the Purchasing Plan, once submitted the spend would commence in Spring if agreed to by BCMH Board and ACE.

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8. AoB

- 8.1. Next meeting (Spring) at St Thomas More – 30th January.
- 8.2. Host needed for Summer term – ***SD to send possible dates on email to group to organise***
- 8.3. Charanga Training on Yu Studio on 9th June – LW & JH would like to attend but unable to host. ***Action: if a school would like to host this KS2/3 training event please contact SD. Ideal opportunity to engage with feeder primaries.***

Next meeting : 30th January 4.30pm – 6pm
St Thomas More

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