

Flautist for more than 70 years

When the Christchurch West School decided to start a drum and fife band the idea appealed to young Trevor Hutton and he signed up to play the fife. He didn't know how to play it but he knew that his father would be able to help.

Albert Edward Hutton, Trevor's father, was said to be the best flautist in New Zealand in his day. He played in the best orchestras at the turn of the century and with touring theatrical shows. Trevor's mother was also musical, being a member of Lou Bloy's Ladies Banjo Band and she played the flute, too, having been taught by Albert. At one stage Trevor's mother, with a brother, entertained as the Kilties (dressed as Scots in kilts) travelling to the West Coast as well as around Canterbury.

So it was understatement to say that Trevor came from a musical family. His sister played the piano. When he took home the fife (a small flute-like instrument used in military music) his father thought the idea a good one and young Trevor, aged about nine, learnt how to play it overnight from his father's tuition. And so started a musical career for Trevor which has spanned more than 70 years.

After education at the Normal School and Christchurch West, Trevor left at 15 and, as he wanted to be a manufacturing jeweller, joined a company where he trained for six years working with gold, silver and jewellery. He remained there for 22 years before moving to Kennedys Diamond Rings for 11 years and finished his trade with Fred Sladen and Son for another 11 years before retiring at 60.

The skills learnt at the jewellery workbenches stood Trevor in good stead when he decided to make his own silver flutes over 40 years ago. He is the only person in New Zealand to have made Boehm-system flutes.



Trevor holds his handmade golden flute at a Risingholme Orchestra rehearsal



The finely worked piccolo sings sweetly in Trevor's hands

These days, at 86, he uses his home-made concert flute for work with the Risingholme Orchestra.

He has been associated with orchestras around Christchurch since a young boy. He recalls being taken to a rehearsal of the Derry's Military Band when he was 10 (his father was a member). The band had 60 members and, at a break, the conductor Gladstone Hill told Trevor to borrow his father's flute and give them a performance. Afterwards, the

conductor told Trevor he was a junior member of the band.

In the 1940s he obtained his Trinity College teachers' diploma (LTCL) for flute, probably the first in Christchurch to do so. He has taught various pupils over the years (and sometimes made flutes for them) although nowadays he has no pupils.

He formed the Serendipity Flutes - a group of 11 piccolo and flute players - about 20 years ago; he played earlier with his father in a 15-piece

orchestra; played with a Canterbury College orchestra for some years; has been a member of the Christchurch Savage Club for 70 years and plays with its orchestra; he gave recitals (with piano) for 3YA before playing with the 3YA Concert Orchestra for nearly 20 years. On occasions he joined pianist Doug Caldwell and the Amigos and also Brian Marston and his rumba band.

When he was 23 - and a member of the 3YA orchestra - he was asked to audition for the then National Orchestra, based in Wellington. He passed and was expecting to be offered a position to fill in and help out when required, but he was asked to become first flute of the orchestra. He couldn't at first get accommodation in Wellington but then some was arranged - however, Trevor, newly married, learnt that he was to become a father. So the Huttons stayed in Christchurch.

However, he did play the flute with the orchestra when it visited the city. In 1959 he played for the touring Royal Ballet. He played in Christchurch, Dunedin and Wellington with the ballet company - nine performances without even a rehearsal.

Trevor joined the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra in its early days and played for 14 years. Once he left that orchestra, except for the Savage Club music and other engagements, Trevor took things a little easier in his retirement. And then came a call from fellow flautist and conductor of the Risingholme Orchestra, Tony Ferner, to join that group.

A grandfather of four, Trevor taught his two sons to play the flute but they dropped playing in their teens. However, his older son, who lives in Canada, has indicated he might be taking it up again. So the flute-playing Huttons might continue to make music.

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