

scottish
ensemble

Concerts by Candlelight

Music for Warmth and Restoration

Programme

2-8 December

Aberdeen
Inverness
Perth
Dundee
Edinburgh
Glasgow

Welcome to Concerts by Candlelight

Welcome to our performance this evening. It's fantastic for us all to be reunited with you, especially in the much loved setting of Scottish Ensemble's annual Concerts by Candlelight tour.

This in some ways is a pandemic programme, at least a response to these strange times. There's some struggle in it, but lots of light too, not least in the central piece, Beethoven's 'Heiliger Dankgesang' (Holy Song of Thanksgiving) from the Op. 132 quartet, a wonderful musical testament to the regaining of health.

After the period of absence of live performance there is a heightened sense of music being a nourishing, restorative, and most importantly, shared experience. It is a huge pleasure to be back in this audience community, especially from within the inspiring community of players which is Scottish Ensemble.



Matthew Truscott

Performers

Scottish Ensemble

Director / Violin
Matthew Truscott

Violin
Liza Johnson
Kate Suthers
Lena Zeliszewska

Tristan Gurney
Laura Ghiro
Alastair Savage
Rachel Culpan*

Viola
Andrew Berridge
Carol Ella
Gordon Cervoni*

Cello
Alison Lawrance
Naomi Pavri

Double Bass
Diane Clark

Lute
Kristiina Watt

*Scottish Ensemble Young Artist

Promising strings students chosen to accompany us on tour as part of our training programme with the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

An introduction to tonight's music from Matthew Truscott

This string programme weaves its way around its central work, Beethoven's taut and beautiful *Heiliger Dankgesang*, his song of thanks for recovery from illness. One of the most celebrated, profound and joyful pieces of string music from any period, it has within it intimations of past, present and future.

String, even as far back as the Greek Moirai, the three Fates who spun, measured out and then at the point of death, cut the threads of individual destinies, has been a metaphor for journeying, for attachment and for life itself.

Strings of different lengths form the drones which resonate throughout Julia Wolfe's *Four Mary's*, Schubert's eerily desperate *Leiermann*, and Purcell's audacious and awe inspiring *Fantasy on One Note*, a perfect lockdown piece, showing how much variety it's possible to find while staying at home.

Threads of chorales, or prayer, which breathe with wonderful gentle optimism and gratitude in Beethoven's Lydian tonality, emanate from the cantus firmus in the two In Nomines which bookend the programme. First Purcell's in the Dorian mode, a darker feel, and at the end the anonymous In Nomine a 6, altogether brighter, but with similarly magical transformative counterpoint. Biber's *Balletti Lamentabili* of 1670 may have been written in response to a near scrape with death in October 1669, the delicate dances forming a more physical 17th century version of Beethoven's metaphysical masterpiece. And the Brahms quintet movement carries the glow

of wisdom and generosity of a man who at the time felt as though he was writing his last music, but who was subsequently inspired to further greatness. The restorative power of music itself is evoked in Purcell's *Ode to St Cecilia*. In *Here the Deities Approve* the Gods of music and love look down appreciatively as the gifts they have bestowed are used to such nourishing and sensual effect, nowhere more so than in the gorgeous string ritornello which sweeps up the voice (here violin) at the end of the aria.

As if to reward our sense of Beethoven's Lydian hymn having an archetypal resonance beyond itself, there follows this historical curiosity:

Around seventy years after Beethoven's death, an ancient fragment of rock was discovered in Greece, carved into which is the earliest surviving example of attributable notated music anywhere in the western world. It was written in 128 BC by an Athenian named Limenios and is dedicated to Apollo, god of music and of healing.

The music: a hymn of thanks in the Lydian mode.

Its text reads
Come ye to this twin-peaked slope of Parnassos with distant views, [where dancers are welcome], and [lead me in my songs], Pierian Goddesses who dwell on the snow-swept crags of Helikon. Sing in honour of Pythian Phoebus, golden-haired, skilled archer and musician, whom blessed Leto bore beside the celebrated marsh, grasping with her hands a sturdy branch of the grey-green olive tree in her time of travail.

Programme

Henry Purcell
In Nomine in 7 parts, Dorian

Julia Wolfe
Four Marys for string orchestra

Heinrich Biber
Balletti Lamentabili a 4

Johannes Brahms
Adagio from String Quintet
No.2 in G major

Franz Schubert
Der Leiermann (*The Hurdy-Gurdy Man*) from *Winterreise*
(arranged for string orchestra by Dobrinka Tabakova)

Henry Purcell
Symphony and *Here the deities*
from *Welcome to all the pleasures*
Fantasy on One Note

Ludwig van Beethoven
Molto Adagio *Heiliger Dankesang*
(*Holy song of thanksgiving*)
from String Quartet No.15
(arranged for string orchestra by Iain Farrington)

Anon
In Nomine in 6 parts (c.1578)

Concert lasts approximately 75 minutes with no interval.

Programme order correct at time of printing; any changes will be announced from the stage.

notes on the music

Henry Purcell In Nomine in 7 parts, *Dorian*

A mood of contemplation is evoked by this beautiful fantasia, originally written in 1680 for a consort of bass viols. An 'In Nomine' is a musical form that takes its name from a phrase in the Latin Mass, 'Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini' / 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord', as set for voices by the 16th-century English composer John Taverner in his 'Missa Gloria Tibi Trinitas'. Instrumental developments of the plainsong theme inspired by Taverner's style became very popular over the next century; there are more than 300 surviving versions by British composers up to the time of Henry Purcell. In this seven-part 'In Nomine', written for two high treble viols, three tenor viols and two basses, Purcell places the main theme or 'cantus firmus' /

'fixed melody' in the middle of the texture, with the other parts weaving around it.

Julia Wolfe *Four Marys* for string orchestra

The American composer Julia Wolfe is a member of the innovative Bang on a Can organisation, which commissions, performs and presents adventurous new music, priding itself on 'fostering a new kind of audience that doesn't concern itself with boundaries'. Wolfe won a Pulitzer Prize in 2015 for *Anthraxite Fields*, a concert-length oratorio exploring the history of the Pennsylvania coalfields. New Yorker magazine described her string quartets as combining 'the violent forward drive of rock music with an aura of minimalist serenity [using] the four instruments as a big guitar, whipping psychedelic states of mind into frenzied and ecstatic climaxes'.

Four Marys started life in 1991 as a quartet, but was revised for string orchestra in 2015. It is inspired by the Scottish folk tune commemorating the four attendants of Mary Queen of Scots, which Wolfe heard the Appalachian folk musician Jean Ritchie singing and playing on the three-stringed mountain dulcimer, the only string instrument that Wolfe herself plays. She has a great love for the instrument and says she has taken the musical material for this poignant, introspective piece 'from gestures that are characteristic of dulcimer playing – the crying quality of the sliding melody string, the mesmerizing strumming of the drone strings. It is as if I have put a magnifying glass on these sounds to look at them up close and big.'

Biber *Balletti Lamentabili* a 4 Sonata; Allemanda; Sarabande; Gavotte; Gigue; Lamenti

We return to the late 17th century for this melancholy dance suite by Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber, which exploits the intense chromatic harmonies and dissonances made possible by the sophisticated tuning methods of the period. It is an outstanding example of the 'balletti lamentabili' (literally 'dancing the sorrow') that were fashionable at the time, and of the fusion of German and Italian musical styles of which Biber was a leading exponent. Born in Bohemia, Biber spent most of his working life as Kapellmeister or director of chapel music at the court of the prince-bishops of Salzburg. He was a virtuoso player, whose surviving violin sonatas demand formidable technique and are full of innovation, complexity and challenges such as double-stopping, stretches to the sixth and seventh positions and especially the art of *scordatura*, or alternative tunings for the strings.

Johannes Brahms *Adagio* from String Quintet No.2 in G major, Op. 111

The emotional intensity continues with the slow

second movement of Brahms's second string quintet, put together from sketches originally intended to be a symphony. The additional fifth voice is a second viola part, and the Adagio opens with a beautiful viola duet with a pizzicato cello accompaniment. There is just one theme: a slow, stately march, developed with great subtlety and lyricism.

The quintet was written in the summer of 1890, and at the end of that year Brahms sent part of it to his publisher with a covering letter in which he wrote 'With this scrap of paper bid farewell to notes of mine – because it really is time to stop'. Although only 57 years old, he felt the string quintet Op.111 would be his last composition; when it appeared in print in February 1891, it was accompanied by a revised version of one of his earliest works, the Piano Trio in B major Op. 8, as though to mark the beginning and end of his career. He also drew up a will, leaving most of his money to two charitable trusts for needy musicians in Hamburg and Vienna.

As it turned out, it would be another six years before Brahms finally succumbed to the cancer of the liver that had also killed his

father, and during those last years he surprised himself with a renewed burst of creativity that produced some of his finest chamber works, including the quintet and trio written for the gifted clarinetist Richard Mühlfeld. But the second viola quintet would have been a fitting last work; it is wonderfully typical of the composer's style.

Franz Schubert

Der Leiermann (The Hurdy-Gurdy Man) from *Winterreise* (arranged for string orchestra by Dobrinka Tabakova)

Schubert described his song cycle *Winterreise* / 'A Winter's Journey', as 'a bunch of ghastly songs', before singing them through to a group of friends who were taken aback by their gloominess. But the composer went on to say that he liked them more than any of his other songs and to predict that they day would come when his friends would like them too. Indeed it did; and *Winterreise* went on to become one of the most famous song cycles in the whole repertoire. The sequence of poems by Wilhelm Müller, written in 1823, describes the aimless wandering of a jilted lover through a snow-covered landscape, alternately recollecting care-free days of spring and summer spent with his beloved,

and haunted by despair and thoughts of death. *Der Leiermann* / 'The Hurdy-Gurdy Man', the last song in the drama, depicts the most chilling image of all; for the hurdy-gurdy man with his bare feet and his empty collecting plate is a symbol of death-in-life, an eternal nightmare: 'Strange old man – shall I go with you?,' the poet asks. 'Will you grind your music to my songs?'

After watching a lockdown performance of *Winterreise* by Mark Padmore and Mitsuko Uchida, live-streamed from London's Wigmore Hall in June 2020, Frances Wilson, who blogs as The Cross-eyed Pianist, described Schubert as 'the composer for our corona times', adding that 'this account of isolation, its chill frequently tinged with the tenderest poignancy, seemed particularly appropriate. We are at home, but we are separate, living in our "bubbles", unable to hug our family and friends, yet finding a sense of closeness, warmth and solace through music.' The music of *Winterreise*, she said, was 'so fitting for these strange days, with its narrative of loss, longing and separation'.

The Bulgarian composer Dobrinka Tabakova has a strong affinity with Schubert's music, and has taken it as the starting point for several

arrangements and original compositions. Here she uses a solo viola as the voice of the traveller and the strings of Scottish Ensemble take the pianist's role in *Der Leiermann*.

Henry Purcell

Symphony and *Here the deities* from *Welcome to all the pleasures*

Fantasy on One Note

Welcome to all the pleasures was an Ode for St Cecilia's Day commissioned by The Musical Society of London for performance on 22 November 1683. It has nine movements, most of which are vocal or choral, setting a text by Christopher Fishburn, a relative of Sir Christopher Wren; but we hear the instrumental overture and also the third movement, which like so much of the repertoire in this concert features a ground bass over which the upper parts weave a decorative musical tapestry.

This concept is refined still further in the Fantasy on One Note, where lively, dancing melodic lines are woven around a single drone.

Ludwig van Beethoven

Molto Adagio *Heiliger Dankesang* (Holy song of thanksgiving) from String Quartet No.15 in A minor

(arranged for string orchestra by Iain Farrington)

Beethoven's late quartets are regarded among the pinnacles of chamber music repertoire and this slow third movement of the String Quartet No 15 in A minor, one of his very last works, has been described by Masumi Per Rostad, violist of the Pacifica Quartet, as one of the highlights of all music. The full title of the movement is 'Song of Thanksgiving to the Deity from a convalescent in the Lydian mode', and it is the emotional as well as the architectural centre of the five-movement work. Musicologist Joseph Kernan in his important 1978 study of Beethoven's quartets wrote of its 'rarified atmosphere, whispered by a convalescent who has just, and barely, passed a supreme crisis. He still seems to be under oxygen.' A condition that is all too familiar for many of us over the past two years.

Anon In Nomine in 6 parts (c.1578)

The concluding In Nomine by an anonymous composer brings us neatly back to our starting point: a musical benediction after this time of trial.

Notes on the music
by Clare Stevens

about the performers



Matthew Truscott
Director/Violin

Matthew Truscott is concertmaster of the Mahler Chamber Orchestra and one of the leaders of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. He has also this year been appointed leader of the Dunedin Consort. His chamber music collaborations have included projects with Trevor Pinnock, Jonathan Manson, Emmanuel Pahud and most recently Leif Ove Andsnes.



Scottish Ensemble

The UK's leading string orchestra, Scottish Ensemble (SE) is a group of outstanding musicians championing music for strings. Founded in 1969, and based in Glasgow, SE delivers dynamic, vibrant performances and musical events across Scotland, the UK and beyond.

Committed to musical collaboration, SE not only regularly collaborates with high-profile guest artists – from trumpeter Alison Balsom and mezzo-soprano Sarah Connolly to violinists Patricia Kopatchinskaja and Nicola Benedetti, to name only a few – but also with artists from other disciplines and art forms.

Since 2014, SE has presented a series of annual cross-artform collaborations that have so

far included projects with visual artist Toby Paterson; Swedish contemporary dance company Andersson Dance; electronic-classical crossover composer Anna Meredith and visual artist Eleanor Meredith; and Scottish theatre company Vanishing Point. SE also has a long history of commissioning new works.

In recent years SE's international reputation has also grown considerably and SE has now performed in Taiwan, China, Brazil, the USA and across Europe, at festivals from the Thuringia Bach Festival to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, and venues including the John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts (Washington D.C.) and the Barbican Centre (London).

Our Supporters

Funders

Creative Scotland
Glasgow City Council
Aberdeen City Council
Dundee City Council
Inverness Common Good
Fund

Trusts & Foundations

Alexander Moncur
Charitable Trust
Binks Trust
Christina Mary Hendrie
Charitable Trust
David and June Gordon Trust
D C Thomson Charitable
Trust
D'Oyly Carte Charitable
Trust
Ernest Cook Trust
Gannochy Trust
Gordon Fraser Charitable
Trust
Hinrichsen Foundation
Hope Scott Trust
Hugh Fraser Foundation
Jennie S Gordon Memorial
Foundation
John Ellerman Foundation
JTH Charitable Trust
Kimie Trust
Lang Foundation
Leach Family Charitable
Trust
Leng Charitable Trust
Martin Connell Charitable
Trust
Merchants House of Glasgow
Michael Marks Charitable
Trust
Murdoch Forrest Charitable
Trust
PRS for Music Foundation
Radcliffe Charitable Trust
R J Larg Family Trust
Robertson Trust
RVW Trust
Tay Charitable Trust
W A Cargill Fund
Walter Craig Charitable Trust
William S Philips Fund

Strings Attached Circle

Anonymous
John Dale in memory of
Jacqueline Dale
Margaret Fothergill
Neil & Alison Kelly
The McGlashan Charitable
Trust
Andrew Pringle

Strings Attached Partners

Anonymous
Campbell Armour & Angus
McLeod
Jeff & Emily Fergus
Fabienne Harrison
John Innes

Strings Attached Associates

Anonymous
Carola Bronte-Stewart
The Right. Hon. Lord
Matthew Clarke
Ian & Irene Dickson
Alison Lawson
Stella Morse
Simon & Lesley Paterson
James Potter
Dame Seona Reid
Jennifer Shearer
Alastair Stewart
Malcolm & Aileen Wishart

Strings Attached Fellows

Anonymous
Gordon Adam
Fraser Anderson
Peter Armit
Dale A. Bilsland
Ian & Nuala Booth
Stephen & Margaret Brearley
Margaret Bremner
Roderick & Patricia Brodie
Anna & Stephen Brooke
Colin Brown
Georgina Clark
Pam Clark
Joe Coleiro
Lindsay & Graeme Colville
Sheila Colvin
Freddie & Michael Dale
Lea & Adrian De Villiers

Thorben Dittes
Rosemary Ewles
Robert Fleming & Ellen
Thomson
Ken Forbes & Margaret
Gibson
Pete Fozard
Donald Fraser
Donald & Alison Gordon
Stuart Goudie & Caron
Anderson
Jenny Jamison
Alison Lawrance
Cathy Lawrance
Iain Leggatt
Josephine Leighton
Graham & Elma Leisk
Janet MacDonald
Neil Metcalfe & Pat
Monaghan
Colin & Valerie Miller
Rosemary Millington
Alan Moat
Michael & Margaret Moss
Clare Munn
William Norris
Christina Paulson Ellis
Angela & Euan Petrie
Roy & Sue Rampling
Dame Seona Reid
Daphne Robertson
Fred & Irene Shedden
Bill & Linda Stephens
Magnus & Alayne Swanson
Simon Taylor
Anne Thom
Scott Turnbull
William & Carolyn Walker
Lesley Watt
Alison Wylie

*plus the
Strings Attached Friends*

Legacies

Anonymous
I.B. Currie
Alasdair Fraser
Joe Coleiro

Patrons

Marina, The Lady Marks
Baron Vallance of Tummel

Scottish Ensemble

CCA, 350 Sauchiehall Street
Glasgow, G2 3JD
scottishensemble.co.uk

 ScottishEnsemble

 ScotEnsemble

 scottishensemblestrings

Stuart Burns

Producer

Catherine Ferrell

General Manager

Chris Gemmell

Development Assistant

Monica Gowans

Marketing Assistant

Jenny Jamison

Chief Executive

Joanne McIntosh

Development Lead

William Norris

Interim Chief Executive

Duncan Sutherland

Creative Learning
& Projects Manager

Registered charity no. SC001539
printed on recyclable paper

