



Hazel Parkes Violin

Hazel's music making started at the age of 6 when she began learning the piano. "I was very scared of my first piano teacher who used to have a 6 inch ruler to hand to give my fingers a slap if I played a wrong note. Luckily my parents moved house when I was 7 so I changed teacher. When I was 11, and about to start secondary school, we visited some friends whose daughter was learning the violin. She let me have a try and I liked it so I started having violin lessons at my secondary school and enjoyed the fun of playing in the School Orchestra and Youth Orchestra."

After obtaining A levels in Music, French and German, Hazel studied Violin at Birmingham School of Music (now Birmingham Conservatoire) with John Bradbury and Felix Kok and gained ABSM teaching diplomas in violin and piano followed by ABSM performing diploma (violin) and GBSM. On leaving college, she was offered positions with CBSO and BBC Midland Radio Orchestra. She became a member of the MRO and enjoyed 7 years working for the BBC at their Pebble Mill studios playing popular classical music and light music. Hazel was a member of the orchestra when the BBC decided to re-record the theme tune for The Archers. "We were paid a fee for the performance but unfortunately don't get any more money every time it's played on air!" When the MRO was disbanded, she became a founder member of the English String/Symphony Orchestra based in Malvern. One of the most interesting times with the ESO was a 2 week tour of East Germany in 1986.

In 1988, Hazel's husband relocated from Birmingham to Sheffield for work so they moved to South Yorkshire and still live there. At this point she left ESO and joined sinfonia ViVA. In 1993, Hazel and three other members of ViVA founded Bow Belles String Quartet. The group has been together ever since and play music for weddings, parties and corporate functions. "My experience in MRO has been very useful for this as Bow Belles play light music as well as classical. We often add to our repertoire with new arrangements and I have enjoyed arranging some of my favourites for us to include."

Outside of work, Hazel's hobbies are playing tennis and tap dancing (not at the same time!). When she worked at Pebble Mill, The Archers was recorded in the studio next door to the orchestra and since then, she has been a keen listener to the programme. Hazel has 2 teenage daughters. The family lives very close to the Peak District and regularly put on walking boots to explore the lovely area.
