

THE TRANSFORMATION OF SCHUBERT

Plus music ranging from Renaissance lute to Latin Jazz, Julia Wolfe and Steve Reich and a deeply felt musical tribute to Fife's miners



Deeply rooted themes and histories permeate the East Neuk Festival (ENF) this year. Artistic director Svend McEwan-Brown deftly interleaves five days of world class chamber music with two significant creative projects representing local heritage and modern-day culture; *de Profundis*, a tribute to the Fife mining community and its brass band legacy led by renowned trumpet virtuoso **John Wallace**, and the world premiere of a newly commissioned work from Norwegian composer **Henning Sommerro** inspired by one of the most Important 17th century Scandinavian poets, Thomas Kingo, whose ancestry lies in Crail.

"With ENF reaching its 13th edition, its first teenage year, we promised to misbehave a little. So we've decided to also take the festival out of the venues and into Fife's streets, fields, harbours, cafes, gardens, beaches and more." commented Svend McEwan-Brown. So music will resonate more than ever around the East Neuk this year in a new programming strand, **FESTIVALLAROUND**, which sees ENF artists and young musicians popping up in unusual locations from distilleries to doorsteps. But at the beating heart of the East Neuk Festival it is always chamber music - performed by musicians of world-class renown and insight, including legendary pianist **Elisabeth Leonskaja**, the **Belcea Quartet** and **Scottish Chamber Orchestra** as well as younger generation artists such as **Julian Bliss**, **Sean Shibe** and the **Castalian Quartet** performing music ranging from Bach to Julia Wolfe.

SCHUBERTIAD

Between 1816 and 1826 the twenty-something Schubert underwent a profound transformation and left behind the influences of his teachers and the composers he revered to develop his own unique voice. McEwan-Brown has invited some of the world's finest Schubertians to programme works that illustrate how great that development was in five concerts of chamber music, solo piano and song. Celebrated pianist, **Elisabeth Leonskaja** juxtaposes his early sonata D 459 with the immense A major D 845, then joins the **Belcea Quartet** for the first time in the 'Trout' Quintet. Rising star, the **Castalian Quartet**, performs his early D353 quartet to complement the Belcea Quartet playing all three late quartets. Pianist **Malcolm Martineau** partners Dutch baritone **Thomas Oliemans** for a selection of songs from the 'golden years' 1815/16 and the mature poetic masterpiece *Die Schöne Müllerin*. Adding further perspectives, the music of Schubert's teacher, Salieri, and two of his music idols, Mozart and Haydn, also feature in other parts of the ENF programme, while pre-concert talks and online blog about Schubert in the lead-up to the Festival are also programmed.

JULIAN BLISS

Acclaimed clarinettist Julian Bliss loves to explore the extreme versatility of his instrument and is the lynchpin for an eclectic range of programmes embracing classical, contemporary and jazz. He teams up with the Castalian Quartet for the first time in **Mozart's Clarinet Quintet**, partners guitar virtuoso Sean Shibe for a contemporary night to include **Steve Reich's Electric Counterpoint**, and finally joins his own Septet for a night of Latin jazz and samba rhythms.

SoftLOUD

Soft and Loud is the theme for guitarist **Sean Shibe's** three Festival concerts, exploring the contrasting qualities of acoustic and electric guitars. He includes masterpieces from **JS Bach** and **James Oswald** (Bach's Fife contemporary) in the tranquil clifftop church at St Monans for the former, and the likes of **Steve Reich's *New York Counterpoint*** and his own take on **Julia Wolfe's *Lad*** (originally for nine bagpipes) in Anstruther's historic Dreel Halls for the latter.

DE PROFUNDIS

East Neuk Festival's **Big Projects** are specially created, collaborative, high calibre musical events that bring together professional and local amateur musicians and resonate with meaning in the specific environment in which they take place: past successes include David Lang's choral work *Memorial Ground* in 2016 and John Luther Adams' *Across The Distance* for 32 horn players (2015) and *Inuksuit* for 30 percussionists (2014). This year's centrepiece will be *De Profundis* featuring approximately 60 brass players, including the highly regarded **Tullis Russell Mills Bands** and **The Wallace Collection**, led by Fife-born trumpeter **John Wallace CBE** (former principal trumpet of The Philharmonia and Principal of the Royal Scottish Conservatoire of Music). The project pays tribute to the generations of Fife miners who toiled underground in abysmal conditions and also played beautiful music in the pit bands. Wallace and McEwan-Brown are devising a performance 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*. *De Profundis* will be performed in the The Bowhouse (a barn on the Anstruther estate), a new ENF venue. The pits and mills may now be closed, but the music lives on.

NORTH TO SOUTH

A pair of concerts touch on Fife's ancient links with the Nordic and Baltic countries. **In the Footsteps of Thomas Kingo** brings together Scottish and Scandinavian musicians to follow a Crail weaver who left Scotland to work at the Danish Court in the 1580s. His grandson, also Thomas, was to become one of the most important poets and composers of his age in Scandinavia. Inspired by Kingo's story, Norwegian composer **Henning Sommerro** has composed *Chrysilis*, a musical journey from Scotland to Scandinavia for Shetland fiddler **Chris Stout**, harpist **Catriona McKay** and the ever-inventive ensemble, **Mr McFall's Chamber**. The premiere of *Chrysilis* plays at the heart of a concert of traditional and reinvented music, also featuring Norwegians **Nils Okland** and **Mats Eilertsen**. To close the 2017 Festival, the **Scottish Chamber Orchestra** takes a musical journey north from Orkney for Grieg, Sibelius and Dag Wiren before turning south to Italy to close the festival with Tchaikovsky's *Souvenir de Florence*.

ENF RETREAT

Now in its third year, the ENF Retreat once again offers up to ten outstanding young string players from around the globe the chance to come to this inspirational festival setting and immerse themselves in music under the mentorship of some of the world's most revered musicians, including **Alexander Janiczek** and two former members of the Alban Berg Quartet, **Valentin Erben** and **Isabel Charisius**. They showcase the fruits of their joyful labours in two concerts of pieces by Mozart and Dvořák and other works studied during the Retreat.

FESTIVALLAROUND

The Bowhouse and Dreel Halls are not the only new venues at this year's Festival: Kingsbarns Distillery the gardens of Kellie Castle, the rolling lawns of Cambo House and the aroma-filled Cocoa Tree Café in Pittenweem are just some of the unusual venues that will resound to the music of the talented young players from the **Tullis Russell Mills Band** and **Live Music Now**, plus Festival artists such as Sean Shibe. The *FESTIVALLAROUND* programme will develop and multiply as the months progress from now until the Festival begins so there will be many more pop-up events indoors and out, including a special serenade on a doorstep (see website for details).

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Clare Hewitt, Music Officer at Creative Scotland said: “This year’s East Neuk Festival encompasses all that music has to offer, spanning Bach to the present day and performed by stellar artists. The line-up includes rising stars like Sean Shibe with his SoftLOUD performances, alongside the gravitas of pianist Elisabeth Leonskaja. The festival’s annual Big Project is always a highlight: in 2017 De Profundis will bring together professional and local amateur musicians as it takes us underground in a celebration of Fife’s pit band heritage. Whether diving into the Schubertiad or stumbling across live music in unusual spaces through FESTIVALALLAROUND, the festival is certain to surprise and delight audiences as it fills all of East Neuk’s hidden corners with music.”

Further press information:

Debra Boraston

T. 01424 883307 M. 07989 434388

E. debra@henrymoorestudio.co.uk

Full programme information, day by day www.eastneukfestival.com

Box Office: Hub Tickets T. 0131 473 2000 www.hubtickets.co.uk

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