

# Catherine Leach Piano School

## October Newsletter 2013

Dear Parents and Pupils,

I do hope you have all had an enjoyable Summer. At last there was sunshine to enjoy this year!

First of all I'd like to welcome aboard all new pupils who have commenced lessons in 2013.

Matthew R, Matthew G, Matthew W (2013 must be the year of the Matthews!) Grace, Lizzie, Gabriella, Jack, Poppy, Ruby, Natalie, Sophie, Teadora and Emma.

Sadly goodbye to Tom Stott (after 13 years! commences from October his degree course in Popular Music at The Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester.) Well done to Tom on being accepted on this course at such a prestigious music conservatoire! Hopefully Tom will return and take part in future concerts. A performance of one of his Grade 8 pieces will be up on the web site very soon.

### Exam Results 2012-13

#### **Congratulations to the following pupils who successfully passed exams last Autumn term 2012:**

Elena Nam T/C violin Grade 2 with merit  
Dave Mottershead T/C Grade 1 with merit  
Tom Stott ABRSM Grade 8 with pass  
Maria Malinowski ABRSM Grade 2 with merit  
John Mitchell ABRSM Grade 4 with merit  
John Mitchell ABRSM Grade 1 Theory with distinction  
Claire Horn ABRSM Grade 3 Theory with merit  
Stefan Wilkinson Hill ABRSM Grade 1 Theory with distinction  
Joshua Mo ABRSM Grade 1 Theory with merit  
Jessica Booth ABRSM Grade 2 with pass  
Mike Turner ABRSM Grade 5 with merit

#### **Congratulations to the following pupils who successfully passed exams in the Spring term 2013**

Min Min T/C Initial with distinction  
Samuel Keith Anderton T/C Initial with distinction  
Kate Peel T/C Grade 1 with distinction  
Beth Malinowski ABRSM Grade 1 with distinction  
Stefan Wilkinson Hill ABRSM Grade 2 with distinction  
Grace Whittle ABRSM Theory Grade 1 with distinction  
Maggie Nichols ABRSM Theory Grade 2 with pass  
Charlotte Hodson ABRSM Theory Grade 5 with pass

## **Congratulations to the following pupils who successfully passed exams in the Summer term 2013**

Kate Peel ABRSM Grade 1 Theory with distinction  
Beth Malinowski ABRSM Grade 1 Theory with merit  
Maria Malinowski ABRSM Grade 2 Theory with distinction  
Samuel Anderton ABRSM Grade 1 with distinction  
Matthew Rooney T/C Initial with distinction  
Grace Rooney ABRSM Grade 1 with merit  
Maggie Nichols ABRSM Grade 2 with pass  
Christopher Hayman T/C Grade 1 with merit  
Anna Malinowski T/C Grade 1 with merit  
Maria Malinowski T/C Grade 3 with merit  
Lizzie O'Rourke T/C Grade 3 violin with merit  
Elena Nam T/C Grade 3 violin with merit

Special exam congratulations to Min Min in achieving 96%, one of the highest marks achieved in my piano school of 20 years for this the Initial Examination! And also being the youngest at the age of 7. Also to Stefan in achieving distinctions for grade 1 theory and 2 practical at the youngest age ever of 8, and also to Tom Stott achieving Grade 8 which is the highest grade level and a brilliant achievement.

Congratulations also to Samuel Anderton in preparing for grade 1 in less than a term and achieving a distinction! Sam is sure on a roll with his achievements this year following being voted top player at my annual Christmas piano concert 2012 with a performance of his own composition! And then going on to achieve distinction marks in both his Initial and then Grade one exam this year 2013.

Highlights and Events over the last year

### **Crosby Music Festival March 2013**

This year several more children took part. It was a very exciting day all round. The adjudicator was Timothy Barratt (who as well as a busy musician is also an ABRSM examiner and is partly responsible for the selection of pieces for the piano exam syllabuses. I think everyone who attended parents and pupils alike will agree that he was incredibly inspiring, giving helpful and insightful pointers to all the children regarding their performances. We were all amazed at his brilliance in performing from memory every item in his demonstrations and whilst looking at the audience! Not his fingers or the piano!!

For the second consecutive year Stefan gained first place in both his classes and came away with two well-earned Trophies. All pupils were awarded places in their grade and age classes. Four pupils Maggie Nichols, Joshua Mo, Jessica Booth and Grace Whittle performed pieces from the newly published Sound Sketches books (of which most pupils now have a copy) and I was delighted that every one gained a placing in the awards and Mr Barratt made some pleasing comments. I really felt the day was enormously beneficial all round and ultimately inspiring. I am sure all pupils wanting to be involved next year are considering what piece they will prepare for the next festival.

The performances of pieces from Graham Lynch's 'Sound Sketches' books were of special significance in that these made debut performances ( a truly historic occasion!) and Graham has included this fact in his listings of performances on his web site. [www.Grahamlynch.eu](http://www.Grahamlynch.eu) You may like to check out his website and if you have not already purchased at least one of his Sound Sketches books at your child's grade level you can do so directly via [www.soundsketches.co.uk](http://www.soundsketches.co.uk) There will be a selection of performances featuring my pupils playing these pieces appearing soon on my website, so look out for them on the special features page which will be added shortly!

### **Miss Saigon**

A performance of this musical took place at the Brindley Theatre Warrington in March. What was special was that this was Tom Stott's first professional orchestral gig. He couldn't have had a better conductor in Daniel Parkinson to guide him through the experience. I went along and enjoyed the performance especially the orchestra!

### **Sine Nomine**

Also in March a small group went along to a concert given by The Playel Ensemble, a small chamber orchestra who performed works by Beethoven and Mozart. If any one is interested in attending any of these charity concerts (organised by Mrs Jackie Granger Brown the current T/C Representative) which raise funds for the Children's Society, please contact me for information as these concerts are not widely advertised due to the venue having restricted numbers, but I can always book you in for a concert. Once you go along you can be added to their mailing list.

### **GCSE Results**

Congratulations to Alice Heaton, Bethany Hill and Claire Horn who passed their GCSE examinations impressively and go on to study at Winstanley College.

### **A Levels**

Congratulations to Charlotte Hodson who starts a degree course in pharmacy at Liverpool University. Good Luck and keep in touch!

### **Website Updates**

There will be new up dates pasted up over the next few months, including various filmed performances so do keep checking! And a big thanks to Stuart Mo (Joshua's Father) for his expertise in continuing the web site work.

If there are pupils wishing to be featured on my website I would be happy to feature you with a photograph and small testimonial for the pupils testimonials page. Just forward via email or bring to the lesson a hand written sentence and a photo. It is good to have current pupils on this. Everyone is welcome to be added.

### **Wigan Jazz Festival 2013**

Making an appearance this year was the jazz musician Darius Brubeck (Son of the famous Dave Brubeck) and his brilliant jazz trio. For those studying ABRSM Grade 5 you may be familiar with the C piece 'For Lydia' which Darius wrote. Being alerted by John Mitchell (my pupil) who is currently preparing this for his grade 5 programme. I couldn't resist going along with a colleague to the festival in June and enjoyed a superb concert, which even included a performance of this piece!! And which we found out from the horse's mouth (after various speculations) that it had in fact been written for his Granddaughter! Darius also performed Dave Brubeck's "Take Five" which was quite a treat We all agreed we had witnessed and met briefly later signing his CDs, Jazz Royalty! It is not often that such eminent musicians grace Wigan!

### **Chetham's 13th Piano Festival**

Year after year I recommend this festival to everyone. It is a special opportunity to witness a wealth of piano brilliance, attracting both students and faculty members Internationally. This year I met Mark Tanner (Cornish based concert pianist, ABRSM examiner, tutor and composer) who was the adjudicator on the Crosby Music Festival in 2012, and whose new piano repertoire ( in particular volumes from the Eye Tunes and Scapes series ) I have been gradually introducing members of my school to this year) You can order his books directly from [www.SpartanPress.co.uk](http://www.SpartanPress.co.uk) Mark runs a special piano Summer School course at Jackdaws in Somerset. You may like to check out his website [www.marktanner.info](http://www.marktanner.info) THE SCAPES SERIES Mark is the pianist in Graham Lynch's Undiscovered Islands CD, amongst other works. It was really good to meet him.

### **Chetham's Open Days**

(For young musicians showing outstanding potential and considering attending with their parents)

Saturday 12th October 11am-3pm

Saturday 18th January 2014 10 am-1pm. Contact 0161 834 9644 or [luciekennedy@chethams.com](mailto:luciekennedy@chethams.com)

### **My New Compositions**

I started to compose a collection of piano pieces last year. Ultimately I wanted to compose pieces which could be reasonably easy to play for the elementary to intermediate pupil due to having a fairly simple left hand parts. I intended the pieces to contain a fairly strong melodic aspect and have a therapeutic effect on performer and listener alike. I have been testing out these pieces on members of my school to get their reactions. Everyone was very kind and enthusiastic, so I hope to have these available in due course in a book format for anyone to purchase from the website and hopefully enjoy. When the first book is ready it will include the music I was asked to write for the film 'Alone' a mental health project created by Elena Atherton my pupil and her husband Darren. Between them they embraced the huge undertaking of

appointing actors, technicians and writing, directing, coordinating, filming and recording. The film has now finally been submitted to various festivals featuring mental health issues. It was an interesting and exciting project to be involved with and will no doubt prove to be an incredibly worthwhile project long term within the field of mental health. Darren has created a website all about the making of the play.

### **Chinese Tea Ceremony**

On Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> October a special traditional Chinese tea ceremony event took place at the Fo Guang Shan Chinese Temple in Stretford Manchester. I was invited to play the piano to invited guests during the ceremony and meditation. It was a most interesting, beautiful and enjoyable event involving meditations and running commentary by the resident master Chueh Yun and a guest speaker from Taiwan. The ceremony included an introduction to the magnificent calligraphy panels on display which had been hand painted by the venerable master Hsing Yun (founder of the original Fo Guang Shan monastery). The various holistic benefits of the tea ceremony as a meditation practise were explained in detail. The music which had been carefully selected especially for this ceremony and included two pieces from Graham Lynch's Sound Sketches books 'On The Silk Road' and 'Hot Air Balloon'. I also performed one of my own compositions 'Oriental Dream' which was the first public performance of this piece.

### **Drumming sessions/workshops**

Arian Sadr an outstanding Persian Drummer was also invited to perform at the Chinese Temple. If anyone is interested in attending his workshops/master classes or concerts check out his website and flyer ZEN WORKSHOP.jpg  
[www.ariansadr.com](http://www.ariansadr.com)

### **Musicians Union**

I am now a member of the M.U. I attended their annual conference in July at The Midland Hotel Manchester and was most impressed with the services they offer and confident the piano school will benefit in the long term.

### **Up Coming Concerts to consider taking your child to**

Do consider taking your child along to a live concert. It can be such an exciting and inspiring experience. There is so much going on in and around Manchester, Bridgewater Hall, RNCM and in Liverpool (Philharmonic) and also opportunities closer to home such as The Parbold Douglas Music festival  
[www.parbolddouglasmusic.org](http://www.parbolddouglasmusic.org) If you are passionate about Beethoven, John Lill CBE is performing a series of concerts at the RNCM of his aristocratic interpretations of all 32 Sonatas, (to mark his 70th birthday) between September 2013 and June 2014 details via [www.bridgewater-hall.co.uk](http://www.bridgewater-hall.co.uk) I have had the privilege of listening to John Lill giving a master class a few years ago at Chetham's and found him to be exceptionally brilliant. I went along with a pupil on the 11th October to hear him perform three of the Sonatas in the series and met him briefly afterwards. Peter Davison in his programme notes says of Lill 'He brings humility and directness to his performances; striving to be an ego less vessel of the music and the composer' I would thoroughly recommend attending at least one of these concerts.

## **RNCM Concert**

On the 9th November 2013 there is a concert taking place at the RNCM featuring the RNCM session orchestra conducted by Andy Stott (Tom Stott's Dad) Tickets for the event are now on sale at the RNCM Box Office, or online here,

<http://rncm.ac.uk/whats-on/events/>

These concerts are always hugely entertaining, as I know from attending the last two private reviews. This is a special opportunity of showcasing the very best of students at the RNCM during their training on the popular music course as well as musicians training on other courses before they go out and into the professional world of entertainment.

## **Natalia Posnova /Casio Master class**

On Tuesday 17th September Hawker and Howarths music shop in Bolton hosted an interesting event featuring the concert pianist Natalia Posnova. A few of the members of my piano school attended this (sorry I did not get chance to inform everyone about it).

We were all really impressed and inspired by Natalia's amazing performances and what was especially memorable were her unique arrangements of some of the hits from the rock group 'Queen' She combines classical (or rather romantic with rock) and showcases this new music at a special concert in Dresden, so I suppose we were lucky to have had a preview of it. Check out her You Tube clips, Natalia Posnova / Queen - Flash Fantasy.

My pupil Kate was incredibly lucky to win a Casio piano in the raffle! It was lovely to meet Natalia herself at the end – Good luck with the Queen concert! I wish I could be there!

## **Piano For Sale**

With Kate thrilled with her new Casio piano she has decided to sell her previous piano ( mainly because two pianos in one room is rather a lot ! so if you are thinking of buying an upright piano contact Kate directly on 01942 214137 or mobile 07403 559005 She is asking £200.00 and obviously you would have to bear in mind removal costs etc.

## **Danielle Salamon**

On the 29th September 2013 Danielle Salamon was invited by Miss Joan Greenburgh to give a talk to the Manchester piano teachers forum (of which I am a member) on various aspects of piano pedalling technique and repertoire. Danielle is an incredibly busy musician and alongside her busy performing agenda, has taught for many years within the junior Department of the Royal College of Music London and in recent years has toured New Zealand giving numerous presentations on different aspects of piano history. It was fascinating to listen to everything she had to say that afternoon. I came away from the session feeling musically energised and knowing I had witnessed someone rather special and unique in the field of musical education. Thank you so

much Danielle for your generous time and sharing so much with us. It gave me a great deal to ponder over during the following weeks.

### **2013 Reunions**

I was delighted to meet up (after many years) with Naomi Bayman who now lives in El Salvador. She came back to the UK for a holiday in the Spring term with her husband and new baby Sofia Elise. Naomi was taught by my Father many years ago and was the first pupil he handed over to me. I held a reunion here to enable ex pupils around her year to meet up during her stay, including Helen Whimpany and Paul Davies. It has been so wonderful to see these special old faces again. Naomi set up a nursery school in El Salvador which is now thriving. Paul Davies is marketing director for Manchester Camerata and works at the RNCM. Check him out on the website soon! Helen is intending to continue her language studies and in the interim is involved in voluntary work with The Stroke Association. More recently I also had the pleasure of Ankita and her Mother and brother visiting to say a final farewell before leaving to emigrate to New Zealand. Ankita had lessons with me two years ago then left the UK for a year living back in India followed by a year in Lincoln. It was lovely to hear her play her grade 4 piano pieces as well as her violin! Thank you for including me on your farewell visit to see friends in this area. Good luck in New Zealand and I look forward to hearing your news. I appreciate you all keeping in touch it is always so good to hear from you all and see you!

### **Considerations regarding examinations and exam preparation**

I would like to highlight that just because a pupil is entered for an exam and is having lessons, it cannot be assumed that the outcome will be a pass! I cannot guarantee this. The lessons will help guide a pupil and help an individual to prepare, but ultimately it is the time spent in careful practise done at home on a regular basis which will serve to prepare a pupil. Lessons cannot be a substitute for practise at home, it doesn't work like this! The point of lessons is to assess, guide, encourage, and motivate. I can alert a pupil to the possible outcome they are likely to get in the exam, and mock exams can be done to further highlight an awareness of the level already reached to give insight and reality to the pupil. I do believe that many pupils could achieve higher marks in exams with generally more careful practise during the earlier weeks leading up to the exam session. It is a shame when a pupil does not reach their fullest potential in an exam outcome. PLEASE TAKE EXAMS SERIOUSLY!

### **Piano Practise for the young pupil**

Most young pupils need to be reminded by their parents, not just myself, of the need to organise their time to incorporate this regular practice into their daily routines, and not just in preparing for exams but in order to progress in general, develop specific piano skills and most importantly in order to feel the fun factor and experience the enjoyment of music making which is the most important thing of all at the end of the day!

## **Practise and Parental encouragement.**

The best support a parent can offer towards their child is in making sure a specific regular time is allocated to piano each day and remind the child calmly to go to the piano and do their important practice. If the child is very young a parent can help by reading through the notes I make in the notebook each week and encouraging the child to think about all the areas to go over. You do not as a parent need a background or knowledge of music yourself. I hear so many parents say `we don't know anything about music ourselves` but you do not need to! If you show an interest and ask your child to show them what they are working on currently, they will LOVE to show you! THIS IS ENOUGH encouragement. Please just ask your child to play and just LISTEN to them. When you can hear improvement as the weeks progress then TELL THEM SO and encourage them, if they are a little older, to listen to good recordings of the pieces they are studying. Usually these are available on You Tube. Listening to the music is one of the most important aspects of all.

## **Timing of exams**

It is not necessarily always a good thing to aim to tackle piano grades immediately one after the other. In fact this can sometimes be detrimental to the individual pupil in a few respects. Although it is a brilliant achievement to pass an exam well, it is very important that there is a break between examinations in order to spend some time in developing specific skills properly. Although the exams are incredibly useful in providing a goal to work towards, and do cover a variety of areas, it is also important that in between preparing for grades, time is taken out in order to focus on various aspects such as developing repertoire, development of knowledge and appreciation of musical style, development of specific technique where there is a weakness evident but also the development of general technique, duet/ensemble playing, sight reading, music literacy. If exams have been taken successively much can be lost. Sometimes children can feel over pressurised and also if the next grade syllabus is started too early and the pupil finds it all too difficult it can be completely off putting for the pupil and result in a child feeling like giving up. The decision to start on the next grade syllabus has to be taken very carefully.

## **Prompt Lesson Payments and Increase in lesson fees**

Fees will be increased in 2014 to £32.00 per hour. This was highlighted on the 2013-14 agreement document and therefore several months notice have been given of this change.

May I ask everyone to pay via one method and stick to it, as it gets complicated and messy when I come to prepare my accounts if payments have been made by different methods. For example if you prefer to pay via cheque please stick to this method continuously. To clarify Lesson payments are due at the first lesson of each calendar month. Everyone signing the agreement document agrees to this. This is a business agreement between you the parent and myself the teacher. It is not acceptable to make late payments. If the chequebook has been left at home then please post the payment before the second lesson in the second week.

If you intended to pay by cash and realised you have not withdrawn the appropriate money then please visit a cash machine after the lesson finishes and please settle up on the day of the lesson. There are cash machines not too far away (the petrol station on Upholland Road and The Co-op in Orrell Village). There have been numerous occasions during the course of the year when many parents were late with piano fees. It is so time consuming, wearisome and also quite embarrassing for me to have to constantly remind parents that they are late in making payments. I am a piano teacher NOT a debt collector or administrator! I do not have time to send reminders about payment before the first lesson of the month or following it. If certain parents continue to be late making payments I will refuse to teach those children.

Most parents are punctual with payment and I appreciate this, thank you. With the exception of parents paying per term, I do not issue monthly invoices. It is up to the parent to calculate the number of weeks a pupil will attend during the particular month and prepare the payment accordingly.

Many parents slip a cheque or an envelope inside the child's notebook, or you could consider paying per term or half term in advance to save you the hassle of dealing with monthly payments. If you wish to pay per term I will issue printed invoices with lesson schedules, but I do not prepare monthly invoices. I do not mind whatever way you wish to pay as long as payment is not late. THANK YOU so much.

### **Holiday Entitlement**

The terms and conditions are up on the website. If there is anything you wish clarification on please get in touch. I assume all parents have read the website information. If not may I please ask you to do so. With regard to holidays one weeks absence is allowable within each of the three term blocks, as long as I am given a months notice. This notice must be given directly via the parent NOT the pupil. Notice of the holiday date must be in writing either by way of a written note in the notebook, a separate letter or by email. Please do not tell me on the doorstep. My mind is on lessons at that time.

Many dance and drama schools expect payment to be made in full at the start of the term and do not allow any holiday entitlement and if it is taken the fee is forfeited. I feel and I am often told I am extremely fair in allowing this per term. In starting lessons you and your child have to be committed. In return I am also committed to being available on the arranged days for the lessons which have been specially arranged for your child.

### **2013-2014 Agreement Document**

This is on the website and every parent is given this document at the start of tuition. If you happen to misplace it you can visit the website to view/download another copy. There is no need to sign further copies if you have already signed one as the agreement runs continuously from year to year for the duration of the tuition. The document highlights term dates and details of when there are no lessons. Once signed either party agrees to the terms and conditions on the web site and the arrangement for tuition stays in place up until lessons are terminated via the one months notice requirement.

### **Lessons Missed and Cancelled at short notice.**

Lessons missed due to sickness on the same day or cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances on the same day or a day prior to the lesson must still be paid for. If I can offer a replacement lesson later within the same week or into the following week I will try to, but please do not expect this will always be possible. This will depend on slot availability at the time. The timetable is tight and a replacement may only be possible into the following week, if someone else is absent etc.

If what I may be able to offer is not convenient at the time then it has to be accepted that the lesson is missed and payment forfeited. Lessons missed due to sickness cannot be transferred into future weeks. I would be forever playing catch up and it just isn't practically possible. I trust everyone will appreciate this.

### **Requesting replacement lessons**

Earlier in the year I seem to have been inundated with parents requesting frequent changes to their pupils regular time slot for various reasons. The situation got rather out of hand. I have given this a great deal of thoughtful consideration. I must be contacted absolutely no less than a week in advance in order that I can either possibly arrange a swap with another pupil or find a way to meet your request.

As I have been finding these requests are taking up a great deal of my time, I have therefore decided to make a charge of £5 for arranging a replacement lesson when I have not been given the full weeks notice. Please consider that arranging a replacement lesson often requires me to spend a lot of time emailing and texting other parents to ask for adjustments to already scheduled lessons, then waiting for parents to respond. This is interfering with time I should be spending doing other things. The assumption that the alternating parent will be flexible can be rather unfair. Everyone is busy and have their own agendas to stick to. If it is impossible to arrange a swap I sometimes find myself having to work through my breaks, or work later into an evening. Please do try to stick to your allocated time slot. I know there are times when unforeseen things crop up such as (parents evenings or emergencies), but especially regarding holiday weeks, where you know there is a holiday week approaching and where lessons may continue as normal, if you decide to go off for the day/week impromptu please bear in mind that I may not always be able to offer a different time for the lesson and please remember to contact me at least a week in advance. Also with many college students and adult pupils currently attending during the day time, it is not so easy to alter an evening slot to a day time during school holiday weeks any longer.

### **Parents Keeping in Contact**

It can often be much more helpful to briefly talk on the telephone or face to face rather than exchanging endless texts and emails in dealing with a matter. The best time to contact me for a discussion is earlier during the days on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays particularly around lunch times. I will not be available from 3.30pm onwards into the evenings to discuss anything as I am teaching at that time.

Please make sure you have spoken to me directly at least once during the term. As pupils get older it is often assumed that communications can take place with the pupils themselves and when older children reach teenage years they often prefer to do the communicating with me but I still need to talk to parents from time to time. It isn't practical to have long conversations on the doorstep before or following lessons but it can be helpful to have a very quick exchange now and then, just to confirm something or get some reassurance. Please keep in touch. Thank you.

## **Festivals**

If it is decided that your child will be taking part in a music festival next year I need each parent to be aware of two things. Firstly I must know before the term ends in December and be in receipt of all entry payments. In addition the piece/pieces must be decided at this time and sufficiently prepared. Also as dealing with entries has become incredibly time consuming for me there will be a £10 administration charge for each child taking part to help cover all the paperwork I have to prepare in advance.

Not only do I have to deal with the organisers, I have to liaise with parents about this and in order to attend myself I need to reschedule lessons, there are my fuel and parking costs, the preparing of child protection documentation, photocopies of the music for the adjudicators and the list goes on....

All of this extra work behind the scenes has in the past been done with no charge to the parents. The more children take part the more time consuming it is for me, so please bear in mind this additional charge which just contributes to covering some of the time I spend dealing with the entries and preparation for this event.

Please consider carefully if you would like your child to take part. You will obviously need to consider if you can arrange time off work yourself in order to attend and the schools need to be aware that your child will need some time off. The schools will encourage this though as it is an educational event. If a decision is made at the end of December it can not be changed in the new term in January as the deadline for entries is around the 4th January which is during the Christmas holiday period. I do think that a great deal of teachers do not bother with festivals as it is just so time consuming on top of normal teaching and examination admin, so please give this consideration and cooperate so that this event can be enjoyable and exciting and run smoothly for everyone involved. We should also be grateful to the patrons and organisers of the festivals who work incredibly hard to ensure it runs smoothly.

## **Exam Entries**

All pupils entered for ABRSM exams will take their exam at the Wigan Centre, unless it is decided that an alternative centre is preferable, All fees must be received at the latest a week before the dead line. If any parent is too late providing a cheque payment then their child will not be entered. All parents are notified in good time about fees. There really is no excuse for late payments, and it is not fair on other pupils whose payments have been received if the entry form is late, as this disrupts everything and there is no guarantee from the ABRSM that entry will be accepted. I am no longer prepared to pay on behalf of and in advance for a pupil's exam entry

just because payments have been over looked. If I do not receive the exam payment on time your child will not be entered.

## **Books**

One of the reasons I (and many other piano teachers) have always ordered books on behalf of pupils is because in the past when I have suggested books are purchased it sometimes takes too long for the parent to get the book. Now as we live in an age of internet ordering I felt that it was more practical for parents to order directly but I am still finding that this time factor is a problem. If books can be ordered asap when I have made the suggestion ( and included details of the particular book in the notebook) this would benefit your child.

## **Pupil Concerts**

From time to time I will invite pupils to attend concerts here. This is a special invitation from me and especially with regard to the Christmas concert I plan the programme of music carefully. If I have not been informed of anyone not being able to attend I will assume all pupils I invite will attend. I do not expect to be informed a few days before the event that a pupil will not be able to attend due to an unforeseen event on the same day!

Please put the date in the diary or on the calendar and make sure that you do not arrange something on the same day. The invitations are given out weeks before the event takes place. If a pupil does not want to attend then I must be informed by the parent. If it is a case of merely not wanting to perform a pupil does not have to perform. It is just as important to attend and LISTEN but obviously there is so much to be gained in taking part. Confidence in performance is built up and a sense of achievement is experienced. There are so many benefits for the pupils. This is a valuable opportunity for all my pupils to come together socially and share their music with each other. I go to a great deal of effort to arrange these events FOR the pupils so that they will benefit. On a practical level I need to know well in advance if a child cannot attend. I have to borrow chairs and there is a great deal involved in the preparing of programmes. In fact I am actually preparing for this annual Christmas concert event for many weeks in advance prior to the event.

## **Christmas Concert 2013.**

I will be inviting all pupils up to and including the age of 18 to a Christmas Concert here on Sunday the 22nd December 2013. This will be just for the pupils ( not parents) to come together and perform for each other. This will start at 2.00 pm and finish prompt at 5.00pm and it would be helpful if everyone can aim to arrive from 1.30 pm onwards. Please encourage your child to prepare well for this event. Looking forward to the year ahead, welcoming on board the new pupils and I wish everyone taking exams in November the best of luck! Very Best wishes from

# **Catherine**