

September 19th '09.

Dear Colourstrings Parents;

I am writing to you to introduce myself as the new Director of Colourstrings.

I am very excited about taking on this new role within the School and look forward to the various opportunities and challenges which will undoubtedly present themselves as we continue to develop the good work that we do here.

Musicmaking:

This is what we are all here for. I would like our ensembles to rehearse as efficiently as possible and have plenty of opportunities to perform. They do depend on complete attendance of all members for their high standard. We are continuing to increase the opportunities for chamber music. This year we have an additional string quartet and places have been given as a scholarship to reward achievement and commitment. In the future, I hope we will be able to take the Colourstrings Orchestra on tour and run holiday courses. This will provide us with the tremendous opportunity of working together every day and also trying new approaches that compliment the Colourstrings method. In July I organised a short, intensive course for some of our instrumentalists. They spent the three days playing chamber music, attending musicianship classes and participating in Alexander Technique and Dalcroze sessions. You can see some of the pictures from this event and the summer concert on a slideshow in the parents' room today. I plan to run a larger, more inclusive course next time, probably at Easter, and will let you know the proposed dates and programme very shortly. Other possible plans for the future include term-time masterclasses, workshops, and concerts by visiting players.

Fundraising:

At the moment, Colourstrings Music School is funded exclusively by tuition fees. However, a number of the projects I have mentioned require extra funding. I would also like to expand our outreach projects in various schools. However, at the moment there is no money available for this. I am actively investigating a number of possible funding opportunities and I would welcome any help that any of you may have to offer, however great or small it may seem. In particular, if anyone has any expertise in writing funding applications or works for a company that has money earmarked for supporting ventures such as ours or knows of funding bodies that exist which might consider helping us, then I would very much like to hear from you!

Colourstrings Online:



Robin and Lorna Ailes and I have been developing a website specific to our School. The address is colourstringsmusicschool.co.uk. In the near future, we are planning to make it more interactive including a community forum for photos, pictures and comments. The site will also provide the opportunity to communicate with us easily in order, for example, to record any planned absences. We would also like to add a place for teachers to communicate with pupils and potentially upload files of pupils' achievements or class exercises.

Parental Involvement:

We are considering the possibility of forming a parents' committee. Its *raison d'être* would be to improve communication between parents and the school, but also to help with fundraising and the organisation of events.

We could also run music classes for parents on a Saturday morning. Perhaps a Kodaly musicianship class, choir, music appreciation class or Alexander Technique would be of interest to some of you? Do get in touch with me if you would like to be involved in either of these projects or want to make a suggestion for a parents' class.

Using our buildings:

Since 1997, we have been delighted to work in Roehampton University buildings and have a generous agreement with them for this to be feasible. However, this also means that we are sharing the facilities with others. We need to make sure that pupils, parents and staff follow a simple set of good neighbourhood rules. This is particularly important on the rare occasions that Conference Roehampton is running an event in Chapman Hall on a Saturday during Colourstrings. For the adults, this may also mean parking elsewhere, and this is in our agreement. A few complaints have been made about enthusiastic runs and ball games in the corridor, as well as curiosity towards the university equipment! We have been asked to keep away from the fountain in the quad and the pool tables in the café. There is a large space at the far side of the duck pond, well away from the water, which is ideal for ball games and burning off energy! Please help us to reinforce a positive approach to these issues.



Administration:



You may have seen the newsletter that Shay published on the Coloustrings website introducing myself and Barbara Breen. Unfortunately, very soon after he wrote that, a close relative of Barbara's was involved in a serious accident and she realised that because of this she would not be able to take on the job of Colourstrings administrator. However, I am very pleased to announce that as of this week we have a new administrator; Jean-Pierre Garde.

Jean-Pierre came to England from France, where he trained as a musician both at University and Conservatoire. In England, he specialised in ethnomusicology while playing with different ensembles and teaching music-as a violin teacher and a secondary school music teacher. He has also worked in different industries where he has acquired experience in administration, customer service and events management.

He is very excited about meeting the staff, the parents, and, of course, the pupils. He will be with us every Saturday morning, based in the parents' room, as well as manning the office at Roehampton two mornings a week.

In addition to this, Maiko Vinden, who has been with us for a year, is taking over as receptionist on Saturdays and will be based at the front desk and helping with general administration. Mary Pennington will also continue to help from the parents' room, so we will be very well looked after!

I hope you have found this letter useful. If you have any questions or concerns or just want to get in touch with any one of us then please do so using the details below.

With all best wishes,

Rachel Erdos

Our Contact Information:

e-mails:

Rachel: director@colourstringsmusicschool.co.uk

Jean-Pierre: admin@colourstringsmusicschool.co.uk

The office is room 002 in Queen's Building.

Office hours: Monday 10am – 2pm , Friday 10am -2pm, Saturday 9am-1pm.

Phone no: 020 8392 3000 and ask for extension 4766

Emergency phone no: This will be active in two weeks and everyone will receive an e-mail with the number before this point.