

# INFLUENCING MOZART



An exploration by Opera dei Lumi



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<b>MICHAEL HAYDN</b>	Symphony No 25 in G, 1783 [with introduction by Mozart]
<b>WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART</b>	Sinfonia concertante in E-flat, K364, 1779
<b>JOSEPH HAYDN</b>	Symphony No 52 in C minor, c. 1772
<b>CARL FRIEDRICH ABEL</b>	Symphony in E-flat Op 7 No 6, published 1767

**Michelle Dierx** violin  
**Edward Keenan** viola  
**Peter Keenan** conductor

**St James' and St Basil's Church, Newcastle**  
11 August 2022

**Canongate Kirk, Edinburgh**  
12 August 2022

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# OPERA DEI LUMI

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Ilhem Ben Khalifa  
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## **Second Violin**

Anna Tulchinskaya  
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## **Viola**

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## **Cello**

Deborah Thorne  
Lucy Hoile

## **Double Bass**

Gwen Reed

# Influencing Mozart: An exploration by Opera dei Lumi

That Mozart is one of the best known musical figures in western culture is fact. But, for me at least, there is still so much that we do not fully know or appreciate about Mozart's life and work. The aim of this evening's programme is to provide a snapshot of context around this towering figure by profiling some of his sources of influence.

Anybody familiar with Mozart's work will read the title 'Influencing Mozart' and inevitably think of Handel and J. S. Bach. So why don't they feature here this evening? Handel and Bach were indeed major figures of influence in Mozart's later years. His close association with Baron Gottfried van Swieten in Vienna (from 1782 onwards) provided Mozart with regular access to works by Handel, Bach and many others, as van Swieten had a generous and specialist musical collection.<sup>1</sup>

This programme is focussed on exploring figures in Mozart's life as much as his music. Two of the works you will hear this evening were believed to be by Mozart for a long time, as these were compositions which Mozart took an interest in and copied in his hand.

Michael Haydn arrived in Salzburg in 1762 and became a central and prominent fixture in the musical community there. He wrote a great deal of excellent sacred music and his influence on Mozart is most obviously observed in this area. The story of how **Symphony No 25** came to be associated with Mozart (for a long time, it was known as Mozart's 37th symphony) is an interesting one. Michael Haydn composed this symphony (in three movements) for the installation of a new abbot at the Michaelbeuern Monastery in May 1783.

First off, it's worth noting that this is the latest dated piece of music in this evening's programme, while its simplicity and style is much more akin to symphonies from the late 1760s or early 1770s. This is an important point when considering it as a possible work by Mozart, whose symphonies were significantly more ambitious in 1783 than we see in this symphony.<sup>2</sup> Purely from a musicological point of view, it is hard to know

how it could have been mistaken to be Mozart's for so long.

Stylistically, Michael Haydn and Mozart are polar opposites – particularly in symphonic output. Michael Haydn's symphonies are generally more old fashioned, while by his nature Mozart liked to explore and mix styles. To an extent, this contrast is inevitable as Michael Haydn remained in Salzburg for a good four decades, not really being exposed to the changes happening across other parts of Europe. Mozart was possibly one of the most travelled musicians of his day: resisting new ideas and flavours would have been impossible.

References to Michael Haydn in the Mozart family letters are common and generally indicate respect and admiration (as well as disapproval of his drinking habits). In the early 1780s Mozart ran a great number of subscription series, for which he was constantly demanding fresh repertoire. By and large, he would compose works himself (the purpose of these events were to profile himself as a musician-composer), but often music by his peers would feature too. It is likely that Mozart obtained this work from Michael Haydn in late 1783 during his stay in Salzburg and added his own slow introduction for such a purpose.

**Sinfonia concertante in E-flat** was composed in 1779, though it is not clear for what purpose or occasion. This is unfortunately common for works written during one of Mozart's spells in Salzburg: there being no need for family correspondence leaves a great gap of information which we benefit from across the majority of Mozart's life.

More curiously, there is no extant autograph or manuscript. Surprisingly little original primary material survives of this work, just a handful of unfinished sketches and the cadenzas. The motive and purpose for the creation of such a towering masterpiece really is a mystery.

Inspiration no doubt will have come from recent time spent both in Mannheim and Paris, two of the great orchestral centres of Europe in the late-eighteenth century. Presumably the multiple concerto was especially popular at these hot-spots because they each offered a larger pool of virtuoso musicians to write for than usual. Indeed, as well as the *Sinfonia concertante*,

<sup>1</sup> One of van Swieten's many roles in the Holy Roman Empire was Prefect of the Imperial Library.

<sup>2</sup> Consider Mozart's 36th symphony (the 'Linz', also 1783) which is full of energy, nuance and vibrant colour and is significantly more ambitious than Michael Haydn's 25th.

Mozart wrote his two-piano concerto around the same time.

The first movement (*Allegro maestoso*) puts Mozart's inventiveness at centre-stage: there is surprisingly little in the way of a direct relationship between the material of the orchestral introduction and the solo material. This garners a variety of thematic ideas which get fully explored throughout the movement.

The *Andante* brings us out of magical E-flat major and into an earthy C minor, unapologetically melancholic and sombre in mood. Following a brief opening orchestral statement, the soloists enrich the atmosphere with simple, expressive lyricism. Their dialogue becomes progressively more elaborate, each phrase drawing more passion than the last. The built-up intensity is relieved through the cadenza, bringing the movement to an introverted close.

The final movement (*Presto*) is vivacious to the extent that it quite literally runs away with itself! It is essentially a rondo with a single episode and numerous open-ended subsidiary themes which are constantly being reused and recontextualised.

Undoubtedly the best known work featured this evening, I must confess that it is also one of my all-time favourite works by Mozart. It is raw, uninhibited genius from start to finish: quite literally every phrase offers something fresh, and the level of detail in his use of the orchestra truly sets this work aside, even within Mozart's own output.

Joseph Haydn's **Symphony No 52** is the last of his *Sturm und Drang* symphonies. One of Haydn's classic traits is that he likes to generate a great deal of material from a modest idea. This symphony really encapsulates this aspect of Haydn's creative process: at its core, each movement only has a small number of musical ideas which are thoroughly explored.

The symphony is predominantly in C minor. The opening bars immediately set up an atmosphere of tension and angst which generally pervades the whole work. Throughout the first movement, it feels like each attempt to break this anguish with something more optimistic is futile and is ultimately thwarted. It is only once we reach the second movement that a more peaceful mood is found. The second movement lilts along quite calmly, for me akin to the flow of a gentle

river on a sunny day.

After an ambiguous and sombre minuet, interspersed with a more light-hearted trio, Haydn opens his final movement with a hushed and exciting subject. The two violins play off against each other, presenting what feels like a *cantus firmus* which then gets taken up by the bass register of the orchestra. This moves into a lyrical melody, full of pathos and yearning. Ultimately, the tension set in the first movement wins out across the whole work, which is brought to a definitive close by a series of unexpected and searching chords.

While Michael Haydn primarily influenced Mozart's sacred output, there is no doubt that Joseph Haydn was a major source of influence symphonically. There is a masterful and effective simplicity to this work, which is a quality Mozart adopted more and more towards the end of his short life.

We close this evening's proceedings with a wonderfully exciting and energetic work by Carl Friedrich Abel. **Symphony Op 7 No 6** is another work which was for a long time believed to be composed by Mozart. Indeed, this mis-attribution is more understandable as it fits well within the dimensions and styles of Mozart's earlier symphonies. In this case, it is likely that Mozart copied it for his own study, though he did change the woodwind line up too, swapping oboes for clarinets and adding a bassoon instead of a solo cello. We have opted for reverting to Abel's oboes and keeping Mozart's bassoon.

The Mozarts befriended Abel during their stay in London in 1764–65 as part of their grand tour of Europe (1763–66). Abel and J. C. Bach ran a prestigious concert series in London (known as the Bach–Abel concerts), which the young Mozart featured in.

Both Bach and Abel made quite an impact on the young Mozart: the solid Germanic musical background together with mastery in Italian style clearly resonated with him even at this early stage in his life.

The first time I heard this symphony, I immediately thought of *Sinfonia concertante*: the bold E-flat opening, with descending quavers, and rising turns. Clearly Abel left his mark on Mozart.

**MICHELLE DIERX** *violin*



Michelle Dierx is a Dutch violinist from Zoersel, Belgium. She was taught by Annemieke Corstens at the Young Musicians Academy at the Conservatory in Tilburg, Netherlands before she moved to Scotland in 2014. Michelle graduated from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland where she received a Bachelor of Music degree with first class honours. She studied with Gina McCormack and Joseph Swensen. Michelle recently completed a Masters of Arts with distinction at the Royal Academy of Music studying with Richard Ireland.

During her undergraduate degree, Michelle received the Robert Highgate Scholarship for violin, the Hilda Anderson Deane Prize and the Mary D Adams Prize for chamber music. In 2018 she had the opportunity to perform as a soloist in a workshop with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra. She has performed as a soloist with orchestras such as the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland Orchestra, Youth Orchestra Amikejo and the Valkenswaard Chamber Orchestra.

Michelle is also an avid chamber musician, she won the Mabel Glover String Quartet Prize with her quartet in 2017 and 2019. Michelle is principal second violin of the Broen Ensemble and is a member of two piano trios: Trio Doyenne and the Mac-Talla Trio. Both trio groups have won prizes in competitions across Europe, such as first place at the 24th Josep Mirabent i Migrants Chamber Music Competition in Sitges, Spain and second place at the 2019 Cavatina Intercollegiate Chamber Music Competition. Michelle is also a member of the Turadh Quartet, with whom she made her London debut at the Purcell Room. The Turadh Quartet is part of the 5-year Yeomen Programme for Young Artists with the Musicians' Company in London.

As an orchestral musician Michelle has freelanced with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and Scottish Ballet.

**EDWARD KEENAN** *viola*



Edward was born in Edinburgh. Having initially started out as a violin player, he switched to the viola at the age of 16 to play in his school's string quartet. In 2020 he completed his MA with distinction at the Royal Academy of Music, studying with Martin Outram.

Edward is a passionate chamber musician, and has performed with a variety of groups over the years. He is a founding member of the Broen Ensemble, a string ensemble based in Glasgow. The group has established a partnership with the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, allowing for exciting collaborative projects with dancers and singers. The ensemble are also recipients of a Tunnel Trust Award and will tour Scotland in November 2022.

Alongside his chamber music schedule, Edward

is an experienced and busy orchestral player. He has worked with all the major orchestras in Scotland such as the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, the RSNO and the BBC SSO since 2017. More recently, Edward has started freelancing with the London Mozart Players, Scottish Ensemble and the Royal Ballet Sinfonia.

Edward has been the principal violist of Opera dei Lumi since it's formation and has enjoyed the journey the orchestra has been on. He is very excited to have the opportunity to perform Mozart's Sinfonia concertante with them in August 2022.

When not performing, Edward enjoys reading and running. He is also a string teacher for Haringey Music Service which he finds immensely rewarding.

## **PETER KEENAN** *founding artistic director*

Peter Keenan is Artistic Director and founder of Opera dei Lumi. He graduated as a Master of Music from the University of Glasgow in 2018, where he researched tempo and proportion in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* under the supervision of John Butt. Prior to this, Peter attended St Mary's Music School in Edinburgh before reading music at the University of York.

During his time in Edinburgh and York, Peter was active as a composer and pianist, winning national prizes in both, including the Heriot Watt University Young Composers' Competition, a national competition aimed towards postgraduate composers in Scotland, which Peter won aged 15.

In addition to his interest in Baroque and Classical repertoire, Peter is a strong advocate for contemporary music. He has worked as a

professional music engraver for music publishing houses such as Ricordi and Edition Wilhelm Hansen, amongst others.



He has written various reviews and mini-articles, particularly on Mozart publications, most notably for *Eighteenth-Century Music* journal (Cambridge University Press) and is assisting Mozart scholar Clemens Kemme on the forthcoming publication of his monograph on Mozart's C minor Mass.

## **OPERA DEI LUMI**

Opera dei Lumi is a touring opera company founded in 2014. Its mission is to explore repertoire from the Age of the Enlightenment, bringing fresh, innovative readings of musical works – both well known and obscure – which are never routine. Performing operatic repertoire – particularly Mozart's – is at the heart of the company's aims, but not exclusively: the name translates as 'Opera of the Enlightenment', though the Italian noun 'opera' also translates simply as 'work', ie any musical work, operatic or not.



Since its creation, Opera dei Lumi has produced concert performances of Mozart's *Così fan tutte* and *Le nozze di Figaro* in the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. Other performances include Mozart's Requiem and *Linz* symphony as part of the Glasgow Cathedral Festival of Music. More recently, Opera dei Lumi toured both the 1742 Dublin version and the 1750 London version of Handel's *Messiah* and gave the Scottish premiere of Handel's first English oratorio *Esther*.

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Chris Newman

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Thos & Monica Oates

David Rimer

*and those who wish to remain anonymous*

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## SPONSOR A MUSIC STAND

We previously ran a campaign for much needed music stands and are hugely grateful to the following for their support in helping us purchase these – we are using them this evening and it has been an enormous

Mr & Mrs Robson

Thos & Monica Oates

Jean Matterson

Dave & Lizzy Lewis-Smith

Chris Newman

Katherine Clark

Audrey Macnaughton

## AMICI DEL SECOLO DEI LUMI

In 2018, we were delighted to launch our new friends' scheme called 'Amici del secolo dei Lumi', which means 'Friends of the Enlightenment'.

Membership costs £40 for a year. As an Amici del secolo dei Lumi you will be joining Opera dei Lumi in its mission to bring fresh and innovative performances of works from the Enlightenment to new audiences. Over the course of your annual membership, you will receive:

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