

# BOOK NOW

## MORE FROM THE RUSSIAN STANDARD VODKA HUB SESSIONS

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### Anna Calvi and Heritage Orchestra

Tuesday 18 – Thursday 20 August, 10.30pm

[eif.co.uk/calvi](http://eif.co.uk/calvi)

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### Magnetic Rose | Oneohtrix Point Never

Saturday 22 August, 9.30pm

[eif.co.uk/oneohtrix](http://eif.co.uk/oneohtrix)

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### Alexi Murdoch

Thursday 27 August, 9.30pm

[eif.co.uk/murdoch](http://eif.co.uk/murdoch)



HUB SESSIONS



## FROM SCOTLAND WITH LOVE KING CREOSOTE

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Friday 14 10.30pm and Saturday  
15 August 9.30pm | The Hub

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The performance lasts approximately  
1 hour and 30 minutes with no interval

[EIF.CO.UK/CREOSOTE](http://EIF.CO.UK/CREOSOTE)

# FROM SCOTLAND WITH LOVE KING CREOSOTE

Tanks menacing Glasgow's George Square; a sandwich-board toddler advertising the Auchtermuchty Flower Show; jiving at the Barrowlands; skaters etching trails on frozen rivers; marching protesters demanding 'A Policy to Make Glasgow Flourish'. *From Scotland with Love* is an unashamedly nostalgic but thoroughly unsentimental celebration of Scotland through the mid-20th century, its stories told entirely through Scottish archive film and specially composed music. Exploring love, loss, resistance, migration, work and play, the film focuses squarely on the ordinary people of Scotland, highlighting their struggles and achievements, the rewards of hard work, and the enduring strength of community.

The *From Scotland with Love* project began as a commission for the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games Cultural Programme, and first aired on BBC Scotland in June 2014, with several screenings with live music – as you'll experience tonight – during the Commonwealth Games and around the UK since then. And it's primarily the work of two people. Edinburgh-based writer and director Virginia Heath has previously won awards from the Berlin International Film Festival and the National Film Board of Canada; she is professor of film at Sheffield Hallam University, and has recently finished shooting the feature film *Mystery Ride*, starring Sam Neill and Peter Mullan. Fife-based musician Kenny Anderson, better known as King Creosote, has released more than 50 albums, many on his own Fence label, and his 2011 collaboration with Jon Hopkins, *Diamond Mine*, was nominated for the Mercury Prize.

Anderson's achingly tender musical contributions almost didn't happen, though. He at first declined Heath's invitation to join the project, fearful that he wouldn't be able to produce the songs she requested to order. But following the commissioning brief she'd received – for a poetic film about Scotland using only archive footage and music, with no narration or interviews – Heath was keen to work with Anderson because of his famed ability to tell vivid stories in song. He finally agreed, and following several months spent watching thousands of hours of footage in the National Library of Scotland's Scottish Film Archive, Heath began to put together sequences of images that coalesced around some of the 20th century's big themes – love and loss, work and leisure, war, resistance and protest, migration.

Director Heath and composer Anderson then worked in an organic, interactive way, with directing, editing and musical composition all happening at the same time. Anderson travelled to studios near Loch Fyne to work with trusted musical collaborators – including cellist Pete Harvey, keyboard player Derek O'Neill, drummer Andy Robinson, bassist Pete Macleod and clarinettist Kevin Broly, all of whom perform tonight – on initial drafts of his new songs, based around sequences of footage that Heath had sent to him, later sending back rough recordings to the editing suite for Heath and editor Colin Monie to refine their images to. The result is a particularly close and evocative match between image and music, with Anderson's songs – by turns melancholy, epic or wryly humorous, and infused with Scottish folk without ever flaunting it as superficial window dressing – charting the emotional temperature of Heath's developing stories with a broad, orchestral sweep.

Heath was keen to tell Scotland's stories from the ground up, and to give due attention to the perspectives of women – the 'fisher lassies' who gutted and packed the catch that their partners brought back from sea; or the women drilling rifles in Scottish factories while their menfolk were killing or being killed on the front line. Despite the film's cheery title, scrawled affectionately across the screen in the opening credits, it never shies away from the harsh realities of 20th-century Scottish life – the back-breaking work, the poor living conditions, the illness and deprivation – nor from the decline in the once proud Scottish industries of coal, steel and shipbuilding.

It's images of industry that begin the film, accompanied by Anderson's 'Something to Believe In', before his 'Bluebell, Cockleshell, 123', combining references to death with a schoolyard chant from a choir of schoolgirls, joins footage of children's games. A sequence focused around home life builds to images of protest, all against Anderson's epic anthem '678', with its confession that 'At the back of my mind/I was always hoping I might just get by'.

A section on industry and shipbuilding leads to wild nights out, and Anderson's bittersweet dance romp 'For One Night Only'. Then out into the countryside and the joys of holidays – beauty pageants; ice cream sellers – to the accompaniment of Anderson's joyful 'Largs'. His 'Cargill', a poignant love song from a woman left on shore to her man out fishing at sea, accompanies Heath's images of fishing, and his powerful protest song 'Pauper's Dough' – with its mantra 'You've got to rise above the gutter you are inside' – is sung to scenes of protest marches and clashes with police.

An abrupt cut takes us to images of war, set to Anderson's 'My Favourite Girl', and his 'Leaf Piece' (a family term for the first snack you're allowed on a day out working in the fields) accompanies a section on agriculture. His 'Carry on Dancing', originally written to mourn the premature passing of Scottish bassist Doogie Paul, is set against bleak images of desolate landscapes and an island funeral. 'Miserable Strangers' is sung to footage of immigration and emigration, and 'One Floor Down' is set against a tapestry of images of celebration, marriage and football crowds, leading to Anderson's own personal take on 'Auld Lang Syne' for fireworks and Hogmanay, and a reflective close – echoing the film's opening – on the transcendent 'Something to Believe In'.

© **David Kettle** is a freelance writer and editor