

4pm: Robert Burn' Concert

[dur. 1 hr, £8.50 / £7.50 conc]

James Blair – Echoes from Ayrshire

Son of Queen Victoria's official violinist William Blair, James also played the violin and taught the then Prince of Wales. The Queen had his father's music published in 1897 after his death and this piece by his son may have been published at much the same time.

Song Cycle: Ae Fond Kiss (trad)

In the main, Burns wrote poems to traditional tunes that he heard whistled and sung in his daily round. He wrote, "Unless I be pleased with the tune I can never make verses to it".

Ye Banks and Braes of Bonnie Doon (arr. Kozeluch)

Adapted from an earlier poem found amongst Robert Burns' papers after his death. This version was based on an air arranged first by a Mr Miller of Edinburgh but later sent by George Thomson to Kozeluch.

Oh whistle and I'll come tae you, my lad (trad)

In the summer of 1795 Burns wrote to his Edinburgh publisher, George Thomson, "In Whistle and I'll come tae ye, my lad" the iteration of that line is tiresome to my ear... a fair one, herself the heroine of the song, insists on this amendment; and dispute her commands if you dare".

Max Bruch – Scottish Fantasy (3rd movement)

Bruch lived mainly in Germany but was caught up in the romance of Scotland as was Mendelssohn. He spent three years as Director of the Liverpool Philharmonic Society which allowed him to visit Scotland and this virtuosic piece may have been the result.

Song Cycle: Bonnie Laddie, Highland Laddie (arr. Beethoven)

The words come from a long poem "The Highland Lad and the Lowland Lassie" which Burns turned into a song.

A Red Red Rose (trad)

Possibly written from an old ballad called "The Turtle Dove" or "True Love's Farewell" which Burns would have heard about his farm.

William Mackenzie Murdoch – Waverley

Son of a well known Glasgow poet, William was born in 1870 and became the Aly Bain of his day. A gifted violinist, he wrote popular music based on Scottish dance and folk tunes.

Song Cycle: Oh wert thou in the cauld blast (arr. Haydn)

Because Burn's verses became so popular, George Thomson, his publisher, commissioned the great composers of the time to produce arrangements of the traditional Scottish tunes.

John Anderson my Jo (arr. Weber)

"One hint let me give you – whatever Mr Pleyel does, let him not alter one iota of the original Scottish airs: I mean in the song department; but let our national music preserve its native features. They are, I own, frequently wild and irreducible to the more modern

rules; but on that very eccentricity, perhaps, depends a great part of their effect.” Letter from Burns to George Thomson. April 1793.

Should Auld Acquaintance be Forgot (arr. Kozeluch)

“An old song and tune that has often thrilled through my soul” says Burns about this song. He sent the words to an old, almost blind and wholly deaf Mrs Dunlop and promised to visit her at Ayr on New-Year-Day fair 1788. “My creed is pretty nearly expressed in the last clause of Jamie Dean’s grace, an honest weaver in Ayrshire; “Lord grant that we may lead a gude life! For a gude life maks a gude end, at least it helps weel!” Letter to Clarinda. January 1788.