

## **Guildhall School of Music and Drama**

The GSMD viola department has had a busy and exciting start to the new term, welcoming in 12 new viola students. Many of the new students took part in the inaugural induction concert that took place in the Barbican Concert Hall in September. The GSMD Symphony Orchestra and Chorus performed Rachmaninov's *The Bells*, conducted by Dominic Wheeler. Running alongside this project was the annual collaboration with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, led by the fantastic Richard Tognetti. GSMD students sat side-by-side with members of the ACO to perform Vaughan Williams's *The Lark Ascending* and Schönberg's *Verklärte Nacht* in Milton Court Concert Hall. It was an incredible experience to sit in a section comprised of such inspirational players.

Guildhall's annual Viola Open Day is fast approaching and we have a fantastic day lined up, including student performances of works for viola ensemble, such as the Benjamin Dale Viola Sextet and Gordon Jacob's Viola Octet. There will be several masterclasses throughout the day from Viola Professor and Head of Chamber Music, Matthew Jones, and an orchestral masterclass from LSO member, German Clavijo. The GSMD viola day is a great opportunity for violists from all over the UK to observe masterclasses and performances, as well as take part in classes from some of the UK's leading violists. The viola open day is open to members of the public and places can be booked on the GSMD website.

During the summer, many of our students were involved in exciting tours and projects across the globe. Postgraduate student Nicholas Hughes took part in the European Union Youth Orchestra's summer tour, which visited many of Europe's leading concert halls. Some highlights included concerts in Berlin, Prague, Vienna and Amsterdam. The orchestra performed some huge symphonic works including Mahler's 5<sup>th</sup> Symphony and Beethoven's 9<sup>th</sup>.

Mabon Llŷr has just begun his postgraduate studies at GSMD, but not before a busy summer touring Russia and the UK with the Britten Shostakovich Orchestra, a newly formed orchestra. Mabon comments, "It was a fantastic opportunity to make music with like-minded people from the other side of the continent. A culturally invaluable experience which I will never forget. The highlights for me included, daunting as it was, performing Vaughan Williams's Fantasia on a theme of Thomas Tallis (viola solo!) for a totally packed St Petersburg Philharmonic Hall, and swimming in the Black Sea at midnight in Sochi."

Kate de Campos