



RSNO

SCOTLAND'S NATIONAL  
ORCHESTRA

REFUGEE  
FESTIVAL  
SCOTLAND

# ...a thing with feathers

A celebration of music and hope in collaboration  
with **Scottish Refugee Council** and  
**Maryhill Integration Network**

SWG3, Glasgow  
Thu 22 Jun 2023 6.45pm

[rsno.org.uk](https://rsno.org.uk)

# Hope is the thing with feathers

Hope is the thing with feathers  
That perches in the soul,  
And sings the tune without the words,  
And never stops at all,

And sweetest in the gale is heard;  
And sore must be the storm  
That could abash the little bird  
That kept so many warm.

I've heard it in the chilliest land,  
And on the strangest sea;  
Yet, never, in extremity,  
It asked a crumb of me.

**Emily Dickinson**  
(1830-1886)



# ... a thing with feathers

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A celebration of music and hope in collaboration with **Scottish Refugee Council**  
and **Maryhill Integration Network**

Welcome drinks and ambient DJ set by **Hiba**

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Welcome from **Alistair Mackie**, Chief Executive,  
Royal Scottish National Orchestra

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Introductory Remarks from **Mónica Laiseca**,  
Manager, Refugee Festival Scotland

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**Joyous Choir**

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**Scottish Refugee Council Panel Discussion**

**Alison Phipps** Chair

**Sabir Zazai**

**Seckou Keita**

**Dr Hyab Yohannes**

**Interval**

**Seckou Keita**

Selection from **African Rhapsodies** (arr. Davide Mantovani)

The Future Strings Variation

Tamala's Caravan Trail

Tatono's Path

Bamba, the Light of Touba

**Ellie Slorach** Conductor

**Seckou Keita** Kora

**Royal Scottish National Orchestra**

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DJ set by **Hiba**

Food provided by





# Professor Alison Phipps

OBE, UNESCO Chair, University of Glasgow

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Alison is UNESCO Chair for Refugee Integration through Languages and the Arts. She is Professor of Languages and Intercultural Studies at the University of Glasgow and co-convenes the Glasgow Refugee, Asylum and Migration Network. Alison is a passionate advocate for refugees and asylum seekers. She is particularly concerned with the experiences of women, young people and separated families in the asylum system and the precarious journeys that many people are forced to make in search of safety.

# Dr Sabir Zazai

OBE, Chief Executive, Scottish Refugee Council

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Sabir was appointed as Chief Executive of Scottish Refugee Council in 2017. He arrived in the UK as an asylum seeker in 1999 after fleeing the conflict in Afghanistan. Sabir was dispersed to Coventry, where he quickly became involved in his local community. He is passionate about refugee rights, social justice, human rights and intercultural relations. Sabir was recently awarded an OBE in recognition of his tireless campaigning to make life better for people seeking safety in the UK.

# Dr Hyab Yohannes

University of Glasgow

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Hyab is a researcher with a PhD in the Realities of Eritrean Refugees in a Carceral Age from the University of Glasgow, where he currently works as a research associate. He has extensive research experience in undertaking fieldwork, interviews, critical evaluation and interpretation, computer-based data analysis and evaluation. Moreover, he possesses strong decolonial and critical thinking skills and brings unique experience and perspective to migration-related policy development and implementation. He is interested in theorising the challenges forced migrants face and the biopolitical b/ordering that led to their challenges and contributing towards a positive change.

## Hiba DJ

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Hiba is a Lebanese DJ and selector based in Glasgow who uses club spaces to platform Southwest Asian and North African artistry as a celebration of Arab culture and heritage. She holds radio residencies at Radio Buena Vida, Radio Flouka and EHFm to showcase the diversity and dynamism of Arabic music.

# Joyous Choir

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Since 2013 Maryhill Integration Network's (MIN) Joyous Choir has used singing to support social inclusion and improve wellbeing, in a welcoming and creative space. The choir welcomes participants from diverse backgrounds, including women who are seeking asylum and refuge in Glasgow, as well as those born and raised in the city. The group shares songs from different cultures, and often sings about themes such as friendship, protest, sisterhood, dreams, freedom and hope. For 10 years the choir has been on an incredible journey, with many great singers and collaborators all bringing their own unique talents to the group.





# Seckou Keita Kora

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Since arriving in the UK in 1999, Seckou Keita has been on an epic creative journey that has seen him broaden the idiomatic scope of his instrument as well as spread his wings, literally and figuratively.

Nicknamed 'The Hendrix of the Kora', Seckou is celebrated for his ingenious tunings and virtuosity and praised as 'one of the finest exponents of the kora'. Performing all over the globe as a solo artist and with his groundbreaking quintet, he has captivated audiences at WOMAD, Hay, Glastonbury, Tokyo Jazz, Chicago World Music Festival, Sydney International, Montreal Jazz Festival and many more.

Acclaimed collaborations with numerous jazz, pop, latin, folk and classical artists have allowed him to make the kora more visible on the international stage. Since 2012 these have included work with Damon Albarn & the Africa Express, Welsh harpist Catrin Finch, Cuban pianist Omar Sosa, AKA Trio with Italian guitarist Antonio Forcione and Brazilian percussionist Adriano Adewale, and Paul Weller. More recently he was part of the folk collective The Lost Words, Spell Songs (2019), joined by the words of Robert McFarlane and artwork of Jackie Morris. Since 2007 he has had several opportunities to perform with classical ensembles, including the Orchestre National de Bretagne, spurring him towards his dream of developing an orchestral work specifically for the kora.

Seckou has previously released 11 albums as a leader and co-leader. He has received

three Songlines Music Awards and several BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards, including 2019 Musician of the Year. 'I don't know if I'm a folk musician, a jazz or a world one,' he said at the time. 'Forget about categories. My music is just music for the soul.'

## African Rhapsodies

On 26 May, Seckou released *African Rhapsodies* (Claves Records), a work for kora and orchestra arranged by Italian composer and bass player Davide Mantovani and recorded with the BBC Concert Orchestra. Directed by the Royal Northern College of Music's head of conducting Mark Heron, Keita also invited Mantovani on double bass and his brother, Gambian percussionist (and kora player) Suntou Susso. Pride of place on two pieces is given to the outstanding South African cellist and vocalist Abel Selaocoe.

*African Rhapsodies* is an enchanting work for kora and orchestra that celebrates Africa's magical 22-stringed harp and gives it the position of prominence granted for centuries to the violin, piano and flute. It makes us wonder if Bach or Beethoven might have composed for kora had they travelled to Africa in their lifetime. Seckou builds on that notion by way of his own imagination, which is greatly sparked by his lengthy fascination with crossing cultural borders. The result is a majestic work showcasing a whirlwind of virtuosity, but above all a sublime poetic journey where music is pure emotion.

# Ellie Slorach Conductor

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Ellie Slorach is a conductor based in Manchester. She is the Founder and Artistic Director of Kantos Chamber Choir and works in the UK and internationally with orchestras and choirs.

During the 2022/23 season, Ellie has made her debuts with the RSNO, Orchestra of Opera North and Manchester Camerata. She has also returned to the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and the Orchestre Philharmonique Royal de Liège.

In 2021/22 Ellie was Assistant Conductor with the Orchestre Philharmonique Royal de Liège, working regularly with the orchestra and assisting their Music Director, Gergely Madaras. She also had engagements with the BBC Philharmonic, RLPO and Choir, Northern Ballet

(productions of *Swan Lake* and *Dangerous Liaisons*), Royal Opera House (*Lost & Found* at St Pancras International) and Northern Opera Group (Musical Director for Handel's *Silla*).

Other recent projects have included working with the BBC Singers for a recording in Shakespeare's Globe, the Hallé Orchestra while Musical Director of the Hallé Youth Orchestra, ABLE Orchestra, and touring major UK theatres with Matthew Bourne's production of *Romeo and Juliet* as Young Associate conductor.

In 2015 Ellie founded Kantos, the trailblazing vocal ensemble at the cutting edge of choral singing in the UK. Kantos performs unique and innovative concerts devised by Ellie, to sell-out audiences, in venues ranging from nightclubs to concert halls. The choir regularly performs and records with orchestras including the RLPO and BBC Philharmonic, on labels including Decca Classics. As well as touring the UK, Kantos toured to Rome and Assisi for special-edition broadcasts for BBC Radio 4.

Ellie studied Conducting at the Royal Northern College of Music, having previously studied Music at the University of Manchester.

# Royal Scottish National Orchestra On Stage

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## FIRST VIOLIN

Lena Zeliszewska  
ASSOCIATE LEADER  
Tamás Fejes  
ASSISTANT LEADER  
Alan Manson  
Caroline Parry  
Ursula Heidecker Allen  
Elizabeth Bamping  
Liam Lynch  
Susannah Lowdon

## SECOND VIOLIN

Jacqueline Speirs  
ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL  
Sophie Lang  
Harriet Hunter  
Anne Bünemann  
Paul Medd  
Maria Oguren

## VIOLA

Tom Dunn  
PRINCIPAL  
Felix Tanner  
Susan Buchan  
Nicola McWhirter

## CELLO

Pei-Jee Ng  
PRINCIPAL  
Betsy Taylor  
Rachael Lee  
Robert Anderson

## DOUBLE BASS

Michael Rae  
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL  
Moray Jones  
Alexandre dos Santos

## FLUTE

Katherine Bryan  
PRINCIPAL  
Oliver Roberts

## OBOE

Peter Dykes  
ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL  
Henry Clay  
PRINCIPAL COR ANGLAIS

## CLARINET

Timothy Orpen  
PRINCIPAL  
Duncan Swindells  
PRINCIPAL BASS CLARINET

## BASSOON

David Hubbard  
PRINCIPAL  
Paolo Dutto  
PRINCIPAL CONTRABASSOON

## HORN

Andrew McLean  
ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL  
Martin Murphy

## TRUMPET

Christopher Hart  
PRINCIPAL  
Andrew Connell-Smith

# Scottish Refugee Council

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Scottish Refugee Council is an independent charity dedicated to supporting people in need of refugee protection. The men, women and children we work with have fled horrific situations, including war, persecution and human rights abuses, often leaving everyone and everything they know behind.

We provide advice, practical support and a listening ear to help people navigate the asylum system, adjust to their new surroundings and begin rebuilding their lives in Scotland.

We stand up for refugee rights and campaign to create a fair and humane asylum system. And we work to support a movement of people dedicated to making Scotland a more welcoming and peaceful place to live.

Find out more at  
**[scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk](https://scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk)**





# Maryhill Integration Network (MIN)

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Maryhill Integration Network (MIN) is a grassroots community organisation based in Glasgow, established to bring asylum seekers, refugees, migrants and the settled inhabitants of the city together. Since 2001 MIN has been developing projects which support positive social change by investing in communities and providing a welcoming and safe space with opportunities for collaboration and connection.

Find out more at  
**[maryhillintegration.org.uk](http://maryhillintegration.org.uk)**



# Royal Scottish National Orchestra

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Formed in 1891, the Royal Scottish National Orchestra (RSNO) plays an integral part in Scotland's musical life, performing across Scotland with concerts in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee, Aberdeen, Perth and Inverness. The Orchestra appears regularly at the Edinburgh International Festival and has toured throughout the USA, China and Europe. The Orchestra's artistic team is led by Danish conductor Thomas Søndergård, who was appointed RSNO Music Director in 2018.

The RSNO's pioneering Music for Life framework aims to engage the people of Scotland with music across key stages of life: Early Years, Nurseries & Schools, Teenagers & Students, Families, Accessing Lives, Working Lives and Retired & Later Life. The RSNO is committed to placing the Orchestra at the centre of Scottish communities across the length and breadth of the country.

The RSNO is supported by the Scottish Government and local authorities in Scotland and is one of the nation's five National Performing Companies.

Find out more at

**[rsno.org.uk](https://rsno.org.uk)**



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**Scottish Government**  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba



# RSNO

SCOTLAND'S NATIONAL  
ORCHESTRA

2023:24

**Concert Season**  
on sale now

## Highlights



**Beethoven  
& Strauss**

6-7 Oct 2023



**Nicola  
Benedetti**

21-23 Mar 2024



**West Side  
Story**

3-4 May 2024



**Berlioz  
Grande Messe**

14-15 Jun 2024

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