

Usher Hall Gala Concert

✘ Edinburgh's much loved Usher Hall is to celebrate its magnificent refurbishment with a spectacular multi-media gala concert today.

Mars, Venus and Mercury as captured by NASA's own cameras will be projected on to a 24-foot screen accompanied by Gustav Holst's exquisite Planets suite played by the Houston Symphony from Texas.

This grand gala 10/10/10 concert promises to be a spectacular evening and is a complete sell-out.

Since reopening last August, the Usher Hall continues to be as popular as ever with more than 220,000 people enjoying concerts and events such as Billy Connolly, Bill Bailey, Tim Minchin, Lesley Garrett, Katherine Jenkins, Ronan Keating, Nicola Benedetti, the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and the Edinburgh International Festival.

Councillor Deidre Brock, Culture and Leisure Convenor, said: "The future is very bright for Edinburgh's newly refurbished Usher Hall, and this memorable gala event will enable us to pay tribute to all those who have taken part in this project over the years. We are extremely grateful to the funders and all the many donors, large and small, who helped us to make it all possible. Our heartfelt thanks also to all the neighbouring businesses and residents, whose patience and understanding while the work was being carried out is hugely appreciated."

The gala concert is the only Scottish date in a UK tour by Houston Symphony, whose collaborative Planets project with NASA was first conceived back in 2006 and has already wowed audiences all over the United States, including New York's famous Carnegie Hall.

The project uses images returned from missions such as the Mars rover explorations, Cassini-Huygens, Voyager 1 and 2, Mariner 10, Magellan, Messenger, and Galileo. The Holst suite, premiered in 1918, pre-Pluto, contains seven movements: Mars, Venus, Mercury, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune.

Houston Symphony conductor Hans Graf said: "This combination of music and science can provide a deeper emotional dimension to the splendid cosmic images, a depth which is not to be experienced without the joyful power and delicate sensuality of Holst's remarkable orchestra pieces."

Forthcoming concerts at the Usher Hall include Way to Blue: The Songs of Nick Drake. This special event on Saturday 16 October, curated and presented in person by the late singer's producer, Joe Boyd, will feature original orchestrations arranged by Robert Kirby. Danny Thompson will anchor the house band along with special guest artists including Vashti Bunyan, Green Gartside, Robyn Hitchcock, Teddy Thompson and Krystle Warren. Award-winning Scottish folk singer [Karine Polwart](#) has also been confirmed in the line-up. To book, please call 0131 228 1155, visit the Usher Hall box office in person or [book online](#).