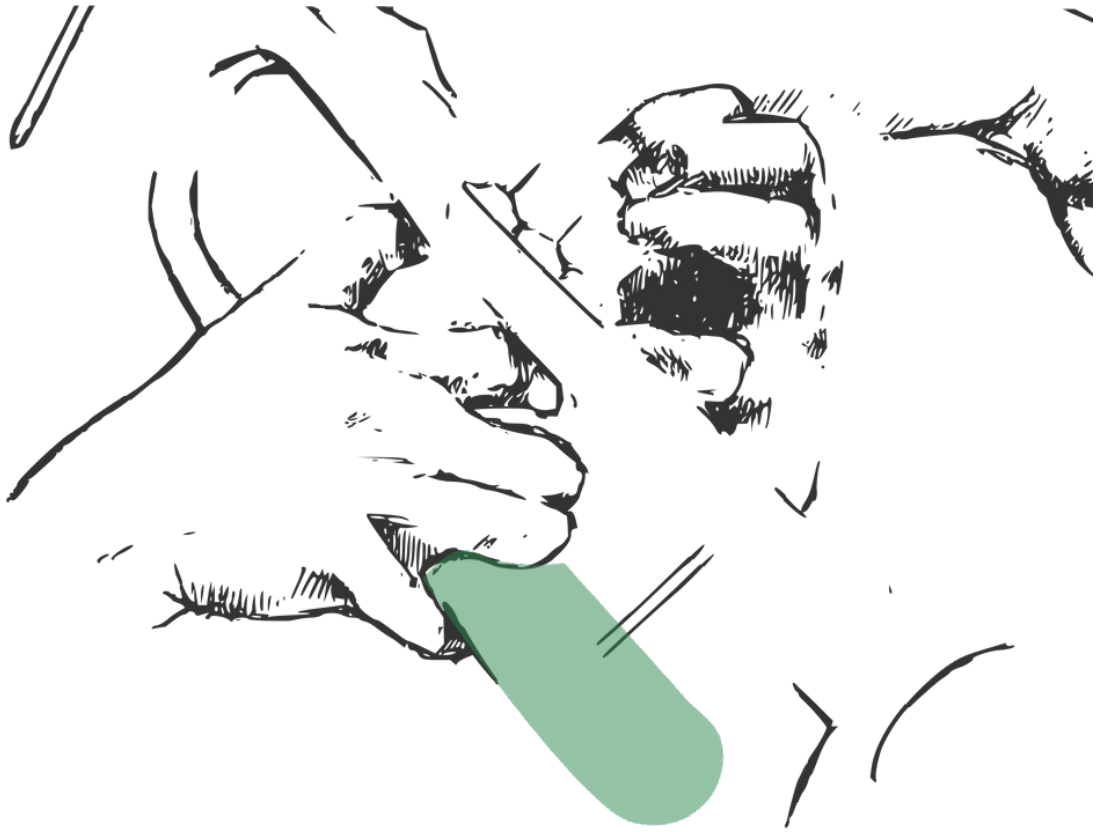
EUCO

winter concert 2025



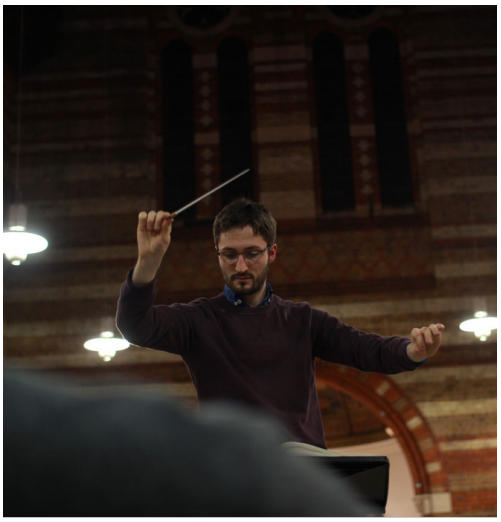
President's Welcome

Srishti Ramakrishnan



Good evening and welcome to our first concert of the year! We are delighted to welcome you to the Reid Hall for a wonderful evening of music, the result of many weeks of hard work. We will be starting the concert with Prokofiev's First Symphony, also known as the 'Classical', which pays homage to the style of Haydn and Mozart. We will then be joined by the Edinburgh University Singers for Brahms' heartrending Schicksalslied (Song of Fate). Since a few of us are in both EUCO and Singers, this is a particularly exciting collaboration, especially since this is the first time Singers have performed with an orchestra since 2017!

After a short interval (and the all-important raffle!) we will then be playing Mendelssohn's Fourth Symphony, the 'Italian'. Like his Third 'Scottish' Symphony, this piece was inspired by Mendelssohn's tour of Europe, particularly the colours of Italy. With such a wide variety of music on offer tonight, we hope to take you on a journey from the Classical to the Romantic, and from Russia to Germany to Italy. Thank you all for joining us, and we hope you enjoy!



Peter Le Tissier

Conductor

Peter Le Tissier is a Scottish composer and conductor, working primarily in his roles as Artistic Director of the Edinburgh City Orchestra and Surbiton Symphony Orchestra, along with other freelance conducting work. Peter was educated at Royal Holloway, University of London, where he had the opportunity to study at both Undergraduate and Masters' Level from 2015–2020, achieving 1st Class Honours.

As a conductor, Peter's work has often focussed on a mixture of established romantic composers, alongside introducing newer works to audiences. Alongside some of his own works, Peter has performed the world premiere of pieces by composers who have been specifically commissioned for his orchestras, alongside world and European premieres of pieces with his orchestras in Scotland and London. Peter has had the opportunity to perform in multiple European countries with a variety of different ensembles, at venues including the Usher Hall and St. Giles' Cathedral, in the heart of Edinburgh, Ghent Cathedral, and St. Johns' Smith Square, London.

Peter has also had the opportunity to guest conduct ensembles such as the Berlin Sinfonietta, the Leamington Sinfonia, and the Southwest London Tennis Philharmonic Orchestra. He is currently the conductor of the Edinburgh Studio Orchestra. Upcoming engagements include further work with his primary ensembles, as well as an appearance in 2026 as a guest with the Glasgow Sinfonia.

As a composer, Peter has written works for chamber ensembles and solo instruments inspired often by poetic and visual arts, alongside larger-scale works for Orchestra. His works have been published by Universal Edition, and can be found in their online catalogue.

Symphony No. 1 in D Op. 25: 'Classical'
Sergei Prokofiev

On the eastern front in 1917, Russian soldiers were so poorly equipped they used rifles taken from corpses. At a time of deep tragedy and political unrest, Prokofiev watched desperate revolution unfold around him in Petrograd. Yet Prokofiev himself, despite dodging bullets in the streets, seemed for the most part unaffected. It was in this dark period that he composed his impish neoclassical first symphony, inspired by the works of Haydn.
Prokofiev's bright and cheeky Symphony No. 1 plays with the expectations of a traditional form that could otherwise be predictable. The first movement theme is restated after a mere ten bars in a shocking new key. The development begins suddenly in a minor key, with humorous moments of dissonant harmony, exaggerated octave leaps, trills and arpeggios.

The gentle lilting high melody of the violins and flute in the larghetto is peppered with delightful Mozartian trills. The gavotte feels reminiscent of Tachikovsky's faux-classical dances (like the Nutcracker), but with a devilish Prokofiev twist – most noticeably some ridiculous changes of tempo and the bassoons' ironically graceless comic grace-notes.

The finale bursts in at an unruly pace, sparkling with stratospheric woodwind lines, dashing string scales, and not a single minor triad. Despite being a comparatively short symphony, it remains one of the most popular from the 20th Century – something Prokofiev himself predicted in his diaries as he composed it on countryside walks.

"Look how he will not let even Mozart lie quietly in his grave but must come prodding at him with his grubby hands, contaminating the pure classical pearls with horrible Prokofievish dissonances. But my true friends will see that the style of my symphony is precisely Mozartian classicism and will value it accordingly, while the public will no doubt just be content to hear happy and uncomplicated music which it will, of course, applaud."

Tonight, we can all but hope to be a true friend of Prokofiev indeed (and applaud generously).

Schicksalslied

Johannes Brahms

with the Edinburgh University Singers

A German composer of the mid-Romantic period, Johannes Brahms is sometimes considered the successor of Bach and Beethoven, having composed four symphonies, four concertos, a Requiem, and hundreds of Lieder and folk-song arrangements. Schicksalslied, or Song of Destiny, is a choral setting of a poem by Friedrich Hölderlin, accompanied by orchestra.

After discovering Hölderlin's poetry while visiting a friend, Brahms began working on the piece in 1868, inspired by the sea and words of the poem, which depicts the tranquillity of the gods in Heaven contrasted with the torments of mortals driven by merciless destiny. Brahms initially wrote the piece in ternary form, with the third movement being identical to the first. However, he was unhappy with this, feeing that repeating the bliss of the first movement to close the piece would undermine the futility of Hölderlin's text. After abandoning the piece for some time, Brahms returned to it in 1871, resolving the issue by concluding the piece with a restatement of the orchestral introduction of the first movement, albeit transposed into C major, to leave room for hope, if not absolute peace. Schicksalslied is celebrated as Brahms' most-loved choral work alongside the Requiem, and has been praised for its rich harmony and text-painting, as well as its dramatic mood changes, such as the hemiola in the second movement which emulates a gasping for breath.

Edinburgh University Singers

conducted by Calum Robertson

Founded in 1945, the Edinburgh University Singers performs a wide range of sacred and secular music: unaccompanied repertoire from the Renaissance to the present day, works with organ and orchestra, folk-song and Scottish song arrangements, as well as new commissions. The choir sings regularly at University ceremonies such as graduations, and on other important occasions in McEwan Hall and Old College, and has toured around various countries; most recently Spain and Romania.
Calum Robertson is a freelance clarinettist, organist and choral conductor. He is a member of the wind quintet, Sirocco Winds and founder member of The White Rose Ensemble with soprano, Sally Carr. He is Assistant Director of Music at Old Saint Paul's Episcopal Church and has been conductor of The Edinburgh University Singers since 2018.

Symphony No. 4 in A Op. 90: ‘Italian’ Felix Mendelssohn,

Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847) stands as one of the most influential early Romantic composers. Often described as a bridge between the Classical and Romantic eras, Mendelssohn was more conservative in his writing than more forward-facing Romantic composers such as Berlioz and Liszt. His sophisticated compositional approach reflects his great admiration of the Baroque masters Bach and Handel while simultaneously capturing the intense expressive power and emotional beauty associated with the Romantic movement.
Mendelssohn was an incredibly lyrical composer, celebrated for his organically flowing, attractive melodies. Many of his works are programmatic, inspired by works of literature (such as the popular A Midsummer Night’s Dream) or the world around him, particularly his extensive travels.

Appropriately nicknamed ‘Italian’, his 4th Symphony was inspired by Mendelssohn’s visit to Italy in 1830, where he was profoundly affected by the beauty of the countryside, the vibrant culture and the country’s people. He began writing the symphony during his trip, completing it a few years later in 1833. At its premiere in May that year it was an immediate success, yet Mendelssohn was not satisfied with his work and made a number of subsequent revisions. He withheld the symphony from publication, and it was only published posthumously in 1851, four years after his death. Described by the composer as a ‘blue sky in A Major’, Mendelssohn’s ‘Italian’ Symphony remains one of his most popular works. Mendelssohn expertly balances delicate, personal passages that demonstrate his melodic talent with impassioned emotion and a grandiose sense of space that reflects the profound beauty he found in Italy.

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Anna Morris (leader)
Karen Lee
Momo Egashira
Carola Borriero
Sally Mulvhill
Catrinel Berevoescu
Srishti Ramakrishnan
Linn Pfitzner
Tianyuan Cao

Violin 2
Rota Shima
Anna Kennedy
Ella Allen
Carys Austen
Emily MacFarlane
Yundi Chen
Sasha Tan
Lethu Khanyile

Viola
Anna Barsham
Anousha Parmar
Huan Xu
Olivia Rosen
Kevin Lo
Saleem El Hady

Cello
Miriam White
Janani Mohan
Isabel Massey
Esther Mayer-Rieckh
Louisa Stiles
Alexandra Nelischer
Lara Andrews
Rupert Sneath

Double Bass
Max Wilson
Jake Mikulin

Flute
Paolo Minhas
Lauren Mooney

Oboe
Cecilia Barry
Cathal O'Regan

Clarinet
Katie Rawson
Matt Wong

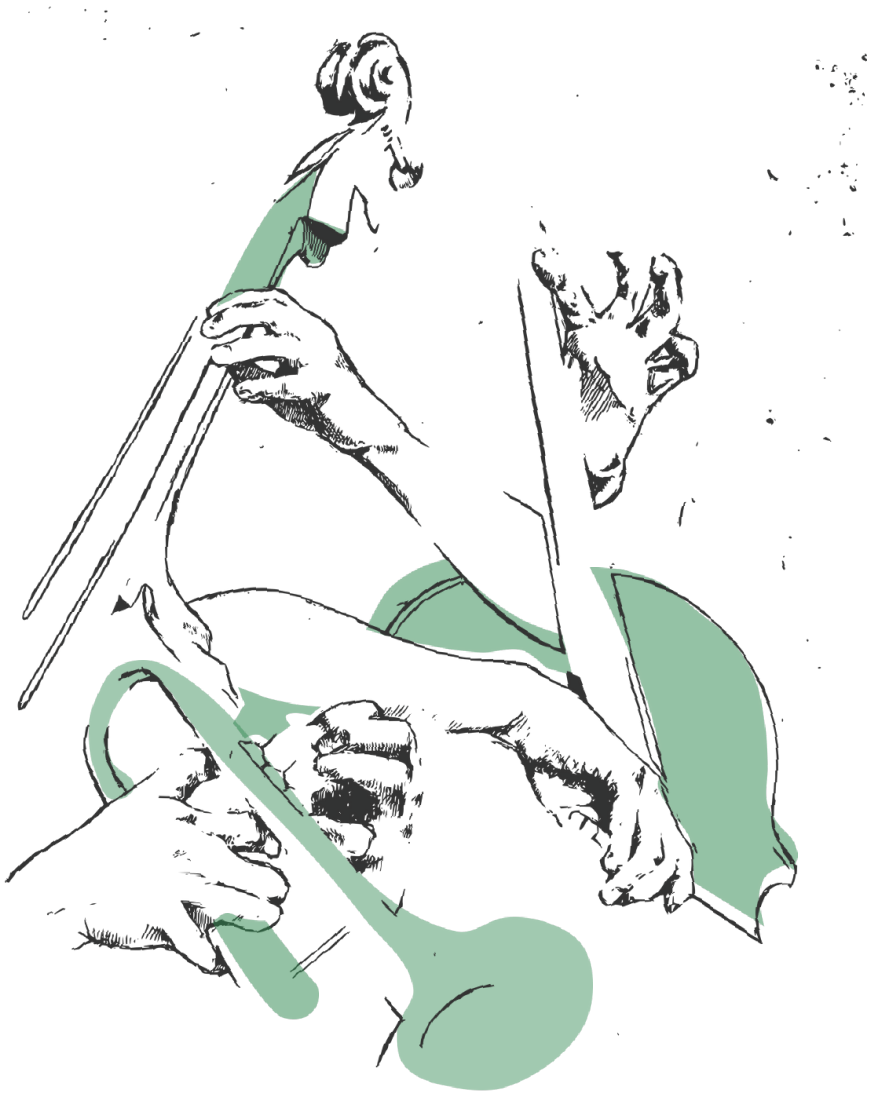
Bassoon
Daniel Cook
Hannah Godsell

Horn
Andrew Armstrong
Arjun Nanning Ramamurthy

Trumpet
Rowan Glegg
Katie Parker

Trombone
Tomas Herbert
Kate Robinson
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