

Programme Note by Chris Darwin: please use freely for non-commercial purposes

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) Orgelstück für eine Uhr (Fantasia in F) K608 (1791)

Allegro

Andante

The Austro-Turkish War of 1787 to 1791 reduced the number of concerts in Vienna and was thus generally bad news for Mozart. But there was a small plus side. Count Josef Deym owned a waxworks, in which he had recently installed an effigy of the late commander-in-chief of the Austrian army Field-Marshal Baron Ernst Gideon von Laudon. Deym's waxworks boasted a clock that housed a mechanical organ and he commissioned three pieces from Mozart for this instrument in honour of the Field-Marshal's arrival. Mozart was glad of the money but hated the job. In 1790 he wrote to his wife from Frankfurt (where he was looking for commissions at the coronation of Leopold II) :

'... it is the kind of composition which I detest, I have unfortunately not been able to finish it. I compose a bit of it every day – but I have to break off now and then, as I get bored... If it were for a large instrument and the work would sound like an organ piece, then I might get some fun out of it. But as it is the works [of the organ] consist solely of little pipes, which sound too high-pitched and childish for my taste.'

Mozart might have been more motivated had he anticipated an arrangement of the piece by Calefax. It has also been arranged for 2- and 4-handed piano and, by Busoni, for two pianos. The piece, as befits one for lots of 'little pipes', was originally scored with three treble clef staves and one bass, which generally stays in the tenor range. The opening *Allegro* consists of a short prelude leading to a fugue. A modified *Allegro* returns after the main *Andante*. Mozart was clearly happy to get to the end, indulging in a little cod Bach for his despised miniature organ.