

Beyond Fingal's Cave



PROGRAMME

Tuesday 28 September 2021

St George's Hanover Square

London
Firebird 
Orchestra

Firebird Friends & Benefactors

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Welcome

Dear Friends, We are delighted to present the first concert of our 2021-22 season. This has been organised in accordance with government guidelines, as things continue to return closer back to normal.

As usual, tonight's concert is being filmed for everyone to enjoy later online.

We are thrilled to welcome the prize-winning cellist Jamal Aliyev, a YCAT Artist, who is performing with us for the first time.

Our regular Principal Guest Conductor George Jackson is conducting once again.

Tonight's performance would not have been possible without the unstinting support of our Friends & Benefactors Society.

I would like to thank each and every one of our donors who have provided support to the charity.

If you are not yet a member, do please consider joining us as your support would be extremely valuable to the orchestra - particularly in these challenging times. Just join online by visiting our website at www.LondonFirebird.com.

Details of the rest of the concerts of the season are viewable there too. It is also now possible to send a one-off donation via the site too.

We look forward to announcing further details of our 2021-22 programme soon.

Kindest regards,
Marc Corbett-Weaver
Artistic Director & Chief Executive

Felix Mendelssohn (1809 - 1847)

The Hebrides Overture, 'Fingal's Cave', Op.26

With the Hebrides Overture, also known as Fingal's Cave, German romantic music comes to Britain.

Felix Mendelssohn came to England for the first time in 1829, following invitations including from the Philharmonic Society. He was then 20-years-old.

After his tour of England, he went to Scotland, and there began working on his Scottish Symphony (No. 3, in A minor).

During his sojourn in Scotland, Mendelssohn toured the Hebrides archipelago off the west coast of the country and visited Fingal's Cave, on the island of Staffa, a volcanic formation of hexagonally jointed basalt columns, accessed from the sea.

Felix sent a postcard to his sister Fanny, in which he wrote, "In order to make you understand how extraordinarily the Hebrides affected me, I send you the following, which came into my head there", and underneath he wrote out the opening phrase of what would become the overture.

He finished it at the end of 1830, and it premiered in London on 14 May 1832, in a concert that also featured his *Overture to a Midsummer Night's Dream*. The work was dedicated to the Crown Prince of Prussia, Friedrich Wilhelm (later King Friedrich Wilhelm IV).

As an orchestral overture, rather than a prelude, the Hebrides Overture is a stand-alone work. It consists of two main themes.



The first theme, which begins the work, – played first by violas, ‘cellos and bassoons – came to Mendelssohn in a flash of inspiration when visiting Fingal's Cave, and it vividly evokes its combination of majesty and solitude.

The second theme depicts the motion of sailing and rolling waves, as the cave is approached by from the sea.

Joseph Haydn (1732 - 1809)

Cello Concerto No. 1 in C Major, Hob. VIIb/1

i Moderato

ii Adagio

iii Allegro molto

Haydn's first Cello Concerto in C Major was composed sometime between 1761 and 1765. It was dedicated to the composer's friend, Joseph Franz Weigl, then the principle cellist in the orchestra of the court of Prince Esterhazy, for many years Haydn's Hungarian employer.

The work was presumed lost until 1961, when musicologist Oldrich Pulkert discovered a copy of the score at the Prague National Museum.

It might never been linked to Haydn at all had not his predecessor at the Esterhazy court, the cantankerous Gregor Werner, complained that Haydn was lazy.

To counter that allegation, Haydn started, from 1765, keeping a list of his own compositions. An entry for that year recorded a concerto in C major for the cello, but the score of the work later disappeared.

The concerto's renaissance premiere was given in Prague by the Czechoslovak Radio Symphony Orchestra, with Sir Charles Mackerras conducting, in 1962.

Some doubts have been raised about the authenticity of the work, but most experts believe the concerto is Haydn's.

After the orchestral exposition of the first movement, the solo instrument plays the opening theme with full chords that use all four strings.

Its central development uses a single theme, which itself contains several motifs that are



developed separately. A cadenza is played near the end of the movement.

The second slow movement, courtly in mood, opens dramatically with the soloist playing a long note (mimicking a vocal technique called *mesa di voce*), sounded while the orchestra replays the opening theme. The cello then goes on to imitate the melody. A cadenza is played again near the end.

Following an orchestral introduction, the final fast movement also has the cello enter on a long note. Again Haydn uses a single theme subdivided into several motifs, which are developed in turn, resulting in rapidly changing moods and colours.

The virtuosity of the soloist is showcased, for example in passages where the instrument's part quickly switches from high to low, giving the impression of two instruments playing in counterpoint.

Franz Schubert (1797 - 1828)

Symphony No. 8 IN B Minor, D759 ‘The Unfinished’

i Allegro moderato

ii Andante con moto

Franz Schubert began writing his eighth symphony, in B minor, in 1822, when he was 25-years-old.

In the next year, 1823, the Graz Music Society gave him an honorary degree, and as customary he dedicated a work to them in return: he chose for this two movements of the piece that he had begun, an Allegro and Andante, plus the first two pages of the beginning of a Scherzo movement. It seems that no further work was ever done it in his lifetime (he would live for another six years), hence the moniker the ‘Unfinished’.

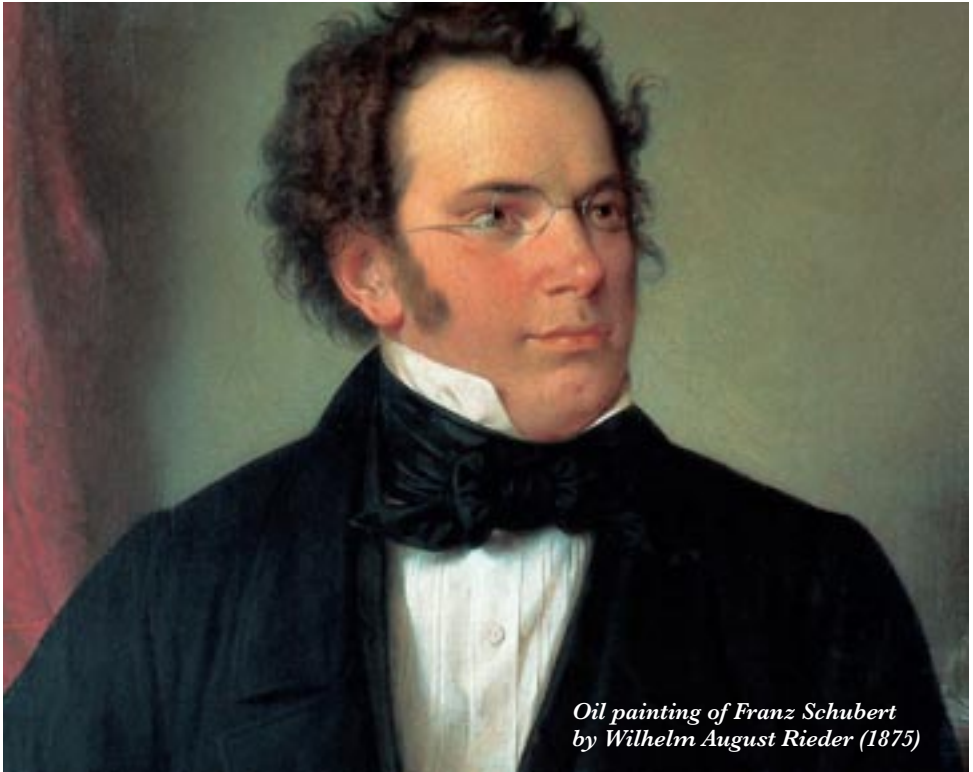
The Unfinished breaks new musical ground, and has been described as the first distinctively Romantic symphony, with its emphasis on lyrical impulse over structure. The dazzling novelty of it is clear from the beginning of the first Allegro movement: instead of a self-confident theme and energy at the opening, as with typical Classical and early Romantic symphonies (including Schubert’s previous), it begins with an introspective, dream-like atmosphere, very softly in the strings. Violins emerge with a busy idea, while oboe and clarinet quickly offer a poignant duet. Orchestral chords interrupt, but the orchestra continues its course, rising to a surging crescendo. Soon after, the cellos sing the memorable waltz-like second theme, immediately taken up by violins. But then a

shock – a brutal orchestral chord stops the flow. The famous melody returns only in pieces. Violins regain their footing to sing the opening of the idea and the wind section contributes. Again an orchestral chord interrupts. A struggle between gentleness and violence creates a sense of wildness and calm. For a moment, the first theme manages to peep out again in the fray, growing in stature and drama, but is shut off by horns which prepare the way for violins to sing the second charming theme. But not for long, as timpani and orchestral chords shut it down. At the end of the movement, recapitulation revives the opening ideas, which are followed by a small coda.

The second Andante movement at first offers brings relief from the storm and stress. Lyricism, romantic yearning, and tenderness reign. But the tension returns. Bass strings play a descending passage in plucked articulation and winds and violins sing above. Once again, the music erupts into emotional turmoil. A quiet conclusion brings serenity, tinted with resignation and ambiguity.

The music critic Eduard Hanslick wrote of the character of the two movements (on reviewing the symphony’s premier concert):

“The whole [first] movement is a sweet stream of melodies, in spite of its vigour and geniality so crystal-clear that you can see every pebble on the bottom. And everywhere the same warmth, the same golden sunshine that makes buds grow! The Andante unfolds itself broadly and even more majestically. Sounds of lament or anger rarely enter this song full of intimate, quiet



*Oil painting of Franz Schubert
by Wilhelm August Rieder (1875)*

happiness, clouds of a musical thunderstorm reflecting musical effect rather than dangerous passion ... The sonorous beauty of both movements is enchanting”

For many years, music lovers entertained a hope that Schubert had actually finished the symphony, and that the missing movements sat, forgotten, in some Viennese attic, awaiting discovery. Scholars are now quite sure, sadly, that the work really was unfinished.

Nobody knows why Schubert never completed it, but theories abound. He suffered bad health in 1822 and this may have entailed early symptoms of terminal illness. Some have speculated that this both contributed to the dark qualities of the work and caused a depression which dissuaded the composer from completing it.

However, he lived for another six years and went on composing other music. Others have wondered whether Schubert felt daunted by the task of writing two further movements to match the monumental quality of the first two, the depth of inspiration for which surprised even himself as he wrote it out.

His next symphony, the ‘Great’ in C Major (completed in 1826), follows a more conventional classical style, leaving that new Romantic current in the Unfinished for others (such as Bruckner) to pick up. Alternatively, he may simply have put it down, dissuaded by other works and life events, intending to pick it up again later.

The Unfinished Symphony only premiered in 1865, in Vienna, some 37 years after Schubert’s death. Even then the work was ahead of its time.

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ii Andante con moto

George Jackson conductor

Jamal Aliyav cello

Calyssa Davidson leader

London Firebird Orchestra

Programme notes by Michael Manning Clark

Members of the audience are respectfully requested to refrain from filming or recording any part of this evening's performance on phones or other electronic devices. Recording is strictly prohibited.



George Jackson

Armed with insatiable artistic curiosity, a true performer's instincts and the advantages of a rigorous central European training, George Jackson has earned critical acclaim for the authority and eloquence of his music-making.

Winner of the 2015 Aspen Conducting Prize, Jackson came to attention after stepping in at short notice for Daniel Harding with Orchestre de Paris.

Recent highlights include leading Ensemble Intercontemporain at the Rainy Days Festival in Luxembourg and Festival D'Automne in Paris, as well as engagements with the Brussels Philharmonic, RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra, the orchestra of Opéra de Rouen, and conducting the world premiere of Tscho Theissing's *Genia* at Theater an der Wien.

His varied operatic experience includes performances at Opera North, Hamburg State Opera and Opera Holland Park, as well as conducting a new production of *Hänsel und Gretel* at Grange Park Opera, where he was described in review as 'a young conductor to watch'.



“George Jackson raised the stature of the music to a rarely-encountered level, absolutely enthralling from first bar to last,” **Robert Matthew-Walker,**
Classical Source

Jamal Aliyev

Jamal was a prize winner at the 2019 Concert Artists Guild International Auditions in New York and the 2017 Young Classical Artists Trust International Auditions in London.

In 2017 he made his solo debut at the BBC Proms with the BBC Concert Orchestra at the Royal Albert Hall performing for the celebrated film music composer John Williams' 85th Birthday. In the same year he won the 'Arts Club – Sir Karl Jenkins Music Award' and released his debut CD *Russian Masters* with pianist Anna Fedorova for Champs Hill Records to critical acclaim.

Jamal has performed widely internationally, highlights including the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra (broadcast by Radio 3), the Philharmonia Orchestra at the Royal Festival Hall, the Presidential Symphony Orchestra in Turkey, Symphony Orchestra Simón Bolívar in Venezuela and Tomsk Philharmonia at the Trans-Siberian Festival. In 2021 he was featured as one of Classic FM's '30 of the most brilliant young classical musicians playing today'.

This season Jamal records with the Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra conducted by Howard Griffiths (under the auspices of the Orpheum Stiftung) and with celebrated Turkish pianist and composer Fazıl Say. He makes his USA debut with recitals at Merkin Concert Hall (NY), The Weiss Center at Bucknell University Pennsylvania and the Macon Concert Association, and appears as soloist with the Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra.

Hugely popular in Turkey, he returns to give recitals with Fazıl Say, and to perform concertos by Haydn and Shostakovich with the Istanbul, Izmir, Bursa, Eskisehir and Mersin Symphony Orchestras. He greatly values the opportunity to collaborate with local musicians, promoting this work through the online release of traditional folk and classical music performances.

On the concert platform Jamal has given recitals and taken part in chamber music at venues including Wigmore Hall, the Menuhin, Istanbul, Kronberg, Istanbul and Enescu Festivals, the Atheneum (Bucharest), Forbidden City Concert Hall (Beijing), Rachmaninov Hall (Moscow) and the Arts Parliament House (Singapore). Solo appearances include the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Northern Sinfonia, the Kennemer Jeugd Orkest in Holland and Bilkent Symphony, among many others.

Born in Baku, Azerbaijan, Jamal studied at the Yehudi Menuhin School and at the Royal College of Music with Thomas Carroll, where he completed his Masters.

Prizes and awards include the 2016 Kronberg Academy Award at the Enescu Competition, an honourable mention at the Pablo Casals Competition in France and 2nd Prize at the 2019 Windsor Festival Competition. He received a Musicians' Company Prince's Prize in 2017.

Jamal plays a Giovanni Battista Gabrielli cello (1756) on loan from a private individual.



Calyssa Davidson

American violinist, composer and arranger, Calyssa Davidson, is a versatile artist whose wide range of interests has led her to perform throughout the world. She has played with major orchestras, bands, in musicals, and as solo violinist on several feature and independent film soundtracks as well as television including the BBC.

Along with performing in musicals on the West End, Davidson has led recording sessions at Abbey Road, Air Edel, and Angel Studios. She recorded the solo violin score for the BBC TWO documentary series *The Story of China* and wrote and recorded the solo violin scores for the BBC TWO documentary *Normandy '44: The Battle Beyond D-Day* and BBC FOUR documentary *Shakespeare's Mother: The Secret Life of a Tudor Woman*. She can also be heard on the *Harry & Meghan: A Royal Romance* soundtrack from the LIFETIME original movie with the same title and is featured on soundtracks for various video games, trailers, and adverts worldwide.

Davidson has performed alongside Alfie Boe, Rick Wakeman and Grammy-award winner Rick Springfield and is also a member of The Hedone String Quartet represented by Twisted Noise Troupe.

Originally from California, Davidson moved to London in 2010 to attend the Royal College of Music where she earned her Master's Degree in Violin Performance and Composition for Screen and Bachelor of Music Degree in Violin Performance where she was supported by an



Alice Templeton Scholarship and a Robert McFadzean Whyte Award Scholarship. Whilst at the RCM, Davidson studied with former Associate Leader of the Philharmonia Orchestra and Co-Leader of the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, Adrian Levine, and film and television composers Maurizio Malagnini (*Call the Midwife*, *The Paradise*) and Howard Davidson (*Death Games*, *The Battle for Malta*). Amongst others, Davidson has also studied with world-renowned violinists Ivry Gitlis, Gilles Apap, LA Phil Concertmaster Martin Chalifour and former BBC Concert Orchestra Leader Cynthia Fleming.

Davidson frequently works in Los Angeles and is set to perform as soloist premiering a new violin concerto with the Santa Barbara Symphony in their next season.

Concert programme 2021

Join us for this live concert on 28 October in London



From the Germanic Lands

Fantastic music from Austria and Germany conducted by Michael Thrift with violinist Emmanuel Bach

Mozart Overture to Le Nozze di Figaro
Mendelssohn Violin Concerto in E minor, Op. 64
Beethoven Symphony no. 8 in F, Op. 93

Watch these concerts online at londonfirebird.com



From London to St Petersburg

This concert recorded live in September 2020 features music by Corelli, Holst and Tchaikovsky



String Fling

This concert recorded live in October 2020 features music by Vaughan Williams, Elgar, Mahler and Grieg.



Welcome the Spring

This concert was recorded live in May 2021 and features music by Frederick Delius, Richard Wagner and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

London Firebird Orchestra

Conductor

George Jackson

Leader

Calyssa Davidson

Violin I

Sydney Grace Mariano (*Sponsored by Michael & Helen Brown*)

Tayfun Bomboz (*Sponsored by Jenny Jones*)

Can Cui

Claire Edwards

Isabella Fleming

Violin II

Stella di Virgilio (*Sponsored by Anatoly Savin*)

Sherry Shen

Iona Allan

Alex Collins

Harry O'Keefe

Gracie Guo

Viola

Catarina Silva

Anastasia Sofina

Edwin Podolski

Cameron Howe

Cello

Elizabeth Elliott (*Sponsored by Philip & Suzy Rowley*)

Elia Benhamou (*Sponsored by Stephen & Susan Yarnold*)

Jennifer Sturt (*Sponsored by Jarrod Henderson & Sue Sinclair*)

Josie Campbell

Bass

Owen Nicolaou

(*Sponsored by David & Eillis Baty*)

Daide Scafarto

Flute

Sofia Zambrano

Sirius Chau

Oboe

Izy Cheesman (*Sponsored by Trevor & Elizabeth Gore*)

Russell Coates

Clarinet

Lauren Brown (*Sponsored by Ken Watters & Robin Wilkinson*)

Ben Mason

Bassoon

Rachel Hurst

Francesco DiMatteo

Horn

Jacob Bagby (*Sponsored by Rory Graham*)

Georgia Dawson

Trumpet

Louis Barclay (*Sponsored by Professor Thomas Hale & Dr Sam Webster*)

Alex Brain

Tenor Trombone

Jamie Tweed

Pau Hernandez Santamaria

Bass Trombone

David Anton Sanz

Timpani

Lewis Blee



London Firebird Orchestra is an orchestra of young musicians comprising talented orchestral players who are making the journey from study into the profession.

Through Firebird's annual season of concerts, players perform core repertoire at central London concert venues, while collaborating with renowned soloists, composers and conductors of the younger generation.

By providing this experience, Firebird offers a helpful platform at the crucial early stages of professional life.

The orchestra has collaborated with many renowned soloists, including Mathieu van Bellen, Thomas Gould, Aleksei Kiseliov, James Meldrum, Jennifer Pike, Yury Revich, Leonard Schreiber and Raphael Wallfisch.

Each Season, Firebird showcases a small number of prize-winning conductors of the younger generation who conduct the concerts.

The orchestra also organises an annual composition competition for young composers, with a cash prize and live performance for the composer of the winning work.

Outreach is an important part of Firebird's mission. Since 2013, the orchestra has held a residency at Middlesex University, involving large-scale concerts, conducting and composition workshops, ensemble and dance performances.

The 2018/19 season saw the launch of a new outreach project for the orchestra "Firebird for Schools" – a tailor-made children's concert for London schoolchildren.

London Firebird Orchestra operates as a registered charity, governed by a Board of Trustees.

The orchestra is supported by Dame Judi Dench as Patron, the Firebird Friends & Benefactors Society and a series of generous sponsors.

A complete list of Friends & Benefactors can be found on page 2 of this programme.



SUPPORT US, BECOME A FRIEND

At the heart of our orchestra is the Firebird Friends & Benefactors Society. Launched at the orchestra's inception in 2012 and now with around 100 members, the Friends & Benefactors Society is a growing association of supporters forming the core of our audience.

Members commit an annual donation to the charity, providing a vital bedrock of funding for the orchestra. Without this vital income stream, the orchestra's concerts would not be possible. Why not join to today to become part of our family and help us continue to grow?

**Sign up today at www.londonfirebird.com
or speak to one of our team.**