

SCOTTISH  
CHAMBER  
ORCHESTRA 50

# DVOŘÁK SERENADE

SIDE BY SIDE CONCERT

19 November 2023

In partnership with



Royal Conservatoire  
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PROGRAMME

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# DVOŘÁK SERENADE

## SIDE BY SIDE CONCERT

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**Sunday 19 November, 3pm, The Queen's Hall, Edinburgh**

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**MILHAUD** Symphonie de chambre

**RUTH GIPPS** Seascape

**JANÁČEK** Mládí

*Interval of 20 minutes*

**FRANÇAIX** Nine Characteristic Pieces

**DVOŘÁK** Serenade

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**SCO Wind Soloists**

**Students of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland**

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**SCO Wind Soloists**

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\* Denotes RCS Players

*Information correct at the time of going to print*

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André Cebrián  
Marta Gómez  
Lalleh Memar\*  
Lily Brown\*

## **Piccolo**

Marta Gómez  
Lalleh Memar\*

## **Oboe**

Fraser Kelman  
Katherine Bryer  
Caitlin Heathcote\*  
Laura Ritchie\*

## **Cor Anglais**

Caitlin Heathcote\*  
Laura Ritchie\*

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Maximiliano Martín  
William Stafford  
Unai Simon\*  
Isabella Runge\*

## **Bass Clarinet**

William Stafford

## **Bassoon**

Cerys Ambrose-Evans  
Rachel Simmonds\*

## **Contrabassoon**

Alison Green  
Rachel Simmonds\*

## **Horn**

Ken Henderson  
Lik Ng\*  
Jamie Shield

## **Cello**

Donald Gillan

## **Double Bass**

Nikita Naumov

**Maximiliano Martín**  
Principal Clarinet



# WHAT YOU ARE ABOUT TO HEAR

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## MILHAUD (1892-1974)

### Symphonie de chambre No 5 (1922)

- I. Rude
  - II. Lent
  - III. Violent
- 

## GIPPS (1921-1999)

### Seascape (1958)

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## JANÁČEK (1854-1928)

### Mládí (1924)

- I. Allegro
  - II. Andante sostenuto
  - III. Vivace
  - IV. Allegro animato
- 

## FRANÇAIX (1912-1997)

### Nine Characteristic Pieces (1973)

- I Presto
  - II Amoroso
  - III Notturmo
  - IV Subito vivo
  - V Allegro
  - VI Andantino
  - VII Leggerissimo
  - VIII Moderato
  - IX Finale
- 

## DVOŘÁK (1841-1904)

### Serenade Op 44, B77 (1878)

- Moderato, quasi marcia
- Minuetto. Tempo di minuetto
- Andante con moto
- Finale. Allegro molto

Music of sophisticated Gallic wit, and of folksy grit; music of the sea and of the countryside. All come together in today's wide-ranging programme of music for wind ensemble – quite a range of styles and subjects for a collection of pieces written within just a century of each other.

French musician Darius Milhaud has a reputation as one of the world's most prolific composers: he created more than 400 works across the course of his career. It might be an uncharitable observation, but cramming a whole symphony into six minutes of music might be one reason behind that high number. Milhaud wrote five 'chamber symphonies' (today's is his final work in the form), none of them lasting more than a few minutes. But what he manages to pack into these miniature forms is quite remarkable. Milhaud was one of the earliest adopters of jazz into classical music, following his first encounter with the dangerous new genre in 1920, and he also immersed himself in Brazilian music as secretary to the French ambassador there between 1917 and 1919. Add to those passions a love for the clarity and directness of Baroque music, and you have a rich, eclectic mix of international influences, all of which lie somewhere behind the dashing invention of his *Symphonie de chambre No 5*. He wrote it in Vienna and Warsaw in 1922, but it received its premiere in Paris's Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in May 1923, and despite its sometimes abrasive sound world, it's music that's distinctively French in its sparkle and humour.

The Symphony is cast in three tiny movements, each with its own idiosyncratic character (as indicated by Milhaud's unusual titles), but running together without breaks. After its squawking, dissonant opening, his opening movement ('Rude' in French, perhaps 'coarse' in English) soon moves on to gentler material,





*Darius Milhaud*

*Despite its sometimes abrasive sound world, it's music that is distinctively French in its sparkle and humour.*

interrupted by a piping piccolo, before reaching an unsettled calm at its close. His slow second movement ('Lent') revels in bizarre sonorities, opening with a trilling flute, dissonant oboes and clarinets, and a snaking melody from the bass clarinet. A clarinet announces the main melody of Milhaud's finale ('Violent'), though other instruments have their own ideas about what key the ensemble is supposed to be in. Its driving rhythms quickly propel the piece to its raucous close.

From a French internationalist we hop across the Channel to a frustratingly little-known figure in British music. Born in Bexhill-on-Sea in 1921, Ruth Gipps came from a strongly musical family – both of her parents were accomplished musicians – and had her first work premiered and published when she was just eight. She went on to found two orchestras (the London Repertoire Orchestra and Chanticleer Orchestra), as well as chairing the Composer's Guild of Great Britain in the 1960s. But, perhaps unsurprisingly, she

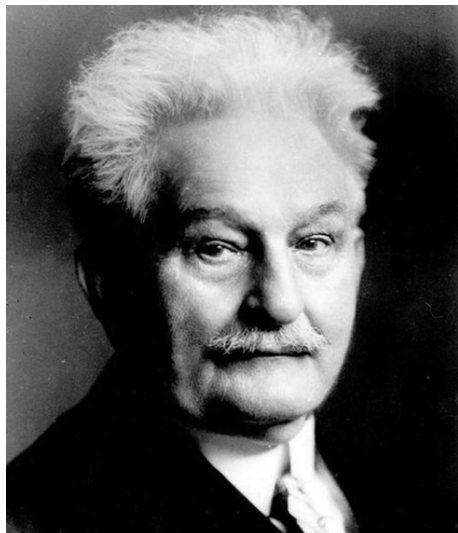
encountered the barriers of discrimination throughout her life – which only served to strengthen her sense of determination. Some called her tough and steely, though she no doubt needed a cast-iron outer shell to fend off the barbed rejections she received as a woman who dared to consider herself a composer in the mid-20th century.

But she was an exceptional, eloquent musical creator (as well as an oboist and pianist, a conductor and a teacher), and she composed a wide range of pieces, including five symphonies, seven concertos and many chamber and choral works. Her musical style, too, is lyrical and immediate, often strongly reminiscent of Vaughan Williams, with whom she studied at London's Royal College of Music.

As an oboist, Gipps had a particular fondness for wind music, and co-founded the all-women Portia Wind Ensemble in 1953. It was for that group that she wrote her *Seascape* in 1958, and the Portia players gave its premiere



*Ruth Gipps*



*Leoš Janáček*

two years later. Gipps took inspiration for *Seascape's* music, she said, from a brief stay in Broadstairs, where she remembered hearing the sea at night from her hotel room. Rippling, wave-like figures open the work, soon joined by a keening melody for Gipps's own oboe. Horns bring warmth to the piece's gently flowing opening section, before a sinuous cor anglais melody leads us into her more rhythmic central panel – though those rippling figurations soon return to lead the piece to its sonorous conclusion.

From the rippling rhythms of a British sea portrait to far more urgent rhythms from central Europe. In the case of Moravian composer Leoš Janáček, that rhythm came predominantly from the flow and cadences of his own spoken language, Czech, which he mined for both rhythm and melody across his operas and his instrumental works. The distinctive, seven-note, sing-song melody that permeates the opening movement of his *Mládí*, for example, is rumoured to be singing

'Mládí, zlaté mládí!' ('Youth, golden youth!'). When you hear it, it makes perfect sense.

Indeed, it makes a lot of sense that Janáček's instruments are singing so warmly about the golden days of youth in a work that's so openly nostalgic, written by a man just four years away from the end of his life, looking back with affection to some of his earliest memories. Janáček composed his wind sextet *Mládí* in the very month of his 70th birthday, July 1924, and the piece was intended for concert celebrations of that anniversary. Its premiere performance in Janáček's home town of Brno in October that year, however, was dogged by instrument malfunctions, leaving the composer furious, and he had to wait for a performance in Prague the following month before he was happy with it.

Janáček had initially been inspired by hearing flautist Paul Taffanel's Société de Musique de Chambre pour Instruments à Vent ensemble, first in Salzburg in 1923 then later in Brno,



*Jean Françaix*

and set about writing his own work for a distinctive and unusual ensemble of flute (or piccolo), oboe, clarinet, bass clarinet, horn and bassoon. The addition of a bass clarinet to the conventional wind quintet line-up gives Janáček's ensemble a characteristically rich, resonant sound – something that aligns it with Dvořák's *Serenade*, which we will hear later – that he exploits throughout the piece.

His specific subject matter was his time as a young boy chorister studying at the Augustinian Abbey in Brno, where he gained a thorough immersion in both music and Czech nationalism, both of which would occupy his later life. He'd written an earlier piece inspired by the same institution, called *March of the Blue Boys*, referring to the blue uniforms of the Augustinian students, for the unusual combination of piccolo, flute, bells, tambourine and piano, and he adapted this earlier work as the third movement of *Mládí*.

After the piece's opening tribute to 'golden

youth', in which Janáček places his memorable theme in sometimes unusual aural settings, his sober second movement, it's been suggested, refers to the composer's unhappier memories of the school's strict regulations. The third contrasts the piping eagerness of his *March of the Blue Boys* with a more relaxed trio section, while his finale recalls the earlier 'golden youth' theme before a more surging, energetic melody takes over, leading to a high-spirited conclusion.

We return to France for today's next piece. And although Jean Françaix was working a few years later than his compatriot Darius Milhaud, he shared much of the elder composer's interest in clarity, objectivity, wit and sparkle. Françaix was just six when he began composing, going on to study with composition pedagogue *extraordinaire* Nadia Boulanger, who considered him one of her finest pupils. He died as recently as 1997, and wrote prolifically during his long life (he described himself as 'constantly composing', barely finishing one piece before launching into the next). But he maintained a cheerful, neoclassical, easy-on-the-ear lightness throughout his output – which took in concertos, symphonies, operas and plenty more.

His *Nine Characteristic Pieces* was only written in 1973, though the collection's style looks back affectionately to music of several decades earlier. And like Milhaud's earlier *Symphony*, the nine brief movements run together without breaks. A perky melody is swapped between clarinet and flute in Françaix's circus-like opening 'Presto', while the richness of his ensemble's horns and bassoons is put to good use among the irregular rhythms of the 'Amoroso'. After a slinky 'Notturmo' and a humorous, scampering 'Subito vivo', his 'Allegro' showcases a





*Antonín Leopold Dvořák*

*Although you might detect the odd hint of Mozart in the piece's tender slow movement, the music is distinctively Dvořák's own.*

raucous clarinet. A plaintive 'Andantino' gives way to fast-moving, airborne flutes in the 'Leggierrissimo' and a clarinet singing what sounds like a popular tune in the penultimate 'Moderato'. Françaix then manages to put almost all of his instruments in the spotlight amid the manic energy of his dashing 'Finale'.

From Brno, Bexhill-on-Sea and even Brazil, we close today's concert with a brief trip to the glittering concert halls of Vienna, where in 1877, Antonín Dvořák heard Mozart's K361 Serenade for wind instruments performed by musicians from the Vienna Philharmonic. He was so smitten with the music that he resolved to compose something similar himself. Returning home to Prague, he dashed off his own Serenade in just two weeks – and, although you might detect the odd hint of Mozart in the piece's tender slow movement, the music is distinctively Dvořák's own. Not only does he call on the rustic rawness of Czech folk dances, but even his rich, dark instrumentation – employing pairs of oboes,

clarinets, bassoons and horns, but no flutes – serves as the ideal sonic setting for his earthy melodies.

His first movement is a strutting, somewhat pompous march that he reportedly threw together in a single day – not that you'd suspect it was a rush job from its impeccable craft and eloquent contrasting gentler material. Dvořák called his second movement a minuet, but it feels quite slow for that tripping Viennese dance form. Instead, it's been suggested that it's closer to a traditional Czech *sousedská* dance, with another Czech dance, a rhythmic, syncopated *furiant*, forming its scampering central trio section. After the lyrical nocturne of Dvořák's slow movement, he summons attention to his concluding polka with a strident, unison opening, before busy but good-natured music that makes full use of his ensemble's sonic richness.

© David Kettle

Conductor

## SCO WIND SOLOISTS



The Scottish Chamber Orchestra includes a double-wind section of outstanding players who also appear as soloists with the Orchestra.

Inspired by the legacy of the great Mozartian conductors of the SCO including Sir Charles Mackerras, the players are known for their stylish and exuberant performances of repertoire ranging from the celebrated divertimenti and wind serenades of the 18th century to music of the present day.

The SCO Wind Soloists appear regularly in Scotland's main cities and further afield, including the Highlands and Islands. They have also performed at Wigmore Hall, the Palace of Holyroodhouse in the presence of HRH the former Duke of Rothesay, and at the Aix-en-Provence Easter Festival. Since 2016 they have partnered annually with wind students of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in Side-by-Side rehearsals and concerts.

As an ensemble, the SCO Wind Soloists have recorded divertimenti and serenades by Mozart and Beethoven (Linn Records).

***For full biography please visit [sco.org.uk](http://sco.org.uk)***

Biography

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Biography

## SCOTTISH CHAMBER ORCHESTRA



The Scottish Chamber Orchestra (SCO) is one of Scotland's five National Performing Companies and has been a galvanizing force in Scotland's music scene since its inception in 1974. The SCO believes that access to world-class music is not a luxury but something that everyone should have the opportunity to participate in, helping individuals and communities everywhere to thrive. Funded by the Scottish Government, City of Edinburgh Council and a community of philanthropic supporters, the SCO has an international reputation for exceptional, idiomatic performances: from mainstream classical music to newly commissioned works, each year its wide-ranging programme of work is presented across the length and breadth of Scotland, overseas and increasingly online.

Equally at home on and off the concert stage, each one of the SCO's highly talented and creative musicians and staff is passionate about transforming and enhancing lives through the power of music. The SCO's Creative Learning programme engages people of all ages and backgrounds with a diverse range of projects, concerts, participatory workshops and resources. The SCO's current five-year Residency in Edinburgh's Craigmillar builds on the area's extraordinary history of Community Arts, connecting the local community with a national cultural resource.

An exciting new chapter for the SCO began in September 2019 with the arrival of dynamic young conductor Maxim Emelyanychev as the Orchestra's Principal Conductor. His tenure has recently been extended until 2028. The SCO and Emelyanychev released their first album together (Linn Records) in November 2019 to widespread critical acclaim. Their second recording together, of Mendelssohn symphonies, is due for release in November 2023.

The SCO also has long-standing associations with many eminent guest conductors and directors including Andrew Manze, Pekka Kuusisto, François Leleux, Nicola Benedetti, Isabelle van Keulen, Anthony Marwood, Richard Egarr, Mark Wigglesworth, John Storgårds and Conductor Emeritus Joseph Swensen.

The Orchestra's current Associate Composer is Jay Capperauld. The SCO enjoys close relationships with numerous leading composers and has commissioned around 200 new works, including pieces by the late Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Sir James MacMillan, Anna Clyne, Sally Beamish, Martin Suckling, Einojuhani Rautavaara, Karin Rehnqvist, Mark-Anthony Turnage and Nico Muhly.

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