

# RSNO

SCOTLAND'S NATIONAL  
ORCHESTRA



# Ode to Joy

Usher Hall, Edinburgh  
Fri 12 Jun 2026 7.30pm

Glasgow Royal Concert Hall  
Sat 13 Jun 7.30pm

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# Ode to Joy

**Usher Hall, Edinburgh** Fri 12 Jun 2026 7.30pm  
**Glasgow Royal Concert Hall** Sat 13 Jun 7.30pm

With its unforgettable *Ode to Joy*, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony is always a special occasion – a glorious way to end any concert season. Tonight, Principal Guest Conductor Patrick Hahn makes it the climax of a very special (and distinctly Scottish) celebration, starting with Mendelssohn's Hebridean journey and pausing for a song or three with Sir James MacMillan and Scottish star, mezzo-soprano Karen Cargill. As Beethoven himself put it: here's a kiss for all the world!

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**MENDELSSOHN** Hebrides Overture Op26 *Fingal's Cave* [10']  
**SIR JAMES MACMILLAN** Three Scottish Songs [16']

INTERVAL

**BEETHOVEN** Symphony No9 in D Minor Op125 *Choral* [67']

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**Patrick Hahn** Conductor

**Eleanor Dennis** Soprano

**Karen Cargill** Mezzo-soprano

**Joshua Ellicott** Tenor

**Andrew Hamilton** Bass

**RSNO Chorus**

**Stephen Doughty** Director, RSNO Chorus

**Paul Whittaker** BSL Performer

**Royal Scottish National Orchestra**

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**Please silence all mobile telephones and alerts, and refrain from taking photographs, without flash, until the end of each piece.**

# Nigel Mason

## Violin



After an exemplary 47 years of service to the Orchestra, we say a fond farewell to our friend and colleague Nigel Mason. Our Season Finale is Nigel's last concert with us before his well-deserved retirement.

After playing with the Orchestra as a freelancer for some time, Nigel became a permanent member of the then-named SNO in February 1979. His first concerts as a member saw him perform Mendelssohn's Piano Concerto No1 and Mahler's Symphony No7 with conductor Lawrence Foster and pianist Jean-Bernard Pommier. In the months that followed, Nigel found himself sharing a stage with Dame Janet Baker, Yehudi Menuhin, Jessye Norman, Witold Lutosławski and Victor Borge, performing in Glasgow's City Halls, Eden Court Theatre Inverness, London's Royal Festival Hall, Antwerp's Queen Elisabeth Hall and the Pavilion in Rothesay.

It's been an amazing journey: 46 Seasons, 36 tours and eight Music Directors later, we'd like to say a massive thank you to Nigel for being such a wonderful violinist, trusted colleague and great friend. We will dearly miss you and hope you enjoy your retirement!

# Welcome

Welcome to the final concert of the RSNO's 2025:26 Season. I can't believe how fast it's flown by, but that's probably an indication of what a phenomenal Season it's been. Since September, we've performed more than 90 times across Scotland, welcomed five new players to our ranks, been on three international tours, won two prestigious awards and appointed a Music Director Designate – Giedrė Šlekytė. The end of this Season also marks the end of Second Violin Nigel Mason's long career with the RSNO. Nigel is retiring after an impressive 47 years of service to the Orchestra, and we wish him all the best for his retirement!

Tonight's concert is a real celebration. I'm delighted to welcome back Principal Guest Conductor Patrick Hahn to close the Season. Patrick and the wonderful mezzo-soprano Karen Cargill make a brilliant combination, particularly in Sir James MacMillan's *Three Scottish Songs*. In fact, the first time Karen and Patrick performed together was with the same piece, and since then they've performed several times together, including with Patrick's Sinfonieorchester Wuppertal in Wagner's *Ring* cycle. I'm really looking forward to the magic they'll bring to this evening's performance.

Alongside Karen and Patrick, we also welcome soprano Eleanor Dennis, tenor Joshua Ellicott, bass Andrew Hamilton, the RSNO Chorus and British Sign Language performer Paul Whittaker for Beethoven's ultimately uplifting and life-affirming Ninth Symphony, with its climactic *Ode to Joy*.

As we reach the end of this Season, I would like to extend a huge thank you to you, our dedicated audiences, on behalf of the Orchestra and our artistic and staff teams. Without you, our work wouldn't be possible. So, if we don't see you at this summer's Edinburgh International Festival or at the BBC Proms in London, we'll look forward to welcoming you back in September for what we hope will be another stellar Season for the RSNO.

**Alistair Mackie**

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

## Keep in touch with the RSNO

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# Royal Scottish National Orchestra



Formed in 1891, the Royal Scottish National Orchestra (RSNO) is one of Europe's leading symphony orchestras. Awarded royal patronage by Her Late Majesty The Queen in 1977, its special status in the UK's cultural life was cemented in 2007 when it was recognised as one of Scotland's five National Performing Companies, supported by the Scottish Government.

Led by Music Director Thomas Søndergård, 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 tours internationally, most recently visiting China and Europe. In May 2026, Giedrė Šlekytė was announced as the RSNO's Music Director Designate and will formally become Music Director from the beginning of the 2027:28 Season, with Thomas Søndergård taking on the new position of Music Director Emeritus.

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 cultivated an international reputation for world-class film, television and videogame soundtrack recording.

The Orchestra has recorded for BAFTA-winning series *Silo* (Apple TV) and worked with the likes of GRAMMY Award-winning composer Lorne Balfe on *Life on Our Planet* (Netflix). Other notable titles include *Nuremberg* (Sony Pictures), *Now You See Me: Now You Don't* (Lionsgate), *Horizon: An American Saga* (Warner Bros) and *Star Wars Outlaws* (Ubisoft). The Orchestra records at its bespoke in-house facility in Glasgow. In 2026, the RSNO was the first professional symphony orchestra to be awarded the Royal Philharmonic Society's Ensemble Award since 2014. The award recognises musical ensembles for outstanding quality and scope of performances and work.

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. The RSNO's engagement offering includes its singing strand, encompassing a Buggy Choir and Chorus Academy in both Dundee and Glasgow and a lunchtime Workplace Choir, which complements the well-established and highly respected RSNO Youth Choruses and RSNO Chorus. The community choruses are designed with the benefits of group singing for health and wellbeing at their core and are open to all.

# On Stage

## FIRST VIOLIN

Igor Yuzefovich  
LEADER  
Shlomy Dobrinsky  
ASSOCIATE LEADER  
Tamas Fejes  
ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL  
Patrick Curlett  
Susannah Lowdon  
Caroline Parry  
Alan Manson  
Veronica Marziano  
Lorna Rough  
Liam Lynch  
Ursula Heidecker Allen  
Elizabeth Bamping  
Joana Rodrigues  
Flora Yeung

## SECOND VIOLIN

Cheryl Crockett  
GUEST PRINCIPAL  
Jacqueline Speirs  
Marion Wilson  
Yuka Sato  
Nigel Mason  
Sophie Lang  
Colin McKee  
Robin Wilson  
Anne Bünemann  
Emily Nenninger  
Paul Medd  
Joe Hodson

## VIOLA

Tom Dunn  
PRINCIPAL  
Felix Tanner  
Asher Zaccardelli  
Lisa Rourke  
Susan Buchan  
Beth Woodford  
Claire Dunn  
Nicola McWhirter  
Francesca Hunt  
David McCreadie

## CELLO

Pei-Jee Ng  
PRINCIPAL  
Betsy Taylor  
Kennedy Leitch  
Rachael Lee  
Sarah Digger  
Gunda Baranauskaitė  
Robert Anderson  
Susan Dance

## DOUBLE BASS

Nikita Naumov  
PRINCIPAL  
Carlos Navarro  
Michael Rae  
Yat Hei Lee  
Alexandre Cruz dos Santos  
Moray Jones

## FLUTE

Katherine Bryan  
PRINCIPAL  
Oliver Roberts  
Janet Burnley  
PRINCIPAL PICCOLO

## OBOE

Adrian Wilson  
PRINCIPAL  
Peter Dykes

## CLARINET

Timothy Orpen  
PRINCIPAL  
William Knight

## BASSOON

David Hubbard  
PRINCIPAL  
Jamie Louise White  
Paolo Dutto  
PRINCIPAL CONTRABASSOON

## HORN

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

## TRUMPET

Christopher Hart  
PRINCIPAL  
Ben Jarvis

## TROMBONE

Dávur Juul Magnussen  
PRINCIPAL  
Cillian Ó Ceallacháin  
Alastair Sinclair  
PRINCIPAL BASS TROMBONE

## TIMPANI

Emmanuel Joste  
GUEST PRINCIPAL

## PERCUSSION

Simon Lowdon  
PRINCIPAL  
Stuart Semple  
Simon Archer

## HARP

Pippa Tunnell

# Patrick Hahn

## Conductor



Patrick Hahn is one of the most sought after and exciting conductors of his generation. He is General Music Director of the Sinfonieorchester und Oper Wuppertal, and Principal Guest Conductor of the Münchner Rundfunkorchester and RSNO. In his last season as General Music Director in Wuppertal, Patrick presents Wagner's *Ring* cycle in concert across the season with an internationally renowned cast featuring Catherine Foster, Benjamin Bruns, Michael Kupfer-Radecky and Karen Cargill.

As a guest conductor in the 2025/26 season, Patrick makes his first appearances at the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig with Sol Gabetta, Staatskapelle Dresden, WDR Sinfonieorchester Köln with Ilya Gringolts and Staatsphilharmonie Nürnberg with Timothy Ridout. Return visits include the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin with Fazıl Say on a five-concert tour of China. Opera highlights include his debut at Deutsche Oper Berlin with Johann Strauss' *Die Fledermaus*, Richard Strauss' *Intermezzo* at the Semperoper Dresden, and Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* at the Bayerische Staatsoper.

Previous seasons' highlights include his first appearances at the hr-Sinfonieorchester Frankfurt, Brussels Philharmonic with Patricia Kopatchinskaja and Anastasia Kobekina, Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della RAI with Truls Mørk, and the Staatsoper Hamburg for Wagner's *Parsifal*. Successful return visits include the Wiener Symphoniker in Vienna and on tour, and the Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich.

CD releases this season include an all-Gottfried von Einem album with the RSNO on Linn Records, and Ethel Smyth's opera *Der Wald* with the Sinfonieorchester Wuppertal on the CPO label, marking the first time it has been recorded in its original German language.

Aside from his work in classical music, Patrick accompanies himself on the piano singing cabaret songs by the Austrian satirist and composer Georg Kreisler. As a jazz pianist, he received awards from the Chicago Jazz Festival, and the Outstanding Soloist Award from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse as the best jazz pianist of the 37th Annual Jazz Festival.



## RSNO CIRCLE

Do you wish to support the Orchestra on a regular basis, hear behind the scenes news, and attend open rehearsals? Becoming a Circle member is for you.

## Donate

This year we launched our *Every Child, Every Community* appeal, with funds directly supporting our work in musical education, from early years to young professionals. If you would like to support the next generation of young professionals please donate at [rsno.org.uk/every-child](https://rsno.org.uk/every-child)



# Supporting the RSNO

By becoming an RSNO Circle Member or Patron, donating to our appeal or leaving a gift in your Will, you are helping to keep Scotland's National Orchestra on stage and in communities across the country.

To find out more please contact [polly.lightbody@rsno.org.uk](mailto:polly.lightbody@rsno.org.uk)

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**Felix Mendelssohn** (1809-1847)

# Hebrides Overture

Op26 **Fingal's Cave**

## FIRST PERFORMANCE

London, 14 May 1832

**DURATION** 10 minutes

In the summer of 1829, Felix Mendelssohn set off on a three-week tour of Scotland, a trip that provided the inspiration for two of his most renowned works: the *Hebrides Overture* and the *Scottish Symphony*. He was accompanied by Karl Klingemann, a friend from Berlin recently posted in London as Secretary to the Hanoverian Legation. Their tour began in Edinburgh and ended in Glasgow, with stops along the way including Abbotsford, Melrose, Perth and Aberfeldy.

One of the main aims of the trip was to visit Fingal's Cave on the island of Staffa, 'discovered' in 1772 by the naturalist Joseph Banks, and such a popular tourist destination that Wordsworth, who visited in 1833, lamented that though he saw it he could feel nothing of the atmosphere because of the swarm of trippers. Of their own visit, Klingemann is the better source, Mendelssohn being violently seasick. 'A greener roar of waves', wrote Klingemann, 'surely never surged into a stranger cavern, whose many pillars made it look like the inside of an immense organ, black and resonant, utterly without purpose, completely isolated.' Once back on dry land, Mendelssohn himself was able to write home about his experience: 'In order to make you understand how extraordinarily the Hebrides affected me, I send you the following which came into my head there,' and here he penned a sketch of the opening bars.

Completing the Overture, however, took some time. Writing to his sister Fanny from Paris 18 months after his Scottish trip, he still did not consider it ready: 'the D major middle section is very silly, and the whole so-called development smacks more of counterpoint than of whale-oil and seagulls and cod-liver oil; it ought to be just the other way round.' The work premiered at Covent Garden in May 1832; a final revised version premiered in Berlin the following January.

'It is as bracing as a weekend by the sea,' wrote Heinrich Jacob, Mendelssohn's biographer, 'bringing the perils of nature straight into the concert hall.' Wagner called it Mendelssohn's masterpiece, 'an "aquarelle" by a great landscape painter. The passage where the oboes rise alone, wailing through the other instruments like the wind above the waves of the sea, is of an extraordinary beauty.' Brahms went further still: 'I would gladly give all I have written to have composed something like the *Hebrides Overture*.'

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**Sir James MacMillan** (Born 1959)

# Three Scottish Songs



**FIRST PERFORMANCE**

Saffron Walden, 16 March 2022

**DURATION** 16 minutes

**Scots Song**

**Ballad**

**The Children**

Sir James MacMillan's *Three Scottish Songs* on poems by William Soutar (1898-1943) were premiered in their arrangement for chamber orchestra in 2022.

On the new arrangement, MacMillan comments: 'When I was younger I used to play and sing with a Scottish folk band, and I set the first two of these songs which I then performed around the folk clubs and pubs in the West of Scotland. They were settings of Scots-language poems by William Soutar who died in 1943 and they were written to sound like old folk ballads. I then set another of his poems, this time in English, and arranged the first two to make a set of three in an "art song" style.'

*Scots Song* (1984) is a setting of Soutar's poem *The Tryst* and tells of two lovers who meet, secretly it seems, at night and share a few precious hours together before they must part once more. MacMillan's setting is as hushed and as delicate as the words themselves, which speak of the silence between the two lovers, their hearts beating together as one. The song made a lasting impression on MacMillan, who said that he felt he had tapped into a 'deep reservoir of shared tradition' in writing it, and would later reuse the melody in several other works in the years that followed.

*Ballad* (1994) was composed a decade later to a Soutar poem of the same name, and describes the tragedy of a lover lost at sea. It is deliberately sparsely orchestrated, with glints of percussion and string harmonics creating an eerie backdrop for the singer's sorry tale.

The set closes on a sombre note with *The Children*, a poem written by Soutar in the middle of the Spanish Civil War. Aghast at the atrocity and suffering of the conflict, Soutar writes graphically and unapologetically about the toll on the nation's children. MacMillan's strings hang in mid-air, every word punctuating the silence like a shot fired or the drop of a bomb. But what begins poignantly and reflectively gathers pace and momentum, culminating in 'violent, explosive' sforzandi strings and percussion as the singer exclaims: 'The blood of children corrupts the hearts of men.'

© Jo Kirkbride

## **SCOTS SONG**

From William Soutar's poem *The Tryst*

O luely, luely, cam she in  
And luely she lay down:  
I kent her be her caller lips  
And her breists sae sma' and roun'.

A' thru the nicht we spak nae word  
Nor sinder'd bane frae bane:  
A' thru the nicht I heard her hert  
Gang soundin' wi' my ain.

It was about the waukrife hour  
When cocks begin to crow  
That she smool'd softly thru the mirk  
Afore the day wud daw.

Sae luely, luely, cam she in  
Saie luely was she gaen;  
And wi' her a' my simmer days  
Like they had never been.

## **BALLAD**

William Soutar

O! shairly ye hae seen my love  
Down whaur the waters wind:  
He walks like ane wha fears nae man  
And yet his e'en are kind.

O! shairly ye hae seen my love  
At the turnin o' the tide;  
For then he gethers in the nets  
[Down be] the waterside.

O! lassie I hae seen your love  
At the turnin o' the tide;  
And he was wi' the fisher-folk  
[Down be] the waterside.

The fisher-folk were at their trade  
No far frae Walnut Grove;  
They gether'd in their dreepin nets  
And fund your ain true love.

## **THE CHILDREN**

William Soutar

Upon the street they lie  
Beside the broken stone:  
The blood of children stares from the broken stone.

Death came out of the sky  
In the bright afternoon:  
Darkness slanted over the bright afternoon.

Again the sky is clear  
But upon earth a stain:  
The earth is darkened with a darkening stain:

A wound which everywhere  
Corrupts the hearts of men:  
The blood of children corrupts the hearts of men.

Silence is in the air:  
The stars move to their places:  
Silent and serene the stars move to their places.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

# Symphony No9

in D Minor Op125 **Choral**



## FIRST PERFORMANCE

Vienna, 7 May 1824

**DURATION** 67 minutes

- 1. Allegro ma non troppo, un poco maestoso**
- 2. Molto vivace – Presto**
- 3 Adagio molto e cantabile – Andante moderato**
- 4. Finale: Presto – Allegro assai – Alla marcia: Allegro assai vivace – Andante maestoso – Adagio ma non troppo, ma divoto – Allegro energico, sempre ben marcato – Allegro ma non tanto – Prestissimo**

Few of Beethoven's major works had easy births. His sketchbooks reveal how long and hard he often had to struggle to bring his material to the form we know today. But the case of the Ninth Symphony is extreme: the process from the moment of conception to complete full score took at least 12 years. A reference to a 'symphony in D minor' occurs in a notebook in 1811, but it wasn't until the autumn of 1823 that the planned Symphony was at last completed. It makes sense that such a colossal work should

have had such a long gestation, and in any case Beethoven's overall conception changed radically during the composition process. At one point he planned a purely orchestral finale, then a choral finale on a traditional religious text; then a much older project resurfaced: a setting of *Ode an die Freude* (Ode to Joy) by the leading German romantic poet, dramatist and philosopher Friedrich Schiller.

What was it about Schiller's poem that had such an enduring appeal for Beethoven? For one thing, he would have appreciated its strongly religious but carefully non-dogmatic tone: 'Do you sense your creator, world? Seek him up above the starry vault.' However, this is balanced by an urgent humanist message: 'All men [the German word *Mensch* means human beings in general] shall be brothers.' Schiller's poem deftly avoids explicit revolutionary language (dangerous in Beethoven's Vienna after the defeat of Napoleon), but for those with ears to hear, the subversive democratic element would have been hard to miss.

The most remarkable feature of the Ninth Symphony – apart from its sheer scale and extreme expressive range – is the way it evolves from purely musical drama to a vivid, sometimes almost pictorial setting of Schiller's words. From the nebulous, hushed beginning to the spine-tingling final orchestral unison, the first movement has a momentum like a great Ancient Greek tragedy, propelled forward as though by the elemental machinery of fate. The second movement – a scherzo in all but name – has the impetus of a cosmic dance; but in the central *Presto* trio one can hear the orchestral instruments straining for a more vocal kind of expression: the trombone writing has an almost choral quality, and in Beethoven's day trombones were most commonly associated with religious music.

Lyricism blossoms in the slow third movement, unfolding in a beautiful series of free variations on the initial theme, twice dramatically interrupted by full-orchestral fanfares, enhanced by martial trumpets and drums. Once again some kind of interpretation seems to be demanded: perhaps a reminder for Beethoven's European audiences (and for us now) of recent military conflict disrupting previous peace.

After the *Adagio's* serene conclusion, the finale's explosive *Presto* opening comes as a shock. Cellos and basses now strive energetically towards vocal expression in a series of quasi-operatic instrumental recitatives, conjuring up memories of the themes of the first three movements. Each theme is rejected in turn, then cellos and basses begin a singing melody in D Major: this is the famous *Ode to Joy* theme. It grows and enriches itself polyphonically, then the

violent *Presto* music breaks in again, to be followed, as before, by recitatives – this time not from the orchestra, but from a solo baritone voice: 'O friends, no more of these sounds!' These words are Beethoven's own. They complete a masterly transition from semi-articulate instrumental expression to the direct utterance of the sung word.

Now the Finale unfolds in a huge setting of Schiller's verses, lovingly, and at times even humorously, dwelling on its central images. Finally, after an ecstatic solo section for the full vocal quartet, the chorus and orchestra join in a thrilling accelerating coda. The concluding *Prestissimo* is left to the orchestra alone, but its message is unmistakable.

© Stephen Johnson

# Ode to Joy

**Friedrich Schiller** (1759-1805)

The first five lines, in *italics*, were written by Beethoven specifically for his Ninth Symphony.

*O Freunde, nicht diese Töne!  
Sondern laßt uns angenehmere anstimmen,  
und freudenvollere.*

*Freude!  
Freude!*

Freude, schöner Götterfunken  
Tochter aus Elysium,  
Wir betreten feuertrunken,  
Himmlische, dein Heiligtum!  
Deine Zauber binden wieder  
Was die Mode streng geteilt;  
Alle Menschen werden Brüder,  
Wo dein sanfter Flügel weilt.

*Oh friends, no more of these sounds!  
Let us instead strike up more pleasing  
and more joyful ones*

*Joy!  
Joy!*

Joy, thou beauteous godly lightning,  
Daughter of Elysium,  
Fire-drunken we are ent'ring  
Heavenly, thy holy home!  
Thy enchantments bind together,  
What did custom stern divide,  
Every man becomes a brother,  
Where thy gentle wings abide.

Wem der große Wurf gelungen,  
Eines Freundes Freund zu sein;  
Wer ein holdes Weib errungen,  
Mische seinen Jubel ein!  
Ja, wer auch nur eine Seele  
Sein nennt auf dem Erdenrund!  
Und wer's nie gekonnt, der stehle  
Weinend sich aus diesem Bund!

Freude trinken alle Wesen  
An den Brüsten der Natur;  
Alle Guten, alle Bösen  
Folgen ihrer Rosenspur.  
Küsse gab sie uns und Reben,  
Einen Freund, geprüft im Tod;  
Wollust ward dem Wurm gegeben,  
Und der Cherub steht vor Gott.

Froh, wie seine Sonnen fliegen  
Durch des Himmels prächt'gen Plan,  
Laufet, Brüder, eure Bahn,  
Freudig, wie ein Held zum Siegen.

Seid umschlungen, Millionen!  
Diesen Kuß der ganzen Welt!  
Brüder, über'm Sternenzelt  
Muß ein lieber Vater wohnen.

Ihr stürzt nieder, Millionen?  
Ahnest du den Schöpfer, Welt?  
Such' ihn über'm Sternenzelt!  
Über Sternen muß er wohnen.

Who the noble prize achieveth,  
Good friend of a friend to be;  
Who a lovely wife attaineth,  
Join us in his jubilee!  
Yes – he too who but one being  
On this earth can call his own!  
He who ne'er was able, weeping  
Stealeth from this league alone!

Joy is drunk by every being  
From kind nature's flowing breasts,  
Every evil, every good thing  
For her rosy footprint quests.  
Gave she us both vines and kisses,  
In the face of death a friend,  
To the worm were given blisses  
And the Cherubs God attend.

As the suns are flying, happy  
Through the heaven's glorious plane,  
Travel, brothers, down your lane,  
Joyful as in hero's vict'ry.

Be embrac'd, ye millions yonder!  
Take this kiss throughout the world!  
Brothers – o'er the stars unfurl'd  
Must reside a loving Father.

Fall before him, all ye millions?  
Know'st thou the Creator, world?  
Seek above the stars unfurl'd,  
Yonder dwells He in the heavens.

# Eleanor Dennis

## Soprano



Winner of a 2023 Carole Rees Award from The Mastersingers, Scottish soprano Eleanor Dennis is a graduate of the Royal College of Music's International Opera School and a former Harewood Artist at English National Opera. Her acclaimed debut as Senta in Opera Holland Park's 2025 production of *Der fliegende Holländer* established her in the first rank of new sopranos in the lyric dramatic repertoire.

Her roles for ENO have included Penelope *Gloriana*, Helena A *Midsummer Night's Dream* and Countess Almaviva *Le nozze di Figaro*, while engagements elsewhere have included Miranda in Sir Malcolm Arnold's *The Dancing Master* at Buxton International Festival; Helena for Aldeburgh and Grange festivals; Miss Jessel *The Turn of the Screw* for Opera North; Fiordiligi *Così fan tutte* for Opera Holland Park; and Countess Almaviva and Liù *Turandot* for Scottish Opera.

Singing under conductors including David Afkham, Rolf Beck, Martyn Brabbins, Daniel Harding, Leo Hussain, Vladimir Jurowski, Cristian Măcelaru, Andrew Manze, Cornelius Meister,

Juanjo Mena, Andris Nelsons, Sir András Schiff, Thomas Søndergård, Ilan Volkov and Ryan Wigglesworth, regular concert engagements have taken her throughout the UK and Europe.

With the BBC Concert Orchestra, she has recorded *The Dancing Master*, which won a BBC Music Magazine Award, on Resonus Classics; Cellier's *Captain Billy*, Ford's *Mr Jericho* and Sullivan's *The Light of the World* on Dutton Epoch; and with The Mozartists she has recorded *Mozart in London*, available on Signum. Most recently released on Hyperion is Havergal Brian's *Agamemnon* with the ENO Orchestra conducted by Brabbins, on which she sings Clytemnestra.

Recent engagements have included Miss Jessel for ENO; Freia *Das Rheingold* and Gerhilde *Die Walküre* for Longborough Festival Opera; Bach's *St John Passion* with the Academy of Ancient Music; Mathias' *This Worlde's Joie* at the Three Choirs Festival; Stanford's *Stabat Mater* with the BBC Concert Orchestra; and *Friday Night is Music Night* at Snape Maltings.

Her current engagements include Elettra *Idomeneo* for Chelsea Opera Group; Fourth Maid *Elektra* at the Edinburgh International Festival; title role in *Salome* for Regents Opera; Beethoven's Symphony No9 with the Ulster Orchestra; and Mozart's Requiem with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra. She will also sing Beethoven's Symphony No9 for Raymond Gubbay Live, as well as Mozart's Requiem, at London's Southbank Centre.

# Karen Cargill

## Mezzo-soprano



Scottish mezzo-soprano Karen Cargill has firmly established herself as one of the leading singers of her generation, with upcoming engagements at the Metropolitan Opera, Bayerische Staatsoper, Dutch National Opera, Canadian Opera Company and Norwegian National Opera. Equally established on the concert stage, Karen regularly appears with conductors such as Sir Simon Rattle, Daniel Harding, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Robin Ticciati, Rafael Payare and Edward Gardner.

Her 25/26 season includes several important operatic engagements, including Judith *Bluebeard's Castle* at the Canadian Opera Company, and with Rafael Payare and the San Diego Symphony Orchestra; Adelaide *Arabella* at the Metropolitan Opera; Geneviève *Pelléas et Mélisande* with Ryan Wigglesworth and the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra; and Waltraute *Götterdämmerung* with Patrick Hahn and the Sinfonieorchester Wuppertal. Especially recognised for her interpretation of Mahler, Karen performs Mahler 2 both with the Staatskapelle

Berlin conducted by Rattle, and with the BBC SSO conducted by Sir Donald Runnicles; and Mahler 3 with the Helsinki Symphony Orchestra conducted by Jukka-Pekka Saraste. In addition, Karen appears with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra in *La Damnation de Faust* conducted by Payare.

Her 2024/25 season saw her return to the role of Brangäne *Tristan und Isolde* at the Glyndebourne Festival with Nézet-Séguin and the Philadelphia Orchestra, and with Rattle and the Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks. She also made her role debut as Brigitte *Die tote Stadt* in concerts with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Andris Nelsons; returned to the Montreal Symphony Orchestra for Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder* with Payare; the San Francisco Symphony for Verdi's Requiem with Esa-Pekka Salonen; the Toronto Symphony for Mozart's Requiem with Saraste; and the San Diego Symphony for Mahler 3 with Payare.

With her recital partner Simon Lepper, Karen has performed at Wigmore Hall London, Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Kennedy Center Washington DC and Carnegie Hall New York, and regularly gives recitals for BBC Radio 3. With Simon, Karen also recently recorded a critically acclaimed recital of Lieder by Alma and Gustav Mahler for Linn Records, for whom she has previously recorded Berlioz's *Les nuits d'été* and *La mort de Cléopâtre* with Ticciati and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra.

Karen is Patron of the National Girls' Choir of Scotland. She sang in the National Service of Thanksgiving and Dedication for King Charles III following his Coronation in 2023.

# Joshua Ellicott

## Tenor



Joshua Ellicott is a sweet-toned, flexible yet powerful lyric tenor, whose versatile musicianship has made him a sought-after artist across opera, concert and song. His wide-ranging repertoire, and the distinguished conductors and ensembles with whom he has worked internationally, reflect an artist equally at home in early music, classical and later repertoire.

He has a particularly strong profile in early music, having worked with Nikolaus Harnoncourt and Concentus Musicus Wien, Sir Roger Norrington and the Zurich Chamber Orchestra, Harry Bicket and The English Concert, Harry Christophers with The Sixteen and the Boston Handel and Haydn Society, Robert King and The King's Consort, Paul McCreesh with The Gabrieli Consort and Wrocław Baroque Orchestra, Bernard Labadie and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, and Emmanuelle Haïm and Le Concert d'Astrée. He has developed a special affinity with Bach, Handel and Monteverdi, and is especially admired as the Evangelist in Bach's Passions.

Joshua is also a committed interpreter of later repertoire, having worked with Sir Mark Elder, Daniel Harding and Esa-Pekka Salonen in works ranging from Wagner's *Parsifal* and *Tristan und Isolde* to Weill's *The Seven Deadly Sins* and Berg's *Wozzeck*. Song is central to his artistry, most notably in his deeply moving programme *From Your Ever-Loving Son Jack*, built around the First World War letters of his Great Uncle Jack, combining dramatic readings with song.

Recent highlights include the Evangelist in Bach's *St Matthew Passion* at Deutsche Oper Berlin and with the Residentie Orkest, *All the Hills and Vales* at The Cumnock Tryst, Handel with the Dresdner Philharmonie, Damon in *Acis and Galatea* at Westdeutsche Rundfunk Köln, *Samson* and *Jephtha* with the Internationale Bachakademie Stuttgart, Tempo in *Il trionfo del tempo e del disinganno* at the Royal Danish Opera, George Walker's *Lilacs* with the BBC Philharmonic, and Handel's *Messiah* with the New York Philharmonic.

This season he returned to the Lammermuir Festival for *Unravelling Ravel* with Al Hogarth, and has sung Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*, *St John Passion* and *St Matthew Passion* with orchestras including the Copenhagen Philharmonic, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig and Antwerp Symphony Orchestra.

Joshua was born in Manchester and studied at the University of York and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. In 2006 he won the International Vocal Concours in 's-Hertogenbosch.

# Andrew Hamilton

## Bass



Andrew Hamilton is a baritone of growing international reputation, praised for the warmth and agility of his voice. A recent member of the Ensemble at the Bayerische Staatsoper (2022-25) and a former member of its Opera Studio, he joined the Ensemble of the Staatsoper Hamburg at the beginning of the 2025/26 season. Andrew is also a BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artist, and has established himself as a compelling presence across opera, concert and recital stages.

In the 2025/26 season, Andrew makes several major role debuts at the Staatsoper Hamburg, including Guglielmo *Così fan tutte* and Papageno *Die Zauberflöte*, alongside a return to Ottokar *Der Freischütz*. At the Bayerische Staatsoper, he creates the role of David Rizzio in the world premiere of Brett Dean's *Of One Blood*, conducted by Vladimir Jurowski and directed by Claus Guth. On the concert platform, he appears with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, and gives recitals at London's Wigmore Hall and at the Lammermuir Festival.

Highlights of the 2024/25 season included his role debut as Valentin in a new production of *Faust* at the Teatro Massimo Palermo, and at the Bayerische Staatsoper he appeared as Dandini *La Cenerentola* and Schaunard *La bohème*. He made his role debut as Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus* at the Grange Festival, and sang in concert performances of *Rigoletto* and *La traviata* at the Tiroler Festspiele Erl. He also gave his first solo recital at Wigmore Hall with pianist Michael Pandya, appeared at the Ludlow English Song Weekend with Iain Burnside, and sang Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and *A Child of Our Time* with the Münchner Rundfunkorchester.

At the Bayerische Staatsoper his appearances included Aeneas *Dido and Aeneas*, Ned Keene *Peter Grimes*, Silvano *Un ballo in maschera*, Lesbo *Agrippina*, Ping *Turandot*, Marcellus and Spieler 3 in Brett Dean's *Hamlet*, and roles in *Wozzeck*, *The Nose*, *Le Grand Macabre* and *Les Troyens*.

# Paul Whittaker

## BSL Performer



Paul Whittaker was born in Huddersfield in 1964 and has been deaf all his life. After being awarded a music degree from Wadham College Oxford and a postgraduate diploma from the Royal Northern College of Music, he founded Music and the Deaf, a charity he ran for 27 years before leaving to pursue a freelance career.

Paul has signed many shows and concerts across the UK, and performed with The King's Singers, Voces 8, Tenebrae, Children's Classic Concerts, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and at many festivals, including The Cumnock Tryst and the BBC Proms. He previously signed with the RSNO for the Scottish premiere of Sir James MacMillan's *Christmas Oratorio* in 2023, and Handel's *Messiah*.

Paul was awarded an OBE for services to music in 2007 and continues to promote music and deafness wherever possible.

# Stephen Doughty

## Director, RSNO Chorus



Stephen Doughty has been Chorus Director of the RSNO Chorus since the start of the 2022:23 Season. Since his arrival the Chorus has seen an influx of new members, and an abundance of varied and critically acclaimed performances, including Verdi's *Requiem*, Britten's *War Requiem*, Bruckner's E Minor Mass and the Scottish premiere of Sir James MacMillan's *Christmas Oratorio*. He has also directed the Chorus in new and imaginative programmes in their own right, including Rheinberger's Mass in E flat for double choir, and concerts with percussion and organ featuring Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*, the European premiere of McIntyre's *Missa Brevis* and Ives' final major choral work, *Psalm 90*.

Stephen's previous 12-year tenure as Chorus Master of Belfast Philharmonic Choir included a number of world premieres, most significantly James Whitbourn's *The Seven Heavens* and Philip Hammond's *Requiem for the Lost Souls of the Titanic*, performed exactly 100 years since the liner went down, and further European premieres of both Stuart Scott's *Requiem Brevis*, which saw the 100-strong choir separated into eight choirs

spaced around the audience, and Christopher Marshall's *Earthsong*.

Stephen particularly enjoys working with amateur singers, not least leading regular singing days frequently involving up to 800 amateur singers. He was Musical Director of Edinburgh Bach Choir for seven years and has enjoyed directing the Garleton Singers for over 30 years, performing with them recently at the Lammermuir Festival.

Stephen plays harpsichord/organ continuo and orchestral piano and has given frequent organ recitals, including several on the grand Mulholland Organ in the Ulster Hall, Belfast. He is also in demand as an arranger and orchestrator, with a large portfolio of work particularly for young voices. He has produced a plethora of arrangements of the music of pianist Christopher Norton, including two publications of piano duets and a suite for wind sextet, and has received commissions from Children's Classic Concerts, the Ulster Orchestra and the RSNO. Commissions from the BBC have seen his work being performed on BBC Alba and at the Last Night of the Proms, and his pieces feature on several recordings, including with the RSNO Chorus.

Stephen is an Examiner for the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music.

# RSNO Chorus



The RSNO Chorus performs in around six different programmes in up to 20 concerts across Scotland with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra each year. The RSNO Chorus has also had great success in recording with the Orchestra. Its recordings, among others, of Prokofiev's *Alexander Nevsky*, conducted by Neeme Järvi, and Holst's *The Planets*, conducted by David Lloyd-Jones, have both attracted high critical acclaim.

In addition to its commitment to the Orchestra, the RSNO Chorus performs independently and has been invited to perform with orchestras in many parts of the world, establishing an international status and touring to Copenhagen, Hong Kong, Israel, Germany, Belfast, Australia, Trondheim, Amsterdam, Prague and, most recently, Budapest, performing with the MAV Orchestra in the Liszt Academy and Matthias Church, directed by Stephen Doughty. In 2018 it performed Britten's

*War Requiem* with the RSNO at the BBC Proms, joining the Orchestra again in the Royal Albert Hall in 2024 for Classic FM Live.

The RSNO Chorus evolved from a choir formed in 1843 to sing the first full performance of Handel's *Messiah* in Scotland. Today it is one of the most successful choruses in the UK. In recent years it has performed practically every work in the standard choral repertoire along with contemporary works by renowned composers, including John Adams, Magnus Lindberg, Howard Shore and, most recently, the critically acclaimed Scottish Premiere of Sir James MacMillan's *Christmas Oratorio*.

The RSNO Chorus is directed by Stephen Doughty, who was appointed to the role at the start of the 2022:23 Season.

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Alison Blair  
 Alison Pryce-Jones  
 Becky Ward  
 Caroline Cradock  
 Catherine Taylor  
 Charlotte McKechnie  
 Heather Keating  
 Joan Lacy  
 Joanna Beaton  
 Joanna Webster  
 Karman Leung  
 Mary Fraser  
 Mhairi Hendry  
 Morven MacDonald  
 Rhona Christie  
 Roberta Yule  
 Sarah Greer

**SOPRANO 2**

Amelie Masters  
 Beth Kean  
 Eleanor Gaskell  
 Elspeth Waugh  
 Frances Kennedy  
 Jennifer Stoddart  
 Kate Adams  
 Katie Dew  
 Laura Gorman  
 Leila Inglis  
 Lorna Robertson  
 Lynsey Brook  
 Mairi Therese Cleary  
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 Theresa Hoare

**ALTO 1**

Ailie MacDougall  
 Angela McDonald  
 Anne Browning  
 Anne Thies  
 Brenda Williamson  
 Esther McMillan  
 Fiona Murray  
 Fiona Taylor  
 Julia Haddow  
 Julia King  
 June Thomas

Laura Macdonald  
 Lauren Hadley  
 Linda McLauchlan  
 Louise Reid  
 Marrian Murray  
 Mary Taylor  
 Marita McMillan  
 Morag Kean  
 Olivia Howe Gillespie  
 Ruth Townsend  
 Siobhán Rodger  
 Sophy Ying  
 Steve Halfyard  
 Uta Engelbrecht

**ALTO 2**

Alison Bryce  
 Ann Firth  
 Anne Newlands  
 Carol Leddy  
 Catharine Perrin  
 Denny Henderson  
 Eleanor McLaren  
 Elizabeth Scobie  
 Elizabeth Stevenson  
 Gillian Downie  
 Hilde McKenna  
 Jane Stansfield  
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Alex Rankine  
 Andrew Clifford  
 David Miller  
 Nathan Dunsmore

**TENOR 2**

Calum Lowe  
 Cosma Gottardi  
 George Lloyd  
 Graham Parsonage  
 John Harvey  
 Kerr Noble  
 Laurie Nelson  
 Robert Paterson  
 Sandy Eadie

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 Alistair Laird  
 Andrew Lyons  
 Andrew Matheson  
 Ian MacKay  
 Ian Mills  
 Martin Engelbrecht  
 Martin Waddell  
 Peter Saunders  
 Robin Watson  
 Stephen Penman  
 Stuart Corkindale

**BASS 2**

Alan Maxwell  
 Chris Morris  
 Findlay Peters  
 Graeme Simpson  
 Ian Gray  
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