

# Meet the Composers!



## **Felix Mendelssohn** | *Scottish Symphony*

**Born in 1809 (Germany) | Died in 1847 (Germany)**

Mendelssohn, often considered the greatest child prodigy after Mozart, began studying piano with his mother at age six and made his Berlin debut at age nine. He soon moved on to study composition, and he began writing music nonstop when he was ten years old. When he was 20, he started traveling. He made trips to Italy, England, Wales and Scotland. Throughout his ten tours in England, he gradually gained popularity as a composer, performer, and conductor, and his time in Britain inspired him to write two of his most famous pieces: *Hebrides Overture* and the *Scottish Symphony*. He eventually became the most popular 19th century composer in England.



## **Cécile Chaminade** | *Concertino for Flute and Orchestra*

**Born in 1857 (France) | Died in 1944 (Monaco)**

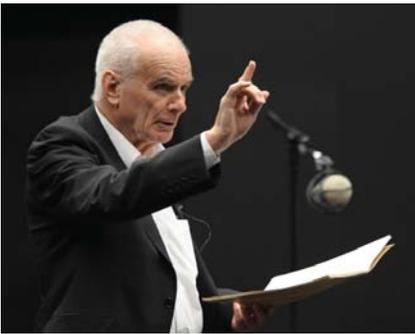
A child prodigy, Chaminade first studied with her mother, a pianist and singer. Although her father forbade her from enrolling in a conservatory, she started studying composition privately when she was eight years old. She gave her first piano recital at age 18, and her London debut followed in 1892. She returned to London yearly to give performances of her new piano works. Her piano music and songs gained widespread popularity through France and England, however her more serious works (operas, ballets, and orchestral works) were less successful among critics, most likely due to gender stereotypes rather than the quality of her work.



## **Samuel Coleridge-Taylor** | *African Suite Op. 35*

**Born in 1875 (England) | Died in 1912 (England)**

Coleridge-Taylor was born in England to a native of Sierra Leone and an Englishwoman. Showing talent at a young age, his grandfather payed to have him take violin lessons starting at age 5. He went on to study at the Royal College of Music, and during that time transitioned from studying violin to composition. By the time he was 21, he had earned a strong reputation as a composer. He wrote concert works in addition to works for theater and opera, and he made an effort to integrate his African ancestry into the classical music tradition by reviving African folk music. His works were quickly recognized by the British musical elite. He made three tours to the United States, where he became known as the “African Mahler.”



## **Peter Maxwell Davies** | *An Orkney Wedding*

**Born in 1934 (United Kingdom) | Died in 2016 (United Kingdom)**

Davies showed musical talent from an early age, taking piano lessons and composing at just eight years old. After he finished his education, he moved back to the U.K. to the remote island of Hoy in the Orkney islands off the coast of Scotland, where he composed most of his music. He wrote everything from symphonies and chamber works to solo works and music theater pieces. One of his most well-known pieces is “An Orkney Wedding,” which was inspired by a wedding he attended while he lived on the island. Davies is also known for being the Master of Queen’s Music from 2004-2014, in which he composed music for royal occasions.



## **Ronan Hardiman** | *The Lord of the Dance*

**Born in 1961 (Ireland)**

Born and raised in Ireland, Hardiman received formal training at the Royal Irish Academy of Music in Dublin, where he also developed interest in rock and pop music. While he was working for the Bank of Ireland, he also played keyboard in numerous local bands. He left the Bank in 1996 to pursue his dream of being an award-winning composer. Known best for his soundtracks, he was sought after by the Irish Film and Television industry, and was commissioned to write the soundtrack for “Lord of the Dance” by Michael Flatley, which was successful on an international level, with over 60 million people seeing it in 60 countries.