

Scottish Chamber Orchestra Wind Ensemble

The SCO Wind Ensemble ranges from 5 to 16 players, drawn from the Orchestra's outstanding wind section. The Ensemble has entertained audiences throughout Scotland and further afield with repertoire ranging from the celebrated divertimenti and wind serenades of the 18th century to music of the present day. In recent years, the Winds have appeared within the SCO's own concert season (including the new drivetime CL@SIX series) and at the Edinburgh International Festival, been broadcast on BBC Radio 3 and entertained HRH The Prince Charles at Holyrood Palace.

Michael Collins, Clarinettist and Conductor

Collins is, without question, the most versatile Clarinettist alive today. His dazzling virtuosity and sensitive musicianship has made him the favourite of Conductors, Composers and Audiences throughout the world. Since his success in the first BBC Young Musician of the Year when he was 16, he went on to win several international competitions, including the Leeds Competition for Musicians and the Concert Artists Guild in New York, which led to his Carnegie Hall debut, and represented Great Britain at the UNESCO International Rostrum of Young Performers. Michael regularly performed for Her Majesty The Queen, HM Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother, and a Recital at the request of HRH The Prince of Wales. After this meteoric rise to fame, Michael joined both the Nash Ensemble and the London Sinfonietta at the age of 18, and later founded London Winds. He also became Principal Clarinet of the Philharmonia Orchestra for many years. As a member of these ensembles he has recorded extensively and given countless first performances.

During this period Michael also formed strong musical relationships with musicians such as Martha Argerich, Mikhail Pletnev, Steven Isserlis, the Takacs Quartet, Joshua Bell, to name but a few. Michael has performed with the major Symphony Orchestras of the world, including the London Philharmonic Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Vienna Symphony Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, and the Deutsche Symphonie Orchester. Conductors who he has worked with include Carlo Maria Giulini, Giuseppe Sinopoli, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Charles Dutoit, Neeme Järvi, Sir Simon Rattle, and Leonard Slatkin.

He has special relationships with many of the world's leading Chamber Orchestras, in particular the Academy of St Martins' in the Fields, with whom he has toured extensively, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, the City of London Sinfonia, Camerata Salzburg, and the Swedish Chamber Orchestra. Michael's role as soloist has developed into that of director and conductor, which has become a central part of his musical life.

As well as specialising in classical repertoire, Michael is an avid champion of contemporary music, having had numerous works dedicated to him, most recently including concertos by Mark-Anthony Turnage (Riffs and Refrains) commissioned by the Hallé Orchestra and has since had Dutch, Belgian and

Scandinavian performances with the Residentie Orkest, Royal Flanders Philharmonic and Helsinki Philharmonic respectively, John Adams (Gnarly Buttons), Elena Kats-Chernin (Ornamental Air) which has recently had its first performances in the US, Scandinavia and the UK, and many UK and European premières of works including the concertos of John Corigliano and Brett Dean.

Michael is a regular visitor to the world's leading festivals, appearing regularly at the Cheltenham, Bath Mozart, Aldeburgh, Salzburg, Verbier, San Diego's Mainly Mozart, and will appear this summer at New York's Mostly Mozart festival with John Adams performing Gnarly Buttons. Since Michael's first appearance at the BBC Proms, he has returned more times than any other wind soloist including the 'Last Night'. In his capacity as a chamber musician, Michael enjoys a long standing relationship with the Wigmore Hall, having had many residencies there. Michael won a Gramophone Award for his recording of Elliott Carter's Concerto with the London Sinfonietta under Oliver Knussen on Deutsche Grammophon.

Michael's other recordings include the Mozart Clarinet Concerto and Beethoven's Violin Concerto (transcribed by Pletnev) with the Russian National Orchestra under Mikhail Pletnev for DG which received international acclaim, the complete works for Clarinet and Orchestra by Louis Spohr with the Swedish Chamber Orchestra under Robin O'Neill for Hyperion, Brahms' Trio with Steven Isserlis and Stephen Hough for BMG, Messiaen's Quatuor pour la fin du Temps with Joshua Bell, Steven Isserlis and Ollie Mustonen for Decca. Recordings with his own group London Winds include the Complete works of Richard Strauss for Hyperion, Mozart's Gran Partita for Onyx, and a Grammy Nominated disc of Ligeti's Wind Chamber Music for Sony. Due for release are the première recordings of Concertos by Turnage and Britten (completed Colin Matthews), and will be recording the complete works for Clarinet and Orchestra by Weber.

Michael recently had the honour of taking part in the opening concert of the Melbourne Recital Hall. In September 2007, he performed Mozart's Clarinet Concerto with the Russian National Orchestra and Pletnev in a special concert to commemorate the victims of the Beslan school siege at the site of the atrocity. In May 2007 he won the Royal Philharmonic Society's Instrumentalist of the Year, placing him amongst past recipients of the award who include Itzhak Perlman, Mitsuko Uchida, Murray Perahia, and Andras Schiff.