

Edinburgh International Festival 2018 – free tickets for opening event

15,000 free tickets for this year's opening event will be released on Monday 2 July 2018.

The Aberdeen Standard Investments Opening Event – Five Telegrams will be a sound and light spectacular that we are becoming accustomed to in Edinburgh. In his first year Festival Director Fergus Linehan brought us the light show at Usher Hall and in the following year on Castle Rock. To mark the 70th anniversary last year the light show moved quite fabulously to St Andrew Square and this year it will be back at Usher Hall.

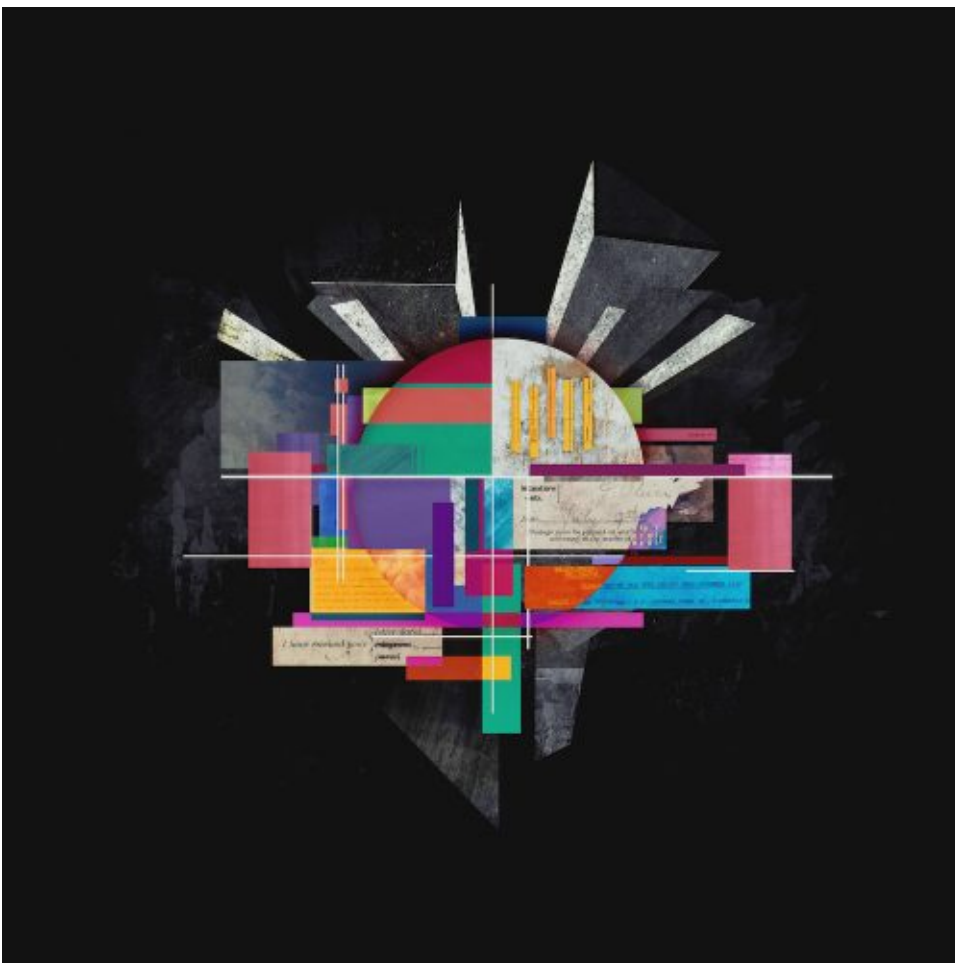


Image courtesy of 59 Productions who will

produce the Aberdeen Standard Investments Opening Event – Five Telegrams

The show will include illuminations on a big scale as before with projections on to the facade of Usher Hall accompanied by a new work for orchestra and chorus composed by Edinburgh's Anna Meredith. Hundreds of young people will feature in the opening event with live performance running alongside the music and illuminations.

This year is one hundred years since the end of World War One and the event is a collaboration between the EIF, 14-18 NOW the UK's arts programme for the centenary and for the very first time, BBC Proms. The way that this partnership works is that the production on 3 August will also open the BBC Proms on 13 July 2018 at the Albert Hall in London. While the work will be similar, we are assured it will be quite different in both capitals.

Anna's works have been performed at the Proms on several occasions, including four commissions (*froms* – Last Night of the Proms 2008; *Left Light* – 2009; *Smatter Hauler* – 2015; and *Connect It* – 2015). *Connect It* was also selected for the nationwide BBC Proms Ten Pieces project in 2015. For the Proms, Anna has led workshops for women composers and has been a judge for the Inspire Competition.

Lothian Road will be closed to traffic to allow you to see and hear Five Telegrams from an arena in Festival Square. It will last for 25 minutes in five movements and includes a symphony orchestra and youth chorus. The work is about the various modes of communication which were used during the Great War and how that resonates with today's world of instant communications.

Anna Meredith and Richard Slaney from 59 Productions visited the Imperial War Museum for inspiration.



Image courtesy of 59 Productions

FIVE MOVEMENTS

Five Telegrams draws on five central themes, rooted in the period between 1914-1918 but drawing parallels in contemporary culture:

Ciphers & Codes – the piece will explore visual codes, Morse code, code breaking, Room 40 and the Zimmerman telegram, semaphore and trench codes, informing the musical rhythm and beats which link with the projected imagery.

Redaction – censorship and the containment of communication is explored, examining the loss of personality and character in communications sent home from the field by soldiers due to the reduction and redaction of personal communication.

Propaganda & News Reporting – the disparity between reality and public communications both historically and currently in

media provides room for the layering of material where the real truth of a story could be buried and later revealed.

Field Postcards & Personal Communications – text in personal communications, censored or anonymised by the State provides inspiration for choral moments and the sound of young voices alongside the visual texts.

Armistice – marking the end of the conflict and noting the sense of ‘what next?’ and the colossal loss of young lives. Musically, it will build towards an anti-climactic cessation of fighting with a decisive change of landscape at that point in the piece.

59 Productions digital animations will be projected on to surfaces of the Usher Hall in tandem with Meredith’s score creating a moving audio and visual event. The Usher Hall will be mapped and used as the canvas for 59 Productions’ digital projections and the live recording of Anna Meredith’s work played across Festival Square.



Anna Meredith outside Usher Hall Photo by Ian Georgeson

Edinburgh is Anna Meredith's home town marking a homecoming and a coming together this August.

SPONSORSHIP

Aberdeen Standard Investments has extended its sponsorship of the opening event for a further three years from 2019-21.

Graeme McEwan, Chief Communications Officer, said: “We’re absolutely delighted that our partnership with the Edinburgh International Festival is to continue for another three years. The Aberdeen Standard Investments Opening Event puts the spotlight on Edinburgh as a global cultural capital. It’s a world class event that we are proud to be part of.”



Fergus Linehan Festival Director

International Festival Director Fergus Linehan, said: “Collaboration sits right at the heart of this event, whether in the creation of Five Telegrams by Anna Meredith and 59 Productions, our co-commissioning of this new work with 14-18 Now and the BBC Proms, through to partnerships with the many supporters who make this event possible. Over the last few years, the Opening Event has grown to become a multi-partner project and I’d like to say thank you to all of them – Aberdeen Standard Investments, Scotland’s Year of Young People through Event Scotland, the University of Edinburgh, Blue-i Theatre Technology and Mclcreate.

“We’re also delighted to announce the renewal of our title sponsorship, which will move forward with Aberdeen Standard

Investments. Knowing that this relationship will continue to 2021, helps us plan ahead with confidence and we look forward to working with the Aberdeen Standard Investment team over the next three years.”

Richard Slaney, Director of Five Telegrams, said: “Five Telegrams is a huge collaboration, and the fact that we can welcome 15,000 people to come and experience it for free to kick off the opening of this year’s Edinburgh International Festival, mirrors the coming together of the commission itself. 59 Productions has been working closely with Anna Meredith since the very start; we’ve shared ideas and themes that Anna has graciously taken into her composition. We’ve also worked for the very first time with some brilliant emerging designers from Edinburgh College of Art on costumes for the live performance, as well as researching the First World War thematic ideas with our commissioners at 14-18 NOW. Bringing all of these elements together for the 3 August Opening Event we hope that audiences will find Five Telegrams both boldly eye-catching as well as thought-provoking”.

Paul Bush OBE, VisitScotland’s Director of Events, said: “In the Year of Young People 2018, it is fantastic to see young people playing a central role in the Opening Event of the world-renowned Edinburgh International Festival. Through their involvement behind the scenes, in costume design and performing as part of a 250 strong youth choir, our young people will present their amazing talents for the whole world to see.

Their contributions will no doubt make for a memorable evening and reinforce Scotland’s position as the perfect stage for events. We are delighted to be supporting the Aberdeen Standard Investments Opening Event through the Year of Young People 2018 Event Fund.”

Tickets [available here from 2 July 2018](#)



Bloom the opening event at the 2017 Edinburgh International Festival used buildings around St Andrew Square as a canvas for moving images and projections