



AUTUMN CONCERT 2007

The first concert of the year is always a daunting one, as anyone who has ever been involved in JAGS music will know. The orchestras, choirs and various groups have just come together and have had only a small amount of time to get into the group spirit. Nevertheless the concerts are always brilliant and inspiring.

As always the final rehearsals were slightly hectic with a lot of repertoire to fit into just two days of rehearsal time. However, they went very well with few problems and little stress and panic.

The night began with performances from some of the smaller ensembles such as Recorder Consort and Symphonic Winds followed by Whole School Choir and Bel Canto who sang some brilliant stuff that got everyone backstage singing along, an example being the well known (*Is this the way to*) *Amarillo*. Concert Orchestra carried on the first half playing some exciting film music 'Mission: Impossible' and a more classical piece Wagner's Entry of the Masters. The first-half concluded with a huge number of players from Concert Orchestra, Symphonic Winds, Advanced Wind Ensemble and Chamber Orchestra, performing two movements from Handel's *Music for the Royal Fireworks*, which were perfect for the occasion, and were made even more dramatic and atmospheric by the huge number of fireworks going on around the church.

The wine and biscuit induced second-half began with a strong and bold performance of Prokofiev's Montagues and Caplets by Wonderbrass of which I'm a proud member. For the first time we had a 'guest' conductor, Mr O'Hara, taking on the difficult role of keeping an excitable group of brass players in order, but he did a brilliant job and the piece was a great success despite all its difficult tempo changes. A slightly more calm performance followed in the form of the JAGS Madrigalists where we sang some beautiful four-part harmony pieces which proved to be popular with the audience. Next came the world premier of *Three Imaginary Scenes* by Raymond Head, who we were lucky enough to have with us on the night, performed by Advanced Wind Ensemble. It was a really great experience to perform something that hadn't been played before especially since it was 20th-century music, with some dissonant chords and complex rhythms that made it really interesting to play. Holst Chamber Choir had the job of following, singing some fast and bright music as well as beginning the festive season with a performance of *Ding Dong! merrily on high*.

Chaos followed as the turn around to set up for full orchestra dawned. This meant all hands on deck to get set up as quickly as possible in order to get everyone seated for the Haydn Symphony. With a full brass, wind and string section, the symphony was a challenging but exciting piece which stunned the audience with its powerful and full sound ringing throughout the church.

The finale was played by nearly all the girls who had been involved in the concert playing as one huge orchestra. It was the third movement of the Fireworks music, the Overture, which sounded great with different sections splitting for different passages of the music. We played the ending as a whole with surprise party poppers being fired from the choir to represent some small but explosive fireworks.

The whole concert was great with some excellent music being played by all the groups. As the first concert of the year, it was exciting to see what we could create in only a few weeks and it will be brilliant to see what we can achieve in the year to come.

Fabia Strathdee
