

St Mary's Music School headteacher running the Seven Hills Race

Kenneth Taylor, the headteacher of St Mary's Music School, is running the Seven Hills race in Edinburgh next weekend to raise funds for the school's 50th birthday project.

The school has commissioned seven new pieces of music each inspired by the seven hills of the city and which will be performed by the music school pupils.

The venture is being supported by author Alexander McCall Smith who has written seven poems for the creative work and has declared his support in a video.

The road race includes 2,200 feet of steep climbs and descents starting and finishing on Calton Hill, just behind the former Royal High School where St Mary's will make its new home. The hills include Castle Rock, Corstorphine Hill, Craiglockhart Hill, Braid Hills, Blackford Hill and Arthur's Seat.

Dr Taylor said: "The Seven Hills Race is a challenge I always relish, and I can't thank Alexander McCall Smith enough for his very generous support. Running the Seven Hills Race has particular resonance with our musical Seven Hills [Project](#) because both celebrate the city's unique landscape and communities.

"All of the money raised will go towards commissioning new

musical works inspired by our surroundings and will give our pupils the opportunity to perform the new compositions at venues across the city. I'm reasonably fit and don't seem to be carrying any injuries this year, so I'm aiming for a respectable time and the experience might even offer the chance to take in the wonderful scenery of our beautiful city!"

The school will celebrate its 50th birthday in 2023 with the music and poetry [project](#).

To date, the Seven Hills Project has included performances of *Theory of the Earth*, by Jay Capperauld, *Imagined Conversation on Blackford Hill*, by Tom David Wilson and *Enlightenment* by Neil Tòmas Smith. The next is *Braid Hills* composed by former pupil Helen Grime MBE, scheduled for performance in the Queen's Hall on Monday June 27 2022.



Alexander McCall Smith left with Dr Kenneth Taylor