

# Merry Christmas



## **Muse News volume 4: the newsletter for Watford School of Music. Christmas 2011**

**We wish you a very Merry Christmas and a peaceful and happy 2012.**

It has been a busy term with some exciting events taking place.

We had a brass day featuring our two brass groups, brass attack! and the brass ensemble as well as County Youth Brass and the Watford Boys' Brass Band. They were joined by professional trumpeters Andy Greenwood and Craig Wild (trumpeters from Strictly Come Dancing and the West End show 'Wicked'). It was great to hear so much brass playing going on in the Concert Hall and it was a truly exciting sound to hear 75 young brass players together with two superb professionals combining together to play Birdland. Thanks to Prozone for sponsoring the event.

Just before half term we had a 'Show Choir' day with some 60 children from local primary schools. They learnt some Music Theatre songs and added choreography. At the end of the day they gave a short performance to very proud parents.

Our Community Choir for adults 'One Voice' continues to develop under their conductor Nyree O'Brien. Towards the end of term have performed in the Harlequin centre as well as at the Peace Hospice. The choir always welcomes new members. They rehearse on Thursday nights from 7.30 – 9.15 at the Muse. You don't have to read music – just come along and sing. For more information please contact the office.

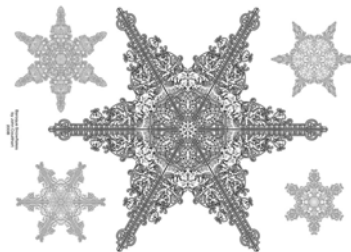
Rock School has taken off this term. We now have 4 bands that meet every Thursday. They make cover versions of songs as well as composing original material using the wonderful equipment that we have. At the end of November these bands combined with other West Herts Rock Schools at a gig at the Pioneer Club in St Albans. It was an entertaining evening with a huge variety of music performed in a contemporary setting.

We had some good end of term concerts. The Wind Bands welcomed back their conductor Mary-Ann Bland and had a nice concert with a social event afterwards. As is always the case, the bands could do with more bass players. If you are a trombonist bassoonist, tenor or baritone saxophone player you'll

be given an extra warm welcome. If you play other wind brass and percussion instruments do join the groups to improve your playing, meet new friends and have fun!

The WSM Youth Orchestra played a series of pieces that both players and audience thoroughly enjoyed. They performed Sibelius' Finlandia, Peer Gynt Suite no 1, Mussorgsky's Night on a Bare Mountain and finished with a rousing performance of Borodin's Polotsvian Dances.

The String concerts started with the first performance of the Beginner Strings. They played beautifully and showed how much they had learned about watching the conductor, playing as a team etc during the term. As they started to play Silent Night the lights went out in the concert hall. A bulb had fused. Like true professionals they continued to play and were followed by Junior and Repertoire Strings, performing in ever decreasing light. Unfortunately, the lighting system could not reboot itself so we had to cancel the concert given by Sinfonia and Senior Strings. This concert will take place on **SATURDAY 14 JANUARY 2012** at 7.00 pm.



#### **What to do if it snows:**

Fingers crossed that it won't snow this year but if we have bad snow again, please look at the website; [www.hertsmusicservice.org.uk](http://www.hertsmusicservice.org.uk). We will put up to date information there about whether the building is open or not. There will also be a message on the office answering machine. In general if the local schools are closed, we shall be too but we also look at conditions later in the day to make sure that it's safe for everyone to travel

**Have we got your correct address?** Please let the office know if your contact details have changed, particularly if you have got a new mobile phone number.

#### **New Reception!**

You may have noticed that the space previously occupied by Prozone had been empty all term. We are delighted that the space will be a WSM Reception Office. New furniture is due to arrive at the end of term so we are hoping that our new office will be open in January and that it is more convenient for you.

We are also going to be joined by a new member of the admin team: Shaun Benjamin. He will be working from 1.30 – 6.30 Monday to Friday.

### **Goodbye's hello's**

We will be saying goodbye to a lot of our teachers this term: we wish them well. Elaine Crooke, Ozz Leach Pikaal and Helen Allen Williams are leaving to pursue new paths. Lucy Peglar and Lucy Searle are going off on maternity leave; we wish them well and hope to see them when they return. A key member of staff that is leaving is Helen Pritchard, Head of Junior Music School. She has done a great deal in developing the Junior Music School. We wish her well for the future. John Brennan will be taking on the overview of Junior Music as well as strings in his role as head of Saturday Mornings at WSM.

Not all vacancies are yet filled but we have welcomed Michelle Spain, Dave Preston and Eric Foster and we look forward to welcoming new teachers in January.

Thank you parents, pupils and teachers for your hard work and support this year and we send all good wishes for 2012. Thanks particularly to the non teaching staff, Roz, Brenda and Tony for all their work behind the scenes.

James Dickinson

Angela Gilby

