



# Upbeat

THE MUSIC BULLETIN OF OXFORD FAJAR/OUP/ABRSM



## Message from the ABRSM Regional Consultant

Complacency is the enemy of progress. As the world's largest provider of music exams the ABRSM is keenly aware of this motto and strives constantly to review, enhance and consolidate. One of the latest examples of this drive towards what in the educational jargon has

become known as 'quality enhancement' was the first ever Professional Development seminar in Bangkok. We have been aware for some time of the need to include this important area in the PDP tour, and at last we were able to do so, as Anthony Williams and David Young greeted over sixty enthusiastic teachers in Bangkok. Anthony, the main presenter, gave three sessions, on the new piano syllabus, and spoke of the importance of cultivating good touch and tone and of aspiring towards these qualities during rather than after the note-learning process. The importance of balance was also stressed, along with pedalling, stylistic awareness, mental preparation, memory and rhythm. A characteristic of Anthony's method is his assertion that pianistic agility comes not from technical drills and copious exercises but from finding solutions to individual technical problems. Anthony is by now accustomed to this part of the world, having given seminars in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore in March 2006, and in Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore last August and September. David's single session was on 'going beyond the notes of the baroque and classical styles', and was concerned with strategies for incorporating theoretical aspects and aural training into the practical lessons. The Bangkok seminars were followed by similar ones in Surabaya and Jakarta, but here the emphasis was on piano technique and expression, with examples from the new syllabus grades 4 to 8.

Another area of development concerns High Scorers' Concerts, of which we are expanding the number in Malaysia, the latest example being the first ever HSC in Kuala Lumpur. A report follows in this issue. In the next issue I hope to be able to report on progress made in further expansion of the concerts, this time in Penang. In order to give some historical context and explanation of the rationale for HSCs, Tim Arnold, International Operations Director at the ABRSM, has provided an article for this issue, after which the first Kuala Lumpur HSC is featured.

Also in this issue we feature the first article in a new series entitled 'Teaching Tips'. Here, Clara Taylor, the Chief Examiner, discusses ornaments and how to deal with them.

At this time of year, the number one concern of teachers, parents and, of course, pupils is the forthcoming ABRSM exams, which will be upon us once more in June. Right now, the Board is busily preparing the timetables, and I am busy making sure that all the accommodation has been booked for the exams and the examiners, that all the pianos have been ordered and are suitable, and a multitude of other tasks. Large numbers of examiners are due to descend on Malaysia and Singapore, and smaller teams in Indonesia, Thailand, Brunei and the Philippines. This is an anxious time for pupils and their teachers, but - as long as everyone remembers that the examiner is basically on the side of the pupils and wants them to do well, and that, whatever happens on the day, the examiners' comments will contain helpful and constructive comments - all should be well. I send my very best wishes to teachers, parents and pupils.

Finally, on behalf of ABRSM, it is a great pleasure to offer our congratulations to Oxford Fajar on their fiftieth anniversary. The ABRSM greatly values its close partnership with Oxford Fajar, as we look forward to the next fifty years!



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(Formerly known as Penerbit Fajar Bakti Sdn. Bhd.)




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### STOP PRESS

#### Introduction of Second Practical Exam Session for Malaysia in 2008

We are pleased to announce the introduction of a second practical exam session for Malaysia in APRIL 2008. The new session will be introduced in main centres only and exams will be held in FT Kuala Lumpur, Petaling Jaya (Selangor), Johor Bahru (Johor), Georgetown (Penang), Kota Kinabalu (Sabah) & Kuching (Sarawak). Entries will be accepted through online registration only and registration dates for the new session will be from 19 November to 10 December 2007.

We hope that this new session will help teachers in planning their lessons and also give more flexibility in preparing their students for ABRSM exams. The main practical session from June to August will continue as normal in all states.

Further information on the introduction of the new period will be available through leaflets distributed with the practical results and through our website and online form.

Alan J Tait  
Deputy Head of International Operations