

Glasgow Symphony Orchestra



Where do you go when you want to carry on playing in amateur orchestras at an age where you are no longer eligible for youth orchestras?

This was exactly the question raised by Dorothy Gunnee and Tom Kent in 1975 when they and a group of friends, many of whom had gone through the ranks of Glasgow Schools' Orchestras together, reached the maximum acceptable age for the 'Unitarian Youth Orchestra' – the leading youth orchestra of the era in the city of Glasgow.

Between them, Tom and Dorothy came up with a plan to recruit fellow musicians with an interest in forming a symphony orchestra. So, with a £10 loan for stamps and paper, they sent out letters to everyone they knew who may wish to participate and, as a result of that mail-shot, the Glasgow Symphony Orchestra was founded. The rest, as they say, is history!

Tom Kent went on to conduct the orchestra for over 20 years and has been succeeded by Tommy Fowler, the present conductor and Dorothy has been the GSO administrator throughout. Many of the founder members continue to meet on a weekly basis and there has always been a healthy feed of younger players. Some are sustaining the tradition of continuity from the Glasgow Schools' ensembles – others are studying or working in the city. The current age range covers teens to eighties!

The orchestra rehearses on Tuesday evenings in term time in Notre Dame High School, performing three times a year in the city centre venue, Adelaide's. Programmes have incorporated everything from Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue to Mahler Symphonies.

The orchestra is entirely self-funding and the conductor, soloists (often young musicians or GSO members) contribute their time without remuneration – everyone participates, in whatever capacity, on the same terms - resulting in very enjoyable evenings of music making!

Throughout 2015 GSO celebrates its 40th Anniversary year with events including concerts, a celebration party and the orchestra dinner.



Double Congratulations

The East Glasgow Music School writes: Huge congratulations go to our Honorary President, Dorothy Gunnee, who was recently awarded an MBE for Services to Community Music and Young People in Glasgow!

Dorothy took over as Director of what was then Bannerman Music Club in 1986, and her wide experience as both an instrumental tutor and music administrator enabled her to develop the group into what we now know as East Glasgow Music School. She was educated at Notre Dame Primary and High Schools and the RSAMD (now RCS), following which she began her career as an instrumental teacher of timpani and percussion. Dorothy worked throughout central Scotland with appointments to schools in Glasgow, Dunbartonshire, Lanarkshire and Stirlingshire as well as Napier College in Edinburgh. She also set material for the Scottish Examinations Board in addition to her work as an examiner for the Guildhall School of Music. Dorothy has worked extensively with many youth orchestras over the years, and a number of our current tutors attended residential courses at Castle Toward under her watchful eye!

Dorothy has been involved with the Glasgow Music Festival since 1968, and has served on its committee since 1976. In 1975 she co-founded the Glasgow Symphony Orchestra, which is still going strong and indeed celebrates its 40th anniversary this year. Dorothy was also instrumental in establishing the

East Glasgow Music Festival in 1988, and this popular event ran successfully for 15 years.

More recently, Dorothy has become involved with both administration and adjudication with the Bridgeton Burns Club Schools' Competition and the Trades House of Glasgow Robert Burns Festival. She continues to indulge her love of choral singing with a number of groups which currently include Concordia, Merchant Voices, St Mungo Singers and The Glasgow Phoenix Choir.

In 2009, Dorothy was delighted to be awarded the Lord Provost's Medal for Services to Music in the City of Glasgow.

We are very fortunate to have the continued support of such a talented woman — thank you, Dorothy!

Dorothy, pictured below. The flowers were a small token of the esteem in which she is held by the St Mungo Singers and so many others

