

theBigblast

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CAVMS ENSEMBLES

“IT’S A STRING THING” – A BIG HIT!

JOHN LEACH

EASTER AT THE GATE SATURDAY 20 MARCH

The senior CAVMS Orchestra and CYJO will be trying out a new concert venue on Saturday 20th March 2010, 7.30pm.

The Gate on City Road is a beautiful contemporary arts centre derived from an old church. It will be a public concert with tickets only available from The Gate box office (02920 483344). The venue only seats 300 so early booking is advisable.

The orchestra will be playing in the first half of the concert with their usual mix of light classical music and highlights from stage and screen. In the second half CYJO will entertain with a swinging mix of Big Band classics.

Details for the day are as follows:
6-7pm – Senior Orchestra Rehearsal.
7.30pm – Concert starts

Orchestra Dress

Gentlemen – Black shirts, black trousers, black Socks, black shoes.

Ladies – Black trousers or ankle length black dress/skirt and top, shoulders covered, black tights, black shoes.

Please remember to bring a music stand.

There was smoke coming off those bows last Sunday in the Cathedral School!! Almost 50 people attended and thoroughly enjoyed a great day of music making. They learned new music, new terms and new techniques. In addition to the CAVMS string team we had Louise Broderick (viola) and Simon Davison (cello) from the WNO. We also had Sheila Smith (violin) and of course our very own Kath Miller (violin) from the BBC NOW. The special guest star was Lesley Hatfield who is of course leader of the BBC NOW.

Marissa and Kath spent most of the day with the younger students, some as young as 8 years old, having just passed grade one! They were helped with simplified parts for the full string orchestra and even performed an item of their own. More advanced students were put through their paces by Lesley and Simon who brought along section features to stretch the individual sections. They also gave a lot of good advice on ensemble playing which certainly paid off judging by the amazing performance of works studied in the end of day mini concert.

Both Simon and Lesley gave entertaining talks by way of diversion during the middle of the day, comparing their two very different jobs. They were bombarded by questions from the students, but the most popular aspect was the ‘You’ve been framed’ items from both

speakers who described what happens when things go wrong! The best laugh was provided by the sword fighting opera singer who fell into the pit during battle and managed to continue fighting with his foot through a double bass!! (luckily it wasn’t a very deep pit).

The end of day concert contained music by Karl Jenkins, Grieg and Sibelius. The performance was greeted by rapturous applause from a good size audience of parents and friends. The majority of performers were not from CAVMS ensembles and a great deal of interest was shown in our various projects. I’m convinced that we will get quite a few badly needed recruits for our string sections.

The high spot for me was eavesdropping on a conversation between Simon and Louise (WNO) They were pointing to an eight year old violinist saying ‘Yes – that’s her, it’ definitely her.’ The young lady in question was sat in the front row for the Saturday night performance of ‘Carmen’ and certain members of the orchestra were placing bets as to when she was likely to fall asleep. She was obviously enjoying the performance and thwarted them all by staying awake to the very end! She will know who she is!

A CONDUCTOR'S RAMBLINGS

John Leach

Many conductors would be totally depressed by the chaotic start to 2010but not this one!

Yes we lost rehearsal time to weather and dentists (I still twitch when I think about it!)

Yes we lost our Cathedral School home for two weeks due to structural damage and yes there will be further disruption when we return in that we will, for a short period, have to hold sectionals in an adjoining block.

But, the evenings are getting lighter and the weather is getting better and we have exciting projects to look forward to.

This term's new event is the first ever concert shared between the CAVMS orchestra and CYJO. The Gate is a very popular venue for

supporters of the arts and we are expecting a lot of general public in addition to the traditional support from parents. I think it is also nice for the older students to be doing something a bit special on their own. You will be aware that I've chosen a slightly simpler programme to reflect the lack of rehearsal time, but the feedback from those students who have talked to me is that it is enjoyable. I think it will certainly be an effective programme that the audience will enjoy.

So I am optimistic, but if you really want to see me brimming with joy, I would like better attendance (from some) and more string players. See what you can do.

CYJO NEWS

Robert Morgan

After a busy term of preparation CYJO is now geared up for an exciting term of performing and competing. With the new re-vamped set list and 2 gigs to come in March the coming term will be very important, not least with the preliminary round of the prestigious Festival of Music for Youth, an event which has led the band to the Birmingham finals twice previously. With several members of the band in their final year, including the 2 remaining founding members – apart from the band director of course! – several new numbers have been introduced to display the veterans' musical prowess! This also means that the band has been and is still busy recruiting the new and promising jazz talent of Cardiff, CYJO2, who are already preparing CYJO's stars of the future is also going from strength to strength, and with that in mind are joining their older sibling, performing in the WMC foyer on March 21st. So keep an eye out for CYJO, and if you think you've got what it takes contact Dave Miller, Band Director, for further information.

HARP ENSEMBLE NEWS

Alicia Griffiths

Hello! My name is Alicia Griffiths and I coach the Harp Section of the CAVMS Senior Orchestra. I am a student myself, doing a BMus degree in performance at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama here in Cardiff.

At the moment we are five harpists altogether, including myself. We all have different abilities and come from different teachers and schools, and we all bring something different into the group. We are learning a lot from each other, as well as having a lot of fun together, of course!

We work hard on Wednesday nights, first rehearsing our orchestra parts in

the sectional rehearsal, and then playing in the orchestra, where we learn how to listen for cues, follow other instruments' parts and also count empty bars (every harpist's nightmare!). When we're not too busy in orchestra, we stay in sectional rehearsal and prepare harp ensemble pieces, which is good fun too. We play a selection of music adapted for us, ranging from Christmas carols, Welsh and English tunes, and more recently, a couple of Chinese songs that I brought back from my visit to Singapore.

We are always keen to welcome new members (up to the age of 18), whatever their standard, either on pedal or lever harp. If you have any harpist friends or

A Student's View

Rhys McLaughlin

Playing with CAVMS has been the best time of my life. When I started I was only 8 and found it hard to find and make friends in the orchestra, however over the years I have found people that have been there with me through it all. The best moment for me in CAVMS would have to be going to Chicago last year. It was so much fun and I feel like I have made some connections there that I would never have made without the trip.

My favourite gigs that I have played are two that we did with the Jazz band in London. One of which was the Royal Albert hall and the tension leading up to performing on the stage was immense, however John Murray's antics soon got rid of most of the nerves that had built up. I don't think that the enormity of the gig hit us until the house lights came up and we were faced with thousands of people looking at us as we sang the national anthem.

I don't know any other way to sum up my time here at CAVMS than to say it has been an epic journey of making friends and improving my playing and I hope after I leave I will still keep both going strong.



relatives we would very much like them to have a try at what we do here! The harp ensemble will surely complement any harp student's individual harp lessons with aural and ensemble skills, and adding the fun of learning in a group.

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M4 Music have a great range of upgrade instruments available for all improving wind and brass players.

In the Brass department we have the excellent B&S Challenger professional trumpets equipped with boxed springs, Monel pistons, handhammered one-piece bell and gold brass leadpipe. The rrp on these is £986 but we can supply them delivered for just **£799**.

We also have a great prices on Yamaha Flutes and Buffet Clarinets including the brand new E11 "France" wooden Clarinet. This is a brand new design, made once again in their French factory with a new bore

designed specially as a step-up from a plastic student instrument. They come with a great backpack style case and are priced at **£799**.

We always have a full range of accessories in stock from strings and reeds to mutes and metronomes and for those of you who don't have a music stand to bring to rehearsals, we have hard-wearing K&M Music Stands in stock for just £16.99.

For information and advice on these or any other instruments, just give us a call.

A BRASS PLAYERS VIEW

Nick Jones

Unlike many of the other orchestral staff at CAVMS I'm not a full time teacher. I make the bulk of my living as a trombonist, so I thought I'd say a few words about how I see the role of the youth orchestra, and the benefits it can bring to all young musicians regardless of whether they see music as a potential career.

Any professional musician will tell you that the youth orchestra was their starting point. It certainly was for me. It's the place where you learn orchestral discipline, repertoire and above all the ability to work with others as a team, or put in more simple terms – to make music together. Being a musician is a long process, there's no quick two week training course to get you up to speed. For most of us it's been a matter of several years and those years started right here in the youth orchestra. The natural progression from YPTO to the senior orchestra is quite clear, and beyond that there's the National Youth Orchestra of Wales and then maybe music college. It's a progression similar to the one that I and countless other musicians have taken over the years.

Of course, only a few actually want to pursue a career in music, but the grounding that a young person gets within the youth orchestra will set them up for life. I can count amongst my friends a prominent doctor, an extremely successful company director and even an eminent historian! The link? We were all in the youth orchestra together of course! Those skills of discipline and team work learned at the music stand have stood so many in good stead for life. And of course the other great benefit of persevering with the practise is that we not only make lifelong friends, but above all it's great fun!

FUNDRAISING IDEA

We are (and probably always will be) short of cash! We live in hope that a few parents might get together and form a group to raise funds for new music, equipment etc. But until that happens, here's an idea that any individual can do....or better still, with friends.

Most pubs and restaurants have a quiet night (Sunday/Monday) and would welcome a large crowd. So here's the idea. Ask your local publican if he could do a curry for 50 people at a fiver a head. Explain that you would be selling tickets for a curry night at his pub as a fund raiser for a good cause at £10 per head. He probably wouldn't make much money on the food, but he would have 50 customers at his bar instead of the usual 2 or 3. I think you will find that he's very interested. In addition, you will have an enjoyable night with friends, family, neighbours and we have £250 pounds to buy new exciting music for your children.

We would like to extend our thanks for this idea, to the parents of Plasmawr rugby team who have already raised thousands of pounds to send their children to Canada.

JOKE CORNER

How many Clarinettists does it take to change a lightbulb?

Only one but he'll go through a whole box of bulbs to find the right one!

What's the range of a Tuba?

About 20 yards if you've got a good arm!

How do you know when there's a percussionist at your door?

The knock always slows down!

How do you prevent your violin being stolen?

Put it in a Viola case!

Why are Viola jokes so short?

So Violinists can understand them!

Dates for the Diary

Saturday 20 March	CAVMS Orchestra/CYJO, the Gate, 7.30pm
Sunday 21 March	CYJO/CYJO2, WMC foyer, 3pm
Wed 14 April	First reh of Summer term
Wed 8 September	First reh of Autumn term
Sun 12 December	Christmas Concert @ Coal Exchange



Liz's Corner

Please remember that Fees of £40.00 are due at the start of every term. There is a £10 reduction for each successive child in either orchestra.

All cheques should be payable to YPTO.

Please make sure that your child's name, instrument and which orchestra they belong to is clearly marked on the back, along with what the money is for (term fees, raffle tickets etc).

I am also constantly trying to keep the database up to date so could you please let the office or me have any changes of address or contact details.

Liz