

composer for it.

In its small forces (the orchestra has only two oboes, two horns, and the standard string ensemble) it is suited for the salon. In line with the standard concerto form, the two soloists wait for the orchestra to present the opening material of the first movement, then take it up in unison. The movement as a whole is most charming in the dialogue-like writing for the flute and harp and in its overflowing lyricism. The second movement is accompanied only by the string section (the violas are divided into two parts for a richer sound). It is warm, uncomplicated, and somewhat florid. The finale is a lively rondo with a veritable parade of attractive tunes. The concerto as a whole, notwithstanding its background, stands as one of the most pleasant mementos of Mozart's Paris sojourn, which would continue to reverberate stylistically through the rest of his output.

Mozart

CLARINET CONCERTO K.622 • FLUTE AND HARP CONCERTO K.299
ALFRED PRINZ clarinet • WERNER TRIPP flute • HUBERT JELLINEK harp
VIENNA PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA • KARL MÜNCHINGER



Of the works which Mozart composed for the outstanding Viennese clarinetist Anton Stadler (1753–1812), the Clarinet Quintet in A, K581, written in 1789, and the present Concerto in A, completed less than two months before the composer's death in 1791, are the crowning achievements. Work on the Concerto was started in 1789. Mozart originally intended the work to be for basset horn, but revised it for clarinet. However, the version widely known today differs from the work Mozart produced for Stadler, since the original version was written for an instrument with an extended bass compass that allowed Stadler to demonstrate his famed ability to play low notes. The transcription for standard clarinet (published ten years after Mozart's death) therefore requires an octave transcription of the notes that cannot be produced on it, which changes the color of the work. The first performance was given by Stadler on 16 October 1791, not in Vienna, but at his benefit concert in the Prague Theatre. It therefore seems certain that the composer never heard the composition that has become one of his best known. Cast in the usual three movements, the gentle, nostalgic lyricism of much of the Clarinet Concerto has drawn such epithets as "valedictory" and "autum-

nal," an assessment that downplays the extraordinary vigor and verve of this inspired work.

At the end of March 1778, Mozart and his mother, Maria Anna, finally arrived in Paris after a prolonged stay in Mannheim (where Mozart had fallen in love with Aloysia Weber). On April 5 Maria Anna reported to Leopold (who had to remain in Salzburg) that Wolfgang had received a commission from the flute-playing Duke of Guines and his harpist daughter, who was taking music lessons from the composer. The commission, for a concerto for flute and harp, could hardly have inspired the young composer, who professed a dislike for both solo instruments and generally despised French musical taste, but he delivered the concerto dutifully. The combination of flute and harp, moreover, is a difficult one; "as a duo," notes writer Ethan Mordden, "they sound like a nymph going bonkers in a plashing spring." In spite of all this, however, the work is often played and is a perennial crowd-pleaser. Orchestras have few other opportunities to put their harpists on display in a concerto. Like almost everything else that happened on his trip with his mother to Paris, this concerto caused Mozart trouble; the Duke failed to pay the

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Clarinet Concerto In A Major, K.622

1 Allegro 12:44

2 Adagio 7:11

3 Allegro 9:30

Flute And Harp Concerto In C Major K.299

4 Allegro 11:20

5 Andantino 8:18

6 Rondo. Allegro Cadenza – Karl Rosner 9:54

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Producer: Christopher Raeburn Engineer: James Brown



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