

Melrose Music Society

World-class performances
amid the beauty of the Borders

2026





Our concerts in 2026 offer an astonishing variety of music, while celebrating two significant landmarks in musical history: the 100th birthday of the enigmatic Hungarian composer György Kurtág and the 150th anniversary of the birth of the German conductor, composer and champion of Mahler, Bruno Walter.

Sunday, March 22nd, 3pm:

Hamish Strathdee - guitar

Sunday, April 26th, 3pm:

Marianna Abrahanyan and Ethan Chan, piano solo and four hands

Sunday, May 31st, 3pm:

Concert Royal – flute, cello and harpsichord

Sunday, June 28th, 3pm:

The Bute Wind Quintet

Sunday, July 19th, 3pm:

Simon Callaghan, piano

Sunday, August 16th, 3pm:

Maria Waszyrowska, soprano & Harris Playfair, piano

Sunday, September 6th, 3pm:

Boglárka György, violin & Amy Butler, piano

Sunday, September 27th, 3pm:

Duo Biz'art, piano four-hands

Sunday, October 25th, 3pm:

Nikodem Rodzeń, violin

Sunday, November 8th, 3pm:

Ian Watt, guitar

Sunday, March 22nd 3pm
Hamish Strathdee, guitar



From Brisbane, Hamish Strathdee is among the foremost classical guitarists in Australia, his CDs receiving excellent reviews across the world. We are proud to host the Scottish debut of this major artist, who will play a delightful mix of memorable melodies: mournful Elizabethan lute music, exuberant virtuoso variations on themes by Rossini; unforgettable lyricism from the Paraguayan genius whom John Williams regards as “the greatest guitarist/composer of any time”; and, finally, new works from prominent young Australian composers, and when I say new, two were premiered by Hamish as recently as February this year.

John Dowland:	<i>Prelude p. 98,</i> <i>Lachrimae Pavane p. 15A,</i> <i>Fancy p. 73;</i>
Mauro Giuliani:	<i>Rossiniana No. 6, op. 124;</i>
Augustin Barrios:	<i>Julia Florida,</i> <i>Vals Op. 8 no. 4;</i>
Elizabeth Younan:	<i>Fantasia No. X for Solo Guitar;</i>
Paul Ballam-Cross:	<i>This Wide Quietness;</i>
Harry Sdraulig:	<i>Sonata for Solo Guitar.</i>

Sunday, April 26th 3pm - Marianna Abrahamyan and Ethan Chan, piano solo and four hands



16-year-old Ethan Chan won the prestigious European Union of Music Competitions for Youth prize last year. Alongside his distinguished teacher at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Marianna Abrahamyan, the duo will juxtapose Kurtág's homages and extrapolations with the classics that inspired them, and feature works by his close friend and other great György of Hungarian music, Ligeti: a dazzling array of baroque, classical, romantic, modern and postmodern masterpieces to mark the 100th birthday of a brilliant composer and the emergence of an exciting young talent.

Johann Sebastian Bach, arr. Busoni: *Ich ruf zu dir*

Ludwig van Beethoven: *Sonata No. 26 in E flat major, "Les Adieux"*

Frédéric Chopin: *Etudes Op.25, Nos 1 & 12*

Sofia Gubaidulina: *Chaconne*

György Kurtág: ... *feuilles mortes* ...; *Szálkák, Op. 6d; Perpetuum mobile; Eight Piano Pieces, Op.3; Hommage à Domenico Scarlatti; couple égyptien en route vers l'inconnu*

György Ligeti: *Etude No. 11, dedicated to Kurtág*
Musica Ricercata 1,2 &10

Franz Liszt: *Hungarian Rhapsody No.7*

Domenico Scarlatti: *Sonata in F minor K 466*

Franz Schubert: *Marche caractéristique à C Major, No 1 D.968b*

Sunday, May 31st, 3pm - Concert Royal – flute, cello & harpsichord

Music for a Georgian Drawing Room



Concert Royal, one of Britain's first "authentic instrument" ensembles, has, remarkably, retained the same personnel for fifty years. This concert on their farewell tour, is absolutely your last chance to hear them recreate the sophisticated charm of a C18th musical entertainment in which German baroque sonatas and fantasies are played alongside British folk-song arrangements, dances and character pieces.

John Gunn:

Four Favourite Scotch Airs

James Oswald:

The Ranunculus; The Crocus

Edward Miller:

Harpsichord Sonata

Johann Ernst Galliard:

Violincello Sonata

Carl Friedrich Abel:

Viola da Gamba Sonata

Johann Christian Bach:

Flute Sonata

George Frideric Handel:

Fantasia;

Musik for the Royal Fireworks

Sunday, June 28th 3pm – The Bute Wind Quintet

Our celebration of Kurtág's 100th birthday concludes with one of his earliest works, alongside music by composers with intimidating reputations. Fear not: Ligeti here is at his liveliest, quirkiest and wittiest; Berio's amusing “entertainment for children” is a set of animal impressions; Stockhausen's elegy is sublimely poignant. All these contrasting moods mingle in the greatest wind quintet ever composed: if you like the lush mysticism of *Verklärte Nacht*, you will be utterly entranced by Schoenberg's Op.26. György Ligeti: *Six Bagatelles*; György Kurtág: *Wind Quintet, op.2*; Luciano Berio: *Opus Number Zoo*; Karlheinz Stockhausen: *Adieu*; Arnold Schoenberg: *Wind Quintet, Op. 26*



Sunday, July 19th 3pm – Simon Callaghan, Piano



One of the leading pianists of his generation, Simon Callaghan has recorded more than fifty CDs and performed in many of the major concert halls around the world. In Melrose, he will play two extraordinary pieces from 1908 by young English composers, both of which he has recorded to great critical acclaim. Rebecca Clarke's *Theme and Variations*, with its Schubertian grace and charm, established her as an emerging feminine talent in those chauvinistic times. Cyril Scott's astonishingly original first sonata so impressed Stravinsky that he incorporated its rhythmic motifs into *The Rite of Spring*. Simon's recital ends with arguably the most profound sonata ever, Schubert's last, completed just weeks before his death.

Rebecca Clarke: *Theme and Variations*

Cyril Scott: *Sonata No.1*

Franz Schubert: *Sonata in B-flat major, D. 960*

Sunday, August 16th 3pm – “Some of my Favourite Songs”

Maria Waszyrowska, soprano & Harris Playfair, piano



We are delighted to welcome back this locally-based duo for an intriguingly eclectic recital, mingling melodious art songs with popular show tunes and jazz interpretations. Maria made her amazing debut for us two years ago as a mezzo, but has since gone up in the musical world in more ways than one. She will again sing songs from her native Poland, this time by Chopin and Szymanowski, and include two of Tchaikovsky's much-loved opus 38 set. We also begin our celebration of Bruno Walter on 150th anniversary of his birth with six of his charming, but rarely-heard, *lieder*, which channel his love of Schumann, Brahms and - of course - his close friend and mentor, Mahler. Walter fled Vienna in 1938 as the Nazis took control, as did Georg von Trapp, whose story was adapted into *The Sound of Music*, with *Edelweiss* paying tribute to Austrian folk music. Indeed, Richard Rodger's must have a claim to have deposed Johann Strauss as the waltz king, for surely *Blue Moon* is better known now than the *Blue Danube*, and then there are *My Favourite Things*, *Falling in Love with Love*, *Wonderful Guy* ...

Richard Rodgers: *My Favourite Things; Blue Moon; My Funny Valentine; Edelweiss; Wonderful Guy; Some Enchanted Evening; Falling in Love with Love; The Lady is a Tramp; It might as well be Spring*

Frédéric Chopin: *Życzenie; Wiosna; Posel; Śliczny Chłopiec; Niema czego trzeba*

Karol Szymanowski: *Lecioły zórazie; Wysła burzycka; Uwoz, mamo; Ujeziorecka; A pod borem siwe kunie*

Pyotr Tchaikovsky: *Twas in the Early Spring; Amid the Din of the Ball*

Bruno Walter: *Waldtrauts Lied Nos. 1 & 2; Die Lerche; Des Kindes Schlaf; Die Elfe; Solvejg's Lied*

Sunday, Sept. 6th, 3pm - Boglárka György, violin & Amy Butler, piano



The scintillating duo that performed Beethoven's "Spring" Sonata so memorably for us in 2024 return to play his passionate "Kreutzer" Sonata. Our celebration of Bruno Walter continues with his only sonata, inspired by and modelled on the Beethoven, and with works from the two composers Walter most admired. He made the first commercial recording of Mahler's *Symphony No.5* with the NYPO in 1947. Its poignant *Adagietto*, made famous by Visconti's film *Death in Venice*, sounds wonderful as a delicate duet in this sensitive arrangement. Mozart's *K301* is his first masterpiece in the genre, with a gorgeous lilting waltz as a *finale*.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart:

Violin Sonata No. 18, G Major, K. 301

Bruno Walter:

Violin Sonata in A major

Gustav Mahler (arr. Otto Wittenbecher):

Adagietto

Ludwig van Beethoven:

Violin Sonata No. 9 in A major, Opus 47

Sunday, Sept. 27th, 3pm: Duo Biz'art, piano four-hands



Our celebration of Bruno Walter reaches an appropriately epic, spectacular, climax with his astonishing transcription of Mahler's *Symphony No 1, "The Titan"*, played by the Belgian duo of André Roe and Geoffrey Baptiste, who have, over the last two decades, become one of the top piano duos in Europe. Leonard Bernstein began his career as Walter's assistant at the NYPO, making his sensational debut at Carnegie Hall in 1943 when the Austrian refugee was ill with 'flu, so it is appropriate that we will hear his *West Side Story Suite*. His fellow American, and friend, John Corigliano's *Gazebo Dances* are exuberant, exhilarating foot-tappers. *Strange and Solemn Music* by Scotland's John Hearne is as moody and evocative as its Shakespearean title suggests.

John Corigliano: *Gazebo Dances*

John Hearne: *Strange and Solemn music*

Leonard Bernstein: *West Side Story Suite*

Gustav Mahler, arr. Walter:

Symphony No.1, "The Titan"

Sunday, Oct. 25th, 3pm: Nikodem Rodzeń, violin



This charismatic young virtuoso from Warsaw performs an irresistible programme of undoubted masterpieces, exploring the full range of emotions. Bach's second *partita*, culminating in the famous plaintive, searingly beautiful *ciaccona* contrasts remarkably with his sunny, lilting *Preludio* and *Loure* in E Major. Grażyna Bacewicz, renowned during her lifetime as an exceptionally talented violinist, is now recognised as one of the finest, most engaging, composers of the last century, her works for her own instrument being particularly uplifting. A performance of Berio's intense, passionate, technically demanding (a euphemism for "almost impossible") *Sequenza VIII* is an unforgettable exhilarating experience, with gorgeous moments of serenity amid the mayhem.

Johann Sebastian Bach:

Partitas: No.2 in D Minor;
No.3 in E Major, Preludio and Loure

Luciano Berio:

Sequenza VIII

Grażyna Bacewicz:

Sonata No. 2; Kaprys Polski

Sunday, Nov. 8th, 3pm: Ian Watt, guitar – “Pieces of Picasso”



One of the world's best guitarists will brighten and warm a November afternoon with captivating works associated with Picasso. Goss' piece depicts a medieval pilgrimage to Coruna, where the painter spent his childhood. Llobet was a drinking companion of the artist in Barcelona; Pujol befriended him in Paris. His *Old Guitarist*, which inspired Tippett's great composition, might just be playing a tune by Sor or Regondi.

Fernando Sor:

Minuet in C minor Op 24;
Rondo in C major, Op. 22

Stephen Goss:

Cantigas de Santiago

Giulio Regondi:

Introduction and Caprice, Op. 23

Michael Tippett:

The Blue Guitar

Miguel Llobet:

Scherzo-Vals; El Mestre

Emilio Pujol:

Canción de Cuna;
Las Abejas; Guajira



Our concerts are held in Melrose Parish Church Hall. We thank the Church for its always friendly co-operation in making this wonderful venue available.



Chamber Music Scotland



We very gratefully acknowledge financial support from Creative Scotland, through Chamber Music Scotland, without which we would find it very hard to continue.



Although we have been putting on concerts of the highest calibre since the 1960s, we remain a very small operation relying entirely on a few volunteers to organise and manage our activities. If you think you might be able to help in any way by, for example, transporting musicians to and/or from Tweedbank or Berwick station, providing overnight accommodation, serving refreshments during the interval, creating publicity materials, putting up posters, please, contact us.

We are a charity (SC005891) with the sole aim of promoting the appreciation of *serious music in Melrose and the surrounding area. We keep our ticket prices as low as possible because we believe great music should be accessible to anyone regardless of income. This means, however, that we are under constant financial pressure. If you are in the fortunate position of being able to afford to pay more, please, give a little extra. It would be very greatly appreciated.

Thank you so much for your continued support.

melrosemusicsoc@gmail.com
www.melrosemusicsociety.org.uk
www.ticketebo.co.uk/melrose-music-society