

WEEKEND JOURNAL



**BRUCE
HOPWOOD, 4**
Burnbutts
Crescent, Cove,
on the bassoon.

IN the oil-rich city of Aberdeen, an unusual institution — which nurtures the best musical talent in the North and North-east — is in financial danger.

So little money to nurture so much musical talent



A director of the North-east of Scotland Music School, Donald Hawksworth, who is also adviser in music to Grampian's schools, is at the piano for singing practice. The singers are (left to right): Anne Rannie, Aberdeen (soprano); Pamela Stephen, Aberdeen (soprano); Sally Garden, Aberdeen (mezzo soprano); Verna Ward, Aberdeen (soprano) and Mrs Dorothy Hateley, the school's secretary.

PEARL MURRAY describes how the North-east of Scotland Music School may not survive — for the sake of a mere £4000. Pictures by DAVID SUTHERLAND and RON CASTLE.

It is true that the arts have enriched life throughout the ages and, arguably, will be even more important and necessary in an uncertain future. Against this background, it is a shameful waste that the promise of talented youngsters anywhere should be put in jeopardy.

And it is something of an irony that, in a city where money tends to have meaning only when it is counted in six figures, the future of some of the best musical talent in the North and North-east could be threatened — for the lack of a mere £4000.

That may be no more than a drop in the rich North Sea. But to a young and flourishing North-east institution, it could make the difference between surviving or not.

The North-east of Scotland Music School was set up in 1975 to provide tuition of a standard not otherwise available for North and North-east singers and musicians, mainly young people of outstanding promise.

This means bringing North professors and teachers from recognised colleges of music throughout Britain, names like Raimund Herinx and Marjorie Blakeston (singing); David Parkhouse (piano); Peter Mountain (violin); Eileen Croxford (cello), Ifor James (French horn), and Martin Gatt (bassoon).

They travel to Aberdeen's music centre in Little Belmont Street three times a term (or nine times a year) for coaching sessions — and the students pay £10 a time for the the privilege, plus their own travelling expenses.

About 30 students enrolled that first year, taking tuition in one of the four disciplines — piano, cello, violin and voice. Now the school have a roll of about 140 and the subjects offered have grown to eight. Those subsequently introduced were bassoon, oboe, French horn and double bass.

They come from many parts of the North and North-east, these students, mainly promising youngsters bent on making music their career — but not all.

They are joined by professionals, like school teachers, attending to improve their technique and by talented lay people, doing it for pleasure, who also form the nucleus of amateur talent in this part of the world.

In the seven years of its short life, about 90 students have completed the three or four-year course and have progressed to further musical study.

Two of them have gained national acclaim, glowing testimony to the tuition they had in Aberdeen.

Both Hugh MacLeod and Anne Stuart James, on separate occasions have been Joint winners of the prestigious John Noble Bursary for Singers.

Baritone Hugh, from Aberdeen, is now understudying with Welsh National Opera as well as doing solo work. He came second in an international competition in Barcelona, which opens doors throughout the musical world.

Soprano Anne, from Porree, went from Aberdeen to the Royal Academy of Music in London and her success in the John Noble Bursary for Singers came only this year.

The school's success, however, is at the root of its present difficulties. They are now appealing for £4000 so that they can begin the 1982-83 session in balance.

From the start, it was constituted as a limited company without share capital, non-profit-making and registered as a charity dependent almost entirely on trusts and companies — and it remains so to this day.



SINGING in the sun: Pamela Stephen (18), 14 Baillieswells Crescent, Aberdeen, practises on the Grecian portico at the rear of the former Central School in Little Belmont Street which now houses the music school. Pamela begins her studies at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in Glasgow in September.

That first year, the total Income was £1500 which represented the students' fees, a major grant from the MacRobert Trust and from Grampian Regional Council who then paid half the fees of the travelling professors, and a handful of small donations from other trusts and companies.

There were no administrative costs since the work was — and still is — done for nothing by one or two enthusiastic volunteers, notably the hard-working school secretary, Mrs Dorothy Hateley, 1 Kenfield Place, Aberdeen.

The appeal target represents the school's share of the total fares of the travelling teachers and professors — Grampian Regional Council pay the other three quarters of the bill.

The growth of the school involves 12 of them visiting the city nine times a year — and fares have all increased.

The trouble is, as Dorothy Hateley points out, that the school's survival depends, year in and year out on a series of smallish, "one off" grants and donations.

The only income currently guaranteed is the £1500 grant from the MacRobert Trust, the students' fees, and Grampian Regional Council's contribution towards the fares of the professorial staff.

"We need £4000 at today's rates just to keep going," says Dorothy Hateley.

"We can not add any more disciplines to what we already offer — although we would like to.

"We would like to add flute, but at present our finances can't meet it.

"The important thing is just to keep going."

The target takes no account of another vital area, either. That is financial help for parents who cannot afford the fees and fares involved in giving their talented children the chance they deserve. The school can offer only six scholarships — two for singing, and four others awarded at the staff's discretion.

Selection is by audition and anyone with a North-east address may apply for a place. There are, incidentally, a few vacancies in every subject still available for next session — even in singing, the most popular of all.

Apart from coaching, which is the *raison d'etre*, "celebrity workshops" and master classes are held quite frequently. Those who have given "celebrity workshops" include Emanuel Hurwitz (violin), David Mason (trumpet), Janet Craxton (oboe), Thea King (clarinet), Michael Arno (recorders), Ifor James (horn) and Alan Lumsden (trombone).

During its short life, the school has become accepted as the only establishment offering top-class tuition and courses in the North-east of Scotland.

It is a registered centre for the Oxford and Cambridge Examination Board "A" Level music exams. This enables students to compete more equally for places in colleges and academies of music throughout the country.

And none of this says anything about its invaluable contribution to the musical life both of the city and of the North-east as a whole.

The asking-price of £4000 seems modest indeed.



FRENCH horn player Joanna Moody. 8 Cairn Gardens, Cults

In its short life the school as gained national prestige through the excellence of its students



SCHOOL secretary Mrs Dorothy Hateley chats with some of the younger students. Back row (left to right): Bruce Hopwood, Cove; Susan Geddes, Aberdeen; Nadia Alzapiedi, Banchory; Calum and Donald Maclean, Aberdeen; Susan Wiseman, Elgin and Joanna Moody, Cults. Front row (left to right): Dania Alzapiedi, Banchory; Rachael Whitelaw, Kintore; Donald Gillan, Cults; Jill Wiseman, Elgin; Douglas Whitelaw, Kintore.



PIANIST Julia Lynch (17), 2 Airyhall Terrace, Aberdeen, former pupil of Hazlehead Academy, has just won a scholarship to the Royal Scottish Academy of Music in Glasgow.



THE administrator of Aberdeen Arts Centre, Verna Ward, goes through a scale. She trained at the former Manchester College of Music.



DUET by brothers Martin (left) and David Clark, 37 Countesswells Crescent, Aberdeen.