



Welcome to another newsletter for Friends of the North East of Scotland Music School

Contributors include Barbara McFarlane, Roger B. Williams, Janette Hall and Ros Coleman, Colin Brockie and Alan Cooper

COLIN BROCKIE



The new administrator of NESMS

After just a year as Administrator of NESMS, owing to pressure of family commitments, **Louise Forbes** has found it necessary to leave the post. We thank her for all the hard work and commitment she gave generously to the post in 'keeping the show firmly on the road'.

We are happy to welcome **Colin Brockie** to the position. He should be a great asset since he has been associated with NESMS as a pupil and a performer, and he also has experience as a singing teacher at the Scott School of Singing.

Originally from Ellon, Colin was a pupil at Ellon Primary and then at Ellon Academy where David Birse is a very gifted Head of Music. Colin first started singing and acting at Haddo House, being involved both on and off stage with the Children's Theatre, Youth Theatre and the Choral and Operatic Society. While still at school, Colin studied violin reaching grade 7 standard but stopped violin at the end of his school days and concentrated on singing.

Colin sang with the National Youth Choir of Scotland (NYCoS) for 11 years, including tours to Sweden (2001), Chicago (2004), Hungary (2007) and Germany (2010). He also sang with the choir in London's Albert Hall as part of the Proms Season as well as several Last Night Proms in the Park concerts.

Whilst gaining a BA Hons in Design and Craft from Gray's School of Art, Colin continued to receive his singing lessons at the North East of Scotland Music School being taught by Ruth Black, Alan Watt and Dr Raimund Herincx, as well as being one of the School's Assistant Administrators.

Having completed a Masters in Solo Performance at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, Colin continued his studies there with Stuart MacIntyre with a one year Postgraduate Diploma.

Upon leaving the RNCM, Colin performed in the choruses of Buxton Festival Opera and in the 61st Wexford Festival. He has also appeared in the Glyndebourne Festival Chorus for productions of *Falstaff*, *Don Pasquale*, *Billy Budd*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Carmen*, *Die Meistersinger*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and *Béatrice et Bénédict*.

Colin has also remained an active concert and choral soloist. Notable performances include singing bass solos at London's St Martins-in-the-Fields, Ripon Cathedral and Aberdeen Music Hall.

He now has his own singing students here in Aberdeen, teaching both privately and at the Scott School of Singing.

Colin is thrilled to take on his new role as Administrator at NESMS helping to further its legacy and contribution to the Aberdeen and North East music scene.

THREE MUSICAL INSTITUTIONS

The North East of Scotland Music School

NESMS was founded over forty years ago as a self-supporting private Music School with the purpose of making available tuition at an advanced level that would not be available elsewhere in Aberdeen.

Musicians of national and international standing were recruited as first or early tutors, numbering amongst them Denis Matthews (Piano), Eileen Croxford (Cello), Ifor James (French Horn), John Carol Case and Raimund Herincx (Voice), James Blades (Percussion), David Nicholson (Flute), and several other

tutors recruited as needed. Some lessons would be given at extended intervals — possibly one or two a term — others at monthly intervals. It was always intended that these lessons should be a supplement to and not a substitute for the local tuition that these students received.

Over the last four decades, while this founding principle has remained, other disciplines have been added and NESMS has responded to the different needs of the musical community in Aberdeen. Additionally there is now tuition at various levels in voice, piano, recorders and jazz piano. We still bring tutors from other places including the splendid recorder virtuoso and tutor Iain Wilson and with James Halsey (Cello) and Nigel Clayton (Piano) have tutors that work in Conservatoires elsewhere. NESMS differs from the specialist nature of the full time education available at ACMS — one of the national music schools — and from the Festival, in that it is primarily a teaching institution with welcome performance opportunities for students.

Aberdeen City Music School

ACMS is a national specialist music school based at Dyce Academy in Aberdeen. The aim of the music school is to allow talented musicians or musicians with great potential to receive expert tuition and additional time for music study whilst continuing their general education at the highest level. Places are free and boarding accommodation is on site.

ACMS are an established centre of excellence for music in Scotland — catering for performers of all music genres in secondary education. Primary bursaries are also available. Pupils receive two hours on their first study and half an hour on their second study per week. They also receive a half hour theory/aural/composition lesson tailored to their needs.

ACMS provides regular opportunities for solo, chamber, jazz, orchestral, choral and Scottish traditional work. Its tutors travel to Dyce from all over the UK providing an exceptional level of tuition in both solo and ensemble environments.

Aberdeen And North East Of Scotland Music Festival

An established Aberdeen tradition, this is the longest running festival in the city. It was founded in 1909 by Professor Stanford Terry to encourage the performing arts and the first festival was attended by Elgar, no less.

Open to all, from Scotland and beyond, the festival offers performance opportunities in music, speech and drama. Classes are structured according to age and ability and entry fees for performer and audience members are low to facilitate participation. Each performer receives supportive feedback from a professional adjudicator, and although primarily competitive, anyone can

enter on a non-competitive basis. The festival culminates with a competitive concert where prizes and bursaries are awarded.

The week of competitions and concerts in June is run by volunteers funded wholly by entry fees and sponsorship.

The festival provides a unique platform for its numerous participants many of whom continue to enjoy the performing arts either as amateurs or as professionals. As well as the visiting tutors at NESMS such as Ian Wilson, a number of other former participants have gone on to successful careers in the arts, either as academics or performers such as Lisa Milne and Annie Lennox.

THE ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE OF NESMS

The Council Of Management

The entire business of the School is managed by the Council of Management which consists of not less than three and not more than sixteen members elected at an Annual General Meeting. A member of the Council of Management must be a member of the School or a person approved by the Council, on account of his or her experience and knowledge of education or finance, as a suitable member. The Chairman and Vice Chairman are elected by the Council on an annual basis from its own body after the Annual General Meeting of the School.

There are four Committees which effectively run the School:

The Finance And General Purposes Committee is responsible for all matters financial, the maintenance of the building, health and safety, insurance, staffing, legal issues and all matters not covered by other committees. It will also deal with child protection.

The Music Committee is at the heart of the School and is responsible for all musical matters. Its duties are to review all existing musical disciplines and keep an eye on the place of the School in the general musical life of Aberdeen.

The Fundraising Committee is responsible for raising funds for NESMS largely by organising fundraising events.

The Strategy And Planning Committee was set up to consider whether or not the School continues to serve the purposes for which it was established and assists the Administrator as well as planning the future development of the School.

For a list of recent notable achievements by NESMS pupils please go to our website page:
www.nesms.org.uk/r8/news2.html

CATCH-UP — NESMS CONCERTS AND EVENTS 2018 – 2019

Since our last newsletter, pupils and teachers too from NESMS have been busily involved in fundraising performances. Craigiebuckler Church was the venue for two such events that drew capacity audiences to enjoy a plethora of great music making by members of the School.

The first such event took place on Sunday 25th March last year. The **Rev. Kenneth Petrie** introduced twelve pupils and teachers from NESMS along with their talented piano accompanists as required, **Harry Williamson, Jeremy Coleman** and **Scott Matheson**.

Music From Around The World

First to perform was **Oisín Lyons** who played ‘La Chapelle de Guillaume Tell’ from *Les Années de Pèlerinage* by Franz Liszt. In this powerfully dramatic piece full of huge chords, trills and challenging leaps across the keyboard, none of these provided any difficulties for Oisín in a brilliant curtain raiser for the concert.

Soprano **Catherine Gellatly** accompanied by Harry Williamson sang ‘June’ by Roger Quilter and ‘If There Were Dreams To Sell’ by John Ireland. Her exceptionally clear diction meant that not a single word in these lovely pictorial songs was missed.

Pianist **Alex Riddell** chose the *Prelude Op. 23 No. 5* by Rachmaninoff delivering the contrasting sections of the work with remarkable refinement.

Soprano **Hazel Wilkins** gave a fine operatic performance marked by easy delivery of the highest notes of Puccini’s ‘O Mio Babbino Caro’ from *Gianni Schicci*.

Pianist **Lynette Thomas** gave us a delicate and thoughtful account of Chopin’s *Nocturne in c sharp minor*, then recorder player Ruaraidh Wishart was nothing short of virtuosic in ‘La Danse’ from *Three Matisse Impressions* by Edward Gregson proving that the recorder can be up there with the finest concert instruments.

On double bass, **Scott Matheson** played Giovanni Bottesini’s well named *Rêverie* in which his bass sounded like a fine baritone singer. He was accompanied on piano by Jeremy Coleman.

One of Scott’s own pupils, cellist **Ruaraidh Williams**, sounded equally smooth toned in Fauré’s *Après un Rêve* followed by William Squire’s fiery *Tarantella* which he played with admirable precision.

Kathleen Christie, another great opera enthusiast, gave a dazzling twirl of a performance as she drew us into Bizet’s ‘Seguidilla’ from *Carmen*.

Adam Auchie played another of Liszt's great piano showpieces, *Sonetto 123 del Petrarca* in which he managed to capture all the heart and soul of the music.

The final piece had two pianists. It was the four hands, one piano arrangement by August Horn of Wagner's Prelude to *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. **Dr Imogene Newland** and **Dr Jeremy Coleman** were simply spectacular. Here we were at the end a wonderful journey across 'The World in Music'.



Performers at the Scholarship Concert, June 2018

Scholarship Concert 2018

The second of the two extra special concerts in Craigiebuckler Church was the annual Scholarship Concert presented by the Friends of NESMS on Friday 22nd June 2018. Thirty seven students of NESMS were benefiting from full or partial scholarships at that time last year.

The concert opened with the first of three gifted young pianists **Aaron Magill** in a relaxed, well-paced performance of Chopin's *Nocturne in c sharp minor* followed by Pam Wedgwood's arrangement of Gershwin's 'Let's Call The Whole Thing Off'. Fortunately Aaron did not call the whole thing off, he went on to give his spirited account of a piece by Brian Bonsor entitled *Willie Wagglestick's Walkabout*. Aaron had captured all the very different spirits of each of his three pieces.

Aaron's mother **Shirley Magill** is a class music teacher at Albyn School. She provided the piano accompaniments for the next performer, oboist **Christopher Smith**. The two works he played displayed between them all the contrasting instrumental voices of the oboe. In the five movement *Sonata No. 4 in D Op. 5* by Loellet, clean fluent playing in the slow movements was contrasted with a crispness in the faster movements. The spirit of the dance

was brought graphically alive by Christopher in the *Sarabande and Allegro* by Grovez.

Flautist **Iona Baillie** chose an unusual piece for her first piece. This was *Orange Dawn* by Ian Clarke painting a musical picture of sunrise in the Great Rift Valley in Africa. The piano accompaniment played by **Andrew Leadbetter** had an extensive colourful solo passage.

Our Master of Ceremonies **Dr Colin Sinclair** told us that we were about to hear a duet played on a single flute. How was that going to be possible? Well, Iona played a slow steady melody while in the background a kind of ‘twiddly-diddly’ accompaniment ran through the melody. How amazing was that?

Our second young pianist was **Malik Salloum**. He began with Mozart’s *Adagio in b minor*. The contrasts between light and dark, gentle and almost violent that Malik was able to create suggested the heart and soul of Mozart the operatic dramatist.

Malik achieved a similar contrast in moods in Chopin’s *Mazurka in c sharp minor Op. 50 No. 3*. Passages of sadness were set against almost joyful dancing. Malik’s final piece was Rachmaninoff’s *Prelude in g sharp minor* — rich and full of almost orchestral breadth of colour.

Our third pianist **Matthew Crabb** went way beyond anything else in the concert. Chopin’s *Impromptu in A flat* was described in Colin Sinclair’s programme note: “A delicate tracery loops over the keyboard like a *perpetuum mobile* leading to a soulful middle section”. That is precisely what Matthew gave us so perfectly. He continued with a totally professional performance of Poulenc’s *Caprice Italien* with dazzling piano fireworks and sumptuous melody.

Cellist **Kara Taylor** accompanied by Dr Colin Sinclair gave a firm performance of Beethoven’s *Cello Sonata No. 3* with lithe fingerboard work and expressive bowing. She followed this with ‘Jewish Melody’, the final movement of Ernest Bloch’s triptych *From Jewish Life*. Moments of vehemence were contrasted with passages of lovely gentleness. Kara also gave warm and enthusiastic compliments to her brilliant tutor at NESMS, James Halsey.

Our final performer was clarinettist **Laura Smith**, also accompanied by Dr Colin Sinclair. She opened with *Adagio* by Heinrich Baermann – a beautifully clear toned performance concentrated on the upper tones of the clarinet. Laura gave the final performance in the concert with the third movement from the *Sonatina for Clarinet and Piano* by Joseph Horowitz. Both musicians gave us what Horowitz himself called his ‘sense of humour’. It was jolly, jazzy and playful a bright and happy ending to one of the best ever Scholarship Concerts.

The next Annual Scholarship Concert in Craigiebuckler Church will take place on the 21st June this year at 7.30 pm. It will present a showcase of some of the best past Scholarship holders — an event surely not to be missed!

RECITAL IN QUEEN'S CROSS CHURCH: AVANTI TRIO

Thursday 11th April, 2019

Imogene Newland: Piano

Alexandra Darloti: Violin

Marina Sánchez Cabello: Cello

The Avanti Trio is an Aberdeen based chamber ensemble currently monitored by Royal College of Music teachers James Halsey and Nigel Clayton both of whom are also tutors at NESMS. In their programme for Thursday's concert, there was a picture of the trio rehearsing in the large studio at NESMS.

The programme for their concert in Queen's Cross Church was startlingly broad ranging, including music by the Romanian composer George Enescu representing the early part of the twentieth century. This was followed by Mozart, a core composer of the classical era. Martin Devek, a composer and visual artist, originally from Argentina but now working at Queen's University, Belfast, represented the most adventurous of contemporary avant garde composers, and finally there was Anton Arensky, one of the most original Russian composers of the Romantic era.

Every member of the trio is a consummate musician, having a wide range of concert experience. Both the violinist Alexandra Darloti and the cellist Marina Sánchez work as tutors for El Sistema, Big Noise, Torry. The final concert in the Lunchbreak Series in the Salvation Army Citadel on Thursdays will host pupils and teachers of the Big Noise.

'Sérénade lointaine' by Enescu was played with both violin and cello muted throughout. Imogene played a marvellously delicate rippling piano part. The string sound was deliciously silky and smooth. The balance of the three instruments was sheer perfection. Enescu keeps them bound together in perfect consonance.

Mozart writes for the trio in a quite different way. In each of the three movements of his Trio K.502, the spotlight tends to fall on each of the three instruments in turn with the piano, probably the instrument that Mozart himself played at his musical evenings, having a prominent part. In the opening Allegro, Imogene Newland's piano playing had a special liquid legato fluency that drove the music firmly forward.

The second movement, Larghetto, started with the piano. All three instruments played in splendid singing tones. Each of the string players demonstrated marvellous smoothness and breadth in their playing, each in turn, and when Mozart brought all three together, the result was magical.

The finale led off once again by the piano was deliciously light and fresh.

After a short interval, we were astonished by the most amazing avant garde piece. 'Tierra Sellada' (Sealed Earth) by Martin Devek was definitely a work for the *SOUND* Festival. Its nine short movements had all sorts of astonishing sound experiments. The string players slid rounded wooden sticks over their strings, they got up out of their seats and assaulted the piano in various percussive ways, both inside and out. Each of the players also recited poetry by Maria McManus, some clearer than others.

The piece dealt with something that is very much in the news these days — plastic and other rubbish in the oceans and other parts of the environment. Oddly enough, if you closed your eyes and did not watch what was going on, the sound world created was not all that 'way out', but as you watched the performance it was possibly what the French poet Baudelaire would have described as being 'pour épater les bourgeois'. I'm sure our three girls would be made very welcome by aficionados of Aberdeen's *SOUND* festival with this piece.

The final work in the concert was the 'Trio in d minor' by Anton Arensky. Before the performance we were told that Arensky's contemporaries regarded him as not very imaginative, often copying some of the better known composers of his era like Tchaikovsky. Actually, Thursday's performance by the Avanti Trio demonstrated the precise opposite. This was particularly true of the second movement, the Scherzo (Allegro molto). It was wonderfully light with tantalising, tickling touches from the strings and more than a touch of good humour from Arensky, so well projected by the Trio. The central trio section of the movement sounded rather like happy café music, dance-like and full of warmth.

The opening movement was richly romantic played with real panache.

The caressing melodic content of the third movement Elegia (Adagio) had the two string players 'singing' beautifully together and there was a particularly delightful moment of ethereal playing with the violin at the top of her instrumental range.

The finale began dramatically and strongly positive, then a passage with mutes led into lovely slower romantic music. This was a popular conclusion to a fantastically varied and stylistically well understood performance.

HONOURED FRIENDS

Please note that **Derek Buchan** who recently retired as Treasurer of the Friends and our splendid piano tutor **Nigel Clayton** have both been made Honorary Friends in recognition of their wonderful contribution to the School.

ACTIVITIES OF THE FRIENDS

In addition to these three large scale concerts and to a successful Coffee Morning held in the large studio in the School's Headquarters in 21 Huntly Street on 10th November 2018, there were two more noteworthy events held at the School.

Happy Birthday Mozart

The first, led by Dr Roger Williams on the afternoon of Sunday, 27th January was a Birthday Party for Mozart. Roger brought with him a picture painted in 1771 by Pietro Fabris showing Mozart and his father about to play at a concert the previous year during their tour across Europe. He also had several recordings of Mozart's music apposite to his wonderfully revealing talk.



Painting by Pietro Fabris, 1771

Most exciting though was a Mozartian piano arrangement prepared by Roger culminating in the tune Happy Birthday dear Mozart in which we were all encouraged to join in singing. This we did with gusto, and then along with tea or coffee Margaret Stone had baked a delicious Kugelhopf, in a sense a birthday cake for Mozart which he would surely have relished every bit as much as we all did.



Can you guess who this is?

Yes! Its Nigel as he was years ago!



And here he is today!

Leading from the front

The second event held on the afternoon of Saturday 16th March was an illustrated talk by the NESMS star piano tutor **Nigel Clayton**. Entitled 'Leading from Behind' it took us on a fascinating journey through Nigel's whole career as a pianist. He presented several recordings taken from his own musical past life, the first being of himself singing as a boy treble at the start of his career.

He regaled us with tales of his work as a solo concert pianist, as a talented accompanist, as a chamber musician as well as a light piano entertainer in hotels and even on a cruise ship. Nigel is an extraordinarily affable and accommodating gentleman. Time and again he explained how people had asked him to provide them with piano accompaniments or to join them in chamber groups. Perhaps, at the time he had thought maybe this is not for me but he always ended up wanting to help and agreeing to take part. His entry into the world of teaching took a similar route and so he came to NESMS as their main piano tutor. Every time he embraced one of these new career opportunities he was a fantastic success in each one. He himself did not say that but I certainly can. I have known several of his past students, for instance Oliver Searle who is now a successful composer and tutor at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in Glasgow. Oliver and all the others always mentioned Nigel with the gratitude they cherished towards him as a teacher and as a musician.

Nigel's talk might have been entitled 'Leading from Behind' but as far as the capacity audience who attended the event Nigel was firmly up there, right in front!

BREAKING NEWS

NESMS looks forward to welcoming two new singing tutors from June 2019, internationally renowned soprano **Judith Howarth** and tenor **Gordon Wilson**.

TWO IMPORTANT EVENTS FOR YOUR FRIENDS' DIARY

The first (already mentioned) is the next Annual Scholarship Concert which will take place in Craigiebuckler Church on Friday 21st June, and at 2pm on May 11th you are invited to Haddo House to meet our recently elected President of the Friends, Lady Joanna Aberdeen.

An outing by the Friends

The President of the Friends of NESMS, Joanna, Lady Aberdeen, will be delighted to host an afternoon visit to historic Haddo House.

There has been a long association between our two organisations, ever since the foundation of NESMS over forty years ago by June, Marchioness of Aberdeen and Temair, and Dorothy Hatley.

This event is FREE for Friends, and £10 for other guests. It will begin at 2 pm in the very beautiful 'Arts and Crafts' Chapel, to hear the fine 'father' Willis organ - one of the last organs from this celebrated organ builder - played by your Convener. After this we shall go to the Library to be welcomed by Lady Aberdeen with a cup of tea. There will then be an opportunity to look round the fine garden which adjoins the House.

The event will take place on Saturday the 11th of May from 2pm onwards.

Please use the official car park - disabled parking beside the chapel - and assemble in the Chapel.

Places are limited so please contact Kathleen Haw on:

kathleenhaw3@gmail.com

By Saturday the 4th of May to book your place before it's too late.

