

neRoof.co.nz

Music devotee collects medal for tireless work

Amy Diamond



Merle Fausett has been a singer her whole life.

Her mother used to tell her she first started singing when she was only 18 months old, and since then, Fausett has dedicated much of her life to music.

This is why the 85-year-old Tauranga woman is the recipient of a Queen's Service Medal on this year's Queen's Birthday Honours list.

"I could not believe it, it is so very, very humbling and exciting," Fausett said.

She has been involved with music on a voluntary basis in the Bay of Plenty and Waikato for more than 60 years.

Fausett has led many choirs and orchestras since the 1950s and has worn "many hats" in the industry, including being deputy conductor of Wesley Methodist Church choir since the 1980s.

"There have been so many highlights over the years, and I've worked with so many superb people," she said.

To name a few, Fausett was the musical director of the Tauranga Civic Choir from 1979 to 1991 and has conducted the Silver Singers since 2014, a choir of local retirees who perform at rest homes and retirement villages.

She has been a committee member of the Bay of Plenty Symphonia and been librarian for more than 10 years and is a



Merle Fausett has been given a Queen's Service Medal for her contribution to music.

PHOTO / ANDREW WARNER

Achievements

- Helped establish Friends of the Orchestra where she supported the Symphonia with front of house duties, refreshments at full-day orchestra workshops, and fundraising.
- Choral director of a 100-strong choir for five successful Last Night of the Proms concerts.
- A driving force behind the establishment of the Rising Starts concerto competition for young musicians and served on the board at inception.

current Friend of the Orchestra.

Fausett, a self-taught singer, said music had been a huge factor in her life.

"There's not much that can beat music, it's been the best years of my life."