



RSNO

SCOTLAND'S NATIONAL
ORCHESTRA

Mahler Nine

Usher Hall, Edinburgh
Fri 21 Feb 2025 7.30pm

Glasgow Royal Concert Hall
Sat 22 Feb 7.30pm

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Mahler Nine

Usher Hall, Edinburgh Fri 21 Feb 2025 7.30pm
Glasgow Royal Concert Hall Sat 22 Feb 7.30pm

With some music, words can't ever come close. When Gustav Mahler wrote his Ninth Symphony, he knew he was living on borrowed time, so he poured everything he had into one of the most poignant and powerful symphonies ever written. Music Director Thomas Søndergård leads the RSNO through a wonderland of hymn tunes, Viennese waltzes, half-remembered songs and distant trumpets – before the sun sets on Mahler's very own, heartbreaking farewell.

MAHLER Symphony No9 [80']

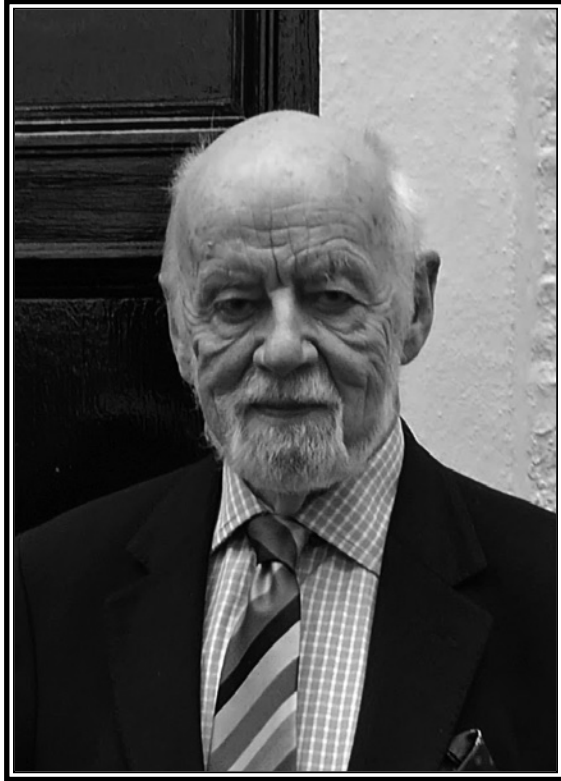
Thomas Søndergård Conductor
Royal Scottish National Orchestra

Dedicated to the memory of **Morrison Dunbar**

The Glasgow performance will be recorded for the RSNO Archive.
Supported by the Iain and Pamela Sinclair Legacy.

If viewing these notes at the concert, please do so considerately and not during performances.

Please silence all mobile telephones and alerts, and refrain from taking photographs, without flash, until the end of each piece.



These concerts are dedicated to the memory of
Morrison Dunbar, RSNO Chair 1993-7

Welcome



Welcome to this evening's concert, which is dedicated to the memory of Morrison Dunbar, Chair of the RSNO Board between 1993 and 1997.

Following the resounding success of our Mahler Two performances in October, this evening's concert is the latest instalment in Music Director Thomas Søndergård's Mahler cycle. Personally, I think the final movement of Mahler Nine is the most perfect movement ever written. During my time as a player, I had the privilege to play this monumental work many times and I've never forgotten a performance. I am sure you won't forget this evening's performance either.

Unusually spanning the whole evening, the scale of this Symphony is something to behold. You may have noticed that large-scale performances have become something of a theme recently; with Wagner's *Ring* Symphony and Shostakovich's Eighth Symphony still to

come this Season, it's a real pleasure to watch the Orchestra rise to the occasion and do what they do best.

For our audience members in Glasgow, I hope you enjoyed the pre-concert performance by the RSNO's Community Orchestra, All Together Now. This 80-strong group of amateur musicians meets monthly to play together, working under the baton of Robert Baxter, and is just one exciting part of the community work we do here at the RSNO.

Next week, the Orchestra joins forces with our Associate Artist and former Assistant Conductor, Kellen Gray, for matinee performances in Airdrie and Greenock. These concerts will offer the opportunity for school pupils and audience members to come together over lunchtime to hear Mendelssohn's *Scottish* Symphony, presented by Gillian Moore. I hope to see some of you there!

Alistair Mackie

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Royal Scottish National Orchestra

1-9



10-18



19-27



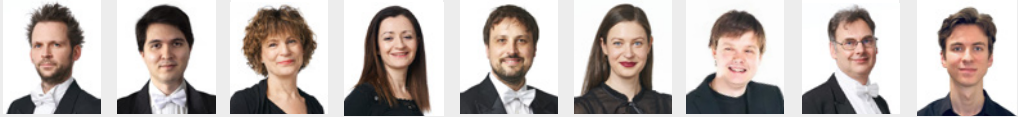
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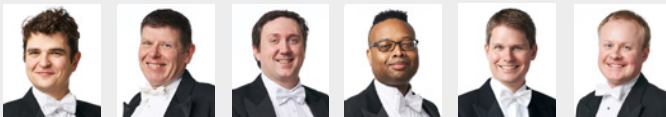
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Thomas Søndergård	1
MUSIC DIRECTOR	
Patrick Hahn	2
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Ellie Slorach	3
ENGAGEMENT CONDUCTOR	
Kellen Gray	4
ASSOCIATE ARTIST	
Derrick Morgan	5
ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR	
Neeme Järvi	6
CONDUCTOR LAUREATE	
Alexander Lazarev	7
CONDUCTOR EMERITUS	
Stephen Doughty	8
DIRECTOR, RSNO CHORUS	
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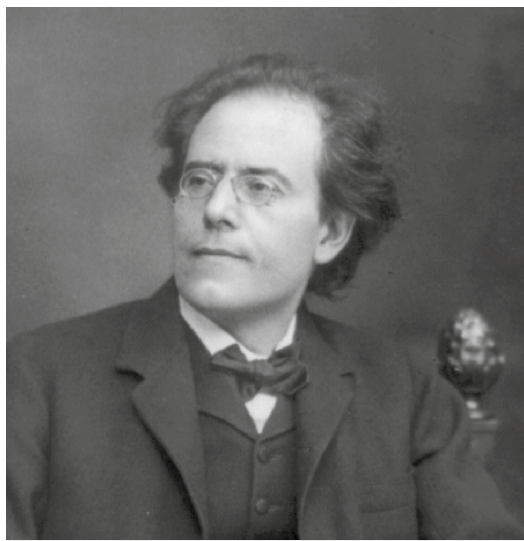
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PERCUSSION

Simon Lowdon	PRINCIPAL	77
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Gustav Mahler (1860-1911)

Symphony No9



FIRST PERFORMANCE

Vienna, 26 June 1912

DURATION 80 minutes

- 1. Andante comodo (D Major)**
- 2. Im Tempo eines gemächlichen Ländlers.
Etwas täppisch und sehr derb (C Major)**
- 3. Rondo-Burleske: Allegro assai. Sehr trotzig
(A Minor)**
- 4. Adagio. Sehr langsam und noch zurückhaltend
(D flat Major)**

Ninth symphonies have a fatal reputation: Beethoven, Schubert, Dvořák and Bruckner had all been struck down by the Curse of the Ninth, and Gustav Mahler was superstitious enough about it to give his actual ninth symphony a name rather than a number: *Das Lied von der Erde* – meaning that the one we are hearing tonight is, to be pedantic, actually his tenth. But by the time he wrote it, Mahler had come to terms with it being his last, so Symphony No9 it is. And that sense of acceptance – a kind of truce with creation – is palpable at the end of the Symphony, after a bruising, exhilarating journey which bears witness to Mahler's mighty struggles with the world, with life and with himself.

This is a titanic piece whose periods of beauty and serenity are hard won. Mahler wrote it in the years 1908-9, a time when he was wrestling with many demons, personal and existential: his always tempestuous marriage to Alma, 19 years his junior, had been severely affected by the death of their eldest daughter Maria ('Putzi') in 1907; his professional life was also in turmoil, with his long period as conductor of the Vienna Court Opera coming to a rancorous end; and he had been diagnosed with a fatal heart condition, focusing his constant anguish about death and the meaning of life's bitter struggles.

Mahler's entire world at the time was one of febrile change and neurosis, with Vienna the place where the greatest artistic and psychological confrontation with the collapse of 19th-century existence – and the birth of 'modernism' – was being played out: Sigmund Freud investigating the turbid depths of human consciousness, the writers Robert Musil, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Arthur Schnitzler and Stefan Zweig expressing the unstable, febrile

atmosphere made visible in the artworks of Gustav Klimt and Egon Schiele, and the brazen new architectural styles of the Secession movement. Mahler and Richard Strauss drove 'Late Romantic' music to the final limits of massive orchestral exploration, while already admitting into their work the uncharted wildness and dissolution of the new music, wresting itself free of traditional harmony and form, pioneered by Arnold Schoenberg and Alban Berg.

It's a lot to synthesise into any symphony, however gigantic, but it is surely fundamental to this work – as is Mahler's likely intuition that his Ninth Symphony was the culmination and end of a symphonic tradition stretching back over 150 years to Haydn. If this Symphony represents a farewell, as is often asserted, it is a farewell to many things, not simply to Mahler's own life (he would finally succumb to his ailing heart in 1911). Such a task surely requires new shapes, new forms: and even though Mahler reverts to a purely orchestral treatment (without the human voices he had introduced into several other symphonies), and uses the traditional four movements, he uses them in entirely new ways.

The outer movements are huge and slow. In the first, almost an entire symphony in itself, which combines a highly complicated sonata form and a rondo of returning themes (constantly varied and developed), the motifs of the hesitant, nervy opening grow and combine into a huge confrontation between the lovely string themes – yearning, nostalgic, peaceful – and another world of turmoil and dissonance: each great climax collapsing into desperate anguish, culminating in a supremely bleak funeral march, which itself then resolves into the gentle radiance of the conclusion.

The shorter middle movements feel more purely acerbic: the curiously brittle, heartless treatments of ländler and waltz – surely a comment on Mahler's growing alienation from Viennese life – in the second cede to a furiously energetic 'Rondo-Burleske', a whirlwind of crazily intricate counterpoint that briefly gives way to a deceptive lull of tenderness.

The final movement emphatically doesn't synthesise or resolve the previous three in the traditional way, but in the incredibly rich, hymn-like string harmonies of its opening theme we might sense an affirmation of existence as a response to the struggles we have witnessed, a dauntless resolution to hope, in the face of all the obvious reasons for the opposite. But there is no great apotheosis: again the theme alternates with curiously bleak and directionless passages. Finally, the chorale returns, reaches ever upwards and inwards, becomes hesitant again, can't seem to find its way to the end, and eventually dissolves in what might be a vision of eternity.

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RSNO Connections

The Scottish Orchestra (as the RSNO was then known) gave the first Scottish performances of Mahler's Ninth Symphony in November 1949, with the Orchestra's Czech-born Principal Conductor, Walter Susskind. The performance at Glasgow's St Andrew's Hall took place on the 26th of the month. The programme also included Chopin's First Piano Concerto, performed by Hungarian pianist Lívía Rév, who died as recently as 2018, aged 101.

RSNO

SCOTLAND'S NATIONAL
ORCHESTRA

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Thomas Søndergård

Conductor



Danish conductor Thomas Søndergård has been Music Director of the RSNO since 2018, following six seasons as Principal Guest Conductor, and is Music Director of the Minnesota Orchestra. Between 2012 and 2018, he served as Principal Conductor of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales (BBC NOW), after stepping down as Principal Conductor and Musical Advisor of the Norwegian Radio Orchestra.

He has appeared with many notable orchestras in leading European centres, such as Berlin (Berliner Philharmoniker, Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin, Mahler Chamber Orchestra, Konzerthausorchester Berlin), Munich (Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunk), Zurich (Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich), Leipzig (Gewandhausorchester), Paris (Orchestre National de France), London (London Philharmonic, BBC Symphony, London Symphony, Philharmonia Orchestra) and Amsterdam and Rotterdam (Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Netherlands Philharmonic, Rotterdam Philharmonic), and is a familiar figure in Scandinavia, with such orchestras as the Oslo Philharmonic, Gothenburg Symphony,

Danish National Symphony, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic, Swedish Radio Symphony, Finnish Radio Symphony and Helsinki Philharmonic. North American appearances to date have included the symphony orchestras of New York, Chicago, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Baltimore, St Louis, Toronto, Atlanta, Montreal, Vancouver, Houston and Seattle.

Following his acclaimed debut for Royal Danish Opera (*Kafka's Trial*), he has since returned to conduct *Die Walküre*, *Elektra*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *La bohème*, *Cunning Little Vixen* and *Il viaggio a Reims*. He has also enjoyed successful collaborations with Norwegian Opera and Royal Swedish Opera. His Stockholm productions of *Tosca* and *Turandot* (both with Nina Stemme) led to his Bayerische Staatsoper debut, conducting main season and Opera Festival performances of *Turandot* with Stemme. He made his Deutsche Oper Berlin debut with the world premiere of Scartazzini's *Edward II* and has since returned for Berlioz's *Romeo and Juliet*.

His discography covers a broad range of repertoire, including Carl Nielsen (Royal Danish Orchestra, Naxos Records); Poul Ruders (Arhus Symphony, Norwegian Radio, Royal Danish Opera (*Kafka's Trial*), Da Capo and Bridge Records); Sibelius symphonies and tone poems with BBC NOW and Prokofiev and Richard Strauss with the RSNO, Linn Records; Lutosławski and Dutilleux concertos with cellist Johannes Moser and Rundfunk Sinfonieorchester Berlin (Pentatone); and Vilde Frang's celebrated debut recording (WDR Köln, EMI).

In 2023, Thomas was a recipient of the Carl Nielsen and Anne-Marie Carl Nielsen's Foundation award for his outstanding contribution to Danish musical life. In 2022, he was decorated with a prestigious Royal Order of Chivalry, the Order of Dannebrog (Ridder af Dannebrogordenen), by Margrethe II, Queen of Denmark.

Royal Scottish National Orchestra



Formed in 1891 as the Scottish Orchestra, the company became the Scottish National Orchestra in 1950 and was awarded Royal Patronage in 1977. Many renowned conductors have contributed to its success, including Sir John Barbirolli, Walter Susskind, Sir Alexander Gibson, Neeme Järvi, Walter Weller, Alexander Lazarev and Stéphane Denève.

The Orchestra's artistic team is led by Danish conductor Thomas Søndergård, who was appointed Music Director in 2018. In March 2024, Austrian-born conductor, composer and musician Patrick Hahn became the Orchestra's Principal Guest Conductor.

The RSNO is supported by the Scottish Government and is one of the Scottish National Performing Companies. The Orchestra performs across Scotland, including concerts in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee, Aberdeen, Perth and Inverness, and appears regularly at the Edinburgh International Festival and BBC Proms. The RSNO has made recent tours to the USA, China and Europe.

The RSNO has a worldwide reputation for the quality of its recordings, receiving a 2020 Gramophone Classical Music Award for Chopin's

Piano Concertos (soloist: Benjamin Grosvenor), conducted by Elim Chan, two Diapason d'Or awards (Denève/Roussel 2007; Denève/Debussy 2012) and eight GRAMMY Award nominations. In recent years, the RSNO has increasingly recorded soundtracks for film, television and video games, with notable titles including *Horizon: An American Saga* (Warner Bros), *Life on Our Planet* (Netflix), *Star Wars Outlaws* (Ubisoft), *Avatar: Frontiers of Pandora* (Meta Quest VR) and *The Woman King* (Sony Pictures). The Orchestra records at its bespoke in-house facility, Scotland's Studio, in Glasgow.

The RSNO believes that music can enrich lives, and aims to inspire, educate and entertain people throughout Scotland and beyond with its performances, recordings and engagement programmes. Supporting schools, families, young professionals and wider communities, the RSNO delivers high-quality initiatives for all ages and abilities, reaching over 68,000 people in 2023.

On Stage

FIRST VIOLIN

Igor Yuzefovich
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Lena Zeliszewska
ASSOCIATE LEADER
Tamás Fejes
ASSISTANT LEADER
Patrick Curlett
Cheryl Crockett
Ursula Heidecker Allen
Veronica Marziano
Lorna Rough
Susannah Lowdon
Liam Lynch
Elizabeth Bamping
Caroline Parry
Alan Manson
Daniel Stroud
Catriona Price
Shulah Oliver-Smith

SECOND VIOLIN

Emily Davis
GUEST PRINCIPAL
Jacqueline Speirs
Marion Wilson
Harriet Hunter
Anne Bünemann
Paul Medd
Sophie Lang
Nigel Mason
Kirstin Drew
Robin Wilson
Colin McKee
Carole Howat
Seona Glen
Joe Hodson

VIOLA

Tom Dunn
PRINCIPAL
Felix Tanner
Matthew Johnstone
Lisa Rourke
Beth Woodford
Maria Trittinger
Nicola McWhirter
Claire Dunn
Katherine Wren
Francesca Hunt
Elaine Koene
Georgia Boyd

CELLO

Tim Hugh
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Betsy Taylor
Kennedy Leitch
Yuuki Bouterey-Ishido
Rachael Lee
Sarah Digger
Niamh Molloy
Gunda Baranuaskaitė
Alison Wells
Heather Lewis

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Nikita Naumov
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Carlos Navarro
Michael Rae
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Katherine Bryan
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Fiona Sweeney
Hannah Foster
Adam Richardson
Janet Richardson
PRINCIPAL PICCOLO

OBOE

Adrian Wilson
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Fraser Kelman
Alan Garner
COR ANGLAIS

CLARINET

Timothy Orpen
PRINCIPAL
Rebecca Whitener
Aaron Hartnell-Booth
William Knight
PRINCIPAL E FLAT CLARINET
Duncan Swindells
PRINCIPAL BASS CLARINET

BASSOON

David Hubbard
PRINCIPAL
Patrick Bolton
Lucy Gibson
Paolo Dutto
PRINCIPAL CONTRABASSOON

HORN

Amadea Dalzeley-Gaist
GUEST PRINCIPAL
Alison Murray
Andrew McLean
David McClenaghan
Martin Murphy

TRUMPET

Christopher Hart
PRINCIPAL
Brian McGinley
Angela Whelan

TROMBONE

Dávur Juul Magnussen
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Robbie Bremner

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I am honoured and extremely proud to be Music Director of the RSNO. It is through the continued generosity of you, our friends, donors and supporters, that we can continue to achieve and realise the most ambitious goals of the Orchestra.

One of the wonders of the RSNO is how it brings high-quality music not only to concert halls, but to the wider community. From hospital settings to care homes, from our Astar app for families with newborns to our National Schools Concert Programme, our music touches so many lives in Scotland and beyond. Your support is the

cornerstone of all that we do, as it allows us to continually build and develop.

Thank you for being part of this wonderful Orchestra's journey, as we adapt and grow towards a bright future.



Thomas Søndergård
MUSIC DIRECTOR, RSNO

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RSNO Benefactors are beacons of philanthropic inspiration, providing truly transformative financial support to the Orchestra that enables us to build and deliver long-term strategic plans. Benefactors share the RSNO's vision for orchestral music and work with us to drive

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Sir Ewan and Lady Brown
Gavin and Kate Gemmell
Kat Heathcote and Iain Macneil
Ms Chris Grace Hartness

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The RSNO Conductors' Circle is an inspirational group of individual supporters at the heart of the RSNO's Individual Giving programme. Our members' annual gifts enable us to realise the Orchestra's most ambitious goals. Conductors' Circle members support inspirational concert performances for our audiences alongside innovative education programmes in communities across Scotland, via our ground breaking initiative Music for Life.

The RSNO is very grateful for the continued support of its Conductors' Circle:

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Carol Grigor and the Trustees of Dunard Fund
Bruce and Caroline Minto
Shirley Murray
David and Alix Stevenson
Rolf and Celia Thornqvist
Eric and Karen Young

We would also like to thank those generous donors who wish to remain anonymous.

Patron Programme

RSNO Patrons support individual musicians and members of the artistic team as well as advocating our work off the stage, from Learning and Engagement activity to commissioning new music. Becoming a Patron will bring you closer to the communities we serve across Scotland and will help to ensure that we maintain our position as one of Europe's leading symphony orchestras.

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Chair Patrons are connected directly to the musicians on stage and get to enjoy privileged behind-the-scenes access. Our musicians truly appreciate the support they receive from their Chair Patrons and the brilliant opportunities they bring to the Orchestra.

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We are also grateful to those who give but who wish to remain anonymous.

If you would like more information or would like to discuss how you can become an RSNO Patron, please contact Constance Fraser, Head of Development (Individuals and Partnerships), at constance.fraser@rsno.org.uk

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We all have special Musical Memories. It could be learning to play an instrument when you were a child, or a special piece of music that just left you breathless the first time you heard the Orchestra play it. Maybe it was seeing a soloist you had always wanted to hear, or just a great concert shared with friends. Memories such as these make music such an important part of our lives.

As a charity, our work relies on donations from our supporters and friends – whether performing world-class music on stage or engaging with children across Scotland in our National Schools Concert Programme – and we need your continued support.

By remembering the RSNO in your Will, you can help us share the joy of music with future generations and allow your passion for the Orchestra to live on.

It is easy to leave a gift. After you have made provisions for family and friends, please think of the Orchestra.

Your gift is important to us and to everyone in Scotland who enjoys music. Contact your solicitor to draft a will or add a codicil to your current will.

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For more information please visit rsno.org.uk/memories

If you would like to discuss this further, please contact Polly Lightbody, Individual Giving and Partnerships Officer, in the strictest confidence, at polly.lightbody@rsno.org.uk

To the many among you who have pledged to leave a gift already – thank you.



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Charitable trusts and foundations have a distinguished history of supporting the RSNO, both on and off stage. From one-off donations for specific projects to multi-year funding for our flagship outreach initiatives, including the National Schools Concert Programme and Young Creatives, every grant in support of our work is truly appreciated. We are grateful to the following trusts and foundations for their generosity:

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When you join the RSNO Circle you enhance your relationship with the Orchestra and enjoy exclusive updates from our musicians. If you would like to find out more about joining the Circle, please visit rsno.org.uk/circle or get in touch with Polly Lightbody, Individual Giving and Partnerships Officer, at polly.lightbody@rsno.org.uk

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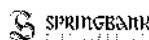
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T: +44 (0)141 226 3868


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