

Work begins on Dunard Centre – a new concert hall for Edinburgh

**Work to clear the site for the
first purpose built concert hall to
be built in Edinburgh for a century
began today.**

The building designed by David Chipperfield Architect and acousticians Nagata Academy will become a 1,000 seat venue where currently a 1960s annexe of The Royal Bank of Scotland HQ on St Andrew Square stands ready for demolition. This area has not been open to the public for around 250 years, but will be opened up with public realm works.

Construction workers and other invited guests enjoyed a performance by cellist Su-a-Lee Assistant Principal Cello at Scottish Chamber Orchestra to celebrate the first day on site. Ms Lee was placed in a position which we understand is exactly where the stage will be when the Dunard Centre is complete.



The work began on the Dunard Centre on 6 February with a visit from UK and Scottish Government Ministers as well as the Council Leader to listen to Ae Fond Kiss by Su-a Lee Assistant Principal Cello at Scottish Chamber Orchestra ©2023 The Edinburgh Reporter

IMPACT Scotland Co-Chair Gavin Reid commented: "The Dunard Centre will open up this unbeatable city centre site to the public for the first time in 250 years. What better way to prepare for the new than by playing out the old building with Ae Fond Kiss: a song both about partings but also a blessing for what's to come. Live music on day one is the perfect start to this extraordinary project: it's exhilarating to be here and getting on with the job."



Gavin Reid Chief Executive of The Scottish Chamber Orchestra and Co-Chair of IMPACT Scotland addressing the audience The work began on the Dunard Centre on 6 February with a visit from UK and Scottish Government Ministers as well as the Council Leader to listen to Ae Fond Kiss by Su-a Lee Assistant Principal Cello at Scottish Chamber Orchestra ©2023 The Edinburgh Reporter

Su-a Lee, Assistant Principal Cello at Scottish Chamber Orchestra and member of McFall's Chamber said: "Performing in a brilliantly created acoustic is a wonderful experience for a musician. When every note is so clearly articulated across the whole orchestra, it allows us to respond to each other in the moment. It also allows us to respond to the audience and to the building itself, which pushes the boundaries of colour and dynamic. It makes the experience very exciting for both performer and listener. When Dunard Centre opens, it will give musicians a very special place to perform music of all genres. As a member of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, I know that we are all looking forward to getting to know this new space and bringing together some amazing performances for our audiences."



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Sir Robert McAlpine (SRM) is the firm appointed to manage this important phase of preparatory works which will remove the existing 1960's extension to the iconic Royal Bank of Scotland branch at 36 St Andrew Square, levelling the site, ready for the Dunard Centre build.

Mark Gibson, Managing Director Northern, SRM, said: "SRM has long been associated with the construction of iconic, bespoke buildings and we look forward to working alongside Impact Scotland on delivering this initial phase of the Dunard Centre and completing the Concert Hall in the fullness of time. This important development at the heart of Edinburgh will bring huge benefits to the city, and will be an opportunity for the SRM project team to make a positive impact on local communities with tangible and measurable social value outcomes."



This is the type of chair which will most likely be installed in the new concert hall. The work began on the Dunard Centre on 6 February with a visit from UK and Scottish Government Ministers as well as the Council Leader to listen to Ae Fond Kiss by Su-a Lee Assistant Principal Cello at Scottish Chamber Orchestra ©2023 The Edinburgh Reporter

The Dunard Centre is being funded through substantial philanthropic donations, including the visionary support of Dunard Fund, and underpinned by £25 million support from the Scottish and UK governments and the City of Edinburgh Council, as part of the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal. Royal Bank of Scotland is supporting the project by providing a long-term lease for the land which sits directly behind Dundas House on St Andrew Square.

A spokesperson for Dunard Fund, said: "Dunard Fund is thrilled that Sir David Chipperfield's monumental addition to Scotland's musical landscape is, from today, on the road towards completion as a home to all performance groups and individuals from Scotland and further afield, as a visionary venue for the Edinburgh International Festival, and as a more

regular base for the Dunedin Consort, the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and the National Youth Choir of Scotland.”

UK Government Minister for Scotland John Lamont said: “This is an exciting day for Edinburgh. The Dunard Centre will take a currently under-used location and turn it into a new ‘jewel in the crown’ for the city that will create jobs and opportunities and support local businesses.

“The UK Government is supporting the project with £10 million through the City Region Deal, and across Scotland we are investing more than £2.2 billion to level up communities everywhere.”

Scottish Government Culture Secretary Angus Robertson said: “I welcome this progress towards creating a world-class concert hall and new home for the Scottish Chamber Orchestra in Edinburgh, it promises to inspire audiences and performers for generations to come.

“This Scottish Government funding worth £10 million through the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal is helping boost the economy by creating a world-class attraction in the heart of the city.”

The City of Edinburgh Council Leader Councillor Cammy Day, said: “I am delighted to help mark this significant step forward for the first new concert hall in Edinburgh in over a century. Set in a most sustainable and accessible location, it adds a world-class cultural offer to the major regeneration of this area of the city centre. As well as reinforcing Edinburgh’s position as the Festival City and attracting top international performers, I particularly value the Dunard Centre’s commitment to community outreach, promoting inclusion, enabling the participation of people from all backgrounds and building an audience that reflects the true, diverse nature of society.”

IMPACT Scotland is the charity taking the project forward,

with the majority of the investment coming from private philanthropy, including from Dunard Fund, a long-term funder of the arts and music in Scotland. Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal is a partnership of national and local government and is investing £25m into the project. Through the support of the Royal Bank of Scotland, Dunard Centre will be built behind and directly connected to the Bank's historic registered office on St Andrew Square in the heart of Edinburgh. It will be ideally located, minutes from train, bus and tram stops linking it throughout the city, region, and the wider country.



Architects drawing – approach from the north



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Ruth Reed Head of Archives and Art with RBS The work began on the Dunard Centre on 6 February with a visit from UK and Scottish Government Ministers as well as the Council Leader to listen to Ae Fond Kiss by Su-a Lee Assistant Principal Cello at Scottish Chamber Orchestra ©2023 The Edinburgh Reporter