

Da Capo Winds

Newsletter 4 (&5) – October 2010

Editor - Katherine Bett

Welcome to Da Capo Winds' fourth (and fifth) newsletter. For many reasons, there has not been a newsletter for a while, but here it is...the compilation of the band's work since the New Year!!

From the Rostrum



As we start preparations for our Christmas concert I look back at all our successes and the progress that the band has made over the past 18 months. Having started with just 18 players we are now well over 40 regular playing members. How well I remember planning for our very first concert thinking of ways the band could provide a whole concert on our own having been used to just doing two short numbers on all previous events. We are now well past our first birthday and what was effectively our first anniversary concert on 29 March went extremely well. The difference in the band over this past year and a half is quite marked. We have dropped the word "training" from the band's official title, as it no longer seems to be appropriate. It just doesn't give the right impression. Of course ongoing training is at the heart of all that we do, but we are no longer considered to be a "training band" in the way that many people might consider it to be. We are tackling some rather exciting and challenging pieces with much success. Just think back to January when we tried the opening section of Pirates of the Caribbean with all the cross rhythms that are involved in this piece. When we

cleared away at the end of that rehearsal I was sure I could see blood on the floor and a few bits of clarinet player's fingers



lurking in the corner of the room ...! Now think forwards to the actual performance – what a difference. I believe that we can all be congratulated on the excellent progress the band has made. It is not just a case of playing challenging and difficult music but also how well we play all music. The quality and accuracy of our tuning and sound of the band generally continues to improve with the majority of this improvement being the result of the musicianship training that is so much a part of our regular weekly rehearsals. Our vocal rendition of "Twinkle Twinkle" in canon with all the harmonies that it produced was something well worth listening to.



We held our first ever "play day" on 28 February when over 40 players came together and enjoyed making music for the day. A combination of band members and guests spent an enjoyable Sunday getting to grips with some interesting music including Palladio (Karl Jenkins) and the lovely Minuet by Boccherini. Both items were destined to appear again in our programmes. It all culminated in an informal performance to family and friends. I would like to say a particular "thank you" to Anna who helped with all the background administration and to Rose and Katie who helped to make it all work on the day. Without this sort of support such events just don't happen.

Our summer concert on 19 July was another success. We had good-sized audience and the band continued to make a good job of tackling such items as the Michael Jackson selection and Basin Street Blues. The complimentary refreshments during the interval were

much enjoyed by all (thanks to all that contributed) and the whole event was another success. In the run up to this concert we had focussed on the sounds of the Dorian mode then sang the scale on the concert. When we performed it as a three-part canon it produced all the harmonies that are contained in this key structure, so when we played "Scarborough Fair (which is in the Dorian mode) it all made such good sense. Other particularly notable items on this concert were Legends of Soul with funky sounds that this entailed and the beautifully sustained sounds of Frank Erickson's Aria Cantabile.

Through the "Friends of Da Capo Winds" we have acquired a set of bongos (hand drums) and a very good quality concert bass drum measuring 40" across, which makes our percussion section more complete. We now have or a pair of good quality hand cymbals, a concert bass drum, a pair of tims, suspended cymbals, bongos, and a whole load of smaller hand held percussion items and we have use of a drum kit and glockenspiel on a regular basis. This means that we are able to play the full percussion score as is so often written for in bands these days.

As I am writing this we have already started rehearsals towards our Christmas concert and we look forward to repeating the success with the children that we had last year. The band continues to go from strength to strength and attendance at rehearsals is good so this all bodes well for our music making in the future. All band members should be thanked and congratulated for their continued support and efforts. Particular thanks go to committee for the work that is done behind the scenes and to Carole (Flute) for agreeing to take on the role of assistant chair to help Gail at relatively short notice.

The Floboes' Lament (by Carole Chamberlain)



The fault is Mr Galway's;
He always looks so cute.
We said "Well, how hard can it be?
We'll learn to play the flute."

He makes it look so easy;
I'm sure you understand.
We thought we'd practise for a while
And then we'd join a band.

That's when our problems started.
To our dismay, we found
However hard we huffed and puffed,
We couldn't make a sound!

Improvements happened slowly;
It took us several years,
But gradually it all seemed worth
The blood, the sweat and tears.

We've joined a friendly outfit,
Da Capo Winds by name.
We're in the back row of the flutes
And trying to 'up our game'.

The music's not that easy;
We play in flats you see,
Which means that we who play the flute
Must use a special key.

Because we're only learning,
And slower than the rest,
We have to play the oboe part
Because it suits us best.

An oboist plays with us;
Without her we'd be lost,
And so we're called the Floboes. We're
Improving – fingers crossed!

We've played in several concerts.
And we've enjoyed each one.
Although we can't play all the notes,
We're having so much fun!

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