

A portrait of Napoleon Bonaparte, the French Emperor, wearing a red military coat with gold embroidery. The image is tinted with a blue and red color scheme. The text "SCOTTISH CHAMBER ORCHESTRA" is written in white, curved letters in the top left corner.

SCOTTISH
CHAMBER
ORCHESTRA

THE EMPEROR

30 Sep – 2 Oct 2021

SCO.ORG.UK

PROGRAMME



Season 2021/22

T H E E M P E R O R

Thursday 30 September, 7.30pm Usher Hall, Edinburgh

Friday 1 October, 7.30pm City Halls, Glasgow

Saturday 2 October, 7.30pm Aberdeen Music Hall

Beethoven Piano Concerto No 5 'Emperor'

Mendelssohn Symphony No 3 'Scottish'

Maxim Emelyanychev Conductor

Lukas Geniušas Piano

Please note there will be no interval.



SCOTTISH
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Our Musicians

YOUR ORCHESTRA

*The orchestra list is correct
at time of publication*

FIRST VIOLIN

Maria Włoszczowska
Ruth Crouch
Alexandra Lomeiko
Kana Kawashima
Aisling O'Dea
Siún Milne
Fiona Alexander
Amira Bedrush-McDonald

SECOND VIOLIN

Marcus Barcham Stevens
Gordon Bragg
Rachel Spencer
Rachel Smith
Niamh Lyons
Wen Wang
Stewart Webster
Gongbo Jiang

VIOLA

Felix Tanner
Asher Zaccardelli
Brian Schiele
Steve King
Kathryn Jourdan
Rebecca Wexler

CELLO

Philip Higham
Su-a Lee
Donald Gillan
Eric de Wit
Christoff Fourie

BASS

Nikita Naumov
Adrian Bornet
Sophie Butler

FLUTE

André Cebrián
Lee Holland

OBOE

Robin Williams
Amy Turner

CLARINET

Maximiliano Martín
William Stafford

BASSOON

Paul Boyes
Alison Green

HORN

Patrick Broderick
Jamie Shield
Rachel Brady
Harry Johnstone

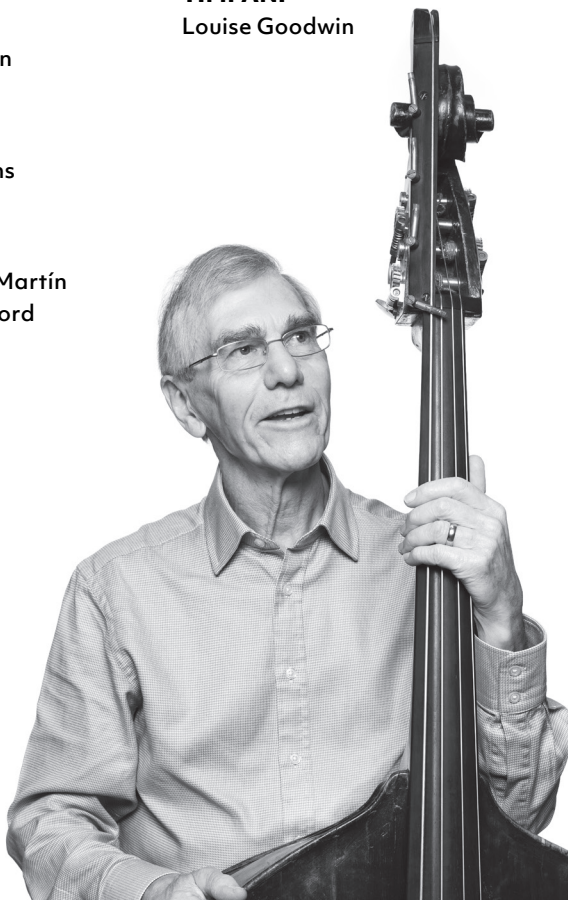
TRUMPET

Peter Franks
Shaun Harrold
Brian McGinley

TIMPANI

Louise Goodwin

Adrian Bornet
Sub-Principal Double Bass



WHAT YOU ARE ABOUT TO HEAR

Beethoven (1770-1827)

Piano Concerto No 5 in E-flat Major,
'Emperor' (1809)

Allegro

Adagio un poco mosso

Rondo: Allegro

Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

Symphony No 3 in A minor, 'Scottish'
(1829-42)

Andante con moto

Vivace non troppo

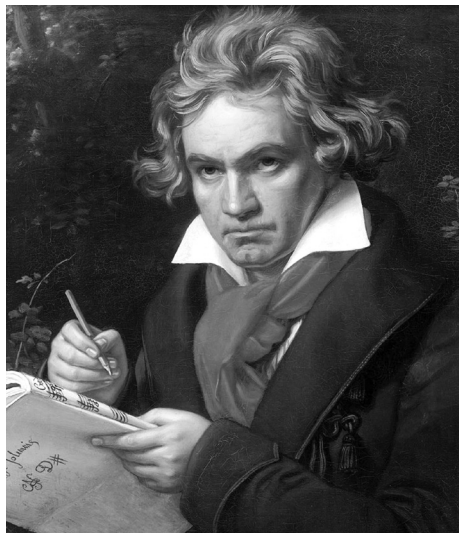
Adagio

Allegro vivacissimo

Musical ambition is an elusive concept, but if we think of it in terms of composers perpetually re-evaluating what music is and what it can convey, then it's an idea that unites the two expansive pieces in today's programme. For Beethoven, it was about pushing the capabilities of a piano as far as they would go, and using them to create his most spectacular concerto, even in a time of turmoil and conflict. For Mendelssohn, it was about recapturing the wonder and joy of a formative period in his early life, and conveying them in a symphony of great power and imagination.

"What a destructive, unruly life around me! Nothing but drums, cannons, human misery of every sort!" That's Beethoven writing from war-torn Vienna to his Leipzig publisher Gottfried Christoph Härtel in July 1809. Indeed, to say that life was tough for the composer at the time he wrote the 'Emperor' Concerto would be an understatement. Napoleon's forces had invaded Vienna in May 1809, and at one stage the fighting grew so terrifyingly close that Beethoven was forced to take shelter in the basement of a poet friend – where he covered his head with pillows in the hope of protecting what precious hearing he had left. Furthermore, with the city's finances thrown into turmoil by the conflict, the annual payment that he'd been promised by several of Vienna's noblemen was all but obliterated.

It's surprising that Beethoven was able to write music at all, let alone produce his longest, grandest and most



Ludwig van Beethoven

It's surprising that Beethoven was able to write music at all, let alone produce his longest, grandest and most ambitious concerto, a work whose nobility and virtuosity are generally considered to encapsulate the so-called 'heroic' style of his middle period.

ambitious concerto, a work whose nobility and virtuosity are generally considered to encapsulate the so-called 'heroic' style of his middle period. It was also the first of his piano concertos that Beethoven didn't premiere himself: by that time, his deafness would have made it impossible. That honour went to Friedrich Schneider, with Leipzig's Gewandhaus Orchestra in November 1811, to great acclaim.

Nor does the work's 'Emperor' nickname have anything to do with Beethoven. In fact, it's highly unlikely he'd have approved: he would have considered the informal title a reference to the invader Napoleon, whom Beethoven had once admired for his apparently democratic, progressive ideals, but who had plummeted from the composer's esteem since proclaiming himself Emperor of the French. Where the 'Emperor'

nickname came from is unclear: some say it was coined by the work's English publisher, John Cramer, to sell more copies of the score. But whether Beethoven would have approved or not, the word neatly encapsulates the piece's grand ambitions and unquestioning confidence, as well as its fiery pianism which looks forward to the virtuosity of later figures such as Liszt.

The broad chords of the expansive first movement's opening would have sounded daringly original in Beethoven's time, as would the cascading scales and trills with which the piano answers them. The soloist then falls silent as the orchestra reveals the movement's two main themes – the first on violins, the second taken up nobly on horns – before returning with its own visions of the same melodies, which are developed throughout the rest of the movement.



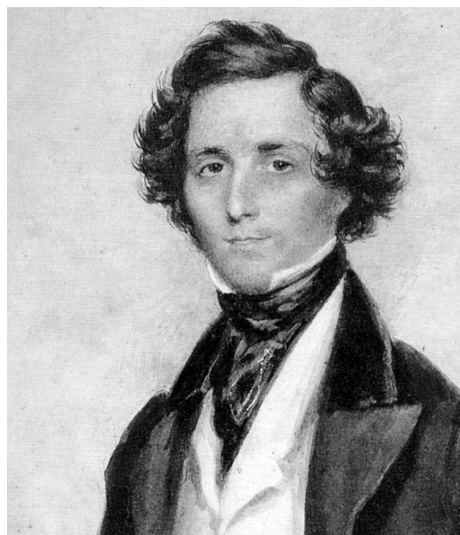
Napoleon and Bessières at Wagram by Antoine-Jean Gros

The calm, reflective slow movement is one of Beethoven's tenderest creations, with the piano floating filigree song melodies over a serene string chorale. It leads directly into the boisterous final movement, in which the soloist hesitantly tries out its dance-like main theme before suddenly bursting forth with it loudly and confidently.

It was less than two decades after the 'Emperor' Concerto's premiere that the 20-year-old Felix Mendelssohn set off on the 19th-century equivalent of a gap year. Perhaps more accurately, it was an excursion in the tradition of a Grand Tour, in which a wealthy young man completed his education by ticking off the cultural highlights of Europe. Mendelssohn, however, opted not for the traditional Grand Tour destinations of France and Italy, but instead for Scotland. His three-week trip in the

summer of 1829 would produce two of his most renowned pieces of music: his *Hebrides Overture*, which he completed soon after returning home to Berlin, and later his 'Scottish' Symphony.

Even at just 20, Mendelssohn was already a mature and respected musician, one whose upbringing in one of Berlin's most cultured, connected families brought him into close contact with many of the city's artistic, musical and scientific elite. It was his parents who suggested he should travel, but it was young Felix who decided he would begin in England and Scotland (though he toured France and Italy at later occasions in his three-year, stop-start European excursion). The whole Mendelssohn family were avid fans of the novels of Sir Walter Scott, and Mendelssohn hoped he might even meet the great novelist during his trip (he did, with disappointing results).



Felix Mendelssohn

Arriving in Edinburgh on 26 July. There, he lodged in Albany Street, climbed Salisbury Crags and Arthur's Seat, and contemplated the atmospheric ruins of Holyrood Chapel, which would later inspire the Symphony's opening.

And even by today's standards, it was quite some journey. After arriving in London in April 1829, he travelled north by stagecoach, arriving in Edinburgh on 26 July. There, he lodged in Albany Street, climbed Salisbury Crags and Arthur's Seat, and contemplated the atmospheric ruins of Holyrood Chapel, which would later inspire the Symphony's opening. He journeyed south to Melrose and Abbotsford, home of Sir Walter Scott, where he arrived just as the great writer was about to leave, spending barely half an hour with him and finding little to talk about in a rather awkward exchange. Disappointments aside, however, he continued north via Stirling and Killiecrankie to Glencoe and Fort William, taking a steamer to Oban, and continuing by water to Mull. It was from Tobermory that Mendelssohn sent a letter home with 21 bars of what would

become the opening of the *Hebrides* Overture. From there, Mendelssohn concluded his Scottish journey with a return to Oban, continuing to Glasgow, Loch Lomond, the Trossachs, and finally a return to London.

It was only several years later, however, that he began work on his 'Scottish' Symphony, and he admitted that he was struggling to recapture the particular mood he'd experienced in Scotland. He aimed to devote time to the Symphony during his stay in Italy in 1830, but found little to remind him of Scotland in the warmth and sun of the Mediterranean, writing home: "The loveliest time of the year in Italy is the period from 15 April to 15 May. Who then can blame me for not being able to return to the mists of Scotland? I have therefore laid aside the symphony for the present."



The Ruins of Holyrood Chapel by Louis Daguerre.

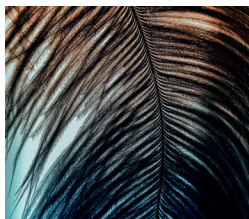
The Symphony was finally premiered in Leipzig in 1842, and later the same year received its UK premiere in London, to an audience that included Queen Victoria, the work's dedicatee. Mendelssohn made clear that his initial inspiration for the Symphony came from the visit he'd made to ruined Holyrood Chapel, writing at the time: "In the evening twilight we went today to the palace where Queen Mary lived and loved; a little room is shown there with a winding staircase leading up to the door: up this way they came and found Rizzio in that dark corner, where they pulled him out, and three rooms off there is a dark corner, where they murdered him. The chapel close to it is now roofless, grass and ivy grow there, and at that broken altar Mary was crowned Queen of Scotland. Everything round is broken and mouldering and the bright sky shines in. I believe I have

found today in that old chapel the beginning of my 'Scottish' Symphony."

The first movement's dark, brooding introduction seems to capture the atmosphere of the Holyrood ruins to a tee. In the playful, featherweight scherzo that follows, Mendelssohn synthesises Scottish folk music into his own unmistakable style, most clearly in the clarinet's folk-like tune with its distinctive 'Scotch snap' rhythms. After the wistful song of the slow third movement, Mendelssohn closes with a stirring finale marked 'Allegro guerriero', or 'fast and warlike', no doubt a reference to the battles whose sites he'd seen at Killiecrankie and Glencoe, though if his Symphony ends in triumph, it's a victory that sounds distinctively German rather than Caledonian.

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UPCOMING AUTUMN 2021 CONCERTS



BAROQUE BRIO

Maxim Emelyanychev Conductor / **Dmitry Sinkovsky** Violin

Leclair Violin Concerto in D major Op 7 No 2

Poulenc Suite française

Locatelli Concerto Capriccioso 'Il pianto d'Arianna'

Vivaldi Concerto 'per la Solennità di San Lorenzo' RV 562

Farkas (arr. Emelyanychev) Five Ancient Hungarian Dances

Thu 7 Oct, 7.30pm | The Queen's Hall, Edinburgh

Fri 8 Oct, 7.30pm | City Halls, Glasgow



THOMAS ZEHETMAIR

Thomas Zehetmair Conductor/Violin

Bach Violin Concerto in A minor, BWV 1041

Mozart (arr. Zehetmair) String Trio fragment, K. Anhang 66

Mendelssohn Overture Die schöne Melusine

Haydn Symphony No 92 'Oxford'

Thu 14 Oct, 7.30pm | The Queen's Hall, Edinburgh

Fri 15 Oct, 7.30pm | City Halls, Glasgow



HIDDEN GEMS

Peter Whelan Conductor/Fortepiano / **Anna Dennis** Soprano

CPE Bach Symphony in F, Wq 183/3

Mozart Vorrei spiegarvi, oh Dio KV 418 / Nehmt meinen Dank, ihr holden Gönner KV 383

Haydn Symphony No 102 in B-flat major

Thu 28 Oct, 7.30pm | The Queen's Hall, Edinburgh

Fri 29 Oct, 7.30pm | City Halls, Glasgow

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Colin Currie Percussion

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