EARS WIDE OPEN 3: INTRODUCING MOZART’S GRAN PARTITA
TUESDAY 9 SEPTEMBER AT 6:30PM

DIEGO MATHEUZ CONDUCTS BEETHOVEN AND TCHAIKOVSKY
MASTER SERIES FRIDAY FRIDAY 12 SEPTEMBER AT 8PM

SATURDAY NIGHT SYMPHONY SATURDAY 13 SEPTEMBER AT 8PM

ANZ GREAT CLASSICS ON MONDAYS MONDAY 15 SEPTEMBER AT 6:30PM

MOZART FAVOURITES FEATURING THE CLARINET CONCERTO
MELBOURNE RECITAL CENTRE SERIES THURSDAY 18 SEPTEMBER AT 8PM
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THE SYMPHONY BANQUET

This October, the MSO presents The Symphony Banquet, a glamorous fundraising event which will showcase the extraordinary talent of the Orchestra and celebrated guest artists.

The MSO invites you to The Symphony Banquet, a glamorous occasion offering an intimate and immersive orchestral experience, led by internationally acclaimed Boston Pops conductor Keith Lockhart.

Joining the Orchestra on the night as MC and featured artist will be one of Australia’s most sought-after performers Trevor Ashley, currently appearing in Les Miserables and known for his (or should we say her) recent and critically acclaimed show, Diamonds are for Trevor. Also making a very special guest appearance will be showbiz legend Rhonda Burchmore who is sure to add sparkle and razzmatazz to the evening.

An exclusive menu, designed especially for the evening by leading chef Teage Ezard, will complement the night’s exceptional performances offering sensational flavours of Melbourne matched with wine from Mount Langi Ghiran and Yering Station.

“The Symphony Banquet offers an opportunity to celebrate Melbourne’s beloved Orchestra, as well as raising vital funds for the Orchestra’s education programs,” said MSO Managing Director, André Gremillet.

The Symphony Banquet will be held on Wednesday 29 October, 7pm, at the Melbourne Town Hall.

Tickets are $1400, which includes a tax deductible donation of $1000 to be acknowledged with MSO Patron status and commensurate benefits.

For further information and to reserve your ticket to this exclusive event, call (03) 9626 1104 or rsvp@mso.com.au
With a reputation for excellence, versatility and innovation, the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra is Australia’s oldest orchestra, established in 1906. The Orchestra currently performs live to more than 200,000 people annually, in concerts ranging from subscription performances at its home, Hamer Hall at Arts Centre Melbourne, to its annual free concerts at Melbourne’s largest outdoor venue, the Sidney Myer Music Bowl.

Sir Andrew Davis gave his inaugural concerts as Chief Conductor of the MSO in April 2013, having made his debut with the Orchestra in 2009. Highlights of his tenure have included collaborations with artists including Bryn Terfel, Emanuel Ax and Truls Mørk, the release of recordings of music by Percy Grainger and Eugène Goossens, and its recent European Festivals tour.

The MSO also works each season with Principal Guest Conductor Diego Matheuz, Associate Conductor Benjamin Northey and the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra Chorus. Recent guest conductors to the MSO include Thomas Adès, John Adams, Tan Dun, Charles Dutoit, Jakub Hrůša, Mark Wigglesworth, Markus Stenz and Simone Young. The Orchestra has also collaborated with non-classical musicians including Burt Bacharach, Nick Cave, Sting and Tim Minchin.

The MSO reaches an even larger audience through its regular concert broadcasts on ABC Classic FM, also streamed online, and through recordings on Chandos and ABC Classics. The MSO’s Education and Outreach initiatives deliver innovative and engaging programs to audiences of all ages, including MSO Learn, an educational iPhone and iPad app designed to teach children about the inner workings of an orchestra.

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Nicola Benedetti in a performance of Beethoven’s Violin Concerto. One of the classical world’s brightest young stars, Nicola is coming to Melbourne after achieving a career milestone with her most recent album Homecoming: A Scottish Fantasy reaching the top 20 in the UK album charts. Also this month, esteemed clarinettist Michael Collins will lead an all-Mozart program of concerts at the Melbourne Recital Centre and Geelong’s Costa Hall, while Richard Gill will take a deeper look at Mozart’s Gran Partita for the final Ears Wide Open concert for 2014.

I look forward to welcoming you at this month’s performances.

André Gremillet
Managing Director
Introducing Mozart’s Gran Partita

EARS WIDE OPEN 3

Tuesday 9 September at 6:30pm
Melbourne Recital Centre

Richard Gill conductor
Melbourne Symphony Orchestra

About Ears Wide Open
Our Ears Wide Open series provides a fascinating insight behind the creation of an important orchestral work and its composer. The work featured in each concert is played in full at a later ‘matching’ concert by the MSO.

If you enjoy Ears Wide Open: Introducing Mozart’s Gran Partita, see the work in full at the matching concert, Mozart Favourites along with Mozart’s Symphony No.34 and Clarinet Concerto. Tickets are available from $25.

This performance has a duration of approximately 45 minutes with no interval.

Richard Gill conductor
Richard Gill, OAM, is one of Australia’s preeminent and most admired conductors and is internationally respected as a music educator. He is Founding Music Director and Conductor Emeritus of Victorian Opera and Artistic Director of the Education Program for the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. He has been Artistic Director of OzOpera, Artistic Director and Chief Conductor of the Canberra Symphony Orchestra and Adviser for the Musica Viva In Schools program.

He has conducted all of the major Australian symphony orchestras and youth orchestras, New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, Sydney Chamber Choir and Sydney Philharmonia Choirs. For the Sydney Symphony Orchestra he has conducted Meet the Music and Family concerts, Discovery concerts with the Sydney Symphony Sinfonia and Sinfonietta concerts.

Richard Gill’s extensive operatic repertoire includes The Rake’s Progress, Così fan tutte, Don Giovanni, The Threepenny Opera, The Damnation of Faust, Julius Caesar, Duke Bluebeard’s Castle, Ariadne auf Naxos and Rembrandt’s Wife (Victorian Opera); The Love for Three Oranges, Faust, The Eighth Wonder, Lindy, Macbeth, The Force of Destiny, Rigoletto, Lucia di Lammermoor, Il trovatore, Roméo et Juliette, Fidelio, Turandot and The Pearl Fishers (Opera Australia); and The Magic Flute and The Marriage of Figaro (Opera Queensland).

He was previously Dean of the West Australian Conservatorium of Music and Director of Chorus at The Australian Opera, and has received numerous accolades including the Bernard Heinze Award; Honorary Doctorates from the Edith Cowan University of Western Australia and the ACU; the Australian Music Centre’s award for ‘Most Distinguished Contribution to the Presentation of Australian Composition by an Individual’; and the Australia Council’s Don Banks Music Award.
WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART
(1756-1791)
Serenade in B flat, K361
(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 was the youngest child of Leopold Mozart, a court musician in the service of the Archbishops of Salzburg. An aspiring composer and established teacher, Leopold quickly recognised his infant son’s prodigious talent and embarked upon a schedule of relentless touring with the young Wolfgang and his sister Nannerl, exhibiting the duo in the courts of European royalty. The child Mozart knew nothing other than an itinerant lifestyle, performing in venues as far afield as Italy and London (where, aged eight, he composed his Symphony No.1, K16), and assimilating a wide range of musical influences. Composing came quickly and easily to Mozart and he became proficient in many idioms at a young age; before he was out of his teens he had composed the opera Mitridate, re di Ponto, all five violin concertos and most of his symphonies. Until the age of 21, Mozart spent almost every day in the company of his father, who, even after Wolfgang had struck out on his own, continued to exert a controlling influence on his son’s life and career.

Upon reaching adulthood Mozart grew restless with the limited opportunities in Salzburg and in 1781 moved permanently to Vienna, where he embarked on a new career as a freelance pianist and composer. By now he had acquired a new wife, Constanze Weber (to the dismay of his father, who viewed the union as a major impediment to his son’s career), and had matured into a composer of startling insight and originality.

During the latter half of this decade Mozart began his opera buffa collaboration with librettist Lorenzo Da Ponte, resulting in The Marriage of Figaro, Don Giovanni and Così fan tutte. However his income from composition, subscription concerts and teaching largely proved inadequate for the lifestyle to which he and Constanze aspired, as his series of begging letters to his friend Michael Puchberg around this time attests. He continued to work at an exhausting pace even in his final year, when he composed some of his greatest works, including the operas La clemenza di Tito and The Magic Flute, his Clarinet Concerto (written for the virtuoso Anton Stadler), and the unfinished Requiem.

Mozart wrote more than 30 serenades, cassations and divertimentos: light-hearted musical entertainments for instrumental combinations that could range from wind sextet or string ensemble to full orchestra. All but a few date from his years in Salzburg. This was largely practical: the balmy Salzburg summers encouraged outdoor diversions. Vienna, however, offered far fewer opportunities for serenade music. It’s been suggested, too, that for Mozart the serenade held strong associations 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 even the newly successful Mozart of the 1780s – busy with symphonies, concertos and operas for the adoring Viennese – couldn’t resist. That was Harmoniemusik – music for wind band. The wind band didn’t come into its own – at least not in Vienna – until 1782, when the Emperor Joseph II formed the Imperial Royal Harmonie. This ensemble set the standard for the classical Harmonie formation: a wind octet with pairs of oboes, clarinets, horns and bassoons. A Harmonie would play at dinner, or in the gardens, and for social events.

The masterpiece of Mozart’s output for winds is the Serenade in B flat for 13 instruments, K361. Some anonymous hand dubbed it the ‘Gran Partita’, and the nickname has stuck with good reason. It is grand in scale – longer than many of Mozart’s symphonies; it is grand in scope – with sophisticated and symphonic gestures; and it requires larger forces than any of his other music for winds alone.

When and why Mozart wrote the piece is open to debate, with musicologists oscillating between 1782, the date of Mozart’s wedding (although evidence that it was composed for this occasion is dubious); and 1784, for a benefit concert for the Emperor’s first clarinettist and Mozart’s good
friend, Anton Stadler. We do know that four movements from the piece were performed at this concert. This would explain the departure from the Harmonie octet formation, since Stadler’s concert would have given Mozart the opportunity to add an extra pair of French horns and a pair of basset horns. (Although the Gran Partita sometimes goes by the name ‘Serenade for 13 winds’ and is played with a contrabassoon in the ensemble, it’s unlikely the instrument would have been available to Mozart at that time, and so he added a double bass to reinforce the bass line.) 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.

This is clear from the outset. The music begins with a set of formal pronouncements leading into a slow introduction (Largo) – the kind of thing that wouldn’t surprise in a Mozart symphony, but is unexpected in a serenade. This then leads into the Allegro molto.

The minuets, however, are true to serenade practice. There are two of these dances, each with two trios. And yet, even here, there is evidence that Mozart intended this serenade to have our full attention, with two of the trios in minor keys.

The Adagio is the emotional heart of the serenade: brooding, sighing lines sustained above what Peter Shaffer’s Salieri, in the play Amadeus, so aptly describes as a ‘rusty squeezebox’ – comic but for its serenity.

The fifth movement is headed Romanze, a rare designation for Mozart. When he included a Romanze in a horn concerto he had written for his friend Leutgeb it was a tribute to the lyrical style of instrumental playing that he so admired. Perhaps this movement was a similar tribute to Stadler and his colleagues.

The Theme and Variations movement is lifted almost note for note from one of Mozart’s flute quartets. Finally, a spirit of celebration permeates the Finale, a rondo that alternates its merry theme – played by the full ensemble – with featured moments for the different instruments.

The first complete performance of Mozart’s Gran Partita given by the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra took place on 6 October 1971 under conductor Fritz Rieger. The MSO most recently performed it in September 1985 with Hiroyuki Iwaki.

GUEST MUSICIANS

GUEST MUSICIANS FOR EARS WIDE OPEN 3

Rachel Curkpatrick oboe

FURTHER LISTENING

Extend your music knowledge further with our specially compiled music list from this concert. Please go to www.mso.com.au/whats-on/2014/ears-wide-open-3/
PRE-CONCERT PERFORMANCE
Friday 12 September at 7pm
Stalls Foyer, Arts Centre Melbourne, Hamer Hall
Saturday 13 September at 7pm
Stalls Foyer, Arts Centre Melbourne, Hamer Hall
Join us for a chamber music performance by musicians from the University of Melbourne.

POST CONCERT CONVERSATION
Monday 15 September after 8:30pm
Stalls Foyer, Arts Centre Melbourne, Hamer Hall
Join Benjamin Hanlon, MSO Double Bassist, for a post-concert conversation with tonight’s artists.

DIEGO MATHEUZ CONDUCTS
BEETHOVEN & TCHAIKOVSKY

MASTER SERIES FRIDAY
Friday 12 September at 8pm
SATURDAY NIGHT SYMPHONY
Saturday 13 September at 8pm
ANZ GREAT CLASSICS ON MONDAYS
Monday 15 September at 6.30pm

Beethoven Leonore Overture No.3
Beethoven Violin Concerto
Tchaikovsky Symphony No.6 Pathétique

Melbourne Symphony Orchestra
Diego Matheuz conductor
Nicola Benedetti violin

This concert has a duration of approximately two hours and 10 minutes, including one 20 minute interval.
The Saturday Night performance of Diego Matheuz conducts Beethoven and Tchaikovsky will be broadcast live across Australia on ABC Classic FM.

BEYOND THE STAGE
Learn more about the music in these free events.
ABOUT THE ARTISTS

DIEGO MATHEUZ
conductor

Diego Matheuz is a graduate of the Venezuelan Sistema, and is already widely known as one of the most promising developing talents from the Americas. In addition to his appointment as Principal Guest Conductor of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, he has been Principal Guest Conductor of Orchestra Mozart since 2009 and Principal Conductor of Teatro la Fenice since 2011. Recent highlights at Teatro la Fenice include a Tchaikovsky symphony cycle and productions of La traviata, La bohème and Rigoletto, and during the 2013/14 season he conducted productions of Carmen, The Barber of Seville and The Rake’s Progress. Recent appearances with Orchestra Mozart include performances in Bologna, the Concertgebouw and Southbank Centre, London. Other orchestral highlights include performances with the Philharmonia Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Czech Philharmonic, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra, Vienna Chamber Orchestra, Mahler Chamber Orchestra and Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. In North America he has conducted the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Houston Symphony and the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa, and he recently made his debut with the NHK Symphony Orchestra in Tokyo. Now well-established in Italy, he joined the Orchestra dell’Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia on tour in Milan, Turin and Lucerne, and has made several subsequent appearances in Rome.

Diego Matheuz began his violin studies in his hometown of Barquisimeto before moving to Caracas. He maintains a strong association with his native orchestras, returning regularly to Caracas, and in 2013 he was appointed Associate Conductor of the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra of Venezuela.

NICOLA BENEDETTI
violin

Nicola Benedetti is in demand with major orchestras and conductors across the globe. Recent and future performances include engagements with the London Symphony Orchestra, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra, Camerata Salzburg, Orchestra del Teatro La Fenice, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, The Philadelphia Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, National Symphony Orchestra, and the Hong Kong Philharmonic, among others. She frequently performs in recital with her regular duo partner, pianist Alexei Grynyuk. Recent appearances include this year’s Cheltenham International Music Festival, Dresden Music Festival, the Sapienza in Rome and Maison symphonique in Montreal.

Winner of Best Female Artist at the 2013 Classic BRIT Awards, Nicola Benedetti’s recordings include The Silver Violin, which reached No. 30 in the UK pop charts while simultaneously topping the classical charts. She was appointed as a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE) in the 2013 New Year Honours in recognition of her international music career and for her work with musical charities throughout the UK. She recently developed her own education and outreach initiative entitled The Benedetti Sessions. In addition, she has received eight honorary degrees to date.

Born in Scotland of Italian heritage, Nicola Benedetti began violin lessons at the age of five with Brenda Smith. In 1997, she entered the Yehudi Menuhin School, where she studied with Natasha Boyarskaya. Upon leaving, she continued her studies with Maciej Rakowski and Pavel Vernikov.
Beethoven’s only opera, Fidelio, had a tortuous gestation. The first performance in 1805 was a flop. It was far too long, but more importantly, the occupation of Vienna by Napoleon’s troops had caused the evacuation of local aristocrats so the small audience was made up mainly of French officers. Cuts and revisions followed for a revival the following year, but in 1814, three librettists and four overtures later, Beethoven made the final version. The work was now a triumph. Vienna was celebrating the final defeat of Napoleon, but more importantly, Fidelio was now a powerful, focused piece of theatre.

The model for Fidelio was a then fashionable French genre later known as ‘rescue opera’. The story was based on an actual incident that took place in France during the post-revolutionary Reign of Terror: an aristocratic woman, portrayed in the opera as Leonore, disguises herself as a boy (Fidelio) in order to save her husband from wrongful execution at the hand of a tyrant. Jean-Nicolas Bouilly found himself in the position of Don Fernando (the government minister in the opera whose arrival signals the release of the prisoners), and later wrote the story, changing names and places, as a libretto which was set by two French composers as Léonore. This was Beethoven’s preferred title for his German version, but theatre management insisted on Fidelio, or the triumph of conjugal love to avoid confusion with the earlier works.

The three Leonore Overtures are now often heard as curtain-raisers in the concert hall. The first dates from 1805 and the second and third were both composed for the ill-fated revival of the following year. Both of those works are substantial compositions in their own right (and share a considerable amount of material) and are arguably too long to serve as overture to the opera. But both may be heard as symphonic précis of the opera: Leonore No.3 sets the baleful mood of the prison with sombre chords, before essaying some of the turmoil and ultimate triumph of the story. The third overture is perhaps the most symphonic, recapitulating the triumphant allegro music at its end.

Gordon Kerry © 2004

The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra first performed this overture in July 1939 under Sir Thomas Beecham, and most recently in August 2004 under Vasily Petrenko.

SCENE FROM FIDELIO AT THE ROYAL ITALIAN OPERA

GUEST MUSICIANS

DIEGO MATHEUZ CONDUCTS BEETHOVEN AND TCHAIKOVSKY

Rebecca Adler violin
Edward Antoniov violin
Aaron Barnden violin
Jacqueline Edwards violin
Cameron Jamieson violin
Erica Kennedy violin
Claire Miller violin
Ceriidwen Davies viola
Simon Oswell viola
Rachel Atkinson cello
Daniel Smith cello
Rohan Dasika double bass
Rachel Curkpatrick oboe
Lara Wilson percussion

Beethoven wrote only a small number of concertos, but his five piano concertos and the violin concerto have become, every one of them, standards of the repertoire. Beethoven’s only violin concerto was preceded by a partially complete first movement for violin and orchestra from his youth in Bonn, and the two Romances for violin and orchestra, from 1798 and 1800-02 (and also by the first nine of his ten sonatas for violin and piano, including the Kreutzer Sonata). These were Beethoven’s preparation for the great concerto he was to write, apparently with speed and certainty, in 1806. The soloist for whom he wrote it, Franz Clement (1780-1842), was a child prodigy who made his debut aged nine.

Nothing had been written for the violin on this scale before, no work in which the soloist and orchestra shared in so elaborate and symphonic a discourse. Even now, when the greatness of Beethoven’s Violin Concerto is not in question, it remains a supreme challenge for violinists. At first the audience and critics in Vienna failed to
understand the concerto, perhaps not surprisingly given the circumstances in which it was first performed in 1806. Franz Clement played the first movement in the first part of the program, and the slow movement and finale in the second. In between he played a sonata of his own, on one string with the violin held upside down. The concerto can hardly have been adequately rehearsed, since Beethoven was late with the manuscript, and Clement virtually had to read it at sight (although not entirely, because he had probably advised the composer on the technicalities of the solo part).

Beethoven, making a dreadful pun, offered it as a ‘concerto per clemenza pour Clement’, meaning either that he presented it with apologies, or that he had mercy (‘clemency’) on the violinist! Beethoven’s Violin Concerto established itself as a supreme masterpiece only when later soloists, from Joseph Joachim in the mid-19th century onwards, made its case with the thorough preparation it deserved.

There are affinities in this concerto with Beethoven’s Fifth and Seventh Symphonies. The opening contains a motif which runs right through the movement: the four quiet drum taps which are heard before the woodwind enter with the first theme. (Actually there are five taps: the fifth is heard under the first wind note.) The figure recurs both in its four-note form (in which it seems to move the music on), and as five notes, with the fifth emphasised as it sounds the first beat of the next bar, giving a feeling of finality.

The three themes which follow are each derived from the basic idea of a rising scale. The solo violin’s wonderful first entry comes, in contrast, in a rising arpeggio, each note preceded by a grace note an octave below. Beethoven is in an expansive mood: even when the music is at its most forceful, it is serene, ordered and of elevated beauty. This is in contrast with the concentrated power and dynamism of, say, the Fifth Symphony of 1808. Perhaps the most typical passage of the first movement of the Violin Concerto comes just before the recapitulation, where an episode in G minor, in the words of one admirer, ‘distils the quintessence of the concerto’s subjective poetry’.

In the recapitulation itself, the subtlety of Beethoven’s orchestration, especially for the bassoons and horns, can be appreciated as it could not in the exposition, when the listener’s attention was on the themes themselves. Beethoven did not compose a cadenza himself, but many great violinists, including Joachim and Kreisler, have remedied the deficiency. The coda which follows presents the theme in all its simplicity, played by the soloist over plucked strings, then wafts it to the heights, both literally and metaphorically, in increasingly rhapsodic arabesques.

The secret of the stillness Beethoven achieves in the slow movement is exposed with superb insight by Sir Donald Tovey: the use of varied repetition to express a sublime inaction. The muting of the strings and the soft interventions of the orchestra, particularly the bassoons and horns, put the improvisatory musings of the solo violin in timbral high relief.

As in so many of his works, Beethoven leads directly from the slow movement through a cadential passage to the finale. At first this is a complete contrast to what has gone before, with a boisterous, good-humoured theme leaping through wide intervals whereas most of the concerto’s melodies up to then had moved step by step. But the episodes, in this Rondo poised on the edge of jocularity, have the breadth and lyricism of the earlier parts of the concerto – thus Beethoven maintains the mood of this supremely well-balanced work.

David Garrett © 1999

The first performance of the Beethoven Violin Concerto by the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra occurred on 16 February 1944 and was conducted by Bernard Heine, with Ernest Llewellyn as soloist. Most recently, the work was performed in March 2012 with Kolja Blacher as director/soloist.
complications; the theory that his old classmates decided in a ‘court of honour’ that he should commit suicide to avoid disgrace has been undermined; and his social, financial and artistic situation all speak against any other motivation for suicide, even if he continued to be troubled by his homosexuality.

The Sixth Symphony, specifically, seems to have been a source of immense pride, satisfaction and joy to him. And shortly after its premiere he’s reported to have said, ‘I feel I shall live a long time.’

He was wrong. His audience, now in mourning and seeking ‘portents’, immediately heard the Sixth Symphony (the Pathétique) in a new way. New significance was given to the appearance in the first movement of an Orthodox burial chant, ‘Repose the Soul’ – a hymn sung only when someone has died – and to the otherworldly, dying character of the Adagio finale.

Even if the symphony is not a suicide note, there is a programmatic and semi-autobiographical underpinning to the symphony that is the source of its unusual form and turbulent emotions. Tchaikovsky admitted the existence of a program but was cagey about the details, perhaps because it reflected his romantic feelings for Davidov. The closest we have is a sketched scenario, devised originally for an abandoned symphony in E flat but appearing to correspond with much of the Sixth Symphony:

‘Following is essence of plan for a symphony Life! First movement – all impulse, confidence, thirst for activity. Must be short (Finale death – result of collapse). Second movement love; third disappointment; fourth ends with a dying away (also short).’

There are aspects of this program and the Sixth Symphony that suggest suffering, but for Tchaikovsky the composition of the symphony was a cathartic experience rather than an expression of current sufferings. He himself wrote: ‘Anyone who believes that the creative person is capable of expressing what he feels out of a momentary effect aided by the means of art is mistaken. Melancholy as well as joyous feelings can always be expressive only out of the Retrospective.’

In its art this is Tchaikovsky’s most innovative symphony. He dares to conclude with a brooding slow movement and uses boldly dramatic gestures to give the music its emotional impulse. The ‘limping’ elegance of the second-movement waltz would have been less surprising, to Russians at least – its five-beat metre was a part of a tradition that was embraced by Borodin, Rimsky-Korsakov and Mussorgsky (in his Pictures at an Exhibition), and later Rachmaninov (in The Isle of the Dead).

In the Sixth Symphony Tchaikovsky comes to terms with his professed inadequacies in structural matters. His solution in the first movement was to extend the exposition section, so well suited to his melodic gifts, and to compress the development section in which he felt his skills inadequate. The music begins in the depths with the dark colour of the bassoon and yet somehow Tchaikovsky sustains a downward trajectory, or the impression of one, for the whole work.

In the third movement the idea of ‘disappointment’ is replaced by something more malevolent. In purely musical terms it conflates two musical figures – feverish tarantella triplets and a spiky march – but the juxtapositions and incursions into each other’s thematic territory create a disturbing sense of antagonism. The movement’s applause-provoking conclusion could be triumphant, or it could be the crash of self-delusion. The finale may not fit the formula established by Tchaikovsky’s classical predecessors, but within the emotional journey of the symphony its stark sense of tragedy provides an inevitable conclusion – all the more powerful for the grace and jauntness of the preceding movements.’

Yvonne Frindle © 2008

The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra was the first of the Australian state symphony orchestras to perform this work, on 19 September 1939 under Bernard Heinze. Andrew Gourlay conducted the MSO’s most recent performance in February 2014.
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Elisabeth Murdoch Hall,
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GEELONG SERIES
Friday 19 September at 8pm
Costa Hall, Deakin University, Geelong

Melbourne Symphony Orchestra
Michael Collins director/clarinet

Mozart Serenade No.10 Gran Partita
Mozart Clarinet Concerto
Mozart Symphony No.34

This concert has a duration of approximately two hours including one interval of 20 minutes.
The Saturday night performance of Mozart Favourites featuring the Clarinet Concerto will be recorded to later broadcast and streaming on ABC Classic FM.

BEYOND THE STAGE
Learn more about the music in these free events.

PRE-CONCERT TALK
Thursday 18 September at 7pm
Elisabeth Murdoch Hall, Melbourne Recital Centre

Friday 19 September at 7pm
Costa Hall, Deakin University, Geelong

Graham Abbott will present a talk on the artist and works featured in the program.

POST-CONCERT CONVERSATION
Saturday 20 September after 8:30pm
Elisabeth Murdoch Hall, Melbourne Recital Centre

Join David Thomas, MSO Principal Clarinet, for a post-concert conversation with tonight’s guest artist, Michael Collins.
ABOUT THE ARTISTS
MOZART FAVOURITES FEATURING THE CLARINET CONCERTO

Michael Collins’ virtuosity and musicianship have earned him recognition as one of today’s most distinguished artists and a leading exponent of his instrument. He has given world and local premieres of John Adams’ Gnarly Buttons, Elliott Carter’s Clarinet Concerto, Brett Dean’s Ariel’s Music, Elena Kats-Chernin’s Ornamental Air and Mark-Anthony Turnage’s Riffs and Refrains. He has since performed Riffs and Refrains with the Hague Philharmonic, Royal Flanders Philharmonic, Helsinki Philharmonic and London Philharmonic Orchestras.

In great demand as a chamber musician, Michael Collins performs with musical colleagues such as the Belcea and Takács quartets, Martha Argerich, Stephen Hough, Mikhail Pletnev, Lars Vogt, Joshua Bell and Steven Isserlis. His Residency at Wigmore Hall saw him in performance with András Schiff, Piers Lane and the Endellion String Quartet. His ensemble, London Winds, celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary in 2013 and maintains a busy diary with engagements at the BBC Proms, Aldeburgh Festival, Edinburgh Festival, City of London Festival, Cheltenham Music Festival and Bath Mozartfest.

Michael Collins has become increasingly highly regarded as a conductor, and in September 2010 took the position of Principal Conductor of the City of London Sinfonia. In recent seasons, his conducting highlights have included engagements with the Philharmonia Orchestra, Academy of St Martin in the Fields, London Mozart Players, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Ulster Orchestra, Kymi Sinfonietta, Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra and Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra. He is also Artistic Director of the Liberation International Music Festival in Jersey.

In 2007 he received the Royal Philharmonic Society’s Instrumentalist of the Year Award.

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The clarinet was still a relatively new invention when Mozart fell in love with it, and made it the soloist in three works which ever since, more than any others, have defined the expressive character and range of the instrument. So much of Mozart's music is vocally inspired that we can be sure he was attracted to the clarinet at least partly by its affinities to the human voice. And just as most of Mozart's arias and opera roles were tailored to a particular singer's voice, his clarinet works were inspired by Anton Stadler, whose playing elicited the following praise from an admiring critic:

'I have never heard the like of what you can contrive with your instrument. Never should I have thought that a clarinet could be capable of imitating a human voice so deceptively as it was imitated by you. Indeed, your instrument has so soft and so lovely a tone that nobody can resist it who has a heart.'

For Stadler, Mozart wrote the Quintet for clarinet and string quartet K581, the Trio for clarinet, viola and piano K498, and this concerto. In the quintet and the Concerto, he wrote for Stadler's basset clarinet, an instrument with some extra notes below the compass of the modern clarinet. Stadler was also a virtuoso on the related instrument, the basset horn. In the opera *La clemenza di Tito*, Mozart wrote brilliant parts for him in two arias, one to be played on the clarinet, the other on the basset horn. The opera was first performed in Prague on 6 September 1791. Mozart then returned to Vienna where he completed *The Magic Flute* and the concerto, but Stadler remained in Prague, where he gave what was probably the first performance of the Clarinet Concerto on 16 October 1791.

Stadler and Mozart were both Freemasons, and it is probable that the clarinet and particularly the basset horn (also used in the Requiem and *The Magic Flute*) had a particular ritual and symbolic significance for them. Although Stadler was a remarkable technician, the parts Mozart wrote for him in the Quintet and Concerto are more expressive than brilliant. The Concerto is a more public, but still intimate, restatement of the musical world of the Quintet. Both works are in the key of A, and Mozart's music in that key is often flowing, smooth and serene. The serenity of the clarinet masterpieces, which sometimes breathes an other-worldly atmosphere, is also to be heard in other works of the last months of Mozart's life.

The Concerto is remarkable for the very close integration of soloist and orchestra. This is achieved partly by the mellowness of the sound: oboes are omitted, and flutes, bassoons and horns surround rather than compete with the solo clarinet. For much of the time the soloist doubles some other instrument's line; all the more telling therefore are the moments where it appears alone, often plunging into the lowest register, only to soar back to the heights – this, and the frequent passages in
minor keys in the first movement, give the music (in clarinettist Anthony Pay’s words) ‘a never-ending range of shifting timbres’. The prevailing lyricism should not conceal the deceptive underlying strength of the music, heard in the interplay of instruments, alternations of first and second violins, and the telling use of the double basses.

Gravity and serenity are the keynotes of the hymn-like Adagio, which recalls nothing more than some passages in Mozart’s late church music, with the clarinet as a celestially pure singer. The last movement, superficially more exuberant, has the simplicity, in its main themes, of folk or dance inspiration. As in the final movement of Mozart’s last piano concerto, however, there is a new atmosphere, which has been described with hindsight as wistful, or having the feeling of a farewell.

David Garrett © 2001

This symphony was composed in Salzburg and bears the date 29 August 1780. As Mozart played at court on 2, 3 and 4 September, it may have been first heard there. Most likely, as Neal Zaslaw observes, Mozart wanted to have a new symphony in his baggage when he went to Munich to supervise the rehearsals of his opera Idomeneo, in case a concert opportunity presented itself as well. Idomeneo is the great masterpiece of Mozart’s early manhood, and the surrounding compositions share his excitement at writing for the orchestra which first played it, the famous Mannheim orchestra, whose princely employer had just removed it to Munich. The opening movement of Symphony No.34 contains Mozart’s version of one of this orchestra’s trademarks, the ‘Mannheim’ crescendo.

The first movement is very grand and symphonic, but note how simple are the thematic materials. The opening chords and arpeggios say ‘C major’ for bars on end. Eventually, after the dominant key (G major) has been prepared by upward rushing scales, a chromatic descending theme appears in unison, followed by graceful little quips. Here is the contrasting drama of tonality and themes which is the essence of the Viennese Classical style. Contrast also motivates the dark, minor-key character of the development section – the kind of Mozart the Romantics hailed as anticipating their own music. Zaslaw, surveying Mozart’s symphonies as a whole, comments that this movement reveals Mozart’s developing interest in longer ‘paragraphs’, replacing the ‘shorter-breathed, patchwork-quilt designs of his earlier symphonies’.

Mozart began a minuet for this symphony, on the back of the final page of the opening movement, which suggests it was to come second. If he completed the minuet, it is lost except for the first 14 bars.

In the second movement the winds and brass are silent, with the exception of the bassoon, which doubles the cellos and double basses. The string writing, however, is outstandingly subtle and multi-coloured. At the beginning of the movement Mozart writes ‘sotto voce’ and this establishes the mood: the impression is of a conversation conducted in hushed tones, between two violin parts and two viola parts.

The Finale is in the unceasing dance rhythm of the jig, virtually a tarantella (a dance to exhaustion). Like the first movement, it is in sonata form, a sign of the breadth of conception of this symphony.

David Garrett © 2003

The first complete performance of Mozart’s Clarinet Concerto by any of the Australian state symphony orchestras was given by the Melbourne Symphony on 11 August 1947 with conductor Bernard Heinze and soloist Thomas White. The MSO most recently performed the work in November 2013 with Graham Abbott and Philip Arkinstall.

The Melbourne Symphony was the first of the Australian state symphony orchestras to perform this work, with Sir Thomas Beecham in July 1940. The MSO most recently performed it in August 1993 with Jorge Mester.

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Rebecca Adler violin
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- Simon Collins
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- Cindy Watkin
- Caleb Wright

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- Anonymous
- Wendy Clarke
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- Nicholas Bochner
- Assistant Principal
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- Rohan de Korte
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- Angela Sargeant
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- Principal

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- Principal
- Ann Blackburn

## Cor Anglais
- Michael Pisani
- Principal

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- Saul Lewis
- Principal
- Thist
- Jenna Breen
- Abbey Elinn
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- Principal Flute Chair
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- Wendy Clarke
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