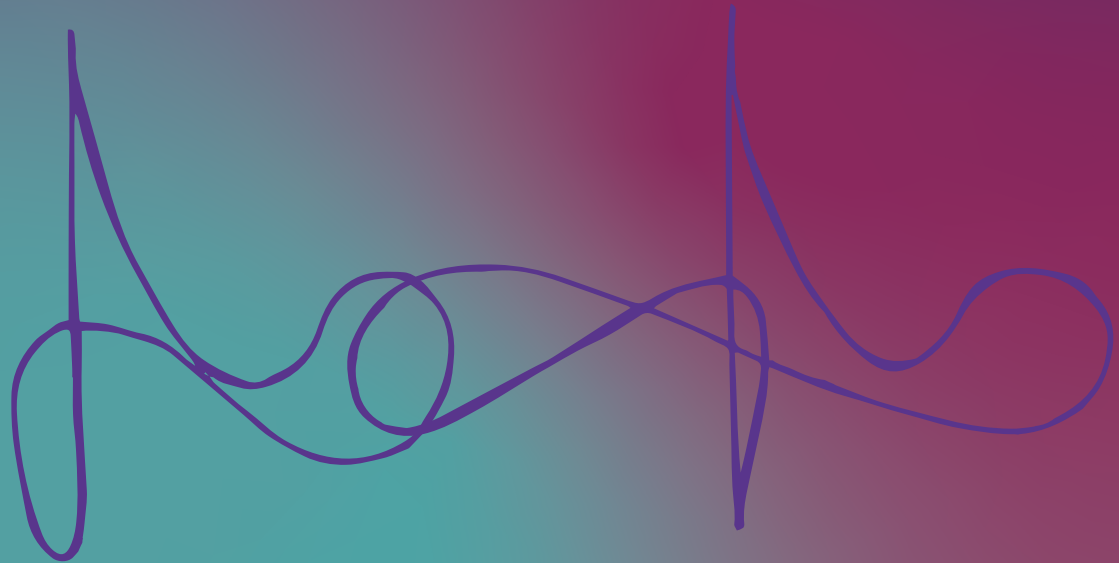


Scotland's

Music

**Ready for
the world**

**Your guide to Scotland's
classical festivals, venues,
series, touring and more**



Contents

Welcome	3
Explore a selection of Scotland's artists, ensembles and composers	4
A selection of Scotland's ensembles, commissioning and producing organisations	7
Orchestras and National Performing Companies	16
Festivals Calendar	18
Resources and Organisations	24

Welcome

Scotland has a vibrant classical scene, a calendar bursting with internationally renowned new music festivals, and creators and artists working in exciting, collaborative ways across classical, experimental and improvisation practices.

Find out how invention and collaboration are key to Scotland's rich classical music scene, and how artists boldly and creatively borrow, share and merge styles and genres.

Scottish Music Centre and Creative Scotland are proud to support the music sector in Scotland.

scottishmusiccentre.com | creativescotland.com

Explore a selection of Scotland's artists, ensembles and composers

Playlist by Rufus Isabel Elliot

“Scotland’s classical music is part of a web of creativity across the country. Classical composition is connected – often via traditional music – to music from the Scottish underground and beyond. Here, improvised music, jazz, and electronic music by Scotland-based artists inform classical artists side-by-side. Invention and collaboration are key.

In this playlist, composers draw inspiration from those who came before, be they recent losses or the creators of now-traditional songs. Peter Maxwell Davies sits alongside Marion Chaimbeul. The sound of the fiddle – and the sound of the violin – plays a particular role.

The artists represented here are part of many different traditions, often crossing different parts of their inheritance and acquired knowledge to imagine a richer world.”

Listen on Spotify.

About Rufus Isabel Elliott

Rufus Isabel Elliot is a composer and musician originally from Tower Hamlets, living now in the south of Skye. Elliot has written funerary music for doomed spaceships and orchestral music about rotting sea-weed. Elliot has worked with the likes of *soundfestival*, Red Note Ensemble, Magnetic North, Knockvologan Studies (Mull), The Night With..., ATLAS Arts (Skye), The Riot Ensemble and the Nevis Ensemble, with whom it was composer-in-residence in 2019. In addition, Elliot devises OVER / AT, a trans, non-binary and gender-diverse music-making world, which encompasses live touring, recordings, workshops, online resources and more.

ambf.co.uk

Playlist by Ear to the Ground

“Scotland’s new music scene is vast, vibrant and varied. One of the most exciting things is how boldly and creatively artists borrow, share and merge different styles and genres together. Throughout the playlist, hopefully you will get a sense of how far the boundaries of new music in Scotland are being pushed.

The playlist presents music that sees traditional classical forms being paired with folk instruments, classical musicians playing ragas, micro-tones meeting half time grooves and a jazz interpretation of a Scottish poem.

As well as this, the music encompasses a variety of different topics and interests including climate change, constellations, derelict Scottish islands and even porcelain.

There’s something for everyone in here, we hope you enjoy this music as much as we do!”

Listen on Spotify.

About Ear to the Ground

Ear to the Ground is an award-winning podcast, keeping you in the loop with interviews and news from Scotland’s top-notch composers. The podcast is hosted by Aileen Sweeney and Ben Eames, in partnership with New Music Scotland. Subscribe to keep your ear to ground for Scotland’s newest and most exciting music.

Listen to the **Podcast.**

Playlist by Matthew Whiteside

“Scotland has a vast network of composers and performers spread across the country. From electroacoustic composers working in a studio on their own to improvisation and notated composition.

This playlist encompasses as many different aspects and genre of music making as possible, linked to the broad church that is ‘classical music’. Improvised music sits comfortably beside notated, electronic and traditional music in an impossible concert that attempts to show some of the breadth of music in Scotland.”

Listen on [Spotify](#).

About Matthew Whiteside

Matthew Whiteside is a composer and the Artistic Director of The Night With... As a composer he has been commissioned by Scottish Opera, Glasgow Barons and Crash Ensemble and self-releases much of his music.

As The Night With... he is interested in presenting contemporary classical music in informal venues. The series frequently commissions Scottish composers showcasing their work in programmes of interesting contemporary music with previous performers including Garth Knox, Red Note Ensemble, Ensemble Offspring and Hermes Experiment.

www.matthewwhiteside.co.uk | www.thenightwith.com

A selection of Scotland's ensembles, commissioning and producing organisations

AC Projects

AC Projects is an arts organisation founded by Alasdair Campbell, producing a range of new music events across the UK and Ireland. Along with collaborators Café Oto and the Centre for Contemporary Arts, AC Projects produces Counterflows, and collaborates with conductor Ilan Volkov and the BBC SSO on the Tectonics festival.

counterflows.com

Chamber Music Scotland

Chamber Music Scotland commission and create new works and projects, working in collaboration with artists. They work with Scottish-based musicians to support their creativity and well-being, helping them develop sustainable careers creating and performing chamber music. They aim to creatively explore Scotland and its relationship with its landscape, people and natural resources, including sustainability and helping to protect the wider environment.

chambermusicscotland.com

Cryptic

Cryptic is a Glasgow-based internationally-renowned producing art house, presenting today's most imaginative, innovative artists whilst also nurturing the creative talent of tomorrow. Creating memorable experiences that engage and inspire audiences, Cryptic 'ravishes the senses' with multi-media performances that fuse music, sonic and visual art.

cryptic.org.uk

Drake Music Scotland

Drake Music Scotland puts disabled musicians, creative artists, ensembles and learners at the heart of its work, creating transformational opportunities for them to have their voices heard and achieve their musical ambitions. The organisation has developed innovative music technologies giving disabled musicians independence and expressive control of their instruments. They run an internationally recognised music education programme and are a source of expertise in inclusive approaches to learning and teaching. Their Digital Orchestra is the world's first disabled youth orchestra, creating new music using inclusive music technologies.

drakemusicscotland.org

Dunedin Consort

Under the musical direction of John Butt, Dunedin Consort has established itself as the leading Scottish Baroque ensemble, performing at the nation's major festivals and in Canada, Italy, Spain, Ireland, Germany, Belgium, Israel and France. In addition to performing Baroque and Classical repertoire and researching specific historical performance projects, the ensemble has commissioned and performed works by numerous contemporary composers, including William Sweeney, Errollyn Wallen, Peter Nelson and Sally Beamish.

dunedin-consort.org.uk

The Glasgow Barons

Paul MacAlindin founded The Glasgow Barons orchestra in 2017 to revitalise his home, the deprived area Govan in Scotland. They regenerate underused and alternative spaces with classical music. Local communities make music with them in various projects including the award-winning Musicians In Exile for asylum-seeking musicians. They redistribute power and wealth by using local goods and services, whilst co-creating projects with Govan's most vulnerable people.

glasgowbarons.com



Drake Music Scotland.
Photo: Anne Binckebanck

Glasgow Improvisers Orchestra

Glasgow Improvisers Orchestra (GIO) is a large improvising ensemble of around 20 musicians from diverse artistic backgrounds ranging from free improvisation, jazz, classical and folk, to pop, experimental music and performance art. Their annual GIOfest includes three days of music, workshops and presentations.

glasgowimprovisersorchestra.com

Hebrides Ensemble

With programmes that are diverse, imaginative and inspiring, Hebrides Ensemble has established itself as one of the foremost chamber music collectives in the UK. Co-founded and led by cellist and conductor William Conway, the Ensemble is renowned for its fresh and intelligent approach to programming, which places contemporary music at the heart of a diverse range of repertoire.

hebridesensemble.com

Live Music Now Scotland

Live Music Now Scotland gives outstanding young artists the opportunity of performing at the start of their careers and enables high-quality live music to reach people throughout Scotland's communities, especially those who wouldn't normally have access to it. Live Music Now is an international movement, located across Europe and with offshoots inspired by Live Music Now in the USA and South America.

livemusicnow.scot

Maxwell Quartet

Prizewinners at the 9th Trondheim International Chamber Music Competition in 2017, the Maxwell Quartet have a strong connection to their collective folk music heritage and a commitment to bringing together wide-ranging projects and programmes to expand the string quartet repertoire. The quartet is passionate about collaborating with musicians and other artforms and has toured widely across the UK and Europe.

maxwellstringquartet.com

Mr McFall's Chamber

Mr McFall's Chamber is an ensemble which plays a range of music from contemporary classical through jazz and rock. The ensemble was formed with the aim to develop new audiences, new music and new directions in music, and creates diverse programmes, introducing audiences to music they otherwise might not encounter. The group is also dedicated to supporting the work of UK composers and regularly commissions new works, as well as creating music written by the ensemble itself.

mcfalls.co.uk

National Youth Orchestras of Scotland (NYOS)

The National Youth Orchestras of Scotland (NYOS) is the pinnacle of classical and jazz education and performance for 8- to 25-year-olds in Scotland. NYOS is unique in providing a complete orchestral experience for its students through its comprehensive pathway of orchestras, jazz bands, training ensembles and an ever-expanding outreach programme.

nyos.co.uk

National Youth Choir of Scotland (NYCOS)

The National Youth Choir of Scotland (NYCOS) is the organisation dedicated to encouraging singing for young people in Scotland. They provide opportunities for young people, teachers and choir directors to support and develop choral singing across the country. Their three choral ensembles – National Youth Choir of Scotland, NYCOS National Boys Choir and NYCOS National Girls Choir – have appeared on the stages of the Edinburgh International Festival and the BBC Proms.

nycos.co.uk

Nevis Ensemble

Nevis Ensemble gives full-scale, orchestral performances of music of all genres, generating huge public audiences in public spaces. They have performed in venues as diverse as swimming pools and children's parks, homeless centres, museums and train stations. Running in parallel to a fast-and-furious public pop-up performance schedule is a carefully plotted patchwork of community-based performances.

Nevis Ensemble were shortlisted for the 2022 Classical:NEXT Innovation Award.

nevisensemble.org

Nordic Viola

Founded in 2016, Nordic Viola is a flexible ensemble of woodwind and string players forming musical and cultural connections in the North Atlantic Region with an emphasis on contemporary music and its relationship with traditional forms. The ensemble takes audiences on an extraordinary journey in words and music to the Faroe Islands, Orkney and Shetland, Iceland and Greenland.

nordicviola.wordpress.com

Paragon Ensemble

Two key principles – equality and inclusion – guide Paragon's work in creating music, dance and performance opportunities. Through learning and performance environments, people from all walks of life and with a wide range of additional support needs come together, develop new skills, meet new friends and discover their true potential.

paragon-music.org



Nevis Ensemble. Photo: Tommy Ga-Ken Wan

Red Note Ensemble

Since its formation in 2008, Red Note Ensemble has taken up a leadership position as Scotland's contemporary music ensemble, performing and developing an extensive, highly varied and critically acclaimed programme of new music to the highest standards, and taking new music out to audiences across Scotland and internationally.

rednoteensemble.com

Scottish Ensemble

Known in the UK and internationally for its versatility and ambitious programming, Scottish Ensemble creates rich partnerships across boundaries of genre, geography and musical style. Founded in 1969, Scottish Ensemble is the UK's only professional string orchestra.

scottishensemble.co.uk

Scottish Freelancers Ensemble

Scottish Freelancers Ensemble is made up of Scotland's top freelance musicians. Born out of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ensemble was created by musicians to continue creating music together and engaging with audiences while providing a community of support for one another.

sfe.scot

Sistema Scotland

Sistema Scotland is a social transformation charity based in five communities in Scotland. They are committed to improving lives and strengthening communities through music and nurturing relationships. Through their local Big Noise orchestra programmes, children are immersed in music to help foster teamwork, confidence and aspiration.

makeabignoise.org.uk

Sonic Bothy Ensemble

Sonic Bothy is an inclusive new music ensemble that explores, composes and performs experimental and contemporary music. The ensemble brings together musicians with and without additional learning support needs, who work across genres and perform to audiences across Scotland and beyond.

sonicbothy.co.uk

sound

sound is a new music incubator based in north-east Scotland, encouraging new music creation and discovery. In addition to presenting the annual *soundfestival*, their year-round activity supports a wide range of composers, engages with local communities and provides educational opportunities. They aim to give composers the opportunity to experiment, develop and create new works, and to have these works performed and heard.

sound-scotland.co.uk

Tinderbox Collective

From grassroots youth work to award-winning arts productions, Tinderbox offers a range of creative workshops, orchestra courses, arts residences and apprenticeship programmes. They provide a year-round programme working with hundreds of children and young people aged 10-25, from complete beginners to young professionals. Tinderbox aims to create high quality and original work, with a drive to be genuinely inclusive and foster active and creative participation from everyone involved.

tinderboxcollective.org

Orchestras and National Performing Companies

BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra

The BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra (BBCSSO) is Scotland's national broadcasting orchestra and performs throughout Scotland, the UK and abroad. It maintains a busy schedule of broadcasts for BBC Radio 3, BBC Radio Scotland, BBC Television and online.

bbc.co.uk/bbcso

Royal Scottish National Orchestra (RSNO)

The Royal Scottish National Orchestra is one of Europe's leading orchestras with a rich history stretching back over 125 years. It is one of Scotland's leading cultural institutions and an orchestra with a variety of work that is almost unparalleled amongst its British peers.

rsno.org.uk

Scottish Chamber Orchestra (SCO)

The internationally celebrated Scottish Chamber Orchestra (SCO) is made up of a unique collection of talented musicians who inspire and connect with people of all ages. The Orchestra aims to provide as many opportunities as possible for people to hear live orchestral music by touring the length and breadth of Scotland and around the world.

sco.org.uk

Scottish Opera

Scottish Opera is Scotland's national opera company. Scottish Opera's mission is to entertain, inspire, surprise, educate, challenge and delight audiences old and new by delivering high quality, powerful opera throughout Scotland, the rest of the UK and internationally.

scottishopera.org.uk



Scottish Ensemble. Photo: Hugh Carswell

Festivals Calendar

Sound Thought | various

Sound Thought is an annual festival of music and sound research, composition and performance run by postgraduate students from the University of Glasgow. It provides postgraduate researchers with a platform to present their research in a collaborative, interdisciplinary environment alongside the work of contemporary practitioners.

soundthought.co.uk

Counterflows | March-April

Counterflows provides a platform for a wide array of radical, off-stream and experimental music. Through live events, club nights, discussions, residencies, film screenings and more, the festival dreams up ways to bring together myriad local and international artists and audiences to share ideas, break down borders, push boundaries and have a lot of fun in the process. Produced by AC Projects.

counterflows.com

Loch Shiel Festival | April-May

One of Scotland's most picturesque chamber music festivals, Loch Shiel Spring Festival takes place in the West Highlands and makes use of the spectacular and unusual settings around Loch Shiel itself. The festival hosts performances from internationally renowned chamber musicians.

lochshielfestival.com

Perth Festival of the Arts | May

One of the oldest, continuously running independent arts festivals in Scotland, Perth Festival of the Arts is now in its 50th year. The festival features international and national artists and orchestras from the worlds of classical music, opera, rock, jazz, Celtic, comedy, theatre, dance and the visual arts.

perthfestival.co.uk

Plug | April

Every year the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS) presents Plug, an important showcase for student composers and performers and a key moment when the RCS turns its focus to the music of right now. This festival showcases budding talent as well as senior Royal Conservatoire composers.

rcs.ac.uk/plug

Tectonics Glasgow | April-May

Tectonics is the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra's (BBCSSO) annual festival of new and experimental music, pushing the boundaries of what music can be. It brings together international and local artists, composers and performers from different musical and disciplinary worlds for two days of exploratory music-making. Tectonics is curated by the BBCSSO's Principal Guest Conductor Ilan Volkov and Alasdair Campbell of AC Projects.

tectonicsfestival.com

St Magnus International Festival | June

Set against the backdrop of land, sea, sky, history and heritage, Orkney's annual celebration of the arts throws a midsummer spotlight on a magical part of Scotland and delivers a diverse cultural offering to visitors from far and wide and those who live on the islands. The festival celebrates the new, showcases both the renowned and emerging, and brings a year-round opportunity for participation on stage and behind the scenes as well as creative learning projects for all ages.

stmagnusfestival.com

East Neuk Festival | June-July

The award-winning East Neuk Festival takes place in quirky, atmospheric and special venues throughout Fife, including churches, halls, an ex-nuclear bunker, caves and stately homes and gardens. The festival nurtures young artists and commissions a new work each year for community and professional musicians, inspired by the landscape, heritage or history of the area.

eastneukfestival.com

Music at Paxton | July

Music at Paxton was established in 2006 to present high-quality performances of chamber music at Paxton House. Over the years, the event has grown to a 10-day summer festival, bringing international artists to the Scottish Borders.

musicatpaxton.co.uk

Edinburgh International Festival | August

The world-renowned Edinburgh International Festival presents an annual programme featuring the finest performers and ensembles from the worlds of dance, opera, music and theatre.

eif.co.uk

soundfestival/. Photo: Tim Hand



Edinburgh Festival Fringe | August

The Edinburgh Festival Fringe is the largest arts festival in the world and takes place every August for three weeks in Scotland's capital city. Thousands of performers, from big names to new artists, present shows across all art forms. The festival includes music, theatre, comedy, dance, physical theatre, exhibitions and events.

[edfringe.com](https://www.edfringe.com)

Made in Scotland | August

Made in Scotland supports Scottish artists and companies to bring work to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, to share incredible music, dance and theatre, and allow them to explore the international opportunities that arise from performing at the world's largest arts festival.

[madeinscotlandshowcase.com](https://www.madeinscotlandshowcase.com)

Lammermuir Festival | September

Born of a conviction that historic architecture and beautiful landscape can be an ideal environment in which to experience great music, Lammermuir Festival was established to bring the finest musicians together with local people and visitors in celebration of music in towns and villages across the county of East Lothian.

[lammermuirfestival.co.uk](https://www.lammermuirfestival.co.uk)

Sonica | Autumn 2024

Sonica is a year-round touring programme dedicated to world-class visual sonic arts, punctuated by an 11-day biennial festival in Glasgow. Sonica presents exceptional international artists alongside emerging Scottish talent in collaboration with renowned co-producers and venues. Sonica is produced by Cryptic.

[sonic-a.co.uk](https://www.sonic-a.co.uk)

The Cumnock Tryst | September-October

Founded by composer Sir James MacMillan CBE, the Cumnock Tryst is a meeting place for music-lovers. Set in the East Ayrshire town of Cumnock, the annual four-day festival brings some of the world's greatest musicians into local venues, churches and halls, with the community at the heart of all its activities.

thecumnocktryst.com

sound | October

sound*festival* events take place across the north-east of Scotland in lighthouses, bothies, museums and churches as well as concert halls and arts centres. Recognised as Scotland's Festival of New Music, sound also organise performances and workshops throughout the year, commissioning and producing new work, nurturing and supporting local and Scottish talent, as well as artists from further afield.

sound-scotland.co.uk

St Andrews Voices | October

St Andrews Voices is Scotland's Singing Festival, run in partnership with The University of St Andrews. The festival was launched in 2012 and takes place each October in the magnificent setting of St Andrews on the Fife coast. Celebrating its 10th Anniversary, over the years Voices has welcomed Ian Bostridge, Voces8, Roderick Williams, The Sixteen, King Creosote, I Fagolini, Tenebrae, Alice Coote, Scottish Opera, Patricia Hodge and Twelfth Day, among others.

standrewsvoices.com

GIOfest | November

Glasgow Improvisers Orchestra is a large improvising ensemble of around 20 musicians from diverse artistic backgrounds ranging from free improvisation, jazz, classical and folk, to pop, experimental music and performance art. Glasgow Improvisers Orchestra's annual festival, GIOfest, includes an international artist-in-residence programme, and three days of music, workshops and presentations.

glasgowimprovisersorchestra.com

Resources and Organisations

Creative Scotland

Creative Scotland is the public body that supports the arts, screen and creative industries across all parts of Scotland on behalf of everyone who lives, works or visits here. They enable people and organisations to work in and experience the arts, screen and creative industries in Scotland by helping others to develop great ideas and bring them to life. They distribute funding from the Scottish Government and The National Lottery.

creativescotland.com

Chamber Music Scotland

Chamber Music Scotland supports a national network of 70 concert series across Scotland who collectively promote over 400 concerts each year. They work to cultivate a distinctive, innovative and inclusive chamber music sector in Scotland, one which celebrates our culture, people and place. They explore what chamber music means in the 21st century and collaborate with artists from across musical genres and artforms to create and platform new chamber music.

chambermusicscotland.com

New Music Scotland (NMS)

New Music Scotland is a network of artists, ensembles, orchestras, composers, creators, music educators, sound artists, musicians, producers, promoters and anyone who believes in the importance and value of creating new music in Scotland. They connect, enable and support makers of innovative and experimental new music through professional development, conferences and networking events, advocacy and profile-raising. They also host the annual Scottish Awards for New Music.

newmusicscotland.co.uk

North East Arts Touring (NEAT)

North East Arts Touring programmes a wide range of professional live performances (including music) and film screenings aimed at children, family and adult audiences. Their venues range in size from small village halls to larger town halls or small-scale arts centres. Some performances are held in school halls, church halls and even pubs and clubs.

neatshows.co.uk/touring

Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland is a national and international centre of excellence for performing arts education. Established in 1847 as a national academy of music, it is now one of the world's best multi-disciplinary conservatoires, offering teaching in dance, drama, music, production and film. They are consistently recognised as one of the world's top performing arts institutions by QS World Rankings.

rcs.ac.uk

Scottish Music Centre

The Scottish Music Centre is a nationally and internationally recognised organisation at the heart of the Scotland's music industry. From preserving Scotland's music heritage with an ever-expanding archive to representing contemporary composers and musicians, the centre supports, promotes and champions the wealth of talent in Scotland's music community. They act as a conduit, a catalyst and a connector to those working in the sector and the public at home and abroad.

scottishmusiccentre.com

Scottish Music Industry Association (SMIA)

SMIA is a membership organisation that works to strengthen and champion Scotland's industry through increasing the value, growing the size and improving the sector's sustainability. SMIA also works in partnerships across all music genres to host the prestigious Scottish Album of the Year (SAY) award.

smia.org.uk

Scottish Classical Sustainability Group

The Scottish Classical Sustainability Group was co-founded in summer 2020 by Nevis Ensemble and Scottish Ensemble. It brings together orchestras, ensemble, festivals, musicians and sector representatives from across Scotland to promote sustainability, learn from one another and share best practice in combatting the climate emergency.

nevisensemble.org/scottish-classical-sustainability-group

The Touring Network

The Touring Network exists to see rural touring be a central, celebrated and indispensable part of the cultural life of Scotland. They encourage live performances of the highest level, and support people as promoters, performers and audiences to create vibrant places to live, work and visit. Their venues cover more than half the area of Scotland.

thetouringnetwork.com

Arts Infopoint UK

Arts Infopoint UK is a pilot initiative developing and sharing resources to guide you through some of the administrative stages of coming to the UK as an artist, cultural professional or organisation. Whether it is questions relating to short term paid work in the UK, moving instruments and kit, or checking social security obligations, Arts Infopoint UK runs events, collates resources, and answers enquiries to assist those planning a creative visit to the UK.

linktr.ee/ArtsInfopointUK



ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL



Waverley Gate
2-4 Waterloo Place
Edinburgh EH1 3EG
Scotland UK

The Lighthouse
Mitchell Lane
Glasgow G1 3NU
Scotland UK

www.creativescotland.com
enquiries@creativescotland.com



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