

CLASSICAL CLUB

Michael Collins: Clarinet at the Clock Tower

Weber: Clarinet Quintet in B Flat Major, Op.34

Mozart: Clarinet Quintet in A Major, K.581

London Mozart Players

Michael Collins: clarinet



Coming soon...

With artists from the Young Classical Artists Trust



Bows and Oboes

Strauss: Concerto in D major for Oboe
Mendelssohn: Symphony No.4 in A major, Op.90 'Italian'

Mateusz Moleda: conductor
Olivier Stankiewicz: oboe

*Broadcast date: 7pm, Thursday 15 October
 Filmed at Fairfield Halls, Croydon*

Inspired by a chance wartime meeting between the composer and a soldier, Strauss's spirited Oboe Concerto is in fact exceptionally difficult to play, with circular breathing a pre-requisite. This concert showcases two artists destined for stardom, oboist Olivier Stankiewicz and conductor Mateusz Moleda. Mendelssohn's jaunty Italian Symphony is an extra treat. The concert comes from Fairfield Halls, Croydon, where London Mozart Players has enjoyed a 30-year residency.



Celebrating Beethoven

Beethoven: Coriolan Overture, Op.62
Beethoven: Violin Concerto in D, Op.61

Jonian Ilias Kadesha: violin

*Broadcast date: 7pm, Sunday 15 November
 Filmed at St John's Smith Square*

To celebrate Beethoven's 250th anniversary, LMP performs his Coriolan Overture and Violin Concerto. The overture reflects the contrasting moods of Heinrich von Collin's play – Coriolan's aggression and his mother's gentle pleading. Beethoven's revolutionary Violin Concerto, performed by rising star and YCAT artist Jonian Ilias Kadesha, takes us on an exhilarating journey from a lyrical first movement to a joyous rambunctious finale. It's a hugely satisfying masterpiece, and the perfect work with which to salute Beethoven's genius.



Michael Collins: Clarinet at the Clock Tower

Broadcast on 7pm, Thursday 1
 October. Filmed at St Pancras
 Clock Tower.




Weber: Clarinet Quintet in B Flat Major, Op.34
Mozart: Clarinet Quintet in A Major, K.581

London Mozart Players
Michael Collins: clarinet

Violin 1 – Simon Blendis
 Violin 2 – Jenny Godson
 Viola – Judith Busbridge
 Cello – Sebastian Comberti

Keep in touch!

If you have enjoyed this concert and would like to hear more about the London Mozart Players then do sign up for our newsletter via our website.

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You'll get to hear first about all our upcoming concerts and exclusive events, and enjoy priority booking and special offers.

Programme notes

This programme of clarinet quintets is a real celebration of friendship and innovation. Both pieces were written for particular clarinetists who were close friends of each composer, and both collaborations led to works which pushed the boundaries of what was then possible for the clarinet. Both are major milestones in the history of music for the clarinet.

Carl Maria von Weber Clarinet Quintet in B Flat Major

- i) Allegro
- ii) Fantasia
- iii) Menuetto, capriccio presto
- iv) Rondo, allegro giocoso

Weber probably would have known Mozart's Clarinet Quintet, written just 22 years earlier in 1789 in Vienna. However, despite their temporal and geographical proximity, the two works feel remarkably different. In Weber's quintet the clarinet takes the role of soloist with the strings often playing an accompanying role, allowing the player to show off a dazzling array of virtuosic techniques. This contrasts with Mozart's quintet, in which the five voices tend to be engaged in a more equal dialogue, and tells us something about the clarinetists

Audio examples




Our programme notes refer to specific points of interest which you may like to listen to – we've supplied a Spotify reference to a recording of Weber's Clarinet Quintet by the Carducci Quartet and Mozart's Clarinet Quintet by the Arcanto Quartett.

for whom the quintets were written, and the development of the clarinet as an instrument.


The quintet was begun in 1811, an important year for Weber. The previous few years had been difficult. He fell into debt, was charged with embezzlement and bribery and eventually banished from Wurttemberg. But by 1811 he had settled in Heidelberg and started to build a new life. He was beginning to make new musical friends and was enjoying a period of cultural invigoration in Germany. (It may be interesting to note that the Grimm's fairy tales were published not far away in Kassel the following year in 1812). In March he made a visit to Munich where he met Baermann, a virtuoso clarinetist who was famous for the warmth of his tone 'which has not the slightest strain or shrillness in it, both of which are so common among clarinetists'.

The two became friends and in September 1811 Weber started sketches of a quintet,


and presented three movements of the work to Baermann for his birthday on 13th April 1813. He did not complete the fourth and final movement until two years later. At the time Baermann had recently started playing a clarinet with ten keys made by Griessling und Schlott, which opened up new technical possibilities. One of these was greater ease with chromatic scales, something which Weber exploited with virtuosic chromatic runs in the first movement of the quintet but also with particularly magical effect in the second movement:

 2:36 on track two on the Carducci Quartet recording.


Here he also uses the expanded dynamic range of the clarinet, from *fortissimo* to *pianissimo*. The use of varied dynamics, and swells within a note, also features at the very opening of the quintet with the clarinet's first entry which grows from an almost inaudible *pianissimo* to a singing *mezzo forte* before it takes over the melody from the strings:

 Beginning of track one on the Carducci Quartet recording.

The third movement, a capricious Minuet and Trio, shows off the clarinet's increased capacity for fast finger-work, and quick leaps between high and low register:

 Beginning of track three on the Carducci Quartet recording.

The fourth and final movement feels especially operatic, with an energised string accompaniment and particularly dramatic dialogue between the string 'chorus' and the clarinet's soprano voice.

 0:35 on track four on the Carducci Quartet recording.

Throughout the quintet, Weber's wit and humour shine through. There is an operatic feel to the music, perhaps not surprising given Weber's strong connection to opera. His first professional post at the age of 17 was the director at the Breslau Opera and he later went on to be director of the Prague Opera and Dresden Opera where he composed the successful operas *Der Freischutz*, *Euryanthe* and *Oberon*.


Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart Clarinet Quintet in A Major

- i) Allegro
- ii) Larghetto
- iii) Menuetto – Trio I – Trio II
- iv) Allegretto con variazioni

Mozart's clarinet quintet was also born out of a friendship, in this case with the Viennese clarinetist Anton Stadler who, along with his brother Johann, was a member of the court orchestra in Vienna, and an important figure in the growing acceptance of the clarinet as an orchestral instrument. He was also a member of the same Freemasons order as Mozart. Anton specialised in the lower registers and experimented with a new instrument with an even lower range which is now generally known as the basset clarinet. This is the instrument for which Mozart wrote the clarinet quintet, although it is now most often performed on the clarinet in A, just one semitone lower than a clarinet in B flat, but with a richer and mellower tone.

The premiere took place on the 22nd December 1789, with Stadler playing the clarinet part and Mozart himself playing the viola. This spirit of friendship permeates the work, and the clarinet is in true conversational dialogue with the string instruments, weaving in and out of melodic and harmonic roles throughout the piece. This is especially clear in the first movement, in the way that the clarinet

enters halfway through the first theme, passing its second theme back to the cello:

 Opening of first movement on the Arcanto Quartett recording.

Like Weber, Mozart was a master of vocal writing and operatic style, and this is particularly apparent in the clarinet quintet. It was in fact written at the same time that he was working on *Così fan tutti*. In particular the second movement is an exquisite aria for the clarinet, supported by muted strings and joined in a duet by

Déjà vu?

Lovers of Mozart's Clarinet Concerto will recognise some similar passages and phrases in the clarinet quintet. Both are written in A major and both were written for Anton Stadler, Mozart's friend and collaborator, to be played on the instrument that Stadler invented, the basset clarinet. Musically, the first theme of the first movement of both the concerto and the quintet begins with a falling minor third, then the second movements are in the same key (D major) and are very similar despite different tempo markings. There is even a direct quotation of two bars in the second movement of the Quintet of the clarinet line in the Concerto's second movement. But then when the tune is this good, why waste it on just one work?

the first violin in the reprise. And the last movement really feels like a chamber opera for a cast of five. It is a set of theme and variations, in which the characters talk, joke, dance and lament. Variation three is particularly striking, in which the viola takes the lead with a melancholy line, while the clarinet takes its place in the middle register of the quartet.

This melancholy voice, originally played by Mozart himself, is perhaps the true heart of this work. Despite the sunny key of A major and the optimism of the first movement, the piece was written during an extremely difficult year for Mozart in

which he struggled with financial difficulties and the ill-health of his wife Constanze. As H.C. Robbins Landon writes in *Mozart: The Golden Years*: 'Parts of [the Quintet] seem to reflect a state of aching despair, but the whole is clothed not in some violent minor key, but in radiant A major. The music smiles through the tears...'

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Clarinet Concerto revisited

During lockdown in May, as part of LMP's 'At Home with LMP' lockdown offering, clarinettist Michael Collins talked us through the best-loved of all clarinet works, Mozart's Clarinet Concerto.

Basset clarinets, concertos and Mozart – an introduction



What does a soloist think about when playing the sublime second movement? Michael reveals all...



But if you'd just like to hear Michael playing the Clarinet Concerto in full:





The London Mozart Players, the UK's longest established chamber orchestra, was founded in 1949 by Harry Blech to delight audiences with the works of Mozart and Haydn. The orchestra is known for its unmistakable British roots. Over the last seventy years, the LMP has developed an outstanding reputation for adventurous, ambitious programming from Baroque through to genre-crossing contemporary music, and continues to build on its long history of association with many of the world's finest artists including Sir James Galway, Dame Felicity Lott, Jane Glover, Howard Shelley, Nicola Benedetti, James Ehnes, John Suchet and Simon Callow. The orchestra enjoys an international reputation, touring extensively throughout Europe and the Far East, most recently Dubai and Hong Kong, and records frequently for Naxos, Chandos, CPO, Signum and Hyperion Records.

The London Mozart Players has remained active throughout the pandemic. Not only was this player-led chamber orchestra the first ensemble to offer daily unique online content throughout lockdown with 'At Home with LMP' (225,000+ views), it was also the first UK orchestra to perform after restrictions were lifted in mid-June, with their LMP Live! concert series with Tasmin Little and Jennifer Pike attracting an audience of over 1 million via Classic

FM's social media channels. And now LMP is in the vanguard of UK orchestras testing the waters with paid-for online orchestral concerts to support their musicians, rather than relying on donations.

If you have enjoyed this performance, please go online and find out more about LMP's Classical Club: eight concerts filmed in unusual or iconic venues in front of socially-distanced audiences and streamed online via a password-protected broadcast platform. You can buy an eight-concert 'Season Pass' for £60, with an 'early bird' price of £50 if booked before 10 October. LMP Friends get a further discount. Concerts will be available to view on demand up until 1 December.

LMP has partnered with Scala Radio, who will promote this exciting series, and they'll also be hosting extra content via their website.

Michael Collins

Michael Collins is one of the most complete musicians of his generation. With a continuing, distinguished career as a soloist, he has in recent years also become highly regarded as a conductor. Recent guest conducting and play-directing highlights have included engagements with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra and the Zurich Chamber Orchestra. From 2010 – 2018 he was the Principal Conductor of the City of London Sinfonia.



Recent highlights include a return to the Philharmonia Orchestra as conductor; performances worldwide with orchestras including Minnesota Orchestra, Swedish Chamber Orchestra, the Rheinische Philharmonie, Kyoto Symphony Orchestra, BBC Concert Orchestra and Kuopio Symphony Orchestra. In July 2018 he performed at the BBC Young Musician 40th Anniversary BBC Prom. He also recently hosted a series of 'Michael Collins and Friends' concerts at LSO St Luke's, recorded for broadcast on BBC Radio 3, featuring the Heath Quartet, Leonard Elschenbroich, Lawrence Power and Michael McHale.

Michael Collins has been committed to expanding the repertoire of the clarinet for many years. He received the Royal Philharmonic Society's Instrumentalist of the Year Award in 2007 in recognition of his pivotal role in premiering repertoire by some of today's most highly regarded composers.

Michael's ensemble, London Winds, celebrated its thirtieth anniversary in 2018 and the group maintains a busy diary with high calibre engagements such as the BBC Proms, Aldeburgh Festival, Edinburgh Festival, City of London Festival, Cheltenham International Festival and Bath Mozartfest.

In the Queen's Birthday Honours of 2015, Michael Collins was awarded an MBE for his services to music. He plays on Yamaha clarinets.

LMP is delighted to announce the appointment of Michael Collins as its Artistic Director in Residence for the 2021–2023 seasons – encompassing Michael's 60th birthday.

Become an LMP Friend

Our wonderful LMP Friends are a vibrant community of music lovers who receive exclusive benefits and association with the orchestra and its musicians, whilst helping to support the future of the London Mozart Players.

For an annual fee, our Friends enjoy a range of benefits including exclusive access to the players, discounted tickets, special events and free programmes. For example, LMP Friends were able to purchase a Classical Club 8-concert pass for just £35.

We have various membership packages available, starting from £60 (£100 for a couple) and you can join via our website: londonmozartplayers.com/lmp-friends

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CLASSICAL CLUB

A Classical Celebration!

Prokofiev: Classical Symphony
Schumann: Cello Concerto

Maciej Kulakowski: cello

Watch online right now!

Donate to support

This online 8-concert series is LMP's response to the Covid-19 pandemic. When lockdown began in March 2020, all the orchestra's live music, recordings and education events were cancelled, along with all the related income. LMP immediately went online to share its music and daily unique content for free through initiatives like 'At Home with LMP' and 'LMP Live!' which attracted more than 1.3 million views. You can still enjoy this content via our YouTube channel.

LMP's Classical Club was launched behind a paywall to try to recoup revenue lost throughout 2020, and to ensure that as one of Britain's finest chamber orchestras, we will be ready to face a new future.

As an unfunded orchestra, we rely on the generous donations of our audiences, patrons and donors as well as ticket sales. These funds help support our community work, build inspiring partnerships, as well as helping us to protect the livelihoods and mental wellbeing of musicians and staff, all of whom have been greatly impacted at this time.



Whilst concert hall doors may be closed, we are determined to continue bringing world-class music to as wide an audience as possible. By making a donation today, you can help ensure that our work can continue both now, and in the future.

Thank you.

londonmozartplayers.com/donate-now



CLASSICAL CLUB

Broadcast Dates

A Classical Celebration!

Available to watch now
Venue: St John the Evangelist
Prokofiev Symphony No. 1,
'Classical' Op.25
Schumann Cello Concerto
in A minor, Op.129
Maciej Kulakowski cello

Façade at Freemasons' Hall

Thursday 8 October 7pm
Venue: Freemasons' Hall
Walton Façade: An Entertainment
Samuel West narrator
Benjamin Pope conductor

Bows and Oboes

Thursday 15 October 7pm
Venue: Fairfield Halls, Croydon
Strauss Concerto in D major for
Oboe and Small Orchestra, AV 144,
TrV 292 **Mendelssohn** Symphony
No.4 in A major, Op. 90, Italian
Olivier Stankiewicz oboe (YCAT soloist)
Mateusz Moleda conductor

Children's Concert – Little Red Riding Hood

Thursday 29 October, 10am
Venue: The Great Conservatory, Syon Park
Patterson/Dahl Little Red Riding Hood
Polly Ives narrator

Children's Concert – The Three Little Pigs

Saturday 31 October, 10am
Venue: The Great Conservatory, Syon Park
Patterson/Dahl The Three Little Pigs
Polly Ives narrator

Stravinsky: A Soldier's Tale

Remembrance Sunday 8 November, 3pm
Venue: Royal Hospital Chelsea
Stravinsky A Soldier's Tale
Tama Matheson narrator
William Vann conductor

Celebrating Beethoven

Sunday 15 November, 7pm
Venue: St John's Smith Square
Beethoven Coriolan Overture, Op.62
Beethoven Violin Concerto
in D major, Op.61
Jonian Ilias Kadesha violin (YCAT soloist)



CLASSICAL CLUB
NEXT CONCERT

Façade at Freemasons' Hall

Walton: Façade:
An Entertainment

Samuel West: narrator
Ben Pope: conductor

Watch online from 7pm
on Thursday 8 October







CLASSICAL CLUB

Little Red Riding Hood

Paul Patterson: music
Roald Dahl: words

Polly Ives: narrator

Watch online from 10am
on Thursday 29 October







CLASSICAL CLUB

Stravinsky: A Soldier's Tale

Tama Matheson: narrator
Will Vann: conductor

Watch online from 3pm on
Remembrance Sunday
8 November



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