

MOZART

CLARINET QUINTET, K. 581

“KEGELSTATT” TRIO, K. 498

Owen Watkins, *clarinet*

Jaap Schröder, *viola*

Penelope Crawford, *fortepiano*

Skálholt String Quartet



WOLFGANG AMADÉ MOZART

CLARINET QUINTET IN A MAJOR, K. 581**

CLARINET TRIO IN E FLAT MAJOR, K. 498*

“KEGELSTATT”



Owen Watkins, *basset clarinet** and clarinet*

Jaap Schröder, *viola**

Penelope Crawford, *fortepiano*

Skálholt String Quartet**

(Jaap Schröder, Rut Ingólfssdóttir, *violins*;

Svava Bernharðsdóttir, *viola*; Sigurður Halldórsson, *cello*)

WOLFGANG AMADÉ MOZART (1756 – 1791)

CLARINET QUINTET IN A MAJOR, K. 581

1	<i>Allegro</i>	9'25
2	<i>Larghetto</i>	6'28
3	<i>Menuetto</i>	7'42
4	<i>Allegretto con variationi</i>	9'45

Owen Watkins, *basset clarinet*

Skálholt Quartet

(Jaap Schröder, Rut Ingólfssdóttir, *violins*;

Svava Bernharðsdóttir, *viola*; Sigurður Halldórsson, *cello*)

CLARINET TRIO IN E FLAT MAJOR, K. 498

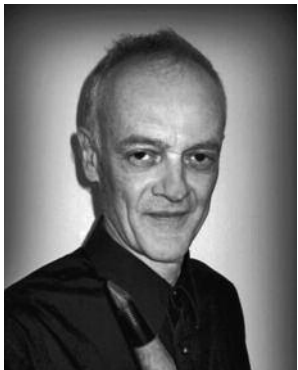
5	<i>Andante</i>	5'36
6	<i>Menuetto</i>	5'43
7	<i>Rondeaux – Allegretto</i>	8'30

Owen Watkins, *clarinet*

Jaap Schröder, *viola*

Penelope Crawford, *fortepiano*

Total Time: 53'12



Owen Watkins

clarinet

Owen Watkins performs on recorder, baroque oboe, and early clarinets. He has performed and recorded with many premier ensembles in the USA, Europe and Australia, including *Boston Baroque*, the *Handel and Haydn Society*, *Boston Camerata*, *Washington Bach Consort*, *Australian Brandenburg Orchestra*, *Pinchgut Opera* and *Orchestra of the Antipodes*, *Orchestra 1788* and the *Cambini Quintet*. A graduate of the Sydney Conservatorium on clarinet and recorder, Owen Watkins

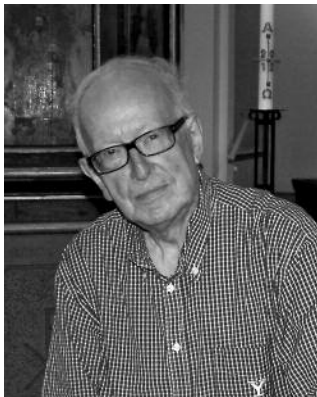
also undertook post-graduate study on recorder at the Sweelinck Conservatory in Amsterdam with Walter van Hauwe and baroque oboe with Stephen Hammer at Boston University where he graduated with a M.Mus degree. Owen has also taught on the faculty of Sydney Conservatorium. He worked from 2006 – 2013 at the Friedrich von Huene Workshop in Brookline, MA making recorders, before re-locating to Daylesford, Victoria to oversee the Frederick Morgan workshop. He has also collaborated with Joel Robinson making historical clarinets. On the *Musica Omnia* label Owen has recently recorded the Mozart and Beethoven Quintets for piano and winds (MO 0501), the Christmas Oratorio (MO 0101) and several cantatas of J. S. Bach (MO 0204).

Penelope Crawford *fortepiano*

Internationally acclaimed as one of America's master performers on historical keyboard instruments, Penelope Crawford has appeared as soloist with modern and period instrument orchestras and as recitalist and chamber musician throughout North America. From 1975 to 1990 she was harpsichordist and fortepianist with the *Ars Musica Baroque Orchestra*, one of the first period instrument ensembles in North America.

Ms. Crawford teaches a doctoral seminar in piano performance practices of the 18th and 19th centuries at the University of Michigan. She also taught for twenty-five years on the artist faculty of the Oberlin Baroque Performance Institute. From 1992 through 2008 she was a member of the Atlantis Trio & Ensemble, recording much of the early Romantic literature for fortepiano and string ensemble (Felix and Fanny Mendelssohn, Robert & Clara Schumann, Franz Schubert and Sigismond Thalberg. For *Musica Omnia* she has recorded Schubert's *Die Schöne Müllerin* and *Winterreise* with Dutch baritone, Max van Egmond (MO 0107 & 0108) and another Schubert Lieder recital with soprano Martha Guth. A further solo fortepiano recital CD, devoted to works by Schubert, Schumann and the Mendelssohns appears on the *Loft* label. Her solo CD devoted to Beethoven's last three piano sonatas (Op. 109 – 111: MO 0308) won general acclaim and was selected by Musicweb as one of its CDs of the year for 2011; it was followed by a second installment (Opp. 78, 81a, 90 & 101 - MO 0510) in 2014.





Jaap Schröder *violin & viola*

Jaap Schröder, the famous Dutch violinist first came to Iceland in 1993, directing and performing as soloist with The *Skálholt Bach Consort* as well as lecturing on playing Baroque music on period instruments. Every year since then he has participated in the Skálholt Summer Concerts Festival. Jaap Schröder, founder of the *Skálholt Quartet* is an expert in the violin repertoire of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries and one of the pioneers

in authentic performance of music from this period. He was the leader of *Quartetto Esterhazy* and *Smithson String Quartet*, performing and recording classical quartet repertoire for the first time on period instruments. He has taught in Basel, Switzerland, and at Yale University and the Smithsonian Institution in the US, where he is honorary professor. Jaap Schröder has made countless recordings of early music, both in Europe and America for many record labels. In Iceland he has been soloist and leader on nine CD recordings for the “Smekkleysa” label. With his Atlantis Trio and Ensemble, Jaap Schröder has recorded many CDs for Musica Omnia, including major works for strings and fortepiano by Franz Schubert (MO 0212 & MO 0310), Robert & Clara Schumann (MO 0207, 0211, 0212), Felix & Fanny Mendelssohn (MO 0105, 0205, 0304) and Sigismond Thalberg (MO 0211).

The members of the Skálholt String Quartet have for many years been part of a group of musicians who participate in the concerts of the summer festival at the cathedral of Skálholt in southwest Iceland. The quartet focuses on historical performance practice of the music of the Classical and early Romantic eras. Their career began in 1996 when the members were asked to form a quartet to perform the *Seven Last Words of Christ on the Cross* in Skálholt, Iceland and a year later in France (Abbaye de la Prée, Bourges). After that the Skálholt Quartet was invited to play in the Haydn festival that takes place every year in the magnificent Esterhaza palace in Western Hungary, also performing Haydn's *Seven Last Words* in the nearby church where Haydn was once organist. A concert in Ljubljana, Slovenia, concluded this trip to central Europe. Their repertoire in the meantime has steadily widened and the quartet's first disc, containing the Haydn *Seven last Words* was recorded in the church at Skálholt in 2003, with a second disc devoted to quartets by both the Haydn brothers and Boccherini. In 2006 the group presented its first concert in Amsterdam, and since then has performed throughout Holland, France, Italy and Spain. A principal project of the Skálholt String Quartet is to record Schubert's string chamber music for the *Musica Omnia* label. In 2010 they recorded the string quintet with two 'cellos (joined by Bruno Cocset), the following year saw the G major Quartet, D. 887 and the G minor Quartet, D. 173. In 2012 they completed the cycle with the quartets in D minor (D. 810, "Death & the Maiden"), A minor (D. 804, "Rosamunde") and E flat Major, D. 87. The members of the Skálholt Quartet are Jaap Schröder & Rut Ingólfssdóttir, violins; Svava Bernharðsdóttir, viola; and Sigurður Halldórsson, 'cello.



MOZART:

CLARINET QUINTET K. 581 & CLARINET TRIO (“KEGELSTATT”) K. 498

Mozart's three great works for various kinds of clarinet – the “Kegelstatt (Bowling-Alley) Trio, K. 498, the A major Quintet, K. 581, and the Clarinet Concerto in the same key, K. 662 all owe their existence to Mozart's association with his friend and fellow Freemason, Anton Stadler (1753 – 1812), who was an innovative performer on and designer of clarinets – an instrument that assumed particular importance towards the end of the 18th century. Stadler's activities as designer and travelling virtuoso brought the possibilities of the newest of wind instruments to general European attention, but it was his association with one of the greatest of all composers that introduced the clarinet as an essential orchestral colour in symphonies and opera, and as a chamber and *concertante* instrument *par excellence*. The two works on this CD represent the sublime pinnacles of Mozart's essays in chamber music for clarinet, each displaying completely different aspects of the instrument's remarkable tonal, dynamic and emotional range.

Anton Stadler and his brother Johann played in many of Mozart's larger-scale works and were the inspiration for Mozart's extensive use of both clarinet and its larger cousin the basset horn in the symphonies, concertos and operas from the latter period of the composer's career. Anton Stadler had both designed and performed on an extended-range A clarinet, whose lower portion was extended by a special extension joint, resulting in an increased lower range of a major third compared to the standard instrument. For this basset clarinet Mozart composed his final works for solo clarinet: the Quintet, K. 581 and Concerto, K. 662. The earlier Trio, K. 498 was composed for the standard clarinet of the day, a smaller, higher-pitched instrument in B flat. All of these instruments differed considerably from the clarinet with which most performers and listeners are familiar today: they were made of boxwood and had relatively few keys. Like the brass instruments of the 18th century, different sizes of clarinet were employed to play in different keys.

The transmission of the texts of both the concerto and quintet was complicated by the vicissitudes of Stadler's adventurous career as travelling virtuoso, and Mozart's premature death in 1791. In Mozart's final year Stadler was granted leave by the Emperor Leopold VII from his position as court musician, playing principal clarinet in his private wind band (*Harmonie*). Initially he travelled with Mozart to Prague in order to play in the première of the composer's final opera, *La Clemenza di Tito*, in which Mozart provided Stadler two arias with solo *obbligati*, one each for clarinet and basset horn. At around this time Mozart took the 191 bars he had already laid out of the first movement of a concerto for basset horn and re-worked it for Stadler's extended-range A clarinet, completing it in short order in Vienna after his return from Prague as Stadler continued what would become a five year extended tour of Europe, taking in such cities as Berlin, St. Petersburg and Frankfurt. By the time the Emperor (Francis, son of the late Emperor Leopold) finally demanded his return, he was waylaid by the French armies surrounding Nuremberg, finally returning to Vienna in July, 1796, to find that his secure court position had been given to another. Stadler has entered the Mozart folklore as something of an "evil genius" – hitting Mozart

up for money when the composer himself was desperately attempting to secure loans himself. This appears to have had no effect on Mozart's esteem for him artistically or personally, as the works continued to flow from his pen.

Without permanent employment, and with a wife and family to feed, Stadler resorted to selling off the manuscripts of the great masterpieces that the now-deceased Mozart had composed for him, adapting them for the standard clarinet in order to increase their marketability. This has led to a distorted impression of these works, obscuring how they were originally conceived, and it has only been with the advent of reconstructions of instruments of the period and the interest of clarinetists in playing them that we can now fairly accurately reconstruct both the quintet and concerto in their original guises. The surviving fragments of manuscript drafts in Mozart's hand indicate that he spent much of 1789 conceiving a quintet for his favourite wind instrument and the most prestigious chamber medium: the string quartet. By 29 September he was able to enter the

completed composition into his catalogue. The work received its première on 22 December of the same year, in one of the four annual Vienna performances of the Tonkünstler-Societät, an organization that funded pensions for widows and orphans of musicians in the Nazional Hoftheater. The main item on the program was a cantata, *Il natale d'Apollo*, by Vincenzo Righini; Mozart's work was performed between the two halves of the cantata. The solo clarinet part was taken by Stadler, who led the work, the first violin part by Joseph Zister.

Mozart's final years were clouded by disappointments, financial chaos, failed subscription concerts and continued ill health, both of himself and his wife, Constanze, who was frequently pregnant as well. Against such a backdrop, and contrary to what might be expected, the quintet radiates serenity and warmth (underlined by its A major tonality), while displaying supreme mastery of form, perfect balance of sonorities and an extraordinary juxtaposition between *concertante* and chamber-ensemble roles of all the instruments – a perfect fusion of all the elements. The result is a work of almost otherworldly grace and purity, of unique sound and innovative combination of the string quartet medium with the most dynamically colourful of all wind instruments, the effect enhanced on this CD by

the use of a modern copy of an original “Stadler” clarinet, and a string quartet of period instruments using gut strings, appropriate bows and played by performers with the requisite knowledge and experience to handle them.

The Quinter's perfect blending of *concertante* and ensemble roles for all five instruments results in each stepping out at various points in a solo capacity and then seamlessly re-merging with the general ensemble. K. 581 contains some of Mozart's most delicate and subtle harmonic passages combined with his most beautiful and memorable melodies and also demonstrates the composer's interest in contrapuntal texture, a matter which concerned him more and more in his final years. The opening movement, where the strings' initial calm serenity is answered by virtuosic flourishes from the clarinet is an extended sonata-form piece, with a strongly contrasted first-and second-subject group, the move to the dominant underlined by the pizzicato bass of the cello. The brief development section takes the figure from the very first bars of the clarinet's entry and gives it to the strings, which treat it contrapuntally, against a series of arpeggios by the clarinet, encompassing a variety of tonalities before the inevitable return to the warm refuge of the home key. Several passages in the present recording depart from the

published version of 1801, restoring the extra low notes that Stadler had available on his extended-range clarinet.

The second movement is a supremely beautiful *da capo* aria, with the clarinet's sublime melody set against strings *con sordini* (with mutes). This movement shows Mozart's ability to draw everything from the simplest of resources, constructing a movement of great and timeless beauty. The "Eingang", or short cadenza for the solo clarinet that leads us back to the opening of the movement must have found special favour with Mozart, as it is repeated verbatim at the analogous position in the slow movement of the Clarinet Concerto, K.662. Perhaps it was Stadler's "signature".

Mozart provides an unusually extended *Menuetto* as the quintet's third movement – this one contains two separate trios, with full re-statements of the *Menuetto* in between. The first trio (in the parallel minor) provides the solo violin with a sadly expressive tune, while the clarinet is silent. The second trio is a clarinet solo, with the strings accompanying sparsely, while the solo instrument demonstrates its considerable range, traversing more than two octaves.

The final movement is a set of variations: four are individually numbered, followed by a slow and operatic *Adagio* and a final recapitulation

of the opening, compressed into a shortened coda. The theme is announced by the two violins in thirds, tersely answered by the clarinet in short, two-bar responses. Variation 1 gives the clarinet another opportunity to show off not only its range, but the ease with which it can suddenly traverse the extremes of its wide compass. The following variation is for strings, the clarinet reserving its comments for the second halves of each section. Then appears an almost comical minor-key "lament", this time by the viola, followed by the violin's weepy, descending chromatic scale. That this variation has its tongue planted firmly in its cheek is revealed by what follows – unbuttoned clarinet virtuosity in the form of rapid A major arpeggios, which must have dazzled Mozart's contemporaries and shown clearly what the clarinet was capable of as a truly virtuosic solo wind instrument, exceeding all others in physical, expressive and dynamic range. The fifth variation, though marked only *Adagio* in the score is notable for the ascending *glissandi* by the clarinet that open the second half. A brief, five-bar bridge passage leads to an apparent recapitulation of the opening theme, this time with the clarinet superimposing a counter-melody above the violins and leading to the coda, which brings Mozart's most perfect, profound and novel chamber work to a satisfying conclusion.

Mozart entered the completion date of 5 August into the manuscript score of the *Kegelstatt* Trio, K. 498, composed for the unusual combination of clarinet, viola and fortepiano, three of the instruments that were dearest to Mozart, two of which he played to the highest professional level himself. The German word *Kegelstatt* means a bowling alley. Mozart wrote that he had composed the 12 duos for French horns (not basset horns, as is commonly supposed) K. 487, while playing skittles. He indicated on the first page of the autograph manuscript “Vienna, 27 July 1786 while playing skittles” (“Wien, den 27ten Jullius 1786 untern Kegelscheiben”) – only about a week before he dated the E flat trio, K. 498. That explanation did not apply, however,

to this work, as the title was added by later publishers, who perhaps misunderstood the correct story, or created the legend. In any case, Mozart entered this work into his catalogue simply as “Ein Terzett für Clavier, Clarinett und Viola”, so the nick-name is bogus. The work was composed for Francisca Jacquin, a fine pianist (one of Mozart’s students and member of a family with which Mozart was friendly), while Anton Stadler played the clarinet (a standard instrument in B flat, this time), and Mozart indulged his passion for playing the viola. The trio was published in 1788 by Artaria, transcribed, probably with Mozart’s own approval, for violin, viola and piano, and the original clarinet part (which was written in the original



score at concert, rather than clarinet, pitch) described as an alternative version: *La parte del Violino si può eseguire anche con un Clarinetto*. It is a highly unusual chamber work within Mozart's output and experiments boldly with instruments, their colours and the roles they assume within the general texture. The standard trio with piano was for violin, with a fairly basic accompanying cello part, for much of the time doubling the piano's left hand, a remnant of the basso continuo role that the instrument had played during the Baroque period. It was more like a duo sonata with bass reinforcement, although the final trios by Mozart assign a more independent role to the cello. Not only does the *Kegelstatt* have no cello, thereby leaving the bass line solely to the piano's left hand, but the novel use of a wind instrument as the upper voice and a tenor string instrument in both melodic and accompanying roles gives a special raw, direct even rustic character to this work. The viola was the archetypical "middle voice" instrument, both in the orchestra and in chamber ensembles, and Mozart was one of the first composers to explore the instrument's solo potential in the *Sinfonia Concertante*, K. 364 from 1779 (also in E flat major), where the viola shares the honours with its smaller, more agile cousin, the violin.

In K. 498 Mozart kept the tempos of all three movements moderate: 1. Andante – 2. Menuetto (Moderato/Allegretto) – 3. Allegretto (Finale/Rondeaux), with never an Allegro or Presto anywhere in sight. The key throughout is either E flat major, or its dominant (so the entire work is composed in key signatures of either three or two flats), with an occasional excursion to a related minor key. This gives the work a kind of continuous homogeneity that blurs the distinctions between the individual movements. Mozart's genius for exploration of colours, textures and the subtlest interplay between harmony and counterpoint nevertheless ensures considerable variety during the work's nineteen-or-so minutes. It is as though Mozart deliberately set himself a test by essentially neutralizing distinctions in tempo and key centre, preferring rather to concentrate on the remaining harmonic, textural and colouristic elements created by his unusual juxtaposition of these three particular instruments.

The opening two movements are based on the simplest rhythmic and melodic elements: in the first a descending question/answer unison arpeggio for piano and viola, a kind of eight-bar ritornello before the clarinet's appearance as soloist (it sounds like a severely foreshortened reduction of a concerto movement).

The movement proceeds as a quartet: with contrapuntal interplay between the upper three voices: clarinet, piano right hand and viola, with the piano's left hand supplying the bass line that underpins everything. The opening movement follows the general outline of a shortened, through-composed sonata form, albeit without the usual exposition repeat, and with a somewhat unusual tonal preparation for the final reappearance of the second theme in the tonic of E flat.

The *Menuetto*, in the brighter dominant key of B flat is notable particularly for its contrasting trio section, in G minor, with the viola assuming the solo role, taken over by the piano's right hand in its second half. An eight-bar bridge passage returns us to the first *Menuetto*. The finale – designated *Rondeaux* (the French plural – either meaningful, as the rondo unusually consists of as many as seven sections or a typographical error), begins with a clarinet melody straight from the world of Mozart opera, which is then taken up by the piano, which enjoys considerable solo opportunities – this trio employs all three instruments in solo capacities, but the piano and clarinet receive the lion's share. In this movement the balance between

individual solos and ensemble texture is carefully poised. A dramatic episode in C minor for the viola involves triple-stopped arpeggiated chords answered by burbling triplets from the clarinet, followed by a bridge passage after which the viola assumes the main tune for the first time. Another episode takes the ensemble into the key of A flat major, then back to the tonic, with the clarinet resuming the primary role. A coda, during which all three instruments get to shine in final, rapid solo passages, ends the *Kegelstatt* trio.

Mozart's three seminal works for clarinet played a major role in establishing this particular instrumental tone colour in the sound world of the late 18th century and beyond. Suddenly the instrument turned up regularly in operas, concertos and symphonies, establishing itself as an essential voice in music. In addition to the composer we must give thanks to his friend and fellow Mason, Anton Stadler, regardless of the problems he undoubtedly created for his colleague, both during his brief life and in the transmission of these works to posterity.

-c. Peter Watchorn, Cambridge,
January 2015



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Oct 7 – 8, 2012 (K. 581)

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The Belvedere from Gesehen, Vienna
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