

Keynotes

The Newsletter of
the North East of Scotland Music School
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David Ferguson becomes a 'Voice'

A new 17 strong choir formed by Military Wives conductor, Gareth Malone, will include NESMS student – and assistant administrator – David Ferguson.

David was selected after two rounds of punishing auditions in London for what Malone describes as “a new and revolutionary choir” that will perform radical new arrangements of hardcore rap, rock and R&B songs. For example, the first track released from the album is a cover of *Guillotine* by Death Grips, an experimental Californian hip-hop band, who mix hardcore punk, dub and militantly political lyrics to create a highly confrontational sound.

The new choir, called *Voices* has 17 (originally it was going to be 16) hand-picked 18–25-year-old singers and David is contracted until next January and attends regular rehearsal and recording sessions. A new CD (also called *Voices*) will be released shortly and a UK tour will take place later this year.

Although it wasn't until comparatively recently that David became determined to pursue a professional singing career, it was, perhaps, almost pre-ordained. With his mother an enthusiastic member of a female bell canto voice group, David was exposed from a very early age to classical and choral music. By the age of eight he was performing as a choirboy with the Deeside

Choristers, learning the vital skill of reading music for voice.

He also took to instrumental playing, initially with the cello and, later, the piano. But singing has always been at the forefront. David has performed with numerous choirs, including the National Youth Choir of Scotland, which toured to various locations in Germany, as well as numerous venues across the British Isles.

David has strong links with the University of Aberdeen Music Department, having graduated with a BMus degree in 2011. He still performs with the University Chapel Choir on an occasional basis.

Solo performances include singing with the Aberdeen based chamber choir 'Con Anima' in its performance of Handel's *Messiah*, as well as playing the part of Prince Gremin in the University of Aberdeen Opera Society's recent production of *Eugene Onegin*. David's most recent solo performance was as part of the AIYF festival with Richard Bailey accompanying.

Since he was about to leave school and go to university, he has been a NESMS singing student under the guidance of



Jean Webster, Gillian Jack and Alan Watt and, additionally, has studied piano with Joseph Long.

During his final year at the University of Aberdeen, while studying with NESMS patron and renowned composer, Paul Mealor, Paul suggested that David might like to audition for Malone's new choir.

"I was initially rather reluctant," reports David. "The auditions were in London and it was going to be pretty expensive to go down there but my mum eventually persuaded me to go. As usual, Mum was right because after two rounds of auditions, Gareth Malone's personal assistant called me up to say I had been selected.

"It's extremely exciting," David says. "Obviously none of us know how successful the new choir will be; it might emulate Harry Christopher's *The Sixteen* in terms of success

although not style, or it may fizzle out into a footnote of history! But whatever happens I'm using it as a great opportunity to expand my address book, building a range of useful contacts."

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About the School

Providing the highest standards of advanced tuition for promising musicians

The School provides a centre where young people of outstanding musical promise can obtain tuition which is not available within their existing framework of study. Any musically talented child, student, teacher or lay person living in Scotland may apply for an audition to the School.

TUITION

Internationally acclaimed professors and teachers are brought to Aberdeen on a regular basis from all over the British Isles.

COURSES

The School offers one-to-one teaching together with occasional workshops and masterclasses. There is a close relationship with the University of Aberdeen, through the Director of Music, and also with Aberdeen City Music School in Dyce.

FINANCE

Finance is generously provided by trusts, commercial organisations and individuals. Continued support is essential in order to maintain the high quality of the teaching programme. The Administrator will be pleased to assist with all enquiries about donations, sponsorship or scholarships.

FEES & SCHOLARSHIPS

Students pay their own fees, although scholarships are available and are applied for annually. Any award is made on a balance of musical potential and financial need.

DOROTHY HATELY

Dorothy founded NESMS in 1975 with the support and encouragement of Lady Aberdeen. Thanks to Dorothy's dogged determination over the years, the School has greatly increased its teaching disciplines, tutors and pupils. Sadly, Dorothy died in 1996, before she could see the School in its own premises in Huntly Street. However, we strive to maintain the high standards she set and intend to take the School from strength to strength.

NORTH EAST OF SCOTLAND MUSIC SCHOOL

Dorothy Hately Music Centre
21 Huntly Street
Aberdeen AB10 1TJ
Tel/Fax: 01224 649685
email: nesms@dsl.pipex.com
www.nesms.org.uk

President: Dr Neil Mackie

Vice President: Dr Murray McLachlan

Administrator: Gráinne Cullen

Assistant Administrators:
Reg Pringle
David Ferguson

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NESMS Annual Scholarship Concert 2013

Craigiebuckler Church Friday, 28 June 2013

Two flautists, a pianist, a recorder player and a bass baritone were the stars of this year's Scholarship Concert promoted by the Friends of NESMS in Craigiebuckler Church.

Not only was there some splendid performances from this year's scholarship winners, the programme also included several musical gems by composers less familiar to a general audience which lent an aura of adventure and discovery to an exciting evening.

The first of these pieces was played by flautist Cara Garton who holds the David Nicholson Flute Scholarship. August Wilhelm Julius Rietz (1812–1877) wrote an attractive *Sonata for Flute and Piano in G minor, Op.42*, romantic in style but delicately ornamented. Cara Garton captured the gentle flow of the opening movement with just the right sense of expressiveness in her playing. The second movement was put across with a lovely singing tone and at the end Cara gave us the flautist's equivalent of a ballet dancer going on points with the delicacy of her staccato playing accomplished with a remarkable lightness of touch. This was carried over into the fleet of foot finale which as our superb accompanist Drew Tulloch commented was reminiscent of Mendelssohn's music and, indeed, Rietz edited most of Mendelssohn's manuscripts for publication.

Lisa Abraham who holds the Tom Johnston Piano Scholarship is only twelve-years-old but her playing sounds far more mature. She gave us a splendidly steady account of J. S. Bach's *Courante* from the English Suite No.2 with admirably clear left hand playing.

This was followed by Cyril Scott's colourful "characteristic" piece *Water-Wagtail*. In Lisa's playing you could sense the brightness of light on water and later the movements of the bird.

In the second half she introduced us to another less well known piano gem, the *Sonata in F Major* by the early Spanish classical composer Padre Antonio Soler (1729–1783).

Druminnor Castle

Druminnor Castle, Rhynie, was the splendid setting for a spring evening's concert given by the cellist Niall Brown and his pianist wife Isabelle Trüb on 19 May. After giving a concert last year in aid of School funds, Niall and Isabelle were generous enough to give NESMS another substantial donation from the proceeds.

A capacity audience was treated to performances of Beethoven's *Sonatas Opus 102 Nos 1 and 2* along with the *Variations* on a theme from Handel's *Judas Maccabeus*. A demanding programme indeed. As well as introducing the three works, Niall also explained his own and Isabelle's plans to run a chamber music course next year (more information on this to follow when available). Derek Buchan attended on behalf of the school, spoke about its history and unique position in the north-east and thanked Niall and Isabelle.

Many thanks are also due to Alex Forbes for offering the castle as the venue as well as arranging the buffet supper which followed the concert.

Echos of the early Mozart were suggested and this was followed by a carefully expressive performance of Chopin's *Nocturne in C# minor*. Lisa's playing of the ornaments had a lovely fluency and the way she gently teased the audience at the slow conclusions showed real artistry.

Recorder player Iain Hall was awarded the Dorothy Hately Scholarship. His first-half offerings were a delightfully smooth Andante from the *Sonata in G minor* by J. S. Bach followed by a fascinating unaccompanied *Fantasia No.9* by Telemann. Leaps from the upper register of the instrument to its lower voice suggested the different registers of the clarinet and this led into sprightlier playing. This sense of virtuosity was even more overt in the two pieces Iain offered in the second half. Norman Fulton (1909–1980) was professor of harmony and composition at the Royal Academy of Music. His *Reel from the Scottish Suite* cast familiar tunes in a witty modern idiom and then there was the *Variations Brillianttes Op.18* by Ernst Krähmer (1795–1837).

David Ferguson's voice continues to mature nicely and he gave us a fine account of the bass recitative and aria from Handel's *Messiah: For, Behold, Darkness Shall Cover the Earth and The People that Walked in Darkness*. What marked the quality of his singing in this and the two following pieces, Sarastro's Aria, *In diesen heil'gen Hallen* from *The Magic Flute* and *Il Lacerato Spirito*, the famous bass aria from Verdi's *Simon Boccanegra* was not just the smooth richness of his singing but his unusually keen sense of the rhythms of each piece of music which gave his performance a real nobility.

To complete the concert Cara Garton was back, this time in duet with another brilliant flautist, Laura Cheyne, holder of the Ina Smith Scholarship. They gave us the *Allegro con espressione for two flutes* by Friedrich Kuhlau.



Druminnor Castle

Long-serving Trumpet Tutor Leads by Example

One of NESMS' longest-serving tutors (at least 17 years and counting!), John Gracie, says his approach to teaching is simple – he leads by example, demonstrating to his students what he describes as “the proper sound”.

“I’m conscious that in local schools education the music tuition, especially of the non-mainstream instruments like the trumpet, can sometimes be in the hands of peripatetic teachers whose primary expertise may be another instrument,” suggests John.

“That means that students will often not have heard how a particular trumpet piece *should* sound, so playing it through for them is, I’m convinced, an essential part of the teaching process.”

That John is qualified to lead by example is unquestionable. In August this year he completed thirty-two years service as Principal Trumpet in the Royal Scottish National Orchestra (RSNO), appearing regularly with them as a soloist as well as being director of their brass ensemble. John is regularly invited to play Guest Principal Trumpet with the London Orchestras where he has undertaken several foreign tours and recording sessions playing under conductors such as Boulez, Tilson-Thomas, Sinopoli, Svetlanov, Abbado, Haitink and Davis.

Teaching positions in addition to NESMS include regular visits as Professor of Trumpet at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RSC) and many concerts and workshops with the RSNO education department.

John’s commitment to music – and brass instruments in particular – seems to have been cast from an early age. Born in Creetown, Kirkcudbrightshire, he started playing the cornet in the village brass band at the age of nine. He went on to study the trumpet with Harry MacAnespie at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music & Drama (now the RSC) from 1966 to 1969 and at the Guildhall School of Music with Bernard Brown. He also had regular lessons from John Dickinson who was then Principal Trumpet in the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra.

Following his studies, John joined the BBC Training Orchestra in Bristol and during this time he also worked with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and the London Sinfonietta.

In 1971 he was appointed Principal Trumpet with the Ulster Orchestra and in 1973 joined the BBC Northern Symphony Orchestra (now the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra) in Manchester under Bryden Thomson, where he was

promoted to Principal Trumpet in 1977.

He also taught trumpet at the Royal Northern College of Music and at Manchester University during this time and played regularly with the Halle, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestras. John returned to Scotland to take up his present position as Principal Trumpet in the RSNO in 1981.

He is a regular Brass adjudicator in the Edinburgh and Ayrshire Music Festivals and was recently invited to direct



an Orchestral Brass Masterclass at the Royal College of Music.

John was invited to teach and give advice to young aspiring trumpet players at NESMS by Tom Johnson and finds it very satisfying to help students with their recital programmes and to bring them up to a standard where they successfully audition for university or music conservatoire.

“NESMS has a great atmosphere and really excellent facilities,” says John. “I look forward to teaching here for many years to come.”



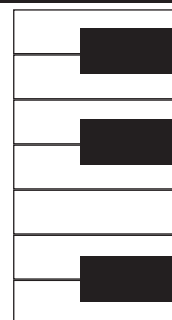
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Showroom: +44 (0)1224 658584 Workshop: +44 (0)1224 276215
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Tutors at the School

as at April 2013

STRINGS	
Violin	Gillian Findlay
Viola	Michael Beeston
Cello	James Halsey
Double Bass	David Inglis

WOODWIND	
Flute	Catherine O'Rourke
Oboe	Joe Houghton
Clarinet	Alison Waller
Bassoon	Lesley Wilson
Recorder	Ian Wilson

BRASS	
Trumpet	John Gracie
Horn	Lizzie Davis

PIANO	
Nigel Clayton	Joseph Long

SCOTTISH FIDDLE	
Paul Anderson	

SINGING	
Alan Watt	Raimund Herincx
Alison McDonald	Jean Webster
Peter Webster	

STAGECRAFT & PERFORMANCE	
Donald Maxwell	

ORGAN	
Dr Roger B. Williams	

Forthcoming events

LUNCHTIME CONCERT AT THE COWDRAY HALL

12.45pm Thursday 17th October
Featuring NESMS tutor and professional concert pianist, Joseph Long.

FRIENDS OF NESMS COFFEE MORNING
10am – 12 noon Saturday 25th October
Tombola, Raffle, Christmas Cards and more!

MASTERCLASS AT NESMS
6.30pm – 8pm Tuesday 29th October
with the Ligeti Quartet.

JAZZ WORKSHOP
10am – 4pm Saturday 2nd November
Exploring the naughty notes in jazz with Joseph Long and Ian Milne.

MASTERCLASS AT NESMS
Saturday 23rd November
with Russian soprano Oksana Lesnichaya.

CONCERT BY JOSEPH LONG
5.30pm Tuesday 3rd December
Cowdray Hall.

FRIENDS OF NESMS AFTERNOON OF MUSIC IN THE RESTAURANT AT MAINS OF DRUM GARDEN CENTRE.
2pm onwards Sunday 8th December
The Newhills Trio and other NESMS musicians will entertain you while you enjoy your lunch or a coffee.

Joan Thomas Retirement

At the end of June NESMS bid a fond farewell to its administrator and the person who has been at the heart of the School for the last 11 years, Joan Thomas, *writes Barbara McFarlane*.

The directors hosted a lunch where Joan was made a Fellow of the School and presented with a NESMS pendant designed by Jamieson & Carry. At the Scholarship concert the remaining School presents were handed over – a netbook and a voucher to enable Joan and a friend to travel to London for afternoon tea at the Ritz and a show of her choice.

Joan's connections with NESMS go back many years. Prior to joining NESMS, she worked for the Grampian Schools Music Service in their office at the old Academy building in Belmont Street. At that time NESMS was given rent free accommodation there. The accommodation only ran to teaching rooms and the NESMS office, where all the



Joan Thomas being presented with her Fellowship certificate by NESMS chair, Barbara McFarlane and Music Committee chair, Dr. Roger Williams

administration was done, was in Dorothy Hatley's house.

The music office therefore took messages for Dorothy when she was out collecting tutors from the airport or buying sandwiches for their lunch so a very cordial relationship between the two organisations developed and many of the original tutors such as Ifor James and David Nicholson

would drop into the music office in between students for a chat with Joan and her colleagues.

When Grampian Region terminated and the music service was divided between the two local authorities Joan decided to take voluntary redundancy and went to work for the charity, CLAN Cancer Support. When the NESMS post of administrator was advertised following the resignation of Alan Young who had held the fort for the School after Dorothy's death, Joan decided to apply.

She already had a good idea how the School worked and some of its idiosyncrasies although with the purchase of our own building and the death of Dorothy the administration had become much more rigorous.

Joan coped superbly with all the demands put upon her and took the School to her heart. The extra hours she put in to help with fundraising and other activities were over and above the call of duty.

Joan will now have time to enjoy her many hobbies and visit her family while she enjoys her well deserved retirement. She is a member of Maryculter WRI where she wins prizes for her baking (which most of us have enjoyed at one time or another) and handcrafts. She also enjoys gardening and scrabble and along with two friends is on a formidably powerful quiz team.

Donors

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- David and June Gordon Memorial Trust
- E H Tutty Trust
- Friends of NESMS
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- Jennie S Gordon Memorial Foundation
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Keynotes is produced for the North East of Scotland Music School

EDITOR
Neil Jones
Cairnstone Limited
Telephone 07050 259859
neil.jones@cairnstone.co.uk
www.cairnstone.co.uk

DESIGN
John Brown
Design for Business
Telephone 01224 875080
jb@design-for-business.com

PRINTER
XIC
Telephone 01224 878799