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Haydn & Schubert

15-17 January 2026

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PROGRAMME



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Haydn & Schubert

With Lorenza Borrani

Thursday 15 January, 2pm The Queen's Hall, Edinburgh

Friday 16 January, 2pm City Halls, Glasgow

Saturday 17 January, 7.30pm Easterbrook Hall, Dumfries

HAYDN Symphony No.56 in C

SCHNITTKKE Concerto Grosso No.1

Interval of 20 minutes

SCHUBERT Symphony No.8 'Unfinished'

Lorenza Borrani director/violin



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Principal Bass



What You Are About To Hear

HAYDN (1732-1809)

Symphony No.56 in C major
(1774)

Allegro di molto
Adagio
Menuetto
Finale: Prestissimo

SCHNITTKE (1934-1998)

Concerto Grosso No. 1
(1976-1977)

Preludio: Andante
Toccata: Allegro
Recitativo: Lento
Cadenza
Rondo: Agitato
Postludio: Andante

SCHUBERT (1797-1828)

Symphony No.8 'Unfinished', D.759
(1822)

Allegro moderato
Andante con moto

Two forward-looking symphonies bookend today's diverse programme, separated by a far more recent piece that gazes backwards to the Baroque brilliance of Vivaldi and Corelli with plenty of wit and humour (even if some of it is decidedly dark).

We begin, though, with Joseph Haydn, who for the best part of three decades from 1761 worked as a court musician to the fabulously wealthy Esterházy family. During that long period, he was responsible for running the court orchestra, composing music to delight Prince Nikolaus and his family, giving chamber music performances and even staging opera productions. Not for nothing is Haydn often dubbed the 'father of the symphony': it was while he was an Esterházy employee – both in Eisenstadt, near Vienna, and in the far further-flung Eszterháza Palace, now in Hungary – that he developed and refined, almost single-handedly, the symphony in the form we know it today. (He did the same for the string quartet, too, and wrote a lot of works in both forms during his time with the family.)

Haydn's Symphony No. 56 comes from 1774. The composer had found his contributions increasingly appreciated by the Prince (and his responsibilities growing as a result), and he took the recognition as a cue for ever more ambitious work. The Symphony No. 56 is one result, and it seems specifically intended to show off the Eszterháza Palace's court orchestra and its individual players to his appreciative boss, as if to remind the Prince what a fine band of musicians he had at his beck and call.

Fanfare-like figures abound in its exuberant opening movement, but even within its opening theme, there are striking contrasts between the bright passages involving



Franz Joseph Haydn

Not for nothing is Haydn often dubbed the ‘father of the symphony’.

winds and horns and the far softer, gentler material for the strings. Once its more lyrical second main theme has been heard, both are combined in clever counterpoint in the stormier central development section, before they return at the close – Haydn even heralds the return of his quieter string theme with a gentle timpani roll.

He shows off Eszterháza’s fine wind players in the gentle slow movement, whose long melody unfurls on a duo of oboes and later a bassoon against a backdrop of muted strings. He plays a small musical prank in his jolly minuet, whose gushing enthusiasm drives it unexpectedly into the ‘wrong’ key: Haydn simply stops abruptly, only to recommence the music as if nothing has happened. His whirling finale draws on the rhythms of Italian tarantella and saltarello dances, and explores the full colours available to Haydn in his rich orchestration

and in his restless switching between contrasting instrumental groups.

The mood changes quite noticeably in today’s second piece. Despite a prolific output of music over several decades, Alfred Schnittke was a composer virtually unknown to listeners in Western Europe and America until the 1980s. There was a simple reason: Schnittke lived almost his entire life under the strictures of the Soviet regime, and though his abilities and expertise were recognised within the USSR, his music was rarely permitted to be heard west of the Soviet bloc. Nonetheless, in his home country – and, as time went on, beyond – he was widely considered the heir to Shostakovich’s legacy, continuing that earlier composer’s uncanny mix of despair, frustration and often bitter, sarcastic humour. In Schnittke’s music, it’s often hard to tell where one stops and the other begins.

Nonetheless, Schnittke gained a few glimpses of Western musical developments throughout his life, during three childhood years in Vienna, and also as a student at the Moscow Conservatoire during the so-called 'Krushchev thaw' following the death of Stalin, when more avant-garde artistic ideas began seeping in from Western Europe. Ironically, however, it was Schnittke's early success as a film composer that set him down the path that he would follow later in his career. Used to combining numerous different musical styles within a film score, even switching back and forth between them nimbly as the storyline demanded, Schnittke quickly adopted this freewheeling mix of styles – later termed 'polystylism' – as his overarching musical approach.

It's a simple idea: when there are so many ways of creating music, and so many styles you might adopt, why restrict yourself to just one of them? Why not instead throw them all together and use any or all of them as the mood takes you? Much of Schnittke's music – including today's Concerto Grosso No.1 – does just that, freely leaping from dense modernism to lightweight tango, for example, or from Baroque pastiche to nursery-rhyme simplicity in a single piece, with results that are sometimes humorous, sometimes disconcerting. It's an approach that's been criticised for an apparent lack of authenticity – as though we're never quite sure which one of these musical impersonations represents the 'real' Schnittke. The answer is probably that they all do – or at least that the apparently irreconcilably different styles add up to music that reflects the profusion and confusion of ideas and voices we encounter in modern-day life.

Schnittke had his own individual perspective on the polystylism of his Concerto Grosso No.1, which he explained in a programme note for an early performance, in Vienna in 1977: 'I dream of the Utopia of a united style, where fragments of "U" (Unterhaltung [entertaining]) and "E" (Ernst [serious]) are not used for comic effect but seriously represent multi-faceted musical reality. That's why I've decided to put together some fragments from my cartoon film music; a joyful children's chorus; a nostalgic atonal serenade; a piece of 100%-guaranteed Corelli (made in the USSR); and finally, my grandmother's favourite tango played by my great-grandmother on a harpsichord. I am sure all these themes go together very well, and I use them absolutely seriously.'

Indeed, there's little doubt that Schnittke was entirely serious about the evident humour in his Concerto Grosso No.1. It had been commissioned by violinists Gidon Kremer and Tatiana Gritenko, who gave its premiere on 21 March 1977 in Leningrad, with the Leningrad Chamber Orchestra conducted by Eri Klas. It was around that time that Schnittke's music was slowly becoming better known in the West, with the result that the Soviet authorities cracked down hard on allowing him to travel. For a European tour with the Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra, however, Kremer and Gritenko came up with a sly solution: they'd employ him as the piece's harpsichord and prepared piano player, thereby making him an essential presence, but sidestepping the possibility that he'd be barred from travelling as simply the piece's composer.

The piece is indeed a true Baroque-style concerto grosso in the way it contrasts a trio of soloists – its two violinists and



Alfred Schnittke

Schnittke lived almost his entire life under the strictures of the Soviet regime, and though his abilities and expertise were recognised within the USSR, his music was rarely permitted to be heard west of the Soviet bloc.

a harpsichord/prepared piano player – against the larger forces of a string orchestra. The work's two violinists are most often in the limelight, but its keyboard performer plays a crucial role, too, whether summoning a Baroque-style sound world on the harpsichord, or conjuring sounds that are far more warped and unsettling with the very modern prepared piano. Invented in the 1940s by maverick US composer John Cage, the prepared piano is simply an everyday acoustic piano that's had objects inserted between its strings, altering its sounds in often strange and unpredictable ways. Cage wrote extensively for it – including the hour-long, 20-movement *Sonatas and Interludes* – and it's been taken up by numerous more recent composers too.

It's the prepared piano that launches the six-movement *Concerto Grosso's* opening

Preludio, playing a strange, naive but slightly unsettling tune that might sound something like a nursery rhyme, and which will return again and again throughout the piece. The two violinists call to each other in increasingly desperate – and increasingly dissonant – two-note ideas, another musical element that we'll hear later.

The *Toccata* begins as an affectionate pastiche of Vivaldi, but becomes increasingly dissonant and obsessive as it develops. It gives way to the funereal *Recitativo*, in which the two-note ideas we heard earlier return, as though the intense energy of the previous movement has changed nothing. The *Cadenza* is a two-part showpiece for the two violinists that heads inexorably to a violent climax – only to suddenly swerve sideways into a different kind of music altogether.



Franz Peter Schubert

Schubert's two existing movements exhibit a strange kind of balance and unity on their own, as if they're two sides of the same coin.

The penultimate Rondo opens as though it's another tribute to Vivaldi (or perhaps Corelli), though the earlier dissonances quickly return. Either shockingly or humorously – depending on your mood – the music suddenly transports us to sultry South America to dance a smoky, sophisticated tango, but the movement is capped off by the return of the prepared piano's nursery-rhyme tune, now set against a dense cloud of dissonant harmony from the string orchestra.

Schnittke's closing Postludio returns the solo violin duo to their two-note opening idea, now apparently drained of life and energy as it rises ever higher – and ever more enigmatically – into the stratosphere.

We close today's concert with another enigmatic piece, this time one of the repertoire's best-loved symphonies.

Schubert's 'Unfinished' was always intended to end up as a conventional, four-movement Symphony. Alongside its completed first and second movements, a reduced version of a projected third movement exists, though there's nothing at all to indicate what the composer had in mind for a finale. Scholars and performers have put forward various competing completions down the centuries, but none has stuck. That's perhaps because Schubert's two existing movements exhibit a strange kind of balance and unity on their own, as if they're two sides of the same coin.

It's not even clear why Schubert left the Symphony unfinished – although it's hardly the only one he failed to complete. He began 13 symphonies in total, but only finished seven of them, leading to all manner of inconsistencies as to numberings (you might find the 'Unfinished' referred to as No. 7, No. 8 or even No. 9, depending on

how editors viewed the other symphonies – complete, sketched or partially completed – that came before and after it).

Various theories have been put forward as to why Schubert seemed to stop after just two movements. Perhaps it was for reasons of health: he began to feel the first serious effects of the syphilis that would later kill him around the same time he began work on the Symphony, in the autumn of 1822. There's little doubt that the sense of turmoil and despair that Schubert evokes in his opening movement feels rooted in genuine personal experience. Or perhaps he was overawed by the remarkable achievements of Beethoven. Schubert would have no doubt heard the premieres of the elder composer's Seventh and Eighth Symphonies in Vienna just a few years earlier, and he clearly took those bold, pioneering creations as models for his new work.

It seems he may have intended to complete the Symphony after taking a break from working on it. In 1823, he received an honorary diploma from the Graz Music Society, an honour he felt obliged to recognise by dedicating a new symphony to the organisation. His friend Joseph Hüttenbrenner was a member, and Schubert sent him the two symphonic movements he'd written in 1822 to be getting on with – then did nothing more. Hüttenbrenner later passed the score on to his brother Anselm for safekeeping, and it remained in Anselm's possession until 1865, almost four decades after Schubert's death. The conductor Johann von Herbeck had been tipped off about the existence of a mysterious, incomplete Schubert symphony, and visited Anselm to find out more. Flattered by the suggestion that Herbeck might include a work of his

own in a prospective future concert, Anselm Hüttenbrenner miraculously remembered the music by Schubert he'd hidden away all those years ago, and Herbeck duly gave the 'Unfinished' Symphony its premiere on 17 December 1865 in Vienna (with a finale tacked on from Schubert's teenage Symphony No. 3). It went down a storm.

It might well have been that delay in performance, coupled with changing musical tastes, that ensured Schubert's 'Unfinished' its success. From the hushed murmurings of its sombre opening on cellos and basses, and its melancholy oboe melody, it feels like music ahead of its time, but very much in tune with the high emotions and drama of the Romantic movement that was in full flight by the mid-19th century. A single held note from the horns acts as a pivot into the brighter music of the opening movement's second main theme, a graceful cello melody, but the new-found contentment suddenly comes to a halt, interrupted by anguished chords from across the orchestra. After a turbulent central development section, the two earlier themes return to propel the movement to its stormy, unremittingly dark close.

In many ways, Schubert's second movement is the lighter, brighter twin of the heavier, darker first, in the same three-time, and even passing by at a similar speed. And though it's tempting to see its dancing, lyrical melodies as the mirror images of the first movement's melancholy, brooding themes, in many ways it's just as turbulent and unpredictable. Its calm, floating tunes are often interrupted by violence, so that its conclusion, though reassuringly calm, also feels somewhat provisional.

Director/violin

Lorenza Borrani



Lorenza Borrani's inspiring programmes and inclusive approach in music making are recognized and appreciated by leading orchestras throughout the world. Alongside her orchestral activities, she is a committed chamber music partner in special projects with her close musical friends.

Previous season's highlights include her successful debut with Orchestre de Paris with Haydn's Symphony Concertante and Symphony No.60 'Il Distratto' and Ligeti's *Kammerkonzert* which she conducted. Lorenza Borrani's long term chamber music partner, cellist and composer Ursina Braun, has written a concerto for her which she premiered with Arctic Philharmonic in Norway and Musica Vitae in Sweden.

Aged 25, Lorenza Borrani was appointed the Leader of the Chamber Orchestra of Europe. Her work with Nikolaus Harnoncourt and Lorenzo Coppola inspired her love and knowledge of period performance practice. Her encounters with Lorin Maazel and Symphonica Toscanini, Claudio Abbado and Orchestra Mozart, where she also performed as a soloist, shaped her musical ideas and interests. As a soloist, she has collaborated with Trevor Pinnock, Yannick Nézet-Séguin and Bernard Haitink.

Lorenza is one of the co-founders of Spira mirabilis, a laboratory for the preparation and performance of orchestral and chamber music repertoire of all periods, which works without a conductor or a leader. Their projects have included Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Beethoven's Symphony No.9, fragments from Mozart's *Così fan tutte* and the premiere of Colin Matthew's *Spiralling*, in Aldeburgh.

Lorenza studied with Alina Company, Piero Farulli, Zinaida Gilels and Pavel Vernikov at the Scuola di Musica di Fiesole, and took the postgraduate course at the Kunstuniversität Graz with Boris Kuschnir. She is a Professor of Violin at the Scuola di Musica di Fiesole and a visiting professor at London's Royal Academy of Music since 2019.

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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 2019 to widespread critical acclaim. Their second recording together, of Mendelssohn symphonies, was released in 2023, with Schubert Symphonies Nos 5 and 8 following in 2024.

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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