



MOZART

Piano Concertos Nos. 9 and 17
(arr. Ignaz Lachner)

Alon Goldstein, Piano • Fine Arts Quartet

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)
Piano Concertos Nos. 9, K. 271 ‘Jeunehomme’ and 17, K. 453
Arranged for piano, string quartet and double bass by Ignaz Lachner (1807–1895)

The solo concerto had become, during the 18th century, an important vehicle for composer-performers, a form of music that had developed from the work of Johann Sebastian Bach, through his much admired sons Carl Philipp Emanuel and Johann Christian, to provide a happy synthesis of solo and orchestral performance. Mozart wrote his first numbered piano concertos, arrangements derived from other composers, in 1767, undertaking further arrangements from Johann Christian Bach a few years later. His first attempt at writing a concerto, however, had been at the age of four or five, described by a friend of the family as a smudge of notes, although, his father claimed, very correctly composed. In Salzburg as an adolescent Mozart wrote half a dozen piano concertos, the last of these for two pianos in 1779 after his return from Paris, where he had hoped to find suitable employment. The remaining 17 piano concertos were written in Vienna, principally for his own use in the subscription concerts that he organised there during the last decade of his life.

The second half of the 18th century also brought considerable changes in keyboard instruments, as the harpsichord was gradually superseded by the fortepiano or pianoforte, with its hammer action, an instrument capable of dynamic nuances impossible on the older instrument, while the hammer-action clavichord from which the piano developed had too little carrying power for public performance. The instruments Mozart had in Vienna, by the best contemporary makers, had a lighter touch than the modern piano, with action and leather-padded hammers that made greater delicacy of articulation possible, among other differences. They seem well suited to Mozart's own style of playing, by comparison with which the later virtuosity of Beethoven seemed to some contemporaries rough and harsh.

It was in 1781 that Mozart at last broke away from his native Salzburg and from his and his father's employer, the Archbishop of Salzburg, to settle in precarious independence in Vienna. The change of status brought a

measure of freedom, but deprived him of the immediate advice of his father, who prudently retained his employment in Salzburg as Vice-Kapellmeister of the archiepiscopal musical establishment. In Vienna Mozart enjoyed initial success, establishing himself as a composer, performer and teacher, and providing, among a wealth of other compositions, a series of piano concertos.

The transcriptions of a number of Mozart's concertos for chamber performance reflect something of the composer's own approach to works that he thought might enjoy wider circulation in more modest form. In a letter to a Paris publisher J.G. Sieber on 26 April 1783 he suggests that three concertos, *K.413*, *K.414* and *K.415* – the first he had written in Vienna – could be played with full orchestra, with oboes and horns, or a *quattro*, and the concertos were so advertised in the Vienna press. The following year, in a letter to his father he reveals his awareness of the commercial dangers of lack of copyright regulation, and suggests that the *Concerto in E flat major*, *K.449*, could be played in a similarly reduced form, better suited to the domestic circumstances of Salzburg.

Various subsequent transcriptions of Mozart's concertos were to be made during the 19th century by other composers, not least a dozen concertos arranged for piano and string quartet or quintet under the aegis of Sigmund Lebert (né Samuel Levi) in Stuttgart, with transcribers including two of the Lachner brothers, Ignaz and Vinzenz, and Immanuel Faisst. The present arrangements of *K.271* and *K.453* are by Ignaz Lachner, whose career as a conductor and composer had taken him from early days in Vienna to positions in Stuttgart, Munich, Hamburg, Stockholm and elsewhere.

The so-called ‘*Jeunehomme*’ *Concerto* was written in Salzburg in January 1777 for the French virtuosa, Mademoiselle Jeunehomme, whose name appears in various misspellings in the Mozart family correspondence. She had visited Salzburg at the end of 1776, the occasion for the composition of the concerto, and Mozart was to

renew the acquaintance in Paris in the following year. He made use of the *Concerto*, a particularly brilliant work, himself, and played it in Munich and Paris and probably at his first public concert in Vienna in 1781. Three sets of cadenzas survive for the third movement and two for the first and second, the later ones written for Vienna.

There is a change in opening procedure in the E flat *Concerto*, with the soloist entering briefly in the second bar, instead of waiting until the end of the orchestral exposition. The appearance is a brief one, followed by a gentler theme from the orchestra. The opening figure is heard again, after which the soloist enters with part of a new theme, before going on to develop the first subject that we have heard and offer its own version of the second theme. Elements of themes already heard form the substance of the central development, which is duly followed by a modified recapitulation, including a cadenza by the composer. The second movement of the *Concerto*, in C minor, reminds us of the essentially operatic vocal style of much of Mozart's music. Here, in the first theme, there are obvious affinities to operatic recitative, here tragic in cast, with all the deep melancholy that the choice of key implies. The mood changes into E flat major, to be replaced again by the prevailing feeling of sadness. This is quickly dispelled by the opening of the final rondo, although the movement is not without its moments of drama.

In 1784 Mozart found himself much in demand in Vienna as a performer. His mornings, he explained to his father, by way of excuse for writing to him so infrequently,

were taken up with pupils, and nearly every evening with playing, and for his performances he was obliged to provide new music. The *Piano Concerto in G major*, *K.453*, was the fourth of six written during the year, and bears the date 12 April in the index of his compositions that Mozart had begun to keep. It was written for his pupil Barbara von Ployer, who played it during a concert at her father's summer residence in June, an occasion to which Mozart had invited the composer Paisiello to hear both his pupil and this and other new compositions.

The opening orchestral exposition of the *Concerto* brings its own surprising shift of tonality before the entry of the soloist with the first subject and a movement that continues with occasional darkening of colour. The C major slow movement, an *Andante* rather than an *Adagio*, as Mozart stresses in his letters home, opens with an orchestral statement of the principal theme, followed by brief contrapuntal interplay between the instruments, the soloist leading the theme into a darker mood. The *Concerto* ends with a movement of which the principal theme was apparently echoed by Mozart's pet starling, transcribed into the notebook in which he was keeping his accounts and writing exercises in English, with the comment ‘Das war schön!’ The theme, with all the simplicity of a folk song, is followed by five variations and an extended coda. Original cadenzas survive for the first two movements.

Keith Anderson

Mozart Rearranged

Rearranging music was very common in the 18th and 19th centuries, whether for performance purposes or as a compositional exercise. Composers, such as Bach, would arrange music of other composers as well as their own. Franz Liszt arranged the Beethoven symphonies or scenes from Wagner operas to be played by just one piano. The two piano concertos by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart featured on this recording were arranged by Ignaz Lachner for piano and string quartet with double bass, most likely for the simple pleasure of domestic use – having the opportunity to play these beloved works without the need of a full orchestra.

Mozart arranged four of his earlier concertos – *Nos. 11 to 14* – for piano with string quartet and double bass. These were the first concertos he wrote when he moved to Vienna in 1782. The reason was most likely as a way of making more money by having a version that could be played at home with amateur musicians. The full orchestration of these early concertos is rather modest and as a result, a piano and string quintet version is quite amiable and actually sounds rather natural. His late piano concertos, however, are much more complex, elaborate and rich orchestrally. To incorporate the wind parts into the strings, as Lachner did, is trickier and riskier. We are at a danger of losing certain orchestral colours as well as sounding forced when playing material which is written idiomatically for winds on strings.

Great music transcends time and place. It survives for centuries well beyond the life of its creators, and it can be interpreted magnificently by a musician regardless of his or her origin. Can great music also transcend the particular instruments it was originally composed for? I have often wondered about why some music yields itself more easily for arrangements than others. I have heard Bach's music reimagined in other instrumentations and the results were often quite convincing. Having said that, I have never heard Chopin's music being played other than in its original form – solely on the piano – that had any degree of success. Where does Mozart stand then? His music is

primarily vocal. Even if the instrumentation includes winds and strings, it often tries to imitate the human voice.

Mozart's piano concertos are like miniature operas. The pianist who is responsible for multiple characters – Don Giovanni or Figaro, Susanna or Donna Anna, the Count, or even Antonio the gardener – is conversing with the strings or the woodwinds, each representing a character in the story. When playing with a full orchestra, the pianist's dialogue with the woodwinds is done sitting at some distance from one another, and looking at the conductor. In the current arrangement, as in this recording, the storytelling, the conversation between the characters/instruments is much more intimate and intense. It is chamber music at its finest.

Listening to familiar music in a different way than we have grown accustomed to might also shed new light, new perspective on things we have forgotten, or to which we did not pay attention. This new arrangement gives us an opportunity to discover new answers to old questions. The different colours, the close proximity of the players and the added transparency, might reveal something new in the music which we have not heard before. In such arrangements as these, when a full orchestra is reduced to simply five string instruments, we hear many details more clearly. The different relationships, the different tensions can tell a different story. I believe that when an arrangement is done with integrity, humility and imagination, the result may be delightful, bringing new insights into a well-digested score. Such are the arrangements on this recording.

The piano part in these arrangements remains absolutely the same as in the original version. Lachner practically incorporated, as much as possible, the wind parts into the strings. At times, my distinguished colleagues and I made some minor modifications to Lachner's version, where we thought it to be more in keeping with Mozart's intentions. We hope you will enjoy the recording.

Alon Goldstein



Alon Goldstein

Alon Goldstein has appeared with the Chicago and San Francisco Symphony Orchestras, The Philadelphia Orchestra, and the Los Angeles, London and Israel Philharmonic Orchestras under conductors such as Zubin Mehta and Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos. Recent highlights include performances of Prokofiev's *Piano Concertos* with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, Mozart's *Triple Concerto* at Carnegie Hall, and a 17-concert Latin American tour with the Israel Chamber Orchestra. Goldstein's discography includes Mozart's piano concertos with the Fine Arts Quartet [Naxos 8.573398 and 8.573736] and Dvořák's piano trios with the Tempest Trio [8.573279]. A passionate advocate of music education, recent teaching engagements have included the Steans Institute at Ravinia Festival and Ensemble Connect (formerly Ensemble ACJW) at Carnegie Hall. Goldstein has performed at prestigious venues around the world, and in 2019 was inducted into the Society of Scholars of his alma mater, the Johns Hopkins University. A graduate of the Peabody Conservatory, where he studied under Leon Fleisher, Goldstein is also an alumni of the International Lieven Piano Foundation in Vienna where he serves as a faculty member. He currently holds the position of Strandberg/Missouri Endowed Chair and Distinguished Visiting Professor at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. www.alongoldstein.com

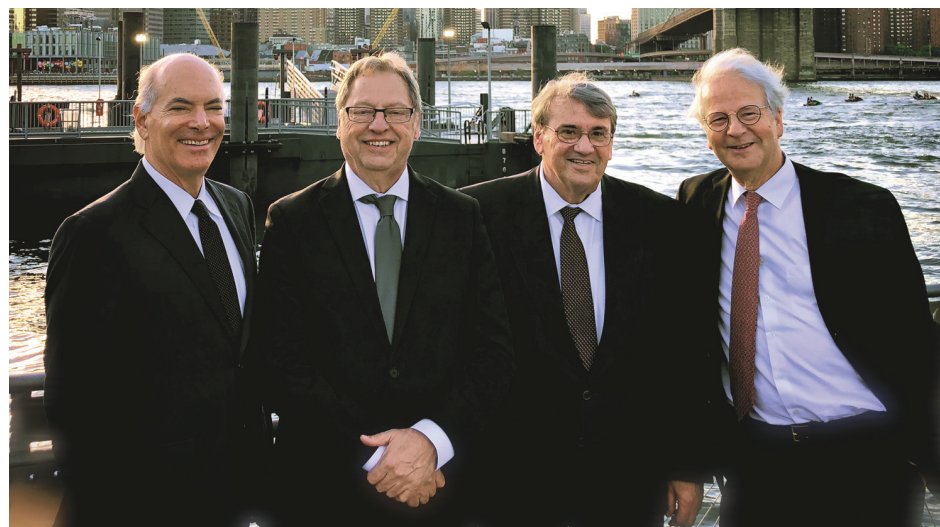


Alexander Bickard

Bassist Alexander Bickard is at home in orchestral, chamber and solo playing. Bickard was appointed assistant principal bass of the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra in the summer of 2019, and additionally appears as a substitute bassist with the New York Philharmonic. Bickard has collaborated with the Ariel and Fine Arts Quartets, including recordings on the Naxos label. Since 2017 he has performed with the International Sejong Soloists, appearing across three continents. At the age of 19, Bickard made his solo debut at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall after winning The Juilliard School Double Bass Concerto Competition. He has appeared at the Spoleto, Tanglewood, Ravinia, Pacific and Castleton Festivals, as well as the New York String Orchestra Seminar. Earning both his Bachelor's and Master's degrees from The Juilliard School, Bickard was a recipient of the Kovner Fellowship and studied with Eugene Levinson and Timothy Cobb.

Fine Arts Quartet

The Fine Arts Quartet, described by the *Washington Post* as 'one of the gold-plated names in chamber music', ranks among the most distinguished ensembles in chamber music today, with an illustrious history of performing success and an extensive legacy of over 200 recorded works. Founded in Chicago in 1946, the Quartet is one of the elite few to have recorded and toured internationally for well over a half-century. Violinists Ralph Evans (prizewinner in the International Tchaikovsky Competition) and Efim Boico (former concertmaster of the Orchestre de Paris under Daniel Barenboim) have performed together since 1983. They are joined by two eminent musicians: violist Gil Sharon (founder of the Amati Ensemble), and cellist Niklas Schmidt (co-founder of Trio Fontenay). Many of the Quartet's recent releases have been selected for inclusion on GRAMMY Awards entry lists in the categories Best Classical Album and/or Best Chamber Music Performance, and have received multiple awards and distinctions, among them: *Gramophone* Award Winner and Recording of Legendary Status (*The Gramophone Classical Music Guide*), Key Recording/Top Recommendation (*Penguin Guide to Recorded Classical Music*), Editor's Choice (*Gramophone* magazine), Critic's Choice (*American Record Guide*), *BBC Music Magazine* Choice, three times Recording of the Year (*MusicWeb International*), and a GRAMMY Award for producer Steven Epstein (Fauré *Quintets* with Cristina Ortiz). The Quartet has also received the CMA/ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming. Other Naxos releases in 2020 include works by Beethoven [8.574051]. www.fineartsquartet.com



From left to right: **Ralph Evans, Efim Boico, Gil Sharon and Niklas Schmidt**

Mozart himself had arranged four of his earlier concertos for the ensemble of piano, string quartet and bass, to enable his works to be performed domestically. Numerous subsequent transcriptions followed during the course of the 19th century, prominently those of the conductor and composer Ignaz Lachner. The concertos here are *K.271 'Jeunehomme'*, a particularly brilliant work, and the charming *K.453*. Leaving the piano part untouched, Lachner ingeniously incorporates all the orchestral music, including wind parts, into his string transcriptions.

**Wolfgang Amadeus
MOZART**
(1756–1791)

Piano Concertos Nos. 9 and 17

Orchestra parts transcribed 1884 for string quartet and double bass
by Ignaz Lachner (1807–1895)

Piano Concerto No. 9 in E flat major, K.271 'Jeunehomme' (1777)		Piano Concerto No. 17 in G major, K.453 (1784)	
			30:48
1 I. Allegro	10:36	4 I. Allegro	11:49
2 II. Andantino	11:36	5 II. Andante	11:13
3 III. Rondeau: Presto	10:42	6 III. Allegretto – Finale: Presto	7:44

All cadenzas by Mozart

WORLD PREMIERE RECORDINGS

Alon Goldstein, Piano
Fine Arts Quartet

Ralph Evans, Violin I • Efim Boico, Violin II
Gil Sharon, Viola • Niklas Schmidt, Cello
with Alexander Bickard, Double Bass

Recorded: 28–30 July 2019 at The Concert Hall, Dorothy Young Center for the Arts, Drew University,
New Jersey, USA • Producer, engineer and editor: Steven Epstein

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Playing Time
63:46



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Booklet notes in English