

Music in the Round celebrates 40th anniversary of Sheffield Chamber Music Festival with Guest Festival Curator Steven Isserlis



Ensemble 360 © Kaupo Kikkas



Steven Isserlis ©Satoshi Aoyagi

Friday 17 – Saturday 25 May 2024

Crucible Playhouse and other venues

Sheffield Chamber Music Festival 2024

"Sheffield Chamber Music Festival is a reminder of what community feels like... A jewel in Sheffield's cultural crown"
Thoroughly Good

Music in the Round celebrates **40 years of the Sheffield Chamber Music Festival** from **17 to 25 May 2024** with Guest Festival Curator **Steven Isserlis**. Performing alongside the ever-versatile **Ensemble 360**, Isserlis has invited guest artists **Roderick Williams, Irène Duval, Mishka Rushdie Momen** and others to share his passion for French music, especially that of Gabriel Fauré, during the composer's centenary year. Founded by the Lindsay String Quartet, the Sheffield Chamber Music Festival is a much-loved annual fixture, and this year's Festival includes a look back to the Quartet's remarkable influence and legacy in the city.

"For 40 years, Music in the Round has been entertaining audiences with music from Bach to Beamish and everything in between, and this Sheffield Chamber Music Festival celebrates us at our best. We're honoured to have Steven Isserlis curate the Festival, and are thrilled that he is also performing alongside other stellar guests with Ensemble 360. We look forward to welcoming familiar and new audiences to the 'in the round' setting of the Crucible Playhouse, our home venue, and giving everyone a breath-taking up close chamber music experience."

Jo Towler, Chief Executive, Music in the Round

Isserlis is renowned for his love of Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924), having recorded the complete works for cello in 1989. Fauré's music runs throughout the Festival, much of it paired with the composer's students, such as Nadia Boulanger, his teachers, like Saint-Saëns, and contemporaries including Ravel and Enescu. The Festival also features lesser-known French composers including Augusta Holmès, George Onslow, Louise Farrenc and André Messager as well as Olivier Messiaen and Darius Milhaud.

"I adore Fauré's music! It offers us a unique mixture of the sensual and the sacred, in a language of often fathomless, almost mystic beauty; as he himself put it, his aim was to offer us a glimpse of a world that is better than our own."

Steven Isserlis, curator

On **Friday 17 May**, the city's resident chamber group, **Ensemble 360**, launches the Festival with Fauré's Piano Quartet and Louise Farrenc's triumphant Nonet. Leading British pianist **Peter Hill**, who performed in the very first Sheffield Chamber Music Festival in 1984, as well as many more, returns to the Crucible Playhouse to perform late-night Bach, with selections from 'The Well-Tempered Clavier' and the 'English' Suites.



Holmès's *La vision de la reine*.

A favourite of the Festival's programme is the Sunrise concert at 5am on **Sunday 19 May** at the Samuel Worth Chapel. Surrounded by the birds and the rising sun, **Ensemble 360** performs music by Messiaen and Milhaud alongside Barber's 'Summer Music' and Nielsen's Wind Quintet.

For the afternoon concert that day **Ensemble 360** is joined by **Ella Taylor, Anna Huntley, Darius Battiwalla**, the **Abbeydale Singers** and conductor **Lucy Joy Morris** to present a purely French programme that includes Fauré's beloved *Cantique de Jean Racine* and Augusta

The **Lindsay String Quartet** (1965-2005) enjoyed an international reputation for its performances and recordings of the staples of the string quartet repertoire. Its leader, **Peter Cropper**, founded Music in the Round in 1984, and the Quartet was at the heart of the Sheffield Chamber Music Festival until retirement in 2005.



In a nod to Music in the Round's origins, **Robin Ireland**, violist with The Lindsays for 20 years, will join Ensemble 360 for an afternoon concert on **Monday 20 May** to perform one of Mozart's finest chamber works, his String Quintet in G minor.

A full screening of the **BBC's 1977 Omnibus arts documentary** will also take place at 7pm at a special ***Remembering the Lindsays*** event at The Showroom independent cinema. It will be introduced by **broadcaster Paul Allen** and will be followed by discussion with invited guests.

On **Tuesday 21 May, Ensemble 360** is joined by friends to perform Saint-Saëns' beloved *Carnival of the Animals* alongside the composer's Bassoon Sonata and other **rarely performed pieces** of the composer's oeuvre. Saint-Saëns also wrote the music for the 1908 French film *The Assassination of the Duke of Guise*, which was one of the very first films to feature an original score. The highlight of the evening will be a very rare chance to hear the score performed live alongside a screening of the film.

"Saint-Saëns was a marvel in every way. In his own words, he produced music as an apple-tree produces apples – but what an amazing variety of that fruit! Reams of music, ranging from witty to profound, conventionally charming to experimental, grand to intimate – he is a composer whom it is impossible to pigeonhole."

Steven Isserlis, curator



Rising star Mishka Rushdie Momen performs a recital on **Thursday 23 May** showcasing Romantics Ravel and Mendelssohn alongside Schumann's *Waldszenen* and Rameau's *Les Rappels des Oiseaux*. Spanning three centuries, this programme demonstrates the pianist's versatility in music from the elegance of Rameau to the impressionist colours of Ravel. Rushdie Momen appears again in a later concert with curator **Steven Isserlis** and

violinist **Irène Duval** performing Fauré's Piano Trio, written in the composer's final years after two decades of deteriorating hearing. Isserlis commented: *"For me, this is one of Fauré's very greatest works"*.

"[Rushdie Momen's] interpretations reveal a special feeling for Romantic music and the art of rubato"

Neue Zürcher Zeitung

Renowned baritone Roderick Williams, who appeared at King Charles III's Coronation, joins **Ensemble 360** for **Friday Night in Paris on 24 May**, for an evening of Fauré, Ravel and Poulenc's Sextet. Williams holds the position of Singer-in-Residence with Music in the Round, and will also be joining Ensemble 360 for a family concert **Close Up: Music for Curious Young Minds** on **Saturday 25 May** at 10.30am.



Closing the 40th anniversary of Sheffield Chamber Music Festival in 2024, Steven Isserlis returns for the Finale, performing Fauré's tragic Elégie with Ensemble 360's **pianist Tim Horton**. More musicians from **Ensemble 360** are joined by Steven Isserlis to sign off the Festival together in a flourish with Tchaikovsky's popular **Souvenir de Florence**, written as a tribute to the composer's love for the city.

"Any chamber music festival that kicks off with Czech genius Martinů's Parisian jeu d'esprit ballet-sextet La revue de cuisine and ends its first concert with Saint-Saëns's glory of a Septet for trumpet, piano and strings is likely to be a winner..."

This one was."

Arts Desk

Sheffield Chamber Music Festival 2024

Friday 17 May, 19:00

Crucible Playhouse

Festival Launch

Fauré Piano Quartet

Farrenc Nonet

Ensemble 360

Friday 17 May, 21:15

Crucible Playhouse

Peter Hill plays Bach

Bach selection from English Suites and The Well-Tempered Clavier

Peter Hill piano

Saturday 18 May, 10:30

Crucible Theatre

Family concert: Sir Scallywag & the Battle of Stinky Bottom

Lucy Drever
Ensemble 360

Sunday 19 May, 5:00

Samuel Worth Chapel, Sheffield General Cemetery

Sunrise

Barber Summer Music
Messiaen Appel interstellaire
Nielsen Wind Quintet (first mvt)
Milhaud extracts from 'La cheminée du roi René'

Ensemble 360

Sunday 19 May, 15:00

St Mark's Church, Broomhill

Visions: An Afternoon of Choral Music

Fauré/Messager Messe des Pêcheurs de Villerville
Fauré Cantique de Jean Racine
Franck Prelude, Fugue and Variation for solo organ
Holmès La vision de la reine

Ella Taylor soprano
Anna Huntley mezzo soprano
Darius Battiwalla organ
Abbeydale Singers
Ensemble 360
Lucy Joy Morris conductor

Monday 20 May, 14:30

Crucible Playhouse

Mozart & Schubert

Mozart Ach, ich fühl's! from 'The Magic Flute'
Mozart String Quintet in G minor K516
Trad. Se solen sjunker
Schubert Piano Trio No.2 in E flat

Ella Taylor soprano
Robin Ireland viola

Ensemble 360

Monday 20 May, 19:00

The Showroom

Film screening: *Remembering The Lindsays*

Paul Allen host

Tuesday 21 May, 13:00

Crucible Playhouse

Relaxed Concert: Carnival

Saint-Saëns Morceau de concert for horn and piano

Saint-Saëns Bassoon Sonata

Saint-Saëns The Carnival of the Animals

Ensemble 360

Tuesday 21 May, 19:15

Crucible Playhouse

Saint-Saëns: The Renaissance Man

Saint-Saëns Morceau de concert for horn and piano

Saint-Saëns Bassoon Sonata

Saint-Saëns Les odeurs de Paris

Saint-Saëns L'assassinat de duc de guise

Saint-Saëns The Carnival of the Animals

Ensemble 360 and Friends

Wednesday 22 May, 19:15

Crucible Playhouse

French Gems

Ravel Berceuse sur le nom de *Gabriel Fauré*

Saint-Saëns Oboe Sonata

Adès Alchymia

Messenger Solo de Concours

Franck Piano Quintet

Ensemble 360

Thursday 23 May, 11:00

Crucible Playhouse

Rameau Le Rappel des Oiseaux
Mendelssohn Variations Sérieuses Op.54
R Schumann Waldszenen
Ravel Miroirs

Mishka Rushdie Momen piano

Thursday 23 May, 19:15

Crucible Playhouse

An Evening with Steven Isserlis

N Boulanger Three Pieces for cello and piano
Debussy Cello Sonata
Ravel Sonata for Violin and Cello
R Schumann (arr. Isserlis) Violin Concerto (second mvt)
R Schumann Ghost Variations for piano
Fauré Piano Trio

Irène Duval violin
Steven Isserlis cello
Mishka Rushdie Momen piano

Friday 24 May, 13:00

Crucible Playhouse

Fauré String Quartet

Enescu Violin Sonata
Fauré Violin Concerto
Fauré String Quartet

Irène Duval violin
Ensemble 360

Friday 24 May, 19:15

Crucible Playhouse

Friday Night in Paris

Fauré Piano Quintet No.1
Ravel Chansons Madécasses
Poulenc Sextet
Fauré La Bonne Chanson

Roderick Williams baritone
Ensemble 360

Saturday 25 May, 10:30

Crucible Playhouse

Close-up: Music for Curious Young Minds

Roderick Williams baritone

Ensemble 360

Saturday 25 May, 19:15

Crucible Playhouse

Finale

Onslow Nonet

Fauré Elégie

Tchaikovsky Souvenir de Florence

Steven Isserlis cello

Ensemble 360

Music in the Round

Music in the Round is the leading national producer of chamber music, with a year-round programme of hundreds of events for people of all ages.

For nearly 40 years, Music in the Round has been bringing people and music closer together through its friendly and informative style of 'in the round' performances. It presents concerts and the Sheffield Chamber Music Festival each year at its home venue, the Crucible Playhouse, as well as activity across the city and in partnership with venues around the country.

Music in the Round events are characterised by passion, excellence and proximity. These events connect people to music in intimate venues, where amazing artists play spine-tingling music with their heart and soul, often accompanied by lively spoken introductions.

Music in the Round's resident group, Ensemble 360, comprises 11 of the finest chamber musicians in the country, and is at the heart of the organisation's activity. World-class guest musicians and outstanding young artists also perform in concerts, alongside free or low-cost participatory events led by high-quality workshop leaders and educators. Each year Music in the Round reaches around 25,000 people, from Goole to Portsmouth via Barnsley and Milton Keynes.

Tickets for Sheffield Chamber Music Festival are now on sale at:

musicintheround.co.uk/whats-on and also via Sheffield Theatre's box office on 0114 249 6000. 2 x £5 tickets to first time attenders, and all concerts are £5 for Under 35s too.

www.musicintheround.co.uk

Ensemble 360



Praised by The Guardian as 'one of the most adaptable chamber groups in the country' Ensemble 360 are renowned for virtuoso performances, bold programming and engaging interpretations of music ranging from baroque duos, through classical quartets to new commissions for all eleven players.

Formed in 2005 by Music in the Round to take up residency at its home venue, Sheffield's Crucible Playhouse, Ensemble 360 quickly gained an enviable national reputation. The group takes its name from the intimacy and immediacy of the Crucible's in-the-round space, which influenced their performance and ethos to give audiences a '360 degree experience' that goes beyond the tradition of classical concerts. Their spontaneous and energetic performances, lively spoken word introductions and talks, adaptability and engagement thrill audiences in venues ranging from prestigious concert halls to major festivals to more intimate spaces.

An impressive collection of recordings, commissions and new collaborations reflects the group's versatility, and has received widespread critical acclaim.

In addition to their work with Ensemble 360, the eleven members all have highly successful international careers as orchestral, chamber and solo musicians.

www.ensemble360.co.uk

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