

variations

The Edinburgh

Quartet

with Rosie Staniforth
and Clare Juan

**Saturday
18 July 2026
at 7pm**

“SCHUBERT FEST”

two concerts at the
Macphail Centre, Ullapool

SCHUBERT

String Trio D471

SCHUBERT

String Quartet in G Major
D887

**Wednesday
22 July 2026
at 7:30pm**

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

SCHUBERT

String Quintet in C Major D956

HAYDN

Emperor Quartet Op, 76

BEAMISH

Opus California for String Quartet

Plus works for solo oboe by SILVESTRINI and

TELEMANN

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TICKETS

Saturday 18 July £15

Wednesday 22 July £20

Combined ticket for both concerts £30

 **EDINBURGH**
QUARTET

This year's two Edinburgh Quartet concerts with Rosie Staniforth (oboe) and Clare Juan (cello) have as their centrepieces two of Schubert's greatest chamber works – the G major quartet and the C major quintet. Neither were ever heard by Schubert – they weren't published until over 20 years after his early death aged 31. Both works appear to have been written quickly taking only 10 to 15 days, remarkable even for Schubert. Both are over 50 minutes long, highly emotional, full of harmonic daring expressing a dichotomy of light and darkness. They make exceptional demands of the players. This is a rare opportunity to hear them both live within a few days, played by the Edinburgh Quartet with Clare Juan (cello).

Saturday 18th July 2026 at 7pm

Franz Schubert String Trio in B flat major D471

Schubert's String Trio in B flat major was composed in September 1816, when the composer was 19 years old. Only the first movement *Allegro* survives complete, but it is a sparkling piece showing off the young composer's assured mastery of compositional style, owing much to Mozart and Haydn and also Salieri who was Schubert's teacher at the time. It is in sonata form, with Schubertian harmonic touches most apparent in the development section.

Franz Schubert String Quartet in G major D887

The G major Quartet was written in 1826, ten years after the Trio but light years away in terms of its compositional style and scale. In this, the last and – in the view of many – his greatest of his string quartets, it appears as Stephen Johnston wrote to "contain the world". He continues: "In few, if any, of his works are so many facets of the Schubertian musical personality represented: the range of expression—from dread to dancing affirmation—can be breath-taking, especially when, as often in the outer movements, opposite extremes are juxtaposed within the space of a few bars".

The first movement *Allegro molto moderato* starts with chords that swing from major to minor – a juxtaposition that recurs throughout the four movements of the work. Timothy Judd has written: "Schubert's quartet is built on key relationships and a restless sense of modulation. From the unsettled opening of the first movement, and throughout the piece, we hear the music alternate between major and minor, as if it can't make up its mind where to go next. It isn't until the first movement's coda that we feel firmly grounded in G major."

The beautiful cello melody at the start of the 2nd movement *Andante un poco moto* descends into a sinister sound world which Judd believes "may be the darkest, most frightening moment in all of Schubert's music, and it's left hanging and unresolved."

The third movement *Scherzo Allegro vivace* – and especially the trio section *Allegretto* takes us to a world far from the terror of the second movement. The music lingers there, as Judd says, "as if it doesn't want to leave, even to return to the sparkling magic of the scherzo".

The monumental final movement *Allegro assai* in the form of a tarantella dance keeps us off balance with one surprise after another, from sudden key changes to rhythmic shifts and quirky contrapuntal activity. Themes from the earlier movements are heard again towards the end of the work. The buoyant cello pizzicati in the final bars finally brings the whirlwind activity and humour of the movement to a fitting close.

Wednesday 22nd July 2026 at 7.30pm

Joseph Haydn

String Quartet Op 76 No 3 "Emperor"

This is one of the most popular of Haydn's compositions thanks to the 2nd movement's famous theme and variations on the Emperor's Hymn, the national anthem of the Austrian Empire and later of Germany. Haydn was apparently inspired to write his famous theme "God Save Emperor Franz" by hearing the UK's stately "God Save the King" while visiting London in the 1790's.

The quartet's first movement *Allegro* is cheerful and conversational, where the first and second themes are derived from the first compact opening idea. The material is used in a variety of ways, including a folksy melody in the upper instruments against a drone bass in cello, just before the original theme returns for the recapitulation. The adventurous harmonies, particularly the interplay between major and minor, foreshadow those of Schubert who was born in the same year as its composition, 1797.

The 2nd movement's *Poco adagio, cantabile* famous theme is used as a basis for a series of variations which exploit all the instruments of the string quartet to the full, with the melody often interplaying with elaborate counterpoints. Each instrument has a chance to play the theme with changing and increasingly complex counter melodies from the accompanying members of the quartet.

The 3rd movement *Allegro* is a fast and cheerful minuet, with a more sombre trio section in the minor. The 4th movement finale *Presto* is a violent tempest in C minor in tension with the major throughout the movement, only resolving itself in the major during the final bars of the piece. There is a lot of stormy energy, and complex interplay between the four instruments.

Gilles Silvestrini (French oboist, born 1961)

Studies I, IV and VI for solo oboe, inspired by the works by the French impressionist painters Monet, Renoir and Manet

These will be interspersed by two of **Georg Telemann's** Fantasies (originally for flute) No 2 in A minor and no 7 in D major.

Rosie Staniforth (oboe) will introduce these pieces herself.

Sally Beamish: Opus California (String quartet no 2)

1. Boardwalk
2. Golden Gate
3. Dreams before Lullabies
4. Natural Bridges

Opus California (String Quartet No. 2) is a 12-minute piece for string quartet composed by Scotland-based composer Sally Beamish in 1999, inspired by a visit to California. She writes:

"In response to a commission from the Brodsky Quartet, who were assembling a set of pieces inspired by Beethoven's Opus 18, I chose the first movement of number 4 in C minor, which was the first piece I ever played in a string quartet, at the age of fifteen. The rich, dark harmonies fascinated me, and it was the beginning of my realisation of what it means to play a stringed instrument – the world of chamber music opened up for me at that moment.

I took the first subject, first bridge passage, second subject and second bridge passage/coda respectively, as the material for four very simple movements.

The four movements each take a fragment of the Beethoven and develop it, using aspects of jazz and contemporary American style. The first movement describes the types 'strutting their stuff' along the boardwalk in Santa Cruz, the second is a snapshot of the Golden Gate Bridge, from the air, in an early morning mist. *Dreams before Lullabies* is a gentle cradle song, and *Natural Bridges* is the name of a popular beach with spectacular rock formations."

Interval

Franz Schubert: String Quintet in C major (D 956)

The **Schubert String Quintet** is widely considered Franz Schubert's chamber music masterpiece and one of the greatest compositions in classical chamber music. It was written in September or October 1828, just weeks before Schubert's death at age 31. It is scored for a standard string quartet (two violins, viola) plus a second cello. This contrasts with Mozart and Beethoven, who added a second viola. Schubert wrote to his publisher: "finally I have written a quintet for 2 violins, 1 viola, and 2 violoncelli ... the quintet rehearsal will only begin in the next few days". There is no evidence he ever heard it performed, and it was only first published in the 1850s. There are four movements lasting roughly 50 to 55 minutes. Like the G major quartet we heard on Saturday, it is famous for its profound shifts between transcendent light and crushing darkness, especially in its legendary second movement.

1. *Allegro ma non troppo*: An expansive movement that opens with a swelling chord. It contains one of the most beautiful melodies ever written—a duet for the two cellos.

2. *Adagio*: A sublime, prayer-like outer section that brackets a violent, turbulent F-minor middle section. It represents the ultimate musical depiction of peace interrupted by existential dread.

3. *Scherzo. Presto – Trio. Andante sostenuto*: A manic and exuberant symphonic dance that abruptly drops into a dark, and brooding funeral march during the Trio section.

4. *Finale. Allegretto*: A dance heavily influenced by Hungarian folk music. It ends on a piercing, dissonant D-flat note just before the final C-major chord, leaving the listener with a final sense of unease.

Programme notes by Gordon Adam (with help from AI and Wikipedia)

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 resident at the Universities of Stirling and Edinburgh. As well as giving a regular classical concert series at each, the players work with composition students, instrumentalists and student teachers. In addition 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 composers 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, Gramophone Editor's Choice), Kenneth Leighton (Meridian) and Mátyás Seiber (Delphian).

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 violinist Sadie Fields enjoys a diverse career as soloist, chamber musician, collaborator, and researcher. 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.

As a recording artist, Sadie's most recent disc was released in June 2023 - Flash Ensemble's 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 for BIS Records with Camerata Nordica and 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. She also broadcasts regularly worldwide, including on BBC Radio 3.

Sadie holds a PhD from the Royal Academy of Music (RAM). She has won awards from over twenty UK and international associations and competitions, and was a Leverhulme Fellow at the RAM 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 by Ivry Gitlis, Ida Haendel, and Ferenc Rados. She 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.

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 Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, studying under Professor Weidong Tong. In 2009, Gongbo moved to Glasgow to study at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS). He graduated with a Bachelor of Music (Honours); a Master of Music (distinction) and a Master of Music in Chamber Music.

Gongbo's awards 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, also joint first prize at the Cavatina Intercollegiate Quartet Competition in London in 2011, and won a special prize for their performance of Lajtha String Quartet No.7 at the first International Sándor Végh String Quartet Competition in Budapest in

2012. In 2014, Aurea won the St. Martin's-in-the-Fields Chamber Music Competition in London and 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.

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 lecturer in violin and chamber music at the RCS and is 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 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.

In 2009 Catherine 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.

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 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. 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 (RCM), where she won various 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 with the RSNO, BBCSSO, Scottish Opera and Scottish Ballet - and nationally, with the Philharmonia, The Halle, Northern Sinfonia and BBC National Orchestra of Wales. She taught at The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS) for sixteen years and tutored the oboe section of The National Youth Orchestra of Scotland.

Rosie has enjoyed many opportunities to work as a soloist, performing concertos by Strauss, Vaughan Williams, Bach, Mozart and MacMillan amongst others. In 2019 she became Co-Principal Oboe with the English National Opera, being promoted to Section Principal in 2024 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.

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

Clare Juan – cello

Clare Juan is the latest Edinburgh Quartet apprentice. She is an Australian cellist having performed in leading venues such as Wigmore Hall, Royal Albert Hall and the Royal Festival Hall. As an avid chamber musician, she has performed alongside the Marmen Quartet as well as Ensemble 360 at Wigmore Hall and her piano trio recently won 2nd prize and Audience prize at the Cavatina Chamber Competition. Clare is delighted to be joining the Edinburgh Quartet Apprenticeship and is very much looking forward to the next year of chamber music making

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 Europe, Canada and the USA.

The Variations Chamber Music summer school ran every year since 2005 apart from the 2020 and 2021 courses that had to be cancelled because of the Covid pandemic. We are now back in Ullapool for our 2026 music making.

A new venture launched this year is the **Variations String Quartet Challenge** open to amateur string players between the ages of 18 and 40 based in Scotland. The finalists' concert will be held at St John's Kirk in Perth on February 27th next year, and the winning quartet will take part in Variations 2027.

This year the Edinburgh Quartet and Rosie Staniforth 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.



The Edinburgh Quartet

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two concerts

