SCOTTISH CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

SUMMER TOUR 22

SCO CHAMBER ENSEMBLE

9 – 10 June 2022

SCO.ORG.UK

PROGRAMME

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Summer Tour 22

SCO CHAMBER ENSEMBLE

Thursday 9 June, 7.30pm One Touch Theatre, Eden Court, Inverness
Friday 10 June, 7.30pm Craigmonie Centre, Drumnadrochit

Lutosławski Dance Preludes (1959 version)
Nielsen Serenata in Vano
Ligeti Old Hungarian Ballroom Dances

Interval of 20 minutes

Beethoven (arr. Cebrián) Symphony No 1

SCO Chamber Ensemble

The Drumnadrochit concert is with highlife highland na gàidhealtachd

4 Royal Terrace, Edinburgh EH7 5AB
+44 (0)131 557 6800 | info@sco.org.uk | sco.org.uk

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The SCO is extremely grateful to the Scottish Government and to the City of Edinburgh Council for their continued support. We are also indebted to our Business Partners, all of the charitable trusts, foundations and lottery funders who support our projects, and to the very many individuals who are kind enough to give us financial support and who enable us to do so much. Each and every donation makes a difference and we truly appreciate it.

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We are also incredibly thankful to the many individuals not listed who support the Orchestra with either regular or one-off donations. Thank you.

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We are incredibly thankful to the many individuals who are kind enough to support the Orchestra financially. Every donation makes a difference and helps us to travel across the length and breadth of Scotland this summer.

We aim to make live orchestral music accessible to everyone and to keep the price of concert tickets as fair as possible. Each donation is so appreciated and enables us to bring music to audiences from Drumnadrochit to Dunoon.

To find out how to make a donation, please get in touch with **Mary Clayton** on **0131 478 8369** or on our website at **www.sco.org.uk/donate**.

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The SCO is a charity registered in Scotland No SC015039.

YOUR SCO ENSEMBLE

Information correct at the time of going to print

First Violin
Siún Milne

Second Violin
Rachel Spencer

Viola
Jessica Beeston

Cello
Philip Higham

Bass
Nikita Naumov

Flute
André Cebrián

Oboe
Robin Williams

Clarinet
Maximiliano Martín

Bassoon
Cerys Ambrose-Evans

Horn
Patrick Broderick

Siún Milne
First Violin

WHAT YOU ARE ABOUT TO HEAR

Lutosławski (1913-1994)

Dance Preludes (1954, revised 1959)

Allegro molto
Andantino
Allegro giocoso
Andante
Allegro molto

Nielsen (1865-1931)

Serenata in Vano
(1914)

Allegro non troppo ma brioso
Un poco adagio
Tempo di marcia

Ligeti (1923-2006)

Old Hungarian Ballroom Dances
(1949)

Andante
Allegro - Trio - Allegro
Andantino maestoso - Trio - Andantino maestoso
Allegro moderato

Beethoven (1770-1827) arr. Cebrián

Symphony No 1 (1795–1800)

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

There's plenty of humour and high spirits throughout the four pieces in tonight's concert. Some of that sense of fun comes from otherwise hardcore avant-garde composers letting their hair down in lighter fare, and some comes from a composer out to show off his symphonic exuberance to a discriminating Viennese audience.

We begin with arguably the most accomplished and influential Polish composer of the 20th century. Witold Lutosławski was a remarkable figure who combined rigorous avant-garde intellectualism with far more sensual, ear-tickling elements in his voluptuous music, sometimes even leaving things up to his performers' own whims on the spur of the moment. He also frequently found himself scrutinised and reprimanded by the Polish communist authorities in a game of cat and mouse that lasted virtually his entire career. And though he was content to create 'useful' music for children and for educational purposes, and even wrote radio jingles and patriotic pieces, he also vowed never to compromise his deeply held musical beliefs in his more serious works.

One area in which the regime and the composer's tastes came together, however, was Poland's folk music. The authorities were keen that it should be celebrated, and Lutosławski found plenty of inspiration in it too. He was asked to write a set of violin pieces on traditional Polish tunes for use in secondary schools, but shifted his focus instead to the clarinet (admitting he found it easier to write for clarinet than for violin). The result was Lutosławski's *Dance*

Witold Roman Lutosławski

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Preludes, written in 1954 for clarinet and piano, then recast for what's virtually a miniature chamber orchestra in 1959.

All of the piece's five movements are based on traditional Polish dances, most evidently in their restlessly shifting rhythms. The first movement is a jerky, perky dance, played almost entirely staccato, while there's a Bartók-like richness to the harmonies of the gentler second movement. The third is a wild, abandoned scherzo, in which Lutosławski consciously evokes the raucous sounds of the Polish folk clarinet, while the reflective fourth sets a very simple melody against a relentless rhythm. Lutosławski's final movement is his most overtly folksy, a strongly accented dance with complex, shifting rhythms and maybe even some hints of bagpipes in the background.

Despite the *Dance Preludes*' warm-hearted sense of folksy fun, however, Lutosławski felt it was time to move on to more serious work after writing them: he dubbed the piece his 'farewell to folklore'.

Denmark's great 20th-century composer Carl Nielsen grappled with primal conflicts and unstoppable life forces in his six visionary symphonies. We find him tonight, however, in a rather more jocular mood.

He'd joined the ranks of the orchestra at Copenhagen's Royal Theatre in 1889 as a second violinist (eventually becoming the ensemble's associate conductor in 1908), and it was there that Nielsen became firm friends with bassist Ludvig Hegner. And, much like the musicians in front of you this evening, Hegner, Nielsen and a few other colleagues embarked on a

Carl Nielsen

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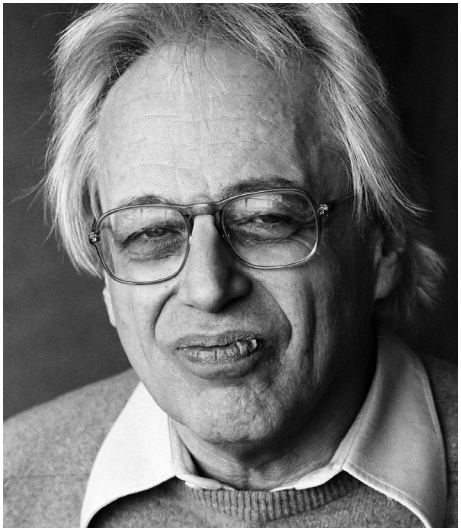
summer tour in 1914. The centrepiece was to be Beethoven's Septet, Op 20, for clarinet, horn, bassoon, violin, viola, cello and double bass, and Hegner asked Nielsen if he'd consider composing something for a similar line-up.

Nielsen had already handed in his notice at the Royal Theatre to devote himself full-time to composition, and he jumped at the chance, writing his *Serenata in vano* in just a couple of days in May 1914. It was around the same time as he was working on his Fourth Symphony – though it's hard to imagine a work that's further away in theme and style from that symphony's elemental, titanic struggles.

Indeed, Nielsen called his *Serenata in vano* (literally 'Serenade in vain') 'a humorous trifle', and in it, he told the tale of two gentlemen serenading a beautiful woman under her balcony, though they receive little reward for their efforts. Let's allow Nielsen himself to explain the story:

'First the gentlemen play in a somewhat chivalric and showy manner to lure the fair one out onto the balcony, but she does not appear. Then they play in a slightly languorous strain (Poco adagio), but that hasn't any effect either. Since they have played in vain (in vano), they don't care a straw and shuffle off home to the strains of the little final march, which they play for their own amusement.'

Like Lutosławski, György Ligeti was another uncompromising modernist composer, most famous, perhaps, for the mysterious clouds of choral sound that haunt the soundtrack of Stanley Kubrick's



György Sándor Ligeti

It's easy to sense, perhaps, the beginnings of Ligeti's absurdist humour in his rather over-the-top arrangements, and there's the inescapable feeling that we perhaps shouldn't be taking this music entirely seriously.

2001: A Space Odyssey. Alongside his sonic experimentation, however, he was also an irrepressible purveyor of absurdist, sometimes slapstick humour, epitomised in his madcap opera *Le grand macabre*.

And like Lutosławski's *Dance Preludes*, Ligeti's *Old Hungarian Ballroom Dances* are an early work, written in 1949 when Ligeti was 26 to the stipulations of the Hungarian communist regime for music that would be entertaining and relevant to the people. Ligeti duly obliged in a set of dance tunes that run together almost like a more richly flavoured version of one of the Strauss family's waltz sequences. It's easy to sense, perhaps, the beginnings of Ligeti's absurdist humour in his rather over-the-top arrangements, and there's the inescapable feeling that we perhaps shouldn't be taking this music entirely seriously. Ligeti's own, rather hands-off description might give us a similar feeling:

"While I was still a student at the Budapest Music Academy in 1949, I was requested by public radio to cultivate the 'national heritage' by writing a suite on dance melodies of the Biedermeier period, that is, around 1800. *The Régi magyar társas táncok* (*Old Hungarian Ballroom Dances*, 1949) are therefore not my own composition, but only a selection of dance tunes by Lavotta, Bihari, Csermák and Rózsavölgyi, which I orchestrated for flute, clarinet and strings."

Beethoven's First Symphony – with all its abundant wit, charm and high spirits – was just one of several works with which the composer set out to establish himself in Vienna in the closing years of the 18th century. It was in 1792 that he had left

his birthplace of Bonn to settle in the Viennese capital, then Europe's musical hub, and he quickly set about composing prolifically across many genres: chamber music, piano sonatas, and his first two piano concertos. His First Symphony, however, had to wait until 1800 for its premiere, at a concert in Vienna's Burgtheater on 2 April.

That eight-year delay was perhaps understandable, however, when the composer had such intimidating figures as Haydn and Mozart peering over his shoulders. Mozart had died about a decade earlier, but Haydn was very much alive: Beethoven had ostensibly moved to the Austrian capital to study with him, though the lessons didn't go well and the younger composer quickly realised that he'd need to establish himself in the city on his own terms.

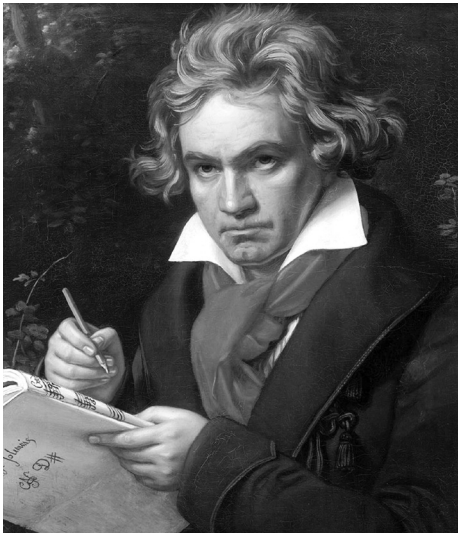
The Symphony has been called a farewell to the 18th century, and in it, there's an undeniable sense of Beethoven clearing the air and making space for something distinctive and new. Nonetheless, it still sits within the Viennese Classical tradition embodied by the two eminent earlier composers. Indeed,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

He begins, however, with a notoriously 'forbidden' chord intended to throw listeners off the scent of the Symphony's 'home' key, before the spry 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.

SCO Principal Flautist André Cebrián made tonight's chamber arrangement of Beethoven's First Symphony for ten musicians. He writes:

"About ten years ago I founded the Natalia Ensemble with some friends. Our aim was to experiment with connections between symphonic and chamber music by playing our own arrangements of major symphonic pieces without a conductor. It gave us the chance not only to get deep inside this music and offer a more transparent version to listeners, but also to bring these big pieces to smaller venues where they had never been played before.

"After several years working on music by Mahler, Bartók, Debussy, Ravel and Wagner (inspired by Schoenberg's Society for Private Musical Performances in early 20th-century Vienna), we decided to explore 18th- and 19th-century music through Mozart, Haydn, Arriaga and Beethoven symphonies. Again, this wasn't anything new: a lot of



Ludwig van Beethoven

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composers from that time – for example Ebers, Hummel, Czerny or Ries – had arranged these symphonies for different chamber groups.

"I made this chamber arrangement of Beethoven's First Symphony with the aim of offering the most faithful version of the original to listeners: respecting the notes, instrumentation, dynamics, and so on. For that, the ten musicians who form the ensemble are pushed to their limits in order to carry the musical weight of an entire symphony orchestra. This particular Symphony has a characteristic chamber quality to it (including a lot of dialogue between the different instruments, and some very contrapuntal spots, some of them really soft) which this version brings out. The ten players also recreate sounds of other, 'missing' instruments of the orchestra: you'll hear a timpani roll on the double bass, for example, or the horn player reaching their highest notes to impersonate a trumpet.

"As I said earlier, these kinds of arrangements were very common between composers living at the same time until the beginning of the 20th century, but they quickly fell out of fashion. I'm very glad that during the past few years, these practices have been revisited, and that these symphonic works can again reach places in which they usually wouldn't fit. It's very rewarding to know not only that we created a thrilling project with the Natalia Ensemble, but also that our arrangements are being played each month in different corners of the world."

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Biography

SCOTTISH CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

The internationally celebrated Scottish Chamber Orchestra is one of Scotland's National Performing Companies.

Formed in 1974 and core funded by the Scottish Government, the SCO aims to provide as many opportunities as possible for people to hear great music by touring the length and breadth of Scotland, appearing regularly at major national and international festivals and by touring internationally as proud ambassadors for Scottish cultural excellence.

Making a significant contribution to Scottish life beyond the concert platform, the Orchestra works in schools, universities, colleges, hospitals, care homes, places of work and community centres through its extensive Creative Learning programme. The SCO is also proud to engage with online audiences across the globe via its innovative Digital Season.

The SCO has long-standing associations with many eminent guest conductors including Conductor Emeritus Joseph Swensen, François Leleux, Pekka Kuusisto, Richard Egarr, Andrew Manze and John Storgårds.

The Orchestra also enjoys close relationships with many leading composers and has commissioned almost 200 new works, including pieces by the late Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Sir James MacMillan, Sally Beamish, Martin Suckling, Einojuhani Rautavaara, Karin Rehnqvist, Mark-Anthony Turnage, Nico Muhly and Associate Composer Anna Clyne.

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.

The SCO and Emelyanychev released their first album together (Linn Records) in November 2019 to widespread critical acclaim. The repertoire - Schubert's Symphony No. 9 in C major 'The Great' – is the first concert Emelyanychev performed with the Orchestra in March 2018.

For full biography please visit sco.org.uk

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