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## Great masterpieces and forgotten treasures in the 2019-20 season from The Mozartists and Classical Opera

- Ian Page leads a season exploring Mozart's music in the context of his life and the work of his predecessors and contemporaries: *"Our programme for the season strikes a careful balance between great masterpieces and forgotten treasures, and we have assembled an outstanding line-up of soloists."*
- Performances in three London concert halls and in Birmingham, Paris and Siracusa (Sicily)
- Ground-breaking MOZART 250 series being performed over 27 years continues with *Mozart in Italy* and a retrospective of 1770
  - The company presents concert performances of *Così fan tutte*
  - Explorations of *Mozart's Czech Mates* and *Mozart's Keys*
- Guest soloists include singers Regula Mühlemann, Chiara Skerath and Benjamin Appl and fortepianist Ronald Brautigam
- First volume of a 6-CD series of recordings devoted to *Sturm und Drang* among new releases on Signum Classics

Ian Page and The Mozartists brought their current season to a close last night (8 July) at Wigmore Hall with an all-Mozart concert exploring the composer's travels across Europe, which was broadcast live on BBC Radio 3 (available [here](#)). Following this triumphant season finale, the company today announces its 2019-20 season.

The 2019-20 season presented by The Mozartists/Classical Opera opens on 19 September 2019 with a concert featuring soprano Regula Mühlemann at Wigmore Hall, affirming Conductor and Artistic Director Ian Page's reputation for imagination, insight and a questing spirit in programming and casting.

Ian Page comments on the 2019-20 season: *"Our programme strikes a careful balance between great masterpieces and forgotten treasures, and we have assembled an outstanding line-up of soloists."* Fans of historically informed performance in London, Birmingham, Paris and the Sicilian

city of Siracusa can look forward to fresh, stylish and illuminating performances under Page's direction.

The qualities of The Mozartists – which were formed in 2017 to develop the work Ian Page began 20 years previously with Classical Opera – are summed up in the critical response to 2018's 2CD set on Signum Classics, *Mozart in London*, which grew from a pioneering themed weekend staged in 2015 at London's Milton Court:

- “A real box of delights.” *Presto Classical* (Editor's Choice, Finalist for Recording of the Year)
- “One of its constant pleasures is the young British performers' sheer gusto. Ian Page's musicians, The Mozartists, bounce along on their period instruments with an alert attack, succulent tones (woodwinds especially) and no signs of panting or strain. [The] singers take spine-tingling leaps into the stratosphere and always come up smiling.” *The Times*
- “Page's knack for choosing interesting singers yields contributions from eight highly capable soloists ... Nevertheless, the star of the show is the superb orchestra, which never sounds in the least bit perfunctory or formulaic.” Gramophone (Recording of the Month, July 2018)

### **Regula Mühlemann opens the season**

When soprano Regula Mühlemann took the title role in *La finta semplice* for Classical Opera in 2018, Opera magazine spoke of “such tonal beauty and purity of well-shaped line as instantly to melt the heart”. On 19 September 2019 at Wigmore Hall she opens the season for The Mozartists with three Mozart concert arias and Susanna's ‘Deh, vieni’ from *Le nozze di Figaro*. Ian Page and the orchestra complete the programme with two Haydn symphonies, Nos. 6 and 80.

### ***Così fan tutte***

Following *Le nozze di Figaro* in 2012 and *Don Giovanni* in 2016, Classical Opera completes the Mozart-Da Ponte trilogy with three concert performances of *Così fan tutte* in November 2019: at London's Cadogan Hall (6 Nov), Town Hall Birmingham (8 Nov) and the Teatro Comunale in Siracusa, Sicily (10 Nov – part of Martin Randall Travel's sell-out ‘Mozart in Sicily’ Festival). Ana Maria Labin leads the cast as Fiordiligi, and is joined by Emily Edmonds (Dorabella), Rebecca Bottone (Despina), Matthew Swensen (Ferrando), Benjamin Appl (Guglielmo) and Richard Burkhard (Don Alfonso).

### **At the heart of the season: *Mozart in Italy* (MOZART 250)**

A themed weekend is at the heart of the 2019-20 season: *Mozart in Italy*, which takes place at Cadogan Hall on 6, 7 and 8 March 2020. *Mozart in Italy* continues MOZART 250, Ian Page and The Mozartists' ground-breaking chronological exploration of Mozart's life, music and influences performed over 27 years – matching the timescale of Mozart's creative output. Each year, MOZART 250 programmes works written by Mozart and his contemporaries exactly 250 years previously.

In 2020 MOZART 250 embarks on its sixth year. In 1770 the teenage Mozart made the first of three highly successful visits to Italy. The weekend will feature symphonies, concert arias and extracts from the vocally spectacular opera *Mitridate, re di Ponto*, written by Mozart for Milan, and the opportunity to discover operatic works by Guglielmi, Piccinni, Mysliveček and Jommelli – some unperformed since the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Joining Ian Page and the Mozartists will be soloists such as

sopranos Ana Maria Labin and Chiara Skerath and tenor Stuart Jackson, and leading Mozart scholars Cliff Eisen and Sergio Durante.

### **1770 – a retrospective (MOZART 250)**

The season's other MOZART 250 event is *1770 – a retrospective*. Taking place at Wigmore Hall on 9 January 2020, it features symphonies by Johann Christian Bach and the Czech composer Johann Baptist Vanhal, and arias and duets by Gluck, Haydn and Mozart. Ian Page has discovered and nurtured many outstanding young artists over the years, and here the soloists are soprano Samantha Clarke, this year's recipient of the Guildhall School's Gold Medal, and mezzo-soprano Ida Ränzlov who, following studies at the Royal College of Music, is now a member of the opera studio at the Staatsoper Stuttgart.

### **Mozart's Keys**

Combining operatic arias with major orchestral works, *Mozart's Keys* begins a three-concert series with the celebrated fortepianist Ronald Brautigam over several seasons built around the keys which most inspired Mozart. The first concert in this series takes place on 30 April 2020 at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, and features the key of E flat major as its guiding force, as Samantha Clarke sings arias from *Le nozze di Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*. Ronald Brautigam, appearing with Page and The Mozartists for the first time, is the soloist in the Piano Concerto No 22, and the programme is completed by the virtuosically vivacious Symphony No. 39.

### **At La Seine Musicale in Paris: Mozart et Haydn à Londres**

On 22 June 2020, The Mozartists' make their debut at La Seine Musicale, the architecturally striking cultural complex that opened on the outskirts of Paris in 2017. The concert is part of the season presented by La Seine Musicale's resident Insula Orchestra, and comprises works written in London by Mozart and Haydn, including three symphonies and works for soprano and orchestra by JC Bach and Haydn, sung by Paris resident Chiara Skerath.

### **Mozart's Czech Mates**

*Mozart's Czech Mates* concludes the season on 14 July 2020 at Wigmore Hall. This programme explores Mozart's links and friendships with outstanding Bohemian composers who had moved to Vienna, and includes symphonies by Vanhal and Leopold Koželuch alongside arias by Mozart himself, Gluck, Josef Mysliveček and Jiří (also known as Georg) Benda. The soloist joining The Mozartists is soprano Chiara Skerath, one of Classical Opera's Associate Artists. Skerath received high praise from Opera magazine for her contribution to the company's 2018 staging of Mozart's *La finta semplice*: "... the delightful singing [and] vitality of Chiara Skerath was a constant pleasure."

### **Recordings on Signum**

#### ***Sturm und Drang, volume 1***

In Spring 2020 Ian Page and The Mozartists release volume 1 of a projected new 6-CD series of recordings on Signum Classics exploring the 18<sup>th</sup> century musical movement known as 'Sturm und Drang'. This first volume features repertoire which was composed during the 1760's, and opens with the finale of Gluck's *Don Juan* ballet, which is often cited as the birth of musical 'Sturm und Drang'. The disc's other centrepieces are Haydn's Symphony No. 49 in F minor, 'La Passione', with its long, brooding opening adagio (is this the only symphony in which all four movements are in the same key?), and the lesser-known Symphony in G minor by Franz Ignaz Beck. The disc also includes soprano Chiara Skerath performing darkly atmospheric arias by Haydn, Traetta and Jommelli.

### ***Apollo et Hyacinthus***

Classical Opera's acclaimed 2012 recording of Mozart's first opera *Apollo et Hyacinthus* (written when the composer was 11 years old), is re-issued on the home of the ensemble's other Mozart recordings, Signum Classics, in Autumn 2020.

On the recording's initial 2012 release, Gramophone wrote:

*"With inspiring conducting, lissom and, where apt, punchy orchestral playing, and first-rate singing from company regulars, their performance of this thoroughly charming intermedio could hardly be bettered."*

The outstanding cast features Lawrence Zazzo and Sophie Bevan in the title roles, with Klara Ek, Christopher Ainslie and Andrew Kennedy, accompanied by the vibrant period instruments of The Orchestra of Classical Opera conducted by Ian Page.

[www.classicalopera.co.uk](http://www.classicalopera.co.uk)

**Images are available to download [here](#)**

For further press information please contact Nasarene Asghar at Premier:  
020 7292 7350 | [Nasarene.Asghar@premiercomms.com](mailto:Nasarene.Asghar@premiercomms.com)

### **About Classical Opera & The Mozartists**

Classical Opera, founded in 1997 under the direction of Ian Page, is one of the world's leading exponents of the works of Mozart and his contemporaries. It is renowned for its vibrant, fresh and stylish performances, for its ability to discover and nurture outstanding young artists, and for its imaginative and illuminating programming.

Following the launch of Ian Page's ground-breaking MOZART 250 and a broadening of repertoire, incorporating symphonies and concertos, oratorios and concert arias as well as operas, the company launched The Mozartists in 2017 to reflect and facilitate this expanding strand of work on the concert platform.