



re:connect Night

Streaming online
Thursday 26 November - 26 December

Academy of St Martin in the Fields
Eleanor Alberga, conductor



asmf.org/reconnect

PROGRAMME

Eleanor Alberga Nightscape (The Horniman Serenade)

Mozart Serenade No. 10 for Winds in B-flat major, K. 361/370a.
'Gran Partita'

ACADEMY OF ST MARTIN IN THE FIELDS

Eleanor Alberga, conductor for Nightscape

Bass

Lynda Houghton

Oboe

Tom Blomfield
Rachel Ingleton

Clarinet

Tim Lines
Tom Lessels

Basset horn

Marie Lloyd
Katie Lockhart

Bassoon

Julie Price
Graham Hobbs

Horn

Stephen Stirling
Jo Hensel
Fabian van de Geest
Alexia Cammish

Eleanor Alberga Nightscape

Nightscape was written in 1993 and was a joint commission from the London Mozart Players and the Horniman Museum. It was premiered on 29th September that year by the LMP for the launch of the Horniman Museum's Music Room, its musical instrument gallery.

At the time of the commission I was shown around the Horniman's fabulous collection of wind instruments from all over the world and somewhat in response, I decided to write a piece for the same line up as the Mozart Gran Partita - but tilted towards a rather different sound world.

The result is a 4-movement Serenade of the sounds, atmosphere, memories and folklore of a Jamaican evening and night.

The four movements are titled:

1. Sundown
2. Cicadas, tree-frogs, crickets, party-goers, geckos, dogs, burglars and other nocturnal creatures
3. Into the arms of Morpheus?
4. Br'er Fox and the Dancing Ghosts

Anyone who has been to or lived in the tropics will know some of the cacophonous insect and animal sounds that arrive as soon as the sun disappears. I have woven in some other more personal memories and near the end I quote a song my mother would sing to me about Br'er Fox and how he would catch me if I failed to go off to sleep. Little wonder that I grew up with night terrors.

I have revised the piece a little for this performance and I am extremely grateful to the Academy of St Martin in the Fields for helping to wake up this piece from its long slumber.

I would say that I have enjoyed getting to know the work again and am struck by its sometimes Stravinsky-esque character and its jazziness. Both these facets are more in play here than in most of my other work.

Eleanor Alberga

W.A. Mozart

Serenade No. 10 for Winds in B-flat major, K. 361/370a. 'Gran Partita'

1. Largo - Allegro Molto
2. Menuetto - Trio I - Trio II
3. Adagio
4. Menuetto: Allegretto - Trio I - Trio II
5. Romance: Adagio - Allegretto
6. Tema con variazioni: Andante
7. Finale: Allegro Molto

Written during the 18th-century era of *Harmoniemusik*, the grand and ambitious *Gran Partita* can be described as 'more than just entertainment' (Gramophone). Pushing boundaries and challenging the norms of the classical period of *Harmoniemusik*, the *Gran Partita* was commissioned for an enlarged ensemble with a unique combination of 12 winds and 1 double bass. Through seven substantial movements and the significant use of basset horns, the *Gran Partita* explores a diversity of colour and texture.

The grandeur and operatic style of the *Gran Partita* highlights Mozart's extraordinary compositional talents. It can be described as one of his most innovative instrumental works, remaining unsurpassed by any other wind serenade of its era.

The exact date of the *Gran Partita* and the reason for its composition remains a mystery. However, its estimated date of composition would be 1781/82, possibly intended for the Munich Orchestra. Around this time Mozart moved away from his patronage in Salzburg and uprooted to Vienna to continue his ambitions as a composer and concert pianist.

The well-known third movement *Adagio* features in *Amadeus*, the 1984 Oscar winning film by Peter Shaffer. The music accompanies the scene where composer Antonio Salieri first meets Mozart, sparking simultaneously both his feud and his awe for him.

The soundtrack to *Amadeus* was recorded by the Academy of St Martin in the Fields and it became one of the most popular classical music recordings of all time, selling over 6.5 million copies and receiving 13 Gold Discs, making it one of the most defining moments in the orchestra's history.

Harmoniemusik: a wind ensemble employed by an aristocratic household/patron during the classical era, 18th century. They would usually be commissioned for outdoor, recreational music and/or as a section of an orchestra/wind band.

Eleanor Alberga (b.1949)



Eleanor Alberga is a highly regarded British composer with commissions and premieres from the BBC Proms and The Royal Opera. Her work is noted for its emotional impact, depth of craft and brilliant colouring and orchestration. Born and growing up in Jamaica, her cultural inheritance is wide including performing with the Jamaican Folk Singers and as a dancer with an African Dance company. Coming to the UK initially on a scholarship to study piano and singing at the Royal Academy of Music, her compositional talents came to the fore whilst working in the contemporary dance world and she now boasts a rich catalogue of works in all genres: her Opera based on an Isabel Allende story, 'Letters of a Love Betrayed', drew comparison with Debussy's Pelléas and Berg's Wozzeck; three string quartets; a growing sequence of chamber music Nocturnes featuring horn and oboe, and orchestral music including two violin concertos and a rip-roaring adaptation of Roald Dahl's 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs' as well as her Last Night of the Proms opener 'Arise Athena'. Her early piano music has a deep connection to her Jamaican heritage and there is music for solo voice and for choir.

Alberga now lives in the English countryside with her husband, the violinist Thomas Bowes, and together they have founded and nurtured an original festival - Arcadia.

eleanoralberga.com
arcadiamusic.org.uk

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Philippe Sands | Simon Wallfisch baritone
Iain Farrington piano/organ

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