



**Press release for immediate use**

## **Scotland's musical stars of the future are showcased at Edinburgh's Usher Hall in Emerging Artists series**

- Usher Hall partners with Live Music Now Scotland to present some of Scotland's finest young musicians.
- Concerts in December and January include New Antonine Brass, Jacopo Lazzaretti, Armonia Duo and Hannah Rarity and Luc McNally.
- Tickets only £3 and free for students.
- Booking now on [www.usherhall.co.uk](http://www.usherhall.co.uk)



Images available to download [here](#)

The Usher Hall and Live Music Now Scotland have partnered to present a series of special concerts at Usher Hall that showcase the best upcoming musical talent from Scotland. **The Emerging Artists series returns for its 10<sup>th</sup> season and will have four concerts across December and January**, each presented by different musicians performing a different style of music.

Tickets are available to book now at [www.usherhall.co.uk](http://www.usherhall.co.uk) for only **£3 and are free for students**.

This partnership forms part of the Usher Hall's civic commitment and the venue gifts the space to Live Music Now. Many great acts have performed as part of previous Emerging Artists series, including big names in the folk and trad scenes such as Skerryvore and Manran.

**New Antonine Brass** will return to the Usher Hall to perform a varied programme on the 9th of December. From the opening brilliance of *Olympic Fanfare* to bringing some Christmas spirit with selections from *The Nutcracker* there's something for everyone. As well as playing some well-known brass quintet repertoire, they will also branch out into the world of musical theatre with a mammoth arrangement of songs and dances from *West Side Story*.



There is even a time travelling surprise at the very end of the recital and of course, the chance for some audience participation with our traditional Bavarian snow waltz.

On Monday 6 January, the classical guitarist **Jacopo Lazzaretti** focuses on Italian composers from different periods - Giulio Regondi, Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Carlo Domeniconi. This concert will take audiences on a journey that will explore some of the sonorities and atmospheres of 19th and 20th century through the virtuosity of the classical guitar.

The following week, **Armonia Duo** (Cuban violinist Eddy Betancourt & Scottish accordionist Valerie Barr) will present a diverse programme including works by Bach, Ravel and Piazzolla on 13 January. Keen to explore the versatility of both of their instruments, they will play their own transcriptions of popular pieces that explore a wide variety of styles included within the classical genre. The duo first met at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and joined Live Music Now Scotland in 2019, and have since enjoyed many performances together in venues across the country.

To round off 3 weeks of inspiring music making, the 20 January sees Scottish folk duo **Hannah Rarity and Luc McNally**, comprising of former BBC Radio Scotland Young Traditional Musician of the Year 2018 and finalist, draw from the Scottish, English, Irish and American music traditions. They're set to perform a range of traditional, cover and original material that showcases their own musicality and passion for songs and melodies of the people.

The Emerging Artists series is funded by Kimie Trust (Scottish Charity SC040611). Kimie Trust was established in 2009, in memory of Kimie Okada, for the support of organisations that advance music, its performance and its appreciation in Scotland. Kimie Trust is funded by a bequest of Kimie Okada (1929 - 2008), who loved music all her life, moved from Tokyo to Edinburgh in 1993 and was always keen to support music in the country that she had made her home. She regularly attended classical music concerts at the Usher Hall. Kimie Trust is proud to support Edinburgh's Emerging Artists Series of concerts, now in its tenth season.

**Cllr Donald Wilson, Culture and Communities Convener, The City of Edinburgh Council said:** *“We're delighted to support this initiative which provides young emerging artists the opportunity to perform on the Usher Hall's stage where all the greats have stood such as Kathleen Ferrier, Ella Fitzgerald, Herbie Hancock, Pink Floyd, Lang Lang, George Ezra and Sheku Kanneh-Mason to name a few. We couldn't be happier to continue our involvement which helps us to continually develop the arts and live music in the capital. Since the partnership began, audiences have enjoyed a creative and eclectic programme and we hope our support continues to provide inspiration for everyone involved”*

**Carol Main, Director Live Music Now Scotland, said:** *“The Emerging Artists series at the Usher Hall gives our musicians an unparalleled opportunity to perform on one of the world's greatest concert platforms at the outset of their professional careers. Now in its tenth season, the series also gives audiences the opportunity to spot talent on the rise and chat with them after the concert. Seating the audience in the organ gallery, with the*



*performers facing them rather than out into the huge auditorium, makes for a surprisingly intimate space, enabling closer audience/performer engagement than the more conventional concert hall experience. We are enormously indebted to Kimie Trust for funding the Emerging Artists series every year since it started in 2010/11.”*

### **Concert Listings**

Emerging Artists - New Antonine Brass

11:00am, Monday 9 December 2019

Tickets: £3.00, Free for Students

Emerging Artists – Jacopo Lazzaretti

11:00am, Monday 6 January 2020

Tickets: £3.00, Free for Students

Emerging Artists – Armonia Duo

11:00am, Monday 13 January 2020

Tickets: £3.00, Free for Students

Emerging Artists – Hannah Rarity and Luc McNally

11:00am, Monday 20 January 2020

Tickets: £3.00, Free for Students

### **Press Enquiries**

All artists are available for interview and reviewers are welcome to attend the concerts.  
Please contact:

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### **New Antonine Brass**

New Antonine Brass was formed in 2014 by musicians studying at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. Lloyd Griffin, Mark James, Hayley Tonner, Lewis Bettles and Danielle Price make up the group which is the standard brass quintet format of two trumpets, french horn, trombone and tuba.



As a group they have enjoyed many highs, such as being highly commended in the David James ensemble prize at RCS and performing James Macmillan's 'Exsultet' for him at the AEC conference hosted in Glasgow. They have affiliations with the prestigious Gleneagles Hotel, providing them with entertainment, and with the National Youth Orchestra of Scotland, where they are involved with coaching and have performed promotional concerts. Outside the quintet all the players regularly freelance with orchestras such as Scottish Ballet, Scottish Opera, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Manchester Camerata and Ulster Orchestra.

The diversity of the group's engagements stem from covering a broad range of genres such as classical, contemporary, jazz, Scottish traditional and pop including many of their own arrangements.

New Antonine Brass joined Live Music Now in January 2018.

### **Jacopo Lazzaretti**

Born in Rome in 1994, Jacopo Lazzaretti has been studying classical guitar since he was 11. During his studies, he has performed in many masterclasses with some of the worlds most well-known guitarists such as Oscar Ghiglia, Marcin Dylla, Pavel Steidl, Giulio Tampalini, Lorenzo Micheli, Carlo Marchione, Rene Izquierdo just to name a few. In 2015-2016, thanks to the Erasmus+ he studied with Matthew McAllister at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and in July 2017 he graduated from the Conservatoire of Santa Cecilia in Rome under the guidance of Arturo Tallini, receiving his First Class Bachelor Degree in Music with Honours. In June 2019 he completed the Masters Degree in Performance at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland under the guidance of Matthew McAllister and Professor Allan Neave.

Jacopo has won several prizes in national and international guitar competitions with or without age limitations, such as first prizes at the North East Scotland Classical Guitar Society Award (2017), the International Guitar Competition "I Musici di San Lorenzo" (2016) and the International Istanbul Guitar Festival (2015). Among the other prizes: second prize at 7° International Competition Alirio Diaz of Rome (2018), third prize at the Leicester MusicFest Competition (2018), third prize at the 11th Montenegro International Guitar Competition (2017), second prize (first not awarded) at 7th International Guitar Competition Acerra Guitar Meetings (2016). He had also the opportunity to play the Romancero Gitano by Mario Castelnuovo Tedesco (concert for Choir and Guitar), which was a prize received during the competition 'Premio Campus 2014' in Bassano del Grappa.

Jacopo has played in many concerts for several Music Festivals in Italy as well as abroad in Istanbul, Glasgow, Edinburgh and other Scottish cities.

Jacopo has been an artist for 'Live Music Now Scotland' in January 2018.

### **Armonia Duo**

The Armonia Duo is a half-Cuban, half-Scottish ensemble comprised of Eddy Betancourt on violin and Valerie Barr on accordion. The duo met at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in Glasgow where they are both first year Masters students and they have played together since



summer 2018. Keen to show the incredible versatility of both of their instruments, they hope to continue creating exciting new arrangements in a wide variety of styles, making them a unique and flexible ensemble. Valerie and Eddy are very excited to be working with Live Music Now Scotland, which they joined in 2019.

### **Hannah Rarity and Luc McNally**

Hannah Rarity and Luc McNally are a song and guitar duo hailing from West Lothian and County Durham respectively.

The pair met whilst studying music at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and collaborated on various projects during their time there. Their repertoire consists of Scottish, Irish, English and American songs and tunes; some old, some new, and appealing to a broad range of audiences of all ages and backgrounds.

Hannah tours worldwide with the renowned international Irish trad. group 'Cherish the Ladies' and has studied and taught traditional and contemporary song in both Ireland and Scotland. She has recently released her debut EP, which features some of Scotland's finest young instrumentalists.

Luc performs with Scottish folk fusion bands 'Dosca' and 'Sketch', in a pipes and Northumbrian song duo 'Eddie and Luc', and in a new contemporary/traditional string trio 'Snuffbox'.

### **Live Music Now**

Live music transcends barriers to communication by engaging the spirit.

Live Music Now works with a very diverse range of people that rarely, if ever, have the opportunity to experience live music - some of whom are very disadvantaged. They often face difficulties in communicating, cut off from the joy and pleasures of participating and sharing with others. LMN's approach to overcoming these barriers is through the quality of our musicians and the way we deliver our music.

LMN's approach has been developed for over 40 years, realising the vision of our founders, legendary violinist Sir Yehudi Menuhin and his friend, LMN Founder-President, [Sir Ian Stoutzker](#).

*Music, amongst all the great arts, is the language which penetrates most deeply into the human spirit, reaching people through every barrier, disability, language and circumstance. This is why it has been my dream to bring music back into the lives of those people whose lives are especially prone to stress and suffering... so that it might comfort, heal and bring delight. Yehudi Menuhin*

LMN selects young, professional musicians who combine exceptional performing skills with special qualities of insight, generosity of spirit and flexibility. We enhance their skills through our distinctive approach to training and performance, and send them out into the



community to perform for older people and children with special educational needs across the UK.

The joy that live music brings in a moment can be transformative over time. LMN delivers programmes tailored to participants whose lives are challenged due to disability, illness, poverty or social disadvantage. It is our ambition to bring live music to more people, achieving greater beneficial impact through sustained involvement. It is our role to inspire young professional musicians to use their talents for the benefit of those who are otherwise excluded from the joy of live music.

For more information about Yehudi Menuhin and his extraordinary legacy, please visit the official website of [Yehudi Menuhin](#).

## **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.