



The Scottish Fiddle Orchestra

Scotland's National Fiddle Orchestra

NEWSLETTER

Patron: HRH The Princess Royal

Scottish Registered Charity No. SC010753

April 2016 / No 72

Here we are again, into another musical season with a fresh programme which should help to drive away the winter blues. We have certainly had a momentous year, with the highlights undoubtedly centring around our Patron, HRH the Princess Royal. It's been a number of years since we enjoyed a visit, but 2015 saw two Royal occasions to add to the orchestra's archives.



The first was a memorable trip to Buckingham Palace made by a small group of players, under the leadership of our principal soloist Yla Steven. Following a request from the Palace to play at an afternoon function for the Princess Royal and her guests the orchestra prepared a short programme which was played at various times throughout the afternoon, alternating with the band of the Household Cavalry. The players voted it to be a truly memorable trip, and returned full of anecdotes and stories of their visit.

Later in the year, the Princess and her husband Vice Admiral Sir Timothy Lawrence attended the SFO Glasgow concert in the Royal Concert Hall in September. Caroline Winn, the Glasgow concert administrator, worked tirelessly over the summer months organising the visit to ensure everything ran smoothly. All her efforts certainly paid off as the visit turned out to be a great success, with the Royal couple happily mingling and chatting with the whole orchestra over the course of the evening. Her Royal Highness and her husband took away with them CDs and a specially framed composition by orchestra leader Bill Cook along with a host of memories of good fellowship and music.



We must sound a sad note however, with the retirement of Robert and Moira Clark. Heading up the front of house team for many years they have decided to step down. Robert also was instrumental in producing the quarterly newsletter which went out to Patrons and members of the orchestra. We wish them all the very best for the future, and extend to them our sincere thanks for their untiring efforts over many years.

Concert Diary

Edinburgh	Usher Hall	18 th June 2016	0131 228 1155	www.usherhall.co.uk
Glasgow	Royal Concert Hall	17 th September 2016	0141 353 8000	www.glasgowconcerthalls.com
Belfast	Waterfront	29 th October 2016	02890 334455	www.waterfront.co.uk
Edinburgh	Usher Hall	30 th December 2016	0131 228 1155	www.usherhall.co.uk
Perth	Concert Hall	18 th February 2017	01738 621031	www.horsecross.co.uk

With an eye to the future we have created a new editorial team to carry on Robert's good work.

This team comprises Campbell Smith (SFO Marketing Director), Peter Brash (SFO Company Secretary) and Douglas Smith (SFO Publishing). Peter has already contributed significantly to previous newsletters and website articles and postings. The team plans to continue, and where possible look at ways of improving the scope and value of the newsletter as regards providing informative and interesting anecdotal features and articles throughout the year.

In the meantime, many thanks for your support and we look forward to providing your newsletters for many years to come.

Concert Summary

It is very pleasing to note that our concerts continue to attract ever growing audiences, with our Hogmanay Concert in Edinburgh, our Perth concert, and Aberdeen concert proving that we can certainly fill a venue.

It's amazing to think that this early in the year we have already put three concerts behind us. And what concerts they were, each providing their own special challenges.

First up, as ever, was **Perth** under the administration of Alister McLean. This concert seems to grow in stature year on year and 2016 was no exception. With the sell out audience creating an enthusiastic atmosphere Robert Lovie celebrated his first anniversary as orchestra compère with another vintage performance, confirming him as a natural successor to the great Jim McColl.

Piping was provided by the Vale of Atholl Pipe Band, with the main attraction undoubtedly being the debut of piper Archie McNab, aged nine! Archie is the young son of well known drummer 'Bongo' McNab, one of Scotland's finest pipe band drummers, himself the son of Gillie McNab who plays a pivotal role in running piping in the Vale of Atholl. As ever it was a pleasure to watch the dancing of Catriona and Marnie and listen to the singing of Collette and Dennis, all now firmly established as part of the SFO family.

Aberdeen brought a completely new set of obstacles. With our usual venue, Aberdeen Music Hall, closing for refurbishment work and no dates available, administrator Sheena Anderson had to set about finding a replacement venue - no easy task when the playing complement can exceed eighty or ninety players!

Sheena managed this in grand style, however, by taking the orchestra to the Beach Ballroom. Overcoming shortage of stage space by using the side balconies for pipe band and some players, the SFO produced a truly spectacular concert of great visual effect and fine sound which left the sell out audience delighted and will surely bring them back next year.

Feeling really upbeat following Aberdeen, the members of the SFO took to planes, trains, buses and cars for the trip to **Nottingham**. Administrator Jim Brodlie had a big act to follow after last year's success, and he certainly produced the goods.

Nottingham concert will be remembered for four particular things.

One, for the first time, advertising on buses was introduced, with spectacular results. Seeing these vehicles moving around the city with our name and picture emblazoned on the side was very exciting.



Two, the enthusiasm of the audience, although down from last year had to be seen to be believed. No question they enjoyed the show!

Three, the after-show ceilidh, again organised by Jim Brodrie as "ceilidhmeister" showed what a depth of talent resides in the orchestra, with some great sketches from Bob Diament and his two hench(men) Catriona and Susie, as well as a visit from magician 'Magic Mike' along with some fine dancing from Catriona and Marnie. The jewel in the crown however was in the performances of Dennis and Colette who were simply hilarious. The concert guests from Preston who had been brought by Tom Smith must have left the next day mightily impressed. If they had felt like more music they could have enjoyed the informal ceilidh afterwards which went on till after three am!

The fourth and certainly most emotive memory must be of the little girl who sat and played beside Yla Steven through the concert. Read the story on page 4.

Sadly it will be a couple of years until we return to Nottingham, but we will carry many warm memories with us and we will certainly be assured of a warm welcome when we return!

Incorporation of Skinners & Glovers

The Scottish Fiddle Orchestra is proud to have the Incorporation of Skinners & Glovers as their charity partner for their Glasgow Royal Concert Hall show on 17th September 2016. The Skinners celebrate their 500th Anniversary this year.

The Deacon of the Skinners this year is Jamie Mason, son of the late great John Mason. John founded the Scottish Fiddle Orchestra and was composer and arranger of many of the orchestra's finest and best loved pieces. Jamie is himself a member of the orchestra and through his mutual interest in these two organisations the Glasgow concert is being organised. It is a great privilege for the SFO to be associated with the Skinners at this auspicious time in their history and the orchestra is looking forward to playing a pivotal role in what promises to be a memorable evening.



The Incorporation of Skinners claims to be the oldest of the fourteen Incorporated Trades of Glasgow, incorporated on 28 May 1516 by the burgh of Glasgow's feudal superior, Archbishop James Beaton, then also Chancellor of Scotland. In terms of the charter forming the first constitution no one could carry on business as a skinner unless he was a burghess of the city and his standard of work good enough to pass the masters of the Craft. Regulations governing apprenticeship and training soon followed and before long provisions for relieving poverty amongst Skinners, their widows and children were enacted too.

Like many early guilds, the Skinners were originally closely connected with the church and particularly in Glasgow the Cathedral. To this date there is an annual service in the Cathedral, where the Skinners and the other Crafts each have their pew adorned with their coats of arms.

The history of the Skinners through the ages is bound up with the history of Glasgow. They took part in every development and the members were concerned in the good government of the city. From about 1780 the Skinners also took an interest in national affairs and their records show instances of objecting to parliamentary bills, and how they helped raise a battalion of Volunteers for the Napoleonic Wars. In 1799 they sent £200 for famine relief in Scotland, in 1854 £200 for aiding the widows of soldiers and sailors serving in the Crimean War, and large sums for relief schemes in both the wars of 1914/18 and 1939/45. Like the other crafts they have widely ranging membership. Their most prominent current member is perhaps the Earl of Snowdon but the ordinary membership still consists mainly of the sons and sons-in-law of members, with many families having been represented over generations.

Craft functions today are entirely charitable. The income of the funds is devoted primarily to the relief of pensioner members, their widows and unmarried daughters and contributions are given to many charitable institutions. They are represented in the Trades House by 4 elected members.

Two Ylas



Imagine discovering that you are not the only person in the world with your first name. For most of us, that's not difficult to imagine at all. However, for the SFO's principal soloist, Yla Steven, it came as bit of a shock. Yla's name - pronounced "Eye-La" - is the old spelling of Isla (as in, Glen Isla, in Angus).

As many readers will already know, most SFO concerts feature Yla playing a slow air, accompanied by the orchestra. This season's programme includes John Mason's composition, "Lament for the Death of the Rev. Archie Beaton", with Yla taking the lead. She has performed solos with the SFO all over the world.

Yla's influence is demonstrated not just in her playing but also in the way she has passed on her skills and knowledge to younger generations of violinists. Until her retirement in 2010, Yla worked as an instrumental teacher in Edinburgh. She has taught hundreds of students, several of whom have gone on to join the SFO. The current management of the SFO includes 3 of Yla's former pupils.

In 2015, Yla was awarded the British Empire Medal in the Queen's Birthday Honours List for services to Scottish music.

Having taught violin to so many pupils, inevitably, Yla lost contact with a lot of them after they left school and moved away from the Edinburgh area. One such pupil was Tudor Lloyd, who was one of Yla's most talented students during the 1970s. After decades of lost contact, Yla was delighted to receive, out of the blue, a card from "Tudor and Clan" at Christmas 2015. This included a note to the effect that Tudor was married with 3 children and living in the Midlands. His middle child, a daughter aged 11, had been called "Yla" in honour of his former teacher. Not only that, Yla (junior) had been learning violin and was already up to Grade 6 standard.

As Yla (senior) says, "I was completely gobsmacked. It was disconcerting to find out all these things and then turn to the back of the card to see that it had been designed by 'Yla Lloyd'. I was honoured that Tudor should name one of his two daughters after me." Yla (senior) quickly contacted Tudor to suggest that he and his family might like to come to see her playing with the SFO at their Nottingham concert in April 2016. He replied, saying that they already had tickets for the concert. From there, it was only matter of time before arrangements were made for Yla (junior) to join the orchestra as a special guest for the Nottingham concert. The 2 Ylas sat side by side in the orchestra throughout the rehearsal and concert - and received a special ovation from the audience for their efforts.



Yla (junior) has clearly been well brought up because, when questioned after the concert as to how much she had enjoyed the experience, she confirmed that the SFO is the best orchestra she has played with so far(!). We wish Yla (junior) all the best with her future in music. May it bring her fun and friendship, in the way it has done for all of us in the SFO.

Contacts

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