

WIGMORE HALL 125

Thursday 15 January 2026
7.30pm

Mozart in Mannheim

Anna Dennis soprano

Rachel Brown flute soloist

Adrian Butterfield director, violin

London Handel Players

Naomi Burrell violin I

Dominika Fehér violin I

Oliver Webber violin II

Maxim del Mar violin II

Nicola Cleary violin II

Rachel Byrt viola

Elena Accogli viola

Gavin Kibble cello

Sarah McMahon cello

Cecelia Bruggemeyer double bass

Beth Stone flute I

Mariia Filippova flute II

Robert De Bree oboe I

Joel Raymond oboe II

Katherine Spencer clarinet I

Louise Strickland clarinet II

Ursula Leveaux bassoon I

Chris Rawley bassoon II

Ursula Monberg horn I

Clare Penkey horn II

Neil Brough trumpet I

Simon Munday trumpet II

Ben Hoffnung timpani

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

I. Allegro assai from Symphony in D No. 31 K297 'Paris' (1778)

Flute Concerto No. 1 in G K313 (1778)

I. Allegro maestoso • II. Adagio non troppo •

III. Rondo. *Tempo di menuetto*

Popoli di Tessaglia K316/300b (1779)

Interval

Alcandro, lo confesso ... Non sò, d'onde viene K294 (1778)

Andante in C K315 (1780)

Vorrei spiegarvi, oh Dio K418 (1783)

From Symphony in D No. 31 K297 'Paris' (1778)

II. Andantino • III. Allegro



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Mozart in Mannheim

The years 1777 and 1778 were hugely important for the 21-year-old Mozart. Professional life in his hometown of Salzburg had become intensely frustrating and his repeated requests for leave of absence eventually led to his dismissal. His father, Leopold, sent him away to seek employment, accompanied for the first time only by his mother. In Mannheim, home of Europe's greatest orchestra, he became friends with many musicians he greatly admired but prospects were disappointing and Leopold urged him to move on to Paris.

However, the young composer had fallen in love with a highly promising soprano, the 17-year-old Aloysia Weber, to whom he gave singing lessons. Initially she sang arias he had written previously but the text of his first aria specifically for her, *Non sò d'onde viene/Quel tenero affetto* 'I know not whence comes the tender emotion,' surely displays the depth of his feelings. The aria's main *Andante* section exploited Aloysia's *cantabile* singing ability. It is followed by a virtuoso *Allegro agitato* and concludes with a return to the opening words and music that is even more expressive.

He told his father that he wanted to take Aloysia on tour to Italy but Leopold responded with incandescent rage. Eventually, Mozart reluctantly took his father's advice and left Mannheim for Paris. He wrote a new 'grand symphony', his first work in this genre for four years, which was commissioned by Joseph Le Gros, the Director of the Concert Spirituel. For the first time he had the opportunity to write a symphony for a full wind and brass section that included clarinets. He opted for a fast-slow-fast, three-movement structure expanding the scale of the outside movements and omitting the usual minuet. Mozart wrote about the première on 18 June: 'its success has been exceptional'. The slightly more muted applause for the slow movement seems to have led Le Gros to ask Mozart to write a replacement *Andante* which he agreed to do but the original version has a rather special simplicity and beauty. The D major key and the inclusion of trumpets and timpani give the outer *Allegros* an open and celebratory character. The finale's imitative second subject is developed later into a fugato which foreshadows the extraordinary finale of the 'Jupiter' Symphony.

The success of this symphony was, however, overshadowed by the shock of the severe illness and subsequent death of his mother just a fortnight after the première on 3 July. He had the supremely difficult job of informing his father of this news by letter and decided to break the news gradually, first by telling him she was severely ill shortly after she had died before following up with the truth. Perhaps the innocent tenderness of the original *Andante* unconsciously reflected his feelings towards his mother.

Despite the success of his symphony, Paris proved to be less fruitful personally and financially and Leopold encouraged him to return home where he had secured

re-employment for him. On his way back Mozart caught up with the Weber family on Christmas Day in Munich. But he was heartbroken by Aloysia's demeanour towards him as it was clear her feelings had cooled. Nevertheless, before heading back to Salzburg he completed, on 8 January 1779, an insertion aria, *Popoli di Tessaglia!*, for her to sing in a revival of Gluck's opera *Alceste*. This spectacular work requires extraordinary control both in the slower section as well as the fast with regular octave leaps high above the stave and concluding with two rising scales to one of the highest notes ever written for soprano, a G a whole tone above the top Fs that are so familiar in his famous 'Queen of the Night' aria in *Die Zauberflöte*.

Two years later Mozart encountered the Weber family again in Vienna. Aloysia had married and Wolfgang began courting one of her younger sisters, Constanze, whom he married the following year. Happily, his friendship with Aloysia recovered and he wrote further music for her including *Vorrei spiegarvi o Dio*, another insertion aria, performed on 30 June 1783.

Mozart's solo flute works also date from his sojourn in Mannheim, commissioned by a wealthy dilettante, Ferdinand Dejean. However, only three quartets and two concertos (one of which was a transcription of the oboe concerto) plus the single movement *Andante* were delivered, thus only a little under half the original fee was paid.

Unfortunately, today, scarcely a mention of Mozart's flute is made without reference to a deprecatory comment he made to his father: 'my mind gets easily dulled, as you know, when I'm supposed to write lots for an instrument I can't stand.' Yet seen in the context of his musical and emotional frustrations, alongside the hectoring, dictatorial and exasperated letters from his father, Mozart's final retort, in a long list of excuses for running behind schedule, is more understandable. Nevertheless, the G major concerto is a joyous work and the *Andante*, probably the slow movement intended for a third concerto, is delightful lyrical, proving that it is perhaps as well not to take Mozart's remarks too literally!

Dejean was an experienced surgeon, medical scholar, Freemason, and supporter of the Enlightenment and the arts. Recently a most fascinating portrait has come to light, almost certainly depicting him, seated in a Dutch interior, with medical, Masonic and geographical references. The flute he is holding, of pale boxwood with three visible keys, for E flat, G sharp and B flat with a tuning slide, pulled out, is characteristic of the new English flutes he would have encountered on his visit there later in 1778. Tantalisingly, the music in the painting is not visible, but the cover appears to bear a name 'Mo...' Could this be the now lost manuscript of Mozart's flute G major concerto?

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Popoli di Tessaglia

K316/300b (1779)

Ranieri de' Calzabigi

People of Thessaly

Alceste
Recitativo
Popoli di Tessaglia!
Ah, mai più giusto fu il vostro
pianto,
A voi non men che a questi
innocenti fanciulli
Admeto è padre.
Io perdo l'amato sposo, e voi
l'amato rè;
La nostra sola speranza,
Il nostro amor c'invola
questo fato crudel.

Non so che prima in sì grave
sciagura
A compianger m'appigli del
regno,
Di me stessa, o de' miei figli.
La pietà degli Dei sola ci
resta
A implorare, a ottener.
Verrò compagna alle vostre
preghieri,
Ai vostri sacrifici;
Avanti all'ara una misera
madre,
Due bambini infelici,
Tutto un popolo in pianto
presenterò così.
Forse con questo spettacolo
funesto,
In cui dolente gli affetti,
I voti suoi dichiara un
regno,
Placato alfin sarà del ciel lo
sdegno.

Alceste
Recitative
People of Thessaly!
Ah, never have you had
more reason to grieve;
Admetus is father to you
as much as he is
to these innocent children.
I am losing my beloved
husband,
you your beloved king;
cruel fate is robbing us of
our love, our only hope.

Faced with such dire
misfortune, I know not
whether to weep first for
our kingdom,
for myself or for my children.
All we can do is pray that
the gods
will show us mercy.
I shall accompany your
prayers,
your sacrifices;
thus shall I present to the
altar
a wretched mother,
two unhappy children and a
grief-stricken nation.
Perhaps the piteous
sight
of a kingdom in mourning
declaring its love and
prayers
will finally appease the
wrath of heaven.

Aria

Io non chiedo, eterni
Dei,
Tutto il ciel per me sereno,
Ma il duol consoli almeno
Qualche raggio di
pietà.

Non comprende i mali miei,
Né il terror, che m'empie il
petto,
Chi di moglie il vivo
affetto,
Chi di madre il cor non
ha.

Aria

Eternal gods, I ask not
that heaven
grant me an untroubled life,
but let some ray of pity
at least comfort me in my
grief.

One who does not possess
a wife's devoted love, a
mother's heart,
cannot understand my
sorrow,
or the terror that fills my
breast.

Interval

Alcandro, lo confesso
... Non sò, d'onde viene
K294 (1778)
Pietro Metastasio

Clistene
Recitativo
Alcandro, lo confesso,
Stupisco di me stesso.
Il volto, il ciglio, la voce di
costui
Nel cor mi destà un palpito
improvviso,
Che le risente in ogni fibra il
sangue.
Fra tutti i miei
pensieri
La cagion ne ricordo, e non
la trovo.
Che sarà, giusti Dei, questo
ch'io provo?

Aria
Non sò d'onde viene
Quel tenero affetto,
Quel moto que ignoto
Mi nasce nel petto,
Quel gel, che le vene
Scorrendo mi va.
Nel seno destarmi
Sì fieri contrasti
Non parmi che basti
La sola pietà.

Alcandro, I must
confess ... I know not
whence comes

Clistene
Recitative
Alcandro, I must confess
that I am surprised at myself.
This man's face, eyes and
voice
cause a sudden pounding
in my heart
which my blood carries to
every fibre.
I seek the reason with all
my mind
but find it
not.
Righteous gods, what can
this feeling be?

Aria
I know not whence comes
the tender emotion,
the unknown impulse
stirring in my breast,
the icy chill now flowing
through my veins.
I cannot believe
that pity alone is enough
to awake such opposing
sensations within my heart.

Andante in C K315 (1780)

Vorrei spiegarvi, oh Dio Oh God, I should

K418 (1783)

love to tell you

Anonymous

Clorinda

Vorrei spiegarvi, o Dio!
Qual è l'affanno mio;
Ma mi condanna il fato a piangere e tacer.
Ardere non può il mio core
Per chi vorrebbe amore,
E fa che cruda io sembri, un barbaro dover.

Clorinda

Oh God, I should love to tell you
of the pain that torments me;
but fate condemns me to weep in silence.
My heart must not burn
for the man who seeks my love,
and merciless duty makes me seem cruel.

Ah conte, partite, correte,
Fuggite lontano da me;
La vostra diletta Emilia
Emilia v'aspetta,
Languir non la fate,
E degna d'amor.
(Ah stelle spietate!
Nemiche mi siete.
Mi perdo s'ei resta.)
Partite, correte,
D'amor non parlate,
E vostro il suo cor.

Ah, my lord, go now, run,
flee far away from me;
your beloved Emilia
is waiting for you –
do not make her suffer,
she deserves your love.
(Ah, pitiless stars,
you are set against me!
I shall be lost if he does not go.)
Go now, run,
speak not of love,
for her heart is yours.

From Symphony in D No. 31 K297 'Paris' (1778)

II. Andantino

III. Allegro