

Press Release under Embargo until 00.01am 8 May 2019

From international soprano superstar Danielle de Niese to The Farmers Choir via Barbara Dickson, Sir James MacMillan heralds the sixth and most diverse Cumnock Tryst yet.



Images left to right: Danielle de Niese (c. Chris Dunlop), Sir James MacMillan (c. Robin Mitchell) and Barbara Dickson (c. Brian Aris)

Today, **Sir James MacMillan announced the programme for the sixth Cumnock Tryst**. The festival will take place from 3-6 October 2019 in and around the village of Cumnock in Ayrshire, where he grew up. The most diverse festival programme so far, this year's concerts range from the first solo recital in Scotland by magnetic soprano **Danielle de Niese** to new work from **Jay Capperauld** and **Gillian Walker**, and informal evenings at the Dumfries Arms Hotel this year including **Barbara Dickson** and the **Farmers Choir**. As ever, The Cumnock Tryst welcomes a group of musicians as its resident artists, this year **Mr McFall's Chamber** and also forefronts music education as part of the main programme including the chance for audiences to see inside the compositional process in a public masterclass.

RESIDENT ARTISTS

Mr McFall's Chamber are the Tryst's Artists in Residence this year, taking part in events on all four days of the Festival. Renowned for their innovative approach to programming and stylistic plurality they are a perfect fit for the Tryst having been formed with the aim of creating new audiences, new music and new directions in music.



Robert McFall (c. Ros Gasson)

Mr McFall's Chamber will be joined by the great Scottish choir Cappella Nova in the opening concert in a programme ranging from Penderecki to Michael Murray, the local composer from Auchinleck whose guitar concerto has just received its US premiere following its first performance at the Tryst in 2017. Two new hard-hitting and visionary works by Murray mark a move to choral music continuing his exciting development.

CHORAL TREATS

Later in the Tryst, *Majesty* sees **Cappella Nova** bring an intriguing programme of early Scottish music exploring Scotland's musical evolution from the time just before the Reformation to the sounds which emerged in the wake of the changes. Mixing the complex and florid Catholic sounds of Robert Carver with the more austere and simple beauties of the immediate post-Reformation composers like Robert Johnson, this concert allows a beautifully crafted glimpse into the shared musical treasury of Scottish history.

Sir James MacMillan said, "*Alan and Rebecca Tavener have been important musical figures in Scotland these last few decades, and the impact of Cappella Nova on musical life has been significant. I have written a lot of music for them over the years, but their dedication to early music, especially of these islands has been a great gift to music lovers in these parts. Their presence at The Cumnock Tryst will be very special.*"

The Tryst finishes with a choral flourish. **The Festival Chorus** and **Novantae Singers** are set to raise the roof with a mix of Handel's timeless and stunning choral music Zadok the Priest, Let thy hand be strengthened and The King shall rejoice.

James MacMillan commented, "*The Festival Chorus is the jewel in the crown of The Cumnock Tryst. It brings together keen choristers from all over Ayrshire and beyond to provide a crucial kernel to the musical and social life of the Festival. Also joined by a brilliant young vocal ensemble, specially created for Cumnock by Andy McTaggart, the closing concert will inspire and delight our audience.*"

This year the Festival Service on Sunday morning takes place in the Congregational Church in Cumnock. The liturgy will be led by a group of singers from **Strathclyde University Chamber Choir**, conducted by James MacMillan. The congregation will have been prepared during a free special workshop led by Alan and Rebecca Tavener of Cappella Nova which anyone can sign up to. Further details are at www.cumnocktryst.com

NEW WORK

Afterlife is a cutting-edge new music and film project based around the fictional work *Sum* by bestselling author David Eagleman.

Sum - 40 Tales from the Afterlives is a collection of vignettes exploring possible post-death scenarios which reveal unexpected and inventive possibilities for the afterlife. This performance consists of new compositions by the rising star Scottish composer **Jay Capperauld**, whose thrilling conceptual works have been broadcast on BBC Radio 3 on numerous occasions. The music will be performed by two prizewinning graduates of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, **Lewis Banks** (Saxophone) and **Marianna Abrahamyan** (Piano), whose combined abilities as a musical duo have earned them debut recitals at top London venues such as The Purcell Room and St Martin in the Fields in 2019. The performance will also seamlessly integrate a number of short films from Manchester-based director Paul Wright, whose recent film *Fissure* has been subject to strong critical acclaim.

Held in the splendour of Dumfries House, this year's Promenade Concert features **Simon Smith** (piano), **Maximiliano Martín** (clarinet) and the strings of Mr McFall's Chamber. The chamber music-making takes place in the beautiful and intimate settings of the Tapestry Room, the Great Steward's Entrance Hall and the Great Steward of Scotland's famous Dining Room.

This year's Promenade Concert includes the **World Premiere of a Cumnock Tryst Festival Commission from Gillian Walker**, a young composer who worked with the festival in 2018 on *The Chronicles of Cumnock* and whose work will hit an international platform for the first time as part of this Tryst. Other music includes Messiaen's *Abyss of the Birds* from *Quartet for the End of Time* and Franco Donatoni's *Clair*.

JAMES MACMILLAN'S 60TH BIRTHDAY

Of course, with the world celebrating Sir James MacMillan's 60th birthday year, The Tryst had to find its own way of marking it. In The Cumnock Hour, James Knox (Chair of Boswell Book Festival) interviews Phillip Cooke about his new book, *The Music of James MacMillan*, which is the first in-depth look at his life, work and aesthetic. From his beginnings in rural Ayrshire, the book explores MacMillan's compositional influences over time. It looks closely at his most significant works and sets them in a wider context defined by contemporary composition, culture and the arts in general.

Across a number of performances at the Cumnock Tryst this year musical birthday treats commissioned and composed to celebrate James MacMillan's 60th birthday will surprise and delighted.



(Sir James MacMillan c. Robin Mitchell)

MUSIC EDUCATION

This Tryst offers everyone a chance to witness the process of composition and improvisation in the festival's first public masterclass with Sir James MacMillan and Jennifer Martin. With the musicians of Mr McFall's Chamber, they will lead a group of young wind players from Auchinleck and Cumnock Concert Band through the process of making music on the spot, allowing the audience to observe the compositional process in action, under the direction of some of the most imaginative and creative musicians in Scotland today. Find out more about how composers think, what goes into the creation and performance of a new piece of music and how musicians work and prepare.

Flow Gently? on Friday afternoon is the culmination of a fascinating creative project involving Mr McFall's Chamber, young composers from Auchinleck Academy, dancers and string players, four composers from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and the wonderful production team at The Citizen's Theatre. From June, composers James MacMillan and Jennifer Martin will be teaching a group from Auchinleck Academy to write their own music for the Tryst's artists-in-residence, Mr McFall's Chamber. Each work is inspired by a moment in the life of Robert Burns and Burns himself will be with us at Cumnock Academy, to share his thoughts on the proceedings, played by the wonderful **Scottish actor Martin Docherty**. There will new music for dancers, new music created by young string players and more world premieres than ever before!

“Flow Gently? is a huge celebration of creativity in all its forms as the Tryst continues to give a platform for young musicians at all stages of their

careers. In our second collaboration with writer Martin Travers and The Citz, this is one of those events you'll not want to miss!" Sir James MacMillan

STAR TURN

Danielle de Niese has been hailed as “opera’s coolest soprano” by New York Times Magazine and “not just a superb performer, but a phenomenal one” by Opera News. A multi-faceted artist, de Niese has gained wide recognition for her superb stagecraft, assured singing and her ability to communicate on every level. She regularly appears on the world’s most prestigious opera and concert stages and is a prolific recording artist, TV personality and philanthropist.

Born in Australia to parents of Sri Lankan and Dutch heritage, de Niese became at the age of eighteen the youngest ever singer to enter the Metropolitan Opera’s prestigious Lindemann Young Artist Development Program. Her debut recording for Decca, *Handel Arias*, was awarded the prestigious Orphée d’Or and the much-coveted ECHO Klassik award, as well as earning her a Classical Brit Award nomination for Female Artist of the Year. Her appearance at Cumnock Tryst marks her **first ever solo recital in Scotland**.

“Our audience will thrill not only to an incredible and beautiful voice, but to an immense and engaging personality who has lit up opera theatres and concert halls around the world.” said James MacMillan



Danielle de Niese (c. Chris Dunlop)

FESTIVAL CLUB

On the Friday and Saturday evenings the buzz is to be found at the Festival Club at the Dumfries Arms Hotel. Tickets are free and can be booked in advance for a chance to enjoy music alongside a drink and snacks from 9.45pm each evening of the Tryst.

On Friday evening **Sax Ecosse**, a quartet of saxophone players which includes local New Cumnockian composer is set to entertain. The ensemble has enjoyed considerable success throughout the UK and Europe, with recent engagements ranging from the Usher Hall to Celtic Connections and Cottiers Chamber Project, to recitals in Ljubljana, Slovenia and the St Olav's Festival in Norway.

The Tryst has always taken a special interest in ordinary people who do extraordinary things in music. This year the Festival welcomes a truly brilliant initiative – the collection of Scottish farmers, their family and friends established as a choir in 2013 – **The Farmers Choir** perform at the Festival Club on Saturday night.

The first evening of the festival sees **Barbara Dickson and Nick Holland** bring an intimate show to The Cumnock Tryst in the evening slot at the Dumfries Arms. Described as Scotland's best-selling female singer and winner of two Olivier Awards, Barbara Dickson's hits have included *I Know Him So Well*, *Answer Me* and *January February*. Tickets for this very special evening are set to sell-out fast!

"It has always been my hope and intention to bring a wide range of music to The Tryst. Barbara Dickson's wide and full musical life-experience, covering folk, pop, rock and musical theatre will be perfect for our first late night concert in the Dumfries Arms Hotel. She will bring real stardust and variety." Sir James MacMillan

Sir James MacMillan CBE, Founder and Artistic Director of Cumnock Tryst said: *"We are looking forward to welcoming everyone to the sixth Cumnock Tryst. It has been profoundly exciting to watch the Festival mature and grow these last few years.*

"New music abounds again with works by Penderecki, Messiaen, Donatoni, New Cumnock's very own Jay Capperauld and a brand-new Festival commission from young Ayr composer Gillian Walker. There will also be some specially commissioned surprises for the last night, when our Festival Chorus is joined again by the brilliant young Novantae Singers. We will also hear music specially written by young composers from Auchinleck Academy and the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

"The sixth Tryst is a huge cause for celebration. Join us in Cumnock in October for one of our most diverse Festivals so far."

Keep up with developments at The Cumnock Tryst at www.cumnocktryst.com
Facebook - www.facebook.com/thecumnocktryst
Twitter - @TheCumnockTryst

ENDS

LISTINGS

Thursday 3 October

7.30pm	Trinity Church Chamber and Cappella Nova	Opening Concert Mr McFall's
9.45pm	Dumfries Arms Hotel	Barbara Dickson and Nick
Holland		

Friday 4 October

12pm	Cumnock Academy	Flow Gently?
4.30pm	Dumfries Arms Hotel	The Cumnock Hour
7.30pm	Old Church	Majesty Cappella Nova
9.45pm	Dumfries Arms Hotel	Festival Club: Sax Ecosse

Saturday 5 October

12pm	Cumnock Academy	On the Spot
4.30pm	New Cumnock Town Hall	Afterlife
7.30pm	Trinity Church	Danielle de Niese
9.45pm	Dumfries Arms Hotel	Festival Club: The Farmers
Choir		

Sunday 6 October

11am	Congregational Church	Festival Service
2pm & 4.30pm	Dumfries House	Festival Promenade Concert
7.30pm	St John's Church	Festival Finale Chorus Concert

Ticketing information

Booking opens on 9th May 2019.

9 May – Patrons (max 4 tickets per concert) and Festival Pass booking

20 May – Friends (max 4 tickets per concert)

27 May – General public

Book at:

Online - www.thecumnocktryst.com

Phone - 0141 332 5057

In person - Royal Conservatoire of Scotland Box Office, 100 Renfrewshire Street, Glasgow, G23DB

Festival Pass

A Festival Pass costs £130 and includes a ticket for all events.

Free Tickets

All tickets for Flow Gently?, On the Spot and the Festival Club are free and available on a first come first served basis from the Box Office and on the door. We invite you to pay a donation on the night at the Festival Club.

Discounts are available for under 26s and local residents. For more details, go to www.thecumnocktryst.com

There are a limited number of free tickets for those aged 16 and under; up to two free can be issued with each full price ticket purchased, subject to availability.

The Box Office operates a waiting list for sold out concerts. Any remaining tickets will be available on the door, 45 minutes before each event. All seating is unreserved.

Press Enquiries

For more information, interviews, photos and tickets please contact the media team:

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