

WHERE THERE WERE MINES THERE WAS BRASS...

## EAST NEUK FESTIVAL'S DEEPLY FELT MUSICAL TRIBUTE TO FIFE'S MINERS

With John Wallace, The Wallace Collection and  
the Tullis Russell Mills Band



**De Profundis** is East Neuk Festival's '**Big Project**' this year – a special tribute to the past generations of Fife miners whose working days were spent in terrible and hazardous conditions but whose leisure time was playing beautiful music together in brass bands. The event will be staged in the Bowhouse, Anstruther, on 1 July featuring approximately 60 brass players, including the highly regarded **Tullis Russell Mills Bands** from Glenrothes and **The Wallace Collection** led by Fife-born trumpet virtuoso **John Wallace CBE** (former principal trumpet of The Philharmonia and Principal of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland).

Despite pit closures and industrial decline, the brass band tradition that originated in the mining communities is still thriving in the UK with large numbers of younger musicians and as many female as male players participating. When they began in the 1850s and in their heyday of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, brass bands were an expression of the local solidarity and aspirations of newly formed and rapidly growing communities and testament to the creativity and education of the working classes.

The *De Profundis* project is led by renowned trumpet soloist **John Wallace** whose childhood memories are rooted in the mining communities around Glenrothes where three family generations worked in the mining and coal industries and also played in the Coaltown of Balgonie Prize Silver Band (whose players joined the Tullis Russell Mills Band when the pit closed). As well being a distinguished performer and composer, he is a leading arts educationalist with a special passion for promoting the diverse world of brass music, which he considers to be a highly significant musical genre deserving of continuing vitality in the contemporary world.

He comments: *"I am a Fifer through and through and am so excited about the possibilities that De Profundis gives to explore Fife's fabulous stories and myths. John Miller (trumpet/flugel/cornet player in The Wallace Collection) and I started playing with the Tullis Russell Mills Band aged seven and in our imaginations we've never left. Putting the Wallace Collection together with Tullis in a once-in-a-lifetime immersive performance in a barn in the middle of the East Neuk (where our entire families came from to cross the River Leven to join the industrial revolution on the other side) is a dream come true for both of us."*

John Wallace and ENF artistic director Svend McEwan-Brown are devising *De Profundis* as a performance for ENF that will draw on the Gaelic Psalm traditions of the Western Isles and other source material including plainsong of the *De Profundis* and *Out of the Deep* and poetry. As with previous ENF projects such as this, the venue will be atmospherically staged and lit for a promenade audience.

*“ENF’s Big Projects have two defining characteristics: they bring together professional and amateur musicians to create something very special and unique, and that something has to reflect the heritage or landscape of Fife. I was first inspired by the stark contrast between the darkness and danger of the mines and the beauty of the sound of a pit band in full flow,”* comments McEwan-Brown. *“John and I are working to create a piece that all the players can make their own, bringing together poetry, music and place.”*

Previous ENF Big Projects include David Lang’s WWI-inspired choral work *Memorial Ground* in 2016, John Luther Adams’ *Across The Distance* for 32 horn players (2015) and *Inuksuit* for 30 percussionists (2014), and Hilke McIntyre’s *Labyrinth* (2012).

Plenty more brass is on offer throughout the Festival weekend 1-2 July as part of the **FESTIVALLAROUND** programme. Talented young players from the **Tullis Russell Mills Band** and **Live Music Now**, as well as members of **The Wallace Collection**, will be giving free, un-ticketed pop-up concerts round the East Neuk, including Kingsbarns Distillery, the gardens of Kellie Castle, the rolling lawns of Cambo House and Elie beach.

**The core programme of the East Neuk Festival** is chamber music, performed by some of the world’s leading musicians and ensembles. 2017, the 13<sup>th</sup> edition, features artists such as legendary pianist **Elisabeth Leonskaja**, the **Belcea** and **Castalian** string quartets, Scottish guitar virtuoso **Sean Shibe** and multi-genre clarinettist **Julian Bliss** among others. Repertoire ranges from Schubert and Mozart to Steve Reich, plus a specially commissioned new work from Norwegian composer Henning Sommerro for Scottish musicians **Chris Stout**, **Catriona McKay** and **Mr McFall’s Chamber**. See website for all details.

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#### Notes to Editors

***De Profundis* takes place on Saturday 1 July 2017 at 6pm  
at The Bowhouse, Anstruther, Fife.**

**It is made possible by the support of Toby & Kate Anstruther, Donald & Louise MacDonald,  
Shields and Carol Henderson**

**Tickets £10 (£ 7-17 year olds) Box Office: Hub Tickets T. 0131 473 2000  
[www.hubtickets.co.uk](http://www.hubtickets.co.uk)**

**John Wallace** OBE, CBE was born in Methilhill, Fife, in 1949. His father worked as a joiner in Tullis Russell Paper Mills and played, like many of his extended family, in the Tullis Russell Mills Band. Soon his father, Kiff, brought home a cornet and from the age of 7 he learnt his music in the informal sector through aural transmission from passionate amateur musicians. He went on to Buckhaven High School where the Principal Music Teacher, Albert Cochrane was superimposing a Performing Arts Factory on a state school in the seminal early sixties. John never looked back from this flying start in Scotland’s superlative formal and informal music education system. At 15, he played the Haydn Trumpet Concerto on a European tour with the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain, went on to read music at King’s College, Cambridge, and then studied trumpet and composition as a postgraduate at the Royal Academy of Music and York University. In 1974 he joined the London Symphony Orchestra and then was Principal Trumpet of The Philharmonia 1976-1995. He later performed as a soloist, most famously with Kiri Te Kanawa to a live TV audience of 750,000,000 people, at the wedding of Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer in 1981. Diverse composers including Malcolm Arnold, James Macmillan and Sir Peter Maxwell Davies have written concertos for him. He started his brass ensemble, the Wallace Collection, with like-minded buccaneering individuals in 1986 and they toured the world, to the USA, Canada, Australia, West and South Africa, Malaysia, Japan, Hong Kong and Argentina, as well as all over Europe. He also made over 30 solo and ensemble CDs with an extended Wallace Collection getting to the top of the USA Billboard crossover charts twice.

He returned to Scotland in 2002, becoming the first Scot to hold the position of Principal of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. During his 12-year tenure he oversaw the new trans-disciplinary educational strategy, Creating the Future for Performance. Key achievements in this period included attaining funding for Drama on the same footing as Music (2009); bringing Dance into the portfolio to make the RSAMD the first small specialist conservatoire of all the performing arts in Europe (2009); changing the name to the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland to reflect this new stature (2011); undertaking a full and comprehensive curriculum reform 2008-14; and extending the Estate both in Renfrew Street (the West Wing) and at Speirs Locks – the Wallace Studios – at a cost of £14.5 million raised mainly through quiet philanthropy at no cost to the public purse. <http://www.thewallacecollection.org>

**The Tullis Russell Mills Band** was formed in 1919 as a social outlet and a morale booster after the First World War for the mill workers at the Tullis Russell paper mill in Markinch, Fife. It soon established itself as a top contesting band and was able to attract some of the best conductors in Scotland at the time, including John Haldane and George Hawkins. The band is now based in Glenrothes and has been involved in every major event in the town, including visits by Royalty, twin town events and major sporting events, as well as local community events and two concert tours in Europe. TRMB has also made numerous radio and TV appearances and well recorded two albums. In April 2015 the band lost its sponsor of 96 years when the paper mill closed. The future looked uncertain but a very hard working management team kept the band on track and turned a negative into a big positive which resulted in the band winning the Scottish first section title which meant a return to the Championship section of Scottish banding for the first time in 36 years. The Tullis Russell Band organisation now boasts three bands including the Tullis Russell Intermediate Band and the Tullis Russell Youth Band.

**Full programme information, day by day [www.eastneukfestival.com](http://www.eastneukfestival.com) Follow on Facebook and Twitter**

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