

# St. Joseph's Academy students set to wow with professionally performed compositions in collaboration with The Cumnock Tryst



13th November 2023

Tuesday 28th November 2023, 7:30pm  
St Joseph's Academy, Kilmarnock.

Pupils in the **Higher and Advanced Higher Music classes at Kilmarnock's St. Joseph's Academy** are being given the chance to hear their original compositions performed by a professional ensemble in a public concert in their school.

The concert, **held on Tuesday 28th November at 7:30pm**, follows a 10-week composition course led by Ayrshire composers **Gillian Walker** and **Sir James MacMillan** as part of **The Cumnock Tryst's** community engagement programme. Around 20 pupils and their class teacher are penning new pieces for a trio of professional musicians, who will premiere the works at the event.

MacMillan launched his hometown Cumnock as a **Centre of Excellence in the Learning and Teaching of Composition** in 2020. Since then, the work that he and The Cumnock Tryst have carried out in primary and secondary schools has been replicated around the world as an example of good practice. The project at St Joseph's Academy will benefit both pupils and teachers: supporting the pupils in composing work that will be recorded and submitted as part of their SQA qualifications, while also helping the teaching staff write a piece alongside their students and provide them with fresh insights into teaching composition as part of the secondary music curriculum.

Gillian Walker, who is leading the project alongside MacMillan, is a composer from Ayr with strong ties to The Cumnock Tryst. She first worked with the festival on a work experience placement while a student of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in 2018, where she gained valuable experience of working as a composer in the community. Since then, she has twice been commissioned by the Tryst to write music for their annual festival, however, this is the first time Walker has led a Tryst project herself as she takes responsibility for supporting and helping to nurture the next generation of young Ayrshire composers.

**Sir James MacMillan, founder and artistic director of The Cumnock Tryst said:**

*"I'm extremely proud of the work The Cumnock Tryst carries out in the Ayrshire community, especially when it comes to sparking the love I have for composition in the young musicians of the area. It will be a real treat to hear the music the students at St Joseph's Academy have been creating in these workshops, professionally performed live in front of an audience of their friends and family."*

**Gillian Walker, composer said:**

*"It's been a real pleasure to lead my first project with the Tryst and to support the students and teachers of St Joseph's with their own compositions. To see how far everyone has come across the ten weeks of workshops and how confident they are in finding their own musical voice has been really gratifying, and I can't wait to hear the final products of all their hard work at the performance at the end of November."*

Free tickets for the Tuesday 28th November concert at St Joseph's Academy are available to the public from [www.eventbrite.co.uk](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk).