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# Newsletter no. 13

## July 2022

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Our **end-of-year concerts** at St. Joseph's and Ferney Lee in the sweltering heatwave this week have been hard work not least because the heat means we keep having to retune the instruments, but they have been a great example of how our pupils are progressing and getting more used to working together in bands and orchestras. As well as orchestral arrangements of folk songs, we played Brahms' Hungarian Dance no.5, theme from Spring by Vivaldi and Round Dance by Bartok. We even played two brand new pieces entitled *Monkey* and *Mermaid* by Dexter, our budding young composer at Ferney Lee School.

As our series of fundraising concerts continued, 13<sup>th</sup> May saw a very special solo recital given by **Robin Hill**, who is one of the country's finest classical guitarists. The programme included some dazzlingly virtuosic Spanish pieces, some exquisite arrangements of J.S. Bach and Lennon and McCartney and some of Robin's originals. Our young guitar pupils were there to take inspiration and we heard the debut performance from our Ferney Lee guitar trio and our Todmorden High School guitar ensemble, who played their own very atmospheric arrangement of The Beatles' Norwegian Wood with some beautiful vocals. Finn delighted the audience with an impromptu duet with Robin of Daytripper. (What a lot of Beatles!)



We were also, thanks to our good friend and supporter Kevin Rivett, very fortunate to receive a lovely red Les Paul electric guitar, renovated and donated to M4M by *Pennine Guitar Centre* for the use of our young musicians.



On 21<sup>st</sup> May M4M **Todmorden Festival of Nasheeds** continued as our Todmorden mosque nasheed group hosted visiting singers from Feversham Academy and Grove House School in Bradford and Parkinson Lane School in Halifax as well as M4M's tabla group. Nasheeds are devotional songs from Islamic traditions and are very popular amongst muslim communities around the world, and now our young people have put our town firmly on the nasheed map. The afternoon heard beautiful, moving and uplifting performances from choirs and soloists in English, Arabic, Urdu and Bosnian languages and a very special guest set from nasheed superstar, Hussnain Hanif. After the music we also had a chance to enjoy the delicious samosas of another good friend and supporter, Farzana Parveen, raising money for White Pearl Charity, helping poor communities around the world.

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On 17<sup>th</sup> June, a lovely midsummer's evening, our fundraising concert featuring our very own guitar tutor, Jack Hogg reinterpreting all sorts of pop songs in imaginative ways with the gorgeous singing of Ai Puenta-Sanchez. This duo, **Two for Now**, brought the M4M audience together in participatory singing and were joined by guitar pupils and by fellow tutors

Daniel and Will for a closing royal tribute to The King (Elvis), Prince and a grand finale of Queen's *Somebody to Love*.

Two days later, on 19<sup>th</sup> June, at Todmorden's Jubilee Picnic in the Park, we presented a completely new work, entitled

### **A Todmorden**

**Cantata**, composed by Daniel Bath and directed by

Katrina Heath, commissioned by *Friends of Centre Vale Park*, and funded by *Arts Council England*. This performance was the culmination of six weeks' work which began with the help of *Age Concern* as conversations with Todmorden people about the life of the town and its community over the past 70 years. These stories and reminiscences were turned into 5 songs: *Farewell to Waterside Weaving Shed* (about the closure of the cotton mills in the 1950's), *Three Valleys* (about the strength and kindness of Todmorden's tightly woven, diverse community), *Carnival* (about the parades, fairs and shows in the park), *Come Together and Sing* (about the town's cultural life) and *Flood* (about Todmorden's experience of and recovery from flooding).

We rehearsed the music and movement with young people in all of our town's eight schools young actors from *Storymagic Theatre School* and with volunteer musicians and singers from our town's community music ensembles, including *Todmorden Choral Society*, *Todmorden Orchestra*, *Fantasy Orchestra*, *Todmorden Brass Band* and *3 Valleys Gospel Choir*.

Altogether about 80 musicians came together to give the performance to an audience of about 200 Todmorden folk. It was a very memorable, festive occasion – a joyous celebration of our community.



On 16<sup>th</sup> July we collaborated again with our brilliant nasheed-singing friend, *Hussnain Hanif*, to lead a workshop and performance of nasheeds in the magnificent setting of *Square Chapel Arts Centre* and *The Piece Hall* in Halifax, as part of the **Festival of South Asian Heritage**, organised by *Verd De Gris Arts*. One listener commented "Your music went straight to our hearts, such power & love in those voices."

Congratulations to our pupils who have worked hard to pass their **ABRSM exams** this term: Yuna, Millie, Lenka, Alfie, Natalia (all grade 1 violin) and Charlotte (grade 2 trumpet). Well done!

Finally, we are very pleased to announce that in September we will be extending our provision of instrumental tuition to the pupils of **Todmorden C of E School**. We can't wait!

### **A date for your diaries:**

On Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> August we will be at Todmorden Unitarian Church from 2pm to 6pm for all children and their families to join in with our **musical fun and games**. This will be a chance to try playing different instruments with the help and inspiration of some professional musicians, to take part in some very enjoyable music-making and to hear a great concert in the early evening, given by Todmorden's truly fantastic *Fantasy Orchestra*. As with all our activities, admission is free of charge. See you there!