

variations

**Saturday
19th July 2025
at 7pm**

HAYDN

String Quartet Op 76 No 5

MENDELSSOHN

String Quartet Op 13 in A

Major

The Edinburgh Quartet

**with Rosie Staniforth
and Claire Wickes**

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

**Wednesday
23 July 2025
at 7:30pm**

MOZART

Flute Quartet in D Major K285

MOZART

String Quintet in C Minor K406

adapted for oboe quintet

DVORAK

String Quartet Op 96 in F Major

The American

 **EDINBURGH
QUARTET**

**The Edinburgh Quartet
in Ullapool
with Rosie Staniforth, Oboe
and Claire Wickes, Flute**

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Interval

Dvorak String Quartet Opus 96 in F Major

Variations is a registered Scottish Charity number SC043152

The Edinburgh Quartet is a registered Scottish Charity number SC052621

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This evening's programmes combines two works of genius – one from the 65 year old Joseph Haydn - the father of the string quartet, and the other by the 18 year old Felix Mendelssohn. Both are strikingly original, in Haydn's case the Opus 76 set of six string quartets is widely regarded as his finest achievement in chamber music, while Mendelssohn in his Opus 13 quartet drew on the revolutionary ideas from the late Beethoven quartets which baffled so many of his contemporaries – but not the prodigiously talented young Mendelssohn. Beethoven had published his first set of quartets in 1800, the same year as Haydn's Op. 76. He was Haydn's student, so there is a direct link between the two works being performed tonight.

Joseph Haydn (1732 - 1809) String Quartet Opus 76 No. 5 in D Major

Allegretto
Largo
Menuetto
Presto

Haydn's D major quartet, the fifth of the Opus 76 set, begins with a surprise – a set of lyrical variations rather than the more customary sonata form. It is followed by the stunningly beautiful slow movement marked Largo "singing but melancholy", the heart of the entire work. It is one of Haydn's most memorable creations, composed in the distant key of F sharp major, the main theme a lament becoming quieter and quieter before falling silent. It is sad yet at the same time gives comfort, and over the years has been played at many funerals. Any sense of melancholy is dispelled by the third movement minuet and trio, and then especially by the characteristically high jinks Haydn finale which has all four instruments playing with increasing energy until the work's final chords.

Felix Mendelssohn (1809 - 1847) String Quartet Opus 13 in A Minor

Adagio – Allegro Vivace
Adagio non lento
Intermezzo: Allegro con moto – Allegro di molto
Presto – Adagio non lento

Mendelssohn's A minor Opus 13 quartet is extraordinarily original, despite being his first published string quartet. Alongside Beethoven, his other inspiration for this work was a neighbour, 19 year old Rebekah, for whom he wrote a love song which became the heart of the quartet. As Kai Christiansen has written, the song "makes literal appearances in both outer movements while lending its spirit to the inner ones. A crucial motif from the song

influences several themes across the quartet while other close relationships bind all the movements into stunning thematic unity. The finale literally quotes the previous movements eventually circling back to the very beginning to resume the introductory adagio and bring the song to a conclusion. Mendelssohn wrote one of the very first "cyclical" chamber works."

On Beethoven's influence, Christiansen wrote that this quartet "makes several vivid references to Beethoven's quartets. It is packed with intricate, extended contrapuntal imitation including numerous fugal entrances and a massive chromatic fugue in the second movement..... In writing this extended instrumental "song without words", Mendelssohn became, like Schubert, a Romantic pioneer."

After a slow start quoting the musical "question mark" motif which is central to the entire work, the first movement is a sprightly *Allegro Vivace*, followed by the deeply lyrical "song without words" slow movement. The Intermezzo features Mendelssohn's fast Midsummer Night's Dream style skittering figures, while the exciting *Presto* Finale breaks off at one point for the first violin to echo the baritone soloist entrance in the final movement of Beethoven's 9th symphony. The movement ends by returning to the *Adagio* of the work's opening bars.

Wednesday 23rd July 2025 at 7.30 pm

Mozart admitted he struggled to write string quartets, though in the end he produced ten masterpieces. With these two pieces, the Flute Quartet in D major and the Oboe Quintet in C minor there appear to have been no such difficulties. The Flute Quartet is bubbly and effervescent, with the flute in its virtuosic element alongside some tricky string writing. The oboe quintet is a posthumous arrangement by an unknown composer of Mozart's String Quintet in C minor. This was in turn Mozart's own arrangement of his earlier serenade for wind instruments K388. This adaptation was so successful, Richard Wigmore writes, that "without prior knowledge few would guess that the work was not conceived as a string quintet". The later arrangement returns an oboe to the ensemble, adding a reedy depth to the seriousness of this piece, as well as to its glorious tunefulness, true to its original wind serenade version.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 - 1791)
Flute Quartet in D Major K285

Allegro

Adagio

Rondo

This is a compact work with the last two movements joined without a pause. Full of high spirits, the flute launches into a series of tunes which are developed and recapitulated in the sonata form style. The *Adagio* features plucked pizzicato strings accompanying a wistful melody on the flute, launching into an exuberant final movement, full of fun and exuberance.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 - 1791)
String Quintet in C Minor K406 (arranged for Oboe Quintet)

Allegro

Andante

Menuetto in canone

Allegro

The first movement starts slightly ominously with all instruments in unison which quickly gives way to a lyrical second subject tinged with sadness. The slow movement is Mozart in wistful mode, rich string harmonies complemented by the oboe. The minuet is a canon initially between oboe and cello, with the same theme being repeated one bar later. The trio central section is a double mirror canon, with the theme being repeated upside down by answering voices, in two sets of two. The finale is a set of variations, beginning softly and developing the theme in a wide variety of ways before turning to C major in the final variation to end the work on a cheerful note.

INTERVAL

Antonin Dvořák (1841 – 1904)

String Quartet Opus 96 No 12 in F Major (The American)

Allegro ma non troppo

Lento

Molto vivace

Finale: vivace ma non troppo

Dvorak composed this, the most celebrated of his string quartets, in the summer of 1893 just after completing his 9th Symphony (from the New World). He was staying amongst the American Czech community in Spillville, Iowa, his family had joined him from Europe, and he was happy, writing: "we like it here and, thank God, I am working hard and I'm healthy and in good spirits". It was a welcome change from his hectic life in New York as Director of the National Conservatory. The quartet was completed in 13 days. He wrote "I wanted to write something for once that was very melodious and straightforward, and dear Papa Haydn kept appearing before my eyes and that is why it turned out so simply". A century on, Haydn's quartet writing inspiration was still keenly felt. The work drew also on Czech and American folk influences – Dvorak wrote that he would not have written the quartet "just so" had he "not seen America", and a feature is its use of the pentatonic – five note - scale much used in folk music. It helps give the quartet its open tuneful character which provides much of its popular appeal. As a whole it reflects, in the words of Dvořák scholar Jaroslav Holeček, "the happy, restful moments and the magic of the beautiful countryside that the composer would walk every day of his stay there, usually beginning shortly after sunrise."

The viola's catchy pentatonic tune at the start of the first movement sets the tone for a series of equally inspiring themes, developed and shared with the different instruments, ending with the cello descending on a note of pathos to a quiet conclusion. The cello and first violin share most of the melancholic but lovely melody of the second movement, which has been interpreted as Dvorak feeling homesick, but which the composer indicated was inspired by the loneliness and emptiness of the vast prairie expanses. The third movement is a cheerful scherzo, while the jaunty finale radiates joy, with hints of native American drumming rhythms and a brief contrasting chorale before the high spirits return bringing the quartet to a triumphant conclusion.

Programme notes by Gordon Adam.

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 Françaix.

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 – Oboe



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 was 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!

Claire Wickes – Flute



One of Britain's leading flautists, Claire Wickes was appointed as Principal Flute of the English National Opera Orchestra in 2015 shortly after graduating from the Royal College of Music. She is in demand as guest principal flute of all major London orchestras, including the London Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Philharmonia and Aurora Orchestra. As a recording artist Claire often appears as a featured artist on albums as well as film soundtracks, and performs regularly on broadcasts for tv, radio and live cinema screenings.

Claire read music at Brasenose College, Oxford, where she held an academic scholarship and graduated with first-class honours. She subsequently completed her Masters degree at the Royal College of Music; she now returns to the RCM to coach, adjudicate and lead classes. Claire

is also featured in video tutorials on Principal Chairs, and teaches privately both in person and online.

Claire achieved international competition success as a prizewinner at the Aeolus Competition, and appears frequently as a concerto soloist in Germany and the UK. As a chamber musician she frequently performs alongside internationally acclaimed artists at chamber music festivals. Alongside harpist Tomos Xerri, Claire performs in Siren duo. With a focus on exploring

beyond the conventional flute and harp repertoire, Siren both collaborate with composers and make their own arrangements.

Claire also composes and produces her own music, and received the award for 'Best Original Score' at the Director's Choice fan film awards. In her role in an ongoing theatrical Carnival of the Animals project with Aurora Orchestra, Claire can regularly be found playing the flute whilst being 'flown' acrobatically across the stage, honing her skills in the niche field of upside-down flute performance.

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, 2023 and 2024 and are now back in Ullapool for our 2025 music making.

This year the Edinburgh Quartet, Rosie Staniforth and Claire Wickes are joined by Philip Burrin 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.



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Variations Scotland is very grateful to

Creative Scotland for their financial support.