



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

MUSIC IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH: 1839–2024



This is my brief introduction to Music at the University of Edinburgh over the last 185 years. A little ambitious I know but I will give it a try.

Music as an academic subject at the University of Edinburgh began thanks to a bequest from General John Reid, a distinguished military man, keen flautist and composer, born in Perthshire in 1722 and who died in London in 1807. The funds to come to the College of Edinburgh following the death of his daughter, should she die without issue. This happened in 1838.

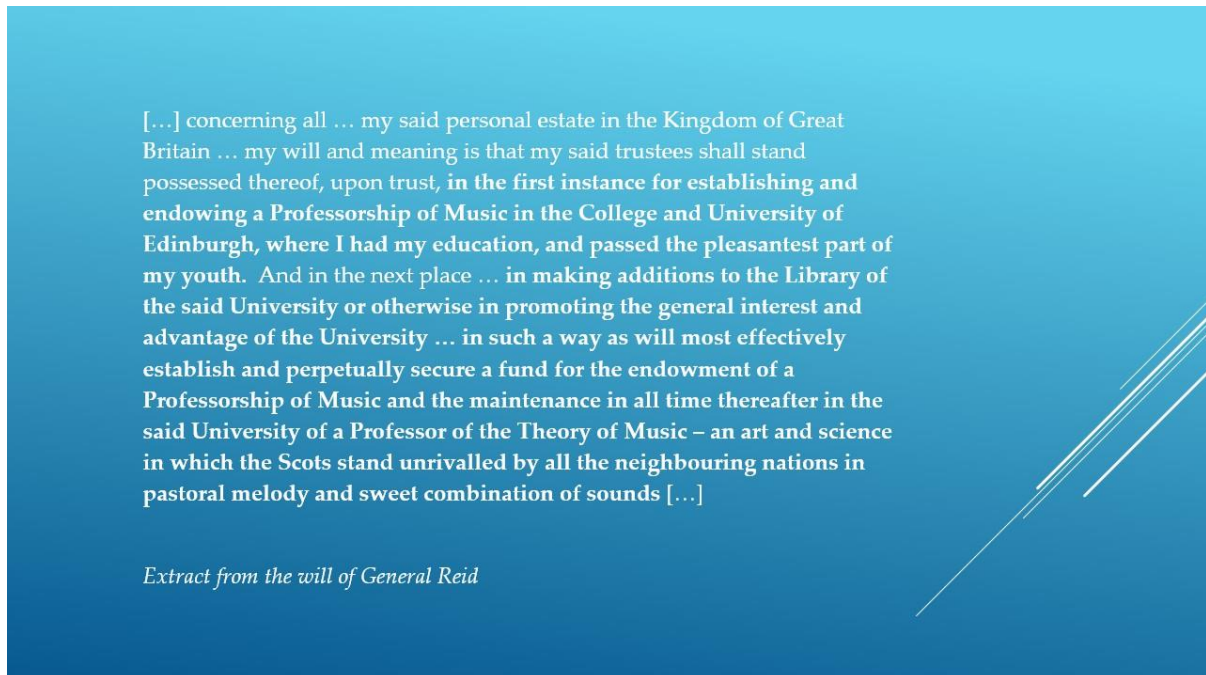


GENERAL JOHN REID 1722–1807

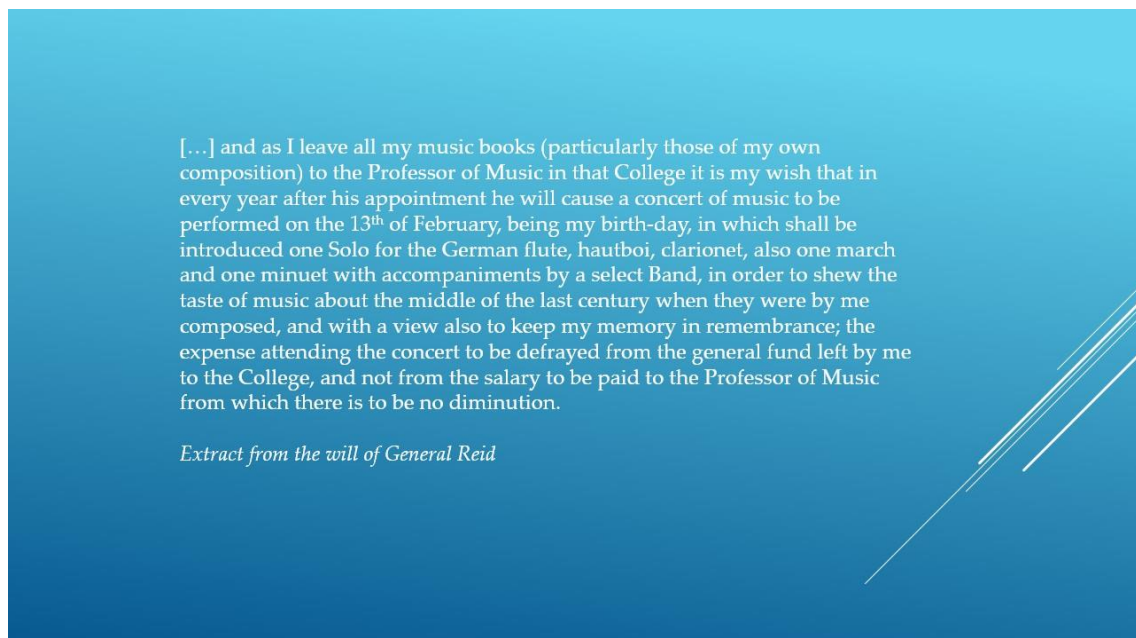
*General John Reid (1806) by George Watson,
EU0523 © University of Edinburgh Art Collection*

The General's endowment was specific in its conditions that the funds be used to establish a Professorship of Music at Edinburgh where he had his education and passed 'the pleasantest

part of his youth'. This excerpt from Reid's will outlines the wishes of the testator and the expected role of the Principal and Professors in carrying out these wishes.



In a codicil attached to his will, Reid outlined the requirement for a concert to be given each year in February in his memory.



In 1838 Reid's estate amounted to around £74,000 and the portion which came to the University was about £69,000: a figure equivalent today [2024] to over £9.6 million, and it remains one of the most valuable received by the University of Edinburgh.

In the early nineteenth-century, the University was administered by the Town Council and the Senatus Academicus which comprised the Principal and Professors. The injection of capital attached to the endowment for the Professorship of Music, for the library and the promotion of the general interest of the College was interpreted by these two bodies for use in ways more favourable to the second part, 'in making additions to the library, [...] and in promoting the general interest and advantage of the University', than to the first part, the establishment and endowment of a Professorship of Music with the attached responsibility to present an annual concert in memory of General Reid.

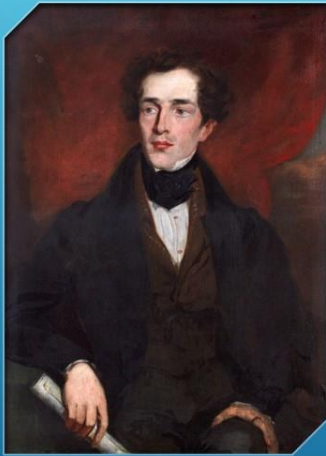
Members of the Senatus were also unhappy about the guaranteed salary for the new post at £300/£42,000), to be paid from the endowment and not, as for all other professors, from the University central funds and student class fees. Music Classes were to be free to attend.

In carrying out the wishes of General Reid according to the terms of the Bequest, the Principal and Professors were challenged to find a candidate worthy of the title, 'Professor of the Theory of Music', who would uphold the standing and reputation of the institution, develop a course of lectures and be capable of organising and directing an annual concert. The first applicants for the new post had little idea of what would be required of them, and the members of Senatus similarly had little idea what they were seeking in the candidates.

Applicants in the mid nineteenth-century were not invited for interview in person and appointments were made based on written evidence. The decisions of the Senatus were informed by their limited knowledge of the duties and requirements of similar posts at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and the musical life of Edinburgh in respect of the concert component. The significant difference at Edinburgh, when compared with the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, was that the Professor of Music was expected to be resident in the city, to carry out timetabled teaching duties during the academic year and to organise an annual commemoration concert.

The first Professor of the Theory of Music, John Thomson, was appointed in October 1939, shortly before his 34th birthday. He was the son of a Church of Scotland minister and, by coincidence, married to the daughter of the Principal of the University, but it was his musical talents and testimonials that secured him the position.

Thomson was fortunate to have met Mendelssohn when the young composer was travelling in Britain in 1829 and was persuaded to spend time with the Mendelssohn family and develop his musical studies in Germany. He published an account of his trip in 'The Harmonicon' in 1830 which demonstrated his written style of language and musical terminology which reflected his enthusiasm for learning and his desire to expand his musical knowledge and experiences. His application for the post was supported by testimonials from, amongst others, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Edward Taylor (Gresham Professor of Music in London), and Cipriani Potter of the Academy of Music in London. These testimonials were unanimous in their support of Thomson's suitability for the new role, identifying the myriad aspects of his character and musicianship.



JOHN THOMSON 1805–1841

Professor of the Theory of Music 1839–1841

John Thomson (c.19th) by William Smellie Watson, EU0524 © University of Edinburgh Art Collection

In Thomson the University had found a young, local musician with the necessary skills and attributes to establish the Chair of Music and present an annual concert. Of the concert Thomson said in a letter to the Senatus in December 1839:

Considering as I do that the establishment of that concert will, if properly conducted, be of essential importance to the cause of music in Scotland, and looking upon it as the grand practical illustration of the theory of music and principles of composition to be treated of in my lectures I am anxious that it should from the very first, be regarded by the public as a standard exhibition of classical music in every style both sacred and secular by which they may regulate and improve their taste, and be led to the more credulous study of the works of the best Masters... The other point on which I request an opinion refers to the library. I find that the music in the library (including that left by Gen Reid) consists almost wholly of the ephemeral music of the day, or of the arrangements of works of a higher character, and that of theoretical works, and compositions of the great masters there are none... I will not take it upon me to specify any sum which would be likely to render the library complete - this must be a work of years, and perhaps an annual sum set aside for the purpose would be the most desirable. However, for present exigencies I should say that £50 would be amply sufficient.


Extract from a letter by John Thomson to the Senatus in December 1839

It is evident from this letter that Thomson had a clear idea of what was required of him in his new role, but the delay in the receipt of funds from the executors of the will did not allow for a concert in 1840 or for the introduction of any lectures.. The first concert was given in 1841 for which Thomson assembled a large orchestra, chorus and soloists and for which he wrote analytical programme notes. These were, and are still, considered to be the

first such printed programme notes for an orchestral concert. Thomson also intended to present lectures beginning in 1841 but his untimely death in May that year put paid to these plans.

His successor was Henry Rowley Bishop, a composer and conductor who was more concerned with his operatic responsibilities in London and, while he did organise commemoration concerts in Edinburgh in 1842 and 1843, he failed to give any lectures. However, an honour bestowed on him in 1842, was a knighthood for services to Music, the first musician ever to receive that honour. The third appointee Hugo Pearson never came to Edinburgh and resigned within a year.

It was not until 1845 with the appointment of John Donaldson, and a revised 'Deed of Foundation', based on the recommendations made by Donaldson in his letter of application for the post in 1841, that stability was restored.



JOHN DONALDSON 1788–1865

Professor of the Theory of Music, 1845–1865

John Donaldson (c.19th) by William Smellie Watson,
EU0519 © University of Edinburgh Art Collection

The image is a slide with a blue background. On the left is a portrait of John Donaldson, a man in a dark coat and white cravat. To the right of the portrait, the text reads: 'JOHN DONALDSON 1788–1865', 'Professor of the Theory of Music, 1845–1865', and 'John Donaldson (c.19th) by William Smellie Watson, EU0519 © University of Edinburgh Art Collection'. There are some white diagonal lines in the bottom right corner of the slide.

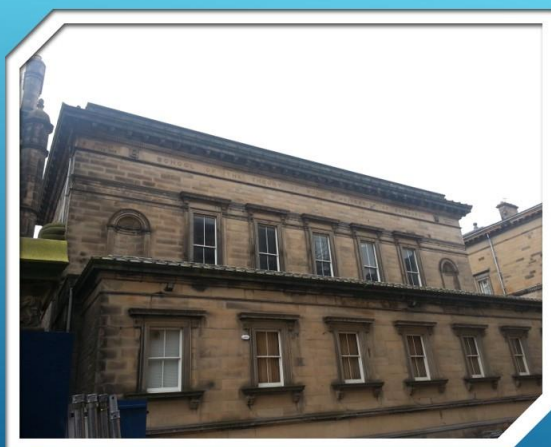
Donaldson had previously applied for the post in 1841, 1843 and 1844 before success in 1845. The Senatus members were determined to achieve stability in honouring the terms of the bequest and were rewarded when Donaldson accepted and remained in post until 1865. The new professor was a former piano teacher turned lawyer who, like Thomson, had a clear idea of the responsibilities of the post.

His focus was on convincing the University authorities to recognise the importance of the Music Department and to secure adequate funds from the bequest for a new teaching facility and suitable equipment to support his teaching - at the time he was working out of a damp

room in the main University building. To achieve this, with the support of the Town Council, he used his legal skills to take the Senatus to court and was successful.

- ▶ 'As the institution of a Professorship of Music is new in this country, and as Music, as a science, has by no means been generally cultivated or understood, I trust I shall not be deemed intrusive in offering some observations in reference to the subjects which I humbly think ought to be embraced in a course of lectures, so as to render them worthy of the place from which they are to be addressed.... it would be the best arrangement to divide the course into two distinct branches. The first would embrace Musical notation, the construction of the scales, with the ordinary rules of Thorough-Bass, an exposition of the principles of methodical composition in the different counterpoints and a grammatical analysis of the compositions themselves... The second branch would embrace the Philosophy and the History of Music, and a Critical Analysis of Compositions of the highest class, both ancient and modern... This branch of the course would include an examination of the doctrine of Acoustics... from which, indeed, the whole system of harmony is drawn. I am aware that there is a prevalent idea amongst practical musicians that the study of the philosophical and mathematical department of music is of little real use but this appears to me to be an erroneous and a narrow view; because this method of study not only leads to a greater excellence in the art itself, but enlarges the understanding and strengthens the intellectual power.'
- ▶ The Commission of the Professor shall bind him to give a Course of Public Lectures, and regular attendance an application for instructing the Students under him yearly, at the usual time and place during the Sessions of the University; which course shall comprehend the different branches of instruction...viz. the phenomena and philosophy of sound, in so far as connected with musical intonation; the laws of harmonies, with their rules of thorough bass, but also a clear exposition of methodical composition, in double, triple and quadruple counterpoint; and the practical application of all the principles and doctrines appertaining to the science. Further, that, joined with those discussions, the Professor shall exhibit the history of the science, with a critical analysis of the works of all the classical masters, ancient and modern, and such improvements as the progress of the science may from time to time suggest [...] That the said Commissions shall also contain clauses binding the Professors thereby appointed to observe and obey such rules and regulations as are declared in the said Will and Codicil to be conditional of the Endowment [...]
- ▶ Extract from John Donaldson's application for the post in 1841
- ▶ Extract from the Deed of Foundation for the Chair of Music 1845

As a result of Donaldson's success in court, work on the 'School of the Theory of Music' began in 1858 and, the Music Class-Room, as it was known, with its Hill & Sos organ, opened in December 1859: the first University building outside the main College precincts. This was very timely as, with introduction of the Scottish Universities Act in 1858, that year the University parted company with the Town Council and was now entirely responsible for its own administration. Donaldson also secured funding for the purchase of musical instruments and books for the library.



SCHOOL OF THE THEORY OF MUSIC

The School of the theory of Music, situated immediately to the south-east of the University New Buildings, was built in 1858, from the designs of the late David Cousin.

It contains the Music Class-Room, with an organ of four manuals and sixty-six stops, in a handsome carved oak case; and a Museum of interesting acoustic and antique instruments.

Photograph 2018

1859-60 Faculty of Arts

Professor Donaldson Theory of Music Class Classes opened Nov. 2, 10 & 12 o'clock Free

In accordance with the Deed of Foundation* the Lectures embrace the following subjects:-

The phenomena and philosophy of sound; the nature and production of musical sounds, accordant and discordant.

The Theory of Music.

General rules for the composition of Music, including methodical composition in the different counterpoints with a critical analysis of the works of the great masters.

The laws of harmonics, with an exposition of how far the theory of Music, as taught by the best theorists, is deducible from, and in accordance with, these laws.

Occasional lectures are given on the compass and properties of each musical instrument, and on their structure. The instruments are exhibited, with illustrations of the experimental researches of Weber, Chladni, Savart, and Wheatstone, which have for their object to discover the true principles on which musical instruments ought to be constructed and which may lead, and have led, to the invention of new ones.

All the topics included in these branches are illustrated with diagrams, musical instruments and philosophical apparatus.

Lectures are delivered occasionally on the history of the science.

Three courses of Lectures are given during the Session; two for gentlemen, and one exclusively for ladies.

.....
*This Chair was founded by General John Reid, for the teaching of Music as a Scientific Art, on a wide and comprehensive scale; or, to use the Testator's own words, so to teach it as to give "stability, respectability, and consequence to the establishment."

This extract from the University Calendar 1864 outlines his teaching programme, and it is interesting to note that there was one course of lectures exclusively for women. Donaldson died in post in 1865.



SIR HERBERT STANLEY OAKELEY
1830–1903

Professor of the Theory of Music, 1865–1891

Sir Herbert Stanley Oakeley (1884) by Charles K Robertson,
EU0522 © University of Edinburgh Art Collection

His successor, Herbert Stanley Oakeley, was a journalist and composer with no obvious experience as an academic educator. He was a brilliant organist and at the end of his inaugural speech he gave an impromptu rendition of General Reid's march 'In the garb of

old Gaul' on the Music Class-Room organ. Oakeley continued the course of lectures set up by Donaldson, and in support of this, gave regular organ recitals.

In 1867 he established the Edinburgh University Musical Society with choir and orchestra to involve students more in music making. He also expanded the annual concert into an Edinburgh Festival over 3 or 4 days when he invited to Edinburgh the Halle Orchestra from Manchester to give a series of concerts each February. Oakeley was knighted in 1876, and in 1881 was appointed Composer to Her Majesty in Scotland.

By the 1880s he had further developed the curriculum, his salary was £420 and there was a Music class fee of 3 guineas, as we see in the following extract from the University Calendar.

1879-80

Professor Sir Herbert Oakeley, M.A. Mus.Doc Theory of Music Class

Winter Session 1879-80 Classes opened Nov. 4, 3 o'clock Class Fee £3.3.0

Lectures given will be on some of the following subjects if sufficient number of students join class:-
History and Development of the Art and Science from early times; various schools and styles of Music; History and construction of some of the principal musical instruments; the modern Orchestra, etc.; or on the works of the great masters.

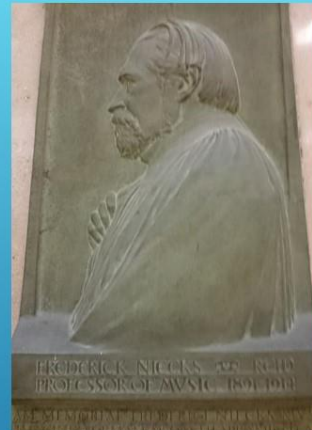
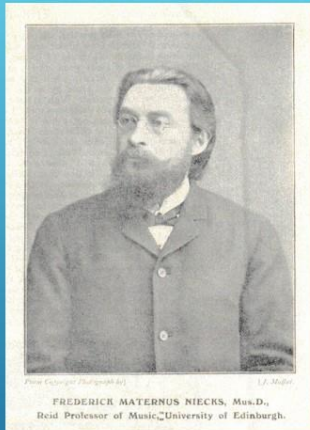
Organ Performances, with instructive remarks or programmes, will be given from time to time during the Session. Separate and individual instruction in Organ or Pianoforte playing given to a certain number of younger students. To these, the Theory of Music is practically imparted.

Class Prize Lists
Certificates of Merit – John Wilson (Harmony); O.H. Walser (Organ).

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Annual Salaries paid to Professors
The salary paid to Professor Oakeley remained at £420 plus £200 for Assistants with an additional £100 allowance for class expenses.

Throughout his tenure Oakeley had been keen to see Music taken more seriously as a subject and to develop plans for Music to have degree status and not be just a subject as part of an Arts degree. The matter of Degrees in Music had been first raised by Donaldson in 1849 and were promoted again by Oakeley, who in 1877, 1886 and 1890 prepared a template for a teaching programme, building on the work of Donaldson and put his case for a new 'Faculty of Music' to the Scottish Universities Commissioners. Oakeley retired in 1891. Following his retirement, Oakeley was, in 1899, one of the first recipients of an Hon. Mus. Doc from the University of Edinburgh.

His successor Frederick Niecks was seen by many as an inspirational appointment, bringing to Edinburgh one of the leading authorities on music history and music theory. Others, hoping for radical change in the teaching of music at the University saw it as a missed opportunity. The Commissioners decided to maintain the focus on the art and science of music, giving Niecks a platform on which to present his thinking through his lectures on music and in practice through illustrated lectures and concerts.



FREDERICK NIECKS 1845–1924

FIRST 'REID' PROFESSOR OF MUSIC AT THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH 1891–1914

Niecks's stated ambition was:

To meet the future confidently, and with the determination to wrest from it the highest, noblest and most beneficent in the realms of that beautiful art which we all admire and love.

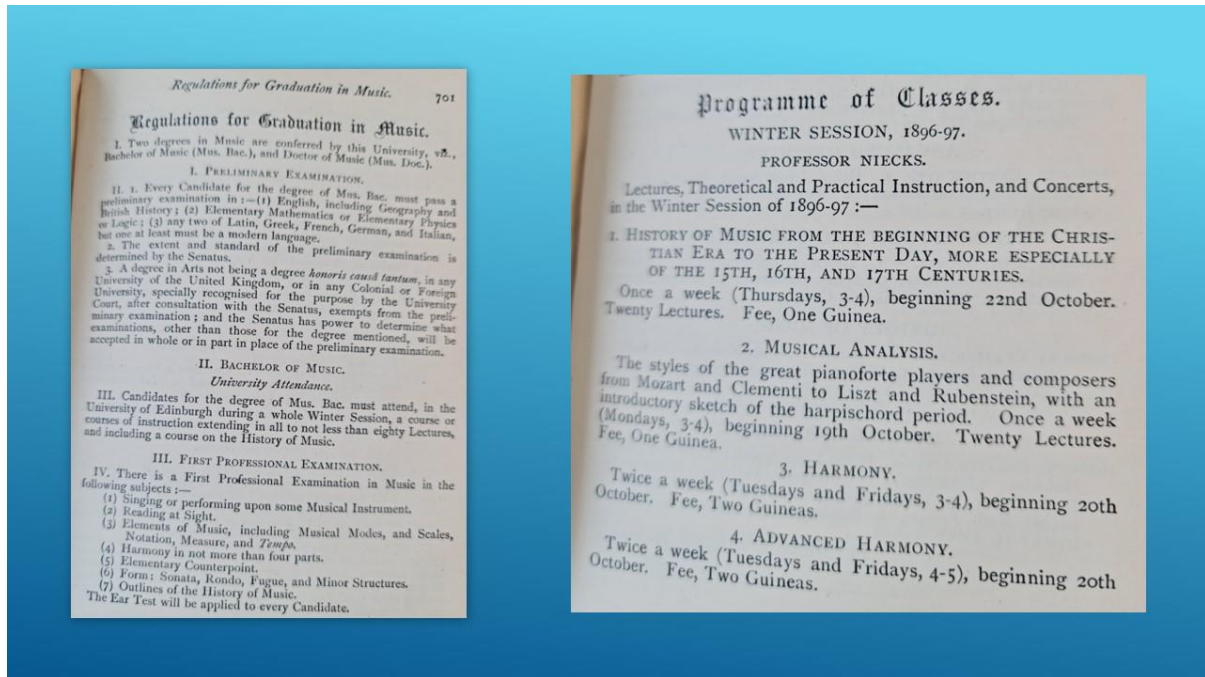
Niecks outlined his thoughts in his inaugural address:

To him who thinks as well as dares the start of an important enterprise is a moment of great solemnity: it is especially so when the enterprise involves a journey not over a well-known well-trodden path but over a road that has yet to be discovered and perhaps to be made [...] Today I set out on such a journey and find myself in the position of a traveller to a much sought but never reached land, the paths before me strewn, so to speak, with the bones of my predecessors [...] My confidence arises chiefly from the changed conditions that now partly exist and partly many be easily called into existence. These more favourable conditions already existing are the more developed and diffused taste for music, and the fuller perception of the requirements of musical training and of the importance of musical culture; the more favourable conditions yet to be attained are regulations that will make the musical teaching in the university available to a wider circle of students.

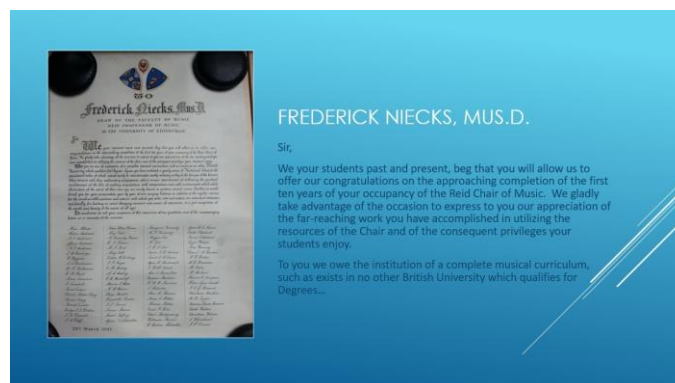
Frederick Niecks

The new Faculty of Music was approved by Queen Victoria in an Act of Parliament in 1893, Niecks was given the title 'Reid Professor of Music' and due recognition was given to the proper scope of the subject as a university discipline, correlating theory and practice and embracing historical studies. Until 1893 the Music Department had been under the Faculty of Arts. The Music Class-Room, with its inscription 'School of the Theory of Music' came to be known as the Reid School of Music.

A Degree in Music was introduced, and the new degree course included requirements for the study of English, Latin or Greek and Mathematics or Logic in addition to the more expected musical subjects and a third language. The first Hon. Mus. Doc. was awarded to Ebenezer Prout in 1895 and the first Mus. Bac candidates graduated in 1898.



During his 23 years in office Niecks, before he retired in 1914, presented a series of carefully devised historical concerts, with programme notes, conveying in an illustrative format his thoughts about music and its development as an art form. Attendance at the University concerts was included in the curriculum and remained so for the next 100 years. Niecks considered that while it was interesting to read about old musical works, the most satisfactory mode of making their acquaintance was to hear them adequately performed. Niecks was popular with his students and in 1901 they presented him with a special scroll.



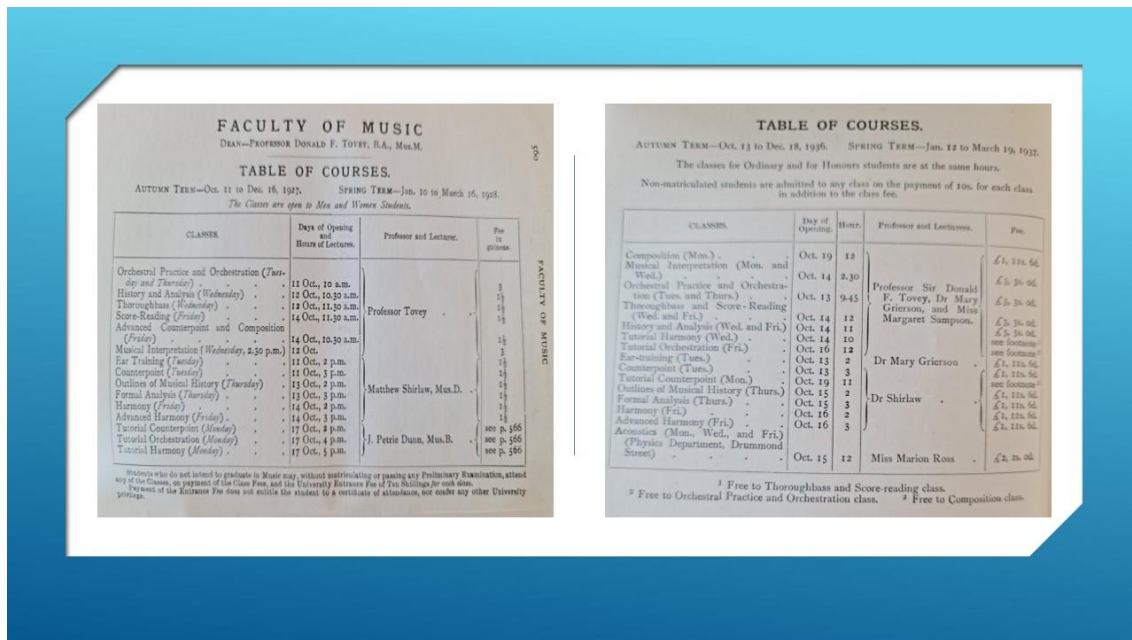
Niecks retired on grounds of ill health in 1914 and, having given thought to his possible successor, recommended to the University authorities that Donald Francis Tovey be considered for the post. Niecks advised that they should persuade him to take up the vacancy, but he was not at all sure if Tovey would accept. Within six weeks of Niecks's retirement Tovey had applied for the vacancy.

At the time Tovey was achieving international recognition as a pianist and had little academic teaching experience. However, based on guidance from Niecks, excellent testimonials and tacit support from his friend and former prime minister, Arthur James Balfour, he was appointed. Tovey was favoured over, amongst others, composer Hamish MacCunn and two Edinburgh Mus.Bac graduates Matthew Shirlaw and Charles Mills who was by then Professor of Music and Director of the School of Music in Illinois.



Tovey continued, and developed, the curriculum and historical concerts introduced by Niecks, and in 1916 added three orchestral concerts, testing the water for his plans to establish a professional orchestra in Edinburgh. He also brought two female lecturers to his small staff: Dr Mary Grierson and Peggy Sampson, both Edinburgh music graduates.

In 1917 Tovey set up the Reid Orchestra, employed local musicians, many of whom were women, and invited students to join as a learning experience. Tovey's orchestral rehearsals and concerts afforded music students, the incalculable advantage of studying orchestral music from every aspect ad initio. He also re-configured the seating in the Music Classroom to allow for desks to accommodate scores for students of the orchestration class who attended the rehearsals.



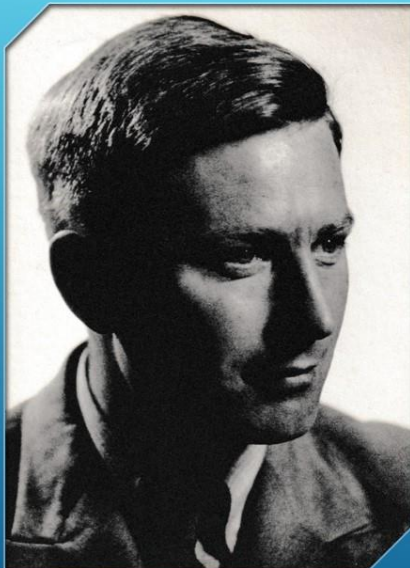
Another teaching aid continued and expanded by Tovey was the concert programme booklet, written and published for each Reid Orchestra concert, featuring extensive analytical programme notes. These programme booklets, sometimes up to 56 pages in length, were on sale before the performance to allow students and members of the public to read the notes before the concert and not be distracted by reading them during the performance. Several of these Reid concerts were broadcast by the BBC and Tovey's analytical programme notes were later published in a series of books, 'Essays in Musical Analysis', for wider circulation. Tovey was knighted in 1935.

Outline details of the University [Reid] Concerts from 1841 to 2024, with some examples of printed programmes, can be found on the Reid Concerts Database. Concerts were given in venues in the city and in the University including the Music Hall, the Reid Music Classroom (now the Reid Concert Hall), the Pollock Hall, the McEwan Hall, the Usher Hall (from 1921) and St Cecilia's Hall.



Sir Donald Francis Tovey with the Reid Orchestra in the Usher Hall, Edinburgh in the season 1935–1936.

The Degrees in Music instituted at Edinburgh in 1893 were the Bachelor degree, treated as an ordinary degree and the Doctorate which could be awarded in one or more of three departments: Composers, Executants and Theorists or Historians. Twenty-five years later Tovey filled the gap by introducing an Honours Degree, catering for those whose capacity for an Honours course was proved in their entry or, at the latest during their First Degree Examination, but made no provision whereby Honours might be taken after the completion of the Ordinary course. The Honours course, moreover, differed from that for the Ordinary Degree primarily in the standard of certain techniques involved, but little in respect of the subjects studied.



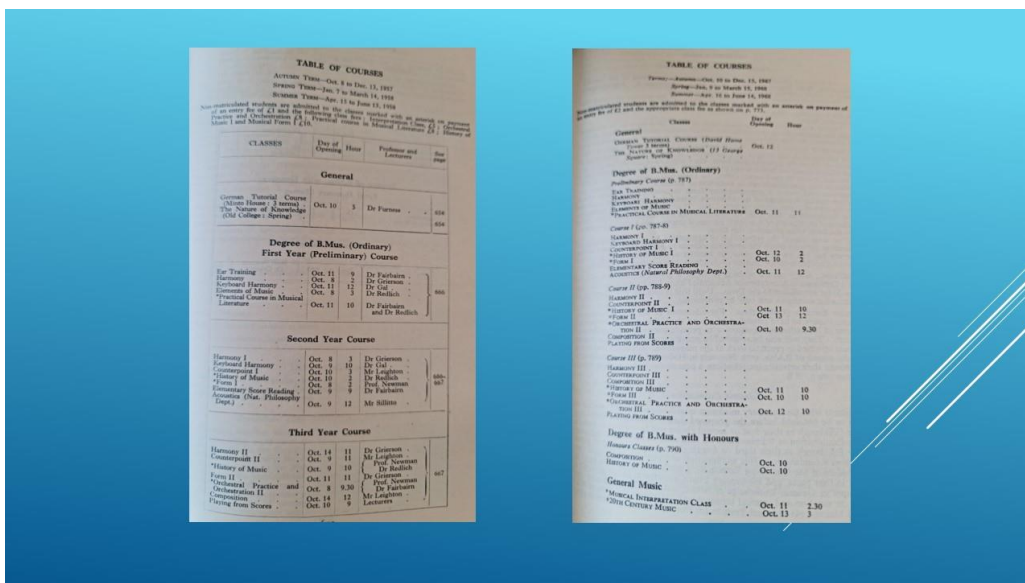
SIDNEY THOMAS MAYOW NEWMAN
1906–1970

Reid Professor of Music, 1941–1970

Following the death of Tovey in 1940, his successor Sidney Newman put forward recommendations for extensive changes in the regulations and curricula for Degrees in

Music, that sought to resolve these issues. After the war Newman, in support of his teaching, continued with regular Orchestral and Chamber Music concerts and in 1954 established the New Edinburgh Quartet, successor to the Edinburgh Quartet introduced by Tovey in 1924. The members of the Quartet played in the Reid Orchestra, performed in chamber music concerts and provided demonstrations for the Musical Interpretation Class.

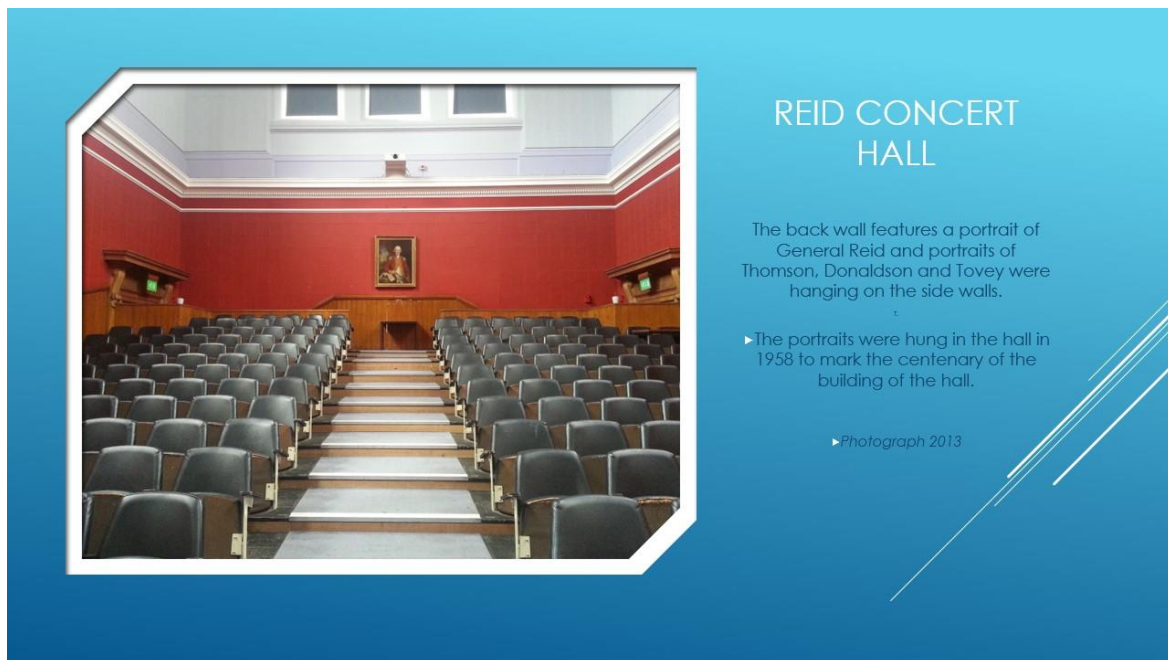
Additionally in 1954 Newman's curriculum changes were effected by a new Ordinance approved by Her Majesty in Council in 1954, which provided that Honours may be taken either in Composition or in History of Music, thus allowing for some manner of specialisation in what were inevitably wide fields of study. It also required the prospective Honours student to have completed all the examinations for the Ordinary Degree before they may be admitted to an Honours curriculum of specialised study in their final year.



The qualifications necessary for admission to the Music course had long raised problems not easy of solution. The opportunities afforded scholars whilst at school, of pursuing musical studies to an extent and standard which justify the decision to seek qualification for one or another of the musical profession through a University Degree in Music, varied considerably. Newman found it necessary to institute a qualifying examination, in line with other institutions for admission to the Music course. It was expected that the successful candidates be expected to pass the First Degree Examination after one year. His experience over previous years had shown that many students admitted needed a longer period of basic study in simple harmony, ear training, keyboard techniques and in a general knowledge of musical classics before they could make progress in the first-year course. Accordingly, the new Ordinance increased the period of the Ordinary degree course from three to four years to facilitate this need. However, a good result in the qualifying examination may allow some students to move directly to second year and complete the degree in three years.

For over 100 years from 1860 the Reid Music Class-Room accommodated most of the requirements for the teaching of Music in the University. The architect had provided one spacious classroom of immense height and embarrassing acoustic properties and a single wing which housed a small library, a commodious museum which included some rare treasures and far exceeded in scope and importance the normal character of a class library.

The large organ used by Oakeley for his fortnightly recitals was removed as a precaution against fire in 1941, leaving a larger platform place, and was replaced with a smaller organ. Regular organ recitals resumed in the 1950s, given by the University Organist, Herrick Bunney, but now on the organ in the University's graduation hall, the McEwan Hall, built in 1897. The McEwan Hall organ was built by Robert Hope-Jones, rebuilt by Henry Willis & Sons in 1953, overhauled in 1980 by Rushworth and Dreaper and renovated again in 2014 by Forth Pipe Organs.



By the 1960s this accommodation, although supplemented by teaching rooms close by in George Square and the Tovey Memorial Rooms in Buccleuch Place, gifted to the University by Tovey's mentor Miss Sophie Weisse, was insufficient for the number of music students now taking music classes and the increasing numbers of staff. Additional space for the Faculty of Music was found in nearby Alison House, 12 Nicolson Square, providing lecture rooms, teaching rooms, practice rooms and shared at the time with Dentistry and Computer Science. The Reid Professor, the Library and the Museum of Instruments remained in the Reid School building.



Alison House became the new home of the Faculty of Music in the 1960s but in 2024 plans were already underway to move again to accommodate the increasing numbers of staff and students and equipment required for the courses on offer. The building still maintained the lettering from its previous use as a warehouse for walking sticks and woodenware, etc. Over the years an access lift was added at the front steps, later replaced by a new ramp, for disabled access

Faculty photograph of staff and students taken outside the McEwan Hall in 1967.



Seated in the front row are David Kimbell, Kenneth Leighton, John Fairbairn, Sidney Newman, Peter Williams and Colin Kingsley and in the second row can be seen Edward Harper (behind David Kimbell), Leon Coates (behind Peter Williams) and Reid Music Librarian, Michael Anderson (behind Colin Kingsley).

In the late 60s, Newman had overseen the purchase and development of St Cecilia's Hall, Scotland's first purpose-built concert hall, dating from 1763, that also provided accommodation for the Russell Collection of Early Keyboard Instruments which had been recently gifted to the University. Weekly evening concerts and lunch-hour organ recitals continued and in 1970, a new series of summer concerts was introduced at St Cecilia's Hall, known as 'Bach at St Cecilia's Hall' featuring instruments from the Russell Collection. This series ran until 1990.



Faculty photograph taken at St Cecilia's Hall in 1969.

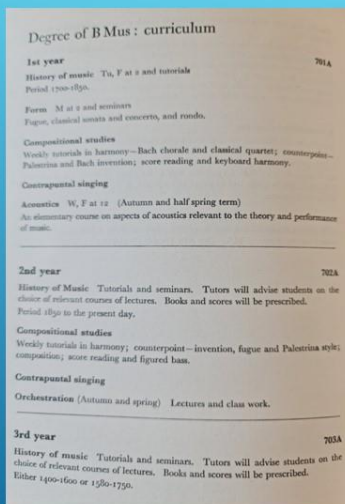


Newman retired in 1970 and was succeeded as Reid Professor by Kenneth Leighton, who had joined the staff in 1955. In 1971 a Tovey Chair of Music was introduced, and Professor Michael Tilmouth was appointed to the post. Subsequently additional personal Chairs were added in support of the increased numbers of students studying specific areas of Music such as performance practice and composition. Leighton oversaw the further expansion of the Faculty of Music to include an Honours option in Performance, new subjects such as ethnomusicology, and a new degree in Music Technology introduced in 1985, but still with a focus on harmony, counterpoint, history and acoustics.

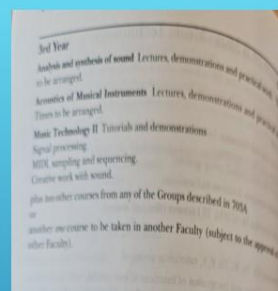
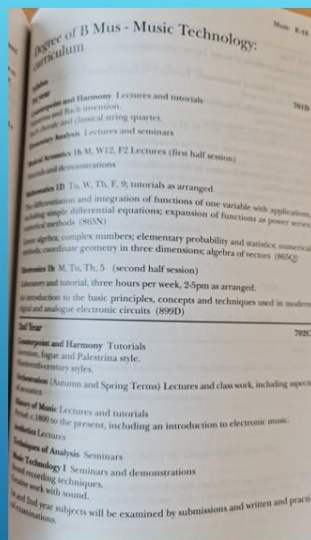


KENNETH LEIGHTON 1929–1988
Reid Professor of Music, 1971–1988

An image of Kenneth Leighton at the piano drawn by one of his students.



BMus Courses 1976–77



BMus Music Technology
1986–87

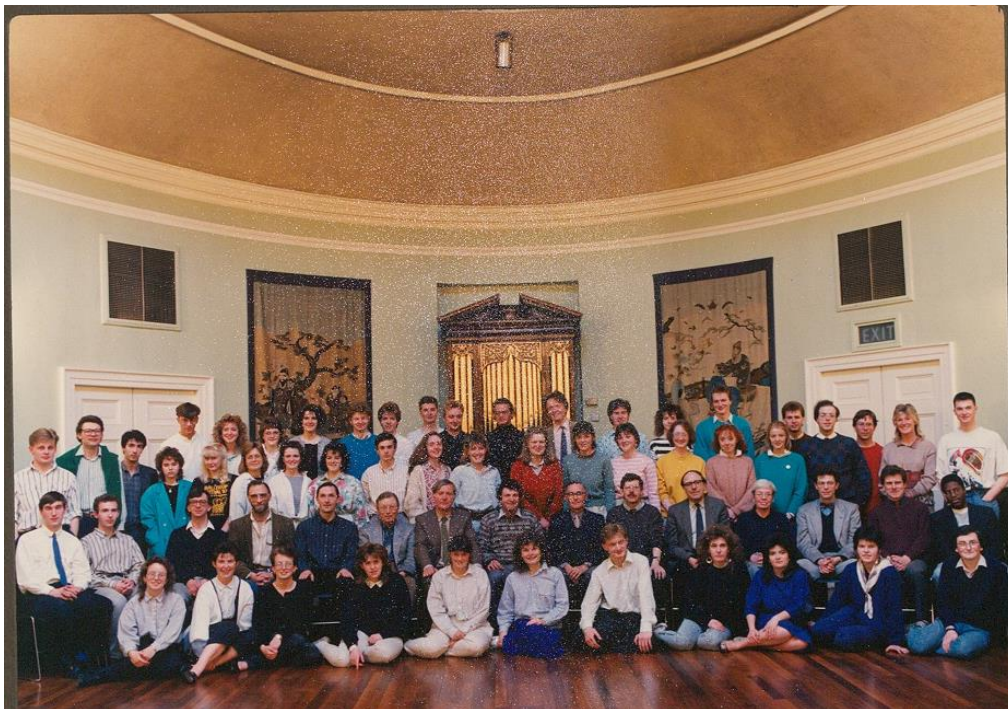
In the 1970s and 1980s the University published regular 'Bulletins' with news and events across the University. Music Faculty events and the Reid Concerts appeared regularly in this publication. On the Reid Concerts Database 'brochures' page Bulletin Music Faculty related articles from 1977, 1978, 1980 are listed.

The final concert given by the Reid Orchestra was in January 1982, after 65 years. It was no longer financially viable with competition from the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, formed in 1974, that moved into their new home at the Queen's Hall, when it opened in 1979, offering a winter season of orchestral concerts. The severe cutback in Edinburgh University departmental funding also meant that the Faculty was no longer in a position to continue sponsorship of the Edinburgh Quartet, but they would, however, still perform in a more

limited series of events. Professor Michael Tilmouth, Dean of the Faculty of Music also announced that in the season 1982-1983 economic circumstances made it necessary for a modest charge to be made for evening Reid Concert. Admission would be by programme £1 (Concessions 50p). These ticketed weekly evening University concerts gradually transitioned to free lunch-hour concerts, affording all University staff and students and the local community the opportunity to enjoy weekly recitals on Tuesdays during term-time from 1.10 pm to 1.55 pm. It also helped to maintain the close association between the University and the City.

Until the 1980s the Reid Concert Programmes and Music Examination papers were professionally printed. With the financial limitations introduced from 1982 the concert programmes were typed and copied in the Faculty Office and the Music examination paper were typed on a manual music typewriter and copied. The money saved was spent on visiting musicians at the University concerts. Gradually as the digital age arrived, computers replaced typewriters and music software replaced the manual music typewriter.

Faculty staff and students photographed at St Cecilia's Hall, 1987:



Leighton's untimely death in 1988 brought Nigel Osborne to the post of Reid Professor with his expertise in composition and music therapy and he introduced the new subject of Music in the Community to the Faculty of Music in the 1990s.



NIGEL OSBORNE 1948–

Reid Professor of Music, 1990–2012

In 1993-94 the Faculty of Music celebrated its centenary with events including a concert given by the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and featuring a new work, a set of variations on General Reid's theme 'In the Garb of Old Gaul' composed by members of staff and former students including Nigel Osborne, Peter Nelson, James MacMillan and Alasdair Nicolson. The full list of centenary events in February 1994 can be found listed on the Reid Concerts Database under 'Brochures ...'.

For the Centenary the Faculty of Music introduced a series of newsletters from 1994 to 1996 and the copy from Autumn 1996 can be found on the Reid Concerts Database under the heading 'Brochures ...'.



FACULTY OF MUSIC, CENTENARY CONCERT FEBRUARY 1994

► In the Reid Concert Hall with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and the composers of a special set of variations on General Reid's march 'In the Garb of Old Gaul'. Composers (left to right) Edward Harper, James MacMillan, Lynn Cresswell, Nigel Osborne, Leon Coates, Peter Nelson, Neil Mackay, Alasdair Nicolson, Peter Inness

The University of Edinburgh published printed leaflets for all its courses in the 1990s and 2000s that gave an outline of the course details and contact information. The Music leaflets for 1997 and 1999 are listed on the Reid Concerts Database. under 'Brochures ...'

Students from the Faculty of Arts continued to take classes in Music as they had since 1845 and the University Musical Society established by Oakeley in 1867 and the University Singers, set up in 1945 were joined by groups including the University Chamber Orchestra, Madrigal Group, Renaissance Singers, Wind Ensemble, and Jazz Orchestra.

In 2003, ten years after the Faculty Centenary, Faculty status was rescinded, and Music was once again returned to a department within the Faculty of Arts and Humanities. In July 2003 Robert Dow of the Music Technology department wrote about Concerts of Electroacoustic concerts in the University.

The Music department at the University of Edinburgh has offered courses in Music Technology and electroacoustic music for many years now and these are very successful. Indeed, we are unable to allow every student who wishes to do these courses on board, due to limited teaching and equipment resources. In this area, we also have a thriving and expanding research profile, with three members of staff fully involved in this area, and a number of Postgraduate students in the areas of Music Technology and Electroacoustic composition. There are also a number of staff and postgraduate student composers who 'dabble' in this area, producing multimedia work.

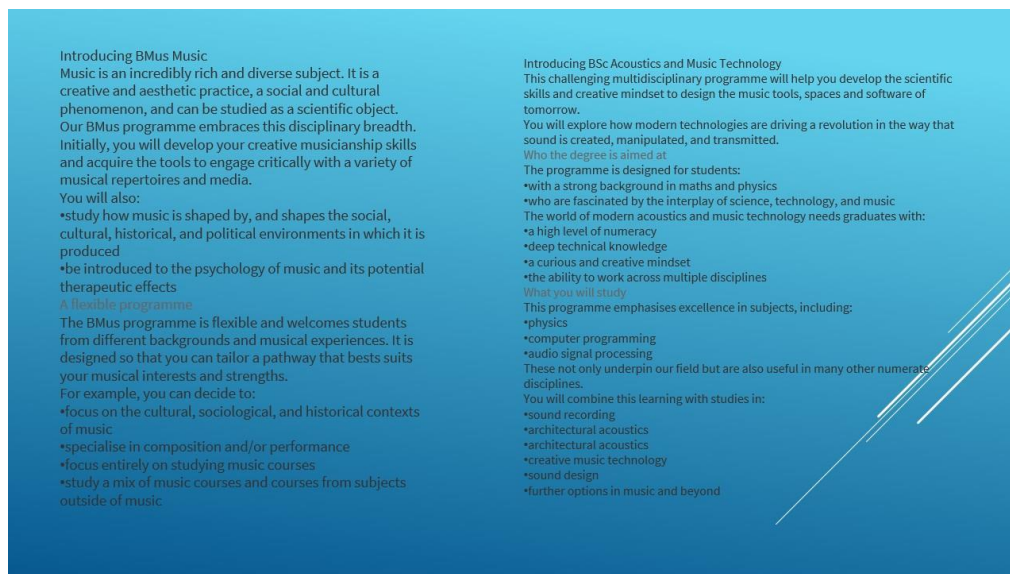
Although we have been careful in the past to try to support student and staff work through the production of concerts of electroacoustic music, there has been no formal arrangement. Although this does have some advantages in that this has meant no limits have been set, it also means that it is impossible to create a structured presentation of repertoire over a number of years. It also means that concerts tend to be badly organised and poorly marketed, as we do not organise these concerts well enough in advance.

I am proposing that the department set aside a small yet significant annual budget for concerts of electroacoustic music, and that these be organised well in advance, in order that they may be advertised in the concerts brochure.

Although this budget would allow us to be flexible, it is my feeling that we should attempt to put on one concert or group of concerts per term, presenting student and staff work, as well as historical and current repertoire. This would be organised well in advance to allow us to organise such things as a suitable hall (Reid) and the collection of resources (e.g. loudspeakers from Glasgow). The budget would allow us to hire and/or collect suitable equipment and allow us the possibility of inviting guest performers.

Ideally, because of the large (physical) effort involved in putting on such concerts, rather than simply putting on once concert, I feel that these should be grouped together: for example, a weekend of electroacoustic music, allowing us to put perhaps 4 short concerts on at a time while the equipment is up.

There had been a few electroacoustic concerts prior to 2003 but Robert Dow's proposal resulted in the first season of 'Soundings ...' in 2003-2004.



Since 2011 the Reid School of Music, as it was by then known, has been part of Edinburgh College of Art within the University of Edinburgh. Here it sits alongside the Schools of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, Art, Design, and History of Art.

The Reid School of Music maintains its long association with the University's School of Scottish Studies which includes the collection, recording, transcription and analysis of Scottish and Gaelic folksong and traditional music for pipes and fiddle. A similarly long association has been with the Physics department who have been responsible for the teaching of acoustics.

From 2011 the focus moved away from the teaching of the core subjects of harmony and counterpoint, orchestration and keyboard skills to music technology, music and multimedia, music in the community, music psychology and courses exploring theoretical, historical and political contexts of music while still offering classes in performance and composition. Also, the degree in Music Technology is no longer a BMus – it is now a BSc.

Documents relating to the evolution of the Music Department/Faculty of Music/Reid School of Music from 1839 can be found in the Centre for Research Collections, Heritage Collections in the University's main library in George Square. The library also houses the Reid Music Library and available Reid Concert Programmes from 1841.

In 2024, the University of Edinburgh, Reid School of Music webpage gives an overview of the current offerings in Music:

At the Reid School of Music, we are committed to thinking differently about music and helping students make a rich contribution to cultural life when they graduate.

We do this by examining the social contexts where music thrives, studying how sound and music affect mind and body, learning about musical acoustics and technologies,

and creating, performing and sharing music in all of its forms across the capital of Scotland.

Working with you is a dedicated team of staff who lead their fields as performers, composers, sonic artists, historians, community activists and scientists, ready to share their knowledge, experience and enthusiasm directly with you.

Based in the centre of Edinburgh, you'll have ready access to several concert halls, spaces to rehearse your band, setup your gig or practice in one of our Steinway School piano rooms. In addition, the UK's top musicians regularly visit to give concerts and masterclasses. Your experience is further enriched by our ensemble in residence programme, open mic nights, and busy student-led music societies creating performance opportunities across genres from orchestra to music theatre, experimental, jazz and traditional music.

.....

Since 1839, when Professor John Thomson was appointed to the new role of Professor of the Theory of Music, there have been only 10 [Reid] Professors of Music. The last Reid Professor of Music was Nigel Osborne who retired in 2012. Each Professor brought something new to the role that has given Music at the University of Edinburgh a multi-faceted history:

Thomson with his programme notes for the first Annual Reid Commemoration Concert.

Donaldson with the curriculum and the Reid School of Music building, (now the Reid Concert Hall), Museum of Instruments and library expansion.

Oakeley with curriculum expansion, the Halle Orchestra Reid Festival concerts and the establishment of Edinburgh University Musical Society

Niecks with the new Faculty of Music status, Degrees in Music and the historical concerts

Tovey with the Reid Orchestra and the concerts with analytical programme notes, further expansion of the curriculum, female staff members

Newman with modernisation of the curriculum, the Edinburgh Quartet & St Cecilia's Hall

Leighton with the introduction of a new degree course in Music Technology and summer concerts at St Cecilia's Hall.

Osborne with the introduction of Music in the Community and, during his tenure, more PhD composition students than anywhere else in the UK.

The story of the 'Reid Concerts at the University of Edinburgh: 1841 to 1941' has been researched by Fiona Donaldson and includes additional information about the Music Professors and the teaching of Music at Edinburgh. The Reid Concerts Database has now been 'archived' but it is still available to view online (see below for further details).

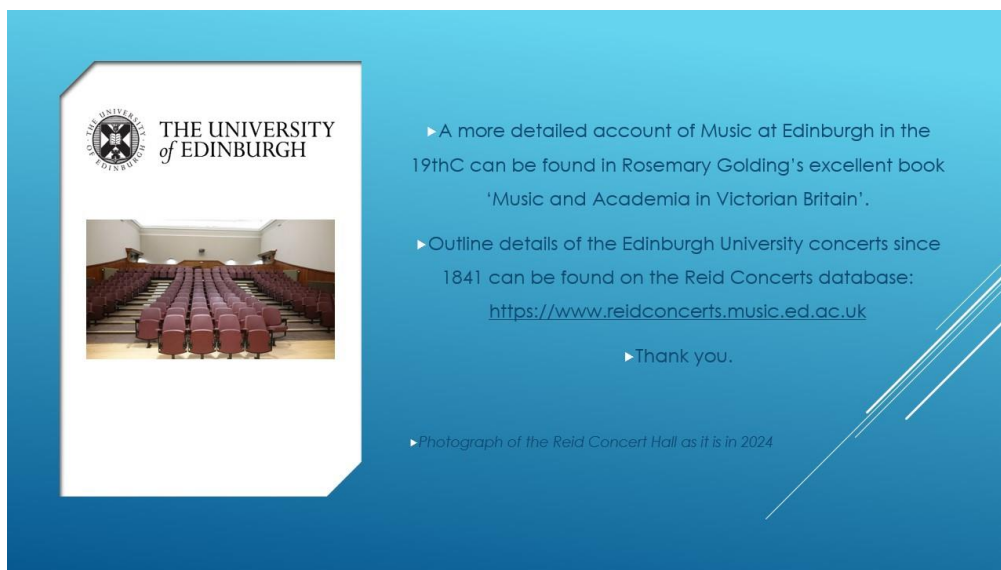
However, additions, corrections and amendments are no longer possible. I have done my best to make the Reid Concerts Database as complete as I have been available to achieve in


the timeframe available, up to December 2024. All the available brochures have been scanned and added to the database, as have selected nineteenth-century concert programmes; the Historical Concerts of Niecks, a few of Tovey's programmes, most of Newman's programmes from 1953 to 1970 and selected programmes from 1971. I hope you will continue to enjoy exploring.


Thank you.

Fiona M Donaldson, PhD, MCS, BSc (Hons)

November 2024



 THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH



- ▶ A more detailed account of Music at Edinburgh in the 19thC can be found in Rosemary Golding's excellent book 'Music and Academia in Victorian Britain'.
- ▶ Outline details of the Edinburgh University concerts since 1841 can be found on the Reid Concerts database: <https://www.reidconcerts.music.ed.ac.uk>
- ▶ Thank you.

▶ Photograph of the Reid Concert Hall as it is in 2024

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From January 2025 the Reid Concerts Database can be found at the

Internet Archive:

https://web.archive.org/web/*/https://www.reidconcerts.music.ed.ac.uk/

UK Web Archive

https://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/archive/*/https://www.reidconcerts.music.ed.ac.uk/

This will take you to a calendar page where you can select a date. We recommend visitors to select the most recent capture available - this should give the most complete and up-to-date copy of the site possible.

Note: In late 2024 the UK Web Archive was hit by a cyberattack and at time of archiving the Reid Concerts Database site in January 2025, the UK Web Archive was unavailable. However, the Reid Concerts Database material was collected up to the day of archiving and it is hoped that it will be restored online for public access as soon as possible.