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Press Release

York orchestra celebrate the genius of Mozart and feature York's first performance of an Oboe Concerto that was unfinished at the time of his death.

Academy of St. Olave's, Saturday 24 September 2011, 8pm, St. Olave's Church, Marygate, York.

After a hugely successful 2010/2011 concert season which raised over £1,600 for charity, the Academy of St Olave's kicks off the new concert season with a spectacular programme celebrating the genius of Wolfgang Amadeus **Mozart**. Of particular interest will be York's first performance of Mozart's Oboe Concerto in F, K293, by local oboist Alexandra Nightingale.

The composition of **Mozart's Oboe Concerto in F, K293**, is shrouded in mystery: begun probably in 1778 but never completed, a tantalising fragment, consisting of the opening tutti (masterfully orchestrated with split violas, two bassoons and two clarinets) and the first 21 bars of the solo oboe, resides in the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge. This was enough to whet the appetite of Robert Levin, who has completed the movement, producing an oboist's dream in F major, with echoes of the better-known C major Concerto and, more particularly, of the Oboe Quartet. It is a joy to play and to listen to, but rarely performed: this is a York premiere and a rare opportunity to hear a brilliant combination of Mozart's genius and Levin's scholarship.

Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante for Oboe, Clarinet, Horn and Bassoon in Eflat major, K297b, continues the joyous partnership of solo winds and orchestra: the virtuosic opening movement, in which the soloists and orchestra are treated as equal partners, is followed by a heartfelt Adagio and a carefree, almost folk-like final Theme and Variations, exploring the different combinations of the solo instruments in a delightful and entertaining finale. Despite some doubt as to whether it is actually by Mozart himself (come and judge for yourself!), it remains a rich and rewarding piece for performers and audiences alike, thanks not least to its original choice of instruments.

Mozart completed his popular **Symphony No. 40 in G minor, KV. 550**, on 25 July 1788. The composition occupied an exceptionally productive period of just a few weeks in 1788, during which time he also completed the 39th and 41st symphonies (26 June and 10 August, respectively). The 40th is unquestionably one of Mozart's most greatly admired works, and most frequently performed and recorded of his symphonies. Unusually it is scored for flute, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, and strings. Notably missing are trumpets and timpani. Ludwig van Beethoven knew the symphony well, copying out 29 measures from the score in one of his sketchbooks and it is thought that the opening theme of the last movement may have inspired Beethoven in composing the third movement of his iconic Fifth Symphony.

Tickets for the concert are £9 (£8 concessions, £3 students) and are available in advance from Visit York 1 Museum Street, York YO1 7DT tel 01904 550099 or on the door.

For further information please visit <http://www.academyofstolaves.org.uk>

Oboe soloist Alexandra Nightingale first played with the Academy of St Olave's in the 1990s, when she arrived in Yorkshire to teach Classics at Ampleforth College. After several years away from York, she returned to York in 2006 and is now the Academy's principal oboe. She also plays with the Guildhall Orchestra and York Musical Society, sings Alto in the choir at St Olave's Church and teaches Oboe at the Minster School. Alexandra teaches Latin online and at her children's primary school.