

Healing Arts

↪ Scotland

15–19 June 2026

PRESS RELEASE

Scotland will host events across cities, islands and regions as part of world’s largest *Healing Arts* week



Healing Arts Scotland 2024, opening celebration outside Scottish Parliament. Courtesy of Edinburgh International Festival

Aberdeen, Scotland – 15 June 2026 – The [Jameel Arts & Health Lab](#) announced today the launch of the second iteration of Healing Arts Scotland, running from 15-19 June 2026, to celebrate the role of arts in improving health and wellbeing. Delegates from across the world will unite in Scotland for the world’s largest bi-annual Healing Arts week, which will include flagship days in Shetland, Lewis & Harris, Dumfries & Galloway, Glasgow, as well as a National Conference in Edinburgh and creative health community activities across the country. Tickets are on sale now, find your nearest event and book [here](#).

Building on the success of Healing Arts Scotland 2024, which delivered **376 events** across the country, the 2026 program arrives at a pivotal moment for creative health in Scotland. The 2024 festival helped elevate arts and health within national policy discussions, contributing to the

growing recognition of culture and creativity in the Chief Medical Officer's Annual Report and Scotland's Population Health Framework.

Scotland's Population Health Framework – the nation's 10-year strategy for improving health and reducing inequalities – recognises that health is shaped by the wider social determinants of health, not healthcare alone. Arts and culture are increasingly recognised as part of these determinants, supported by a strong and growing evidence base demonstrating their impact on physical health, mental wellbeing, social connection and community resilience.

Scotland has emerged as a leading voice in the global creative health movement, helping to shape thinking and practice across the UK and beyond. Through Healing Arts, Scotland has demonstrated how creativity can be embedded within health and care systems and positioned as a positive health behaviour alongside exercise, sleep and good nutrition.

Nicola Benedetti, who was recently appointed the first **Global Ambassador for Healing Arts**, commented, *“Through my work with the Edinburgh International Festival, I see every day the profound role that artistic experiences can play in bringing people together, opening space for reflection and fostering a sense of belonging. To contribute to this global “Healing Arts” conversation is a responsibility we all share, to ensure that creativity in all its forms, is recognised as an essential part of a healthier, more connected society.”*

As access to arts and culture is recognised internationally as a human right, ensuring everyone can participate is both a cultural and public health priority. Evidence shows that engagement in the arts improves health outcomes across all communities, regardless of socioeconomic status. Expanding equitable access to creative opportunities therefore has a vital role to play in reducing health inequalities and improving population health.

2026 has also seen the release of Jameel Arts & Health Lab Steering Committee Chair, Professor Daisy Fancourt's best-selling book ***Art Cure: The Science of How the Arts Transforms our Health***; the publication in May of [a landmark report](#) from University College London linking engagement in arts with a slower pace of ageing; and the pre-launch of a ***Four Nations Arts & Health: The Time is Now*** policy brief by the Jameel Arts & Health Lab and National Centre for Creative Health.

Healing Arts Scotland 2026 will build on this momentum with conferences, artist commissions, exhibitions, concerts, workshops and an artist-led communications campaign showcasing how Scotland is moving from recognition to implementation—embedding creative health within population health delivery and demonstrating how the arts can help create a healthier, fairer and more connected society.

Speakers and delegates from across the globe, including Singapore, Japan, USA, Spain, Denmark, Norway, and Ukraine, will gather to share their research and findings, with a focus on three key themes:

1. **Arts, Health and Environment:** the role of the arts in supporting community engagement with nature and addressing the health impacts of climate change.
2. **Innovation in Arts & Health:** Arts-based health interventions created using innovation and technology to improve lives and build communities
3. **Arts & Health Across the Life Stages:** National programs featuring intergenerational activities, prevention and youth led initiatives

Speakers at the event will include Assistant Vice President of NYC Health + Hospitals Arts in Medicine Program, **Larissa Trinder**; inaugural People's Artist of New York City, **Yazmany Arboleda**; Chief Officer, Public Health Scotland, **Manira Ahmed**; Director of Research initiatives for the Center for Arts in Medicine at the University of Florida, **Dr. Jill Sonke**; Edinburgh International Festival Director, **Nicola Benedetti**; Jameel Arts & Health Lab Co-Directors, **Dr. Nils Fietje** (WHO Europe), **Dr. Nisha Sajjani** (NYU Steinhardt) and **Stephen Stapleton** (CULTURUNNERS); and Scotland's Chief Medical Officer, **Prof. Sir Gregor Smith**, whose annual Realistic Medicine Conference will close the week with a focus on the impact of arts in healthcare settings.

Healing Arts Scotland is part of the Jameel Arts & Health Lab's global *Healing Arts* campaign, produced by CULTURUNNERS in collaboration with the World Health Organization. It is spearheaded by a coalition of organizations bridging culture, healthcare, education and policy, including Scottish Government, Public Health Scotland, Creative Scotland, National Galleries Scotland, Scottish Ballet, Arts Culture Health & Wellbeing Scotland, International Teaching Artists Collaborative (ITAC) and NHS Scotland. Core funding has been provided by Creative Scotland and the Jameel Arts & Health Lab, with in-kind support from partners across Scotland.

Dr. Nils Fietje from WHO Regional Office for Europe commented *"It is wonderful to see colleagues from across the Scottish Government and the health and culture sectors uniting to bring the healing power of the arts to wider communities than ever before. Scotland is a vibrant place for arts and health that is constantly inspiring new initiatives across the world."*

NOTES TO EDITORS:

Please download a selection of press images [here](#).

About Healing Arts Scotland

15-19 June 2026

As part of the Jameel Arts & Health Lab's global outreach campaign in collaboration with the World Health Organization, Healing Arts Scotland is a bi-annual celebration of the role of the arts to improve health and wellbeing. Launched in partnership with Scottish Ballet in 2024, and co-produced by CULTURUNNERS and a national coalition of organisations bridging culture, healthcare, education and policy, the initiative is designed to embed the arts into public health and community well-being across Scotland.

Bookings are now open go to <https://www.healingartsscotland.org/>

About the Jameel Arts & Health Lab

Launched in January 2023 by the World Health Organization, New York University, Community Jameel, and CULTURUNNERS, the Jameel Arts & Health Lab is a global initiative to measurably improve health and wellbeing through the arts. With a focus on overlooked and underserved communities, the Lab leverages scientific evidence, a global Healing Arts campaign, and capacity building to drive the integration of the arts into mainstream healthcare across 193 UN member states.

For more information on Jameel Arts & Health Lab, please visit jameelartshealthlab.org.

About Healing Arts

Healing Arts is the Jameel Arts & Health Lab's global outreach campaign in collaboration with the World Health Organization. It is realised through city and country-wide activations integrating academic symposia, cultural events, artist commissions, pilot projects, roundtables, workshops, and artist-led communications campaigns. Healing Arts is produced internationally by CULTURUNNERS in collaboration with local partners, and prioritises silo breaking between academic, cultural and policy communities to drive inter-disciplinary innovation, investment and policy uptake in the field.

About Nicola Benedetti

Nicola Benedetti is one of the most sought-after violinists of her generation. Her ability to captivate audiences and her wide appeal as an advocate for classical music has made her one of the most influential artists of today.

Winner of the GRAMMY Award for Best Classical Instrumental Solo in 2020, as well as Best

Female Artist at both 2012 and 2013 Classical BRIT Awards, Nicola records exclusively for Decca (Universal Music). Her latest recordings of Vivaldi Concerti and Elgar's Violin Concerto entered at number one in the UK's Official Classical Album Chart. Other recent recordings include her GRAMMY award-winning album written especially for her by jazz musician Wynton Marsalis: Violin Concerto in D and Fiddle Dance Suite for Solo Violin. In 2021, BBC Music Magazine named her "Personality of the Year" for her online support of many young musicians during the pandemic.

Nicola was appointed a CBE in 2019, awarded the Queen's Medal for Music (2017), and an MBE in 2013. In addition, Nicola holds the positions of Vice President (National Children's Orchestras), Big Sister (Sistema Scotland), Patron (National Youth Orchestras of Scotland's Junior Orchestra, Music in Secondary Schools Trust and Junior Conservatoire at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland). In 2019, Nicola formalised her commitment to music in education when she established The Benedetti Foundation. Since its launch, the Foundation has worked with over 29,000 participants, age 2-92, from 103 countries through its transformative in-person workshops and online sessions for young people, students, teachers and adults.

In October 2022, Nicola became the Festival Director of the Edinburgh International Festival. In taking the role she became both the first Scottish and the first female Festival Director since the Festival began in 1947.