

# keynotes

The Newsletter

of the North East of Scotland Music School

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## School gives students a flying start

**Three NESMS students have won places at leading UK music colleges with a view to pursuing professional music careers.**

Balmedie, has been playing the piano since he was twelve, having been encouraged to start by his father. He plays mainly classical music but admits to a

instrument, but there's still lots of different things you can do," he concludes confidently.

Nick Scott started playing the piano at the age of eight but then dropped it for three years before starting again more seriously four years ago. "Originally it was just a hobby but when I started standard grade I became really interested in composition and did far more than the small amount required for the exam," Nick recalls.

Since then, as well as studying the piano, singing and French horn, he has developed his talents as a composer and is currently making the long haul from Ellon to Glasgow every Saturday to study at the Junior Academy run by the RSAMD. "It means getting out of bed at 4.00 am to catch the 5.30 am train but I guess we composers have to suffer for our art!"

Nick says his composing is in a classical style with a Celtic influence but: "I'm still experimenting, making each piece different." Nick's ambition is to be a professional composer, "but, failing that, it would be great to just be working in music."

It's perhaps no surprise that Alan John is showing considerable talent; both his mother and father are music teachers, percussion and cello respectively. "My first instrument was the cello," says Alan, "but at the age of seven or eight my hands weren't large enough so I started the violin." Alan has been a member of the National Youth String Orchestra, playing with them at last year's Edinburgh International Festival and on a tour of Germany in 2001. "My favourite music is baroque and some of the big romantic stuff



Alan John

but I also play guitar in a rock band with some school chums. We were doing some professional gigs but more recently we're without a drummer - and, no, I'm not going to ask my mum to fill in!

"But I'm really looking forward to going down to Birmingham in September - even if it does mean travelling down on my birthday."



Chris Baxter

Eighteen-year-old Chris Baxter, a piano pupil of Nigel Clayton, goes to the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in Glasgow to take a four year BA music degree, while seventeen year old Alan John has won a place at the Birmingham Conservatoire to

liking for jazz! He has been a pupil at NESMS for three years and says his biggest performance so far was his solo at the Malcolm Sargent Carol Concert at the Music Hall with the Grampian Hospitals Choir. "It was pretty much a full house and was a bit daunting to start

*"... once you're up on stage, you just get on with it."*

study for a BMus. Alan is a violin pupil of Gillian Findlay. Finally, seventeen-year-old Nick Scott will also be going to the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama to take a four-year BA course in composition. Nick has been studying the horn with Ifor James.

Chris, who hails from

with but, once you're up on stage, you just get on with it."

Chris says that his tutor, Nigel Clayton, has been a tremendous influence. "Nigel has been a huge support and I've learnt a vast amount from him," says Chris, who plans a chamber music career. "The piano is not a regular orchestral

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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 and Europe.

### 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

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**Chairman:** June, Marchioness of Aberdeen and Temair

**President:** Dr Neil Mackie

**Administrator:** Joan Thomas

**Piano tutor Nigel Clayton married his Japanese sweetheart at ceremonies in both the UK and Japan just before Christmas.**

Nigel and his new wife, Miho, met at Sion in Switzerland at the Tibor Varga International Violin Competition in 1996 where Nigel is one of the two official accompanists. "I was one of the competitors assigned to Nigel and as it was my first competition abroad and I didn't speak much English at the time I was finding the whole situation quite difficult," recalls Miho. "But Nigel was so kind I was immediately attracted to him and although I didn't get to the final of that competition I was offered a scholarship for two years at Tibor Varga's Violin Academy there. I rang Nigel up to ask his advice about whether I should take it and he said yes – not that he had an ulterior motive, of course!"

Nigel and Miho started seeing each other quite often, and now, as well as being partners in marriage, regularly play recitals together professionally, including two tours of Japan each year: "We have just met an agent in Japan who wants to take us on, which could considerably ease the

# Tutor ties the knot



*Nigel and his new wife, Miho.*

organisational burden for Miho and her parents!" says Nigel.

Their British marriage took place at St. Mary's Church in Addington, with Miho's parents, brother and sister making the long trip from Japan to attend, and then, a couple of months later, they went to Japan for a Japanese celebration. "That was a wonderful time,"

says Nigel. "There were many nice friends and relatives there who made my Mum and brother so welcome that we were happy to give them a concert as well as having a big party."

The couple are now based in West Wickham in Kent although performing and teaching commitments take them jointly and severally around the world.

# Kincardine House concert

**A concert by School piano tutor, Nigel Clayton, and his internationally acclaimed violinist wife, Miho Hakamata, will take place at Kincardine House on the evening of Saturday, 26th April.**

Proceeds from the concert will kick-start a new funding programme for the School's instruments. In particular, the piano that is used most often for teaching and for concerts is in need of either a major overhaul, or replacement with a new instrument. "Either scenario is likely to be costly," said Nicky Bradford, chair of the School's fundraising committee. As well as an enchanting evening of music there will also be a champagne reception for the 80 guests.

Nigel says that he and his wife are really looking forward to the concert. "Nicky and her husband, Andrew, have been

kind enough to put me up a couple of times when I've been visiting the School teaching," he says. "Kincardine House is a beautiful venue and I'm sure it will inspire Miho and myself to a really great performance!"

"We are still discussing

## Well done!

*Congratulations to the following NESMS pupils.*

**Ruth Lunny**, violin – Principal's Award from Aberdeen University

**Caroline Davidson**, cello – Principal's Award from Aberdeen University

**Raemond Jappy** – Nora Bentley Award from Aberdeen University

exactly what we're going to play but we always like to include a sonata as well as some shorter pieces by great violinists such as Kreisler and Heifetz – maybe his Gershwin transcriptions."

Nicky says she's delighted that Nigel and Miko will be playing together at the concert. "This is the first time they've played together in Scotland as far as we know so I'm certain tickets for the concert – a mere snip at £15 – will sell like hot cakes," Nicky suggests.

Kincardine House is the ancestral home of Andrew Bradford. Built in the 1890's, and with stunning views over the heart of Deeside, it is still very much a family home. It is not normally open to the public but it is used occasionally as a venue for business and corporate entertainment, and for charitable events.

# Tutor profile – Nigel Clayton

Nigel Clayton has been a piano tutor at the School since 1998, having been introduced to NESMS by his friend and now colleague at the Royal College of Music, John Blakely. John was himself a regular tutor at NESMS and felt that Nigel would be an excellent replacement for himself when he left.

"I know that there was supposed to be a trial period," remembers Nigel, "but everything seemed to go very well from the start, and I enjoyed it so much, that now, already five years down the line, I'm travelling up each month! The time has absolutely flown past and I just wish I could spend more time in Scotland. There is a very happy family atmosphere at the school with some nice personal connections such as David Parkhouse (with whom I studied) and James Halsey who I was at School with."

Nigel was born in 1960 in Croydon, Surrey, and started

playing the piano when he was seven years old. He subsequently studied with Stephen Savage and Angus Morrison at the Royal College of Music, London, where he won prizes in every category of piano performance and was awarded the College's yearly prize for his Bachelor of Music Degree.

Whilst there, he developed a particular interest in chamber music and accompanying and was further encouraged by international prizes from competitions in London, New York (Concert Artist Guild) and from the English Speaking Union.

"One of the really great things about this profession is that it has allowed me to indulge a fascination for travel as well as music," says Nigel. "Since winning the competitions, my travel schedule has included four major tours of India, Sri Lanka and Pakistan with Indian cellist Anup Kumar Biswas, tours of the Middle East and America with flautist Wissam

Boustany, of Scandinavia with Gerard LeFeuvre and throughout every European country."

He's also a good sailor – Nigel has played more than one hundred solo recitals on board the British cruise liner SS Canberra, as well as completing several cruises on P&O's Oriana, Victoria and Arcadia luxury cruise liners.

Nigel performs as many as eighty concerts every season including most of the music clubs and festivals in Great Britain, appearing regularly on the BBC's radio network, at the Wigmore hall, and at the South Bank Centre, where he has already given over sixty recitals. His most recent concerts have been in Taiwan and Japan, where he is becoming an increasingly regular performer.

Apart from several long standing partnerships, Nigel has appeared alongside such artists as Michael Collins, Sylvia Marcovici, Ofra Harnoy, Tasmin Little and Bryan Rayner Cook, the Chilingirian, Sorrel and Bingham Quartets and with instrumentalists from Japan, Korea, Canada, Spain, America, Poland and Iceland; he is engaged as official accompanist each year for the Tibor Varga and Shlomo Mintz International Violin Competitions in Switzerland, and has so far recorded ten compact discs.

As well as teaching at NESMS he is also a tutor at a specialist school for pianists in Surrey and was recently appointed to the keyboard faculty at the Royal College of Music, London.

"I thoroughly enjoy coming to Scotland to teach," Nigel says. "It can almost feel more like I'm going on holiday than to work and I'm amazingly well looked after by Jean Ward and Alec Chalmers or by Nicky Bradford and her husband.

"There's also a really interesting cross-section of pupils to engage with. There are the promising younger generation pianists, two of whom have recently gained places at the RSAMD in Glasgow, and the "other career" professionals who have kept up their playing, and still play marvellously well."

## Tutors at the School

as at January 2003

### STRINGS

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

### WOODWIND

Flute David Nicholson  
Flute Catherine O'Rourke  
Oboe Anne Rankin  
Clarinet Alison Waller  
Bassoon Lesley Wilson

### BRASS

Trumpet John Gracie  
Horn Ifor James

### PIANO

Nigel Clayton  
Joseph Long  
Tom Johnston

### GUITAR

Gilbert Biberian

### SINGING

Raimund Herincx  
Alan Watt  
Ruth Black  
Alison McDonald  
Jean Webster

### STAGECRAFT & PERFORMANCE

Donald Maxwell

## Forthcoming events

### Thursday, 20th March

Friends Gourmet night.

Tickets at £26.00 including drinks reception, four course dinner and entertainment, from Jenny Shirreffs (telephone 01224 321998).  
Aberdeen College

### Thursday, 22nd May, 7.30 pm

Recital by Fiona MacBride.

Tickets at £7.50 from the School Administrator from 1st May. School

### June – date to be advised

Gilbert and Sullivan Concert  
Inchmarlo House

### FRIENDS' FERRYHILL CONCERT SERIES

### Thursday, 8th May, 7.30 pm

Joseph Long and Marianne Fordyce.

### Thursday, 2nd October, 7.30 pm

Ifor James and Friends.

### Thursday, 20th November, 7.30 pm

Donald Hawksworth and Sally Garden.

Tickets for all concerts £8.50 from Jenny Shirreffs (telephone 01224 321998), the School Administrator or at the door.

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## Recent events

### UNKINDEST CUT OF ALL

Opera critic and writer, Neil Jones, entertained and educated an audience at the School in November with details of the history of the castrati.

An oboe trio of NESMS pupils, featuring Mary Noden, Alice Reid and Alyson Boyd, created an enchanting and welcoming atmosphere in the foyer of the Music Hall before the RSN0 Christmas Concert. Well done, girls!

### FRIENDS' COFFEE MORNING

Over £300 was raised at the pre-Christmas coffee morning held at the School, including the sale of NESMS Christmas cards.

## Donors

The North East of Scotland Music School gratefully acknowledges the valuable financial contributions made by the following over the last 12 months:

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## Successful Keynotes auction

The inaugural fund raising auction held as part of the Keynotes Lunch at the Caledonian Hotel last November raised a staggering £2,700.

Nicky Bradford, chairman of the Fund Raising and Development Committee, said after the event that this far exceeded expectations. "We knew we had some really valuable and interesting lots in the auction, but the keenness and generosity of the bidders

was wonderful to see," Nicky reported.

"Our target was to cover the cost of the next Keynotes newsletter, which is an essential part of the way we communicate with our supporters. In the event, we raised more than enough to pay for the next two editions of Keynotes, with some to spare for the general fund.

"We definitely intend to repeat it again this year – on 2nd November to be precise!"

## Aberdeenshire Council funding for school

New funding for the School to be used for tutor travelling expenses has been agreed with Aberdeenshire Council. The Council is giving the School £5,000 per year for the next two years.

"We're very pleased indeed that the Council has taken the decision to support the School," says a delighted Nicky Bradford, chairman of the School's Fund Raising and Development Committee. "We used to receive substantial funding several years ago when Grampian Regional Council existed, but when the local government restructuring took place we lost that funding. It's great to get it back even though we will now have to alter our literature – we've made a bit of a point that the School doesn't

have any government or local government support!"

Dr Jim Banks, head of education and recreation for Aberdeenshire Council, says the Council is pleased to be able to support the School. "The School uses internationally recognised tutors and bringing them to Aberdeen is obviously a major expense to which we are happy to contribute as nearly 40% of the School's pupils are from the County.

"This is very practical way of ensuring that these talented youngsters have an opportunity to receive a very high standard of music tuition that provides a stepping stone between the music tuition available in their normal schools and that available at the national academies or universities."

## Church venue for Friends' concert



Pupils of Raimund Herincx – supported by the master himself – dazzled the audience at Ferryhill Church late last year with a concert of Haydn Fragments and other works. This was the first time that Ferryhill Church had been used by the Friends of the School for a concert and the success – and potential for a larger audience –

has encouraged them to plan a series this year (see forthcoming events on page three).

The evening programme included extracts from three operas; Mozart's rarely performed *Lo Sposo Deluso* (*The Deluded Bridegroom*), and his *Der Schauspiel Direktor* (*The Opera Manager*) plus Hadyn's *Die Feuersbrunst* (*The Burning House*),

## Distinctive results for cello tutor

The School's cello tutor, James Halsey, has recently achieved an extraordinary result; Frances Lunny became his 100th pupil who has attained a distinction at grade eight in the ABRSM examinations. And even more remarkable is that all his pupils who have taken grade eight have achieved distinction.

However James, who is very modest indeed about this achievement, suggests that it is much more about the abilities of the pupils than his own teaching. "I've been fortunate to be able to teach some very talented people but I am prepared to be quite tough if necessary and I do hear scales EVERY lesson. It is also so important to get the foundations really in order, give absolute attention to detail and hope to give musical inspiration," says James.

James did quip that the enviable statistic would make things tougher for his current pupils. "You wouldn't want to be number 101 taking grade eight, would you? No pressure or anything!"

## Congratulations and well done!

*These are just some of the pupils who have done well in Associated Board exams:*

**Eleanor Dennis**, Grade 8 singing, with distinction  
**Frances Lunny**, Grade 8 cello, with distinction  
**Laura Elliott-Jones**, Grade 7 cello, with distinction  
**Fiona Morrison**, Grade 5 cello, with distinction  
**Lucy Cruickshank**, Grade 7 clarinet, with distinction  
**Dr. Margaret Jubb**, Dip ABRSM, piano with distinction.  
**Naomi Watson**, who studies both piano and violin at NESMS, won the 12 and Under class at the Moray Piano Festival.

written in 1777 and never before performed at all in Scotland.

The singers – Anna Hamilton, Martin Rudge, Glynn Hesketh, Kerry Fleming, Alison McDonald and Raimund himself all made this a memorable evening.