

THE
NIGHT
WITH...

SEASON

2026

THENIGHTWITH.COM

United Strings of Europe Programme

20th Feb - 3:00pm | Doors 2:30pm

Composer Workshop

Anatomy Rooms, Aberdeen, AB10 1AP

21st Feb - 6:30pm | Doors 6pm

Lecture Theatre

Anatomy Rooms, Aberdeen, AB10 1AP

23rd Feb - 8pm | Doors 7:30pm

Fruitmarket [Warehouse]

45 Market St, Edinburgh EH1 1DF

24th Feb - 8pm | Doors 7:30pm

GUU [The Well]

12 University Ave, Glasgow G12 8LX

Punctum - Caroline Shaw
Generation Loss - Liberty Richardson (w.p.)
Quartet No. 4 - Ivan Josip Skender

interval

String Quartet No. 2 - Georg Friedrich Haas

interval

Quartet No. 6 (Ma) - Matthew Whiteside
Spindrift - Aileen Sweeney (w.p.)

Punctum

Caroline Shaw

Punctum is essentially an exercise in nostalgia, inspired by Roland Barthes' description of the 'unexpected' in photographs and in particular by his extended description of the elusive 'Winter Garden' photo in his 1980 book *Camera Lucida*. Through modular sequences strung together out of context, the piece explores a way of saturating the palette with classicism while denying it form, and of disturbing the legibility of a harmonic progression in order to reinforce it later. One could also say the piece is about the sensation & memory of a particular secondary dominant in Bach's St. Matthew Passion.

www.carolineshaw.com

Quartet No. 6 (Ma)

Matthew Whiteside

This piece was written while I was staying in Tallinn, Estonia and began life when I picked up a set of windchimes in the flat where I was staying. The piece is a loose orchestration of those chimes. It imagines a great hand picking up and jiggling the quartet to initiate each gesture before pausing to hear the resulting mesmerising sound. Slowly the piece departs from this initial gesture as if drifting off to sleep.

www.matthewwhiteside.co.uk

Quartet No. 4

Ivan Josip Skender

The Fourth String Quartet was composed in 2025 at the invitation of the Sebastian Quartet (Zagreb, Croatia). Unlike the previous quartets, this work is essentially meditative in character. It reflects a state in which the composer abandons the need for outward exploration and instead turns inward, toward reflection and contemplation. Moments in which individual instruments unfold free "thoughts" over sustained chords alternate with collective surges into crescendos, followed by a swift return to a contemplative stillness. The climax — or perhaps anti-climax — of the piece arrives when all instruments merge into unison, forming a chorale without clear beginning or end.

String Quartet No. 2

Georg Friedrich Haas

My String Quartet No. 2 – a commission by the Wiener Konzerthaus for the Hagen Quartet – combines tonal, apparently historicising sound elements with microtonal adjustments, temporal expansions and compressions and a sometimes virtuoso, flickering sound picture. Tradition shines through again and again, but it appears as something lost, distant, clouded.

Generation Loss

Liberty Richardson (w.p.)

This piece is an exploration of using string instruments to imitate the effects of generation loss in cassette and VHS tapes. Generation loss occurs in analogue media when material is copied multiple times, using the previous copy to make the next. This makes the audio reduce in quality with each copy made.

Within this piece, the instruments are used to evoke the characteristic features of generation loss in audio including warbling, white noise and distortion. The piece follows a process where the melodic material becomes clearer as layers of distortion caused by the generation loss are stripped back.

At the end of the piece, when the melodic material is the most clear, the cassette tape starts to fail, with this being hinted at throughout the piece with material which disrupts the process of the music becoming less distorted.

Spindrift

Aileen Sweeney (w.p.)

Spindrift is a collection of short pieces inspired by ferry journeys I've taken to islands along the West Coast of Scotland. Each crossing has a very different feeling and vista and these short pieces act as little postcards from my trips. The title 'spindrift' is a Scots word which refers to the spray blown from a cresting wave. I hope to add to the Spindrift collection as I continue island hopping round Scotland.

www.aileensweeney.com

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United Strings of Europe

Heralded as one of 'the leading string ensembles of its era' (Gramophone), the United Strings of Europe, led by director Julian Azkoul, has forged a reputation for developing engaging and experimental programming that pushes beyond the confines of the concert hall. The ensemble's focus on commissions and bespoke arrangements of established repertoire has led to a long-term partnership with BIS Records/Apple, seeing the release of at least one album per year, and collaborations with a wide range of artists including the BBC Singers, pianist George Fu, violinist Itamar Zorman, percussionist Colin Currie, flautist Sharon Bezaly, folk ensemble Lodestar Trio, and jazz pianist Gwilym Simcock.

Having recently performed at Snape Maltings, West Wicklow Festival (Ireland) and Chiltern Arts Festival for the first time, the 25/26 season sees the USE make further debuts at the Canterbury Festival, Two Moors Festival, and the Southbank Centre, with plans to return to the Wigmore Hall, Barbican Centre, King's Place and the Victoria Hall (Geneva) over the coming seasons.

The United Strings' interdisciplinary projects stretch their practice and reach out to new audiences beyond classical music. Send back the echo, a lockdown film exploring disability and social exclusion with deaf actor Vilma Jackson, premiered on BBC Arts and was selected for the London Short Film Festival (the film is now available on VSYN+, a media platform dedicated to content in sign language). More recently, the group has collaborated with Gandini Juggling and Concert Theatre Works to create touring shows that combine mime, dance, and juggling, blending music old and new.

THE
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BIO

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Since 2020, the ensemble has built an enviable catalogue of recordings on BIS Records/Apple with six critically-acclaimed albums praised for their 'compelling programmes'

(BBC Music Magazine) and 'superb performances' (The Strad). With two albums selected for Apple Music's '10 Classical Albums You Must Hear this Month' and over 3 million streams on that platform alone, their recordings are celebrated for their 'technically polished and highly expressive playing' (Fanfare) and for being 'supremely executed' (Stereophile Magazine). They are increasingly sought after by leading artists to develop collaborative projects with several more recordings in the pipeline alongside commissions by Freya Waley-Cohen, Gabriel Prokofiev and Misha Mullov-Abbado.

Believing in music's power to connect and bridge divides, last year the group partnered with SANSARA Choir and Syrian musician Basel Saleh to curate a concert celebrating themes of Sanctuary and Solidarity at St Martin-in-the-Fields Church, followed by an album released on Platoon/Apple. Outreach activities are central to the United Strings' artistic output, collaborating with refugees and marginalised communities to make meaningful long standing connections and explore social issues through their work.

'Technically secure, rhythmically precise, richly colored...USE delivers with pristine focus'

– The Arts Fuse

www.unitedstringseurope.com



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Tickets £12/£6

Available on the door and from
THENIGHTWITH.COM

April with
Ensemble Offspring

25th Apr - 8pm | Doors 7:30pm

Fruitmarket [Warehouse]

45 Market St, Edinburgh EH1 1DF

26th Apr - 7:30pm | Doors 7pm

The Stables

Cromarty IV11 8XS

27th Apr - 6:30pm | Doors 6pm

Anatomy Rooms [Lecture Rooms]

Anatomy Rooms, Aberdeen, AB10 1AP

28th Apr - 8pm | Doors 7:30pm

Civic House

12 University Ave, Glasgow G12 8LX

2027



THE
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FESTIVAL

26TH - 28TH FEB
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New Music
Biennial



PRS
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