

MOZART

Clarinet Quintet, K. 581 Clarinet Quartet, K. 374f

József Balogh, Clarinet
Danubius Quartet



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 - 1791)

Quintet in A Major for clarinet and string quartet, K. 581

Quartet in E Flat Major for clarinet and string trio, K. 374f

Quintet in F Major for clarinet, basset horn and string trio,

KA. 90 (K. 580b) (completed by Franz Beyer)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born in Salzburg in 1756, the son of a court musician who, in the year of his youngest child's birth, published an influential book on violin-playing. Leopold Mozart rose to occupy the position of Vice-Kapellmeister to the Archbishop of Salzburg, but sacrificed his own creative career to that of his son, in whom he detected early signs of precocious genius. With the indulgence of his patron, he was able to undertake extended concert tours of Europe in which his son and his elder daughter Nannerl were able to astonish audiences. The boy played both the keyboard and the violin and could improvise and soon write down his own compositions.

Childhood that had brought Mozart signal success was followed by a less satisfactory period of adolescence largely in Salzburg, under the patronage of a new and less sympathetic Archbishop. Like his father, Mozart found opportunities far too limited at home, while chances of travel were now restricted. In 1777, when leave of absence was not granted, he gave up employment in Salzburg to seek a future elsewhere, but neither Mannheim nor Paris, both musical centres of some importance, had anything for him. His Mannheim connections, however, brought a commission for an opera in Munich in 1781, and after its successful staging he was summoned by his patron to Vienna. There Mozart's dissatisfaction with his position resulted in a quarrel with the Archbishop and dismissal from his service.

The last ten years of Mozart's life were spent in Vienna in precarious independence of both patron and immediate paternal advice, a situation aggravated by an imprudent marriage. Initial success in the opera-house and as a performer was followed, as the decade went on, by increasing financial

difficulties. By the time of his death in December 1791, however, his fortunes seemed about to change for the better, with the success of the German opera *The Magic Flute*, and the possibility of increased patronage.

The clarinet in its more primitive form, a simple single-reed instrument of cylindrical bore, has an ancient history. The chalumeau, the form of the instrument known in 17th century Europe, was developed at the beginning of the following century to give a wider and higher range, with two contrasting registers, the so called chalumeau or lower register and the upper flute-like notes, now possible with an additional register key. The clarinet won only gradual acceptance as an orchestral instrument, notably in Vienna with the brothers Johann and Anton Stadler, engaged in the Imperial wind band from 1773 and from 1787 in the court orchestra. Anton Stadler, specialising in the lower register, experimented with a form of the instrument with a still lower range, now generally known as the basset clarinet, for which Mozart wrote his *Clarinet Quintet* and *Clarinet Concerto*, both for Anton Stadler. The basset horn, an instrument also used by Mozart, particularly in his masonic compositions, and played by the Stadlers, is of the clarinet family, with a still lower range than that of Anton Stadler's basset clarinet.

The *A major Clarinet Quintet* was completed in Vienna on 29th September 1789, a time during which Mozart was busy with the composition of the opera *Così fan tutte*. The autograph of the Quintet is lost and it was first published by Johann André in 1802 as *Oeuvre 108* in the now familiar version for clarinet. It was first performed by Stadler at a concert on 22nd December 1789. The wind instrument as always adds a particular poignancy, a touch of melancholy, particularly evident in the slow movement. The Minuet has a first *A minor Trio* without the clarinet and a second in which it again has a more prominent part to play. In the last movement the third variation is in the tonic minor key, with attention now given to the viola, its mood quickly dispelled by the clarinet in the fourth variation, which is linked by an *Adagio* to the re-appearance of the theme, in a now elaborated texture.

After Mozart's death in December 1791, his widow Constanze came to an agreement with the publisher the younger Johann André, who in 1799 bought the remaining Mozart manuscripts and set about the preparation of a catalogue of his compositions, a list that remained incomplete but was of material assistance to Köchel, when he came to make his catalogue. In 1799 André published *Trois Quatuors pour Clarinette, Violon / Alto & Violoncelle composés par W. A. Mozart Oeuvre 79me*. Of these three quartets the first two are based on the sonatas for violin and piano K. 378 and K. 380 and the third is a version of the Piano Trio K. 496. It is improbable that these arrangements were by Mozart, but they have been plausibly attributed to André, who, like his father, was a not inconsiderable composer. The transcriptions make good use of the medium, with additional voices where these are called for and a convincing sharing of thematic material between violin and clarinet.

The Quartet in E flat major for clarinet, violin, viola and cello, is a version of the sonata for violin and piano, K. 380, written in the summer of 1781, Mozart's first period of independence from his anxious father and from a patron. It was published by Artaria as one of a set dedicated to his pupil Josepha Auernhammer, a girl whose charm lay in her piano-playing rather than in her appearance (ein Scheusal, according to Mozart in a letter to his father). The transcription provides a further interesting addition to possible clarinet repertoire in its dramatic first movement, followed by a melancholy G minor slow movement and a varied final rondo.

The unfinished Quintet in F major for clarinet, basset horn, violin, viola and cello has been conjecturally dated to the year 1789, the period of the completed Clarinet Quintet. It was presumably intended for the two Stadler brothers. Mozart completed the first movement as far as bar 46, but sketched in the principal thematic material up to the end of the exposition. The movement has been completed with a development and recapitulation added by Franz Beyer.

József Balogh

József Balogh was born in Pécs in 1956, studying first in his native city and then at the Liszt Academy in Budapest. In 1974 he was a prize-winner at the Prague Concertino Festival and joined the orchestra of the Hungarian State Opera in 1976, also serving as principal clarinet in the Hungarian Radio Orchestra. Since 1988 he has been on the teaching staff of the Budapest Academy. In 1989 he was awarded a scholarship to the Chicago Symphony Orchestra by Sir Georg Solti. He has won various awards, including first prize at the Graz International Competition in 1988, when he performed with his frequent colleagues of the Danubius Quartet.

Béla Kovács

Born in Tatbánya in 1937, Béla Kovács studied at the Ferenc Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest and from 1956 until 1981 was principal clarinetist in the Hungarian State Opera Orchestra. In 1969 he joined the teaching staff of the Liszt Academy. Béla Kovács is well known as a member of the Hungarian Wind Quintet and the Budapest Chamber Ensemble and as soloist in the first performances of a number of works by contemporary Hungarian composers. Awards in Hungary include the title Artist of Merit and the Kossuth Prize.



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STEREO

MOZART

DDD

Clarinet Quintet, K. 581 • Clarinet Quartet, K. 374f
 Quintet for Clarinet, Bass-Horn and String Trio

Playing
 Time :
 61'12"

József Balogh, Clarinet
 Danubius Quartet

Clarinet Quintet, K. 581 in A Major

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|---|--------------------------|--------|
| 1 | Allegro | (9:12) |
| 2 | Larghetto | (5:57) |
| 3 | Menuetto | (7:34) |
| 4 | Allegretto con Variation | (9:27) |

Clarinet Quartet, K. 374f in E Flat Major

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|---|-------------------|--------|
| 5 | Allegro maestoso | (6:57) |
| 6 | Andante con moto | (6:00) |
| 7 | Rondo: Allegretto | (4:28) |

**Quintet for Clarinet, Bass-Horn and String Trio,
 KA 90 (580b) in F Major**

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| 8 | (Béla Kovács, Clarinet • József Balogh, Bass-Horn)
Allegro | (11:18) |
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 from 23rd to 25th September, 1991 (Tracks Nos. 1-4, 8)
 and on 25th September, 1992 (Tracks Nos. 5-7).

Producer: Ibolya Tóth

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Music Notes: Keith Anderson

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