

My first school report from Mr Cork said, "Shows some interest 50/100". This was in 1967. At that time I had been playing classical guitar for 3 years, and was entering Music festivals with some success. This had the effect of inspiring me, when I too became a music teacher, to always ask my year 7's what they had done in music before entering secondary school. During the interregnum between his leaving and the arrival of Dorothy Sanderson, we started all kinds of music groups, instrument ensembles and such, with no input from qualified staff. Perhaps he had opened our eyes to the possibilities. I remember singing in the choir, and loving The Shepherds Farewell, and In Dulce Jubilo, and dreading the bit where it expands from 4 soloists to what looked like 16 parts to an 11 year old. Fortunately, my classical guitar studies had given me some skill at music reading. Keyboard skills were imparted by finding notes on a cardboard representation of an octave or so (so different from the suite of 16 Casios I was blessed with at Eastbrook many years later!)

I suppose I owe the Christmas Musicals I used to write every year to his adaption of The Mikado (Not Only The Mikado, which had somebody walking on with a pot plant intoning "Miss Jones" for some reason.) My Mother used to get very cross with the staging, which had the choir on the stage, and dancers on the floor. Anyone not in the front row could only glimpse the occasional arm waving as these talented performers did their thing. We, in the choir had a much better view. (This was addressed by Dorothy Sanderson, who staged Operas, with costumes, lighting and orchestra.) Despite all my moans, he didn't put me off music, and I have now just retired, having taught for 50 years!

John Clarke