

Introduce yourself!

Hi I am Moyra. I play 3rd clarinet. I have always played in this section since joining DCB. It is not that I do not have ambitions but I LOVE this range of the clarinet and I like playing in the middle of the harmony (if that makes sense).

How long have you been a member?

I have been in DCB since 1999. I joined when there was an interim Director, a few months before Robert took over.



Tell us a bit about yourself.

I live in the country just outside Glasgow which I love; we have had deer sleeping in the doorway sheltering from the snow and one cold night I was chased back into the house by a snarling pine marten. I love being outdoors; gardening, nature, walking and backpacking in the mountains. I have also had a lifelong love of music and have an early childhood memory aged around 2-3 years sitting with a '78 record' trying to figure out how to work granny's record player as I knew it made the most wonderful sounds. I subsequently realised that the beautiful music was The Nutcracker Suite. I must admit however that I struggle to stay indoors to practice unless it is cold, dark and miserable outside! For various reasons I did not follow either music or botany/horticulture as a career preferring to keep both as interests and as a result I have had a really interesting and varied career working with abused, traumatised and disabled children. It was while working with disabled children that I realised the power of music. While I was bashing out a few chords on the guitar and leading a musical rammy, a wee girl who normally sat totally immobile in her wheelchair with her head down lifted some bells from her tray and started shaking them vigorously above her head and vocalising joyously. I went on to complete an MSc. in Music Therapy and have worked in music with various groups of children and young people since. Until recently therefore working life has been a mixture of music making with children, teaching piano and latterly research and consultancy in childcare at Strathclyde Uni. My other passion is Tap Dancing and I dance (outwith Covid restrictions) with a local Tap Dancing group for people over a certain age.

What other instruments do you play?

Piano is my 'first instrument'. I have played since I was around aged 9 and completed a teaching Diploma. More recently I have taken up Harpsichord which I also love. Unfortunately I haven't been able to progress to playing with other instruments, recorder etc due to Covid. As a child I was really drawn to the clarinet, undoubtedly from the music of Acker Bilk who was very popular in the 1960s but didn't have an opportunity to take that up until adulthood. I can bash out a few chords on guitar and I play English concertina with the village 'acoustic jam', mainly Celtic folk music. I also help out with the local community choir, The Campsie Crooners.

Is there another instrument you would like to play?

I have a battered old Bass clarinet which I have found children LOVE; it makes such a fun sound. I would like to play a little more with that. I would also like to play the harp and 'cello but realistically I have plenty to keep me busy. I would like to do more ensembles, including playing piano and harpsichord in groups.



What do you enjoy most about DCB?

I really like the community nature of DCB. At one point the 3rd clarinets section was comprised of Cameron who was aged around 12 at the time, George who was, I think, aged around 90 and me somewhere in between. For me it's about playing with a great group of people, a really varied and rich repertoire and striving to do our best. I find that playing in a wind band has really enhanced my wider understanding of music and I enjoy Robert and Michelle's explanations of musical texture, structure, tonality, conducting etc.

Favourite concert venue – past, present..... or future?

Undoubtedly Kelvingrove Christmas Concerts. They were amazing fun and from experience of family, great for parents looking for something to do with really excited children just before Christmas. Remembering the power of music as a young child, I am aware that we are making memories for children and their families when we play such community concerts.

Favourite DCB memory?

The Gozo trip; it was the first band trip, so that was special in itself. We played with La Stella Band who are part of La Societa Philharmonika and connected with the Basilica of St George in Gozo. We also played in the "Victoria International Arts Festival". We were made most welcome by everyone we met. So many amazing memories but one which sticks in my mind was marching with several bands including La Stella Band. It was in the evening, dark but lots of bright lights and a real festival atmosphere. My music was fastened to my clarinet by clothes pegs as I didn't have a marching lyre! People were crowded on the pavements and everyone was dancing and cheering – it was a great atmosphere. Another memory, again from the Gozo trip, was playing outdoors in the evening, I think in nearby Malta and the audience were up dancing wildly to our music. At one point one of the percussionists left his pitch in the Band, joined in the fun and danced across the stage wearing a 'Hey Jimmy' hat. It was an amazing trip.

Favourite piece we've played?

One favourite (but I am aware there were mixed views) is Loch Awe by Steve Forman; I love the opportunity for creativity and improvisation. For me, being an outdoors enthusiast, it conjures up images of the sun sparkling on the waves on the west coast of Scotland. Another favourite, total contrast, is Singing in the Rain. It is such a joyous piece of music, I want to put down my clarinet, put on my tap shoes and dance across the stage with my umbrella.

Any piece you'd like to play with the band in the future?

I love 'world music' and Klezmer music. We did some Klezmer influenced music once; it really lends itself to the clarinet and I suspect wind instruments generally. Anything tho' as long as it is not about dead Unicorns. Someone in the Band tried to reassure me that Unicorns aren't real but that didn't make a difference, I still want to cry when we play that piece.....



Any (family friendly!) DCB related story you'd like to share?

One experience which no-one probably knows about except our lovely former 3rd clarinet colleague Ken Hawkins, now living in Hastings. It was at one of our concerts at Cairns, for some reason I had taken my clarinet with me through for refreshments at the interval (mistake). One of the guests nudged me and my clarinet toppled. It looked fine but as we tuned up for the second half I quickly realised that some of the keys were not working. Unusually for a 3rd clarinet, I had a short solo. "Ken you might have to play the solo" I whispered during a few bars rest. "What??!!!" he whispered back. We played on and I figured out that the damaged keys were those 'over the break' on the clarinet; B, C, Db, D, Eb and mercifully there were none of these notes in my 'solo'. "It's OK Ken, you can stand down" I said and came in perfectly on cue, Robert completely unaware of the drama in the back row.

Have you done anything exciting during lockdowns (other than lots of music practice – obviously!!) – learned a new skill or decided to get back into an old hobby for example?

Maybe exciting is not the word! Planning my garden to accommodate the local wildlife while preventing them eating it! I built a hedgehog house from logs and leaves (not sure if anyone is in residence yet), I am trying to create a small 'wild flower meadow', spreading snowdrops hidden up the hill which I found under the hedge, planning a deer proof potager/vegetable and flower garden, sketching and painting (water colours) the flowers that grew on the lawn when I didn't cut the grass during Summer 2020. Not everything about lockdown has been bad!

Looking forward to getting back to rehearsals?

Can't wait! Really looking forward to playing together and particularly the opportunities offered by Kessington.