

# Music news

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## Music Ensembles at Meriden

Joining a music ensemble offers a range of research-supported advantages that stem directly from the act of making music with others. Studies in music cognition show that ensemble playing strengthens rhythmic precision, pitch discrimination, and auditory–motor integration because musicians must constantly adjust to the collective sound. Neuroscientists have found that synchronising with other performers activates brain regions tied to empathy and social cohesion, which helps explain why ensemble musicians often report a strong sense of connection and shared purpose.

We are so pleased to have seen a record number of video auditions this year. We have now placed each student into the appropriate ensemble according to their technical ability. All ensembles have now commenced, and students have been contacted via email regarding their ensemble placements. If any student submitted a video audition but has not received an email, please speak to a member of the music staff on Level 1 of the GCMD, or email [performingarts@meriden.nsw.edu.au](mailto:performingarts@meriden.nsw.edu.au).

Please note that ensembles such as the Symphony Orchestra and Sinfonia have limited brass and woodwind positions. If you are still interested in joining an ensemble, we encourage you to contact the music staff via the email address above.

We look forward to seeing all students at rehearsals.

## Amadeus and Holiday news

### AYO National Music Camp

In January, Old Girls, Annabelle Desmond, Class of 2025, and Amayah Ryan, Class of 2022, and Year 11 student, Tina Dong, attended the Australian Youth Orchestra National Music Camp. This wonderful viola team was selected along with 200 musicians from all over Australia out of over 700 applicants.

National Music Camp is a two-week intensive program that focuses on honing each musician's orchestral skills and understanding of large-scale works, smaller contemporary or chamber works, and the potential pathways for a future career in music.

The girls were able to engage in high-performing orchestras, join smaller chamber groups, and participate in professional development sessions led by AYO staff and conductors who shared insights into their professional journeys. They performed newly composed orchestral repertoire and, along with Stravinsky's *Petrushka*, Ravel's *Daphnis and Chloé Suite*, and Borodin's *Polovtsian Dances*.

Tina has also recently been selected for the SYO Flagship Orchestra for 2026.



Tina Dong, Amayah Ryan and Annabelle Desmond

## Singapore International Young Pianist Competition

Year 10 student, Symphony Shi, recently travelled to Singapore after being selected for the final of the 2026 Singapore International Young Pianist Competition. Symphony was awarded an Honourable Mention in the Open Class Category B final, where she performed Bach's *Prelude and Fugue in C sharp minor BWV 873*, *Piano Sonata No. 2* by Scriabin, and Messiaen's *Etudes de rythme: No. 1. Ile de feu 1* (Island of Fire).



Symphony Shi performing in Singapore

## International Béla Bartók Piano Competition



Emma Rose Koeswandy

Year 10 student Emma Rose Koeswandy recently returned to Europe after attending the Music Tour to participate in the International Béla Bartók Piano Competition. Emma was awarded First Prize in Category Group 3, along with special recognition from the adjudicators for the "Best Interpretation of Béla Bartók". The competition took place at the Johann Joseph Fux Conservatory in Graz, Austria.

## 2026 Verbier Festival

Year 8 student Alice Wu recently attended the renowned Swiss Verbier Festival, which was held for the first time in Shenzhen, China. The program included various concerts, masterclasses, and unique encounters with world-renowned artists such as Martha Argerich, Joshua Bell, Mischa Maisky, Janine Jansen, and Mikhail Pletnev.



Alice Wu

## Macau International Art Open Competition



Sarah Lin

Gold Award – Piano Youth A Class

Sarah Lin, Year 10, recently competed in the 12th Macau International Art Open Competition, and was awarded a Gold Award for her piano performance in the Youth A Class event.

**Ms Jodie Spooner-Ryan**  
Dean of Music (P-12)