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Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto

Caird Hall, Dundee
Thu 29 May 2025 7.30pm

Usher Hall, Edinburgh
Fri 30 May 7.30pm

Glasgow Royal Concert Hall
Sat 31 May 7.30pm

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Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto

Caird Hall, Dundee Thu 29 May 2025 7.30pm

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'For me, personally, music has been a way to inspire others,' says Randall Goosby – and that's just one reason why we're delighted to have this young American violinist as Artist in Residence. He's the perfect performer for Mendelssohn's magical Violin Concerto. Plus, Music Director Thomas Søndergård brings all his energy to the First Symphony by Lera Auerbach – a tale of love, death and impossible dreams, from a composer who believes that 'every concert is about being transformed'. In Dundee and Edinburgh we open with Debussy's sensuous *Prélude*, and in Glasgow, Associate Artist Kellen Gray conducts Price's *Adoration* and Wirén's *Serenade for Strings* featuring Randall and young musicians from Glasgow CREATE.

DEBUSSY *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* [10'] (Dundee and Edinburgh only)

PRICE *Adoration* [4'] (Glasgow only)

WIRÉN *Serenade for Strings* Op11, 1st movement [3'] (Glasgow only)

Price and Wirén performed Side-by-Side with Musicians from Glasgow CREATE

MENDELSSOHN *Violin Concerto in E Minor* Op64 [26']

INTERVAL

LERA AUERBACH *Symphony No1 Chimera* [40'] UK PREMIERE

Thomas Søndergård Conductor

Kellen Gray Conductor (*Price and Wirén* only)

Randall Goosby Violin

Royal Scottish National Orchestra

The Dundee concert is dedicated to the **RSNO Dundee Circle Committee** in recognition of their generous support of the RSNO.

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The Glasgow performance will be recorded for the RSNO Archive.
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Please silence all mobile telephones and alerts, and refrain from taking photographs, without flash, until the end of each piece.



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Daniel Müller-Schott Cello

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Welcome



Welcome to tonight's concert, which marks the RSNO's final visit of the Season in Dundee and the penultimate in Edinburgh and Glasgow. It's been a phenomenal Season and I'd like to thank all our audiences across Scotland for your support.

This evening we are lucky to have Randall Goosby with us for the second time this Season as our Artist in Residence. While in this post, Randall has spent a lot of time working with the young people from CREATE, Glasgow's Instrumental Music Service, alongside Associate Artist Kellen Gray, to prepare them for a side-by-side with the Orchestra. Those of you at our Glasgow performance will be able to see the fruits of this collaboration in the opening two pieces. The enthusiasm that Randall and Kellen have for empowering the next generation of talent is seriously heartening and I am so pleased that we have the chance to work with them both so closely.

The second half of tonight's concert, the UK premiere of Lera Auerbach's First Symphony, is a special one. We performed a movement from

Chimera at our 2023 Salzburg residency and also during the 2023:24 Season. The performances were well received by audiences, the Orchestra and Music Director Thomas Søndergård, so it felt only right to explore the whole Symphony and give it the attention it deserves. Lera's work has an absolutely wonderful sound and features some unusual orchestration – keep your eyes peeled for the theremin, an electronic instrument controlled without any physical contact from the player. You'll be mesmerised!

On a final note, I'd like to invite those of you in Glasgow to visit the Clyde Foyer in the interval to see our newly installed artwork by Scottish illustrator Katie Smith – you'll recognise the illustrations of our musicians from our 2024:25 Season brochure. I'd like to extend my particular thanks to the supporters of the featured musicians who give generously to the Orchestra via our Chair Patron scheme.

Alistair Mackie

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Royal Scottish National Orchestra



ARTISTIC TEAM

Thomas Søndergård	1
MUSIC DIRECTOR	
Patrick Hahn	2
PRINCIPAL GUEST CONDUCTOR	
Ellie Slorach	3
ENGAGEMENT CONDUCTOR	
Kellen Gray	4
ASSOCIATE ARTIST	
Derrick Morgan	5
ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR	
Neeme Järvi	6
CONDUCTOR LAUREATE	
Alexander Lazarev	7
CONDUCTOR EMERITUS	
Stephen Doughty	8
DIRECTOR, RSNO CHORUS	
Patrick Barrett	9
DIRECTOR, RSNO YOUTH CHORUSES	

FIRST VIOLIN

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LEADER	
Lena Zeliszewska	11
ASSOCIATE LEADER	
Tamás Fejes	12
ASSISTANT LEADER	
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Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune



FIRST PERFORMANCE

Paris, 22 December 1894

DURATION 10 minutes

According to the leading modernist Pierre Boulez, 'Modern music began with the *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* [Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun]'. There are aspects of this work that really do seem way ahead of their time. The delicate, voluptuous harmonies may have their origins partly in Wagner's epochal erotic masterpiece *Tristan und Isolde*, but in Debussy they acquire a new ambiguity – faintly unsettling and strangely calm at the same time. Then there are the supple, fluid rhythms which at times seem to float free of any measured beat: it's as though Debussy had achieved the near impossible and captured in fixed crotchets and quavers the sense of a timeless, ecstatic improvisation.

The use of orchestral colour too is remarkably forward-looking. Even in the last decade of the 19th century, when the *Prélude* was composed,

some composers were still tending to think of the notes first, and only then of the instrumental colours in which to dress them. But from the very first bars of *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* pitch and sound-colour feel as though they have been born simultaneously. The opening note – a C sharp played softly by a solo flute – is as much 'flute' as it is 'C sharp'. Towards the end of the piece, Debussy includes a pair of 'antique cymbals' (crotales) – highly exotic by the standards of his own time – but it is impossible to imagine their notes played by any other instrument.

In another sense, however, *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* is a work with a well-established 19th-century lineage. More than half a century earlier, Franz Liszt had argued that the way forward was to compose music that rejected abstract classical forms and found a new fluidity and imaginative freedom by drawing on visual arts, landscapes or literature for inspiration. Debussy takes as his creative starting point a poem by the French symbolist Stéphane Mallarmé, which depicts a faun – a sensual but benevolent goat-like being of Roman mythology – who dreams lazily of sexual gratification in the full heat of the Mediterranean sun, before finally surrendering to sleep.

In the *Prélude* Debussy fastens on phrases, images and feelings in Mallarmé's poem and transforms them into music that rises and falls, ebbs and flows with an extraordinary lifelike freedom. In the background there still hovers a ghost of the age-old 'ternary form' – a huge arch-like A-B-A structure. But that's not really how it feels. Literary listeners may be reminded of the phenomenon of 'stream of consciousness' writing in 20th-century literature, developed brilliantly by such radical innovators as James Joyce and Virginia Woolf.

Unlike a lot of revolutionary works, *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* was an instant success at its first performance in 1894. Years later the conductor, Gustave Doret, remembered it vividly: 'All at once I felt behind me, as some conductors can, an audience that was totally spellbound. It was a complete triumph, and I had no hesitation in breaking the rule forbidding encores.'

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Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune is performed in Dundee and Edinburgh only.

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***Prélude à l'après-midi
d'un faune***

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The Arts in 1894

24 Feb Oscar Wilde's play *Salome* was first published in English, with illustrations by Aubrey Beardsley

15 Feb Martial Bourdin accidentally killed himself while attempting to blow up the Royal Observatory in Greenwich, an event fictionalised by Joseph Conrad in 1907 in *The Secret Agent*

14 Mar Carl Nielsen's First Symphony premiered in Copenhagen

10 Apr Abstract painter Ben Nicholson was born in Denham, Buckinghamshire

21 Apr George Bernard Shaw's *Arms and the Man* opened at the Avenue Theatre in London

14 May Blackpool Tower, at 518 ft (158 m) and designed by Maxwell and Tuke, opened to the public

30 Jun Horace Jones' Tower Bridge on the Thames in London officially opened

26 Jul Aldous Huxley, author of *Brave New World* (1932), was born in Godalming, Surrey

8 Nov Robert Frost's first poem, *My Butterfly*, for which he was paid \$15, appeared in *The New York Independent*

15 Nov Greenock-born composer Hamish MacCunn's opera *Jeanie Deans* premiered at Edinburgh's Royal Lyceum Theatre

3 Dec Robert Louis Stevenson, author of *Treasure Island* and *Kidnapped*, died in Samoa

Florence Price (1887-1953)

Adoration

DURATION 4 minutes

Florence Price, born in Little Rock, Arkansas, was a pioneer African American composer. Most notably, she is remembered as the first African American woman to gain success as a composer of symphonic music. Her First Symphony, winner of a national prize, was given its premiere in 1933 by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra – very much a social and cultural milestone at that time.

Quite extraordinarily, a large part of Price's compositional output was lost until 2009, when a trove of material was found in an abandoned house in St Anne, Illinois, where Price spent her summers before she died in 1953. Included in

this remarkable find were two violin concertos, her Fourth Symphony and a short work for organ, *Adoration*.

Composed two years before her death, *Adoration* is a brief work, simple in form and structure, and filled with tender emotion. It opens with a long meditative melody accompanied by a rich bed of harmony redolent of the hymnary. A richer, slower section builds to an expressive peak, before the opening melody returns and the work concludes with a musical Amen. The increasing popularity of *Adoration* is attested by a number of arrangements, including this evening's version for string orchestra.

© Mark Fielding

Adoration is performed in Glasgow only.

Dag Wirén (1905-1986)

Serenade for Strings Op11

FIRST PERFORMANCE

Stockholm, October 1937

DURATION 1st movement: 3 minutes

Preludium (Prelude): Allegro molto

Swedish composer Dag Wirén wrote orchestral and chamber music as well as works for film and theatre. He was also a pianist and performed regularly on Swedish radio. His *Serenade for Strings*, his best-known work, was written after a period of study in Paris with the Russian composer Leonid Sabaneyev. It was the result of a commission from the conductor and violinist Tobias Wilhelmi and the Stockholm Chamber Orchestra, who gave the *Serenade*'s premiere in October 1937.

The *Serenade for Strings* was written at a time when much of the musical world was attempting to come to grips with atonality, rhythmic complexities and violent sonorities. Wirén, however, could be best described as a kind of Swedish neo-classicist: his style was distinctly retro and approachable, with easily hummed tunes presented with grace and good humour. 'The purpose of this little *Serenade*', Wirén wrote in his own programme notes for the piece, 'is simply to amuse and entertain, and if the listener, when the last note has faded, feels cheerful and happy, then I have reached my goal.' The opening *Prelude*, with its lively, buoyant atmosphere and wealth of thematic material, clearly evokes the spirit of Mozart, Wirén's musical hero.

© Mark Fielding

Serenade for Strings is performed in Glasgow only.

Glasgow CREATE



Trish Strain Conductor

Victoria Abbey Viola

Saskia Allen Violin 2

Theo Arkinstall Violin 1

Ella Bonnyman Viola

Finlay Bryce Bass

Nikita Bubulchuk Violin 1

Eilidh Campbell Violin 2

Rose Clarke Violin 2

Olwen Dimberly-Webber Violin 1

Hannah Eastdale Violin 2

Disha Gondal Violin 2

Shreya Gondal Cello

Sasha Graham Violin 2

Ava Griffith Bass

Nellie Heinrich Violin 1

Martha Johnston Violin 1

Daniil Liusov Cello

Lia McCulloch Cello

Dylan McGroarty-Ainslie Violin 1

Erin Nixon Bass

Grianne Owens Violin 2

Michael Park Violin 2

Catherine Raduzky Violin 1

Kathy Ross Viola

Daniel Snee Viola

Harper Stewart-Henderson Cello

Austin Vincent Agarwal Violin 2

Guanyi Wang Cello

Cheryl Xu Cello

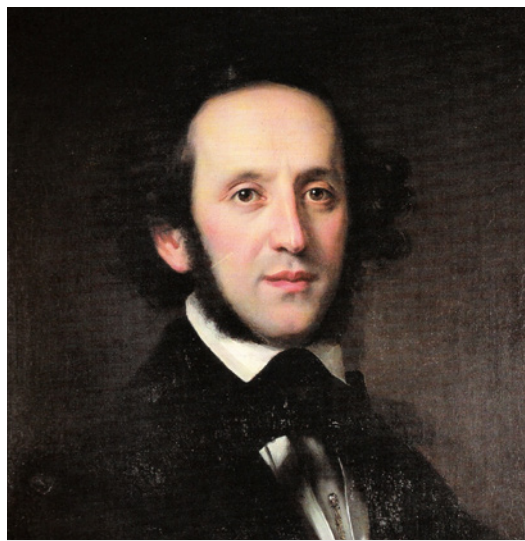
Jessica Zhu Violin 1

Raymond Zhang Violin 1

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

Violin Concerto

in E Minor Op64



FIRST PERFORMANCE

Leipzig, 13 March 1845

DURATION 26 minutes

Allegro molto appassionato –

Andante –

Allegretto non troppo – Allegro molto vivace

Success, fame and money were things that Mendelssohn never had to think about. Indeed, no less an eminent critic than Queen Victoria described him as 'A wonderful genius. So pleasing and amiable.' Born in Hamburg into a wealthy banking family, Mendelssohn's extraordinary musical gifts were evident from his earliest years and were carefully nurtured. His father sought the best advice when it came to his son's choice of career. Cherubini, director of the Paris Conservatoire, was consulted and, while complimenting Abraham Mendelssohn on his wealth, suggested that the only true path open to Felix was that of a professional musician.

First in the Rhineland, where he was appointed musical director at Düsseldorf in 1833, then in Leipzig where he was in charge of the Gewandhaus concerts and founded the Conservatoire (still one of the foremost institutions of its kind in Germany), Mendelssohn became the centre of all serious musical efforts.

Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto was written for the virtuoso violinist Ferdinand David, whom Mendelssohn had appointed his concertmaster when he became conductor of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra in 1835. He wrote to David:

I would like to write a concerto for you. I have one in E Minor in my head, the opening leaves me no peace. I feel that with every work I get further towards being able to write what is really in my heart, and in fact that is the only rule of conduct I have. If I am not destined for popularity I do not want to study or struggle to win it. Whatever comes from the heart makes me happy – and so I should be very happy if I were able to grant you and my other friends the wish you have expressed.

The work was begun shortly thereafter, but completion was delayed by other projects and

by Mendelssohn's frequent bouts of ill health. He never abandoned the score for long, however, and at intervals showed sketches to David, soliciting practical advice from its eventual dedicatee every step of the way.

By 1939, Mendelssohn was frustrated and reported, '... this task is not an easy one. You ask that it should be brilliant, and how can anyone like me do this? The whole of the first solo is to be for the E string.' With David's help, the Concerto was eventually completed in 1844. David was responsible both for the cadenza and for giving frequent advice regarding technical matters throughout the compositional process. Sadly, Mendelssohn was too ill to attend the successful premiere on 13 March 1845 (he would be dead just 18 months later) and so the Concerto was conducted by Niels Gade with David as the soloist.

The Concerto is in three movements, played without a break. After one bar's introduction the violin quietly enters with the principal theme, which is eventually taken over fortissimo (very loud) by the full orchestra. A secondary theme is given out by clarinets and flutes. The development section, based on the opening theme, leads to a cadenza of trills and arpeggios which continue as the orchestra begins the recapitulation. A note of the first movement's final chord, held by a solo bassoon, serves as a link to the *Andante*, and a tender theme sung by the soloist – surely one of Mendelssohn's loveliest melodies. The finale opens with a tiny introduction and brass fanfare, which the soloist answers with lightly scampering arpeggios. Echoes of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are everywhere. A suitably dazzling coda ends this movement of great good humour and brilliance.

© Mark Fielding

What was happening in 1845?

7 Feb At London's British Museum, a drunk visitor smashed the Portland Vase, dating to between AD 1 and 25, which took months to repair

3 Mar Florida was admitted as the 27th US state

11 Mar The New Zealand Wars began when 700 Maoris burned the British colonial settlement of Kororareka, or modern-day Russell

17 Mar British inventor and businessman Stephen Perry patented the rubber band

19 May HMS *Erebus* and HMS *Terror*, under the command of Sir John Franklin, left London on their ill-fated voyage to find the Northwest Passage

10 Aug Isambard Kingdom Brunel's SS *Great Britain* arrived in New York from Liverpool, the first screw-propelled vessel to complete the transatlantic crossing

9 Sep Potato blight broke out in Ireland, precipitating the Great Famine
9 Oct The eminent and controversial Anglican, John Henry Newman, was received into the Roman Catholic Church

9 Oct The eminent and controversial Anglican, John Henry Newman, was received into the Roman Catholic Church

19 Oct Richard Wagner's opera *Tannhäuser* premiered at Dresden's Royal Court Theatre

27 Dec Anaesthesia for childbirth was used for the first time, administered by Dr Crawford Long in Jefferson, Georgia

Lera Auerbach (Born 1973)

Symphony No1 *Chimera*

FIRST PERFORMANCE

Düsseldorf, 10 November 2006

UK PREMIERE

DURATION 40 minutes

1. *Aegri somnia*

2. *Post tenebras lux*

3. *Gargoyles*

4. *Et in Arcadia ego*

5. *Siste, viator*

6. *Humum mandere*

7. *Requiem for Icarus*

There are works you write, and there are works that write their way into you. *Chimera* wears the mask of a symphony, but I know better: it entered wearing the skin of something lost. It is a return – backwards, yes – but also inward, a mirror swallowing its own reflection.

As a child, I would press my forehead against the glass and ask the reflection: Who are you? Why this face, these eyes? The dissonance between the outer copy and the inner original was excruciating.

The name *Chimera* contains multiple meanings, and I embrace them all: the mythological beast made of disparate parts, the impossible dream one cannot realise, the biological fusion of incompatible origins. These definitions are not contradictions. They are facets and refractions – light bending through memory's prism.

I wrote *Chimera* by reimagining the material of my ballet *The Little Mermaid*, based on one of the most tragic stories by Hans Christian Andersen – a dark self-portrait of sacrifice and transformation masked by the illusory form of a fairytale.

But this Symphony is not a suite or a summary. In my mind, it has little, if any, connection to the ballet. The transformation of the material is an alchemical act.

A theatre work moves through a story. *Chimera* moves through states of being, through liminality, through shadows. The mermaid, no longer content with silence, sheds her illusory self like a skin and becomes Icarus. The girl with a fish's tail becomes the boy with wings. And both are swallowed by the sky. None of this is real and all of this is real, because music is the most abstract art form. Music carries no meaning beyond vibrations of sound in time – yet it holds within it every personal interpretation, memory, story, emotion and image the listener may discover. Its vastness is the reflection of the listener.

The seven movements carry Latin titles. Each one is a door into a world I needed to name in order to enter:

- *Aegri somnia* – the dreams of the sick
- *Post tenebras lux* – light, yes, but only after darkness
- *Gargoyles* – guardians who weep stone tears
- *Et in Arcadia ego* – even in paradise, death speaks
- *Siste, viator* – halt, traveller: you are already within the underworld
- *Humum mandere* – to bite the dust, the futility of running into constant dead ends while searching for the way out of the labyrinth
- *Requiem for Icarus* – not a fall, but an ascent burned into memory

The form of this Symphony is not classical: there is no sonata map here, no expected resolution. It is not a static architecture, but migration – an echo, a slow-burning ritual. Motifs appear like

fragments of dreams, like footsteps echoing on broken glass. *Chimera* is not a journey from point A to point B. It circles, ascends, descends, vanishes, returns. The structure is that of memory – not linear, but tidal. It is the kind of music that knows what it means to drown.

The boundary between existence and nonexistence is fragile. This is music that lives on the edge of forms, just as I live between languages, countries and selves.

When I was a child in Chelyabinsk, I grew up in a city that did not exist. Outside, the walls bore the portraits of Marx, Engels, Lenin. Inside, I read ancient Greek myths and imagined gods devouring their children. Outside was control. Inside was myth. Both were illusions. Both were reality. Bringing these disparate parts together was the way to survive – and to continuously transform.

Every day, a new Icarus kills himself. Every day, the wax melts.

I think of another chimera – Pan. Goat-legged, melancholy, embarrassed by his own form. And still he plays. That is the artist's fate. To play – despite the monstrosity. To sing through grieving. To sing even if nobody is listening.

Chimera is an abstract work. It is also intensely autobiographical. Not in chronology – the soul has no timeline. I do not believe in the past tense, only in reflections.

I wrote my first song at age four. The song was about death. No one taught me then to fear that word. I spent early childhood playing among the gravestones.

The mermaid, Pan, Icarus, the chimera – they are more than symbols for me. They are beings that do not fit into frames. The mermaid cuts her tail

and leaves her glorious kingdom of the sea to love someone who cannot love her back. Icarus attaches wings and flies in hope to find freedom. Chimeras are made of seemingly contradictory parts that never belonged together – yet breathe life all the same. And each of them, in some way, is my mirror.

Music is my native language. But it is not a language of explanations. It is a language of transformations. Tonality and dissonance are not opposites – they are coordinates. You know you are lost only because you once knew where home was.

Why do I give my works names, when music does not need words? Because titles, too, are offerings, invitations. Like a key quietly left on a table. You may choose not to use it, but it is there. Waiting.

I do not ask the listener to understand *Chimera*. Understanding is the wrong verb. I ask you to feel it, to meet it, to find it within yourself. To fly and fall with it. And maybe, if you are willing, to be transformed by the encounter.

© Lera Auerbach

Lera Auerbach

Composer



Lera Auerbach's journey into the world of art began as a poet, with several published works before she turned 18. Born in 1973 in Chelyabinsk, in the Ural Mountains, she was a virtuoso pianist from early childhood and composed her first opera at the age of 12. In 1991, during a concert tour in the United States, she made the spontaneous decision at just 17 years old to remain in New York – without a safety net and without speaking English – while the Soviet Union was on the brink of collapse. She seized her freedom and started a new life in the US, where she was later granted American citizenship in recognition of her extraordinary talent. In 2021 the Austrian government also awarded her citizenship for her significant contributions to music and the arts, underscoring her international influence. She studied piano and composition at the Juilliard School and comparative literature at Columbia University, both in New York. In 2002 she completed her concert diploma at the Hochschule für Musik in Hanover. That same year, she debuted at Carnegie Hall with her Suite for Violin, Piano

and Orchestra, performed by Gidon Kremer and Kremerata Baltica. Her extensive catalogue now encompasses nearly every musical genre, from chamber music and orchestral works to opera and ballet, performed worldwide by leading soloists, orchestras and theatres.

Today, conducting is at the centre of Auerbach's artistic focus. It defines her current artistic expression: 'Standing on the podium, creating vast musical landscapes, sharing a vision of expression with the orchestra, drawing from my experience in various art forms, and integrating these currents into the ocean of the orchestra and the stage – that is my greatest joy.' This role enriches her artistic voice and expands her legacy as she brings her unique vision to symphonic stages worldwide. She conducted the RSNO in performances in Haddington and Perth earlier this Season.

As a poet of both words and music, Auerbach's literary work includes poetry and prose collections, novellas, and numerous contributions to newspapers and magazines. She was named Poet of the Year by the International Pushkin Society, and her first English-language book, *Excess of Being*, explores the art of aphorisms. In 2022 her children's book *A is for Oboe* (Random House) won the AudioFile Best Audiobook Award, and she received the Robert Creeley Memorial Award, leading to the publication of her poetry manuscript *Forever Music*. She remains active as a visual artist, with her works being collected and exhibited. It is a career that would suffice for multiple lifetimes – yet she continues her journey: 'There is no reason to keep something locked in its cage and not connect to it,' says Auerbach. 'For me, art must feel larger than life. Whether it is music, visual art or literature, art is what remains of our time.'

Randall Goosby

Violin



'For me, personally, music has been a way to inspire others' – Randall Goosby's own words sum up perfectly his commitment to being an artist who makes a difference.

Signed exclusively to Decca Classics in 2020 at the age of 24, American violinist Randall Goosby is acclaimed for the sensitivity and intensity of his musicianship alongside his determination to make music more inclusive and accessible, as well as bringing the music of under-represented composers to light.

Randall is the RSNO's 2024:25 Concert Season Artist in Residence. The 2024/25 season also includes his debut performances with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra/Sir Mark Elder, Minnesota Orchestra/Thomas Søndergård, National Arts Centre Orchestra Ottawa/Alexander Shelley, Montreal Symphony Orchestra/Dalia Stasevska and Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra/Michele Mariotti. He joins the London Philharmonic Orchestra on their US tour led by Edward Gardner.

He returns to the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Detroit Symphony Orchestra and Utah Symphony, and appears in recital across North America and Europe as soloist as well as with the Renaissance Quartet.

Randall was First Prize Winner in the 2018 Young Concert Artists International Auditions. In 2019 he was named the inaugural Robey Artist by Young Classical Artists Trust in partnership with Music Masters in London; and in 2020 he became an Ambassador for Music Masters, a role that sees him mentoring and inspiring students in schools around the United Kingdom.

A former student of Itzhak Perlman and Catherine Cho, Randall received his Bachelor's, Master's and Artist Diploma degrees from the Juilliard School in New York. He is an alumni of the Perlman Music Program and studied previously with Philippe Quint. He plays the Antonio Stradivarius, Cremona, 'ex-Strauss', 1708, on generous loan from Samsung Foundation of Culture.

Kellen Gray

Conductor



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.

Kellen has earned a reputation as a versatile and imaginative artist, celebrated for his diverse array of traditional and experimental programming, thrilling performances and provocative multimedia concert experience curation.

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 and 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 and 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 five-star review from the prestigious *Diapason* magazine.

Kellen's appointment as Associate Artist of the RSNO – the first position of its kind for the orchestra – marks an unprecedented but organic development following his highly successful tenure as the orchestra's Assistant Conductor. Previous positions in Kellen's formative years included successful tenures with the Charleston Symphony Orchestra (Associate Conductor, 2018-23), Chicago Sinfonietta (Conducting Fellow and Assistant Conductor, 2016-18) and Valdosta Symphony Orchestra (Assistant Conductor, 2014-16).

Recent and forthcoming guest conducting highlights include engagements with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Cincinnati Symphony, Houston Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra (Washington), Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra and Seattle Opera.

Thomas Søndergård

Conductor



Danish conductor Thomas Søndergård has been Music Director of the RSNO since 2018, following six seasons as Principal Guest Conductor, and is Music Director of the Minnesota Orchestra. Between 2012 and 2018, he served as Principal Conductor of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales (BBC NOW), after stepping down as Principal Conductor and Musical Advisor of the Norwegian Radio Orchestra.

He has appeared with many notable orchestras in leading European centres, such as Berlin (Berliner Philharmoniker, Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin, Mahler Chamber Orchestra, Konzerthausorchester Berlin), Munich (Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunk), Zurich (Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich), Leipzig (Gewandhausorchester), Paris (Orchestre National de France), London (London Philharmonic, BBC Symphony, London Symphony, Philharmonia Orchestra) and Amsterdam and Rotterdam (Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Netherlands Philharmonic, Rotterdam Philharmonic), and is a familiar figure in Scandinavia, with such orchestras as the Oslo Philharmonic, Gothenburg Symphony,

Danish National Symphony, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic, Swedish Radio Symphony, Finnish Radio Symphony and Helsinki Philharmonic. North American appearances to date have included the symphony orchestras of New York, Chicago, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Baltimore, St Louis, Toronto, Atlanta, Montreal, Vancouver, Houston and Seattle.

Following his acclaimed debut for Royal Danish Opera (*Kafka's Trial*), he has since returned to conduct *Die Walküre*, *Elektra*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *La bohème*, *Cunning Little Vixen* and *Il viaggio a Reims*. He has also enjoyed successful collaborations with Norwegian Opera and Royal Swedish Opera. His Stockholm productions of *Tosca* and *Turandot* (both with Nina Stemme) led to his Bayerische Staatsoper debut, conducting main season and Opera Festival performances of *Turandot* with Stemme. He made his Deutsche Oper Berlin debut with the world premiere of Scartazzini's *Edward II* and has since returned for Berlioz's *Romeo and Juliet*.

His discography covers a broad range of repertoire, including Carl Nielsen (Royal Danish Orchestra, Naxos Records); Poul Ruders (Arhus Symphony, Norwegian Radio, Royal Danish Opera (*Kafka's Trial*), Da Capo and Bridge Records); Sibelius symphonies and tone poems with BBC NOW and Prokofiev and Richard Strauss with the RSNO, Linn Records; Lutosławski and Dutilleux concertos with cellist Johannes Moser and Rundfunk Sinfonieorchester Berlin (Pentatone); and Vilde Frang's celebrated debut recording (WDR Köln, EMI).

In 2023, Thomas was a recipient of the Carl Nielsen and Anne-Marie Carl Nielsen's Foundation award for his outstanding contribution to Danish musical life. In 2022, he was decorated with a prestigious Royal Order of Chivalry, the Order of Dannebrog (Ridder af Dannebrogordenen), by Margrethe II, Queen of Denmark.

Royal Scottish National Orchestra



Formed in 1891 as the Scottish Orchestra, the company became the Scottish National Orchestra in 1950 and was awarded Royal Patronage in 1977. Many renowned conductors have contributed to its success, including Sir John Barbiroli, Walter Susskind, Sir Alexander Gibson, Neeme Järvi, Walter Weller, Alexander Lazarev and Stéphane Denève.

The Orchestra's artistic team is led by Danish conductor Thomas Søndergård, who was appointed Music Director in 2018. In March 2024, Austrian-born conductor, composer and musician Patrick Hahn became the Orchestra's Principal Guest Conductor.

The RSNO is supported by the Scottish Government and is one of the Scottish National Performing Companies. The Orchestra performs across Scotland, including concerts in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee, Aberdeen, Perth and Inverness, and appears regularly at the Edinburgh International Festival and BBC Proms. The RSNO has made recent tours to the USA, China and Europe.

The RSNO has a worldwide reputation for the quality of its recordings, receiving a 2020 Gramophone Classical Music Award for Chopin's

Piano Concertos (soloist: Benjamin Grosvenor), conducted by Elim Chan, two Diapason d'Or awards (Denève/Roussel 2007; Denève/Debussy 2012) and eight GRAMMY Award nominations. In recent years, the RSNO has increasingly recorded soundtracks for film, television and video games, with notable titles including *Horizon: An American Saga* (Warner Bros), *Life on Our Planet* (Netflix), *Star Wars Outlaws* (Ubisoft), *Avatar: Frontiers of Pandora* (Meta Quest VR) and *The Woman King* (Sony Pictures). The Orchestra records at its bespoke in-house facility, Scotland's Studio, in Glasgow.

The RSNO believes that music can enrich lives, and aims to inspire, educate and entertain people throughout Scotland and beyond with its performances, recordings and engagement programmes. Supporting schools, families, young professionals and wider communities, the RSNO delivers high-quality initiatives for all ages and abilities, reaching over 68,000 people in 2023.

On Stage

FIRST VIOLIN

Maya Iwabuchi
LEADER
Lena Zeliszewska
ASSOCIATE LEADER
Tamás Fejes
ASSISTANT LEADER
Stuart McDonald
Cheryl Crockett
Caroline Parry
Elizabeth Bamping
Lorna Rough
Susannah Lowdon
Alan Manson
Liam Lynch
Stewart Webster
Joana Rodrigues
Kirsty MacLeod

SECOND VIOLIN

Patrick Curlett
GUEST PRINCIPAL
Jacqueline Speirs
Marion Wilson
Paul Medd
Sophie Lang
Anne Bünemann
Kirstin Drew
Robin Wilson
Harriet Hunter
Nigel Mason
Colin McKee
Seona Glen

VIOLA

Tom Dunn
PRINCIPAL
Felix Tanner
Asher Zaccardelli
Katherine Wren
Claire Dunn
Beth Woodford
Maria Trittinger
Francesca Hunt
David McCreadie

CELLO

Pei-Jee Ng
PRINCIPAL
Betsy Taylor
Kennedy Leitch
Yuuki Bouterey-Ishido
Gunda Baranauskaitė
Niamh Molloy
Rachael Lee
Sarah Digger

DOUBLE BASS

Nikita Naumov
PRINCIPAL
Danijel Petrović
Michael Rae
Moray Jones
Alexandre Cruz dos Santos
Cole Morrison

FLUTE

Katherine Bryan
PRINCIPAL
Helen Brew
Rebecca Larsen
PICCOLO

OBOE

Adrian Wilson
PRINCIPAL
Peter Dykes
Drake Gritton
COR ANGLAIS

CLARINET

Timothy Orpen
PRINCIPAL
William Knight
Duncan Swindells
PRINCIPAL BASS CLARINET

BASSOON

David Hubbard
PRINCIPAL
Grant McKay
Hugo Mak
CONTRABASSOON

HORN

Amadea Dazeley-Gaist
GUEST PRINCIPAL
Alison Murray
Andrew McLean
David McClenaghan
Martin Murphy

TRUMPET

Christopher Hart
PRINCIPAL
Katie Smith
Brian McGinley

TROMBONE

Dávur Juul Magnussen
PRINCIPAL
Hannah Stell
Alastair Sinclair
PRINCIPAL BASS TROMBONE

TUBA

John Whitener
PRINCIPAL

TIMPANI

Paul Philbert
PRINCIPAL

PERCUSSION

Simon Lowdon
PRINCIPAL
Tom Hunter
Colin Hyson
Peter Murch

HARP

Pippa Tunnell
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A man with grey hair and a beard, wearing a black tuxedo with a white bow tie, stands in a lush jungle. He holds a baton in his right hand and gestures with his left. The background is a dense thicket of green foliage, including large leaves, red bird-of-paradise flowers, and pink peonies. A blue grid pattern, resembling a conservatory roof, is visible behind him.

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www.glasgowcreate.online.



Supporting the RSNO

I am honoured and extremely proud to be Music Director of the RSNO. It is through the continued generosity of you, our friends, donors and supporters, that we can continue to achieve and realise the most ambitious goals of the Orchestra.

One of the wonders of the RSNO is how it brings high-quality music not only to concert halls, but to the wider community. From hospital settings to care homes, from our Astar app for families with newborns to our National Schools Concert Programme, our music touches so many lives in Scotland and beyond. Your support is the

cornerstone of all that we do, as it allows us to continually build and develop.

Thank you for being part of this wonderful Orchestra's journey, as we adapt and grow towards a bright future.



Thomas Søndergård

MUSIC DIRECTOR, RSNO

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RSNO Benefactors are beacons of philanthropic inspiration, providing truly transformative financial support to the Orchestra that enables us to build and deliver long-term strategic plans. Benefactors share the RSNO's vision for orchestral music and work with us to drive

the organisation forward, helping us to realise our future plans and ambitions.

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The RSNO Conductors' Circle is an inspirational group of individual supporters at the heart of the RSNO's Individual Giving programme. Our members' annual gifts enable us to realise the Orchestra's most ambitious goals. Conductors' Circle members support inspirational concert performances for our audiences alongside innovative education programmes in communities across Scotland, via our ground breaking initiative Music for Life.

The RSNO is very grateful for the continued support of its Conductors' Circle:

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We would also like to thank those generous donors who wish to remain anonymous.

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RSNO Patrons support individual musicians and members of the artistic team as well as advocating our work off the stage, from Learning and Engagement activity to commissioning new music. Becoming a Patron will bring you closer to the communities we serve across Scotland and will help to ensure that we maintain our position as one of Europe's leading symphony orchestras.

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We are also grateful to those who give but who wish to remain anonymous.

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To the many among you who have pledged to leave a gift already – thank you.



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Charitable trusts and foundations have a distinguished history of supporting the RSNO, both on and off stage. From one-off donations for specific projects to multi-year funding for our flagship outreach initiatives, including the National Schools Concert Programme and Young Creatives, every grant in support of our work is truly appreciated. We are grateful to the following trusts and foundations for their generosity:

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Our Circle Members are at the centre of the RSNO. Your membership helps to support the future of the RSNO while sharing the joy of music both on and off stage.

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