

Newsletter, March 2009

Dear pupils and parents,

It has been a while since our last newsletter, but we have been busy behind the scenes creating our new website and planning a series of events for the School. Please take note of the dates highlighted here – there are some excellent opportunities for all pupils to gain experience in performance and other musical skills and we hope to see many of you at forthcoming workshops and concerts.

NEW WEBSITE AND STAFF

We are pleased to welcome to our team **Mark Wales**, who has designed and built our new website and is now working with our senior staff team as a communications consultant. As part of his role within the School, Mark has taken on the task of observing and auditing our teaching staff to ensure that the highest quality is maintained across the board. Mark has his own web design and IT consultancy – [Small Hadron Collider](#) – and has helped various members of the School's staff with computer problems. We can thoroughly recommend Mark as an IT troubleshooter and tutor, and think you'll agree that he has done a fine job with the new website. If you have computer-related issues, you can contact Mark on 07595 665249 or at mark@smallhadroncollider.com.

Mark is also taking `cello lessons with Lucy Revis – perhaps you will see him taking part in a concert in the future!

You will notice that there is now a secure **pupils' area** (link at top right). This part of the site contains downloadable teaching materials exclusively available to students of the Milsom School and requires a login which you will soon receive by email. We shall be adding more resources to the pupils' area from time to time.

EXAM RESULTS

Our recent ABRSM Special Visit was held in the choir vestry at St John's Church, Ranmoor, which proved to be an excellent venue. All 15 candidates benefited from rehearsals and mock exams in the vestry, which gave them extra confidence for the real thing. We were very pleased with pupils' efforts in preparing for their exams, and with the results – 3 Distinctions, 8 Merits and 4 Passes.

The next Special Visit is planned for **Saturday 6th June 2009**.

PERFORMANCE WORKSHOP: 'COMMUNICATION SKILLS'

Saturday 28th March, 10am-12.30pm, St John's Church, Ranmoor (£10)

This event will take the form of a masterclass, with experienced tutors guiding pupils in how best to present themselves and their music on stage or in front of an examiner. In an informal setting, participants will be asked to perform a piece (or part of a piece) that they have been working on and will learn both from comments made by the tutors, and from observing others doing the same.

SINGING WORKSHOP – MUSICAL THEATRE

Saturday 18th April, 10am-1pm, St John's Church, Ranmoor (£10)

Our singing tutors, Peter Taylor and Robert Webb, are both specialists in Musical Theatre, a genre that ranges from Gilbert & Sullivan operettas, through Cole Porter and Rogers & Hammerstein, to more contemporary writers such as Sondheim and Schwartz. We hope that you will join us in this lighthearted workshop to explore some of the vocal techniques used in Musical Theatre and to have fun singing some of the repertoire.

This event is open to pupils, siblings and families – parents are especially welcome to come and join in!

AURAL WORKSHOP

Saturday 25th April, 10am-12.30pm, St John's Church, Ranmoor

We held our first Aural Workshop last term, working as a large group on singing technique and then in graded groups on other aspects of the ABRSM syllabus. Participants found that their skills and confidence grew in the group setting and as they concentrated on each test for an extended period of time.

The next workshop will follow the same format and will be helpful for pupils at all stages, whether preparing for imminent exams or not.

This event is especially valuable for parents who wish to help their children practice their aural skills at home – do come along.

LESSON PAYMENTS

A few families have now started paying half-termly in advance for lessons and are finding this a more helpful way of keeping track of dates and payments. Your teacher will speak to you about the possibility of switching to this system.

FORTHCOMING CONCERTS

The Sterndale Singers directed by **Robert Webb**

Saturday 14th March, 8pm – St Marie’s Cathedral, Norfolk Row, Sheffield

‘Out of Africa’ – a programme of African-inspired music including **Basler** *Missa Kenya* and **Bob Chilcott** *The Making of the Drum*

Hallam Choral Society directed by **Peter Taylor**

Friday 3rd April, 7.30pm – St Marie’s Cathedral, Norfolk Row, Sheffield

Haydn *Little Organ Mass*; **Stainer** *The Crucifixion*

Orchestra to include staff, students and ex-students of the Milsom School of Music

Sheffield University Singers’ Society directed by **Peter Taylor**

Saturday 9th May, 7.30pm – Firth Hall, Sheffield

Stuart Johnson *Requiem*

Orchestra to include staff, students and ex-students of the Milsom School of Music

St John’s May Music Festival

Including concerts by St John’s Chamber Choir and a new string orchestra directed by David Milsom.

Please visit the St John’s music website www.stjohnsmusic.org.uk for information.

NEW VICAR AT ST JOHN'S

On Thursday 19th March, Dr. Rev. James Grenfell will be installed as the new vicar at St John's Church, Ranmoor. As you know, our five senior staff are all involved in the music-making at St John's and we are delighted that James promises to be a keen supporter of the musical activities associated with the church. We are hopeful that our relationship with St John's will continue to grow and bear fruit.

All are welcome at James' licensing, and especially at his first services on Mothering Sunday (22nd March, 10am / 6.30pm) – David, Ruth, Pete and Mark will be singing at these services, under Robert's direction.