

## mozart...NOT MOZART

### Williams Chamber Winds

7 December 2006

*In the sense that God can only be defined as God, so the music of Mozart can only be defined as music. Some say he was the last composer to distill music's pure essence. We tolerate the limitations because of that truth.*

Anthony Burgess, *On Mozart*

Celebrating the end of the Mozart year, the Williams Chamber Winds is pleased to present **“mozart...NOT MOZART”**: a concert-juxtaposition of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's sublime, seven-movement *Serenade in B-flat*, KV 361 (370a)—also known as “*Gran Partita*”—with Louis Andriessen's ironic homage *M is for Man, Music, Mozart*, also in seven movements. Tonight's performance will alternate movements from the two pieces, allowing Mozart and Andriessen to engage in a musical dialogue across more than two centuries—and thus hopefully provoking a new understanding and appreciation of the works of both artists. The concert is book-ended by Andriessen's “Eisenstein Song.” Written as the final movement of *M is for Man, Music, Mozart*, the song reveals Mozart as “a man bringing himself, melody, and mathematics into perfect and enviable proportions—only more so, much more so.” Tonight, we allow Andriessen's version to begin the concert, setting the stage, so to speak, for Mozart's supreme wind achievement; to end the concert, then, both ensembles will combine to once again offer the song—it now being an apotheosis, a confirmation of the genius of both Mozart and Andriessen.

### **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** ***Serenade in B-flat*, KV 361 (370a)** **“*Gran Partita*”**

*And then, right away, the concert began. I heard it through the door—some serenade—at first only vaguely, too horrified to attend. But presently the sound insisted—a solemn Adagio in E-flat. It started simply enough: just a pulse in the lowest registers—bassoons and basset horns—like a rusty squeezebox. It would have been comic except for the slowness, which gave it instead a sort of serenity. And then suddenly, high above it, sounded a single note on the oboe. It hung there unwavering, piercing me through, till breath could hold it no longer, and a clarinet withdrew it out of me, and sweetened it into a phrase of such delight it had me trembling. The light flickered in the room. My eyes clouded! The squeezebox groaned louder, and over it the higher instruments wailed and warbled, throwing lines of sound around me—long lines of pain around and through me. Ah, the pain! Pain as I had never known it. I called up to my sharp old God, “What is this?...What?!” But the squeezebox went on and on,*

### **Louis Andriessen (b. 1939)** ***M is for Man, Music, Mozart* (1991)**

*“My friends at the Conservatory played jazz; they were not the typical music students—pretty girls who play Mozart. I was totally uninterested in that.”*

Louis Andriessen (b. 1939, in Utrecht, Holland) is, without question, the most significant living Dutch composer—and, by most accounts, he is one of Europe's most eminent and influential composers. His music blurs the boundaries between “high” and “low” arts, not just in his choice of instruments (often dominated by wind, brass, pianos, and electric guitars), but also in his musical language, which combines a jazz/rock aesthetic with post-WWII intellectualism. He has explored in relation to music, the subjects of politics, time, velocity, matter and mortality in five works for large

and the pain cut deeper into my shaking head, until suddenly I was running, dashing through the side door, stumbling downstairs into the street, into the cold night, gasping for life. "What?! What is this? Tell me, Signore! What is this pain? What is this need in the sound? Forever unfulfillable, yet fulfilling him who hears it, utterly. Is this Your music? Can it be Yours?..." Dimly the music sounded from the salon above. Dimly the stars shone on the empty street. I was suddenly frightened. It seemed to me that I had heard a voice of God—and that it issued from a creature whose own voice I had also heard—and it was the voice of an obscene child!

With these words, in Peter Shaffer's play *Amadeus*, the composer Antonio Salieri extols the genius of Mozart while questioning the relationships between art and artist, between man and God. Through Salieri, Shaffer asks why God would seem to bestow genius so indiscriminately, indifferent to morality or human decency: Shaffer's Salieri worships Mozart's music yet is consumed by a jealous hatred of the selfish, repugnant creature who creates it. What relationship is there between the goodness of a person and the genius of her creations? Tantalizing as these questions (and Shaffer's play) may be, Salieri's comment is interesting for another reason: he is talking about the "Adagio" from Mozart's *Gran Partita*! While Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart is regarded as one of the greatest and most significant composers in the history of Western art music—largely due to his operas, symphonies, piano pieces, and string chamber works—his serenades and divertimenti are no less striking or innovative; in fact, his three wind serenades—his *Harmonie*—are arguably the finest works of the genre and are considered among Mozart's finest creations. And so, when Shaffer needed to select a work to demonstrate Mozart's brilliance, he didn't pick the *Requiem*. He didn't pick the "Jupiter" symphony. No, instead he picked a wind serenade—the "Gran Partita."

Harmoniemusik refers to a musical genre written for pairs of woodwind instruments within the period 1750-1835. A typical

ensemble: *De Staat* (1976), *De Tijd* (1981), *De Snelheid* (1983), *De Materie* (1985-88), and *Trilogy of The Last Day* (1996-97).

When asked how he became a composer, Louis Andriessen will usually answer: "I merely joined my father's business." The Andriessen family boasts generations of musicians, beginning with Louis's great-grandfather Cornelis (1816-1893), a choir conductor and music teacher, and his grandfather Nicolaas (1845-1913), a prominent Dutch organist. Louis grew up hearing the music that was admired by his father Hendrik (1892-1981) and brother Juriaan (1925-1996), both composers and his first two teachers. As Louis recalled, his father "favored a French classicist approach to music. Music was extremely important as an objective beauty, and we should therefore realize that we are not important, it is the music that is important. That means that almost any French composer was better than any German Romantic composer. He also liked Stravinsky a lot..." Juriaan was influential in introducing Louis to American jazz of the 1940s and 50s, especially the music of Count Basie and Stan Kenton. As Andriessen readily admits: "I must say that what was the most influential on my music, when I look back now, was the big-band culture: the writing, settings, arrangements, the harmonies of large groups of brass instruments. It all came from Stan Kenton, Dizzy Gillespie, and others." Andriessen also professes an admiration of Maurice Ravel, whom he believes to be the first truly avant-garde composer, and for Olivier Messiaen, with whom he "shares a fascination of harmony." Beginning in the 1970s, Andriessen began to accept minimalism as an important influence, incorporating aspects into his style for both political and aesthetic reasons. Andriessen, however, does not believe his music sounds much like American minimalism:

*"It has not the cosmic sound of those pieces which Reich and Glass wrote at the same time. What is different from my music is that in America there is not enough angst! I'm much more aggressive, I would say."*

Harmoniemusik ensemble would consist of 3-4 pairs of wind instruments: bassoons and horns, with either oboes or clarinets, or both. In a sense, these were the popular music ensembles of the time, playing a significant part in the social lives of the aristocracy and bourgeoisie. Each of the royal courts throughout Europe employed a personal Harmonie, to provide entertainment for themselves and for their distinguished guests, not only during dinner, but also in private and public concerts. In 1782 Emperor Joseph II appointed a Harmonie of the finest available players, including the Stadler brothers on clarinet and Johann Nepomuk Wendt on oboe. Although many composers contributed original works for the medium, the repertoire consisted mainly of full-length transcriptions of operas and ballets. Recognizing both the craze that transcribing operas for winds had become in Vienna and their financially lucrative nature, Mozart himself began arranging selections of his *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, writing to his father on 20 July 1782: "I am up to my eyes in work, for by Sunday week I have to arrange my opera for Harmonie. If I don't, someone will anticipate me and secure the profits...You have no idea how difficult it is to arrange a work of this kind for Harmonie, so that it suits these instruments and yet loses none of its effect." (The Symphonic Winds performed Wendt's arrangement of Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* in 2004.) Mozart even included Harmoniemusik in two of his operas: first, a Harmonie ensemble offers a serenade during a garden scene in *Così fan tutte*; and second, the dinner music in *Don Giovanni* (Finale, Act I) contains a transcription of his "*Non più andrai*" from *Le nozze di Figaro*, to Leporello's witty comment "*Questa poi la conosco pur troppo*" ("I know this all too well"). The "*Gran Partita*," though, is without question the gem in the original Harmonie repertoire. While most divertimenti were written in a light style and were intended for social occasions rather than formal concerts, the "*Gran Partita*" is striking not just for its seriousness of artistic content, but also for its length and instrumentation: its seven movements exceed

Andriessen describes his musical style: "From Stravinsky to Steve Reich, from the gamelan to Miles Davis and Stan Kenton, this is all part of my musical language. But one thing is clear: I almost completely shied away from the nineteenth century [Romanticism]." He takes as the ultimate compliment the indictment made by Dutch playwright Karst Woudstra: "That Andriessen is a bloody classicist!" He epitomizes the Hague School sound: loud, aggressive, rhythmically energetic, and devoid of all neo-Romantic sentiment).

A self-professed Marxist and Catholic, Andriessen was very involved in socio-political movements in the 1960s and 70s in the Netherlands. He played an active role in the increasing politicization of the arts put into practice during the Holland Festival in 1969 with the collective work *Reconstructie*, a music-theatre morality based on Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and the life of Che Guevara, composed jointly with four other former students of Van Baaren. Later the same year Andriessen was involved in the infamous *Notenkrakersactie* ("Nutcracker"), the disruption of a concert by the Concertgebouw Orchestra, whose artistic policy the protesters regarded as reactionary. (Andriessen and his colleagues leapt onto the stage, papering the hall with leaflets while sounding noise-makers, during a performance of the Flute Concerto by Quantz, creating a minor riot.) This controversial act has since come to be seen as a turning-point in postwar Dutch musical life, as what has been termed the "ensemble culture" of Holland emerged.

For Andriessen it led to a near-permanent abandonment of the medium of the symphony orchestra and a reevaluation of the "materials and methods of musical production." In 1971, together with his friend jazz saxophonist Willem Breuker, Andriessen assembled a band of nine musicians (three saxophones, three trumpets, and three trombones)—some of whom were jazz players, some of whom were classical players—who were committed explicitly to redefining the role of musical per-

the usual form of most serenades, and at almost 50 minutes in length, it is longer than all of Mozart's symphonies; and—with four pairs of woodwinds instead of the usual two or three pairs, four horns instead of two, and the addition of a string bass—the “Gran Partita” transcends the conventional limits of the genre and reveals Mozart's affinity for the graciousness and clarity of wind ensembles.

Interestingly enough, for a work regarded as one of Mozart's masterpieces, virtually every piece of information commonly known about the time and place of composition of this work has been shown to be incorrect in research by Daniel Leeson and David Whitwell: it was not written in 1780 or 1781 in Munich (the years that correspond to the work's two Köchel catalogue numbers, and led to the belief that the serenade was somehow connected to his *Idomeneo*), it was not played at Mozart's wedding supper (a myth perpetuated by a recent recording entitled “Gifts for My Wife” which pairs “Gran Partita” with Wagner's *Siegfried Idyll*), it was not written at two separate times (as two separate serenades—movements 2, 3, 7 and movements 4, 5, 6, with both “sharing” the first movement), nor is the “Gran Partita” title even Mozart's own! (In an unknown hand, the words “Gran Partita” are sketched on the work's cover. Mozart, though, never called any of his pieces partitas—only divertimenti or serenades. Despite its dubious origin, the title has stuck, though—and the work is generally known today as “Gran Partita.”)

It is now widely held that the work was written for a benefit concert for Mozart's friend (and fellow Freemason), the clarinetist Anton Stadler. (Mozart would later compose his Clarinet Quintet and Concerto for Stadler, too.) The work seems to have been immediately recognized as a musical phenomenon; the event was advertised on 23 March 1784: “Herr Stadler senior, in the present service of His Majesty the Emperor, will hold a musical concert for his own benefit, at which

formance in socio-cultural terms; as Andriessen wrote at the time, the group was trying to “uncover the relationships between the conception of music (phase 1, the composer), the production of music (phase 2, the performing musicians), and the consumption of music (phase 3, the listeners) and to change them.” These were musicians who were protesting the Vietnam War, capitalism, and the commodification of music; they believed that music could change the world (or at least be a part of a process), and so they sought to create musical experiences that would point to a different conception of society.

With Andriessen on the piano, the yet-unnamed ensemble debuted on 12 May 1972 at the Carré, as part of an Inclusive Concert (marathon programs that juxtaposed “all” types of music, from free jazz improvisations and avant-garde offerings to Medieval motets, 19<sup>th</sup>-century Romantic pieces and folk songs from around the world), performing Andriessen's *In C*-inspired *De Volharding* (whose Socialist title, “Perseverance,” resonates throughout The Netherlands). As the debut performance was wildly successful, the ensemble decided to remain together; and so, when a flutist, hornist, and bassist joined the group after the premiere, the Orkest de Volharding was born: a thirteen-member ensemble, that performs standing shoulder-to-shoulder, dedicated to the creation of new music and the development of new socio-musical relationships.

Volharding is a democratic ensemble; members not only each have a say in how music will be performed, but they also select the music to be performed, where it will be performed, and so on. The idiosyncratic “sound” of Volharding is characterized by extreme individualism and a lack of homogeneous blending, described by Andriessen as “loud, out of tune, and asynchronous.” Andriessen is fond of labeling the project of Volharding as “de-hierarchizing,” music; in an attempt to create the “Terrifying Orchestra of the Twenty First Century,” Andriessen intended Volharding to be “an

will be given, among other well-chosen pieces, a great wind piece of a very special kind composed by Herr Mozart.” An influential critic Johann Schink reviewed the concert, writing: “My thanks to you, brave virtuoso! I have never heard the like of what you contrived with your instrument. Never should I have thought that a clarinet could be capable of imitating the human voice as it was imitated by you. Indeed, your instrument has so soft and lovely a tone that no one with a heart can resist it—and I have one, dear Virtuoso; let me thank you.” However, it is the first sentence of Schink’s review that has led to much confusion: “I heard music for wind instruments today...by Herr Mozart, in *four* movements—glorious and sublime! It consisted of thirteen instruments, viz. four corni, two oboi, two fagotti, two clarinetti, two basset-corni, a contre-violon, and at each instrument sat a master—oh, what an effect it made—glorious and grand, excellent and sublime!” Only four movements—not the seven we have today. It is inconceivable, however, that Mozart would have written such a rich and complex piece for any other occasion or for other musicians; indeed, if the piece was written for Stadler, that would explain the presence of the basset horns (a lower, mellow clarinet, pitched in F)—that was the instrument of his brother! In addition, as Leeson and Whitwell contend, all of the manuscript and documentary evidence points to the work being conceived and composed as a seven-movement whole in 1784—two years after his wedding to Constanze. More than likely, Stadler felt the work was too physically demanding to perform in one concert. In fact, the work is likely to receive, in the next edition of the catalogue, a new Köchel number—449a— which would reflect that “*Gran Partita*” was written, in fact, *after* Mozart’s other two wind serenades (K. 375 in E-flat and K. 388 in c-minor).

The first movement is unusual for several reasons: first, because it is prefaced by a dignified, imposing slow introduction (in which the primacy of the first clarinet is subtly, but

orchestra that vigorously and vociferously breaks with the division between ‘high’ and ‘low’ art”—or, in the words of Tira Gijs, to remove the “ludicrous discrepancy between the two forms of music, jazz and classical.” Many of the initial pieces that comprised Volharding’s repertoire were composed by Andriessen: *De Volharding*, *Volkslied*, *Worker’s Union*, *Dat gebeurt in Vietnam*, *On Jimmy Yancey*, and *Hymne to the memory of Darius Milhaud* (which was given its American premiere by the Symphonic Winds 23 March 2006), to name but a few.

When Andriessen was commissioned by BBC in 1991 to compose a film score that would be part of a television movie (and now DVD entitled *Not Mozart*) that would be an irreverent alternative to the respectful homages being offered to Mozart during the Bicentennial of his death, Andriessen immediately decided that the work should be written for Volharding since he was he already preparing to write a piece to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the ensemble; now as we close the latest *Mozartjahr*, celebrating his 250<sup>th</sup> birthday, this clever, ironic tribute seems most appropriate again. Andriessen immediately suggested Peter Greenaway, known for such avant-garde and controversial films as *Prospero’s Books* and *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife, Her Lover* (and with whom Andriessen has since collaborated on two operas: *Rosa: Death of a Composer* [1994] and *Writing for Vermeer* [1999]), as his filmmaker/collaborator. Andriessen said: “I like his films very much, and I recognize in his work what I like in music: this combination of aggression, and strangeness and extreme formalism...I think that, in Greenaway’s films, I recognize something of my own work, namely the combination of intellectual material and vulgar directness.” Andriessen and Greenaway easily agreed on the structure for their film ***M is for Man, Music, Mozart*** (1991): a symmetrical form with four songs (sung by the jazz singer Astrid Sierese) alternating with three instrumental interludes. The elegant logic that underlies this arresting, provocative, avant-

unmistakenly stressed), and second, because the allegro body lacks a true second theme—in fact, it almost lacks a theme, as the main motive of the movement is a graceful harmonic progression to which a number of rhythmic mottos are attached. In his article “Heightened rhythmic activity in a monothematic exposition by Mozart,” David Nelson contends that the movement actually betrays Haydn’s influence on Mozart; much more than Mozart, Haydn frequently wrote monothematic sonata movements, and so it is conceivable that Mozart, in this volatile movement, is paying homage to Haydn. In between the two wildly contrasting minuets—the first is stately and commanding, while the second is a brisk, rustic *Ländler*, and each has two trios (brilliant and unique in their own regards) of its own that explore various instrumental combinations—is the expressive heart of the work: the Adagio. Operatic in its emotional communicativeness, three solo woodwinds (oboe, clarinet, and basset horn) sing a seamless terzetto over a slow-moving (and fairly relentless) bass and haltingly syncopated chords. The Romance is another ternary movement, with serene and charming moments framing an agitated, nervous central section. In the theme and variations, Mozart explores a seemingly-infinite and inventive variety of textures, rhythms, timbres, and moods, displaying the wind band at its most spectacular. The exuberant rondo, then, provides a fitting Finale to this charming masterpiece.

garde thirty-minute film is, simply:

Stopping at M, the center of the alphabet, the Gods decide to create man. Having created man, it was necessary to give him movement. Having given him movement it follows that he should have music. And having invented Music, it was necessary to invent Mozart in order to have Perfect Music.

*M is for Man* offers an ironic homage to Mozart. As William Van Wert writes, Greenaway and Andriessen deliberately postmodernize Mozart “in a stunningly beautiful and cerebral collage of dance, animation, scatological jokes and allusions, both to show the humor and corporeality of Mozart, and Mozart in and outside of his music.... Are they faithful to Mozart in their homage? Decidedly no and inventively yes are the paradoxical answers.” The film starts with a vulgar Alphabet Song that reinterprets genesis taxonomically; when the Alphabet Song breaks off abruptly at M—the middle of the alphabet—the mystical power of the litany becomes focused: everything else that will be created in this genesis tale will now start with the letter M—starting with Man. In a 17<sup>th</sup>-century Theatre of Anatomy, Man is created (or rather assembled), accompanied by the first instrumental interlude, where two Mozart piano sonatas (K. 310 and K. 545) are transformed by their dry, biting, Stravinskian context. (Schwarz writes: “It is always Stravinsky who tempers the stylistic brew and makes it cohere—even when *Mozart* very close to pop music.”) The second song—named after Andreas Vesalius, a sixteenth-century Belgian anatomist and physician whose dissections of the human body and descriptions of his finding helped to correct misconceptions prevailing since ancient times—lists all of the ingredients that were necessary to create man (in the first interlude). During the hauntingly tender second interlude (which recalls Milhaud’s *La création du monde*, a fitting reference for a film about creation), Man’s first attempts at Movement are displayed, stunningly represented in the film by the austere, classical movements and positions of a lone, naked, male dancer. The third song—obliquely referring to Bruno Schulz, a

Polish/Ukrainian novelist and painter, widely considered to be one of the greatest Polish prose stylists of the 20th century—functions in the same way as the second song: as a commentary upon the preceding instrumental “creation tale,” in this case, elaborating upon the movements of the body. The big-band and boogie-woogie-inspired final interlude advances the film’s narrative with the creation of our third M: Music. The final song—curiously eliminated from the DVD version of the movie—succinctly summarizes the entire film and details the creation of Mozart. Named for the revolutionary Russian filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein (who promoted and developed the use of montage techniques) and with a text by Greenaway, the “Eisenstein Song” is an understated, unadorned, unpoetic praise of Mozart. In *M is for Man, Music, Mozart*, Greenaway and Andriessen chose to emphasize the crudeness, vulgarity, and base physicality that defines, at least in scientific terms, what it means to be human, thus showing Mozart to be not a god-like creator to be held aloof on a pedestal, but instead as a human: the most gifted of humans. Perhaps this ironic homage, then, is the most appropriate.

*Two hundred years after [Mozart’s] death, there seems nothing to say except how divine he is. He produced God’s music. This, naturally, is nonsense. That he was a great musician we can have no doubt. If you want to discuss his great achievement we have to get down to the works themselves. I’m prepared to analyze them—well, some of them (he wrote far too much)—but analysis is for the musicologists, and here our concern is to justify the layman’s adoration. This can be done only through evasion. We may talk of the man, but what is the relevance of the man to the composer? ... The music should be enough.*

Anthony Burgess, *On Mozart*