

Our visits to schools are all about engaging with GCSE music students so they can experience the many aspects of organ and its wide variety of music. Many of these students only have a vague idea about the organ but are interested to find out more. We run our sessions in two back to back lessons. We start by playing short extracts of well-known music with the spectacular sound of our digital organ. It only takes a minute to grab the students' attention.

After briefly introducing our team, Martin gives short presentation to show some history and development of the organ over hundreds



Geoff explains about how organs are recorded

of years. We have real pipes to demonstrate the physical shapes and sizes and types of sound. If we have students from the Music Technology topic, Geoff shows how pipe organs are recorded and how the sound is used in our digital computer organ. This is followed by a demonstration on our organ. Rob shows how sounds are selected and combined, the use of multiple keyboards and the pedal board, all illustrated with short extracts from well known pieces - classical through to current chart music.



Martin demonstrates a pipe



Rob demonstrating at the console

In the second lesson, all the students are invited to play. After the usual initial 'group' shyness, each student is assisted to play at their level. We encourage them to use both keyboards, help them with a range of sounds and maybe some simple pedalling. The students have a wide range of keyboard skills but they all enjoy the spectacular 'cathedral style' sound of the organ. We often find students queuing up again for another go!

Occasionally, a student wants to follow up with a visit to a pipe organ or in some cases, organ lessons. All these options are available and straightforward to arrange via the school and parents.



A student plays in the workshop

At Calthorpe Park School in Fleet, Hampshire the demo/workshop is usually followed by an evening concert a week later. The Head of Music invites four students each to play a short piece on our digital organ. We help to set appropriate registration. There is little sign of nerves from the performers. In some programmes, we will play the organ with other instruments played by students e.g. trumpets, flute and other ensembles. It is much appreciated by the audience.