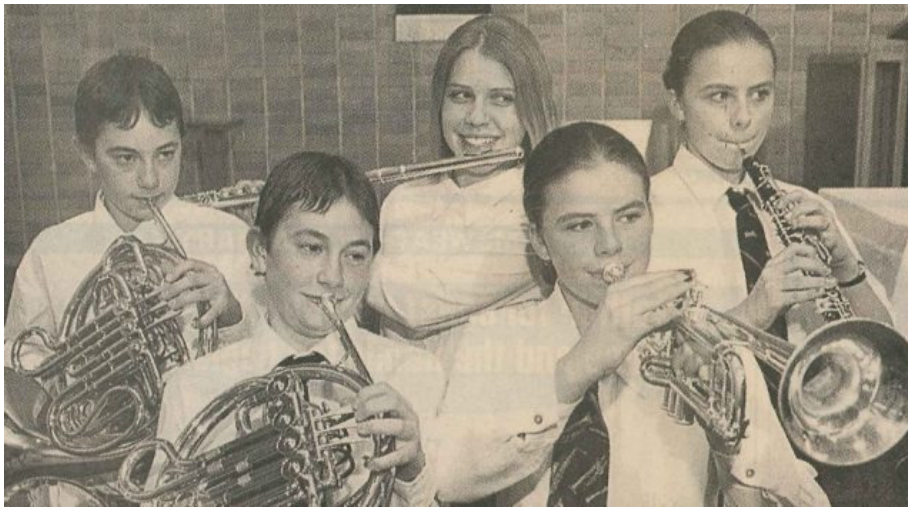




## KSO 40th: Sisters started musical careers at symphony

By **Dale Bass** - September 9, 2016



*Liam Doyle (left), brother Rory, Christina Howie, Anita Eccleston and sister Elizabeth were members of the Kamloops Symphony Orchestra's Junior Wind Ensemble back in 1997. Photo submitted.*

Some sisterly competition — as well as some influence from a big brother — led to the musical instrument choices for Anita and Elizabeth Eccleston.

The Kamloops Symphony Orchestra also played a big role in what became life-changing decisions.

Let's start with the role Tom Eccleston played. A member of the Westsyde secondary band, he played trumpet "and I thought it was really cool," Anita said. She started lessons with KSO conductor Bruce Dunn, leaving Elizabeth still debating what choice she would make.

"Anita had already picked the trumpet and I thought 'Oh man, she's already ahead of me,'" Elizabeth said from her home in Toronto.

Tom took her to a KSO concert and afterward, suggested to Elizabeth

she take up the oboe and sign up for lessons with KSO oboeist Shauna Martin.

The musical paths were set, ones that led both to become professional musicians and for Elizabeth to recently complete PhD studies in music.

Neither were formally taught at the KSO Music School, although Elizabeth taught there for a year between her undergraduate and post-graduate studies.

Many of the orchestra members had students, she said, a fact that led to the creation of the KSO's Junior Wind Ensemble that also included Liam and Rory Doyle — whose weekly lessons were right before hers — and Christina Howie.

While they also were in the band at school and benefitted from the instruction of longtime teacher and musician Syd Griffith, the sisters said their KSO teachers fuelled their interest in music.

"I teach private lessons," Anita said, "And, when I started, I realized I was regurgitating all the things Bruce had taught me."

While making music is the key, Anita said the classes "are more than just music lessons.

They're life lessons" that helped her gain the confidence to perform, to face disappointment and to work hard to be skilled and reliable.

Another longtime KSO musician also had a role in the sisters' musical lives. David Mardon encouraged both of them; for Elizabeth, his role was key when, about three months into lessons, she was thinking of quitting.

While debating her music future, Mardon invited her to join a youth orchestra "and this was before I had even done band. I was in Grade 7," Elizabeth said. "I credit him for not quitting."

At the age of 15, she performed with the KSO "sitting next to my teacher."

These days, the twins continue to make music. Elizabeth is freelancing, performing with various orchestras in Ontario while Anita has made Vancouver her base, where she frequently finds herself on stage or recording.

She will release a new jazz album soon.