

StAMP Camp builds bright future via digital learning

The Laidlaw Music Centre at the University of St. Andrews launched its flagship Outreach Project in July – StAMP (an acronym for St. Andrews Music Participation) with an online brass camp on 11, 18 and 25 July for all ages and abilities from around the World to play together with The Wallace Collection, the University's Ensemble-in-Residence, along with experts and acclaimed soloists.



The final virtual concert, which was broadcast on 30 July and can be viewed on the Music from St. Andrews channel via YouTube, was a culmination of the StAMP online brass activities. With all participants given the opportunity to record a contribution, it involved players from all over the World, including 75 beginner trumpeters in Fife, Clackmannanshire, Tayside, and Perth and Kinross, as well as The Wallace Collection, Solstice Brass, tuba virtuoso James Gourlay in Pittsburgh, world-leading trombonist Ian Bousfield in Bern, and new music magicians, Marco Blaauw and Christine Chapman, in Cologne!

During the three weeks of classes, Marco Blaauw (trumpet) and Christine Chapman (horn), from Ensemble Musikfabrik, led special ensemble performances with participants, while Ian Bousfield shared insights about solo performance through an inspirational master class. The former principal trombone of the London Symphony Orchestra and Vienna Philharmonic also backed up his words of wisdom in the final virtual concert with a serene performance of J.S. Bach's *Prelude from Cello Suite no.2*.

Following an introduction by John Wallace CBE, Solstice Brass and The Wallace Collection opened the final virtual concert with a scintillating first performance of Matthew Rooke's *New Horizons for Brass Ensemble*, before the StAMP Brass Camp's Sinton-Dolby, Gabrieli and Bruckner ensembles delighted with their own contributions, including two fine arrangements by Tony George and John Miller.

Through the power of modern video technology, James Gourlay was able to roll back the years with excerpts from Eric Ball's *Tuba Quartet*, in which he performed all four parts! The River City Brass MD also treated the virtual audience to Brendan Collins's *New Dances*, and one of the highlights of the concert was seeing James join forces with his long-time friend and colleague, John Wallace, for a beautifully atmospheric duet performance of *Meditation on MacMillan*.

Music by Sir Arthur Sullivan, Eddie McGuire, Giuseppe Verdi and Samuel Scheidt added to the imaginatively conceived programme, with Tony George's *Band Camp Blues* bringing the curtain down on a thoroughly engaging concert.

The concert that would not have been possible without the the Camp itself,

which not only focused on playing, but also included sessions from renowned brass experts, Trevor Herbert (Royal College of Music), Arnold Myers (Royal Conservatoire of Scotland) and Peter Holmes (European Music Archaeology Project), who presented many interesting topics and revealed new research into the archaeology of brass instruments, and their place in society and culture.

A special part of the brass camp was offering children the opportunity to start learning the trumpet at home by providing them with a polycarbonate model delivered to their address, to began learning with 'Discovering Brass', a pioneering method of teaching brass developed by The Wallace Collection. At the conclusion of the brass camp, arrangements were made for anyone wishing to continue learning at no cost.

The StAMP Brass Camp, made possible by an anonymous philanthropic gift, showcased many strands that coalesced into the broad aim of raising aspiration, attainment and well-being by providing opportunities for joyful music-making. Although the project primarily focused on brass playing in Fife, it also garnered research about new models of teaching brass and brass performance that will be applied in the future.

Said Dr. Bede Williams, Head of Instrumental Studies, University of St. Andrews and Director of StAMP: "We have all learned so much recently about how online music-making can be fun and rewarding. It was so exciting to have participants from around the World learning together, and I am absolutely certain that though it wasn't anything like playing together in person, we all gained something through this altogether different experience and thrill."



Key to the project, Professor John Wallace, Honorary Professor of Brass at the University of St. Andrews, also commented: "An exciting new world of learning music has opened up before our eyes and ears – the future is bright!"

While Ellen Thomson, Head of Outreach, University of St. Andrews, observed: "The StAMP Brass Camp was a fantastic opportunity for local children to take their first step in music. By receiving an instrument and lessons completely free-of-charge, StAMP enabled young people to focus on something positive during this challenging period. It's a perfect time to learn an instrument and develop a new skill in a supportive and nurturing digital environment"

Christine Chapman, of Ensemble Musikfabrik, also contributed: "... StAMP provided an exciting world of brass playing, not only for the children of Fife, but also for others all around the World!"

DAVID CHILDS