

## **Music Society Woodwind Masterclass with Paul Harris**

**Wednesday 7 October at 6pm, Amey Theatre**

On Wednesday 7 October, we were delighted to welcome back the phenomenal teacher, writer, composer and clarinettist, Paul Harris, to work with six of our senior woodwind players. This must have been Paul's fifth or sixth visit in recent years and his sessions are always immensely thought-provoking and stimulating, both for the performers and audience members.

We were treated to a wonderful range of instruments – a flute, an oboe a clarinet, two bassoons, and a saxophone and an age range from 3rd Year to Lower Sixth. This evening was our second live event since the lockdown and so for this event we couldn't have an audience apart from the boys who were participating.

Mr Harris was able to spend 15-20 minutes with each of the players and quickly found something specific to work on in each performance, whether musical, technical, or in terms of projecting their playing.

For David Hrushevski (clarinet), who started us off with the slow movement of Weber's Clarinet Concerto, it was about finding a beautifully even and legato melodic line and avoiding any unintentional bulges. Oliver Glover (oboe) demonstrated some wonderfully advanced playing in the second movement of Martinu's Oboe Concerto, and, again it was a question of creating an effortless legato between some challenging low notes.

Luc Tucker stepped up with Gabriel Pierné's Solo de Concert, where he worked particularly on his muscular control and his tonguing, thinking particularly about oral anatomy and where he could articulate the notes. Next, we were delighted to hear some more Weber, this time the first movement of his Bassoon Concerto in which Josef O'Connor demonstrated his beautiful sound in the high bassoon register. Soon Josef was able to play with an even more striking dynamic control and some even more energetic up-beats and characterful dotted rhythms.

Tom Harding, one of our more prominent jazzers, bravely chose a classical piece - Massenet's elegiac *Méditation* from his opera, *Thaïs*. This he played with a beautiful legato line. Soon he was exploring where to find the centre of the note and how to create anticipation through rubato. Julien Rohart played Mozart's D major Flute Concerto and this offered opportunities to work at keeping the air pressure even and strong without the semiquaver articulations getting in the way. The improvement was immediately obvious and Julien produced some beautifully shaped phrases.

It was a really great evening of music-making and learning and everyone took away something really significant to think about. Our thanks must go to all who participated - pupils, accompanist, Miss Stulting and, of course, to Mr Harris, who again brought us such a stimulating and inspiring evening of music teaching.

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