

EMBARGOED UNTIL 1pm SUNDAY 27 MAY 2018

PRESS RELEASE

Edinburgh's iconic Usher Hall announces new Sunday Classics season with some of the world's finest soloists and orchestras.

- **Dazzling talents of Angela Hewitt, Pinchas Zukerman, Michael Morpurgo, John Lill, Valentina Lisitsa, Barry Douglas, Marat Bisengaliev and Freddy Kempf take centre stage.**



Musicians from the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, who are taking part in the season, read the new Sunday Classics programme. Photo credit: Ian Georgeson

Images available to download [here](#)

- **Edinburgh welcomes orchestras from across the world including the Symphony Orchestra of India, Japan Philharmonic and Russian Philharmonic with premiere conductors including Yuri Temirkanov, Martyn Brabbins and Thomas Sanderling.**

Edinburgh's iconic Usher Hall is pleased to announce its **2018/19 Sunday Classics programme**. A much-loved and integral part of the venue's year-round schedule, the Sunday Classics concert season runs from **14 October 2018 until 16 June 2019**.

Some of the world's finest international orchestras and soloists will flock to Edinburgh's Usher Hall to take part in this concert series. The season kicks off in October, with a visit from the **Russian State Symphony Orchestra** and pianist **Barry Douglas**, whose interpretations of Russian music are renowned, to perform Shostakovich's *Piano Concerto No.2*, while the **Vienna Tonkünstler Orchestra** also pay Usher Hall a visit with the dazzling **Angela Hewitt** later in the month for Beethoven's *Piano Concerto No.5*.

The final Sunday Classics concert in 2018 is set to be a very special afternoon of music with the **War Horse: The Story in Concert – Centenary Concert**. Narrated by War Horse author **Michael Morpurgo** and performed by the **Royal Scottish National Orchestra**, the concert will commemorate 100 years since the end of the First World War.

The Usher Hall welcomes in the New Year with a visit from **St Petersburg Philharmonic**, the oldest orchestra in Russia. They bring with them the explosive pianist **Freddy Kempf** for Rachmaninov's *Piano Concerto No. 2*. In February virtuoso violinist **Marat Bisengaliev** will perform Bruch's *Violin Concerto* alongside **The Symphony Orchestra of India**, while at the beginning of April London's historic **Royal Philharmonic Orchestra** takes to the stage for a diverse programme of Vaughan William's *Fantasia*, Elgar's *Enigma Variations* and Beethoven's *Violin Concerto* performed by the phenomenal **Pinchas Zukerman**.

The **Japan Philharmonic** perform Beethoven's *Piano Concerto No.3* with **John Lill**, unanimously regarded one of the finest pianists in the world, on the keys as part of a varied afternoon of music on 14 April, and on 12 May YouTube pianist sensation **Valentina Lisitsa** makes a triumphant return to Sunday Classics with the **Russian Philharmonic of Novosibirsk**.

The final concert of the season takes place on 16 June with another special performance from the **Royal Scottish National Orchestra** conducted by **Ben Palmer**. *The Planets – An HD Odyssey* will awe the audience as Holst's beautiful and mystical suite *The Planets* is performed by the RSNO while a film – created in collaboration with NASA and award winning producer/director Duncan Copp – is shown on the big screen.

This multimedia event features the latest high-definition planetary images from NASA's exploration of the solar system, made more vivid alongside the orchestra's performance of Holst's *The Planets* and is preceded by other iconic classics synonymous with the theme of Space, including Strauss's *Blue Danube Waltz* (featured in 2001: A Space Odyssey) and John Williams's iconic *Star Wars* theme.

Now a well-established and much-loved part of the Usher Hall's year-round programming, the Sunday Classics season brings the world's finest orchestras to Edinburgh. The 2017-18 season brought the likes of the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, Russian State Philharmonic and Mahler's 'Resurrection' Symphony with Bruckner Orchester Linz to name but a few. The series also sees distinguished international soloist accompany the ensembles, with last season's guests including **classical YouTube sensation Valentina Lisitsa** and arguably the **world's greatest living violinist, Maxim Vengerov**.



(From top left clockwise: Angela Hewitt, Thomas Sanderling, Yuri Temirkanov, Marat Bisengaliev)

Councillor Donald Wilson, Culture and Communities Convener, said: “Where better to enjoy a live symphony than a relaxing Sunday afternoon at the Usher Hall? Designed and built with classical music in mind over 100 years ago, the tradition of concert-going at Edinburgh’s most stunning indoor venue continues as strongly as ever.

“It’s a genuine pleasure to sit back in the impressive auditorium and lose yourself in the music, and this new programme of Sunday Classics will feature first-class orchestras from around the world outside the usual Festival period. Plus, with special rates for students and those out of work, and free tickets for under 16s, the Usher Hall is helping to make classical music accessible to all.”



Musicians from the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, who are taking part in the season, outside Usher Hall. Photo credit: Ian Georgeson.

Tickets go on sale Sunday 27 May.

2018/19 SUNDAY CLASSICS SEASON - FULL LISTINGS:

Date: Sunday 14 October 2018, 3pm
Orchestra: **Russian State Symphony Orchestra**
Conductor: Valentin Uryupin
Soloist: Barry Douglas (piano)
Programme: Tchaikovsky – Swan Lake Suite
Shostakovich – Piano Concerto No. 2
Rachmaninov – Symphony No. 2

Date: Sunday 28 October 2018, 7.30pm
Orchestra: **Vienna Tonkünstler Orchestra**
Conductor: Yutaka Sado
Soloist: Angela Hewitt (piano)
Programme: Bernstein – On the Town: Three Dance Episodes from On the Town
Beethoven – Piano Concerto No. 5
Sibelius – Symphony No. 5

Date: Sunday 18 November 2018, 3pm
Orchestra: **Royal Scottish National Orchestra**
Conductor: David Charles Abell
Narrator: Michael Morpurgo
Programme: War Horse: The Story in Concert – Centenary Concert

Date: Sunday 27 January 2019, 3pm
Orchestra: **St Petersburg Philharmonic**
Conductor: Yuri Temirkanov
Soloist: Freddy Kempf (piano)
Programme: Rachmaninov – Piano Concerto No. 2

Mahler – Symphony No. 4

Date: Sunday 24 February 2019, 3pm
Orchestra: **Symphony Orchestra of India**
Conductor: Martyn Brabbins
Soloist: Marat Bisengaliev (violin)
Programme: Weber – Oberon Overture
Bruch – Violin Concerto No. 1 in G
Rimsky-Korsakov – Scheherazade

Date: Sunday 7 April 2019, 3pm
Orchestra: **Royal Philharmonic Orchestra**
Director & Soloist: Pinchas Zukerman (conductor and violin)
Programme: Vaughan Williams Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis
Elgar Enigma Variations
Beethoven Violin Concerto

Date: Sunday 14 April 2019, 3pm
Orchestra: **Japan Philharmonic Orchestra**
Conductor: Pietari Inkinen
Soloist: John Lill (piano)
Programme: Rautavaara – Opener
Beethoven – Piano Concerto No. 3
Takemitsu – Requiem for Strings
Sibelius – Symphony No. 2

Date: Sunday 12 May 2019, 3pm
Orchestra: **Russian Philharmonic of Novosibirsk**
Conductor: Thomas Sanderling
Soloist: Valentina Lisitsa (piano)
Programme: Rimsky Korsakov – Capriccio Espagnol

Rachmaninov – Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini Variations

Mussorgsky – Pictures at an Exhibition

Date: Sunday 16 June 2019, 3pm

Orchestra: **Royal Scottish National Orchestra**

Conductor: Ben Palmer

Programme: The Planets – An HD Odyssey:

Richard Strauss Also Sprach Zarathustra (opening)

Johann Strauss II Blue Danube Waltz

J S Bach (orch. Stokowski) Toccata and Fugue in D minor

Beethoven Symphony No. 7 (2nd movement)

Williams Main Theme from Star Wars

Holst The Planets

For more information, interviews and press ticket requests please contact:

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Sunday Classics at Usher Hall

Tickets for the 2018-19 season go on sale 27 May.

Book 5 or more concerts in the 2018-19 season (14 Oct 2018 - 16 June 2019) to become a member of the **Sunday Classics Club**. As a member you can take advantage of the following benefits.

- Sunday Classics Club Membership Card
- Free Sunday Classics concert programmes on concert day
- Complimentary tea/coffee at Sunday Classics concerts
- Flexible ticket exchange scheme*
- Invitation to special Sunday Classics Club Party
- 15% discount on the Sheraton Hotel's Sunday Lunch**
- Complimentary glass of Prosecco when booking the Sheraton Hotel's afternoon tea**

£1.50 transaction fee applies on all phone and online bookings.

Bookings for groups, young people, students and unwaged

Group Bookings

The Usher Hall offers great benefits for bookings of 10 or more tickets to Sunday Classics. There can be no better way to enjoy your concert experience than to come with your friends and family, saving money in the process.

Benefits include:

- Ticket discounts: 20% off all full price Sunday Classics 2018/19 concerts.
- Flexible reservations: book now, pay later (6 weeks prior to event).
- Free organiser ticket: book 10 or more tickets and group organiser's ticket is free.

Please call 0131 228 1155 to make your reservation.

Young people, students and unwaged

We try to ensure our concerts are accessible to all, so young people under the age of 16 can go for free (when accompanied by an adult) to Sunday Classics concerts. Registered students and unwaged people can take advantage of £10 tickets to all Sunday Classics concerts. All you need to do is produce proof of age / valid ID when you come to along on concert day.

USHER HALL

The Usher Hall is Scotland's only five-star concert hall hosting a range of concerts from rock, pop, classical, jazz, world and folk music. The venue has hosted concerts and events since it opened way back in 1914! A beautiful Edwardian building with a modern twist, which is well loved by performers and audiences all over the world due to its magnificent acoustics.

It is said that Andrew Usher sparked the idea of a 'concert hall for Edinburgh' whilst chatting away over the counter of his jewellers in Rose Street. His 'desire and intention' was that this Hall 'should become and remain a centre and attraction to musical artistes and performers and to the citizens of Edinburgh and others who may desire to hear good music...'

On 23 June 1896 it was formally announced that Andrew Usher had gifted £100,000 to The City of Edinburgh. The purpose of the money was to provide a City Hall, to be used for concerts, recitals, or other entertainments or performances of a musical nature, and for civic functions, or such other performances as the Lord Provost, Magistrates, and Council saw fit. Above all it was to be about the music. Edinburgh was very much lacking a hall for such musical and civic purposes, as stated in the Scotsman the following day; 'The necessity for a great hall in Edinburgh under city management has been pressed upon the attention of the public for many years.' Sadly Andrew Usher died before his dream was realised.

State Visit

19 July 1911 saw the state visit of King George and Queen Mary and one of their duties while in the city was to lay two memorial stones. Within the foundation stone is a lead casket containing all the coins of the realm, a copy of the City Chamberlain's accounts, a copy of The Scotsman the Edinburgh Evening News, a list of city officials, a list of the Town Council, and a copy of Andrew Usher's deed of gift.

Usher Hall Opens

The building was officially opened by Andrew Usher's widow on 16 March 1914. Three celebratory concerts took place featuring music from Handel, Bach, MacCunn, Wagner and Beethoven. 'It is not too much to say that those present, who saw the hall for the first time, were greatly struck with its dignified proportions, its open and airy aspect, and the character of its decorative detail'. The Scotsman (7 March 1914).

Today

Today, the much praised acoustics make it one of the best concert halls in Europe with many of the world's finest musicians performing here. The Usher Hall is the city's key venue for visiting national and international orchestras and has been the main venue for the Edinburgh International Festival since 1947, hosting legendary artists such as composers Benjamin Britten and Dmitri Shostakovich, contralto singer Kathleen Ferrier and cellist Jacqueline Du Pre to name but a few.

The venue is a centre of excellence embracing the widest range of music and events, including rock, pop, jazz, world and blues. It is Edinburgh's go-to venue for today's mid-large scale rock and pop acts, with the likes of Queens of the Stone Age, The National, Radiohead's Thom Yorke, George Ezra and Echo & the Bunnymen having performed on its stage. Usher Hall also hosts a broad spectrum of comedy, talks, school concerts, conferences, sponsorship events, ceremonies, lectures and recording sessions.