



Newsletter

May 2004

Do make a note of our website for information and reminders about when/where concerts are scheduled: <http://www.hmc-parents-assoc.org.uk>

Annual General Meeting on 12th June

The AGM will be at 10.45am in the Lower Hall (where the Christmas Fair and the concerts are held). Everyone is welcome to the meeting to hear what has been happening over the past year; we always appreciate any interest and support shown by you for the activities we organise. It is also an opportunity to meet members of the Parents' Committee and to put forward any views you have about what we do.

If you have some comments but cannot come to the meeting, or would like to become more involved in the Parents' Committee, please contact the Chair, Tony Elgie on 01423 501377, or any other member of the Committee.

BBC Philharmonic Orchestra Concert

Members of HASSO who went to hear the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra play the *Hebrides Overture*, Beethoven's 4th Piano Concerto and the *Rite of Spring*, were suitably impressed.

Tom Smith had the following comments to make about the trip: 'At first the number of people going to see the concert was scarily small, but fortunately, you can't judge a concert like that. The *Hebrides Overture* was fantastic: it was humbling to hear the hard parts we couldn't play, performed impeccably! Benjamin Frith played Beethoven's 4th Piano Concerto, which, hearing it for the first time, I enjoyed, and this was followed by the moving performance of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*. And no mobile phone rang during the bassoon solo! Thanks, Mike, the trip was great.'

Forthcoming concerts

- 15th May: **Area Band** playing a joint concert with Skipton Music Centre at Aireville School, Skipton, at 7.00pm. There will be no morning rehearsal and a coach will be leaving from Harrogate at 3.30pm (take a packed tea).
- 12th June: ICB playing at St. Robert's School summer fair, 2.00-2.45pm.
- 19th June: **HYPE, Guitar Orchestra, Woodwind Choir** and **Junior Brass** playing at Ashville College, at 7.00pm.
- 19th June: **ICB** playing at Oatlands Junior School summer fair, 2-4pm.
- 26th June: **HASSO** playing at St. Mark's Church, Leeds Road, at 7.30pm.
- 27th June: **Junior Strings** and **ISO** playing at Granby, at 3.00pm.
- 3rd July: **HYJO** playing at Grassington Festival in the morning and at Harlow Carr Gardens in the evening (for Soroptomist International) at 7.00pm.

Some members of HASSO and ISO will be joining the 5-day North Yorkshire Orchestra Course in July. Their final concert will be on 15th July in Ripon Cathedral.

Advance notice of the Gala Concert 2005

It is hoped that the next Gala Concert at the Harrogate International Centre will be on 22nd January 2005. Confirmation of this date will be made in the Autumn.

31st Harrogate International Youth Music Festival

This year the festival was back on top form after two years of disruption due to international events. From the Music Centre, ICB and HYJO joined in the festivities alongside bands from Armenia, Canada and Sweden. The parade through the town on Easter Saturday was graced with bright sunny weather, and the marching bands drew large watching crowds which, altogether, made for a great atmosphere. By taking part in this event, the participants will have acquired the skill of playing an instrument at the same time as marching in time, which could possibly be described as a new form of mental gymnastics somewhat akin to patting one's head and rubbing one's tummy at the same time.

It was especially satisfying that the Ararat band could come this year, since Ian Peak forged links with them several years ago, and he raised money to fund their visit. Although they come from an extremely poor country relative to the UK, they made the effort to travel the 3,000 miles (6 days' travel day and night by coach!) to attend this event.

Many, many thanks to all the families who accommodated the band members during their visit; without your hospitality, the band simply couldn't have afforded to come.

Below are some edited comments from Music Centre musicians who took part in the festival:

From **Joel Smith** whose family provided accommodation: 'Initially we had difficulty communicating, but gradually worked out a system using each language and gestures to speak to each other. Although they stayed with us for only a week, we will remember them for ever. We learned something about their country and culture, such as their unusual timekeeping. It was noticeable that, perhaps unlike us, they took great care of the few possessions they had, especially their instruments. The Band was superb: in six concerts, they received six standing ovations. Armenia is a very poor country, as were their instruments, but they took back nineteen donated instruments and many other gifts. Our band continues raising funds for more instruments, and to bring them back to England in 2006.'

From **Ailsa Brown**: 'Marching – an activity eagerly awaited and dreaded by equal halves of ICB; the latter, if mocking friends are out in force. The parade started on the Stray, ICB behind a Canadian band eagerly waving their flags ("so you're from Russia then?"). Soon we were off – there was a good crowd who were effusive in their reception, despite a certain wobbliness in ICB ranks! We marched round Harrogate, finally returning to the Stray, where all seven bands played a final piece. All in all, everyone had a great time, particularly some trumpets (who shall not be named) who had fun confusing the euphoniums by shouting leftleftleftleftleft very quickly!

The concert in the Sun Pavillion, Valley Gardens, launched the incredible Ararat Band on the unsuspecting public. A powerful performance made even more powerful by the instruments which, to put it as nicely as possible, were on their last legs (and possibly had been for the last 50 years) – but the sound was so pitch-perfect, this was soon forgotten.

On Monday the Tewit Youth Band, the Ararat Band and ICB joined for a concert in St Peters. All the bands had a good time and played wonderfully. Again it's hard to describe the brilliance of the Ararat Band, who must be getting used to a standing ovation wherever they go. On their encore they produced an amazing impromptu soloist singer – who struck everyone dumb! There was also a birthday in the Ararat Band so Mr. Peak gave us yet another challenge – to play a music-less arrangement of *Happy Birthday* (personally I think it was our best piece!)

On Wednesday it was a rest night for the musicians, when it was the band disco which rocked, with us all mingling very easily. Finally on the Thursday it was the Grand Finale Concert with all 12 bands and some very talented dancers. It was the best end to the week that we could have possibly asked for. All the bands gave a very professional performance and we all came together for the finale where we performed *Thank you for the music* conducted by Nore Sundqvist, the retired founder of the Hudiksvall Marching and Show Band followed by Jon de Revere, the artistic director, conducting the *William Tell Overture*, *God Save the Queen* and *Auld Lang Syne*. Amazingly, all the musicians appeared to get all 20 codas right in the first two pieces, and everything worked and was perfect (possibly due to some ridiculously early rehearsals – since when has the time 9.00am existed?)

In the end it was a memorable experience enjoyed by everyone; so great thanks to all the organisers (and Mr Peak who kept us all going!). We're all looking forward to next year, which will be the 32nd Harrogate Youth Music Festival.'

Theory Lessons

There are a few places available for Music Centre students who are working towards their Grade 5 Theory exam. Classes are at 5.00pm and 5.45pm on Wednesdays. Anyone interested should contact the Music Centre office (01423 700118).