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SCOTTISH
CHAMBER
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24 Nov 2024



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SIDE BY SIDE CONCERT

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Sunday 24 November, 3pm, The Queen's Hall, Edinburgh

GRIME Elegiac Inflections

HUMMEL Octet-Partita

SCHMITT Lied & Scherzo

Interval of 20 minutes

KAPRÁLOVÁ Trio for Winds

CAPLET Suite Persane

SCO Wind Soloists

Students of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland



SCO Wind Soloists

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Conductor

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Flute

André Cebrián

*Molly Gribbon

Oboe

Katherine Bryer

*Laura Kathryn Ritchie

*Angelos Charalampous

Cor Anglais

*Laura Kathryn Ritchie

Clarinet

Maximiliano Martín

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*Anthony McKindless McKenna

*Isabella Runge

Bass Clarinet

William Stafford

Bassoon

Cerys Ambrose-Evans

Alison Green

Contrabassoon

Alison Green

Horn

Jože Rošer

*Abigail Wilson

William Stafford

Sub-Principal Clarinet



WHAT YOU ARE ABOUT TO HEAR

HELEN GRIME (b.1981)

Elegiac Inflections (2005)

Allegro ma non troppo
Elegiac

HUMMEL (1778-1837)

Octet-Partita (1803)

Allegro con spirito
Andante piu tosto Allegretto
Vivace assai

SCHMITT (1870-1958)

Lied & Scherzo (1910)

KAPRÁLOVÁ (1915-1940)

Trio for Winds (1937-1938)
reconstr. Egeling (2011)

Allegro
Andante semplice
Vivo

CAPLET (1878-1925)

Suite Persane (1901)

Scharki (Allegretto quasi Andante)
Nihawend
Iskia Samaïsi

Today's concert embarks on an ambitious musical journey – not only from Scotland to the Middle East (with a couple of European stop-overs along the way), but also through more than two centuries of music for wind instruments, taking in a couple of respected traditions during the course of the voyage.

We begin, however, at home in Scotland, and in our own times. Though born in York, composer Helen Grime moved to Scotland with her parents as a baby, studying at the City of Edinburgh Music School and St Mary's Music School, as well as taking composition lessons from the age of 12 with Icelandic multi-musician Hafliði Hallgrímsson, for many years the SCO's Principal Cellist. She's been associate composer with the Hallé and composer in association at London's Wigmore Hall, and is currently professor of composition at London's Royal Academy of Music.

She wrote her *Elegiac Inflections* for double wind quintet (two each of flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons and horns) in 2005. She writes about the piece:

"In Elegiac Inflections I wanted to exploit and highlight the different characteristics of the wind ensemble, focusing both on the highly virtuosic and intensely lyrical capacities of the group. The piece is in two movements and both incorporate elements of elegy. This is often represented in explosive and fast-changing moods throughout the work.

The first movement is lively and energetic throughout. After a vigorous build-up incorporating the whole ensemble, there is an episode for solo oboes, later with horns, punctuated by a slightly ungainly and unpredictable bassline in the bassoon. After



Helen Grime

In *Elegiac Inflections* I wanted to exploit and highlight the different characteristics of the wind ensemble, focusing both on the highly virtuosic and intensely lyrical capacities of the group.

a somewhat chaotic passage with high flute and piccolo, the group comes together for an intense rendition of the earlier oboe solos, increasing in volume and speed to its close.

A melancholic cor anglais solo opens the second movement, gradually leading the way to extensive solos that flow throughout the ensemble. A more animated section, with the flutes as a focus, foretells the much more agitated centre of the movement. Fast and virtuosic solos begin in the depths of the group before everyone is involved in a powerful climax encompassing over five octaves. A final section that refers back to the opening solos ends the piece with gentle, hovering chords".

For today's next piece, we jump back in time to 1803. Johann Nepomuk Hummel

might be a lesser-known figure to us today, but he was a hugely admired and influential musician in Vienna at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries. He studied with Mozart, Salieri, Clementi and Haydn, and counted Beethoven and Schubert among his friends. Indeed, his fellow students among the pupils of Johann Georg Albrechtsberger included Beethoven, by whose fiery creativity he felt entirely overshadowed, even as a young man. Their friendship endured, however, and Hummel later served as one of the pallbearers at Beethoven's funeral in 1827.

As the Viennese public rushed to embrace the new-fangled emotion and unbridled creativity of Romantic composers such as Mendelssohn and Schumann, not to mention Liszt and Wagner, Hummel found his elegant, balanced, late Classical music



Johann Nepomuk Hummel

Hummel's Octet-Partita is far more than mere background music. It's very much intended for concert performance, and as the focus of attention.

rather overlooked. Which is a shame, because there's much to admire and enjoy in it, not least in his sunny, buoyant Octet-Partita, whose score is dated 27 October 1803.

The piece draws heavily on the central European tradition of the *Harmonie*, or wind band, ensembles that were all the rage during the second half of the 18th century, as nobility and wealthy landowners demanded light music from their house ensemble's wind players for the purposes of entertainment. At its simplest, it meant a few popular opera tunes as background music for dinner. At its most sophisticated, however, it led to elaborate rearrangements of symphonies or even whole operas, intended as serenades for banquets or garden parties, to charm and delight hunting expeditions, or even

as 'morning music' to wake particularly esteemed guests.

Despite its place in that tradition, however, Hummel's Octet-Partita is far more than mere background music. It's very much intended for concert performance, and as the focus of attention. After the military-style fanfares of its opening movement, its slow movement is charming and simple, while the horn calls of its dashing finale suggest we might be out at a hunt.

Next on today's programme, music by Florent Schmitt, who has been described as probably the most important French composer you've never heard of. It's not an unfair characterisation. He was born in 1870 in the Lorraine region in northeastern France, close to the border with Germany and in an area that had historically



Florent Schmitt

Florent Schmitt has been described as probably the most important French composer you've never heard of. It's not an unfair characterisation.

swapped back and forth between the two countries. That perhaps explains not only his German-sounding surname, but also the beguiling mix of influences in his music: it sounds distinctively French in its lustrous textures and love of atmosphere, but far more Germanic in its clearly defined themes and contrasting moods. Schmitt counted Maurice Ravel as a friend and Claude Debussy as a figure of deep admiration, but also took profound influences from Wagner and even Richard Strauss.

Nonetheless, Schmitt was deeply proud of his French heritage and identity, so much so that that pride tipped over into a darker form of nationalism in the mid-20th century. One event in particular cast a shadow over his later reputation. Schmitt was a famously outspoken music critic for

Parisian newspaper *Le Temps*, and was so dismayed at a 1933 performance of excerpts from *Der Silbersee* by Kurt Weill – who'd recently fled Nazi persecution – that he cried out 'Vive Hitler!'. Controversy continued after the Second World War: Schmitt's willingness to collaborate with the Vichy regime was another factor that led to a partial spurning of his music.

But Schmitt's lyrical, somewhat elusive *Lied et Scherzo* comes from many years before his ill-advised later activities, and stands as part of the eminent French tradition of music for wind instruments. He wrote the work in 1910, employing – like Helen Grime – a double wind quintet, but singling out one of the ensemble's horns as a soloist. He dedicated the *Lied et Scherzo* to Paul Dukas, whose own *Villanelle* for horn and piano Schmitt much admired – and you

might discern in Schmitt's piece, too, a similar mood of mischief and mayhem to that of Dukas's most famous creation, *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*.

As its title implies, the piece falls into two large sections – a dreamy, appropriately song-like Lied, then a fantastical, quicksilver Scherzo – though Schmitt unites the two with a web of cross-references. Cackling clarinets answer the solo horn's solemn opening call, and the rest of the ensemble later joins in the perhaps mocking response. It takes a while before they allow the horn to launch into its rich, noble melody, accompanying it with exotic-sounding harmonies (and with the clarinets' earlier braying laughter transformed into gentle rocking figures). The pace quickens as the piece heads towards its devilish Scherzo section, in which an oboe is first to deliver its scampering melody, quickly followed by the solo horn. There's a memory of the Lied's slow-moving melody in among the Scherzo's frenetic movement, and then a wholesale return to the pensive, indulgent mood of the opening. Just as the music seems on the verge of reverting to the Scherzo's mischief, however, Schmitt opts instead for a gracefully quiet close.

From a Lorraine-born Paris resident, we jump to another composer who was drawn to the French capital – though from far further afield. Vítězslava Kaprálová was a remarkable figure, though she lived a tragically short life: she was born in the Moravian city of Brno in 1915, and died in Montpellier, France, just 25 years later. Nonetheless, she achieved remarkable things as both a composer and a conductor, and her music – which includes songs, piano works, a string quartet, two piano concertos and several other

orchestral pieces – is gaining increasing interest internationally.

Her compatriot and fellow composer Bohuslav Martinů played a large role in the creation of her Trio for Winds. He had moved to Paris in 1923 and, inspired by the exceptional standard of wind playing in France, wrote his own reed trio, *Quatre madrigaux*, in 1937 for the famous Trio d'Anches de Paris (or Paris Reed Trio), comprising oboe, clarinet and bassoon. On a return visit to Prague for the premiere of his opera *Julietta*, he met Kaprálová and encouraged her to come to Paris to study with him, which she did a few months later, quickly setting to work on her own Reed Trio in the hope that the same eminent players would perform and even record it.

Sadly, she never completed the work – maybe because the hoped-for performance and recording grew increasingly unlikely, or possibly because she was simply too busy with other music. As it stands, the Trio is a reconstruction by the oboist and musicologist Stéphane Egeling, and it received its premiere as recently as 2011. The first movement is Kaprálová's original: it begins as a distinctive, memorable march, before the oboe introduces the slower, more lyrical second main theme. Kaprálová never completed the two remaining movements: instead, Egeling has added transcriptions for reed trio of movements from her piano work *April Preludes*: a melancholy slow movement led by an oboe melody, and a playful finale that leads the ear in all manner of unexpected directions.

We heard earlier from one little-known French composer, and for today's final piece, we turn to another. Though he was



Vítězslava Kaprálová

She achieved remarkable things as both a composer and a conductor, and her music – which includes songs, piano works, a string quartet, two piano concertos and several other orchestral pieces – is gaining increasing interest internationally.

prominent and highly regarded in his own time, we might not remember French composer André Caplet much these days – and if we do, it's probably as an expert arranger of some of Debussy's piano music for orchestra, including *Pagodes* and *Clair de lune*. Indeed, it was Debussy who championed Caplet early in his career, drawing attention to the younger man's talents under the guise of his music critic alter ago, Monsieur Croche.

Born in Le Havre in 1878, Caplet won numerous prizes at the Paris Conservatoire, and even beat Ravel to the prestigious Prix de Rome in 1901, though he cut short the residency at the Italian capital's Villa Medici he received as a prize (for reasons that are not entirely clear) and headed back to Paris, where he became a close friend of Debussy, Ravel, Falla and others.

Volunteering for combat in the Great War had a profound effect on his later life, however: he was caught in a German poison gas attack, which left him with health complications for many years, and may have contributed to his early death, at just 46, in 1925, when a simple cold developed quickly into pleurisy.

His *Suite persane* for ten wind instruments (note the continuing French interest in this repertoire), however, came long before the dramas of his later life. He wrote it in 1901 while still a student at the Conservatoire, probably inspired by the oriental exhibits he'd encountered at the Paris Exposition Universelle the previous year. It was premiered on 9 March 1901 in the Salle Érard, in an all-Caplet concert given by the Société de Musique Moderne pour Instruments à Vent and flautist Georges



André Caplet

Though he was prominent and highly regarded in his own time, we might not remember French composer André Caplet much these days.

Barrère. And it gained a rave review from *Le Monde Musical*, which called the Suite 'a very ingenious work of instrumental combinations and much inspiration'.

The orient – and all the mystery, opulence and sensuality that came with it – was very much in vogue among Parisian society at the time, and Caplet's Suite fits in perfectly with an imagined, idealised vision of the Middle East. But it's no mere orientalist fantasy: Caplet clearly researched his subject matter, using an authentic Persian melody in his first movement (or so he claimed), and evoking a particular Arabic *maqam* (or scale, a bit like an Indian raga) in the second.

The restless first movement, 'Scharki', is named after a hot, humid wind that blows in the Persian Gulf in early summer and

early winter. The music opens strikingly with an exotic Persian melody first heard unadorned in unison flutes and clarinets, though Caplet later clothes it in Debussian harmonies that would have been far more familiar to his Parisian listeners. The second movement, 'Nihavend', opens with a particular *maqam* or scale used in Persian music. It opens with a melancholy, rhapsodic flute theme, harmonised using bare intervals, before a more overtly Western-sounding central section. The final movement, 'Iskia Samaïsi', is the longest and most elaborate of the three, colliding together contrasting musical ideas in its opening section, before slowing down for what feels like a kind of love song, led by a horn melody, in its sultry central section.

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Biography

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

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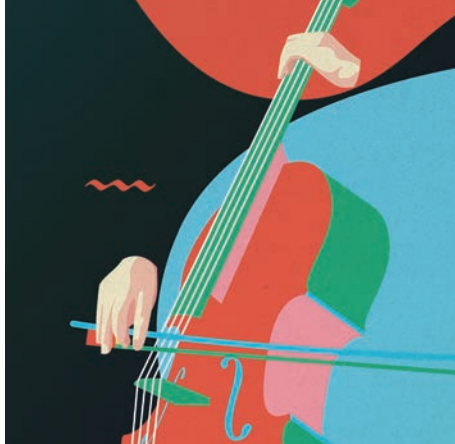
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SCOTTISH CHAMBER ORCHESTRA



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. Their latest recording, of Schubert Symphonies Nos 5 and 8, was released on 1 November.

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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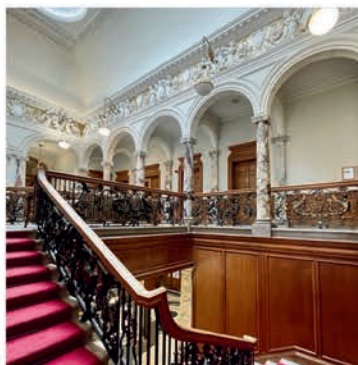
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An SCO Academy participant performs on Glasgow City Halls' stage with the full Orchestra, May 2024 © Christopher Bowen.

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