SCOTTISH CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

GROSVENOR PLAYS LISZT

3 – 5 Feb 2022

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The registered office is Rosebery House, 9 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh, EH12 5EZ.

Season 2021/22

GROSVENOR PLAYS LISZT

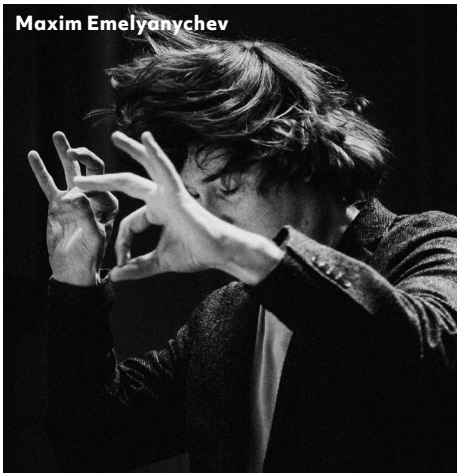
Thursday 3 February, 7.30pm Usher Hall, Edinburgh
Friday 4 February, 7.30pm City Halls, Glasgow
Saturday 5 February, 7.30pm Aberdeen Music Hall

Beethoven Symphony No 1 in C Major, Op 21
Liszt Piano Concerto No 1 in E-flat Major

Interval of 20 minutes

Sweelinck (arr. Emelyanychev) Beati pauperes from Cantiones Sacrae
Mendelssohn Symphony No 5 'Reformation'

Maxim Emelyanychev Conductor
Benjamin Grosvenor Piano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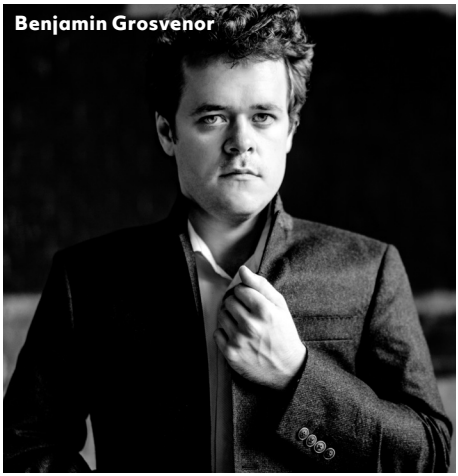
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SCOTTISH CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

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Kana Kawashima
Tijmen Huisingh
Aisling O'Dea
Siún Milne
Fiona Alexander
Amira Bedrush-McDonald
Huw Daniel

Second Violin
Marcus Barcham Stevens
Gordon Bragg
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Sarah Bevan-Baker
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Rachel Smith
Kristin Deeken
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Felix Tanner
Jessica Beeston
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Steve King
Liam Brolly
Rebecca Wexler

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Philip Higham
Su-a Lee
Donald Gillan
Eric de Wit
Niamh Molloy

Bass
Nikita Naumov
Adrian Bornet
Ben Burnley

Flute
Lee Holland
Yvonne Robertson

Piccolo
Hannah Foster

Oboe
Rainer Gibbons
Rachel Harwood-White

Clarinet
Maximiliano Martín
William Stafford

Bassoon
Cerys Ambrose-Evans
Alison Green

Contra Bassoon
Heather Brown

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Peter Franks
Brian McGinley
Simon Bird

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Serpent
Tony George

Timpani
Louise Goodwin

Percussion
Ally Kelly
Colin Hyson

Organ
Jan Waterfield

Siún Milne
First Violin

WHAT YOU ARE ABOUT TO HEAR

Beethoven (1770-1827)

Symphony No 1 in C Major, Op 21 (1800)

Adagio molto – Allegro con brio
Andante cantabile con moto
Menuetto: Allegro molto e vivace
Adagio – Allegro molto e vivace

Liszt (1811–1886)

Piano Concerto No 1 in E-flat Major (1830-1849)

Allegro maestoso
Quasi adagio
Allegretto vivace – Allegro animato
Allegro marziale animato

Sweelinck (arr. Emelyanychev) (1562-1621)

Beati pauperes from Cantiones Sacrae (1619)

Mendelssohn (1809–1847)

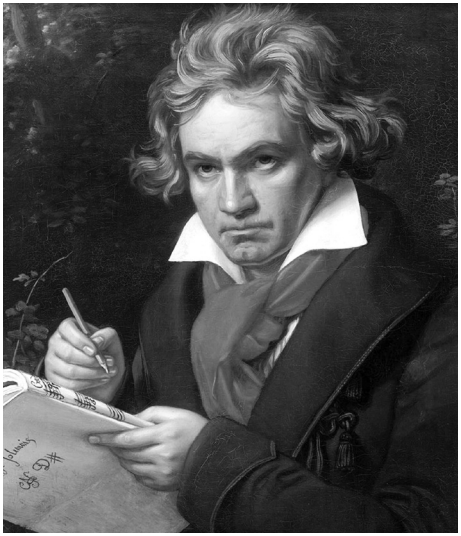
Symphony No 5 'Reformation' (1830)

Andante – Allegro con fuoco
Allegro vivace
Andante
Andante con moto – Allegro vivace – Allegro maestoso

Two pieces that look forward defiantly to new sounds and new musical possibilities share tonight's programme with two other works that look resolutely backwards, with much fondness and no little admiration.

From the notorious 'forbidden' chord that kicks off Beethoven's First Symphony, it's clear the composer was out to push boundaries, bend rules and challenge his audience's expectations. What was so shocking about it? To be honest, to modern ears – certainly to ones already familiar with the Symphony in question – that opening harmony will no doubt sound entirely conventional and natural, partly because we're used to far more challenging dissonance than what Beethoven offers. But to Viennese listeners in 1800, attending the Symphony's premiere at the city's Burgtheater on 2 April, it almost certainly did raise a few eyebrows.

For a start (and forgive the musical technicalities here), it's a C major chord with an added B flat, which itself creates something of a dissonance – and it's hardly a harmony we'd expect to launch a symphony. That chord, though, is what's termed a dominant 7th, and it feels like it needs to resolve – which Beethoven does immediately, but into the 'wrong' key of F major (the Symphony meant to be in C major, but by its second note we're somewhere else entirely). Lastly, the chord comes from nowhere: Beethoven hasn't yet established any sense of harmony or home key, so to start throwing around harmonies requiring resolution is like a character launching into a soliloquy without us even knowing who they are.



Ludwig van Beethoven

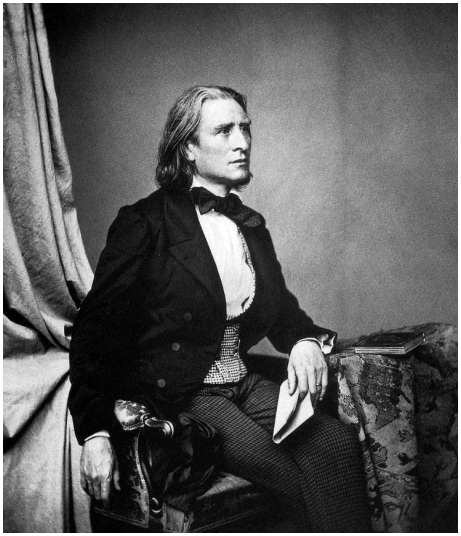
Beethoven's First Symphony has been called a farewell to the 18th century, and there's an undeniable sense of Beethoven clearing the air and making space for something fresh and original.

All that detail, however, is to make the simple point that, even from its very first note, Beethoven's First Symphony is out to break new ground. And to mark the composer out as a new and distinctive musical voice. It was in 1792 that Beethoven had left his birthplace of Bonn to settle in Vienna, then musical capital of the world, and he quickly began setting out his musical stall across several musical genres: chamber music, piano sonatas, and his first two piano concertos.

He chose to wait to unveil his First Symphony, however, until 1800. That eight-year delay was perhaps understandable when the composer had such intimidating symphonic figures as Haydn and Mozart peering over his shoulders. Mozart (who'd written 41 symphonies) had died about a decade earlier, but Haydn (composer of no fewer than 104) was very much alive. Beethoven had ostensibly moved to the Austrian capital to study with him, though the lessons didn't go well and Beethoven quickly realised that he'd need to establish himself in the city very much on his own terms.

Because of its innovations, Beethoven's First Symphony has been called a farewell to the 18th century, and there's an undeniable sense of Beethoven clearing the air and making space for something fresh and original. Nonetheless, it still sits very much within the Viennese Classical tradition embodied by the two eminent earlier composers. Indeed, its dedicatee, Vienna-based dignitary Baron Gottfried van Swieten, had also been a patron to Mozart and Haydn, so Beethoven was more than aware that his new work would be judged by their standards.

His first movement's slow introduction searches for its home key, before the spry



Franz Liszt

What he attempted in his First Piano Concerto was a work so thoroughly integrated in its musical material, and so confident in its innovations, that critics would be too awe-struck to complain.

energy of its faster main section takes over. Such is the second movement's sense of constant motion that it hardly counts as a slow movement, its graceful, even dance-like melody returning in more elaborate guises following its richer central section. Beethoven calls his third movement a minuet, but with a tempo marking of 'very fast and lively', it feels more like the first of his playful scherzos, and its surging opening theme is so urgent that you'd hardly notice it's simply a rising scale. Another rising scale launches his finale, tentatively and teasingly in the violins, as if they're cautiously feeling their way towards the movement's scampering main melody, which returns after its stormier central section to bring the Symphony to an irrepressibly sunny conclusion.

If Beethoven waited a few years before unveiling his First Symphony to the world, Franz Liszt took an astonishing 26 years to complete his First Piano Concerto. Its main themes date back to 1830, when Liszt was just 19, but he would only allow the work to be published in 1856, following numerous revisions and reworkings. That lengthy gestation is understandable, however, when you consider that Liszt was attempting nothing less than a wholesale rethink of what a concerto is, and what form it should take.

This was a period of enormous change for the pianist and composer. After encountering the violin virtuoso Niccolò Paganini in 1832 – and, more importantly, witnessing the adulation that Paganini provoked with his almost superhuman feats of technical prowess – Liszt locked himself away and transformed himself into an equally breathtaking piano virtuoso, becoming in the process

Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck

Musical visitors to Amsterdam would be ushered respectfully into the Oude Kerk to experience Sweelinck's masterful compositions and improvisations, and it wouldn't be going too far to say he represented the pinnacle of choral and organ composition before JS Bach came on the scene

undoubtedly one of the greatest instrumentalists of the 19th century.

But the astonishing success and popularity he achieved also proved something of a millstone around Liszt's neck. He'd written countless sparkling, breathtakingly virtuosic piano showpieces, but critics were beginning to grow restless, carping that Liszt's music was full of empty showmanship, that it offered dazzling keyboard fireworks with nothing much to say. In his First Piano Concerto, Liszt was determined to prove them wrong.

What he attempted in his First Piano Concerto was a work so thoroughly integrated in its musical material, and so confident in its innovations, that critics would be too awe-struck to complain. Following several earlier versions in different forms and formats, what emerged in Liszt's final version is a single-movement work lasting just 20 minutes, clearly divided into four separate movements that run into each other, but with its themes and material recurring again and again across different contexts and in different guises.

Just take the Concerto's famous opening theme. The composer joked with his son-in-law Hans von Bülow that it should take the words 'Das versteht ihr alle nicht, haha!' (or 'None of you understand this, haha!'), pointing witheringly to the inability of critics to comprehend what Liszt had achieved. That distinctive theme comes back again and again across the course of the piece, uniting all four of its movements while also serving to differentiate their contrasting individual characters. A growling, rising theme on cellos and basses marks the beginning of Liszt's second movement, though it's quickly transformed into a

Felix Mendelssohn

The Symphony provided the ideal opportunity, too, for Mendelssohn to display his reverence for the genius of Bach, whose techniques he embedded into the Symphony's material.

long, slow, romantic melody by the piano soloist.

His third movement takes clear inspiration from Mendelssohn's fairy music, though Liszt's prominent use of the triangle got him into trouble with the critics here: influential writer Eduard Hanslick even went as far as calling the piece a 'Concerto for Triangle'. Liszt retained it regardless. The distinctive opening theme re-emerges towards the end of the third movement, in preparation for the swaggering finale, which begins with a military march that we only later realise is a faster version of the second movement's romantic melody.

Once he'd created such a daring, innovative piece, however, Liszt was worried that the incomprehension he'd predicted with the opening theme's cheeky added words might come true, and that listeners simply wouldn't understand it. For that reason, he rarely performed it himself after its premiere, instead preferring to allow other pianists to demonstrate its compositional genius with their own interpretations.

If the concert's two opening pieces peered resolutely forward into the future, we now turn to two works that demonstrate just as much innovation, power and passion can come from gazing back with affection and admiration to the past.

Jan Sweelinck – whose originally vocal 'Beati pauperes spiritu' has been given an instrumental makeover by SCO Principal Conductor Maxim Emelyanychev – was nicknamed the Orpheus of Amsterdam for the ease with which music seemed to flow from his pen, and for his enormously prolific output. He worked for more than four decades at the city's Oude

Kerk (beginning – reputedly – at the age of just 15) as organist and composer, and among his many works are choral settings of the entire collection of psalms, which he published in four immense volumes in the early 1600s. Musical visitors to Amsterdam would be ushered respectfully into the Oude Kerk to experience Sweelinck's masterful compositions and improvisations, and it wouldn't be going too far to say he represented the pinnacle of choral and organ composition before JS Bach came on the scene a few decades later.

Sweelinck's *Cantiones sacrae* dates from 1619, just two years before the composer's death, and collects together 37 sacred motets using Catholic liturgical texts for five voices. It's unclear whether the pieces were intended specifically for use in religious services, or for more informal music making. 'Beati pauperes spiritu' is a setting of the Beatitudes from Matthew 5:3-12, praising the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek and the merciful. It's a fine example of Sweelinck's rich choral writing, with vivid shifts in harmonies and luminous textures between his intertwining musical lines, here realised using orchestral instruments.

If 'Beati pauperes spiritu' shows the SCO's Principal Conductor looking back to a Renaissance master, in his 'Reformation' Symphony, Felix Mendelssohn looked back with similar admiration to JS Bach. Mendelssohn had been playing and studying Bach's music – which was largely disregarded in the later composer's day – since his mid-teens, and famously, in 1829, conducted the first performance of the *St Matthew Passion* since Bach's own time.

The 'Reformation' Symphony – numbered as Mendelssohn's Fifth but actually his Second by composition date – was intended for celebrations marking the 300th anniversary of the Augsburg Confession, at which Martin Luther declared the core beliefs of Protestantism. The Symphony provided the ideal opportunity, too, for Mendelssohn to display his reverence for the genius of Bach, whose techniques he embedded into the Symphony's material.

Rather than Bach, however, the first movement's slow introduction recalls earlier Renaissance choral music, including the distinctive six-note rising figure of the so-called 'Dresden Amen', which Wagner returned to in his opera *Parsifal*. It's been speculated that the movement's stormier main section, however, represents a Catholic church beset by conflict and controversy. Mendelssohn's second movement is a robust German dance, and his third could almost be an aria from a Bach passion.

It's in his finale, however, that Mendelssohn pays most overt homage to Bach (and Luther), opening with a warm statement of the Lutheran hymn 'Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott' ('A Mighty Fortress is Our God'), which Bach employed in his Cantata No 80 and other works. The hymn begins on a solo flute (Luther's own instrument) and returns to bring the movement to a noble conclusion, by way of elaborate passages of complex counterpoint in which Mendelssohn pays overt homage to the earlier master.

Conductor

MAXIM EMELYANYCHEV

At the Scottish Chamber Orchestra Maxim Emelyanychev follows in the footsteps of just five previous Principal Conductors in the Orchestra's 46-year history; Roderick Brydon (1974-1983), Jukka-Pekka Saraste (1987-1991), Ivor Bolton (1994-1996), Joseph Swensen (1996-2005) and Robin Ticciati (2009-2018).

2020/21 Season engagements included conducting the opera of the Geneva Grand Theatre in Mozart's *Clemenza di Tito* and the Toulouse Théâtre du Capitole in Mozart's *Nozze di Figaro*. Debuts with the Orchestre de Paris, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, the Münchner Philharmoniker, the London Philharmonic, the Luxembourg Philharmonic, the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Accademia Nazionale of Santa Cecilia Orchestra, the Royal Concertgebourw Orchestra, the Hessischer Rundfunk Frankfurt Orchestra, the Deutsche Symphony Orchestra, and returning to the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra.

He regularly collaborates with renowned artists such as Max Emanuel Cencic, Patrizia Ciofi, Joyce DiDonato, Franco Fagioli, Richard Goode, Sophie Karthäuser, Stephen Hough, Katia et Marielle Labèque, Marie-Nicole Lemieux, Julia Lezhneva, Alexei Lubimov, Riccardo Minasi, Xavier Sabata and Dmitry Sinkovsky.

With the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Maxim has recorded the Schubert Symphony No 9 – the symphony with which he made his debut with the orchestra – which was released on Linn Records in November 2019.

For full biography please visit sco.org.uk

Piano

BENJAMIN GROSVENOR

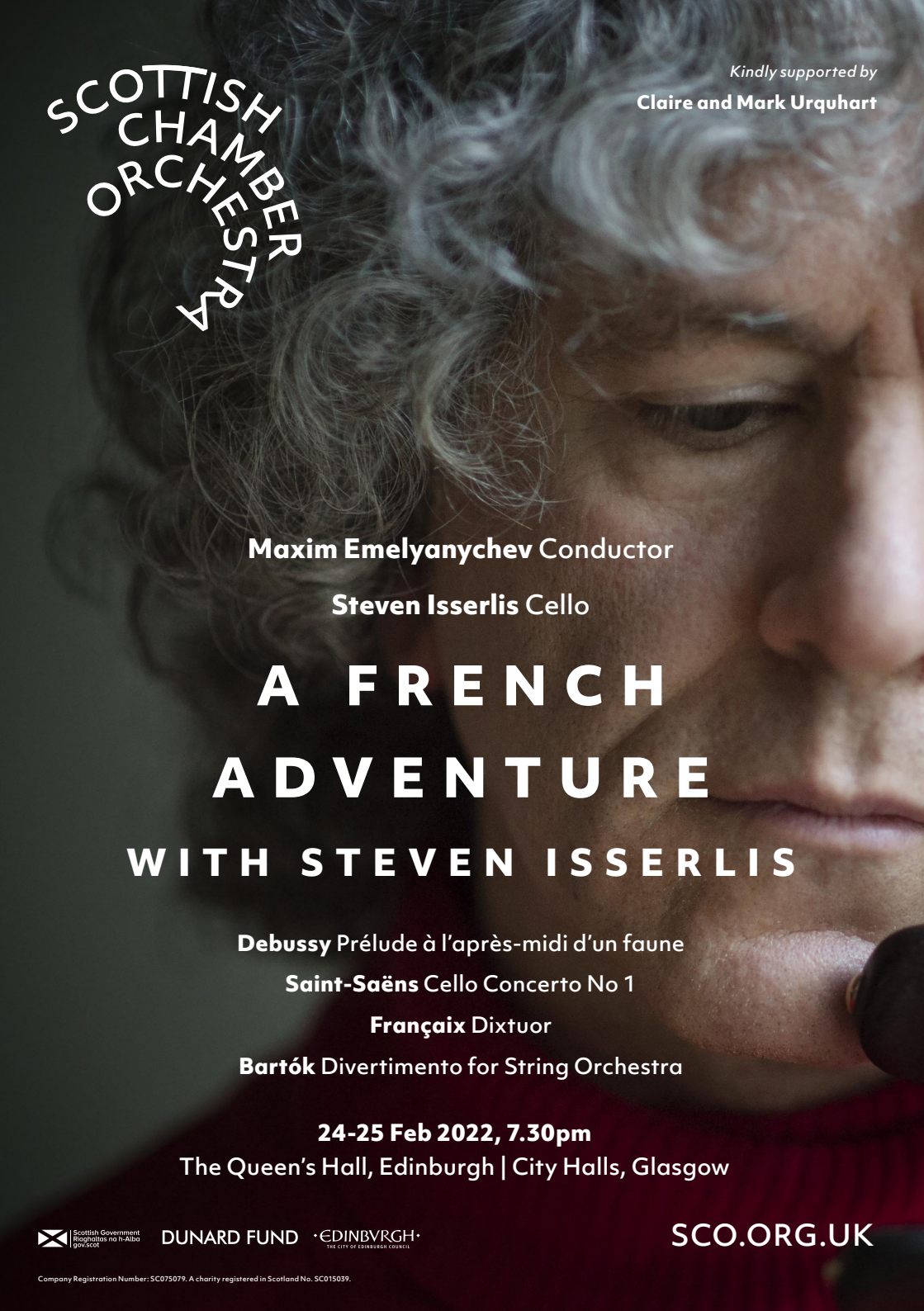
British pianist Benjamin Grosvenor is internationally recognised for his electrifying performances, distinctive sound and insightful interpretations. His virtuosic command over the most arduous technical complexities underpins the remarkable depth and understanding of his music -making. Described as "one in a million...several million" by *The Independent*.

A pianist of widespread international acclaim, in the 21/22 Season he is Artist in Residence at the prestigious Wigmore Hall in London with three varying projects. The previous season he was Artist-in-Residence at both Radio France and with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. His "astounding technical gifts, the freshness of his imagination, his intense concentration, the absence of any kind of show, and the unmistakable sense of poetic immersion directed solely at the realisation of music" have been lauded by *Süddeutsche Zeitung*.

Recent and forthcoming concerto highlights of the 21/22 season include engagements with the Chicago, Baltimore and Pittsburg Symphony Orchestras, Philharmonia Orchestra, Scottish Chamber, Hamburg Staatsorchester and City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. Benjamin works with such esteemed conductors as Semyon Bychkov, Riccardo Chailly, Sir Mark Elder, Kent Nagano, Alan Gilbert, Manfred Honeck, Vladimir Jurowski, François-Xavier Roth and Esa-PekkaSalonen.

Benjamin first came to prominence as the outstanding winner of the Keyboard Final of the 2004 BBC Young Musician Competition, and he was invited to perform with the BBC Symphony Orchestra at the First Night of the 2011 BBC Proms. The youngest of five brothers, Benjamin began playing the piano aged 6. He studied at the Royal Academy of Music with Christopher Elton and Daniel-Ben Pienaar, where he graduated in 2012 with the 'Queen's Commendation for Excellence' and in 2016 was awarded a Fellowship from the institution. Benjamin is an Ambassador of Music Masters, a charity dedicated to making music education accessible to all children regardless of their background, championing diversity and inclusion.

For full biography please visit sco.org.uk



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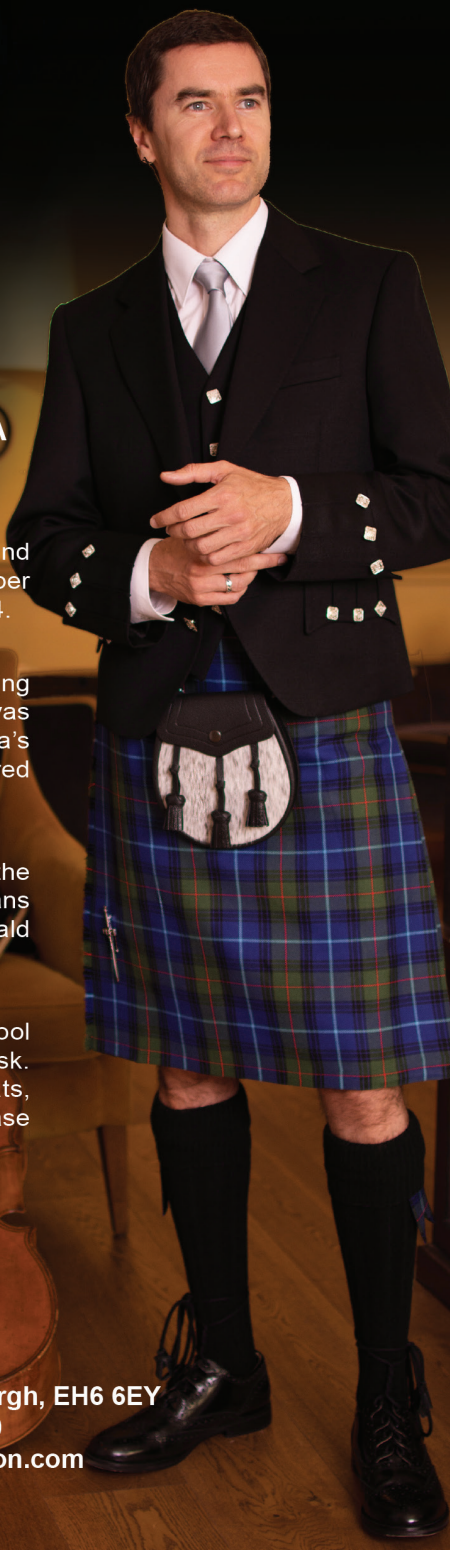
THE SCOTTISH CHAMBER ORCHESTRA TARTAN

Kinloch Anderson, foremost experts in Highland Dress since 1868, and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra have been in partnership since 2014.

The Scottish Chamber Orchestra tartan, being worn here by SCO cellist Donald Gillan, was exclusively designed to celebrate the Orchestra's 40th Anniversary and has been officially registered in The Scottish Register of Tartans.

The tartan's background comes from the Ferguson, MacDonald and Maxwell clan tartans to represent Sir Charles Mackerras, Donald MacDonald and Sir Peter Maxwell Davies.

For limited edition tartan notebooks and lambswool scarves, please visit the SCO merchandise desk. For all tailored products, including waistcoats, trousers, skirts and made to measure kilts, please contact Kinloch Anderson directly.



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