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Mozart & Strauss


3-5 Apr 2025



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Thursday 3 April, 2pm The Queen's Hall, Edinburgh

Friday 4 April, 2pm City Halls, Glasgow

Saturday 5 April, 2pm Aberdeen Music Hall

ZEDGINIDZE Symphony No 1 (Scottish Premiere)

Commissioned by Mozartwoche Salzburg, the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, and the Swedish Chamber Orchestra

MOZART Bassoon Concerto

Interval of 20 minutes

R STRAUSS Serenade for Winds

R STRAUSS Symphony No 1 in D minor

François Leleux Conductor / Oboe

Cerys Ambrose-Evans Bassoon



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YOUR ORCHESTRA TONIGHT

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Péter Palotai
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Marta Gómez

Oboe

Maria Alba Carmona
Katherine Bryer

Clarinet

Maximiliano Martín
William Stafford

E flat Clarinet

Maximiliano Martín

Bassoon

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Heather Brown

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Duncan Wilson
Cillian Ó'Ceallacháin
Alan Adams

Timpani

Louise Lewis Goodwin

Peter Franks
Principal Trumpet



WHAT YOU ARE ABOUT TO HEAR

TSOTNE ZEDGINIDZE (b. 2009)

Symphony No 1 (2024)
(Scottish Premiere)

Commissioned by Mozartwoche Salzburg, the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, and the Swedish Chamber Orchestra

MOZART (1756-1791)

Bassoon Concerto in B-flat major,
K 191/186e (1774)

Allegro
Andante ma adagio
Rondo: Tempo di menuetto

R STRAUSS (1864-1949)

Serenade in E-flat major, Op 7
(1881)

Symphony No 1 in D minor, TrV 94
(1880)

Andante maestoso – Allegro vivace
Andante
Scherzo: Molto allegro, leggiero – Trio
Finale: Allegro maestoso

If you detect a sense of youthful freshness and vigour to the music in today's programme, you wouldn't be wrong. All four of today's pieces were written by composers in their teenage years – though to describe them as works from 'early' in their respective creators' careers wouldn't always be entirely accurate. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was already an established musician, for example, when he wrote his Bassoon Concerto at the age of 18, while Richard Strauss also had a fair amount of experience when he composed his Serenade for Winds aged 17, and his Symphony No 1 at the age of 16.

Beating both Mozart and Strauss, however – at least in the age stakes in today's programme – is the extraordinary Tbilisi-born pianist and composer TsoTne Zedginidze, who was just 15 when he composed his Symphony No 1 in 2024. He's been widely hailed as a remarkable musical prodigy, and has already collaborated with eminent international figures including violinist Lisa Batiashvili (who's become a mentor), clarinetist/composer Jörg Widmann and conductor Sir Simon Rattle.

Zedginidze was born into a family of musicians, and was able to distinguish and name different musical instruments by the age of two. He began piano lessons aged five, and composing at six, teaching himself through musical experiments and a search for new compositional techniques. Zedginidze gave his first public piano recital in 2019 in Tbilisi, and has since performed right across Europe, usually including his own compositions in his concerts. He's composed a Sonata for Violin and Piano for Batiashvili, and he premiered his own *Fantasia for Piano and Orchestra* at the Audi



Tsothe Zedginidze

Beating both Mozart and Strauss, however – at least in the age stakes in today’s programme – is the extraordinary Tbilisi-born pianist and composer Tsothe Zedginidze

Sommerkonzerte in Ingolstadt, Germany, with the Georgian Chamber Orchestra conducted by Nikoloz Rachveli. In 2020 he gave the first performance of his solo piano work *The Bells*, composed during the Covid 19 pandemic and dedicated to the memory of his mother.

His single-movement Symphony No 1 was premiered in Salzburg by the Salzburg Camerata on 28 January 2025, conducted by tonight’s conductor, François Leleux. It’s a purely abstract work, unfolding as a series of contrasting episodes that take in a variety of moods, all held together with recurring musical ideas and developing themes. It opens with a contemplative dialogue for viola and cello, which gradually expands into richer, interweaving lines for the orchestra’s strings. The structure is defined by shifts in dynamics and speed, from hushed climaxes (featuring a double bass solo) to fast, frenetic outbursts, more upbeat sections, and a

sequence based on the traditional idea of a playful scherzo and contrasting trio. There are solos for flute, bassoon and horn, before layered repeating figures build tension, leading to a return from the opening theme. The Symphony closes, however, with a tense, unresolved harmony.

Mozart was already a prolific composer by the time he completed his Bassoon Concerto on 4 June 1774, but by then he was already an established, not to say prolific composer: he’d written several masses and other church music, a handful of short operas, numerous violin sonatas, no fewer than 25 symphonies, several serenades and divertimenti, and a clutch of string quartets (not to mention a whole catalogue of smaller works). Just the previous year, in fact, he’d gained his first employment, as a 17-year-old musician at the court of Hieronymus von Colloredo, Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg, the Mozart family’s home city.



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

If that was his aim, Mozart might not quite have succeeded, but he nonetheless created what's indisputably the bassoon repertoire's best-loved and most frequently performed Concerto.

Aside from its specific date of composition, however, we don't know a great deal about Mozart's only surviving Bassoon Concerto. He's thought to have written several others, though there's no specific evidence, and the B flat major Concerto is the only survivor in its form. It's been speculated, too, that he may have written the piece for the aristocratic amateur bassoonist Thaddäus Wolfgang von Dürnitz, a big fan of Mozart's music, though the composer's letters indicate that he only met von Dürnitz in 1775, the year after the Concerto's completion. It's probably more likely that he wrote the Concerto for one of the two bassoonists in the Salzburg court orchestra, Heinrich Schultz or Melchior Sandmayr.

What's incontrovertible, however, is that the piece was authentically and specifically conceived for the bassoon, since Mozart exploits the instrument's sound world and

personality so effectively in it. Indeed, it's even been suggested that the piece was part of an attempt to revive the bassoon concerto as a popular form: though bassoon concertos had been well-liked during the Baroque period (Antonio Vivaldi wrote no fewer than 39 of them, for example), their popularity had waned in later years. If that was his aim, Mozart might not quite have succeeded, but he nonetheless created what's indisputably the bassoon repertoire's best-loved and most frequently performed Concerto.

The first movement opens with a confident theme, complete with an urgent, repeated-note bassline, before a more graceful second melody takes over – though the pomp and swagger of the opening are quickly re-established. The bassoon maintains the opening melody's sense of nobility when it enters, but quickly embellishes and decorates the theme,

with huge leaps and athletic figurations demonstrating the player's virtuosic prowess.

There's a gentle sense of flow to Mozart's slower second movement, which shows off the bassoon's lyrical, even vocal qualities in a tune that the composer would later transform into the much-loved aria 'Porgi, amor' in the opera *The Marriage of Figaro*. He closes with a gently tripping minuet dance that leaves its recurring theme to the orchestra (for the most part, at least), while the bassoon soloist supplies drama and decoration in intervening episodes.

Like Mozart, Richard Strauss was just a teenager (a 17-year-old, in this case) when he composed his Serenade for wind instruments in 1881. By then, however, he'd already been busy as a composer, having published a string quartet, a piano sonata and an orchestral march (as well as having completed his Symphony No 1, as we'll discover later). He'd been immersed in music through his father Franz, principal horn player in Munich's court orchestra, whose influence can be heard clearly in the younger man's Serenade – not only in its prominent use of a quartet of horns, but also in the inspiration it takes from Mozart, Mendelssohn and Schubert. Franz Strauss had little time for the new-fangled musical modernism of Wagner (despite working with the composer on several occasions), and focused his son squarely on the established classics of the past.

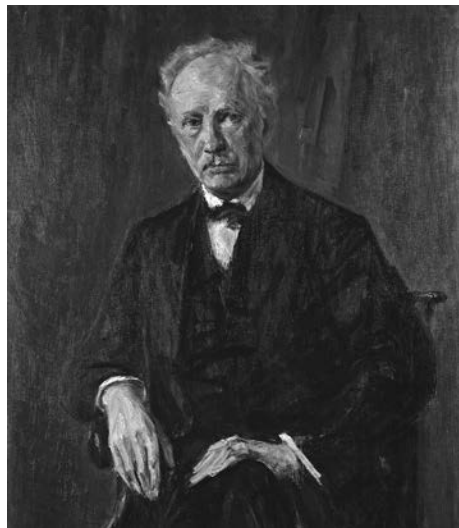
And in his Serenade – which clearly takes its inspiration from Mozart's Serenade in B flat, nicknamed the 'Gran Partita' – the younger Strauss was more than happy to comply – well, mostly. You might notice a few slightly more modern-sounding harmonic twists

that point towards the far lush sounds of Strauss' later music.

He opens with a poignant, graceful oboe melody, set against a rich, darkly coloured accompaniment, and his second main theme – led by a duet between clarinet and horn – is faster-moving and more lyrical. The Serenade's central development section – kicked off by a return from the oboe's opening melody – takes the piece into darker, more turbulent music, but Strauss announces the return of his opening material with a gloriously sonorous horn quartet, surely designed to bring a smile to his father's face. After a swift return to the piece's opening music, the Serenade winds down to a gentle conclusion.

It was the previous year – 1880 – that the 16-year-old Strauss had completed his First Symphony, today's final piece. But, as is the case with all the music in today's programme, it's by no means simply a childhood or student offering. Instead, it's a lengthy, substantial work of great ambition, and one that received an appropriately prestigious premiere on 30 March 1881, from the Munich Academy of Music conducted by the eminent figure of Hermann Levi (who'd be on the podium for the premiere of Wagner's opera *Parsifal* the following year). Strauss' father took great pains to ensure that the Symphony's inaugural outing was a success, even copying the orchestral parts by hand, and was so grateful to Levi for conducting the premiere that he reluctantly agreed to join the orchestra for that *Parsifal* premiere.

The younger Strauss' Symphony gained a mixed but generally positive review from the *Müchener Neueste Nachrichten* newspaper, whose critic assessed that the piece showed



Richard Strauss

Like all the music in today's programme, Strauss' Symphony No 1 might be the work of a teenager, but it's just as authentic, sincere and – in its own way – pioneering as music created by composers with many more years of writing behind them.

'considerable competence in the treatment of the form as well as remarkable skill in orchestration. It must be said that the work cannot lay claim to any true originality, but it demonstrates throughout a fertile musical imagination, to which composition comes easily.'

That question of originality is a vexed one, naturally, and one that's relevant to all of today's music. It's not hard to point to influences from earlier composers in Strauss' writing in his Symphony: Haydn in the first movement's slow introduction, for example, or Mendelssohn in its scurrying faster theme. After the slow, gently unfolding violin melody of its passionate second movement, there's a distinct flavour of Beethoven in the Symphony's rugged, scherzo-like third movement, and the spirit of that same composer surely strides confidently through Strauss' grandiose finale.

It's perhaps inevitable that the 16-year-old Strauss was eager to demonstrate what he'd learnt from his composition lessons with his first teacher, Friedrich Wilhelm Meyer. But there's a sense, too, that his musical cap-doffings are entirely intentional, and that rather than attempting to model himself on a particular composer, he was positioning himself at the end of a long lineage of German and Austrian musical greats, assimilating their influences into a language all his own – indicated beyond question by his sometimes daring harmonies and characteristically colourful orchestration. Like all the music in today's programme, Strauss' Symphony No 1 might be the work of a teenager, but it's just as authentic, sincere and – in its own way – pioneering as music created by composers with many more years of writing behind them.

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Conductor / Oboe

FRANÇOIS LELEUX



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Conductor and oboist François Leleux is renowned for his irrepressible energy, exuberance and musical clarity. Leleux has previously featured as Artistic Partner of Camerata Salzburg, Artist-in-Association with Orchestre de Chambre de Paris, and Artist-in-Residence with orchestras such as hr-Sinfonieorchester, Orchestre Philharmonique de Strasbourg, Berner Symphonieorchester, Norwegian Chamber Orchestra, and Orquesta Sinfónica de Tenerife.

In the 2024/25 season, Leleux's conducting engagements include appearances with Deutsche Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Orchestre de Chambre de Paris, Swedish Chamber Orchestra, Hungarian National Philharmonic Orchestra, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Japan Philharmonic Orchestra, and Robert Schumann Philharmonie Chemnitz. Leleux furthers his international profile as a player-conductor via his continued close association with Camerata Salzburg and appears as a soloist with the SWR Symphonieorchester under conductor Andrés Orozco-Estrada and Orchestre de Paris under Roberto González-Monjas. Additional season highlights include a residency with Orquesta de Valencia as both conductor and soloist, Leleux's first appearance with Estonian National Symphony Orchestra as conductor, and the first of several collaborations with Kammerakademie Potsdam in anticipation of Leleux taking over as Artistic Director of the Kammerakademie Potsdam in 2025/26.

As an oboist, Leleux has performed with orchestras such as New York Philharmonic, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Budapest Festival Orchestra, and Swedish Radio and NHK Symphony orchestras. A dedicated chamber musician, he regularly performs worldwide with long-standing recital partners Lisa Batiashvili, Eric Le Sage and Emmanuel Strosser, as well as with his critically acclaimed woodwind sextet Les Vents Français who in 2024/25 will give numerous concerts across Germany, Switzerland, Spain, and Japan.

For full biography please visit sco.org.uk

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

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. 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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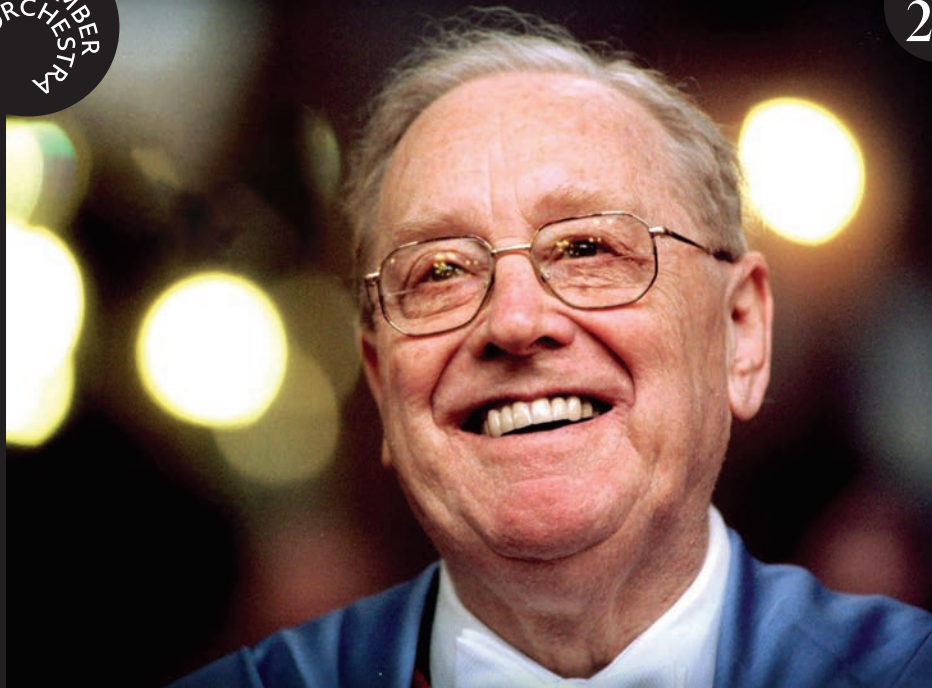
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