



Friday 18th September 2020

MMC Virtual Performances

In March 2020 an abrupt change was enforced on us all as the country introduced social distancing measures to try and control the Covid 19 pandemic. For Macclesfield Music Centre this resulted in a swift shut down of face to face rehearsals and Saturday morning music making. Here we are six months later in September 2020 and we can see the country starting to take small cautious steps to returning to social settings.

Through this playlist of virtual performances we are able to reflect and celebrate the many resourceful ways in which our members created opportunities for music making, despite the restrictions. Some formed small weekly social gatherings on zoom, others delved head first into editing and creating videos that were able to be shared with town wide initiatives such as Treacle Market online and Barnaby Festival Online.

It has been striking how many members have been in touch expressing concern for our professional music colleagues. They too have shown enormous resilience and adaptability, changing the way they work and earn a living. It was this concern, expressed by members, that provided the initial impetus for commissioning our all together virtual performance 'I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel To Be Free'.

We were also able to commission our first ever online Holiday Course; this took the form a Jazz Course for under 18's. Simon Lodge, Kyran Matthews and Tom Sykes successfully led the young people through online learning resulting in some very enjoyable videos that feature on this playlist.

MMC Virtual Performance Playlist 2020

I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel To Be Free

Producer: Cat Hanson

The Muppet Show Theme - MMC Simply Saxes

Producer: Joe Nuttall

Slavonic Dance No.8 – MMC Synchronised Saxes

Producer: Joe Nuttall

O Magnum Mysterium – MMC Saxophone Choir

Producer: Joe Nuttall

Mattachins - MMC Strings

Producer: Nick Cheetham

The Jazz Police - MMC Youth Jazz

Producer: Simon Lodge

The Big Noise - MMC Youth Jazz

Producer: Simon Lodge

Jam Session Improvisation - MMC Youth Jazz

Producer: Simon Lodge and Joe Nuttall

Here Comes the Sun - MMC Members

Producer: Mike Brown



I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel To Be Free

This song is part of a long history of African-American people's fight for freedom and equality. A Jazz song written by Billy Taylor and Dick Dallas, the song served as an anthem for the Civil Rights Movement led by Martin Luther King Jr in American in the 1960's. The most famous version of it was recorded by Nina Simone. Nina Simone herself was very aware of the restrictions put upon her by society's view of the colour of her skin. As a child she fell in love with the music of Bach and dreamed of being the first black concert pianist but when she was rejected from a music college because of racism she changed to jazz. Her incredible musical ability and training shines through in all her work. This collaborative performance uses a Kirby Shaw arrangement of this song. The syncopated rhythms and part writing provided a challenge for many of us but this project really has helped keep members of MMC connected with each other.

The Muppet Show Theme Tune "Simply Muppets"

The Muppet Show Theme tune, written by Jim Henson and Sam Pottle was released under the Walt Disney Records label in 1987. This fun, four-part saxophone version was arranged by Philippe Marillia and published by 4x4quartet.com in 2011. The MMC Simply Saxes virtual collaboration project was the inspiration of Joe Nuttall, who then went on to coordinate, cajole, encourage and then mix to create this video, the first undertaken by any MMC group during the Coronavirus lockdown in April 2020.

Slavonic Dance No.8

The second, more challenging MMC virtual saxophone project was again inspired and coordinated by Joe Nuttall, with contributions from members of MMC Synchronised Saxophone group. The Slavonic Dance No 8 was composed by Dvorak as the last of his Opus 46 suite in 1878, and although this was several decades after the saxophone had been invented, no saxes were included in the original orchestration. This eight-part saxophone arrangement was created by Claire Tomsett and is published by Saxtet Publications.

O Magnum Mysterium

The third and final piece that members of Simply and Synchronised Saxes recorded was Gabrieli's 'O Magnum Mysterium'. Not to be confused with the vocal piece of the same name by Morten Lauridsen, this Gregorian chant is a festive offering for the Matins of Christmas. O Magnum Mysterium is a choral piece originally composed for San Marco church, which had two choir lofts facing each other. The piece starts with the first (higher) choir singing the first line "O Magnum Mysterium", which is then echoed by the second (lower) choir, then both sing it together. This arrangement is a simple direct transcription of the eight vocal lines into eight saxophone parts. In this video our higher choir is on the left (of the screen and of the audio), the lower choir is on the right.



Mattachins

Members of MMC string groups present Peter Warlock's string arrangement of Mattachins, which is the sixth and final movement of Warlock's Capriol Suite. Mattachins, meaning sword dance, is aptly played here with sweeping bow strokes and with a fast and energetic character.

The Jazz Police

Often referred to as a hot jazz-rock chart, the Gordon Goodwin Big Phat Band "The Jazz Police" was one of the main projects created during the MMC Youth Jazz Course held online in August 2020. The version being played is the original as played by Gordon Goodwin's band published in 2004, and features several of our many talented students playing solos. All the students recorded their individual parts at home using a full backing track created by the course tutors, and the final video mix was created by Simon Lodge for an end of week concert via YouTube Livestream.

The Big Noise

"Big Noise from Winnetka" is a jazz song co-written by composer and bass player Bob Haggart and drummer Ray Bauduc with lyrics by Gil Rodin and Bob Crosby, who were members of a sub-group of the Bob Crosby Orchestra called "The Bobcats". This arrangement was adapted for young jazz ensemble by Calvin Custer, and performed here by members who attended the MMC Youth Jazz Course held on line in August 2020.

Jam Session – Youth Jazz Improvisations

During this montage of performances you will see and hear the attendees of the Youth Jazz Course turn their hand to the skill of Jazz Improvisation. This track features Blue Bossa by Kenny Dorham, Cantaloupe Island by Herbie Hancock, Chameleon by Herbie Hancock, Cold Duck Time by Eddie Harris, and Have You Met Miss Jones by Rogers and Hart.

Here Comes the Sun

This classic Beatles track from 1969 is sung in this video by members of our adult choir. The back drop of sunshine and birdsong remind us of the more positive aspects of lockdown; the sunshine, the emergence of nature, and the clear blue plane-less skies.

