



NPA plan for 2010/11 for a rural school of 500

We plan to have two teachers timetabled to one column for Senior Music. Within these constraints and very much depending on demand we intend to accommodate Advanced Higher Music, Higher Music, free-standing Units in performing and the NPA in Performing. This is a catch all situation and with creative timetabling I am confident we can accommodate the demands of our students. We were offered two columns with one teacher in each but I felt that this would inhibit flexibility as one teacher could not possibly cope should there be demands at all levels in each column. We have five periods of 55 minutes, two teachers and, where possible, will be asking Instrumental Instructors and a school technician who has an interest in music technology to contribute.

Why choose NPA in Performing?

Because it gives us the opportunity to design a course to suit each individual:

- ◆ The performer interested in understanding how the business side of musical performance operates may opt for *Music: Promotion in the Music Industry* in addition to the two mandatory Units.
- ◆ The performer interested in the technical support of a performance may opt for the *Music: Technical Support* Unit in addition to the mandatory Units
- ◆ The performer who is interested in exploring opportunities through a project may opt for the *Creative Project*.
- ◆ The performer whose sole interest lies in performing may, in addition to the two mandatory Units, opt for the *Performing Music on One Instrument or Voice* at level 5. This Unit could be undertaken on a second instrument or could be a progressive pathway for their first instrument.

For this year our plan might look like this:

For one period whilst NPA performers and performers of free-standing Units have access to equipment and practice areas for performing the other teacher will teach Higher and Adv Higher listening. Performers will be given diaries with outcomes and expectations clearly stated. They will be told that it is their responsibility to regularly complete the diaries and that they will be regularly checked. One teacher will be on hand and if possible an instructor to facilitate choice of pieces, good practice for a practice regime, show exemplification and give advice regarding small commentaries.

We have built up many resources to support independent study and are continually adding to this. We have a wide variety of music for a wide variety of instrumentalists, tascam guitar trainers for private practice, lots of portable CD players, recording and video equipment. We encourage the use of Ipods/mobile phones, computers and lap tops – internet access to useful websites, tutor books with CDs and DVDs and so on.

Whilst NPA candidates are busy planning aspects of the *Music: Live Performance* Unit and gain access to equipment needed for this, Adv Higher and Higher students will work on composing with one teacher to advise and guide this

Two periods for Higher and Adv Higher to work on performing Unit/two instruments for whole course award. Meanwhile the NPA candidates can concentrate on either creative project, technical support or second instrument. For this year we won't be offering *Music: Promotion in the Music Industry* but I hope that in the future we can have a partnership with Business Studies in this.

That leaves one period for all candidates to work together, maybe on *Creative Project*. That could be the NPA students organising a concert/gig for Adv and Higher students and themselves to take part in (which could also be part of their own *Music: Live Performance* Unit). It could also be an interdisciplinary project with Business Studies contributing with promotion/budgets and planning; Home Economics with catering; Art with graphics for posters. It could also be on song writing together or in a community project, maybe taking their skills in to the primary schools and helping with transition to S1 through Music. Or it could be having time to help each other with practice on pieces for the performing Units. Or it could be time for two teachers and available instructors to chase up the stragglers!!

It may possibly take time to increase numbers for this award and Units and we are thinking of introducing an induction type experience in S4 next year to persuade pupils to vote with their feet.

The only way this will succeed is if we are all able to be flexible and adaptable, think creatively and encourage independence – this is the key to success. The NPA in Performing is a course for individuals; it is not a course to mould students into. It gives us the freedom to mould the courses around each individual. FE colleges say that students who have shown these levels of creative thinking, self-discipline, collaborative working, self-motivation, ambition, adaptability and forward planning are the students they seek. They recognise the skills needed for the next generation to survive in an ever changing world.