RCM and its community, part 2:
The hair-raising exploits of RCM staff
Welcome to upbeat...

Welcome to the second of two special bumper issues of Upbeat, celebrating the extraordinary RCM community.

Following a summer issue devoted to RCM students, we now turn our attention to RCM staff. When they’re not here in Prince Consort Road, RCM professors and administrative staff can be found running festivals, working with charities, collaborating with composers, producing CDs and DVDs, and performing in the widest possible variety of locations. They also perform under the widest possible variety of names, so if you want to know the meaning of curious phrases such as *My Gosh Marvellous*, *The G Project* and *Colombus Giant*, then read on!

Huge thanks to the many staff who submitted their stories, including those we sadly couldn’t quite fit in: we would love to have had the space to tell you about a dramatic year at Kathron Sturrock’s Fibonacci Festival, and Catherine Jack’s appearance on Centre Court at Wimbledon, but that would have blown the budget!

As usual, the rest of Upbeat is packed with news from around the RCM. From 400th birthday celebrations to an encounter with the dreaded Jeremy Paxman – it’s all inside this issue.

We’re always keen to hear from students past and present, so if you have anything you’d like us to feature in the next issue of Upbeat, send your news and pictures to news@rcm.ac.uk by Monday 10 January 2011.

**NB**: Please note that we cannot guarantee to include everything we receive and that we reserve the right to edit submissions.

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**Front cover** - RCM Harpsichord professor Jane Chapman (see page 10). Photograph by Letizia Petrucci.

**Inside front cover** – Images of John Wilson conducting the RCM Symphony Orchestra at the Amaryllis Fleming Concert Hall in May. Photographs by Chris Christodoulou.

**Inside back cover** - A selection of images from The Bartered Bride, performed this summer by the RCM’s International Opera School. Photographs by Chris Christodoulou.

**Graduation Ceremony 2010**

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In the news...

Lang Lang visit

The RCM recently joined forces with leading life and pensions company AEGON to offer three young pianists from the Junior Department a once in a lifetime opportunity – to take part in a masterclass with Chinese-born star pianist Lang Lang. The Lang Lang AEGON Masterclass, which took place in a packed Amaryllis Fleming Concert Hall, gave Lara Melda, Asagi Nakata and Martin Bartlett the unique opportunity to work with and learn from Lang Lang on a piece of their choice.

Lang Lang was impressed by the students: "I am really honoured to be invited to this beautiful college, and to listen and work with such great talent. They are three very talented pianists and it was a pleasure to work with them."

Peter Hewitt, Director of the RCM Junior Department, said: "We were thrilled when we were contacted by AEGON to say Lang Lang was playing a concert at the Royal Albert Hall, and would be interested in giving a masterclass to some of our junior department students. The masterclass saw fantastic playing from the trio – all already impressive but becoming more so after such penetrating and inspiring input from Lang Lang himself. It was a joy to welcome him to the RCM."

They survived Paxman!

In a fantastic achievement for such a small institution, a team from the Royal College of Music became the first ever team from a UK conservatoire to qualify for the televised stages of the iconic BBC2 quiz programme University Challenge, presented by Jeremy Paxman.

Our boys weren’t quite able to pull off a giant-killing act against a strong team from the University of York – which has a student body 20 times the size of the RCM’s – but they did put up a fine performance. Many congratulations indeed to Alvaro, Stephen, Sam, and Michael for doing the RCM proud!

Honouring Pam Thompson

At their annual conference in Moscow in July, the International Association of Music Libraries (IAML) conveyed a very special and rare honour on RCM Chief Librarian Pam Thompson, when they made her an Honorary Member of the association.

Pam reports that she was "utterly flabbergasted!” at becoming just the fifteenth person to be recognised in this way since the IAML was founded in 1951. The special honour recognises Pam’s decades of work on behalf of both the IAML and the RCM Library. Congratulations to her from all at the RCM.
**Prince Michael of Kent**

The RCM was delighted to welcome HRH Prince Michael of Kent for a visit on Wednesday 28 April, arranged in partnership with the William Smith Foundation, a major supporter of the RCM. Prince Michael first visited the Director’s office, where he met the Director and other senior RCM staff, and enjoyed a short concert from students who had received funding from the William Smith Foundation. He was then led on a short tour of the College, visiting the Amaryllis Fleming Concert Hall (where Martin André was rehearsing the RCM Symphony Orchestra), the Britten Theatre and the Library, where he viewed various original manuscripts in the College’s collection, including Mozart’s Piano Concerto K491.

**The RCM goes primetime!**

In August, BBC viewers had the chance to hear one of the RCM’s star performers, when BBC1 flagship drama series Holby City featured a major storyline about a young opera singer. The production team wanted to create a special recording of Schubert’s *Ave Maria*, to be played at a key moment in the episode, so they contacted the RCM’s Professional Engagements Service, who were happy to make all the arrangements. Soprano Paula Sides, a student at the RCM International Opera School, stepped up to the microphone to make this brand new recording in the acclaimed RCM Studios, engineered by Stephen Harrington.

**A trip to Finchcocks**

In May, RCM professors David Ward and Geoffrey Govier took a group of students to Finchcocks Musical Museum in Kent. BMus student Susanna MacRae writes:

“The morning was spent with David, who guided us through the history of keyboards, right from the earliest spinets and harpsichords, to the Pleyel, Erard and Broadwood models. To everyone’s delight, we were permitted to try out any keyboard instrument in the collection, and the remainder of the morning was ours to play, experiment and revel in history.

The afternoon began with a talk by the museum’s founder and director, Richard Burnett. From the moment he entered the room, this charming man had us captivated. He demonstrated every instrument in its full glory, including a rendition of Mozart’s *Marcia alla Turca*, complete with Turkish drums and cymbals built into the piano. Between each of his demonstrations, a few students from our party were given the opportunity to perform. Each did so with confidence and evidently the members of the public were impressed. The afternoon drew to a close on a very high note when four of our party (8 hands at one piano!) played *Les noces d'argent* by Chaminade. Everyone sat smiling and clung to the moment, as music once again brought people together.

What I experienced has opened doors to a whole new world of music that I didn’t know existed. I feel enriched and above all extremely lucky!”

**Graduation Ceremony 2010**

Some 130 undergraduate and postgraduate students and their families attended the RCM Graduation Ceremony in July. RCM Chairman Lord Winston and RCM Director Professor Colin Lawson both made addresses and gave out the prizes in the Britten Theatre. RCM students provided the processional music, which was directed by RCM Head of Brass Nigel Black.

**Finchcocks Musical Museum in Kent**
In the news...

Johannes Goritzki

In November, international cello-playing legend Johannes Goritzki visits the RCM for the first visit of a two-year residency here. Head of Strings Mark Messenger comments: “Having such a legendary pedagogue choose to associate himself with the RCM is not only fantastic news for the College and for the students here, but underlines the supremacy that this faculty enjoys amongst its rivals in London and the UK. Don’t miss his three day visit involving a recital, masterclass and lessons. Many thanks also to cello professor Melissa Phelps for making this partnership possible.”

More information on his visit can be found at www.rcm.ac.uk/events

A Summer of Progress

RCM staff and students returning to Blomfield Road after the summer break noticed a number of improvements.

Following on from the refurbishment of the Britten Theatre Bar in April, the Senior Common Room was refurbished in August, and is providing a new lunchtime catering service. New signage was erected, to replace the no fewer than seven(!) different signage systems that were previously in place, and to comply with new legislation. Also installed over the summer were new telephones and photocopiers, offering a number of new functions while saving the RCM thousands of pounds each year – a sum that can be reinvested in the academic and performance programmes.

The RCM’s commitment to providing the best possible environment for students, visitors and staff will continue in coming months and years – keep an eye on Upbeat for details!

Running to Restore a Score!

On Sunday 5 September, Kate Eberwein and Heather Letley, who both work in the RCM’s Development Team, put on their running shoes for a special 5 kilometre charity race in Hyde Park as part of the Adidas Women’s Challenge, a fun run that gives women the chance to raise money for charity. Kate and Heather helped to raise funds for the very worthy cause of Restore a Score. This scheme helps to conserve for future generations some of the valuable items in the RCM’s Library, including important original manuscript scores and early printed editions.

If you are interested in contributing to the campaign, please contact the Development Department on 020 7591 4785

MSc in Performance Science

The RCM is delighted to announce the launch of a brand new Masters programme: an MSc in Performance Science. This unique programme is aimed at researchers, performers and educators who want to develop a deep understanding of musical performance, and explores issues such as musicians’ health and wellbeing, musical development, and effective learning and teaching.

Aaron Williamson, Head of the RCM’s Centre for Performance Science, commented: “The new MSc programme, which will give students insight into the nature of music as an art and a science, fits well with the founding vision of the RCM. We’ve designed the programme so that students will enrich and build upon their musical experience by gaining a scientific understanding of how music is created, learned, performed, and perceived.”

For more information on the programme see www.rcm.ac.uk/MSc
Castleton Festival

For the second year in a row, Lorin Maazel invited a group of RCM students to perform at the annual Castleton Festival in Virginia, USA. As well as performing in the Festival Orchestra, they also had the chance to work on operas by Puccini, Britten and Da Falla with musicians from all over the world. Flautist and composer Ben Macdougall was also able to have composition lessons with Maazel, who is also a renowned composer himself.

The RCM students were chosen for principal positions in the festival and opera orchestras. For the final concert, a programme included Beethoven’s Symphonies numbers 3 and 8. Maazel personally selected RCM violinist Erzsebet Racz to lead the orchestra. Erzsébet told Upbeat: “I was probably almost the happiest violinist on earth that the Maestro chose me… Beethoven 8 with Maazel was an amazing experience!”

Despite the soaring heat and intensive rehearsal schedule, the RCM contingent still managed a trip to the White House, and spent many happy hours cooling down in the pool! Violist Sophie Stanley commented that “The festival was a unique opportunity to work on music with a conductor of such high calibre, and the memories will definitely last a lifetime.”

Happy 400th Birthday to the Brothers Amati Cello

One of the RCM string collection’s most treasured instruments is the Amati cello, built by Antonio and Hieronymus Amati (known as the ‘Brothers Amati’) in 1610. It is kindly loaned to the College by the trustees of the Balmain Charitable Trust (formally the Mrs B M Bendixson 1967 Charitable Settlement).

Barbara Bendixson, who died in 2002, was a keen amateur cellist who acquired the Amati cello in the 1980s. When she became too frail to play, it was suggested by one of her trustees and RCM luthier David Hume that the cello could be loaned to the College. Mrs Bendixson readily agreed to the idea, and the first formal loan agreement was signed in early 1996.

The Amati cello has a very special sound quality, partly due to the maturity of the maple and pine wood which it is made from. The cello has had an illustrious history, and previous owners have included Terence Weil, who made a number of celebrated recordings on the instrument as a member of the Melos Ensemble. Unsurprisingly, it is now in great demand with RCM students, who regularly play it in high profile competitions and recitals.

It is an awesome responsibility for the RCM to take on a cello of such importance and beauty. We hope the cello will continue to be enjoyed and played by RCM students for many more years to come.

Award winners announced

Some of the RCM’s most prestigious awards were announced in the summer, given to departing students who have made a particularly big impact on life at the RCM. The Worshipful Company of Musicians Silver Medal will be awarded to Jiafeng Chen, the Queen Elizabeth Rosebowl will go to to Sarah-Jane Brandon, while Tagore Gold Medals will be given to Paula Sides and Antoine Françoise. They will all be presented with their awards at next year’s President’s Visit.

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Summer Music and the BBC Proms

This year, the RCM once again played a big part in the BBC Proms, the world’s biggest classical music festival. More than 10,000 people attended a range of pre-concert events in the Amaryllis Fleming Concert Hall, including talks, concerts and discussions.

In addition, over 300 young people took part in a series of inspirational activities run by RCM Sparks, which gave a practical and creative insight into music featured at the BBC Proms. Participants were offered specially discounted BBC Proms tickets, so many went directly from their workshop at the RCM to a concert at the Royal Albert Hall. One parent commented: “I just wanted to write to thank everyone concerned for the opportunity given to my son and his friends to experience music in a completely new and inspiring way.”

William Yeates Hurlstone

The RCM is pleased to announce the launch of a new online resource on the life and music of William Yeates Hurlstone (1876–1906). A student at the RCM in the late 1890s, Hurlstone went on to become a professor in 1905. He was beginning to forge a reputation as an important musical voice in the new generation, but died at a tragically young age.

This web resource brings together a biography, a newly-completed catalogue of works, audio recordings (made by RCM performers as part of the RCM’s Hurlstone Centenary day in 2006) and a number of key documents and concert programmes from the RCM Centre for Performance History and RCM Library.

A view from the stalls…

In July, Paul Banks – Head of the RCM’s Centre for Performance History – visited a conference at Liverpool Hope University to announce the recent discovery of a large and important collection of handwritten reports on concerts covering the period 1936 to 1953. His keynote lecture, ‘Britten’s progress 1937-45: a view from the stalls’, discussed the history of these unusual documents, which were discovered in the RCM’s Portraits and Performance History Collection. Created as mid-20th century ‘blogs’ by Lionel Bradley, they give (among other things) an account of the impact made by the first performances of Britten’s new works in the 1940s. For example, Lionel Bradley reported on the world premiere of Peter Grimes in 1945: “I am convinced that it is a work of genius – not without blemish, but with passages of extraordinary beauty and effectiveness… I was completely won over and convinced that I was probably listening to a masterpiece.”

The RCM has given our family a wonderful opportunity to appreciate classical music, and the events surpassed all our expectations. Thank you very much!”

The RCM once again played a big part in the BBC Proms, the world’s biggest classical music festival.

RCM is the UK’s Greenest Conservatoire!

We’re extremely proud to announce that The Royal College of Music has achieved a meteoric rise in the Green League, which evaluates the environmental performance of the UK’s Higher Education Institutions.

We’re not doing this for the Green League. These are all things that we think of as being very important,” he adds. “The Green League is a catalyst, but we feel we’ve got a role to be responsible. We are grateful to our Estates team for taking this forward so effectively. We look forward to climbing even higher up the Green League next year.”

When we entered the Green League for the first time in 2009, a “Fail” and a last place finish in the table demonstrated how much we had to achieve. So we’re delighted that in 2010 we shot up to 22nd place, and received a “First Class Degree”. The RCM’s sustainable food policy, socially responsible investment policy and determined effort to make students and staff aware of their combined responsibility have contributed to this rapid improvement.

The RCM Director Professor Colin Lawson comments: “The RCM has given our family a wonderful opportunity to appreciate classical music, and the events surpassed all our expectations. Thank you very much!”

The RCM once again played a big part in the BBC Proms, the world’s biggest classical music festival.
Welcoming our new arrivals!

Students
This academic year the RCM warmly welcomed a total of 358 new students from 48 different countries, with no fewer than 138 of these new arrivals benefiting from an RCM scholarship.

Charles Bradley has been appointed as the new President of the Students’ Association. Charlie and his team will represent and support the student body, and provide a full programme of social events and activities.

Junior Fellows
The RCM welcomes a host of new Junior Fellows for the 2010/11 academic year including Jianing Kong (Mills Williams Junior Fellowship), Jakub Cywinski (Constant & Kit Lambert Junior Fellowship), Leverhulme Chamber Music Fellowship holders The Cavaleri Quartet (Anna Harpham, Ciaran McCabe, Ann Beilby, Rowena Calvert) and Françoise-Green Piano Duo (Antoine Françoise, Robin Green). In Piano Accompaniment we welcome David Smith (Junior Fellowship), Michael Jerace (Gilbert & Eileen Edgar Junior Fellowship), Alisdair Kitchen (Anthony Saltmarsh Junior Fellowship) and Aya Kawabata (Adami Award for Piano Accompanists Junior Fellowship).

We also welcome back the following Junior Fellows for their second year: Katy Hamilton (Junior Fellowship in Performance Documentation), Nicholas Wright (Junior Fellowship in Performance History) and Craig White (Phoebe Benham Junior fellowship).

Directors
We are delighted to announce the appointment of Amanda Glauert as Director of Programmes and Research. Amanda brings with her an outstanding record in research, teaching and academic management. Her experience of curriculum development (including at Kingston University and the Royal Academy of Music) includes setting up research programmes for performers and composers at masters and doctoral level, and helping establish creative links between aspects of theory and practice. She has examined for universities and conservatoires including Oxford, Cambridge and the RNCM and has written numerous papers and given seminars, workshops and pre-concert talks in major venues both in the UK and overseas.

Stephen Johns also joins us as Artistic Director from EMI Classics where he was Vice-President of Artists and Repertoire at EMI Classics. In his twelve years with EMI Stephen has worked with artists including Sir Simon Rattle, Bernard Haitink, Leif Ove Andsnes, Evgeny Kissin, the Belcea Quartet and the Berlin and Vienna Philharmonic Orchestras. In 2000 he was Guest Artistic Director for Spitalfields Winter Festival. During his career he has earned numerous accolades including three Grammy Awards, four Gramophone Awards and a Diapason d’Or. Stephen read music at Cambridge where he was an organ scholar, and spent a short time teaching at Trinity Boys School early in his career.

Woodwind Professors
We are thrilled that Christine Pendrill (cor anglais) and Joost Bosdijk (bassoon) have joined the Woodwind Faculty’s impressive roster of professors.

A fond farewell...

In the summer we said goodbye to three outstanding RCM staff members

David Wright, Reader in the Social History of Music, has taken early retirement. He will continue his association with the RCM as an Honorary Research Fellow until the summer of 2012 in order to complete current research projects. David joined the RCM in September 1997, and for five years was Head of Postgraduate Programmes. He has published extensively on a series of nineteenth and late twentieth century topics. David is presently working on a history of the ABRSM, which is to be published by Boydell.

Director of Artistic Policy Richard Steele left the RCM in September. Richard was first appointed to the RCM Council in 1999, and was appointed to the staff of the RCM in 2002. His contribution to the College was outstanding, not least the implementation of the National Pay Framework. Richard’s training as an organist at the Royal Academy of Music has allowed him to contribute with intelligence, wisdom and sensitivity to the development of many important aspects of our work and we are most grateful for what he has achieved.

Mike Mitchenall came to the College fresh from the Guards, bringing with him his trombone, his military discipline, a no-nonsense, can-do attitude: and the knack of finding a solution to everything. Initially he worked in the orchestral department, ensuring that rehearsals and performances ran like clockwork. Dame Janet Ritterman, then Director, was quick to spot Mike’s ability to solve problems, and put him in charge of the estate and facilities. He quickly grasped the challenge, and within a few months the building was repaired, spruced up and no longer leaking. In his role as Estates Manager, Mike effectively project-managed the redevelopment of the RCM Concert Hall, a responsibility he carried out superbly, leaving a great legacy. We wish him every possibly happiness in his retirement.
Do composers know how to write for harpsichord?
More and more they do. I think composers are perhaps familiar with my work, so they are have an existing soundworld to access. Composers take who they write for very seriously, and it’s important to have a relationship with them.

Do you have a sense of mission about the harpsichord – extending the repertoire, making the instrument more well known?
Certainly bringing it to different audiences. I really like the idea of an old instrument playing contemporary music, and what excites me is trying to subvert people’s views of something, and to create something wildly different from what they are expecting to hear – and to see.

So the visual aspect is very important?
Well in the RCM Museum we have a beautifully painted Trasuntino harpsichord with a reclining nude on the lid, and others decorated with images of wildlife and flowers. In many ways the harpsichord was a cultural icon: showing what was fashionable in art, and also revealing something about the society of the time. I love the idea of taking a fresh look at that and saying: “Ok, what can a contemporary artist do?” So I developed the idea of projecting images onto the lid, and seeing how that can work with the music. My own instrument has a pale lid, a bit like a blank canvas, so we can project all sorts of images onto it. When I’ve worked with dancers it’s been quite dramatic because you can actually project the image of the dancer onto the lid, and have them physically present somewhere else.

I think of the harpsichord as a box of magic tricks! The potential is huge.

What other projects have you been involved in?
The electric guitarist Mark Wingfield and I have worked together on a CD of improvisatory music, based on his tunes and his material, with Iain Bellamy on sax. That’s been very interesting: the electric guitar has such potential for creating sort of orchestral textures, which is wonderful for the harpsichord as it’s a way of extending the scope of the instrument. Also, last year I released an album on NMC called “Wired”, of pieces for harpsichord and electronics, which again is another great way of extending the instrument.

A lot of music that I play is quite “out there”, and I think there’s an interesting parallel with when we all started playing Baroque music on period instruments, and people were saying “oh my goodness isn’t that weird”. Well now I’m playing this cutting edge modern music, and people say the same thing! Sometimes I think “oh god, I always seem to be ruffling people’s feathers in one way or another!”

You’re researching a publication called “Oriental Miscellany”?
Well this is absolutely fascinating. It was published in Calcutta in 1789, and it’s the first instance of Indian music transcribed from live performance for Western instruments – harpsichord and guitar. I studied sitar at Dartington many years ago, and I’ve always been interested in Indian music. And the subject of the perception of India and Indian music in the west has always been fascinating to me; how western society is always reinventing it. This idea of fusing Western and Indian music has been around for a while!

I’m just at the research stage now, looking at different ways to present and record it. I have to be careful when performing it – it has to be done in a way that has integrity. It could look patronising if we don’t do it right. I also need to find some other music that will throw light onto this volume, and the vogue at the time for music from other cultures. I think there was a sense of openness, and people wanting to discover things about other cultures, even if on their own terms. There was a genuine desire to engage with this repertoire, and somehow make it “palatable” for Western ears.

I’m hoping to do some recording here at the RCM, and to do a performance in the Museum. The Kirkman harpsichord in the Museum is perfect – from just the right era.

Is it important to set up projects yourself?
Absolutely, and that’s what I tell my students. If you want to have a busy and varied career then don’t be the kind of musician who waits by the phone– be the one making the call!
Columbus Giant

Representing the RCM's Registry, Box Office, Human Resources and Studios, singer/songwriter and guitarist Darren Clark, cellist Kate Findlay, bassist Sarah Buckley and drummer Seb Durkin joined forces with singer Angie Fullman to form Columbus Giant in 2009.

So, how did Columbus Giant come about?
DC: I’d been writing stuff for years but had never got around to properly recording anything, and it occurred to me that if I got other people on board then I might feel some obligation to follow things through. I discovered Kate and her cello in the Box Office and asked her if she’d like to do some recording, and she very wisely asked to have a listen to my stuff first! I discovered Sarah when I sat on her interview panel, and Seb had played drums for me on something else before - we had a lot of fun together so I asked him to get on board. We played a few gigs together, and then my friend Angie, who is a singer, joined us.

How would you describe your music?
KF: It’s pop-folk. It’s very upbeat, but because there is so much sound coming from the strings, and minimal drums, and two vocalists, it sounds quite folky.

Who writes the songs?
DC: I write the songs, the music for the chord structure and the guitar arrangements, and then hand it over to everyone else to make it sound good.
SB: I like to think Darren goes through the traumatic emotional experiences and we make them sound like they are no big deal!

What about promotion?
SB: Kate is very well connected and knows about gigs all across London.
KF: I think it’s been a collective effort, and it’s actually been surprisingly easy. In London there are a few big promotional companies that are always looking for bands, and if you do one gig and manage to prove yourself, they’ll book you again and again.
DC: I think we’ve benefited from our contacts really. Kate and Sarah both played with lots of bands in Manchester, and I performed in London for about four years before meeting these guys so we all had existing networks.
KF: Facebook is also a fantastic tool. I was resistant to begin with, but it’s definitely one of the best ways to promote gigs.

Have there been any particular highlights so far?
DC: We’ve just played at The Water Rats which had a lovely crowd. We didn’t expect it to go very well because we didn’t have chance to do a soundcheck and hadn’t had a rehearsal with the full band for a couple of weeks, but it was great.
SB: I think those sort of issues almost make you less stressed about it as a good performance is a bonus, but it turned out to be a cracker of a gig. I really liked the Giggling gig we did as there was such an eclectic line up. We were followed by a band called Rock Opera from Hell. They were all wearing tight trousers with naked torsos and it was all a bit bonkers, but it turned out to be an amazing gig and the crowd was really up for everyone who played.

Where did the band name come from?
DC: About seven years ago my friend James and I used to busk together in New Zealand. One day we were counting our money over our usual curry, and I decided that if I was ever in a band I’d call myself Columbus Giant, and James decided he would be called The Flying Wilson. Neither of us did anything about it for over six years, until Kate, Sarah, Seb and I were tossing round lots of bad names for our band and decided to revive my original idea. Hopefully James will be coming over to the UK at some point, so he can join us as The Flying Wilson!

What about plans for the future?
DC: Gig-wise, we’ve got a couple of dates coming up at the National Theatre. Angie is a tour guide there and put us forward to perform in their main foyer. They visited our website and liked what they heard so they booked us.
KF: I think to some extent the best audiences are the ones that haven’t come to see you specifically. We’re going to be performing before and during the interval of the main show, and in those situations I think people are a bit more open to relaxing and enjoying the music, whereas at billed gigs the audience can be much more demanding. By the time Upbeat is out we should also be in the process of recording out first album...

DC: It will be called Salvington Hill, and I’m busy writing some new songs for it at the moment. Another thing in the pipeline is a musical I’ve been working on called Raven Boy which has been picked up by a theatre company. It’s about a boy who has been raised by ravens on the roof of the Tower of London, and Columbus Giant will be writing the music and lyrics for the production. The first workshop sessions are due to take place in mid-November so watch this space...
Was Spectrum your idea?
Yes, it was. For ages I had been frustrated by the lack of serious contemporary music that was playable by good amateurs and students. There was little I could recommend to my own students here at the RCM or at London University where I also taught for some time. I also believe that it’s vital for contemporary composers that their music is accessible to amateur and student performers – not just professionals.

What’s happened since then?
There are now four Spectrums for solo piano, single volumes for clarinet, cello and violin, and there’s a piano duet volume in the pipeline. It’s been massively and very startlingly successful. I don’t think anyone expected it to be. Indeed, the first publisher I approached with the original idea turned it down! They liked the concept but were frightened of the financial risk.

Did the composers you commission understand that brief?
Most did. The people who picked up and ran with the Spectrum idea instantly saw what it was about, and for the most part were very easy to work with even if they didn’t always grasp what might be technically approachable for players who are not professional.

How did you deal with the pieces that weren’t quite appropriate?
I spent quite a lot of time with some composers, modifying and simplifying! I had initially asked them to try to limit the quantity of difficulties. For example, if writing something rhythmically complex, it’s best not to ask the player to jump around the keyboard, or to play big chords at the same time; it’s advisable to keep the texture sparse if the rhythm’s hard. I gave composers quite detailed suggestions, some of which were a bit restrictive, like those above, and others the kind of things you might not necessarily think of when composing technically undemanding music. For instance, people writing relatively easy music for the piano tend to keep to the middle of the keyboard. So I suggested using the fascinating extremities too!

Has contemporary music always been an interest?
From the age of about twelve I began to realize that being dead wasn’t an essential characteristic of a composer. I remember somebody pointing out that there was going to be a broadcast of Humphrey Searle’s Symphony no 2. I remember being absolutely transfixed by it. I’m not sure that I liked it particularly, but I was fascinated by the alien nature of the sounds and I knew then that that there were things I had to explore. But I love playing older music too!

Who influenced your interest in new music?
A very lively teacher at school suggested that I should broaden my listening, which led to the Searle experience – and I didn’t look back. I think it’s essential that young instrumentalists listen to as much music as possible. I encourage my students to do this too, though it’s sometimes difficult to retain aural energy and curiosity after you’ve been practising long hours. Such energy as one has left is not always in the ears!

So this pioneering piano collection, Spectrum One, was published in 1996. In 2000, in collaboration with the RCM Junior Department, Bath Spa University College and COMA [Contemporary Music-making for Amateurs], I commissioned the Chamber Music Exchange, works with a similar purpose for piano trio, string quartet and wind quintet. The series is available from Sound and Music.

Have you been involved in commissioning new work for ensembles?
In 2000, in collaboration with the RCM Junior Department, Bath Spa University College and COMA [Contemporary Music-making for Amateurs], I commissioned the Chamber Music Exchange, works with a similar purpose for piano trio, string quartet and wind quintet. The series is available from Sound and Music.

Your name is synonymous with new music, and Spectrum in particular. Has this made a difference to your professional life?
Well, yes! I’ve given Spectrum-related recitals, projects and workshops in concert halls, conservatoires and universities all over the place. Composition teachers use Spectrum a lot. I have led a project here at the RCM, ‘Shorts’, where student composers write piano pieces which are performed by Junior Department students. I give the students a brief similar to the one I used for Spectrum. I have done a similar project several times at the Royal Academy. Next week I shall be at Trinity Laban where pieces will be written specifically with adult learners in mind, and will be performed at the City Lit. That pleases me a lot!
Susan Milan

Flute professor Susan Milan is Director of the Charterhouse International Music Festival.

What moved you to set up the festival?
Like many wind players, I have spent a lot of time searching for and learning unusual and interesting repertoire. Sometimes works that have been lost or neglected turn out to be surprisingly beautiful. Bringing together students on the brink of professional life and inviting them to explore unusual repertoire, particularly unusual combinations of instruments in chamber groups, excites me very much. During the festival major works of Brahms, Beethoven, Mozart, Schubert and other great composers are performed but some of these lesser-known composers can take one by surprise. And this is what the Charterhouse International Music Festival is all about; repertoire and performance experience.

How do you go about planning the festival?
The run up to the festival is possibly the most frantic and challenging period in my academic year. I find myself working through the night quite a few times in order to make sense of all the information received from applicants; information which enables me to create two evening concert programmes every day for eight days, before the festival even starts. They don’t all work out! But they do form a good foundation.

The other two daily concerts are informal. I must admit that the first year of the festival I was convinced that nobody would want to perform in the lunchtime or Baroque concerts, as they would be so very busy studying for their classes, chamber music coaching and evening performances. However I was quickly proved wrong and those concerts became longer and longer!

Every year has been rewarding, and this year the concerts were absolutely fabulous. With four concerts a day we programmed 152 works! Perhaps this was too many, but there was certainly a lot of excitement and the response since the festival has been very positive.

Where do your performers come from?
This year we had a wonderful international line-up. Students attended from all the major conservatories in UK, from Chetham’s and the Purcell School, as well as from USA, Australia, Spain, Czech Republic, Japan, Romania, Belgium, Kosovo, Poland, France, Oman, Armenia and Estonia.

And how about the teachers?
Teachers are drawn from the four London conservatoires. Professors Andrew Ball, David Theodore, Ieuan Jones, Martin Gatt, Patricia Rozario and myself represented the RCM and it was a great pleasure to work along side Mark Van de Wiel (clarinet), Michael Thompson (horn) and Richard Deakin (viola) from the RAM; Matthew Jones (viola) from Trinity College; and Louise Hopkins (cello) from the Guildhall School of Music.

The other key participants are the four resident pianists. This year, Siu Chui Li, Leanne Singh-Levett, Annabel Thwaite and Antony Ingham were kept very busy running from class to class and performing in many concerts throughout the week. Their professionalism, good humour and high standard of playing at all times gave the performers a great deal of confidence and put their whole experience of performing onto another level.

Is the location important?
Absolutely. With a well established music department, there are ample practice rooms, a number of Steinways, a lovely concert hall and smaller recital room. The facilities and beautiful grounds of Charterhouse help to make the social side of the course very pleasant. Oh yes, and there’s even a gym and a pool!

What next for the festival?
Well I don’t get much time for rest - soon I will begin to work towards next year’s festival!

www.cimf.org.uk

Susan Milan - centre

The opening concert was held at Charterhouse School in Guildford.

Andrew Ball (left) with Frederic Bager

Opening Concert

David Theodore coaching Henrietta Ford

www.cimf.org.uk

upbeat 13
Howard Felton

Howard Felton is an assistant within the RCM’s Woodhouse Professional Development Centre, and is currently also Musical Co-Director for events company My Gosh Marvellous.

Tell us a little about My Gosh Marvellous and your involvement with the company...

My Gosh Marvellous is an exciting, young, vintage events company which puts on its own club nights in London and across the UK, and is also available for hire. Our events are styled on the jazz and swing clubs of the ‘30s and ‘40s but always add a generous amount of the era’s Hollywood glamour too. I work as Musical Co-Director, arranging music, directing band rehearsals and playing trombone too.

As Musical Co-Director, to what extent do you attempt to reproduce the original sound of the era – do you strive to be historically accurate or to achieve a mix of old and new?

All our music is from the era, though our show numbers are often more inspired by Hollywood films than by jazz history. Though we’re not perfectionists when it comes to accuracy, we make sure to keep everything properly ‘vintage’, from the look and sound of the performers, to the DJ sets playing original LPs on antique equipment. We draw a young crowd who want to dance, and therefore our biggest effort goes into making sure everything we do is a lot of fun and that we have fun doing it. When you listen to recordings of the jazz greats in their early days you can hear a wild and carefree edge to the performance and I try to bring this out in our rehearsals.

Your events can be quite large scale productions, including a 15 piece band, singers, dancers and even magicians – how do you bring all these elements together and what challenges does it present?

We do bring together a lot of different talents at our events. We also often add special guest singers and performers to the mix, and previous club nights have featured west end legends such as Oliver Tompsett and Josie Walker. We have an inspiring Director in Suzie Butler, who carries the overall vision and brings all the different elements together, as well as taking on all the organisational aspects of putting on a show. It takes patience and understanding in rehearsals to manage everyone’s needs, but we have a good core team – Director, Choreographer and two MDs, and the end result is so rewarding that there’s never a problem that can’t be sorted with a little hard work.

You discovered My Gosh Marvellous after responding to an ad on Gumtree – an approach that has also presented some other interesting opportunities to you in the past. Would you recommend other musicians give it a try?

I originally answered a Gumtree.com advert simply looking for a trombonist for a swing band, but it wasn’t long before I was heavily involved and busy writing arrangements for the first showcase gig at Proud Camden. Gumtree’s community pages are a great way of expanding your horizons as a musician, though it’s hit and miss as a rule, and don’t expect anything like straightforward paid work. Over the last few years I’ve had so many adventures, the highlights being playing with a rock-latin band, writing arrangements for an indie band’s album (which was released last year and had plays on Radio 1, 6 Music and Kerrang), and now My Gosh Marvellous, and all through Gumtree!

Finally, what has your involvement with My Gosh Marvellous given you personally?

A long term ambition of mine has always been to run or lead a big band in the tradition of Tommy Dorsey or Glenn Miller. This is that dream and so much more, as I’ve always enjoyed working across art platforms with dancers, performance artists and vocalists. Working with so many talented people and being a part of something so ambitious and fun is what living in London is all about!
Genevieve Wilkins

RCM Outreach Mentor Genevieve Wilkins performs alongside RCM alumna Gabriella Swallow in a brand new duo called G Project...

How did the collaboration come about?
I’d always wanted to work with Gaby. When I was in Australia I used to play with a cello quartet and I loved it, and when I moved here I felt like part of my soul had been ripped out. I always wanted to be a cellist!

Gaby and I have been friends for about two years, and it was in November last year that I finally said to her: “do you fancy forming a duo?”, and she said “I’ve been hoping you’d ask me that!” So it started from there.

We click so well as friends, and are musical tastes are similarly broad – plus we both have a similar drive, and a similar attitude to performing.

How do you choose what to perform at your first concert?
That was quite tricky! We did a lot of research, and we very quickly realised that there’s hardly anything written for cello and percussion. I saw Steve Schick and Maya Beiser perform Mariel by Osvaldo Golijov together in about 2001 – which is when I realised how much I like the combination – but apart from that piece, there isn’t really much.

So we basically set about commissioning a whole programme. We’re really lucky that we have a family of composers around us who all said they’d like to write something for us, including RCM composers like Mark-Anthony Turnage, Solfa Carlile, Jonathan Cole and Shiva Feshareki. Our first full concert was at The Forge in April, including eight world premieres. It was a huge success, it was sold out, it was fantastic. And we had a party afterwards, which was also wonderful!

How closely did you work with the composers?
We worked solidly for three weeks and we had all the composers to a minimum of two rehearsals. It was quite intense for us! I remember that halfway through the project I felt exhausted and thought “whose crazy idea was this??”

Did you specify a particular instrumentation?
No. I guaranteed that marimba and vibes would be there – I’m completely in love with the combination of bowed vibes and cello – but basically left the rest to the composers. I think that out of the eight composers, four came over to my studio and had a listen to all my instruments. They were quite good in asking what everyone else was using, and saying “how can I use it differently”? So for one piece I was using a cajón, and then in another piece the composer asked me to use it with footbells tied to my ankles.

Will you continue to commission, or repeat these works?
A bit of both! For our second concert, at Bath Spa University, we repeated most of the works from The Forge with two new arrangements by Andrew Poppy. Every time we do a concert we’d like to add new repertoire – we’ve got three additional composers working with us right now – while repeating the existing pieces as often as possible. They deserve to be heard more.

What other future plans do you have?
The idea of G Project is to be able to tour just as a duo, but also to involve collaborations with other sorts of artists. So we’re talking to a dancer, we’re hoping to find an audiovisual artist to work with, and we’ve been sounded out about providing the music for a theatre project in 2012.

The thing I think is that if you’re doing a collaboration, you want to make sure it’s not reliant on the collaborator, and you can also do it as a standalone piece for duo. Then if it’s repertoire that you love, you can take it on tour, even if it’s such a section of the original piece.

What else are you up to?
I perform with Ensemble Bash and it’s an exciting time for us, as next year is our 20th anniversary, so we’re talking with Kings Place about a residency. I’m in Andrew Poppy’s ensemble, which I really enjoy. I’ve also joined a jazz group with bassist Nathan Rikki Thomson – I’ve been brought in to play marimba and vibes, and I’m loving doing that. I’ve just finished on the West End Show Tap Dogs with Adam Garcia – there were two drummers on stage, and we were playing a lot of rock and roll and Latin music.

Did you always plan such a varied career?
Not at all! I went to New York to study with the principal percussionist of the New York Phil and the principal timpanist at The Met, and my plan was to be an orchestral musician. But gradually I discovered more different instruments, I discovered world percussion, I studied flamenco for a while, and it all grew from there.

Would you advise percussion students to take a similar route?
I always encourage students to have an open mind and try absolutely everything, because even if you don’t like it, it improves you as a musician. When I was training as a classical musician, everyone pooh-poohed pop music. But playing on pop sessions with really amazing session musicians has been inspirational, and has really improved my classical playing too. I think it makes it so much more alive.

Every now and again I think maybe I should have carried on in the orchestral world, and I have just the hugest respect for orchestral percussionists who have really specialised, but really I’m very happy doing this mixed bag. It can be scary, but I wouldn’t have it any other way!
People come up to you afterwards and say “that was lovely”, which may be, to varying degrees, true! But there’s not that wonderful immediate feedback that you get with education.

You can forget as a musician, but when you hear someone like Mark sing, whether you understand it or not, it’s an overwhelming experience. I remember when I first heard a professional musician. I was at primary school and someone brought in a harp, and I just thought it was fantastic! The busier you get as a musician, it becomes just a job and you forget just how amazing it is for people who don’t play, and who don’t often get to hear that kind of music. It’s good to be reminded of that.

Another important thing about education work is it gets kids in through the door. Just learning how to negotiate the space of a classical concert hall is so important. For me it’s like when you first use public transport in a foreign country – at first you’re nervous about where to go, how to get a ticket, and so on. But once you’ve done it the first time, it’s fine! I hope those kids will feel able to come to more concerts in the future.

Finally, it’s about making music a valid experience. If you’re a singer or a pianist you’re out there on your own, and you have to make what you’re doing relevant.

Turning to the MBF – how did you get involved with them?
I got involved initially because they wanted to have a wider variety of musicians on the committee, and what they called a “recent user” of the funds – I had won the Henry Richardson Award for accompanists when I was a student, and it helped me enormously.

How does the MBF can help individual musicians?
Well the MBF is well known for helping musicians who are ill, or at the end of their working lives, but in fact it looks after musicians at every stage of their career. There are funding schemes for under 18s – if you want to buy an instrument, or if you need money for music lessons, you can apply. Then there are the postgraduate awards such as the Sybil Tutton Award for singers and the Henry Richardson Award for accompanists and repertiteurs, which is the panel that I’m on.

I’m also on the committee that assess professional development awards. These are the schemes for people five years, ten years and twenty years out of education. So if you’re a rank and file violinist and you want to do something else, for example if you want to have lessons you can apply, or it could be that you want to go on an Alexander Technique course.

Why is it so important for musicians to develop professional skills?
When you’re in your early twenties, you can be very confident and determined that you’re going to be the next big star. By the time you’ve followed it through and realised that’s not going to happen, you’re actually quite old. So what do you do? You might want a family, but you don’t necessarily have the means. That’s when the love of playing your instrument alone might be wonderful, but it needs to help you earn money.

How else does the MBF help?
The network you have at somewhere like the RCM is a real cushion that supports you, even if you’re not always aware of it. If you’re a pianist, you’re spending hours a day practising on your own, but you at least have people that you say hello to, and faculty classes, and so on. But when you’re out in the world you don’t have that – you’re on your own, and when you’re a few years out of College, it can be really difficult.

I think with the MBF it’s not just about the money: the receptions and meetings that we hold are just as important, so people can feel like they’re really part of something, and are being taken care of by an organisational structure. Most people in a work environment have that, but us freelancers don’t. The MBF is there to fill the gap.

www.helpmusicians.org.uk

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When he’s not touring the world working with singers like Angelika Kisslager and Elizabeth Watts, RCM piano professor Simon Lepper keeps himself busy with education projects and his work for the Musicians Benevolent Fund (MBF).

What have you been working on recently?
I’ve just finished a major education project with Mark Padmore. We did some workshops with kids in Camden, aged between 7 and 17, working with the Wigmore education team. Over several months, they wrote songs based on Twelfth Night. They took some ideas from the play and had some workshops where they developed images, words and eventually poems, which they set to music. Mark and I went into the schools to work on the songs with them, which we performed all together at the Wigmore Hall. It was incredible to see these kids take really difficult texts, and you forget just how amazing it is for people who don’t play, and who don’t often get to hear that kind of music. It’s good to be reminded of that.

On so many levels it was great: the kids get to learn how to compose, they get to hear Mark performing, and they get to perform at the Wigmore Hall, which just as a space is quite exciting, even if you know nothing about it. How brilliant that the kids get to perform there.

People like Mark Padmore and yourself don’t “need” to do education work. Why do you devote so much time to it?
I do it because I love it, for so many reasons! Working with children you get an immediate reaction. In a way, the more you hone your art, the less direct engagement you get with the audience.

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www.helpmusicians.org.uk
Is the role difficult to learn?
It's a huge challenge! It looks and sounds simple, but there's never two bars the same, so you can never take anything for granted, and you have to count constantly. Of course I've had my practice with pieces like Satyagraha, and I'm grateful for it – I hope that in my old age it's going to save me from getting Alzheimer's!

Do you try to encourage the same approach in your students?
Totally. I tell students it's important to have the right attitude – to be open and prepared to take what comes to you and get the most out of it. Whatever you're singing, you have to think: “I'm meant to be doing what I'm doing now”. That includes being open to contemporary music.

With fellow RCM professor Norbert Meyn, you've recently made a DVD about the speaking voice. Why is that so important?
If you don't have a relationship with your own speaking voice, then I think there's something missing in your singing. And it's so important in its own right: think of Orpheus in the Underworld or The Magic Flute – pieces with dialogue, where the speaking has to be as good as the singing.

Norbert and I both have a relationship with Katherine Lambert, who was my speech teacher when I studied here. I learned so much from her, she was a really inspirational person, and we were just desperate to capture all her words of wisdom. So we put a camera on her, and she didn't stop for two and a half hours! We hardly had to ask her a question. It was so beautiful, it was hard for us to edit it!

We had thought this would just be part of a DVD, but it's a whole DVD now. It's for singers who need to discover what's going on with their speaking voice, how that can relate to singing, and how they can get the best out of it. It's not finished yet, but it is in a format where we can take clips from it. We can put those clips in the RCM Library, and students here can access them.

Do you have plans for more DVDs?
I would like to interview some of the teachers here. Not to find a uniform technique for singing teaching, as there are different ways of doing things, but just so we can bounce off each other and pass on information. It's always been a bit of a secret!

I would ultimately like to think about running a course on singing teaching, for singers who come out of college and want to start teaching, but haven't really got enough information, or are scared to do it. I'd like be able to guide them.
The big give

Double Your Money!

This December, anyone wanting to help out tomorrow’s great musicians has the chance to make their money go twice as far.

The Big Give Challenge is a special fundraising initiative, whereby all funds donated are matched by the Big Give Challenge Fund in conjunction with the RCM Council. That means that if you donate £5, the organisation that you donate to actually receives £10.

For the first time this year, there is a dedicated matched fund for cultural organisations – the Big Arts Give. The RCM will be taking part, with the aim of raising £80,000 for the RCM Scholarship Fund (see box right).

So if you have ever thought of making a donation to the RCM – however little or large – December 2010 is the time to do it! The Challenge opens on Monday 6 December 2010 and is staggered over 5 days. But be quick – once the money in the matched funding pot has been used up, it will be gone! If you have trouble making a donation on the first day, please do try again the following day. We aim to raise £40,000 during the challenge period, which will be doubled to £80,000 with the matched funding.

RCM Director of Development Samir Savant told Upbeat that “The Big Give is a terrific way for alumni and supporters of the RCM to maximise the value of their giving as we will receive up to twice the amount of any donations made during the Challenge, raising vital funds needed for our ongoing scholarship programme. Many who have studied at the RCM have benefited from generous scholarship support, and I hope in turn they will want to help future generations of students.”

If you are interested, please email development@rcm.ac.uk or call 020 7591 4320. We can send you a special reminder on the day.

NB: Please note that in order to qualify for the matched funding, all donations for this challenge must be made online via The Big Give website.

RCM Scholarship Fund

Music tuition is expensive as is the cost of living in London. Therefore the financial pressures on RCM students are acute, and rising tuition fees deter many talented students from applying. They are then lost to the music profession and the cultural life of this country suffers. RCM students have the ability and ambition to be the leading performers of the next generation and to contribute fully to their local communities but the financial support available to them is very limited. Generations of RCM students have gone on to outstanding careers, but were only able to maintain their studies through generous grants from donors. The RCM Scholarship Fund gives all gifted students – irrespective of background – the opportunity to complete their studies without financial worries. This is essential if the RCM is to attract the very best talent in the future and to maintain its international reputation for excellence in spite of the current economic climate and cuts in government grants.

Meet the supporters...

Fresh from yet another staggeringly successful performance with his orchestra at the BBC Proms, RCM alumnus John Wilson explains why the Big Give Challenge is so important.

“Without the financial support that the College offered me, I would have found it almost impossible to make my way into the profession. It’s at this stage that investment in talent is most cost-effective. By supporting the College’s most talented young students, you are playing your part in ensuring the future of classical music. I urge you to take part in the RCM’s Big Give Challenge – I shall make a gift myself, and all donations, whatever size, are welcome and vital to the future success of the RCM’s scholarship programme”

John Wilson, Conductor, RCM alumnus
The RCM International Opera School enjoys worldwide renown for excellence and has an outstanding record of launching its graduates onto national and international stages. Former students include Sir Thomas Allen, Gerald Finley, Janis Kelly and the late Joan Sutherland.

Join the RCM Opera Circle to
• support the RCM International Opera School and its award-winning students
• enjoy a rewarding relationship and learn how each individual singer is nurtured

Opera Circle Founder Patrons: Anonymous
Philip & Christine Carne • Matthew & Fiona Collins
Vernon & Hazel Ellis • Gisela Gledhill • Linda & Tony Hill
Clare & James Kirkman • Richard & Sue Price
Sir Peter and Lady Middleton • Richard & Victoria Sharp

The RCM Chamber Music Circle is a new initiative for music lovers who particularly enjoy the intimate experience of chamber music. The RCM has a strong reputation for the performance of chamber music and a well-established training programme.

Join the RCM Chamber Music Circle to
• support the training and development of talented young musicians at the RCM
• gain an insight into the journey from emerging talent to accomplished performer

Chamber Music Circle Founder Patrons:
Philip & Christine Carne • Matthew & Fiona Collins
Dr Georgette Bennett & Dr Leonard Polonsky
Emma Rose & Quentin Williams

We are inviting music-lovers to join as Patrons of these two new Circles for a minimum donation of £5,000. For a minimum donation of £10,000 we would be delighted to create an award in the name of your choosing.

For further information, please contact Sophie Hussey, Major Gifts Manager on 020 7591 4353 or shussey@rcm.ac.uk

With thanks to...

Generations of gifted students from around the world have been guided and inspired to develop their musical potential within the Royal College of Music’s stimulating creative environment. In order to sustain the provision of the highest levels of training and performance opportunities to our students - whatever their financial means - we rely heavily on the support of individuals, companies and charitable trusts. There are many ways you can get involved and support our work. Every gift to the RCM helps to transform the lives of talented young musicians, and all supporters are invited to see at first hand what a difference their support makes. Please join us. For more information, visit www.rcm.ac.uk/Support Us or call 020 7591 4320.

Welcome to new Friends
We are delighted to welcome the following people who have joined the RCM Friends recently:

Ms Vivian Armstrong
Ms Megan Beynon
Mrs Jane Bradlow
Mrs Christine Bruell
Mrs Katsuko Buckeridge
Mr Paul Dean
Mr Jonathan Denbigh
Mrs Louise Grattan
Ms Elizabeth Grimsey

Mr John Hadler
Mr Charles Hopkins
Mr Ivan Katzen
Professor Helmut Lachenmann FRCM
Ms Sheelagh Leith
Mrs Ellen Moloney
Dr Victoria Moore-Gillon
Dr Ornella Moscuccì
Ms Sandra Reynard

Ms Teni Shabi
Mr Philip Sober
Mrs Natalie Speir
Mr Mark Waddington
Mrs Kathleen Wale
Mr Michael Wilding
Dr David Wilson
Woodwind professor Janet Hilton’s Naxos recordings of the Reger Clarinet Sonatas with Jakob Fichert, a former student and Junior Fellow at the RCM, are now available on CD. The project came about after Jakob invited Janet to take part in Max Reger day at the College. Janet says: “as soon as we started rehearsing the sonatas I realised the great subtlety of the music and that although the harmonic progression is sometimes difficult to understand, the rewards of detailed study are great”.  

This summer violin professor Madeleine Mitchell has recorded a CD of Wendy Hiscocks’ violin and chamber music. In the autumn, she will hold recitals with fellow RCM professors Andrew Ball (Chester Celebrity Concerts) and Nigel Clayton (Sound Festival in Aberdeen, including pieces written for her by Scottish composers). In November she will perform the Elgar Violin Concerto in London on the centenary of the first performance of the work.

Terence Charlston has recorded The Selosse Manuscript for Deux-Elles Recordings. This fascinating manuscript of 17th century Jesuit keyboard music was discovered in a second-hand book and print shop in Camden in 2004 by Peter Leech. Visit http://homepage.ntworld.com/terence.charlston/

Academic professor Matthew Shlomowitz has had his work performed in The Netherlands (by the Ives Ensemble), San Francisco (by sSound), in Belgium and at the Huddersfield Music Festival (by the Letter Piece Company) and in London (by Mark Knoop). www.shlom.com

rarescale (formed in 1993 to promote the alto flute and its repertoire, featuring former RCM flautist Carla Rees) will be performing the premiere of composition professor Michael Oliva’s Requiem in late November at St Albans Abbey with chamber choir Mosaic. Bookings are now open for the 2011 rarescale on Skye course, with places available on the alto and bass flute masterclass courses (instruments can be borrowed if necessary), the electroacoustic composition course and the composers’ retreat. www.rarescaleonskye.co.uk

Academic professor Timothy Salter has had a number of recent commissions. These include Vitis Flexuosa on Regent Records (for a CD of cello and organ music performed by the Svyati Duo), Fantasy on SFZ Music (part of the ‘Contemporary British Organ Music’ series performed by Michael Bonaventure) and quartet Aerial on Usk Archive (performed by the Nephele Ensemble). All three CDs will be released during 2011. Harpsichord professor Carlos Bonell has played at the Bolivar Hall in the first concert of the Transformations Music Series. Performing alongside special guest RCM alumni Esteban Antonio, Carlos played the astounding ha-shem, a three-necked guitar of his own invention, which can be plucked and bowed. Carlos has also visited Oslo, Tokyo and Mexico while touring.

Alice Harper (JD Administrator) has been working as a Trustee responsible for the Artistic Direction of Churchill Music! – a rural music charity in Somerset who host a professional concert series to make it possible (logistically and financially) for local people to hear good quality music. www.churchillmusic.org.uk

Director of Opera Michael Rosewell has received outstanding reviews for his ETO productions of The Marriage of Figaro (a co-production with the RCM) and A Midsummer Night’s Dream: “The star of the evening is Michael Rosewell, whose conducting of the excellent orchestra attacks Britten’s score with tremendous panache, emphasising its daemonic qualities and making its colours glow” (Rupert Christiansen, The Telegraph). “Conductor Michael Rosewell brings out the sheer charm of the score with more spontaneous-seeming ensemble work than I have ever seen on a large stage.” (Michael Church, The Independent).

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Theatre Technician Kieran Taylor has completed his Level 3 Diploma in Electrotechnical Services.

Professor Paul Robinson and his six piece ensemble HarmonieBand have toured Wales with Paul’s revised score to Alfred Hitchcock’s 1927 silent classic The Lodger starring Ivor Novello, supported by the Arts Council of Wales. An additional performance was held at the Barbican. www.harmonieband.com
Martin Gatt (professor of bassoon and chamber music) has recorded a CD with the group AMATA Music.

Composition professor Michael J McEvoy has written the music for the 20-part Nickelodeon TV children's series *Summer in Transylvania*, which began with broadcasts in October. His CD *Terra Cognita* was released in July.

www.michaeljmcevoy.com

Margaret Phillips (organ professor) has recorded the complete organ works of Bach using historic instruments in Cambridge, Germany, the Netherlands and a newer organ in Paris built in the style of Bach’s organs.

www.margaretphillips.org.uk

Research Associate Rosie Perkins visited China in August to present papers on career and curriculum development for conservatoire students at the International Society for Music Education’s World Conference. Rosie has also recently won the Elen Wynne Vanstone Scholarship from the British Federation of Women Graduates for her doctoral work on the learning cultures of conservatoires.

Florilegium, RCM Ensemble in Association (directed by Ashley Solomon, Head of Historical Performance) continued their Pergolesi anniversary events with concerts in Germany, France and Italy, giving master classes and performing at a summer school in Prachatice (Czech Republic). In August they presented two Bolivian Baroque concerts with four Bolivian soloists – one in a French abbey. This followed the group’s debut concert at the Edinburgh International Festival, recorded by the BBC for broadcast on Radio 3’s Early Music Show.

Assistant Librarian Angela Escott spoke at the Staging the East conference (Bury St Edmunds) on the oriental musical comedy of 18th century dramatist Hannah Cowley whose *A Day in Turkey* was performed. Her presentation included recorded performances of music from the play by RCM students, transcribed for orchestra from the 18th century edition in the RCM library.

At the International Association of Music Libraries annual conference in Moscow, Assistant Librarian Rob Corp presented a paper on the digitisation of recordings in our Leopold Stokowski archive, drawing attention to the importance of this significant former RCM student, who extended audiences for classical music, championed new composers and involved himself in new recording techniques long before our concepts of ‘outreach’ and ‘widening participation’.

Harpischord Professor Robert Woolley has released *Sweelinck: Keyboard Works, Volume 2* on CD on the Chandos label.

www.chandos.net

The world premiere of an operatic setting of Chekhov’s play Uncle Vanya entitled *Sonya’s Story* took place this summer at the Tête à Tête Opera Festival at Riverside Studios, London. This was the debut collaboration between Neal Thornton as composer and Musical Director and RCM vocal professor Sally Burgess as Director.

www.sonyastoryopera.webs.com

Sally Burgess has also been travelling to Russia. In collaboration with London Gates Education, she held private and public masterclasses in Moscow with a number of vocal students.
RCM Curator of Musical Instruments Jenny Nex has had a piece published in the August issue of The Strad magazine, focusing on the extraordinary escapades of the Hill family of violin makers. Jenny brought to light new evidence on the fate of Lockey Hill, who was hung in 1796 for horse thieving, and his two sons.

Vocal professor Michael Roderick Earle has sung the role of Lear in the world premiere of Alexander Goehr’s new opera Promised End (using text from Shakespeare’s King Lear) with English Touring Opera.

Violin professor Hilary Sturt (Junior Department) recently spent three months as Director of Strings at Barker College, Sydney.

Composition for screen professor Howard Davidson is currently writing and recording a six-part series for BBC2/ BBC4 The History of the English and BBC2 The Battle of Britain. He has a number of projects lined up and these include writing for American Civil War for The History Channel, the documentary The Story of Islam for Channel 4 as well as a six-part series on China for BBC2.

Vocal professor Patricia Rozario has had a busy summer, including performances at the City of London Festival, West Cork International Chamber Music Festival and the Vale of Glamorgan festival. She has also performed Faultline, a contemporary ballet by Shobana Jeyasingh, in Sweden and India.

Violin professor Adrian Butterfield has been made sole Director of the Tilford Bach Society. He also leads the period instrument ensemble The Revolutionary Drawing Room, who have performed Chopin’s own chamber arrangements of his piano concertos on a Pleyel piano owned by Chopin at Hatchlands, Surrey. The ensemble was recently described in Early Music Today as having ’the best name in the business’.

Reference librarian Dr Peter Horton has given papers on the music of Samuel Sebastian Wesley at the Royal Musical Association Annual Conference in London and at the North American British Music Association’s conference in Des Moines, Iowa. He has also given a lecture on Wesley at the Southern Cathedrals Festival at Chichester (under the auspices of the Church Music Society).

In November, Rachel Brown (Baroque flute professor) is launching the publication of some virtuosic flute sonatas by the 18th-century flautist Quantz that were composed for Frederick the Great, King of Prussia. Following performances at flute conventions in New York, Manchester and The Hague, she has published two volumes of sonatas in an Urtext edition, with flute and figured bass parts together (so vital for ornamentation), facsimile copies of the original manuscripts, figured bass realisations by Terence Charlston (RCM professor of harpsichord) and an online performance guide covering articulation, ornamentation and cadenzas.

www.rachelbrownflute.com


RCM Junior Fellows Nick Wright and Katy Hamilton held a recital at Finchcocks Musical Museum in Kent, tracing the history and development of brass and keyboard instruments over the past 400 years.

Known for his London Marathon madness, Mark Messenger, Head of Strings, is taking on the challenge of two marathons within four weeks of each other in Spring 2011. Before running his sixth London Marathon for the Anthony Nolan Trust (for whom he has raised over £15,000) in April, he will be disappearing in March for a brief weekend in Rome, where he will be running the marathon there to support ESTA, the European String Teachers’ Association.
Keyboard triumphs...

Marek Bracha has won Second Prize at the Chopin International Piano Competition, held in Marianske Lazne in the Czech Republic... Oliver Poole shared First Prize at the Serenata Stars Competition at the first Serenata Festival in Dorset... Caterina Grewe has won First Prize at the Norah Sande Award 2010, at the Eastbourne Festival... Asagi Nakata (Junior Department) has won Fourth Prize at the International Piano Competition for Young Pianists, Ettingen, Germany... Poom Prommachart has performed the Prokofiev Piano Concerto no 2 at St John’s Smith Square. He will be performing in Thailand, Serbia and next year in Manila (Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto no 3).

www.pprommachart.com

Christopher Guild has been selected for the prestigious Countess of Munster Recital Scheme... Alexey Chernov was awarded First Prize at the 26th Concorso Internazionale Valsesia Musica 2010 in Varallo, Italy, with a performance of the Brahms Piano Concerto no 1. He also gained First Prize in the Italian International Piano Competition ‘AMA Calabria’... Junior Department student Nina Del Ser has won First Prize, with congratulations of the jury with unanimity in young pianist category 2 of the Concours International de Piano Son Altesse Royale La Princesse Lalla Meryem, in Morocco. Nina also was awarded a prize for the best performer of a Russian composer (offered by the Russian Embassy), open to all categories... Kumi Matsuo was Highly Commended at the RCM Chappell Medal final in July... Yulia Vorontsova won First Prize at the Concours Musical de France CMF held in Paris and the Kenneth Lovelind Award by competitive audition held at the Royal Academy of Music. Alongside violinist Ksenia Berezina, she also gained Third Prize and the Hans and Mary Romney Prize at the Tunbridge Wells International Young Concert Artist Competition... The Muse Piano Quintet (RCM students Ksenia Berezina violin, Ilona Bondar viola, Jordan Gregoris cello, Yulia Vorontsova piano and Trinity College of Music Scholar Ilya Movchan on violin) took Second Prize at the 18è Concurs Josep Mirabent I Magrans.

Composition congratulations...

Nimrod Katzir’s Juba’t for two clarinets received its first performance by Duo Stump-Linshalm at the Jüdisches Museum in Hohenems in Austria, Tola’at was performed by Ensemble Praesenz at the Felicia Blumental Concert Hall in Tel-Aviv and his cycle Azza for chamber ensemble, electronics and mime was performed as part of the Jardins Musicaux Festival in Neuchâtel, Switzerland... The Luxembourg Society for Contemporary Music has recently released a new CD featuring Arne Gieshoff’s ensemble work Nachtreise, performed by the Luxembourg Sinfonietta. Arne and fellow RCM composer Mark Boden were selected to take part in this year’s St Magnus festival composers course... This summer Marcos Fernandez was resident composer for the Italian artist program Le Ville Matte. His commission Mare – entro – Terra for violin, viola and piano, inspired by the culture and environment of Sardinia, was premiered by Paul Waters, Valentino Corvino and Giovanni Prosdocimi. He gained the Jury Prize at BCN Visual Sound for the soundtrack of the clip La Musica nunca Muere (Music Never Ends)...

String successes...

Violinist Joo Yeon Sir has won Second Prize at the Tunbridge Wells International Young Concert Artist Competition. She has performed the Malcolm Arnold Violin Concerto with the Virtuosi of Stratford and the Bruch Violin Concerto with Epsom Symphony Orchestra... Yuki Ito (Cello) won First Prize at the 17th International Johannes Brahms Competition in Pörtschach... In the Dominican Republic, violinist Aisha Syed has performed Vivaldi’s Four Seasons at the presidential palace (attended by the President and the First Lady) and at the regional theatre in San Juan. She also performed Saint-Saëns’ Violin Concerto no 3 at the National Theatre conducted by Maestro Jose Antonio Molina. In 2009 Aisha became the first person under 30 to be awarded the Ministry of Culture’s ‘Cultural Personality of the year’. Solfa Carlile was one of three young composers selected to work with Harrison Birtwistle and Stephen Langridge at Dartington Hall for a collaborative project entitled Theatre of Illusion. Her work Ad Locum was performed by the London Chamber Orchestra, and Solfa was also awarded one of the two prizes donated by the orchestra’s sponsors... Daniel Saleeb has been selected to take part in the 2010 International Composers Pyramid and will create new works for the ICP Ensemble... Pedro Faria Gomes has been accepted onto the Royal Opera House’s VOX2 programme... Steven Daverson received the Royal Philharmonic Society Composition Award. He joins the Philharmonia Orchestra’s Young Composers Academy, and will have a work performed as part of the orchestra’s Music of Today series.
Vocal victories…

Mezzo-soprano Emilie Alford has been awarded 1er Prix Femme, Opéra and 1er Prix Mélodie Française in the Festival Lyrique de Marmande 22ème Concours International de Chant… Soprano Monica Bancos has been awarded a two year Independent Opera Fellowship … Christopher Jacklin (tenor) won third prize in the Patricia Routledge National English Song Competition 2010 held by the Association of English Singers and Speakers… Soprano Rhian Evans, baritone David Hansford, soprano Louise Alder and soprano Hannah Sandison were awarded MBF Postgraduate Performance Awards for 2010-2011. Additionally, Louise has been awarded a Dewar Scholarship… Mezzo-soprano Martha Jones won Second Prize in the Chelsea Schubert Festival’s Lieder Competition.

Other activities…

Earlier this year, RCM organ student Martin Ford visited Knole House in Kent to perform on England’s oldest playable organ. Martin and the RCM Viol Consort recorded music by Tomkins, Gibbons and others as part of his Masters dissertation on ‘The Organ in the Domestic Context, 1580-1642’, looking at both the solo organ repertory and the organ’s role in consort music … Percussionist Ruairi Glasheen has been awarded a full scholarship to attend the Percussive Arts Society Annual Convention (PASIC) in Indianapolis… Jadran Duncumb took part in the Monteverdi Vespers Prom on theorbo as a member of the English Baroque Soloists, under the direction of Sir John Eliot Gardiner.

And the award goes to…

Swedish guitarist Johannes Möller has won the Guitar Foundation of America’s International Concert Artist Competition… Anna Gorbachyova, soprano, has won First Prize and the Audience Prize at the first International Singing Competition for Baroque Opera Pietro Antonio Cesti in Innsbruck, Austria… Laurie Ashworth was selected as a finalist in the inaugural BBC Radio 2 Kiri Prize, a new competition to find the UK’s brightest young operatic talent… Baritone Peter Brathwaite has commenced his studies at the Flanders Opera Studio in Ghent, supported by major awards from the Peter Moores Foundation and Stichting Robus, and a two-year Independent Opera Fellowship … Helen-Jane Howells, soprano, won First Prize in the Patricia Routledge National English Song Competition 2010 held by the Association of English Singers and Speakers… Charlotte Bray gained a special prize from the Royal Philharmonic Society. Supported by the Susan Bradshaw Composers Fund, the prize includes a commission for a chamber piece for the 2011 Cheltenham Festival… As usual, the standard at the RCM Chappell Medal final in July was incredibly high.

The Chappell Medal and First Prize went to Alexei Petrov, the Hopkinson Gold Medal and Second Prize to Meng Yang Pan, the Hopkinson Silver Medal and Third Prize to Michael Ierace, and the Esther Fisher prize for the highest placed undergraduate to Evgeny Andreev… pianist Mikhail Shilyaev won Third Prize at the Vianna Da Motta International Music Competition in Lisbon… Konstantin Lapshin has triumphed in the Mendelssohn Cup, held in Taurisano, Italy… The Piatti Quartet, which was founded at the RCM by alumni Michael Trainor, David Wigram and Jessie Ann Richardson, founded at the RCM, have won the inaugural St Martin-in-the-Fields Chamber Music Competition and the Martin Musical Scholarship.

www.piattiquartet.com

Opera stars Out and About…

Tenor Alfie Boe and soprano Natasha Marsh topped the bill at the Royal Albert Hall’s ‘Opera Gala’ in June. Alfie has also recently performed with ENO in The Pearl Fishers… Mezzo-soprano Alison Valentine has made her Wagnerian debut as Fricka in Die Walküre at Longborough Opera… Baritone/bass Peter Brathwaite sang the role of Nelson in Porgy and Bess at the Opera National de Lyon in July and made his Edinburgh International Festival debut in the same production. He sang Guglielmo for Westminster Opera’s Emerging Artists’ Scheme at the Chateau de Panloy in La Rochelle. Peter has now commenced his studies at the Flanders Opera Studio in Ghent, supported by major awards from the Peter Moores Foundation and Stichting Robus, and a two-year Independent Opera Fellowship.
Releases and recordings…

Violinist Ruth Palmer’s CD Hidden Acoustics has been released with Nimbus Alliance, including solo works by Bach and Börtok. She is supporting the release with a solo tour to unusual venues. www.hiddenacoustics.com

Piano performances…

Pianist Alan Chu has collaborated with the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra in their Season Finale concert, performing Carl Orff’s Carmina Burana… Yoko Nakamura gave a piano solo recital at Kamakura Performing Arts Centre in Japan… Eulalie Charland (violin) and Maiko Mori (piano) have been broadcast on Radio France performing William Walton’s Sonata for Violin and Piano… pianist Antoine Françoise has performed Pierrot Lunaire at Wigmore Hall with members of the LPO, conducted by Vladimir Jurowski… Pianist Konstantin Lapshin is performing with his Eidos trio at the Wigmore Hall in the new year… Warren Mailey-Smith will make his debut in May 2011 with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in a performance of Beethoven’s Piano Concerto no at The Hawth, Crawley

 Conductors on show…

Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra has appointed Rui Pinheiro as Conductor in Association. He is also Musical Director of the ensemble Serse… Choral and Artistic Director Elizabeth Bates has promoted her seventh and final Bach Festival in the City of Bath. The Chantry Singers performed the St Matthew Passion and the Mass in B Minor under her direction, alongside RCM Ensemble in Residence Florilegium and the Steinitz Bach Players respectively… Anne Marie Granau has conducted the St Petersburg Chamber Philharmonic in the world premiere of a harp concerto by Karsten Fundal, Cubulus by Nicklas Schmidt, and Poul Ruders’ masterpiece Four Compositions. She also conducted the Athelas Sinfonietta Copenhagen in several performances The Millennium Project – a Musical Journey: Jacob Groth’s music to the Millennium Trilogy, based on the best-selling books by Stieg Larsson. Anne Marie has now been appointed Assistant Conductor at Royal Danish Opera

Other News…

Composer Piers Tattersall has been commissioned by London Children’s Ballet to write the music for their production of Rumpelstiltskin… Konstantin Lapshin will be featured in US ‘Fanfare’ magazine this winter… Cellist William Burrows is now a member of the Symphony Orchestra of Sinaloa in Mexico… Christopher Nickol is celebrating his 50th birthday this autumn with fund-raising organ recitals in Glasgow, London and York – proceeds go towards the Nicholas Danby Trust (Chris was a pupil of Nicholas Danby at the RCM during the late 1980s). christopher.nickol@ntlworld.co.uk

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Obituaries

We were saddened this summer to learn of the death of Conductor Charles Mackerras, one of the most significant musical figures of the last fifty years. He won renown for his operatic and orchestral performances, for his commitment to Czech music in particular, and most recently for his tremendous classical recordings with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra. He also displayed a great commitment to education, serving as President of Trinity College of Music, and visiting the RCM as guest conductor for some memorable performances.

Composer David Fanshawe passed away in July. David joined the College as a Foundation Scholar in 1965, studying with the legendary John Lambert. A colourful and engaging individual, he loved adventurous travel, and this exposure to diverse cultures was a lifelong driving force for his musical creativity. On his travels he gathered many hundreds of recordings of indigenous music, which inspired his compositions. In particular, his explorations of North and East Africa led to his most famous work, *African Sanctus*, which earned him an Ivor Novello Award. Last year David described his ‘life’s missions’: “to celebrate the universal language of music; to record for posterity endangered World Music, threatened with extinction; to seek inspiration for my own compositions – thus uniting musical worlds apart.”

Anthony Rolfe Johnson died in July at the age of 69. Anthony came to singing relatively late, having worked as a farmer until the age of 29. Having entered the profession, he proved himself to be an astonishingly versatile artist, winning international acclaim for his interpretations of major roles from Bach to Britten. He was passionate about education, teaching regularly at the Britten-Pears School, and becoming its director in 1990.

South African tenor and composer Siphiwo Ntshebe died suddenly in May at the age of just 34. A graduate of the RCM International Opera School, Siphiwo had been selected by Nelson Mandela to perform *Hope* – a piece of his own composition – at the football World Cup opening ceremony on June 11, but died from meningitis on 25 May. Nick Sears, RCM Head of Vocal Studies, comments: “Siphiwo was an exceptionally talented artist who was right on the cusp of a major breakthrough in his professional singing career. One morning, I wrote to Siphiwo to congratulate him on behalf of the RCM and to wish him well for his forthcoming appearance at the World Cup. To find out the next day that he was dead was absolutely shocking. This tragic news has stunned the many staff and students who had the pleasure of knowing and supporting him. We send our sincere condolences both to his family and to a nation deprived of one of its brightest young operatic hopes.”

Tim Marshall passed away in September. An organist, Tim studied with John Birch and gained the GRSM in 1974. He subsequently took Holy Orders and, at the time of his death, was Vicar of Bovingdon, Hertfordshire. He was also closely involved in the New School of Organ Studies, a charitable organisation dedicated to providing organ tuition in Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire.

Marriages

Lucy Isaac married David Goldsmith at St John’s College, Oxford in August.

Births

Former composition student Julia Kny and her partner Steve Owen are delighted to announce the birth of their son Aurelio Samuel, on 5 February 2010.

Owen Michael Fosbrook-Rance was born on 4 June 2010 to John Fosbrook (RCM Press and Marketing Manager) and his wife Madeleine Bradbury Rance, weighing in at 9lb 9oz.

Violinist Erik Houston has died, aged 37. As well as being an exceptionally fine player, he was an outstanding teacher, both at the RCM Junior Department (since 2001) and the Purcell School, and will be greatly missed by his students and colleagues. Erik joined the Junior Department as a student in 1982 aged 10, where he was a contemporary of Daniel Hope, who remained a close friend. He returned to RCM as a postgraduate to study with Itzhak Rashkovsky. Erik leaves a young son Max, his fiancée Merissa and his mother, to whom we extend deepest sympathy. His name will be kept alive at RCM through a named award for violinists attached to the JD Angela Bull competition.

Anne Shorter (nee West-Watson) passed away in June 2010. She was a violin student in the late 1960s at the RCM, and spent much of her working life in Winchester.