

Oldest music venue celebrates to the tune of £800,000

25/03/2014



The initiative to transform St Cecilia's Hall in Edinburgh has been awarded £823,500 by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). The award is a key part of the University of Edinburgh's £6.5million vision to create a centre for the study, display and enjoyment of instruments which date back to the sixteenth century.

The HLF award will fund new ways to make the instruments more readily available to the public. The venue will host live demonstrations, innovative use of sound and recordings, song-writing projects, exhibitions about instruments and their owners, resources for schools, and lunchtime concerts.

The refurbished and extended hall will be home to more than 1000 world-class objects and be a hub for research and teaching.

The plans, being developed by architects Page \ Park, will reinstate the 18th-century character of the venue, restoring the original historic frontage on the Cowgate and repairing the external stonework.

A new entrance with a feature door will be visible from the Royal Mile. The oval concert hall at the heart of the building will be completely restored and the original acoustics will be recreated.

The University of Edinburgh is a leader in musical instrument research and the hall, which dates from 1763, is home to one of the most important historic musical instrument collections anywhere in the world.

Jacky MacBeath, University of Edinburgh's Head of Museums, said: "We are absolutely thrilled with this award from the Heritage Lottery Fund. It is a huge boost to the project which focuses on revealing St Cecilia's Hall as one of the Old Town's most important historic places, transforming access to this special building and its unique collections of international significance."

Colin McLean, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund Scotland, said: "Edinburgh University's collection of musical instruments is regarded as one of the finest in the world. HLF applauds its aspiration to bring this unique collection under one roof so that many more people can study, perform and enjoy it. We are also delighted to support to the transformation of Scotland's oldest purpose-built concert hall. St Cecilia's Hall will have new life breathed into it as people explore the music that Scots have made over the centuries, while its new modern gallery will ensure that the collection is kept safe for future generations."

Further information

Kathryn Dunlop, Press and PR Office on 0131 651 5587, email: Kathryn.Dunlop@ed.ac.uk.