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# CAFÉ DE PARIS

WITH MAXIM AND FRIENDS

25 February 2024



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# CAFÉ DE PARIS

## WITH MAXIM AND FRIENDS

**Sunday 25 February, 3pm, The Queen's Hall, Edinburgh**

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**FRANÇAIX** L'heure du berger (Musique de brasserie)

**RAVEL** Jeux d'eau

**JOLIVET** Chant de Linos

*Interval of 20 minutes*

**DEBUSSY** Première rhapsodie

**POULENC** Sextet

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**Maxim Emelyanychev** Piano

**André Cebrián** Flute

**Robin Williams** Oboe

**Maximiliano Martín** Clarinet

**Cerys Ambrose-Evans** Bassoon

**Máté Börzsönyi** Horn

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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, 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.

# WHAT YOU ARE ABOUT TO HEAR

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## FRANÇAIX (1912-1997)

*L'heure du berger* (Musique de brasserie)  
(1947)

*Les vieux beaux*  
*Pin-up girls*  
*Les petits nerveux*

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## RAVEL (1875-1937)

*Jeux d'eau* (1901)

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## JOLIVET (1905-1974)

*Chant de Linos* (1944)

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## DEBUSSY (1862-1918)

*Première rhapsodie* (1909-10)

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## POULENC 1899-1963)

*Sextet* (1932-39)

*Allegro vivace*  
*Divertissement: Andantino*  
*Finale: Prestissimo*

Think of French music from the first decades of the 20th century and you might imagine languid, limpid impressionist soundscapes, or zippy neo-classical wit and irony. If that's the case, you wouldn't be wrong – and there's arguably quite a bit of both of those in today's colourful concert. It's not quite the whole story, though, as you'll hear.

We begin, with an inveterate musical wit, a composer who maintained his distinctively fresh, sparkling style throughout his lengthy career. Le Mans-born Jean Françaix was just six when he began composing in 1918, and he went 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 1947 *L'heure du berger* for piano and wind quintet, which opens today's concert, is an ideal example of that bright, bustling, brisk musical style. Its subtitle – 'Musique de brasserie' – betrays the piece's origins. Strictly speaking, you might term the piece 'musique d'ameublement', or something unpretentiously intended as sophisticated background sounds to serenade another activity – in this case, diners enjoying their food at a Parisian restaurant whose atmosphere Françaix particularly enjoyed. And what the composer served diners was portraits of themselves, cast across three short movements that act as richly





*Jean Françaix*

***Le Mans-born Jean Françaix was just six when he began composing in 1918, and he went on to study with composition pedagogue extraordinaire Nadia Boulanger, who considered him one of her finest pupils.***

imagined character sketches of Parisian café life.

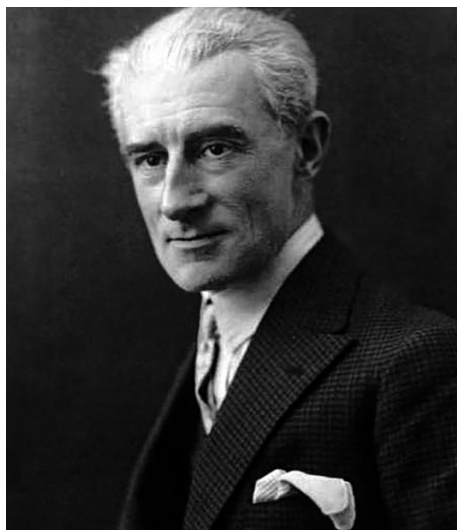
We open with 'Les vieux beaux' (or maybe 'The Old Dandies'), a back-and-forth conversation between clarinet and bassoon, clearly portraying two gentlemen of a certain age remembering – well, perhaps better times. Judging by Françaix's slippery rhythms, there's maybe a certain degree of inebriation going on, though he provides contrast with a crisper, more energetic central section.

His languid, piano-less second movement, the English-titled 'Pin-Up Girls', takes us back in time to a world of busty blondes and sultry seductresses that might feel, in 2024, like another era entirely. Françaix provides elegant portraits, however, with the ensemble's clarinet delivering ever more elaborate melodic decorations. His bubbling final movement portrays 'Les petits nerveux'

(or 'Nervous Children'), clearly chattering for attention at a nearby brasserie table as conveyed by the instruments' intricate interweaving lines. Jazzier rhythms take over in the movement's central section, but the mood of slightly skittish fun remains the same.

From mischievous wit to something far more overtly, and exquisitely, beautiful. Maurice Ravel was just 26 when he wrote the piano piece *Jeux d'eau* (literally 'Water Games', or perhaps 'Fountains') in 1901. But it marked a crucial moment in the young composer's career – not just a stretching of his musical wings in a work that was more overtly virtuosic and ambitious than his previous keyboard creations, but also a piece that boldly restated his decidedly forward-looking perspectives.

He was still studying at the Paris Conservatoire at the time, in the



*Maurice Ravel*

***But Ravel creates music that's subtly more modern and sophisticated, with fragile harmonies, and instrumental colour as its own crucial musical element.***

composition class of Gabriel Fauré (to whom he'd dedicate *Jeux d'eau*), but he wasn't having an easy time. The principal figure behind Ravel's discomfort was Théodore Dubois, arch-conservative, protector of traditional musical values and, unfortunately for Ravel, the man who happened to be the Conservatoire's director. Dubois wholeheartedly disapproved of the young Ravel's musical experiments in colour and sound, and saw it as his role to discourage or actively undermine his student's progress. Things came to a head four years later when Ravel attempted – unsuccessfully – to progress in the prestigious Prix de Rome competition for a fifth time, causing such outrage that Dubois resigned from his post, to be replaced by the musician who had believed in Ravel all along: Gabriel Fauré.

After the relative simplicity of Ravel's earlier keyboard *Menuet antique* and

*Pavane pour une infante défunte*, *Jeux d'eau* feels like an intentional step-up in exuberant virtuosity, designed to demonstrate both his own compositional prowess and his pianist's digital skills. With its rippling cascades of sound, and its intricate accompaniment patterns, the piece owes a lot to Franz Liszt, especially the earlier composer's own *Jeux d'eau à la Villa d'Este*. But Ravel creates music that's subtly more modern and sophisticated, with fragile harmonies, and instrumental colour as its own crucial musical element. 'This piece,' he explained, 'inspired by the sound of water and the music of fountains, cascades and streams, is founded on two motifs.' The first is heard right from the work's opening: a rippling, down-and-up-again melody that returns again and again against different harmonies. The second, more lyrical theme comes later, a melody in octaves set against another rippling accompaniment. After a climax on a bright tremolo chord, the opening



*André Jolivet*

***And though Jolivet was never a flautist himself, he wrote extensively for the instrument throughout his career.***

theme returns alongside a tolling, gong-like lower tone, and the tender second main melody guides the piece to its ethereal ending.

We move to another world entirely in today's next piece: perhaps ancient Greece, or perhaps a mythical, spiritual land of ritual and magic. André Jolivet was born in Paris just seven years earlier than Françaix, but he took a very different path through music, focusing from early in his career on ancient forms and spiritual meanings, inspired at first by Debussy and Ravel, and later by the more radical sonic experiments of Schoenberg and Varèse. 'From the aesthetic viewpoint, my aim is to give back to music its ancient and original character as the magic and incantational expression of human groups. Music should be a sonorous manifestation directly related to the universal cosmic system,' Jolivet wrote. Not for nothing was he one of the co-founders – alongside

a young Olivier Messiaen – of La Jeune France in 1936, a loose composers' group that stood in direct opposition to the dashing wit, irony and cool objectivity of composers like Françaix and (as we'll discover later) Francis Poulenc. This was music as ritual, a performance as a shared spiritual experience between players and listeners, one that delved deep into ancient meanings and associations.

And though Jolivet was never a flautist himself, he wrote extensively for the instrument throughout his career. He created today's *Chant de Linos* in 1944 as a test piece in the annual performance competition at the Paris Conservatoire (it was won that year, incidentally, by the young Jean-Pierre Rampal, who would go on to forge a career as one of the 20th century's most prominent flautists). *Chant de Linos* quickly established a secure place in the professional flute repertoire, however, even if you can still detect its



prowess-testing origins in the music's breathtakingly virtuosic demands.

*Chant de Linos* draws directly on Jolivet's interests in ancient rites. His Linos is the ancient Greek musician we'd call Linus, son of Apollo, sometimes considered the inventor of music itself, and music teacher to both Orpheus and Heracles. The latter would slay his elder tutor by striking him on the head with his own lyre after hearing his playing criticised. And it's effectively a dirge for the murdered Linus that Jolivet conjures in his strange, ritualistic music, which he described as 'a kind of threnody – a funeral lamentation, a song of lament interrupted by cries and dances'.

Jolivet's music contrasts passionate, free-flowing flute cadenzas, possibly evoking the wailing of mourners, with more exuberant, even angry dance music. The piece switches restlessly between the two, as if we're witnessing a kind of arcane ritual we don't fully understand – though Jolivet quietly indicates a path back to the modern world with a change of mode and mood to something more luminous just before the piece closes.

From one Paris Conservatoire test piece to another – albeit in a very different style, and created more than three decades earlier. By 1909, Claude Debussy was no longer the problematic radical of French music that his languid, pastel-hued music had once indicated. He'd been welcomed into the mainstream, and was so revered, in fact, that few batted an eyelid when institution director Gabriel Fauré invited him to join the Paris Conservatoire's board of directors. One of Debussy's responsibilities in the role would be to

create new pieces for the school's end-of-year performance competitions, and his *Première rhapsodie* was one of them.

He wrote the piece between December 1909 and January 1910, for clarinet performance exams to be held the following July (marking it 'Première' himself, though he'd never write a 'deuxième'). So successful was it that Debussy set about orchestrating the piece in August 1910: he called it 'one of the most pleasing pieces I have ever written'. Part of that success was no doubt due to the piece's wide range of moods and textures: indeed, its frequent shifts between them is a characteristic it shares with Jolivet's *Chant de Linos*, as is Debussy's intention to test and display many sides of his performer's abilities. But Debussy's music is far more voluptuous, far less esoteric, even if there's a certain sense of otherworldliness to some of the piece: not for nothing does he mark his opening 'Rêveusement lent' (or 'Dreamily slow').

The *Rhapsodie* begins quietly and hesitantly, before the clarinet embarks on a long, slow melody against gently rippling piano accompaniment, later introducing a quirkier, more playful theme. The piano grumbles away in its bass register, then moves to chiming, bell-like harmonies, before the two opening themes return in fresh guises, eventually dashing to an exuberant, outspoken close.

For today's final piece, we come full circle, and back to distinctively Parisian humour and sparkle. 'A musical clown of the first order' was how musicologist Martin Cooper described Francis Poulenc in his 1951 book *French Music*. It's rather reductive, maybe, but it's hard to refute



*Claude Debussy*

***By 1909, Claude Debussy was no longer the problematic radical of French music that his languid, pastel-hued music had once indicated.***

that pithy assessment, certainly in the context of a work like the 1932 Sextet for piano and wind instruments, surely one of the composer's most intentionally witty creations. But there's far more to Poulenc than simply fun and high jinks: the description of the composer as 'half monk, half rascal' by French critic Claude Rostand is probably closer to the mark, as we'll see.

Poulenc was a Parisian through and through, born into the comfort and security of a well-heeled family whose copious wealth had come from pharmaceuticals. (His father's company would later become the well-known Rhône-Poulenc, which – following a couple of buyouts and mergers – is now part of Sanofi, a major developer of one of the Covid-19 vaccines.) Without the necessity of finding himself a job, the young Poulenc was able to devote himself to his passion for music, and taught himself virtually

unaided as a composer. He delighted in hanging out in Parisian bars and cafés as one of a loose composer collective dubbed Les Six (alongside Georges Auric, Louis Durey, Arthur Honegger, Darius Milhaud and Germaine Tailleferre), a gang that idolised Erik Satie and Jean Cocteau for their iconoclastic aesthetics, and gleefully stuck two fingers up at the serious-minded refinement of the French impressionist composers who had preceded them (though Poulenc maintained a quiet reverence for Debussy). Although Françaix, composer of today's opening piece, was working a few years later than Les Six – in fact, he was only eight when that group received its nickname in 1920 – he shared much of their interest in clarity, objectivity, wit and sparkle.

Poulenc merrily pilfered influences from the music hall and the circus, from boulevard cafés and friteries, blending his sarcastic satire with a deep thread of



*Francis Poulenc*

***But there's far more to Poulenc than simply fun and hijinks: the description of the composer as 'half monk, half rascal' by French critic Claude Rostande is probably closer to the mark, as we'll see.***

heart-on-sleeve sentimentality, both sides exquisitely delivered with sophistication and impeccable craftsmanship. Indeed, Poulenc succeeded in transforming the unabashed sentimentality of his earlier music into something entirely sincere and genuinely moving in many of his later works, often his religious music. Raised a devout Catholic, he returned to explore his faith anew in works such as his solemn *Stabat Mater* and his deeply moving opera *Dialogues des Carmélites*, about the gruesome fate of a group of nuns during the French Revolution.

Poulenc's Sextet, however, comes from decades earlier, and is as lighthearted and satirical as anything he wrote. Its instrumentation is unusual, but it reflects Poulenc's early predilection for the piercing distinctiveness of wind instruments over the velvety blend of strings: other early works include a Sonata for clarinet and bassoon, another for horn,

trumpet and trombone, and a Trio for oboe, bassoon and piano.

Following a rushing call to attention, the first movement mixes jazziness and nostalgia to energetic effect, contrasting a bustling opening theme with a second main melody, initially on piano, of indulgent sentimentality. The elegant second movement – a 'Divertissement' – seems to consciously reference (or even take the mickey out of) Mozart's famous C major Piano Sonata, with a sprightly middle section providing comic relief. The finale is just as cheeky as the first movement, and includes more than one knowing nod to Stravinsky (its opening could come straight from *The Rite of Spring*). But after all its dashing, insolent invention, it closes with a surprisingly calm, thoughtful apotheosis that rises above the madness that's gone before, as if Poulenc were saying: you see, there was a serious point to this all along.

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Piano

## MAXIM EMELYANYCHEV



At the Scottish Chamber Orchestra Maxim Emelyanychev follows in the footsteps of just five previous Principal Conductors in the Orchestra's 50-year history; Roderick Brydon (1974-1983), Jukka-Pekka Saraste (1987-1991), Ivor Bolton (1994-1996), Joseph Swensen (1996-2005) and Robin Ticciati (2009-2018).

Recent highlights have included a US tour and a performance at the London Proms with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and his debuts with the Berliner Philharmoniker, New Japan Philharmonic, Osaka Kansai Philharmonic, Bergen Philharmonic, Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre de Chambre de Paris.

In 2023/24 Maxim's highlights include debuts with the Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks, WDR Sinfonieorchester Köln, SWR Symphonieorchester Stuttgart, Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio-France and Mozarteum Orchestra at the Salzburg Festival. He returns to the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Mahler Chamber Orchestra, Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra.

He regularly collaborates with renowned artists such as Max Emanuel Cenčić, Patrizia Ciofi, Joyce DiDonato, Franco Fagioli, Richard Goode, Sophie Karthäuser, Stephen Hough, Katia and Marielle Labèque, Marie-Nicole Lemieux, Julia Lezhneva, Alexei Lubimov, Riccardo Minasi, Xavier Sabata and Dmitry Sinkovsky.

Maxim is also a highly respected chamber musician. His most recent recording, of Brahms Violin Sonatas with long-time collaborator and friend Aylen Pritchin, was released on Aparté in December 2021 and has attracted outstanding reviews internationally. With the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Maxim has recorded Schubert Symphony No 9 – the symphony with which he made his debut with the orchestra – and Mendelssohn Symphonies Nos 3 'Scottish' and 5 'Reformation', both on Linn Records.

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

Flute

## ANDRÉ CEBRIÁN



Spanish flautist André Cebrián studied in his home town Santiago de Compostela with Luis Soto, Laurent Blaiteau and Pablo Sagredo. He then went on to study with János Bálint in HfM Detmold (Germany) and with Jacques Zoon in HEM Genève (Switzerland).

André's first orchestral experiences at the National Youth Orchestra of Spain, the Britten-Pears Orchestra and the Gustav Mahler Jugendorchester led him to perform with such orchestras as the Orquesta de Cadaqués, Staatsskapelle Dresden and Orchestra Mozart. He performs regularly as a Guest Principal Flute with the Sinfónica de Castilla-León, Filarmónica de Gran Canaria, Sinfónica de Barcelona, Gran Teatro del Liceu, Malaysian Philharmonic and Spira Mirabilis.

When he is not playing in the SCO you can find him performing with his wind quintets Azahar Ensemble and Natalia Ensemble - where he is also the artistic director and arranger - or in one of his duo projects with harpist Bleuenn Le Fric, or guitarist Pedro Mateo González. In 2019 he founded the Festival de Música de Cámara de Anguiano in La Rioja (Spain).

He loves sharing his passion for music with his students at the Conservatorio Superior de Aragón, Barenboim-Said Foundation and the youth orchestras he coaches each season.

André joined the SCO as Principal Flute in early 2020.

***André's Chair is kindly supported by Claire and Mark Urquhart***

Oboe

## ROBIN WILLIAMS



"Robin Williams' heart-wrenching oboe solos were to die for in their sheer beauty." – Herald

Born in West Bromwich, Robin Williams attended Wells Cathedral School where he studied oboe with Janet Craxton. He went on to study with Peter Graeme at the RNCM, where he was a major award winner of the Countess of Munster Trust and was finalist in many prestigious competitions (including in the first ever BBC Young Musician of the Year).

After graduating, Robin spent several years abroad, as concert soloist with the Heidelberg Kammerorkester, the Wiener Solisten, the Johann Strauss Sinfonietta and Musikkollegium Zurich, and subsequently as Principal Oboe with the Espoo City Chamber Orchestra in Finland. Moving to Germany in 1990, he worked with the Niederrheinischen Sinfoniker.

Principal Oboe of the SCO since 1992, Robin appears regularly as part of the SCO Wind Ensemble, in chamber music and as a soloist with the SCO including Mozart's Oboe Quartet K370 as part of a chamber music disc directed by Alexander Janiczek. His recordings include Bach's Oboe and Violin Concerto (directed by violinist Joji Hattori) and Vivaldi's Oboe Concerto in A minor as part of a mixed disc of Vivaldi concertos conducted by Nicholas McGegan.

*Robin's Chair is kindly supported in memory of Hedley G Wright*

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

Clarinet

## MAXIMILIANO MARTÍN



Spanish clarinettist and international soloist Maximiliano Martín is one of the most exciting and charismatic musicians of his generation. He combines his position of Principal Clarinet of the SCO with solo chamber music engagements, and masterclasses all around the world.

Maximiliano has appeared as a soloist and chamber musician in many of the world's most prestigious venues including the BBC Proms at Cadogan Hall, Wigmore Hall, Library of Congress in Washington, Mozart Hall in Seoul, Laeiszhalle Hamburg, Durban City Hall in South Africa, and Teatro Monumental in Madrid. Highlights of the past years have included concertos with the SCO, European Union Chamber Orchestra, and Orquesta Filarmónica de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, amongst others. He performs regularly with ensembles and artists such as London Conchord Ensemble, Doric and Casals String Quartets, François Leleux, Pekka Kuusisto and Llyr Williams.

Born in La Orotava (Tenerife), he studied at the Conservatorio Superior de Musica in Tenerife, Barcelona School of Music and at the Royal College of Music, where he held the prestigious Wilkins-Mackerras Scholarship, graduated with distinction and received the Frederick Thurston prize. His teachers have included Joan Enric Lluna, Richard Hosford and Robert Hill. Maximiliano was a prizewinner in the Howarth Clarinet Competition of London and at the Bristol Chamber Music International Competition. He is one of the Artistic Directors of the Chamber Music Festival of La Villa de La Orotava, held every year in his hometown.

Maximiliano Martín is a Buffet Crampon Artist and plays with Buffet Tosca Clarinets.

*Maximiliano's Chair is kindly supported by Stuart and Alison Paul*



Bassoon

## CERYS AMBROSE-EVANS



Born in London, Cerys started playing the bassoon when she was 15, after first playing the double bass. She studied at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, learning with Miriam Gussek, Daniel Jemison, Helen Simons and Peter Whelan, and was awarded the Howarth-GSMD Bassoon prize in her first year. After participating in the Erasmus scheme in Amsterdam and graduating with first class honours, she continued her studies with Bram van Sambeek at the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague.

Since moving back to the UK, Cerys has enjoyed a varied freelance career, performing with the RPO, LSO, Hallé, CBSO and The Orchestra of the Royal Opera House. She has been Principal Bassoon of the SCO since 2021/22.

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

Horn

## MÁTÉ BÖRZSÖNYI



© Tamás Márkos

Born into a musical family, the Hungarian horn player Máté Börzsönyi studied at the Music Academy Budapest, and subsequently in Florence and Stuttgart, winning international competitions in Hungary, Italy and Austria. He is currently Principal Horn in the Dohnányi Orchestra Budapest and received the 'Musician of the Year' award in 2023.

An enthusiastic baroque and natural horn player, Máté is a member of the award-winning Orfeo Orchestra in Budapest, which performs on period instruments, touring and recording extensively.

Máté is a regular guest of the UMZE (New Hungarian Music Association) chamber orchestra, which specialises in contemporary music; he also freelances in all the Budapest orchestras.

He has appeared several times in the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, and at the end of 2023 he was guest Principal horn for a month in Teatro la Scala, Milan.

As a soloist, Máté has performed concertos by Strauss, Mozart, Glier and Telemann. He has taken part in the Kaposfest chamber music festival and Budapest Wagner days and has given masterclasses in Hungary and the Czech Republic.

Obsessed with everything to do with his instrument, Máté has developed an orchestral double horn together with Christopher Cornford, the master German horn maker. In 2022 Máté launched a new brand of high resolution, 3D-printed 'Tátu Mutes', which he designed and developed himself. These have become internationally popular, used by brass soloists and in many of the world's top orchestras (Instagram: @tatuhorn).

In his free time, Máté loves hiking and astronomy, and is studying astrophysics.

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