



Colne Valley Youth Orchestra News

January

Rock star Damon for President

Former Colchester schoolboy turned rock star Damon Albarn is to be the new Honorary President of the Colchester-based Colne Valley Youth Orchestra.

The lead singer of the successful bands Blur and more recently Gorillaz was a member of the orchestra when it was first established 30 years ago by local music teacher and composer Nigel Hildreth.

Damon, then a student at Stanway School where Nigel was a music teacher at the time, played the violin and was also actively involved in the school orchestra, choir and numerous school productions where he took a number of lead roles.

Damon, now recognised as a major creative talent, not only enjoyed a string of successful hits as the front man of Blur, he has gone on to form the virtual band Gorillaz collaborating with a wide range of artists. He has collaborated with musicians from Mali and other African countries and was commissioned by the Manchester International Festival to write the opera "Monkey Journey to the West" which also received critical acclaim in 2007. Although he admits that orchestral playing was not a major strength he also says that "playing in the orchestra and performing generally gave me the confidence to compose and to develop my musical ideas".

Nigel Hildreth, now Head of Performing Arts at the Sixth

Form College, and still Musical Director of his popular youth orchestra, has maintained close links with the star over the years. He said: "I am absolutely delighted that Damon has agreed to be our new Honorary President. His creative energies are so inspirational for young people and we are so pleased to see that his name will be associated with the orchestra as we celebrate our 30th anniversary and into the future."

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For further information about Colne Valley Youth Orchestra news and events contact our Communications Manager, Christine Garrington on 01206 396469 christine.garrington@btinternet.com