

A popular feature returns:

Sixty seconds with...

Arnold Myers

Arnold Myers read physics at St Andrews University and completed his doctorate, on the use of acoustical techniques to study brass instrument history, at the University of Edinburgh. He has twice been vice-president of CIMCIM, the international council of musical instrument museums and is a vice-president of the Galpin Society. A prolific author, he was appointed, in 2006, to a Personal Chair in Organology in the University of Edinburgh.



What is your earliest musical memory? My mother singing to me traditional songs such as *Strawberry Fair*.

What instruments did you learn to play and when? As a teenager I fell in love with piano music, bought a Collard & Collard upright, and signed up for lessons. My ambition was to play Chopin and Liszt. Later, a friend took me to a brass band he played in and I was lent a euphonium and given instruction. Seeing a trombone in a shop and hearing the Halle Orchestra's trombone section started a fascination with this instrument which I took up at university. Since then I have taken a few lessons in double bass, viol and drums, and dabbled with the sordune.

How did your interest in early music develop? At St Andrews and playing the trombone, I was invited to play early music, and took part in performances of repertoire such as Schütz's *Attendite popule meus*. In Edinburgh it didn't take me long to become part of the early music scene that was developing rapidly.

Your greatest musical influence? As a scholar my greatest influence has been Anthony Baines.

Who is your favourite composer? I hesitate to single out one, but could suggest Giovanni Gabrieli – on another day I might mention Jean Sibelius.

Which is your favourite instrument in the collection? Even more hesitation here, since instruments in the collection can provide gorgeous sounds, historical interest, consummate workmanship, sculptural or decorative design – and the thrill of the hunt in acquiring them and personal memories of previous owners. One which scores highly on most counts is the Griesbacher basset horn.

What has been your most exciting musical experience? Possibly playing in the orchestra for *Don Giovanni* under Daniel Barenboim.

Which piece of music plays continuously in heaven? Without doubt the 4th movement of Anton Bruckner's 9th symphony.

And in hell? The background music in restaurants and other public places is well rehearsed for this function.

What should be your epitaph? This should be for someone else to write. If I have contributed to the understanding of and delight in musical instruments, that's enough to be remembered for.