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The Quilter Cheviot Benedetti Series



QUILTER CHEVIOT
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BEETHOVEN VIOLIN CONCERTO

WITH NICOLA BENEDETTI

13-15 December 2023



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WITH NICOLA BENEDETTI

The Quilter Cheviot Benedetti Series



Wednesday 13 December, 7.30pm, Perth Concert Hall
Thursday 14 December, 7.30pm, Usher Hall, Edinburgh
Friday 15 December, 7.30pm, City Halls, Glasgow

MONTGOMERY Strum*

MOZART Symphony No 34*

Interval of 20 minutes

BEETHOVEN Violin Concerto

Nicola Benedetti Director/Violin

Benjamin Marquise Gilmore* Director/Violin



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Associate Composer

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Benjamin Marquise Gilmore
Elizabeth Wexler
Mark Derudder
Kana Kawashima
Aisling O'Dea
Siún Milne
Fiona Alexander
Amira Bedrush-McDonald

Second Violin

Marcus Barcham Stevens
Gordon Bragg
Michelle Dierx
Rachel Smith
Niamh Lyons
Sarah Bevan-Baker

Viola

Max Mandel
Ana Dunne Sequi
Brian Schiele
Steve King

Cello

Philip Higham
Su-a Lee
Donald Gillan
Eric de Wit

Bass

Nikita Naumov
Jamie Kenny

Flute

André Cebrián

Oboe

Robin Williams
Katherine Bryer

Clarinet

Maximiliano Martín
William Stafford

Bassoon

Cerys Ambrose-Evans
Alison Green

Horn

George Strivens
Jamie Shield

Trumpet

Peter Franks
Shaun Harrold

Timpani

Louise Lewis Goodwin

Alison Green
Sub-Principal Bassoon



WHAT YOU ARE ABOUT TO HEAR

MONTGOMERY (b.1981)

Strum (2006 rev. 2012)

MOZART (1756-1791)

Symphony No 34 in C major, K338 (1780)

Allegro vivace

Andante di molto (più tosto Allegretto)

Allegro vivace

BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)

Violin Concerto in D major, Op 61 (1806)

Allegro ma non troppo

Larghetto

Rondo. Allegro

Tonight's concert is hardly what you'd describe as a Viennese evening: no tripping waltzes, elegant polkas, azure rivers or thunder and lightning. But Vienna, musical capital of Europe (and therefore the world) during the 18th and early 19th centuries, provides a significant connection between this evening's two final pieces. Their composers were inevitably drawn to the city – to varying degrees of recognition and success – and it was the city's own music and musicians that played a role in the pieces' creation.

We begin, however, in another place and another time entirely: just 11 years ago, and on the other side of the Atlantic. New York-born composer and violinist Jessie Montgomery has long been closely connected with the Detroit-based Sphinx Organization, which supports young African American and Latinx musicians. Indeed, her music is very much of today, incorporating popular styles, improvisation and a deep sense of social consciousness. She's written a multi-cultural rethink of the American national anthem in *Banner*, as well as several settings of Black spirituals for orchestral or chamber groups.

Her *Strum*, which opens tonight's concert, displays her wide-ranging musical interests, from its folk-like opening to Bartók-style rhythmic propulsion and celebratory conclusion. It began life in music for string quintet that Montgomery wrote in 2006, before finding its final string orchestra form in 2012. It takes its title from the strumming pizzicato technique that Montgomery uses throughout the piece to generate the music's driving rhythms, building from wistful nostalgia to joyful celebration.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was, born in Salzburg, and found early employment



Jessie Montgomery

Montgomery's music is very much of today, incorporating popular styles, improvisation and a deep sense of social consciousness.

in the city as a court musician to Prince-Archbishop Hieronymus von Colloredo. He grew increasingly frustrated, however, by Colloredo's demands that he write music for the church rather than the concert hall, and also by the growing feeling that his substantial talents were going unrecognised.

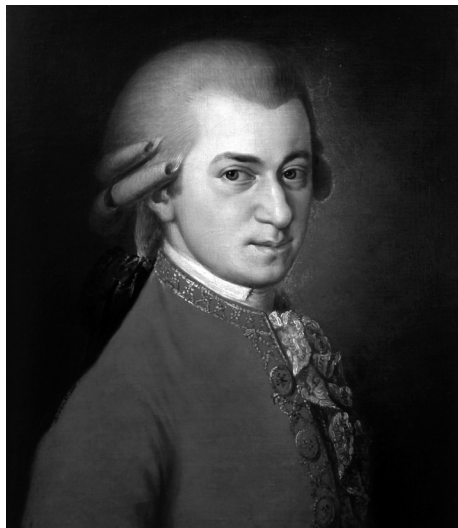
He made a break for the bright lights of Vienna in 1781 (with, in the long run, substantial if partial success), but No 34 was the last Symphony he composed in Salzburg before doing so. Completed in August 1780, it was premiered at Colloredo's court the following month, and clearly prefigures the ambition and vision of his later symphonies. He took it with him to Vienna, too, where it received further performances that helped establish Mozart's name in the Austrian capital.

It contains something of a mystery, too. Following the bright, ceremonial fanfares

and bustling energy of its opening movement, Mozart tore out the pages from his manuscript that contained the Symphony's original second movement, leaving just a few scribbled-out bars of the work's original minuet. Some conductors have imported minuets from elsewhere, but the Symphony is usually played without.

Mozart's slow movement is a delicate creation using just bassoon and strings, and he returns to exuberant energy and high spirits in his dancing finale, in which he shines the spotlight firmly on his orchestra's pair of oboists.

That succinct introduction to Mozart's Symphony No 34 reflects the scale of the work itself: it runs to barely more than 20 minutes. That's considerably shorter than just the opening movement of tonight's final piece – but by the time Beethoven came to write his sole Violin Concerto in 1806, his music had developed hugely in length and



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

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ambition, as well as daring to explore more meditative, even visionary realms.

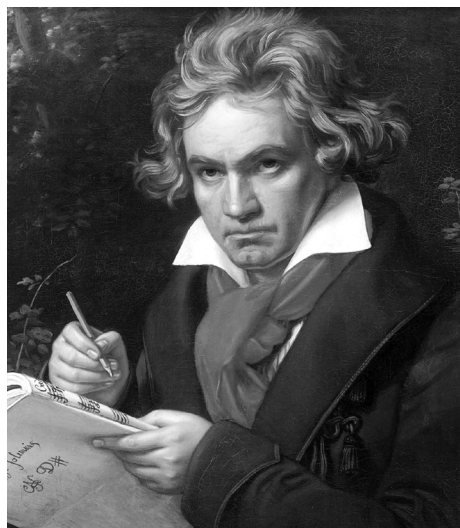
Beethoven had left his birthplace of Bonn for Vienna in 1792, with the specific aim of establishing himself in the musical capital of Europe – not just as a composer (not even primarily as a composer during his first years in the Austrian capital), but also as a pianist and teacher. The music he did write during his first few Viennese years, however, was big-boned, assertive, out to demonstrate its creator's skills and breadth of vision, to set out his stall. Just think of his Op 1 Piano Trios, or the 'Pathétique' Piano Sonata, or the Third Piano Concerto.

The Beethoven of 1806, however, while better established in Vienna, had been through a lot. He'd struggled to write his only opera, *Fidelio*, and had endured his love for widowed countess Josephine Brunsvik being spurned. More importantly, he'd contemplated suicide because of his own inexorably encroaching

deafness – as he would have revealed to his brothers, had he ever sent them the letter that's nowadays called his Heiligenstadt Testament.

Beethoven vowed to continue, and to fulfil his musical destiny. And the music he produced around this time – the 'Appassionata' Piano Sonata, Fourth Piano Concerto and 'Razumovsky' Quartets, for example – seems shot through with a new sense of freshness and renewal. It's a feeling of confidence and inspiration that largely replaces the stall-setting of his earlier music.

Beethoven's Violin Concerto fits right in to that fresh collection of pieces. He wrote it for the young violinist Franz Clement, a superstar fiddler of his day who'd wowed Europe as a child prodigy. Beethoven had first met him shortly after his move to Vienna, in 1794, when Clement was just 13. And he was impressed. He later wrote to the youngster: 'Continue along the road on which you have



Ludwig van Beethoven

Beethoven vowed to continue, and to fulfil his musical destiny.

already made such a fine and magnificent journey. Nature and art have combined to make a great artist of you.'

The older and the younger man became friends and mutual supporters. Clement advised Beethoven when he was struggling with his opera *Fidelio*, for example, and it was at a benefit concert for Clement that Beethoven unveiled his 'Eroica' Symphony in 1805. It was the 26-year-old Clement who asked for a Concerto from his pal – though Beethoven ultimately left the writing so late that Clement was virtually sightreading the piece at its premiere in December 1806. The violinist nonetheless found enough energy to entertain the audience with variations on some of the Concerto's tunes and other wacky antics, including playing with his instrument upside down.

Despite Clement's pranks, however, not everyone was amused, or even entertained. In fact, quite a few were rather bemused by

Beethoven's new Concerto: sure, it had its fair share of dazzling virtuosity, but it felt very serious and dignified, even cool and detached. The critic for the *Wiener Zeitung für Theater, Musik und Poesie* summed up the general puzzlement in writing that 'cognoscenti are unanimous in agreeing that, while there are beautiful things in the Concerto, the sequence of events often seems incoherent and the endless repetition of some commonplace passages could easily prove fatiguing. It is to be feared that if Beethoven continues upon this path he and the public will fare badly.'

The Concerto didn't catch on, receiving barely a handful of performances over the following few decades. It was only after a London performance in 1844 (17 years after Beethoven's death) from another child prodigy, the 12-year-old Joseph Joachim – under the baton of one Felix Mendelssohn – that other violinists came to recognise the Concerto as the masterpiece that it is.

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The Concerto's general mood of reserve and refinement surely didn't help with early performers leaping to perform it. Just take the first movement's famous opening: rather than a grand, loud call to attention, as he'd done many times before, Beethoven launches with five quiet taps on the timpani, before winds and strings begin the movement's first main melody. It's one of the most unusual beginnings to any of Beethoven's pieces, and indeed of any work in the repertoire. Yet those five notes – like the famous opening of his Fifth Symphony, written just a couple of years later – permeate his opening movement, straddling contexts and instruments, sometimes glaringly obvious, sometimes rather hidden. It takes a while for the soloist to make their first entry, and when they do it's with their own introductory material, before giving us our first hearing of the movement's main theme, played from beginning to end, and almost unadorned.

Beethoven's prayerful second movement is essentially a set of variations on a hymn-like melody, but reducing it to such a bald description does the music a disservice. It's an intimate, deeply introspective movement in which nothing much happens at all in a traditional sense, aside from increasing elaborations on its opening theme – which is precisely what gives the movement its uncanny power.

The slow movement seems forever to be striving for its conclusion, however – which it never reaches, since the music shifts at the last moment, linking directly into Beethoven's playful, if not downright mischievous finale. The movement's smiling melody begins quietly on the solo violin before erupting across the full orchestra, and the music works its way through several contrasting episodes before reaching its joyful close.

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Director/Violin

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. 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.

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.

Nicola begins her 2023-2024 season with performances of the Marsalis Violin Concerto with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and conductor Karen Kamesek. She will take up a residency with the Philharmonia with performances across the season including Brahms' Violin Concerto with Cristian Măcelaru, Marsalis' Violin Concerto with Santtu-Matias Rouvali, and Bruch's Scottish Fantasy with Pablo Heras Casado. Further engagements include Bruch's Scottish Fantasy with the Orchestre National de France and Cristian Măcelaru, and Simpson's Violin Concerto with David Afkham and the RSNO, amongst many others. The 2023-2024 season also sees Nicola embark on a tour of Asia with the 'Benedetti Baroque Orchestra'. This ensemble gathers freelance period-instrument players who collectively join together to create the highest level of collaborative and energized music making, directed by Nicola.

For full biography please visit sco.org.uk

Director/Violin

BENJAMIN MARQUISE GILMORE



Benjamin Marquise Gilmore enjoys a busy life as an orchestral and chamber musician, joining the London Symphony Orchestra as Leader in August 2023. He was concertmaster of the Philharmonia Orchestra between 2019 and 2023, and has been a member of the Navarra Quartet since 2021. He is also a member of the Chamber Orchestra of Europe and from 2016 to 2019 was leader of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, to which he continues to return as guest leader and director. A lover of opera, he is also a frequent guest concertmaster with the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House.

Benjamin studied with Natalia Boyarskaya at the Yehudi Menuhin School and with Pavel Vernikov in Vienna, and received further guidance and inspiration from Julian Rachlin and Miriam Fried. He won prizes at the Oskar Back, Joseph Joachim and Salzburg Mozart competitions, and has participated in festivals such as Kuhmo, Prussia Cove and Ravinia. Benjamin's father was the musicologist Bob Gilmore, his grandfather was the conductor Lev Markiz, and his mother Maria Markiz has variously been a musicologist, interpreter, equestrian and data analyst. He is married to Hannah Shaw, a violist, and enjoys cooking and cycling, in both of which disciplines he makes up in enthusiasm what he lacks in proficiency.

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, was released 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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