

The Right Notes

The Newsletter of the Balerno Music Festival Society

Festival 10

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tenth

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Hello 10th Anniversary Festival !

It's ten years since the first Balerno Music Festival took the community by storm changing October in the upper water of Leith Valley for ever. In the 2017 issues of Right Notes while we'll of course be looking forward to the tremendous programme for the 10th Festival, we'll also look back to the nine Festivals to date and we'll chat with some of the people who've been involved over the years. So hang on to your hats, this is going to be a roller coaster of a year!

So what's in store at the Tenth Festival ?

The Festival Programme is launched officially at the Balerno Childrens Gala on Saturday 27 May although it's been on the website for a couple of weeks before that, and if you're a Friend of the Festival you'll already have been able to take advantage of the early bird booking opportunity.

We've some old favourites for you and some new and exciting events. We're starting with a real flurry of shows on the first weekend. There's two 'big' events on the first Saturday with the Meadows Chamber Orchestra performing in Juniper Green

and the Edinburgh Highland Reel and Strathspey Society in Balerno, With four other events on the same day that will make it the busiest opening weekend we've had, and the blend of cinema, cabaret, fiddle and classical means that there really will be something for everyone.

But the closing weekend is even bigger with seven events on Saturday 14 October. But there's a whole lot between the two so make sure you get the programme and don't miss out on the best Festival yet!

So in 2005 , someone asked 'why don't we do a music festival?'

'So where did the Balerno Music Festival come from and how has it come to be what it is today?'

Going right back to the beginning, the idea for a Music Festival first arose in spring 2006, shortly after the first Balerno Farmers Market which had been organised by the Balerno Conservation and Development Forum, now the Balerno Village Trust. In March 2006 a prospectus was offered to BVCDF, to give it its full acronym, setting out options for a Festival. BVCDF, had itself been set up in an effort to try to regenerate the village, in particular Main Street, and to ensure that the character of the village could be protected and enhanced in the face of increasing change. We didn't want to halt that change but to harness it for the benefit of the community at large.

The Forum had arrived on the scene as an initiative of the Community Council back in 2003, and those involved knew that having set up a Market, establishing a Music Festival would take a little time. So a small group was formed and a number of options were considered; Could the Festival be a series of concerts or should it have a

compact programme over say a weekend, and if so should that be in spring, summer or autumn. We never considered winter I'm afraid! And, importantly, we didn't set out to limit it by calling it a Folk Festival, a Jazz Weekend, an Opera event or such like. We wanted it to appeal to all tastes; something for everyone!

Then there was the question of *how* you do it. That was how the Music Festival Society was born as a partnership of groups and individuals. But by then it was 2007, and we reckoned it would take a minimum of 18 months to put together, and put on, a Festival. And so we plumped for the Farmers market weekend in October 2008.

No-one knew how or whether it would work; as a dry run Balerno Parish Church put on a variety show in summer 2007 to see whether the Church could be used as for live performance art, and to ensure that we understood the regulatory requirements.

The very first performance on Friday 3 October featuring a recorder group who had travelled up from London. Audiences have fluctuated over the years but the first concert was a near sell out, and so the

Balerno Music Festival was born.

In many ways the pattern of the Festival has remained unchanged - with the Festival closing with the Jazz Party featuring Roger Cull, a Folk Concert promoted by Balerno Folk Club and a Gala Concert and Reception, and importantly the Young Musicians Concert which gives especially our school students an opportunity to perform in public. Of course over time the weekend has grown into three weekends and the number and variety of events has increased correspondingly.

Right Notes hope you'll enjoy not only reading about the Festival, but also the programme for this

Consortium 5
featured at the first
ever Festival
Concert on 3 Oct
2008



BOX OFFICE NEWS - You can get hold of Festival tickets on-line, by posting an order to Balerno Parish Church Office, calling at the Box Office at Balerno Farmers Market. Nearer the time you will also be able to buy from the Box Office at Scotmid Balerno

Remembering Music Festivals - No 1 - Ray Wyper

In the first of a special series of articles for Right Notes, Ray Wyper chats about what was and is important about the Festival.

Ray was involved with the idea of the Festival right from the start and despite being involved with many other aspects of village life, including Chaining the C&B News Board, he found time to chair the Festival Society in 2014 and 15. who was in right from the start in 2005 and who was Chair of the Festival Society between 2013 and '15.

'Yes,' Ray writes, 'I like music, mainly Classical or Folk, I've even been known to listen to Radio Nan Gáidheal which, like Italian Opera, I can't understand a word but, still, I like the 'sound'. I cannot sing and my whistling is distinctly dodgy, however, just 10 years ago I found myself with a group of good Balerno people who had the ambition to start a Balerno Music Festival and, some of them were distinctly 'Musical'.'

As Ray says, the Festival was to be a vehicle to bring local people together by offering world class musical events, - and from the very first concert that has been absolutely evident in the programmes offered by the festival - and to involve as broad a selection of our community as possible along with our local schools. 'We contacted various local organisations.' notes Ray, 'like the Balerno Folk Club, the Bowling club, The Balerno Theatre Company the local Churches. Did it work? Well, ten years on I think we did quite well and as I take a back seat I take great satisfaction that new people have joined the committee. There is even an outpost of the Festival in Juniper Green where the Parish Church has 'signed on' for another year. 2017 will be another successful year but,

please, ' Rays asks, 'please consider joining the 'Friends of Balerno Music Festival', there are some fringe benefits but mainly you will be committing to the future of our Festival.' Thank you Ray, and thank you for all you have done to make the Festival what it is today.



The Friends of Balerno Music Festival

This is why Ray would like you to become a Friend!

Earlier this year the Chair of Balerno Music Festival handed over cheques to each of our three local schools, Balerno High, Dean Park Primary and Harmeny to help and encourage music making and learning.

Fiona Gilroy, Chair of the Festival Society, said of the donations; 'Helping and encouraging the next generation of musicians is just about the most important thing that the Festival Society can do, and we know that the Society's assistance is hugely appreciated.

Being a Friend of the Balerno Music Festival is one way you can help the Society to continue to support young people as they start out on what may become a career in music.

The 2017 Festival marks ten years since folk like Ray had the vision and commitment to help create what is now a jewel in Balerno's crown. The 10th Festival is special and it's going to be a great experience for everyone. I'm looking forward to welcoming you to it. See you there!

Remembering Music Festivals - No 2 - Roger Cull

To say that the Roger Cull Trio are regulars at the Festival is an understatement and then some. In many ways they *are* the Balerno Music Festival, and this year is no exception. In fact Roger himself will be appearing in three different events; Music@TheMill, the Borders Big Band and as the mainspring of the Jazz Party again . This year Roger will again welcome special guests to the Jazz party in the form of Bruce Michie (saxophones and brass), and by popular demand Iain Ewing will again bring his own special voice to the event.

"This will be our 10th year playing at the BMF jazz party." says Roger. 'We always enjoy ourselves at the Balerno Festival gig, mainly because of the very enthusiastic, warm audience. We try to change the band line-up a little each year in order to offer some variety. This year, in addition to the regular trio of myself on piano, Allen Skinner on drums and Alastair Burnet on bass, we are looking forward to having two outstanding musicians with us as our guests: Bruce Michie is a



multi-instrumentalist who plays brass (trumpet, flugel horn and valve trombone) as well as most of the reed family of instruments (clarinet, soprano, alto, tenor and baritone saxophones). We are never quite sure which instruments Bruce will bring to any one event ! Iain Ewing has performed as our guest vocalist at least twice before, and returns by popular demand. Iain has a wide repertoire of jazz "standard" songs, but also some rock n' roll favourites. He also enjoys singing songs which the audience request - which means we instrumentalists have to keep on our toes."



We're hoping to get some may get some words from Iain and Bruce before October to whet your appetites through the pages of Right Notes, so keep looking out for update Newsletters

And a big thank you to Roger and friends for being such a good Friend for the Festival over all the years. We're looking forward to October 15th 2017!

NEXT ISSUE - In the next issue we'll give more news on the different events and some more recollections of Festivals past and interviews with the people who helped to make them happen.

Many thanks to our Sponsors!