



Welcome to AYM's Spring Bulletin!

Furthering Talent Programme

The start of 2009 saw the launch of an exciting new programme which we're piloting called Furthering Talent. Here's some more about it...

What are we aiming to do?

We're working with the government's Wider Opportunities programme (which pays for every young person aged between seven and 11 to receive one year's free instrumental tuition) to identify musical talent in young people who haven't yet had much opportunity to develop their playing. The aim of our programme is to provide them with both individual instrumental tuition and mentoring from another professional musician for a minimum of two years, tailored to their particular needs.

How are we doing it?

We're working within the existing music education infrastructure through the government-supported Music Partnerships in Bristol, Devon, London, Staffordshire and Manchester. Each partnership combines a range of different organisations working in music education, from orchestras and local authority music services to independent charities and venues: this means that we can use local expertise to help us identify young people for the programme and to give the right support once we've found them.

What support will they receive and for how long?

So far we've raised enough funding to enable each young person to receive at least 30 minutes of individual tuition per week for two years.

How much is it costing?

We have raised £32,500 so far, thanks to the considerable generosity of The Alan and Babette Sainsbury Charitable Trust, The Austin Hope Pilkington Trust, The Derek Butler Trust, The Misses Barrie Charitable Trust and The Alan and Nesta Ferguson Trust. However, we need to raise significantly more in order to expand the level of tuition we can provide, to fund a mentor for each young person and to increase the number of young people we're supporting.

By the time the next Bulletin comes out, we'll be able to hear more from the young people involved in this programme and find out how they're progressing in their music making. To be continued!

Orchestral Mentoring programme

As many of you will know, AYM is continuing to enable the young people it supports to access the wonderful musical experiences and opportunities provided by orchestras in their locality. Here's one of the latest:

Mother of Billy, after attending a performance at the Royal Opera House

I just wanted to thank you for Sunday (the family event at the Royal Opera House). I've never tried to take Billy there before, because of my back (I just can't sit long enough to make it through a performance), and also because of the daunting costs. But after receiving your AYM invitation to Hansel and Gretel a few weeks ago, I decided to give it a go. Their education department arranged a box for Billy and I, so I could lie down across the chairs for part of the performance. And we had such a fantastic view, and marvellous time. We loved every minute. The gorgeous music. The fantastic seats. The beautiful building. The orchestra below us. The bizarre and scary stuff on stage. And God – the singing! It made me realise that somehow I must start taking Billy to opera at least once a year. His 'membership' of Awards for Young Musicians has made such a huge difference to his experiences, belief in himself, and potential. It has been a brilliant year. Thank you again, and so much.

Young musicians' progress

Thank you to all our 2008 Award winners who updated us on their progress via our six-month evaluation questionnaires. Here's one example of the responses we received, from Luke, an 18-year-old bassoonist:

What have you enjoyed most about playing your instrument in the past six months?

Everything! The opportunities I've had since starting at the Junior Department of the Royal College of Music [RCMJD]; I've been playing with such able musicians, and I feel the level of teaching and coaching that I am receiving is excellent and will help me on the path to a senior department of a music college next year.



Luke

Also, I have a new bassoon which I am continuing to fundraise for, so everything I play on it seems wonderful! I have really enjoyed doing the fundraising for the instrument, playing a mixture of baroque and chamber music in concerts in my local area as well as organising everything from raffles to bingo nights!

What have you found difficult or challenging?

Joining RCMJD means that I get weekly bassoon lessons (something I wasn't really getting before), and with National Youth Orchestra [NYO] re-auditions and music college auditions, the level of practice I've had to do has really stepped up. Coping with it as well as juggling A-Levels hasn't been easy. Also, I've found that jumping in as Principal bassoon in RCMJD Symphony has been a real challenge. The standard of the orchestra is immense when compared to anything I play in locally, and finding myself in quite a pressurised environment has been a bit of a shock! But I know if I stick with it and work hard, I can gain a lot from the experience.

If you could pick one highlight in terms of a concert or gig you have played in, or another musical experience, what would it be?

I'm performing with RCMJD Symphony Orchestra at Cadogan Hall this coming Sunday, so I've yet to play in a proper concert with the college – although over the past six months, the biggest highlight was playing in the BBC Proms with the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain. It really was an incredible experience and one that I know will stay with me for a long time.

Please give us information on any exams you are working towards and/or recent exam success.

Please also let us know about any recent audition or competition successes.

I had a successful NYO re-audition in October, being appointed 2nd bassoon/sub principal bassoon (no. 2/7) in the orchestra. I also had a music college audition at Birmingham Conservatoire and was offered a place and a scholarship on the spot! I have my Royal College of Music and Guildhall School of Music and Drama auditions a week today, and have also been awarded a few grants in the local area. [Luke was subsequently offered scholarships by both and will be starting at the Royal College of Music in September].

What have other people, such as audience members, said about your playing?

The success I experienced at Birmingham Conservatoire came with quite a lot of praise! Plus points were the maturity of the sound I make and the richness of it, as well as my musicality and attitude towards playing.

What are your ambitions for the future and have they changed since you received your Award?

No, they haven't changed; I still want to go on to music college and become an orchestral bassoonist.

Why has this Award made a difference to you?

Because it has enabled me to travel up to London every weekend to attend RCMJD and without it I wouldn't have been able to afford it, and would have missed out on all these wonderful opportunities that I am coming across. Just thank you for the award! Without your kind help, very little of the above would have happened!

More young musicians, on what a difference an Award makes

Joel, 13, saxophone, whose Award enabled him to be driven from Lincolnshire to attend Sheffield Music Academy every weekend

This award has changed my life. It has given me the opportunity every week to attend the academy and concentrate on my diploma in composition. Without this award, I may not have been able to complete the year as the cost of fuel needed for the miles covered would not have been possible.

Ram, 17, piano

Since receiving the grant, I feel my whole relationship with music has changed. Being a member of a jazz group has led to me playing with musicians such as Simon Spillett, Andy Sheppard and Jules Buckley. I feel this has affected my piano lessons, too, as I'm more open to trying music of different styles and more creative in my approach to playing the piano. AYM has helped me shape my ideas for the future... receiving the grant has made music not just a deeply loved hobby but an integral part of my life. It is thanks to the award that many of the events that have shaped my musical life have occurred and hopefully will continue occurring.

Fergus, 17, double bass

This award has made a huge difference to me as it has enabled me to truly adjust and settle with an instrument. Since I now own my own double bass, I can truly learn everything about the individuality of the instrument and also my own playing. I wish to truly thank AYM as it has enabled me to develop my playing beyond a level that I had hoped, and without AYM I wouldn't own the truly fantastic instrument that I have now gained. Also, the contacts AYM has given me will prove invaluable in the years to come when I am looking for work in British orchestras.



Joel

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