

EIF – Benedetti launches her first festival programme

Onlookers were startled by the media circus around the Ross Fountain in Princes Street Gardens, but many became embroiled in the photo frenzy although some international tourists did not know who the centre of attention was.

Well, in case they read this, the focus was Nicola Joy Nadia Benedetti, CBE, the Italian-Scottish classical solo violinist and the media event was to promote the Festival's biggest ever opening event.

She looked nervous standing on a narrow ledge of the much-photographed fountain and then Benedetti, conducted a number of interviews with Scottish and international TV and radio during the hour-long session.

The venue was chosen as almost 500 amateur and professional musicians of all ages and from all over Scotland, including the Isle of Mull and Ayrshire, will indulge in collective music making in Princes Street Gardens this weekend.

The Festival begins on August 4 and runs until August 27 and the big event helps launch the annual jamboree of music, dance, theatre and comedy at venues throughout the city.

Looking back, the Festival was established in 1947 following the end of the Second World War and it has inspired artists

and audiences through cultural collaboration down the decades.

Year-long, the Festival aims to connect with local communities through education projects, access programmes and initiatives.

Benedetti, who was born in Irvine, Ayrshire, of Italian heritage, began violin lessons aged four and then moved on to The Yehudi Menuhin School before winning the BBC Young Musician title in 2004, when she was 16, and that effectively launched her career.

She recently performed at a 400-year-old ceremony to mark King Charles' Scottish 'Coronation' and told The Edinburgh Reporter that she was not nervous but excited about what lies ahead in the next few weeks.

Benedetti said: "There is nothing that we are not doing this summer. We have a mass event in Princes Street Gardens on Saturday afternoon, we have amazing events at the Queen Hall, we have an amazing concert in the Usher Hall with a big orchestra and the Festival Choir which is one of the absolute prides of the Festival.

"We have the Royal Lyceum Theatre doing all sorts of plays throughout the Festival and we have got some incredible dance at The Playhouse and then we are also going to be in The Traverse working with a new production.

"Kids aged six to 11 will be in the Churchill Theatre so all kinds of things are going on for everybody."

She highlighted the Gardens event and said: "That is a community event and that is people from all over Scotland who are coming over. We have a group from Mull and Ayrshire and there are several hundred different performance on stage trying to pull together a piece of music."

All photos courtesy of Andrew Perry





