

Notes from NESMS

North East of Scotland Music School Newsletter

Spring 2020

What was shaping up to be a busy spring term here at NESMS suddenly became very quiet with the necessary pandemic lockdown measures. Thankfully NESMS has managed to adapt to allow us to tick along, albeit in a reduced capacity, with online lessons being offered by most of our tutors. During this unsettled time of separation we wish to stay as connected as we can with the NESMS community by sharing your musical achievements with future exam, audition or competition success, either online or off-line!

Congratulations to the following NESMS students in:

Trinity and ABRSM exams

- Robert Kennedy, Merit, ARSM Diploma Piano, ABRSM
- Laura Ritchie, Distinction, Grade 7 Oboe, ABRSM
- Hannah Magill, Distinction, Grade 6 Oboe, ABRSM
- Olwenn Stewart, Distinction, Grade 6 Piano, ABRSM
- Mark Simpson, Pass, Grade 5 Double Bass, ABRSM

Good luck to anyone who had their exams postponed from March and June. We know it's frustrating but keep up the practise and remember to let us know how you get on whenever you find out. A full list of NESMS student's exam achievements are listed [here](#) and are continually updated on our website.

The Aberdeen & N. E of Scotland Music Festival 2020

Please also let us know how you get on during the Plan B Aberdeen Music Festival taking place online via video submissions; a first in the Festival's long history. Many of the classes that were advertised in the 2020 syllabus are still due to run. Good luck to all those taking part.

Audition Congratulations

- Johnny Low, Trumpet – Royal Welsh College of Music
- Beth Nicolson, Soprano – 6th year Musical Theatre course at Knightswood School (The Dance School of Scotland)
- Bethany Clarke and Luca Roderick Johnson were accepted to audition for the competitive Beatrice Huntington Cello Award.

NESMS office

After two years, Assistant Manager Sophie Lewis will be leaving us, and Aberdeen, at the end of May to prepare for a September move to Colorado USA for her Masters at Denver University. I'm sure you'll join me in saying good luck and we'll miss you at NESMS!

NESMS Scholarship Auditions postponed

At this time of year we would be busy announcing the results of the Scholarship auditions to applicants and to sponsors, however we decided to postpone these until a later date. We are hopeful that they will be as close to the start of the new academic term as we can safely make them with social distancing rules in place.

What's been going on at NESMS:

Summer Singing School

Summer 2019 saw NESMS launch a pilot Summer Singing School. Held at 21 Huntly Street during the last week of July, the 12 students worked daily with Graeme Lauren, Gillian Jack and Joseph Long to prepare solo and ensemble songs for an end of week recital for friends and family. From Mozart to Sondheim the programme charted the full history of Musical Theatre.

New tutors

At the start of the academic year we were delighted to announce Gillian Jack as our newest singing tutor at NESMS. Her experience with younger singing voices at various National Youth Choir of Scotland (NYCOS) choirs has proved invaluable to her students.

NESMS also introduced a new regular Saxophone tutor, a new instrument for NESMS, with the addition of Catherine Evison. A masterclass at the end of November kicked off Catherine's teaching with us before regular lessons started.

Jazz workshops

Workshops held in November and March, led by Joseph Long and Ian Milne, continued the successful and interesting series at NESMS, where people can learn and hear the intricacies of smooth jazz.

NESMS Cowdray Hall Lunchtime Concert

November saw the highly anticipated re-opening of Aberdeen Art Gallery and the ever popular Cowdray Hall Lunchbreak series returning to the redeveloped Cowdray Hall. NESMS students Aaron Magill (piano), Emily Gow (flute) and Stephanie Walker (soprano) performed a wonderful programme of music at the Thursday 12th March concert; the last Lunchtime Concert before the lockdown measures were introduced. Read the full review [here](#)

NESMS moves online

During lockdown, most of our tutors have been able to continue teaching their pupils using the NESMS Zoom room option. Negotiating online lessons was a steep learning curve for everyone at the beginning and which has continued to evolve to ultimately provide the best continuity of musical tuition in these challenging times.

For those musicians using Zoom, please see this YouTube video [here](#) on enabling the Original Sound function when using a laptop or computer and continue to ensure you are using the most recently updated version of the app.

Murray McLachlan Piano Masterclass

Using our Zoom room, NESMS had its first ever online public masterclass on April 15th when our Vice-President, and Head of Keyboard at Chethams School, Murray McLachlan gave a piano masterclass. Though this event had some teething problems being the first of its kind, Murray still provided some expert advice to those talented piano students taking part.

NESMS Patron Eileen Croxford

It is with deep regret that we inform you of the death of one of our Patrons, Eileen Croxford, on Wednesday 8th April. Ms Croxford was appointed by Dorothy Hatley (NESMS founder) as our first cello tutor and became one of our first Patrons upon her retirement from NESMS cello teaching in the late 1990's. Working alongside her husband, David Parkhouse (NESMS piano tutor) and Hugh Bean (NESMS violin tutor), Ms Croxford was a member of the celebrated London Music Group (formerly the Boise Trio). A fuller appreciation of the Boise Trio can be found in [this](#) newspaper article from 1987 which is framed and now hangs in Studio 4 in NESMS.



The following notice appeared in the Telegraph on Tuesday 14th April:

"Parkhouse - Eileen (nee Croxford) FRCM died peacefully on 8th April 2020, aged 96. Beloved wife of the late David Parkhouse, mother of Nicholas and Richard and much loved grandmother to six. Widely admired cellist with an international reputation both as a performer and teacher, and energetic supporter of young chamber musicians. A celebration of Eileen's life will be held later in the year, when friends and family are able to gather. Donations to the Parkhouse Award: music@gbz.demon.uk." Our thoughts are with her family at this time

Coming soon to NESMS:

Unfortunately we don't foresee face-to-face teaching resuming at 21 Huntly Street until the new academic term at which time there will be more clarity on how we will tackle social distancing policies within the building. These policies may result in reducing the number of tutors being able to teach simultaneously in the building and therefore will affect the regular visitations of our tutors. We ask for your patience and understanding during such an unpredictable time.

Summer Singing School 2020

After such a successful pilot scheme last year we were hoping to run the Summer Singing School with renowned singer Linda Ormiston joining the returning vocal tutors Graeme Lauren and Gillian Jack. Unfortunately, like so many summer music courses, we have had to postpone this event in its current format until 2021.

Jazz Ensemble

An exciting new ensemble focusing on the practicalities of Jazz through performance based learning, led by Neil Birse, will be open to all interested instrumentalists. Details about the first meeting are to be announced in the new term.

Programme notes class

NESMS flute tutor Catherine O'Rourke will be offering students the opportunity to learn how to compile and write programme notes for use in recitals and exams in a series of small seminars and one-to-one tutorials. Further details are to follow.

Exam practice recitals

A new performance opportunity will be available to those students wishing to have either a "dry-run" of their exam programme or to those who have recently sat an exam wishing to perform their exam programme to an invited audience. This opportunity is aimed towards those working on longer programmes required for higher grades 7 and 8, diploma and final year recitals. Any interested students should be in touch with the NESMS office to discuss dates for availability of the main studio at NESMS.

Keynotes Lunch

Save the date for this year's Keynotes Lunch to be held at the Marcliffe Hotel on Sunday 17th November. With fantastic live music, a delicious meal and exciting raffle prizes to be won, we hope that this unmissable highlight of the NESMS calendar will continue to go ahead as planned.

Social Media

A reminder that it has never been easier to keep up-to-date with all the latest NESMS news and weekly competitions with our [website](#), Facebook page and Instagram account (NESMS_abdn).

I hope everyone continues to keep safe during this difficult time; our thoughts go out to those whose families have been affected directly with COVID-19. Hopefully some sort of new normality can resume after the summer holidays, until then, stay safe and keep in touch.

Colin Brockie
Manager