



Summer Tour 2024

# MENDELSSOHN VIOLIN CONCERTO

25-27 July 2024



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PROGRAMME

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# MENDELSSOHN VIOLIN CONCERTO

Kindly supported by Eriadne & George Mackintosh and Claire & Anthony Tait.

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**Thursday 25 July, 8pm, Stirling Castle**

**Friday 26 July, 7.30pm, The Ryan Centre, Stranraer**

**Saturday 27 July, 7.30pm, The Volunteer Hall, Galashiels**

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**SCHUBERT** Overture in the Italian Style

**MENDELSSOHN** Violin Concerto

*Interval of 20 minutes*

**MENDELSSOHN** String Symphony No 10 in B minor

**SCHUBERT** Symphony No 5

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**Viviane Hagner** Director/Violin

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concert is with   
STIRLING  
CASTLE

The Stranraer  
concert is with   
Dumfries  
& Galloway

The Galashiels  
concert is with   
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Jo and Alison Elliot

### **Second Violin** *Rachel Smith*

J Douglas Home

### **Principal Viola** *Max Mandel*

Ken Barker and Martha Vail Barker

### **Viola** *Brian Schiele*

Christine Lessels

### **Viola** *Steve King*

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### **Principal Timpani** *Louise Lewis Goodwin*

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THE TIMES ★★★★★

# YOUR ORCHESTRA

*Information correct at the time of going to print*

## **First Violin**

Viviane Hagner  
Afonso Fesch  
Tom Aldren  
Kana Kawashima  
Fiona Alexander  
Sarah Bevan Baker  
Sian Holding  
Kirsty Main

## **Second Violin**

Marcus Barcham Stevens  
Gordon Bragg  
Stewart Webster  
Will McGahon  
Niamh Lyons  
Catherine James

## **Viola**

Max Mandel  
Ana Dunne Sequi  
Brian Schiele  
Steve King

## **Cello**

Christian Elliott  
Donald Gillan  
Niamh Molloy  
Duncan Strachan

## **Bass**

Nikita Naumov  
Jamie Kenny

## **Flute**

André Cebrián  
Marta Gómez

## **Oboe**

Katherine Bryer  
Fraser Kelman

## **Clarinet**

Kate McDermott  
William Stafford

## **Bassoon**

Cerys Ambrose-Evans  
Alison Green

## **Horn**

Anna Drysdale  
Jamie Shield

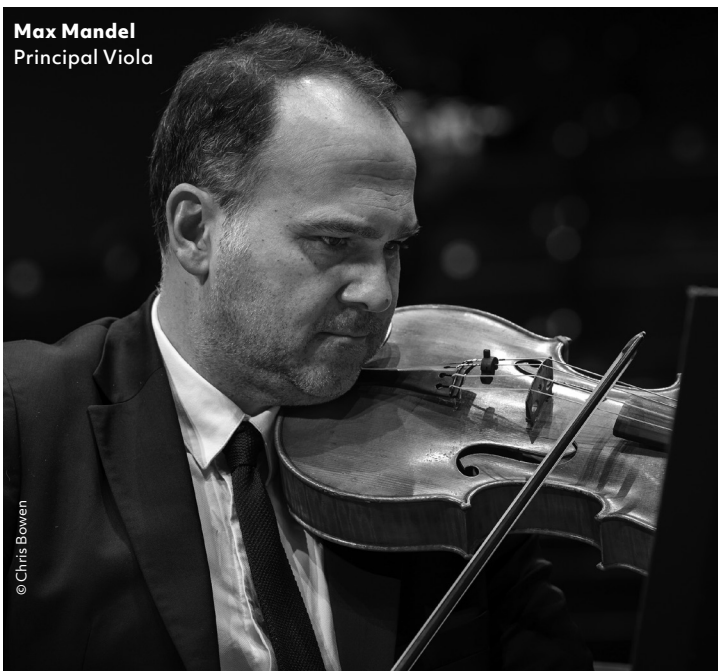
## **Trumpet**

Peter Franks  
Shaun Harrold

## **Timpani**

Louise Lewis Goodwin

**Max Mandel**  
Principal Viola





# WHAT YOU ARE ABOUT TO HEAR

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## **SCHUBERT (1797-1828)**

Overture in the Italian Style, D591 (1817)

**Adagio — Allegro**

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## **MENDELSSOHN (1809-1847)**

Violin Concerto, Op 64 (1838-1844)

**Allegro molto appassionato**

**Andante**

**Allegretto non troppo – Allegro molto vivace**

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## **MENDELSSOHN (1809-1847)**

String Symphony No 10 in B minor (1823)

**Adagio – Allegro – più presto**

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## **SCHUBERT (1797-1828)**

Symphony No 5, D485 (1816)

**Allegro**

**Andante con moto**

**Menuetto. Allegro molto**

**Allegro vivace**

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There's no shortage of youthful vigour, energy and optimism among the four pieces in tonight's programme. That shouldn't come as too much of a surprise: Felix Mendelssohn was just 14 when he wrote his String Symphony No 10, while Franz Schubert composed his Fifth Symphony at 19, and his *Overture in the Italian Style* at 20. But, without wanting to introduce too much of a morbid note, we probably ought to put those ages in context. Both composers died tragically young (Schubert at 31, Mendelssohn at 38), but they'd launched their musical creativity so early in their short lives that they'd already produced serious quantities of music by the stage that other composers had barely got started. All of which leaves Mendelssohn's evergreen Violin Concerto – completed in 1844 – as something of a paradoxically 'late' work in his output, even though he was just 35 when he finished it.

But we begin with the 20-year-old Schubert, attempting to make a name for himself and his music in the European musical capital of Vienna in 1817. The year before, Viennese audiences had first encountered the operas of Rossini in a visit from the Italian Opera Company, and they'd been immediately captivated by the composer's wit and drama. The young Schubert was among those admirers. So impressed was he, in fact, that he attempted to produce something similar himself – possibly as a musical tribute, but also, more pragmatically, in an attempt to provoke enough interest from Viennese theatres that he might get a commission for something more substantial along similar lines. Sadly, he never did.

Indeed, Schubert dreamt throughout his life of writing a successful opera, and began more than 20 – his first, *Des Teufels Lustschloss* (or 'The Devil's Pleasure Palace') at the age of just 16 – though he completed fewer than half of



*Franz Peter Schubert*

**We begin with the 20-year-old Schubert, attempting to make a name for himself and his music in the European musical capital of Vienna in 1817.**

them. For a composer now so revered for his hundreds of songs and his uncanny ability to produce effortlessly expressive melody, you'd think an opera might come as second nature. Schubert struggled, however, with second-rate librettos, convoluted storylines, and also perhaps a feeling that he shouldn't simply indulge his knack for melody in heartstopping arias, but focus instead on complex ensembles and dramatic development.

But back to 1817. Fired up by Rossini's Viennese success, Schubert wrote two Overtures 'in the Italian Style' (or so they were dubbed by his publisher), taking a break from writing his Sixth Symphony to do so. Tonight's Overture in C, D591, wasn't published until 1865, but it remains more popular than its companion piece (which wasn't published for another two decades). Schubert's serious-minded, somewhat pompous slow introduction might be more reminiscent of Beethoven than Rossini, but the clarinet and bassoon quickly launch a decidedly

Italian-style duet over distinctive oom-pah accompaniment. Later, there are a bouncing violin melody, an operatic-sounding duet for flute and oboe, and even a few Rossini-style build-ups for good measure. A dashing closing coda swerves us sideways into new ideas and unexpected harmonies, but we're delivered back home safe and sound by the Overture's spirited conclusion.

From the 20-year-old Schubert in 1817, we hop a few decades forward to meet the 35-year-old Mendelssohn. The Violin Concerto was the last major orchestral piece that Mendelssohn produced, and, unlike the childhood music he wrote at a rate of knots (as we'll discover shortly), it took him a while – six years, in fact, though Mendelssohn has the excuse of directing Leipzig's Gewandhaus Orchestra and founding the city's Music Conservatoire.

The Concerto is rooted in friendship, that between Mendelssohn and violinist Ferdinand

David, who first became friends and chamber music collaborators as far back as 1825, when David was 15 and Mendelssohn 16. When Mendelssohn founded the Leipzig Conservatoire, he soon enlisted David as its inaugural violin professor, and when he took on the directorship of the Gewandhaus Orchestra, no prizes for guessing who he hurried to appoint as its leader.

The first inklings of a Violin Concerto came in 1838, when Mendelssohn wrote to David: 'I should like to write a violin concerto for you next winter. One in E minor runs through my head, the beginning of which gives me no peace.' In the end, Mendelssohn only completed the work on 16 September 1844, and worked closely with his friend on it. One of David's specific requests was that the Concerto should avoid virtuoso display for its own sake, with the result that, though the piece is hardly without its difficulties, it remains relatively playable, and a favourite for younger violinists. David (who else?) premiered the Concerto in Leipzig on 13 March 1845. It was an immediate hit, and has remained popular ever since.

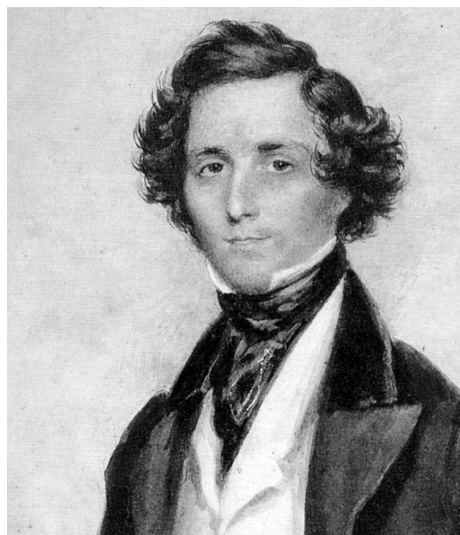
Nonetheless, it's a quietly innovative piece. Mendelssohn the conductor wasn't fond of applause between movements of a longer work, so composed links joining the Concerto's three movements: a solo bassoon that refuses to be quiet once the haunting first movement has ended; then a more elaborate dialogue between the soloist and orchestra to launch the scherzo-like finale. Furthermore, Mendelssohn breaks Classical convention by placing the violinist's solo cadenza not towards the end of the first movement, but at the climax of its central development section, an innovation that was picked up and copied by composers including Tchaikovsky and Sibelius.

It was just a few years after Schubert's Italian-style Overture that opened today's concert that Mendelssohn began his first attempts at writing music. The younger composer's earliest compositions date from 1820, when he was just 11 (they include – deep breath – a violin sonata, a piano trio, several songs, three piano sonatas, choral works and even an opera), and tonight's next piece is one of 12 String Symphonies that Mendelssohn composed between the ages of 12 and 14. At that time, he was a pupil of Carl Zelter, and these String Symphonies inevitably display the influence of Zelter's rather conservative teaching, not least in their backward glances to the music of CPE Bach.

But they're no mere childhood exercises. The String Symphony No 10, completed in May 1823 when Mendelssohn was 14, is a single-movement work of enormous confidence and sophistication, whose solemn, Haydn-inspired introduction is followed by a dashing faster section that's Mendelssohn through and through. It's been suggested it may originally have been joined by two complementary movements, though they've never been unearthed.

To close tonight's concert, we return to Schubert, and to the 19-year-old composer in 1816. Though Mozart had been dead for a quarter of a century by then, the year that Schubert was writing his Fifth Symphony, the earlier composer's music was more highly regarded than ever – and more popular, certainly, than that of Beethoven, who at that point was eight symphonies through his nine-strong cycle, and seen as dangerously, unpredictably innovative. Schubert was fascinated by Beethoven, but devoted to Mozart. In October 1816, the same month he completed his Fifth Symphony, he gushed in his diary: 'as though from afar, the magic





*Felix Mendelssohn*

**Mendelssohn breaks Classical convention by placing the violinist's solo cadenza, not towards the end of the first movement, but at the climax of its central development section, an innovation that was picked up and copied by composers including Tchaikovsky and Sibelius.**

notes of Mozart's music still gently haunt me. So these fair impressions, which neither time nor circumstance can efface, linger in the soul and lighten our existence. They show us in the darkness of this life a light, clear and lovely, for which we may constantly hope. O Mozart, immortal Mozart, how many, how endlessly many such beneficent intimations of a better life have you imprinted on our souls.'

Schubert's Fifth Symphony would no doubt have received its first performances from the amateur orchestra that met in the apartment of Vienna violinist Otto Hatwig, in which the young composer played viola. But it had to wait until 13 years after Schubert's death for its public premiere, in 1841 at Vienna's Josefstadt Theatre.

And if the Symphony is sometimes dismissed as 'light' music when compared with the darker, more ambitious Fourth (which Schubert himself called his 'Tragic' Symphony) – well, that can only

be a compliment. Light it certainly is, in its apparently effortless invention, its endless charm and grace, and its delicate, translucent scoring. Schubert opens his first movement with a miniature 'curtain-raiser' for the woodwind, which the first violins can't help but interrupt with their jaunty main theme. There's an undoubted Mozartian feeling to the movement's clarity and balance, but also a harmonic richness that makes it distinctively Schubertian. Light and shadow seem to constantly shift in the gently tripping second movement, officially the slow movement but not terribly slow at all. The third movement, a minor-key minuet, provides the Symphony's stormiest, most dramatic music, despite its lighter, more bucolic central trio in the contrasting major. And Schubert offers plenty of mischievous harmonic surprises in his bouncy, scampering fourth movement, a masterclass in transparent orchestration.

© David Kettle

Director / Violin

## VIVIANE HAGNER



Munich-born violinist Viviane Hagner has won exceptional praise for her highly intelligent musicality and passionate artistry. Since making her international debut at the age of 12, and a year later participating in the legendary 'joint concert' of the Israel and Berlin Philharmonics (conducted by Zubin Mehta in Tel Aviv), Hagner has acquired a depth and maturity in her playing that is reflected in her stage presence and assurance.

Appearing with the world's great orchestras, Hagner's concerto appearances include the Berlin Philharmonic, Boston Symphony, Chicago Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, Leipzig Gewandhaus, New York Philharmonic, and the Philharmonia Orchestra, working with conductors such as Ashkenazy, Barenboim, Eschenbach and Salonen as well as a Carnegie Hall appearance with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra.

This season Hagner is Artist in Residence with the Orchestre National de Bretagne and joins them for three orchestral concerts as well as a solo recital at the beautiful Opera de Rennes. She will be performing the Tchaikovsky and Walton Violin Concertos, as well as directing a programme based around Bach and Mendelssohn. Elsewhere she performs Hartmann's Concerto Funebre on tour in the Netherlands, as well as recitals with Till Fellner including in Geneva and other performances across Germany.

A committed chamber musician, Hagner regularly appears in concert halls such as the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Berlin Konzerthaus, London's Wigmore Hall, the Palais des Beaux Arts Brussels and the Zurich Tonhalle. Performing at festivals across the world, past invitations include the Ravello Festival, Salzburg Easter Festival and the Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival.

Hagner dedicates herself to outreach activities for audiences of all ages. She is a founder and Artistic Director of Krzyżowa-Music, an ambitious festival promoting the exchange of ideas and culture whilst allowing young and aspiring musicians the opportunity to rehearse and perform with internationally acclaimed artists. Residing in Berlin where she grew up, she has been Professor at the Mannheim Conservatory of Music and Performing Arts since 2013.

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

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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 Principal Guest Conductor Andrew Manze, Pekka Kuusisto, François Leleux, Nicola Benedetti, Isabelle van Keulen, Anthony Marwood, Richard Egarr, Mark Wigglesworth, Lorenza Borrani 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 Sir James MacMillan, Anna Clyne, Sally Beamish, Martin Suckling, Einojuhani Rautavaara, Karin Rehnqvist, Mark-Anthony Turnage, Nico Muhly and the late Peter Maxwell Davies.

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