



PENTATONE

TRACK
INFORMATION

PLAYERS ROSTER

PERSONAL
STATEMENT

LINER NOTES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Invitation

Mozart, Mendelssohn & Schumann

IRISH CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
JÖRG WIDMANN

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)
Serenade for Winds in C Minor, K.388/384a

1	I. Allegro	8. 30
2	II. Andante	4. 20
3	III. Menuetto	4. 08
4	IV. Allegro	7. 14

Oboe: **Daniel Bates & Matthew Draper**

Clarinet: **Jörg Widmann & Katherine Spencer**

Bassoon: **Diego Chenna & Íde Ní Chonaill**

Horn: **James Palmer & Stephen Nicholls**

Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy (1809-1847)
String Symphony No. 8 in D Major, MWV N 8

5	I. Adagio e Grave. Allegro	9. 55
6	II. Adagio	4. 31
7	III. Menuetto - Trio. Presto	4. 30
8	IV. Allegro molto. Più presto	9. 35

Violin 1: **Katherine Hunka, leader, Nicola Sweeney, Clíodhna Ryan, Kenneth Rice & Emily Nenniger**

Violin 2: **André Swanepoel, Oonagh Keogh, Diane Daly, Louis Roden & Anna Cashell**

Viola: **Joachim Roewer, Mark Coates Smith, Robin Panter & Cian O Dúill**

Cello: **Marie Bitlloch, Aoife Nic Athlaoich & Richard Angell**

Double bass: **Malachy Robinson**

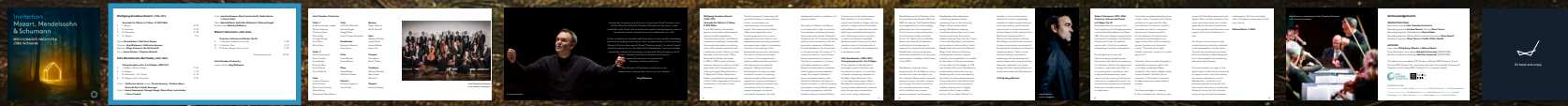
Robert Schumann (1810-1856)
Overture, Scherzo and Finale, Op.52

9	I. Overture. Andante con moto	5. 58
10	II. Scherzo. Vivo	4. 41
11	III. Finale. Allegro molto vivace	5. 39

Total playing time: 69. 04

Irish Chamber Orchestra

conducted by **Jörg Widmann**



Irish Chamber Orchestra

Violin 1

Katherine Hunka, *leader*
Nicola Sweeney
Clíodhna Ryan
Diane Daly
Oonagh Keogh
Siún Milne
Maria Ryan

Violin 2

André Swanepoel
Anna Cashell
Louis Roden
Kenneth Rice
Anita Vedres
Anna Mitchell

Viola

Joachim Roewer
Robin Panter
Mark Coates Smith
David Kenny
Giammaria Tesai Palacio

Cello

Aoife Nic Athlaoich
Richard Angell
Peggy Nolan
Yseult Cooper Stockdale

Double bass

Malachy Robinson
Aura Stone

Flute

Jane Mitchell
Emma Roche

Oboe

Daniel Bates
Matthew Draper

Clarinet

Katherine Spencer
John Forde

Bassoon

Diego Chenna
Íde Ní Chonaill

Horn

Stephen Nicholls
Joseph Ryan
Louise Sullivan
Jenny Cox

Trumpet

Colm Byrne
David Collins

Trombone

Michael Marshall
Ross Lyness
Paul Frost

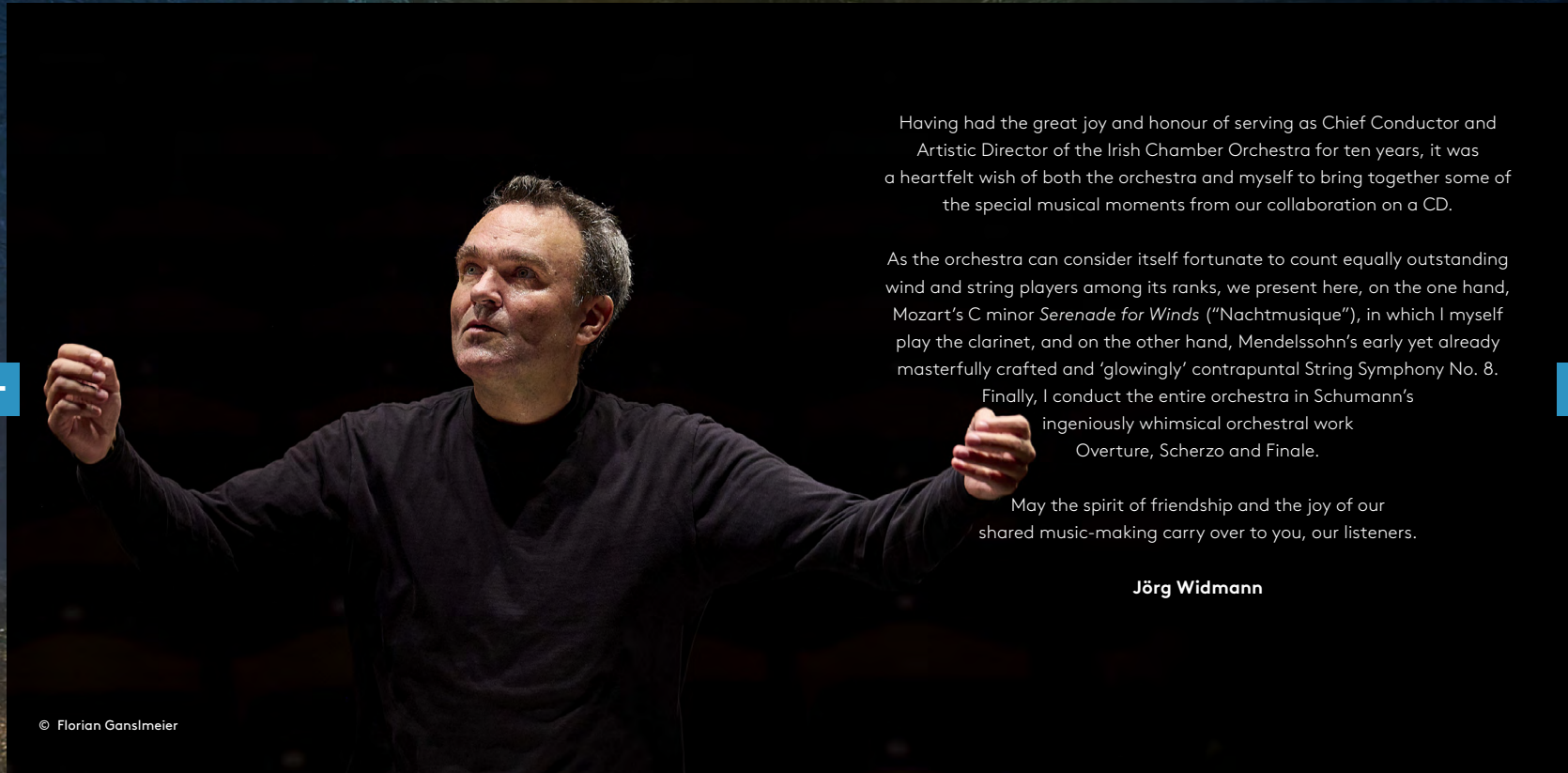
Timpani

Jonathan Raper



Irish Chamber Orchestra
© Ken Coleman Photography





Having had the great joy and honour of serving as Chief Conductor and Artistic Director of the Irish Chamber Orchestra for ten years, it was a heartfelt wish of both the orchestra and myself to bring together some of the special musical moments from our collaboration on a CD.

As the orchestra can consider itself fortunate to count equally outstanding wind and string players among its ranks, we present here, on the one hand, Mozart's C minor *Serenade for Winds* ("Nachtmusique"), in which I myself play the clarinet, and on the other hand, Mendelssohn's early yet already masterfully crafted and 'glowingly' contrapuntal String Symphony No. 8.

Finally, I conduct the entire orchestra in Schumann's ingeniously whimsical orchestral work Overture, Scherzo and Finale.

May the spirit of friendship and the joy of our shared music-making carry over to you, our listeners.

Jörg Widmann

© Florian Ganslmeier



**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756-1791)**
***Serenade for Winds in C Minor,
K. 388/384a***

In the 18th century the related genres of serenade or divertimento were principally regarded as “entertainment music”, but Mozart sometimes completely transcended this modest description, producing music of far greater emotional and intellectual content. There is no finer example of this than the *C Minor Serenade for Winds*, composed in 1782 or 1783 for pairs of oboes, clarinets, bassoons and horns. A few years later, with the experience of writing the great *String Quintets in C Major* and *G Minor* behind him, Mozart completed an arrangement of this *C Minor Serenade* for the same combination of 2 violins, 2 violas and cello.

The first movement, beginning with a powerful theme in unison octaves, is taut, concentrated and overwhelming in its emotional impact. The suave second subject offers some respite from the prevailing grimness, but a more aggressive tone soon returns, with repeated quavers providing a restless accompaniment. Again the relaxation of mood at the opening of the development proves only temporary. The return of the second subject in C minor in the recapitulation—subtly modified and with enriched accompaniment—is especially poignant. Mellow and serene, the *Andante* in F major provides wonderful contrast, its opening melody including little accented suspensions. The second theme is repeated in slightly decorated form (now *forte*) while the bassoons’ upward arpeggios contribute a wonderful buoyancy. The brief

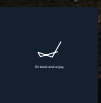
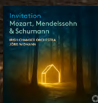
development section is based on the opening theme.

Unusually for Mozart, the *Minuet* is contrapuntal in style, its canonic form perhaps emulating the same technique in the minuet of Haydn’s *Symphony No. 47*. Its severe, relentless quality invites comparison with the equivalent movement of Mozart’s *Fortieth Symphony*. The trio section, in the warmer key of C major, is “in canone al roverscio”—each phrase being answered by its inversion. The fourth movement is a theme with eight variations in which Mozart encompasses an extremely wide imaginative and expressive range. The majestic Variation 1 has an energetic bassoon part, Variation 2 presents the theme in triplets, Variation 3, with its swaying syncopation, shows Mozart’s genius for creating poignancy with the simplest material, before Variation

4 returns to a more robust manner. Both Variation 5 (in the relative major) and Variation 6 begin with the same horn figure, but are thereafter quite different in character—the latter featuring a wonderful first bassoon part. Following a seventh variation in which the theme is simplified above chromatic harmony, the final variation turns to the brightness of C major to conclude this masterpiece in exuberant mood.

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)
String Symphony No. 8 in D Major

A vital element in Mendelssohn’s privileged musical education was his parents’ provision of a chamber orchestra comprising members of the Berlin State Orchestra. Thus in the large family home in Berlin Mendelssohn enjoyed the luxury of hearing these professional musicians play through early compositions such as his string symphonies.





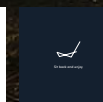
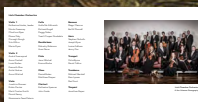
Mendelssohn wrote all thirteen of his string symphonies between 1821 and 1823. His teacher, Carl Friedrich Zelter, had suggested to his outstandingly gifted pupil that the composition of such works—in what was by then an old-fashioned style, inherited from C. P. E. Bach, Johann Gottlieb Graun and other North Germans—would serve as fine exercises to improve his compositional technique. Mendelssohn’s string symphonies remained unpublished until they were rediscovered in the Berlin State library in the 1950’s.

Mendelssohn originally wrote *Symphony No. 8 in D Major* for string orchestra but later arranged it for full orchestra (flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns, trumpets, timpani and strings). The slow introduction has two main elements—a *forte* call to attention and sinuous quaver movement marked *piano*.

Mendelssohn alternates these contrasting elements before combining them. In the following *Allegro*, which exudes terrific energy, Mendelssohn employs monothematicism—thus, as in many Haydn symphonies, the second subject is derived from the first. There is also a bustling figure (introduced by the cellos in the transition) which Mendelssohn borrows from Mozart’s *Magic Flute Overture*. Following a development section of great intensity, the recapitulation is notable for the return of the second subject on solo cello. For the *Adagio* (in 3/8 and the key of B minor) Mendelssohn imaginatively reduces the scoring, dispensing with violins and dividing the violas into three individual parts. The combination of the B minor key and this unusual scoring produces a darker texture which is slightly relieved by the C major middle section. The so-called “Minuet” is

actually a one-in-a-bar scherzo and the Trio section (surprisingly marked at a faster tempo) features some syncopation, good-natured humour and, in its second section, a little influence of the scherzo from Beethoven’s *Symphony No. 2*. The tour de force finale is, like the first *Allegro*, monothematic and also in many ways slightly reminiscent of the equivalent movement in Mozart’s *Jupiter Symphony*. There is much imitative writing, some theme-combining, and the development section begins with a fugue, but the dominant impression is of manic energy and that amazing fluency so readily associated with Mendelssohn.

© Philip Borg-Wheeler



Robert Schumann (1810-1856)
Overture, Scherzo and Finale
in E Major, Op. 52

Emboldened by the success of his First Symphony at its Leipzig premiere conducted by Mendelssohn in March 1841, Schumann began composing his next work for orchestra, the *Overture, Scherzo and Finale*. So satisfied was he with it that he considered designating it his Second Symphony.

Encouraged by his new wife, Clara, the *Spring Symphony* was Schumann's first effort at composing for orchestra. Clearly, the opportunity to write on a grander scale after so long mining piano miniatures, solo songs and extended song cycles, was too good to pass up. Schumann would go on to expand his reach into another three symphonies, orchestral Overtures, chamber music and a single opera.

He initially considered describing it as a Suite, then a "Symphonette" before settling on its eventual title. Why the indecision? Schumann wouldn't have been the first to compose a symphony in three movements, but the absence of a serious slow movement counted against any larger claims. That and its infectious sense of *joie de vivre*, Schumann noting: "The whole has a light, friendly character. I wrote it in a really gay mood".

Certainly, there is a relish throughout impossible to ignore or resist. Look to its tempo markings—*Alllegro* (cheerful); *Vivo* (lively); *Allegro molto vivace* (cheerful and fast)—for an indication of Schumann's mood as he flexes newly discovered creative muscles.

The *Overture* begins in lowering E minor, tentative up-reaching violins

vying with forbidding downward cello figures. When the key changes to the major and other voices join in—listen especially for the oboe and clarinet—the pace quickens and becomes more urgent until the full orchestra is in play.

The *Scherzo* drives along on lively dotted rhythms stretching individual notes answered by a slower, lyrical *Trio* with airy woodwinds prominent. Both are restated, a descending cello line in the repeated *Trio* introducing ideas from the *Overture*.

Schumann moves up a gear in the rapid *Finale*, its first theme introduced by vigorous violins over viola triplets, the second, perhaps in a nod to Mendelssohn, conductor of its premiere, graceful and gentle. And then comes Schumann in ecstatically Romantic mood, the full orchestra racing along with exultant pleasure

in being given full rein, concluding with a triumphant coda based on the main theme.

Michael Quinn © 2024





Jörg Widmann conducting the Irish Chamber Orchestra

© Ken Coleman Photography

Acknowledgements

PRODUCTION TEAM

Executive producer **Irish Chamber Orchestra**
 Recording producer **Andrew Keener** | Editing **Oscar Torres**
 Recording engineer (Mendelssohn) **Simon Eadon**
 Recording engineer (Mozart & Schumann) & mastering **Dave Rowell**
 Assistant engineers **Oscar Torres** & **Caitlin Pittol-Neville**

ARTWORK

Liner notes **Philip Borg-Wheeler** & **Michael Quinn**
 Cover & booklet cover design **Marjolein Coenrady** (PENTATONE)
 Booklet coordination & design **Karolina Szymanik** (PENTATONE)

This album was recorded at ICO Studio on 24 April 2022 (Tracks 1–4) and 25 June 2015 (Tracks 5–8), and at the University Concert Hall, University of Limerick, on 6 October 2024 (Tracks 9–11) in Limerick, Ireland.



PENTATONE TEAM

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Sit back and enjoy

