

# WESTMORLAND YOUTH ORCHESTRA

## NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2021

### STOP PRESS AND APOLOGIES!

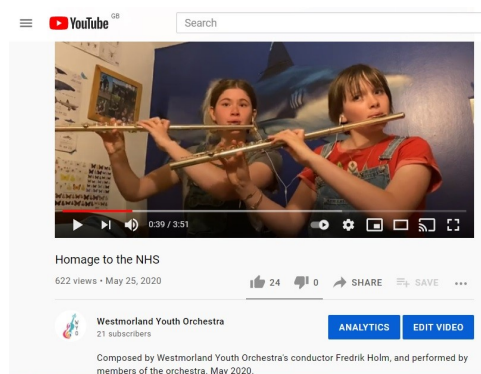
We were hoping to release this newsletter at the same time as a recording of our concert which was performed to a tiny socially distanced audience on Saturday 3 July. Unfortunately, owing to a technical problem the recording is not available. We are as disappointed as all those who missed the concert and will learn from this experience so that, hopefully, all future recordings are more successful!

### UPDATE FROM FREDRIK

#### We are back!

The other week I was shown a picture of myself and the orchestra. I was wearing a blue cap and a Super Mario T-shirt. We were all geared up to perform a range of demanding music from various video games at Queen Elizabeth School in Kirkby Lonsdale.

The concert was in March last year. I find this unbelievable. It feels so incredibly long ago and almost as if it happened in a different universe.



We made a decision early on in the lockdown to do what we could to keep providing for our players. I was however against us meeting too much online simply because of the fact that the orchestra is built around the joy of playing together, which unfortunately isn't possible to achieve in the same way electronically.

Having said that, I did write an online piece last May called *Homage to the NHS*. The aim of the piece was to cheer up our NHS staff and get those players who were up for it to get creative. The piece is three

minutes and 52 seconds long and is still available online on our YouTube channel.

It didn't take three minutes to put the video together though. First I made a score, then created parts that were sent out together with a backing track specially designed for each instrument. Our students then recorded themselves playing their part. I mixed the sound and Asa Sandberg edited the video.

The benefit with this rather time-consuming project was that we were able to reach many hundreds of people and we now have a recording that we can show to anyone who is interested in knowing more about what we actually do.

A year ago, I didn't know how to meet as a group via Zoom and I certainly didn't know how to share documents or my screen. So, good things have come out of this situation. We have, for example, decided to record future concerts and make them available online for anyone who can't attend our great gigs.

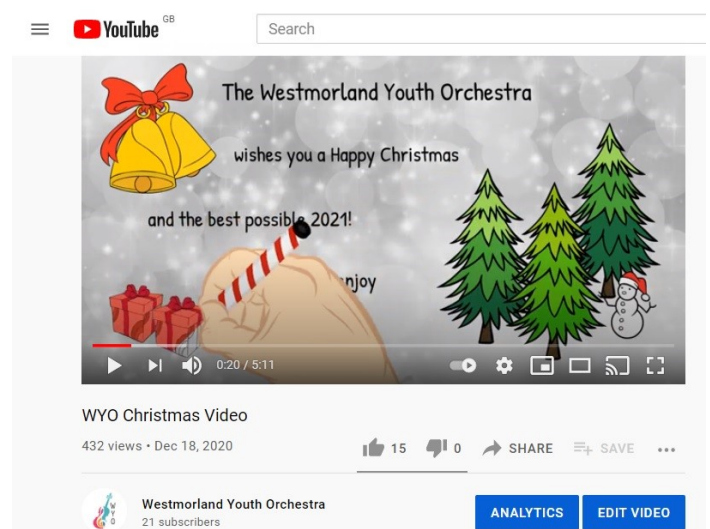
During summer last year, there were talks about the possibility of opening up our society from September, but on a limited scale. We decided to research what we would be able to do. We first sent out an email to gather information on how many players we had at our disposal and then tried our best to figure out what ensembles and music we possibly could offer to the players we had.

So, in September we started two groups; a string group and a beginners' jazz/fusion group (now more experienced and named 'Jazzinfusion'!). It took an enormous amount of planning to write risk assessment and put safety measures in place. Luckily we have a very efficient committee and an even more efficient secretary (Anna Howard).

The jazz group was a completely new beast for some of our players, so it took a while to get going, but once we were rolling...

Then the second lockdown hit us... Arghh!

But... we didn't give up. We made a second video, of the festive piece *Christmas Eve Sarajevo*.



We also started to plan our return in January... which.... as you know didn't happen!

January was tough for many but also for our tutors and myself. Being self-employed and teaching online with reduced capacity was hard for me. Luckily I was commissioned to write a piece by the Westmorland Orchestra for their 2021-2022 season. I was also asked by Cumbria Music Service to create some new composing support material for the schools in the county.

Above all I spent a lot of time actually talking to teachers, tutors and music leaders. As I live in Lancaster I don't know that many people in Westmorland and during times like these I felt we needed to unite and work even more closely together to produce something stronger for when we would be allowed to open our doors again.

This resulted in a contact database for the orchestra but also in a lot of great ideas for the future. It is really good to know that almost all schools want to work with us. The Westmorland Orchestra, the Lancashire Youth Orchestra and Cumbria Music Service are also all really keen to collaborate.

After Easter we were finally allowed to resume the string orchestra and the Jazinfusion group. Debby Howrie worked with the string orchestra on one of the most famous classical pieces ever written, Mozart's *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*. I was able, with the help of Pam Redman, to rehearse a movement from Dvorak's *Serenade for Strings* and the slow movement from Telemann's Viola Concerto performed by our own Martha Rand.

In addition to this we have started two string quartets and a fantastic world/folk group called the East of Westmorland Band. All these groups featured in our concert on the 3 July at St Thomas' Church Kendal.

## Open Day:

For our orchestra to stay healthy long term I believe we need to put emphasis on our younger players and to build the orchestra from the base up. We are therefore organising an Open Day, currently planned for **Sunday 3 October**. On this day any young player can turn up, regardless of level and ability.

It will take place at the Castle Street Centre as a collaboration with Cumbria Music Service and will involve:

- **Kendal Young Strings** (Grades equivalent 0-2) led by Debby Howrie
- **The Westmorland Youth Orchestra Training Strings - WYOTS** (Grades 2-4) led by Rachel Moore
- **Kendal Young Winds** (Grades 0-2) led by Isobel Mortimer
- **The Westmorland Youth Orchestra** (Grades 4-8) led by me (obviously!)

But the open day will also feature a brand new group -

- **The Westmorland Youth Orchestra Wind Band, the WYOWB**, (Grades 2-4) led by Isobel Mortimer.

## And finally... The future

The Jazinfusion group was such a success that this group will live on even after we are back to normal (whatever normal is!). If this pandemic has taught us anything, it is that we don't know anything about the future.

However, we still need to plan and we are aiming to start rehearsing with the whole orchestra from 17 September (7pm-9.30pm). The jazz group, WYOTS and WYOWB will rehearse from 5.45pm to 6.55pm. Check out our website for further details.

Programming for the autumn is not the easiest. I feel a bit like a chef working at a restaurant who will have to estimate how much fish to order for the evening without actually having any firm bookings. At the moment we are looking at performing in Kirkby Stephen Parish Church at 7.30pm on Saturday 4 December. I am aiming for a programme consisting of the whole of Schubert's 8th Symphony, a piece called *Earth* by the famous film composer Hans Zimmer, a trumpet concerto, a trombone concerto, and a piece composed by our own bassoonist Ellian Ozanne.

With all this said I hope to see you all back in the next season and thanks for your support through these extraordinary times.

*Fredrik*



# 2021 LEAVERS



## Jen Hucknall

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time with WYO over the last 6 years! Migrating through various sections of the orchestra — starting out with the clarinets and ending up with the violas (with brief detours as a pianist or even conductor!) — has been a fabulous opportunity and it has been wonderful to experience the orchestra from so many different angles. A huge thanks to Fredrik and Co. for enabling this and all the effort they put in for our Friday nights.

It's hard to single out a specific memorable moment. From getting the hiccups during a clarinet solo in my first concert, becoming a cat (the dream) in Peter and the Wolf, to Red-Necked Phalaropes clapping on the downbeat... It's been wild. Special shoutout to the chips.

Next year I'm heading off to the University of Manchester to read music (shock horror). The skills I've learnt at WYO will no doubt serve me well in years to come.

## Joe Wilkinson

I started playing in the Westmorland Youth Orchestra four years ago. Throughout my time there I have played a variety of different styles of music such as film and dance. The orchestra has boosted my confidence as a musician as well as my skill and I would not be the musician I am today without the help of Fred and Catherine (Scott).

I am off to Leeds Conservatoire to study Music Production. My aim is to try and become a producer for the media industry. I am also hoping to keep up with my flute playing and to expand into different genres.



## Martha Rand

When I joined WYO in year 8 I was the only viola player in the orchestra which was a bit scary at first, but with the support of Debby Howrie I soon got stuck in and it wasn't long before the section grew, reaching a maximum of 6 in 2019. I've got to know so many different people here at WYO and enjoyed playing a wide variety of music under two great conductors, Roland Fudge and Fredrik Holm. I also owe a big thank you to Rachel Moore for her leadership of the Training Strings which gave me a great start at WYO when I moved into the area and has given me valuable experience as I have helped the younger players – it's great to see those who I supported as beginners grow, improve and join the main orchestra. In the autumn I will hopefully be off to the University of Cambridge to study Engineering and I hope there will be many musical opportunities there including orchestras and choirs.



## Libby Kay

I started WYO when I was 13 and after the embarrassment of dropping 9 sheets of music off the stand mid-piece during my first session, I have absolutely loved every moment. I am so sad I haven't been able to play this year and even more sad I won't be returning with everyone else. I would like to thank Fredrik and Pam for all their guidance and help with my playing and an even bigger thanks goes to Debby who has taught me to love music, kept me going when I have wanted to quit, and has put up with me for 11 years! I am so grateful for all the musical joy WYO has brought me but even more grateful for the incredible friends I have made over the last 5 years. I would like to remember Rhiannon Clifford-Powell who would have been leaving this year, we all miss her very much.



## Josh Lucas

I started playing the bass in WYOTS before joining the main orchestra about 5 years ago. Initially I was a little apprehensive about joining but I soon overcame those feelings and started to enjoy playing with WYO. I have played a lot of different repertoire with the orchestra from Baker Street to Tchaikovsky symphonies... and a whole concert of video game music! I think one of my favourite concerts was the film music concert - as well as the main orchestra pieces, I also got to play the Cantina Band music from Star Wars in a little trio with Ed and Eddy. It was always entertaining trying to fit the bass section into the smallest of spaces... in between the brass, woodwind and the odd church pillar!



Although I am not going on to do music at university, (I'm actually a very keen footballer and hope to go to UCLAN to study a degree in Football in a year's time), I have thoroughly enjoyed being a member of WYO and a special thanks to Rachel Moore (WYOTS director, taxi service and mum!), Stu Lewthwaite (bass tutor), Roland Fudge and Fredrik Holm (conductors of WYO).... and all those who make WYO run so smoothly.