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CLASSICS

MOZART

An Italian Journey

Jeremy
Ovenden
tenor

Orchestra of the Age
of Enlightenment

Jonathan Cohen



MOZART

AN ITALIAN JOURNEY

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JEREMY OVENDEN TENOR
ORCHESTRA OF THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT
JONATHAN COHEN CONDUCTOR

ARTIST'S NOTE

The inspiration for this recording came from two simple factors: I have been singing Mozart's operas for the last 14 years and I have an enormous affinity with Italy, the country where my career began and where I lived happily for five years.

I wanted the programme for this CD to be a musical journey through Mozart's life but concentrating solely on his Italian repertoire. Jonathan Cohen and I spent some time going through every Italian aria that Mozart ever wrote and began the fascinating task of creating our disc.

I not only wanted to record the famous arias, but also to rediscover Mozart's early arias, and so I came up with the title of the CD, **Mozart: an Italian Journey**: a journey of discovery through Mozart's music. I also wanted listeners to embark on their own journey, discovering for themselves just how the young Mozart developed as a composer as he journeyed from childhood into adulthood.

We started with *Lucio Silla* which he wrote when he was 16 years old and ended with 'Se all'impero' from *La Clemenza di Tito*, the very last Italian opera aria that Mozart wrote before his death at the age of 35. We chose the concert aria *Misero! o sogno o son desto* as the centrepiece of the CD – an aria which is rarely performed, fiendishly difficult to sing and emotionally draining, but that shows so well the brilliance of Mozart.

I hope this CD takes you on an enjoyable musical journey and that you discover for yourself how the young Mozart changed and became the Mozart that we know today.

Jeremy Ovenden



Adrian Peacock (producer), Jeremy Ovenden and Jonathan Cohen (conductor).

MOZART (1756-1791) AN ITALIAN JOURNEY

The development of Mozart's creative genius can be illustrated in many of the genres that he adorned – symphony, concerto, string quartet – but is perhaps most striking in the field of opera. From his first attempts he was an amazingly adept setter of a text, and had already produced operas of marvellous invention in his teens. But he steadily achieved a more profound grasp of dramatic situations and pacing, whether comic or tragic, and refined his psychological insight in delineating character. The selection of operatic arias presented here, which range from his earliest operas to his last, are a perfect illustration of his unrivalled skills in operation over more than two decades.

Mozart's first full-length opera – and only his second work for the stage – was the *opera buffa* **La finta semplice, K.51/46a** (The feigned simpleton), composed at the age of 12 in 1768. Leopold Mozart had taken his son to Vienna and, anxious to increase his reputation, invented a story that the Emperor himself had taken a fancy to Wolfgang's music and thus persuaded the impresario Giuseppe Afflisio to commission an opera from him for 100 ducats. The work

was rapidly written but fell foul of Viennese musical politics, so the Mozarts returned to Salzburg, where the work was performed at the Archbishop's Palace the following year. The plot, in the manner of the *commedia dell'arte*, derives from a farce by Goldoni. In the aria 'Sposa cara', the timid Polidoro tells his proud brother Cassandro that he should not be so rude to the baroness Rosina, who loves him. If he is upset, he suggests, then he should beat Polidoro, not her.

In strong contrast to this amiable comedy stands **Lucio Silla, K.135**, a 'dramma per musica' composed by the 16-year-old Mozart for performance in the theatre at Milan (which was then under Austrian rule). The last opera he would write for Italy, this is an ambitious and almost dramatic work, somewhat in the tradition of the older *opera seria*, full of long bravura arias. The libretto by Giovanni de Gamerra (revised by Metastasio) is loosely founded on events in the Roman dictatorship of Lucius Cornelius Sulla in the first century BC. The first performance, in the Teatro Regio Ducale, Milan on 26 December 1772, was a near-disaster since the audience had to wait three hours for the opera to begin (owing to the delayed arrival of the Archduke) and the work itself, already four

hours long, was filled out with three ballets. Nevertheless it played to full houses on 26 subsequent evenings; but like most of Mozart's early operas was long forgotten until the 20th century. 'Il desio di vendetta' finds the dictator Silla in a rage because Junia, whom he desires, has declared her hatred for him, as the daughter of his defeated rival Marius and the fiancée of his enemy Cecilio. All his affectionate feelings for her have turned to hatred, and he resolves to kill her. She may beg him for her life, he says, but he will not grant her a pardon.

Despite its earlier Köchel number the one-act 'serenata drammatica' *Il sogno di Scipione*, **K.126** (Scipio's Dream) is probably a little later than *Lucio Silla*. In all probability it was composed in mid-1771 for the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the ordination of Mozart's patron, Archbishop von Schrattenbach – who died before the anniversary arrived. The 'serenata' may then in fact have been performed to celebrate the arrival of his successor as Archbishop of Salzburg, Hieronymous Colloredo – with whom Mozart would later have such a fraught relationship – though no certain record of the event survives. The libretto, by Metastasio, had already been set by several composers, and is founded on a story in Cicero in which the

Roman general Scipio Aemilianus dreams that the goddesses of Constancy and Fortune tell him he must choose one of them as his protectress. Transported to heaven, he consults his ancestors on which goddess he should choose, but eventually selects Constancy of his own volition. 'Quercia annosa' is sung by the spirit of Scipio's adoptive father, Publio. Scipione wishes to leave the mortal world and remain in Heaven, but Publio tells him that it is not yet time. Like an oak tree growing strong against winds and winter, Scipione must go through many trials to strengthen him before he is ready for heavenly life.

La finta giardiniera, **K.196** (The feigned gardener), a three-act *opera buffa* to a libretto by Giuseppe Petrosellini, was commissioned in 1774 for the carnival season at Munich. Originally scheduled for performance just before the end of the year, its difficulties demanded additional rehearsal time and the premiere took place on 13 January 1775 at Munich's Salvatortheater. It was later adapted as a *Singspiel* in German, with spoken dialogue. A comedy of errors and misunderstandings leading to a triple marriage, it is a work of bucolic simplicity for the most part. In 'Dentro il mio petto' Don Anchises, governor of the fictitious town of Lagonero, has just declared

his love for Sandrina and sings now of the sound of the orchestra with its flutes and oboes and its drum and trumpets: a feast of sound that almost drives him insane.

Il rè pastore, **K.208** (The Shepherd King) is not a full-length opera but a two-act drama to a libretto adapted from one that Metastasio had based upon a 16th-century play by Torquato Tasso. Contemporary writers also refer to it as a serenade or a cantata, which rather suggests that the premiere – which took place in the Archbishop's Palace in Salzburg on 23 April 1775 – was a concert performance rather than staged. The work had been commissioned to celebrate the fact that a son of the Empress Maria Theresa was visiting Salzburg. In it, Alexander the Great restores the rule of Sidon to its rightful king, Aminta, who has been living as a shepherd and would prefer to remain one.

'Se vicendo' is an aria for Alexander (Alessandro), in the Greek military camp. He has decided to leave Sidon now that Aminta has assumed the kingship, and also to wed Tamyris to Aminta. Believing he has thus made everyone happy, he sings that as long as he leaves peace and happiness behind him, he has fulfilled all his wishes. But in 'Sol può dir' Alexander's

friend Agenor, who is in love with Tamyris, laments the torture he is going through by losing his love to Aminta through Alexander's decree.

Six years passed before, in 1780, Mozart composed the 'dramma per musica' *Idomeneo, rè di Creta*, **K.366** – another work commissioned for performance in Munich, but which stands at the beginning of the series of his mature operas. Premiered at the Residenz Theater on 29 January 1781, the work was held to be a success, but its only revival in Mozart's lifetime was an amateur performance in Vienna in 1786, for which he partly revised the score. An epic drama of conscience and filial love complete with sea-monster, *Idomeneo* was among Mozart's most ambitious operas, for which he produced a score of unrelenting intensity. In 'Il padre Adorato' Idamante, the son of Idomeneo, greets his father, whom he has not seen for 20 years. His joy turns to consternation, however, when Idomeneo runs away from him. We discover the reason in 'Vedrommi intorno', where Idomeneo himself recalls how, shipwrecked, he promised Neptune he would sacrifice the first person that he met if he was saved from the wreck. Now, saved indeed, he imagines how the ghost of the sacrificed person will haunt him for his entire

life. Finally in 'Fuor del Mar', Idomeneo confronts the sea-god Neptune who, even though sparing Idomeneo's life, is still torturing him: escaped from the sea, Idomeneo still has a sea raging in his breast.

The remaining extracts are from the great operas of Mozart's last few years. The one that we know as **Don Giovanni, K.527** was in fact originally performed as *Il dissoluto punito* (The libertine punished). After the enormous success of *Le Nozze di Figaro* in Prague, Mozart's librettist Lorenzo da Ponte suggested he should capitalize upon it by writing another work for performance there and suggested a version of the Don Juan legend. Responding with alacrity, Mozart produced his archetypal study of hubris and its punishment. 'Il mio tesoro' is a revenge aria sung by Don Ottavio, the fiancé of Donna Anna, whom Don Giovanni wishes to seduce. Sure that Giovanni was the person who killed Anna's father, Ottavio swears that he will make sure she is revenged on the rascally nobleman.

Mozart's third da Ponte opera was the highly sophisticated two-act *opera buffa* **Così fan tutte, K.588** (All women behave so), produced at the Burgtheater, Vienna on 26 January 1790. According to legend the Emperor Joseph II

commissioned the work and he is said to have suggested the subject – two men testing the faithfulness of their fiancées by each, in disguise, wooing the other's beloved – though doubt has been cast on this attribution. True or not, da Ponte made of this suggestion a wonderfully rich and humane comedy. After its initial performances the opera was pretty well neglected until the 20th century, but is now generally accepted as one of Mozart's greatest works. In 'Un'aura amorosa' Ferrando, in love with Dorabellai, praises the fact that she has (so far) resisted the advances of his friend Guglielmo. The recitative 'In qual fiero contrasto' and its following cavatina 'Tradito, schernito' reflect, on the other hand, Ferrando's confusion and turmoil when he realizes that his innamorata has, in fact, fallen for his friend and thus betrayed their love.

Mozart had hoped to write another opera for Prague after *Don Giovanni*, but **La Clemenza di Tito, K.621**, which proved to be the last opera he wrote, was actually commissioned by the Bohemian Estates to celebrate the coronation of Emperor Leopold II as King of Bohemia. Though in poor health, Mozart laboured over the work and travelled to Prague to complete it in time for the first performance, which took place in September

1791. His exertions may well have contributed to his death on 5 December. In a sense *La Clemenza di Tito* (The Clemency of Titus) returns to the old-fashioned form of *opera seria*, but with the richness and dramatic power of Mozart's late style. The libretto, as so often, was by Metastasio, and deals with a subject from Roman history – a political drama about a plot by star-crossed lovers against the life of the Emperor Titus. The aria 'Se all'impero' is sung by the Emperor himself as, after an internal struggle, he tears up the death warrant on one of the conspirators and declares that if the world wishes to accuse him of anything it will be for having an excess of mercy rather than the desire for revenge.

In addition to full-scale opera, Mozart wrote numerous concert arias for independent performance: glimpses, as it were, of an unwritten drama, whose antecedents and consequences we are left to imagine for ourselves. One such is the recitative and aria **Misero! o sogno, K.431** written for the tenor Johann Valentin Adamberger (1740-1804), a Mason and friend of Mozart, who wrote several other works for him. Adamberger sang this aria in concerts by the Vienna Tonkünstler-Societät in December 1783. The authorship of the text

is unknown: it feels as if it might be part of an existing libretto, but if so this has never been identified. Strongly dramatic – even prophetically looking forward to Beethoven's *Fidelio* – it finds the tenor character imprisoned in a dark and scary cave. He shouts to his captors to release him, to open the hellish door, but no one answers his plea: all he hears is the echo of his own voice, and implores the winds to carry his sighs to the ears of his beloved, whom he will never see again. In the last part of the aria, his mind becomes increasingly agitated at the thought of never getting out; he can find no peace. The musical result is a fascinating blend of the Baroque and proto-Romantic.

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1 Il desio di vendetta

Lucio, Lucio Silla: Act 1, No.5

Il desio di vendetta e di morte
Sì m'infiamma e sì m'agita il petto,
Che in quest'alma ogni debole affetto
Disprezzato si cangia in furor.

Forse nel punto estremo
Della fatal partita
Mi chiederai la vita,
Ma sarà il pianto inutile,
Inutile il dolor.

2 Sposa cara

Polidoro, La finta semplice: Act 2, No.17

Sposa cara, sposa bella,
Per pietà, deh non piangete:
E se voi bevuto avete
Poveretto, andate in letto,
Né la state a molestar.

Piano, piano, ch'io burlavo;
State in là, che vi son schiavo.
Quanto a me, tutto v'è lecito:
Bastonatemi, accoppatemi,
Ma mia moglie, no signore,
Non l'avete da toccar.

*The desire for vengeance and for death
Inflames me and so agitates my breast,
that each tender feeling of the soul
That has been scorned is turned to wrath.*

*Perhaps you will at the end
Of the fateful duel
Beg that your life be spared,
Yet tears will then be useless,
Useless anguish.*

*Dear wife, beautiful bride,
Oh please don't cry:
And if you have been drinking
Poor man, go to bed,
Don't disturb her.*

*Take it easy, I was joking;
Remain where you are, I am your slave.
As far as I'm concerned, everything is allowed:
Hit me, kill me,
But my wife, no sir,
You mustn't touch her.*

3 Quercia annosa

Publio, Il sogno di Scipione: Act 1, No.7

Quercia annosa su l'erte pendici
Fra'l contrasto de'venti nemici
Più sicura, più salda si fa.
Chè se'l verno le chiome le sfronda,
Più nel suolo col piè si profonda;
Forza acquista, se perde beltà.

4 Dentro il mio petto

Don Anchises, La finta giardiniera: Act 1, No.3

Dentro il mio petto io sento
Un suono, una dolcezza
Di flauti e di oboe.
Che gioia, che contento,
Manco per l'allegrezza,
Più bel piacer non v'è.

Ma oh Dio, che all'improvviso
Si cangia l'armonia
Che il cor fa palpitar.
Sen'entran le viole,
E in tetra melodia,
Mi vengono a turbar.
Poi sorge un gran fracasso,
Li timpani, le trombe,
Fagotti e contrabbasso
Mi fanno disperar.

*Against the opposition of hostile winds
the aged oak on the steep slopes
makes itself more secure, more steadfast.
For if winter denudes it of foliage,
it digs its feet further into the ground;
if it loses beauty, it gains strength.*

*Within my breast I hear
a sound, the sweetness
of flutes and oboes.
What delight, what contentment,
I swoon with happiness,
there is no greater pleasure.*

*But, oh heavens, suddenly
the harmony changes,
making my heart flutter.
I hear the violins enter,
they come to disturb me,
with sombre melodies.
Then a great tumult arises,
the drums, the trumpets,
bassoons and basses
drive me demented.*

5 **Se vincendo**

Alessandro, *Il rè pastore*: Act 2, Scene 4

Se vincendo vi rendo felici,
Se partendo non lascio nemici,
Che bel giorno fia questo per me!
De' sudori ch'io spargo pugnando,
Non dimando più bella mercé.

*If I make you happy by winning,
If I leave no enemies when I go,
What a wonderful day this is for me!
The sweat I spill through my labours
Requires no greater thanks.*

6 **Il padre Adorato**

Idamante, *Idomeneo*: Act 1, No.7

Il padre adorato
Ritrovo, e lo perdo,
Mi fugge sdegnato
Fremendo d'orror.

*My beloved father
I find again, only to lose him.
He scorns and flies me
trembling with horror.*

Morire credei
Di gioia, e d'amore:
Or, barbari Dei!
M'uccide il dolor.

*I thought I would die
of joy, and love:
but, cruel gods!
Grief is killing me.*

7 **Sol può dir**

Agenore, *Il rè pastore*: Act 2, Scene 10

Sol può dir come si trova
Un'amante in questo stato
Qualche amante sfortunato,
Che lo prova al par di me.

*The only one who can understand the feelings
For a lover in this state
Is some unfortunate lover,
Who feels the way I do.*

Un tormento è quel ch'io sento,
Più crudel d'ogni tormento,
E un tormento disperato
Che soffribile non è.

*I feel tormented,
More cruel than any torment,
This is a desperate torment
Which is impossible to bear.*

8 **Vedrommi intorno**

Idomeneo, *Idomeneo*: Act 1, No.6

Vedrommi intorno
L'ombra dolente,
Che notte, e giorno:
Sono innocente
M'accennerà.

*I shall see about me
a lamenting shade,
which night and day
will cry to me:
"I am innocent."*

Nel sen trafitto,
Nel corpo esangue
Il mio delitto,
Lo sparso sangue
M'additerà.
Qual spavento,
Qual dolore!
Di tormento questo core
Quante volte morirà!

*The blood spilt
from his pierced breast,
his pale corpse,
will point out to me
my crime.
What horror,
what grief!
How many times this heart
will die of torment!*

9 Misero! o sogno

Misero! o sogno, o son desto?
Chiuso è il varco all'uscita!
Io dunque, o stelle!
solo in questo rinchiuso
abitato dall'ombre,
luogo tacito, e mesto,
ove non s'ode
nell'orror della notte
che de' notturni augelli
la lamentabil voce,
I giorni miei
dovrò qui terminar?
Aprite, indegne,
questa porta infernale!
spietate, aprite!
Alcun non m'ode,
E solo ne' cavi sassi ascoso,
risponde a' mesti accenti eco pietoso.
E dovrò qui morir?
Ah! negli estremi amari sospiri
almen potessi, oh Dio!
dar al caro mio ben l'ultimo addio!

Aura, che intorno spiri,
sull'ali a lei che adoro
deh! porta i miei sospiri,
dì che per essa moro,

*Unhappy that I am! Am I dreaming
or awake? The way out is barred!
Here then, O stars!
Alone in this enclosed
silent, gloomy place
haunted by shadows,
where nothing is heard
in the horror of the night
save the mournful voices
of nocturnal birds
must I end my days?
Open this infernal gate,
vile, pitiless creatures,
open, open!
No one hears me, and,
hidden in these rocky caves,
only a merciful echo
answers my cries.
Must I then die here?
Ah, if with my final bitter sighs
I could at least – Oh God! –
bid my beloved a last farewell!*

*Breeze that blows around me,
go, on your wings carry my sighs
to her whom I adore:
say that for her I die,*

che più non mi vedrà.
Ho mille larve intorno
di varie voci il suono;
Che orribile soggiorno!
Che nuova crudeltà!
Che barbara sorte!
Che stato dolente!
Mi lagno, sospiro,
nessuno mi sente,
nel grave pericolo
nessun non miro,
non spero consiglio,
non trovo pietà!

10 Il mio Tesoro

Don Ottavio, *Don Giovanni*: Act 2, No.22

Il mio Tesoro intanto
Andate a consolar,
E del bel ciglio il pianto
Cercate di asciugar

Ditele che i suoi torti
A vendicar io vado,
Che sol di stragi e morti
Nunzio vogl'io tornar.

*that she will never see me more.
Around me are a thousand phantoms
and the sound of my voices.
What a dreadful abode!
What new cruelty!
What barbarous fate!
What pitiful state!
I lament, I sigh,
no one hears me,
in this dire peril
I see no one.
I have no hope of help:
I find no pity!*

*On your affection relying
I leave her to your care,
Ease all her tears and sighing
And comfort her despair.*

*Tell her I go to serve her,
Tell her I shall avenge her,
To him who made her suffer,
Justice and death I bear.*

11 Fuor del Mar

Idomeneo, *Idomeneo*: Act 2, No.12

Fuor del mar ho un mare in seno,
Che del primo è più funesto,
E Nettuno ancora in questo
Mai non cessa minacciar.
Fiero Nume! dimmi almeno:
Se al naufragio è sì vicino Il mio cor,
qual rio destino
Or gli vieta il naufragar?

*Saved from the sea, I have a raging sea
more fearsome than before within my bosom,
and Neptune does not cease
his threats even in this.
Stern god! Tell me at least:
If my body was so close to shipwreck,
for what cruel purpose
was that wreck withheld?*

12 Un'aura amorosa

Ferrando, *Così fan tutte*: Act 1, No.17

Un'aura amorosa,
Del nostro tesoro,
Un dolce ristoro
Al cor porgerà;

*From eyes so alluring,
Our hope reassuring,
A mystic refreshment
Our hearts will beguile;*

Al cor che, nudrito,
Da speme, da amore,
Di un'esca migliore
Bisogno non ha.

*For hearts that are nourished,
On longing and passion,
A glance is ambrosia
And nectar a smile.*

13 In qual fiero contrasto — Tradito, schernito

Ferrando, *Così fan tutte*: Act 2, No.27

In qual fiero contrasto, in qual disordine
Di pensieri e di affetti io mi ritrovo?
Tanto insolito e novo è il caso mio,
Che non altri, non io
Basto per consigliarmi ... Alfonso, Alfonso,
Quanto rider vorrai
Della mia stupidizza!
Ma mi vendicherò: saprò dal seno
Cancellar quell'iniqua,
Saprò, cancellarla ...
Cancellarla?
Troppo, oh dio, questo cor per lei mi parla.

Tradito, schernito
Dal perfido cor,
Io sento che ancora
Quest'alma l'adora,
Io sento per essa
Le voci d'amor.

*Ah! My mind is distracted! The voice of reason
is overwhelmed by the conflicting urges of passion?
So completely unheard of is my dilemma,
That there's no one, but no one,
Competent to advise me ... Alfonso, Alfonso,
What contempt you will feel
For my naïve behavior!
But I shall be avenged: You faithless woman
You will see from now onwards
With scorn I'll dismiss you ...
I'll dismiss you?
Vain attempt if my heart fails to resist you.*

*Her treason is poison
That tortures my heart,
Though her love may falter,
Yet mine cannot alter,
I still hear the accents
Of love in my heart.*

14 **Se all'imperio**

Tito, *La Clemenza di Tito*. Act 2, No.20

Se all'imperio, amici Dei,
Necessario è un cor severo;
O togliete a me l'imperio,
O a me date un altro cor.

Se la fé de' regni miei
Coll'amor non assicuro:
D'una fede non mi curo,
Che sia frutto del timor.

*If a hard heart is necessary to a ruler,
ye benevolent gods;
either take the empire from me,
or give me another heart.*

*If I cannot assure the loyalty
of my realms by love:
I care not for a loyalty,
that is born of fear.*

BIOGRAPHIES

JEREMY OVENDEN

Jeremy Ovenden studied at The Royal College of Music, London and privately with Nicolai Gedda.

His regular Mozart appearances have included Ferrando *Così fan tutte* for The Royal Opera, Covent Garden and Staatsoper Berlin; Ottavio *Don Giovanni* at La Scala, Milan and Staatsoper Berlin; Count Belfiore *La finta giardiniera* at La Monnaie, Brussels; Vogelsang *Der Schauspieldirektor* with Concerto Köln and Publio *Il sogno di Scipione* and Ozia *Betulia Liberata* with Concentus Musicus. Appearances at the Salzburg Festival include Fracasso *La finta semplice*; Don Asdrubale *Lo Sposo Deluso*, Biondello *L'Oco del Cairo* and Mozart's *Mass in C Minor*.

He has also appeared at Netherlands Opera and in concerts with the London Philharmonic and London Symphony Orchestras and Deutsches Symphonie Orchester Berlin.



Conductors with whom Jeremy has collaborated include Sir Colin Davis, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, Vladimir Jurowski, Riccardo Muti, Daniel Barenboim, Christophe Rousset, Ivor Bolton, Jeremie Rhorer, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Paul McCreesh, Rene Jacobs, Rinaldo Alessandrini and Giovanni Antonini in repertoire ranging from Monteverdi, Bach and Handel through Mozart and Haydn, to Berlioz, Britten, Szymanowski and Henze.

Jeremy's extensive discography includes Mozart's *Il sogno di Scipione*, *Betulia Liberata*, *La finta semplice*, *L'Oca del Cairo* and *Lo Sposo Deluso*; Bach's *St Mark Passion* and *St John Passion* and Cantatas; Biber's *Missa Salisburgensis*; Handel's *Ode for St Cecilia's Day* and *Saul*; Haydn's *The Seasons* and *The Creation*; Holst's *Morning of the Year* and Book VIII of Monteverdi *Madrigals*.

ORCHESTRA OF THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT

Just over two decades ago, a group of inquisitive London musicians took a long hard look at that curious institution we call the Orchestra, and decided to start again from scratch. They began by throwing out the rulebook. Put a single conductor in charge? No way. Specialise in repertoire of a particular era? Too restricting.

Perfect a work and then move on? Too lazy. The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment was born.

And as it began to get a foothold, the OAE made a promise to itself. It vowed to keep questioning, adapting and inventing as long as it lived. Residences at the Southbank Centre and Glyndebourne Festival Opera didn't numb its experimentalist bent. A major record deal didn't iron out its quirks. Instead, the OAE examined musical notes and instruments with ever more freedom and resolve.

That creative thirst remains unquenched. Informal night-time performances are redefining concert formats. Searching approaches to varied repertoires see the OAE involved in exceptional musical and non-musical collaborations. New generations of exploratory musicians are encouraged into its ranks. It enjoys a truly international reputation. New York and Amsterdam court it; Birmingham and Bristol cherish it.

In its 24th season, the OAE is part of our musical furniture. It moved recently to beautiful new headquarters. It has even graced three legendary conductors – Rattle, Jurowski and Fischer – with the joint title of Principal Artist.

But don't ever think the ensemble has lost sight of its founding vow. Not all orchestras are the same. And there's nothing quite like this one.

JONATHAN COHEN

Jonathan Cohen is rapidly developing a reputation as one of Britain's finest and most versatile young musicians. A conductor, cellist and keyboardist, with a wide ranging experience of music from Baroque to contemporary, he is in increasing demand worldwide.

In the 2010/2011 season Jonathan conducted Monteverdi's *Poppea* with Glyndebourne Touring Opera, *Ulysses* with English National Opera and *Dido & Aeneas* with Dijon Opera. On the concert stage he conducted the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Ensemble Orchestral de Paris and Capella Cracoviensis. Recent highlights have included the Lausanne Chamber Orchestra, the Irish Chamber Orchestra and Potsdamer Kammerakademie. For the 30th anniversary season of Les Arts Florissants, Jonathan collaborated with William Christie conducting performances of *Dido & Aeneas* (Netherlands Opera), Purcell's *Fairy Queen* (Opéra Comique and Brooklyn Academy New York) as well as a

programme of Gluck, Haydn and Mozart in London and Paris.

As assistant conductor to William Christie, Emmanuelle Haim and Harry Bicket, Jonathan has worked on numerous productions over the last few years. Highlights with Emmanuelle Haim include Monteverdi's *Orfeo* (Lille Opera), Mozart's *Nozze di Figaro* (Lille) and Monteverdi's *Poppea* (Glyndebourne Festival).

Jonathan enjoys a close relationship with Les Arts Florissants and has recently been appointed Associate Conductor. His conducting debut with them conducting Zampa at the Opéra Comique in March 2008 received great critical acclaim: "his exhilarating yet attentive baton brought out all the impetus, liveliness and flowing colours of Hérold's score" (Opera Magazine).

With counter tenor Iestyn Davies, Jonathan will début his newly founded orchestra Arcangelo in 2012 with a disc for Hyperion of Porpora cantatas and a concert tour. Other exciting artistic projects with Arcangelo are planned and Jonathan intends to focus his energies on developing Arcangelo whilst enjoying his collaboration with Les Arts Florissants and his rapidly expanding guest conducting career.



Recorded at St Silas the Martyr, Kentish Town, from 29 September to 2 October 2010.

Producer - Adrian Peacock

Recording Engineer - Mike Hatch

Editor - Dave Rowell

Cover image and photos of Jeremy Ovenden - © Pierre-Philippe Hofmann

Design and Artwork - Woven Design

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SignumClassics, Signum Records Ltd., Suite 14, 21 Wadsworth Road, Perivale, Middx UB6 7JD, UK.

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The Independent