



**Ian Page and The Mozartists present 'Mozart in Italy' –
an immersive exploration of the 14-year-old composer's tour of
Italy in 1770**

Cadogan Hall, 6-8 March 2020

- **Three-day festival weekend includes major concerts, illustrated talks and readings from key letters and documents**
- **Highlights include a reconstruction of Mozart's audition concert in Milan; UK premières of excerpts from operas by Guglielmi, Piccinni, Celoniati, Mysliveček and Gasparini; lecture recitals on Italian church music and Mozart's first String Quartet; and insights into his first major opera, *Mitridate***

Ian Page and The Mozartists celebrate the 250th anniversary of Mozart's 1770 trip to Italy with the first ever musical exploration of this important and formative year in Mozart's life, as part of their ground-breaking MOZART 250 project.

This immersive weekend at **Cadogan Hall, 6-8 March 2020**, includes three concerts and a series of related talks by leading music historians, featuring the music that the 14-year-old composed and exploring highlights from fascinating but long-forgotten operas that he heard during the course of his travels. Each concert incorporates readings from the Mozart family letters, from Charles Burney's notes on his own contemporaneous travels through Italy, and from the same guidebook that the Mozarts used to plan their itinerary.

In 1770, Italy was still widely regarded as the home of opera, and in coming there to further his studies Mozart was following in the footsteps of such esteemed compatriots as Handel, Gluck and J. C. Bach. Mozart and his father remained for the entire year, incorporating stays in Milan, Bologna, Rome and Naples, and the tour culminated with the triumphant première of *Mitridate, re di Ponto* at Milan's Teatro Regio Ducale on 26 December 1770. Arias from this opera will also feature in the Festival.

The Festival showcases the vocal talents of sopranos Samantha Clarke and Kiandra Howarth – two of the newest singers to join the Mozartists' Associate Artists scheme, which was launched by Ian Page in 2006 to assist the development of young performers in the early stages of their career. They join fellow Associate Artist and tenor Stuart Jackson and mezzo-soprano Rachel Kelly who has sung with the ensemble previously.

Ian Page says: *"This is the first ever detailed retrospective of this seminal year in the young composer's life, and includes several pieces that have not been performed since the 18th century. One would have thought that by now we know pretty much everything there is to know about Mozart, but I am regularly surprised by the extent to which discoveries are still being made. When presenting such unusual and*

little-known repertoire it becomes crucial that our performances present the best possible case for the music, and in this regard casting is of paramount importance. I am delighted that we have assembled a wonderful line-up of singers, all of whom are popular company regulars. Each concert will also feature readings from contemporary sources, thereby creating an informative and entertaining narrative in what promises to be a unique and illuminating weekend.”

The concerts throughout the weekend will be recorded live, for planned commercial release on Signum Classics. Ian Page and the Mozartists’ revelatory ‘Mozart in London’ weekend in 2015 was also recorded live and released on Signum in 2018 (SIGCD534) to critical acclaim, with both Gramophone and Limelight magazines selecting it as their Recording of the Month.

Festival Highlights:

Friday 6 March

6.00pm Talk: Mozart in Italy – 1770: Leading Mozart authority Cliff Eisen, Professor at King’s College, London and author of numerous books on Mozart, provides an overview of Mozart’s travels through Italy.

7.30pm Concert 1: The Audition: using compelling recent research, the second half is a reconstruction of the audition concert that Mozart gave in Milan on 12 March, a concert which led directly to him receiving the prestigious commission to write *Mitridate, re di Ponto*.

Saturday 7 March

3.30pm Illustrated Talk: Mozart and Italian Sacred Music: Cliff Eisen investigates the church music with which Mozart came into contact in Italy. Musical examples are provided by the Chamber Choir of King’s College, London, conducted by Edward Jones.

5.00pm Panel Discussion: ‘A Very Musical Education’ – Mozart’s 1770 Italian Tour: A distinguished panel chaired by James Jolly, Editor in Chief of Gramophone magazine, discusses the significance, benefit and influence of Mozart’s travels through Italy during 1770. Speakers include Cliff Eisen, Sergio Durante and Ian Page.

7.30pm Concert 2: The Road to Rome: including Symphony No. 10 in G major K.74 and a concert aria composed for the celebrated soprano Lucrezia Agujari, alongside thrillingly virtuosic arias and duets by Piccinni, Celoniati and Mysliveček.

Sunday 8 March

2.00pm Illustrated Talk: Mozart’s First String Quartet: Distinguished writer and musicologist Sergio Durante – Professor at the University of Padua, a member of the Mozart Academy in Salzburg and a former De Bosis Lecturer at Harvard University – explores the context of Mozart’s first string quartet, composed in Lodi in March 1770.

3.30pm Concert 3: The Commission: featuring opera highlights by Galuppi, Jommelli and Gasparini that had a significant influence on Mozart; the programme includes fascinating comparisons between Mozart’s music for *Mitridate* and corresponding arias from Gasparini’s 1767 setting of the same libretto.

For the full festival programme visit: www.classicalopera.co.uk/whats_on/mozart-in-italy/

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For further information please contact

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Notes to Editors:

MOZART 250

In 2015 Ian Page launched MOZART 250 – a ground-breaking 27-year project following the chronological trajectory of Mozart’s life, works and influences. Each year MOZART 250 explores the music being composed and performed exactly 250 years previously, thereby placing Mozart’s life and music in context, and this major initiative has already incorporated music by over thirty composers.

The Mozartists – [full biography here](#)

The Mozartists were launched in 2017 as an extension of Ian Page’s work with his internationally acclaimed period-instrument ensemble Classical Opera and are among the world’s leading exponents of the music of Mozart and his contemporaries. Renowned for their fresh and stylish performances, their ability to discover and nurture outstanding young artists, and their imaginative and illuminating programming, they have performed most of Mozart’s stage works, as well as operas by J. C. Bach, Gluck, Haydn, Arne, Telemann, Jommelli and Hasse. In 2012 they embarked on a major new recording cycle of the complete Mozart operas and their discography also includes ‘The A-Z of Mozart Opera’ (Sony Classics, 2007, re-launched on Signum Classics in 2014), ‘Blessed Spirit – a Gluck retrospective’ (Wigmore Hall Live, 2010), Thomas Arne’s *Artaxerxes* (Linn Records, 2011), ‘Where’er You Walk’, a programme of arias composed for the celebrated English tenor John Beard, featuring Allan Clayton (Signum Classics, 2016), ‘Perfido!’ – a programme of concert arias by Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven sung by British soprano Sophie Bevan – which was shortlisted for the 2017 International Opera Awards, (Signum Classics, 2017), and ‘Mozart in London’ (Signum Classics, 2018), which was selected as Recording of the Month in Gramophone and Limelight magazines.

Ian Page – [full biography here](#)

Ian Page is the founder, conductor and artistic director of The Mozartists, formerly known as Classical Opera. He has conducted most of Mozart’s operas, 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* and Jommelli’s *Il Vologeso*, and the first new 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 Studio Theatre, he conducted Handel’s *Ariodante* with the Drottningholm Palace Theatre, Sweden.

Ian is deeply committed to nurturing and championing outstanding young singers and players – for several years he was a professor at the Royal College of Music, and he has given masterclasses for the Guildhall School of Music & Drama and The Royal Opera’s Jette Parker Young Artists Programme. He is also a passionate spokesman for classical music, opera and the arts, and has broadcast on BBC 4 and Sky Arts, as well as making many radio appearances.