

Summer 2014 | Music Newsletter

Music

Welcome to this year's issue of the University of Southampton Music Department's annual newsletter. We are a dynamic department with an enormous range of different staff and student activities and achievements, but this year has been exceptionally busy even for us. The stories below will tell you something about what we've been doing, but there's too much to fit in one newsletter: so if you'd like to find out more, you can check out the news feed on our main website (www.southampton.ac.uk/music) or keep in touch with us via our brand-new blog, *Soundings* (find it at blog.soton.ac.uk/music). The blog hosts a variety of voices from our undergraduate and postgraduate students through to staff and visitors to the department, providing a lively and informal snapshot of life in our department.

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Exciting Developments

We're especially proud of some exciting developments this year in supporting our students. The new Southampton Showcase programme provides professional training and opportunities for our advanced undergraduate and postgraduate performers. In addition to promoting and managing university and external bookings, we organise workshops on fees, contracts, working with agencies, and other topics that can help our students prepare themselves for successful musical careers. Showcase performers are supported by our new Turner Sims Interns. Appointed in partnership with Turner Sims, these paid internships - worth £500 per semester to successful candidates - provide invaluable experience in marketing and promoting artists and events, compiling and editing programmes and advertising, and other skills essential to careers in arts management.

We're also improving our material support for students, and we're delighted that a generous gift from an anonymous donor is allowing us to achieve a £135K upgrade to our electronic studios this year: the new facilities will be ready for student use in early 2014. Finally, we're very pleased to be offering new academic and musical studentships for candidates beginning their course with us in October 2014. These scholarships are available to outstanding candidates on the basis of A-level or practical musical achievement - see our website for details.

This year has seen some major achievements for our staff: important premieres for our composers, prestigious appearances in major venues and recordings with international labels for our performers, and new books and articles in leading journals from our musical scholars. And Turner Sims, where our staff and students rehearse and perform in professional-quality surroundings, has had an excellent year - shortlisted for the Royal Philharmonic Society's annual awards for Audiences and Engagement, Turner Sims scored an even greater coup when its manager Kevin Appleby was named Concert Hall Manager of the Year in the Rhinegold/ Association of British Orchestra Awards.

Professor Jeanice Brooks
Head of Music

Keyboards Cross the Centuries

Music at Southampton has always been a vibrant environment for keyboard specialists. Our keyboard collection boasts a range of instruments, including a 1796 Broadwood grand piano, several 19th-century pianos, harpsichords and modern pianos. Students have free harpsichord lessons alongside their regular studies, and hold organ scholarships at our partner city churches.

2013 has seen further enhancements for both staff and students. The appointments of jazz pianist Dave Stapleton as Turner Sims Professor, and pianist Mark Knoop and harpsichordist Jane Chapman as Turner Sims Fellows, has brought outstanding new performance expertise.

Dave Stapleton has a burgeoning international reputation as both a player and a composer, with a host of acclaimed CDs to his name. As well as fronting his own quintet, he has written scores for film and television. His new project, *Slowly Rolling Camera*, comes to Turner Sims in January.

Mark Knoop, hailed by the Sunday Times as 'one of the most brilliant pianists of the contemporary repertoire', is a long-time collaborator with composition lecturer Matthew Shlomowitz and now contributes to our teaching in cutting-edge new music. He released two CDs in November 2013, a new recording of Stockhausen's *Mantra* (hat[now]ART

190) and Shlomowitz's *Popular Contexts* for piano and sample keyboard (SubRosa SR382).

Jane Chapman is well known as one of Europe's foremost champions of the contemporary harpsichord, as well as being 'one of Britain's most distinguished classical harpsichordists' (Wall Street Journal). Jane's recent performances include *Peckham Car Park* as part of London Contemporary Festival, juxtaposing eighteenth-century works with electroacoustic pieces. Her current research includes the first transcription of Indian music for harpsichord, the *Oriental Miscellany* (1789), supported by a fellowship from the Leverhulme Trust.



Turner Sims Professor Dave Stapleton

Turner Sims Fellow Jane Chapman



Admissions Tutor Ben Oliver conducting the premiere of his Loop Concerto. Credit: Martin Hines Kent Music KCYO

Happy Birthday to Britten

We celebrated the 100th anniversary of the birth of Benjamin Britten with two events starring our undergraduate students. Our Hartley Sinfonietta and Singers together with our choral scholars, Cantores Michaelis, performed three of Britten's key works to an enthusiastic full house at the ancient city church of St Michael's. The programme featured the unaccompanied *Hymn to the Virgin*, the 1943 festival cantata *Rejoice in the Lamb*, and the *Serenade* for tenor, horn and strings with professional operatic tenor Ted Schmitz, who is writing his PhD at Southampton on Britten's operas, and our principal horn tutor, Rob Harris of the Bournemouth Symphony. Led by our conducting tutor Robin Browning, the programme was completed by a real rarity: the movement entitled 'Blumine' that Gustav Mahler left out of the final version of his first symphony, and which Britten was the first to conduct in the UK.

This formal tribute to Britten was counterpointed by something very different when Southampton's Professor of Performance and Head of Keyboard Studies, David Owen Norris, led a project to perform Britten's complete folk-song settings. Student singers and pianists gathered on a Saturday morning in October for informal performances of a single folk song each, followed by an afternoon concert at which selected Britten folk songs were juxtaposed with performances of traditional songs given by the Fo'c'sle Folk club, a Southampton based folk group. The event provided fascinating insights both into Britten's art of arrangement and the compelling qualities of the original folk materials.

Performances and Premieres

At the University of Southampton, we believe that composition students at all levels should have as many opportunities as possible to hear their work performed. Our 2012/13 composition workshops led to the performance of more than sixty new student works by professional ensembles including Dutch reed quintet Calefax, Fraser/Knoop duo and the Mercury Quartet. These workshops provide composition students at all levels with the opportunity to hear their work being performed by top-notch musicians, and allows them to develop such skills as instrumental writing, orchestration, notation and collaboration with performers.

The workshop programme continues in 2013/14 with artists including the Orazbayeva/Chadwick violin and piano duo and We Spoke: New Music Company. This year also sees the beginning of a new relationship with Manama - an advanced Masters programme in contemporary music performance run by the Belgian ensembles Ictus and Spectra alongside the Ghent Conservatory. Manama students will visit Southampton to

present music and instrumental techniques they have been working on as well as trying out sketches by our composers, and Southampton students will visit Belgium for rehearsals and a concert of the new completed works.

Staff composers within the department have also had busy years:

- Benjamin Oliver was commissioned to write an orchestral piece by the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Sound and Music.
- In October 2013, Michael Finnissy's new *Third Symphonic Etude* for two pianos was premiered by Ian Pace and Frederick Croene at the Transit Festival in Belgium. And in December, Finnissy's new *Chi Mei Ricercari* for cello and piano was performed in several venues in Taiwan on priceless instruments from the celebrated Chi Mei collection.
- Matthew Shlomowitz had a new work, *Popular Contexts, Volume 6*, premiered by Speak Percussion at the Maerzmusik festival in March 2013.

Student Performers Shine at Turner Sims



Students performing

Southampton music students have been in the limelight with outstanding contributions to gigs by major jazz artists at Turner Sims. Student band Ghostnote was chosen by Serious - among the UK's leading live music promoters - as the support act for renowned saxophonist David Murray and his quartet, for the Southampton leg of their UK tour on 17 October. And on 25 October, student singers performed with Denys Baptiste in his multimedia extravaganza 'Let Freedom Ring' and its brand-new prequel, 'Now is the Time'.



Students performing their tribute to Britten at St Michael's church



Postgraduate Katrina Foulds filming for the National Trust at Tatton Park

Dancing with Jane Austen

Music department staff and students played key roles in a major BBC documentary film, first aired in May 2013 to a peak audience of 1.7 million. The programme, called 'Pride and Prejudice: Having a Ball', follows a team of experts recreating a Regency ball in honour of the 200th anniversary of Jane Austen's popular novel. The first readers of 'Pride and Prejudice' in 1813 would have understood the workings of a private ball. 'Pride and Prejudice: Having a Ball', presented by social historian Amanda Vickery, sets out to recapture this detail, aiming to enable modern audiences to understand Austen's novel fully by reimagining the time in which she lived.

Southampton's Professor Jeanice Brooks and Dr Wiebke Thormählen chose music for the programme using Jane Austen's family music books – manuscripts that the novelist kept of music that interested her and which she played at home. Brooks, Thormählen and a team of Music postgraduates then put

together a band to play at the ball featuring Southampton Music staff: Professor Adrian Chandler (violin), Katy Bircher (flute) and Joe Crouch (cello) joined Dr Thormählen on violin to form what we called 'Mr Chandler's Band', a suitably Regency-sounding name. Professor William Drabkin constructed musical arrangements from keyboard sources in the Austen music books, while PhD student Samantha Carrasco (piano) and undergraduate singer Emma Bryant also took part in the filming. Some of the preparation scenes in 'Having a Ball' were shot at the University's Hartley Library Special Collections and Turners Sims, while the ball itself was staged at Chawton House Library near Alton. Chawton House is the former home of Austen's brother and has research links with the University through its unique collection of books focusing on women's writing in English from 1600 to 1830, and it also hosts a new concert series in collaboration with the department of Music, launched in 2013.



Professor Adrian Chandler (violin), Katy Bircher (flute) and Joe Crouch (cello) joined Dr Thormählen on violin

Our project 'At Home with Music' also made its film debut this year, when Southampton staff and students made four short films about music in Austen's time at Tatton Park, one of the Northwest's most imposing stately homes. You can find the films on our YouTube channel.

For further information please contact

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