



# Notations

The Ashby Concert Band Newsletter

Adrian Ashton, Director of Music



## Notes from the Director of Music

Once again Ashby Concert Band is looking forward to another full year of concerts. Concerts are what it is all about for us – they provide us with the opportunity to demonstrate our enthusiasm for the music which brings us together every week. Although every concert represents an opportunity it also represents a challenge, and not just the challenge of playing the music. Before all of that there is the challenge of finding the music to play and that is a challenge that falls to me as Director of Music.

Our library of music is already pretty extensive, ranging from popular classics by the likes of Elgar, Wagner and Mahler, through to the popular music of the stage and screen by composers like John Williams, Randy Edelman, Rogers and Hammerstein and, of course, Leonard Bernstein. Then there is the 'pop music' scene with music from the Beatles, Queen and ABBA and the original concert band works by composers like Jacob and Sparke. In fact our library currently contains some 176 titles and amounts close to £8000 in value. However, we are constantly in search of new music, and that's where the challenge for me begins.

When I took over as Director of Music way back in 1999 our concerts were all set and organised by the Band Committee, and it was very much a case of playing a concert of music that we owned, and music that we could play to a standard where I felt comfortable that we could give a creditable performance. How things have changed in eleven years. Now only one of our concerts each year is set and organised by the Band Committee, and that is our annual Christmas concert. All the other concerts we now perform are at the request of outside organisations or individuals, usually to help raise money for some worthwhile cause. And, as the old saying goes, "He who pays the piper, calls the tune", and so the challenge is set to find music that meets the requirements and expectations of the concert sponsor.

It is at that stage that I start to wade my way through the numerous music catalogues and CDs sent to me each month to try to find music that will fit into the requested programme. The music must be sufficiently challenging to play but not so difficult that it would stretch the Band too far. It must be by an arranger who not only understands each instrument in a concert band, but also arranges the piece to reflect as faithfully as possible the nuances and intricacies of the original, faithfully reproducing the harmonies and respecting the original wishes of the composer. It never ceases to amaze me just how many arrangers seem to feel they know better than the composer when it comes to harmonies and modulations that give the music its unique character and magic.

Our concert programme for 2011 will very much centre around the music of stage and screen. We will be performing music from such great films as *Avatar*, *Apollo 13*, *West Side Story*, *The Incredibles*, *Gettysburg*, *633 Squadron*, *The Battle of Britain*, *Those Magnificent Men in Their Flying Machines*, *Titanic* and *Schindler's List*, to name but a few. Many, like *Avatar* and *Apollo 13*, will be first-time performances for the Band; others like *Schindler's List*, are old favourites we have performed many times before. One of those named above has been arranged by yours truly, and to find out which? – well, you'll just have to make sure you come along to all our concerts to find out!

Adrian Ashton

Director of Music

## Dates for your Diary

12th November	Concert of Remembrance	18th December	Christmas Concert
5th February 2011	Chair of NWLDC Charity Concert	26th March 2011	Mayor of Ashby's Charity Concert
25th June 2011	The Palace Theatre, Ibstock	22nd October	Anniversary Concert, de Montfort Hall

All concerts are at Holy Trinity Church, Ashby and start at 7.30pm unless otherwise stated. Tickets are available from Ashby TIC, the Hub café or by calling Jackie Ashton (01332 864007) or Pat Maltby (01530 222934.)

[www.ashbyconcertband.org.uk](http://www.ashbyconcertband.org.uk)  
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# "Making music at the heart of the East Midlands"

## Portrait of a Player: Laura Storer



Laura started playing the oboe at the age of 9 after waiting for her two front teeth to grow. She actually always wanted to play the cor anglais but was told that you have to learn the oboe first, but is now Ashby Concert Band's cor anglais and oboe player.

She grew up in Ashby and progressed musically the traditional way through the Associated Board grade system and the Leicestershire Arts Orchestras. She became Principal Oboist in the Leicestershire Schools Symphony Orchestra and member of the Leicestershire Arts Wind Quintet, who have performed on Classic FM and won their category in the National Chamber Music Competition for Schools on a couple of occasions and performed at St. Johns, Smith Square in London.

Laura went to Birmingham Conservatoire where she studied with Jennie Phillips, the current joint head of woodwind, and Principal George Caird before deciding not to pursue music as a profession but as a hobby and embarking on a Law Conversion course at Birmingham University. She is now a practicing solicitor in Birmingham.

More recently, apart from playing with the band, Laura has played in the Ashby Operatic Society's productions of *Oliver* and *Oklahoma!* and also plays with the Bardi Orchestra and Glebe Symphonic Winds.

## Instruments of the Band: Oboe and Cor Anglais

The oboe is a double reed musical instrument of the woodwind family. The spelling "oboe" was adopted into English ca. 1770 from the Italian oboè, a transliteration in that language's orthography of the 17th-century pronunciation of the French word *hautbois*, a compound word made of *haut* ("high, loud") and ("wood, woodwind".)

In comparison to other modern woodwind instruments, the oboe has a clear and penetrating voice. The timbre of the oboe is derived from the oboe's conical bore (as opposed to the generally cylindrical bore of flutes and clarinets). As a result, oboes are readily audible over other instruments in large ensembles. The reed has a significant effect on the sound of the instrument and subtle manipulation of embouchure and air pressure allows the player to express timbre and dynamics.

The oboe has several siblings. The most widely known today is the cor anglais, or English horn, which is neither English nor a horn. A transposing instrument; it is pitched in F, a perfect fifth lower than the oboe. By coincidence, the only other orchestral instrument to be pitched in F is the French horn, which is not French but is a horn. The cor anglais is thought to have originated about 1720, when a bulb bell was added to the oboe da caccia, a Baroque alto instrument of the oboe family.



*Members of the oboe family, ranging from the piccolo oboe (bottom) to heckelphone (top). The oboe and cor anglais, similar to those played in Ashby Concert Band, are second and fourth from bottom.*

## Supporters Acknowledgements

Ashby Concert Band is especially grateful for the continued and extended support of our patrons,

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