



MILNGAVIE MUSIC

The newsletter of Milngavie Music Club

ADOPT-A-PRIMARY-SCHOOL: LET'S CREATE AN OPERA



This summer term MilngavieMusic and McOpera are bringing singing and dancing to the children of Milngavie Primary School in a project called "Let's Create an Opera". It's the first activity in our new "Adopt-a-Primary-School" outreach initiative. We're focusing on one school in this first year to trial various activities and find out what we can contribute to the musical life of the school.

Humans love to sing and dance, but why? One theory is that singing is a natural extension of speech: an enhanced way of communicating, especially for emotions. Think of lullabies and love songs. Singing also helps groups co-operate together and feel socially connected. Traditional work songs are just one example. Dancing has similar roots in pre-history. It's a natural response to rhythm and helps us express everything from fear to excitement.

Based around current themes such as "Global Warming" and "Recycling", the opera project uses ideas from the children to create a story, music and movement. McOpera professionals, led by composer Aileen Sweeney, support the children to sing, play their instruments, dance, and act in a mini-opera they create over a few days. There's even a chance to draw and paint, creating artwork to set the scene. The whole project taps into and encourages natural creativity, and has been running successfully in East Lothian schools for a number of years.

You can't create an opera without a lot of teamwork and creating together is a wonderful and positive way to learn and develop. The children of Milngavie Primary School get this great opportunity thanks to financial support from private donors of MilngavieMusic.

Katie Hull and Sue Baxendale

New Name, Same Great Music

MILNGAVIE MUSIC

Milngavie Music Club has reached the venerable age of 84 this year. It's quite a thought, that in 1942-45 many of our early concerts must have been held under black-out conditions; a society presenting concerts which might be disrupted at any time by air-raid sirens was a brave undertaking. But the club thrived – and it really was a 'club' which you had to join before you could buy a ticket. After a couple of years, demand for tickets was so great that there was a waiting list. Non-members (who used to be known as 'guests') could only attend in the company of a member.

But times change. Now and again we have found the notion persists that we are an exclusive society, like a golf club, giving members-only concerts. But we have, in fact, been inclusive for a very long time and wish that to be clearly conveyed. That is why, after all these years, we are following the example of many similar societies in Scotland and dropping the word 'club' from our name for everyday purposes. Constitutionally, we'll still be a registered charity called 'Milngavie Music Club', but our public face will be MilngavieMusic.

Hugh Macdonald



MEET THE COMMITTEE



*Colin Suckling
Business Secretary*

Whilst teaching and researching chemistry at the University of Strathclyde for over 50 years has been my front-line career, in parallel there has always been music in multiple forms, including 10 years as Business Secretary of MMC.

I've been lucky to have had opportunities to contribute to music as a player, composer, conductor, entrepreneur, and administrator. Highlights include playing the horn with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra as a student, founding the West of Scotland Schools Symphony Orchestra and chairing its Board for 20 years, conducting the Glasgow Senior Citizens Orchestra since 2023, and having one of my pieces of music performed at an MMC concert!

Which brings me neatly to the question of what the Business Secretary actually does. It's much what you'd expect: supporting the team in the formal business of MMC, including managing the committee, annual general meetings, and contracting artists for performances. It's really rewarding to see the large audiences enjoying top quality performances and knowing that you've played a part in bringing it to Milngavie.

A reminder of a splendid concert

In March we hosted the trio Shaham-Erez-Wallfisch. One of our audience, John Creed, sat quietly sketching while they thrilled us with Smetana and Brahms. What a talented audience we have too!

Contributions for the newsletter are always welcome: mail us at newsletter@milngaviemusic.org



What's on at Douglas?



The annual Music School Concerto Concert is a great chance to support our local young musicians. The concert is at 7.30pm on Tuesday 2nd June at Douglas Academy. Selected by audition earlier in the year, three soloists will be accompanied by a side-by-side orchestra of pupils and professional players, led by BBCSSO violinist Dave Routledge.

The concert programme includes Mozart's Horn Concerto no 3 performed by Magnus Campbell, Bruch Violin Concerto no 1 performed by Rebecca Grieg and Lalo's Symphonie Espagnol performed by Andrew Irvine.

Tickets, available on the door, are priced at £8 for adults and £4 for children/concession.

Sue Baxendale

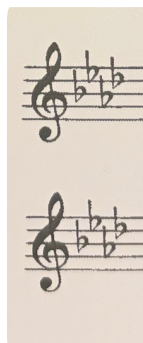
Ticket prices

After much discussion the committee has reluctantly concluded that our subscription and single concert ticket prices no longer reflect the cost of presenting concerts of the quality you, our audience, have come to expect. We last raised the single ticket price (from £14 to £15) in 2021 and since then our costs have increased considerably, especially fees to artists which are now between 20% and 30% higher than they were five years ago. Looking at ticket prices charged by our colleagues in other similar societies across Scotland, it's evident that we're charging significantly less than the average. In order to maintain the quality of artists we can engage, we're raising the single ticket price to £20 (online booking costs an extra £1.56, charged by our ticket provider.)

The committee really appreciates the security that subscribers give to the MilngavieMusic season, and the loyalty of those who return year on year, therefore we are setting the subscription at £115 for all 8 concerts. That's a discount of £45 on the full cost, and effectively gives you two concerts for free. We are also keen to promote chamber music to young people, therefore the student price remains at £5 (£30 for the season) and tickets for school pupils are free.

Hugh Macdonald

ON THE RADIO



Have you discovered *Key Changes*? This is an ambitious project to cover a thousand years of musical history in 48 programmes. It starts with Guido d'Arezzo and the invention of notation. There are lots of musical clips to illustrate the ideas, and chat from a historian and a music educator. Seek it out on Radio 3 or iPlayer.

Carron Shankland

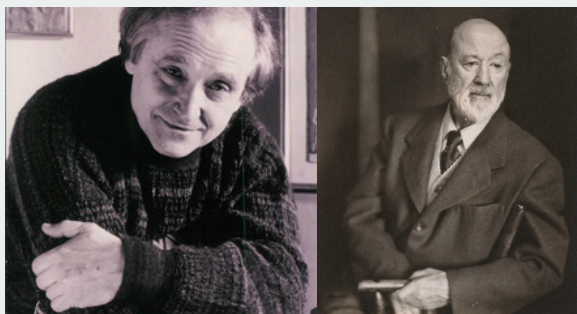


LOOKING BACK ...

100 years ago, Glasgow's classical music scene was buzzing. World-famous musicians like Fritz Kreisler, Artur Rubinstein and the soprano Elizabeth Schumann could be heard in recital. Václav Talich, founder of the great Czech Philharmonic, was conductor of the Scottish Orchestra for the 1926-27 season. His repertoire was eclectic – he introduced new works like Vaughan Williams's 'Pastoral' Symphony and Honegger's 'Pacific 231' – and the audience at the St Andrew's Hall reportedly loved him.



The British National Opera Company gave a three-week season in the city during which they performed no fewer than 19 different operas under a conducting team that included John Barbirolli, Malcolm Sargent and Adrian Boult. During the run the company's Wagner specialist, tenor Walter Hyde, managed to squeeze in Act One of Parsifal in a live studio broadcast from 5SC, Glasgow's fledgling radio station. Also in 1926, the 5SC Orchestra, much augmented at St Andrew's Hall, was conducted by Gustav Holst himself in the first complete Scottish performance of 'The Planets'.



50 years ago, in 1976, there was still a spirit of adventure in the air when South African-born piano virtuoso Yonty Solomon visited Milngavie Music Club to play the mammoth and very difficult 'Concord' Sonata by Charles Ives – 45 minutes of challenging modernism and a towering monument of 20th century piano music. We'd love to hear from anyone who remembers that concert!

Hugh Macdonald

"Art is not a plaything, but a necessity, and its essence, form, is not a decorative adjustment, but a cup into which life can be poured and lifted to the lips and be tasted."

Rebecca West



MUSIC HUB ACTIVITIES

Spring 2026

Players at The Music Hub were very happy to get back to Bearsden Cross Parish Church in January with its new and improved heating up and running. The return to warmth and comfort was echoed in our most recent project, the *Boccherini Bonanza* workshop day.

Boccherini is probably most known for his "Celebrated Minuet" from the string quintet in E, G.275 which emerged as the favourite of a 19th century European-wide Boccherini minuet craze and then found further fame as the elegant foil to the criminal forces of violence and disorder in the 1955 film 'The Ladykillers'. Yet there is much more to this unjustly neglected composer.

A phenomenal cellist, Boccherini composed music of the utmost refinement, elegance and beauty for his royal patrons in Spain. Luckily for us at the Hub the bulk of his music was written for chamber ensemble. He composed over one hundred and twenty string quintets plus six excellent sextets. Much of this music is suitable for good amateurs – apart from the cello parts which can be truly virtuosic and rather terrifying! But with professional fortification (players, not alcohol!) the performances at the end of the day were accomplished and the famous Fandango from the guitar quintet, featuring a castanet solo from our own Hugh Macdonald, naturally brought the house down.

In May we head into the summer sessions for six weeks and then we have a well-earned break before resuming in September. The success of our Music Hub is undoubtedly built on our season of twenty-eight weekly meetings, a reminder that consistent habits in music can bring results whatever your age. Perhaps you have a Strad in the attic waiting for a new lease of life? Come and try us out: details on the Hub pages in the brochure.

Pat Field



AUDIENCE spotlight



For this issue we talked to Marie Milne. If you'd like to be featured, get in touch!

Tell us about your introduction to chamber music.

I started coming to Milngavie Music Club after my husband had been coming for a few years. At that time the concerts were held in Milngavie Town hall. The present site of Cairns Church has much better sound than in the Town Hall and the ambience is very good too. We are so lucky to have such a dedicated committee who work to let us enjoy such amazing music. They strive to bring local and international artists who are passionate about their craft. Having the opportunity to hear players at the beginning of their musical careers is also such an honour for us and them.

How long have you been coming to MMC?

I've been a member for over 15 years, I think. I served on the committee as treasurer for about 4 years and was able to meet and greet new members during that time. Hopefully they found me welcoming and I certainly enjoyed meeting them. I still say hello to many of them as though they are friends.

Did you learn an instrument or sing and do you still make music?

I learnt piano for a while when I was 10 years old. I am pleased to be able to read music and enjoyed learning the theory part. I also enjoy singing in a group situation. Sadly, I don't make time to play anymore and I rather feel that I would be very rusty now.

What's your favourite piece of music?

I really enjoy *The Lark Ascending* by Ralph Vaughan Williams. I enjoy nature being depicted in music whether wildlife or weather.

If you were introducing someone to chamber music, what piece would you get them to listen to and why?

I would recommend Bedřich Smetana's Quartet No 1 in E Minor, 'From My Life'. It takes me to another place for a little while.

Cameron puts down his pen

This year Cameron Shepherd steps down from the committee. His informative programme notes have been a special feature of concerts for many years now and we will miss them. We think Cameron may be the longest-standing attendee of Milngavie Music Club, having been to concerts in the 1960s. Can any audience members go further back than this? Let us know!

PUZZLE CORNER: CONNECTIONS

Congratulations to David Dunphy who got all the connections in the last newsletter and mailed us within 24 hours. Honourable mentions to Paul Brownsey and Kathleen Cartwright who got the right connections but weren't quite so quick!

Answers to the January connections grid: Beethoven, Britten, Mozart, and Schumann all wrote works with "Spring" titles or nicknames; Bärenreiter, Faber, O.U.P., Peters are all music publishers; Bach, Guistini, Handel and Scarlatti were all born in 1685; Antarctica, Italian, New World and Scottish are all geographic nicknames for symphonic works.

Here's the next puzzle. Arrange the 16 items here into four groups of four by figuring out the common themes or categories for each group. There's a modest prize for the first person to mail newsletter@milngaviemusic.org correctly identifying the groups and the connecting category. Answers in the next newsletter. Hub players are not eligible for this competition.

Brian	Kegelstatt	Corelli	Mahler
Ghost	Jargar	Corrette	Dumky
Martini	Schubert	Astrea	Chopin
Larsen	Tartini	Archduke	Mouret

MilngavieMusic Season 2026-2027

Dates for your diaries:

25 September 2026	22 January 2027
16 October 2026	19 February 2027
13 November 2026	12 March 2027
4 December 2026	16 April 2027

