



Hayley Tonner, left, with the New Antonine Brass, says Live Music Now has given the ensemble valuable opportunities

## CLASSICAL

# Inclusive vision takes music to community and concert hall



David Kettle

It's one of the most active performing arts organisations in Scotland – it puts on about 600 performances per year, right across the nation, according to director Carol Main – but there's a fair chance you will never have encountered one. That's because Live Music Now Scotland's events often take place in precisely the places you might not expect to encounter live music – in care homes, for example, or in front of children with learning or physical difficulties. Which, of course, is precisely the point.

"There's more and more recognition of how powerful music is in transforming people's lives," Main explains. "It's terrific that there's more research out there now to back up what LMN has been doing since Yehudi Menuhin founded it in 1977. He was really ahead of his time."

LMN Scotland – currently celebrating its 35th anniversary – does give slightly more conventional public concerts, of course, with a series in the National Gallery of Scotland, and another for Emerging Artists at Edinburgh's Usher Hall. Those latter concerts kicked off in September, and continue with four further events either side of Christmas, beginning with the quintet New Antonine Brass on 9 December.

The relationship between LMN and young musicians brings enormous

mutual benefits to both sides, as well as to audiences. "We have about 40 ensembles on our list at any one time," says Main, "and there's a rigorous audition procedure. First and foremost, we're looking for musicianship and technical abilities, but we're also looking for the kind of personalities that will share their passion for music readily, and engage with people of all backgrounds and levels of skill."

Once on the list, players receive training in working with music and people with dementia, and with children with additional support needs. "Those are two of our core audiences," Main explains, and further training – in areas including music therapy, working in prisons, even doing a tax return – is also on offer later in their relationship.

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"It's about developing musicians' own professional performing practice and helping them to build their careers in Scotland, by equipping them with the skills they need to do that," she says.

What's it like to be on LMN Scotland's roster? Hayley Tonner, horn player with New Antonine Brass, is understandably enthusiastic. "They've been so supportive of us," she says, "and given us such great opportunities to perform to people who might not be able to come and hear us otherwise." Her group was formed about five years ago by like-minded students at

the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. "When we go out into the community to perform, it just makes people happy – which is why we do what we do, of course. But sometimes it can have a big effect – like being told that an audience member hadn't been responding to anything, but responded to our performance."

The Usher Hall series might seem at the more conventional end of what LMN Scotland does, but Main stresses that the concerts maintain a lot of the organisation's ethos. "For a start, they're at 11 o'clock on a Monday morning, so we're enabling people who might not be able to get out on a winter evening to access high-quality music in one of the world's great concert halls. And although the artists are on the Usher Hall stage, they're facing the organ gallery, which is where the audience is seated, so we create quite an intimate atmosphere."

New Antonine Brass is followed by classical guitarist Jacopo Lazzaretti on 6 January, the violin-and-accordion Armonia Duo on 13 January and Scottish folk duo Hannah Rarity and Luc McNally on 20 January. What does Tonner have in mind for New Antonine Brass's programme?

"We didn't want it to be too Christmassy as it's still quite early, but we'll have Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Suite* to put people in the mood. And we'll be doing some Beatles numbers, and also some music from Bernstein's *West Side Story* – there should be something for everyone." ■

**For more information on Live Music Now Scotland, visit [www.livemusicnow.org.uk/scotland](http://www.livemusicnow.org.uk/scotland). To book tickets for the Emerging Artists Series at the Usher Hall, visit [www.usherhall.co.uk](http://www.usherhall.co.uk)**