

## Clean up act by NESMS students!

A major clean-up act by NESMS students has taken place in two prestigious local music competitions. In the University of Aberdeen's annual Ogston Music Prize, NESMS flute student, Kay Ritchie, took first place.

The prize was originated and is supported by Professor Derek Ogston, a former Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and later Senior Vice-Principal of the University who has a strong interest in music.

Judges for the competition were Richard Chester, former principal flute of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and Director of the National Youth Orchestras of Scotland; Lt. Col. (ret'd) Bob Owen, conductor of the University Wind Band and a former Director of Music, Scots Guards and Senior Director of Music of the Household Division; and Dr. David Smith, Acting Head of Music, University of Aberdeen.

Kay performed a three movement Sonata in F major by Benda and the first movement (allegretto grazioso) of the Sonatina for Flute and Piano by Eldin Burton, accompanied by Harry Williamson.

Kay said she was delighted to be selected as one of the finalists – the competition is open to any student attending the University – and was particularly pleased to win. (Kay has a psychology degree from the University and is currently studying for a PhD in the same subject.)

Despite her win – and the performances it brings at the



*Ishoka Aberdeen Young Musician of the Year Joe Boyd with runner-up, Elizabeth Marr.*

Aberdeen International Youth Festival – Kay is adamant that music will always be a serious hobby rather than a profession. “There was a time when I was at school when I seriously thought about taking up music professionally but my interest in psychology overrode it.”

Kay reckons that winning the prize has been the highlight of her musical life to date although a close second was an impromptu folk music jamming session in a club in Houston, Texas, as part of a trip to NASA. “That’s the thing with the flute,” she says, “it’s maybe not quite pocket size but it is small enough to carry around most of the time and it opens all sorts of doors and helps you meet all

sorts of people when you’re abroad!”

The second NESMS success story has been the Ishoka Aberdeen Young Musician of the Year competition where three of the five finalists were NESMS’s students!

Another NESMS flautist, Elizabeth Marr placed second while the winner was French horn player, Joe Boyd, who has been a student at the school for seven years.

Like Kay, Joe is also set on a non-musical career; he has just started at Heriot-Watt University to study chemical engineering. “Music will always be a big part of my life but I want to keep it as a hobby,” he says. As part of that plan he has

been awarded a music scholarship by Heriot-Watt to enable him to continue taking lessons. “I will also continue my lessons at NESMS,” he says. “My tutor there, Lizzie Davis, is just amazing!”

*“The flute opens all sorts of doors and helps you meet all sorts of people when you’re abroad.”*

**Kay Ritchie**

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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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# LADY ABERDEEN

(1913 — 2009)

The death was recently announced of June, Marchioness of Aberdeen and Temair, the Chairman and co-founder, with Dorothy Hately, of the North East of Scotland Music School.

June was one of the most important persons on the musical scene in the North East of Scotland. Trained at the Royal College of Music in London, she and her beloved husband, David, formed a remarkable musical organisation at Haddo House. The concerts of the Choral Society and later the Choral and Operatic Society numbered amongst its distinguished visitors a veritable roll-call of the leading British musicians of the last 50 years. The mix of local talent and international artists under June's baton produced astonishing results which became widely respected. As a newcomer to Aberdeen in the late 1970s, I recall June in her prime, very much leading the musical ensemble from the front with a relish that was impossible to ignore. The several performances of Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* in which I took part as a singer, were outstanding musically and very moving.

June was very concerned that women conductors should be given proper recognition and though her gestures were not always the most fluent, her powers of persuasion coupled with a superb flair ensured her many natural musical instincts bore ripe fruit. The large overall canvass of a work was what mattered and it was this grasp of the ebb and flow of particularly English works in which she demonstrated her mastery. Her repertoire was however broad, with performances of Bach and Handel, Mozart, Bizet, Verdi, Puccini, Finzi, Howells, Vaughan Williams and Britten firmly in her grasp.

In addition to superb international soloists such as Janet Baker, Peter Pears and Neil Mackie, there was a particularly distinguished



coterie of London-based players who travelled to Haddo on an annual basis to form the nucleus of the orchestra. Though many musicians of reputation and standing were frequently at Haddo, there was also a wonderfully all-embracing sense of egalitarianism about June's approach. The most celebrated artist and the enthusiastic local musician were treated with the same respect and were equally caught up in her music making. June was the sort of person to whom it was very difficult to say 'no' – you did so at your own peril!

The vision of founding NESMS was a piece of remarkable foresight. The many contacts which June had were activated in this new venture which was designed to enhance the sometimes limited teaching resources available on a local basis. Though much has changed in the City and Shire since those early days, and the standard of music provision is now quite different, the early vision of the School is still intact and the number of Aberdeen musicians now involved at the highest professional level nationally, is no small tribute to the value of the original concept.

Above and beyond all, however, what will be missed is the humanity and the warmth of June. Those of us who were lucky enough to have known her are glad that her recent sufferings due to ill health are now over. We shall, however, miss a remarkable, pioneering and inspiring musician but, above all, a magnificent personality to whose generosity we shall always be indebted.

(DR. ROGER B. WILLIAMS, MBE,  
CONVENER, MUSIC COMMITTEE, NESMS)

# THE NORTH EAST OF SCOTLAND MUSIC SCHOOL MUSIC AT MIDSUMMER

Glen Tanar Ballroom, itself a gloriously cinematic venue, lies at the heart of one of Deeside's most spectacularly beautiful estates. This was the lavish backdrop for Music at Midsummer starring three of the many fine musical talents that NESMS can offer. The young French horn virtuoso Joe Boyd set a formidable standard for the two other musicians to match with his performance of *Nocturno* by Franz Strauss (1822 – 1905) the father of Richard Strauss. The treacherous leaps it presents to a notoriously temperamental instrument, especially so in the quiet, laid-back introduction, were no problem for this young player.

Joe was back to close the first half of the performance with the final movement of a Mozart *Horn Concerto* which he played with a wonderfully relaxed sense of style. Joe also brought the official programme to a close with an equally accomplished performance of a *Romanza* and *Scherzo* for horn and piano by Jan Koetsier (1911–2006). Born in Amsterdam, Koetsier spent much of his musical life in Munich and specialised in music for brass. Here was a young player with a perfect mastery of his instrument and a mature understanding of the music.

Friday's concert was probably the last that will be given by Colin Brockie as a NESMS student. In the first half of the concert his two Mozart *Concert Arias* along with the aria from Verdi's opera *Don Carlos* demonstrated Colin's mastery of the growing power and projection in the lowest registers of his voice. His growing talent for colourful dramatic delivery was equally striking. In the second half of the concert he dedicated his first three songs to the memory of June Gordon, Lady Aberdeen.

Britten was just one of the twentieth century English composers who were close friends of June Gordon as was Vaughan Williams. Colin Brockie chose Britten's fine



*The ties have it! Pictured with their colourful neck gear at the Music at Midsummer concert at Glen Tannar are (left to right) Richard Bailey, Joe Boyd, Colin Brockie and Drew Tulloch.*

arrangement of *Down by the Salley Gardens* as the first part of his tribute. Here his beautifully transparent upper register was to the fore and this setting in which the piano part adds so much emotional commentary to the simple melody for voice gives me a chance to add my appreciation of the splendid contribution to the concert provided by our superb accompanist Drew Tulloch.

To follow Britten's folksong arrangement we heard two songs by Vaughan Williams,

*Silent noon* and *Love bade me welcome*. These were beautifully sung by Colin before he completed his solo contribution with Copland's setting of *At the River*, one of the *Old American Songs*.

Pianist Richard Bailey was our third performer and once again here was firm evidence of a young musician whose playing is progressing by leaps and bounds. His performance of Chopin's *Scherzo in b flat minor, Op 31* combined remarkable

*Continues on page 4*

## Auction Lunch

The *Keynotes* auction lunch, scheduled for 1st November 2009 at the Marcliffe Hotel and Spa in Aberdeen, will have a new auctioneer for the first time since it started in 2001.

Replacing auction lunch stalwart, Peter Mitchell, will be Aberdonian Doug Duthie who, in his own words: "Is a native of Aberdeen where he was educated to swimming certificate level!" He is well known around the city as a charity auctioneer and after-dinner speaker.

Gordon Mitchell, chair of the auction lunch committee, reports that there are a wide variety of interesting lots coming in. "We are very excited with our catalogue of lots which now includes one of Rosie Long's famous 3D papier-mâché cats, made from recycled materials. Rosie is the mother of pianist Joseph Long and her work is inspired by cats through which she explores colour, texture, character and movement with an added humorous quirk," Gordon says. "We will also have a framed piece of work donated by the artist Frank Boag and for the more adventurous, we have a one-hour trip for four people around the spectacular coast near Stonehaven on a 24ft rigid inflatable, courtesy of the Stonehaven Maritime Rescue Institute.

"These are in addition to the lot described in the last issue of *Keynotes* – the full day's exclusive use of the Balmoral Estate golf course. The nine-hole course is part of the Queen's Balmoral Estate and is only rarely available for corporate events.

"I'm confident that this year's event will be one of the best yet."

## Tutors at the School

as at September 2009

### 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

### BRASS

Trumpet	John Gracie
Horn	Lizzie Davis

### PIANO

Nigel Clayton	Joseph Long
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### SCOTTISH FIDDLE

Paul Anderson
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### SINGING

Raimund Herincx	Alan Watt
Ruth Black	Alison McDonald
	Jean Webster

### STAGECRAFT & PERFORMANCE

Donald Maxwell
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### ORGAN

Dr Roger B. Williams
Donald Hawksworth

## Forthcoming events

### CHRIS BAXTER PIANO CONCERT Sunday 20th September, at 2.30pm at NESMS

A delightful afternoon of piano music, with afternoon tea to follow.

Tickets are £6 each and Chris has offered to donate the proceeds to the school's Scholarship Fund. This will be a ticket only event, so book early.

### QUEEN'S CROSS CHURCH: Sunday 4th October at 6.30pm

The concert will be given by Derek Buchan, piano, and will include pieces by Haydn, Schubert and Chopin. Tickets are available at the door on the night, and refreshments are served after the concert.

### COME AND SING ALONG! Saturday 10th October, at Queen's Cross Church

Come and sing excerpts from *Messiah* and *Elijah*, in aid of *Voices for Hospices*. Rehearsal at 2–5pm with performance at 7.30pm

The soloists are  
Gillian Jack and Colin Brockie.

### Sound Contemporary Music Festival Sunday 8th November, at 3.00pm at NESMS

Another piano recital with Donald Hawksworth. This is always a very popular afternoon, and is a ticket only event. Please be in touch with the office to book your seat. The sound brochure is enclosed.

### Cowdray Hall Lunchbreak Concert Thursday 10th December, 12.45pm

Derek Buchan, piano, will be our main performer. This concert series is always well attended so come along early to be sure of a seat.

# It's the journey, not the destination

For the last 12 months, pupils at the school have had the benefit of being able to book a consultation with one of Scotland's leading practitioners of the Alexander Technique.

Nicola Apel has been visiting the school for two days a week and explains that the Technique was developed in the late 19th century by Frederic Mathias Alexander, an actor who was a particularly well known as a Shakespearean orator. Early in his career he suffered chronic laryngitis and despite visiting several doctors could find no lasting help.

"F.M. Alexander spent a lot of time investigating what his problem might be and eventually concluded that the problem lay in the way that he was actually using his own body," says Nicola.

"Gradually he evolved a technique for helping people to appreciate the sort of tensions that they were under, particularly when performing demanding jobs such as playing

a musical instrument, acting or even athletics, and to help them perform better."

"At any stage in life great benefit can derive for people in very ordinary day to day living from gaining an experiential understanding of what the Alexander Technique has to offer. Because it is the basic



Nicola Apel demonstrates the Alexander Technique on one of her patients

muscular pattern of our every action that portrays great opportunity for refinement."

In fact, what the Alexander Technique does is to look at the whole of the process, both physical and mental."

Nicola was first introduced to the Alexander Technique in her late teens through her flute teacher in southern Germany, where she was born and brought up. The flute teacher had a sister who was learning the technique and this triggered an interest. At the age of 20 she moved to Britain to train and, having spent several weeks in London looking at a number of Alexander Technique schools, ended up taking a full-time three-year course in the Lake District.

Nicola has been enjoying gaining expertise for over 15 years and welcomes questions and interest. She runs a practice in Forres as well as Aberdeen and can be contacted on 07947 379533.

## Music at Midsummer...

agility with great dramatic power. His grasp of and ability to deliver multiple changes of colour and atmosphere as he navigated his way through this marvellous piece was thoroughly satisfying.

It was Richard who opened the second half of the concert with a beautifully reflective version of Debussy's *La Fille aux Cheveux de Lin*. He followed this with Scott Joplin's *Maple Leaf Rag*. Here it was his splendid delivery of the oompah bass accompaniment that I really admired, an example of Joplin mimicking the small bands that would often perform music like this in the dance halls and parks.

As Colin Brockie said just before the end of the concert, "No NESMS concert is really complete without the three performers doing something together". The surprise encore bringing Colin, Joe and Richard together was *Some Enchanted Evening* from *South Pacific*. And indeed, an enchanted evening was exactly what we had all experienced.

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