

Music in Peebles enjoyed another record-breaking season in 2012/13, with membership and audiences both at their highest-ever levels, audience satisfaction remaining strong and the financial position being sound. The backing of Enterprise Music Scotland, in raising the profile of chamber music nationally as well as in providing financial and logistical support, has again played an enormous part in our success and the Club is most grateful for all that EMS does for the sector.

Our main subscription series has been highly successful, both artistically and in terms of audiences. Membership for the year reached 99, an increase of 19% over 2011/12 and audiences also grew significantly to the highest aggregate level in the club's history. This more than compensated for our concert in the 2012 Peebles Arts Festival which attracted a disappointingly small audience and resulted in a small financial loss. We have also continued to attract a regular attendance by younger people, particularly students from Peebles High School, and we are grateful to the school's Music Department for continuing to promote our concerts and distribute the free tickets that we provide.

As in 2011/12, we were able to present eight concerts between October and April, helped by the award of a concert by the Andrews Massey Duo in February, generously funded by the Tunnell Trust. The concerts included a wide variety of music, from the Renaissance to contemporary, and also featuring some jazz, traditional and pop/rock pieces. Artists included the world-renowned Brodsky Quartet and Steven Osborne, and also reflected our continuing commitment to presenting emerging artists in the form of Song Studio, consisting of four young singers from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. Of particular note this season was the introduction, for the first time in one of our concerts, of electronic music; in March Steve Bingham presented a programme of violin, electric violin and live looping. Audience reaction to the concerts, as measured by our 'instant feedback' surveys, remained extremely positive with the average rating maintained at 4.6 (out of 5) and no concert scoring below 4.3.

In consultation with local schools, we were able to arrange six music workshops this season, three each by the brass quintet, Pure Brass, and violinist Steve Bingham. Reaction from staff and pupils at all the schools, primary and secondary, has been universally very favourable and helped to boost the representation of young people in the audiences for the evening concerts that followed. We are grateful to the staff of all the schools for their enthusiastic support for these workshops, and to Enterprise Music Scotland, whose generous financial support makes it possible to run the workshops at very little cost to Music in Peebles or the schools.

Once again, we have had excellent support from the management, staff and volunteers of the Eastgate Theatre who work so hard on our behalf. Both audiences and performers benefit greatly from the existence of this wonderful venue and its professional and dedicated team, to whom I extend my warmest thanks.

I would like to express my personal gratitude to those Committee members and Club members who have provided hospitality to visiting musicians, saving the Club substantial amounts in accommodation costs. I particularly wish to record my thanks to Ann and John Taylor, who accommodated Duo Dorado for two nights, and Gusia and Arthur Thornton, who provided hospitality to George-Emmanuel Lazaridis for two nights. My thanks also go to everyone involved in making our Strawberry Tea and Tombola such a success, in particular to Carole Archibald, Kate Hasson and Linda Singer for all their organisation skills, Alison Cruickshanks for masterminding the tombola and Sam Docherty for introducing the book and CD stall.

Finally, I am very grateful for all the support from my fellow Committee members, all of whom are volunteers and all of whom have contributed to the success of Music in Peebles over the last year. I especially wish to thank Kate Hasson for her excellent programme notes and Tony Bell for the concert posters. Special thanks are due to Derek McLachlan who is stepping down this year after seven years' service, all but one of them as Treasurer. Thanks to his careful stewardship, the Club is in a very healthy financial position and can plan for the future with confidence. The Club owes Derek a great debt of gratitude and he leaves with my thanks and best wishes.

John Fox
President, Music in Peebles
30th April 2013