NEWS JETTER 010 winter 2017



The

Yehudi

School

Menuhin

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Dear friends

It was, of course, announced more than a year ago that I would be retiring from headship and that Elaine and I would be leaving the School at the end of this term. And, suddenly, here we are at the start of December, surrounded by empty walls and half-full packing boxes. Time really has flown.

The past seven and a half years have been very happy ones for us both. The role of Head at The Yehudi Menuhin School is a very special one: the size of the School means that you really do get to know every single pupil (rather than, perhaps, just their names and faces, as would be the case in a larger school), as well as, in many cases, their parents and even, sometimes, their grandparents. This has been as true for Elaine as it has been for me: not only do we enjoy welcoming the pupils informally to our home, but Elaine (as well as being the School's Alumni Officer) has also got to know them extremely well in an 'official' capacity through her role as Exams Officer. And it is an extraordinary privilege for us both to be able to watch them growing in assurance and confidence as young musicians, not just in the regular Showcase Concerts which we all enjoy but also in the twice-weekly lunchtime concerts which provide pupils with such vital and regular performing experience.

We have been fortunate, too, in having a talented and supportive staff, whose friendship we have much enjoyed, as well as a governing body every one of whom holds the School very dear to their heart. And I must here thank Chair of Governors Richard Morris for his constant support and invaluable advice.

But the School community is much broader than merely those who attend it and are involved in its running and management. The wider YMS family comprises all those many well-wishers, friends and benefactors who are so interested in its activities, development and continued success. So, whether you read this as a former student, member of staff or governor, as one of our many devoted Friends, as one of the many donors who have responded so generously to our various appeals for support, be it for bursaries, buildings or musical instruments, or one of those who have joined the 1963 Society and remembered the School in your will – we have very much enjoyed getting to know you all and hope very much that you will continue to support the School in the years ahead.

With very best wishes from Elaine and me for Christmas and the New Year.

Dr Hillier Remembers..

Dr Richard Hillier gave an interview reflecting on his time as Headmaster to Richard Tanner a few weeks before the end of his final term at the Yehudi Menuhin School.

RT What surprised you most about the school when you first became Headmaster here?

RJH The pupils themselves. I had feared these super-talented young people might be weird, geeky, narrow, introverted – not normal kids. And, of course, not surprisingly, they are just that: normal kids who just happen to be extremely talented as well. They do all the things, both right and wrong, that all teenagers do. It is quite refreshing. If they didn't do all those things, I would be quite worried.

RT What have you enjoyed most about your time here?

RJH The pupils – it has to be the pupils. I don't think Elaine and I will ever forget the first concert we came to at the Summer Festival in 2009, before I was even appointed. It is a jaw-dropping moment when you see a whole programme of pupils from the School, young and old, performing at such a high level. Now, of course, it is no longer a surprise, but the sense of wonder remains. We shall certainly miss that. The most enjoyable thing has been helping these pupils in some small way to achieve their potential and to see them on a daily basis improving and impressing in such a way.

RT How do you relax?

RJH I try to switch off. It is very important in any kind of stressful job that you are able to 'compartmentalise'. You have got to be able to switch off entirely. In this online age it is quite difficult: you have to be extremely disciplined and not react to potential problems as you see them coming in on your phone or your email.

RT Are there specific things that help you switch off?

RJH Spending time with Elaine. Taking Jimmy, our rather lively Parson Russell Terrier, for walks in the beautiful Surrey countryside and down to the south coast.

Escaping from the School site. When you live where you work it is very important to get out of School when you can. For me, it is normally only at weekends. But Surrey has been a total surprise to us. I had imagined it to be unbroken stockbroker belt with mock Tudor mansions and not much else. The countryside around here is so beautiful.

I also like to immerse myself (when I can) in my own (non-School) academic work which is so different from the 'day job' that it is strangely relaxing.

RT What aspect of the School's most recent development are you most proud of?

RJH I know it is easy to be impressed by buildings (and buildings aren't the only thing), but, at the beginning of the last academic year when I walked out of our house and saw these wonderful music studios and looked across at the Harris House extension and Music House extension, I did feel incredibly proud that I had played some part in making this happen in such a short time.

We are not a rich school, but we are incredibly fortunate to have generous and loyal benefactors and donors who have made this possible. We have managed to achieve so much in such a short time – I would never have dreamed it could be possible.

RT Did you deliberately think early on that you needed to get a development office set up?

RJH It was being discussed even before I had taken up my post. In the months before, Alan Trail, the previous Chair of Governors, had realised that the School was going to have to become more serious about development.

The School had been very fortunate in the past because of generous individual governors and their invaluable personal connections. Their hard work, as well as a capital grant from the UK government (the like of which we shall not see again), had enabled the School to build The Menuhin Hall. But it had become clear by 2010 that any future development would need a more serious, organised and professional fundraising effort.

RT What are your feelings as you come up to leave?

RJH Very much a mixture. People say working with young people keeps you young. We are going to miss the pupils. It has been such a privilege and joy to watch them and to get to know them. Owing to the small size of the YMS, you get to know them far better than you would in bigger schools. We are particularly going to miss watching the younger pupils grow and develop into the wonderful performers they will undoubtedly be.

We will miss the staff, an incredibly happy, harmonious staff, a wonderful group of people to work with. It has been a joy to work with everyone. The School has also been lucky to have such supportive and interested governors. But, in the end, it will be the day-to-day contact with the pupils Elaine and I shall miss the most.

On the other hand Elaine and I are looking forward to living in our own house for the first time in 26 years. I am also looking forward to devoting time to our garden – starting a new garden practically from scratch is both daunting and exciting. And, of course, my chief aim is to be able to find more time for my academic studies (the Latin poetry of Late Antiquity): I am very much looking forward to that.

RT What would you like to be doing in a year's time? In your garden writing a book?

RJH My editor has been waiting patiently for my book for longer than I dare admit. I would like in a year's time to have submitted the draft of my book to the publisher and, hopefully, to be doing a little Latin or Greek teaching (not too much!) either at the university or a school in Durham.

And I hope I will have got round to putting up my shed and greenhouse and they won't still be languishing in a dismantled state in the garage!

RT Thank you very much, Richard, and best wishes to you and Elaine.



Farewell Malcolm Singer

Cathy Whitnall writes:

The art of saying goodbye is a complex matter, especially when doing so after nearly 40 years of contact with The Yehudi Menuhin School.

The farewell events arranged for Malcolm Singer stretched from the High Notes interview on 21 June to the massive farewell concert and barbecue held on 12 July (the day before his birthday). In between was a dinner with the Governors, a trip to Wales with the orchestra, final visits to Longfrey and Painshill and concerts at Wigmore Hall, Thaxted and the Menuhin Hall.

The concert on 12 July will stay in the memory for a long time. When it was first mooted back in January various ideas were put forward but it wasn't until the end of June that plans became firmer – and then there was something of a mad rush to get it all together. The repertoire combined some of Malcolm's best loved pieces with performances of music that had inspired him, and there were also new works by three of the composers that he in turn had inspired.

Thomas Carroll, who brought the whole plan to life, conducted an orchestra led by Tasmin Little and consisting of past and present students and staff in a performance of the Suite from the Shtetl, and the school choir sang two of his earliest choral works in addition to movements from his childrens' cantata Dragons. Malcolm had been fully involved in choosing the repertoire for performance, but a surprise or two was also arranged – notably the appearance of dancer Ben Whitnall in the performance of Tango Machine for String Quartet.

The concert finished with the first performance of a new work written specially for the occasion by former pupil Cheryl Frances-Hoad; words by Plato were set so that all the performers and the audience could take part, providing a triumphant end to a moving concert. The concert was followed by a barbecue for the school past and present; thankfully the weather played its part and reunions took place all over the lawn.

COME & PLAY AND OPEN DAY

In the first half of term 24 families attended our Open Day and 45 young musicians (between the ages of six and 15) came to 'Come & Play'. Apart from instrumental lessons, applicants took part in aural classes, a student-led tour and a concert by our pupils. The hard work of both teachers and students paid off: smiling families praised the lessons and concert both throughout and after the day. James Young's aural classes turned out to be a crowd favourite – hats off to him for teaching 45 applicants in six sessions with hardly a pause in between! When asked in the feedback form how we could change Come & Play to make it better, one parent simply remarked: 'Make it weekly!'.

COMPOSITION PROJECT

On 28 September a convoy of minibuses arrived in our car parks.

42 GCSE and A-level students from Surrey schools flocked into the Music Studios to attend a lecture by John Cooney, our Head of Composition. In the first of three events at YMS, the students learned about the basics of composing for strings; valuable knowledge to help them write pieces for workshops in January and March.

The students also came to our Lunchtime Concert which left such an impression that it led to us setting up a new and exciting initiative:

THE OPEN LUNCHTIME CONCERTS

We are offering a new series of termly recitals to secondary schools for free. On the one hand, these are 'normal' concerts where visiting students can listen to performances by fellow teenagers. On the other hand, it is also a chance for guests to catch a glimpse of everyday life at the Menuhin School. On 7 November the first such concert saw 30 spell-bound students in attendance from the Howard of Effingham.

Wigmore Hall

On 11 October Dr and Mrs Hillier took a group of pupils to the Wigmore Hall to hear a wonderful concert by the Endellion String Quartet, who played a varied programme of Haydn, Bartok and Beethoven. Three members of the Endellion String Quartet are Alumni – Andrew Watkinson (1968), Garfield Jackson (1975) and Ralph de Souza (1977). The fourth member of the Quartet is David Waterman.

The Endellion Quartet

Tunisian Festival

Earlier this term I had the honour of being invited to give a recital as part of the classical music festival Octobre Musical de Carthage by concert pianist Roberte Mamou, its founder and artistic director. The festival has existed for over 20 years now and takes place in the historical district of the Tunisian capital, Carthage, near the ruins of the ancient Punic and Roman cities. In a magnificent building called Acropolium, audiences could enjoy 16 chamber music or solo recitals by artists from all over the world. I was honoured to be representing Morocco. This year was the first where an Arab country other than Tunisia took part in the festival, and this fact generated a lot of enthusiasm from the public. Just before the concert Ghofrane Miladi and I were interviewed by Tunisian TV and, afterwards, part of the concert was televised. I was lucky to have a very warm welcome and nice feedback from both the audience and the press. This festival is a wonderful enterprise, and I am very proud of what it does: promoting classical music in Tunisia and in the Maghreb region. I feel truly honoured to have been able to take part in this project and hope its success will inspire many other similar initiatives throughout the region.

LEATHERHEAD CONCERT SOCIETY

Ketan Curtis writes:

On 4 October pupils from the school performed a concert at the Leatherhead Parish Hall. This concert was for the Leatherhead concert society. The concert club provides social evenings for elderly people and visually impaired adults and they provided an evening of live music, homemade cakes, tea and coffee and a raffle. Their members come from the Leatherhead, Bookham and Ashtead areas. During the year they have lots of choral music such as visits from the Epsom Male Voices and the Downsmen Barbershop singers. The concert we did included pupils from C3 to A3 and the programme was very varied, with pieces by Smetana, Bottesini, Handel and Ravel. All of the pupils would agree that it was one of the most relaxed concert experiences given throughout the year; the conversation and occasional singing throughout performances was a refreshing change of environment for all pupils. It was felt that the audience really enjoyed the concert and that they especially enjoyed Max Calver's joke from a Morecambe and Wise sketch: 'I'm playing all the right notes but not necessarily in the right order'.

LOOKING AHEAD

There are two long-standing favourites in the diary for later this term. On 24 November we will be giving our annual concert for the Wimbledon International Music Festival (at St John's Church, Spencer Hill) and this year the Festival's theme is Music and Cities.

This led to some interesting discussions about repertoire, but in the end we decided to present John Ireland's London Pieces, Boccherini's La Musica Notturna di Madrid, Variations on the Carnaval de Venise by Dancla and two pieces representing the gypsy 'city-less' tradition.

Just over a week later we will be returning to Champs Hill in West Sussex, home of a wonderful recital room which is often used for recordings (Champs Hill has its own CD label) and a stunning landscaped garden which is full of sculptures in all sorts of styles. David and Mary Bowerman, who own Champs Hill, have become great friends of the school and always give the pupils a very warm welcome - not to mention the best greenroom facility in the country! The concerts there are almost always sold out and it is a thoroughly enjoyable experience for everyone.



Summer Results





SENIOR MATHS CHALLENGE

Silver: Finlay Hay

Bronze: Katie Morgan, Pere Puertas Masferrer. Tianyou Ma and Nipakorn Limcharoen

GCSE MATHS IN ACTION DAY

On 23 November all the Bs went to The Emmanuel Centre, London for a day of Maths-related talks.

We discovered how errordemonstrated by playing a CD with a small hole drilled through games and to be wary of statistics

CANCER RESEARCH



Penny Wright, our Box Office Manager, completed a half marathon in London called Shine Night Walk for Cancer Research UK. 14,000 people took part on Saturday 23 September.

Penny set off at 7.30pm from Southwark Park and the route took in some of the landmarks in London, including Tower Bridge, St Paul's Cathedral and Buckingham Palace. She finished in Old Billingsgate at 12.45 am with sore feet but she had had an amazing experience, meeting many wonderful people who were all determined to help beat cancer.

Memorable Friendships

The D group spent some time in their first days of the new school year thinking which qualities they would look for in a new friend. They then had fun writing recipes to create their own special friends. We hope they will 'last a lifetime'!



1. Set out all of the ingredients you need and measure everything.

2. Secondly, whip the generosity and helpfulness together in a big bowl.

3. Melt loyalty and sympathy in a saucepan on a hob. Now add it with generosity and helpfulness. Stir it well

4. Pre-heat the oven now.

5. While you're waiting for your oven to pre-heat, slice honesty and then pour happiness into the mixture you made before.

6. You shall now add honesty into the rest of the mixture.

7. Kindness and patience will be thrown in with the rest of the ingredients as well as thoughtfulness

8. Scrape the mixture onto a baking tray, then put the baking tray into the oven you pre-heated.

9. When it is ready to be taken out, garnish it with a sprinkle of wisdom and caring.

10. Finally your special friend is READY!







Rebecca Vol

A LEVEL ECOLOGY TRIP **TO CUCKMERE HAVEN**, EAST SUSSEX

On a beautiful day in September our three Biology A level students were in East Sussex studying the distribution of molluscs along a rocky shore. Cuckmere Haven is an area of flood plains where the river Cuckmere meets the English Channel between Eastbourne and Seaford.

The river is an example of a meandering river and contains several oxbow lakes. The beach at Cuckmere Haven is next to the famous chalk cliffs. the Seven Sisters. Katie Morgan, SongHa Choi and Will Duerden all have to carry out a number of practical investigations to gain a pass in their practical paper.



ngHa Choi d Katie Morgan

CHARITY FUNDRAISING

the prize being bouquets of flowers arranged by our own



Katie Morga

Duke of Edinburgh

Jenny Dexter writes:

On 24 September Alfie Leishman, Leon Sturdee, Hattie McGregor and Darwin Chang completed their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh expedition in the North Downs. They walked for six hours each day with all the food, tents and equipment needed for the whole weekend. In the evening they cooked a tasty pasta dish and in the morning they had the same for breakfast! They were a really enthusiastic, diligent group and Sarah Lee and I were pleased to help them gain their Bronze award.

NEW PUPILS

We are pleased to welcome the following new pupils this year:

SASHA BOULT 16, cello, UK CAITLIN CHAN 9, cello, UK SALVATORE DI LORENZO 14, violin, Italy LUDWIG DORNER 15, violin, Germany DURU ERDOGAN 13, piano, Turkey MAGNUS FORBES 9, violin, UK

ISABEL GARCIA GONZALEZ 16, double bass, Spain ANTONI INGIELEWICZ 16, violin, Poland CATERINA ISAIA 14, cello, Italy EMIRI KAKIUCHI 11, violin, Japan TRINA KAMAWAN 14, violin, Thailand SEOYUL KIM 10, violin, S Korea NIPAKORN LIMCHAROEN 16, violin, USA PENDO MASOTE 13, violin, South Africa STEFANIJA NIKOLICH 13, piano, UK ROCIO ORTEGA LOPEZ 13, violin, UK HARRIET QUICK 16, viola, UK AIYANA RENNIE 12, double bass, UK ALEXANDER STEJSKAL 8, violin, UK ALIX VAILLOT 15, violin, France CLAIRE WELLS 16, violin, USA

Hattie McGregor, Leon Sturdee, Alfie Leishman and Darwin Chang

Alumni news

KATHRYN STOTT (1975) was recently appointed as the new Artistic Director of the Australian Festival of Chamber Music.

After the success of the London workshop for the European String Teachers' Association in June **RUTH PHILLIPS** (1980) and Jane Fenton were invited to run a Breathing Body/Breathing Bow workshop in Cornwall between 21-24 November. Ruth also runs retreats from her home in Provence. Her website is http:// thebreathingbow.com. Please follow the links to an interview Ruth did for The Crossed Eyed Pianist https://crosseyedpianist. com/2017/09/30/the-exquisitely-breathing-bow/ and an article she wrote for Musical Orbit https://musicalorbit.com/news/ and-breathe/.

CARLAMARIA RODRIGUES (1982) has been invited to join the faculty at the Aspen Music Festival beginning in 2018.

TASMIN LITTLE (1983) has received her 5th Honorary Degree – this one from Birmingham City University, presented to her by Sir Lenny Henry.

NING KAM (1993) has been appointed as professor of violin at the Conservatoire Royal de Musique de Bruxelles.

Over the summer **BENJAMIN BAKER** (2009) was awarded 3rd Prize at the Michael Hill International Violin Competition and returned as a Fellow to Ravinia's Steans Institute in Chicago. He went on to tour throughout China and made his debut at the Festspiele-Mecklenburg Vorpommern in Germany with pianist Daniel Lebhardt. At the opening of the 17/18 season he gave concerts in Chile and Argentina, culminating in a Wigmore Hall concert on 19 September

In May he was honoured to premiere a new violin concerto, 'Stranded' by Matthew Kaner at the European Commission's celebration of Europe Day at St John's Smith Square. It was a very moving evening and it felt especially poignant to be premiering one of the first pieces to be written about the current situation in the UK.

The next few months for Benjamin include debut recitals at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., Merkin Concert Hall in New York and a residency at Caramoor Rising Stars in the U.S. with Pamela Frank.

CANSIN KARA (2014) has been awarded the 3rd prize in the International Benyamin Sönmez Cello Competition in Fethiye. It was (as far as we are aware) the first truly international cello event to take place in Turkey.

YMS YOUNG FRIENDS

Lord Menuhin founded the Friends of The Yehudi Menuhin School in 1971 together with a few local supporters of the School. The first concert for the Friends took place in Slyfield Barn in the summer of 1972 and since then the Friends have grown to over 750 supporters from all over the globe, offering financial assistance to the School and a warm and supportive presence at concerts.





Cosima Soulez-Larivière

The 20-year old **COSIMA SOULEZ-LARIVIÈRE** (2015) won 1st prize at the Bartók World Competition in the violin category in the Grand Final held in the evening of 16 September. Also various special prizes were awarded. Cosima was also invited to the 2018 Budapest Spring Festival, to the Cziffra Festival, to the Singapore Violin Festival and to the Festival Academy Budapest as well as to collaborate with the Győr Philharmonic Orchestra and the Franz Liszt Chamber Orchestra.

SÀO SOULEZ LARIVIÈRE (2017) was awarded third prize, playing viola, in the 24th International Johannes Brahms Competition Pörtschach.



This year we are very excited to be developing a new programme within our Friends to encourage local young music lovers to visit The Menuhin Hall and discover all that we have to offer. YMS Young Friends will be open to anyone under the age of 30 and will offer members the chance to attend concerts at a greatly reduced price. Watch this space for full details in the next newsletter!

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STAFF NEWS

As readers will all be aware, this term saw Dr Òscar Colomina i Bosch take up the reins as Director of Music. He was joined in the music department by the following new staff: Dr Shu-Wei Tseng and James Young (General Musicianship Teachers), Tamas Reti (Partnership and Outside Events Officer), Marta Gonzalez Bordonaba (Music Librarian), and Tereza Privratska (Assistant Violin Teacher). Tereza replaces Jenna Sherry who has been appointed a Principal Teacher at the School for Young Talent – the junior department of the Royal Conservatoire at The Hague. We wish Jenna all the very best in her new post: we are very grateful for all she did as an assistant teacher here. We are also grateful to Robert Aldous (Art Teacher) for deputising again this term for Patsy Belmonte while she recuperates after an operation. We send Patsy our best wishes and hope to see her back with us soon.

Elsewhere, we said farewell to Development Assistant Lizzie Utting who left us to move to Norwich at the end of the summer holiday. We were very grateful to Angela Legg who, having helped us during the busy Menuhin 100 Festival last year, agreed to help out again until Amy Mitchell was able to join us at half-term. We also welcomed several new staff to the

Launch of The 1963 Society

On 15 October a special group of supporters gathered together in the Music Studios for an intimate concert and tea to celebrate the launch of The 1963 Society.

Named for the year of our foundation, The 1963 Society was created to honour those who have chosen to leave a legacy gift to the School. The Music Studios felt like the perfect place for such an event, as their construction was made possible thanks to the critical contribution of our legacy donors.

Society members were treated to a wonderful concert in The Menuhin Benthall Studio by students Mira Marton, Rebecca You, Joseph Pritchard and Molly McGregor, followed by a delicious tea in the Music Studios lobby.

Legacy gifts have also been vital to the School in providing bursaries to many extraordinary children who would otherwise have been unable to attend the School. On behalf of all of these incredible musicians and their families, and the generations of talented students still to come, we would like to thank all of the members of The 1963 Society for their pledges.

If you would like information on legacy giving, or if you plan to leave the School a gift in your will and would like to join The 1963 Society, please contact the Development Director, Edward Romain on **development@menuhinschool.co.uk** or **01932 864739**. Information can also be found on our website at www.menuhinschool.co.uk/support-us/ways-of-giving/legacies. Menuhin Hall Bar team: Carol Butcher, Oliver Dean, Grace Evans, Diana Glassett and Bella Nelligan.

A warm welcome to all our new staff: I hope they all enjoy their time working at the School.

Leaving us at the end of the Christmas holiday will be Poppy Way (Receptionist and Admin Assistant) who has been such a welcoming and friendly first point of contact for our visitors and to Ben Wyithe who has been so reliable and dependable as Assistant Estates Manager. We shall miss them both and wish them well in the new posts.

At the end of term, we also said farewell, of course, to Elaine Hillier. As well as everything else she has done in her role as Headmaster's wife, she has also over the last seven years been both a highlyorganised, efficient and meticulously accurate Examinations Officer and the School's first Alumni Officer. In this latter role she has been responsible for tracking down and establishing contact with around 500 of the School's former pupils and for the organisation of two highly successful Alumni Reunions. The School is enormously grateful for all Elaine has done: she will be missed by staff, parents, and past and present students alike.

Autumn/Winter Season

Highlights of the Autumn/Winter Season in The Menuhin Hall included a concert by the extremely talented Trio Isimsiz in September (with past pupil Michael Petrov), a wonderful performance by past pupil Ben Baker in October and an evening of clarinet music by Emma Johnson in November to a soldout auditorium.

The scheduled concert by current YMS cello teacher Bart LaFollette on 31 October had to be cancelled due to illness but we are thrilled to announce that Bart will be performing the same programme on Tuesday 6 March 2018.

On Thursday 30 November 'His (Head)master's Voice' was a truly fitting way to bid a very fond farewell to Richard Hillier, whose singing was greatly enjoyed by all. On behalf of The Menuhin Hall, I would like to thank Richard for a wonderful evening, as well as his support over the last nine years. The Hall team wish him and Elaine all the best for the future.

The Spring/Summer events brochure will be released in February and is packed with an array of events. We look forward to welcoming you in the months to come.

Ben Baker, with admirers







