

keynotes

The Newsletter

of the North East of Scotland Music School

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Festival clean sweep for NESMS students

The three main categories at the recent Aberdeen and North East of Scotland Music Festival were won by NESMS students in what was one of the best ever results for the School.

The festival, now in its 79th year, draws youngsters from all over the North East of Scotland to compete in a wide variety of music and drama categories.



The three overall winners at the recent Aberdeen and North East of Scotland Music Festival were all NESMS pupils. Pictured front to back are Hollie Pirie, Maryam Sherhan and Fraser Kelman.

The instrumental section was won by 17-year old oboist, Fraser Kelman. Fraser has been playing the oboe for six years and has been studying at the School under Anne Dunbar. "The School has been very good

for me," he says. "Not only for the high quality tuition, but for the variety of performing opportunities it has provided."

Fraser is keen to pursue a professional career as either an oboist or composer; although he describes himself as a 'wannabe' composer, he was a runner up in last year's BBC/Guardian newspaper Young Composer of the Year competition. "My own music is mildly contemporary

– hopefully pleasantly so," he says.

Fraser is about to go off to St. Mary's Music School in Edinburgh. "I want to concentrate on music a bit more during my sixth year and the oboe teacher there is excellent; in fact he taught Anne! Hopefully from there I can win a place at one of the London music schools – although I appreciate that the competition for them is fierce."

Similarly bent on a professional music career is 16-year old

Hollie Pirie from Stonehaven. Hollie won the vocal section at the Festival and has followed that up with a place in the chorus in the critically acclaimed Aberdeen Youth Festival production of Mozart's

Don Giovanni.

"I've been singing seriously since I started lessons at the age of eight," Hollie told *Keynotes*. "But it's only in the last year that I've realised that I might have a voice that's good enough

"The School has been very good for me."

for me to cut it as a professional singer." Hollie is currently taking lessons with both Alison McDonald at the School, where Alison concentrates on developing Hollie's technical skills and the lighter repertoire, and Peter Wilson at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in Glasgow. Peter works on Hollie's classical repertoire.

"I want to keep improving my voice and developing my repertoire," says Hollie. "When I leave school I want to go to the RSAMD and, ultimately, become an opera singer. So my first involvement as a performer (in the Don Giovanni) was fascinating. The one thing that was really difficult was walking everyone's routines so they could get the lighting correct. That took from 10.00 am to 5.00 pm on one day – and then we did a dress rehearsal. This opera stuff is really hard work!"

Hollie's musical talent doesn't stop at singing. She also plays the piano, the saxophone and the drums and is hopefully joining a rock band at her school.

Seventeen-year old Maryam Sherhan won the piano section of the Festival. She has been playing the piano since she was six-years old and has been taking both violin and piano lessons at the School since 1999.

Maryam, who plays in the

School's string quartet describes this year's success as: "Not my best ever. I've been taking part in the Festival since I was seven and have had some years where I won several prizes. But it nice to win such a major award!"

Maryam is all set to pursue a musical career of some kind. "I'm going to Strathclyde University in September to study Applied Music which covers all aspects of music from performing to music as therapy to teaching. To be honest, I don't really know exactly what I want to do with music yet so I thought it would be a good course to do."

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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 and Europe.

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 the newly formed 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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President: Dr Neil Mackie

Administrator: Joan Thomas

Lecture will hit the high notes

'The Unkindest Cut of All' is the title for a lecture that will be delivered on Saturday, 23rd November in aid of School funds by Neil Jones, a member of the School's Fundraising and Development Committee and critic and contributor for both Opera Now magazine and The Herald newspaper.

The lecture examines the development and history of the castrati, that strange breed of emasculated male singers that

dominated both liturgical music and the operatic stage during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

"It's debatable whether, in the society of the day, castration for the sake of art was indeed an 'unkind cut'," suggests Neil. "But regardless of your viewpoint in that debate, there's no doubt that the history of the castrati is a fascinating one, even if high male voices aren't your thing. Hopefully the

audience will find it less of a lecture and more a knowledge based musical entertainment. There will certainly be some fabulous music to listen to."

The lecture starts at 7.30 pm at the School and will last approximately two hours including an interval when wine and light snacks will be served. Tickets cost £10, including the refreshments and can be obtained from the school.

You never stop learning

In recognition of all the help and support that Marion Fordyce, the School's longest serving pupil, has given NESMS over many years, she had been made the School's first Honorary Fellow.

Marion says she can't recall not having sung: "Both my great-grandmother and grandmother were really good singers. In fact, my great-grandmother had a career as a concert soloist. So it was just normal for me to sing. My first public performances came after I joined the junior choir in the local church. The choir's conductor, John Findlay, recruited me in a conversation with my grandmother in an air raid shelter during the Second World War!"

At the age of eighteen, Marion started to take individual lessons with Bess Jenkins but then, for personal reasons, gave up singing completely, before being persuaded back by Dorothy Hately.

"Dorothy insisted I started again and helped fix a place for me in the SNO Chorus for their 1986 tour of Israel, which was a great experience. Then I started taking lessons at the School with Raimund Herinx and I've been here ever since."

Marion says she much prefers the lessons and the preparation for concerts to the actual performances themselves. "I think I always sing better during the lessons than at the performances," claims Marion. "I find the lessons always give me a lift and, of course, you never stop learning."

Marion has featured as a

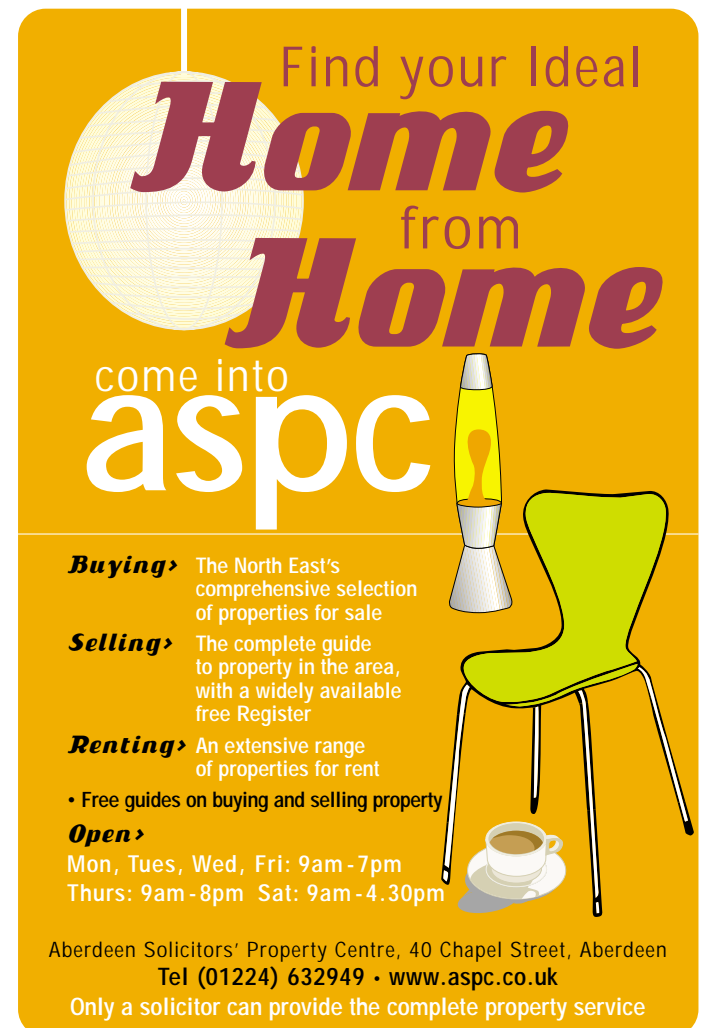
soloist in some outstanding concerts and recitals, many of

however, was singing the role of Dido in a performance of Dido

"I find the lessons always give me a lift and you never stop learning."

them raising money for the School. Her fondest memory,

and Aeneas in the round at the Mitchell Hall in 1968.



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Tutor profile – Ifor James

The School's horn tutor for the last 22 years has been the international horn soloist, Professor Ifor James.

Ifor was first persuaded to teach at the School by Dorothy Hately: "I expect most people you talk to will say you never said no to Dorothy," Ifor recalls. "She was a very forceful lady but a real inspiration."

Ifor's career could almost be said to be pre-ordained. His father was the top cornet player in Britain and his mother was Ena Mitchell, the soprano. Little wonder that Ifor started to play the cornet at the age of four, later taking up the piano and organ and becoming assistant organist at Carlisle Cathedral during his teens. It was in this period that he took up the horn, later entering the Royal Academy of Music as a pupil of Aubrey Brain.

His first professional appointment was with The Hallé Orchestra and after only



Professor Ifor James

two years he became principal horn with the Royal Liverpool

Philharmonic Orchestra – at the age of 22.

In 1963 he moved to London and played principal horn with all the leading orchestras before becoming a soloist. He subsequently played all over the world as well as developing a substantial discography, including 30 recordings as the horn player in the renowned Philip Jones Brass Ensemble.

He was also for some years the principal conductor of the famous Besses o'th Barn Brass Band; under his baton they won the 1978 BBC Band of the Year Competition.

Ifor has a long and distinguished career as a teacher and he has been a professor of music at the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal Northern College of Music. In 1980 he was appointed professor of horn and brass chamber music at the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik in Freiburg.

Indeed, well over 100 of his pupils – including several from NESMS – have become professional musicians, with 31 of them currently principal horn players with orchestras not only in England but in Germany, Switzerland, Scandinavia, the U.S.A., Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Japan. Nine are now professors at music colleges around the world, a further two are the principals of German music colleges and a further six have solo careers. It could be said that Ifor has pretty much fostered a whole generation or two of horn players!

"I do believe that interest in music waned a few years ago but I think there is evidence that it is coming back," Ifor told *Keynotes* recently. "But I do feel sympathy for youngsters today. If they're applying for a position as second horn in any half decent orchestra, there will be perhaps 50 or 60 people applying and most of those will be good players. I think it was easier in my day. If you carried a horn case, you were in!"

"Thankfully, there are some really talented students at NESMS at the moment and although some of them are very young, hopefully that talent can be nurtured. That's why I still enjoy teaching so much."

Tutors at the School

as at August 2002

STRINGS

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

WOODWIND

Flute David Nicholson
Flute Catherine O'Rourke
Oboe Anne Dunbar
Clarinet Alison Waller
Bassoon Lesley Wilson

BRASS

Trumpet John Gracie
Horn Ifor James

PIANO

Nigel Clayton
Joseph Long
Tom Johnston

GUITAR

Gilbert Biberian

SINGING

Raimund Herincx
Ruth Black
Alison McDonald
Jean Webster
Donald Maxwell

Forthcoming events

Thursday, 26th September – 7.30 pm

My Musical Life – a talk given by international horn player and School tutor, Ifor James.
Entry by ticket only, £10.00 to include refreshments.
School

Thursday, 3rd October – 7.30 pm

Impresario and Haydn Fragments – pupils of Raimund Herincx will perform. Will include the Scottish premier of Haydn Fragments.
Ferryhill Church

Saturday, 26th October – 10.00 am – 12.00 noon

Coffee Morning.
Cake & Candy, Bottle Stall etc.
All welcome.
Admission £1.50.
School

Sunday, 3rd November – 12.30 pm

Auction Lunch – see story on page 4.
Caledonian Hotel, Union Terrace

Saturday, 23rd November – 7.30 pm

The Unkindest Cut of All – lecture by Neil Jones.
See story on page 2.
School

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Recent events

ONLY MY DREAMS

Singing student, Adrian McBurnie, entertained on the 22nd May with a selection of music that kept his audience enthralled.

VOCAL LIAISONS (8th June)

One of our own singing tutors, Jean Webster, together with her husband Peter and pianist Ian Gillis, gave a superb recital on 8th June at the School. Jean sang the Schumann *Frauenlieb und Leben*, and Peter sang Vaughan William's *Songs of Travel*. A superb evening, much enjoyed by the audience.

RAIMUND AND FRIENDS

At a splendid evening in June in the lovely setting of Kincardine House, School tutor and international opera star, Raimund Herinx told anecdotes from his life and career, with musical contributions from his students Marion Fordyce and Moira Docherty. As ever, the able accompanist was Mary Wetherick.

Donors

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School in the news

The two Masterclasses conducted by Aberdeen's home grown – and School trained – opera star, Lisa Milne, were not just a big hit with the pupils that attended – they caught the attention of the media as well.

Grampian Television covered the classes for the early evening Scottish news whilst the story appeared in both the Press & Journal and the Evening Express.



Pupils who attended the Lisa Milne Masterclasses. Pictured (left to right) are Hollie Pirie, Colin Brockie, Amy Cowling, accompanist Robert Howie, Lisa Milne, Anne Buchan and Mandy Murray.



Lisa is interviewed at the School by Grampian Television's Norman MacLeod.

Just good friends!

One of the single largest sources of funding for the School is the School Friends organisation that contributes at least £4,000 per year, raised from a variety of functions.

Friends' chairman, Jenny Shirreffs recalls: "The Friends started formally about fifteen

years ago when a bunch of people who basically ran around doing odd jobs for the School, such as transporting and accommodating tutors, got together as a fund raising entity when the move to the current premises in Huntly Street was mooted.

"We now have over 150 supporters and we have a number of regular items on the agenda; we produce the School Christmas card each year, have an annual Gourmet evening, regular concert promotions and

underwrite the cost of the food and drink at most of the School concerts."

As well as the money raised from all of these activities, part of the membership fee – a mere snip at £7.00 per annum – also goes to the School.

But the Friend's original remit hasn't changed. "Members of the Friends still make themselves responsible for transporting our visiting tutors and putting them up when they're in Aberdeen," says Jenny.

What a 'lot' for the auction

Donations of some superb lots have been made for the fund raising auction that will be a 'key' part of the Keynotes Lunch at the Caledonian Hotel on Sunday, 3rd November.

Nicky Bradford, chairman of the Fundraising and Development Committee, says that there will be some very valuable and interesting lots for the auction. "So far, they include a weekend for two in London with lunch at and a guided tour of the House of Commons, and a lovely silver brooch by the well known engraver and silversmith, Malcolm Appleby.

"We anticipate that there will be about eight lots for auction by local raconteur, Peter Mitchell."

Another highlight will be the

chamber music to accompany lunch, played by some of the School pupils.



The silver brooch kindly donated by well known engraver and silversmith, Malcolm Appleby.

Nicky goes on to report that the Caledonian Hotel are being enthusiastically supportive and that the carvery lunch will be splendid. "Even if you don't want to bid for the lots, just coming along to the lunch will help support the School. Our target is to raise enough money to cover the cost of a year's issues of the School's *Keynotes* newsletter, which is an important means for us to communicate with our various supporters and to help us lobby our financial and political supporters."

Tickets for the lunch cost £12.50 and are available either from the School or from Nicky. She can be contacted on 013398 84225, fax 013398 84394 or email kincardineestate@btinternet.com.