

Conservator Jonathan Santa Maria Bouquet tuning a harpsichord in the museum Neil Hanna

Scotland’s oldest purpose-built concert venue – St Cecilia’s Hall in Edinburgh – is once again alive with the sound of music after a multimillion-pound re-development.

Thanks to National Lottery players, the historic venue has been transformed to house the University of Edinburgh’s world-class collection of musical instruments. Over 400 instruments spanning four centuries will be on display.

[quote=Lucy Casot, Head of HLF Scotland]"Thanks to players of The National Lottery, Scotland’s oldest purpose-built concert hall has been transformed."[/quote]

From intricately designed harpsichords to a Mayuri - an elaborate 19th-century stringed instrument from India in the shape of a peacock - people will have the chance to learn about how the role of musical instruments has changed over time, and to hear them performed.

Jacky MacBeath, Head of Museums at the University of Edinburgh, said: "St Cecilia's Hall is a triumph that is both sympathetic to its Georgian heritage and equipped for a modern audience. Visitors to the museum will be immersed in the sounds of our instruments, as students and experts will play them throughout the day, so no two visits will be the same."

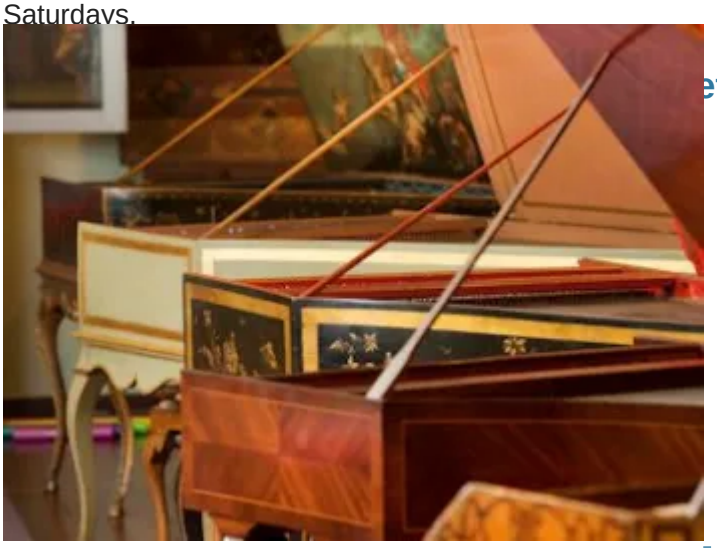
A unique venue

As part of the project, St Cecilia's striking Sypert Concert Room has been restored, retaining its distinctive oval shape. It's the only venue in the world where it's possible to hear 18th-century musical instruments played in an 18th-century concert hall. In the months ahead, the Concert Room will host an eclectic array of performances for up to 200 people.

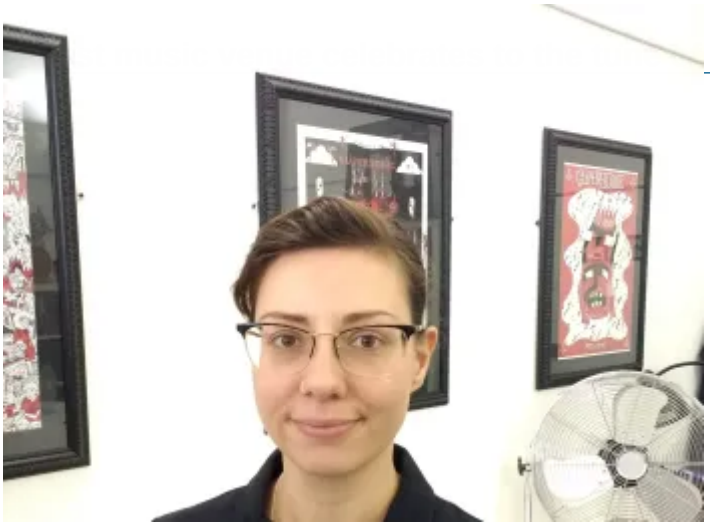
Built in 1763, St Cecilia's Hall was originally commissioned by the Edinburgh Musical Society and was designed by architect Robert Mylne. Since its construction, the Georgian building has had many uses including a school, a masonic lodge and a dance hall.

The Hall also features an in-house conservation studio, where visitors can see university conservators treating and preserving instruments, and a teaching lab.

St Cecilia's Hall Music Museum and Concert Room will be open 10am-5pm Tuesday–Friday and 12pm-5pm on Saturdays.



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