

variations

**Saturday
20 July 2024
at 7pm**

**MENDELSSOHN
String Quartet Op 44 No 1
BEETHOVEN
String Quartet Op 18 No 4**

**The
Edinburgh
Quartet
with
Rosie
Staniforth**

**two concerts at the
Macphail Centre,
Ullapool**

**Wednesday
24 July 2024
at 7:30pm**

**HAYDN
String Quartet Op 54 No 2
FRANCAIX
Quartet for Cor Anglais & Strings
DVORAK
String Quartet Op 105 No 14**

 **EDINBURGH
QUARTET**

**The Edinburgh Quartet
in Ullapool
with Rosie Staniforth, Cor Anglais**

Saturday 20th July 2024 at 7.00 pm

Mendelssohn String Quartet Opus 44 No. 1

Beethoven String Quartet Opus 18 No. 4

Wednesday 24th July 2024 at 7.30 pm

With Rosie Staniforth, Cor Anglais

Haydn String Quartet Opus 54 No. 2

Francaix Quartet for Cor Anglais and Strings

Interval

Dvorak String Quartet Opus 105 No. 14

Variations is a registered Scottish Charity number SC043152

The Edinburgh Quartet is a registered Scottish Charity number SC052621

Saturday 20th July 2024 at 7.00 pm

Felix Mendelssohn (1809 – 1847)
String Quartet Opus 44 No 1 in D major

Molto allegro vivace
Menuetto Un poco allegretto
Andante espressivo ma con moto
Finale Presto con brio

The three quartets of opus 44 are the centrepiece of Felix Mendelssohn's mature string quartets. He wrote them in the years 1837-38, starting composition at the age of 28, when his fame in the international musical community was rapidly growing. The oratorio St. Paul had recently brought international success. He had directed the renowned Gewandhaus Orchestra in Leipzig since 1835. Now, he travelled constantly between the important musical centres of Europe – conducting, advising major cultural and educational committees, composing commissioned works to order for the major festivals and performing as a pianist, organist and chamber musician for the public and royalty of Europe. Family matters similarly came fast and furious with his wedding to Cécile Jeanrenaud, the daughter of a French Protestant clergyman, in March 1837 and the establishment of a new home in Leipzig.

He began composition of the opus 44 quartets during his honeymoon in the Black Forest and completed the earliest of them, in E minor, on June 18, 1837. The E-flat major quartet followed on February 6 of the following year, the day before the birth of his first son, Carl Wolfgang Paul. The last to be completed, in D major, followed on July 24, 1838. With all three complete, Mendelssohn re-ordered them, giving them the numbering we know today and published the set as *Trois Grands Quatuors*, with a dedication to the Crown Prince of Sweden.

Mendelssohn held the **Quartet in D major, Op. 44, No. 1** in high regard. It was the first of the three to be published but the last to be written. "I have just finished my Quartet in D," he wrote to the violinist Ferdinand David, a close friend and concertmaster of the Gewandhaus Orchestra. "I like it very much. I hope it may please you as well. I rather think it will, since it is more spirited and seems to me likely to be more grateful to the players than the others." David and his quartet had already premièred the two earlier opus 44 quartets and now gave the first performance of the D major at one of the quartet's regular matinées, on February 16, 1839.

The opening movement is an exuberant and high-spirited conversation between the four instruments, confidently written and carefully polished. After a period without writing chamber music in the early 1830s, Mendelssohn is now more classically oriented than he was in the earlier, structurally

experimental and Beethoven-influenced opus 12 and 13 quartets. The two central movements provide contrast to the quartet's exuberant start. First comes a gentle, smooth-as-silk Menuetto, somewhat rococo in flavour and in the even structure of its phrases. It is the only minuet in any of Mendelssohn's quartets. A wistful slow movement follows in which the composer keeps a firm hand on the sentiment. The brilliant finale is a driving saltarello, a whirlwind version of a 16th century dance form that Mendelssohn had already mastered in the final movement of his Italian symphony.

Keith Horner 2015

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 – 1827) String Quartet Opus 18 No. 4 in C Minor

Allegro ma non tanto

Scherzo: Andante scherzoso quasi allegretto

Menuetto: Allegro

Allegro

It has been suggested that Beethoven's C minor quartet is based on material from his earliest period in Bonn; whatever the truth, the work represents him at full power so far as he had evolved it around 1800, when the six Op. 18 quartets were being composed. C minor has always been connected with Beethoven in trenchant mood, and there is some of that here, with instantly assimilable melodic invention. For all this, there is no lack of subtlety in the proportions, and the sense of movement is as perfect as a cat's. In the crisply effected first movement we feel strong purpose rather than the tragedy or pathos often associated with a minor key, and the E flat music of the second group has an unmistakably optimistic "lift". As if to confirm this, there is no slow movement – instead a light-hearted C major andante actually entitled "scherzo"; this anticipates in some ways the second movement of the First Symphony, especially in its fugato beginning.

By far the most serious part of this quartet is the so-called minuet, having the urgency of some of Beethoven's later scherzo movements (which incidentally when they were not humorous, he never called "scherzo"). This dramatically intense "minuet" has some remarkable chromaticisms, and the Trio, with its constant quick triplets in the first violin, could well have influenced Schubert's quartet textures. The finale is one of Beethoven's rare excursions into the Hungarian style of which Haydn was fond; it is a simple rondo with a contrasting much broader second theme. At the end the tempo increases and unlike Haydn in such cases, Beethoven allows the minor key to persist to the end. In this quartet, all the movements are in C.

Dr Robert Simpson

Wednesday 24th July 2024 at 7.30 pm

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732 – 1809)
String Quartet Opus 54 no 2 in C major

Vivace

Adagio

Menuetto – Trio

Finale: Adagio – Presto – Adagio

The three Op 54 quartets are the first of the 12 quartets that Haydn wrote for the Hungarian violinist Johann Tost. From 1783 to 1788 Tost played in the Esterházy orchestra of which Haydn was music director. When Tost left Esterházy in 1788 to freelance in Paris, Haydn entrusted 6 quartets to him with a view to finding a publisher. Tost was successful, and they were published in Paris as Op 54 & 55. This C major quartet is a masterpiece, the best of the bunch, profound and original, producing fire and eloquence from Tost's Hungarian-flavoured virtuosity. The opening 6 bars set the scene with a bold statement, but where a lesser composer might have ended the opening phrase on the F at the beginning of bar 5 (*), Haydn adds, piano, an interrogatory two notes: "Really?". There is a reflective pause, followed by a repeat of the statement and question before Haydn shifts into a remote key and we stride off into the rest of the movement.



This questioning forms the heart of the extraordinary slow movement. It starts with a solemn chorale-like 8-bar phrase in the lower three parts.



The motif repeats almost unchanged whilst Tost's Hungarian violin weaves a searching, improvisatory magic. The uncertainty is unresolved, with the violin inserting anguished discords just before the end.

The mood lightens in the directly following Menuetto, which just before its end echoes the "Really?" motif, this time in rising chromatic quavers.



The doubts are roundly dismissed but immediately reappear more forcefully in the minor key Trio, again with jabbing anguished discords. The Finale is one of Haydn's most original: a long Adagio, interrupted by a short, skittish Presto, and ending with more of the Adagio. The rising question opens the movement, but after a few bars consideration, Haydn gives us one of his most sublime passages: the cello plays simple, long, slow, rising arpeggios while the violin weaves a very different magic from that of the slow movement, resolving all doubts. The brilliant Presto acts as a comic foil, but the returning Adagio restores calm content.

Chris Darwin

Jean Françaix (1912 – 97)
Quartet for Cor Anglais, Violin, Viola and Cello

Allegro vivace
Andantino tranquillo
Vivo assai
Andantino
Allegro giacoso

The Quartet was written in 1970 for Janet Craxton's London Oboe Quartet and we are fortunate to have Jean Françaix' own programme notes for this piece. Janet Craxton told him that the BBC required an introduction to the broadcast performance, and this is what he provided:

"In asking me to write a programme note for my Quartet for cor anglais, violin, viola and cello, Madame Janet Craxton puts me in a very difficult position. In fact, in order that this work should be ready for her concert in March, I had to write it so quickly that I can remember nothing about it! I only remember that, without wariness for the Ides of March, I wrote something for cor anglais because I had already composed a work for oboe and orchestra (L'horloge de flore), and I was afraid of relapsing into the same instrumental effects, seeing the paucity of my inspiration, which has been pointed out many times by the critics.

Furthermore, writing music, which is often cheerful, against the advice of my colleagues, it pleased me to make the cor anglais, above all a melancholy instrument, laugh from time to time, at the same time respecting its consumptive temperament. I have, after a fashion, treated it with antibiotics, to take its illness seriously. Also, having written, just before this Quartet, a work on Rabelais, the writer who said that 'laughter is an attribute of mankind', I was probably in a frivolous mood; much more than at present, for in France it is the time of year when one makes one's Income Tax declaration to the Inspector!

But a financial wound is not fatal, and with God's help, I hope to recover very quickly that good humour which is indispensable to the well-being of humanity."

However, Françaix was, as ever, playing with us and after the broadcast he sent Janet Craxton a very different kind of note:

"... my ear has now heard the 'Quatuor' exactly as I heard it in my head while I was composing it – in my head, and also in my heart: an experience rarely felt by a Composer!"

INTERVAL

Antonin Dvořák (1841 – 1904)

String Quartet Opus 105 No 14 in A \flat major

Adagio ma non troppo - Allegro appassionato

Molto vivace

Lento e molto cantabile

Allegro, non tanto

Dvořák began writing his *String Quartet in A flat major* just before he was due to leave the United States for his homeland. He started on the sketch in New York at the end of March 1895 but, after completing 111 bars, he laid it aside and only returned to the sketch in December of that year, once back in Prague. In the meantime he wrote his *String Quartet in G major* (November–December 1895), hence the *Quartet in A flat major* has a lower opus number even though it was finished afterwards. Both works herald the last stage of the composer's career and, at the same time, these are his last compositions in the domain of absolute music. The quartets appeared after an unusually long break of four months which Dvořák probably took in order to rest after his two-and-a-half years in America. The outcome of this lengthy period of inactivity was a surfeit of ideas thus, just two days after completing *Quartet in G major*, Dvořák reached once more for his New York sketch for the *Quartet in A flat major* and finished it in under three weeks. Of his original sketch he used only the exposition in the first movement; from the development section onwards, he approached the work from an entirely different perspective.

Like the *Quartet in G major* from the same period, the *Quartet in A flat major* is also a masterpiece of its genre. In this, his last chamber work, Dvořák brought together all the experience he had acquired in the field of absolute music and transformed the traditional quartet form into something exceptional. In contrast to its predecessor, the *Quartet in A flat major* is

conceived more polyphonically, and the scherzo is now incorporated into the second movement. In this quartet as well, Dvořák works with a rich palette of expressional means and vibrant thematic material. The typical traits of the composer's American period, traces of which are still evident in the previous work, are now absent. The overall tone of the work is positive and joyful, and faithfully reflects his spiritual disposition at the time.

The first movement begins with a slow introduction which, first in the cello, then gradually in the other instruments, anticipates the main theme. The quartet boasts a wealth of ideas, particularly in the treatment of the main theme, which undergoes various modifications even as it is first introduced in the exposition; its individual partial elements then co-create various contrasting musical figures. The second subject features a distinctive rhythm constructed around a succession of triplets. The skilfully conceived development section first incorporates individual motivic cells from the main subject, which are later "encroached upon" by the second subject. The music in the development gradually becomes more agitated, leading to the recapitulation which, surprisingly, does not begin in A flat major, but in G major. The recapitulation follows its traditional course, to be followed by a coda at the end which further intensifies the prevailing joyous mood of the movement.

The second movement is sometimes described as Dvořák's most inspiring scherzo. It is written in traditional three-part A-B-A form, the whole built around a single thematic focal point, namely a highly rhythmical, syncopated idea exposed in the introduction to part A. As it develops, this theme acquires a more lyrical character in which we will hear echoes of the lullaby sung by Bohuš's mother from the opera *The Jacobin*. The middle part of the movement, part B, in contrast, brings a serene, broadly arching melody.

The third movement is a prime example of typical Dvořákian lyricism and fervour. With the exception of the middle section, with its somewhat more sombre tone, the movement represents a wonderful arc of tranquillity and contentment, incorporating masterful use of contrapuntal approaches and an unusually rich sound.

The fourth movement, a combination of the sonata principle and rondo, crowns the work in an expression of spontaneous joy. It is constructed from three themes and betrays a strong resonance of Czech folklore, in particular, the polka. Towards the end, Dvořák gradually enhances the joyous tone of the movement, and the work culminates in dazzling euphoric style.

BIOGRAPHIES

The Edinburgh Quartet

Sadie Fields	Violin
Gongbo Jiang	Violin
Catherine Marwood	Viola
Mark Bailey	Cello

The Edinburgh Quartet has long been celebrated as one of Britain's foremost chamber ensembles, having appeared regularly at prestigious venues across the UK and toured extensively across Europe, the Far and Middle East, and North and South America.

In addition to a busy concert schedule the Edinburgh Quartet is frequently featured in radio broadcasts for the BBC and other stations. Recently this has included live appearances on Classics Unwrapped (BBC Radio Scotland) and Jazz Line-Up and In Tune (BBC Radio 3) as well as video recordings for Studio One Sessions, which appear on the BBC Radio Scotland website.

The Edinburgh Quartet is committed to nurturing talent and is resident at the University of Stirling and University of Edinburgh. As well as giving a regular classical concert series at each of these institutions, the players work with composition students, instrumentalists and student teachers. In addition to this the Edinburgh Quartet's outreach programme encompasses workshops for primary and secondary school children and tutoring adults on the Variations Summer School in Ullapool, and their annual tours around Scotland.

The Quartet has always been a champion of new music and has worked with many important and prolific composers of our age including James MacMillan, Michael Tippett and Howard Blake.

The Edinburgh Quartet has an extensive discography available on various labels such as Delphian, Linn, Meridian and RCA. Among their recordings are the complete string quartets of Hans Gál (Meridian), Kenneth Leighton (Meridian) and Mátyás Seiber (Delphian), as well as discs of Bartók, Robert Crawford, Haydn, Schubert and Thomas Wilson.

Their recent release "Postcard from Nalchik" featuring Haydn, Prokofiev and Shostakovich received a four-star review in The Scotsman, with Ken Walton commending the playing as "perky and pristine in the Haydn, gutsy and attitudinal in the folk-inspired Prokofiev, movingly sustained in the grim delights of the Shostakovich... richly considered, rigorously balanced and, ultimately, a musical treat".

Sadie Fields - Violin



Canadian/British (and Brussels-based) violinist Sadie Fields enjoys a diverse career as soloist, chamber musician, collaborator, and researcher. Sadie discovered the violin at the age of seven when her primary school went to see the famous Axelrod collection of Stradivarius violins. After she heard these Strads being played, she was hooked, and persuaded her mother to let her start lessons. She started performing at a young age. Sadie performs regularly throughout Europe and North America, and her concerts also bring her further afield, including to the Middle East, Asia, and New Zealand. Sadie has long been passionate about chamber music, and was the founding leader of the Castalian Quartet and violinist of Trio Khnopff. She is also the founding

violinist of the Festival Trio (Canada) and the Belgium-based Flash Ensemble, a flexible chamber ensemble with a string trio as its core. Sadie plays in recital with a number of fine pianists, and has recently formed a duo with Italian accordionist Luca Piovesan. Sadie was a member of the Swedish ensemble Camerata Nordica for ten years, and she currently performs regularly with the New European Ensemble (Netherlands) and many other ensembles in Europe.

As a recording artist, Sadie's most recent disc was released in June 2023 - Flash Ensemble's pioneering recording of the complete string trios by Hungarian composer Laszlo Lajtha (Pavane Records). Her recording, 'Weinberg - 1945', by Trio Khnopff (Pavane Records), has met with great critical acclaim in Europe and North America, and was chosen as BBC Music Magazine's 'Chamber Disc of the Month' for January 2020. Sadie has recorded extensively for BIS Records with Camerata Nordica and has released two discs with Champs Hill Records. The first, a disc of Mendelssohn chamber music, was chosen as BBC Music Magazine's Editor's Choice and 'Chamber Disc of the Month' and was also 'Chamber Music Disc of the Quarter' by the German Record Critics' Award Association. Sadie's second disc for Champs Hill is the complete Brahms Sonatas with pianist Jeremy Young, released to widespread critical acclaim. Sadie also broadcasts regularly on BBC Radio 3, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Radio New Zealand, NDR (Germany), Swedish radio, Klara (Belgium), Musiq'3 (Belgium), and NPO Radio 4 (Netherlands), and many others.

Sadie holds a PhD from the Royal Academy of Music, London. Her practice-led doctoral research addresses practical and philosophical ideas associated with the concepts of learning and 'tradition', focusing on her own engagement with Bartók's violin works. Sadie has won awards from over twenty UK and international associations and competitions, and was a Leverhulme Fellow at the Royal Academy of Music and the Edison Visiting Fellow at the British Library.

Principal teachers include György Pauk, Yair Kless, and Atis Bankas, and Sadie has also been guided and mentored by Ivry Gitlis, Ida Haendel, and Ferenc Rados. As a teacher herself, Sadie teaches violin and chamber music, she taught at King's College London, and she gives masterclasses at conservatoires and universities in China, Canada, and the UK.

Sadie plays on a very fine violin by Gioffredo Cappa, made in Italy in 1687.

Gongbo Jiang – Violin



Born in China, Gongbo first picked up the violin at the age of five, initially taught by his father. At 12, he joined the Middle School of the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, where he studied under Professor Weidong Tong. In 2009, Gongbo moved to Glasgow to study at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS) under the tutelage of Gina McCormack, Leland Chen, Peter Lissauer and Mieko Kanno. He graduated with a Bachelor of Music (Honours); a Master of Music (distinction) and a Master of Music in Chamber Music.

During his studies at Scotland's national conservatoire, Gongbo toured India in 2014 with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra where he performed a duet with Nicola Benedetti MBE. He also performed for members of the Royal Family, including His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales, patron of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. He led the RCS chamber ensemble which recorded Mahler's Symphony No.4 under the baton of Peter Manning, which was released by Nimbus in December 2015.

Gongbo's award wins include the Walcer prize for solo violin in 2012 and 2013, the Hilda Bailey prize for violin in 2010, the audience prize at the

2010 Ian D Watt Award for string players and pianists, and he was a finalist in the Postacchini International Violin Competition in 2010.

He led the Aurea String Quartet from 2009 to 2015 which won all possible chamber music prizes at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland between 2010 and 2011. Aurea won joint first prize at the Cavatina Intercollegiate Quartet Competition in London in 2011 and were finalists in the first International Sándor Végh String Quartet Competition in Budapest in 2012, where they were awarded a special prize for their performance of Lajtha String Quartet No.7.

In 2014, Aurea won the St. Martin's-in-the-Fields Chamber Music Competition in London, leading to numerous concert opportunities throughout the UK, and in the same year, were selected for the Enterprise Music Scotland Residency Project 2014-16. Aurea were St. John's Smith Square Young Artists 2014-15, and resident quartet for the 2015 Wye Valley Chamber Festival.

Gongbo has received violin masterclasses from Ilya Gringolts, Robin Gallardo, Leland Chen, Kristóf Baráti, and Peter Manning. Chamber masterclasses have included Alban Berg Quartet, Quatuor Mosaïques, Brodsky Quartet, Carducci String Quartet, Wihan Quartet, Chilingirian Quartet and Johannes Meissl.

In 2016, Gongbo and his wife, violinist Wen Wang, established the London Bridge International Music Academy, an annual summer school, to bring together string students and teachers from China and the UK.

Gongbo is currently the second violin of the Edinburgh Quartet, also holding a teaching position at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland as lecturer in violin and chamber music and has recently been appointed Leader of the second violins in the Ulster Orchestra.

Catherine Marwood – Viola



Catherine Marwood studied at the Royal Academy of Music and spent the following nine years playing with the Fairfield String Quartet with whom she toured Europe and recorded for the Hyperion label. She also explored the oboe quartet and string trio repertoire with her siblings in the Marwood Ensemble and together they recorded a disc of the music of Jean Francaix.

In 1988 she was appointed principal viola with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, a position she held for ten years. She

appeared many times as soloist with the orchestra collaborating with such artists as Joseph Swensen, Yuri Bashmet and Ernst Kovacic and in the SCO's chamber series she worked with Michael Collins, Stephen Isserlis, Peter Donohoe and many others. She also premiered and recorded Sir Peter Maxwell Davies Strathclyde concerto no 5. She was principal viola in the Scottish Ensemble with whom she recorded under the prestigious Wigmore Live label, frequently broadcast on Radio 3 and toured extensively in this country and abroad.

Catherine works with many other chamber groups and orchestras and in 2009 she was appointed principal viola of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. She has been a member of the Hebrides Ensemble for over 20 years and values the opportunity to showcase contemporary music alongside more traditional repertoire. She joined the Edinburgh Quartet in 2017 and is loving the return to the pinnacle of the chamber music form and the challenges it brings. Catherine also examines for ABRSM both in the U.K. and in the Far East.

Mark Bailey - Cello



Born in London, Mark Bailey has performed all over Europe, the UK, USA & Canada, the Far East and Middle East, both as soloist and cellist of the Edinburgh Quartet. The quartet is one of the UK's longest running chamber ensembles and celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2010. In 2007 the Edinburgh Quartet received the much-coveted Gramophone Editor's Choice for their recording of the complete string quartets of Hans Gal.

Mark studied at the Royal College of Music on a Foundation Scholarship where he won all the major cello prizes, including the top concerto and recital prizes. He was then invited by Paul Tortelier to study with him in France for two years, attracting scholarships from the British Council, The Countess of Munster and Suggia Trusts and the Martin Musical Scholarship Fund. There he was

awarded the Premier Prix de la Musique de Chambre de Nice. Later he worked with William Pleeth and Jacqueline du Pré, as well as performing in master classes with, amongst others, Zara Nelsova and Johannes Goritzski.

As soloist he has broadcast for French & Spanish Radio and recorded recitals for the BBC. Works have been recorded under Meridian, Naxos, Delphian and The Divine Art labels. In the course of his distinguished career he has given recitals at the Purcell Room, Wigmore Hall and has appeared as soloist in many leading British festivals.

Mark teaches cello and coaches chamber music at the Universities of Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Glasgow, and Stirling – where the Edinburgh Quartet is in Residence.

Rosie Staniforth – Cor Anglais



Rosie grew up in Yorkshire and began playing the oboe at the age of nine. She studied Modern Languages at Oxford University before winning a postgraduate scholarship to the Royal College of Music, where she was a pupil of Michael Winfield and John Anderson. She won various RCM oboe prizes and gave the London premiere of the Horowitz Oboe Concerto.

She subsequently won a scholarship to the Geneva Conservatoire to study with Maurice Bourgue, her musical idol! Rosie graduated with a distinction and won a place on

the prestigious “Troisieme Cycle” course at the Paris Conservatoire, where she able to further hone her skills with the same mentor.

Whilst still a student Rosie was offered the position of Sub-Principal Oboe with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, a post which she retained for 21 years. During this period, she also freelanced as Principal Oboe both locally- with the RSNO, BBCSSO, Scottish Opera and Scottish Ballet- and nationally, with orchestras such as The Philharmonia, The Halle, Northern Sinfonia and BBC National Orchestra of Wales. She taught at The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland for sixteen years and tutored the oboe section of The National Youth Orchestra of Scotland.

She has enjoyed many opportunities to work as a soloist, performing concertos by Strauss, Vaughan Williams, Bach, Mozart and MacMillan amongst others. Rosie loves playing chamber music, although is not a big fan of the wind quintet!

As a devotee of opera, Rosie was thrilled to be offered her dream job as Co-Principal Oboe with the English National Opera in 2019. In 2024 she was promoted to Section Principal and is regularly invited to play as Guest Principal with The London Symphony Orchestra, The Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, The BBC Concert Orchestra and The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, amongst others.

She enjoys giving masterclasses and examining at the London colleges and still manages the odd foreign tour with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe and the Mahler Chamber Orchestra.

Rosie now lives between London and the Cotswolds, where she enjoys rambling, horse-riding and feeding the local sheep!

About the Variations Chamber Music summer school at the Macphail Centre

The professional concert musicians you're hearing this evening form the coaching team for the annual Variations summer school. Established in 2005, it has now become an integral part of Ullapool's musical calendar. The summer school attracts up to 60 amateur musicians, of all ages and abilities, for an intense week of chamber music playing under the guidance of the tutors. Typically, participants come as members of string or wind quintets, quartets or trios. Many arrive as players in preformed chamber groups, but some come as individuals. Many live in Scotland but others travel from as far as France, Germany, Canada, Belgium and the USA.

The Variations Chamber Music summer school ran every year from 2005 through to 2019 but sadly the 2020 and 2021 courses had to be cancelled because of the Covid pandemic. However, we were all delighted to run the course again in 2022 and 2023 and are now back in Ullapool for our 2024 music making.

This year the Edinburgh Quartet and Rosie Staniforth are joined by Philip Burrin and Barnaby Robson as tutors at the summer school and Variations is immensely privileged to enjoy the inspiration and guidance of this outstanding team.

We hope you enjoy this wonderful opportunity to hear them perform at the Macphail Centre.