



Fife Youth Jazz Orchestra Celebrates 50 Years of Musical Excellence at Adam Smith Centre

Fergus McCreadie, Mercury Music Nominated and Winner of Scottish Album of The Year (SAY Award) said:

“For me the Fife Youth Jazz Orchestra was the start of everything - the passion and enthusiasm that Richard teaches with is unparalleled in Scottish music education and totally changed my life at the time. I owe so much of my musical outlook and ability to the lessons I learned in the orchestra, never mind the incredible opportunity as a young jazz musician to play with a number of other like-minded musicians.”

Fife Youth Jazz Orchestra (FYJO) is thrilled to announce its 50th anniversary celebration, marking half a century of nurturing young musical talent and promoting jazz music in Fife.

Since its inception in 1976, FYJO has been a cornerstone of the local youth music scene, providing a platform for young musicians to develop a range of musical skills and share their passion for jazz.

The band has made an incredible mark on the Scottish and National jazz scene with many former players now recognized as leading figures in the contemporary jazz scene such as Fergus McCreadie, (piano) Harben Kay, (sax) Calum Gourlay, (bass) Ewen Hastie (bass) and Tom Gordon (drums) led by the indomitable music director Richard Michael for the past five decades.

“I feel responsibility for setting so many youngsters down the path of poverty as I have the power to give them such a love of this music that they will want to play it for the rest of their lives!” said Richard Michael, founder and director of FYJO. “What makes FYJO different from all other youth bands is this – every player learns the basic techniques of how to improvise and there is a positive culture, which I encourage, that **“Mistakes are cool”**.”

Since 2006 Richard has been a key contributor on BBC Radio Scotland’s weekly jazz programme “Jazz House”, and has appeared on numerous broadcasts on Radio 3 and Radio 4. He is also Honorary Professor of Jazz at St Andrews University, and a leading figure in jazz education throughout the British Isles.

To commemorate this milestone, FYJO will host a celebratory event on **Saturday, 1 November at the Adam Smith Centre, Kirkcaldy** to celebrate the orchestra's rich history and to inspire the next generation of jazz musicians.

FYJO are currently reaching out to all ex-players (from professional musicians to vets and midwives) who remember their FYJO days with enthusiasm, for a day of fantastic music and catching up with old friends. And also a chance to check out the current crop of FYJO players for the professional musicians of tomorrow. To get involved please contact: secretary@fyjo.org.uk

As explayer Jasmine Shackman said on leaving the band “ FYJO is a safe place to be, and where I learned it’s OK to get it wrong”.

Tickets for the event will be available from the Adam Smith Centre later this summer.

further information contact secretary@fyjo.org.uk or Richard Michael richardmichael@icloud.com 07759 498836

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