

# MOTHER OF ALL THE PEOPLES

BY MIKE GIBB, MUSIC BY MAIRI WARREN

15 - 17 APRIL 2015

ALL PROCEEDS WILL GO TOWARDS THE MARY SLESSOR FOUNDATION  
(SC032781) AND THEIR ONGOING WORK IN AKPAP OKOYONG, NIGERIA.



Good evening and welcome

Tonight, be prepared to go on a musical journey that will take you from tough living in the expanding industrial city of nineteenth century Dundee, to a new and challenging experience on the continent of Africa.

Mary Slessor was no ordinary missionary. She was as unorthodox as she was inspirational and courageous as she was determined.

At the age of 28, she left the hardship, disease, poverty and deprivation of her adopted city to travel to Calabar in south east Nigeria - to follow in the footsteps of David Livingstone in a part of the world known as "The White Man's Grave". Unlike some of the other Victorian missionaries of the time, she was as physically and psychologically prepared as anyone could be for the life that lay ahead.

Teaching, worshipping, helping and offering her own brand of assertiveness meant confrontation with tradition and dress code, but also gaining the respect and confidence of the communities and crucially, their chiefs.

The 38 years Mary spent amongst the people in various regions of Calabar were filled with excitement, disappointment, horror and joy. An extraordinary story of a mill girl who became the first female magistrate in the British Empire.

Please sit back, relax and enjoy the play.

*At the time of going to print all of the information in this publication was correct. Mary Slessor Foundation are not responsible for any changes made to any of the events that are outwith their control.*

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## “Eka Kpukpro Owo” - Mother of All the Peoples

Mary Slessor was a remarkable woman, as a mill girl, magistrate, mediator and Mother.

She made great changes amongst the tribes she lived with, and for years after she moved on to another village, chiefs and their representatives would go looking for Mary to seek her council.

Through her insistence that peace be sought with words rather than weapons she enabled cooperation between tribes. Through her quick thinking, she stopped human sacrifices which accompanied the death of a chief, and when grief and alcohol saw these attempts fail, she stood her ground in front of heavily armed warriors to save as many people as possible. Her most well known achievement was the work she did in saving twins, but Mary did not discriminate against babies that did not come in pairs. Word spread that ‘Ma’ would turn no baby away.

Though her kindness can not be contested, her fiery temper would bubble to the surface, a multitude of curses on the tip of her tongue, made her a formidable enemy. It was this attitude as much as any that earned her a place in their society - as a fearless Scot!

Mary Slessor’s death caused devastation in Nigeria: “the sight of hundreds of Africans, earlier prostrate with grief, who now in a supreme effort of self-control contained their sorrow and honoured “Eka Kpukpro Owo” with dignity, their last magnificent way of showing their love and respect.”

- Elizabeth Robertson *‘The Barefoot Missionary’*



*photos courtesy of Dundee City Council*



## The Mary Slessor Foundation

The Mary Slessor Foundation is registered with the Scottish Charity Commission (SC032781) and the Corporate Affairs Commission in Abuja, Nigeria. Its base in Dundee is run by a small group of voluntary Trustees, who help with fundraising and raising awareness.

In Akpap Okoyong, 55km north of Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria, where Mary lived, worked and loved, the Mary Slessor Foundation was founded. In 2002, Dr Lawrie Mitchell MBE and his wife Eme Mitchell, descendent of Ma Eme (Mary's closest Nigerian friend), decided to set up and run the Foundation with the support of other local charities and the Nine Incorporated Trades of Dundee. With this financial assistance in Dundee and the influence of Eme Mitchell amongst the community in Akpap Okoyong, the Foundation had the money, security and infrastructure to kick-start their cause.

The Foundation is a vocational centre which focuses on providing the local communities with opportunities to learn valuable skills. This allows them to walk away with a trade and the ability to earn money for themselves and for their families. Students can learn mechanics, fashion and design, or metalwork and welding, as well as having access to the on site agricultural processing unit, the goods of which are sold at local markets.

The Foundation focuses on converting the endeavours of those at the project into a self-sustainable business, relying on the skills of those trained there to deliver that aspiration.

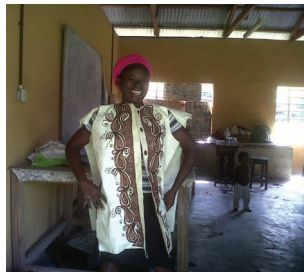
**For more information on the Foundation, visit the website at: [www.maryslessor.org](http://www.maryslessor.org)**



*photos courtesy of Dundee City Council*







## Cast

(In order of appearance)

Elder Mary .....	Lynne Binnie
Younger Mary .....	Tricia Stewart
Mary's Mother .....	Aileen Air
Mary's Sister, Susan Slessor .....	Carolyn Johnston
Visiting Missionary .....	Aileen Air
Janet Wright .....	Carolyn Johnston

## Production Team

Musical Director .....	Euan Gow
Stage Manager .....	Jim Taylor
Lighting & Projections .....	Phil Cooney
Sound .....	Accent Audio
Set Construction .....	Jim Shearer & Dave Nicoll
Makeup & Props .....	Rhona Anderson & Moira Inglis

## Acknowledgements

Norman Robertson  
Dundee Rep and The Little Theatre  
for costumes and props  
Ron Howie  
Vicki Bowman  
Mandy Nicoll  
Kristi Herd  
Downfield Musical Society  
All front of house and back stage team  
who have assisted.

**The Mary Slessor Foundation owes a  
debt of gratitude to:-**

## The Heritage Lottery Fund

The Mary Slessor Centenary is supported  
by the National Lottery through the Heri-  
tage Lottery Fund.



## Act I (Musical Numbers)

Mother Of All The Peoples .....	Elder Mary
58 Hours A Week .....	Younger Mary
Seterday Black Eye .....	Elder Mary
Be Here .....	Mary's Mother
The Mission .....	Younger Mary, Mary's Sister Susan, Elder Mary
Calabar .....	Susan
A New Land Awaiting .....	Younger Mary and Elder Mary

## Act II (Musical Numbers)

A New Land Awaiting (reprise) .....	Younger Mary
Without Ma Sheen .....	Visiting Missionary, Younger and Elder Mary
My Hame .....	Younger & Elder Mary
No Choice .....	Elder & Younger Mary
Spreading The Word .....	Younger Mary, Janet Wright and Elder Mary
Every Passing Moment .....	Elder Mary
Nearer My God To Thee .....	Younger Mary



### Stuart Taylor

We are very much indebted to the significant financial contribution pledged by local business man Stuart Taylor towards this staging of 'Mother of All the Peoples'.

Stuart, who was born in Dundee and now lives in Barry, has spent his working life in the world of construction and property development and after an approach by friend and chairman of the trustees, Doug Binnie - he recognised and was impressed with the efforts of the Mary Slessor Foundation and was keen to support their work. His benevolence and kindness is hugely appreciated.



## Meet The Cast

The cast have gathered together several times in the past few years to perform this play. This is their second performance at the Dundee Repertory Theatre however it has also been performed at the Gardyne Theatre in Dundee and Angus College, the Byre Theatre in St Andrews and the Mitchell Theatre in Glasgow.

This cast of *Mother of All the Peoples* reunites one last time on the centenary of the death of Mary Slessor to perform.



### Lynne Binnie

Born in Aberdeen on 2nd December but having lived most of her life in Dundee (the same as Mary Slessor!), Lynne has featured in many local theatrical productions. She has played the role of Elder Mary on many occasions and is honoured to play the role once more on the centenary of this remarkable woman's death. Lynne (fast approaching the age that Mary died...) feels that this will probably be the last time she plays this part, as it is becoming increasingly difficult to remember the words! Lynne has also featured in another of Mike Gibb's plays "Sunday Mornings on Dundee Law" performed recently at Dundee Rep. She has been a member of Broughty Ferry Amateur Operatic Society and over 25 years, appeared in a number of their musical productions and concerts. However, more recently Lynne has turned her hand to theatre production and successfully staged "The Wizard of Oz!" and more recently "Peter Pan" with Tayport Amateur Dramatic and Musical Society.



### Tricia Stewart

London dwelling Tricia Stewart had a great start to acting in her home town of Dundee and surrounding areas. With its plethora of theatres and vibrant dramatic and musical scene, Tricia enjoyed performing onstage in Scotland in plays, musicals and live events before eventually travelling south to complete her training at drama school. In the last few years she has worked on a number of films, commercials and screen material as well as acting in some very interesting live performances in both classics and fresh new material. She is very excited to return to work with the fantastic team both off and on stage that make *Mother of All the Peoples* so magical and memorable and to have the honour of playing young Mary Slessor once again.





### Carolyn Johnston

Carolyn is delighted to be back playing the parts of Susan Slessor & Janet Wright in Mother of All the Peoples having first appeared in the roles at the Byre Theatre, St Andrews in May 2007. Usually there isn't a dry eye in the house with her final delivery of Mary's eulogy so here's a warning, keep your hankies handy... Carolyn started singing with Dundee University Operatic Society too many years ago and followed that with other production groups including Sounds Spectacular, Apex Productions, Downfield South Church Panto Group; Broughty Ferry Operatic Society and more recently with Stirling & Bridge of Allan Operatic Society. Her favourite roles to date, apart from Susan & Janet have been Sergeant Sarah Brown (Guys & Dolls); Cinderella; Hodel (Fiddler on the Roof) & Baroness Elsa Schrader (The Sound of Music). Working nationally for Macmillan Cancer Support doesn't lend too much spare time to amateur dramatics these days and so Carolyn is thrilled to be back in Dundee.



### Aileen Air

Aileen is a longstanding member of Dundee Rep Women's Singing Group (AKA Loadsaweeminsinging). The group meet regularly and perform at a variety of functions and venues throughout the city and beyond, singing a wide range of songs acapella. In June 2014 the group celebrated 20 years of singing with a concert in the Bonar Hall. A member of Carnoustie Theatre Club, Aileen has appeared in a number of productions in the Dibble Tree Theatre in Carnoustie. Aileen has been part of "Mother of All the Peoples" since it was first performed in 2003 and is delighted to be part of the team again on the centenary of Mary Slessor's death.

CD's of the cast recording are available for sale in the foyer or through contacting the Mary Slessor Foundation at [www.maryslessor.org](http://www.maryslessor.org).

All profits from the sale of the CD and this programme will go directly to aiding the project in Akpap Okoyong, Calabar, Nigeria.

## The Creators



### Mike Gibb

'Mother of All the Peoples' was Aberdeen playwright Mike Gibb's second musical play (after A Land Fit For Heroes) and has been followed by a string of musical plays, including Five Pound & Twa Bairns, Sunday Mornings on Dundee Law and Clarinda, and plays such as Children of the Sea, and Lest We Forget (commissioned to mark the 20th anniversary of the Piper Alpha Disaster). Mike has also written a number of books on dog themes, the two most recent to raise money for the Friends of Bianca charity which he established in 2011. Mike is currently working on a play titled Giacomo & Glover, and a new children's book commissioned by Aberdeen Football Club. Most of Mike's theatre works are now available for the amateur circuit and can be licensed through Stagescripts Ltd.



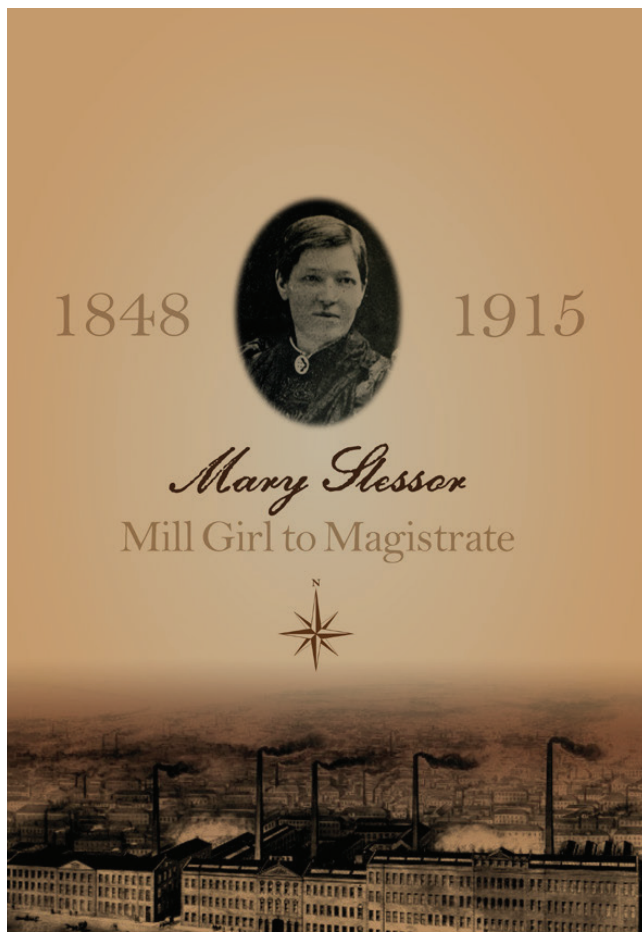
### Mairi Warren

Mairi graduated as a music teacher in 1994, and since then has worked as a teacher, a musical director, accompanist, composer and arranger. In 2002, 'Mother of All the Peoples' was Mairi's first collaboration with Mike, writing music for a play, followed by 'Five Pound and Twa Bairns', 'Lest We Forget', 'Red Harlaw' and 'Aberdeen's Forgotten Diva'. While living in Aberdeen, Mairi's Musical Direction credits included 'Copacabana', 'Sweeney Todd' and 'Calamity Jane'. Since moving to Glasgow, she's added 'Footloose', 'Beauty and the Beast', 'The Sound of Music' and most recently, 'Jesus Christ Superstar' to this. 'Mother of All the Peoples' retains a special place in Mairi's heart. She'd like to wish the cast and crew the very best, and thanks to Mary Slessor for being an inspiration.



### Elizabeth Robertson

Author of the book, "The Barefoot Missionary", the late Elizabeth Robertson provided the inspiration for playwright Mike Gibb to create the play 'Mother of All the Peoples'. She was a great supporter of the Foundation and its work, for which we thank her.



## Free Exhibition

Scotland's Jute Museum  
@ Verdant Works

11 April - 1 November

## Opening Hours

Monday to Saturday, 10.00am -  
6.00pm

Sunday, 11.00am - 6.00pm

For more details about Verdant  
Works please call 01382 309060

The centenary exhibition tells the story of Mary Slessor's journey from Dundee mill girl to missionary and later magistrate in Calabar. It celebrates her work to improve the lives of the local tribes, in particular the women and children and her ongoing legacy.

This temporary exhibition includes personal objects which belonged to Mary Slessor from the collections of Dundee Art Gallery and Museums, along with contemporary images and quotes from her letters written during her life in Calabar.

The story begins in Dundee, an expanding industrial city, struggling with poor housing, sanitation and poverty. It then follows Mary as she sets out for the then mysterious continent of Africa, encountering a whole new set of dangers and challenges.

Exhibition curated by: Catriona Baird, Freelance Curator

Designed by: GBDM Ltd. Dundee: Griff Boyle, Wendy Maltman and Emma Thompson.

Supported by the National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund.



DUNDEE  
HERITAGE  
TRUST





***“It’s been a privilege  
to have had a purpose  
to my life.”***

Design by Dundee City Council, Communications Division

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PRODUCTIONS



1848-1915

MARY  
SLESSOR  
CENTENARY  
*Building a better future*



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