



AUSTRALIAN
BRANDENBURG
ORCHESTRA



Mozart, Salieri & Pleyel

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Mozart, Salieri & Pleyel

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With Thanks

MELBOURNE RECITAL CENTRE	CITY RECITAL HALL, SYDNEY
Thu, 15 Oct, 2026 7PM	Wed, 21 Oct, 2026 7PM
Sat, 17 Oct, 2026 5PM	Fri, 23 Oct, 2026 7PM
Sun, 18 Oct, 2026 5PM	Sat, 24 Oct, 2026 2PM
	Sat, 24 Oct, 2026 7PM
	Tue, 27 Oct, 2026 7PM

ARTISTS

Robert Nairn (Adelaide) Violone
Paul Dyer (Sydney) Fortepiano, Conductor
Australian Brandenburg Orchestra

The Australian Brandenburg Orchestra is privileged to work, create and perform on the lands of the longest living culture in the world, and we pay deep respect to traditional custodians and Elders, past and present.

Repertoire

SALIERI

Sinfonia from Cublai, gran Kan de Tartari

MOZART

Divertimento for strings in D major, K 136
i *Allegro*
ii *Andante*
iii *Presto*

PLEYEL

Concerto for violone in E-flat major^
i *Allegro*
ii *Adagio Cantabile*
iii *Finale. Allegro [moderato]*

MOZART

Symphony No. 39 in E-flat major, K 543
i *Adagio — Allegro*
ii *Andante con moto*
iii *Menuetto: Allegretto — Trio*
iv *Finale: Allegro*

^ Denotes World Premiere

KEYBOARD TUNERS

Fortepiano preparation in Sydney by
Nathan Cox

Fortepiano preparation in Melbourne by
Shaun Catchpole

PERFORMANCE LENGTH

Performance will be approximately 100
minutes with Interval



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BIOGRAPHY

Robert Nairn Violone



Boston Early Music Festival, Juilliard Baroque, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique, English Baroque Soloists, Smithsonian Chamber Players, Florilegium, ARCO and Adelaide Baroque.

Rob was appointed 'Master Musician in Residence' at the Elder Conservatorium in 2020 and joined the faculty as head of Early Music in 2023, having worked as Head of the Early Music Department at Melbourne University from 2017-2020. Previously he also taught on the faculty of the Juilliard School and Penn State University for 18 years where he was a Distinguished Professor, and a Kulas Visiting Artist at Case Western Reserve University. He is past-president of the International Society of Bassists and hosted the Society's 2009 Convention in Penn State. In 2008, he was awarded a Howard Foundation Fellowship from Brown University. Rob received his Bachelor of Music with Distinction from the Canberra School of Music and a post-graduate diploma from the Berlin Musikhochschule.

A specialist in historical performance, Robert Nairn is Principal Bass with the Brandenburg, affording him the opportunity, in his words, "to work with the best Australian historical artists in programs that are totally entertaining, thought-provoking, radical, sensitive and alluring".

Rob's teaching experience over 14 years at Juilliard has made him acutely aware of historical accuracy in the lower strings. "I'm always looking for direction and impulse from the other players. I love to catch people's eyes on stage. It's all about what happens on stage: the communication, the energy."

His playing experience is vast and has introduced him to most Australian and many international ensembles, orchestras and festivals. These include the London and Oslo Philharmonic Orchestras; the Pittsburgh, Baltimore, and Gothenburg Symphony Orchestras; the English, Scottish, and Australian Chamber Orchestras; the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra; the Melbourne, Sydney, Queensland, and Adelaide Symphony Orchestras; the Hallé Orchestra; and the Australian World Orchestra. He has also worked with the Handel and Haydn Society,

Rob has commissioned and premiered more than 40 works for solo double bass and chamber groups, and given solo recitals in Europe, Scandinavia, China, the United States and Australia. He has premiered concertos by Barry Conyngham, Douglas Balliett, and Elena Kats-Chernin. He released a solo CD 'Tremor' in 2022 on the U.S. Ablaze label, and a CD of the double bass music of English composer Luke Styles on the German I3oderI4 label in 2025.

Paul Dyer AO Artistic Director

Paul Dyer AO is one of Australia's foremost specialists in historically informed performance.

He co-founded the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra in 1989 after completing postgraduate studies at the Royal Conservatorium in The Hague, and has served as its Artistic Director and Conductor ever since. A visionary performer and musical thinker, Paul is known for his adventurous spirit and for collaborating across genres with circus performers, contemporary dancers, and visual artists. His performances have taken him across Europe, Asia, the USA, and Canada, and his innovative approach to stagecraft continues to shape the Brandenburg's distinctive artistic identity.

A passionate champion of Australian music, Paul has been instrumental in commissioning new works by Australian composers, often weaving early music traditions with contemporary sound worlds. His artistic leadership has also fostered meaningful collaborations with First Nations musicians, including Rrawun Maymuru and Marcus Corowa. These landmark projects blend ancient songlines with Baroque textures, offering audiences a profound and uniquely Australian musical experience.

Paul is a dedicated educator, having held teaching roles at leading institutions including the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. He is also the driving force behind the Brandenburg Mentorship Program, which supports and develops the next generation of early music performers.

Over the course of his career, Paul has performed with many of the world's most celebrated soloists, including Andreas Scholl, Cyndia Sieden, Marc Destrubé, Hidemi Suzuki, Stefano Montanari, Xavier de Maistre, Shunske Sato, Maurice Steger, Riccardo Minasi, Yvonne Kenny, Emma Kirkby, Philippe Jaroussky, Samuel Mariño, Francesco Corti, Simone Kermes, and Yukie Sato.

Career highlights include the Brandenburg's European tour with Andreas Scholl in 2001, his Tokyo debut in 1998, and numerous national and international accolades for his recordings with the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra and Brandenburg Choir, which include five ARIA Awards for Best Classical Album. More recently, Paul featured on the soundtrack of the James Bond film *Spectre* and, in 2024, appeared in the acclaimed documentary film *Mozart's Sister*.

Beyond the podium, Paul is an avid cook, traveller, and lifelong connector of people and cultures. Through the Brandenburg's programming, he continues to foster dynamic collaborations between Australian and international artists.

Paul was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) in 2013 for his distinguished service to the performing arts. He is also a recipient of a Churchill Fellowship (1995), the Centenary Medal (2003), and the University of Sydney Alumni Medal for Professional Achievement (2010).



Australian Brandenburg Orchestra



Photo by Keith Saunders

The Australian Brandenburg Orchestra is Australia's national Baroque music flagship and one of the world's leading period instrument ensembles, celebrated for bringing the music of the past vividly to life for audiences today.

Founded by Artistic Director Paul Dyer and Bruce Applebaum, the Brandenburg made its debut at the Sydney Opera House in 1990. More than 35 years later, it is one of Australia's most distinctive performing arts companies, renowned for exceptional musicianship, adventurous programming and an unmistakable energy on stage.

The Orchestra's musicians are among Australia's finest specialists in early music, performing on rare and original instruments of the period and drawing on historical sources to explore the music of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. Under Paul Dyer's artistic leadership, tradition becomes a starting point for performances that are immediate, expressive and alive.

Collaboration and innovation are central to the Brandenburg story. Acclaimed international soloists, actors, writers and creative partners across theatre,

movement and visual design continually find new ways to illuminate the music, tell unexpected stories and expand the possibilities of the concert experience. The Brandenburg Choir, established in 1999, is also an integral part of the company, renowned for its extraordinary vocal blend, virtuosity and expressive power.

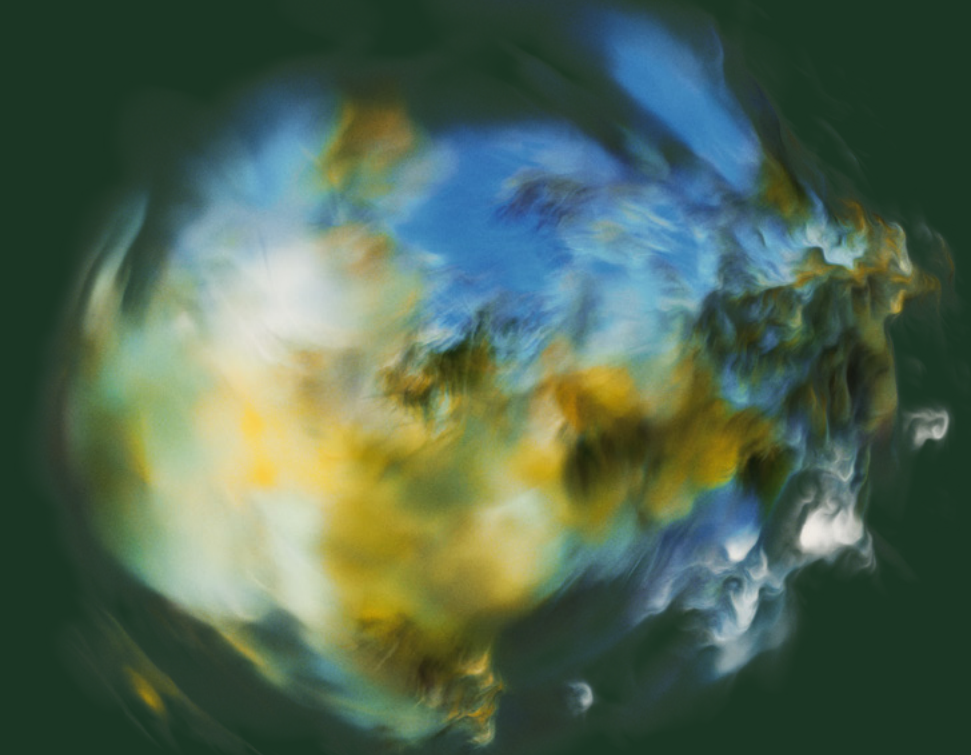
With 20 recordings for ABC Classic, including five ARIA Award winners, performances across Australia and a growing global audience through its digital platform Brandenburg One, the Brandenburg continues to honour the past while boldly shaping the future of early music.

'...what stands out at concert after concert is the impression that this bunch of musicians is having a really good time. They look at each other and smile and laugh... there's a warmth and sense of fun not often associated with classical performance.'

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Australian Brandenburg Orchestra



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Sim Walters (Hobart)
Period Bassoon



Michael Dixon (Sydney)
Principal Period Horn



Dorée Dixon (Perth)
Period Horn



Leanne Sullivan (Sydney)
Principal Period Trumpet



Alexandra Bieri (Sydney)
Period Trumpet



Brian Nixon (Sydney)
Principal Timpani



Paul Dyer* (Sydney)
Fortepiano / Conductor

*Denotes Brandenburg Permanent Musician
*Robert Nairn appears courtesy of Elder Conservatorium, Adelaide University (Staff)

Mozart, Salieri & Pleyel

Antonio Salieri (1750–1825)

Sinfonia from opera *Cublai, gran Kan de Tartari*

Salieri has entered popular culture as Mozart's arch enemy, bitter and jealous of the success and composing ability that apparently came so easily to his frivolous rival but for which he, Salieri, had to work so hard. Shortly after Mozart's death in 1791, rumours spread that Salieri had poisoned him, a story which was turned into an opera by Rimsky-Korsakov and perpetuated by the play and movie *Amadeus*.

Although some reports, dating from well after the fact, claim Mozart believed he was being poisoned, there is no evidence at all that this was the cause of his death, and plenty of evidence that he died from rheumatic fever. There is some evidence that Mozart was envious of Salieri and suspected him of 'tricks', as he wrote to his father. There is no evidence at all that Salieri was jealous of Mozart, or regarded him as other than a colleague, and indeed such a notion makes no sense. By any measure, Salieri was far more successful. He was the director of Italian opera at the Habsburg court, his operas were regularly performed in Paris, and he was a favourite of Austrian emperor Joseph II.

Mozart was desperate to obtain a court appointment (he was eventually made a chamber musician, a low-paying position well down the pecking order) and wrote darkly to his father about 'the Italians' who received the emperor's favour. Much later though, in 1791, he invited Salieri and a singer who was his protégé to sit in his box in the theatre for

a performance of *The Magic Flute*, and in his very last letter to his wife, on 14 October, he wrote, 'You cannot believe how kind they both were — how very pleased they were not only with my music, but the libretto and everything else. [...] Salieri listened and watched with total attention, and from the overture to the last chorus, there was not a single piece which did not elicit from him a *bravo* or a *bello* [...]'.

Salieri dominated the Italian opera scene in Vienna in the late 18th century and was a strong influence on contemporary composers, both through his own innovative compositions and as a teacher. He was a composer of great versatility with a strong sense of the dramatic, and many of his 35 operas were widely performed in Europe and even in South America in his lifetime. He also composed hundreds of sacred vocal works for the imperial Habsburg court. One of Salieri's students described him as 'the greatest musical diplomat', and Salieri seems to have had a talent for making connections with people able to further his career.



Drawing of Anton Salieri
c. 1801, The Albertina Museum

Born in a small town near Verona, Salieri studied violin and keyboard with his older brother. After his parents died, when he was about 13, he became the ward of an aristocratic Venetian and was taken to Venice where his musical education continued. In 1766, when he was just 16, his talent was noticed by the eminent Viennese composer Florian Leopold Gassmann, who took him to Vienna. There he embarked on intensive musical training and developed close relationships with the composer Gluck and the librettist Metastasio, and most importantly with Emperor Joseph II. His first opera was performed in 1770 and was rapidly followed by commissions for others. In 1774, Joseph appointed him court chamber composer and then music director of the Italian opera in Vienna. He was only 24.

Joseph reorganised Viennese theatres in 1776 with an emphasis on works in German and gave Salieri permission to travel to Italy. He was commissioned to compose the inaugural opera for La Scala in Milan, after Gluck turned it down, and spent time in Venice and Rome. He returned to Vienna, but in 1783 he received another opportunity through the patronage of Gluck, which was to assist him with a new work for the Paris Opera. In the end the opera was entirely Salieri's work, acknowledged publicly by Gluck when it was recognised as a great success. This was the start of a decade spent dividing his time between composing serious French opera for Paris and witty comic operas for Vienna, and in 1785 Joseph commissioned both Salieri and Mozart to compose one-act operas for a state banquet at the imperial palace at Schönbrunn. In 1788, Joseph appointed Salieri as chief music director, a position he was to hold for nearly 40 years.

Things changed for Salieri in the 1790s. His greatest patron, Joseph II, died in 1790, Mozart was no longer around as a stimulating rival and Paris was cut off because of the French Revolution. Salieri wrote a handful of operas, of which only one was more than moderately successful, and assiduously performed his duties as chief music director. Having benefitted so much from his teachers and mentors, he devoted himself to teaching others. Beethoven, Liszt, Schubert, and Mozart's son Franz Xaver were among his many students.

What to Listen For

Salieri's 'heroic-comic' opera *Cublai, gran Kan de Tartai* is set in China and ostensibly deals with Kublai Khan's problems as ruler of the Tartars, but actually it was a biting satire on the scandalous court of Russia under Tsar Peter the Great with strong political undertones. The librettist, Giovanni Battista Casti, had travelled to St Petersburg in the late 1770s, and being a product of the Enlightenment, he used the libretto to point out the dangers of autocracy and to criticise stiff court ceremonial and senseless extravagance.

Salieri started work on the opera in the summer of 1786 and finally completed it in 1788. The timing was unfortunate: the Ottoman Empire had declared war on Russia, Joseph II's ally, in 1787, and he cancelled the premiere. The opera also fell foul of the Viennese theatre censor, so it was not performed until 1998, in a German translation. The original Italian version was finally performed in Vienna in 2024.

A *sinfonia* was a short instrumental piece which functioned as the overture to an opera in this period. Here it consists of only one movement, an extrovert *Allegro*, instead of

the usual three. It was only in the 19th century that the overture became part of the dramatic narrative, so there are no Chinese or Russian musical references, nevertheless the impressive and weighty sound of the full orchestra with horns, trumpets, and timpani sets the scene for an opera about a fearsome warlord.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)
***Divertimento* for strings in D major, K 136**
 i *Allegro*
 ii *Andante*
 iii *Presto*

This *divertimento* is one of a set of three that Mozart composed in Salzburg in 1772, when he was 16. He and his father Leopold had just returned from a two-year trip to Italy, where Mozart's operas *Mitridate* and *Ascanio in Alba* had been premiered in Milan to great acclaim. He had received a commission for another opera in Milan at the end of the year (*Lucio Silla*), but now he was back to working for the Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg as concert master and writing anything that was required. As his father wrote to the music publishers Breitkopf in February 1772, that 'my son will write whatever kind of composition you may consider most profitable to yourself, provided you let us know in good time.'



Portrait of the Mozart Family by
 Johann Nepomuk della Croce (oil on canvas), c.1780-81

What to Listen For

A *divertimento* (or diversion) was a light-hearted work designed to please the ear or to entertain and could be intended as background music at a social gathering. The performance of instrumental serenades at festive occasions or social gatherings was a popular summertime tradition in Salzburg, and almost all of Mozart's works in this genre were written to be performed there.

Mozart composed the *divertimenti* for string quartet, but in such a way that they could be expanded for a larger string ensemble or by the addition of wind instruments. Leopold recounted playing one of them at an amateur concert: he played second violin, and two town watchmen (the 18th century equivalent of security guards) played French horns.

This *divertimento* begins with a sparkling *Allegro*. A repeated first section gives way to a minor section notable for restless second violin passagework underneath a sustained melody in the first violin, before an extended return to the opening theme. A lyrical *Andante* slow middle movement reminiscent of Mozart's later arias is followed by a fast brilliant final movement, also in two sections.

Ignaz Josef Pleyel (1757-1831)
Concerto for violone in E-flat major
 i *Allegro*
 ii *Adagio Cantabile*
 iii *Finale. Allegro [moderato]*

Pleyel was born in Ruppersthal in Austria. When he was about 15, he became a pupil and lodger of Joseph Haydn in Eisenstadt, but little is known about his early working life. He travelled to Italy in the early 1780s, where a connection at the Austrian embassy in Naples led to a commission to compose some instrumental pieces for Ferdinand IV, King of Naples. This was followed by a commission for an opera, which was premiered at the Teatro di San Carlo.

In 1783, Pleyel took up the position of assistant music director at Strasbourg Cathedral. The cathedral was wealthy and maintained a full orchestra and choir which gave regular performances. Pleyel's years there were the most productive in his career as a composer. Unfortunately, these years coincided with the turbulence of the French Revolution, during which all church property was seized by the state and musical performances in churches and public concerts were banned.

Fortunately for Pleyel, in 1791 he received an invitation to conduct a series of concerts in London, where he stayed for some time. While there, he happily met up with Haydn, who was in London conducting his own concert series. Pleyel made a fortune in London and was able to buy a chateau when he returned to Strasbourg, although this added to his difficulties with revolutionary authorities during the Reign of Terror, from 1793 to 1794.

Pleyel was suspect because he was a foreigner, wealthy, and had connections to the cathedral, and he was labelled a royalist collaborator. He avoided imprisonment, and possibly execution, by composing pieces honouring the new French republic. They were subsequently performed in Strasbourg Cathedral, which was then called the *Temple de l'Être Suprême* (Temple of the Supreme Being) as churches had been outlawed during the Terror.

In 1795, Pleyel moved to Paris, entering a new phase of his career as a businessman, founding what would prove to be a very successful music publishing house. The *Maison Pleyel* published over 4000 works by many composers including Beethoven and Haydn, and was the first publisher to issue miniature scores, small enough for a music enthusiast to take to concerts. Building on this success, he turned to piano manufacturing in 1807. His son later joined him, and the firm supplied pianos to Frédéric Chopin and other eminent musicians.

Although his music is little heard today, Pleyel was a prolific composer, and his straightforward and accessible works were enormously popular in Europe and North America during his lifetime — even Nantucket, a Massachusetts whaling town, had its own Pleyel Society! He wrote over 40 symphonies, 15 concertos and symphonies concertantes, many chamber works for various combinations of instruments (including keyboard and harp), songs and vocal ensemble works, and two operas.

Following page:
 Manuscript of the first movement of Pleyel's Concerto for violone in E-flat major (D-SWI Mus.5174/2a), Schwerin. Long miscatalogued as anonymous, the work's true authorship was identified as Pleyel's only in 2024, through research by musicologist Darija Andelic-Andzakovic.

(7)

What to Listen For

This concerto was long thought to have been composed by Johannes Matthias Sperger (1750-1812), a double bass player from Moravia (now Czechia). The instrument he played and for which he composed 18 concertos was a Viennese violone, a double bass sized instrument but with five strings and frets which was commonly played in Vienna and other parts of Austria in that period. Through extensive musicological detective work musicologist and double bass player Darija Andelic-Andzakovic has established that the concerto was actually by Pleyel.

Darija Andelic-Andzakovic explains its features:

Pleyel employed devices reminiscent of Baroque concertos and concerti grossi. Notably, the soloist first enters together with other strings, as the lowest voice of a solo group; it is only in the answering phrase that we finally hear the violone in a truly solo capacity. Additionally, the opening motif returns many times, marking the beginnings of new sections. To my eye, it plays out like a clever synopsis of the concerto across time: beginning with a ritornello-like motif, the first solo section recalling the concerto grosso by opening with a group solo, and, finally, the latest addition to the concerto genre: the violone as a full-fledged solo voice.

[Interval]

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) Symphony No. 39 in E-flat major, K 543

- i *Adagio — Allegro*
- ii *Andante con moto*
- iii *Menuetto: Alegretto — Trio*
- iv *Finale: Allegro*

Mozart's last three symphonies (Nos. 39, 40 and 41) represent the pinnacle of his symphonic output and remain high points of orchestral composition in the entire Western tradition. He composed all three in about ten weeks in the summer of 1788, almost certainly with a specific performance in mind — but, as far as we know, none were performed in Mozart's lifetime.

This was not a happy time in Mozart's life: the Viennese premiere of his opera *Don Giovanni* had not been a success, and his wife Constanze was continuously ill after a series of pregnancies, travelling several times to the spa town of Baden to convalesce. Mozart was also seriously in debt, though, even as he and Constanze continued to live beyond their means, his financial woes were not all of his own making.

The Austrian economy had faltered due to the mounting cost of a disastrous war against Turkey, and patronage of the arts and the concerts which provided Mozart with most of his income fell away. Coincidentally, the Viennese taste for piano concertos, which had been the main source of Mozart's success and income, faded. Between 1784 and 1786 Mozart had written and performed twelve piano concertos, but in 1787 he wrote none at all because there was no audience for them. Interest in his subscription concerts had died away to the extent that his last one attracted only one subscriber, and by the beginning of 1788 he had not mounted a public concert for two years.

It was just as Count Karl Arco, the Archbishop of Salzburg's steward, had predicted when he dismissed Mozart from the Archbishop's service in 1781: 'A man's reputation [in Vienna] lasts a very short time. At first, it is true, you are overwhelmed with praises and make a great deal of money into the bargain — but how long does that last? After a few months, the Viennese want something new again.'

In the middle of June 1788, he was forced to move his family to a suburb some distance from the centre of Vienna, where rents were considerably cheaper. The day after he completed Symphony No. 39 he wrote to a friend from his Masonic lodge, a wealthy businessman, asking for yet another loan: 'I am very much distressed that your circumstances at the moment prevent you from assisting me as much as I could wish, for my position is so serious that I am unavoidably obliged to raise money somehow'. Mozart ended the letter by saying, 'If such black thoughts did not come to me so often, which I banish by a tremendous effort, things would be even better...'. Things then became even worse: just three days later, Mozart and Constanze's fourth child, a girl, died at only six months old. Perhaps this turmoil accounts for why Mozart's autograph score shows signs of the work being hastily written, with far more mistakes than in most of his scores.

A change in Mozart's style did not help to keep his music accessible to the Viennese audience. In the last years of his life his compositions became increasingly less lyrical, more complex, and sometimes overtly experimental, and many found this bewildering. In 1787, a review of some of his newly published chamber music appeared:

[Mozart is] 'the best and most accomplished piano player I have ever heard; it is only a pity that in his artful and really very beautiful writing, by searching for novelty, he reaches too high, which means that sensibility and heart gain but little: his new Quartets . . . are really too highly seasoned — and which palate can withstand that for long?'



Mozart drawing by Doris Stock (Silverpoint), 1789

What to Listen For

One aspect of Mozart's shift towards increasing complexity in his compositional style was his interest in orchestral texture, the soundscape produced when instruments play together. This is apparent in Symphony No. 39, with its extensive and prominent writing for wind instruments. Mozart frequently doubles the strings and winds, giving them the same notes to play, especially in the outer movements, which gives the symphony a weighty effect.

The first movement begins with a long, slow, unsettled, and at times dissonant introductory section. This was quite unprecedented, and the sound would have been startling to Viennese audiences. The movement moves subtly into a lively *Allegro*, which is given a martial air with the use of horns and drums. Sudden changes of mood shift the focus to the wind instruments and the strings drop away.

Mozart was a composer of wit and sophistication who was more concerned with disjunction and surprise than with regularity and cohesion, so similar abrupt variations in orchestral texture occur throughout the whole symphony. The whimsical *Andante* opens with the strings alone but the winds are soon given a prominent position, with variations on the two-part theme being shared between the two groups of instruments. The striking harmonic shifts which occur midway through this second movement may have been what the Viennese critic had in mind when he called Mozart's later compositions 'too highly seasoned'.

The *Menuetto* which begins the third movement is in the style of an Austrian country dance for full orchestra, in contrast with the *Trio*, an accompanied duet for two clarinets, Mozart's favourite instrument towards the end of his life. Flute and bassoons are prominent in the irrepressible *Allegro* finale, and textural and tonal surprises keep the audience guessing as the movement rushes headlong towards an abrupt conclusion.

Program notes © Lynne Murray 2026





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