

One of the world's oldest celebrations of contemporary classical music and sound, Nordic Music Days takes place in Scotland for the first time in its 136-year history.



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Glasgow: 30 October – 3 November

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One of the world's longest running festivals for contemporary classical music, established in 1888 by the NKR (Council of Nordic Composers), Nordic Music Days takes place outwith the Nordic countries for only the third time in 136 years.

This revered music festival presents Nordic, and this year Scottish, contemporary music and sound and is curated by composers and creators. The 2024 curator team includes: Tróndur Bogason (Faroe Islands), Lauri Supponen (Finland), Guoste Tamulynaite (Norway), Gillian Moore (Scotland) and Pippa Murphy (Scotland).

This autumn Nordic Music Days comes to Scotland for the first time, to Glasgow, a UNESCO City of Music, where it hosts and presents music and musicians from Greenland, Iceland, the Faroe Islands, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland – and Scotland.

Opening on 30 October (until 3 November) the festival sees events happen across the city. Filled with innovation and curiosity, infiltrating public spaces and popping up in a variety of cultural spaces in the city, a vast number of concerts, sound installations, talks, screenings and participatory events celebrate musical and cultural resonances between these northern countries.

The theme running through the festival is **Word of Mouth**. It invokes something personal, informal and close: the passing on, movement and the spreading of ideas, stories, knowledge and traditions.

As well as the strength and variety of the artistic programme, the festival is an enormous coming together of the contemporary music industry in all these countries, with partnership and exchange being key to its legacy including a focus on sustainable practice and social responsibility.

The Festival is an initiative of the NKR (Council of Nordic Composers) which works in collaboration with the lead partner in Scotland, Royal Scottish National Orchestra.

The Festival brings together a Who's Who of music across these countries. From Scotland's vibrant and diverse music scene participants include Sound Festival, Drake Music Scotland, Hebrides Ensemble, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Scottish Ensemble, Scottish Music Centre, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, and staff and students from the University of Glasgow. The incredible network of the Council of Nordic Composers comprising composer societies of Denmark, the Faroe Islands, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden represents 1500 composers and sound artists across the Nordic countries. The Nordic partners include Art Music Denmark Faroe Music Export, Iceland Music, Music Finland, Music Norway, Nordic Film Music Days, Nordic Theatre Laboratory, Northern Connection, Nuuk Nordic Festival, STATUS and Young Nordic Music.

Alongside this huge coming together in the music sector, are partners in wider cultural, education and communities. Helping to bring depth and breadth to the project, these partners include Glasgow Film Theatre, Glasgow Life/UNESCO City of Music, Centre for Contemporary Arts and the University of Glasgow which hosts a conference concurrent with the festival, focused on the role and value of experimentation in new music.

Today Nordic Music Days announces the first information on the concerts and collaborations confirmed for the festival (30 October – 3 November), with further information to follow in September.

Martin Jonsson Tibblin, Chair of the Council of Nordic Composers and the Swedish Society of Composers said: "Nordic Music Days has been an unmissable event for over a century. It's a chance for composers from across the region to gather together, hear each other's music, discuss trends and ideas, and to share and develop cultural and artistic experiences. There's a strong affinity to Scottish music and culture in the Nordics, so the Council of Nordic Composers is looking forward to seeing the opportunities that open up for composers, performers, organisations, and audiences as a result of this exciting new partnership, which I believe will last long after the festival."

Alistair Mackie, CEO of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra said: "The truly remarkable thing about this project, which has been supported here in Scotland for this special edition by Creative Scotland, is the number of partner organisations who are working together, pooling resources and facilitating each other's performances in order to share a common artistic goal and conversation. So many are contributing to the project and looking towards future collaborations and partnerships throughout the Nordic region."

Culture Secretary Angus Robertson said: "We are delighted to welcome Nordic Music Days to Scotland for the first time in its 136-year history. The five-day programme is truly innovative and a celebration of contemporary music from Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Greenland, Iceland, the Faroe Islands and Scotland.

"The festival brings together artists from these countries in venues all across Glasgow to showcase the exceptional diversity of music that is being created and performed. We are looking forward to giving a very warm welcome to all those performing at, and attending, Nordic Music Days in Glasgow, a UNESCO City of Music."

Emma Campbell, Music Officer at Creative Scotland said: "Scotland's music is distinguished by an adventurous spirit that's ready to share with the rest of the world. We are delighted that our own UNESCO City of Music will host a festival that seeks out old, new and surprising points of connection between Scotland and our like-minded neighbours in the Nordic regions. Thanks to the collaborative vision of the Nordic Council of Composers, the RSNO and the festival organisers, audiences can look forward to celebrating bold and ambitious new music that will build a lasting legacy between our countries."

PROGRAMME

Major Orchestral Concerts

Scotland's major orchestras take centre stage. The Royal Scottish National Orchestra is joined by its Danish Music Director, Thomas Søndergård, to present a programme with superstar violinist Isabelle Faust as the soloist for Rune Glerup's *Of Light and Lightness*. Performing in the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, the programme opens with a new work from Lisa Robertson, where the RSNO is joined by the young musicians of Big Noise Govanhill. Music by Errollyn Wallen, Aileen Sweeney, and a reprise of a work by Bent Sørensen that was a hit with RSNO audiences in 2022, sit next to a well-known work from a trail blazing Nordic composer of days past - the seventh symphony of Jean Sibelius - which is performed at the same time as a thought provoking work for silent performer by Hildur Elísa Jónsdóttir.

The BBC Symphony Orchestra's programme *An Extraordinary Voyage!* at City Halls takes the audience on a fantastical musical journey with Maja S K Ratkje's trombone concerto *Considering Icarus* (with Stephen Menotti as soloist), and through recurring orchestral transformations in Britta Byström's *Voyages Extraordinaires*, inspired by the enchanting (and impossible) journeys depicted in Jules Verne's famous novel series. Conducted by Emilia Hoving, the programme also includes Faroese composer Eli Tausen á Lava's re-imagining of Handel's *Let me cry*, and a choral work from Hildur Guðnadóttir, the extraordinary, Academy Award-winning musical imagination behind *Joker* and *Chernobyl*, where the BBC SSO is joined by the University of Glasgow's Chapel Choir.

The Scottish Chamber Orchestra's programme, *Borealis*, at City Halls uncovers new sounds from both Sweden and Scotland. Swedish composer Anders Hillborg's 2021 Viola Concerto is a thrilling, high-energy ride through glistening sonic landscapes, performed by its dedicatee, the remarkable British violist Lawrence Power. Fellow Swede Madeleine Isaksson, meanwhile, transports us to the raw, ethereal beauty of her country's far north. The programme also takes in the austere beauty of Sir James MacMillan's powerful Ayrshire-inspired Second Symphony, written for the SCO in 1999. The programme opens with SCO Associate Composer Jay Capperauld's witty, macabre *Death in a Nutshell*, which challenges audiences to find the clues and solve the case.

Across the City & Pop-ups

From shops to concert halls to galleries and Glasgow's parks, Nordic Music Day spreads itself across the city and across lifestyles to reach audiences on their doorsteps and in their daily lives.

Norway's Ulf A S Holbrook's *Mountain Dialogues* is a 3D sculpture of Norway's Finse mountain range brought to life with field recordings of natural sounds, spoken word, and music from the regions. Alongside *Sound Art*, a set of 3 interactive 'paintings' by Swedish Sound artist Håkan Lidbo which allow the viewer to create a new piece, this installation will be hosted in Waterstones on Sauchiehall Street. Norway based composer Mariam Gviniashvili's *LOTSVA* is a mesmerising and meditative work created in response to the isolation and absence of connection that was felt by many during the Covid pandemic, which will be installed in the University of Glasgow Memorial Chapel.

The Festival's opening concert with the Scottish Ensemble will take place in The Old Fruitmarket. The programme will include music by Finland's Jukka Tiensuu and Scotland's Seyoung Oh, as well as the first performance of *Qullaq*. Initiated by the Danish Composers Society, *Qullaq* (meaning ascending or levitating) is a new work devised in collaboration between Aidan O'Rourke, Arnannguaq Gerstrøm, **Nive Nielsen, Hans-Henrik Suersaq Poulsen and Mike Fencker Thomsen** following residencies in Greenland and Denmark. The project involves traditional, electronic and experimental musicians alongside the virtuosic strings of the Scottish Ensemble.

The University of Glasgow's popular lunchtime series includes a programme from Drake Music Scotland and Icelandic baritone Colin Levin, performing new works for voice and an ensemble of accessible instruments.

The CCA will be a hive of activity during the Festival, with several concerts and events including an acousmatic programme which brings together composers from Sweden (Girilal Baars), Norway (Natasha Barrett), Scotland (Leo Butt) and Iceland (Rikharður Fridriksson), and a performance from the Hebrides Ensemble. CCA's Courtyard Bar will be the location for a of Pop- Up Human Library and will be the venue for a late night Festival Club (the programme for this will be announced in September).

A quartet of string players from the RSNO perform music from *Wood Works* and *Last Leaf*, two hit albums by the Danish String Quartet which took a classical quartet into conversation with the untamed beauty of Scandinavian folk music. The Festival's closing concert, *Echoes on the Edges*, paired with a programme in the Glasgow Cathedral Festival, will bring the drama and philosophy (though hopefully not the humidity!) of the Faroe Islands' Klæmintsgjógv sea cave concerts to St Mungo's Cathedral. A concept pioneered by Kristian Blak.

Mass Participation

Kelvingrove Museum and Art Gallery plays host to *phōné*, a new work for massed choirs by Finnish composer Tytti Arola. The performance in Kelvingrove will be the hub performance, with community, youth and regular choirs throughout Scotland and the Nordic countries (and further afield) putting on their own performances concurrently. *Phōné* is a playful work which uses old-school technology in the form of homemade tin can telephones to underline the importance and value of communication between people and cultures in the modern world.

Young Composers Exchange

Through UNM x NMD Young Composer Exchange four Scottish composers visit the Ung Nordisk Musik festival in Sweden and four Nordic composers come to Scotland. The composers, all under the age of 30, pair up to create four new commissions which will be featured throughout the festival.

Exhibitions and Film

Forever Changes is an exhibition of work by Nordic photographers which looks at the impact of the climate crisis, created by Street Level Gallery in collaboration with the Nordic Embassies.

At Glasgow Film Theatre, a screening of **Apolonia, Apolonia** will be followed by a panel discussion with soundtrack composer Jonas Struck (Denmark). The film has been chosen in collaboration with GFT and Nordic Film Music Days.

International Exchange

The exchange not just of music, but of ideas, understanding, innovations and the building of stronger relationships is a key part of Nordic Music Days.

NordEX sees a daily programme of industry focused discussion and presentation, in partnership with the Scottish Music Centre, Music Finland, Art Music Denmark, Music Norway, Iceland Music and Faroe Music Export. The NordEX programme takes place over 4 days (Connect, Sustain, Build and Play) and is rooted firmly in the concept of sustainability – both environmental and artistic.

Through the Northern Connection project, an initiative of Music Finland, Music Norway, Scottish Music Centre, and Sound, Ensemble Temporum are piloting low impact travel, making their way to Nordic Music Days from Norway by train with events en route.

Finally, the University of Glasgow hosts an associated conference which explores new music in Education, the development of musical instruments (including electronics, accessible instruments, vocal technique, acoustic instruments) and artistic impact of innovation.

Further programme information is set to be released in September.

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