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Networking trip to US and Canada is success for musician



Phamie Gow performed at Parliament Hill in Canada on St Andrew's Day

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She has already played for the Queen and the Dalai Lama – now harpist Phamie Gow has been invited to meet musical royalty Stevie Wonder.

Gow, 31, who lives in Bruntsfield, has just returned from a whirlwind two-month trip to New York and Canada, which she spent networking, performing for music industry high-fliers, and marking St Andrew's Day with a gig at the Canadian Parliament.

The harpist, who is also a pianist, singer and composer, travelled to New York at the end of September, just after releasing her sixth album, *Road of the Loving Heart*.

She made the trip to build contacts, and said: "Honestly, it was a life-changing experience for me on so many levels."

Gow even crossed the path of music supremo Simon Cowell, who she said appeared to have worked like a lucky charm. She said: "I almost bumped into him on Madison Avenue, literally. He was just jumping out to get into his limousine. Ten minutes later I found a 20 dollar note on the ground on that spot and from that moment on my luck was abundant."

She said the trip opened countless doors – including the promise of a rendezvous with Stevie Wonder, after she met his friend, the jazz flautist Bobbi Humphrey, at a glittering event organised by DEX, aka designer make-up artist Dexter Phillip.

She said: "The room was full of millionaires and a TV crew were filming footage. DEX is keen to do my make-up for my next music video."

"I then met Bobbi for lunch as we discovered we were neighbours. As we were lunching, one of Stevie Wonder's songs came on that he wrote sitting next to Bobbi years ago."

During her trip, she was also invited by the American Scottish Foundation to play at an awards ceremony at the beginning of November, and there she was spotted by Scottish cultural ambassador Robin Naysmith, who invited her to play in Canada.

After a gig in Toronto she went to the Canadian Parliament in Ottawa, where culture secretary Fiona Hyslop introduced her to an audience of politicians and guests to mark St Andrew's Day.

She said: "I performed at Parliament Hill, the big parliament building, and I was being driven around in a big black limousine everywhere, it was just amazing. Everywhere I go, I'm very aware of my Scottish roots and heritage and I see myself as an ambassador."

She is now back in Edinburgh, writing and being the musical director of the forthcoming performance of The Infamous Brothers Davenport at the Royal Lyceum, but she hopes to head back to the US in the future.

During her trip she was also signed up to take part in next year's Tartan Week in New York, and says she has a number of other projects "bubbling away".

One thing she won't be needing, however, is to bump into Simon Cowell again. She said: "I actually thought, 'It's nice to see Simon, but I don't want anything from him because I've got my own recording label and my own artistic freedom'."

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