



Philidor<sup>1</sup>, which Mozart may well have heard in Paris.

The following *Minuet* has two contrasting *Trio* sections; the first just uses the two clarinets and the two basset horns, the second gives the clarinets a breather and pairs off the oboes with the basset horns accompanied by the lower instruments, particularly exercising the first bassoon in running triplets.

The *Adagio* is, thanks to Peter Shaffer's play *Amadeus* and its film, the best-known of the seven movements. Following Pushkin's short verse play *Mozart and Salieri* of 1830, Shaffer's Salieri recognises Mozart's genius and, by contrast, his own mediocrity. For Shaffer, Salieri's

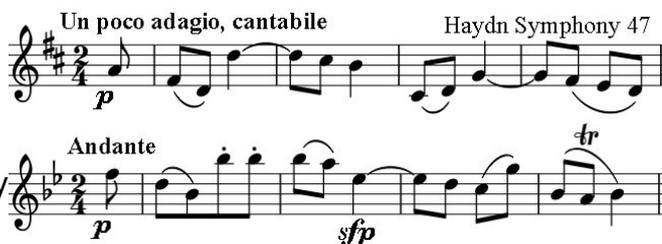
revelatory moment comes when the first oboe's entry on a high Bb transforms a mere 'squeeze-box' accompaniment into 'the voice of God'.



Another *Minuet* with two *Trios* follows. Again Mozart explores new combinations of instruments, for example, the second *Trio*'s theme is played by the first oboe and basset horn in unison with the first bassoon an octave lower. The better the players, the better the blend and the harder it is to hear exactly which instruments are playing.

The *Romanza's Adagio* starts, like the opening of the Clarinet Quintet, with one of Mozart's miracles of simplicity: two horns in octaves providing the bass along with just two clarinets for a bar joined by two oboes and then two bassoons. But the resultant sound is one you will never forget. The *Adagio*'s luxuriance contrasts with a sprightly *Allegretto* where the bassoons and double-bass keep fit with semiquaver exercises.

Now follows a set of variations, which are a re-scoring of those in Mozart's Flute Quartet K.171. Whether Mozart's or another hand made the arrangement is debated, but the earlier movement is in turn derived from the second movement of Haydn's Symphony No 47 (known as *The Palindrome* because of its mirror-image Minuet). Mozart's theme is very similar to Haydn's (both illustrated) and the variations have a similar shape. The theme for the last movement, a rollicking *Rondo*, is also recycled from one of Mozart's very early works, the keyboard Sonata for four hands K.19d written when he was nine.



The *Gran Partita* still endears itself to audiences as it did at its 1784 premier to the critic Adolphe Schink: '*I heard music for wind instruments today, by Herr Mozart - glorious and sublime! ... at each instrument sat a master - oh, what an effect it made - glorious and grand, excellent and sublime!*'

<sup>1</sup> Philidor was from an oboe-playing family (his great-uncle co-invented the instrument), but is now remembered more for his prowess at chess than for his 20 comic operas. He was considered the best player in the world for 50 years, wrote a standard treatise on chess and played against Voltaire, Jean Jacques Rousseau and David Hume.