



# Jon's Teaching Group Autumn 2004

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## *Finally!!! - 3rd Concert Date*

Welcome to the fourth group newsletter, and remember don't hesitate to ask if you have requests for a particular feature. It all seems a long time ago but I hope everybody had an excellent summer break.

Congratulations as always for the excellent examination results of last terms candidates. Good luck for this terms eight entrants!

Apologies for the lateness of this fourth edition, I hadn't forgotten and it has been written since June, but due to complications in setting a date for the third pupil's concert and a protracted house move (see new contact details) which finally ended on Friday I had to wait until now.

The date of the 3rd Pupil's Concert has finally been set in stone and will take place on Friday 19th November at 7pm, lasting approximately an hour. Two pieces are required and there will be a short rehearsal with the accompanist for brass players and vocalists no more than 45 minutes beforehand. Directions and rehearsal times will be given out shortly before the date, and there if a buffet afterwards so please bring lots of food.



Soft drinks and wine will be provided though a small donation to cover the cost would be appreciated. The charge to cover the cost of the professional accompanist and hall hire will be £8.00 per performer, while the audience watch for free.

I would particularly like to pass on thanks from many parents to the adult pupils who show great courage in participating. Please complete the enclosed form and return as soon as possible.

*Jon Grave*

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## Are Examinations Relevant?

My viewpoint on this issue has evolved radically within the last few years. Initially I felt that concentrating all the practice and lesson time on exams for a term detracted from matters I felt were more important, such as correcting technique. Since then I have realized that without a goal to aim at many pupils just go through the motions, failing to reach their full potential, while those who have passed exams develop confidence from their achievements. These pupils want to take as many exams as possible and seem to fly through them reaching a higher standard than those of the greater natural ability who haven't taken that route.

As always it boils down to practice, the quality and quantity. It is especially difficult for younger pupils to be content and to understand why they are remaining on a certain piece for a long period. Pupils want to progress quickly while sometimes it is important to spend a long time on a piece leading not just to an improvement in notes, but more importantly tone quality. In exams the pupil is aware they will have to stick with

the pieces they have chosen for the next few months and in the end they must avoid excuses and find a way to learn the pieces.

Approaching exams miraculously manage to motivate even those pupils who obviously hardly touch their instrument from week to week. The motivation this time comes from within rather than through being forced or bribed by parents. Once a pupil realises that they are going to be tested in two weeks it is often amazing the progress that ensues. There are no excuses or places to hide, especially as in the earlier grades no pupil will fail who has put the required work in. This is the same reason I started the pupil concerts, to hopefully instill in my pupils a sense of pride in their performance and a desire to do well, as well as a touch of competition.

However, exams aren't necessarily the way forward for every pupil. If you feel you or your children would benefit from entering an exam or you would like to know more, don't hesitate to ask.

*Next term: Examination pieces....?*

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## Performance Points from Pupil Concert:

- Arrive in time to warm-up, even if just playing a few notes on the mouthpiece.
- Ensure the pianist knows the tempo YOU want the music to go.
- Walk on and off slowly
- Take time to adjust the stand or your playing position
- Know where in the Programme you are playing.
- Acknowledge the audience with a small bow after the performance.
- Try to smile whatever has happened.
- Thank your accompanist

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Jon Grave

Teacher & Performer of Piano,  
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We're not on the  
web yet, but  
hopefully one day!!!

## Why do we get nervous?

Everyone is affected by nerves at some point during their life, especially musicians. Having to stand up and perform in front of a group can be a terrifying ordeal but it shouldn't have to be, how often we perform is a large determining factor. When I auditioned at 17 for music conservatoires I didn't know what to expect and my first audition didn't go well. It was an experience similar to the first day at school, when initially you don't know what to expect and don't know anybody, but within a few days you wonder why you ever worried. In my case going to London for four auditions in three days turned auditions into something I did every day, becoming enjoyable rather than terrifying. There was no time to be worried about which internationally famous trumpeter you were playing in front of today!

Perhaps the biggest reason for nerves is our expectations, do we want to be the best player in a competition, are we worried about messing up in front of friends, do we want a certain mark in an exam, do we want praise from a teacher, or are we scared that a large audience will think we can't play. Everyone deals with these situations in different ways, some relish the excitement, most rush on and off the stage, hiding behind their stand or instrument in the hope they won't be noticed, for others the fear of failure is so great they avoid practicing so they won't get put in that situation.

I frequently receive frantic excuses for not having practiced, many due to a fear of failure. It is easier not to bother than to try and fail. I remember sometimes keeping my teachers talking to avoid them discovering I couldn't play something well enough, now I realize I'm only disappointed when a pupil hasn't tried. I know each pupil's capabilities and it is obvious to me if a pupil has worked, but if a pupil tells me they spent hours and just couldn't get to grips with the problem then I won't be upset, often the solution is simple and can be resolved in a few minutes during the lesson.

## End of Term Concert

### EXAM RESULTS & RE-CENT PERFORMANCES

Let me know of your achievements - however small you feel they are.

Trumpet Grade 6

- Robert Millar (*Distinction*)

Piano Grade 2

- James Robertson

Cornet Grade 1

- Remus Bigg (*Merit*)

### FORTHCOMING EVENTS

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#### 3rd PUPILS CONCERT!!!

St Sepulchre's, intersection of Holborn Viaduct and Giltspur St. Friday 19th November, 7.00.

Tickets are free: £8 to perform (complete attached form).

Another excellent opportunity to perform in this beautiful, intimate and friendly environment, with a professional accompanist and afterwards to socialise with other pupils and parents/relatives.

Pupils to perform two pieces per instrument. Please bring food for buffet afterwards, and return the completed forms as soon as possible, adding contact details if they have changed.

### My Performances

Every Sunday morning,

11.00 - 12.15, St John's, St John's Wood, Choral Eucharist

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16th October, 4.30 - 6.00pm

7th Day Adventist Church, Haverstock Hill, Chalk Farm

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11th December, 3.00-5.00pm, Tenor soloist at the Hamstead Choral Society Christmas Concert, 7th Day Adventist Church, Chalk Farm

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12th December, 6.00 - 7.30pm, Christmas Carol Service, St John's, St John's Wood

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If you would like to see any of the 10-20 other Carol Services I will be performing in December please ask for more details.



**WANTED:** Musical Photos.

**ASSOCIATED BOARD  
EXAM CLOSING DATES -  
2004 - 2005**

Autumn - Friday 24 September

Spring - Friday

Summer - Friday