



A Winter Wonder land

Music, drama
& dance at the
Winter Concert

A levels +

Starting this year, Lower Sixth students at d'Overbroeck's Sixth Form have the option of enhancing their A level studies through the AQA Baccalaureate. This new qualification encourages initiative-taking and affords the opportunity to demonstrate commitment, self-motivation and extra-curricular achievement.

So how does the AQA Baccalaureate work? Students study at least three standard A level subjects, as normal – and also sit an AS-level in Critical Thinking: an intellectually challenging course, involving rigorous analysis and the deconstruction of arguments.

The qualification goes beyond classroom learning, however. A major component is the Extended Project – a chance to practise long-term project management skills and self-motivation – qualities likely to catch the attention of any university admissions tutor. Students are also required to participate consistently in an

out-of-classroom activity – perhaps join a local sports team, volunteer, or work towards a Duke of Edinburgh award.

As we have always striven to provide a broad, rounded education at d'Overbroeck's, we are delighted to be pioneering the AQA Baccalaureate. We believe that this new qualification not only stands to boost students' university and career prospects, but also – and most importantly – recognises, encourages and rewards breadth, initiative and community engagement.



Inspirational Entrepreneur

Claire Watt-Smith (left), a recent d'Overbroeck's student, has been announced as one of the Future 100 Young Entrepreneurs of the Year. As part of our Speaker Programme, Claire spoke to current Business Studies students about her experiences of founding and running ethical fashion company BoBelle (www.bobelle.co.uk).

Claire passed on her own tips, and spoke about the rewards – and the challenges – of entrepreneurship: from 5am rises and haggling with traffic wardens to negotiating with billionaire businessman Philip Green.

The Winter Concert

Whether by the emotional intensity of a classical piano sonata or the perfectly-poised understatement of an intimate voice-and-guitar vignette, the audience at December's Winter Concert was moved in many senses, and in many directions.

It was a pleasure to listen to a range of performances as eclectic as they were polished. One minute, Sammy Seedaket (right, inset) was dominating the stage with a dramatic yet sensitive rendition of the classic 'Summertime'; the next, the Lower Sixth Drama class was reinterpreting Greek tragedy with a menacing, creepily intense performance taken from Berkoff's *Agamemnon*.

There was passion and virtuosity; humour and energy. Musically, we walked in a Winter Wonderland with Josh Vizor and Amelia Sampson, before being 'thrown into the whirlpool of suffering and strife' by Stasya Ng's dramatic performance of Scriabin. d'Overbroeck's Dance Club mesmerisingly 'danced into Disturbia', while Upper Sixth Drama students performed a satirical piece devised by the group, in which haughtily intoned reflexions on haute cuisine were juxtaposed with spectacles of exaggerated gluttony.



Meanwhile, a series of songs performed by Evie Oswald, Sarah Pearson and Kathryn Poon (Kathryn is photographed, left) ushered in yet another atmosphere – and, for a few minutes, the Jacqueline du Pré Music Building felt like a campfire-lit summer field (thankfully, without the mosquitoes).

Ultimately, words can hardly do justice to what was an enchanting evening.

If you missed the Winter Concert, you might like to view video footage of some of the performances – which you can find online at doverbroecks.com/winterconcert08



Which premiere?

Having composed music for two professional theatre shows – *The Jungle Book* and *A Tender Mother* – Gidon Fineman (left) then found himself in the unusual position of choosing between premieres: both productions opened in Oxford theatres on the same night.

An indication of Gidon's versatility, music for *The Jungle Book* spans genres including pop,

Green Scholars

This year, we're thrilled to have awarded our first Environmental Awareness Scholarships. With green issues increasingly taking centre stage – and ever greater numbers of students seeking to make a difference – we resolved to recognise and encourage these efforts.

Danielle Greenspan (right) and Timea Suli (bottom, inset) are therefore d'Overbroeck's College's first 'Green Scholars'. Both are not only well-versed in environmental issues, but also passionate about taking a lead in promoting sustainability within the College.

Already, a student-led environmental action group has been formed, and plans are afoot for a fund-raising concert. As well as sending out weekly environmental tips to students and staff, the group is also forging links with local schools and identifying areas of potential cooperation.



In Other News...

Oxbridge success

Congratulations to the eleven d'Overbroeck's students who have this year been offered places at Oxford and Cambridge Universities: a richly deserved reward after months spent honing subject knowledge and preparing for demanding interviews. Well done!



Interstellar Design

Head of Chemistry Max Parsonage worked as a consultant for the European Space Agency in the development of *Spaceflight Challenge 1* – a 3D teaching tool

for classroom use. As well as assisting in the design and construction of the educational components, Max also designed many of the activities, and wrote or edited the text. Also involved were other members of staff: Chris Carter (Maths) and Adam Johnstone (Biology).

More Activities For All

Having extended our sport and activities programme this year to two afternoon sessions per week, we're able to offer students an even broader array of options. The change has also made possible additional training sessions and matches for keen sportspeople such as Oscar Hassan and Sherif Sam-Sadeen (above).

Beyond Vision

Art teacher Sharon Wyper – also artist in residence at the Diamond Synchrotron in Harwell – recently exhibited her work under the title 'Beyond Vision'. Concerned with seeking what is 'beyond', Sharon's work engages with subjects such as the cosmos beyond the clouds, the molecular world beyond that which we can see with our eyes, and the spiritual beyond the physical. You can view some of her work at www.sharonwyper.co.uk

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