

## FALKNER HOUSE MUSIC NOTES

Please note that Covid-19 considerations may alter groups and parental presence at concerts etc.



Music is an extremely important part of life at Falkner House. Class music allows for all children to have one (Years 4 – 6) or two (Nursery – Year 3) lessons per week. The curriculum covers singing, percussion, composition, aural training and preparation for shows and the carol concert. The individual music programme, allows children from Year 1 onwards, to learn an instrument at school. Mrs Altenburger at Brechin Place and Mrs Beddington at Penywern Road lead a team of visiting specialist musicians. Individual music lessons take place during the school day on a rotational basis. The older children have priority in terms of not missing key academic subjects but every effort is made to look at each child's timetable individually so as to ensure that the inevitable compromises are kept to a minimum. We do not recommend learning more than one instrument in school, though a second instrument could be started after the conclusion of the secondary school exams in Year 6.

It takes, of course, a certain maturity for a child to cope with the discipline of coming in and out of lessons as well as the requirements of daily practice. Parents are thus asked to take advice in advance, from their child's form teacher as regards the timing of starting an instrument. Mrs Altenburger and Mrs Beddington will then discuss the options available in terms of which teachers have time available and which instrument would be best. Your child may also have strong views as to which instrument he or she would like to learn and indeed the final choice has to rest with the child – learning an instrument should not be “imposed”. To help in the choice, trial lessons are always possible as is watching one of the ensembles.



Whatever the instrument, parental involvement is key. Not only is daily practice essential but intelligent support of practice is also crucial. Instruments and music also have to be in the right place at the right time! Regularity of practice is more important than time (one hour's practice the day before the lesson achieves little). If parents wish, we can suggest a “FH recommended” music tutor to work with your child at home working under the guidance of the Falkner House music specialist and following the school programme. Parents will be in charge of payment and supervision of any such tutor.



All the music teachers welcome communication with parents: they are encouraged to talk with the music staff as to their child's progress, examinations, etc. and to attend a lesson on occasion. Mrs Altenburger and Mrs Beddington liaise closely with the individual music teachers as well as the teaching staff. Each child's musical progress is analysed and discussed on a regular basis. The music staff are happy to discuss the appropriate size and quality of instrument as well as the hire or purchase options (see below).

Most children learning an orchestral instrument will become invited to join one of the weekly pre-school music ensembles: wind band, mini strings and big strings. Children learning an instrument outside of Falkner House are also welcomed to these groups and indeed to participate in concerts etc. Punctuality is important for the pre-school groups and children must arrive before 8.00 am to allow time to tune all the instruments (timing depending on the specific group). While the pre-school ensembles are chargeable, there are also a growing number of chamber groups where participation is rotated and there is no charge. Many Falkner House pupils are selected for the Royal College of Music and the National Children's Orchestra and we are proud of their success.

Lessons are charged on a termly basis (generally in advance) on the basis of 10 lessons per term and /



or 30 lessons per year. Please see the details of costs in the fees section. Every effort is made to "catch up" on lessons missed on account of school trips, potentially in a subsequent term. This is not generally the case if music lessons are missed on account of pupil illness, external examinations, pupil absence, etc. In these situations, teachers will also try to make up lessons missed but this is not guaranteed. Refunds are given in July if there is a shortfall over the academic year and, equally, parents will be charged pro rata if pupils receive more than the 30 lessons in the year. Once a child has started music lessons, a term's notice is required before giving up or changing instruments, to avoid fees being charged in lieu. If, however, there is a waiting list for the instrument, the notice requirement may be waived. The music books required will be

ordered by the music teacher with the cost being included in the subsequent term's invoice.

Once a certain level of competence is reached, a child will be invited to play in prayers and parents' are invited to join the school for assembly (8.45 – 9.00 am) to watch their child's short performance (accompanied by piano if necessary). This should not be seen as a "performance" requiring significant preparation, instead it is an opportunity to play in front of a very supportive group of friends! There are regular formal and informal concerts for individuals and small groups as well as open sessions to showcase the wind band and string groups, the children and the music department. Parents and family members are always most welcome at these events. Details are found on the school website Fixtures Calendar.

Children are entered, as appropriate and if desired, for the ABRSM grade examinations (see music notes – ABRSM grades).



### **Purchase or rental of instruments**

There are clearly a number of options but listed below are a few recommendations. Some shops will offset rental fees against purchase price if you buy within a certain period. Some also run a system of purchase with buy back later when your child may need a larger or better quality instrument. Out-of-London shops will usually supply instruments, etc. by post. In all rental or purchase and buy back arrangements, parents need to set up a contract and pay the outlet themselves. It is clearly important that all instruments are insured and that everything including bows, cases, etc. are clearly labelled.

#### **Violin, cello or viola:**

- **Stringers** of London [www.stringersmusic.com](http://www.stringersmusic.com)  
99 Lisson Grove London NW1 6UP 020 7224 9099  
Maureen Morrison is generally very helpful

#### **Wind: Trumpet, saxophone or French horn:**

- **Phil Parker, the Brass Musical Instrument Specialists** [www.philparker.biz](http://www.philparker.biz)  
106a Crawford Street, London, W1H 2HZ 0207 486 8206
- **Prozone Music** [www.prozonemusic.com](http://www.prozonemusic.com)  
20a Station Road Chesham Bucks HP5 1DH 01494 776262  
Probably the better but less convenient being out of London

#### **Recorder, clarinet and saxophone:**

- **Kensington Chimes Music (for recorder only)** [www.chimesmusic.com](http://www.chimesmusic.com)  
9 Harrington Road London SW7 3ES 020 7589 9054
- **Howarth of London** [www.howarth.uk.com](http://www.howarth.uk.com)  
31 Chiltern St. London W1U 7PN 020 7935 2407  
Excellent for the purchase of B flat clarinets (the standard instrument) and a trusted place for repairs. Call the repair department in advance to discuss the problem and to make a booking.
- **Wood, Wind & Reed** [www.wwr.co.uk](http://www.wwr.co.uk)  
106 Russell Street, Cambridge CB2 1HU 01223 500442  
Good for Amati C clarinets and Elkhart C clarinets, (sometimes used in the initial stages by young players who cannot reach the keys of the more usual B flat clarinet). Options for buy back when ready to move on to the B flat clarinet.
- **John Packer Ltd** [www.johnpacker.co.uk](http://www.johnpacker.co.uk)  
141 Staplegrove Road Taunton Somerset, TA2 6AF 01823 282386  
Useful for John Packer C clarinet and simplified C clarinet hire and purchase which can be useful on a temporary basis for young players with small hands.

**Reeds Direct Cambridge** Rapid delivery of reeds. 0800 0969 440

#### **Flutes:**

- **All Flutes Plus** [www.allflutesplus.com](http://www.allflutesplus.com)  
60-61 Warren Street London W1T 5NZ 020 7388 8438  
[afp@allflutesplus.com](mailto:afp@allflutesplus.com)

### Piano:

All children learning the piano need to have a piano at home. The piano can be an keyboard so long as it is full-range (88 keys) with fully weighted keys.

- **Chappell of Bond Street** [www.chappell-bond-st.co.uk](http://www.chappell-bond-st.co.uk)  
152-160 Wardour Street London W1F 8YA  
Tel: 020 7432 4400
- **Jaques Samuel Pianos** (Edgware Rd). [www.jspianos.com](http://www.jspianos.com)  
142 Edgware Road London W2 2DZ  
Tel: 020 7723 8818

### Electric pianos:

The best electric pianos are Yamaha Clavinova or Yamaha Auris. Yamaha P-90 and P-45 are considerably less good than Clavinova. Auris or Clavinova will last longer.

### **Suggested concerts, workshops, courses etc.**

#### **Week-end Workshops:**

- BBC SO Family Orchestra & Chorus Workshop, all ages and levels  
[www.bbc.co.uk/events/eq9j3d](http://www.bbc.co.uk/events/eq9j3d)
- RCM: Royal College of Music, Sparks Festive Family Music, all ages and levels  
[www.rcm.ac.uk/sparks/](http://www.rcm.ac.uk/sparks/)

#### **Orchestra courses (Christmas, Easter or Summer)**

- String Wise: age 6 to 14, any level (from starters) [www.stringwise.com](http://www.stringwise.com)
- NCO: National Children's Orchestra of Great Britain, age 7-10, Grades 3 to 6  
[www.nco.org.uk/](http://www.nco.org.uk/)
- NCWO: National Children's Wind Orchestra, age 10 to 19, Grade 5 and above  
[www.ncwo.org.uk](http://www.ncwo.org.uk)
- DYOW: Dulwich Youth Orchestra, aged 7 - 18. [www.dyodulwich.com](http://www.dyodulwich.com)
- NPSO: National Preparatory School Orchestra, Grade 2 to 5 and above [www.npso.co.uk/](http://www.npso.co.uk/)
- Gloucester Academy of Music: International Holiday Music Courses 2012 [www.gamweb.co.uk](http://www.gamweb.co.uk)

#### **Choir Workshop (Easter)**

- The Junior Choral Course, choir, all ages <http://thejuniorchoralcourse.co.uk>

#### **Family Concerts:** Children can often try instruments before and after concerts

- Barbican Hall: LSO Discovery Family Concerts  
[www.barbican.org.uk/music/event-detail.asp?ID=11813](http://www.barbican.org.uk/music/event-detail.asp?ID=11813)
- Royal Festival Hall: Funharmonics concerts  
[www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whats-on/festivals-series/classical-season/london-philharmonic-orchestra/lpo-funharmonics](http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whats-on/festivals-series/classical-season/london-philharmonic-orchestra/lpo-funharmonics)
- Wigmore Hall: family concerts  
[www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/whats-on/productions/sing-a-story-schools-concert-2914](http://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/whats-on/productions/sing-a-story-schools-concert-2914)
- Cadogan Hall: Hall:  
Cadogan Hall family concerts: [www.cadoganhall.com/whats-on/genres/family-events](http://www.cadoganhall.com/whats-on/genres/family-events)

