

Lammermuir Festival 2023 explores the past and looks to the future with exciting young performers in bold and spirited programme



20th June 2023

September 7th-18th 2023

Beautiful Music in Beautiful Places

<https://www.lammermuirfestival.co.uk/>



- 36 performances at 12 venues across East Lothian.
- Scottish Opera performs Scottish premiere of Richard Strauss's *Daphne* (1937).
- World leading harpsichordist Mahan Esfahani returns as Artist in Residence.
- The Marian Consort and Dr Lizzie Swarbrick explore the early architectural and musical history of Haddington's St Mary's Church to mark the 50th anniversary of its restoration.
- Secret Byrd: The Gesualdo Six and Fretwork mark William Byrd's 400th anniversary with interactive and immersive performance.
- Five of Europe's top string players form new ensemble Spunicunifait, performing all of Mozart's string quintets over two concerts.
- Kaleidoscope Chamber Collective bring an astonishing line-up of virtuosos in a three concert residency.
- A rich seam of song includes appearances from Roderick Williams, Harriet Burns, Nick Pritchard, Nicholas Mulroy and Nardus Williams.
- Festival favourites Maxwell String Quartet, Dunedin Consort, Royal Northern Sinfonia, BBCSSO and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra return.
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The Lammermuir Festival returns this September with a varied and bold programme of beautiful music in beautiful places. The festival runs from the 7 – 18 September, featuring 36 performances at 12 venues across the historic county of East Lothian, offering audiences the chance to explore and marvel at the splendour of Scotland's 'sunshine coast'.

Scottish Opera partners the Lammermuir Festival to bring yet another Scottish premiere to the festival on Thursday 7 September at St. Mary's Parish Church. Richard Strauss's *Daphne* (1937) sees the titular character fighting off the affections of Greek sun god Apollo in a tale of love, death, jealousy, and nature. This concert staging is conducted by **Stuart Stratford** and brings to life the soaring melodies that Strauss held dear through the last months of his life. Sung in German with English supertitles, this is a must-see for opera-lovers.

Lammermuir Festival Patron and pianist **Steven Osborne** performs in three concerts. Firstly he teams up with violinist **Alina Ibragimova** for a programme of Debussy, Pärt, and Prokofiev, in what is lauded as one of the most exciting partnerships on the concert stage today. A more contemplative event is next for Osborne, as he discusses "What does music mean?" before performing Schubert's Sonata in A major, D959. Finally, the festival Patron draws proceedings to a close in an appropriate finale, playing alongside the **BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra** in Tippett's Piano Concerto, before the ensemble bring all the fanfare and climactic magnificence of Beethoven's 'Eroica' Symphony No. 3 to the St. Mary's Parish Church stage.

Having given a sensational performance at the very first Lammermuir Festival, harpsichordist **Mahan Esfahani** returns as artist-in-residence with five programmes, including his Coffee Concert. The Iranian-American musician focuses on the music of Bach through his residency, performing his work in solo, duo with violinist **Antje Weithaas**, and concerto with the **Scottish Chamber Orchestra**. Esfahani also explores the limits of his instrument in modern repertoire and his concert at 3pm on Tuesday 12 September at St. Mary's Parish Church sees him combine the harpsichord with live electronics, in an atmospheric programme where audience members may move around the venue as he plays.

St. Mary's Parish Church, the hub of the festival in Haddington, is celebrating the 50th anniversary of its restoration. The festival marks this with an afternoon of lectures from art historian **Dr. Lizzie Swarbrick** and music from **The Marian Consort**, exploring what the church and its surrounding area would have looked and sounded like before the Reformation and the siege of Haddington in 1548. The Marian Consort close this evening on Saturday 9 September with a programme from the 'Dunkeld' Partbooks, one of Scotland's few remaining manuscripts from the sixteenth century.

Continuing the Reformation theme, **Gesualdo Six** and **Fretwork** perform *Secret Byrd* in the transformed St. Mary's on Wednesday 13 September. A recusant Catholic, William Byrd's masses are performed here as they were intended – in secret, by candlelight, with hidden artifacts dotted around the room. The audience can roam around the shadowy room between costumed performers, and passing soup and bread as part of ritual inclusivity. A unique and inspiring performance at a time where three-quarters of the world still suffer from religious intolerance, Byrd's activism is championed in this living exhibition.

Five of Europe's top string players come to Lammermuir Festival to perform as **Spunicunifait**. The group are named after a nonsense word coined by Mozart, reminding them in the face of his genius that he was still a very silly man! They perform a complete cycle of his extraordinary string quintets, some of the greatest chamber music ever composed.

Many festival favourites return to the festival in its 14th year. The **Kaleidoscope Chamber Collective** perform three concerts, utilising their ten virtuosic musicians to perform works from duos to nonets by composers from Mozart to Coleridge-Taylor.

The Maxwell Quartet are one of Britain's leading ensembles and are part of an exciting new residency relationship with Lammermuir Festival for the next three years. They play two concerts at this year's festival, firstly a stimulating programme where Haydn and Purcell are juxtaposed with their arrangements of Scottish folk music and a vivacious quartet from Jamaican-British composer Eleanor Alberga. Secondly, the quartet team up with baritone **Roderick Williams** and pianist **Christopher Glynn** for a programme of Elgar and Vaughan Williams.

The Dunedin Consort returns for a 14th consecutive year at Lammermuir on Sunday 17 September. The spotlight is shone on neglected women composers of the 17th and 18th centuries, such as Barbara Strozzi, the most prolific composer of any gender when it comes to secular music in the mid-17th century. Director **John Butt** and soprano **Nardus Williams** bring to life these oft-forgotten voices in a programme of rediscovery at 11am at Crichton Collegiate Church.

Royal Northern Sinfonia brings a blockbuster concert to the festival on Thursday 14 September at St. Mary's Parish Church at 8pm with their principal conductor Dinis Sousa. **Maria Włoszczowska** performs Beethoven's Violin Concerto, often considered the greatest concerto for the instrument. Following this is Schumann's Symphony No. 2, an inspiring work created against depression and anxiety.

Some of last year's debutants return to the festival for another go in 2023. Alongside their Coffee Concert, French ensemble **Quatuor Agate** perform in the lovely Stenton Parish Church on the festival's opening day at 3pm, performing quartets from Mozart and Beethoven.

The National Youth Choir of Scotland Chamber Choir returns to St Mary's Parish Church on Sunday 10 September at 8pm. The choir reprises Britten's *Hymn to St Cecilia* from last year's programme, alongside works from all over the world – Estonia, Denmark, Britain, and America are all represented in this performance conducted by charismatic director **Christopher Bell**.

Holy Trinity Church in Haddington hosts the continuation of the popular **Coffee Concerts** following their return last year. Highlighting the best of classical music's young stars, the concerts feature **Irène Duval** and **Sam Armstrong** performing violin sonatas by Brahms, Suk, and Martinu; young French string quartet **Quatuor Agate** perform Bartók and Dvorák; violinist **Jonian Ilias Kadesha** delivers a varied programme ending in Bach's lauded D minor Chaconne; Jordanian-Palestinian pianist **Iyad Sughayer** – labelled 'one to watch' by International Piano Magazine – flits between Mozart and Khachaturian; and 2022 BBC Young Musician Strings final winner **Jaren Ziegler** performs a programme of music for viola and piano.

Festival favourite **Tom Poster and Elene Urioste** bring excerpts from their online phenomenon **Juke Box** which was watched all over the world during lockdown; **Trio Gaspard** performs Haydn with Scottish premieres of Sally Beamish and Kit Armstrong compositions; and artist-in-residence **Mahan Esfahani** plays Bach's English Suites. Head to the church for coffee and Falko's famously tasty cake at 11am before each concert.

Exciting young performers are dotted throughout the programme. BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artists **Ensemble Molière** brings *The Dancing Star*, a programme of the best in French baroque dance music to the beautiful setting of the Crichton Collegiate Church on Sunday 10 September at 11am.

Trio Gaspard accompanies its Coffee Concert with a performance at North Esk Church in Musselburgh offering a whistle-stop tour of the best in Czech chamber music – Smetana, Suk, and Dvorák. Catch this sought-after piano trio and their fresh take on music-making at 3pm on Wednesday 13 September.

Tenor **Nicolas Mulroy** and accordionist **Ryan Corbett** bring *Years of Solitude* to Garvald Village Hall on Friday 15 September at 7:30pm. with a varied collection of songs from Piazzola to Paul McCartney, Joni Mitchell to Monteverdi to explore concept of solitude in this fascinating concert.

More songs bring Dirleton Kirk to life on Saturday 16 September at 7:30pm. Soprano **Harriet Burns**, tenor **Nick Pritchard**, and pianist **Christopher Glynn** cling onto summer with Berlioz's *Les nuits d'été*, before performing *Myrtles*, an English translation by **Jeremy Sams** of Schumann's *Myrthen*. A wedding gift to his wife Clara Wieck, the song cycle is an intricately created wreath of 26 scenes from married life, created in a year when Schumann wrote many of his most well-known songs.

The Festival's Artistic Directors James Waters and Hugh Macdonald, said:

"We are delighted to be bringing a programme of fantastic musicians and music to the beautiful and historic county of East Lothian this September.

*"We are particularly excited to welcome back the great harpsichordist Mahan Esfahani as our Artist in Residence with five programmes demonstrating the breadth and depth of his artistry: and Scottish Opera's Scottish premiere of Richard Strauss's spellbinding late opera *Daphne* is something any festival would be proud to present.*

"The Gesualdo Six and Fretwork have created a very special project to mark William Byrd's 400th anniversary in dramatic style, immersing us in the more revolutionary aspects of this prolific composer. And in the company of The Marian Consort and Dr Lizzie Swarbrick we will explore the early history, both architectural and musical of Haddington's magnificent St Mary's Church, marking the 50th anniversary of its restoration.

"The wonderful violinist Alina Ibragimova partners our patron Steven Osborne in Prokofiev violin sonatas, and Steven's performance of the Tippett Piano Concerto will be a very special occasion indeed. And we look forward to the return of the virtuoso Kaleidoscope Chamber Collective with three glorious concerts, as well as, this September, marking the start of an ongoing collaboration with the Maxwell String Quartet.

"If you love listening to world-class musicians playing everything from Byrd to Tippett in stunning surroundings, please join us in this special place east of Edinburgh this September."

There is a listings document available on request.

You can see the full programme at www.lammermuirfestival.co.uk

A digital brochure is here