



IBDP Debut – Making Music the MES Cairo Way!

Our

goal is to continually adapt the HRCF Programme to meet the needs of our different student groups; with this in mind it was with great interest that I had the first discussion with Ms Sheehan (our new IBDP Coordinator) about the needs of our IBDP students.



It has always been a bit of a challenge for them to meet the Creativity requirements of the Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS) element of the Diploma, so this year we are trying to incorporate something into the HRCF Programme to clock up some of those Creativity hours. Ms Sheehan being an established member of the Staff Choir meant it could only be one thing: yes, all of DP11 and 12 were going to be making their choral debut during Period Four on the 30th September 2015.

I don't think excited was the word I would have used to describe their initial reaction to the news, if anything the word dread would have come to mind. I don't think many of the students had really sung before, other than the usual in the privacy of their own bedroom and so they were understandably nervous about the whole thing.

The bell went, the lesson was on, and all of our Diploma students were assembled in Mr Tomlin's music room ready to begin. Now, Mr Tomlin is a musical force to be reckoned with and even though I only popped in to get some photographs and observe how the students were coping for a short while, I ended up joining in as well! I might add, not just by Mr Tomlin, but by some of my DP12 students. My only experience of singing prior to this was my own debut with the Staff Choir at last year's Graduation and the flashmob the staff did of 'One Day More' from Les Miserables before the students returned. I could empathise completely with the students – I found the experience enjoyable but terrifying – being in a classroom instead of on a stage definitely had some advantages.

So we set to it – what better way to start than with the Egyptian National Anthem. I must admit, the pronunciation of the 3, 5 and 7 numbers thrown into a word completely flummoxed me! I am still not certain I got it, but I gave it a go. Mr Tomlin worked up quite a sweat, working his magic on the still nervous students. They started all together, just where they had sat when they entered the room. Their homeroom teachers were with them every step of the way, literally! Mr Bullough was placed in the Bass section of the boys and Ms Creak, Ms McTigue, Ms Sheehan and myself were in the Soprano section (this came as a bit of a shock to me as Mr Tomlin had me in the alto section of the staff choir). I can safely say we all learned something that Wednesday afternoon – I now know what a 'head voice' is, as does everybody who attended; we all also know how to 'sing like a man'!

Mr Todd popped in from time to time, but due to his own commitments he wasn't able to stay for long on each visit, however he made some encouraging gestures and facial expressions – which I know means we were on the right track.

The students had all relaxed by the end of their 'singing lesson' and there were smiles all round. The majority said they had enjoyed it and learnt something new, and they would be happy to develop their experience and have more singing lessons.

We recorded the final two versions of the anthem and when Mr Tomlin and myself were back in the office I played them for him. He was very impressed with what the students had achieved in a very, very short space of time.

Well, perhaps we'll let all concerned catch their breath and relax for a little longer before putting them back into the pressure cooker that is a condensed one hour lesson of vocal challenges.

Then again, perhaps not! The formal debut for the DP Choir was to sing the Egyptian National Anthem at an assembly for our younger students. You could see the nerves, the tension was palpable - however, the DP students pulled it off with aplomb and were rewarded with a thunderous round of applause from the audience. Well done DP11 and 12! Here are some of their thoughts on the experience.

"Personally it was a very interesting experience, at first I was a little uncomfortable singing but it felt better being in a group and as we began learning how to sing properly and sounded better. I was amazed with the result, the discomfort returned when we were told we'd





be performing on stage but with the support of the group and our teachers it was honestly a real confidence boost and I would most definitely like to continue with it for the experience. It's fun and is helping us all with our confidence, not to mention our singing skills". **Kenzy McKay (DP11)**

"The journey between hating and loving the singing was extraordinary, it has helped me a lot to believe that anything is possible." **Abdullah Kilaney (DP12)**

"Never in a million years did DP12 expect to participate in choir. We are glad we did, it has grouped DP11 and 12 together, making it a special activity just for us." **Yasmine El Shaer and Iman Saleh (DP12)**



"I've always loved singing in front of a crowd and doing it with my IB family just makes it a million times better." **Hamzah Abdel-Majid (DP12)**

"During my experience of IB Choir, I learnt that the key to reaching the maximum output is to collaboratively work with others. This process taught me how to overcome my weaknesses by channeling strengths from my classmates as a whole". **Farah Gouda (DP12)**

"IB choir helps me push boundaries. Singing in front of a room filled with people, although intimidating is an excellent experience that is increasing my confidence levels."

Mahum Asif (DP12)

"Singing in front of an audience as part of a choir is something I never imagined doing before.

Surprisingly, I really enjoy the sessions and I really look forward to them. Great CAS experiences always push us out of our comfort zones, making us do things we never imagined we could do." **Nour Bahaa (DP12)**

Ms M Ingham – HRCF Coordinator

10 Out of 10 for the IB Diploma Programme at MES Cairo

It is a very special year for our IB Diploma Programme at MES Cairo as it is our tenth year, and one which will culminate in what we are sure will be a very positive 2nd 5-year evaluation by the International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO). Our results continue to be significantly above the world averages and we are extremely proud of the quality of the Diploma Programme that we offer here at MES Cairo. Several of our DP12 students have already been offered places at top twenty universities in the UK. The future looks bright for all of our Seniors, and we wish them all the very best of luck in their remaining applications to universities in the UK, USA, Canada and Egypt.

The students have had an exciting, busy term filled with rich learning experiences across the subject disciplines and have enjoyed developing their thinking skills in Theory of Knowledge classes. DP12 students have been finalising their 4000 word Extended Essays while DP11 are starting to learn all about this crucial element of the Diploma. Each DP student has been building up his or her CAS portfolio based on a wide variety of Creativity, Activity and Service experiences. We hope you enjoyed reading about the IBDP's fantastic journey to Aswan and about the new creative challenge they so boldly undertook with the launch of the IBDP Choir. The IB Organisation's Mission Statement clearly emphasises the aim of educating young people to be the world's future leaders and peacemakers and we hope you got a chance to hear our DP students in their performance of the apt, well-known peace canon, *Dona Nobis Pacem* (Give us Peace) at the MES Cairo Seasonal Concert. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr Tomlin, on behalf of the IB Section, for working so effectively with the DP Choir.

We would like to thank all those who attended our recent Open Day in November. We welcomed parents of children as young as four years old, and enjoyed giving our visitors an insight into the IB Diploma Programme and what exactly it means to be an IBDP student. We will be telling you more about our Open Day and sharing the photos in our DP News section of the next MESSenger.

The MES Cairo Diploma Programme is growing and we are currently considering applications from highly enthusiastic students in Year and Grade Ten.

Joining the IBDP is to join a prestigious community of lifelong learners, both students and teachers. Being an IBDP student is a lifestyle, and our students and teachers enjoy the community spirit that this lifestyle engenders. IB Diploma Programme alumni around the world report that the IB has profound, long-lasting effects on their lives. It is an exciting pathway and one which requires much commitment, for as IB students all know, hard work brings about the very best rewards.

We wish the MES Cairo family a restful and peaceful holiday.

Ms S Sheehan – Assistant Head, IBDP Coordinator



Creative learning in History



Business Management is clearly a lot of fun!



DP11 enjoying a Science lesson



DP12 English - Beckett seminar with a special visit from Theatre specialist, Mr Todd