

Aberdeen Standard Investments Opening Event: Five Telegrams

The Edinburgh International Festival 2018 began tonight with a modern light and sound production which harked back to the time a century ago when young men were still fighting in a world war.

Young people were a point of focus for the evening with many of them taking part as singers and musicians. They wore capes which were designed by Edinburgh College of Art students which are a modern day take on the uniforms worn by soldiers.



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Vikki Allan of Aberdeen Standard Investments, Fergus Linehan Director of Edinburgh International Festival, Anna Meredith Composer and Richard Slaney of 59 Productions.

The music was powerful and emotional, the story told with colourful projections onto the exterior of the Usher Hall.



The inspiration came from the Imperial War Museum where Meredith found five types of communication and some of the ways that communication worked. She said : “It might be about redactions, about reducing text, about code, ways of encrypting text, or spin, hype and distortion. All these things have resonance now.



“It was hard to find a way in to this sensitive subject matter but we were in the museum looking at field postcards which the second movement is based on. These are heartbreaking little multiple choice postcards which the soldiers would send back nearly every day. These would say I am well, I am in hospital, I’ve been wounded. Those were the only options and if they wrote anything else it would be destroyed. There was something about the economy of that which got just thinking about the restrictions, and that spread into other ideas.”



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2,750 artists from 31 nations will now play to audiences across Edinburgh this August.

Fergus Linehan told us that he starts his schedule in the Usher Hall with the Opening Concert on Saturday night which features the National Youth Choir of Scotland.

120 young singers will perform Haydn's Creation.

The Edinburgh International Festival will run until 27 August 2018. But tonight was a great way to begin one of the greatest arts festivals.



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