



**A question for  
Celia Craig**  
Principal Oboe

**What is the challenge of performing an all-woodwinds work? What are you looking forward to the most when preparing this piece with your colleagues?**

I'm looking forward to *seeing* my wind colleagues-working with them including a better interaction than we can get in orchestras always sitting in rows with our backs to each other. It will be wonderful to see everybody at last - makes it more fun to anticipate reactions, watch people breathing, which all goes towards good ensemble and a musical conversation. Sitting opposite the first clarinet in this work allows a great interaction, and the two parts answer each other and duet a lot.

The challenge here is also doing it without a conductor. The idea that one person should be charged with the overall architecture as is the conductor's job—for a monumental work of nearly an hour—is common. Doing it on your own (although equally often performed like this) is a great challenge and opportunity.

## Adelaide Symphony Orchestra Musicians

### OBOES

Celia Craig\*\*  
Renae Stavely

### CLARINETS

Dean Newcomb\*\*  
Darren Skelton  
Mitchell Berick  
(Basset horn)  
Damien Hurn  
(Basset horn)

### BASSOONS

Mark Gaydon\*\*  
Leah Stephenson

### CONTRA BASSOON

Jackie Newcomb\*

### HORNS

Sarah Barrett\*\*  
(Acting Principal)  
Emma Gregan  
Philip Paine  
Alex Miller

\*\* denotes Section  
Principal

~ denotes Associate  
Principal

\* denotes Principal Player



**Graham Abbott**  
Presenter

Graham Abbott has been Conductor-in-Residence at the Elder Conservatorium of Music Adelaide, Musical Director of Adelaide Philharmonia Chorus, Associate Conductor of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Musical Director of Melbourne Chorale, and in 1997 was Guest Chorus Master of the Chorus of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra.

He is a frequent guest conductor with all of the major Australian orchestras and opera companies, leading choral societies and numerous new and early music ensembles. Graham is also a respected speaker and broadcaster and has been producer and presenter of Keys To Music on ABC Classic FM since 2003.

International highlights have included presenting and conducting Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra's Unwrap the Music series, Dvořák's Stabat Mater with the Prague Chamber Orchestra, concerts with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra in Glasgow and Edinburgh, and with the Ulster Orchestra in Northern Ireland.

2016-2017 has seen the return of Graham to the Canberra and Tasmanian Symphony Orchestras, Adelaide Philharmonia Chorus, Sydney Philharmonia Choirs and New Zealand Symphony Orchestra.

Photo credit: ABC Classic FM



# Mozart at Elder

Wed 16 Aug 2017

Mozart Serenade in B flat, K.361, 'Gran Partita'



## Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

### Serenade in B flat, K.361, 'Gran Partita'

Largo – Allegro molto  
Menuetto – Trio I, Trio II  
Adagio

Menuetto – Trio I, Trio II  
Romanze (Adagio – Allegretto)  
Tema con variazioni (Andantino)  
Finale (Molto allegro)

Mozart wrote more than 30 serenades, cassations and divertimentos: light-hearted music for instrumental combinations that could range from wind sextet to full orchestra. Only three of these were composed after Mozart moved to Vienna from Salzburg. This was largely practical: the balmy Salzburg summers encouraged outdoor diversions; Vienna offered far fewer opportunities for serenade music. It's been suggested, too, that Mozart associated the serenade with Salzburg and the frustrations he'd endured there – once he'd left he wanted nothing more to do with the genre. But there was one kind of serenade that Mozart couldn't resist. That was *Harmoniemusik* – music for wind band – and all three of Mozart's Vienna serenades were composed for combinations of winds.

The wind band didn't come into its own in Vienna until 1782, when the Emperor Joseph II formed the Imperial Royal Harmonie. This ensemble set the standard formation: a wind octet with pairs of oboes, clarinets, horns and bassoons. And the Emperor persuaded the best musicians of the day to play in it by offering them complementary jobs in the Burgtheater.

Mozart saw an opportunity and immediately reworked a wind sextet from

the year before. But this was not the type of music that the aristocracy had in mind. A Harmonie would play at dinner, or in the gardens, and for social events. And what was wanted was popular music: hits of the day – which meant opera. Mozart embarked on an arrangement of his own *Abduction from the Seraglio*. But Johann Wendt – second oboist in the Emperor's Harmonie – beat him to it.

In the end, none of Mozart's music for Harmonie octet made it into the Emperor's library, but the appeal of wind ensemble music clearly extended beyond mere professional opportunity. The attraction of the colouristic possibilities can also be heard in his orchestral writing, especially in the piano concertos, where frequently the winds are in intimate dialogue with the soloist, creating moments of genius.

But the masterpiece of Mozart's output for winds is this work. Some anonymous hand dubbed it the 'Gran Partita', and the nickname has stuck. It is grand in scale, with sophisticated and symphonic gestures; and it requires larger forces than any of his other music for winds alone – pairs of oboes, clarinets, basset-horns, and bassoons; four French horns; and a contra bassoon.

Which poses the question: how did Mozart come to compose such a piece for such a combination of instruments?

We do know that the first recorded performance of the piece – or at least four movements from it – took place at the 1784 benefit concert for the Emperor's first clarinetist and Mozart's good friend, Anton Stadler. This was in March, during Lent, when the court

musicians were given their holidays. As a result Stadler was free to put on a private concert, and the best musicians in town were free to join him for the performance. If K361 was in fact commissioned for Stadler's benefit, it's easy to imagine Mozart's delight at the chance to compose a serious work for Vienna's wind virtuosos.

This would explain the departure from the standard Harmonie octet formation, since Stadler's concert would have given Mozart the opportunity to add an extra pair of French horns and the plaintive sound of basset horns.

This would also explain something of the music's character, which far exceeds what would have been required of a typical serenade: background music, light and diverting, with nothing to draw particular attention to itself or to tax the ear. Unlike some of Mozart's serenades, the Gran Partita would make very poor background music.

This is clear from the outset. The music begins with a formal, slow introduction – common for a symphony, but unexpected in a serenade. This then leads into the 'Allegro molto', the mournful sighs of oboes and clarinets giving way to sprightly music that quotes an aria from Philidor's *Le Maréchal ferrant*, which Mozart may have heard in Paris.

The minuets, however, are true to serenade practice. There are two of these and their lively contribution to the music is further extended by each having two trios.

The brooding, sighing 'Adagio' is the emotional heart of the serenade. As Peter Shaffer's fictional Salieri enviously describes its mastery (*Amadeus*: Act I):

*It started simply enough: just a pulse in the lowest registers – bassoons and basset horns – like a rusty squeezebox. It would have been comic except for the slowness, which gave it instead a sort of serenity. And then suddenly, high above*

*it, sounded a single note on the oboe.*

*It hung there unwavering – piercing me through – till breath could hold it no longer, and a clarinet withdrew it out of me, and sweetened it into a phrase of such delight it had me trembling....*

The fifth movement is headed 'Romanze', a rare designation for Mozart. Just as the romanze in one of his horn concertos was a tribute to the lyrical style of his friend Leutgeb, this romanze may well have been a tribute to Stadler and his colleagues.

The 'Theme and Variations' movement is lifted almost note for note from one of Mozart's flute quartets. It takes on a fresh character as Mozart plays with different instrumental colours in each variation. The different instruments also have their featured moments in the celebratory rondo 'Finale'.

Anton Stadler's benefit concert on 23 March 1784 was announced as including 'a large piece for wind band of a quite special character, being a composition by Herr Mozart'. Posterity agrees that nearly everything by Herr Mozart from these golden years in Vienna is 'quite special', and yet the Gran Partita stands unequalled. In this work Mozart takes an ensemble formed for purely diversionary functions, expands it and gives it music worthy of weightier genres. But he retains an allegiance to the serenade tradition by never failing to entertain.

Adapted from a note by Yvonne Frindle  
Sydney Symphony ©2006

*The Adelaide Symphony Orchestra first performed Mozart's Gran Partita on 16 July 2008 under the direction of David Sharp, and most recently in May 2010 with Dmitry Sitkovetsky.*

This concert will be recorded for delayed broadcast on Sun 20 Aug at 1:30pm on ABC Classic FM.