



SCOTLAND'S NATIONAL
ORCHESTRA

Debussy, Ravel & Perkinson

New Auditorium, Glasgow Royal Concert Hall

Sun 6 Apr 2025: 2.30pm

The RSNO's Associate Artist Kellen Gray shares some of his favourite music for chamber ensemble. Ravel's rarely heard Introduction and Allegro – considered by many to be a little harp concerto – is the sparkling finale to a concert that opens with Debussy's otherworldly Sonata for Flute, Viola and Harp, and also features the passionate personal testimony of African American composer Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson, his String Quartet No1.

RSNO CHAMBER ENSEMBLE

Katherine Bryan Flute

Timothy Orpen Clarinet

Abigail Kent Harp

Patrick Curlett Violin

Robin Wilson Violin

Beth Woodford Viola

Robert Anderson Cello

Kellen Gray Presenter

If viewing these notes at the concert, please do so considerately and not during performances. Please silence all mobile telephones and alerts, and refrain from taking photographs, without flash, until the end of each piece.

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

Sonata for Flute, Viola and Harp

First performance: Boston, 7 November 1916

Duration: 17 minutes

- 1. Pastorale: Lento, dolce rubato**
 - 2. Interlude: Tempo di minuetto**
 - 3. Finale: Allegro moderato ma risoluto**
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Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson (1932-2004)

String Quartet No1 Calvary

First performance: 1956

Duration: 16 minutes

- 1. Allegro**
 - 2. Adagio**
 - 3. Rondo: Allegro vivace**
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Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Introduction and Allegro

First performance: Paris, 22 February 1907

Duration: 10 minutes

- 1. Introduction: Très lent**
 - 2. Allegro**
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Debussy, Ravel & Perkinson



This afternoon's programme weaves a rich tapestry of colour, texture and lyrical expression, linking three masterful works through their shared emphasis on timbral exploration and evocative storytelling. Debussy's **Sonata for Flute, Viola and Harp** embodies Impressionist delicacy, its ethereal sonorities shaping a dreamlike dialogue among the instruments. This intimate and colouristic approach resonates in Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson's **String Quartet No1 Calvary**, in which the composer's signature fusion of classical and African American musical traditions unfolds in expressive and highly rhythmic dance figures reminiscent of juba

and tap idiom. Ravel's **Introduction and Allegro** serves as both a precursor to and culmination of these ideas, combining Impressionist orchestral textures with chamber-scale precision. Commissioned to showcase the harp, Ravel's work expands the instrument's expressive capabilities, much like Debussy's Sonata. Together, these pieces create an evocative journey, revealing how composers across time and traditions have harnessed instrumental colour and lyrical narrative to shape uniquely immersive soundscapes.

© Kellen Gray

Kellen Gray **Presenter**

Scotland-based American conductor Kellen Gray is Associate Artist of the RSNO, following his two-year tenure as Assistant Conductor (2021-3), a post that was supported by the Solti Foundation.

Born and raised in Rock Hill, South Carolina, Kellen's early professional life took him on a diverse path ranging from orchestral violinist to beekeeper, before turning his full-time attention to conducting.

Kellen credits the many folk music styles of the south-eastern United States as his earliest and most impactful musical influences, and his repertoire interests to date have been fuelled by the engaged pursuit of that same spirit of cultural authenticity. This has led to a particular mastery not only of works that incorporate American folk idioms, but also in-depth explorations of heavily folk-inspired European composers such as Béla Bartók, Manuel de Falla and Ralph Vaughan Williams.

A passionate champion for African-diasporic composers, Kellen was the Founder & Curator of Charleston Symphony's Project Aurora, a programming and performance initiative aiming to illustrate the importance of African American arts and culture as equally valuable to its European equivalent. Additionally, he serves as Assistant Editor & Conductor Liaison for the African Diaspora Music Project, after extensive research at The Center for Black Music Research at Columbia College Chicago.

Kellen's discography to date comprises two celebrated releases – *African American Voices* and *African American Voices II*, made with the RSNO – showcasing music by Margaret Bonds, William Dawson, William Grant Still, Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson, Florence Price and George Walker. Both records have met with the highest critical acclaim, including an elusive 5-star review from the prestigious *Diapason* magazine.

Fauré Piano Quartet

New Auditorium, Glasgow Royal Concert Hall

Sun 27 Apr 2025: 2.30pm

Bridge Phantasy for Piano Quartet

Fauré Piano Quartet

RSNO Chamber Ensemble

Still waters run deep. Gabriel Fauré was modest, witty and elegant, and always a popular guest in the salons of Paris' Belle Époque. But real passion surges beneath the beautiful surface of his chamber music. Four RSNO players also bring to life the gorgeous (and startlingly emotional) music of Frank Bridge. He was Benjamin Britten's favourite teacher, and you can really tell.

Book online at rsno.org.uk/whats-on or phone the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall Box Office on 0141 353 8000 (booking fees may apply).

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Royal Scottish National Orchestra
19 Killermont Street, Glasgow G2 3NX
+44 (0)141 226 3868
rsno.org.uk | info@rsno.org.uk

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