EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

Edinburgh International Festival and Scottish Government welcome Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra for a historic free concert

- The Edinburgh International Festival and the Scottish Government welcome the Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra for a special free concert at the Usher Hall on Saturday 6 August at 2pm

- The newly formed Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra tours Europe and the USA throughout summer 2022 in artistic defence of its country

- Edinburgh International Festival celebrates its 75th anniversary in 2022, running from 5 to 28 August.

MEDIA IMAGES AVAILABLE HERE

[eif.co.uk](eif.co.uk)

26 April, Edinburgh: In a gesture of solidarity with the victims of the war in Ukraine, the **Edinburgh International Festival** and the **Scottish Government** are partnering to welcome the **Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra** for a historic free concert at the Usher Hall on Saturday 6 August 2022 at 2pm. Marking the orchestra's only performance in Scotland, this concert is part of the Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra's European and USA tour in artistic defence of its country.

Edinburgh is twinned with the city of Kyiv, and this special collaboration between the International Festival and the Scottish Government is in support of the city's Ukrainian community and those directly affected by the war.

The special concert will see invitations extended to the Ukrainian community in Scotland and organisations leading efforts in the resettlement of Ukrainian refugees, as well as those supporting people impacted by the conflict.

Assembled by New York's Metropolitan Opera and the Polish National Opera, the Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra includes recent refugees, Ukrainian members of European orchestras and leading Ukrainian musicians and performers. The Ukraine Ministry of Culture is granting a special exemption to military-age, male members of orchestras inside the country to participate, allowing them to put down weapons and take up their instruments in a demonstration of the power of art over adversity.

Under the leadership of Canadian-Ukrainian conductor **Keri-Lynn Wilson**, the orchestra's repertoire includes Ukrainian composer Valentin Silvestrov's Seventh Symphony; Chopin's Piano Concerto No. 2 with Ukrainian virtuoso **Anna Fedorova**; and leading Ukrainian soprano **Liudmyla Monastyrska** performing an aria from Verdi's *Aida*.

Seventy-five years after **Rudolf Bing**, himself a refugee, co-founded the Edinburgh International Festival, the 2022 programme reflects the organisation's rich history of promoting unity and healing through cultural collaboration. The 2022 Festival includes a lecture on the importance of the arts and culture from **Peter Gelb**, General Manager of New York's Metropolitan Opera, presented in association with **Edinburgh Jewish Cultural Centre** in memory of Rudolf Bing**.**

The 2022 International Festival also features **Refuge** – a season of contemporary theatre, dance, visual art, film and conversation created to explore themes of refugeehood, migration, identity and inclusion.

Tickets for the Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra's concert at the Usher Hall will be available at eif.co.uk from late June 2022. Tickets are free of charge however anyone wishing to may make a donation in support of organisations assisting those impacted by the conflict. Further information to follow.

Fergus Linehan, Festival Director of the Edinburgh International Festival said:

"The staff and board of the Festival are honoured to be given the opportunity to welcome our colleagues from Ukraine and offer them our support and solidarity at this time."

Neil Gray, Minister for Culture and Refugees from Ukraine said:

"The Scottish Government is delighted to provide the support to enable the Ukraine Freedom Orchestra of more than 70 displaced Ukrainian professional musicians to perform at the Edinburgh International Festival in August.

"The Edinburgh International Festival was first created to bring together Europeans suffering in the shadow of war, and as the festival celebrates its 75th anniversary it has never been more appropriate to underline its founding principles of peace, collaboration and solidarity.

"Scotland has responded to the present crisis by offering a warm welcome to those Ukrainians fleeing the brutal invasion of their country – and we offer the same warm welcome to these wonderful musicians. I am sure this historic free concert will be one of the highlights of this year's cultural celebrations in Edinburgh."

Oleksandr Tkachenko, Ukrainian Minister of Culture said:

"Today, culture is showing a completely new side. It can also be the 'soft power' that helps heal wounds. Ukrainian culture is original and deserves to be at the centre of attention abroad. We thank our international colleagues for producing the tour."

– ENDS –

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For media images – see here

NOTES TO EDITORS

About Edinburgh International Festival

Every August, the International Festival brings world-class music, opera, dance and theatre performances to Edinburgh.

Created in 1947 following WWII, the festival inspired artists and audiences to heal through international cultural collaboration. This year the International Festival celebrates 75 years of bringing world cultures together and will take place from 5-28 August 2022.

Year-round the Edinburgh International Festival connects with local communities through education projects, access programmes, and initiatives that introduce new audiences to live performance.

For more information visit www.eif.co.uk

Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra Key Biographies

Maestro **Keri-Lynn Wilson's** international career as a guest conductor spans more than 20 years, leading some of the world's most prestigious orchestras—such as the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks—and operas at the world's top opera houses, including Covent Garden, the Bavarian State Opera, Bolshoi Theatre, and the Vienna State Opera. Next season, Ms. Wilson will make her Metropolitan Opera debut, conducting *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk,* and will return to Covent Garden to

conduct *La Traviata*. Ms. Wilson's work has been praised as "vividly shaped and nuanced" by The New York Times, and "elegantly incisive" by The Telegraph. Ms. Wilson received a nomination for conductor of the year from the Opus Klassik 2020 awards for her recording of Rossini's *Sigismondo* with the Bayerische Rundfunk.

Ukrainian soprano **Liudmyla Monastyrska** made her Metropolitan Opera debut singing the title role of Verdi's *Aida* in 2012, followed by the title role of Puccini's *Tosca*, Santuzza in Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana*, and Abigaille in Verdi's *Nabucco*. This season, she will sing the title role of Puccini's *Turandot* at the Met, Abigaille in *Nabucco* at Covent Garden, and the title role of *Aida* in Naples and Verona. Recent performance highlights include *Aida*, Elisabeth in *Don Carlo*, *Tosca*, and *Abigaille* at the National Opera of Ukraine; Lady Macbeth in Verdi's *Macbeth* at the Bavarian State Opera; Leonora in *Il Trovatore* at La Scala; *Tosca* in Rome and Barcelona; *Abigaille* at Deutsche Oper Berlin and in Hamburg; Leonora in *La Forza del Destino* at Deutsche Oper Berlin and Covent Garden; and *Santuzza* in concert with the NDR Radiophilharmonie.

Ukrainian pianist **Anna Fedorova** has performed with leading ensembles including the Philharmonia Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic, Tokyo Symphony, Yomiuri Orchestra, Russian National Orchestra, Utah Symphony, Dallas Symphony, Hong Kong Philharmonic, and the Netherlands Philharmonic. In 2018, Ms. Fedorova signed with Channel Classics Records and released six albums, including Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 1 with the St. Gallen Symphony Orchestra and the duo album *Silhouettes* with violist Dana Zemtsov. In March, she organized a charity concert with members of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra and cellist Maya Fridman, raising €111,000 in humanitarian aid for the victims of the war in Ukraine.