

# HAMPTON S C H O O L MUSIC S O C I E T Y

SPRING  
TERM  
REVIEW  
2024

## Dear Greatly Appreciated HSMS Members,

This Spring Newsletter, in which Hampton musicians summarise and highlight their many and varied endeavours, is the perfect 'display cabinet' for musical life at Hampton! You will discover, amongst a veritable smorgasbord of items, 'The Monty Fletcher Experience', inspired by the legendary Jimi Hendrix, the multi-school choir rendition of the Billie Eilish song 'What Was I Made For', and Japanese Sakura performed by Colin Yeung. Not to be outdone the chamber concert delivered a number of pieces, including the 'Grandstand' theme,

presumably to provide some nostalgia for those parents, like me, within the 'delightfully mature' segment of the Hampton parent age range! The joint Choral Society included a debut performance based on the stories from the Old Testament whilst Unsilenced III focused on music written by female composers. The keyboard festival section alone has enough material for a whole newsletter! Please do enjoy and savour the sheer breadth and depth of musical engagement highlighted and many thanks for your continued support.

*Mark Morrison, HSMS Chair*

## Spring's Rock Concert

From Polyphia to Deftones, the 2023 Winter Rock Concert, held on 26 January 2024, hit the Hammond Theatre by storm, as musicians from all years raised the roof. Parents, teachers, pupils and friends alike were treated to a plethora of electrifying music, with something for everyone.

This year I had the honour of being appointed as the host of the rock concert along with my dear friend Vishal Saha, and what an experience it was.

I was blown away by the sheer talent on display that night, with several highlights of note. Firstly, the junior band ECLIPSE took me by surprise, as they came out onto the stage with passion and excitement for their performance. Playing their original song 'Shadows', ECLIPSE delivered a truly impressive display of both showmanship and musicianship, setting a tremendous standard for the following acts. Their original song was incredibly well thought out and planned, and I hope there will be more originals to come down the line in future rock concerts.

Another standout performance for me was 'The Monty Fletcher Experience', with a clever play on words, the Jimi Hendrix inspired band delivered a captivating and energetic performance of one of the most notoriously difficult songs to play in the rock world – Voodoo Child. But my word, did they do it justice. Despite only three in the band, Monty and his bandmates lit up the theatre, with extravagant costumes and a scintillating guitar solo by Monty himself, even playing the guitar with his teeth! Certainly, a performance to get you off your seat.



*Zac in his element!*



*The Senior Rock Band headline the show*

Finally, perhaps the most technically impressive performance of the night was the band 'Polyphony' playing O.D. by Polyphia. I was enthralled by Rohan's dancing fingers as they raced across his guitar, bringing the song and his instrument to life. Despite all its technical brilliance, Polyphony produced an exceedingly brilliant and memorable performance that I hope to see again.

The Winter Rock Concert was an experience like no other, and it was a pleasure to not only host and be a part of, but also to watch and appreciate the incredible talent on display in our school. Cheers to the next one!

*Milo Band, upper sixth*



*Mr Ferrier conducting the ISSP Orchestra*



*Miss van Ments leads the huge String Orchestra*

## Hampton hosts music day with neighbouring schools

On 30 January 2024, a number of schools were invited to Hampton to perform in a massive concert. There was a string orchestra, a woodwind ensemble, a choir and many solo acts. The concert also featured a rock band playing Foo Fighters and a beautiful rendition of 'Valerie.' There were also classical pieces, including violin and many other instruments. Then, the ensembles performed.

The choir, which I was part of, sang two pieces, the first was a Queen medley and the second was 'What Was I Made For' by Billie Eilish from the Barbie movie, both of which were really fun.

I personally loved singing with people from other schools, even if there were only five or six tenors and basses.

The string orchestra and the woodwind ensemble played amazingly too, with the string orchestra playing a tango which I really loved.

The concert ended in a fantastic closing number called 'Sunday' from the musical 'Sunday in the Park with George', an apt number to end a huge concert. It involved all the ensembles and (I think) sounded really good.

The music day is a great way to meet and make music with many musicians from other schools. Having only a day to prepare this many pieces was very challenging, but it all came together really well, with massive help and guidance from the teachers, who must need so much patience to deal with all of us!

*Arun Swales, fourth year*



*Oliver in control of percussion!*



*The ISSP Orchestra*

## Fifty Strings

The String Concert took place in the Hammond Theatre on 1 February 2024 when more than 50 players from the Hampton strings department participated, playing a variety of instruments including guitar, violin, viola, cello, double bass and even the harp, which is a new instrument to the department.

The evening started with solo performances with players from the first year all the way up to the upper sixth presenting a range of repertoire from intermediate to advanced.

There were a variety of different and interesting performances; for example, Colin Yeung, a first year, played a mesmerising unaccompanied traditional Japanese style piece called 'Sakura', arranged by Millar; Pierce Bishop, a second year, played the only viola piece of the evening, an energetic and confident scherzo by Brahms, and Yangzi Tjoe, the leader of the Hampton symphony orchestra, performed twice, a solo Wieniawski concerto movement on the violin and then the beautiful piece 'Mountain Stream' by Kanga on the harp.

My performance was the first movement from Bach's violin concerto in A minor - it was such a fantastic experience playing on the Hammond stage, in front of a big audience. I really enjoyed it.

As a finale, all of the string players in Hampton, no matter the level of their experience, joined together to play 'The Fiddler's Hill' by J. Moore, and was such a cool opportunity because we got to play in a huge string orchestra, all making music together. We would like to say a massive thank you to Miss Van Ments and all the other music staff for organising this special evening.

*James Nunn*



*The Big String Orchestra*



*Leo impressing the audience with his stunning sound*

After school on 1 February, many brilliant musicians took part in the rehearsal for Miss Van Ment's Big String Orchestra, the final one before the performance. I was taking part in two performances, the Big Orchestra and a solo piece, only my second at Hampton. As you can imagine, I was very nervous, but listening to the other brilliant performances helped calm me. I took to the stage, and put all my energy into the performance, and overall, I think it went quite well, despite my previous doubts.

Hearing all the brilliant performances, it really showed me what I could achieve at Hampton with all the opportunities available.

Then came the time for the main part of the concert, 'Fiddlers Hill', which is a great piece, combining folk and classical music to form a brilliant, fast-paced tune. I played in the Subdominants, and it was just a great experience performing in front of hundreds of people with a big group of musicians. I had never really done something on that scale before.

*Magnus Findlay*

## Chamber Concert's Sixty

Around sixty musicians from the music department played in the Chamber music concert that took place in the Hammond on 5 March 2024 in small groups ranging from string quartets to large wind and brass ensembles. Some of these groups had recently represented the school at the South East Chamber Music Competition and this concert gave the musicians the chance to share their repertoires with a wider audience.

The trombone ensemble, directed by Mr Horden, began the evening with three diverse pieces, including a baroque score by William Byrd and also featuring the theme from 'Grandstand'. They were followed by the clarinet ensemble of ten clarinetists playing e-flat, b-flat and bass clarinets - they played a swinging 'American Patrol' by Meacham. After that, there were a variety of different and interesting performances; for example, the senior guitar ensemble consisting of Ishaan Das, Max Carter and Daniel Tresidder played two contrasting pieces: the joyful 'Tico Tico no Fuba' by Abreau and the spirited 'Libertango' by Piazzola.

Shortly after the interval, my string quartet played the humorous, energetic Haydn's String Quartet in G, Op.64 number 4, and finally, to round off the evening, one of the most senior, advanced chamber groups in the school, played the challenging and inspiring 'Piano Trio' in G minor, Op.15, no 4 by Sme tana.

*Trombone Ensemble*



*String Quartet*

It was such a special event and I can't wait to play in the concert next year!

*James Nunn, second year*

## Unsilenced III

With a plethora of pupils and staff in attendance, the third anniversary of the Unsilenced Concert was held in the Hammond on 8 February 2024, and is a concert to celebrate music written by women composers.

Music from various periods of time spanning from the Baroque Era right up to the modern 20th century were played by numerous performers with flair, from the likes of Angela Morley to Elisabeth di Gambarini.

The spectacle contained virtuosic performances by the Clarinet Ensemble, who played a spectacular rendition of 'Danse Creole' by

## Joint Choral Society's Concert

The joint Hampton and LEH choral society's 2024 concert, held on 16 March, was once again a great success, including a fantastic performance from both a talented orchestra and choir. With thanks to the ever-reliable volunteer parents and the support of professional solo singers, the night was one to remember, displaying what months of hard work and time in the rehearsal room can produce.

The first half of the concert started with a bang, showing renditions of well-known film scores, the famous oratorio 'Davide Penitente' by Mozart.

The second half of the night, however, took a rather different tune, as we had the pleasure of performing the debut of an original work by LEH's very own Mr Ashe, 'The Waters'. Based on texts from the Old Testament, it took a whistle stop tour through stories such as that of the Creation and Noah's Ark; all to a dramatic and grandiose composition.

Learning the intricate parts was a challenging yet rewarding task, but thanks to the masterful guidance of the music departments all the musicians involved were thoroughly prepared for the night.

Many thanks to all involved in the work that went into setting up the performance and helping to put on a memorable night for all.

*Ben Williams, lower sixth*



*Mr Ashe with the Joint Choral Society*

Chaminade; the Consort of Voices performed 'Upon You Heart' by Eleanor Daley, and the piano-bassoon duet of Alex and Dominic Nelson, played 'Llama's Lullaby' by Ruth Gipps.

In general, the concert was an immense success and provided a platform for music from a range of female composers to be heard which was not often the case as many were silenced or unable to truly express their work.

Last, but not least, the concert could not have been possible without the aid and coordination of Mr Oyarzabal, who worked tirelessly to create this masterpiece of a concert.

*Leo Ma, fifth year*

# KEYBOARD FESTIVAL

## Introduction to the Harpsichord

In March the school ran an introductory course on the harpsichord that was led by Mr Oyarzabal, when we were taught about the history of the harpsichord in the Baroque era and the many different composers who used it through the eras, such as Handel.



Its history is very unique; however I also found that learning about the internals of a harpsichord was equally as fascinating. The inability to change the dynamics, the dampers – like the piano – and the fewer strings because of the weaker wooden casing, are all examples of the mechanics of this instrument.

Learning about the different styles of harpsichord, such as the Italian or French models, also proved illuminating; for example, the French models sounded drastically different as well as having two keyboards.

We were allowed to play pieces on the harpsichord and the differences when compared to music played on a modern piano is very noticeable as these pieces often sound 'foreign' on a harpsichord. We had an opportunity to consolidate our knowledge in a final quiz that encompassed both the theory and practice, which proved a lot of fun.

*Gabriel Knowles-Szuniewicz, second year*

## Tips on being an accompanist

Mr Tong's "Tips on being an accompanist" workshop was one to attend. As a pianist myself, it is often quite rare that we get a chance to play in an ensemble setting, however accompanying others can be a really fun and simple way of playing with others.

It is always good to know what not to do, as demonstrated in the beginning of the workshop: no communication at all. Mr Tong had made it clear the communication between both the performer and accompanist is vital in order to build a strong musical relationship that will help to convey the music more strongly.



One fundamental example is tuning: knowing what different instruments tune to and how their comfortable range can make for a versatile accompanist. Another example is having a good understanding of the style and character of the piece. Whether it is the use

of the sustain pedal in romantic pieces or more focus on articulation in baroque pieces, and of course, not playing too loudly over the soloist.

Overall, it was a very valuable workshop, especially if you are a pianist as it can also help you to improve your general musical ability and different techniques.

*Theo Tang, third year*

## Workshop memorising your piano pieces

As part of the Keyboard Festival, this workshop session focused on how to memorise your piano pieces.

Pianists learnt that it was much easier to memorise a smaller section of music with hands either separately or hands together than a bigger section of music. As for the left hand, which is usually made of quavers or semiquavers as broken chords, pianists were told to write down the

## Piano teacher plays the Wigmore Hall

As we walked down Wigmore Street, we were all very excited as we were going to see a concert at the wonderful Wigmore Hall in London, but this was no ordinary concert as Mr Oyarzabal, Hampton's piano teacher, was playing in the concert.

Wigmore Hall is a special venue noted for its classical music heritage with concert goers welcomed by its red carpet and plants on the many entrance hall pillars and inside the hall there were many beautiful friezes on the walls.

On the stage stood a large Steinway piano ready for Mr Oyarzabal

name of the chords just below the broken chord made out of quavers. This approach made it much easier to memorise. The left hand is also usually quite repetitive (for example, with the same broken chords with every phrase, which is around eight bars). For the right hand, which is usually the melody, it can be quite repetitive, and should just stick in your head if you play it a few times, as the melody is the main tune and is very easy to remember. Additionally, fingerings for every note in the right hand were a focus so that it made them easier to play. It was a fantastic workshop experience and very useful.

*Oliver Yang, second year*

## Competition, class 1

I was very excited during the run up to this competition – I had been doing lots of practice ahead of the class one auditions, and the winner would win a trophy. My piece was called 'Tango III' (Argentine) by a composer called Matyas Seiber, which is very dramatic and lively.

I was slightly nervous as I went into the practice room where Mr Roland was going to judge us, luckily, I got to have a couple of practices before he started the audition. Once I had finished, I was very pleased with my performance but wasn't sure whether I had done enough to get through to the finals.

A few days later I realised I had got through and I was very happy and excited, so, I kept practising hard until the day came for the finals.

There were seven of us in the finals and we all played different pieces, some of them I recognised and some not. They were all very good, and knew it was all or nothing for me but once I started playing I got into the mood and think it was the best I'd ever played, so I was very proud of my performance.

A few hours later, when I discovered that I had won, I was very excited! Everyone played very well, and I can't wait to audition for next year's competition.

*Reuben Nicolson, first year*

## Piano Recital with Danny Driver

Danny Driver, a renowned professional pianist, visited Hampton on 15 March when he delivered a masterclass to a small number of Hampton pupils, but in the evening, he also delivered an amazing piano recital in the Hammond Theatre.



The recital started with an opening speech from Danny Driver when he gave an overview of the pieces he was about to play in the first half. His first piece, 'Darknesse Visible', by Thomas Adès, contained lots of repeated notes, which Danny played with speed while still maintaining clarity.

His second piece, 'Nocturne No. 6 in D flat', by Gabriel Fauré, was very calming, yet with lots of variation in dynamics, and which were not out of place in the Romantic period.

The third piece that night, 'Etude No. 4 Fanfares' by György Ligeti has an endless motif that is constantly changing octaves, along with chords so dissonant that it was amusing. Danny made the piece look like improvisation, especially with the seemingly random chords.

The final piece before the interval was 'Sonata No. 9 'Black Mass'', by Alexander Scriabin; this piece has differing characters throughout the entire length, but Danny Driver breezed through them.

After the interval, Danny introduced Bach's 'Goldberg Variations'; he proceeded to play its Aria, all 30 variations, and the Aria another time (Aria da capo). The use of the pedal was a welcome addition, despite these variations being from the Baroque period. The Variations were not as contrasting to each other as the 'Black Mass Sonata' was, but they were still quite different to each other.

Overall, my favourite piece was the 'Fanfares Etude', as the dissonance was amusing to me.

This recital really was an incredible end to the Keyboard Festival; many thanks to Danny Driver for performing to us, and also Mr Roland for the organisation.

*Nileeth Gwalla, third year*

who was accompanied by a lady called Natasha Loges who read aloud a number of imaginary letters between the different pieces.

It was amazing that Mr Oyarzabal was able to play all of the music from memory and incidentally his whole programme featured music composed by women.

We all really enjoyed the concert, the imaginary letters were fascinating and gave me an insight into the attitudes and events of the time. This was a fantastic experience and a great concert and congratulations to Mr Oyarzabal!

*Reuben Nicolson, first year*

## Jazz Café serves another ace

The first day of March marked the day of the annual Jazz Café, but this year it was turning from a jazz café concert to a whole jazz day. All of the pupils involved in both jazz ensembles, swing band and jazz band were able to attend jazz workshops in the afternoon delivered by a visiting professional jazz quintet.

These workshops were based on key jazz skills, mostly focusing on improvisation and playing by ear, and using both of these skills, everyone learnt a song together by ear with the help of the jazz quintet which was performed later in the concert.



The Pro band with our young musicians

Shortly after the workshops, the time came for the concert that the jazz ensembles had been working on since September. The concert was split into two halves: the jazz band and swing band played one set in each half as well as the visiting quintet, who played their own set; a special guest singer sang a number, and then everyone played the song that they had been working on in the workshops.

The idea of a whole jazz day was a great idea and everyone had a great time with both the workshops and the concert.

*Harry Skeffington, third year*

## News and Information...

To keep updated with the wealth of musical performances and achievements from Hampton boys please look to the following for up to date information and images between now and the next edition of the newsletter: [www.hamptonschool.org.uk/music](http://www.hamptonschool.org.uk/music) Music Department can be found on twitter @Hampton\_Music and as a webpage <http://twitter.com/HamptonSchool>

## Accessing online...

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Scan the QR code from your phone or tablet to go straight there.



# STAFF INTERVIEW

with Jamie Akers, classical guitar teacher



### How did you become a teacher?

After leaving college I mostly travelled around playing music. When my son was born, I thought I had better get a regular income so I applied for some guitar teaching jobs, including at LEH which led me to work at Hampton. Having had no teaching experience, I still managed to get all the jobs I applied for.

### Please tell us about your music degree / education.

I have a diploma in jazz studies from Napier University Edinburgh. I then studied for a BMus degree in guitar and lute at the Royal College of Music, after which I did a masters degree in baroque guitar and lute. I finished up as a junior fellow at Trinity College of Music for which I received a postgraduate advanced diploma in musical performance.

### How did you come to join the music department at Hampton?

I was on holiday in Portugal one summer when I received a message on Facebook from the music administrator at Hampton asking me if I would cover some teaching at Hampton because they had more pupils applying than could be accommodated. She said it would probably be for about one term, and that was 11 years ago!

### What are your responsibilities within the music department?

I teach one-on-one guitar lessons.

### Do you take any whole-class music lessons?

Not at school level, I do some visiting lecturing at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland which involves bigger groups.

### Tell us about your own musical journey growing up?

My first musical experience was playing tenor horn in Peebles Burgh Silver Band. Aged 10, my appendix ruptured so I wasn't allowed to play horn or do sports at school. My primary school teacher started teaching me some chords on the guitar while the other children were doing PE. For a few years I taught myself to play using books and listening to music, initially rock and blues then jazz and finally classical. I taught myself to read music and tried to copy techniques from watching videos. My high school music teacher heard me play and persuaded Border's regional council to employ a guitar teacher so I could have lessons. I played in rock bands, jazz ensembles, big bands, musicals and with orchestras, it was quite a broad range of experience overall.

### Is there a musician you particularly admire?

Stanislav Hvartchilcov.

### If someone wants to learn a musical instrument, what advice would you give?

Be patient and methodical, learn to enjoy the process of learning and exploring your instrument and its music. Approach technique like a scientist, observing carefully, solving issues with dispassionate curiosity. Be willing to listen to and learn from a broad range of sources.

### Are there any top tips for those wanting to pursue a professional music career?

Turn up on time, be friendly, likeable, polite and willing to try out new things. Be a good colleague and reliable employee and people will want to hire you.

### Do you still get an opportunity to perform?

Yes, I do a mixture of things: I have a reasonable sized solo career and have released several solo albums, mostly of obscure nineteenth century guitar music. I play with a few chamber music groups, early music ensembles and singers. I played for a lot of operas and theatre and recently worked on soundtrack recordings for series for Netflix, Amazon Prime and Sky.

### What advice would you give to a boy who wants to study music?

Be committed, it's not an easy option. Studying music is a big commitment and you will have to make many sacrifices, so if you are going to do it, be sure and then really go for it.

### What artists have inspired you?

Julian Bream, Django Reinhardt, Angelo Debarre, Jakob Lindberg, Paul O'Dette, Joe Pass, John McLaughlin, Tony Iommi, Edward Van Halen.

### Which one piece of music would you choose for your Desert Island?

'Farewell Fantasia' by John Dowland.

### And your Desert Island luxury?

An espresso machine.

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