NAXOS

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MOZART

Violin Concertos Nos. 3 & 5

Adagio • Rondo

Takako Nishizaki

Capella Istropolitana

Stephen Gunzenhauser

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 - 1791)

Violin Concerto No. 3 in G Major, K. 216

Violin Concerto No. 5 in A Major, K. 219

Adagio in E Major, K. 261

Rondo in C Major, K. 373

Peter Shaffer's play Amadeus and the subsequent film based on the play presented an apparent paradox. For dramatic rather than historical purposes Mozart was shown as a thoroughly unworthy vehicle for divine inspiration, as opposed to the jealous old court composer Antonio Salieri, worthy but uninspired. The truth of the matter must be rather different. Mozart had been brought up to mix with a higher level of society and to avoid too much contact with humble musicians, in this following the example of his father.

The five violin concertos that Mozart wrote in Salzburg in 1775 might seem to offer a similar paradox, at least when they were performed by the violinist Antonio Brunetti, a man whom Mozart was later to describe as a disgrace to his profession, coarse and dirty. Brunetti, a Neapolitan by birth, had been appointed Hofmusikdirektor and Hofkonzertmeister in Salzburg in 1776 and in the following year he succeeded Mozart as Konzertmeister, when the latter left the service of the Archbishop of Salzburg to seek his fortune in Mannheim and Paris. In 1778 Brunetti had to marry Maria Judith Lipps, the sister-in-law of Michael Haydn, who had already born him a child. Mozart himself was fastidious about the company he kept and he clearly regarded Brunetti as uncouth. Nevertheless the exigencies of his profession found Brunetti providing tolerable performances of the concertos. The first soloist, however, seems to have been Franz Xaver Kolb, a Salzburg musician and a competent enough violinist. We hear in passing of these performances by Kolb and by Brunetti in letters from Leopold Mozart to his son written during the latter's

absence in 1777 and 1778, letters that paint a clear enough picture of the kind of music-making there was to be had in Salzburg, and from Mozart's own letters, the vastly superior standards of Mannheim, and, given the exaggerations of French taste, of Paris.

By the age of nineteen Mozart encouraged by his father Leopold had become increasingly anxious that a place should be found for him in a more distinguished position than Salzburg could ever offer. His dissatisfaction was to lead to his attempt to find employment in Mannheim or in Paris, and finally, in 1781, to a breach with his patron the Archbishop and to a final decade of precarious independence in Vienna.

Limited as it might have been, Salzburg, all the same, offered some opportunities. In 1775 the Archbishop commissioned a setting of a Metastasio libretto, Il re pastore, for the official visit to the town of the Archduke Maximilian Franz in April. The violin concertos were written later in the year and as we have seen provided at least a reminder of Mozart's achievement during his long absence.

The Concerto in G Major, K. 216, shares the greater popularity of the last three of the series. The opening Allegro offers an orchestral exposition in which the principal themes are declared, the first of them having already appeared in Il re pastore. The soloist repeats the principal theme and by means of new material leads to the second subject, both duly developed and re-established in the final section of the movement.

The Adagio is an assured example of Mozart's handling of the solo violin cantilena, a finely sustained violin melody, to which the orchestra provides a subtle foil. This D Major slow movement is succeeded by a final rondo with a profusion of varied ideas in its contrasting episodes, which include a courtly dance and a less urbane folk-dance before the final re-appearance of the principal theme.

The Concerto in A Major, K. 219, opens, again, with the customary orchestral

exposition, followed unexpectedly by an Adagio entry for the soloist, the first two notes poised perilously over an abyss of orchestral silence, before the murmur of the moving orchestral accompaniment is heard. This is a prelude to the soloist's own version of the Allegro, and subsequent development and recapitulation.

The slow movement allows the solo violin to repeat and complete the opening theme, while the middle section offers a contrast of theme and key. This is followed by a final movement in the speed, at least of a Minuet and in the form of a rondo, one of its contrasting episodes an example of what passed for "Turkish" music in Austria in the late eighteenth century, a fashionable piece of exoticism.

The Adagio in E major for violin and orchestra, K. 261, was completed in 1776 in Salzburg. It was intended for the use of Antonio Brunetti, the court violinist, who had found the slow movement of Mozart's A major Violin Concerto too artificial and had asked for a movement to replace it. Unlike the original slow movement of the concerto it is scored for flutes instead of oboes, with a pair of horns and the customary string section, and in itself offers music of considerable charm and invention.

Mozart's C major Rondo for violin and orchestra, K. 373, was composed in Vienna and bears the date 2nd April 1781. It was written for the Salzburg court violinist Brunetti during the course of the composer's visit to Vienna with other members of the archiepiscopal household, a visit during the course of which he secured his own dismissal. Among matters that particularly rankled with him at this time was the social ineptitude of Brunetti and the castrato Ceccarelli, with whom he was bound to associate. The former found Vienna too grand for him, whatever merits he may have had as a performer. Still worse was the behaviour of his patron, who showed no satisfaction whatever in the new music that Mozart had provided for him, compositions that included the new Rondo, and prevented him from making the most of the material opportunities that Vienna seemed to offer. The movement is scored for the usual oboes, horns

and strings and is marked Allegretto grazioso. The soloist embarks on the first theme at once and is later entrusted with the new material of the intervening episodes, punctuated by the main theme, which returns to conclude the movement, as the solo violin ascends to an unexpected top C.

Takako Nishizaki

Takako Nishizaki is one of Japan's finest violinists. After studying with her father, Shinji Nishizaki, she became the first student of Shinichi Suzuki, the creator of the famous Suzuki Method of violin teaching for children. Subsequently she went to Japan's famous Toho School of Music, and to the Juilliard School in the United States, where she studied with Joseph Fuchs.

Takako Nishizaki is one of the most frequently recorded violinists in the world today. She has recorded ten volumes of her complete Fritz Kreisler Edition, many contemporary Chinese violin concertos, among them the Concerto by Du Ming-xin, dedicated to her, and a growing number of rare, previously unrecorded violin concertos, among them concertos by Spohr, Bériot, Cui, Respighi, Rubinstein and Joachim. For Naxos she has recorded Vivaldi's Four Seasons, Mozart's Violin Concertos, Sonatas by Mozart and Beethoven and the Mendelssohn, Tchaikovsky, Beethoven, Bruch and Brahms Concertos.

Stephen Gunzenhauser

The American conductor Stephen Gunzenhauser was educated in New York, continuing his studies at Oberlin, at the Salzburg Mozarteum, at the New England Conservatory and at Cologne State Conservatory. His period at the last of these was the result of a Fulbright Scholarship, followed by an award from the West German Government and a first prize in the conducting competition held in the Spanish town of Santiago.

For NAXOS Gunzenhauser has recorded Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 5, Beethoven Overtures, the Saint-Saëns Organ Symphony, Orff's Carmina Burana and the symphonies of Borodin and for MARCO POLO Dvorák Overtures, Rubinstein's Ocean Symphony, symphonies by S. I. Taneyev and suites by Lachner. He is currently engaged in recording all the symphonies and symphonic poems of Dvorák, also for NAXOS.

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Violin Concerto No. 3 in G Major, K. 216

1	Allegro	(9:42)
2	Adagio	(8:24)
3	Rondeau: Allegro	(6:41)

Violin Concerto No. 5 in A Major, K. 219

4	Allegro aperto	(10:31)
5	Adagio	(10:53)
6	Tempo di menuetto	(9:13)
7	Adagio in E Major, K. 261	(7:16)
8	Rondo in C Major, K. 373	(6:10)

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