



PRESS RELEASE
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Scottish Chamber Orchestra celebrates 50th Anniversary throughout 2023-24 Season

- Principal Conductor Maxim Emelyanychev extends contract with the Orchestra for a further five years
- World-renowned guests include Thomas Adès, Nicola Benedetti, Colin Currie, Karen Cargill, Richard Egarr, Andrew Manze and Roderick Williams
- An SCO for everyone, with a new matinee series, dementia-friendly concerts, a brand-new work specially for children and a digital season
- Maxim's 'Eroica' - *A Grand Tour of Scotland* opens the Season visiting seven towns and cities across Scotland
- A residency with visionary Finnish violinist Pekka Kuusisto presents a fresh new perspective on Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*
- New music includes the world premiere of Sir James MacMillan's choral work *Composed in August*, the UK premiere of Anna Clyne's violin concerto *Time and Tides* and three new works by SCO Associate Composer Jay Capperault
- Mendelssohn's *Elijah* heads to the BBC Proms in July and closes the 2023-24 Season

Watch the SCO's 2023/24 season launch film [here](#)
Watch Maxim Emelyanychev: *The Man Behind the Music* [here](#)
Download images [here](#)

The Scottish Chamber Orchestra (SCO) is delighted to announce its 2023-24 Season, celebrating **50 years of inspiring music-making** across Scotland and beyond. Since its inaugural concert in Glasgow's City Halls on 27 January 1974, the SCO has been known for its pioneering spirit, outstanding musicianship and for bringing exceptional live performances to its audiences, from classical masterworks to premieres by many of today's most exciting composers.

Maxim Emelyanychev

The SCO is thrilled to announce that Maxim Emelyanychev will extend his contract as Principal Conductor of the Orchestra through to 2028, continuing the electrifying partnership for which he and the Orchestra have become known. During the 2023-24 Season Maxim brings his skills as both conductor and soloist to eight programmes that explore some of his greatest musical passions.

Maxim launches the 50th Anniversary Season with a tour of the nation, presenting Beethoven's epic 'Eroica' in seven different locations across the country. From Perth to Aberdeen and Craigmillar to Ayr, Maxim's ***Grand Tour of Scotland*** presents an unforgettable programme with soloists including pianist Kirill Gerstein, clarinettist Maximiliano Martin and violist Max Mandel. As part of the tour, Maxim unveils a brand-new piece by one of the country's most exciting young composers, SCO Associate Composer **Jay Capperault**: *The Origin of Colour* tells a surrealist tale of the creation of colour on Earth (27 September – 7 October).

To conclude the season Maxim turns to one of the composers he loves the most – Felix Mendelssohn – for a performance of his grand and dramatic oratorio ***Elijah*** with the massed forces of the SCO

Chorus and an international line-up of soloists including Carolyn Sampson and Roderick Williams (9 – 10 May). The SCO, SCO Chorus and Maxim will also take *Elijah* to the **BBC Proms** this summer for a performance at London's Royal Albert Hall (29 July 2023).

Further highlights of Maxim's Season include Mendelssohn's Piano Concerto No 1 with Benjamin Grosvenor (23 -25 November); a concert exploring his Baroque inspirations as both harpsichordist and conductor (6 – 8 December); a special birthday concert marking the SCO's 50th Anniversary in January 2024 (18 – 19 January); and a programme celebrating the age-old friendship between the peoples of Scotland and France in the company of superstar Scottish mezzo Karen Cargill and including the world premiere of Sir James MacMillan's new choral setting of Robert Burns' *Composed in August* with the SCO Chorus (21 – 22 March).

Maxim Emelyanychev, Principal Conductor says: "*I'm delighted to be extending my commitment to this wonderful group of musicians with whom I have shared such incredible musical experiences since our partnership began. I also love the welcome we receive from Scottish audiences, and I'm proud to join the SCO when we take our music further afield too. I'm very excited about the season ahead which celebrates the Orchestra's 50th anniversary by showing what we do best – creating life-changing musical experiences for our audiences. I look forward to seeing you in the concert hall!*"

World-class soloists, choral masterworks and starry collaborations

The magnificent **SCO Chorus** and Director **Gregory Batsleer** return for five concerts in the 2023-24 Season and give the world premieres of two new choral works – Sir James MacMillan's *Composed in August* (9 – 10 May) and Jay Capperault's *The Night Watch*, a setting of Niall Campbell's poem of the same name which will be unveiled as part of the Chorus' annual Christmas concert (19 – 20 December). Further highlights include a performance of Bach's most profound expression of humanity – his B Minor Mass – with conductor Richard Egarr and soloists including Rowan Pierce and James Gilchrist (12 -13 October) and a concert of choral masterworks including Schumann's *Nachtlied* and Schubert's Mass in A-flat (30 November – 1 December).

SCO friend and regular collaborator, Finnish violinist **Pekka Kuusisto** returns for a typically eclectic trio of concerts as both soloist and director. A birdsong-inspired programme explores music by Respighi and Tarrodi as well as bringing a fresh new perspective on Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons* as Pekka and cittern player Ale Carr intersperse the work with traditional Nordic folk tunes (7 – 9 March). Pekka directs a concert inspired by the wonders of the natural world, including music by Tüür and Rautavaara as well as the UK premieres of Helen Grime's *It Will Be Spring Soon* and Anna Clyne's violin concerto *Time and Tides*, featuring folk tunes from Scotland, America and Finland, and written for Pekka himself (13 – 15 March). And he joins Maxim Emelyanychev for a very special concert that takes audiences from the shadows of Fauré's *Pelléas et Mélisande* Suite to the blazing light of Shostakovich's Chamber Symphony via Magnus Lindberg's dazzling Violin Concerto No 1 (21 – 23 February).

Further guest conductors throughout the season include **Andrew Manze**, who brings his remarkable musical insights to two concerts – the first featuring Ravel's Piano Concerto with Steven Osborne as soloist (24 – 25 April), and the second a visionary, all-Vaughan Williams concert featuring *The Lark Ascending* with SCO leader Stephanie Gonley as soloist and the composer's *Concerto Grosso* featuring young string players from the current SCO Academy (2 -3 May). And one of Britain's most inspirational and influential musical figures, composer and conductor **Thomas Adès**, conducts the Orchestra in a concert that showcases music from Haydn to Judith Weir, as well as a new orchestral version of his own rapturous *The Origin of the Harp*, weaving together threads of Celtic music and more contemporary sounds (11 – 12 April).

Star soloists throughout the 2023-24 season include **Nicola Benedetti** in Beethoven's Violin Concerto (13 – 15 December); **Colin Currie** directs an evening of classic minimalism from founding father Steve Reich to Julie Wolf and Arvo Pärt (9 – 10 November); director/violinist **Jonian Ilias-Kadesha** explores the fiery rhythms and blazing colours of Eastern Europe (10 – 12 January); conductor and oboist **François Leleux** leads the Orchestra in music by Mozart, Berlioz and Ravel (31 January – 2 February), **Steven Osborne** performs Ravel's Piano Concerto (24 – 26 April); and singer **Roderick Williams** joins the SCO Chorus for two performances – Bach's B Minor Mass (12 – 13 October) and Mendelssohn's *Elijah* (9 – 10 May).

Gavin Reid, Chief Executive of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra says: *“I’m delighted to launch our 23-24 Season, celebrating the SCO’s extraordinary achievements over the last 50 years, and looking forward to the next 50. I’m thrilled that Maxim will continue in his role as Principal Conductor for at least five more years, bringing his exhilarating musical insights to our musicians and audiences, and I’m excited that so many of our regular musical collaborators are joining us for this special season, including our brilliant friend Pekka Kuusisto. As we celebrate the important cultural role the SCO has played in Scotland for half a century, we look forward to continuing to deliver musical experiences which transform and enhance lives across Scotland and beyond.”*

An SCO for everyone

Since the Orchestra began, the SCO have always looked for ways to ensure that as many people as possible can experience the joy of its live music-making. The 2023-24 season continues the Orchestra’s ambition that everyone should have equal access to exceptional musical experiences, wherever and whoever they are.

Following post-pandemic audience feedback, this Season the SCO will introduce a series of **Matinee concerts**. Three full-length programmes across Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Glasgow will be performed at 2pm instead of 7:30pm meaning audiences who prefer not to come out at night are still able to enjoy the Orchestra’s work. The Matinee performances include Mozart and Haydn with Nicolas Altstaedt (26 – 28 October), Berlioz, Mozart and Ravel with François Leleux (1 – 2 February) and Northern Lights with Joseph Swensen (18 – 19 April).

Building on the SCO’s *Reconnect* programme for people with dementia, and developing the Orchestra’s ongoing partnership with Alzheimer Scotland, the SCO presents three **dementia-friendly concerts** in the 2023-24 Season. The performances are designed especially for people living with dementia, their friends and carers. Programmes include Schubert’s ‘Unfinished’ Symphony conducted by Maxim Emelyanychev (18 May 2023, Caird Hall, Dundee), *Appalachian Spring* with Ryan Bancroft (2 November 2023, The Queen’s Hall, Edinburgh) and a *Reconnect Tea Dance*, an afternoon of music, tea and cake and a chance to join the SCO’s musicians as they perform much-loved, well-remembered classics and old-time favourites (21 April 2024, The Queen’s Hall, Edinburgh).

The SCO gives children and families the opportunity to experience the Orchestra live in action in Perth, Edinburgh and Glasgow with the world premiere of Jay Capperault’s ***The Great Grumpy Gaboon***, a brand-new musical adventure written in collaboration with children’s author and illustrator Corrina Campbell and inspired by the SCO’s very own musicians. Ideal for children aged four to eight, this exciting theatrical concert experience will delight little ones and their grown-ups alike (9-11 February).

The **SCO’s Digital Season**, launched during the pandemic, continues to allow audiences who may not be able to get to the concert hall the ability to experience the SCO’s musicianship online. The 2023-24 the Digital Season is entitled *From Scotland to the World* and presents works by four iconic composers with compelling musical visions. From deep tragedy to joyful celebration, the SCO sends virtuosic performances out into the world, in four specially commissioned concert films recorded in Edinburgh’s historic Leith Theatre.

The 2023-24 Digital Season features Sally Beamish’s Beethoven-influenced Second String Quartet, ‘Opus California’ (19 October), Thea Musgrave’s 1988 orchestral work, commissioned by the SCO, *The Seasons* (16 November), Mendelssohn’s dramatic String Quartet No 1 (15 February), and one of the most powerful works by Sir James MacMillan, *Tuireadh*, his memorial for the victims of the 1988 Piper Alpha disaster (28 March).

The digital works are available to watch online for free for one month after the broadcast date.

Full SCO Digital Season listings are available at sco.org.uk/digital

New music

As always, the SCO celebrates and champions new voices, be they composers, musicians or young people looking to get into the classical music profession.

There are eight premieres in the 2023-24 Season, including the world premieres of three new works by SCO Associate Composer **Jay Capperault** - *The Origin of Colour*, a kaleidoscopic new piece written specially for the Orchestra's anniversary year (27 September – 7 October, Maxim's 'Eroica' – A Grand Tour of Scotland) which will also feature as this year's focus for *Immerse*, the Orchestra's flagship full orchestra project for secondary school music pupils; *The Night Watch*, a brand new choral piece setting the poem of the same name by Niall Campbell (19 – 20 December) and *The Great Grumpy Gaboon*, a new work for children aged four to eight (9 – 11 February).

Further world premieres include **Errollyn Wallen's** *Dances for Orchestra* conducted by Ryan Bancroft (2 – 3 November), **Sir James MacMillan's** new choral setting of Robert Burns, *Composed in August* (21 – 22 March), and a new orchestral version of **Thomas Adès'** rapturous *The Origin of the Harp* (11 -12 April). Pekka Kuusisto leads a programme featuring the UK premieres of works by two inspiring female composers - former SCO Associate Composer **Anna Clyne's** new violin concerto *Time and Tides* and **Helen Grime's** lyrical work *It Will Be Spring Soon* (13 – 15 March).

Soundbox and Jay Capperault

Jay Capperault joined the SCO as Associate Composer for the 2022-23 season and since then he has truly embedded himself in the Orchestra's work. The 2023-24 Season will see the world premieres of three of his new works commissioned by the SCO and he continues his work as Composer in Residence as part of the **SCO's Craigmillar Residency** where he leads the *Seen and Heard* project, working alongside local community members to develop musical responses that tell the story of Craigmillar.

As lead mentor for the SCO's new artist development programme **Soundbox**, Jay works alongside three music creators to develop their practice and create a new work for the SCO to perform in its 50th Anniversary Season. **Soundbox** offers a platform for music creators from any musical or cultural background to experiment with the chamber music format, expand their creative practice and explore new ideas, new sounds and new music. The three creators on the 2023-24 programme are singer, songwriter, double bassist and music educator **Emily Scott**, composer and musician **Daniel Abrahams** and electronic musician, DJ and songwriter **naafi**.

Emily Scott says: "*I see this opportunity to work with the SCO as a chance to finally begin to draw together two sides of my musical life. I've often felt I needed to have some separation between my classical background and my current life as a band musician and writer, but gradually I'm learning that it's when the disparate elements collide that music becomes richer and more meaningful. This is something I've wanted to do forever, and I'm so excited that aside from choosing me to be a part of this, that the SCO are an orchestra fully committed to embracing this kind of cross-genre work. For me it means I can feel free to be a complete musician without judgement, and I'm looking forward to delving into the process and hearing what we create together.*"

SCO in Craigmillar

The SCO's unique community residency in **Greater Craigmillar**, Edinburgh, enters the half-way point of its five-year programme later this year. This is the Orchestra's most substantial community project to date, as its team of professional musicians and creative learning practitioners deliver imaginative, cross-artform workshops and performances for children, young people, families and adults to explore their musical potential and help celebrate their creativity. This project is made possible through the generous support of Baillie Gifford, the SCO's Creative Learning Partner.

Since its launch in 2021, the SCO in Craigmillar programme has:

- Delivered a regular programme of 7 music and cross-artform projects each year
- Run over 232 workshops for local people of all ages
- Seen over 375 people across the community involved in the orchestra's regular programme of activity, from nursery, primary and secondary pupils, to local residents, as well as those living with dementia.
- Seen over 700 local people attend SCO performances delivered in the community
- Over 50 musicians and creative practitioners currently delivering projects across the Craigmillar community
- Engaged with 18 schools and local community organisations across Greater Craigmillar

More information on the SCO in Craigmillar can be found [here](#).

2023/24 Subscriptions:

Priority booking for current Edinburgh, Glasgow and St Andrews Subscribers opens on Friday 21 April, 10am.

Priority booking for the Aberdeen Concert Series opens on Monday 24 April, 10am.

Priority booking for the Perth Concert Series opens on Monday 1 May, 10am.

Subscribe online:

Edinburgh, Glasgow and St Andrews audiences will be able to renew Subscriptions or book a new one online at www.sco.org.uk/subscriptions

Aberdeen audiences will be able to book Subscriptions online for the Aberdeen Concert Series at www.aberdeenperformingarts.com

Perth audiences will be able to book Subscriptions online for the Perth Concert Series at www.perththeatreandconcerthall.com

Subscribe by Post:

Edinburgh, Glasgow and St Andrews customers can use a booking form to subscribe by post.

Booking forms should be returned to SCO Subscriptions, 4 Royal Terrace, Edinburgh EH7 5AB by Friday 2 June, 5pm.

Aberdeen Concert Series customers can use a booking form to subscribe by post. Booking forms should be returned to Aberdeen Performing Arts Box Office, Music Hall, Union Street, Aberdeen, AB10 1QS.

Subscribe by Phone:

Edinburgh, Glasgow and St Andrews audiences: The SCO Subscription team will be able to fill out a form for customers over the phone. Call 0131 557 6800 Monday-Friday, 10am-4pm.

Aberdeen audiences: Call Aberdeen Performing Arts on 01224 641122 Tuesday-Saturday, 10am-6pm.

Perth audiences: Call Perth Concert Hall on 01738 621013 Monday-Saturday, 10a-4pm.

Tickets for individual concerts, including SCO concerts in Ayr, Dumfries and Stirling and all special events, go on sale via venue box offices on Monday 5 June at 10am. Visit for www.sco.org.uk for ticket prices and booking arrangements.

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Notes to Editors

- The internationally celebrated Scottish Chamber Orchestra is one of Scotland's National Performing Companies. Formed in 1974 and core funded by the Scottish Government, the SCO aims to provide as many opportunities as possible for people to hear great music by touring the length and breadth of Scotland, appearing regularly at major national and international festivals including the Edinburgh International Festival and BBC Proms, and by touring internationally as proud ambassadors for Scottish cultural excellence.
- Making a significant contribution to Scottish life beyond the concert platform, the Orchestra works in schools, universities, colleges, hospitals, care homes, places of work and community centres through its extensive Creative Learning programme.
- An exciting new chapter for the SCO began in September 2019 with the start of dynamic young conductor Maxim Emelyanychev's tenure as the Orchestra's Principal Conductor.
- The SCO has long-standing associations with many eminent guest conductors including Conductor Emeritus Joseph Swensen, François Leleux, Pekka Kuusisto, Richard Egarr, Andrew Manze and John Storgårds.
- The Orchestra also enjoys close relationships with many leading composers and has commissioned almost 200 new works, including pieces by Associate Composer Jay Capperauld, Anna Clyne, the late Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Sir James MacMillan, Sally Beamish, Martin Suckling, Einojuhani Rautavaara, Mark-Anthony Turnage and Nico Muhly.
- The SCO and Emelyanychev released their first album together (Linn Records) in November 2019. The repertoire - Schubert's Symphony No 9 in C major 'The Great' – was part of the first concert Emelyanychev performed with the Orchestra in March 2018.
- SCO in Craigmillar is kindly supported by Scops Arts Trust, The Daphne Hamilton Trust, The Plum Trust, The Stevenston Charitable Trust, Cruden Foundation, The D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust, The Misses Barrie Charitable Trust, Mrs Jean Fraser's Charitable Trust, our Creative Learning Partner Baillie Gifford and those who wish to remain anonymous.