

## **SPECIAL REPORT A YEAR OF MUSIC AT DUNGOG HIGH SCHOOL**

And what a busy year it has been with little time to write reports for the Dungog High School newsletter or Dungog Chronicle.

But just because these reports have been missing, doesn't mean that our musical students have been 'resting'. Far from it!!! They have been very busy this year and are still working toward the end of Year assemblies and Carols by Candlelight before the school year is complete.

**JANUARY:** The school year began and music students went straight into the STARSTRUCK mode with continuing auditions. This year saw Rachel Salmon go through the first round of auditions to be asked to attend the backing vocal workshop which is a great day where around thirty singers spend their time singing harmonies and working toward a place in the show. With over four hundred auditions, an achievement in itself...well done Rachel.

**FEBRUARY:** This time it is the dance and choir auditions for Starstruck by DVD (alas the days of video auditions has gone as technology moves forward). A group of sixteen dancers and twenty choir members audition to take their place in the show. This year saw our Director John Deacon retire from the show after starting his work in 1993 when Starstruck first began....he will be greatly missed as will his energy and enthusiasm. John was a great believer in giving every child an opportunity to perform...every age...every shape and size...everyone!! As long as they enjoyed what they were doing, all the hard work was worth it.

**MARCH:** As the Tocal, Relay for Life and the Dungog Film Festival nears it is time for the students to organise their performances. This takes place in the music room at lunch times with solo work, backing vocals and the band to accompany them all learning their various parts. As well at this time Starstruck, the show is being written and song choice decided. Choir parts are being arranged by the music team which consists of music teachers from the area including Mrs Danvers from Dungog High.

### **Our performers:**



## APRIL:

In April two of our talented music students Dennis VanRooyen on trumpet and Oliver Wheeler on Tuba travelled to Japan as members of the Hunter and Central Coast Regional Wind Ensemble. They were lucky enough to tour and perform in Tokyo, Ube, Hiroshima and Osaka and this was an amazing experience for them not only because they travelled to these cultural places but also as they joined in workshops and performances with local students of their age and conductors from this country. What a wonderful musical and educational experience for them both.



**MAY:** After the Easter break there is little time before the **TOCAL FIELD DAYS** is upon us. Dungog High provided music for two hours this year where they did one 'set' of songs which they then repeat for another audience. Our songs range from Folk to Country and Rock so it is easy to please the TOCAL audience.

After our gig at TOCAL this year which concluded at 3pm, we had to rush back into Dungog for the **RELAY for LIFE** event which this year took place at Dungog High School. With a lot of unpacking and setting up we performed our repertoire which went well into the night and was greatly appreciated by the organisers. There is a wonderful sense of community each year at this event and the numbers seem to grow each year giving support to those who have had family members and friends touched by cancer. Dungog High has performed every year since this event began and we are

always happy to be involved.

**DUNGOG FILM FESTIVAL** A busy time for all of Dungog with so many people and celebrities moving in for the weekend of films and workshops.

Our first commitment is to perform at the local Railway Station to welcome the celebrities and tourists who arrive on the XPT from Sydney. This year was our best because we did not suffer rain which has hindered our performances over the last two years. The guests from Sydney are always very appreciative of the live music and this year was no exception with some well known actors sitting and watching our performance....much to the delight of the senior girls who recognised many of the actors. This year as well, we were complimented but not only the celebrities but also the Minister for the Arts NSW.



But that is not the end of our Film Festival commitments. This year not only did we entertain in the main street for the street parade but also sang at the Opening at the Dungog High School MPC which was great fun.



MAY also saw the rehearsal schedule tighten up for STARSTRUCK. Both the dance group and choir headed off to Newcastle to join the three and a half thousand other students who are involved in this amazing show.



**JUNE: OPEN DAY AT DUNGOG HIGH:** This was an exciting time for Dungog High as we have now expanded our music areas from one small classroom to two specialist rooms, two small rehearsal rooms which will also be used for a computer area and in the future we hope to soundproof one room so we can record our music and work with students in writing and recording original music. This is a project which will take a number of years to set up completely but it will be well worth it in the end.

Our outside rehearsal area is a great space where students can work individually or in groups on classroom workshop material. We also cleared this area for an outdoor performance on Open Day and this proved to be a great space which we hope to put to much more use in the future.



June is also **STARSTRUCK** month. This show is put together in an incredibly short amount of time. All singers, dancers, soloists, backing vocalists, choir, orchestral members, drama students and other featured artists learn their parts independently and then with minimal rehearsal, they all get together for a Technical Rehearsal, a Dress Rehearsal and then the show is on. Three nights and a matinee later it is all over for another year. This is quite an achievement and a wonderful experience for all.

Dungog High School has been involved with Starstruck since it began in 1993 and there is never a doubt that they will take part as it is such a great and educational experience for all those involved. Phyl Danvers directs the massed choir and Donna Griffith from Dungog Public School has also been involved with the Hunter Signing Choir since 1994 taking with her hearing impaired students from the Dungog and Hunter areas.



This year Starstruck featured a moving choir of Primary School Students.

**JULY:** By now the HSC is really rolling around for our music students and Trial examinations are taking place. This doesn't just involve Dungog High's Year 12 students but also students from other years who provide backing vocals and band work for performances. This year also involved ex Dungog High students Sharon McKenny who travelled from Sydney to play drums on performances and Chris and Michael Danvers who performed on bass guitar and voice. We thank them all for their valuable help.

**AUGUST: EDUCATION WEEK ECUMENICAL CHURCH SERVICE  
NEWCASTLE CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL.**

This year we were invited to perform at the Christ Church Cathedral for the Education Week Church Service. This was a huge thrill as not only were we the only secondary choir performing; we also had the pleasure of performing with the Hunter Signing Choir. This group under the direction of their founder Donna Griffith also from Dungog were an amazing sight in their purple robes with Dungog High in red and black. With one full rehearsal we went on to perform and were very proud to be a part of this service performing; 'I Still Call Australia Home' by Peter Allen.



**DUNGOG HIGH STUDENTS PERFORMING WITH THE HUNTER SIGNING  
CHOIR AT CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL**

## Our Teachers :

<b>PHYL DANVERS:</b> B(Mus)Ed / ATCL Teacher at Dungog High School Starstruck Choir Director since 1996. Director of the Callaghan Singers Newcastle University.	<b>LOUISE KNIGHT:</b> B(Mus)Ed General Nursing (Registered Nurse) Teacher Dungog High School Accompanist and Vocal group director. Music therapist.	<b>DONNA GRIFFITH:</b> B.(Education) / Dip Teaching (Hearing) Previously a teacher Clarence Town Public School. Presently Itinerant teacher of the deaf. Director of the Hunter Signing Choir and Sydney Schools Spectacular signing choir.
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**SEPTEMBER:** As the Music and Drama students finalise their preparations for the Higher School Certificate practical examinations which take place in September, we present our annual **SHOWCASE** where students can perform for their parents, friends and the local community. This year we saw many fine acts and performances and this is a good indicator to students that it is time to 'perfect' their work and also gives them some extra experience in performing for an audience.

The Higher School Certificate practical examinations in music took place in our new music room which proved to be a great venue.

**OCTOBER:** The **HUNTER MUSIC FESTIVAL** took place in October this year and Rachel Salmon represented Dungog High School performing an original song 'The Dream' which was very well received by the audience.

**NOVEMBER:** Has everyone wondering where the year has gone and it still moves along for our musicians who have formal assemblies, presentation days and Carols by Candlelight still to come.



It is also a time thank all of our amazing students who give up their own time at lunch and recesses to rehearse for performances. We are very lucky at Dungog High to have such a talented and reliable group and we are always keen to add to that group if other students wish to be included...just come along and see us.

Finally we wish you all a Merry Christmas and a restful holiday break....  
well deserved.

Best wishes from Mrs Danvers and Mrs Knight