

Keynotes

The Newsletter of
the North East of Scotland Music School
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Left repertoire is right for Paul

For a 22-year-old who seems to have been dealt one of life's poorer hands, Paul Murray is remarkably upbeat, preferring to focus on his musical talents than on the illnesses that have incapacitated him.

As a young teenager he was already enjoying playing the keyboard when, at 14, he fell in love with the piano but without access to formal training at his school in Glasgow, he resorted to using books. "This wasn't ideal," he recalls, "but I did learn to sight read quite quickly and managed to achieve a credit two level in my S Grade school music exam.

"However, the school pushed me back into keyboard playing so I started studying privately again on the piano, eventually applying for and being accepted by Aberdeen University to study for a BMus."

Having been diagnosed with Crohn's disease whilst still at school, life dealt Paul another health related blow when it was discovered he had a brain tumour. "I started to notice I was getting severe headaches, initially only once or twice a day but, eventually, they were constant. I put it down to stress but one day – when I was working on a shift as a part-time caterer at the Rangers football ground – the penny dropped.

"I was referred to the South-ern General on a Monday, had

MRI scans on the Wednesday and was on the operating table on Thursday! They found an even larger tumour than they were expecting and what was planned as a three hour operation became 14½ hours. What was pretty horrible was that I came round, sightless, soundless and could't even remember my name. Subsequently I needed four further brain operations."

By the following March (the first operation had been in December), Paul had recovered the ability to talk and had spent a month in rehab learning to walk again. Wanting to return to university, he got home and went upstairs to play his beloved piano only to realise that his right side didn't work properly.

"I had permanent paralysis on my right side so I had to come up with a new way of playing piano," recalls Paul. "It was only after returning to university and speaking to composer, and University of Aberdeen professor, Paul Mealor that he suggested looking at left handed repertoire."

With his degree course back on track it was through the university's Choral Society



that he learnt about the opportunity to take lessons at NESMS with Nigel Clayton. "It was like being offered a golden ticket," says Paul. "Not only does Nigel have a worldwide reputation as a performer and teacher but he already had a good knowledge of left-handed repertoire as he was already teaching this repertoire to another pupil at the Royal College of Music in London.

But Paul's medical problems weren't over. Last year he was diagnosed with an aggressive form of multiple sclerosis but with powerful medication now keeping this under some form of control, Paul has changed his degree from a pure performance course into a part

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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.

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Donald Hawksworth

(1930–2012)

It is with great sorrow that we have to report the passing of one of the School's most outstanding colleagues and supporters.

As tutor in organ studies, committee member and friend Donald Hawksworth will be sorely missed. Friends of the School will remember the happy atmosphere of his many fine piano recitals and his joyful chairing of last year's hugely successful Face the Music.



He was also a founding member as pianist of the celebrated Aberdeen Trio along with violinist Bryan Dargie and cellist Raymond Dodd.

Donald's tastes in music were admirably wide-ranging while recent performances of the works of Percy Grainger and with

Donald hailed from Sheffield and moved from there to study at the Royal College of Music numbering among his tutors Arthur Benjamin and Frank Merrick. He first came to Scotland as a music teacher in Brechin before moving to Aberdeen Grammar School where he taught from 1956–73. He went on to become Music Advisor to the Aberdeen Education Authority, a post which he held until 1983. Early retirement was no retirement at all for Donald. He joined the examining team for the Royal Schools of Music both in the UK and often far abroad and was in constant demand as a recitalist on both piano and organ.

soprano Sally Garden, the music of Edvard Grieg, were invaluable contributions to the concert repertoire. He travelled the world to attend operas and music festivals. Donald continued as a performer right up to the end and was due to give an organ recital in St. Andrew's Cathedral in the week when he was taken ill.

Donald was also a keen hill walker and when advancing age made that more difficult he loved to watch the changing seasons on Morven which he could see from his house in Strathdon.

ALAN COOPER

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performing, part composing, has applied for a two year MMus course – again at Aberdeen – and is seriously contemplating writing a piano duet for two left handed players and a text book on left handed playing technique.

Paul will also be featured in a forthcoming Channel Four documentary on the power of classical music. Scenes of Paul have been filmed in Glasgow, in London at the RCM and in Aberdeen at the university chapel. The programme will be broadcast sometime during the summer.



Pictured at The Marcliffe Hotel & Spa in November last year are The Ifor James Horn Ensemble who provided the musical entertainment for the *Keynotes* Auction Lunch.

The young musicians played a variety of pieces which put everyone in the mood for a successful lunch, which as usual, raised enough funds to cover the *Keynotes* production costs for another year.

The Ensemble players are, on the left of the tree trunk, from top to bottom: William Jamieson, Louis-Pierre Girard and Rona Cook, with Joe Boyd on the right of the trunk.

NESMS launches another star soprano

"I'm not sure I can recall one who so obviously deserves to be a star." So wrote *The Observer's* classical music critic, Fiona Maddocks, in March last year, referring to Eleanor Dennis in the title role in Handel's *Rodelinda* at the London Handel Festival at the Royal College of Music's Britten Theatre.

And Maddocks wasn't the only critic who was impressed either. Geoff Brown from *The Times* wrote: "As the grieving queen, wife and mother, Eleanor Dennis's powerful soprano made the eardrums shake. A talent to watch." So how has a north-eastern quine made the giant step from Ellon to the opera stages of London and being taken on as their youngest singer on the books of the renowned agents, Askonas Holt?

Herinx at NESMS and Eleanor says: "It was Raimund who awakened my ambition and suggested I could have a career as an opera singer. He's a great repertoire coach and he guided me, pointing me towards the best college and coach. It was wonderful to have access to this experience with Raimund. I was very privileged, not just to have his teaching but for his fantastic fund of anecdotes and stories which were almost as inspiring as his teaching!"



after graduating with First Class Honours in July 2009. In September 2010, she commenced her studies at the Royal College of Music International Opera School as the Gatto Sievwright Charitable Trust scholar.

Eleanor is now determined to develop her career and has



Eleanor began singing at the age of five, in the award-winning Haddo Junior Choirs who are coached by Eleanor's mother, Alice.

Always a keen performer, Eleanor was soon regularly appearing on the stage at Haddo House, playing roles such as Maria in *West Side Story*, Yum-Yum in Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado* and Eliza Doolittle in *My Fair Lady*.

At 16 though she started taking lessons with Raimund

Eleanor also took cello lessons at NESMS with James Halsey and says that her Grade 8 with the instrument was a great discipline that helped enormously with her singing.

Having worked on her audition arias with Raimund, Eleanor was accepted at the Royal College of Music and was offered a place in December 2005. She was awarded a Van der Beugel scholarship from the college to continue her studies there on the postgraduate course,

been auditioned by several of the country's leading opera companies. "But it was Raimund and the lessons I took at NESMS that provided the encouragement that I had the right tools for the job and egged me on. That backing and guidance gave me the confidence to really go for it.

"I hope that in four or five years I'm regularly appearing on the opera stage. That's what I really like doing, rather than recitals. It might be something to do with the big dresses!"

Tutors at the School

as at April 2012

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		
Raimund Herinx	Alan Watt	
Ruth Black	Alison McDonald	
Jean Webster		

STAGECRAFT & PERFORMANCE	
Donald Maxwell	

ORGAN	
Dr Roger B. Williams	

Forthcoming events

JUBILEE CELEBRATION CONCERT

A "Royal Variety" Concert will be held on **Friday 1st June, at 7.30pm**

at **Craigiebuckler Church**

as part of the Jubilee weekend.

There will be performers from the congregation, from local schools, community groups and from the NESMS flautist, Laura Cheyne. Please be in touch with the school for ticket information.

THE FRIENDS OF NESMS SCHOLARSHIP CONCERT

This annual concert will be held at **7.30pm at Craigiebuckler Church on Friday 15th June.**

Come and hear the four annual scholars: Kay Ritchie, flute, Megan Rolf, cello, Isabella Cook, piano and Brychan Cromwell, soprano. Tickets are **£5** each and include light refreshments at the interval.

MUSICAL QUIZ WITH AFTERNOON TEA

Feed the body and mind on

Sunday 24th June, at 2.30pm at NESMS,

when we have a musical quiz followed by afternoon tea. Enjoy a glass of fizz while you agitate the brain cells!

Tickets cost **£10** each and since numbers are limited, booking is **essential**.

Phone the school **01224 649685**.

Keynotes Auction Lunch

Just to get the date in your diary, the Keynotes Auction Lunch will take place in **The Marcliffe at Pitfodols on Sunday 4th November**. Your invitation will be included in the next issue of Keynotes.

The Friends need you!

Are you a Friend of NESMS? By reading Keynotes you already are but more importantly are you a member of the Friends, the School's sister charity? The Friends exists to promote interest in the School and to fundraise on its behalf.

For many years, it has donated **£4,000** annually to the School, funded out of membership subscriptions and fundraising activities such as the Gourmet night, promoting concerts, sale of Christmas cards and so on. This donation has become a valuable source of income for the School, particularly in these difficult financial times.

The Friends would like to help the School even more but it needs more members to achieve that goal. Would you consider becoming a Friend? That is how you can support the School financially and its high quality teaching programme.

The annual subscription is only **£10** and can be given with gift aid tax advantages. Included with this Keynotes is a subscription form along with a standing order form which is a convenient way to pay each year.

To existing Friends, thank you for your support. To others, do please think about becoming a Friend.

Best Wishes

Derek Buchan

FRIENDS TREASURER

Big Audience for Moira

Moira Docherty is well used to being the star of the show, singing title roles with both Tayside and Aberdeen opera companies and performing in countless recitals over the past two decades.

But being plunged, almost unexpectedly and with no rehearsal time – or any kind of accompanying music – into singing in front of 11,000 people at the National Television Awards at the O₂ Arena in London was by her own admission, more than a little daunting.

“Originally, I was simply going as a guest of the producer,



Moira collects an autograph from Gloria Hunniford

who I know through my local church – Queen’s Cross,” explains Moira. “Then he had the bright idea that I ought to sing but it never came to anything definite until the day before the event when he rang up and said, ‘you’re on!’ and can you wear some tartan and do something Scottish as the event was on Burn’s Night.”

“What I hadn’t quite grasped until I got there was that he wanted me to sing in the main auditorium, albeit during one of the commercial breaks, and that there were going to be 11,000 people, give or take the odd couple of dozen!”

So Moira stepped up to the microphone and rendered *Comin’ Thro’ The Rye*. “I guess that’s what 18 years of lessons at NESMS prepares you for,” quipped Moira after the event. “Certainly it’s been the encouragement of Alison McDonald, Alan Watt, Raimund Herinx and Donald Maxwell – all of whom I’ve had lessons with – that enabled me to sing in public. NESMS and my lessons there have been absolutely core to my singing career.”

Having wowed the audience Moira took advantage of the after show party to get autographs from many of the ‘other’ stars on the show script, including those of Gloria Hunniford, Carol Vorderman, Peter Andre and Ant and Dec. “I have a friend with an autistic child so I must admit that being invited to the after show party was a great opportunity to get plenty of star signatures,” Moira says.

“A couple of weeks later my friend invited me to sing at her fundraiser for autistic children at which the script was auctioned for the charity.”

Originally from Glasgow, where she first started singing at the age of 23, Moira came to Aberdeen when she got married and initially fitted her singing in with her day job as a nurse and midwife and bringing up two boys who are now 18 and 16. She no longer works as a midwife but spends most of her time on musical preparation and concerts.

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- Innes Trust
- Jennie S Gordon Memorial Foundation
- John Gordon Charitable Trust
- MacRobert Trust
- Marcliffe at Pitfodels Hotel
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