



## **PARENTS' INFORMATION**

**2015 / 2016**

[www.fiddleorchestra.com](http://www.fiddleorchestra.com)

## A BRIEF HISTORY

Wallace and his then wife founded the Ayrshire Fiddle Orchestra in August 1982, both string instrument tutors in South West Scotland, with the aim of encouraging and developing Scots Fiddle Music among local young musicians many of whom were, or had been their pupils. The Orchestra has steadily matured since those early beginnings and now has around 110 violinists, cellists, bass players and percussionists from 10 to 19 years old.

The Orchestra has developed a well-deserved reputation for producing some of the most entertaining fiddle music in Scotland and are continually offered many musical engagements not just in Ayrshire but throughout Scotland and beyond.

Membership is free and is open to all string and percussion players and the principle is that you learn "on the job". Beginners are not expected, and should not worry about, being able to fiddle at a fast and furious pace when they join – but it is amazing how they soon pick it up! The self-confidence that these young players acquire over a short period of months is incredible and they are soon seamlessly merging with the older players.

Under the previous musical direction of Alistair McCulloch, one of Scotland's most prominent fiddle players, the Orchestra is now in the capable hands of musical director **David Moore** and, coupled with the boundless organisational, logistical and promotional energies that **Wallace, Kathleen** and **Euan** maintain, the Orchestra continues to thrive and entertain thousands of people each year.

August 2012 marked the Orchestra's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

## WHO'S WHO?

The structure of the Orchestra is very straightforward but the smooth running of the Orchestra relies on parental support for the majority of the administrative functions. To offer some continuity office bearers are usually appointed at the AGM for a period of three years. The following is the current set up: -

Position	Name	Telephone	email
Director & Chairman	Wallace Galbraith	07967 222572	wallace@fiddleorchestra.com
Musical Director	David Moore	07723 405354	d_moore_@hotmail.com
Director & Secretary	Kathleen Terras	01292 479306 07711 813351	secretary@fiddleorchestra.com
Director & Tour Manager	Euan Terras	01292 479306 0780 360 1313	euan@fiddleorchestra.com
Treasurer	Gillian Espie	01292 264575	gillian.espie@btinternet.com
Merchandise	John & Catriona McHugh	01292 314712	merchandise@fiddleorchestra.com
AFO Clothing	Elizabeth Watt	07967 222572	wallace@fiddleorchestra.com
Media Contact	Margret Campbell	01292 289575	margret_campbell@hotmail.com
Music Secretary	Celeste Teenan	01292 283674	celeste@teenan.freemove.co.uk
Kilts	Robin & Fiona McMeehan	01292 476202	mcmeehanf@aol.com
Christmas Fayre	Douglas Clark	01292 440464	dougeaz@talktalk.net

**WEBSITE**     [www.fiddleorchestra.com](http://www.fiddleorchestra.com)

Our newly updated website has lots of information in it including a calendar with events which you can link to your phone, ipad etc.

**Hannah Coombs**, one of our senior players has a *Blog* on the website which she started in South Africa and will continue to keep it updated with AFO news!

## HOW DOES IT ALL GET ORGANISED?

Basically the answer to this is – everyone needs to help! With David Moore free to look after the music, Wallace, Kathleen & Euan do a huge amount of work in the background but the whole operation depends on the support of all the parents as part of the ‘AFO Family!’ There are numerous ways to ‘do your bit’ for the Orchestra and new volunteers are always made very welcome. Please volunteer to help in any way you can.

Some options are:

- Parent supervision duty at rehearsals
- Assisting at concerts & Christmas Fayre - e.g. front of house programme sellers, raffle tickets, stallholders, catering, running the bar!
- Helping with hosting players from visiting musical groups
- Fundraising – help with organising events
- Helping update our Website
- Marketing and publicity
- Going with the groups on concerts & visits
- Selling tickets for events and concerts

General support by attending local concerts and fund raising events

Find your niche – if you have a special skill we can use you! We always welcome administration assistance, promotional ideas, people with newspaper and radio contacts etc.

How do I volunteer? – Simply contact Wallace Galbraith or Kathleen Terras and they will point you in the right direction.

### *Email*

Virtually all our communications are by email, either from Wallace Galbraith ( [wallace@fiddleorchestra.com](mailto:wallace@fiddleorchestra.com) ) or our secretary, Kathleen Terras ( [secretary@fiddleorchestra.com](mailto:secretary@fiddleorchestra.com) ). Please make sure Kathleen has your up to date email address and **please** check your email account regularly!!

## THE AFO YEAR

### *Rehearsals*

These take place at Kingcase Church Hall, Prestwick (behind Aldi's Supermarket) on Saturdays from 1.45pm to 4pm with a short break for refreshments. The number of rehearsals is dependant upon concert commitments but there are usually two per month during the school term. A list of all dates is given to every member at the start of each term. Players are expected to attend all rehearsals where possible.

### *AFO Concerts*

The Orchestra has several regular concerts and a large number of invitational performances throughout the year. As with rehearsals, a list of concert dates is given to every member at the start of each term. The number of players for each event is determined by the venue and occasion, with numbers varying from 4 to 100! The selected players receive invitations and details via email for each event well in advance of the required dates..

### *The Main Events*

Our two main concerts of the year are held at Ayr Town Hall in June and December. The full Orchestra usually performs to a sell-out crowd and the concerts are the best way for parents, friends and family to hear the development in the playing skill of their children. The standard of playing is always extremely high, with various solo artists taking part – sometimes invited guests and very often from within the ranks of the Orchestra itself. Another full orchestra concert is the 'Two's Company' event held in November with the Dalmellington Band - a great opportunity to hear the unique combination of brass and strings.

## *Small Concert Groups*

The Orchestra is invited to play at a large number of other events throughout the year. These might include: charity functions, Burns Suppers, church events, weddings, various local ceilidhs, the Ayr Flower Show, Prestwick Prom celebrations amongst others. Many of these events offer fabulous entertainment and, once again, parental and family support is encouraged and always welcome. We hope that you will leave your armchair and add your support! As our younger players will not be playing in these smaller events initially, it is recommended that they still come along and attend to experience the 'lie of the land' and to see at first hand what happens at small group events. Details of these groups are generally emailed to those players involved.

## *Concert Dress*

At almost all concerts the players are expected to wear the following concert dress:-

**Boys** - white shirt, tartan tie, kilt, belt, sporran, kilt socks and black shoes

**Girls** - white blouse, white bra, kilt (knee length), tan tights and black shoes

The orchestra do have some kilts for loan so please ask Fiona and Robin McMeechan if you require help.

On some occasions the players are asked to wear the AFO blue polo shirts with their kilt. Elizabeth Watt handles the orders for these polo shirts.

## *Find us on Facebook and Twitter !*

You can keep up to date with chat, news, photographs and film clips of our events throughout the year by 'liking' our Facebook Page and joining the AFO 'Official' Facebook Group.

Find us on Twitter: *@ayrshirefiddle*

## **CONCERT TOURS – UK & BEYOND**

Each year the Orchestra has various visits where friendships are made and fun and music making overlap.

### **Arran**

The first of these is in May when the junior section head ‘over the water’ to Arran for the weekend. This short overnight tour is an ideal way for the junior players to learn that, when the seniors are not around and you are playing to a ‘packed house’, you have to play loud and hard! Many parents notice a difference in the confidence of their children when they return from this mini-adventure. During the trip there is plenty of time for “messaging about”, a rehearsal, a concert, a ceilidh, games at the Auchrannie Hotel and an afternoon in Brodick.

### **Outreach Weekend**

Each year, early on in the session, the Orchestra goes on a mini-tour out into the Ayrshire community for their Outreach Weekend, when we take our music to parts of North, East and South Ayrshire where perhaps we are not previously as well known. Visits to West Kilbride, Ardrossan, Irvine, Kilmarnock and Cumnock give those in the locality a taste of what AFO is like and often helps bring in new members from a wider area.

## **INTERNATIONAL TOURS**

Every two years the Orchestra embarks on a major International Tour. Places visited over the past 23 years have included, Norway, Denmark, France, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, Italy, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and China. Shorter trips abroad include a visit in April 2014, with a group of senior players visiting Ariccia, near Rome, Italy when they enjoyed sightseeing in Rome and gave two fantastic performances, each receiving standing ovations.

### **Europe 2013**

Our European Tour in July 2013 was also a great success with 75 players and adults embarking on visits to Strasbourg (where the Orchestra played at the European Parliament), staying with hosts in Lichtenfels in Bavaria, visits to Lucerne and Geneva (playing a concert at CERN and giving the world premiere of "The Higgs Boson" a tune specially composed for the Tour by (now former) Orchestra member Joe Cherry), concerts at the Eiffel Tower and St Germain en Laye in Paris and finally to Brussels.

A great CD featuring a recording of the Orchestra's performance at the Salle de Musique in La Chaux de Fonds in Switzerland is now available at just £5 and has been the AFO's biggest ever selling CD, now on its fourth production run!

### **South Africa 2015**

Our fantastic South Africa Tour in July 2015 saw the orchestra playing three sell-out concerts at the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown as well as in George, Cape Town, Hout Bay and Johannesburg with our tour starting in a game reserve, getting up close to elephants, giraffe and lions. Memorable visits included the Cape of Good Hope, Robben Island, the Apartheid Museum, having a ceilidh at the summit of Table Mountain and playing at the Regina Mundi Cathedral in Soweto. Our visit to the young township players of the Hout Bay Music Project and our joint concert with them had such an impact on AFO that we hope to arrange some future events to help support the ongoing work of the Project. [www.houtbaymusic.org](http://www.houtbaymusic.org)

Our latest CD, "**Keepin it Live and Reel!**" launched in June features much of the repertoire we took on Tour. Available at just £10, it is AFO's best CD yet!

### **North America 2017**

Planning is underway for our next international tour to North America in 2017 and new members joining the Orchestra this year should have the opportunity of going on this tour. Further details to follow!



## FUND RAISING

On the whole the AFO is a self-financing organisation. Small amounts are raised from playing on a commercial basis, individual sponsorship and the occasional grant, but the majority of income is raised by the Orchestra itself. No annual or weekly membership fees or subscriptions are charged so money from ticket sales, raffles and merchandise (CDs, DVDs, pens, mugs etc.) from the **main concerts** and **Christmas Fayre** form the main source of income for the year. Players are often allocated a set number of tickets to sell for each event and it is expected that their full allocation will be sold. Without this income the subsidies for other Orchestra events – trips & tours etc. – are severely affected.

Various other fundraising activities take place during the year, all of which require parental and family support, particularly leading up to the international tours. In previous years these have included:

- **swimathon**
- **car treasure hunt**
- **fun run**
- **race nights**
- **silent auction**
- **summer ceilidh**
- **even an abseil!**

As well as raising essential funds for the Orchestra, these activities are also great social events for the players to get to know each other outside of a playing environment. The friendship and the sense of 'the AFO family' and unity that is promoted during these events form one of the most valuable elements of the Orchestra. New fundraising ideas are always welcome so please pass any suggestions or ideas to any of the office bearers.

A further opportunity to raise finance is through sponsorship and while the Orchestra has many "friends" who support it financially, we always need new ideas for companies or sympathetic individuals who would be willing to offer sponsorship. If you know of any such source please contact Wallace Galbraith.