

## **Holst Strings Report November 2009**

Holst has enjoyed another successful year. Whilst membership was down a little compared to recent years the children made a very strong and enthusiastic sound so they sounded like a larger group. We were particularly pleased we continued to have some very strong viola players.

During the year we purchased many new pieces of music with support from the Friends. The children's favourite piece was "Batman" although this probably wasn't a hit with the double bass players who had a page of A4 that consisted of quavers throughout. It has to be said though that they rose to the challenge in fine form and did themselves proud in the concert.

As in previous years we performed in three concerts throughout the year. Our own concert in the Autumn term, the Pyramid concert at Central Hall in the Spring term, finishing with a joint concert with Finzi strings in the summer.

The summer term concert became a very poignant occasion following the death of Valerie Rogers in June. Valerie had helped the orchestra in its various forms for around thirty years, helping to tune instruments, supporting children when they were finding the music difficult and playing the piano. Her loss continues to be very keenly felt every Monday evening. We were very touched that her daughter Nikki was able to be with us for the summer concert and the collection at the end raised £80 for "The Stroke Association" in Valerie's memory.

We were very fortunate to also have Bev Geen and Jenni McWilliams assisting with the orchestra last year. This enabled the children to gain additional insights into working as an ensemble and gain experience of working with different conductors – including a left handed one! We thank both Bev and Jenni for all the help and support they gave to the children over the year.

The academic year 2009-2010 has been designated as the "Year of Music". To help celebrate this we will be getting up to some different activities and events over the year. On 19 October, Kath Page, (Assistant Director of the Southampton Music Service) came along to do some creative improvising work. The children will be demonstrating their results of at our concert at the end of this term.

Finally as always I would also like to say a very big thank you to the Friends for all the help and support they give to Holst.

Zoe Hunting

Director Holst Strings