

**Newsletter No. 3**

Dear Friends,

Your Artistic Director has been very clumsy and has spent 12 days in hospital with a broken hip since she last wrote, hence the rather delayed correspondence again. Apologies! Thank you to all who sent kind wishes and again to those who have recently joined up as Friends or Patrons or have sent donations (to the Festival not me!).

I promised to feature musicians who will visit us in 2021 in these Newsletters and earlier I caught up with Palisander, a group of very fine recorder players who were finalists in the prestigious Royal Over-Seas League Competition in 2019. You can find a link to a video performance by them at the end of this short interview.

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**Firstly I am sure that readers will want to know about the choice of name. What is the meaning and why did you choose it?**

*Palisander is a type of wood, sometimes used to make recorders. Our collection of over 40 recorders (!) are actually made from a wide range of woods, including Boxwood, Grenadilla, Maple and Cherry, but we like the sound of the name 'Palisander'.*

**Tell us a little about your backgrounds, when did you begin to play these instruments and why?**

*We all began playing the recorder as children and whilst we play other instruments, recorder is our specialism. We all studied the recorder at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, where we met. Palisander's performances and overall ethos is built around a shared love of the recorder and all that the instrument has to offer. Our concerts often feature music spanning 1000 years, performed largely from memory on recorders from 6 inches to 6 feet tall! We love introducing audiences to the different recorders and repertoire, often including several recorder-related surprises and we enjoy answering questions and having a chat, after concerts.*

**What message would you have for youngsters learning to play a musical instrument?**

*Learn to play different types of music and find which style you enjoy playing the most. If you're offered the chance to perform a piece you're working on, perhaps to your class, take the opportunity. Sharing your music-making with others is when you feel the biggest sense of achievement and all the practising is worth it!*

**We first met at your audition for Live Music Now some years ago. Would you like to tell us a little about your work with LMN?**

*We really enjoyed our work with LMN, which included working in nursery schools and schools for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, as well as family activity days and performances in care homes. The skills that we learnt with LMN have really informed our other engagements - including an intergenerational project we ran in France, which brought together nursery school children and care home residents for music-making with Palisander.*

**Have you visited/performed in Wales before?**

*We're really excited to be performing in the Fishguard and West Wales International Music Festival, especially as this will be our first performance in Wales!*

**It has been a very difficult period for free-lance musicians of late. How have you had to adjust your lives?**

*We have been so disappointed to have our performances cancelled over the last few months. We were due to give several performances in the UK and also in France, Spain, Germany, Belgium, Latvia and the Czech Republic. Some of these have been postponed, so we are crossing our fingers for next year.*

*When we rehearse, we're used to going to each other's houses, but in order to physically distance, we are now having to hire larger facilities. For Palisander, the Covid-19 crisis has presented additional complications, as we usually share the recorders between members, during performances. Of course, this is no longer possible and it has resulted in considerable changes to our programmes and ways of rehearsing. In the longer term, it may also mean investing in yet more recorders!*

**Do you have interests other than music?**

*Caoimhe enjoys reading and going for a run, while Miriam loves baking and gardening. Teresa likes long walks and cooking and Lydia has been rediscovering her enjoyment of drawing and making jewelry. The one perk of the summer lockdown was finding a little more time for these activities! We all enjoy travelling - being able to explore new places together, as part of our work with Palisander, is a very special aspect of playing in the group.*

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In addition to the performance at the Festival on 27<sup>th</sup> July, I very much hope that we can arrange some sessions for Palisander in primary schools before the end of term. Watch this space! In the meantime here is a link to a video performance for you to enjoy:

<https://www.fishguardmusicfestival.com/palisander-video>

Copies of this and all previous newsletters can be found at:

<https://www.fishguardmusicfestival.com/news>

Stay safe and I shall be in touch again soon.

With very best wishes

Gillian

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