



NOVEMBER, 2008

Dear Parents and Pupils,

This term sees more new activity for the Milsom School, as well as the continuation of some of our established regular events. We are very pleased with the overall progress of our pupils and their enthusiasm to learn; it is always rewarding when the teaching process becomes a genuine two-way exchange, and we are finding that this happens more readily with pupils who have engaged with our programme of workshop and concert events. If you or your child have never attended one of these events, do consider coming along to something this term. We always take care to make workshops enjoyable, accessible and non-threatening for everyone taking part; concerts are presented in an informal and supportive atmosphere to encourage nervous and inexperienced performers to take part with confidence.

Practice Clinics

This month we held our first practice clinics, when we launched our new Practice Notebooks. Those who attended benefited from discussion of the approach to and principles of effective practice and we are already noticing positive effects on those who attended.

We will be running more of these sessions through the year, so that everybody can take the opportunity to learn about this vital part of learning music.

ABRSM Exams

Our next Special Visit is planned for Saturday 24th January at St John's Church, Ranmoor. This date cannot be confirmed until the entry is submitted to the Associated Board, but if you know that you / your child will be a candidate for this round of exams, please put the date in your diary now.

Mock Exams: Saturday 10th January (am) / Sunday 11th January (pm)

For the first time, as we approach this Special Visit day, we will be running Mock exams. These will take place in the exam venue and there will be an 'examiner' present. This will give candidates a chance to undertake all elements of their exam in front of somebody they do not know, who will give them a predicted mark and feedback that will help them make their final preparations before the real thing. Your teacher will talk to you about taking part.

Singing Workshop: Improve Your Sightsinging

Saturday 1st November, 2-4pm, St John's Church, Ranmoor

Peter Taylor and Robert Webb will be leading this term's Singing Workshop, which will focus particularly on sightsinging. For those who sing (or would like to sing) in a choir, the ability to learn a vocal line quickly and accurately is essential. Pupils who are at Grade 4 and above are required to sing at sight as part of the ABRSM Aural Tests, beginning with pitching a series of five notes at Grade 4 and culminating in singing a short melody with piano accompaniment at Grade 8.

The activities in this session will help participants with issues of finding starting notes, pitching different intervals and recognising patterns in music. Knowledge of reading music is not a necessary requirement for taking part and the workshop is open to all pupils (whether preparing for grade exams or not), parents and other family members.

ABRSM Aural Workshops

Sat. 22nd November, 10am-12noon / Sun. 23rd November, 3-5pm, St John's Church

There will be parallel sessions on each day, covering Grades 1-3, 4-5 and 6-8. Working in groups will mean that participants can learn from each other as well as from the tutors, and we will be addressing each element of the Aural Tests in imaginative ways to help pupils gain initiative and confidence in delivering their responses in exams.

All pupils, whether preparing for imminent exams or not, will benefit from attending the workshop.

Staff News

New Teaching Staff

This term we welcome Amy Finch (violin) and Lucy Revis (cello) to the Milsom School team.

Amy is a second-year philosophy student at the University of Sheffield and an accomplished musician. She has taken on a number of violinists who had lessons with Vicky Moran before Vicky graduated in July, as well as several pupils who are new to the School this year. Amy comes to us highly recommended, particularly by Andrew Kirk, who was Robert Webb's predecessor as Director of Music at St John's, Ranmoor and more recently taught Amy in Bristol. Amy currently leads the University Symphony

Orchestra, and some of you may already have seen her playing in a number of recent concerts at St John's.

We are also thrilled to be able to expand our strings tuition to include cello.

Lucy is a second-year Music student and has several places available to pupils of any age and standard. Please speak to your teacher if you are (or anyone you know is) interested in cello lessons.

Biographies of Amy and Lucy are available on our website.

Senior Staff

It is good news that Peter Taylor and Robert Webb have both agreed to take on senior, consultative roles with us in running the School and developing its activities. Much of what they contribute (both specifically to the Milsom School and to music-making in Sheffield) is done in their 'spare' time and unpaid; we are absolutely delighted to have two such committed musicians alongside us. We have worked closely together over the last year and share a single-minded vision to bring music to, and draw music out of as wide a range of people as possible. Pete and Robert's involvement at this level is already strengthening the quality and scope of what we are able to offer as a School and we are all confident and excited about the future!

Concerts & Performances

On Sunday 12th October, teaching staff Amy, David, Pete, Robert and Ruth gave a recital as part of a new series of concerts hosted by St John's Church. These will take place at 7.45pm on the second Sunday of the month, after the Choral Evensong service (6.30pm). Admission is free.

The next concert of this series, on Sunday 9th November, will be given by St John's Chamber Choir, directed by Robert Webb, in which David, Pete, Ruth and one of our sixth-form pupils, Sarah Noyce, all sing. Amy and Lucy will

also be involved, as will Rachel Carlile (one of David's viola students), providing string accompaniment to the choir in a number of items.

Staff and pupils of the School will also be providing music to accompany Christmas carols at the annual Outdoor 'Living Nativity' in the Ranmoor Parish Centre amphitheatre, at 6pm on Christmas Eve. This event is free, relatively short and great fun for families, so do come along!

Finally, please note the date of our Christmas Concert – 6th December, 2pm. It would be helpful for us to know sooner rather than later whether you will be coming to the concert, so that we can plan the event as well as possible.

Best wishes,

David & Ruth Milsom

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