



virtuosi school of music

Newsletter – Summer 2011

Important Notice - New Full-Year Program!

Until this year, we have run with 5 different calendars across three locations to accommodate students from ISH, ASH, HSV, Elckerlyc and The British School. On considered reflection, we will run with only three calendars in 2011/2012 by lesson location.

This year we will invoice by Academic Year rather than by term. Payment upfront receives a discount, while monthly payment by direct debit is possible with authorisation. Full information, including 'holiday dates' for each location are available on our website.

Christmas Concerts

The final concerts for 2011 will be split over three locations. Teacher's will be able to register their students as soon as attendance is confirmed. Again we encourage all students to present a piece. The three concert dates and venues are:

Elckerlyc International School - Leiden

Wednesday November 16th, 15:30 pm

The British School in the Netherlands - Leidschenveen

Thursday December 1st, 19:00 pm

Virtuosi School of Music – Church of St John & St Philip

Saturday December 10th, 19:00 pm

The final concert for the year will showcase our adult students and teachers, everyone is invited to attend!

The Year in Review

It was a busy one! Rather than write a long account, the following pages contain a pictorial overview of 2010/2011 'as it was'; from the final touches to our Dintelstraat Studios to the Feel at Home in The Hague fair, after the Christmas Concert, Winter (our water meter burst, which saw us carrying buckets of water from the carpenter next door for more than a week); Demonstration for JSL, hard at work, Staff Family Day for the Peace Palace & Final Concert on June 18th. Thank you everyone!

The Year Ahead...

Importantly 2011/2012 will begin with our first annual Staff Seminar. The aim is to clarify objectives, share our teaching experience, resources, best practice along with food and wine. New programs such as the intermediate level Music Preparation Class (4-7 Years) and Adult Appreciation Course fill the remaining holes in our vision for 'life long learning'.

More important information follows on pages 4-5, please read on!





ABRSM Exams – Notes from the meeting with Alison Harvard (June 13, 2011)

Following the June round of ABRSM exams I had the opportunity to attend a brief meeting with examiner Alison Harvard at the invitation of local ABRSM representative Karin Hollreiser. At this meeting we were able to clarify the Board's expectations for each grade. I was pleasantly reassured that the examiners want to see and hear authentic music, and to develop well-rounded musicians. Here is a summary of the main points from this meeting...

(editorial comment is italicised)

Repeats

Plain repeats are generally discouraged due to time restraints. However adding ornaments idiomatic to the stylistic period will be viewed favourably. If the repeated section will be identical to the first, don't play it! Alison reports that in exams, students tend to relax in the second repeated section and make unfortunate errors, where often they would have received maximum marks had they not repeated at all. In short, unless repeats will add something to the performance omit them - especially in the earlier grades. Above grade 5 students are expected to demonstrate a greater awareness of style and period. The student and teacher take an informed decision together.

Sight Reading

Pupil's are allowed to try out (i.e. practice) the sight reading test before being tested. Students should not feel bashful to do so. Examiners are looking for continuity when mistakes are made, so keep going at all costs. The examiner will judge the musical phrase or excerpt as a whole – not note for note. Most students make the mistake of focussing on 'correct' notes at the expense of meter, pulse, dynamics and phrasing. A steady pace with reasonable flow, in key will receive a MERIT. This plus musicality (observing expression and dynamic markings) will receive a DISTICTION.

Alison emphasised the importance of sight reading, including scales and arpeggios. Developing sight reading skills enables pupils to learn new solo pieces quickly, and to be an effective member of an ensemble, band, orchestra, quartet or duo. Music is a language, and daily sight reading helps us to become fluent and informed by covering a larger body of work; awareness of stylistic conventions, common fingering patterns, tonality, rhythmic patterns, tempo indicators, cadential formulas *et al...* these are all essential to building musicianship. *Internalising the elements of music also allows a performer to improvise more readily, to take informed 'risks' in performance while landing on thier feet, and to write thier own music. This is historically the case in music education.*

Rhythm & Pulse

Alison notes that in mid to upper grades students should know & be able to describe the difference between rhythm and pulse. 'Rhythm' and 'Pulse' are related, and are thus used loosely in describing music practice. This can lead to confusion among students. However, for the purpose of exams, the definitions are clear cut. The basic underlying pulse is determined by the meter, whereas rhythm refers to 'patterns' formed in the written notes. *This is not to deny that Rhythm and Pulse are mutually dependent in performance.. We feel or count the underlying pulse when we clap, play or sing a rhythm. In lessons a teacher will often say 'here mind the rhythm' or 'be careful to play in time', when they are all the while implicitly refering to the observation of the underlying pulse predetermined by the time signature.*

“Opening Our Ears to Music” - Adult Music Appreciation Course

Feeling overwhelmed by classical music? Virtuosi now offers an adult Music Appreciation course for those wishing to enhance their musical experience and understand music on a deeper level. We hope that this course will allow you to get the most from performances and recordings.

Led by mezzo-soprano and Cambridge alumna Emma Brown (*Pictured top right*), you will watch, listen to and discuss Western music in a variety of contexts: film, theatre, church, concert hall and arena. The emphasis is not on music history or general knowledge, but on learning the questions we can ask ourselves when listening to music that will help us to engage with it more readily.

When?: Monday (five Mondays of 90 minute sessions), **7:30 - 9:00 pm.** The next course will begin in August with sufficient interest. TBA

Where?: The course will be in a friendly social setting in our Dintelstraat Lobby.

The total contribution for the five week course is €75 per person. Please contact us by phone or email to register your interest, as space is limited in order to create a small, friendly group dynamic.

Music Preparation Class (4-7)

Theory based singing class for children four and above with little or no former musical experience in preparation for instrumental lessons. Combines solfege and eurythmics.

Early Childhood Music Awareness (Thurs 10:30 Sat 10:30 & 15:30)

Our junior Music Awareness class, is a general workshop for pre-school age children (1-4) which aims to develop listening, singing, coordination and social skills in preparation for propaedeutic and groups lessons. New enrollments are welcome at any time.

Trinity & ABRSM Grade Exams

The next round of ABRSM grade exams are after the Summer Break in November/December, with entry closing September 24. Well Done to those who sat in the May/June rounds. Support materials for the Aural Component and syllabi are available from our head office through your teachers.

Trinity College exams are held once a year at the ISH (International School of The Hague) in Kijkduin. Registration is in January. The Trinity syllabus is broad in scope, allowing pupils to sit exams on more contemporary instruments such as 'Plectrum Guitar'; incorporating rock alongside the classical and jazz repertoire.

Practice Cards

For people without an instrument or place to practice, Practice Cards are now available at our Dintelstraat studios. Each card entitles the bearer to 15 hours of studio time at a rate of 3€ per hour. They have no expiration date.

Pictured Right top to bottom: Mezzo Soprano Emma Brown, Jazz Drums Francesco de Rubies, Double Bass Luciano Poli, Classical Percussion Orlando Velazquez & Guest Star: “No sticker until absolutely perfect, put it on your nose and play it again!

