



Press release for immediate use

The very best classical music is coming to the Usher Hall this Summer

- Orchestras and soloists from Scotland and further afield take to the stage of Scotland's 5-star concert hall bringing summer season to a stunning finale.
- Tickets available at www.usherhall.co.uk



(Images from top-left going clockwise: Katherine Bryan, Ben Palmer, Valentina Lisitsa, Elim Chan)

Photos available to download [here](#)

Scotland's most iconic concert venue, the Usher Hall, has a packed summer of classical music taking audiences to



emotional heights of passion, elegance and intense tragedy and making souls soar.

The Royal Scottish National Orchestra (RSNO) rounds off a stand-out season with four stirring concerts before festival madness hits the capital. The first four notes of Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony* are some of the best known in the classical cannon, but May 4 brings Edinburgh audiences the chance to hear the rest – and it's gripping: a no-holds-barred emotional struggle from tragedy to triumph, in some of the most dramatic music ever written. First, though, comes something a bit gentler, as the RSNO's Principal Flute **Katherine Bryan** and harpist **Pippa Tunnell** perform Mozart's elegant – but deliciously witty – *Concerto for Flute and Harp*.

On 10 May, the RSNO bring Mahler's mighty *Sixth Symphony* to Edinburgh, a piece that imagines a hero destroyed by three devastating blows of fate. But after he'd completed this immense, tragic masterpiece, that's exactly what happened to Mahler himself. It's a musical experience that leaves no listener unmoved, so **Thomas Søndergård** begins with something altogether sunnier: the lovely *Piano Concerto No23* by Mahler's hero Mozart, played by RSNO favourite **Ingrid Fliter**.

Impatient pianists, practical jokers, and an overenthusiastic bulldog. Elgar dedicated his *Enigma Variations* to 'my friends pictured within', and if all you know of them is Nimrod, then prepare to meet some of the most loveable characters in British music on 17 May as the RSNO is led by **Elim Chan**. It's a joyous finale to a musical journey that begins inside the fantastic imagination of Hong Kong-born Fung Lam, and finds violinist **Benjamin Beilman** deep in the Finnish forests of Sibelius' hugely popular *Violin Concerto*.

The summer season sees the final two concerts in the venue's much-loved Sunday Classics series of concerts. On May 12, the Usher Hall welcomes back YouTube sensation **Valentina Lisitsa**, a brilliant pianist of the Russian old school who plays with fiery intensity and profound insight, and a musical evangelist who has taken classical music to millions through her online videos. Lisitsa has long adored the romance and power of Rachmaninov, and following her electrifying performance of his *Third Piano Concerto* at the Usher Hall in 2018, she makes a welcome return with the passionate *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* – Rachmaninov at his tenderest, and his wittiest. She's joined by the remarkable **Russian Philharmonic of Novosibirsk**, Russia's third largest city. Considered cultural ambassadors for Siberia, and for the whole of Russia, they are directed by Principal Conductor **Thomas Sanderling**, himself from an eminent musical lineage.

The final concert of the Sunday Classics season is a very special appearance from the **RSNO**. *The Planets: An HD Odyssey* will take audiences on an unforgettable journey to the furthest reaches of the cosmos. From the galvanising military rhythms of Mars to the eerie beauty of Venus; from the majestic power of Jupiter to the mystical visions of Neptune – *The Planets* is a spectacular tribute to pioneering science, and also a glimpse into the hidden mysteries of astrology, all conveyed in some of Holst's most evocative music. Combined with real-life, large-screen NASA pictures of the planets' uncanny natural beauties, it's an overwhelming experience. Holst's magical masterpiece is performed by the exceptional musicians of the RSNO, directed by exciting young British conductor **Ben Palmer**. And before the interval, prepare for lift-off with some of the most dazzling space-themed music ever written.

Sticking with the end of season theme, passion rules in **the Scottish Chamber Orchestra's** Season Finale on 9 May! Principal Guest Conductor **Emmanuel Krivine**



brings an abundance of French panache in Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*: unrequited love, a 'Dream of a Witches' Sabbath', an intense vision of hell, and a bizarre and fantastic ending. In contrast, Fauré's *Requiem* offers gentleness and intimacy, radiant with consolation – gloriously delivered by the sublime **SCO Chorus** and the soothing baritone of **Rudolf Rosen**.

And for Edinburgh opera fans, 21 May sees the esteemed **Opera North** perform its unique take on *Aida*. Two countries are at war. Aida secretly loves an enemy general, Radamès, who returns her love. When Radamès is selected to lead a renewed assault against the enemy, Aida is forced to choose between betraying her country and betraying her heart. Verdi reserved some of his finest arias for the doomed lovers such as 'Celeste Aida' and 'O patria mia'. This new concert staging of *Aida* comprises an international cast and reunites the 2017 Turandot creative team with conductor Sir Richard Armstrong, director Annabel Arden and set and costume designer Joanna Parker.

The Usher Hall, opened in 1914, is **Scotland's only 5 Star concert hall** and is well loved by performers and audiences from all over the world because of its magnificent acoustics and atmosphere. It's 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.

Listings

RSNO Beethoven Five
7:30pm, Friday 03 May 2019
Prices - £42, £32, £24, £19, £13
Sharon Roffman – Leader/Director
Katherine Bryan – Flute
Pippa Tunnell - Harp
Royal Scottish National Orchestra
Beethoven - *Coriolan Overture*
Mozart - *Flute and Harp Concerto K299*
Beethoven - *Symphony No5*

SCO: Berlioz *Symphonie Fantastique*
7:30pm, Thursday 09 May 2019
Prices - £35, £30, £23, £17.50, £11.50
Emmanuel Krivine - Conductor
Rudolf Rosen - Baritone
SCO Chorus
Gregory Batsleer - Chorus Director
Scottish Chamber Orchestra
Fauré - *Requiem*
Berlioz - *Symphonie Fantastique*

RSNO Sondergard Conducts Mahler Six
7:30pm, Friday 10 May 2019
Prices - £42, £32, £24, £19, £13
Thomas Søndergård - Conductor
Ingrid Fliter - Piano



Royal Scottish National Orchestra
Mozart - *Piano Concerto No23 K488*
Mahler - *Symphony No6*

Sunday Classics: Russian Philharmonic of Novosibirsk
3:00pm, Sunday 12 May 2019
Prices - £35, £29, £24, £18, £13.50
Russian Philharmonic of Novosibirsk
Thomas Sanderling - Conductor
Valentina Lisitsa - Piano
Rimsky-Korsakov - *Capriccio espagnol*
Rachmaninov - *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*
Mussorgsky - *Pictures at an Exhibition*

RSNO Chan Conducts The Enigma Variations
7:30pm, Friday 17 May 2019
Prices - £42, £32, £24, £19, £13
Elim Chan - Conductor
Benjamin Beilman - Violin
Royal Scottish National Orchestra
Fung Lam - *Endless Forms **Scottish premiere***
Sibelius - *Violin Concerto*
Elgar - *Enigma Variations*

Opera North - Aida
7:30pm, Tuesday 21 May 2019
Prices - £42, £32, £24, £19, £13
Conductor Sir Richard Armstrong
Director Annabel Arden
Set and Costume Designer Joanna Parker
Aida – *Verdi*
Torn Between Love and Duty

Sunday Classics: The Planets: An HD Odyssey, with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra
3:00pm, Sunday 16 June 2019
£35, £29, £24, £18, £13.50
Royal Scottish National Orchestra
Ben Palmer - Conductor
The Planets: An HD Odyssey
Richard Strauss - *Also sprach Zarathustra (opening)*
Johann Strauss II - *The Blue Danube*
JS Bach (orch. Stokowski) - *Toccat and Fugue in D minor*
Beethoven - *Symphony No. 7 (second movement)*
Williams - *Main theme from Star Wars*
Holst - *The Planets*

/ENDS



Tickets available at:

www.usherhall.co.uk

0131 228 1155

Please note a £1.50 transaction fee applies on the overall booking when purchasing online or over the phone (non-refundable)

Concessions and offers may vary between concerts. For more information please contact the box office or check the Usher Hall website.

Box office: Usher Hall, Lothian Road, Edinburgh, EH1 2EA

Media Enquiries:

Susie Gray / susie@thecornershoppr.com / 0131 202 6220 / 07834073795

Will Moss / william@thecornershoppr.com / 0131 202 6220

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.

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.

