

Notes & Notices

City of Belfast School of Music

Issue 2 : October 2004

Joe McKee writes ...



The past year has been an immensely busy one, whether for those involved with the BELB Music Service as it supports schools during the day or at the School of Music in the afternoons, evenings and weekends. Each week around 3000 young people get caught up in our activities. There were memorable concerts and recitals – including a growing number of community concerts, enjoyable residential weekends, an outstanding tour and exceptional examination results. On top of all of this work in progress, I am delighted to record that staff have been working exceedingly hard to facilitate various new development areas, all driven by an evolving music curriculum in schools. Elsewhere in this newsletter you can read of our strides into Music Technology and World Music. I'm also delighted that our enhanced Percussion Room in Porter's School is now as good as anything you'll find in the school sector in Northern Ireland and Paul Wynn, our instrument technician, has made excellent headway in seeing that our extensive stock of instruments is maintained to professional standards. Perhaps most important of all, the full-time staff have agreed to re-schedule their working hours in such a way that we shall be extending our support to around 60 additional Belfast schools in the year ahead. These are impressive achievements, not least in a difficult financial climate brought about by declining school numbers within the BELB area. In the months ahead we shall be involved in a number of special events to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the opening of the School of Music, while 2005 also marks the 50th anniversary of the founding of the City of Belfast Youth Orchestra. Please look out for a number of special events beginning in the New Year. Our website is www.cbsm.org.uk

Music Technology

In recent feedback from schools, and in response to specific requirements within the N.I. Curriculum, the School of Music has commissioned a new Music Technology Studio. Located in what had been the Percussion Room near the entrance area in the main building, the new facility has 8 PCs, a data projector, music keyboards and a range of supporting software.

Consideration was given as to whether or not the platform should be PCs or Macs, but the final decision was based on what the majority of schools in Belfast

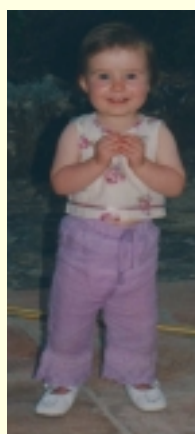


School of Music Technology Studio

are currently using. Initially the room will be used to train CBSM staff and then to broaden out to support class teachers. A number of one day courses have already been planned for the incoming year. These will be facilitated by staff members Ms Wendy Weatherup and Mrs Helen Frame. Eventually it is hoped to provide composition classes for students.

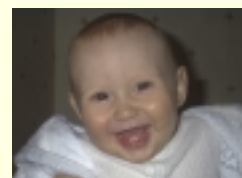
Staff News

Mrs Alison Kennedy and Mr Alan McClure left their posts in the School at the end of June 2004 to change direction in their careers; we are sorry to see them go but wish them well. Many thanks to Mrs Helen Mackie who stood in so skilfully for Alison, and congratulations to her as she now heads up the Woodwind Department. Ms Janine Close and Ms Suzanne Kendell have been appointed to the full-time staff in the Woodwind and String Departments respectively; we are delighted to have them on board. Ms Nicola Such joins the full-time staff under the umbrella of the Percussion Department and finally it's great to welcome back Ms Denise Roden to the String Department.

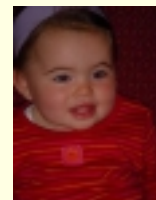


Anna McCoy

Our readers might enjoy seeing the recent arrivals mentioned in Notes and Notices Issue 1: Miss Anna McCoy, Master Robin Wynn, and Miss Grace Hamilton. Future students at the School of Music? We certainly hope so!



Robin Wynn



Grace Hamilton

Retirements



The work of three teachers who have given exceptional service to the School of Music over many years was marked at the end of June. Mr Sean Coyle and Mr William Young have each made a significant contribution to the piano

and theory departments. Both men have always been held in the highest regard, not only as gifted performers and inspiring teachers, but also as compassionate and warm-hearted colleagues. Mr Young's retirement is particularly poignant as he joined the part-time staff in 1965, the year in which CBSM first opened its doors. Mr Coyle, himself a star pupil of the legendary Mr Bertram Jones, travelled by bus from his home in Newry each week to teach his students in Belfast.

Mr Graham Nelson has had to relinquish his cello teaching, after nearly three decades, due to the re-location of the Music Department of the University of Ulster to new facilities in the City of Derry. He too will be remembered for the sensitive way in which he encouraged his many students over the years and for the genuine affection for his instrument which was clear for all to see. At an informal reception in Porter's Hall attended by many members of staff, Dr McKee spoke warmly of the work of this outstanding trio of musicians, each of whom was presented with a framed print of the CBSM building. We wish them all great happiness and fulfilment in the years ahead.

Examination Successes

Distinctions in higher grades:

March 2004

Bobbie-Leigh Herdman *piano*
Rory Boardman *violin*
Cormac Brown *trumpet*
Jonathan Boyd *tuba*
Andrew Cupples *trombone*
Elizabeth Donaghy *cello*
Emma Grimes *violin*
Richard Gibson *viola*
Laura McCarthy *cello*
Laura McGrogan *cello*
Peter Sweeney *tuba*

June 2004

Nathasha Basheer *voice*
Jonathan Carroll *Eb horn*
Kate Hainsworth *horn*
Jonathan Sproule *euphonium*
Divya Rao *theory*
Lauren Beck *theory*
Highest overall marks:
Peter Darling
100% in Theory, Grade 1
Mark McCloskey
143 marks in Jazz piano, Grade 2

World Music Specialist

As part of its response to creating wider opportunities for our young people in schools, the BELB Music Service has recently appointed a specialist in African Drumming. Ms Nicola Such, already well-known for her outstanding work with A-FREEK-A!, has joined the full-time staff. Her work will take her into a number of schools across the city where contact with the Music Service had been mostly based on curriculum support rather than instrumental tuition. As well as developing interest in World Music at school level, Nicola Such will also be recruiting around a dozen students to re-form A-FREEK-A! In the past this exciting group has played at many of the country's top festivals and venues, delighting audiences by its infectious energy and by the physical impact of its music. If you are in your teens and interested, please contact Ms Such via CBSM (tel 9032 2435) or by letter.

Profile: Nicola Such with her newly formed – A-FREEK-A!

Nicola was born in Antrim in the mid-seventies. On leaving school she studied music at Colchester School of Music and completed her PGCE at the Institute of Education, London. Her main instrument is flute, which she studied under the watchful eyes of two Colins- Colin Irvine and Colin Fleming. In 1997, whilst living in Essex, she discovered the wonderful sounds of the African Djembe, and was completely enthused by the energy and power playing such an instrument excites. In 1999 A-FREEK-A! was formed and appeared at such prestigious events as the World Cup Cricket Tournament. Nicola returned to Northern Ireland in 1997 and quickly re-formed her drumming group. Since then the group have been outright winners at both the Belfast and Ballymena Festivals. They were invited to perform for the North of England Education Conference in the Waterfront Hall, to play in the Odyssey Arena for a Youth Programme launch, and at the RDS Dublin, for a Co-Operation Ireland Cross-Community project. A-FREEK-A! has also starred at many festivals across the province. Nicola is looking for new members for this dynamic group. If you are interested please do get in touch – (see Dr McKee's article).

In any spare time that she has, Nicola enjoys horse riding, open-water swimming and socialising. She brought a different start to term for the staff when everyone got a chance to play the Djembe as part of the first INSET day, bringing smiles to faces when we were told to "hit it as hard as you like". The discovery that Dr McKee had got the Djembe with the punk hairstyle, freshly designed and created in West Africa, added a certain fun to the proceedings!

We really look forward to seeing this area of music developing in Belfast schools and CBSM in the year ahead under Nicola's guidance, and we wish her well in all her adventures.



Nicola Such introducing pupils to the delights of the Djembe drum in St. Gall's Primary School

Sale of LPs

We are rapidly running out of space in our library! To help create additional areas for sheet music and careers literature, we are proposing to move on our stock of just over 1000 vinyl LP records. These have been catalogued and show an interesting and well-maintained collection, many of them boxed sets with pristine programme and artist notes. Although a catalogue is available for selected purchases, we would much prefer to sell the entire collection as a unit, with the proceeds going to the CBSM Students' Fund. The first £1000 (ono) secures the lot! Please contact Joe McKee at jmckee.hms@btopenworld.com

Concert Band Concert Tour of Bavaria 29 June – 7 July 2004

Mr Stanley Foreman, supported as always by Mr Paul McGuigan of our administrative staff, organised another fantastic tour for our students. Stanley reports:

Forty-four students and five staff left the School of Music at 0100 on 30th June on a brand new “Chambers” 86-seater double-decker and arrived safely in Tauberbischofsheim at 1830 on 1st July.

Friday morning started with an open-air rehearsal on the volleyball court outside the youth hostel. Colin Irvine wanted to get the band used to the problems of playing outdoors. In the afternoon there was time for football, table tennis and shopping in the town.

At 1930 the entire Band assembled on the outskirts of the town to join the OldTown Festival opening parade. The annual festival would last three days and bring many thousands of people into Tauberbischofsheim. A terrible thunderstorm drenched everyone and an emergency plan was set in motion to return quickly to the hostel to get changed and dried. The full story of this and the ensuing half hour is not without humour and may be told at another time. At 2010 the Concert Band was in place in the castle square and ready to give an inspiring concert to a large appreciative audience. The Band in fact opened the town festival in style and many other local musicians clapped enthusiastically. A band conductor from Lake Como in Italy commended our musicians highly. A noisy but very enjoyable disco followed and this was a good chance for staff and students to relax.

Everyone was up early on Saturday ready for a two-hour drive to Bamberg and a meeting with the students from the Music Society of Gundelsheim. Following a sightseeing tour of this ancient and beautiful town the decision was taken for an indoor venue. What a venue! - the Congress Concert Hall - home of the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra. Colin was introduced to the Gundelsheim conductor and both men immediately hit it off! This would be a joint concert, each band taking one half of the programme and then the two bands would play two pieces together, one conducted by the German conductor, the other conducted by Colin. The standard of the German band was very high but they did not outshine the Concert Band in any way. The concert was warmly received by a responsive audience and speeches at the end reflected the



goodwill and mutual benefit of the joint venture. Members of the Gundelsheim Music Society were our hosts later in the evening and provided a sumptuous meal in their village hall.



This proved to be an excellent setting for the young people from the two bands to meet each other in an informal way. The entire Gundelsheim band joined our band on the bus to give the bus (and us!) the traditional farewell bus shake! Sunday's concert was given in the beautiful spa town of Bad Mergentheim. The venue was the superb Kurverwaltung Concert Hall. We had a very large audience and almost every seat was taken. The audience thoroughly enjoyed Colin's varied programme of music, including the classics, military marches, film music, songs from the shows and trendy pop music.

On our way back to base our new bus developed a problem, which we later discovered was to do with electrical power. Sunday night was the time for the traditional disco and tour fun and games. Everyone was suitably embarrassed!

Monday brought news that one of the alternators on our bus was “Kaput”. Another would be brought from Klobenz. Frau Schneider, however, came to the rescue and brought her bus from Kreuzwertheim to collect us.

The concert in Kreuzwertheim was a community event. The members of the Concert Band were the big brothers to the recently formed local band. As the Mayor said, “the *professionals* would inspire the inexperienced players!” The hospitality and the welcome we received from this community were truly overwhelming and I had the opportunity of saying so at the end of the concert. The final three encores brought many to the front of the stage to dance. The concert finished with a standing ovation from the entire audience!

This was the best and most memorable Concert Band Concert Tour to date and I know that all students and staff thoroughly enjoyed themselves. The quality of the performances given and the deportment of our young people brought great credit to Belfast and the music education system of the Belfast Board.

Parents' Association

The Parents' Association of the City of Belfast School of Music makes a huge contribution to the School by its Endeavour Awards and Junior Centre/ Junior Groups Awards every year. Last May the Parents Association gave a significant amount of money towards the Concert Band tour.

Proceeds from tea bars, tuck-shop and raffles at all our concerts help to raise money and the annual subscription fee is £5 per family.

New members are always welcome; it is also important to have a strong voice in the current economics of the education system, so please do consider joining. Contact Mrs L Marshall, 20 Greenwood Park, Belfast BT4 3JN – cheques should be made payable to CBSM Parents' Association.

Profile: The Singing Department

Mrs Rowena Eames, Head of the Singing Department and Junior Music Centre writes:

The Singing Department encourages people of all ages to experience the joy of singing. Our youngest singers start in the Saturday Club at the age of 7 or 8 and then continue through the Junior Music Centre, Youth Chorale and the Belfast Chorale.

We are delighted that Heather Lowry has come back to look after the Youth Chorale while Jacqui Vance is on maternity leave. We send Jacqui our good wishes and look forward to hearing news of the safe arrival of her baby very shortly.

In addition to the CBSM concerts in the Ulster Hall, the Youth Chorale and the Belfast Chorale also enjoy the opportunity to sing in other venues. Last year included singing at events in Belfast City Hall and Hillsborough Castle among others. On a smaller scale, singers, together with colleagues from the Guitar Department, were warmly welcomed at a Community Concert in Mary Magdalene Church in Donegal Pass; then with Symphonic Brass, the Choral groups gave a concert in the fine surroundings of Clonard Monastery. We look forward to another busy year, starting with recordings for two programmes of Songs of Praise in St Anne's Cathedral at the end of September.



Our students have enjoyed success at local festivals and in Associated Board examinations. We particularly congratulate Nathasha Basheer on gaining a distinction at grade 8 and also Charlotte McCurry on winning the Grand Opera House 'Pantidol' competition. Charlotte will be treading the boards as Cinderella in this year's pantomime. Look out for her! Previous CBSM students who have gone on to great acclaim include Peter Corry and Katie Melua.

In addition to performing, some of our students had a wonderful opportunity to attend a workshop at Castleward Opera in June. After an informative presentation and tour backstage, we were treated to a performance of *Albert Herring* by Benjamin Britten, which was thoroughly enjoyed by all. I would like to thank our teachers: John Dallas, Maeve Falconer, Catherine Harper and Margaret McAusland for all their hard work and contribution to the department and look forward to an exciting year ahead.

Symphonic Brass



played at Mount Stewart's Fun Day in May 2004. It was a gloriously sunny day and the crowds appreciated the talents of the group who entertained them with solos, duets and full-blooded brass music under the baton of Mr Bill Donnan.

Colin Harper



our Assistant Librarian in CBSM, would like to draw readers' attention to the publication of his second book: **Irish Folk, Trad & Blues: A Secret History**, which will be launched with a concert in the Belfast Festival at Queen's on the 5th November at 8pm in the Guinness Spot. This concert

will involve Irish rock legends Brush Shiels, Henry McCullough and Jackie McAuley. Tickets from the Festival box office are priced £10.

Colin is also producing a charity CD called **The Wildlife Album**; the proceeds will go to the Ulster Wildlife Trust and the World Wide Fund for Nature. CBSM tutors, Catherine Harper, Anita Mawhinney, Scott Heron and David Johnston will feature on it, along with recordings of other legendary international artists of folk, traditional and progressive rock. The CD will be available initially online from www.thewildlifealbum.com in November 2004.

We wish Colin every success with these ventures.

Diary Dates

See also full diary at www.cbsm.org.uk

Saturday 6 November Joint Concert of CBSM Camera and MCB Choirs
St Patrick's Church, Donegall Street, 7.30pm

Saturday 13 November *Men Against Cancer* charity event, Joint Concert with CBSM Stage Band / CBSM Camera / Melisma
St. George's, High Street 7.30pm

Thursday 25 November Rush Hour Recital
Central Library, 5.00pm

Friday 26 November Aled Jones/CBYO,
Corryduff Presbyterian Church Concert
Belfast Waterfront Hall 7.30pm

Tuesday 7 December Christmas Community Concert; Youth Chorale/Intermediate Band/Symphonic Brass
Castle High School, 7.30pm

Thursday 9 December Junior Wind Groups Family Concert
Mary Magdalene Church Hall 7.30pm

Sunday 5 December mid-afternoon Symphonic Brass
Sir Malcolm Sargent Cancer Care charity event
Central Station,

Monday 13 and Tuesday 14 December Carol Parties
Ulster Hall 10.30am (to be confirmed)

Wednesday 15 December CBSM Christmas Concert
Ulster Hall, 7.30pm

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