

The Kelvin Ensemble

CONDUCTED BY
JOHN GRANT

SYMPHONIE FANTASTIQUE • BERLIOZ
NOON WITCH • DVOŘÁK
DANSE MACABRE • SAINT-SAËNS

8TH MARCH
2PM AND
7.30PM

BUTE HALL
UNIVERSITY
OF
GLASGOW
G12 8QQ



Arts & Crafts
Janet & John



WELCOME

Hello,

Welcome to the Kelvin Ensemble's Spring Concert 2025! On behalf of the entire orchestra, I am delighted to welcome you all back to the beautiful Bute Hall for our second concert of the year. We have a fantastique (pun intended) programme of music to share with you featuring some thrilling works by Saint-Saëns, Dvořák and Berlioz. This semester's programme explores some of the spookiest and most fantastical pieces in the Western classical repertoire, capturing images of shimmying skeletons, harrowing folk tales and even a witches' round dance (because we've all seen one of them).

Over the last two semesters, every member of the orchestra has worked extremely hard to learn and rehearse this challenging but exciting programme of music at our weekly Tuesday rehearsals and we can't wait to share it with you. Outside of rehearsals, we have been lucky to enjoy a jam packed social calendar organised by our epic Social Secretaries, Kirsty and Anna (themed bingo anyone?). The social side of Kelvin allows us to get to know each other better outside of rehearsals, resulting in many new and lifelong Kelvin friendships.

Additionally, Kelvin is run entirely by a group of dedicated students who form the Kelvin Committee. Every week, each member of the committee volunteers their time and effort to ensure that all aspects of the society continue to run smoothly. I cannot express how proud I am of all the work they have achieved and I feel so lucky to have been Chairperson of the Kelvin Ensemble this year.

Being able to play music together and perform as part of an ensemble like Kelvin is something that is extremely important to many of us. The Kelvin Ensemble strives to demonstrate the positive impact that music can have on student wellbeing and emphasises the value and importance of music and arts societies within the University of Glasgow through our continuing hard work, a shared enthusiasm for what we do and a genuine love for music and performing.

Of course, today's performances would not be possible without our fantastic conductor, John Grant. We are so fortunate to have him as our conductor and are eternally grateful for his lasting support and all the work he puts into Kelvin - thank you John!

Lastly, there wouldn't be a concert without you... the audience! Thank you for your continued support for the Kelvin Ensemble - we hope to see you all back again next year :))

So, without further ado, sit back, relax and don't let the Noon Witch get you...

Abby Fabel
Chairperson

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Kelvin Ensemble would also like to thank the following for their efforts and support throughout the semester:

Concert Stewards: Lucia Garland, Kate Morgan, Andie Swain, Miranda Roy, Maria Lujan Vinales, Jedi Lim, João Pedro, Rachel Jamieson

Photographer: Neil Stuchbury (Instagram: @what_stuch_saw)

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GLASGOW'S
VIOLIN SHOP

ORCHESTRA MEMBERS

Violin 1

Alberto Brunelli Bonet**
Duncan Richards
Qinyue Zhang
Vanessa Xue Hui Tan
Riu Rodriguez-Sakamoto
Han Yeo
Veera Vihantola
Imogen Siemens
Orla McLeod
Bryan Wong
Jules Hedges
Weiwei Peng
Yi Zheng
Jonathan Assur

Violin 2

Caitlin Williams*
Thea Jones
Arka Chatterjee
Alex Badura
Kirsty Clark
Abby Fabel
Joseph Kwan
Lorna Richardson
Anna McGowan
Molly Wallbanks
Katherine Hui-min Varley
Phoebe Marlow
Tajinder Kaur
Oli Hagmann

Cello

Dòmhnall MacGriogair*
Danny Urquart
Flora Delfas
Christina McGillion
Gogo Boubouna
Hoi Ling Tsang
Hamish Beeley
Laura Johnson
Orli Meiksin
Beth Kernohan
Dougie Easdale
Reilly Gardner
Ella Skinner
Georgia Hally

Viola

Orla Smyth*
Yuki Suter
Sarah Salloway
Alexandra Archibald
Ellie Delahunt
Iris Davies Johnson
Aimili Troup

Double Bass

Euan Coyle*
Maria Stewart
Zoe Booth
Ana O'Brien
Reuben Thomasson

Flute

Charis Tse*
Sevrin Draper*
Evie Mulcahy
Phoebe Jones

Piccolo

Phoebe Jones*

Clarinet

Jack Horrocks*
Ruby-Jo Philips
Naomi Calley*
Molly Hannaway

Oboe

Charisse Leung*
Rose Jamieson
Hal Phillips-Dibb

Cor Anglais

Hal Phillips-Dibb*

Bassoon

Reuben Clark*
Shona Rae
Freya Edington
Freya Liles

French Horn

Anya Vasko*
Abbey Lindley
Sarah Lindsay
Archie Wallace

Trumpet

Finn Cormack*
Tao Shen
Ross Gilchrist
Charlie Johnson

Trombone

Charlotte McLaughlin*
Ruth De Villers
Adam Haacker
Lorna Rae

Bass Trombone

Mark Gammon*

Tuba

Eleanor Gaskell*
Ewan Saunders

Harp

Kezia Conran
Hannah Middleton

Percussion

Ellie Smillie*
Garance Labrosse
Matthew Elliott
Lewis Russell

**DENOTES ORCHESTRA LEADER

*DENOTES SECTION PRINCIPAL

PROGRAMME

DANSE MACABRE, OP. 40 - CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS

Danse Macabre, or the Dance of Death, was originally composed in 1874 by the legendary French composer Camille Saint-Saëns. Born in Paris, Saint-Saëns' talent as a musical prodigy was recognised at a young age, and at only age thirteen he attended the Paris Conservatoire. After graduating from the conservatoire he worked as a church organist for many years before pursuing a successful career as a composer.

Danse Macabre was originally written as a symphonic poem, telling the story of death summoning skeletons from their graves to dance with him. The solo violin takes the place of death playing the fiddle, entering the piece with the dissonant tritone after the strike of midnight. Saint-Saëns also employs the use of the xylophone to represent the clattering of bones as the skeletons dance for death. The piece's intensity increases as it goes, turning into a ferocious dance that abruptly stops with the 'rooster's call' as dawn breaks, represented by the oboe.

When the piece originally premiered it was said to give the audience feelings of anxiety, and had a less than positive reaction. Now, the piece is regarded as one of Saint-Saëns most iconic pieces, being used countless times throughout modern pop culture, cementing Saint-Saëns as one of the most recognisable composers of his time.

THE NOON WITCH, OP. 108, B. 196 - ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK

The Noon Witch was written by famed composer Antonín Dvořák in 1896. Born in the Czech Republic, Dvořák was strongly inspired by the traditional Czech and Slavic music that coloured his youth. After training as an organist and playing the viola in the Prague Provisional Theatre Opera for years, Dvořák found success in winning three Austrian state scholarships for his compositions. Through this prize he was introduced to fellow composer Johannes Brahms, who helped introduce his music to a wider international audience.

The Noon Witch is a symphonic poem based on Czech folklore. Dvořák wrote the piece after returning home to his native Czechia after a few years living in America. It tells the story of a mother warning her son to stop misbehaving or else the Noon Witch will come and steal him away. To the mother's horror the Noon Witch actually appears, and a frantic chase ensues as the mother tries to escape the witch trying to steal her son from her. She eventually collapses, with her child held tight to her. The piece transitions from the tense frantic music to a jovial jaunt, representing the unsuspecting father returning home. The piece morbidly ends as he finds his wife unconscious, with their child dead in her arms.

SYMPHONIE FANTASTIQUE, OP. 14 - HECTOR BERLIOZ

Hector Berlioz, a pioneering Romantic composer, was born on 11 December, 1803, in La Côte-Saint-André, France. Initially, he studied medicine at his father's insistence, but he later rebelled against this path and pursued music and literature, which had been his true passion since childhood. Berlioz gained recognition for his innovative orchestration and expressive compositions.

Driven by his unrequited love for the Irish actress Harriet Smithson after watching Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Berlioz composed *Symphonie Fantastique*, which premiered in 1830. This piece is an early example of programmatic symphony, which narrates the opium-induced visions of a disconsolate lover driven to suicide by his indifferent lover. The symphony is also noteworthy for its expanded orchestration, which is grander than usual for the early 19th century.

1. RÊVERIES - PASSIONS (LARGO - ALLEGRO AGITATO ED APPASSIONATO ASSAI)

The symphony opens with the artist's melancholic daydreams, reflecting his longing and obsessive love. A recurring theme, known as the "idée fixe," is introduced. This was taken from a previous composition by Berlioz: "*Scène Lyrique*" (1828). This represents his beloved and recurs throughout the symphony, symbolising his persistent obsession.

Berlioz's Programme Notes:

"The author imagines that a young musician, afflicted by the sickness of spirit which a famous writer has called the vagueness of passions (le vague des passions), sees for the first time a woman who unites all the charms of the ideal person his imagination was dreaming of, and falls desperately in love with her. By a strange anomaly, the beloved image never presents itself to the artist's mind without being associated with a musical idea, in which he recognizes a certain quality of passion, but endowed with the nobility and shyness which he credits to the object of his love.

This melodic image and its model keep haunting him ceaselessly like a double idée fixe. This explains the constant recurrence in all the movements of the symphony of the melody which launches the first allegro. The transitions from this state of dreamy melancholy, interrupted by occasional upsurges of aimless joy, to delirious passion, with its outbursts of fury and jealousy, its returns of tenderness, its tears, its religious consolations – all this forms the subject of the first movement."

II. UN BAL (VALSE: ALLEGRO NON TROPPO)

Transported to a festive ballroom, the artist seeks solace in the lively waltz. Amidst the swirling dancers, the “idée fixe” emerges, reminding him of his unattainable love and deepening his despair.

Berlioz's Programme Notes:

“The artist finds himself in the most diverse situations in life, in the tumult of a festive party, in the peaceful contemplation of the beautiful sights of nature, yet everywhere, whether in town or in the countryside, the beloved image keeps haunting him and throws his spirit into confusion.”

III. SCÈNE AUX CHAMPS (ADAGIO)

In the tranquil countryside, the artist attempts to find peace. The two shepherds in the programme notes are depicted by a cor anglais and an offstage oboe. The serene pastoral melodies are interrupted by the “idée fixe,” reflecting his inner turmoil and the inescapable nature of his obsession. As the movement concludes, the timpani attempts to evoke the sound of distant thunder. The timpani aims to depict sound of distant thunder as the movement ends.

Berlioz's Programme Notes:

“One evening in the countryside he hears two shepherds in the distance dialoguing with their ranz des vaches (rows of cows); this pastoral duet, the setting, the gentle rustling of the trees in the wind, some causes for hope that he has recently conceived, all conspire to restore to his heart an unaccustomed feeling of calm and to give to his thoughts a happier colouring. He broods on his loneliness, and hopes that soon he will no longer be on his own... But what if she betrayed him!... This mingled hope and fear, these ideas of happiness, disturbed by dark premonitions, form the subject of the adagio. At the end one of the shepherds resumes his ranz des vaches; the other one no longer answers. Distant sound of thunder... solitude... silence.”

IV. MARCHÉ AU SUPPLICE (ALLEGRETTO NON TROPPO)

In a nightmarish vision, the artist dreams he has murdered his beloved and is condemned to death. The movement portrays his march to the scaffold, culminating in a dramatic conclusion as the guillotine falls, symbolizing his execution.

Berlioz's Programme Notes:

"Convinced that his love is spurned, the artist poisons himself with opium. The dose of narcotic, while too weak to cause his death, plunges him into a heavy sleep accompanied by the strangest of visions. He dreams that he has killed his beloved, that he is condemned, led to the scaffold and is witnessing his own execution. The procession advances to the sound of a march that is sometimes sombre and wild, and sometimes brilliant and solemn, in which a dull sound of heavy footsteps follows without transition the loudest outbursts. At the end of the march, the first four bars of the idée fixe reappear like a final thought of love interrupted by the fatal blow."

V. SONGE D'UNE NUIT DU SABBAT (LARGHETTO -ALLEGRO - RONDE DU SABBAT: POCO MENO MOSSO)

In the final movement, the artist envisions himself at a diabolical gathering (Dream of the Night of the Sabbath), surrounded by sorcerers and monsters. The "idée fixe" returns, now grotesquely transformed, mocking his former love. The movement incorporates the "Dies irae" (*Day of Wrath*) chant, blending it with a wild witches' dance, leading to a frenzied and macabre finale.

Berlioz's Programme Notes:

"He sees himself at a witches' sabbath, in the midst of a hideous gathering of shades, sorcerers and monsters of every kind who have come together for his funeral. Strange sounds, groans, outbursts of laughter; distant shouts which seem to be answered by more shouts. The beloved melody appears once more, but has now lost its noble and shy character; it is now no more than a vulgar dance tune, trivial and grotesque: it is she who is coming to the sabbath ... Roar of delight at her arrival ... She joins the diabolical orgy ... The funeral knell tolls, burlesque parody of the Dies irae, the dance of the witches. The dance of the witches combined with the Dies irae."

JOHN GRANT, CONDUCTOR

John Grant was born and brought up in Ayrshire, Scotland and began his formal musical studies at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music & Drama (now the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland) in 1977 where his achievements included winning the Governors' Recital Prize, the Chamber Music Prize and the Subject Prize for Flute. Having already been a member of the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain, John continued to establish himself as an orchestral musician by becoming a founder member of the National Youth Orchestra of Scotland, with whom he later appeared as a soloist.

In 1981, John began his professional career first freelancing with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Scottish Ballet and Welsh National Opera, then holding posts with the Hallé Orchestra, Scottish Opera and from 1987 to 2000, was Principal Flute with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra. During this time, John also made many solo appearances, performing concertos by Mozart, Bach, Nielsen and Ibert and was a member of a number of chamber ensembles, including Paragon, the Chamber Group of Scotland and the Allander Ensemble. He also played as guest principal with the London Symphony Orchestra, the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and the BBC National Orchestra of Wales. Throughout his time with the RSNO, John also taught at the RSAMD.

Following studies with Maestri Jorma Panula and Benjamin Zander, John now dedicates his working life to conducting and music education, giving him the opportunity to work with many orchestras and bands, including the London Soloists Chamber Orchestra, Camerata Caledonia, West of Scotland Schools Symphony Orchestra, the National Children's Orchestra of Scotland and is currently conductor of the Strathclyde University Symphony Orchestra as well as the Kelvin Ensemble. John is also an adjudicator member of The British and International Federation of Festivals.

The Kelvin Ensemble have thoroughly enjoyed working with and learning from John and would like to express their gratitude and admiration for his musicianship.

ALBERTO BRUNELLI BONET, CONCERTMASTER

Alberto Brunelli Bonet began playing the violin at the age of 4 with the Suzuki method and has studied at the Junior Royal Conservatoire of Scotland from 2020 to 2024 with Prof. Andrea Gajic. Alberto won the 2022 Edinburgh Competition Festival Gray Medal for Strings, the RCS Nan Christie Prize for Strings (2022, 2023), and second prize at the Birmingham International Competition (2023). He was invited to perform with the RCS Senior Symphony Orchestra at COP26 in Glasgow (2021) and the NYOS Senior Symphony Orchestra (2022). From 2022 to 2024, he was first violin in RCS Symphony and String Orchestras and led the premiere of Patrick Doyle's score for the 1927 silent film *It* at the New Auditorium in Glasgow in February 2024. He is the recipient of the RCS 2024 Hutchings Memorial Award and continues to study violin with Prof. Andrea Gajic.

Alberto is currently studying Physics at the University of Glasgow and in his spare time enjoys composing beats.

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Inn Deep is a pub known for its impressive selection of craft beers and relaxed, cozy vibe, with an outdoor seating overlooking the River Kelvin.

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