



COMPETITION WINNERS GO TO RUSSIA TO PLAY



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A "Russia Special" covering the recent visit by five of our students to give concerts and experience the musical and cultural life in Taganrog

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Pictured outside the Chekov museum, the five winners of the Doncaster Young Musician competition 2008 held in February. They are, from left to right, Hannah Brayford, Hannah Greening, Hayley Head, Annabel Allison and Sami Alsindi. There is a write up of the trip on page 2.

YOU MIGHT LIKE TO KNOW THAT . . .

Every week the 45 teaching staff of Doncaster Music Service deliver

Over 700 hours of vocal and instrumental tuition in 113 of the borough's primary, secondary and special schools reaching 5634 of the town's students.

33 large and small Centre based ensembles, with attendance free to pupils within Doncaster LA schools

10 free Live Music sessions in schools, supporting the Government's pledge to put "Music at the heart of every school" and to promote less well known instruments

Lifelong Learning lessons, workshops and ensembles (from pre-school age)

TRIP TO RUSSIA EASTER 2008

It was a bit early when we left on our trip - 3.15 in the morning! Even the birds weren't up yet. As we travelled across Snake Pass to Manchester Airport it started to snow. If this was England we wondered what it would be like in Russia.

None of us knew quite what to expect in Taganrog. Everyone had 'googled' it, so we knew all about Chekhov, and



.....Peter the Great.

Our first chance to have a proper look was on Saturday morning, when we had a walk around the town and visited a couple of the museums dedicated to Chekhov.

There wasn't a lot of time to relax though, as by 4.00pm it was straight into the first concert at the Tchaikovsky Museum. The piano was one that Tchaikovsky himself used! It's probably best not to mention who it was that bumped into it with their instrument. Fortunately though, it didn't seem to affect the tuning of the piano.

Sunday was spent sightseeing and visiting some of the main museums,

and by Monday we were ready for the rest of the concerts.

There were seven concerts in total, from the quite formal, at the Taganrog Art Gallery, in front of local press and television, to the informal such as the concert for student teachers of English, who then performed for us in return and joined us on a massed walk down by the sea.

By the end of the week, the William Appleby students were old hands at playing in front of TV cameras, video cameras, press cameras etc. The standard of playing certainly improved over the week, with such intensive performance practice.

Often the concerts were shared with local music students, and we were treated to performances of traditional music, song and dance on traditional instruments, which was wonderful to see and hear. We were welcomed warmly wherever we played. A couple of times we arrived at a venue to be met by students in national costume carrying an offering of bread and salt, a Russian custom to greet guests. We tried to think how we might give visitors in our own country a traditional greeting but struggled to come up with any ideas.

The education system in Russia is very different from our own, so we couldn't really compare like with like. Our own instrumental lessons tend to be about 20 minutes each week, whereas the Russian students often have a lesson every day, often of an hour in length. In Britain, we take for granted the fact that we have access to high quality musical instruments. This is not the case for the students in Taganrog. It certainly brought home to us how lucky we are to have the facilities and equipment that are available at our own Music Centre. What was noticeable, however, was the dedication of their students in the face of very difficult circumstances.

We took the opportunity to sample some of the local dishes, such as blinis, borsht and kasha. There was also a rather famous local cake shop that needed trying out a few times!

As well as becoming familiar with local culture and customs, we also learned a few words of Russian - if anyone ever needs to know the Russian for 'tortoise', just ask!

Although the main objective of our trip to Russia was to perform, perhaps the biggest impression that every member of our party brought away with them, was the hospitality and kindness of everyone that we met.

We hope that two or three of the young musicians we met during our stay will be able to come to Doncaster this summer. It would be wonderful to see them again, and to give people the chance to hear them perform. However, the travel situation in Russia has changed drastically, and the cost of going abroad for them has recently doubled in price. So if anyone out there knows of any generous benefactors who might be willing to help, do let us know!

By the way, it was still snowing when we arrived back in Manchester. Some things never change!

The students that went were; Sami Alsindi (percussion, guitar), Annabel Allison (piano), Hannah Greening (flute, recorders), Hannah Brayford (piano) and Hayley Head (clarinet).

There are more photos and video clips on the Music Service website from the Special Events page.



Taganrog - what our students said

Best parts...

"Meeting the Russian people, visiting museums/art galleries, performing in all the concerts, listening to the Russians perform."

"Russian traditions, Russian hospitality, Russian music and the talented Russian musicians. It was also interesting and enjoyable to hear the pieces played by the other 4 students that went on the trip, all of which were amazingly played by them. Finally, it was fascinating to see the Russians' version of musical education and compare it to the (fantastic) education we receive in Doncaster."

"Performing as a soloist nearly every day, in some of the most fantastic buildings with ideal acoustics and in front of large audiences."

"Learning about the totally different culture through listening to traditional instruments, eating the food, and speaking to the Russian musicians after concerts were all things I really enjoyed. I also feel I was very lucky to meet some of the most generous and kind people while I was over there."

"The sight seeing was great fun, I especially enjoyed looking around all of the old buildings. They are so beautiful and well looked after and I felt privileged and honoured to be invited to perform in some of them. I really liked performing in Russia; the people were so friendly and welcoming."

Worst parts...

"The roads were terrible and scary. The cars had no seatbelts and the roads had no traffic lights. Daunting when you want to cross as a pedestrian!!!"

"I didn't really have a worse part. I went to Russia!!!!"

"Being fed too much!"

"The worst part was leaving behind my host, Nina. She was so lovely and even though she couldn't speak any English she would never fail to satisfy our needs. Staying with Nina was like playing a ten-day long game of charades but it was fun all the same. I will miss her loads!!!"

"Seeing fantastically-talented, young Russian musicians not being able to afford what we see as basic musical instruments or repairs. Oh, and the roads were like roller-coasters; it felt like driving on an off-road course that whole time!"

Our winners offer advice to other young musicians

"You will never be given an opportunity like this without just going for it and auditioning to be given the chance. So just go for it and keep playing, even if music is not the career for you, music is so enjoyable especially when able to play in different bands and groups."

"Work hard, practise often and do the best you can."

"Keep playing even when you hit a wall, get passionate about your instrument (live it, breathe it) and practise regularly! But I think one of the things that helped me advance quickly was, instead of reading the music, listening to it and learning it. Once you start playing by ear you play with so much emotion and feeling and your playing becomes so much more melodic. Oh, and attend as many Music Centre groups as you can!"

"Persevere until you reach your goal and if another opportunity like this comes along, get auditioning because it is an incredible opportunity, one not to be missed - a chance of a life time! You will never be given an opportunity like this without just going for it and auditioning to be given the chance."

INSTRUMENT PURCHASE SCHEME

The Music Service is able to offer parents or guardians the opportunity to purchase new musical instruments at a discounted price and without the addition of VAT. If you are interested in the scheme please ask your son/daughter to contact his/her Peripatetic Music Teacher or collect a form from the Music Centre reception or visit: www.doncastermusicservice.org.uk/faq

The Music Centre has a shop for the sale of a wide range of accessories. We are able to sell at an educational discount. The shop is open from 9.00am - 1.00pm on Saturdays in our Reception upstairs.

Music Makers

These classes are for pre-school children with their carers. The sessions are fun and include singing, dancing, instrumental playing and play-acting. Classes take place on Tuesday mornings and Thursday afternoons. Each session costs £3.50, and £2.50 for subsequent children, payable each half term in advance.

The *OPUS* letters are available in colour from our website: www.doncastermusicservice.org.uk by selecting the News link. The diary page of the website will give you details of all events and important dates (closures etc.) during the current term.

Widening Opportunities

The story so far..

Between January and April this year Chris Bartram undertook an independent evaluation of the current provision of the Whole Class Instrumental Tuition currently in place in Doncaster Schools, and delivered by the Music Service. A summary of his findings are included below...

"....From all the available evidence, there is very high quality whole instrumental tuition taking place in Doncaster schools. Quality of teaching and learning is often excellent, with a wide range of well-prepared activities delivered in a way that engages and enthuses the children. Schools for their part generally provide a welcoming and highly supportive environment in which the lessons can take place, and share an active and positive dialogue about the scheme with the instrumental teachers.

The children are generally progressing well. As would be expected, levels of attainment vary, but the lesson activities generally allow for all

children's abilities, and even where some children have not attained the level of some of their peers it is clear that their work is generally valued and respected, and that they too value their own work.

Schools are generally enthusiastic about and highly supportive of the scheme, and keen to praise its positive impact on both the children and the school as a whole.

Many, many examples were given to me of specific children who have benefited personally from the lessons. Stories abound from the staff, of children who show improved confidence and self-esteem, better behaviour and better engagement with lessons.

There is also plenty of anecdotal evidence from staff that the whole class instrumental lessons can have a powerful effect on the wider school, including improving discipline and behaviour, raising class and school levels of confidence and pride, striving for real quality, developing a sense of community, etc.

School staff are generally enthusiastic and supporting of the scheme, whilst the great majority of children seem to be enjoying, and even thriving, on the lessons.

The practice already taking place in Doncaster clearly provides an excel-

lent model for the future development and expansion of whole class instrumental tuition via Doncaster Music Service. Existing staff are skilled and generally highly motivated, providing a firm foundation on which to build the whole class instrumental scheme...."

A Question for David Blunkett

The sustainability of the scheme is an issue picked up by Chris Bartram as a concern shared by schools. It is still not clear how or whether schools will be able to fund continuing provision for those pupils who wish to continue playing after the year long projects finish. In June, the Music Service will host a conference for South Yorkshire Music Services at which a keynote speaker will be David Blunkett. He was, at the time, Education Minister responsible for the pledge that:

"over time, all pupils in primary schools who wish to will have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument"

The conference should provide an opportunity for David Blunkett to explain how he envisaged the answer to the problem of sustainable provision.

A BLAST FROM THE PAST

Members of a 1961 orchestra returning to the Beechfield Centre after giving concerts around several primary schools



HOLIDAYS, CLOSURES AND RESTARTING IN SEPTEMBER

- Half term -

The Music Centre will be closed from **Saturday 24** to **Saturday 2 June inclusive**.

- Summer -

The Music Centre will close at 4.00pm on **Friday 18 July** and will re-open on **Monday 4 September**.

Saturday Music Centre ensembles will begin on Saturday 9 September, and evening ensembles from Tuesday 12 September.

DONCASTER MUSIC SERVICE

Concerts - Dates for your Diary - May / July 2008

Please would the performers arrive at least 15 minutes before the start of the concert.

Concert clothes: dark coloured trousers/skirts and white shirts/blouses should be worn, except where directed otherwise.

Unless stated otherwise, admission to concerts is free, with a retiring collection for Music Centre funds.

Wednesday 21 May

Music Centre Pupils. Doncaster Museum and Art Gallery, Chequer Road at 1.00pm. The Museum makes a small charge for admission on the door.

Saturday 24 May

Doncaster Schools Symphonic Band. St Peter's Church, Bentley Rd, Bentley at 7.30pm. Admission payable on the door, £3.00 and £2.00 concessions.

Wednesday 18 June

Doncaster Schools Senior Orchestra. Music Centre Hall at 7.00pm.

Friday 20 June

Doncaster Schools Symphonic Band, Beechfield Youth Orchestra and the William Appleby Chamber Orchestra. Salvation Army Lakeside Community Church, Booth Avenue, Doncaster (*directions below*) at 7.00pm. Tickets are available by telephoning the Women's Institute on Doncaster 325829 or at the Music Centre office: adults £5 and children £3.

Wednesday 25 June

William Appleby Chamber Orchestra. Doncaster Museum and Art Gallery, Chequer Road at 1.00pm. The Museum makes a small charge for admission on the door.

Wednesday 25 June

The Percussion Ensemble, Senior Brass Group, and the Steel Pan Ensemble. Music Centre Hall at 7.00pm.

Friday 27 June

Vermuyden Concert Band. Hall Cross Lower School at 7.00pm.

Saturday 5 July

Guitar Groups. (Mr Belbin-Wood) Music Centre Hall at 11.00am. Rehearsal at 10.00am.

Saturday 5 July

Band Concerts at Hall Cross Lower School. The Beginner Wind Group and the Beginner Brass Group at 9.00am.
10.00 Band at 10.00am.
11.00 Band at 11.00am.
12.00 Band at 12.00pm.
1.00 Band Concert at 1.00pm.

Tuesday 8 July

Electric Guitar Groups. (Mr Merrett) Music Centre Hall at 7.00pm.

Wednesday 9 July

Guitar Groups. (Mr Nockalls) Music Centre Hall at 7.00pm.

Thursday 10 July

Recorder Groups. Music Centre Hall at 7.00pm.

Saturday 12 July

Orchestra Concerts at Hall Cross Lower School.
9.30 Beginner Strings (Mrs Gange) and the 10.30 Transitional Strings (Mrs Roberts) both together at 9.30am.
11.30 Progressive Strings (Mrs Roberts) at 10.45am.
11.45 Training Strings (Mrs Gange) at 11.45am.
Saturday Afternoon Orchestra (Mrs Gange) at 12.45pm.

Directions to the Salvation Army Lakeside Community Church, Booth Avenue, Doncaster DN4 5JN.

From the south (Cantley and Bessacarr). After Cantley traffic lights keep in the left hand lane and turn left at the "Dome" traffic lights into Glivice Way. Take the first left turn as if going to the Campanile hotel and follow the road past the hotel to the Church hall. Please use the Campanile car park if the Church park is full.

From the Race Course roundabout, proceed along Bawtry Road to the "Dome" traffic lights and turn right into Glivice Way. Take the first left turn as if going to the Campanile hotel and follow the road past the hotel to the Church hall. Please use the Campanile car park if the Church park is full.

Thursday 22 May - recorder groups

Please note there will be no recorder group rehearsals on this day.

Last rehearsal dates and theory classes this term.

As a general guide, most ensembles do not have any more rehearsals after their end of term concert, until the start of the next term. Exceptions to this are listed below:

Theory Classes - Tuesday 8 July.
DSSB - Tuesday 8 July
Steel Pans - Thursday 10 July
Senior Brass Group - Friday 11 July
DSSO - Wednesday 2 July

Car Parking.

Please would all visitors to the Music Centre use the car parking facilities at the Centre in order to avoid stress to local residents.

In the interest of the safety of Music Centre pupils, please would parents ensure that they **park only in the designated parking spaces** and take the utmost care when driving away, especially at busy times such as Saturday mornings. **Please do not drop off or pick up your children around the rear door area.**

Wednesday 11 June and Thursday 26 June

Please note that on these two days there will be no evening ensemble rehearsals at the Music Centre and no instrumental teaching in schools, with the exception of DSSO on Wednesday evening.

Beechfield Youth Orchestra Auditions.

Auditions for our most senior orchestra will take place on Friday 27 June (6.00pm -7.00pm) and Friday 4 July (6.00pm - 7.00pm.) Applications are invited from players of all orchestral instruments of approx. Grade 6 or above standard. To maintain the very high standard of this orchestra, applicants should be available to attend all rehearsals (which take place every Friday evening during term-time) and all concerts as arranged. Application forms will be available from the Music Centre office from 24 May, and should be returned by Friday 20 June. For pupils at the McAuley Catholic High School, an additional date will be arranged for September, if needed.

All the Music Centre staff would like to wish you a relaxing holiday and look forward to your continued support in September.