

Maoin Cheoil na Gaillimhe

Newsletter November 2013 Issue 21

Dear Parent

Time for ongoing updates for everyone. There is rather a lot in this one so I will try to make each point briefly, and then, if any parent wants further clarification please do call or email the office and I shall try to elaborate.

Fees

Maybe it is the recession but this year there are still a small number of outstanding fees! I would urge any parent that has not yet made payment to contact the office to arrange same. We do offer stage payments and standing order facilities for those who wish to spread the cost of lessons, but staff cannot be reasonably asked to work without some arrangement in place. All co-operation in this is very gratefully acknowledged.

Concerts

We have had a wonderful start to the year with two beautiful music evenings. The first, for culture night, presented by staff of MCnG, and the second was part of a symposium organised on behalf of the Huston film centre in NUIG, and featured the wonderful music of Micheal O Suilleabhain and Mel Mercier. The following links are for excerpts from each concert for you to enjoy. We will announce at least one more concert before Christmas and a short series afterwards.

<http://youtu.be/OMOxiwX-Dc> King of the Blind by Micheal O Suilleabhain

<http://youtu.be/Dd1hQBFiSXQ> Bach Prelude in B Minor by David Szabo

<http://youtu.be/YVA5Nbv6Rms> Float you blues away by Tom Portman

<http://youtu.be/3Gfe4OrWH68> Brahms Clarinet Sonata by Robert Solyom



Student Christmas concert preparations are already underway amongst staff, and individual teachers should be providing details in the coming weeks. We do encourage participation in these events, as they really do build a set of skills not possible under any other regime.

Mr David Clarke and his adult string orchestra will be performing their Christmas concert in St. Mary's on Dec 20th. This grouping always promises an eclectic mix of musical styles to suit all tastes.

Finally on November 26th, school director, Hugh Kelly, will don his other hat, as conductor of the NUI Galway concert orchestra. In a charity concert shared with the Trad and Choral societies from NUIG the orchestra will play Schubert's beloved unfinished symphony. Concert kicks off at 8pm in St. Nicholas Collegiate Church.

Art Competition

We ran an art competition last year for students of the school, and such was the response to it that we have decided to re-run it again this year. So, out with the paints and pencils, and begin creating the masterpieces that will adorn our classroom walls. There will be three prizes on offer again this year. The overall winner will receive a whopping €50, with second place receiving €25, and third place €15. Once entered, all pictures will remain property of the school.

Drum Line

Our Saturday mornings are no longer havens of calm and peace, since the Drumline moved in. The group are hugely enthusiastic and doing remarkably well. We will offer a small number of additional places in the next semester to continue with the building process. St. Mary's College have also taken the concept on, and are recruiting amongst students there, so, in time, we should have a full formation to present. A special price of €45 for 10 lessons is available to students of MCnG only.

James Ross, Composer in Residence



Our composer in residence makes his second visit this weekend, and the buzz about the school amongst the students has been amazing. He is conducting exercises with a range of groups, and has already begun preparing chord progressions that we will explore on Saturday as our unique musical composition begins to take shape. He really does have a natural affinity for children, and they respond to his humour and talent instantly. It is one of the nicest projects we have had the pleasure to be a part of, and our Colourstrings group, and Paris ensemble are going to remember this for years to come. The word from our other MEP partners is that the impact he is having there is equally as profound.

Colourstrings

We are saddened to report that our wonderful teacher Katri has sustained an injury while on holiday in Italy. She has fractured her leg in two places and dislocated her foot. She spent time in surgery and we are happy to report that it went very well. It has meant however that we have had to cancel classes. We could yet put in a short term replacement, if her mobility is severely compromised, but

at time of writing, that is not known. Best case scenario, we cancel one more week of classes. But please understand that we will not ask her to compromise her health, and if we do need to schedule a temporary substitute, then we will liaise directly with Katri, to ensure the smoothest possible transition, until she is ready to return. We do thank all parents for their patience, and understanding in this, and indeed, for all of the thoughtful messages you took the time to send in.

On a happier note, we are trying to finalise details of the Christmas party, and this grows each year into something that has become a truly joyful event. We will post full details on this in about 2 weeks.

Because of all the upheaval, we have not had time to organise a meeting of our parents committee. This group will assist in the implementation of simple projects over the year to make the colourstrings experience that much more fun and integrated. Plans include simple concerts designed around small children, and lesson visits from instrumentalists to introduce their music and let the children get up close to each instrument presented. We have about three parents that have volunteered but would in truth accept about 2 more so if there is anyone that feels they could spare about one evening a month to meet and help drive plans forward, then please let us know, in the office.

We are also happy to announce that Suzanne now has 2 classes on a Saturday morning. A 5yr old class at 11.15, and a 3yr old class at 12. There are still some spaces in those but all other 3, 4, 5 and 6yr old classes on Saturday are now full.

Hazel Collins has begun teaching colourstrings in the newest addition to our primary school project. Moycullen National School brings the total involvement now up to 6 schools, and, as always, we are hugely grateful to the Galway Education Centre, and the Galway Music Residency, for their support of this initiative. We are already seeing the benefit in Furbo school, where there are students now in their third year of learning who are really making huge developments in their reading. It is proof positive that colourstrings works, and, that a young musically literate population is an attainable reality.

Jessica Sytsma, violinist, has also joined staff here in the past couple of weeks as our latest colourstrings violin teacher. We will hope to introduce her directly to all young students in the new year.

MCnG Prize

A reminder to all parents that the Prize is still an integral part of the teaching year. In January, we will host a parent/ teacher meeting day for all parents to come and discuss progress etc., and it is worth keeping tabs on progress towards the awarding of the prize for each student.

And Finally....

Our warmest congratulations go out to Alyson Barber who represented Ireland in the 'International Society for Contemporary Music, new world music festival'. Her new composition for solo viola was premiered this week in Warsaw to huge acclaim.