

NEWSLETTER

Dear all,

I couldn't just disappear into the mist without informing you a little about the change of administration, as well as try to recall some highlights of the year. So here it is, a farewell newsletter from me. To make things a little more festive, I have made it look like a real newsletter with pictures to boot!

It has been a privilege to work in this school as a piano teacher from 2002 and as its music director from September 2006. The future for me is as yet uncertain, but I know I am leaving this school in capable hands. So I'd like to start by introducing my successors.

Shay Loya

Changes in Administration

Rachel Erdos, who joined this school in September 2008, will become its Music Director from 27th July this year. She will be joined by Barbara Breen, who will be the School Administrator.

RACHEL ERDOS, THE NEW MUSIC DIRECTOR

Rachel studied violin with Diana Cummings and has an MA from Oxford University where she was an instrumental scholar and Advanced PG Dip (distinction) from Trinity College of Music. She also has a BKA certificate in advanced musicianship and is a certified Alexander Technique teacher. She has been working with young musicians and music students at Roehampton University and the National Youth Strings Academy as well as Colourstrings. Rachel has already helped me and is working hard behind the scenes in preparation for this job. She is committed to Kodály's philosophy and feels as if she is carrying on a family tradition, as her grandmother studied under Kodály himself.



Rachel Erdos

BARBARA BREEN, THE NEW ADMINISTRATOR



Barbara Breen

Barbara has many years experience working in higher and secondary education and has a clear idea of the needs of students and academic staff. She is an efficient administrator and excellent communicator who, among other things, managed the Southlands Concert Society Series at Southlands College.

A NEW SETUP

How will this new team work? My old job will be split into two. Barbara will take on the administrative side of things, especially payments and registration, and will be the first point of contact for parents (e.g. when you have a query about dates, or when you want to inform all the relevant teachers you will be away on any given Saturday). As the director of the school, Rachel will concentrate on pedagogical matters. Both parents and teachers should contact Barbara for all financial/registration matters and otherwise straightforward queries. Contact Rachel if you have a query about the content of courses, participation in concerts, moving from one class to another; in short, anything that requires pedagogical input. If you are unsure who to contact, you can always start with Barbara, who will forward your email to Rachel if it needs that further input.

Barbara and Rachel will work from Roehampton. The address, contact numbers and email addresses will be confirmed soon and a further circular will be sent to you. The new contacts will also be updated on the website.

Timetable for handover: From this point on I am no longer in charge. I will retain my work email address for a couple of months longer, in case anyone contacts me by mistake with CSS business, and forward the email to Barbara/Rachel. Sometime in September this email will be terminated.

Rachel and Barbara will officially start on 27th July, but the administration will take a short break until the beginning of August. You can send queries during this time but wait a few days for a reply.

... BUT SOME THINGS STAY THE SAME

Freeze on Fees: We were mindful of recent economic developments and therefore have decided that fee rates from last year, as published on the website, will not increase. This was made possible after Roehampton University confirmed that it will not increase the rent for using the building. This is good news for all our families, of course, but please be aware that it also means teachers will not have any increase in their payments in September. Hopefully, normal inflation checks will return soon.

The same **major concerts and events** we have had this year will continue in the next. The dates have already been set.

2009 Autumn Term

Starts Saturday 19th September
(Wednesday 16th September)

Roehampton University Open day:
School closed on Saturday 10th October

Half term:
no school on Saturday 31st October and
Wednesday 28th October

Try-an-Instrument: Saturday 14th November

Last Day and Christmas Concert:
Saturday 12th December

Rest of the year: see <http://www.colourstrings.co.uk/CSS%202009-10%20Term%20dates.htm>

SPECIAL THANKS

To conclude this admin section, I would like to take the opportunity to thank **Maiko Vinden** and **Mary Pennington** who have assisted me in running the school on Saturdays, and to **Sharon** and **Rhiannon Mehta** who assisted me in the previous two years and continued to be available this year when Mary or Maiko were away. Finally, special thanks is due to **Pat & Andy Wislocki** and **Nod Ownsworth** for their continuing support.

CONCERTS AND PLAY-INS
THIS YEAR**End-of-Year Reports**

These reports are for pupils taking instrumental tuition with us and/or pupils who have been otherwise greatly involved in our concerts. The reports include a summary of pupils' performances this year and a musicianship report. They are now printed and will be available for collection on the first day of term. If your child has left the school, his/her report will be posted to you during the summer break. If you do not receive this report by the end of August, please get in touch with Barbara; her contact details will be posted on the website (<http://www.colourstrings.co.uk/CSschool.htm>) by then.

Play-ins

Play-ins are our informal weekly concerts and the surest way for pupils to gain in confidence as performers. There are two play-ins a week, so, taking into account a few that were cancelled on major concert days, there were about *sixty* of them this year! Some – I do recall – were really lengthy and packed. But once you look more closely the picture gets a bit more complex. Here are some interesting statistics. On the negative side, only 50% of the pupils played the required 'one play-in per term' minimum. Some of them were beginners, but 72% of them were not. Clearly, this could be improved. On the

positive side, of the 50% who did play the required minimum, 72% (strange symmetry with the above!) participated in four or more play-ins.

In other words, most pupils who managed three play-ins, played even more. Indeed, there were 34 pupils this year who played four or more play-ins (a record), 23 who played five or more (another record). Then the list begins to narrow down so here I will start citing names, if I may. Rosella Gostellow, Philip Jensen, Bryony Jones and Jonathan Wolstenholme played in six play-ins. Isobel Mason and Sophie Peacock played in seven; Hannah Evans and Linden Hogarth did eight, and Hannah Northcott did no fewer than nine!

This suggests that the once-a-term 'goalpost', once achieved, becomes the gateway for a lot more practical experience, greater confidence, and 'keeping in shape' throughout the year. But, you might ask, how is it possible to perform so many times throughout the year? What if my child is simply not ready with his or her pieces?

Well, in some of these cases, pupils performed the same pieces several times. Why not? Professional musicians do exactly the same thing. and here the advantage is that a piece can be tried out, informally, at different stages of the pupil's learning. It doesn't have to be perfect, and it can be work-in-

progress as long as it is presentable.

Multiple play-ins and concerts also occur when pupils appear *both* as soloists and as members of an ensemble. These are complementary experiences, and it is important for the development of a young player to be able to appear once a term as a soloist, as well as participate in play-ins or concerts scheduled for his or her ensemble.

However you look at it, one fact stands out very clearly. All of the above pupils with a good play-in record have done very well in their studies, reviews, performances and/or Grade Exams this year. Now, don't misunderstand that last statement. It simply means that play-ins are good practice, as both statistics and common sense would tell you. There are, admittedly, a few pupils who did very well yet hardly or never attended the play-ins. This, however, is merely the exception that proves the rule. Besides, whatever their achievements, they too would have benefited from more informal concerts in front of a friendly audience. In the case of more advanced players, their participation is always an inspiration to the younger players following in their footsteps. So yes, it's not only about narrow benefits to oneself but also about giving back something valuable, and that, I believe, is the high road towards musical maturity.

CHRISTMAS CONCERT, 6 DECEMBER, 2009

The first term ended on a high note with an impressive showing from almost all the ensembles. CSO made its debut under Blai Soler's baton, and Rachel Erdos's new string quartet made its own first appearance with a minuet from Haydn's quartet op. 76 no. 3. Rachel also appeared for the first time with the String Masters, and there were contributions from the 'Apprentices', 'Wizards' and Soile's Flute group as well. Then came the duet debuts: Tobias Haswell and Zahrah Hutton (guitar duet), Charlotte Inskip and Katie Newton (piano), Harriet Tymens and Thomas Westlake (piano) and Oscar Holmes and Helen Westlake (piano). Nod's two

upper Kindergarten classes sang some Christmas songs, and the pianists' choir, reinforced by David Vinden's advanced musicianship groups, ended this concert impressively with five songs, some traditional and others by Mendelssohn and Tim Porter.

RICHMOND FESTIVAL, 21 MARCH, 2009



The CSO and its leader, Linden Hogarth, positively glow as they are handed the Richmond Festival cup.

The two ensembles sent to the Richmond Festival were CSO (the Colourstrings Orchestra), and 'The Colourstrings': Rachel's string quartet with Linden Hogarth, Zosia Niedermaier-Reed, Laura Brun and Bronwen Mehta. Linden also acted as the leader of the orchestra, and the other three were the soloists in Corelli's *Christmas Concerto*, played by the CSO.

We sent a few soloists too: Lottie Fogg, Isobel Mason, Hannah Northcott and Zosia Niedermaier Reed. They all represented themselves, as well as CSS, admirably. CSO, The Colourstrings and Zosia (as soloist) were all awarded first prizes. See under 'Further Congratulations'.

CONCERT REVIEWS,

17 MAY, 2009

The concert review was and felt like a concert first and a review only second – as it should. It took place in the big (Chapman) hall. As

most concerts in this hall concentrate on groups, this particular event gave instrumentalists from their second year onwards a rare opportunity to try out their solo pieces in a bigger setting and get some feedback

from adjudicators, most of whom were external (so this was also an important exercise for us as teachers). The attendance at 84% was pretty high, though one always wishes for 100%!

GRADE EXAMS AT CSS,
27 JUNE, 2009

Many pupils took Grade Exams this year with overall good to excellent results. At the time of writing this newsletter I do not have all of the photocopied exam papers with me, therefore I will refrain from mentioning those who took exams outside CSS, lest I forget anyone. But this does not take anything from anyone's achievements.

I would like to highlight, however, the Trinity-Guildhall Visiting Examiner Scheme, which we tried out for the first time this year. The pupils who participated in this scheme this year were Isabella Larkum, Elizabeth Saleh, Samuel Miguet, Hannah and Eva Northcott, Hannah and Bryony Jones, Erin Ailes, Niamh Hunter and Zosia Niedermaier-Reed.

Having the examiner come to CSS, rather than visiting an exam centre outside, definitely had its advantages. Pupils benefited from easily available and free facilities (like accompaniment sessions), they were on their home turf, they could see their teacher before the exam and I was able to control the schedule, take care of any special needs and negotiate things in general to our pupils' advantage. AND we got the results on the very same day!

The examiner was quite impressed with the overall level. There were two passes, six merits and two distinctions. The latter two were Zosia Niedermaier-Reed and Erin Ailes. Congratulations to them and to everyone who took part!

SUMMER CONCERT,
4 JULY, 2009

I have a lot of pictures from this event, courtesy of the Mehta family. In fact, I have so many, that selecting a few for this newsletter out of the best ones was a struggle. Please contact or speak to Sharon at the beginning of the year if you would like to see the lot.

The concert was a marathon which started at 9 am in the morning and ended at about 3.15 pm. In every hourly (or indeed "hourly+") session there were dozens of items, so naturally I cannot provide photographic evidence of even a fraction of them, let alone describe them all here.

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Blai Soler and the String Apprentices

SUMMER CONCERT

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But I *would* like to mention a few groups who made a unique appearance, like Angela Fogg's musicianship groups and the Playing Rascals (this year's string beginners), who made their debut in the big hall. This was also the concert where our senior leavers, Grace Chilton, Elizabeth Edwards and Georgina Werkmeister played solo pieces (more about these three below).

The first concert was characterised by its variety of solo instruments and a very high level of solo playing. One cannot mention everyone individually in this limited space, but one simply must mention Lottie Fogg, our most senior flautist, who gracefully delivered her farewell piece at the beginning of the concert (alas, she is leaving next year). The String Wizards gave their farewell concert too (they will be disbanded next year – see under "New String Groups"), and Sarah Barker and her teacher Petra Malik played Debussy's exquisite *En Bateau* for piano four hands.

The second concert had some special appearances by the Marianne Dodge's senior flute group, piano and string duets, and the final concert of the String Apprentices (the older beginner group). There is a particularly arresting picture of the Apprentices, which I

just had to include here (see previous page).

The third concert was dominated by guitar and piano duet playing. I include one of my favourite pictures from that third concert, of Philip Jensen and Rosie Jennings. Sometimes, one simply must look at the other person's music...



The joy of piano duet

The Midday Concert, the high point of the day, was dominated by all the senior ensembles and the choir. There was a notable contribution from Miguel's cellists, where at one point the younger children were joined by the older ones, and a few – Thomas Nettle, David Mason and Kuba Niedermaier-Reed – even got the opportunity to play solo parts in this ensemble. The CSO played movements from Mozart's Symphony no. 4 and a Vivaldi concerto, where the leader, Linden Hogarth, played solo in the first movement, and Isobel Mason played solo in the second. The choir gave a moving rendition of Fauré's *Pie Jesu* and Bach's *Du bist bei mir* ("If thou art near"; they sang in English) (see picture), and this was followed by members of David Vinden's senior musicianship groups who sang beautifully works by Thomas Weelkes and R.R. Bennett.



The enthusiastic choir

SUMMER CONCERT

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Not to be outdone by their pupils the teachers gave a fantastic one-and-a-half-hour-long concert, beginning at 1.30 pm. There were virtuoso solo and duet pieces, refined Baroque and Classical pieces, South American jazz, children's music and even a parody of Ravel's *Bolero* played on one cello by four players (this had to be seen to be believed: I enclose a picture which may give you the approximate idea). This endlessly versatile and exciting concert was prepared and rehearsed by teachers voluntarily – as a gift to all the pupils – and the spirit of goodwill, humour and camaraderie that pervaded it was truly uplifting! The teachers who took part in this concert were Diana and Cordelia Mathews, Soile Pylkkönen (Baroque Flute) and Miguel Calvo, Rachel Erdos, David Stratkauskas, Blai Soler, Michele Salvemini (playing the clarinet!), Gábor Podhorszky, Clara Tchotoeva (with her husband, the pianist Temirzhan Yerzhanov), Maryan Balkwill and myself. Elizabeth Edwards, one of our senior leavers (more about Elizabeth below), also participated in this concert. Almost all of the school's teachers took part in at least one of the concerts that ran that day since the morning.

What more can one say? The whole of the Summer Concert was a real musical feast and a tremendous conclusion to the entire year. One could simply congratulate and thank all those who took part in this year's concerts and play-ins.



The 2009 Summer Concert concludes with a very unusual *Bolero*. Left to right: Elizabeth Edwards, Maryan Balkwill, Miguel Calvo and Diana Mathews.

MORE CHANGES AT CSS

The **school's name** will change to the Colourstrings Music (instead of 'Saturday') School. Rachel will circulate a message about that at a later date.

New String Groups

Next year all groups at all levels, except for the very beginners, will be divided into upper strings and cellos. The other exception is CSO, which will work as a whole orchestra; however, the cellos in this orchestra will often be sent to 30-minute sectional rehearsals with Miguel at the beginning of rehearsals, while Blai works with the upper strings. This will be explained in more detail to the orchestra members. There will also be two new senior string quartets.

MORE CHANGES

*continued from previous page***Choir and Piano Workshops**

This year the choir will be 45 minutes and it has moved to 11.30 – 12.15. Moreover, it will no longer be affected by pupils leaving for workshops at the same time. These changes will undoubtedly have a beneficial effect on the choir's work.

The piano workshops will take place around midday by appointment. Every pianist will get a chance to participate (with the exception of a few pupils in their first year). However, since these workshops are an expensive extra, and effectively a form of scholarship for pupils taking the piano package, time will be allocated according to individual pupils' interests, investment and commitment. It is my hope the workshops will continue to develop beyond duets, to include also chamber music and accompaniment sessions.

Goodbye to Five Teachers

As a matter of coincidence, several teachers will be leaving this year apart from me. I would like to pay tribute to **Marianne Dodge (flute)** who has been in this school as a parent since September 1994, i.e. a year after its foundation, and as a teacher since September 2003. Her departure was planned long ago: now that all of her children left CSS, Marianne simply wants to spend more time with her family on weekends; **Silja Murto (violin)**, who

joined CSS in September 2001, was appointed last September as Head of Strings in St. Catherine's School in Bramley (Guildford) and carried on at CSS temporarily for an additional year; **Sarah Wortley (cello)**, who joined us in September 2007 and last term moved to Winchester (yet carried on until the end of the year – thanks Sarah!); **Clara Tchotoeva (AKA Frei) (piano)** who joined the school in 2003 and will be now concentrating on arts management; and **Urszula Galuszka (guitar)**, who has been with us for only a year. Sadly, Urszula was unable to teach on Saturdays or participate in the school events. She recommended, already in March, someone to replace her in September, and it turned out that that person was perfect for the job.

A New Teacher

I am therefore very pleased to welcome Gábor Podhorszky, the new guitar teacher. Gábor has already participated in the instrumental tryouts this May, met some of his future pupils – who instantly liked him! – and took part in the teachers' concert this July.

Goodbye to our senior leavers

Our senior leavers, aged 16-18 deserve a special mention in this newsletter. **Grace Chilton (piano & viola)** joined us back in 1994, as a 3.5-year-old in Nod's KG. Colourstrings has literally been her second

home. This is also true of **Georgina Werkmeister (cello)**, who joined the KG in September 1996. **Elizabeth Edwards (cello)** joined us only in September 2006, but has since made a tremendous contribution to the school concerts. The three girls formed together the 'Senior String Quartet' with Miguel Calvo. This group has given us many memorable moments over the past two years, including the final Summer Concert on 4th July, when (joined by Bronwen Mehta) they played together works by Frank, Bloch and Kodály, and accompanied some of the younger cellists (see picture below).



Grace has astonished her fellow piano pupils by playing this year Chopin's Etude op. 10 no. 5, and for her farewell concert as a pianist, she played on 4th July Liszt's Rhapsody no. 3. Georgina's farewell solo piece was the lovely *Arioso* by Bach. Elizabeth played the soulful and dramatic *Elegie* by Fauré.

We wish them all the very best in their future studies and endeavours!

FURTHER CONGRATULATIONS

Let me just say sorry in advance if I omit anyone or anything important...

The Colourstrings Orchestra (CSO) won the Junior Orchestra cup at the Richmond Festival.

'The Colourstrings' (Linden Hogarth, Zosia Niedermaier-Reed, Laura Brun and Bronwen Mehta) won the Best Junior Ensemble shield at the Richmond Festival.

Zosia Niedermaier-Reed got first prize in her solo class at Richmond music festival.

Thomas Nettle will join Westminster Abbey Choir School and **Luca de Flammineis** will join London Oratory School in Sep-

tember 2009. Previously **Joshua** and **Henry Broadbent** have joined the London Oratory School. Both of these schools are aware of the Colourstrings programme.

And now for some truly spectacular news: **Elizabeth Edwards** has won this year the prestigious National Centre for Early Music (NCEM) Composers' Award in association with BBC Radio 3 and the Tallis Scholars. Her choral piece, *Arise*, is available online: <http://www.ncem.co.uk/cgi/projects/projects.cgi?t=temple.htm&a=66>. Elizabeth, it must be added, was the youngest person to have been short-listed for that prize. Since she joined the school in September 2006, her already well-formed mu-

sicianship skills continued to develop in David Vinden's musicianship class. An increasing interest in arranging music naturally grew into fully-fledged composition. From September 2007 she took piano as a second instrument with me and has made truly remarkable progress as cellist with Miguel Calvo. She will be now going to Wells Cathedral School as a Music Specialist. Bravo!

Finally, one should congratulate *all* the pupils for their hard work, the parents for their continuing support and the teachers for their idealism and dedication. This is a long road we travel together, but the journey, you will agree, is well worth it.

That's all from me. It has been a pleasure and an honour. Goodbye!



Shay Loya
Outgoing Music Director

A lesson with my pupil Anne-Lise Cogoli, 4th October, 2008.
Photograph taken by Pieter Grimbergen.