

British Viola Society Newsletter November:

The first term at has been a busy one for the violists at Trinity Laban. It started with the all-important blind auditions which are used to place us into projects, as well as the first contact for the new violas in 1st year undergraduate and postgraduate programs.

In mid-October, Trinity was playing host to the LSO for the LSO String Experience Viola Workshop, led by Robert Turner. A select number of students from each of the four London Conservatoires were gathered together to discuss and play orchestral excerpts, which included Mahler Symphony No 10, Bruckner Symphony No 4 and Mendelssohn Symphony No 4. The violists were also given advice on orchestral etiquette and how to deal with nerves when performing.

This year, Trinity launched a scheme where half of the repertoire performed will consist of works by female composers, which has led to a rise in recognition of some well-written yet unknown repertoire. A particular favourite is a work for string orchestra by Grazyna Bacewicz. The work was performed by the TL String Ensemble which is conducted by the Head of the String Department, Nic Pendlebury. It is safe to say that there will be plenty of Rebecca Clarke performed this year.

Violist Matthew Jones gave a masterclass in early November. He discussed key points on performance such as how to ground yourself, discovering where your mind goes whilst you are performing and how to be present in the performance. He worked with violists on solo Bach, the Schumann Märchenbilder and the Walton Viola Concerto. This masterclass came at a crucial time for some of the violists as they took part in the internal Bach competition a week after the class. Here is what post graduate student Javier Morrilas had to say about Bach and the masterclass:

“When it comes to Bach everyone has a different way to perform and understand his music. When you have many points of view it is easier to find your own way. In my last masterclass with Matthew I discovered new ways to look at Bach's 3rd suite and it opened my mind a lot in preparation for the competition. It was very productive and I am so happy that I had the opportunity to play to him.”

Peter Fenech

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