



**Press release for immediate use**

## **Sunday Classics season comes to a thrilling close as the RSNO take Edinburgh audiences on an incredible journey through the solar system**

**Sunday Classics: The Planets: An HD Odyssey, with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra  
3:00pm, Sunday 16 June 2019**

**The Planets: An HD Odyssey  
Richard Strauss - Also sprach Zarathustra (opening)  
Johann Strauss II - The Blue Danube  
JS Bach (orch. Stokowski) - Toccata and Fugue in D minor  
Beethoven - Symphony No. 7 (second movement)  
Williams - Main theme from Star Wars  
Holst - The Planets**



(Left: RSNO onstage at Usher Hall. Right: Ben Palmer)

**Images available to download [here](#)**

### **Holst's mystical masterpiece with stunning NASA images of our solar system: a spectacular Sunday Classics Season finale.**

Take an unforgettable journey to the furthest reaches of the cosmos. With the visionary music of Holst's *The Planets*, together with stunning NASA images of our solar system's planets in high definition on the big screen in the gorgeous surroundings of the Usher Hall.

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 overwhelmingly powerful experience.

Holst's magical masterpiece is performed by the exceptional musicians of the **Royal Scottish National Orchestra**, 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.

Stanley Kubrick contrasted the imposing power of Richard Strauss's mighty *Also sprach Zarathustra* and Johann Strauss II's elegant *Blue Danube* waltz in his trailblazing movie 2001: A Space Odyssey, while John Williams transports us to the universe of Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader in his rousing music for *Star Wars*.

### **Programme information**

Sunday Classics: The Planets: An HD Odyssey, with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra  
3:00pm, Sunday 16 June 2019

Door time: 2:00pm

Royal Scottish National Orchestra  
Ben Palmer - Conductor  
The Planets: An HD Odyssey

Richard Strauss - Also sprach Zarathustra (opening)  
Johann Strauss II - The Blue Danube  
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### **Prices**

£35 | £29 | £24 | £18 | £13.50

Concessions available

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

### **Media Enquiries**

William Moss / [william@thecornershoppr.com](mailto:william@thecornershoppr.com) / 0131 202 6220



## **Royal Scottish National Orchestra**

Royal Scottish National Orchestra

Formed in 1891 as the Scottish Orchestra, the company became the Scottish National Orchestra in 1950, and was awarded Royal Patronage in 1977.

Throughout its history, the Orchestra has played an integral part in Scotland's musical life, including performing at the opening ceremony of the Scottish Parliament building in 2004. Many renowned conductors have contributed to its success, including George Szell, Sir John Barbirolli, Walter Susskind, Sir Alexander Gibson, Neeme Järvi, Walter Weller, Alexander Lazarev and Stéphane Denève.

The Orchestra's artistic team is led by Danish conductor Thomas Søndergård, who was appointed RSNO Music Director in 2018, having previously held the position of Principal Guest Conductor. Hong Kong-born conductor Elim Chan succeeds Søndergård as the new Principal Guest Conductor.

The RSNO performs across Scotland, including concerts in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee, Aberdeen, Perth and Inverness. The Orchestra appears regularly at the Edinburgh International Festival, the BBC Proms at London's Royal Albert Hall and the St Magnus Festival, Orkney, and has made recent tours to the United States of America, Spain, France, China and Germany. The RSNO was an active participant in the cultural programme of the 2014 Commonwealth Games, held in Glasgow and in the same year hosted the Ryder Cup Gala Concert at the SSE Hydro.

The Orchestra is joined for choral performances by the RSNO Chorus, directed by Gregory Batsleer. The RSNO Chorus evolved from a choir formed in 1843 to sing the first full performance of Handel's Messiah in Scotland. Today, the RSNO Chorus is one of the most distinguished large symphonic choruses in Britain, with a membership of around 160. The Chorus has performed nearly every work in the standard choral repertoire along with contemporary works by renowned composers, including John Adams, Magnus Lindberg, Howard Shore and James MacMillan.

The acclaimed RSNO Junior Chorus, formed in 1978 by Jean Kidd, also performs regularly alongside the Orchestra. The Junior Chorus has now expanded its membership to over 400, with members aged from seven to eighteen. It has built up a considerable reputation singing under some of the world's most distinguished conductors and appearing on radio and television.

The RSNO has a worldwide reputation for the quality of its recordings, receiving two Diapason d'Or de l'année awards for Symphonic Music (Denève/Roussel 2007; Denève/Debussy 2012) and eight GRAMMY Awards nominations. Over 200 releases are available, including the complete symphonies of Sibelius (Gibson), Prokofiev (Järvi), Glazunov (Serebrier), Nielsen and Martinů (Thomson), Roussel (Denève) and the major orchestral works of Debussy (Denève).

The RSNO's pioneering learning and engagement programme, Music for Life, aims to engage the people of Scotland with music across key stages of life: Early Years, Nurseries and Schools, Teenagers and Students, Families, Accessing Lives, Working Lives and Retired and Later Life. The team is committed to placing the Orchestra at the centre of Scottish



communities via community workshops and annual residencies across the length and breadth of the country.

## **Ben Palmer**

Ben Palmer is Chief Conductor of the Deutsche Philharmonie Merck, and Founder and Artistic Director of Covent Garden Sinfonia. Recent guest conducting engagements include the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Hallé, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Northern Sinfonia, the Orchestra of Welsh National Opera, NDR Radiophilharmonie, Deutsches Kammerorchester Berlin, Sinfonietta de Lausanne, St Petersburg Symphony Orchestra and Cinematic Sinfonia. He works regularly with the BBC Singers, Hallé, London Mozart Players, the Orchestra of Opera North, Grimethorpe Colliery Band and the Czech National Symphony Orchestra. In 2019/20 he will conduct the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Hong Kong Philharmonic, Heidelberger Sinfoniker, and National Youth Jazz Orchestra for the first time, as well as returning to the Deutsches Filmorchester Babelsberg, Württembergische Philharmonie Reutlingen, Pilsen Philharmonic Orchestra and St Petersburg Symphony Orchestra.

Ben Palmer is one of Europe's leading specialists in conducting live to film. Past performances include screenings of *Jurassic Park*, *Home Alone* and *The Snowman* at the Royal Albert Hall, the German premieres of *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* and *Casino Royale*, the European premiere of *The Pink Panther*, and performances of *Star Wars Episode IV*, *Jaws*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*, *Back to the Future*, *Brassed Off*, *Under the Skin*, *Casablanca*, *Psycho* and *Metropolis*. In 2019/20 he will conduct *Skyfall*, *Star Wars Episode VI*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and *Love Actually*, and the closing concert of Le Giornate de Cinema Muto, the world-famous Pordenone silent film festival.

Forthcoming recordings include a disc of Max Richter, Arvo Pärt and Peteris Vasks with violinist Fenella Humphreys and Covent Garden Sinfonia, a live recording of film music with the Deutsche Philharmonie Merck, and a CD for Sony with the NDR Radiophilharmonie. From 2011-16 he worked closely with Sir Roger Norrington, acting as his assistant for concerts, recordings, on tour and at the BBC Proms. He has twice worked as rehearsal conductor for Bernard Haitink, and in 2016 conducted the Gabrieli Consort and Players and Wrocław Baroque Orchestra as assistant to Paul McCreech. In addition to his work as a conductor, he is sought after as a composer, arranger and orchestrator.

[www.benpalmer.net](http://www.benpalmer.net)  
@conductorben

## **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.