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Edinburgh International Festival announces 70th anniversary season

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The Edinburgh International Festival has announced the programme for its 70th anniversary season, which will take place 4-28 August.

The Festival will open with *Bloom*, an outdoor public art event which will bring together light and sound installations, large-scale illuminations and projections onto Edinburgh's iconic buildings, celebrating the joyful transformation of the city over the past 70 years.

The opera programme will launch with Verdi's *Macbeth*: the first opera performed at the inaugural International Festival in 1947. The opera will be performed by EIF's new resident company Teatro Regio of Turin, conducted by Gianandrea Noseda and directed by Emma Dante.

Other operatic highlights include Àlex Ollé's production of *La bohème*; Mark-Anthony Turnage's *Greek*, with Stuart Stratford conducting a cast including Alex Otterburn, Susan Bullock, Allison Cook and Andrew Shore; and a production of *Don Giovanni* which will be conducted and directed by Iván Fischer.

Sir John Eliot Gardiner will present Monteverdi's three surviving operas in celebration of the 450th anniversary of the composer's birth. *L'Orfeo*, *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria* and *L'incoronazione di Poppea* will be presented as concert performances, with Elsa Rooke directing and Monteverdi Choir and English Baroque Soloists performing.

The opera programme is completed by two concert performances. *Die Walküre* will feature Bryn Terfel as Wotan, Christine Goerke as Brünnhilde, Karen Cargill as Fricke and Amber Wagner as Sieglinde, with Sir Andrew Davis conducting the Royal Scottish National Orchestra; and Britten's *Peter Grimes* will be conducted by Edward Gardner, with Stuart Skelton taking the title role, Erin Wall as Ellen Orford and Christopher Purves as Captain Balstrode, supported by the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra & Chorus and the Edvard Grieg Kor.

The classical music programme will launch with Haydn's 'Surprise' Symphony – the work which opened the 1947 festival – and Mendelssohn's second symphony from the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and Edinburgh Festival Chorus under Pablo Heras-Casado.

Highlights of the main season include a rare performance of Elgar's cantata *Scenes from the Saga of King Olaf* by Sir Andrew Davis, the Philharmonia Orchestra and the Edinburgh Festival Chorus; a 'festival firsts' programme featuring works by Tippett, MacMillan and Walton which received their world premieres at the EIF; a recital from Bryn Terfel and Malcolm Martineau; a concert which will see the Orchestra of the Mariinsky Theatre and Royal Scottish National Orchestra come together under Valery Gergiev for a programme of Prokofiev, Britten and Shostakovich; and the final concert, an eclectic programme of Bliss, Shostakovich, Vaughan Williams, Mahler, Ravel, Strauss and a new collaborative work inspired by Mendelssohn's *Fingal's Cave* by BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and Martyn Brabbins.

The Queen's Hall recital series includes performances from the Dunedin Consort and John Butt, Christian Tetzlaff and Leif Ove Andsnes, Mikhail Pletnev, Karen Cargill and Simon Lepper, and I Fagiolini and Robert Hollingworth. Joshua Bell will undertake a three-concert residency, and Iestyn Davies will join the Academy of Ancient Music to sing Bach in two concerts.

The Festival also includes a series of concerts to celebrate the renovation and restoration of St Cecilia's Hall. These include a Schubertiade featuring Julian Prégardien, fortepiano trios with Kristian Bezuidenhout, and Mozart from Rachel Podger and Brecon Baroque.

Tickets go on general sale on 25 March.

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