

Guitarist drafts in high class sub for Leith date

Guitarist Don Paterson has called on the multi-instrumental talents of Fraser Fifield as a short-notice replacement for his quartet's concert at St James Scottish Episcopal Church in Leith this Saturday, 7 March 2020.

When Paterson's saxophonist, Laura Macdonald, had to cancel all her engagements during March, Fifield's name immediately sprung to mind.

"Fraser's such an expressive and perhaps more appropriately in this instance, such an adaptable musician," says Paterson. "His playing on the low whistle has earned him quite a fan base in the Netherlands, particularly, and he's incredibly able on smallpipes and soprano saxophone, which will add greatly to the colours we have available."

Fifield is also a long-time partner of guitarist Graeme Stephen, who along with keyboardist Steve Hamilton, currently on a break from his regular gig with drumming legend Billy Cobham, makes up the unusual line-up that Paterson currently favours.

"I knew that Graeme and Fraser would gel instantly," says Paterson. "But we're really lucky to get Fraser because he just happens to be between tours this week. He works in all sorts of situations, from folk bands including Capercaillie to

the Dutch-Scottish sextet LoLanders to Indian percussionist Zakir Hussain's Indo-Celtic projects, and when he's not in demand for other people's groups, he might be in Argentina or in Eastern Europe pursuing some of the many world music ideas he's been developing in recent years."

Paterson's own musical appearances have been restricted over the past decade or more due to his commitments as a multi-award-winning poet, his work as a creative writing fellow at St Andrews University and his commuting from Edinburgh to London to fulfil his role as poetry editor for Picador.

"I was a musician before I got into poetry," says the Dundee-born Paterson. "People are often surprised to learn that because writing words has earned me much more coverage than composing music has, but when I went to London in the 1980s, I wanted to develop as a guitarist and composer and I did that for quite a few years."

Throughout the 1990s Paterson co-lead the well-regarded Celtic jazz group Lammas, with the saxophonist Tim Garland, recording five albums and touring internationally. Paterson's emergence as a poet coincided with Garland's discovery by jazz legends, saxophonist Ronnie Scott and pianist Chick Corea, with whom he toured off and on for seventeen years, and the prog rock drummer-turned-jazz band leader, Bill Bruford. Hence Lammas going on hold indefinitely.

Paterson and Garland have kept in touch over the years and even tested a jazz and poetry collaboration at the Queen's Hall last year, despite Paterson's severe reservations about the two artforms' compatibility.

"There's a horrible ring to jazz and poetry that creates a set of expectations that make me uncomfortable," he says. "But the piece Tim's current trio and I tried out actually worked quite well and we've talked about doing more. I might read a poem or

two on Saturday but really, the other three guys in the quartet are so good that I'd rather they got the attention they deserve.

"As a music fan, I can't wait to hear what they create from the compositions I've prepared for them."

[Tickets here](#)

