

Summer Term 2011

...teaching music, changing lives!

We have had a marvellous spring term here in Reading. It has been busy, long and tiring but above all fun and productive with many highlights and I would like to thank the students, parents and staff for making this happen.

Spring Term Highlights

As always, it was a busy term for staff and students alike but the hard work certainly paid off as those of you who have been at our many concerts will testify.

The first concert of the term was held at the spectacular Douai Abbey in Woolhampton and for that we are very grateful to Father Oliver and his team for accommodating us. We are very privileged to play in such a venue and every one of the groups did themselves and Maestros credit. The house was absolutely packed; we could not have squeezed another person in.

In February we enjoyed the concert given by our junior groups who provided us with a delightful performance, which saw the audience enthralled with the skill and expertise of our younger children.

Chamber concerts were held to enable a number of solo performances to happen and there were some really stunning items from a wide variety of instruments.

A Brass Chamber Concert and Chamber Ensemble concert were held at the end of term which gave those performers a platform to show off what had been achieved in those specific areas.

So as you can see, a lot happened last term and a lot of hard work and dedication was able to be showcased.

Summer Term

There is such a lot to look forward to during the Summer Term. It is going to be such a very busy and productive time that it will be difficult to know what the absolute highlight will be!

That said, they are sure to include The Garden Party and Have a Go day, The Summer Proms at the Hexagon and the senior groups tour to Germany.

The Garden Party will involve almost every group in the music centre and is on 21 May. It will run parallel to the "Hands on Session" so please do come and support this event and bring friends, family, siblings and anyone that may be interested in any way. We will have burgers, ice creams, cakes, drinks and various stalls as well as a lovely afternoon of music. Let's hope that we are as lucky with the weather as we were last year.

The biggest change for the summer term is that we have been lucky enough to secure the Hexagon for 4 sessions rather than the 2 we have had previously. We will be putting on performances on Sunday 3 July (4pm and 7pm), Monday 4 July and Tuesday 5 July. I have already notified the groups as to which session they will be performing in but if you have any queries please do either look on the website or let me know. I hope you will agree that this presents a super opportunity for more groups to be involved in this amazing event. Tickets will be on sale in a few weeks directly from the Hexagon.

Reading Music Centre Tours

The intermediate tour has now returned from Dusseldorf after a spectacular weekend of music making, camaraderie and fun. The students were all impeccably behaved and played absolutely beautifully. They had their own concert in Mettmann and received a standing ovation from some members of the audience and I have already received a complimentary email from a member of the audience – see in quotes below.

They also played in a joint concert with the Dusseldorf U16 Youth Orchestra and new links and friendships were made with their peers. This was so successful that the German orchestra are now planning their own trip to come and see us here in Reading.

"I found this trip exciting and enthralling. I feel I have learnt a lot from our German friends. This trip has allowed me to exercise and refine my skills. Thank you for organising such an enjoyable trip" String player.

"The tour has been brilliant! I am sad to be going home. The concerts were such fun to play in and I'm a lot closer with other members of the band" Band member.

"I had so much fun. Everyone was very friendly and I made lots of new friends. The hotel was amazing and so were the venues. I can't wait until we can go again. Thank you staff for organising it" String player

"My name is Norbert Ebner, and I did have the chance to see the Mettmann performance of the **Reading String and Wind Ensembles** this weekend — thank you very very much it was really great — simply superb". A member of the audience

The senior groups still have all this to look forward to when they go off to Dusseldorf and Leipzig in the summer holiday. If the spring tour is anything to go by they will have a marvellous time. They are going for longer and will play more concerts and will also get to see some of the former East Germany. They will be having a pre-tour concert in July so keep an eye out for the more detailed diary dates and come along and support them.

Beginner Ensembles

We are still able to offer the very special rate of only £20 for the first term in the beginner ensembles. This represents excellent value at only £2 per session. This includes Caversham Junior String Ensemble, Reading Junior String Ensemble, West and North Reading Junior Woodwind, Farnaby West Brass Band, Junior Choir, Drumming Circle as well as some of the guitar bands. Full details are on the web site.

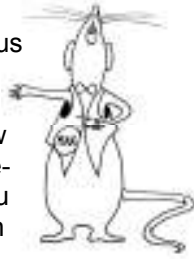


Concert tickets

I would like to take this opportunity to explain the policy on concert tickets. We are no longer in a position to put on free concerts as in the current economic climate we need to recoup some, if not all of our expenses. The expenses include hire of the hall, staff costs, transportation, programmes, music etc etc. Here at Berkshire Maestros we all work extremely hard to keep these to an absolute minimum but I am sure that you will appreciate that there are always costs. I have been trialling a policy whereby I keep the cost of a concert to £5 per person. This will inevitably have the effect that some concerts will feel better value than others. However, by keeping the cost to £5 I very much hope that no-one is priced out of coming to see their child perform. However, I do not have control over the Hexagon ticket prices.

Mini Maestros

The Mini Maestros classes that are held here on a Saturday morning are enormous fun for the smaller children as well as providing solid foundations for future music learning. We do have a few spaces available for children between pre-school and year 1 to start in May. If you are interested please get in touch with me on 0118 901 2366 or email karenbrown@berkshiremaestros.org.uk.



Correspondence

We have very definitely moved away from paper and the majority of our correspondence and notices will be by email so please ensure that we have a correct email address for you that is checked on a regular basis. This will be backed up by notices on the various boards in the Music Centre so please make sure you keep an eye on those as well as your emails. Copy letters will also be posted on the website.

Lost property

There is an ever-growing pile of lost property accumulating in the Music Centre. This cannot be stored indefinitely so if you have lost something then please do check. There is a list on the board by the window in reception.

Student supervision - Reminder

We are fully responsible for the children whilst they are in an ensemble. However, when that is finished responsibility transfers to the parents. Increasingly students are not collected on time and ensemble leaders wait with them at the end of a long evening. Sometimes younger siblings are left until the older one has finished and they are then unsupervised. Please make every effort to be there at the end of an ensemble to collect your child even if it means that you need to wait a few minutes for another one to finish.

Music Services for...



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Term dates

All term dates are published on the website and are on display in the Music Centre. The summer term starts on Saturday 30 April and music centre finishes on Saturday 2 July. We look forward to seeing you then and at some of our many events.

Adult lessons

I am regularly asked about specific lessons for adults. If you are interested, either as a beginner or a return to playing then please do let me know or complete and return an application, downloadable from our website.

Did you know?

Here at Stoneham Court we hire our rooms out during the day for a wide variety of activities on both a regular and ad hoc basis. Please do bear us in mind if you ever need a room during the day. We have a capacity of 100 in our largest room and rates are very competitive.

Karen Brown

Change to Berkshire Maestros' Annual Reporting Procedures

From summer 2011, Berkshire Maestros will be changing the way in which we report pupil progress to parents. There will be no formal written annual report this year. Instead, during the second half of the summer term, all teaching staff will write a short comment in the back of the pupil's practice diary - either in the teacher comment box or on the 'notes' page. This comment will refer to the pupil's progress and attainment and highlight expected targets for improvement in the usual manner. From September 2011, it is intended that teacher assessment comments will be completed termly in the student practice diary to help children become aware of their own strengths and weaknesses and to be involved in identifying, with their teacher, what they need to do to improve.

Parents are asked to contact Maestros by email at reports@berkshiremaestros.org.uk if they have not received teacher comments in their child's practice diary by the end of June or with any queries.

Are you a UK taxpayer?

We can claim Gift Aid on donations and ensemble membership fees - tax relief on every pound you give. To qualify for Gift Aid, you must pay an amount of UK Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax at least equal to the tax that Maestros reclaims on your donations or eligible membership fees in a tax year (6 April one year to 5 April the next). If you qualify and wish the tax to be reclaimed on any donations or membership subscriptions that you have ever made or will make to Berkshire Maestros, please complete the relevant section on the payment slip at the bottom of your enclosed invoice.

giftaid it

Reading Music Centre • Berkshire Maestros
Stoneham Court • 100 Cockney Hill • Reading • RG30 4EZ

Tel: 0118 901 2370 • Fax: 0118 901 2351 • Email: reading@berkshiremaestros.org.uk

www.berkshiremaestros.org.uk