

MOZART

Piano Concertos Nos. 20 and 21 (arr. Ignaz Lachner)

Alon Goldstein, Piano
Fine Arts Quartet



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)
Piano Concertos Nos. 20, K. 466 and 21, K. 467
Arranged for piano, string quartet and double bass by Ignaz Lachner (1807–1895)

The solo concerto had become, during the eighteenth 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. The remaining seventeen 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of the eighteenth century also brought considerable changes in keyboard instruments, as the harpsichord was gradually superseded by the fortepiano or pianoforte, with its hammer action, an instrument capable of dynamic nuances impossible on the older instrument, while the hammer-action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 seemed 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 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, primarily for his own use.

Mozart entered the *Piano Concerto in D minor, K. 466*, in his new catalogue of compositions on 10th February 1785. It received its first performance at the Mehlgrube in Vienna the following day in a concert at which the composer's father was present. Proud of his son's achievement, the latter sent his daughter a description of the first of his son's Lenten subscription concerts, remarking particularly on the fine new concerto that was performed, a work that the copyist was still writing out when he arrived, so that there had been no time to rehearse the final rondo. He found his son busy from morning to night with pupils, composing and concerts, and felt out of it, with so much activity round him. Nevertheless he was immensely gratified by Wolfgang's obvious success. The next day Haydn came to the apartment in Schulerstrasse and Mozart's second group of quartets dedicated to the older composer were performed, to Haydn's great admiration.

The *Piano Concerto in D minor*, the first of Mozart's piano concertos in a minor key, to be followed a year later by the *Concerto in C minor*, adds a new dimension of high seriousness to the form, a mood apparent in the dramatic opening, with its mounting tension. The soloist enters with a new theme, after an orchestral exposition that has announced the principal material of the movement, and later extends the second subject in a work in which the recurrent sombre mood of the opening is only momentarily lightened by reference to brighter tonalities, these too not without poignancy. The slow movement, under the title *Romance*, is in the form of a rondo, in which the principal theme, announced first by the soloist, re-appears, framing

intervening episodes. Its key of B flat major provides a gentle contrast to the first movement, with a dramatic return to the minor, G minor, in the second episode. In the final rondo, into which the soloist leads the way, again in the original key of D minor, a triumphant D major version of an earlier theme interrupts a repetition of the minor principal subject, after the cadenza, and brings the concerto to an end. Cadenzas were presumably improvised by Mozart, and not written out, as they would have been for his pupils or for his sister, and do not survive. Beethoven, who had narrowly been prevented by his mother's final illness from studying with Mozart in Vienna, later provided cadenzas for the first and last movements, the first of which is recorded here, followed, in the last movement by the present performer's own cadenza.

The *Piano Concerto in C major, K. 467*, was entered in Mozart's catalogue of compositions with the date 9th March, 1785, a month after his *D Minor Concerto*. Like its immediate predecessor the original concerto is scored for trumpets and drums, as well as flute, pairs of oboes, bassoons and horns, and strings, with divided violas. It was first performed by the composer at the fifth of his Lenten Mehlgrube concerts on 11th March, the day after a concert in the Burgtheater for which he had used his new fortepiano with an added pedal-board, an instrument that his father remarked was constantly being taken out of the house for concerts at the Mehlgrube or in the houses of the aristocracy.

The opening bars of the exposition, originally played by the strings, are answered, in military style, by the wind, and there is a second theme of less significance than a true second subject, which is reserved for the soloist's exposition. The soloist enters at first with an introduction and brief cadenza, leading to a trill, while the strings again play the first part of the principal theme, answered by the piano, which then proceeds to material of its own. An unexpected foretaste of the great *Symphony in G minor*,

K. 550 from the soloist leads to the happier mood of the true second subject, to be followed by darker moments in the central development. The F major slow movement has won recent fame by its use in the film *Elvira Madigan*, but is, nevertheless, one of the most beautiful of Mozart's slow movements, moving in its apparent simplicity and lack of bravura, but complex, in fact, in its harmonic pattern. The final movement provides a relaxation of mood, a carefully balanced and lighter conclusion to a concerto of much substance. The cadenzas played here are by Alon Goldstein.

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 the Paris publisher J. G. Sieber on 26th 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, 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 nineteenth 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. 466 and K. 467 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.

Keith Anderson

Transcriptions of Mozart's Piano Concertos Nos. 20 and 21

Because Mozart wrote to his father that four of his piano concertos (K.413, K.414, K.415, and K.449) could be performed *a quattro*, pianists occasionally perform them with string quartet alone, leaving out the woodwind parts. Whenever I hear such chamber performances, however, I miss Mozart's beautiful wind lines and wonder if any accomplished composer had ever taken a Mozart piano concerto and transcribed all its orchestral lines for string quartet (or quintet).

While researching, I discovered that one nineteenth-century composer, Ignaz Lachner, had actually made *many* such complete transcriptions. Lachner (1807-1895), one of three well-respected composer brothers who were friends of Franz Schubert, was an experienced composer and conductor. His original compositions, while seldom performed today, are well-crafted, and many of them were quite popular during his lifetime.

But were Lachner's Mozart concerto transcriptions any good? To find out, the Fine Arts Quartet decided to try

them out in concert. Together with pianist Alon Goldstein, we performed two of Mozart's greatest works, the *D minor Concerto, K.466*, and the *C major Concerto, K.467*, ('*Elvira Madigan*'), in Lachner's chamber versions for piano with string quartet and bass. The results in both cases were splendid. The accompaniments for string quintet sound natural – almost as if Mozart himself had transcribed them. Genuine Mozart, in all its parts, is always preferable, of course, but pianists who do not have the opportunity to perform these two concertos with orchestra, can use Lachner's arrangements to play Mozart's incomparable masterpieces with the interpretive freedom and intimacy that only a chamber version can offer. With thanks to Naxos, we are now pleased to offer the first recordings ever of these two great Mozart concertos in Lachner's chamber versions.

Ralph Evans
Fine Arts Quartet

Photo: Christian Steinern



Alon Goldstein

Alon Goldstein is one of the most original and sensitive pianists of his generation, admired for his musical intelligence and dynamic personality. He has played with the orchestras of Chicago, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Radio France, London and Israel, under such conductors as Zubin Mehta, Herbert Blomstedt, Vladimir Jurowski, Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos and Leon Fleisher. He has performed at Carnegie Hall, in Beijing (Forbidden City), Moscow (Kremlin), Los Angeles (Hollywood Bowl), Lima (Philharmonic Society), London, Paris, Madrid, Zaragoza, Jerusalem, and Tel Aviv as well as at the Gilmore, Santa Fe, Tanglewood, Ravinia, Marlboro, Seattle, Verbier, Prussia Cove and Jerusalem music festivals. Over the past several years he has taught at the Ravinia Festival, New York's IKIF, "Piano Texas" Fort Worth, and the "Tel Hai" master-classes, Israel. His engagements have included a seventeen-concert Latin American tour with the Israel Chamber Orchestra under Yoav Talmi. Alon Goldstein's recordings include the Mendelssohn *Piano Concertos* and, with his Tempest Trio, Dvořák's *Piano Trios Nos. 3 and 4* for Naxos [8.573279].

Photo: Kurt Muroki



Rachel Calin

Rachel Calin won the Juilliard Concerto Competition in 1994, making her concerto début at Lincoln Center with the Juilliard Orchestra. As a chamber musician she has collaborated with the Cavani, Daedalus, and Fine Arts Quartets, Larry Dutton, Ron Leonard, and has worked closely with the violinists Itzhak Perlman and Gil Shaham through her work with the Perlman Music Program and the Sejong Soloists, respectively. Rachel Calin attended The Juilliard School as a full scholarship student of Homer Mensch, and is currently a guest artist with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra and on the faculty of the Perlman Music Program and the McDuffie Center for Strings at Mercer University. She currently performs on a double bass crafted in 1690 by Carlo Giuseppe Testore.

Fine Arts Quartet

The Fine Arts Quartet ranks among the most distinguished ensembles in chamber music today, with an illustrious history of performing success and an extensive recording legacy. Founded in Chicago in 1946, and based at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee since 1963, the Quartet is one of the elite few to have recorded and toured internationally for over half a century. Each season, **Ralph Evans** and **Efim Boico** (who have been playing together for over thirty years), **Juan Miguel Hernandez**, and **Robert Cohen** perform worldwide, in such cities as New York, London, Paris, Berlin, Rome, Madrid, Moscow, Tokyo, Beijing, Istanbul, Jerusalem, Mexico City, and Toronto. The Quartet has recorded over 200 works. Their latest releases have received many distinctions, among them: "Gramophone award-winner and recording of legendary status" (2012 *Gramophone Classical Music Guide*), "Key Recording/Top Recommendation" (2010 *Penguin Guide to Recorded Classical Music*), and "Editor's Choice" (*Gramophone* magazine, 2010). Releases on Naxos include the world première of Efrem Zimbalist's *Quartet* (1959), Eugène Ysaÿe's long-lost masterpiece, *Harmonies du soir*, Fritz Kreisler's *Quartet*, Saint-Saëns *Quartets* and *Piano Quartet/Quintet*, Beethoven *Quintets*, Franck *Quartet/Quintet*, Fauré *Quintets*, Schumann *String Quartets* and *Piano Quartet/Quintet*, Bruckner chamber music, Mendelssohn *Quintets*, quartets by Antheil, Herrmann, Glass, Evans, and Glazunov chamber music. Other FAQ recordings available in the Naxos Music Library include quartets of Dohnányi and Arriaga. For more information: www.fineartsquartet.com

Photo: Robert Devers



From left to right: Ralph Evans, Efim Boico, Robert Cohen and Juan Miguel Hernandez

To make Mozart's *Piano Concertos K. 466* and *K. 467* more accessible to the public, the 19th-century composer Ignaz Lachner left the piano parts untouched and made splendid transcriptions of the orchestra parts for just string quartet with added bass. These chamber versions of two of Mozart's greatest and most popular concertos sound almost as natural as if Mozart had transcribed them himself.

Wolfgang Amadeus
MOZART
(1756–1791)

Piano Concertos Nos. 20 and 21

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

Piano Concerto No. 20 in D minor, K.466 30:29

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| 1 I. Allegro (cadenza by Beethoven) | 14:27 |
| 2 II. Romance | 8:49 |
| 3 III. Allegro assai (cadenza by Alon Goldstein) | 7:11 |

Piano Concerto No. 21 in C major, K.467 27:21

- | | |
|--|--------------|
| 4 I. Allegro maestoso (cadenza by Alon Goldstein) | 13:57 |
| 5 II. Andante | 6:43 |
| 6 III. Allegro vivace assai (cadenza by Alon Goldstein) | 6:38 |

WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDINGS

Alon Goldstein, Piano
Fine Arts Quartet

Ralph Evans, Violin I • Efim Boico, Violin II
Juan Miguel Hernandez, Viola • Robert Cohen, Cello
with Rachel Calin, Double Bass

Recorded at The American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York City, USA, 24–26 June 2014
Producer, Engineer & Editor: Steven Epstein • Booklet notes: Keith Anderson, Ralph Evans
Special thanks to William Schwartz • Cover photo: Leigh Prather / Dreamstime.com



8.573398

DDD

Playing Time
57:56



© & © 2015
Naxos Rights US, Inc.
Booklet notes in English
Made in Germany
www.naxos.com