



ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15

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At the end of another successful season, I am delighted to report that Music in Peebles continues to thrive. Membership in 2014/15 was maintained above the 100 mark, with 19 new members joining (more than in any recent year) and ticket sales holding up well. Average attendance at concerts was slightly down from last season, but remains at a healthy level.

The seven concerts during the season featured a mix of exceptional emerging young artists and the internationally renowned. Top of the audience ratings was Martin Roscoe, with Chloë Hanslip and Danny Driver not far behind. A highlight for many was the sound of massed wind instruments as the 13-strong Scottish Wind Ensemble gave us a thrilling performance of Mozart's *Gran Partita*. Our season opened and closed with two of the finest young string quartets, the Gildas and Maxwell. The latter's programme included two works by Ronald Stevenson, so the concert took on an especially poignant significance as the composer had died just three days earlier. Across the season, programmes continued to combine the familiar with the challenging and although the great established masterpieces win the widest acclaim, our audiences continue to show their receptiveness to, and appreciation of, contemporary music, with John Mayer's *Prabhandha* and Gary Carpenter's *Pantomime* proving particularly enjoyable. Overall results from the audience reaction surveys maintained their encouragingly high level, with 94% of all votes cast giving 4 or 5 stars – the same as last season.

Our partnership with local schools continues to flourish, with music workshops in all four Peebles schools by the Scottish Wind Ensemble. This year we expanded our outreach work to take music into a local nursing home, where residents were treated to performances by the Maxwell Quartet and some pupils from Peebles High School. We are very grateful to Peebles Common Good Fund for the generous financial support that made this venture possible. I would also like to thank Carole Archibald whose initiative this was and who worked tirelessly to bring it to fruition.

The club remains financially sound, in spite of a small deficit on the year's activities. An increase in performers' fees and expenses was the main reason, with a small increase in outreach expenditure and a slight fall in subscription income also contributing. Fund-raising income was reduced by the absence of a Strawberry Tea and Tombola in 2014, but the newly-introduced raffles on concert evenings made up some of the shortfall. As ever, we are grateful to Enterprise Music Scotland, whose financial backing makes it possible to present concerts of such high quality, and allows us to provide music workshops at very little cost to Music in Peebles or the schools. Once again, we have received a number of cash donations, and have also had wonderful support in the provision of accommodation and transport for musicians, which greatly helps to keep down costs. I would like to express my personal gratitude to all who have contributed in either of these ways, and to acknowledge the invaluable support they have provided to the club.

As the Eastgate Theatre enters its second decade in confident mood, its role in the success of Music in Peebles should also be recognised. More and more of our visiting artists comment on the enjoyment they get from playing in our wonderful venue, and on the friendliness and professionalism of the staff. I would like to add my thanks to everyone at the Eastgate for providing us with such a wonderful home.

Finally, I wish to record my gratitude to my fellow Committee members, all of whom have contributed to the success of Music in Peebles over the last year. Special mention must go to Alison Cruickshanks who, after many years of calm, cheerful and faultless page-turning, has decided to take a well-earned retirement from that most stressful of roles. Her place at the pianists' side has been taken by Douglas Holligan and Philip Hutton, to both of whom I am most grateful. My thanks also go to Carole Archibald for organising hospitality for musicians, Tony Bell for designing and producing concert posters, and both Philip Hutton and Kate Hasson for the splendid programme notes.

John Fox
President, Music in Peebles
28 April 2015