

Sunday 20th

Saturday 26th

November 2022

**A Message from Saffron Walden Music Festival**

Hello again to schools and music teachers in our area. Did you know that the 10th Saffron Walden Music Festival is happening this year? We are celebrating with some amazing new opportunities for young musicians in the area and would like to tell you about these and ask you to help get the word out to young musicians.

First, we are adding a Percussion Section. This will be in addition to our current Strings, Woodwind, Voice, Piano, Guitar and Brass Sections. We are delighted to be able to include Percussion (including drum kit) for the first time as we look for the Festival to evolve and expand.

We are also thrilled to announce the introduction of our brand new Jazz Section. This will run in its own slot with performers playing with a trio of musicians (piano, drums and bass).

Also, as it is our 10th Festival, any ensembles entering may now have up to 10 performers!

Our core aim remains to provide a performance platform for young musicians, not just those who aspire to careers in music but also those who just love playing or singing and will go on to have their lives enriched by music.

We are committed to ensuring that all children and young people have the opportunity to participate and have a Bursary Scheme available to give financial support to those who need it.  This can offer a reduced fee of £3 per entry (instead of £6), including provision of an accompanist where necessary. Bursaries can be requested via the entry form. The Saffron Walden Music Festival is modestly funded through sponsorship, donations and participant entry fees and we are grateful for this continued support that makes it possible for us to offer Bursaries for participants who require it.

**How does it work?**

Hosted by Saffron Walden County High School and centred around Saffron Hall, it is open to young musicians of all standards, from pre-Grade 1 to post-Grade 8.

It has an element of competition, in the style of the BBC “Young Musician”. Certificates, medals and trophies are awarded, along with the splendid Festival Cup for the winner, but it is much more than this: it is a joyful celebration of live performance. All participants receive individual written feedback on their performance from our panel of specialist adjudicators. For players who are up to and including Grade 4 standard, there is the chance to win their section’s Ellie Morrow Trophy, which is awarded for the most promising performance.

The instrumental sections are divided into classes, which means that musicians of a similar standard will be grouped together for their performances. Feedback is given by the adjudicator at the end of each class, both individually and to the class as a whole. Musicians and their parents are encouraged to stay for the whole section to provide a supportive audience: there is also much to learn from watching others perform. The adjudicators decide the overall best performance in each section and these seven musicians are invited to compete in the Finale Concert for the Saffron Walden Music Festival Cup.

**How does it work?  -  Jazz**

The jazz session will run on similar lines but performers on all instruments will play in three broad categories according to experience with a trio to support them. All performances will include elements of improvisation unlike other Festival Sections. The Jazz Session adjudicator will be Kate Williams, who will lead the young jazz musicians through the two-hour session, concluding with a short workshop for all the performers taking part. The jazz winner will be asked to perform in the Finale concert where they will also be presented with the Saffron Jazz Trophy.

**Finale concert**

The Festival culminates in the Finale Concert which will be held in Saffron Hall at 6pm on Saturday 26th November. In addition to the competition for the Festival Cup, we will celebrate other notable performances from the two days of the Festival, including the winner of the Jazz Section Trophy. The Finale Concert is free and open to all, including teachers and family members.

The full schedule for the two days and information on how to enter can be found on the Saffron Walden County High School website <https://www.swchs.net/page/?title=Saffron+Walden+Music+Festival&pid=60>

We also share news on Facebook and Instagram:

<https://www.facebook.com/saffronwaldenmusicfestival>

@saffronwaldenmusic

**We are asking you to please encourage as many young musicians as you can to enter, as we really need your support to enable our talented local students to get maximum benefit from this event. I have attached an A4 poster which I hope you will be able to circulate for us.**

Please don’t hesitate to contact ksemken@swchs.net if you have any queries at all.

We very much look forward to meeting you and your pupils at what promises to be an exciting and inspiring festival.

Best Wishes

Karen Semken (Chair, Saffron Walden Music Festival Committee)