

PROGRAM NOTES

Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra, KV 622

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756–1791)

Only two months before his death in 1791, Mozart wrote his Clarinet Concerto for his fellow Mason and friend (his *Notschibinitschibi*) Anton Stadler, who premiered it at the Prague National Theater on October 16 of that year. According to Neal Zaslaw in *The Compleat Mozart*, “the galant era of the flute, oboe, and bassoon concertos is past, the almost concertino-like succinctness of the horn concertos is now unnecessary. The clarinet concerto is of the same depth and breadth of conception as the last piano concertos, and possesses the same serenity and sublimity as the very last of these. Mozart shunned technical virtuosity for its own sake, and found even cadenzas irrelevant.”

As composed by Mozart, Stadler performed the concerto on his specially built “basset clarinet,” a soprano clarinet (in A) except extended four half steps lower. Mozart’s basset-clarinet manuscript of the concerto is lost (perhaps Stadler pawned it), so the concerto’s very lowest notes are uncertain. Modern scholars have attempted reconstructions, which are sometimes performed on modern basset clarinets. Mr. Anderson will perform the standard soprano-clarinet version, but with some notes and passages lowered an octave in the spirit of those basset-clarinet reconstructions.