THE MOZARTISTS

WIGMORE HALL

Thursday 18 January 2024, 7.30pm

'1774 – A Retrospective'

A. Zimmermann (1741-81)	Symphony in E minor (e2)*
C. W. Gluck (1714-87)	"Par un père cruel" & "Jupiter, lance la foudre" from *Iphigénie en Aulide*
P. Anfossi (1727-97)	"Care pupille belle" from *La finta giardiniera**
A. Salieri (1750-1825)	"Sperar il caro porto" from *La calamita de' cuori**
W. A. Mozart (1756-91)	"Ergo interest… Quaere superna" K.143
J. Mysliveček (1737-81)	"Pace e calma in questo sdegno" from *Artaserse**
	Interval (20 minutes)
W. A. Mozart	Symphony No. 29 in A major, K.201
C. W. Gluck	Scene from Act Three of *Orphée et Eurydice*

*UK première

Sarah Dufresne (soprano)

Chiara Skerath (soprano)

Alessandro Fisher (tenor)

The Mozartists (leader, **Matthew Truscott**)

Ian Page (conductor)

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If you would like more information about becoming involved with The Mozartists, please contact Debbie Coates
(debbie@mozartists.com / 020 8846 9744)

Welcome

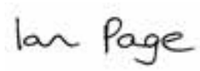
I have great pleasure in welcoming you to the start of the tenth year of MOZART 250. Over the past nine years, our chronological survey of Mozart's life and music has seen him develop from a precocious prodigy to a fully-fledged master worthy of comparison with the greatest composers of the day. On 2 May we will be exploring in more depth Mozart's own output from 1774 with another concert here at Wigmore Hall, but as with previous years in the series, we begin our New Year with a carefully curated programme that places Mozart in the context of his own time.

Mozart himself spent all but the last three-and-a-half weeks of 1774 in Salzburg, his longest spell in his hometown since he was a five-year-old, and on 27 January he celebrated his eighteenth birthday. If this did not quite have the same coming-of-age significance that it has nowadays – and after all, he had already achieved more in his childhood than most people do in a lifetime – then the A major symphony that he completed on 6 April, and which we are performing in the second half of this evening's concert, stands as a hallmark of the levels of artistry of which he was now capable.

Elsewhere in 1774, Gluck turned sixty and embarked in his important series of French operas written for Paris, and we perform extracts from the first two of these this evening. As with our most recent concert last November, we also include several works that have – to the best of our knowledge – never previously been performed in the UK. These include music by two composers not previously featured in MOZART 250, Pasquale Anfossi and Anton Zimmermann, rendering this concert a genuine A-Z.

Our aim in introducing audiences to such repertoire is not for any novelty value, nor exclusively for any specific light it casts on Mozart's development. I hope that by now we have well and truly dispelled the myth that neglected music is generally neglected with good reason, and that a work such as the Zimmermann symphony with which this concert begins can open our eyes, ears and minds to music that we can explore, admire and enjoy on its own terms.

Many thanks for joining us for this concert, and all best wishes for a very happy 2024,



Ian Page
Conductor & Artistic Director of The Mozartists

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THE MOZARTISTS

Mozart 250

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Thank you

Zimmermann Symphony in E minor (e2)

1. Allegro 2. Andantino 3. Menuet e Trio 4. Finale: Allegro

Anton Zimmermann was born in the small village of Breitenau (Široká Niva) in Silesia in December 1741 (still with a population of less than 600, it lies in what is now the eastern part of the Czech Republic). Virtually nothing is known about his childhood and early career, and although speculation that he might have been the same Zimmermann who served as church organist in Königgrätz (Hradec Králové) in the 1760s remains unproven, he seems to have spent the first half of his short career in Bohemia or Moravia. By the early 1770s he had settled in Pressburg (modern-day Bratislava), which was then the capital of Hungary and rapidly developing into a significant economic and cultural metropolis. Zimmermann himself made an important contribution to the city's growing status, and in 1776 he was to become Kapellmeister of the newly-formed court orchestra there. His music – some 250 works, incorporating symphonies, concertos, chamber music, theatre works and numerous masses and cantatas – was disseminated and performed throughout Europe, but he died in October 1781, aged thirty-nine, and his extensive output is now largely forgotten.

Unlike operas, where the date and venue of their premières have generally survived as a matter of public record, the dating and sometimes even the authorship of eighteenth-century instrumental works is often hard to ascertain. Forty-one symphonies by Anton Zimmermann have survived, although ongoing research might cause this number to shift a little in either direction, and the fact that two of them were erroneously attributed during his lifetime to Haydn serves as a mark of their quality. The annual catalogues of the renowned Leipzig publishers Breitkopf include ten Zimmermann symphonies that predated his appointment to the Pressburg court orchestra – three published in 1772, three in 1774 and four in 1775. The E minor symphony was published in 1774, and the numerous similarities it shares with Haydn's 'Trauer' Symphony (No. 44, also in the key of E minor), which is thought to date from 1771, suggest that Zimmermann used Haydn's masterpiece as a direct model.

The work is scored for the same standard orchestra as Haydn's (strings, two oboes and two horns, with a bassoon doubling the bass-line), and it begins similarly with a starkly ominous unison figure counterbalanced by a soft, yearning riposte. The movement exhibits many of the archetypal characteristics of the so-called 'Sturm und Drang' movement, with its strong rhythmic and harmonic drive and latent emotionalism, and febrile syncopations and tremolandos ensure that the forward momentum is unrelenting. As with Haydn's 'Trauer' Symphony, respite is achieved with a shift into the major for the ensuing slow movement, Zimmermann's wispish and gently lilting andante scored for strings alone. Perhaps the most direct link with Haydn, though, follows with the canonic unison of the minuet, whose severity is offset (as in the Haydn) by a contrasting trio section in which burnished horns again lead us briefly into the sunnier realms of the major. The ominous hue of E minor is restored with the return to the minuet, and then sustained in the finale. Less visceral and tempestuous than the finale of the 'Trauer', Zimmermann finally steps out of Haydn's shadow and finds an independent voice which culminates – after another momentary threat to shift into the more positive major key – with an ending which is as original and unnerving as it is surprising.

Gluck Two airs from *Iphigénie en Aulide*

Chiara Skerath (Clytemnestre)

Christoph Willibald Gluck was one of the primary figures in the reform movement of opera in the third quarter of the eighteenth century. His work was based on "the immutable foundations of beauty and truth" (his own phrase), and his reforms sought to achieve dramatic and emotional verisimilitude through making the music serve the text. This represented a conscious attempt to replace the florid vocal excesses of the late baroque with a return to the naturalistic and poetic origins of opera; "I sought to restrict music", he wrote, "to its true purpose of expressing the poetry, and reinforcing the dramatic situation without interrupting the action or hampering it with superfluous embellishments."

Following a long and varied apprenticeship, which incorporated operas written for Milan, Venice, London, Copenhagen, Prague and Naples, Gluck settled in Vienna in around 1753. His three great 'reform' operas – *Orfeo ed Euridice* (1762), *Alceste* (1767) and *Paride ed Elena* (1770) – were written in collaboration with the librettist Ranieri de' Calzabigi, and finally established his international reputation as one of the leading opera composers of the day. In 1768 he bought a luxurious house on the outskirts of Vienna, but his productivity was starting to wane and he needed new challenges.

By the early 1770s he seems to have decided that his future lay in Paris, and he hoped to secure the patronage of his former student in Vienna, the Austrian Princess Marie Antoinette, who in 1770 had married the Dauphin (the future King Louis XVI). In 1771-72 the French diplomat and playwright François du Roullet rewrote Racine's great tragedy *Iphigénie en Aulide* as an opera libretto, and he showed it to Gluck in the hope that it might be of interest. Gluck had already written a ballet (now lost) of *Iphigénie* in 1765, and he immediately started work on Du Roullet's text in the hope of arousing interest in Paris. According to the chronicler and music historian Charles Burney, the opera was virtually completed by the summer of 1772, with the minor drawback that none of it had yet been committed to paper. Gluck's gamble paid off, though, due in no small part to his own tenacity and political acumen. In 1773 he received a contract to write six operas for the French capital, and *Iphigénie en Aulide* finally received its première on 19 April 1774.

Like his previous opera, *Paride ed Elena*, the subject matter is related to the Trojan Wars. The Greek army, on its way to attack Troy, has been held up by inclement weather on the island of Aulis. The Gods will only subdue the storms if King Agamemnon sacrifices his own daughter, Iphigenia. Clytemnestra, Agamemnon's wife, is horrified to learn of her husband's ghastly intentions, and in a plaintive aria accompanied by a soulful oboe solo she begs Achilles, Iphigenia's fiancé, for help.

CLYTEMNESTRE:
Par un père cruel à la mort condamnée,
Et par les Dieux abandonnée;
Elle n'a que vous seul; vous êtes dans ces lieux
Son père, son époux, son asile et ses Dieux!

Vous remplirez mon espérance,
Vous défendrez des jours si précieux;
Le courroux éclatant, qui paraît dans vos yeux,
M'en donne l'assurance. Elle n'a que vous seul.

CLYTEMNESTRA:
Condemned to death by a cruel father,
and abandoned by the Gods,
she has no one but you. In this place you are
her father, her husband, her refuge and her God.

You will fulfil my hope,
you will protect so precious a life;
the fulminating anger which appears in your eyes
gives me assurance of this. She has no one but you.

Par un père cruel à la mort condamnée,
Et par les Dieux abandonnée;
Elle n'a que vous seul; Sans vous, sans vos secours,
Nous la perdons tous deux, c'en est fait de ses jours!

Condemned to death by a cruel father,
and abandoned by the Gods,
she has no one but you; without you, without your help,
we shall both lose her, her days will be over.

By the third and final act of the opera, Iphigenia is aware and accepting of her fate, and she bids farewell to her mother before being led off to her death. Now Clytemnestra's reaction is one of rage, and in an extraordinary accompanied recitative she has a terrifying vision of her daughter's execution, before turning her fury on Jupiter himself in the highly-charged aria that follows. Gluck's musical evocation of the scene is unerring in its intensity and power, and it is this impassioned and fearless attack as much as Iphigenia's stoical acceptance of her fate that ultimately prompts the gods to relent.

CLYTEMNESTRE:
Dieux puissants
que j'atteste...Non, je ne le souffrirai pas...
Vous osez arrêter mes pas!
Perfides, privez-moi du jour que je déteste,
Dans ce sein maternel enfoncez le couteau;
Et qu'au pied de l'autel funeste
Je trouve du moins mon tombeau.
Ah! je succombe à ma douleur mortelle…
Ma fille… Je la vois, sous le fer inhumain…
Que son barbare père aiguisa de sa main;
Un prêtre, environné d'une foule cruelle,
Ose porter sur elle une main criminelle ;
Il déchire son sein… et d'un oeil curieux,
Dans son coeur palpitant… il consulte les Dieux.
Arrêtez, monstres sanguinaires!
Tremblez: c'est le pur sang du Souverain des cieux
dont vous osez rougir la terre!

Jupiter, lance la foudre,
Que sous tes coups écrasés
Les Grecs soient réduits en poudre,
Dans leurs vaisseaux embrasés!

Et toi, Soleil, et toi qui, dans cette contrée,
Reconnais l'héritier et le vrai fils d'Atrée,
Toi, qui n'osas du père éclairer le festin,
Recule, ils t'ont appris ce funeste chemin.

CLYTEMNESTRA:
Mighty Gods, I bear witness…
No, I will not suffer it…
You dare to halt my steps?
Wretches, take from me a life I abhor,
drive a knife into this motherly breast,
and at the foot of that dread altar
at least let me find my grave.
Ah, I succumb to the pain of mortals…
My daughter… I see her under the heartless sword
sharpened by the hand of her barbarous father…
A priest, surrounded by a cruel crowd,
dares to lay on her a murderous hand…
He rips open her breast, and with curious eyes
seeks advice from the Gods in her quivering heart…
Stop, bloodthirsty monsters! Tremble!
This is the pure blood of the Lord of the Heavens
with which you dare to redden the earth.

Jupiter, hurl your thunderbolts,
so that beneath your crushing blows
the Greeks may be reduced to dust,
trapped in their ships!

And you, O Sun, who in this region
recognises the son and true heir of Atreus,
you who did not dare illuminate his father's festivities,
withdraw – it was they who taught you this fatal path.

Anfossi "Care pupille belle" from *La finta giardiniera*

Alessandro Fisher (Belfiore)

Pasquale Anfossi was born in Taggia, sixty-eight miles south-west of Genoa on the north-west Italian coast, on 5 April 1727. He studied violin at the celebrated Conservatorio di Santa Maria di Loreto in Naples from 1744 until c.1752, and subsequently played in the orchestra of a small Neapolitan orchestra, but it was not until the early 1760s that he developed an interest in composition. Even then he proved a slow starter, and it was not until the success of *L'incognita perseguitata* in Rome in 1773 that he achieved significant recognition. This proved a major turning-point in his career, and he went on to compose more than fifty further operas before his death in 1797.

La finta giardiniera was premièred at the Teatro delle Dame in Rome in January 1774, and is significant mostly because Mozart began setting the same libretto just a few months later in response to a commission from Munich. It is unlikely that Mozart was familiar with Anfossi's score, but the opera was clearly a success, for it was soon translated into several other languages and performed in such cities as Dresden, London and Lisbon. The comic and romantic entanglements of its ludicrously far-fetched plot were clearly a major reason for its popularity, but Anfossi's music too has an elegant charm typical of the generic style of the day.

BELFIORE:
Care pupille belle,
Volgete un sguardo a me.
Ah, se voi siete quelle
Che delirar mi fate…
(*Sandrina mostra sdegnarsi e lo sollecita a partire.*)
Parto, non vi sdegnate,
che barbaro rigor.
(*Il Podestà sta in osservazione e avvicinandosi Sandrina lo vede e si scosta ed in luogo di Sandrina entra il Podestà e mentre il Contino timoroso vuol prendere la mano di Sandrina, prende quella del Podestà.*)
Ma nel partire, carina,
vorrei, se m'è permesso,
Baciar quella manina
Per segno del mio amor.
Oh, che manina tenera,
io me ne vado in cenere,
dolcissima mia Venere.
(*al Podestà*)
Padrone stimatissimo,
gli son buon servitor.
(Destin maledettissimo,
Mancava questo ancor.)

BELFIORE:
Dear beautiful eyes,
turn your glance to me.
Ah, if you are those ones
that make me delirious…
(Sandrina shows signs of anger and urges him to leave.)
I'm going; don't be angry with me.
What cruel severity!
(The mayor, who has been observing the scene, draws closer. Sandrina sees him and steps aside as the mayor takes her place, and when the Count timorously goes to take Sandrina's hand he instead takes that of the mayor.)
But in leaving you, my dear,
I would like, if I am allowed,
to kiss that little hand
as a token of my love.
Oh, tender little hand,
I am turned all to ashes,
my sweetest Venus.
(To the mayor, realising his error)
Most esteemed Lord,
I am your humble servant.
(Accursed destiny,
this is all I needed!)

Salieri "Sperar il caro porto" from *La calamita de' cuori*

Alessandro Fisher (Armidoro)

Antonio Salieri, nowadays remembered more for his supposed rivalry with Mozart than for any of his forty operas, was born in Legnago, northern Italy, on 18 August 1750, and died in Vienna on 7 May 1825. He was orphaned in 1765 and taken to Venice, and the following year his musical talent and ambition caught the attention of the Vienna-based Bohemian composer Florian Gassmann, who was in Venice to oversee the première of his opera *Achille in Sciro*. Gassmann brought the fifteen-year-old Salieri back to Vienna with him and took him on as his student and assistant. Salieri soon established what was to prove a lasting friendship with Vienna's leading opera composer, Christoph Willibald Gluck, and opportunities for career advancement gradually presented themselves. By 1769 he was directing opera rehearsals at the court theatres, and the following year – while Gassmann was in Italy composing and directing an opera in honour of Joseph II's visit to Rome – he set a libretto originally intended for Gassmann, the comedy *Le donne letterate*.

In 1771 his first serious opera, *Armida*, pursued the ideals of Gluck's reform operas with its grand choral writing and spectacular scenic effects, and this work firmly established his reputation as of one of Vienna's most promising young opera composers. When Gassmann died on 21 January 1774, Salieri was chosen to succeed him as chief composer and music director of the court opera, and his first work in his new role was a comedy, *La calamita de' cuori*, which was based on a text by Goldoni that had originally been set by Galuppi in 1753.

The dress rehearsal of *La calamita de' cuori* was held on 10 October, the same day as Salieri's wedding, and it received its première the following day. Surviving box-office records reveal that it attracted considerable interest, with a total of 855 individual seats and 47 boxes being sold for the first night, but a local chronicle reported that the audience was somewhat divided in its opinion: "Of the music some connoisseurs and music lovers wish to assert that it is artful, beautiful, harmonious, and does great honour to Herr Salieri. The plot is too childish, others asserted, and the music, while beautiful, is too serious for the libretto."

The opera's title translates as 'the magnet of hearts', and refers to the main character, Bellarosa, who displays a peerless ability to charm every man with whom she comes into contact. One of these is the tenor Armidoro, a serious, aristocratic character of the sort that Haydn similarly incorporated into several of his comic operas. Salieri himself observed in his notes that the aria Sperar il caro porto, the character's opening aria "is rather serious and well-suited to the role, the character being rather serious, or at least not comic; moreover this number is dedicated to the voice, and to vocal agility, which results in a contrast of effect in the context of numbers in parlante ['spoken'] style."

ARMIDORO:
Sperar il caro porto
In mezzo alle procelle,
È l'unico conforto
Che fa men fiero il mar.

ARMIDORO:
To hope for the beloved port
in the midst of storms
is the only comfort
that makes the sea less fierce.

Mozart "Ergo interest… Quaere superna", K.143

Sarah Dufresne (soprano)

No information survives as to the origins of this short solo motet. It was thought to date from early 1773, at the end of Mozart's third and final visit to Milan (when he purportedly wrote a few motets that have subsequently been lost), and its Köchel number (originally designated in 1862) reflects this placement, but later scholars suggested that it belongs to the composer's first Italian tour in 1770. It has since been ascertained, however, that although the manuscript paper on which it was written is of Italian derivation, Mozart continued to use this paper for some time after his return to Salzburg, and an analysis of his handwriting suggests a later date. Late 1773 or early 1774 therefore seems the most likely date of composition.

Whatever its provenance, it is a slight work, scored for soprano solo and strings and comprising just a short recitative and a single aria. The anonymous text returns to the theme of Mozart's first oratorio, *Die Schuldigkeit des ersten Gebots*, as the singer encourages a wavering soul to live a good life so as to be considered favourably when the Day of Judgement arrives. Mozart's simple setting reflects the text's aspirational tone – the aria's opening phrase ("Quare superna"/'Seek that which is above') reaching upwards before dropping to a lower part of the voice for "Fuge terrena" ('flee from earthly things') – and the vocal line suitably eschews vocal virtuosity in favour of a pleading tenderness and lyricism.

Ergo interest,
an quis male vivat,
an bene?
Fidelis anima,
cogita vias tuas,
facileque quis tibi sit
videbis exitum.
Est aliquid,
iram promeruisse,
an gratiam!

Quaere superna,
fuge terrena,
non cura reliqua,
nil enim sunt.

Hoc dabit gaudia,
mortis solatia
in coelis praemia,
eterna quae sunt

So does it matter
whether one lives badly
or well?
Faithful soul,
reflect on your ways,
and you will easily see
what your end will be.
It does matter
whether one has deserved anger
or favour.

Seek that which is above,
flee from earthly things;
do not worry about the rest,
for they are nothing.

This will give joy,
comfort in death
and the rewards of heaven,
which are eternal.

Mysliveček "Pace e calma in questo sdegno" from *Artaserse*

Sarah Dufresne (Mandane)

Josef Mysliveček was born near Prague on 9 March 1737, and died in Rome on 4 February 1781. He initially trained in his father's profession as a miller, and achieved the rank of master miller in 1761. Throughout his childhood, though, he had displayed a particular talent for music (and mathematics), and following the success of his early instrumental works in Prague he moved to Italy in 1763. He reportedly studied in Venice with Giovanni Battista Pescetti, and in 1765 he wrote his first opera, *Semiramide*, which was premièred in Bergamo and soon revived in Alessandria and Prague.

His first great success was *Bellerofonte*, written in 1767 for the Teatro di San Carlo in Naples, and this led to commissions from all the important operatic centres in Italy. Mozart met him for the first time in March 1770 in Bologna, where Mysliveček was rehearsing his new opera *La Nitetti*. They subsequently met in Milan in both 1771 and 1772, but their next meeting would not take place until 1777, when Mysliveček was receiving treatment for venereal disease in a hospital in Munich. Mysliveček was one of very few foreign composers to enjoy sustained success in Italy, and Mozart seems to have held him in high regard.

Following the success of *Romolo ed Ersilia*, written in Naples to honour the birthday of Queen Maria Carolina on 13 August 1773, Mysliveček was immediately contracted to write a piece for the queen's next birthday. The libretto initially selected was another of Metastasio's less familiar ones, *L'eroe cinese*, but the authorities at the Teatro di San Carlo subsequently decided that this was not sufficiently substantial for the occasion, and Mysliveček was instead required to set the same librettist's far more popular *Artaserse*, which had been set sixty-one times since its creation in 1730. The result was again a great success, with the composer straightaway being commissioned to write an opera to celebrate the name-day of the King of Naples the following year.

The role of Mandane was sung by the celebrated German soprano Antonia Bernasconi, whose many previous credits had included the title role in Gluck's *Alceste* (1767) and the role of Aspasia in Mozart's *Mitridate, re di Ponto* (1770). Her first aria in Act Two provided a suitably impressive showcase for Bernasconi's dramatic and vocal talents, and it was perhaps in recognition of this requirement that Metastasio's original text was here replaced (the new text was presumably the work of a local Neapolitan poet). Mandane is in love with Arbace, but when he is erroneously accused of murdering her father, King Xerxes of Persia, she places duty above matters of the heart and denounces him. When Arbace's sister Semira encourages her to recall her former tenderness, Mandane berates her for reawakening feelings that she has been trying so hard to suppress.

MANDANE:
Pace e calma in questo seno
Lascia pur ch'io goda almeno.
Non svegliarmi una tempesta
Sì funesta, o Dio, per me.

Troppo grande è il mio periglio;
A fuggir mi basta il core,
ma combatter con amore,
no, capace il cor non è.

MANDANE:
Let me at least enjoy peace and calm
in this heart of mine.
Do not awaken a tempest,
oh God, so wretched for me.

My danger is too great;
my heart is strong enough to run away,
but it is not capable
of fighting against love.

Interval (20 minutes)

Please check that your mobile phone is switched off, especially if you used it during the interval.

Mozart Symphony No.29 in A major, K.201

1. Allegro moderato 2. Andante 3. Menuetto 4. Allegro con spirito

In the summer of 1773, Leopold Mozart took advantage of his employer's absence from Salzburg to take his son on a two-and-a-half-month visit to Vienna. He was hoping to be able to secure a lucrative appointment for Wolfgang that might enable the whole family to move from the cultural backwater that they considered Salzburg to be, but no such appointment was forthcoming. By the time they arrived back home, however, on 26 September, Leopold was seemingly reconciled to the situation, and one of his first acts was to move the family into more spacious lodgings in Salzburg.

He and Wolfgang resumed their duties as, respectively, Vice-Kapellmeister and Konzertmeister to the Archbishop of Salzburg (Wolfgang's position, which was part-time, was not onerous, and involved playing the violin more than composing). The trip to Vienna, though, where Wolfgang would have encountered Haydn's most recent symphonies as well as his Opus 20 string quartets, seems to have had a significant influence, and the half-dozen symphonies that he wrote in Salzburg over the next eight months reveal a new richness and maturity in his writing.

In assessing Mozart's symphonic output, which spanned the quarter of a century from 1764 to 1788, we should remember that by the time he reached the age that Haydn had been when he composed the very first of his own 106 symphonies, Mozart had already written all but the last six of his own fifty-or-so symphonies. By his eighteenth birthday, on 27 January 1774, he had penned such outstanding works as the *Exsultate, jubilate* and the Symphony No. 25 in G minor, K.183, but the Symphony No. 29 in A major raised the bar still higher; it could even lay claim to being the greatest work ever composed by a teenager.

Unusually, it begins quietly, with an ineffably calm, flowing figure that sets the tone for the whole movement, although by the end it has been transformed into a fiercely competitive four-part canon. The noble, song-like eloquence of the second movement, with muted violins, anticipates the marvels of Mozart's maturity – inevitable and miraculous at one and the same time – while the third movement is a highly individual minuet, in which the unison blarings of oboes and horns comically undermine the graceful elegance of the courtly dance, like subversive children blowing a raspberry at tradition and decorum. Mozart's mischievous sense of humour is also to the fore in the vivacious finale, a scintillating allegro full of chattering trills and cascading semiquavers, which brings the symphony to a vibrant and exultant conclusion.

Gluck Scene from Act Three of *Orphée et Eurydice*

Alessandro Fisher (Orphée), Chiara Skerath (Eurydice), Sarah Dufresne (L'Amour)

Having secured a contract to write a whole series of operas for Paris, Gluck was under considerable pressure to deliver. *Iphigénie en Aulide* had generally been considered to be a success, but it was forced to close after three weeks due to the death of King Louis XV, and Parisian audiences remained ambivalent about Gluck's suitability for assuming such a major role in the city's musical life. To cement his reputation, he turned back to his greatest success, *Orfeo ed Euridice*, and the young French poet Pierre-Louis Moline was entrusted with the task of writing a new version of the text. The original Italian version of the opera had been premièred in Vienna in 1762 with a castrato, Gaetano Guadagni, in the title role, and in 1769 in Parma Gluck had made a second version for a slightly higher-lying castrato, Giuseppe Millico. Castrati, however, had never been popular in Paris, and *Orfeo's* brevity and sparse beauty was contrary to the French taste for epic drama.

Gluck's new 1774 version, therefore, recast the central role as a tenor, and not only modified but significantly expanded both the length and the scale of the original score. Additions such as the bravura aria with which Orpheus closes Act One may have compromised the bold reform ideals that had fuelled the original version, but the final version of *Orphée et Eurydice* proved to be a triumph when it was premièred at the Académie Royale de Musique on 2 August 1774. It even prompted the prominent writer, philosopher and sometime composer Jean-Jacques Rousseau to comment: "Seeing that it is possible to discover so much pleasure in the space of two hours, I concede that life is still worth living."

The taut dramaturgy of Gluck's original version is least compromised in the third and final act of the French version, where the music for the whole of the first scene is essentially the same as in the original, but even then the differences between the two versions are more interesting and instructive than the similarities. We cannot be sure which of the numerous small alterations in the French version represent deliberate changes by Gluck and which are merely clarification of what he had already intended in the original. One intriguing change that was clearly deliberate, though, was the addition of Orpheus singing an anguished aside in the middle section of Eurydice's 'aria'; not only does this beautifully enrich the music's harmonic texture but it enhances the dramatic verisimilitude by removing the need for Orpheus to observe a respectful silence for the full duration of the aria. Indeed, this addition serves to reinforce the aims of Gluck's 'reform' operas in further blurring the distinction between set-piece 'numbers'.

Following the death of his wife Eurydice (which in Gluck's setting has taken place before the opera begins), the celebrated poet and musician Orpheus has travelled to the Underworld in an attempt to retrieve her. Having placated the Furies through the beauty of his singing (and Gluck's version is as much about the power of poetry and music as it is about bereavement and the power of love), Orpheus has been reunited with his beloved. He is only allowed to bring her back to the land of the living, however, if he avoids looking at her for the duration of their journey. As he leads her away, she becomes increasingly distraught at his failure to look her in the eye, and accuses him of not loving her any more. Tormented by her reproaches and her anguish, he finally turns to reassure her, and in doing so he instantly condemns her to a second death.

As she falls lifeless to the ground, Orpheus laments his tragic plight and prepares to kill himself, but when he lifts his sword Cupid appears, and brings about the statutory happy ending by again restoring Eurydice to life. For Cupid's final intervention, which in the original version was a brief recitative, Gluck added at the denouement a trio that he lifted from his *Paride ed Elena* – another work that had not previously been heard in Paris – and he then extended it with a brief new section in E major that brings the scene to a suitably joyful and grateful conclusion.

Récitatif
EURYDICE:
Mais d'où vient qu'il persiste à garder le silence?
Quels secrets veut-il me cacher?
Au séjour du repos devait-il m'arracher
Pour m'accabler de son indifférence!
Ô destin rigoureux!
Ma force m'abandonne,
Le voile de la mort retombe sur mes yeux,
Je frémis, je languis, je frissonne,
Je tremble, je pâlis, mon cœur palpite,
Un trouble secret m'agite,
Tous mes sens sont saisis d'horreur,
Et je succombe à ma douleur.

Air
EURYDICE:
Fortune ennemie!
Quelle barbarie!
Ne me rends-tu la vie
Que pour les tourments?

Duo
EURYDICE:
Je goûtais les charmes
D'un repos sans alarmes;
Le trouble, les larmes
Remplissent aujourd'hui mes malheureux moments.
Je frissonne, je tremble.

ORPHÉE:
Ses injustes soupçons redoublent mes tourments,
Que dire? Que faire?
Elle me désespère!
Ne pourrais-je calmer le trouble de ses sens?
Que mon sort est à plaindre,
Je ne puis me contraindre.

Recitative
EURYDICE:
But why does he persist in remaining silent?
What secrets is he trying to hide from me?
Did he have to tear me from my place of rest
to overwhelm me with his indifference?
Oh, harsh destiny!
My strength deserts me.
The veil of death falls once again over my eyes.
I shiver, I languish, I shudder,
I tremble, I turn pale; my heart palpitates,
a secret anxiety agitates me.
All my senses are seized with horror,
and I am overcome with anguish.

Air
EURYDICE:
Hostile Fortune,
what cruelty!
Are you giving me back my life
just for these torments?

Duet
EURYDICE:
I was enjoying the charms
of an untroubled sleep,
but agitation and tears
today fill my unhappy moments.
I shudder, I tremble!

ORPHEUS:
Her unjust suspicions redouble my torments.
What can I say? What can I do?
She is driving me to despair!
Can I not calm the frenzy of her senses?
How piteous is my fate;
I cannot bear it.

Air
EURYDICE:
Fortune ennemie!
Ah, quelle barbarie!
Ne me rends-tu la vie
Que pour les tourments?

Récitatif
ORPHÉE:
Quelle épreuve cruelle!

EURYDICE:
Tu m'abandonnes, cher Orphée!
En ce moment, ton épouse désolée
Implore en vain ton secours.
Ô dieux, à vous seuls j'ai recours;
Dois-je finir mes jours
Sans un regard de ce que j'aime?

ORPHÉE:
(Je sens mon courage expirer,
Et ma raison se perd dans mon amour extrême;
J'oublie et la défense, Eurydice, et moi-même!
Ciel!)

(Il fait un mouvement pour se retourner, et tout à coupe se retient.)

EURYDICE:
Cher époux, je puis à peine respire.
(Elle tombe sur un rocher.)

ORPHÉE:
Rassure-toi, je vais tout dire.
Apprends… (Que fais-je! Justes Dieux,
Quand finirez-vous mon martyre?)

Air
EURYDICE:
Hostile Fortune,
what cruelty!
Are you giving me back my life
just for these torments?

Recitative
ORPHEUS:
What an agonising ordeal!

EURYDICE:
Are you forsaking me, dear Orpheus?
In this moment, your desolate wife
begs in vain for your help.
O gods, to you alone can I turn;
must I end my days
without a glance from the man I love?

ORPHEUS:
(I feel my courage fading, and I am
losing my mind in the extremities of my love;
I forget the decree, Eurydice, and myself!
Heavens!)

(He starts to turn round but suddenly stops himself.)

EURYDICE:
Dear husband, I can hardly breathe.
(She falls onto a rock.)

ORPHEUS:
Console yourself; I'm going to tell you everything:
Listen… (What am I doing? Merciful gods,
when will you end my agony?)

EURYDICE *(d'une voix entrecoupée)*:
Reçois donc mes derniers adieux…
Et souviens-toi d'Eurydice…

ORPHÉE *(avec transport)*:
Où suis-je! je ne puis résister à ses pleurs.
Non, le ciel ne veut pas un plus grand sacrifice!
Ô ma chére Eurydice!
(Il se retourne avec impétuosité.)

EURYDICE:
Orphée! ô ciel, je meurs!
(Elle fait un effort pour se lever, et meurt.)

ORPHÉE:
Malheureux, qu'ai-je fait! et dans quel précipice
M'a plongé mon funeste amour?
Chére épouse! Eurydice!
Elle ne m'entend plus, je la perds sans retour:
C'est moi qui lui ravis le jour!
Loi fatale!
Cruels remords!
Ma peine est sans égale!
Dans ce moment funeste,
Le désespoir, la mort
Est tout ce qui me reste!

Air
ORPHÉE:
J'ai perdu mon Eurydice,
Rien n'égale mon malheur;
Sort cruel! Quelle rigueur!
Je succombe à ma douleur!

Eurydice! Eurydice!
Réponds! quel supplice!
Réponds-moi! C'est ton époux fidèle,
Entends ma voix qui t'appelle.

EURYDICE (in a halting voice)*:*
Receive then my last farewell,
and remember your Eurydice…

ORPHEUS (beside himself):
Where am I? I cannot bear her tears.
No, heaven does not wish for such a great sacrifice!
O my beloved Eurydice!
(He turns round impetuously.)

EURYDICE:
Orpheus, oh heavens, I'm dying!
(She makes an effort to get up, then dies.)

ORPHEUS:
Wretched me, what have I done! Over what
precipice has my tragic love plunged me?
Dear wife! Eurydice!
She no longer hears me. I have lost her for ever!
It was I who took away her life!
Fatal decree!
Cruel remorse!
My pain is without equal.
In this tragic moment,
despair and death
are all that remain for me!

Air
ORPHEUS:
I have lost my Eurydice.
Nothing equals my despair.
Cruel fate, what severity!
I am overcome with grief.

Eurydice! Eurydice!
Answer! What torture!
Answer me! This is your faithful husband;
hear my voice calling you.

J'ai perdu mon Eurydice,
Rien n'égale mon malheur;
Sort cruel! Quelle rigueur!
Je succombe à ma douleur!

Mortel silence!
Vaine espérance!
Quelle souffrance!
Quel tourment déchirent mon cœur!

Récitatif
ORPHEUS:
Ah! puisse ma douleur finir avec ma vie!
Je ne survivrai point à ce dernier revers,
Je touche encore aux portes des Enfers;
J'aurai bientôt rejoint mon épouse chérie.
Oui, je te suis, tendre objet de ma foi,
Je te suis, attends-moi,
Tu ne me seras plus ravie,
Et la mort pour jamais va m'unir avec toi!
(Orphée tire son épée pour se tuer, mais l'Amour qui
paraît tout à coup retient son bras.)

SCENE 2

Récitatif
L'AMOUR:
Arrête, Orphée!

ORPHÉE:
Ô ciel, qui pourrait, en ce jour,
Retenir les transports de mon âme égarée!

L'AMOUR:
Calme ta fureur insensée,
Arrête, et reconnais l'Amour
Qui veille sur ta destinée.

I have lost my Eurydice.
Nothing equals my despair.
Cruel fate, what severity!
I am overcome with grief.

Deathly silence!
Vain hope!
What anguish!
What torment tears at my heart!

Recitative
ORPHEUS:
Ah! May my grief end with my life!
I shall not survive this final setback,
and am still by the gates of Hades;
I shall soon be reunited with my beloved wife.
Yes, I follow you, tender object of my faith,
I follow you; wait for me!
You will never again be taken away from me,
and death will unite us forever
(Orpheus draws his sword to kill himself, but Cupid suddenly appears and restrains him.)

SCENE 2

Recitative
CUPID:
Stop, Orpheus!

ORPHEUS:
O Heaven, who on this day could
restrain the frenzies of my distraught soul?

CUPID:
Calm your senseless fury.
Stop, and recognise Cupid,
who watches over your destiny.

ORPHÉE:
Qu'exigez-vous de moi?

L'AMOUR:
Tu viens de me prouver ta constance et ta foi;
Je vais soulager ton martyre.
(L'Amour touche Eurydice, et l'anime.)
Eurydice, respire!
Du plus fidéle époux viens couronner les feux.

ORPHÉE *(avec transport)*:
Mon Eurydice!

EURYDICE:
Orphée!

ORPHÉE:
Ah! justes Dieux!
Quelle est notre reconnaissance!

L'AMOUR:
Ne doutez plus de ma puissance:
Je viens vous retirer de cet affreux séjour;
Jouissez désormais des faveurs de l'Amour.

Trio
EURYDICE:
Tendre amour, que tes chaînes
Ont de charmes pour nos cœurs.

ORPHÉE:
Tendre amour, à tes peines
Que tu mêles de douceurs!

ORPHEUS:
What do you demand of me?

CUPID:
You have proved to me your constancy and faithfulness; I shall put an end to your agony.
(Cupid touches Eurydice and brings her back to life.)
Eurydice ... Breathe again! Come to crown the ardour of the most faithful of husbands.

ORPHEUS (beside himself):
My Eurydice!

EURYDICE:
Orpheus!

ORPHEUS:
Ah, merciful Gods!
How grateful we are!

CUPID:
Doubt my power no more: I have come to take you from this dreadful abode; from now on, revel in the favours of Cupid!

Trio
EURYDICE:
Tender Love, how delightful are your chains for our hearts!

ORPHEUS:
Tender Love, what sweetnesses you blend with the pains that you inflict!

L'AMOUR:
Je dédommage tous les coeurs
Par un instant de mes faveurs:
Que l'ardeur qui vous enflamme
Toujours régne dans votre âme:
Ne craignez plus mes rigueurs.

EURYDICE, ORPHÉE:
Quels transports et quel délire,
Ô tendre Amour, ta faveur nous inspire!
Célébrons pour jamais
Tes bienfaits!

L'AMOUR:
Célébrez pour jamais
Mes bienfaits.

CUPID:
With a moment of my favours I make amends to all hearts.
May the ardour that enflames you always reign in your soul; fear no more my severity.

EURYDICE, ORPHEUS:
What rapture and delirium your favour inspires in us, gentle Cupid! Let us celebrate your acts of benevolence for ever.

CUPID:
Celebrate my acts of benevolence for ever.

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Biographies

Chiara Skerath (soprano) studied at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris. She became an Associate Artist of The Mozartists in 2018, making her UK début with the company at Wigmore Hall and singing the role of Ninetta (*La finta semplice*) at Queen Elizabeth Hall. She has subsequently appeared with the company in concerts at Wigmore Hall, Cadogan Hall and La Seine Musicale in Paris and on CD in Mozart's Il sogno di Scipione and in 'Sturm und Drang, Volume 1'. Her extensive list of Mozart roles includes Erste Dame (*Die Zauberflöte*) at the Opéra de Paris and the Salzburger Festspiele, Despina (*Così fan tutte*) at Oper Frankfurt, Servilia *(La clemenza di Tito)* at the Opéra du Rhin, Cinna (*Lucio Silla*) at Theater an der Wien, Opéra de Versailles and Philharmonie de Paris, Barbarina and Susanna (*Le nozze di Figaro*) at the Opéra Royal de Wallonie, and Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*) at the Drottningholms Slottsteater in Sweden and Opéra Royal de Versailles. Other recent engagements include Eurydice (*Orphée et Eurydice*) at Zürich Opera House, Ilione (*Idomenée*) at Opéra de Lille, Ännchen (*Der Freischütz*) with the Insula Orchestra at the Théâtre des Champs Elysées, and Mélisande (*Pelléas et Mélisande*) and Micaëla (*Carmen*) at the National Opera of Bordeaux. Chiara began the 2023/24 season with her début as Donna Elvira (*Don Giovanni*) in a new production of at Opéra de Lille conducted by Emmanuelle Haïm, and her future engagements in 2024 include Almirena (*Rinaldo*) at the Théâtre des Champs Elysées and a staged version of Mozart's Mass in C minor at Opéra de Limoges.

Sarah Dufresne (soprano) was raised in Niagara Falls, and was named last year as one of Canada's 'Top 30 Classical Musicians Under 30'. She is currently in her second year of the Jette Parker Artists Programme at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and recently became an Associate Artist of The Mozartists. She made her company début last November in '1773 – An Opera Kaleidoscope', and this evening's concert marks her Wigmore Hall début. In 2019 she was awarded the top prize at the L'Opéra de Montréal talent gala and was an award winner at the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, and in 2022 she won Second Prize (Aria division) at the Concours Musical International de Montréal. She has performed with various companies and orchestras across Canada, including Opera McGill, Halifax Summer Opera, Ottawa Choral Society and Orchestre Métropolitain. Her performances at the Royal Opera House have included Lucia (*The Rape of Lucretia*), Papagena (*Die Zauberflöte*), Hirt (*Tannhäuser*), Barbarina (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Voce dal Cielo (*Don Carlo*) and Tusnelda (*Arminio*), and other recent performances have included *Carmina Burana* with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra and Nora (R*iders to the Sea*) with the Montreal Opera. Other engagements this season include Gianetta (*L'elisir d'amore*), Frasquita (*Carmen*) and The Dew Fairy (*Hänsel und Gretel*) at the Royal Opera House, and her US début with the Toledo Symphony Orchestra, singing Mozart's "Exsultate, jubilate".

Alessandro Fisher (tenor) read Modern and Medieval Languages at Cambridge, where he was a Choral Scholar at Clare College, furthering his studies at London's Guildhall School of Music & Drama. He is an Associate Artist of The Mozartists, and was a member of the BBC New Generation Artist Scheme between 2018 and 2021. He won First Prize at the 2016 Kathleen Ferrier Awards, and was awarded a Borletti-Buitoni Trust Fellowship in 2022. His roles with The Mozartists have included Christian (*Die Schuldigkeit des ersten Gebots*), Don Polidoro (*La finta semplice*) and Bastien (*Bastien und Bastienne*), and other opera engagements have included Delmiro/Alindo (Cavalli's *Hipermestra*) at the Glyndebourne Festival, Lucano/First Soldier (*L'Incoronazione di Poppea*) at the Salzburg Festival, Fenton (*Falstaff*) and Ferrando (*Così fan tutte*) for The Grange Festival, Bellecourt (Offenbach's *Vert-Vert*) for Garsington Opera, Osvaldo (Mercadante's *Il Proscritto*) for Opera Rara, and Fabio (Handel's *Berenice*) for the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. His extensive concert work has included Weill's *The Seven Deadly Sins* with the London Symphony Orchestra and Sir Simon Rattle, Britten's *Les Illuminations* with the Ulster Orchestra, Vaughan Williams' *On Wenlock Edge* with the BBC Philharmonic and the Nash Ensemble, and Mozart's Mass in C minor with the Royal Northern Sinfonia. He is in regular demand as a recitalist, appearing with such pianists as Graham Johnson, Roger Vignoles, Simon Lepper, Joseph Middleton and Sholto Kynoch, and he made his BBC Proms début singing Songs by Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha with Stephen Hough.

Ian Page (conductor) is the founder, conductor and artistic director of The Mozartists (formerly Classical Opera). He has conducted most of the Mozart operas with the company, including the world premières of the 'original' version of *Mitridate, re di Ponto* and a new completion of *Zaide*, as well as the UK premières of Gluck's *La clemenza di Tito*, Telemann's *Orpheus*, Jommelli's *Il Vologeso*, Haydn's *Applausus* and Hasse's *Piramo e Tisbe*, and the first staging for 250 years of Johann Christian Bach's *Adriano in Siria*. In 2009 he made his Royal Opera House début conducting Arne's *Artaxerxes* at the Linbury Theatre, and his studio recording of the work was released in 2011 on Linn Records. Ian has devised and conducted numerous recordings for The Mozartists, including 'The A-Z of Mozart Opera', 'Blessed Spirit – a Gluck retrospective', 'Mozart in London' and solo recital discs with Sophie Bevan and Allan Clayton. In 2012 he embarked on a complete cycle of Mozart opera recordings on Signum Classics, and the third volume in his acclaimed 'Sturm und Drang' series was released last October. He is the driving force behind MOZART 250, The Mozartists' ground-breaking 27-year journey through Mozart's life and works, which launched in January 2015, and other recent engagements include Handel's *Ariodante* with Ann Hallenberg at the Drottningholms Slottsteater in Sweden and concerts at the Mozart Maximum Festival at La Seine Musicale, Paris, the Schleswig-Holstein Festival in Germany, and his début with the Belgian National Orchestra at Bozar in Brussels.

The Mozartists

The Mozartists (formerly Classical Opera) specialise in the music of Mozart and his contemporaries, and have established themselves among the most exciting period-instrument ensembles in Europe. The organisation was founded in 1997 by conductor Ian Page, and has attracted considerable critical and public recognition for the high quality of its performances, its imaginative programming, and its ability to discover and nurture world-class young singers. In January 2015 the company embarked on MOZART 250, a 27-year chronological journey following the life, works and influences of Mozart, and this epic project will form part of the company's programme each year until 2041.

The Mozartists have mounted staged productions of Mozart's *Die Schuldigkeit des ersten Gebots*, *Apollo et Hyacinthus*, *La finta semplice*, *Bastien und Bastienne*, *Mitridate, re di Ponto*, *Il re pastore*, *Zaide*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Così fan tutte* and J. C. Bach's *Adriano in Siria*. Concert performances of operas include Gluck's *La clemenza di Tito*, Telemann's *Orpheus*, Niccolò Jommelli's *Il Vologeso* (all UK premières), Mozart's *Mitridate, re di Ponto* (world première of the 'original' version), *Ascanio in Alba*, *Lucio Silla*, *La clemenza di Tito* and *Don Giovanni*, and Thomas Arne's *Alfred*. In 2009 the company was invited to perform in The Royal Opera's new production of *Artaxerxes*.

The company has also won widespread praise for its extensive concert work, performing regularly at venues such as Wigmore Hall, Southbank Centre, Cadogan Hall, the Barbican and Birmingham Town Hall. In 2016 it gave the opening three concerts at the prestigious Haydn Festival in Eisenstadt, and other engagements have included performances in Italy, Germany, France, Greece and the Czech Republic, and at the Royal Opera's Linbury Theatre; Sadler's Wells; The Anvil, Basingstoke; Bridgewater Hall, Manchester; St George's, Bristol; the Sheffield Lyceum; the Lufthansa Baroque Festival, the Bath International Music Festival and the Brighton, Buxton, Lichfield, Newbury and Windsor Festivals.

The Mozartists have established an outstanding track record for their work in discovering and developing world-class young artists, and the numerous singers who have worked with the company at the outset of their careers include Sophie Bevan, Rebecca Bottone, Allan Clayton, Lucy Crowe, Klara Ek, Sarah Fox, Jacques Imbrailo, Anna Leese, Sally Matthews, Robert Murray, Matthew Rose and Lawrence Zazzo. In 2006 they launched their Associate Artist scheme, designed to nurture and showcase exceptional young singers in the early stages of their careers. Current and recent Associate Artists include sopranos Louise Alder, Samantha Clarke, Sarah Dufresne, Kiandra Howarth, Alexandra Lowe, Emily Pogorelc and Chiara Skerath, mezzo-sopranos Ida Ränzlöv and Rebecka Wallroth and tenors Alessandro Fisher and Stuart Jackson. The company's acclaimed period-instrument orchestra likewise incorporates some of the finest young players in their field.

In 2015 the company launched an outreach programme to tie in with MOZART 250. It is now working in partnership with the Music Services of Ealing and Harrow to inspire children with the music of Mozart through intensive, cross-curricular performance projects.

In 2012 the company embarked on a major new recording cycle of the complete Mozart operas on Signum Classics, and the first seven releases in the series have all attracted widespread critical praise. Its recordings 'The A-Z of Mozart Opera' and 'Blessed Spirit – a Gluck retrospective' were both selected for Gramophone magazine's annual Critics' Choice, and its solo recital discs with tenor Allan Clayton ('Where'er You Walk') and soprano Sophie Bevan ('Perfido!') were shortlisted for the International Opera Awards in 2017 and 2018 respectively. The Mozartists' 2-CD set 'Mozart in London', featuring a collection of live recordings made at the Barbican's Milton Court in 2015, was selected as both Editor's Choice and Recording of the Month by Gramophone magazine, and the company recently launched a new series of 'Sturm und Drang' recordings which has received international acclaim.

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THE MOZARTISTS

Suite 108, Boundary House
Boston Manor Rd, London W7 2QE
020 8846 9744
info@mozartists.com
www.mozartists.com