

keynotes N

The Newsletter

of the North East of Scotland Music School

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New Quartet for School



The new NESMS cello quartet.

Pictured left to right are Janna Stammeijer, Iain Hall, Megan Rolf and Lucy Neil

A new cello quartet has been formed by the School to supplement the NESMS string quartet that was formed some time ago.

The new quartet of Iain Hall, Megan Rolf, Janna Stammeijer and Lucy Neil was formed at the suggestion of cello tutor, James Halsey. "We have four exceptionally good young cellists in the School at the moment and I thought it would be good experience for them to form a quartet and meet NESMS's requirement for a small chamber group that could be the school's public face," explains James.

He continues by saying: "Although all four play in other chamber groups, playing with three other cellists has its own challenges and is thus a valuable

part of their musical education."

Lucy Neil agrees: "We're certainly used to playing with other people and different instruments but playing together is very different. You have to match the tone and pitch in a way that you don't need to think about when playing with other instruments so you have to think about what you're doing more."

Iain Hall agrees and reports that the quartet have had two rehearsals so far. "At the moment we're playing lots of stuff to see what works and what we like," he says.

Iain also plays the recorder and was, in fact, the winner of the instrumental section of this year's Aberdeen Music Festival. Megan, too, did well at the Festival, winning the cello section.

The quartet's first public outing will be to play at the *Keynotes* Auction Lunch in November.

The three girls in the quartet already have their Grade 8 Distinction – Megan took hers only three years and two months after taking up the instrument – while Iain will be sitting his Grade 8 in the autumn.

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About the School

Providing the highest standards of advanced tuition for promising musicians

The School provides a centre where young people of outstanding musical promise can obtain tuition which is not available within their existing framework of study. Any musically talented child, student, teacher or lay person living in Scotland may apply for an audition to the School.

TUITION

Internationally acclaimed professors and teachers are brought to Aberdeen on a regular basis from all over the British Isles.

COURSES

The School offers one-to-one teaching together with occasional workshops and masterclasses. There is a close relationship with the University of Aberdeen, through the Director of Music, and also with Aberdeen City Music School in Dyce.

FINANCE

Finance is generously provided by trusts, commercial organisations and individuals. Continued support is essential in order to maintain the high quality of the teaching programme. The Administrator will be pleased to assist with all enquiries about donations, sponsorship or scholarships.

FEES & SCHOLARSHIPS

Students pay their own fees, although scholarships are available and are applied for annually. Any award is made on a balance of musical potential and financial need.

DOROTHY HATELY

Dorothy founded NESMS in 1975 with the support and encouragement of Lady Aberdeen. Thanks to Dorothy's dogged determination over the years, the School has greatly increased its teaching disciplines, tutors and pupils. Sadly, Dorothy died in 1996, before she could see the School in its own premises in Huntly Street. However, we strive to maintain the high standards she set and intend to take the School from strength to strength.

NORTH EAST OF SCOTLAND MUSIC SCHOOL

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Lisa's coming home!

Opera star and NESMS patron (and alumna), Lisa Milne, is returning to Aberdeen to live and is hoping that during 2011 she can begin to teach at the school.

"I have previously undertaken masterclasses at NESMS and also did one at the recent Aberdeen International Youth Festival and they were great fun," Lisa says. "I thoroughly enjoyed the whole process and can definitely see myself moving towards doing more teaching over the next year or two."

Lisa's career has included leading roles with the Metropolitan Opera, New York, Glyndebourne Festival, English National Opera, Welsh National Opera (where she is currently singing the role of Leonore in *Fidelio*) and Scottish Opera.



Image Bill Cooper

Lisa Milne singing Leonore in Fidelio

appeared at the Aix-en-Provence and City of London Festivals, the Usher Hall in Edinburgh, the Oxford Lieder Festival, the Palais des Beaux Arts in Brussels and at the Schumannfest in Düsseldorf. She is a regular guest at London's Wigmore Hall.

"I really enjoy concert work," Lisa told Keynotes. "You work with such fabulous conductors and have the opportunity to sing such a variety of wonderful music. But I also love the stage so I expect to be doing more of that."

"What will be different is that I'll be based in Aberdeen. As a true Aberdonian quine I felt it was time I came home!"

Lisa's news was warmly welcomed by Joan Thomas, NESMS's administrator. "Lisa has always been enthusiastic about what we do here and as our newest patron has been a great supporter. If she were able to fit in even a few teaching sessions at the school that would be fantastic news; with her experience she would be a tremendous asset to the teaching staff."



Image Brian Tarr

Lisa Milne during rehearsals at Welsh National Opera, where she sang the role of Leonore in Fidelio

But in the past few years she has concentrated on concert performances and her recent engagements have included appearances with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Berlin Philharmonic with Simon Rattle, the Rotterdam Philharmonic, the CBSO and the Budapest Festival Orchestra. Forthcoming engagements include debuts with the Seoul, Vienna and New York Philharmonic Orchestras. A renowned recitalist, she has

Sense of balance needed at recorder open day

by Alan Cooper

The Recorder Open Day in June, led by Professor Ian Wilson of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, was a significant success although his advice to one of the students to 'play on one leg' may have not been expected.

A noted teacher and performer and founding member of the UK's most prestigious recorder quartet, the Flautadors, Ian Wilson is a native of Aberdeen and a former NESMS student.

There appears to be a resurgence of interest in the recorder and the players who turned up at the School to take advantage of Ian Wilson's experience and penetrating musical intelligence were mainly young enthusiasts.

Sammartini's Sonata in G for Treble Recorder was the choice of Iain Hall (14) who was first to

perform in the individual masterclass session.

Professor Wilson began by asking Iain what he knew about the composer. He did this with all the participants, pointing out that a composer's background can have a crucial bearing on the way in which his music is to be performed.

There was a fine performance of Lennox Berkeley's Sonatina for treble recorder given by Dimitri Olayzola (16). Before that however, the problem of playing the several F sharps that occur in that piece was dealt with. Dimitri's solution

TUTOR PROFILE – ALISON MCDONALD

Story and picture by Neil Jones

In the last issue of *Keynotes* we profiled one of the NESMS singing tutors, Ruth Black. In this issue we interview the ‘other half’ of the duo who make up what is known at the School as ‘The Girls’.

Like Ruth, Alison McDonald is a native of Angus and still lives in the county, has taught at NESMS for more years than she cares to remember, is a farmer’s wife and has successfully managed both a singing career and bringing up a family. In fact, Ruth and Alison live so close together they car share on their twice-a-month visits to the School.

Alison was brought up in Arbroath where she attended Arbroath High School before going to Aberdeen College of Education (now Northern College) to train as a primary school teacher. However, her interest in singing – sparked whilst she was at school – continued and she took lessons with Elizabeth Izaat. However, when Elizabeth moved to Glasgow to teach at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama she suggested to Alison that she should go to NESMS as a student, which she did, studying initially with Merryl Jenkins and then, later, Raimund Herincx.

Having completed her teacher training Alison then became a full-time primary school teacher before marrying Ruth’s cousin, Angus, and starting a family. “We had four boys so for 11 years I was out of teaching,” Alison recalls, “although I was developing my singing career with Arbroath Operatic Society and, later, Tayside Opera – but increasingly professionally.”

And although her profes-



sional career has concentrated on recital work her first love is opera: “Singing and acting in opera has been the most fulfilling experience of my singing career,” she says. She made her oratorio debut at the Aberdeen International Youth Festival in 1983 when she stepped in to sing Carl Orff’s *Carmina Burana*. “They fired another soprano who was, shall we say, being untowardly diva like!” Alison recalls. “And they needed someone who can reliably hit a top ‘D’ (Alison also recalls that a young, newly discovered, virtuoso was on the programme playing the Brahms Violin Concerto. His name? Nigel Kennedy.)”

Alison’s debut with Tayside Opera was in 1986 when she sang the title role in *Aida*. Since then she has appeared frequently in leading soprano roles including Susannah, *Marriage of Figaro*, Queen of the Night and Pamina in *Die*

Zauberflöte, Lucia in *Lucia di Lammermoor* and Violetta in *La Traviata*.

Eventually she returned to teaching but mixed singing engagements with supply teaching. In the late 1980’s Alison was persuaded to join NESMS as a tutor. “I find the teaching of singing very rewarding and enjoy passing on sound vocal technique, which I feel I missed out on in the early stages of my singing. I’m indebted to Raimund Herincx for his inspirational teaching and to the late Dorothy Hatley for giving me the opportunity to do something which I enjoy so much.”

Thankfully, Alison has no intention of giving up her teaching role any time soon. “I love doing it too much,” she exclaims.

Alison’s 2011 engagements include Ruthven Festival of Music in rural Perthshire at which she has sung annually as guest soprano for 21 years.

was to play the piece sitting down so that the end hole of the recorder could be easily and unobtrusively jammed down on the leg.

However, Ian Wilson felt that this playing position tended to cramp the style of the solo player leading to a loss of expression in performance. He recommended to all the students that they learn to raise the knee while standing and to mark the score with a highlighter pen so that the player is given fair warning to adjust his balance in good time! However, he did admit

that some of his students still fall over when trying this.

Three very different ensembles took part in the afternoon session and then the Recorder Open Day reached a glorious conclusion with Ian Wilson conducting a fourteen strong recorder orchestra in Brian Bonsor’s excellent arrangement of Ravel’s Pavane pour une enfante défunte. All the recorder players present, from the youngest to the oldest, took part in this most enjoyable performance.

Tutors at the School

as at September 2010

STRINGS

Violin	Gillian Findlay
Viola	Michael Beeston
Cello	James Halsey
Double Bass	David Inglis

WOODWIND

Flute	David Nicholson
Flute	Catherine O’Rourke
Oboe	Joe Houghton
Clarinet	Alison Waller
Bassoon	Lesley Wilson
Recorder	Ian Wilson

BRASS

Trumpet	John Gracie
Horn	Lizzie Davis

PIANO

Nigel Clayton	Joseph Long
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SCOTTISH FIDDLE

Paul Anderson

SINGING

Raimund Herincx	Alan Watt
Ruth Black	Alison McDonald
Jean Webster	

STAGECRAFT & PERFORMANCE

Donald Maxwell

ORGAN

Dr Roger B. Williams
Donald Hawksworth

Forthcoming events

CHRIS BAXTER PIANO CONCERT
On Sunday 3rd October 2010 at 2.30pm in Craigiebuckler Church, pianist Chris Baxter will give a recital of music by Beethoven and Mussorgsky. Tickets at £5 each will be available at the door and this will include refreshments.

COWDRAY HALL LUNCHBREAK CONCERT
On Thursday 7th October, at 12.45pm in the Cowdray Hall, the NESMS String Quartet will perform a quartet by Haydn. Two of the Quartet members, Iain Hall and Dmitri Olayzola will also give solo performances: Iain will play recorder and Dmitri will sing. This is a very popular concert series, so do come early to be sure of a seat!

THE FRIENDS OF NESMS COFFEE MORNING
The annual Friends Coffee Morning will take place on Saturday 30th October, 10am – 12 noon, at the school, with the usual stalls, and a new NESMS Christmas Card. We look forward to seeing you then, and if you would like to contribute items for the Coffee Morning, please be in touch with the office.

SOUND CONTEMPORARY MUSIC FESTIVAL
Our annual date with Donald Hawksworth! This will be on Sunday 14th November at 2.30pm in the school, and the title of this year’s programme is “May I have the Pleasure”. Always a popular event, booking is essential! Afternoon tea will be served.

Fellowship for Bobbie

One of NESMS longest serving accompanists, Bobbie Howie, has been awarded a NESMS Honorary Fellowship, becoming only the fourth person to do so, joining Marion Fordyce, Jean Ward and Mary Wetherick.

Bobbie is an Aberdonian and worked in the old College of Education at Hilton for many years, firstly as a lecturer and then as head of instrumental teaching. Latterly, he taught at Aberdeen City Music School and Aberdeen University.

"He was always in great demand as an accompanist and as a piano teacher and was for many years the organist and choir master at Holburn West Church," recalls Joan Thomas, the NESMS administrator.

Roger Williams, chair of NESMS's Music Committee, says: "Bobbie is one of nature's real gentlemen and is renowned nationally and

internationally as a superb and inspiring accompanist. He has had a long and fruitful association with NESMS as a tutor, a fellow performer and for many years as a member of the Music Committee.

"Whether working with students or colleagues he has always given superb support enabling a soloist to shine. Despite his expertise Bob has an endearing modesty which has enabled him to be a wonderful servant to music. For this he is widely admired and loved. NESMS was thrilled that he accepted an Honorary Fellowship for his long and distinguished service to music."

Peter Mitchell back as *Keynotes* Lunch Auctioneer

This year's *Keynotes* Auction Lunch will be held at the Marcliffe Hotel and Spa, Pitfodels, Aberdeen on Sunday 7 November 2010 with Peter Mitchell making a welcome return as auctioneer.

Among the auction lots and raffle prizes this year are a water-colour by local artist and NESMS parent, Anna Rolf. In addition, longtime Auction Lunch supporter, Malcolm Appleby, has once again provided a piece of individually designed jewellery whilst William Duncan, a piano pupil at the school but also an accomplished piper, is auctioning himself to play at a special occasion to



be chosen by the successful bidder.

Another lot is a two night dinner, bed and breakfast package at any of the 26 hotels in the Malmaison/Hotel du Vin group.

"The Auction Lunch has become an important fixture on our fund raising calendar," says John Ritchie, chairman of the lunch's organising committee. "It usually raises more – sometimes far more – money than the costs for *Keynotes* but in the current economic climate fundraising is not without its challenges!

"But we anticipate that the tried and tested formula for the event, including an excellent musical interlude with the newly formed NESMS Cello Quartet, will ensure an entertaining, fun and financially beneficial day."

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