

# Imogen Cooper Plays Mozart

7pm, Friday, May 22

QPAC Concert Hall

**Conductor** Jari Hämäläinen

**Piano** Imogen Cooper

**Mozart** Serenade in D, K.239 *Serenata Notturna*

**Mozart** Piano Concerto No.23 in A, K.488

INTERVAL

**R. Strauss** Serenade for 13 wind instruments, Op.7 in E flat

**Grieg** *Peer Gynt* Suites No.2, Op.55 & Suite No.1, Op.46



# About the Artists

## Jari Härmäläinen, Conductor

Maestro Jari Härmäläinen is one of the newest conducting stars to come out of Finland. Recently named the Artistic Director of the Savonlinna Festival as of 2008, he has conducted such prestigious orchestras as the Munich Philharmonic, the Stuttgart Philharmonic, and leading opera companies such as Frankfurt and the Finnish National Opera.

Educated in Finland, Mr. Härmäläinen studied at the Sibelius Academy as a concert pianist. He was then engaged by the Finnish National Opera in Helsinki in 1985 as an assistant to the General Music Director and as a coach and conductor by the Savonlinna Festival. He remained there until 1990 in both capacities.

His initial engagement in Germany was in Hildesheim in 1990, and by 1992 he became the chorus master and Kapellmeister in Braunschweig under the tutelage of Stefan Soltesz and Brigitte Fassbaender. In 1997, Mr. Härmäläinen became the General Music Director and Musical Director of the Stadttheater Pforzheim and city orchestra. In 2003, he was named Opera Director and Intendant, the first Finn to hold such a position in Germany.

Maestro Härmäläinen's operatic repertoire is vast, having conducted over 45 operas from Beethoven's *Fidelio* and Hindemith's *Cardillac* to Verdi's *Don Carlo* and Puccini's *Tosca*. In 1999, he debuted with the Frankfurt Opera conducting *Don Giovanni*, and he made frequent guest appearances at the Finnish National Opera in 2002 and 2004, conducting *Carmen* with Agnes Baltsa in the title role along with Mozart's *The Abduction from the Seraglio*. In 2004, he appeared at Theater Regensburg, conducting Boito's *Mefistofele*.

Maestro Härmäläinen's orchestral repertoire is even more expansive, having led the prestigious Munich Philharmonic, Stuttgart Philharmonic, Württemberg Philharmonic Reutlingen, Südwestdeutsche Philharmonie Konstanz and the Philharmonic Orchestra of Regensburg. In addition to acting as

opera director and conductor, the maestro has maintained an active career as a Lied accompanist, appearing in recitals in Japan and Germany.

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## Imogen Cooper, Pianist

Recognised worldwide as a pianist of virtuosity and poetic poise, Imogen Cooper has established a reputation as one of the finest interpreters of the classical repertoire. She has dazzled audiences and orchestras throughout her distinguished career, bringing to the concert platform her unique musical understanding and lyrical quality.

In the 2008/9 season Imogen Cooper's performances include the Philadelphia Orchestra with Simon Rattle, Boston Symphony with Colin Davis, NHK Symphony and a tour with the London Symphony Orchestra and Daniel Harding. She also continues her long term relationships play/directing with the Britten Sinfonia and undertakes an extensive tour in Australia. Her solo, lieder and chamber recitals this season include the USA, UK, Netherlands, Australia and Japan. During 2008 and 2009 Imogen Cooper will be performing the last 6 years of Schubert's solo works as part of the International Piano Series in London. Last season her performances included the London Symphony Orchestra and Colin Davis in New York, the Netherlands Radio Chamber Orchestra with Frans Bruggen in Amsterdam and the only solo piano recital at Tanglewood.

Imogen Cooper has a widespread international career and has appeared with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra with Colin Davis and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra with Simon Rattle. She has also performed with the Royal Concertgebouw, Leipzig Gewandhaus, Dresden Staatskapelle and NHK Symphony Orchestras and undertaken tours with the Camerata Salzburg, Australian and Orpheus Chamber Orchestras. Imogen Cooper has played with all the major British orchestras including the



Jari Härmäläinen



Imogen Cooper

Philharmonia with Christoph Eschenbach and the London Philharmonic Orchestra with Mark Elder at the BBC Proms. Imogen Cooper has given recitals in New York, Chicago, Paris, Vienna, Rotterdam, Prague and at London's Wigmore and Queen Elizabeth Halls.

As a supporter of new music, Imogen Cooper has premiered two works at the Cheltenham International Festival; *Traced Overhead* by Thomas Adès (1996) and *Decorated Skin* by Deirdre Gribbin (2003). In 1996, she also collaborated with members of the Berliner Philharmoniker Orchestra in the premiere of the quintet, *Voices for Angels*, written by the ensemble's viola player, Brett Dean.

Imogen Cooper is a committed chamber music player and performs regularly with the Belcea Quartet. As a Lied recitalist, she has had a long collaboration with Wolfgang Holzmaier. They have performed recitals in many major venues including Vienna, Paris and London, and have made several recordings for Philips, the most recent release being a disc of Lied setting the poems of Eichendorff. She also performs frequently with the cellist Sonia Wieder-Atherton, their recordings include a CD set of Brahms Sonatas and Bach (RCA). Wolfgang Holzmaier and Sonia Wieder-Atherton both feature in the box set "Imogen Cooper and Friends" encompassing solo, chamber and lieder works (Philips). She has also recorded four Mozart Concertos with the Northern Sinfonia (Avie) and a solo recital at the Wigmore Hall (Wigmore Live).

Imogen Cooper received a CBE in the Queen's New Year Honours in 2007 and was the recipient of an award from the Royal Philharmonic Society in 2008.

# About the Music

## Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Serenade No.6 in D, K.239 *Serenata notturna Marcia (Maestoso)*  
*Minuetto*  
*Rondo (Allegretto – Adagio – Allegro)*

This 'nocturnal serenade' is one of the most individual of the pieces Mozart turned out for social occasions. It is basically a concerto grosso, but with unusual features. The composition of the concertino (soloists' group – two violins, viola and double bass – may mean that it was written for outdoor performance: this, it has been suggested, is the typical 18th-century scoring for an outdoor divertimento, whose players might arrive and depart playing on the march. A cello cannot readily be played on the move, whereas the double bass can be strapped to the player, and so can the kettledrums. Indeed, this serenade begins with a march. On the other hand, Mozart's autograph score bears the date January 1776, and it is unlikely that the music was played out-of-doors in winter.

Perhaps the best way to understand this work is that Mozart was using the conventions of outdoor music, with their suggestion of an *al fresco* style, as a substitute for the out-of-doors itself. The prominence given to the timpani is particularly noteworthy: the drums' presence in the ripieno (large group) balances the double bass in the concertino. Mozart makes the most of the effects of colour available from this combination of instruments. The first movement, a march, is restricted to a simple tonic-dominant basis because only two notes are available from the timpani. The sonority achieved by pizzicato strings with timpani is particularly original. The minuet, a rather grand one, has a trio for the concertino alone; the final *Rondo* is especially interesting in its episodes – one of them a poignant adagio leading to a sprightly contredanse. Einstein suggests that these episodes, contrasting so strikingly with the music surrounding them, are allusions to tunes known to the first audience which signified something special and amusing.

David Garrett © 2001

## Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Piano Concerto No.23 in A, K.488 (1786)  
*Allegro*  
*Adagio*  
*Allegro assai*

### Imogen Cooper piano

Two of the most often-played Mozart piano concertos are this one and the Concerto in D minor, K.466 (No.20). They are very different: the D minor concerto is tragic and powerful, bringing to the surface the depths of Mozart's pathos. It was especially admired in the Romantic era. In Concerto No.23, on the other hand, it is as though Mozart had retreated some way from such uncompromising self-declaration. Writing the concerto for himself to play in his subscription concerts during Lent 1786, he seems mindful of the need to entertain his public.

This concerto is one of Mozart's simplest and clearest, both in structure and in themes, and its solo part is among the least virtuosic. But in meeting his public halfway Mozart sacrifices none of his individuality. It is a wonder of the art of music how each of Mozart's great piano concertos can be so complete in itself, yet so different. Only in Haydn's quartets and symphonies can a parallel be found.

The individuality of the K.488 concerto results partly from Mozart's choice of key. After his return from Paris in 1778 he composed only six works in A major, the key of this concerto. These include the Clarinet Quintet K.581, Clarinet Concerto K.622, and the String Quartet K.464. The key of A major, as Mozart uses it in these works, has many colours, transparency, and also darker shadings and concealed intensities. Cuthbert Girdlestone, in *Mozart and his Piano Concertos*, says of the concerto's first movement: 'under the transparent guise of a cheerful exterior, the heart of the work is sad and its mood hovers between smiles and tears.'

The instrumentation contributes to the poetry and delicacy of the work. There are no trumpets and drums, and the woodwind,

without oboes, is coloured by the mellow sound of the clarinets. Mozart's scoring in this piece is often ethereal, always fastidious.

The first movement is very straightforward in form. At the conclusion of the orchestral exposition the piano enters with almost studied simplicity, re-stating the first subject. Only certain touches of minor keys ruffle the limpid surface. So far, it might be the only one of Mozart's piano concerto first movements which actually 'follows' the rules 'laid down' by textbooks. Yet the movement has certain original features, notably a new theme which begins the development. It is given out softly by the strings, recollected and tranquil, and sounds as though it is continuing a discourse rather than beginning a new one. Before the reprise of the exposition, which is hardly altered, there is a passage of drama, with throbbing basses – intense, but so fleeting it could easily be missed by an inattentive listener. Mozart instructed players who improvised their own cadenzas in this work to be brief. His own cadenza in this work is unique in his piano concertos for being fully written out in the score, rather than on a separate sheet.

Mozart's sketches show that he originally planned a slow movement in D, but rejected it in favour of one in F sharp minor, the only time Mozart ever used this key. Some sources give the tempo as *Andante*, though the manuscript has *Adagio*. The music is certainly both slow and sad – a sombre melancholy reigns. The rhythm is that of the *siciliano* dance, and the voice of the solo piano is intensely personal. Wide leaps imitate the contrasts of register of a singer – an effect more pronounced on the pianos of Mozart's day. There is an extraordinary passage in the recapitulation which rises to an almost painful pitch of sorrow, then a coda of resignation, where the rather sketchy piano part seems to demand some decorative filling-out by the soloist, though few have dared to tamper with Mozart's telling outline. This is the last minor-key slow movement Mozart was to write in a concerto, and is altogether one of the most

memorable things he ever created – almost unbearably perfect.

The last movement comes as a bracing, invigorating relief. The rondo theme – simple, verging on the trivial – contrasts with the richness of all the other material. Mozart only adopted this theme after rejecting a number of other starts, evidence of the care he took over one of his most satisfying finales. It is an uninterrupted race of melodies and rhythms, except for a pause of three-quarters of a bar, before the flute and bassoons set off the second subject. There is another striking moment when Mozart goes without preparation from A to D major, and introduces a theme as carefree and sauntering as its immediate predecessor had been searching. This has been compared to the entry of a new character in an opera finale, and indeed the high spirits of this rondo owe much to the *opera buffa* genre of which Mozart was the supreme master.

David Garrett © 1987

## Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

Serenade for 13 wind instruments in E flat, Op.7

Late in life Richard Strauss would occasionally conduct his Op.7 Serenade, muttering that it wasn't 'too bad for a music student'. He was only 17 at the time he composed this work, but he had been a music student of one sort or another for well over a decade. And of course he had grown up in the household of one of Germany's most eminent musicians, his father Franz Strauss.

Franz was the leading horn player in the German-speaking world, and had married into a wealthy brewing family in Munich, where he was principal horn in the Court Orchestra. He was, therefore, well connected both socially and musically, a situation which was of undeniable help to his son's career. Like Leopold Mozart, perhaps, Franz sought to influence Richard's musical development, and in particular to keep him from being

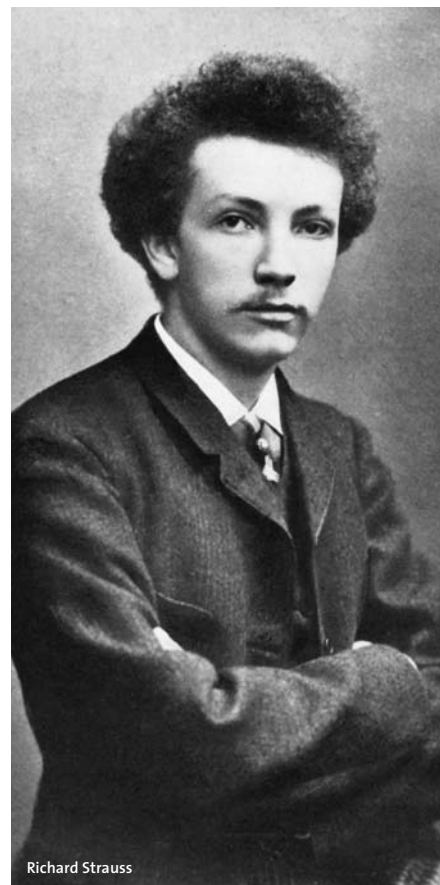
contaminated by the music of Wagner. As Richard later wrote, Franz's 'musical trinity was Mozart (above all), Haydn and Beethoven...' In other words Franz was an unapologetic classicist and Wagner music was anathema to him. Except that Franz was a frequent member of the Bayreuth Festival Orchestra, playing in the premiere performances of such works as *Parsifal* and losing no opportunity to bag Wagner's music in public. Wagner, for his part, was uncharacteristically tolerant, knowing that it was one way to have a great virtuoso playing music in which the horn is indispensable.

Franz's aesthetic influence is clear in the early Serenade Op.7, though the work is by no means *faux*-Mozart. The scoring for winds is in accordance with the classical serenade. Here Strauss uses two flutes, oboes and clarinets, four horns, two bassoons, with the bass provided by contrabassoon or bass tuba (there is an optional double bass part in the last two bars!). Unlike the classical serenade – always a multi-movement work – this is in a single movement, though it might be likened to the Andante movements of some of Mozart's. Like Mozart's, Strauss's sonata design doesn't spend much time developing themes in the symphonic sense, but rather takes great pleasure in generating beautiful melodies.

The piece had great consequences for young Strauss. It was the first of his works which had its premiere outside of Munich, being launched by the Dresden Tonkünstlerverein under Franz Wüllner in 1882. Wüllner had conducted the world premieres of two Wagner operas, and would introduce several new works of Strauss' over the next few years. More importantly, the piece found its way into the repertoire of the Meiningen Orchestra, conducted by the legendary Hans von Bülow. A publisher who had brought out two of Strauss' early works had been fobbed off by Bülow who wrote that Strauss was 'not a genius, at best a talent, 60% calculated to shock'. As a one time intimate of Wagner's, Bülow had himself come in for some tongue-lashings from Strauss' father so may have been understandably prejudiced, but he did like the Serenade and performed



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart



Richard Strauss

it widely. The Meiningen Orchestra included some extremely fine players: horn-player Gustav Leinhos must have enjoyed playing a part written with the expertise that Franz had taught his son; the principal clarinetist was Richard Mühlfeld for whom Brahms wrote his late clarinet-based masterpieces. In addition, Bülow commissioned a new piece, the Suite Op.4 for the same combination, which he arranged for Strauss to conduct in the younger man's podium debut. Bülow also brought Strauss to a deeper understanding of contemporary music, notably that of Brahms. The Serenade, then, was a pivotal work in many ways for the young Strauss. And as we've seen, it was a work that Strauss kept in his own repertoire.

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## Edvard Grieg (1843-1907)

*Peer Gynt* – Suites No.2, Op.55 and No.1, Op.46  
*Ingrid's Abduction and Lament*  
*Arabian Dance*  
*Peer Gynt's Return Home*  
*Solveig's Song*  
*Morning Mood*  
*Åse's Death*  
*Anitra's Dance*  
*In the Hall of the Mountain King*

It was Ibsen himself, the Norwegian dramatist, who asked Grieg in 1874 to write the music for a revised and staged version of his poetical drama *Peer Gynt*. Grieg was at first unenthusiastic about the project, commenting later on the dance of the Mountain King's daughter: 'I have written something... which smacks so much of cow dung, ultra-Norwegianism and self-satisfaction that I quite literally cannot bear to listen to it...' Ironically, Grieg's music has become more popular than the play, especially the two suites for orchestra made by the composer.

Ibsen's central character, Peer, is reckless, irresponsible, boastful, and a storyteller full of imagination. He lives with his aged mother Åse, until he elopes with an heiress, Ingrid, on

her wedding day, because Solveig spurns him. Deserting Ingrid, Peer becomes an outlaw, and in the mountains meets the daughter of the Troll King. He is attacked by the Trolls, and saved only by the sound of church bells which puts them to flight. Hiding in a hut in the wood, he is found by Solveig, who loves him. But he cannot stay with her until he has cast off the load of his past. Peer goes to his mother, who is dying, and 'rides her into heaven'. Then he is off again, to adventures in America, Morocco and Egypt, lasting a quarter of a century. He tries to seduce and is robbed by Anitra, a Bedouin chief's daughter. When he returns home, older, wasted, Death comes to claim him, because he has never lived according to his self. But in the search for one more chance to redeem himself, Peer finds Solveig, now old and blind who affirms that Peer has lived as himself, in her love.

The forceful side of Ibsen's story is not what most people expect from Grieg. Debussy described Grieg's music as 'a pink sweetmeat stuffed with snow'. But Grieg's range was greater than Debussy suspected, notably in *Peer Gynt*. The two orchestral suites give only eight of the 23 numbers, and in an order quite unrelated to their place in the drama.

### Ingrid's Lament

At the end of Act One, Peer abducts Ingrid but by the following morning (Act Two) he has tired of her. Her *Lament* (*Andante doloroso*) contains some of Grieg's most passionate music.

### Arabian Dance

Muted strings joined by triangle in a *tempo di mazurka* – in the Sahara, Peer is entertained by dancing girls.

### Peer Gynt's Return Home

Grieg's unexpected power is revealed again in this tone poem, as the old but still energetic Peer returns to Norway, where his ship is driven on the rocks by a storm.

### Solveig's Song

Grieg made a version for orchestra alone of the song of Solveig as she waits for Peer's return. Perhaps the best-known and loved of Grieg's

musical inspirations, it is one of his most direct imitations of Norwegian folk song.

### Morning Mood

The Prelude to Act IV, for all its travelogue associations, is intended to evoke sun breaking, not on Norwegian fjords and mountains, but on the Sahara desert where Peer's adventures have taken him.

### Åse's Death

This poignant elegy for muted strings is played as Peer's mother dies peacefully after reminiscing with her son of happier times.

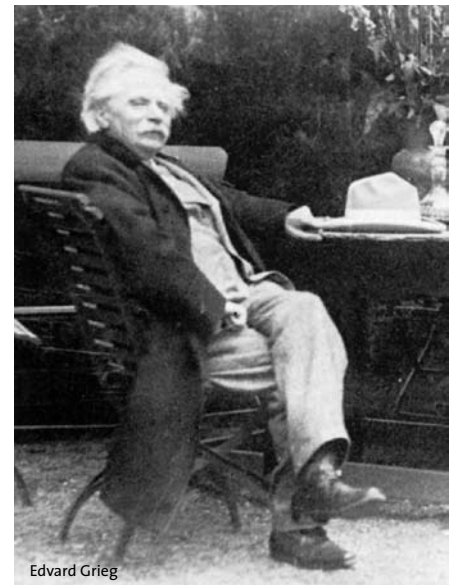
### Anitra's Dance

The most beautiful of the Arabian girls, Anitra, does a special dance for Peer, but will rob him. Grieg wanted this dance performed 'in a really nice and delicate manner...treated like a little pet'.

### In the Hall of the Mountain King

Grotesquery and power depict the Troll kingdom. There is a chorus in the original version as the Trolls set on Peer to slay him.

David Garrett ©1998



Edvard Grieg