

May 2026

# Irish Chamber Orchestra

Carolyn Widmann Director/Violin

# Brothers Haydn



**Thursday 14 May** University Concert Hall, Limerick

**Friday 15 May** Whyte Recital Hall, RIAM, Dublin



[irishchamberorchestra.com](http://irishchamberorchestra.com)





# The Arts Council

## More People, More Places, More Spaces

The Arts Council is the national agency for funding, developing and promoting the arts in Ireland. It was established by statute in 1951. The Arts Act 2003 provides that the Arts Council stimulates public interest, promotes knowledge, appreciation and practice and assists in improving standards in the arts. The Arts Council is an autonomous expert body for funding and promoting the arts, steering its development, and offering advice on arts and cultural matters.

The Arts Council's objective over the next three years is to nurture, support and fund More People, More Place and More Spaces across the country. We want to work alongside artists, arts organisations and partners to develop practices, strengthen capacity and audience engagement. This supports professional development, innovation and adaptability.

We are also implementing and monitoring our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy. This will make sure that the arts sector and the Arts Council support a greater diversity of audiences, participants and artists.

The Arts Council proudly funds Irish Chamber Orchestra.



# A Welcome from Our CEO



**Gerard Keenan**  
CEO

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to this evening's performance by Irish Chamber Orchestra.

There are certain artistic partnerships that bring a special kind of energy to the stage, and our collaboration with Carolin Widmann is one of them. From the moment she joined us, there was a shared sense of curiosity, trust and adventure that transforms each performance into something truly alive. Her playing moves effortlessly between intimacy and brilliance, drawing us into the music in a way that feels both personal and exhilarating.

Tonight's programme celebrates the remarkable musical legacy of the Haydn brothers. At its heart is Violin Concerto No. 4 by Joseph, a work full of wit, elegance and charm, brought vividly to life through Carolin's expressive and playful interpretation. Michael's Symphony MH 287 reminds us just how inventive and engaging his voice is. Full of warmth, humour and youthful spirit, it offers a fresh perspective alongside his brother's more familiar works. We close with Joseph's "Farewell" Symphony, a piece that continues to surprise and move audiences with its elegance, subtle mischief and unforgettable ending.

We at Irish Chamber Orchestra are committed to making music that feels open, immediate and relevant, to breaking down barriers and inviting everyone to experience the joy of live performance. Whether you are joining us as a long-time supporter or for the first time, we are delighted to have you with us.

As a not-for-profit organisation, our work is only possible through the generosity of our audiences and supporters. If tonight's performance moves you, I warmly invite you to consider supporting Irish Chamber Orchestra. Your contribution helps us to continue creating exceptional musical experiences, nurturing artistic partnerships, and reaching communities across Ireland and beyond.

Thank you for being part of this journey with us.

May 2026



**Carolyn Widmann** Director/Violin

**Gordon Trajkovic** Guest Leader

# Brothers Haydn

**Michael Haydn**

Symphony, MH 287 (P.43), D major

**Joseph Haydn**

Violin Concerto No. 4 in G major, Hob. VIIa/4

**Joseph Haydn**

Symphony No. 45 in F-sharp minor, Farewell, Hob. I:45

**Thursday 14 May**

University Concert Hall, Limerick, 7.30pm

**Friday 15 May**

Whyte Recital Hall, RIAM, Dublin, 7.30pm



# Irish Chamber Orchestra

We're the orchestra that invites you in. That saves you a seat. That wants you to feel the same heart-stirring, hair-raising, on-the-edge-of-your-seat feelings that we feel. We do so by pouring heart, soul, and no small measure of skill into our art. By playing old, by playing new, by playing everything with guts and fire.

You'll find us each season in **Limerick and Dublin**, touring regularly in the far corners of Ireland, as well as at some of the most prestigious halls in the world. From playing the classics, to performing with theatres, operas, DJs, or dance companies, we forge new pathways to bring you unforgettable experiences, whoever you are, wherever you are.

We are not afraid to push the boundaries of classical music. Since joining us as Artistic Partner in August 2025, **Henning Kraggerud** has brought a fresh warmth and an adventurous spirit to our work, championing artistic diversity and placing emotional connection at the heart of every performance. His inclusive vision is reshaping our repertoire, inspiring bold new commissions from some of Ireland's finest composers and offering vibrant, human-centred interpretations of the classics.

Most importantly, we believe that music is for everyone. We are a registered charity, delivering a series of successful community engagement programmes alongside our core work. After 16 years, our **ICO Schools** initiative continues to provide valuable free music lessons to children and young people in Limerick City while our **ICO Youth** provides an orchestral platform for young people. We are also deeply immersed in the **MA Classical Strings Programme** at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance at the University of Limerick, where we are proud to be orchestra-in-residence.

It's our rich creative musical heritage that inspires us. It's our unstoppable enthusiasm for what we do, and the people we do it with. As Ireland's national chamber orchestra, we are lucky to call the **University of Limerick** home and are funded by The **Arts Council of Ireland/An Chomhairle Ealaíon**.

Whether it's your first time or your hundredth time, we are Irish Chamber Orchestra, and you are in for a treat.

See upcoming events —  
we've saved you a seat!

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### **Violin**

Gordon Trajkovic Guest Leader  
Nicola Sweeney Principal  
Anna Cashell  
Emily Nenniger  
Lorenza Sabatini \*  
André Swanepoel Principal  
Louis Roden  
Kenneth Rice  
Oonagh Keogh  
Diane Daly

### **Viola**

Joachim Roewer Principal  
Christine Anderson  
Mark Coates Smith  
Robin Panter

### **Cello**

Aoife Nic Athlaoich Principal  
Peggy Nolan  
Richard Angell

### **Bass**

Malachy Robinson Principal

### **Oboe**

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\* ICO Apprentice Scheme (Pilot). See next page.



**Carolin Widmann**  
 Director/Violin

A wonderfully versatile musician, Carolin Widmann's activities span the great classical concerti, new commissions specially written for her, solo recitals, a wide variety of chamber music and period instrument performances, including play/direction from the violin.

Throughout the 2025/26 season, Carolin has made acclaimed debut appearances with the Oslo Philharmonic, Budapest Festival

Orchestra, and Tapiola Sinfonietta, with further debut performances to follow with the Aalborg Symfoniorkester and Bruckner Orchester Linz. Other projects include returns to the City of Birmingham Symphony, NDR Radiophilharmonie Hannover, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, & the Gulbenkian Orchestra as well as multi-city tour of Germany with the Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin leading a play/direct programme. Carolin will also be the Artist-in-Residence of the Philharmonie Essen for this season, leading multiple chamber, orchestral and community outreach projects. Further chamber music projects include recitals at the Pierre Boulez Saal and Wigmore Hall.

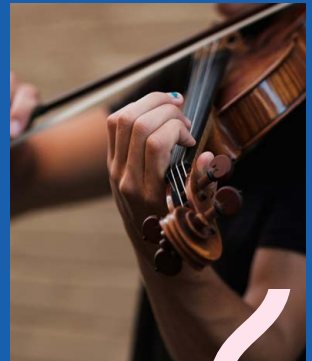
Recent successes have included engagements with the London Symphony Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Danish National Symphony, Seoul Philharmonic, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Munich Philharmonic, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Irish Chamber Orchestra, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic, Halle Orchestra, Netherlands Radio Symphony, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra & WDR Rundfunk Sinfonieorchester Cologne.

# ICO Apprentice Scheme (Pilot)

**In partnership with the University of Limerick, Irish Chamber Orchestra's Apprentice Scheme offers exceptional postgraduate string players the chance to step inside a professional orchestra.**

Participants rehearse and perform with ICO, gaining hands-on experience alongside mentoring from principal players. Through side-by-side and sectional work, they develop the skills, insight, and confidence needed for a professional career.

Running until June, this pilot programme supports the next generation of orchestral musicians while strengthening the connection between ICO and UL.



# Programme

## Notes

### Michael Haydn (1737-1806)

Symphony No. 23 in D major, MH 237 (P.43)

1. *Allegro assai*
2. *Andantino*
3. *Fugato. Presto ma non troppo*

Being the younger brother of Joseph Haydn can't have been easy. But Michael Haydn, a prolific composer of more than 800 works and widely admired (including by Joseph) for his sacred music, carved out his own path.

No less prolific than his sibling and as successful in his lifetime, it says something about his abilities that no less a figure than Mozart borrowed themes from several of his works. Among them was one from the finale of the Symphony No. 23 for his own String Quartet No. 14. It was even once thought that the symphony had been composed by Mozart.

Dating from around 1779, it falls roughly at the mid-point of Haydn's 41 symphonies. Modestly scored for strings and pairs of oboes, bassoons and horns, its three fast-slow-fast movements brim with colour, humour and a youthful verve that belied its 41-year-old composer's age.

The extrovert *Allegro assai* bursts forward with an attention-grabbing fanfare from confident, bright violins, piping woodwinds scurrying to keep up.

There is something mischievous about its playful jumbling and jousting of chattering strings and pirouetting woodwinds, heard through a glinting kaleidoscope of distant keys as the movement develops. A swift return for a spruce recap and a tongue-in-cheek coda is capped by horns adding rustic gloss.

The shine is quickly taken off things by the funereal walking pace of the moody D minor *Andantino* – one of only four minor-key slow movements in Michael Haydn's symphonies. The initial sense of a gathering storm with strings pulsing through syncopated rhythms is dispelled by woodwinds changing tone and temperament to sunnier D major. In the warmth of its glow, a tender dialogue between strings and woodwinds follows before gently fading away.

Featuring the theme purloined by Mozart, the fugue-like *Presto ma non troppo* (Quick, but not too quick) finale is Haydn flexing his creative muscle. Harking back to the Baroque era's fascination with counterpoint, the simplest of themes – four long notes introduced by violins – is teasingly passed around the orchestra. Listen out for the horns' bold treatment of it, and for the emphatic conclusion that glosses the antique with Classical-era vitality.



## Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

Violin Concerto No. 4 in G major, Hob. Vlla/4

1. *Allegro moderato*
2. *Adagio*
3. *Finale: Allegro*

Of the four violin concertos Joseph Haydn composed, only three survive. Among those, the expressive Concerto No. 4, with its focus on bright, flowing lyricism rather than the virtuosity claimed by its siblings, makes it seem like a cuckoo in the nest.

Some, pointing to its more modest technical challenges, have questioned whether Haydn composed it at all. But listen to the fluid interplay between light and shadow in the first movement, the beautiful, aria-like Adagio, and the rhythmically bristling finale, and it could only be his work.

Its difference of tone and temperament might be easily explained. Though numbered the Fourth, the G major was the first of the concertos to be composed, around 1761. The following year Haydn was appointed music director of the elite court of Prince Nikolaus Esterházy where he would come fully into his creative maturity.

The Allegro moderato first movement coasts along on two genial themes introduced by string orchestra and then taken up by solo violin. It juggles and plays with both themes, adding ornate embellishments and plunging suddenly – like clouds briefly covering the sun – into the minor key. A full restatement of the themes is heard before a solo cadenza from the violin and a short orchestral coda.

The serene middle-movement Adagio evokes chamber music intimacy. Again, lyricism rather than virtuosity is emphasised, and again the solo violin takes up the orchestra's opening theme. Listen for the seamless changes of tone as major and minor keys gently weave around each other, and for that moment of unease, soon dispelled, at the beginning of the middle section. After a short solo cadenza, the orchestra brings things full circle by returning to the opening music.

Any lingering doubts about Haydn's authorship

are surely banished by the high-spirited, fleet-footed Allegro finale. Racing out of the traps, it gallops along in fizzing bursts of vitality and colour that belong recognisably to him. Here, virtuosity is finally allowed its head, the orchestra indulging in a series of grandstanding contrasts, its lively theme spun into dazzling passages by the violin, the whole concluding with a playful flourish.

## Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

Symphony No. 45 in F-sharp minor, Farewell, Hob. I:45

1. *Allegro assai*
2. *Adagio*
3. *Menuet e Trio: Allegretto*
4. *Finale: Presto-Adagio*

Despite its nickname, the Farewell Symphony was far from being Haydn's leave-taking of the form. Another 61 were to follow bringing his total to 106 and earning him his own epithet: the Father of the Symphony.

Haydn was by no means the first to compose symphonies. There had been many others before him, the form emerging around the year of his birth. But it was Haydn who standardised the structural features that came to be the norm and that shaped the symphony's development from his day to our own.

Dating from 1772, Symphony No. 45 is the only 18th-century symphony composed in the key of F-sharp minor. The choice obliged Haydn to purchase special adapters to expand the limited range of the valveless natural horns available to him.

Its Farewell nickname resulted from a cheeky response by Haydn, then Kapellmeister of Nikolaus I's court orchestra, to a request from its exhausted, grumbling musicians. With their patron's long summer sojourn at his Eszterháza palace showing no signs of ending, eager to return home to families in Eisenstadt they asked Haydn to intervene.

Instead of risking displeasure with a direct approach, Haydn came up with an audacious nudge to Nikolaus's elbow. In the symphony's final passage each musician in turn would stop playing, turn off the light on their music stand,

and exit the concert platform. By the end only two – pointedly muted – violins remained, Haydn himself and the orchestra's concertmaster. Nikolaus took the hint and returned to Eisenstadt the next day. No industrial dispute has ever been so harmoniously resolved.

Agitated shop floor discontent is obvious from the off, the Allegro assai opening tumbling headlong into turbulence. Think of it as a meeting of unhappy and fractious workers. Strident violins stir up discord, rumbling basses stoke the fire, oboes, woodwinds and horns add their own disaffected syncopated contributions. It is only late on that a more lyrical and placatory theme is heard to brief and little effect. It ends more in sorrow than in anger, as if all the fight has been drained from musicians now resigned to being at their oblivious employer's beck and call.

The Adagio offers a time-out from debate and pauses for reflection. Momentarily subdued violins caught uncertainly between major and

minor keys sound all but defeated, philosophically accepting their sorry lot.

Their weary sufferance is echoed by the Minuet gracefully clothed in F-sharp major, as unique a choice as the symphony's home key. Listen for the inconclusive beat that ends each of its sections with unsettling consequences. Borrowing an old Gregorian melody, the horn-dominated Trio provides relaxed if fleeting respite.

Batteries recharged, the orchestra once more rushes into the fray in the finale's driven Presto opening. As it races towards what might have been its final utterance, an unexpected pause leads to a chamber-like Adagio during which Haydn slyly makes his point. As players exit one by one the music gradually thins until only two violins are left to bring proceedings to a whispered but pointed conclusion.

Notes by Michael Quinn © 2026

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# Education and Community Engagement

## ICO Schools

ICO Schools is a ground-breaking Irish Chamber Orchestra initiative that offers free music lessons to hundreds of schoolchildren.

## ICO Youth

ICO Youth is our free youth orchestra for young people aged 12-24 years. It focuses on orchestral participation and performance, as well as small chamber music groups with individual lessons boosting confidence and skills.

## MA in Classical String Performance

A unique two-year full-time programme offering advanced tuition in violin, viola, cello and double bass. Focusing on musicianship and chamber music skills, the MA is run in conjunction with the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance at University of Limerick.

## Community Visits

Throughout the year, ICO musicians give time to visit local voluntary organisations and charities to perform for audiences who are unable to attend concerts.



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At ICO, we are deeply grateful to our Friends and Patrons, whose support enables us to perform across Ireland and internationally and deliver free music education to hundreds of schoolchildren in Limerick. In return, Friends & Patrons enjoy a range of exclusive benefits and a closer connection to our work.

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**Henning Kraggerud** Director/Violin



June

# French Reverie

**Faure** Pavane Op.50

**Debussy** The Girl with the Flaxen hair

**Satie** Gymnopedie No.1

**Massenet** Meditation from Thais

**Hunka** Beyond

**Ravel** String Quartet, F major (arrangement for string orchestra)

**Thursday 18 June** Whyte Recital Hall, RIAM, Dublin

**Friday 19 June** University Concert Hall, Limerick