

Mozart

3 VIOLIN CONCERTOS

The English Concert
ANDREW MANZE



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Cover (detail): *Page from the violin tutorial by Leopold Mozart*, published Augsburg 1756 / Museum der Stadt Wien / Dagli Orti / The Art Archive

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Performing editions used for this recording were prepared by Andrew Manze from the existing manuscripts.

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Producer: Robina G. Young

Recording Engineer & Editor: Brad Michel

DSD Engineer: Chris Barrett

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PRODUCTION **USA**

Wolfgang Amadeus **Mozart** (1756–1791)
3 VIOLIN CONCERTOS

		CONCERTO IN G MAJOR, K. 216	24:04
1	I	Allegro	9:03
2	II	Adagio	8:21
3	III	Rondeau: Allegro – Andante – Allegretto – Tempo primo	6:40
		CONCERTO IN D MAJOR, K. 218	22:35
4	I	Allegro	8:26
5	II	Andante cantabile	7:00
6	III	Rondeau: Andante grazioso – Allegro ma non troppo	7:09
		CONCERTO IN A MAJOR, K. 219	28:50
7	I	Allegro aperto – Adagio – Allegro aperto	9:25
8	II	Adagio	10:23
9	III	Rondeau: Tempo di Menuetto – Allegro – Tempo di Menuetto	9:03

All cadenzas by Andrew Manze

The English Concert

ANDREW MANZE *solo violin & director*

Mozart

3 VIOLIN CONCERTOS K.216, 218, 219

The present three violin concertos were completed during the last four months of 1775. After the success of his operas *La finta giardiniera* in Munich in January, 1775, and *Il Ré pastore* at home in Salzburg in April, Mozart was now back in his seat, earning a modest salary as a violinist at the Episcopal court. His employer Count Hieronymus Colloredo was rarely helpful when it came to the Mozart family's extra-mural activities but he was a keen amateur violinist, so performing entertaining violin concertos was perhaps one of the better ways to keep in his good books. In addition, Mozart was working alongside the *Vice-Kapellmeister*, his father Leopold, who had taught him the violin and whose letters are peppered with parental pressure on the subject. "Every time I come home I succumb to a feeling of melancholy, for as I draw near to our house I always half expect to hear the sound of your violin." (6 October, 1777). "Have you been practising the violin at all while in Munich?" (9 October, 1777). "Your violin is hanging on its nail, of that I'm sure" (a reference to a common way of storing a violin in the 18th century, by tying a ribbon to its scroll and hanging it on the wall; 27 November, 1777). Writing and playing violin concertos must have been a good way to keep his father happy as well as Colloredo.

That is not to belittle Mozart's skill on the violin, or the enjoyment he took in playing it. He made a point of keeping his father informed, giving us valuable information in the process. "I played Vanhal's violin concerto in B-flat, to general *applauso*... In the evening during supper I played the Strasbourg concerto [K. 216]. It went like oil. Everyone praised the clear, beautiful tone." (24 October, 1777). "To end with, I played my latest Cassation in B-flat [K. 287]. They were all agog. I played as if I were the greatest violinist in the whole of Europe." (6 October, 1777). Leopold's reply to this last comment is worth including in light of the fact that the Cassation mentioned has one of the most technically demanding violin parts Mozart was ever to write (which partly accounts for the fact that the piece is so rarely attempted nowadays). "I am not surprised that they were all agog when you played your latest Cassation. You've no idea how well you play the violin. If only you'd pay yourself some respect and put your whole technique, heart and soul into it, yes,

just as if you were the first violin player in Europe." (18 October, 1777). How frustrating for a teacher, let alone a father, to see such talent squandered by a pupil/son!

When it came to violin playing, Leopold knew what he was talking about. Six months after Wolfgang was born, in 1756, he had published what quickly became one of the most influential violin treatises of the eighteenth century. For all musicians and music-lovers, this *Treatise on the fundamental principles of violin playing*¹ is a treasure trove of information not only about how the violin was played in the Mozart household, but about how an intelligent mid-eighteenth-century musician was thinking. It is a shame that many Mozart specialists take little interest in this treatise, if they even know it exists. You do not have to be part of the historically-informed-performance brigade, or even a violinist for that matter, to find many wonderful things in it.

Before 1775, Mozart had composed only one concerto each for piano (K. 175), bassoon (K. 191) and violin (K. 207), plus the *Concertone* (K. 190). From the point of view of Mozart's evolution as a concerto composer, 1775 could be said to be a pivotal year, as the nineteen-year-old made the transition from *wunderkind* to fully-fledged genius. He already handles concerto form like a veteran, and is not afraid to innovate, but what is perhaps most striking, when comparing these pieces with concertos by his contemporaries, is the way Mozart treats the violin not simply as the principal instrument but as the leading *dramatis persona*, with the orchestra one moment playing the Greek chorus, the next a fellow protagonist. In this respect, these concertos verge on the operatic.

K. 216 actually opens with a nod towards Mozart's most recent opera, a melody close to that of Aminta's aria *Aer tranquilla* in *Il Ré pastore*. Later, the violin and oboe engage in dialogue (from 4:15) and, just before the recapitulation, the soloist seems to forget for a moment that this is not an opera and breaks into recitative (5:04). The second movement is, in effect, an aria without words. To achieve its soft focus, Mozart mutes the *tutti* violins and exchanges oboes for flutes. He saves one extra touch of magic for the end: the soloist plays a final, melting statement of the first phrase *after* the cadenza (at 7:53), an innovation so satisfying that we do not register how ingenious

it is. The reference to the 'Strasbourg concerto,' in the letter quoted above, puzzled musicologists for a long time. Only in the 1950s was the solution found, when Dénes Bartha came across an Hungarian folk melody in an eighteenth-century source, called *Strassburger*, which appears in the *Rondeau* of K. 216 (at 4:01). Even though the joke or storyline explaining this quote has long been lost, we can appreciate that there is something extra-musical going on here. The very fact that Mozart deconstructs rondo form, breaking into a pseudo-Baroque ground-bass *Andante* (at 3:29), before plunging the listener into *Strassburger*, must have tickled Mozart's audience.

In K. 218, the innovations continue. In answer to the conventionally grandiose start, the whole orchestra in unison at a low register (see page 39), the soloist enters in its highest possible tessitura (at 1:19), accompanied by a tiny choir of violins, at a stroke defeating the listener's expectations. The second movement, like that of K. 216, has a solo passage after the cadenza but Mozart still manages to surprise us. Rather than repeat something already heard, he gives the violin an entirely new melody, if that is not too weighty a word for what is just a scale upwards and a scale downwards of breathtaking simplicity and beauty (at 6:13). As if he knew we would not believe our ravished ears, he repeats the phrase before having the orchestra gently dispel the reverie and end the movement. The autograph score shows that this heavenly passage was literally an afterthought, added after the movement was finished. Mozart crossed out his original ending for orchestra without soloist, turned the page and wrote what we now hear, before continuing with the finale. It is as if we are witness to the actual moment he was touched by God. Surely this is the most sublime passage he had yet written? In the third movement, conventional rondo form is again stirred up: the recurring first theme is never given time to end before it is interrupted (e.g. at 0:28 and 2:16) by an irrepressible dance. This is itself interrupted (at 3:26) by another folk-like episode, similar to that of K. 216. Although the main melody is yet to be identified, we can still appreciate the joke.

Having heard two concertos that year, Mozart's 1775 listeners must have been bracing themselves for more

experiments in K. 219. None of them, however, could have predicted the stroke of genius in the first movement. After the orchestral exposition, at the moment when the soloist is due to enter with the expected eruption of dazzling virtuosity, the music stops. The violin then begins what sounds like a completely different piece – a slow, lyrical aria, floating high above the hushed orchestra. Only after this *Adagio* phrase has reached its graceful conclusion does the *Allegro* resume with all the brilliance we expected, and only in hindsight do we realize that the other-worldly melody we fleetingly heard was in fact the soloist's *Allegro* opening played in slow motion. Once again, Mozart has handled his experiment so perfectly that we did not realize it was one. Not that everything Mozart did escaped criticism: the *Adagio* of K. 219 was considered by one violinist to be “too studied,”² so Mozart had to write an alternative slow movement. He had to do this because the complainant was his superior, Antonio Brunetti, concertmaster at Salzburg from 1776 and “a thoroughly ill-bred fellow” according to Mozart (letter to Leopold, 9 July, 1778). Exquisite though the replacement *Adagio* (K. 261) undoubtedly is, nobody since Brunetti has thought of complaining about the original, which is performed here. The *Rondeau* of K. 219 includes a folk-like episode that, for many years, lent the concerto the epithet ‘Turkish.’ Mozart used this style of writing in several works, most famously in the *alla Turca* finale of the piano sonata K. 331, but it is now generally agreed that the style is not Turkish but originated in the Christian-ruled areas bordering on the Ottoman Empire. Some have suggested that it should more properly be described as ‘Hungarian.’ Should K. 219 be renamed the ‘Zigeuner Concerto’?

Performance note

For this recording, facsimiles were consulted of the autograph manuscripts. They survive in the Jagellonian University Library, Cracow (K. 216 and K. 218), and in The Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (K. 219). In keeping with what we know of contemporary practice, all the cadenzas and lead-ins are the soloist's own. Shorter perhaps than we are nowadays used to, their structure and length are the result of a study of Mozart's many cadenzas that survive, mostly for piano concertos but also importantly for the violin in the *Sinfonia Concertante* K. 364 and *Ein musikalischer Spaß* K. 522. I decided not to record the cadenzas I contributed to Cliff Eisen's recent Breitkopf & Härtel editions. There is a danger that musicians treat their interpretations as Victorian lepidopterists did butterflies, chasing them across continents, netting them and pinning them through

the heart. What remains, as Monty Python might say, is an ex-butterfly. I felt that the published cadenzas had been pinned already. Better find new ones still flying.

These concertos are used everywhere by teachers to perfect students' technique and musicianship, by record companies to show off new talent and by orchestras to audition applicants. They are now so familiar, so often performed and recorded, that we can all perhaps be forgiven the fact that we need reminding how thoroughly good they are. A potent image to keep in mind is that of a nineteen-year-old standing in front of an orchestra and audience of friends, family and colleagues, playing his own, astounding compositions. Far from the modern, post-Classical notion of the concerto as a conflict between the one and the many, a *Helden*-soloist struggling against the massed ranks of an anonymous orchestra, the concerto was a communal effort in the early Classical era. Nowadays there is a risk that soloists travel around, showing off the same, pinned butterfly again and again, regardless of the orchestra around them. Too often they spend minutes rather than hours getting to know the orchestra. For this project I feel fortunate to have been playing at home, a *primus* amongst The English Concert's *pares*.

– ANDREW MANZE

The English Concert

Andrew Manze *director & solo violin*

VIOLIN I

Miles Golding
Graham Cracknell
Rodolfo Richter
Thérèse Timoney
Stephen Jones

VIOLIN II

Walter Reiter
Catherine Martin
Silvia Schweinberger
Fiona Huggett
Claire Duff

VIOLA

Trevor Jones
Stefanie Heichelheim
Ylvali Zilliacus

VIOLONCELLO

Alison McGillivray
Timothy Kraemer

DOUBLE BASS

Peter McCarthy

FLUTE

Katy Bircher
Guy Williams

OBOE

Katharina Spreckelsen
Alexandra Bellamy

HORN

Anthony Halstead
Christian Rutherford

THE INSTRUMENTS & THEIR MAKERS

SOLO VIOLIN	Andrew Manze	Joseph Gagliano, Naples, 1782
VIOLIN I	Miles Golding Graham Cracknell Rodolfo Richter Thérèse Timoney Stephen Jones	Antonio Mariani, c. 1660 Joseph Gagliano, c. 1760 Andrea Guarneri, Cremona, 1674 Anonymous, Paris, c. 1760 Thomas Perry, Dublin, 1794
VIOLIN II	Walter Reiter Catherine Martin Silvia Schweinberger Fiona Huggett Claire Duff	Mathias Klotz, Mittenwald, 1727 Carlo Antonio Testore, 1745 Anonymous, Flemish, c. 1750 Chris Johnson, 1999, after Guarneri del Gesù Marcus Snoeck, c. 1720
VIOLA	Trevor Jones Stefanie Heichelheim Ylvali Zilliacus	Rowland Ross, 1977, after Stradivari Rowland Ross, 2004, after Andreas Guarneri, 1676 Jan Pawlikowski, 2004
VIOLONCELLO	Alison McGillivray Timothy Kraemer	Anonymous [?English], London, c. 1715 John Barrett, 1743
DOUBLE BASS	Peter McCarthy	Anonymous, Brescia region, 2nd half of 17th C.
FLUTE	Katy Bircher Guy Williams	Martin Wenner, Germany, 2003, after J. J. Quantz Martin Wenner, Germany 2003, after Palanca, mid 18th C.
OBOE	Katharina Spreckelsen Alexandra Bellamy	Paul Hailperin, 2003, after P. Paulhahn, c.1720 T. Hasegawa, 2003, after J. Denner
HORN	Anthony Halstead Christian Rutherford	Webb / Halstead, 1992, after L.-J. Raoux, Paris, c. 1795 Paxman, c. 1982
PITCH	A = 415	

