



Clarinet Ensemble entertain residents of Linwood Care Home

## CHAIRS' LETTER

Dear Members,

A very Happy New Year and wishing you all a healthy and music-filled 2020!

The AGM held last November saw changes to the HSMS committee. Full details are on the website but we would like to thank Janet Wood for her tremendous dedication as Chair, and Matt Skeaping for his contribution as Vice Chair. Janet and Matt will remain on the committee in supporting roles. Melissa Foux and Celia Lucas (joint Membership Secretaries) move into the role of co-Chairs and we welcome Catherine Cundy (Membership Secretary) to the committee.

The term was busy starting with the New Boys' Concert and leading up to the Christmas Concerts. The final event of the term, the Festival of Lessons and Carols at St Mary's Church, was a joyful affair, the perfect celebration to put us all into the Christmas mood.

We look forward to seeing many of you at the Spring Term concerts. The two main events are the Jazz Café and the Joint Choral Society concert, both in March. Before then, however, we will be treated to an eclectic mix of rock and chamber music as well as the Junior Musical performance of *The Wizard of Oz*.

With thanks to all our members for your support of the HSMS.

*Melissa Foux and Celia Lucas, HSMS Co-Chairs*



## 'Return To the Forbidden Planet' Musical

It took a stellar directing team to successfully pull off the Rock Musical *Return To The Forbidden Planet*; a daring mixture of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and 60's rock 'n' roll songs.

In addition, the six weeks of rehearsal involved a lot of hard work, to say the least! However, Director Miss. Torrent's vision of the characters quickly came to life, and her creative guidance provided a deeper understanding of the crew of the spaceship, The Albatross. Meanwhile, Mrs. Tait kept the dancers working rigorously, until they were moving with pin-point precision. Last but not least, MD Mrs. Ashe's masterful musical training of the cast ensured the authenticity of classic songs such as *Great Balls of Fire*, *She's Not There* and *Good Vibrations*.

The crew of the Albatross were soon ready for 'lift-off', with the destination being a week of performances on the mysterious planet D'Illyria! Audiences were treated to a vibrant, energetic performance with everything a good story needs: betrayal, unrequited love and bravery. The two secret ingredients, to quote Mrs. Ashe, were without any doubt 'pizzazz and chutzpah'. Sadly, it wasn't long until The Albatross and her crew said their final goodbyes at the final performance!

It was a great honour and privilege to take part in such an astounding musical, a sentiment that I know was shared with the whole cast. On paper, *Return To The Forbidden Planet* shouldn't work at all, but when you add superb creative visions, incredible energy and the camaraderie of a cast who became close friends faster than you can say 'reverse polarity', there was no way the show could fail to please.

*Oscar Leonov (L6ELE)*

## Classical Spectacular

A mixture of excitement and anticipation mingled in my stomach as we boarded the coach in the near darkness. Our destination: the renowned Royal Albert Hall to witness the Classical Spectacular, a series of famous classical pieces performed by a flawless orchestra. Impatiently, we waited as the bus dawdled towards our destination, hindered by seemingly endless traffic jams and red lights.

After a quick headcount, we entered the magnificent building and climbed a multitude of stairs before stepping out to a sight that would never cease to amaze; a gigantic arena of glorious red and gold chairs as well as an entire orchestra, smartly dressed and ready to take us on an unforgettable journey.

The lights suddenly went dim and a single blazing spotlight fell upon the stage; the concert had begun! The first piece was an exhilarating tune, awe-inspiring to watch as it was accompanied by surreal laser effects that made us all gasp. From that moment on, everybody knew that that was in store for us would exceed our expectations. The pieces evoked a range of emotions, from pride and joy – as was the case with *Rule Britannia* – to sorrow and loss. As the concert pulled later into the night, a drowsy feeling began to overcome us and we were lulled by the rhythm and beauty of the music - indeed some of us even fell asleep! However, the ending would change all this; a deafening yet almighty display of mesmerising fireworks as well as fiery cannons accompanied Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture*, and left many Hamptonians feeling rather traumatised! Just as we envisioned the concert drawing to a close, a shower of red, white and blue balloons rained down and fell upon a joyous audience; the perfect way to round off a night.

*Joshi Rasi de Mel (1P)*



Outside the Albert Hall

## Keyboard Concert

With the Steinway moved to the centre of the stage, lid open, the scene was set for the Keyboard Concert which took place on Tuesday 12th November. Prior to settling into the Hammond Theatre, the audience were treated to a Couperin organ piece played in the Main Hall by Sathin Wijesena.

Back in the Hammond, Nick Stoner began with a challenging and strident Chopin piece by Schoenberg. Piers Marchant then followed with the lyrical Chopin *Prelude in B minor*.

Tejas Sivaram then performed *Passepied* by Delibes, a jovial piece with a Middle Eastern flavour. This was a great performance, particularly given that Tejas is only in his second year at Hampton. Then came the difficult *Rhapsody in G minor* by Brahms. Matthew Cresswell pulled off an impressive delivery, before Jack Lucas thrilled the audience with Beethoven's *Allegro* from *Sonata No. 1*.

Aitor McConnell then changed the mood with a version of Billy Strayhorn's *Take the A Train*. This was a jovial version of the piece, adopting George Sherwin style block chords – Aitor had a smile on his face as he played the one jazz piece in an otherwise classical evening!

Tristan Robinson then also performed the Chopin *B minor Prelude*, and delivered a majestic rendition. William O'Brien, another second year, followed with *Solfeggiato* by CPE Bach. Thomas Escobar then played *Gigue* from *English Suite No. 2* by J.S. Bach. This performance was very tuneful, rhythmic with good dynamics. Johnny Evans-Hutchison's subsequently played *Serenade sur l'eau* by Ibert, which was more atonal in style. Elliot Cundy then performed P. Scunthorpe's *Sonatina No. 1*. I found this a particularly lyrical and atmospheric performance.

To conclude the first half came a Rachmaninov arrangement of the *Flight of the Bumblebee*, played by James Abrahart. To embark on such a challenging piece in the third year was impressive to say the least, and this brought a spectacular end to the first half.

Yann Luk started the second half with a Mozart *Allegro*, crisply



James Abrahart delighting the audience

played. Freddy Liang then took up the mantle for Chopin's *Etude No. 4*. Next came Thomas Skeffington, with a lyrical performance of *Un Phare dans le Brouillard*.

Sam Power played the *Presto* from Beethoven's *Sonata in G* – accurately and with great dynamic range. Poulenc's *Improvisation* came next, performed emotively by Daniel Morgan. A second Chopin *Etude* was then tackled by Pranav Santhosh, a fast and tense performance. Harry Spence performed the *Gigue* from Handel's *Suite No. 8* with great precision. Cameron Marshall then performed *Elegie Op3* by Rachmaninov, a very soulful and passionate performance of a challenging piece.

Next came one of Parry's *Shubrede Tunes* played by Viduna Diyasena, very measured and controlled. Pallav Bagchi performed the *Allegro* from Beethoven's *Sonata Pathetique* – this was a long and difficult piece, expertly played. The evening concluded with *Ave Maria* by Liszt, majestically performed by Stephon Umashangar.

Many of the above pieces are played by concert pianists. It is, as always, incredible to believe there is such a wealth of talent in one school.

Stuart Skeffington

## St Cecilia's Day Concert

What a charming evening! So many lovely performances that I can only give you thumbnail sketches of each, but if you've not been to a St Cecilia's Day concert before, you should definitely consider it.

Dylan Little produced a classical French saxophone sound in Singelée's *Concertino* - smooth and charming, while Matthew Cresswell gave us a spirited, crisply articulated rendition of a movement from Beethoven's *C Minor Piano Sonata*. Thomas Wyke's hugely enjoyable clarinet playing was full of style and swing in Goodman's *Flying Home*, followed by a technically assured performance of Goltermann's *Capriccio* by cellist Dylon Singah.

The first section was rounded off by pianist Daniel Morgan, playing Poulenc's charming *Improvisation No. 3* from memory, which enhanced a very refined sense of improvisation in his performance.

After the starter course French Horn player, Henry Ward, performed Vintner's *Hunter's Moon*, absolutely flawlessly. He produced a super sound and a wide range of colours with effortless musicality. Alexander O'Sullivan followed with a performance of Drdla's *Souvenir*, and Sathin Wijesena with a recitative and aria from Handel's *Judas Maccabaeus*.

I really enjoyed trumpeter, Adam Wood's bright tone and crisp articulation in Goeyen's *Fantasie Dramatique*, with a particularly impressive final section.

Hindemith is a difficult composer to interpret but pianist, Jack Lucas, gave a deeply felt, highly musical performance of his *Ludus Tonalis*, with expressive and clear delineation of the contrapuntal lines and body language that enhanced the performance.



Diners enjoying Thomas Wyke's clarinet playing

## Choirs for Change

The Choirs for Change Concert was held at the Hammond Theatre on 15th November, and included the Boys' Choir from Hampton as well as several other choirs from local schools. The aim of the concert was to raise money (from tickets) for the charity Health, Poverty, Action. We were really excited to raise over £500!

The first school to perform was Twickenham School who started the concert with a bang! Next up was the Hampton School Boys' Choir singing *Rhythm of Life* and *Shotgun*. We then heard from Hampton Hill Junior School and Waldegrave. Finally, The Holles Singers from LEH ended the concert with a fantastic number written by their composer in residence, pianist Brendan Ashe.

Overall, the Choirs for Change Concert was a great experience for me, as it undoubtedly also was for the others who took part.

Adi Timblo (2W)

I feel the audience should have risen to their feet before the main course and danced the night away to the Latin rhythms of Piazzolla's *Spanish Joint!* Saul Morrison's double bass partnered wonderfully with the piano, with an exposed opening solo and a palpable sense of confidence throughout.

After the main course Thomas Williams opened with Mozart's *Flute Quartet No. 1*, producing a good tone and sense of line. Sam Spence gave us the lovely *Nocturne in E flat* by Chopin, and Nick Stoner's pleasing tenor voice shone in Durante's *Danza, danza, fanciulla gentile*.

Two more piano performances concluded the evening, first Stephon Umashangar with Liszt's *Ave Maria*. Stephon conveyed subtle light and shade, pulling us in to his highly committed performance, and with a good feeling for structure.

The word 'chutzpah' ran strongly in my mind as Max Elliott jazzed his way through the squasy harmonies of Makhholm's *Trois Impressions*, played from memory.

Huge praise to Mr. Tong, the evening's accompanist, who supported the performances with ease. And of course to Chef, who served some delightful food. Congratulations all!

Andrew Brixey-Williams

## Christmas Concert 2

The proceedings started with the Voices of Lions: a fantastic opener to an evening of superb musical entertainment from the Hampton students in the Hammond Theatre. With the boys clearly enjoying every moment, they delivered a pitch-perfect piece called *Here Comes Santa Claus*.

Next up was the Swing Band, conducted by Mr. Fox, playing *Nothing from Nothing*, an upbeat rocky number, with an accomplished trumpet solo, fabulous brass swells and dramatic diminuendos.

This was followed by the Chamber Choir singing *Stars* by Esenvalds; confident, tight and smooth in delivery, conveying emotions, and thoroughly absorbing. This was particularly so with their second tune: *Underneath the Stars* which had a haunting and melancholic solo voice introduction accompanied by the eerie sounds of singing wine glasses (you had to be there!). This morphed into big choral sound, with some lovely warm jazz-influenced harmonies.

The Consort of Voices followed with a Christmas medley of favorites: *Dingdong Merrily on High* but with a twisted take on *Gloria in Excelsis*, which became *We Wish You A Merry Christmas*. Given the absence of a conductor, this group showed sensitivity and accomplishment as they changed volume and speed en masse, with great accuracy and steadiness.

Before thoughts of the promised mulled wine and mince pies in the interval could distract my attention, a sprightly young violinist jumped on stage and introduced the next act, with some very good humor.



First Year Choir, Christmas Concert 1

## New Boys' Concert

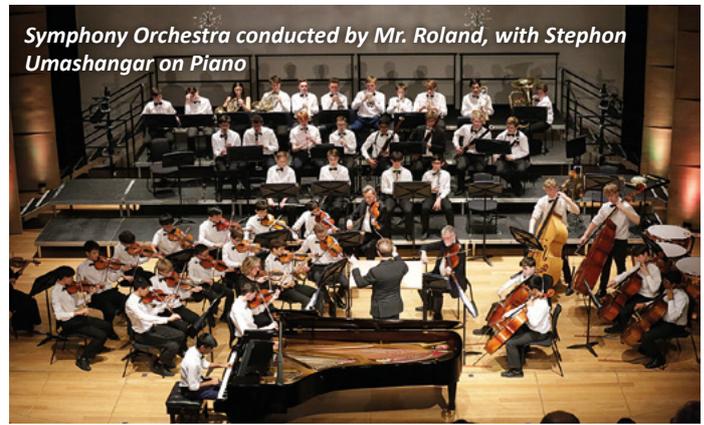
47 brave boys took part in the New Boys' Concert in the magnificent Hammond Theatre on Thursday 7th November. A large range of instruments were played, from the trumpet and oboe to the drum kit and double bass, and the repertoire that the boys offered was varied and exciting. Pieces from popular culture included the James Bond theme played on the French Horn by Erik Domsodi, *Fly Me To The Moon* sung by Harry Swain, *Hedwig's Theme on the Trombone* played by Charlie Puczniec and *Wonderwall* performed as a duet by Felix Landricombe on guitar and Louis Wright who was singing. There were also two fantastic performances on the drum kit consisting of Kravitz's *Are You Gonna Go My Way* played by Edward Reilly and Griffiths and Bowld's *Tiberius*, played by Avi Bhatt.

Other performances included Falak Sher playing *Old Town Road*

## Woodwind Concert

The wind quintet opened the night with two movements of Malcolm Arnold's humorous and playful *Three Sea Shanties* which left a smile on the audiences faces. This was followed by the first soloist of the evening, Ronit Raj, who played *Lamplight* by Ned Bennett; this slow and relaxing piece helped the audience to relax after the fast and energetic movement *What shall we do with the Drunken Sailor* of Arnold's sea shanties. The audience were then treated to the first solo clarinetist: Theo Webb playing *The Wistful Shepherd* by Raybould; this slow jazz-like piece was played with sensitivity. The Hampton Flute group then provided some contrast by playing Hook's *Sonata for Three Flutes*. Theo Shah played Stanford's *Intermezzo No 2* on the clarinet. Rohan Crowe then played *Bagatelle* on the bassoon. Mrs. Jaggard, Miss. Estall, Mr. Fox, Mr. Oyazabal and Henry Ward closed the first half with a performance of the first movement of Mozart's *Quintet for Piano and Winds* which left the audience looking forward to more music in the second half.

The Reeders opened the second half with an arrangement for clarinet quartet of a suite from the *Threepenny Opera* by Kurt Weil. Arjun Kang then played *Sarabande et Allegro* by Gabriel Grovlez on the saxophone. Following this Saul Morrison and Sam Schomberg played the first duet of the evening on two clarinets; the first movement from Bernhard Crussell's elegant *Duet No.1 in F*. Thereafter, the newly formed



Symphony Orchestra conducted by Mr. Roland, with Stephon Umashangar on Piano

"What are you clapping for? We haven't started yet!" he began. With the crowd warmed up, the Chamber Orchestra assembled, and directed by Miss. Van Ments, they began a marvelous rendition of movements from the *Capriol Suite* by Warlock. It was a feast of different moods and flavors, culminating in 'Mattachins' – with its wonderful dissonance and vigorous energy. This was followed by *Tico Tico* – a jolly and capricious calypso.

After the interval the Symphony Orchestra conducted by Mr. Roland performed the *Hansel and Gretel Overture* by Humperdink – an exciting piece with many twists and turns of texture, which left me spellbound. This was followed by *Piano Concerto in A Minor, Op. 16* by Grieg with Stephon Umashangar taking on the keyboard challenge – and wow, what a challenge! His execution was bold and emotive and the orchestra utterly captivating.

The finale was, of course, some rousing carols sung by us, the audience, with the added treat of a large orchestra accompanying and an expert conductor directing.

Matt Skeaping

on the guitar, Jian Graffe playing *Suite No. 1* by J.S.Bach on the cello and Hector Raoux playing *Dance of The Raindrop* on the descant recorder. There was a grand total of 18 piano solos, including pieces by Beethoven, Handel, Telemann and Haydn.

Performing in such a large concert can be a very nerve-racking experience; I know this as I was one of the many performers! I chose to play Piazzolla's lively *Kicho* on the double bass. Walking out on to such a large stage gave me incredible butterflies. Ploughing through the technically demanding piece, I tried to resist the urge to play faster. In the end though, I had a great sense of achievement as I walked off stage with the audience clapping.

This fantastic concert would not have been possible without the hard work of the music department, the theatre management, and the brilliant piano accompanist Mr. Tong.

Elliot Cundy (1H)

bassoon group entertained the audience with some Gilbert and Sullivan; for our stage debut we played an arrangement of *Madrigal* from *The Mikado*. Tom Wykes then played *Selanka* by Fibich.

The audience was subsequently transported to the jazz age by the Improvisation Group with Kenny Dorham's *Blue Bozza*. Theo Mantel played an arrangement for flute and piano of the first movement of Mozart's *Flute Quartet in D major*. The clarinet ensemble closed the show with arrangements of *Funeral March of a Marionette* and *Helen's Dance* by Charles Gounod. The main theme conveyed in these last pieces were the clumsy and artificial-looking movements of a marionette, and they provided a satisfying end to the evening.

Many thanks to Mr. Oyazabal for accompanying on piano throughout the evening, and to Miss. Estall for her key part in organising the event.

Sathin Wijesena (L6GHC)



Arjun Kang on saxophone

# '10 Minute' Interview

with Lizzie Esser  
Head of Academic Music



**Q: Can I please start off by discussing your specific responsibilities in the music department?**

**A:** I am Head of Academic Music, which means that I oversee what happens in the classroom in the Music Department. I work really closely with Mr. Roland and the other music staff on this. The specific projects for which I have responsibility this academic year include the New Boys Concert and the Chamber Concert. I am also Co-Musical Director with Mr. Fox for the Junior Musical, *The Wizard of Oz*, which will take place just before the half term in February.

**Q: Can you tell me about your musical experiences growing up?**

**A:** I started playing the piano when I was tiny, maybe three or four years old and grew up surrounded by music. My Dad is a musician – he was a Lay Clerk in the chapel choir at St George's Chapel in Windsor and a Lecturer of Music. When I was around seven years old, he would listen to symphonies and give me the scores and I learned to follow them. Later I took up the violin, and increasingly enjoyed singing, especially at secondary school. I went on an Eton Choral Course when I was 16 and discovered a complete love of choral singing, and that gave me the bug to get a choral scholarship at university. Whilst I was at university I did a lot of singing, and by this time singing had overtaken my instrument playing. I sang everything, from opera to musical theatre and chamber choir, as well as close harmony groups at May Balls, which was great fun. I am afraid that the piano playing got left behind a bit. I want say to the boys that I still regret this - don't stop practising!

**Q: What period of choral singing do you enjoy most?**

**A:** I really enjoy singing Renaissance music in small groups, such as William Byrd's *Mass for Four Voices*. I still do quite a lot of this now.

**Q: Can you tell me a bit about your Music Degree?**

**A:** I read Music at Cambridge, which was a very traditional three year music degree. You specialise more and more as you go through your degree. During the first year you study very broad-brushed music history, analysis and compositional techniques. By the third year I spent a lot of time on 20th Century music, and wrote my dissertation on Mozart's opera, *Così fan tutte*.

**Q: So, what brought you to teaching and to Hampton School?**

**A:** After I left Cambridge, I was not sure that I wanted to pursue music as a career. I think I needed a break, and wanted to go for something completely different, so I became a head-hunter for 8 years. I learnt a lot and really enjoyed it. However, when I was in my late 20s I started to wonder whether I wanted to keep doing headhunting and go further down the promotion track, and I realised that, although I enjoyed my job, I did not love it, and I could not see myself working in the industry for another couple of decades. I was also really missing Music. I had

thought about teaching for a while so I observed a couple of friends who had gone into teaching and I absolutely loved it. So I quit my job and decided to train as a teacher.

I did my teacher-training at the Institute of Education - the same place as Mr. Fox, Mr. Roland and Mrs. Oldfield – and half way through my teacher-training the vacancy came up at Hampton. I had thought that I wanted to teach at a State school as I had loved my first placement in the State sector but was persuaded that Hampton had a fantastic music department and that I would fit in. So I was delighted to be offered the job, and of course accepted.

**Q: Can you tell me a bit more about your musical interests outside school?**

**A:** I sing regularly on a Sunday morning at a church in central London, with others who were at Cambridge with me. It is a small group of singers, and we have known each other for years. I also sing with a choir called Voce, and in general I try and taken on as much as possible. It is important to me to make music for myself, as every time I do a concert I might learn a new piece of repertoire, or the conductor might say something which I think would be an interesting perspective for the Consort of Voices. Performing keeps me fresh as a musician.

**Q: What tips do you have for those who actually want to pursue a career in music?**

**A:** It is really hard. Musically, you need to be on top of your game technically, but you also have to be open-minded and flexible. You cannot be too selective in terms of what you are willing to try. You have to be open to advice as well as to criticism, and you have to be very professional, right from the beginning. It is a small world, and if you are rude to someone or turn up late for a rehearsal, it will get back to people and everyone will know within seconds. You should only do it if you absolutely love it because otherwise you might end up no longer enjoying it.

**Q: Which composer has been your biggest influence?**

**A:** That is easy - Bach. I always come back to Bach because the harmonies, beautiful counterpoint, and his instrumental and vocal writing are really phenomenal. I love a lot of music by many composers but to me, Bach is in another league. I have always felt this way since I listened to the *Mass in B Minor* when I was 17 and it just blew my mind.

**Q: Are there any contemporary musicians who you admire?**

**A:** Well, Mr. Fox and I have a thing about Jamiroquai! He is a much bigger fan than I am but I also like them. I really like Parovoz Stelar, a DJ who samples, for example, swing music and is really cool. I am also having an Amy Winehouse moment - I think she is great - and Laura Mvula is another female artist I admire. Basically, I listen to the music on the radio whenever I can; Radio 3 is the default, but I love a bit of Magic!

**Q: We are casting you away to a Desert Island – what one piece of music or recording will you choose?**

**A:** It may not surprise you that I am going to choose Bach's *Mass in B Minor* as it has everything – the highs and the lows, moments of extraordinary emotional pain and extraordinary emotional joy.

**Q: And what would your luxury be?**

**A:** I thought about this! I am a really bad swimmer so I thought that I would take a snorkel and flippers so that I could go for a little swim. I really could not escape as I would not get out of my depth.

Caroline Muller (Editor)

## ABRSM EXAMINATION RESULTS

Congratulations to all the boys – in the Autumn Term, there were:  
**11 Distinctions, 9 Merits, and 11 Passes.**

Please note that, in accordance with the new GDPR requirements of May 2018, we are no longer able to publish results for individual boys.

## 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](https://twitter.com/Hampton_Music) and as a webpage <http://twitter.com/HamptonSchool>

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