

# **Edinburgh impresario awarded honorary doctorate for stellar cultural career**

**A festival director and Edinburgh Napier alumnus has been recognised by the University for his contribution to the arts – after being presented with an honorary doctorate.**

Since completing his studies Alex Poots CBE has made a name for himself by putting on several major cultural events, becoming the founding Artistic Director and Chief Executive of the Manchester International Festival in 2005.

The impresario, who is from Edinburgh, has spent the last decade as founding Artistic Director and CEO of The Shed, which was described upon its completion as New York City's largest new art space.

Since opening to the public in 2019, the distinctive Manhattan attraction has hosted immersive experiences, groundbreaking theatre, major visual art exhibitions, and music concerts.

Alex has also put on concerts and productions for organisations such as the Royal Festival Hall, the Barbican Centre, Tate Modern & Britain, the BBC, and the English National Opera – where he produced their performance on Glastonbury's Pyramid Stage.

On Wednesday 3 July Alex returned to his roots, collecting his

Honorary Degree of Doctor of Arts during the graduation ceremony for students at Edinburgh Napier University's School of Arts & Creative Industries and School of Applied Sciences.

He originally studied for a music diploma at ENU's forerunner, Napier College of Science & Technology, and paid tribute to the staff there who helped to forge his career in the arts.

He said: "Napier was my opportunity to entirely focus on a range of musical subjects, which I relished and valued.

"I'm very grateful to Anna and Neil Butterworth for the rigorous, strong foundational diploma they created and developed here."

Presenting Alex with his degree during the ceremony at Edinburgh's Usher Hall, Professor Haftor Medbøe from ENU's School of Arts & Creative Industries said: "Throughout his career, Alex has seen and seized opportunities often invisible to others, taken risks where many would have shied away, and formed creative networks that have transcended discipline and doctrine.

"His work has enabled new and vital culture to be made and presented, affording audiences fresh and profound perspectives on the nature of our human existence and of our place in the world."