

# Arsis Handbell School

## *Facts&Figures*

### About Arsis Handbell School

The Arsis Handbell School (education licence 4070 HTM) is a private hobby school that started out in 1999. Initially, there were 72 pupils. To date, the Arsis Handbell School has become a hobby school for 300 pupils and has established itself both in Tallinn and Tartu.

The Arsis Handbell School is an untraditional music school in which pupils learn notes and instruments, but the instruments and teaching methods are unusual. Music is taught through the use of handbells. Handbells are musical instruments that allow for starting to play as an ensemble rather quickly, and pupils enjoy making music this way. A player must only have basic sense of rhythm and coordination. As handbells are used to make music in an ensemble, the methods applied at school are based on the principles of group and team work, developing in children besides love for music also responsibility, performance and communication skills.

The curriculum contains four subjects – ensemble music, solfeggio (to learn the notes), music history and piano lessons.

### Administration

#### **Aivar Mäe: Headmaster**

Aivar Mäe is the founder of the Arsis Handbell School as well as the artistic director and conductor of the Arsis concert ensembles.

He acquired his musical education at Tallinn Music High School and Estonian Academy of Music. In 1992, Aivar Mäe studied in the USA improving his knowledge at the music department of Portland University with Prof Bruce Brown. He has been working with several choirs in Estonia as well as abroad. He has been the leader of international choir festivals, also running seminars for choral music and handbell music in USA and Finland. Since 2000, he has been working as the general manager of Eesti Kontsert, the National Concert Institute of Estonia, from 2003 until 2006 he was also the general manager of Theatre Vanemuine in Tartu City. Since 2007, he is also the chairman of the “Russian Theatre” foundation in Tallinn

#### **Tiina Kodumäe: Deputy Headmistress in Tallinn**

Tiina’s music education started with piano lessons in the former Tallinn Secondary School No. 22, followed by studies at the G. Ots Music School. Although Tiina has played various instruments (accordion in a folk group, mandolin and guitar in the music group called Irma and nowadays handbells in the Arsis ensemble), her passion is singing. She has received

excellent training as a choir singer in girls' choir Ellerhein, conducted by Heino Kaljuste, in the Mainor Chamber Choir, led by Olari Elts, and in the Arsis Chamber Choir, conducted by Aivar Mäe. Tiina has worked as the Deputy Headmistress of the Arsis Handbell School since its foundation. Besides responsibilities in the Handbell School, she also serves as the Manager of the Arsis concert ensembles. In 2006 Tiina graduated from the Estonian Business School studying International Business Administration.

#### Viive Nuggis: Deputy Headmistress in Tartu

Viive graduated from the University of Tartu in 2006 as a linguist. Her speciality is the Estonian language and literature. She has worked as a teacher in Vara Basic School and since February 2007 for the Arsis Handbell School in Tartu. She is interested in different linguistic problems: languages, dialects and translating, texts and their meta-texts. Translating literature is her hobby and leisure passion. Her first ordeal as a novice translator was a crime novel by Ann Granger, 'Say It With Poison'. The second trial was another crime novel by the same author, 'Where Old Bones Lie'. Viive is currently at work on Ann Granger's next novel 'A Fine Place for Death'. As a person, she is cheerful and kind and absolutely unpractical.

#### Greta Roosaar: Assistant in Tallinn

Greta is an alumna of our school. She was among the first students graduated from the Handbell School in 2003. The same year a competition to play in a concert ensemble took place and as a result she became a member of Arsis Youth Ensemble. Greta started her education in Tallinn Pääsküla Gymnasium and in high school continued her studies in Tallinn Secondary Science School. The interest for the science subjects was outweighed by her passion for theatre and literature, so after graduating from high school, she went on to Tallinn University, where she studies in the cultural theory department. Besides going to school she is a member of university theatre, takes dancing and singing lessons and reads as much as possible. Greta has also worked as a secretary in Eesti Kontsert.

## History

### 1991

The conductor of chamber choir ARSIS, Aivar Mäe, stays in the US for the purpose of retraining and hears handbells for the first time. It becomes his fixed idea to found a handbell ensemble also in Estonia.

### 1993

The representatives of the American Guild of English Handbell Ringers visit Estonia, bringing along first three octaves of bells as a present to Aivar Mäe and his choir. The idea becomes a reality - Arsis Handbell Ensemble is founded. Chimes are probably the oldest instruments that many nations knew already in ancient times.

### 1995

An idea to found Arsis youth handbell ensemble arises.

1996

Nineteen teenagers come together forming Arsis Children Handbell Ensemble. All the nineteen are children of members of ARSIS chamber choir age of 5-15. The conductor of the ensemble is Aivar Mäe. First concert is given at Christmas together with older colleagues.

2002

After six years activity the youth ensemble is giving the last concert.

2003

By results of the competition a youth concert ensemble will be founded which consists of 14 pupils who all were graduated from Arsis Handbell School. The conductor of the ensemble is Aivar Mäe and the assistant is Handbell School teacher Lemme-Liis Elp.

2006

To satisfy the demand of several pupils finishing the school, a second ensemble of 13 members is created in Tallinn. The 27 members that will finally composed the two ensemble go through a selection process aimed at choosing the most motivated and talented candidates.

2007

The first Youth Ensemble is created in Tartu to allow students who graduated from Arsis school in Tartu to continue practising, performing in public, and improving their musical skills.