

Seven Hills Project finale – to be premiered next week

St Mary's Music School will present the final instalment of its Seven Hills project at its Spring Concert on 29 March.

The final composition is called Castle Rock. It is written by composer and Professor of Composition at the Royal Northern College of Music David Horne who is a former pupil. Professor Horne studied at St Mary's in the 1980s and drew inspiration for the piece from Edinburgh Castle, and Alexander McCall Smith's poem, *The Castle Rock dominates*. The piece is written for alto saxophone, accordion, horn, and string quartet.

The Spring Concert will also include performances by the Chorister's of St Mary's Cathedral as part of the Cathedral Choir, Senior String Ensemble, a performance of Rachmaninov's Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini performed by the winner of the School's Lord Clyde Concerto Competition, the School's Junior and Senior Choir and the Senior Orchestra.

Dr Valerie Pearson is Head of Strings at St Mary's Music School, which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year and has been the driving force behind the Seven Hills Project. She said: "We have made it to the seventh and final hill in our Seven Hills Project and what a great time the school has had getting here!

"Over the last two years, myself and the pupils have worked with each of the seven professional composers in turn, through every step of the commissioning process from deciding

instruments to rehearsing with them and finally giving the first performance of each new work. It has been a real partnership between the composers and the School.”

David Horne added: “As a former pupil of St Mary’s Music School, Castle Rock remains an aspect of Edinburgh’s landscape etched in my mind no matter where in the world I might be. I was delighted to compose a piece for the Project and wanted to ensure the music resonated with my feelings for and memories of the rock.”

The Seven Hills Project was commissioned in 2015 by the school to celebrate the capital’s seven high spots and its rich culture. Seven new compositions have been written by seven composers – each with connections to the School and Scotland – with each new work complemented by a new poem from Alexander McCall Smith. All compositions can be listened to on YouTube.

Tickets for the Spring Concert are Free and can be obtained via the School’s website – [St Mary’s Music School Online Community \(ptly.uk\)](https://www.ptly.uk)



David Horne