Music at Heriot-Watt

Calling all music lovers! Do you love singing or want to play in an orchestra? Is music your passion? Heriot-Watt University is a wonderful playground to discover the fantastic array of musical opportunities.
MESSAGE FROM A HERIOT-WATT STUDENT

Heriot-Watt has choirs ranging in sizes. From a Quartet group to a choir a hundred strong. Chorale Excelsior is the main choir on the campus and rehearses on a Tuesday night. It is not auditioned and we’ve a wonderful mix of people from all walks of life – Students, Alumni, Staff, and singers from outside the University, many of whom travel a long way for their weekly ‘choral fix’! It is a choir where people are there to enjoy singing pieces varying from Palestrina to Gershwin, Mozart to Christmas Carols. Opportunities arise throughout the year to sing at graduations (students get paid), sing in stunning venues such as St Giles Cathedral, Rosslyn Chapel, Iona Abbey or the James Watt Centre at the Edinburgh Campus where you have a full orchestra accompanying you.

The orchestra at Heriot-Watt grows steadily stronger by the year and is conducted enthusiastically by the Director of Music, Dr. Steve King. Some members of the orchestra have been there for too many years to count and some are just passing students for the year. There is never a dull moment, jokes are a regular occurrence throughout the rehearsal and the high standard of music played every week definitely keeps you on your toes.

There are other ensembles ready to suit anyone willing to participate and if there isn’t a group that suits you then usually it will be made. For example this year, ‘Big Band’ was started, a student run Jazz group. Performance opportunities are endless.

The University offers music scholarships to talented musicians. This scholarship allocates money for music lessons usually for individual musicians but group ensembles can also apply.

Another benefit of the music at Heriot-Watt is the annual ‘Inchcolm New Music Ensemble’ music course - an exciting fresh thinking music group. The course fee is minimal for students and is definitely worthwhile. The course is based in the stunning west coast of Scotland every June. It lasts a week and you learn newly composed music and perform at the end of the week in Iona Abbey and St Giles Cathedral. If you are a composer there is a competition each year for an individual who lives in Scotland to compose for this course.

From a student point of view being part of any ensemble at Heriot-Watt is a fantastic experience and a great place to make friends from varying backgrounds and ages. If you show any interest you will end up being drawn into as many groups as you can.

We’re always on the look-out for new talent, so if you’ve sung in a choir before, or played in an orchestra, think we sound like a fun-loving crowd, and like the look of what we’re planning, contact the Director of Music, Steve King.
Hello Musicians!

Welcome to Music at Heriot-Watt University. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, our normal activities as laid out in this flyer will be taking a different route while we gradually adjust to moving into the ‘new normal’. I have many exciting music activities planned to take us through the first semester, including chamber music groups for various ensembles. When the situation improves, we will move into having a chamber orchestra and hopefully small singing groups, eventually leading finally back to having a full orchestra and big choir again, doing wonderful concerts in our favourite venues.

The scholarship scheme for talented students is still in place and open to orchestral instrumentalists and choral singers.

Please make contact with me by email to discuss your music activities and what you would like to get involved in.

My contact details and directions to the Music Cottage are on the last page of this flyer. Many thanks and I look forward to meeting many of you.

Steve King
CHORALE EXCELSIOR, is the choir of Heriot-Watt University. Chorale Excelsior gives concerts on and off campus throughout the year. The choir joins up with the orchestra for two of the concerts and the Christmas Carol Celebration. For a third concert the choir performs on its own in St. Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh. Singers from the campus, the Edinburgh community and further afield are welcome to become members of the choir. This choir is non-auditioned. Rehearsals start on the first Tuesday of each semester.

SINFONIA EXCELSIOR, is the orchestra of Heriot-Watt University. The Orchestra gives concerts on and off campus, performs in the annual Heriot-Watt orchestra concert in St. Giles Cathedral and plays for the Christmas Carol Celebration. The orchestra is open to students, staff and the Edinburgh community and further afield. Rehearsals start on the first Monday of each semester. Potential members are auditioned.

Excelsior per cantum

The University Chamber Choir meets Monday lunchtimes in the Music Cottage. The repertoire explores music from 12th century to the present day. EPC features in the Edinburgh University’s Remembrance Service in November, the University anniversary service in February, as well as the Heriot-Watt choirs concert in St. Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh, and its own two concerts in the famous Rosslyn Chapel in November and March.

Graduation Choir

The University Graduation Choir performs at all the Edinburgh and Borders campus graduations.

Vocal Chamber Music

Singers are encouraged to become involved in a variety of musical activities. The Heriot-Watt Upper Voices Choir produced a very successful CD a few years ago.

Instrumental Chamber Music

Coaching is available and help is given to form groups. Excelsior String Quartet and Excelsior Wind Quintet are University-based chamber music groups and are available for concerts, functions and weddings.

Heriot Watt Wind Ensemble

Heriot Watt String Group

Both meet during the year for concerts.

Heriot-Watt Pipe Band

The Heriot-Watt University Pipe Band has been in existence for over 20 years and was founded primarily for HWU students and staff; however, everyone is welcome to join. The band meets once a week. Contact: Juergen.Munz@hw.ac.uk

Inchcolm New Music Ensemble

The Inchcolm New Music Ensemble is seen as the flagship of music making at Heriot-Watt, reflecting the cutting edge of science and technology for which Heriot-Watt is celebrated. The group has given concerts in the St Magnus Festival in the Orkney Islands; Inverie in Knoydart; St Giles’ Cathedral, Edinburgh; the Isle of Skye; Ardtornish House; Iona Abbey off the west coast of Mull; Dunkeld Cathedral; Biggar; and Peebles. The INME toured the Czech Republic in June 2008 giving concerts in Prague, Brno and Kromeriz.

To date, the Inchcolm New Music Ensemble has premiered over 50 new works over 20 years, many being repeated at various times.
Music Scholarships at Heriot-Watt

Heriot-Watt University awards many music scholarships each year in the form of free music tuition for talented choral singers and orchestral instrumentalists up to a maximum of £400 per year. These scholarships are generously supported by the Heriot-Watt Alumni fund.

Selection Criteria
The following criteria will be taken into consideration in the award of scholarships:

• Musical ability and potential. Proof of exam results and membership of orchestras or choirs should be provided. ABRSM Grade 8 is the required standard.

• A reference from your last vocal/instrumental teacher.

Duration
One year, with the probability of an annual extension for the duration of the student's period of study at the University. All scholars will be assessed on a continuous basis.

Audition
All new applicants will be auditioned during their first semester. The outcome of this audition and the show of commitment to the choir or orchestra during that semester will be taken into account on whether a scholarship will be offered.

Commitment
All music scholars will be expected to be members of the orchestra or choir, and attend all rehearsals and concerts.

Wellbeing
Student Wellbeing activities give you the opportunity to take a small break from busy University life to focus on your own physical and mental wellbeing. Whether you want to meet other students, or learn some techniques to manage stress or anxiety—we offer a wide range of activities and workshops. One of our popular music wellbeing activities is Voice Vibe which is a fun and interactive workshop where we use rhythm and voice to relieve stress and create some great sounds. Our full range of activities can be found at bit.ly/HWWellbeingActivities.

For further information, please contact the Director of Music, Steve King.

Vocal/Instrumental Tuition
We carry a database of good teachers in Edinburgh who understand the needs and pressures of being a student. Please ask Steve for recommendations.

Scottish Composers Competition
Heriot-Watt holds an annual competition each year for unpublished Scottish composers. The winners receive a prize and their piece becomes part of the ‘Inchcolm New Music Ensemble’ repertoire.

Scottish Chamber Orchestra
The internationally celebrated Scottish Chamber Orchestra (SCO) is made up of a unique collection of talented musicians who inspire and connect with people of all ages.

Their aim is to provide as many opportunities as possible for people to hear live orchestral music by touring the length and breadth of Scotland and around the world as proud ambassadors for Scottish cultural excellence.

Music at Heriot-Watt is pleased to offer free tickets to students to attend many SCO Edinburgh concerts each year.
For further information, please contact:
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WE WOULD LIKE TO SAY A HUGE THANK YOU
to those who give generously to support the music project at Heriot-Watt University. This enables us to deliver our student scholarship programme; commission new vibrant music; and generally bring the love of music into the University community enhancing our cultural landscape.