

Notes from NESMS

North East of Scotland Music School Newsletter

Spring 2021

This spring we have been slowly emerging out of the necessary pandemic lockdown measures little by little with an odd mixture of déjà-vu and ever increasing hope brought from the advancing vaccination programme. The winter lockdown feels a distant memory now but NESMS continued to tick along with online lessons being offered by most of our tutors. Now, just before the end of term, in-person lessons and Live music making are slowly restarting giving a sense of 'normality' returning. As ever we want to continue to share your musical achievements with the NESMS community so please let us know any future exam, audition or competition success, on or off-line!

What's been going on at NESMS:

NESMS blends online and in-person learning

During lockdown, most of our tutors continued to teach their students using the NESMS Zoom room option. The steep learning curve of moving lessons online at the beginning of lockdown last spring seems a distant memory now but we've all learnt a great deal over the last year and we have consequently all become much more tech-savvy.

As the lockdown restrictions gradually lifted, NESMS was able to adapt by offering students the main studio as a place to have their online lessons from and now with the rise of more in-person lessons and grade exam rehearsals taking place, the building is once again become a hive of socially distanced musical activity.

A reminder that any of the NESMS studios are available to rent as private practise rooms away from busy homes for £7.50/hour. Anyone wishing to hire a studio or those students who would like to use a studio for their online lesson should book via the NESMS office.

New office email address

Several months since its introduction, everyone should now be aware that we have a new NESMS office email address, office@nesms.org.uk. This was out of necessity and prompted the switching of our broadband provider. Though this was far from ideal to happen mid-term, we can now boast faster wifi speeds for those students and tutors wishing to have or give an online lesson from Huntly Street. Unfortunately this new address is still going into some spam/junk folders so we ask that you regularly check and move any of our emails to your inbox, thus marking as a safe contact.

Have you updated your own contact details recently? Why not double-check that the details the NESMS office hold are correct by sending an email to the new office email address.

This new email address also prompted an update in our headed-paper stationary and new business cards which are displayed throughout the building so please feel free to pick up a few next time you are in to hand out to anyone you think may be interested in NESMS.

Programme Notes online sessions

NESMS flute tutor Catherine O'Rourke has continued to offer students the opportunity to learn how to compile and write programme notes for use in recitals and exams in a series one-to-one tailored tutorials available online and in-person. Students have described these sessions as "enlightening and inspiring", "invaluable" and "greatly beneficial". Learning about a piece and its context not only in the composer's own history but within wider world history, as one student put it, "opens a piece up and makes it so much more interesting to study". To sign up for a session please be in contact with Catherin directly: flauto@mail.com

Spot the difference

Over the past year through various Lockdowns, Colin has continued to come into the building each weekday and some weekends to ensure that online lessons and lesson scheduling continued smoothly. He took advantage of the building having no visitors by doing some overdue building maintenance and updating. There are some obvious changes and additions like the new screens in the studios and new notice boards but some more subtle changes in the new and re-framed pictures, new signage within the building and even out in the small rear garden will leave you questioning "hasn't that always been there?"

Congratulations to the following NESMS students in:

Trinity and ABRSM exams

Good luck and well done to anyone who has continued with their grade exams and submitted online performances. It really is a huge achievement to gain a grade during such a difficult year of online learning. A full list of NESMS student's exam and diploma achievements are listed [here](#) and are continually updated on our website. If your achievement is missing from the list or needs updating please let us know.

NESMS Scholarship Auditions – online submissions

Once again the auditions for a NESMS Scholarship have taken place entirely online by video submission. Applications were received throughout May so that at the start of June the panel could watch, deliberate and agree on the submission outcomes all from the comfort of their own homes. The panel were very impressed with the exceptionally high standard of both musical and video quality achieved but this consequently made the competition incredibly fierce. Congratulations to those students who received full or part scholarships valid for the academic year 2021/2022, made possible by donations from our generous donors.

Special mention goes to the following students who all received **full** scholarships:

Scott Manson, piano - *Tom and Cath Johnston Award*
Eve Begg, voice - *Ellie Pirie Bach Choir Award*
Charlotte Hay, cello - *Joan Dickson Award*
Chenghong Zhu, piano - *Dorothy Hately Award*
Aaron Magill, piano – *Gina Dallas Harper Award*

Bethany Clarke, cello
Henry Jaspars, piano

Joseph Kwan, violin
Hannah Magill, oboe

Isla McKeown, piano
Emily Smith, piano

And also a mention to the following students of musical promise in Local Authority schools who are receiving a Gladys Sangster Award:

Olive Beston, recorder

Emma Cameron, violin

Amber Craig, voice

The Aberdeen & N. E of Scotland Music Festival 2021

Well done to all the applicants, judges and behind-the-scenes volunteers who put together a very successful Music Festival online in May. Congratulations to the following NESMS students who won their classes:

- Emily Gow – Flute/Recorder – G7-8
- Elizabeth McCall – Woodwind & Recorder - Open
- Abigail Nye – Fiddle – Age 18 & U
- Gemma Ramsay – Cello – G7-8
- Eve Begg – Classical Open – 18 & Over
– Bach Oratorio Open – 18 & Over
– Oratorio Open – 18 & Over
- Lily-Bell Gill – Vocal Solos – Girls S3-4
- Freya Corry – Vocal, Up to 1969 – S3-4

Please note at the time of this newsletter being sent these were the results available. Apologies to any NESMS student missed from the above list! The full schedule and list of results can be found [here](#)

Moving on – music courses

At this time of year, many students are moving onto higher education courses. Good luck to the following NESMS student's pursuing music and preparing for their moves to Glasgow and Manchester!

Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

Eilidh Bisset, voice
Abigail Nye, violin
Laura Ritchie, oboe

Royal Northern College of Music

Emily Manson, saxophone
Ruaraidh Williams, cello

NESMS office – new assistant

NESMS manager Colin spent seven months on his own in the office after Sophie Lewis left us back in May 2020. It wasn't until January, whilst in the depths of lockdown that he gained a new assistant in Chloe Gordon. With all the interviews and subsequent training of the inner workings of NESMS held online via zoom calls and screen sharing, it is only recently that Chloe is meeting more NESMS people; finally putting some faces to names. In September 2021 Chloe will be starting her 4th year at the University of Aberdeen in Communities with music degree.

Coming soon to NESMS:

In-person teaching has already slowly started resuming filling 21 Huntly Street with music once more. Tutors Guera Crockett, Catherine O'Rourke and Nigel Clayton have recently been offering all their students socially distanced lessons in the main studio. As ever it will be up to tutors when they teach with us but we are hopeful that most tutors will be back with us in-person from the new academic term onwards.

Summer Singing School 2021

After such a successful pilot scheme in 2019, we were hoping to run the 2020 Summer Singing School with renowned singer Linda Ormiston joining the returning vocal tutors Graeme Lauren and Gillian Jack. Unfortunately, while indoor group singing remains "unsafe" we have decided to again postpone this event in its current format until 2022.

Group classes

Until it is deemed safe for indoor music groups to start we can't predict when Flute Choir, Horn Ensemble or even the new Jazz Ensemble will start at NESMS. We hope that there will be more clarity on this at the start of the new term.

Keynotes Lunch 2021?

A huge thankyou to all the generous donations made in lieu of last year's cancelled event, raising almost £2000. We ask that you continue to save the date for this year's Keynotes Lunch due to be held at the Marcliffe Hotel on Sunday 21st November. We are sure you can appreciate that we never know what lies ahead but with fantastic live music, a delicious meal and exciting raffle prizes to be won, we *hope* that this unmissable highlight of the NESMS calendar will continue to go ahead as planned.

Social Media and Donations

With the new office email address we've also updated our Easyfundraising and Paypal accounts, making this an ideal time to remind everyone that you can donate to NESMS every time you shop online through our Easyfundraising [link](#). It has also never been easier to keep up-to-date with all the latest NESMS news and weekly competitions with our [website](#), Facebook page and Instagram account (NESMS_abdn).

I hope everyone continues to keep safe during this time; our thoughts go out to those whose families have been affected directly with COVID-19 since the beginning of the pandemic. With the vaccine now being offered to everyone, some sort of normality can hopefully resume after the summer holidays with a return of even more in-person teaching, until then, stay safe and keep in touch.

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