

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

(1756-1791)

Anne-Marie McDermott, piano
Calder Quartet
David J. Grossman, bass (K. 449)

Piano Concerto No. 13 in C Major, K. 415 (27:55)

- 1 I. Allegro (10:19)
- 2 II. Andante (9:08)
- 3 III. Rondeau: Allegro (8:15)

Piano Concerto No. 12 in A Major, K. 414 (26:25)

- 4 I. Allegro (9:55)
- 5 II. Andante (0:26)
- 6 III. Rondo: Allegretto (6:53)

Piano Concerto No. 14 in E flat Major, K. 449 (21:22)

- 7 I. Allegro vivace (8:53)
- 8 II. Andantino (6:35)
- 9 III. Allegro ma non troppo (5:46)

Notes by Malcolm MacDonald

The concertos of Mozart so dominate our present-day mainstream concert repertoire, and have crowded out so completely the concertante works of his immediate contemporaries, that it's all too easy for us to think that they constitute some sort of norm. They must, we unconsciously assume, perfectly typify the generally-accepted Classical concerto form of the late 18th century, simply raised to the highest power of genius; the purest and most masterly representatives of a common genre.

Yet Mozart's personal adaptation and exploitation of the concerto genre was highly idiosyncratic. Yes, his concertos inhabit the tonal design that we call sonata form, which was the Classical era's greatest achievement in musical architecture. But they do so in a way that constantly draws upon his experience and ambitions in the genre of opera. It is in Mozart's concertos, and above all the piano concertos, that the concept of the concerto as a *drama* – practically a commonplace to all succeeding generations – first arises. (There is hardly a trace of such an idea in Haydn's piano concertos, for example.) The 'operatic' elements are not confined to the aria-like character of so many of Mozart's slow movements, the *buffo* antics and rejoicings of his finales, the

contests, arguments, duets or dialogues between the soloist and the orchestra or a chosen group of instruments. They extend to the thematic material itself. Mozart's concertos typically begin with a very large-scale orchestral exposition that may introduce as many as seven salient themes, or even more. Not even Beethoven emulated Mozart in this, perhaps because the sheer profusion of themes might have militated against his instinct for close-knit motivic development. Yet Mozart's first movements are not (as those of his lesser contemporaries, working with fewer themes, frequently are) merely episodic. Rather every theme has its proper place and function in the workings of the sonata design, like a character in a drama: it may be used for a particular juncture, for a turn in the argument, to introduce a new emotional colouring, and so on.

This highly original approach to concerto form, in which theatrical impulses are seamlessly blended with the demands of working-out the material, manifested itself very early in Mozart's career, and became his established strategy whenever he worked with the genre. What developed over the years was the subtlety, richness and expressive profundity of that strategy, which found its finest flowering in the concertos of his last years. Though the seeds of this later genius were present even in his earliest concertos, there is a distinct transitional period

between 1782 and 1784 in which his mastery of the genre began to come into full flower.

Writing to his father in Salzburg on 28 December 1782, Mozart described the set of three comparatively small-scale piano concertos (K. 413-415) that he had prepared for his proposed subscription concerts in January. *These concertos are a happy medium between what is too easy and too difficult; they are very brilliant, pleasing to the ear, and natural without being vapid. There are passages here and there from which the connoisseurs alone can derive satisfaction; but these passages are written in such a way that the less learned cannot fail to be pleased, though without knowing why.* At the time of the letter, two of those concertos remained to be finished, but one – **Piano Concerto No. 12 in A major, K. 414** – was already complete. They were the first piano concertos he had written in Vienna.

On 15 January Mozart solicited subscriptions in the *Wiener Zeitung* for the three concertos, describing them as being with optional wind parts, to allow performance if necessary only with the accompaniment of only a string quartet. The appeal was not very successful, and in April Mozart was offering the three concertos to the French publisher Sieber; now he claimed they could be performed with full orchestra (ie, with oboes and

horns), which he knew was the French preference, or alternatively just with four-part strings. Sieber must have declined to offer, however, for although the concertos were being sold in manuscript copies, three years were to pass before they were printed and issued in Vienna, by Artaria, as Mozart's "opus 4".

As noted above, K. 414 is actually the earliest of the three, completed in the autumn of 1782. (An independent work, the Rondo in A major for piano and orchestra, K. 386, is thought to have started life as the finale for K. 414, only to be replaced by the finale we know.) We do not know the date of the premiere, though some scholars think it must have been as part of a Vienna concert given on 3 November that year by Mozart and his pupil Josephine von Auernhammer. He is also known to have played the work in Salzburg. Two sets of cadenzas survive for this concerto; the second set is thought to date from 1785, around the time of its publication. (Tovey, for once, found these cadenzas admirable.) Apparently Mozart was particularly fond of the work and used it to teach his favourite pupils; it has remained the favourite of these three concertos with audiences, too.

He was already at the height of his powers by the time he wrote this concerto, and his mastery of the genre is immediately apparent. Tovey

indeed declared it one of the most 'Mozartian' of all Mozart's works – *'it almost seems as if [he] had concentrated the most personal features of a dozen compositions on this single work'* – and he absolved the two sets of cadenzas, though they are short, from his usual stricture of being too 'perfunctory'. The first movement opens with the principal theme, which is characterized by the descending 'Scotch snap' rhythm of its second bar. There follow a number of contrasting ideas including a cheerful second subject in march-rhythm. Overall, however, this is a dignified movement; but its sheer wealth of invention is worthy of remark. The soloist repeats and develops all the different themes (save one) in its own exposition, and then the 'development' section as such concerns itself with completely new material. (Charles Rosen has suggested this is because the various themes of the exposition are too complex, and too complete, to require further development.) In the recapitulation the music returns to the material of the exposition, and this time the piano takes up the flowing theme that it had not glanced before.

The slow movement, in D major, opens with a grave falling and rising theme which the piano takes up in full majestic harmonization. This theme is actually borrowed from J. C. Bach, who had died in London in January 1782 – perhaps in tribute, for

Mozart had been very fond of the elder composer. This opening establishes the dominant mood of ruminative solemnity.

The finale is a lively rondo: the ebullient principal theme appears first on the violins, but does not get taken up by the soloist until most of the other themes have been heard. This is a movement rich in witty dialogue, which makes a sparkling conclusion to an exceptionally beguiling work.

Piano Concerto No. 13 in C major, K. 415 is the last of the three concertos written in the winter of 1782-73. Mozart gave the first performance in Vienna on 23 March 1783. It has been found a more 'impersonal' work than K. 414, and avails itself of the traditional 'grand manner' connotations of C major. Yet, although the material of the concerto might at first seem like a string of commonplaces turned with divine elegance, Mozart's treatment of it is often striking and original. The first movement begins with the usual orchestral exposition – one that has a distinct 'military' quality to its rhythms from the outset. The march-like first theme remains the property of the orchestra: Mozart gives new material to the piano, which it sometimes plays in combination with the orchestra's march-music. The central development is more extensive than in most of the concertos Mozart had written up to this

time, and demands a high level of technical skill and musicality from the soloist. The cadenzas are Mozart's own.

There exists a rejected fragment of an *Adagio* in C minor that was intended as the slow movement of this concerto; clearly Mozart had second thoughts, and settled for the ornate F major *Andante* that we know. The orchestra introduces the movement and pauses on the dominant before the soloist enters, taking up the material already heard on the orchestra. This is a warm, melodious movement with a subtle use of tone-colour.

The finale is cast as a sonata-rondo with a double exposition, the first entirely in the tonic, an unusual phenomenon for a concerto finale. The exposition has three themes, which are varied (or replaced with a new idea) each time they recur in the movement. Even more unusual is the occurrence between the two expositions of a plaintive *Adagio* episode in C minor: music which derives from, or at least echoes, the rejected slow movement (clearly Mozart had third thoughts, as well as second, about the material's usefulness). This phenomenon crops up again in the recapitulation, during which Mozart reverses the order of the two subjects. The hushed *pianissimo* ending is unexpected.

Piano Concerto No. 14 in E flat, K. 449 dates from only about a year later, but the artistic advance over Concertos Nos. 11-13 is immense, and K. 449 is generally considered first 'mature' piano concerto. Charles Rosen described it as a 'bold, even revolutionary' work. Mozart himself described it to his father as '*a concerto of a peculiar kind*'; he was thinking, perhaps, of the enhanced scope of the first movement, and the unusual form of the finale. The autograph score, and Mozart's own work-list, show it as having been completed in Vienna on 9 February 1784. It was the first of the two concertos (the other was No. 17 in G, K. 453) he wrote for his pupil Barbara von Ployer, daughter of Ignaz von Ployer, court councillor and agent of the Salzburg court in Vienna, who seems to have given the first performance on 17 March 1784. She must have been an excellent pianist, for the keyboard part is quite challenging to any virtuoso. Mozart scored the work for 2 oboes, 2 horns and strings, writing to his father that it would not be much use in Salzburg '*for you seldom have wind-players at your house*'. But he later stated that, like the concertos K. 413-415, it could be performed with string quartet accompaniment. In fact, modern research has shown that it was begun at the time of those concertos, and then laid aside until 1784.

The first movement's opening ritornello immediately makes clear that there has been a fundamental change of scale and conception in Mozart's view of concerto form. The themes and orchestration are reminiscent of the dramatic style of Mozart's operas, with abrupt changes of mood and atmospheric forays into the minor mode. Moreover, the whole span modulates to the dominant – something that Mozart had hitherto usually reserved for the soloist's re-exposition. The whole impression is that the movement has been opened up, tonally speaking, and has broader horizons than hitherto; although in its structure it is compact and tightly-argued. It has a cumulative dramatic force, as well. The role of the soloist is subtly different, too – less of a *prima donna* merely supported by the orchestra, and more integrated with the other instruments. The cadenza is Mozart's own, written for the use of Barbara Ployer.

The *Andantino* slow movement, in B flat, is a perfect example of Mozartian delicacy and elegance of expression, an appropriate contrast to the forceful opening movement. There are two themes, each played first by the orchestra and then given a decorated version by the soloist, which alternate in a movement that feels organically through-composed and visits several tonalities in its progress, including, early on, the remote key of A flat, and

later a surprising modulation to B minor. A simple linking figure becomes the focus of the movement's concluding bars.

The finale, *Allegro ma non troppo*, is an unusual and original conception. It resembles a sonata-rondo, with the principal material interspersed with episodes, but the episodes are in effect variations on the movement's first theme, so that it is very nearly a monothematic structure. This theme is unusual enough in its leaping, jagged character; while the overall texture displays Mozart's ingenuity in combining tunes in *opera buffa* style with a contrapuntal expertise that carries its learning very lightly.





In a career that has spanned over 25 years, American pianist **Anne-Marie McDermott** has played concertos, recitals and chamber music in hundreds of cities throughout the United States, Europe and Asia. Recent highlights include recitals in China, Toulouse, New York with violinist Nadja Salerno Sonnenberg; and concertos with the New York Philharmonic in Vail and the MDR Symphony in Amsterdam's Concertgebouw. The breadth of Ms. McDermott's repertoire matches that of her instrument, spanning from Bach, Haydn and Beethoven to Rachmaninoff, Prokofiev and Scriabin to works by today's most influential

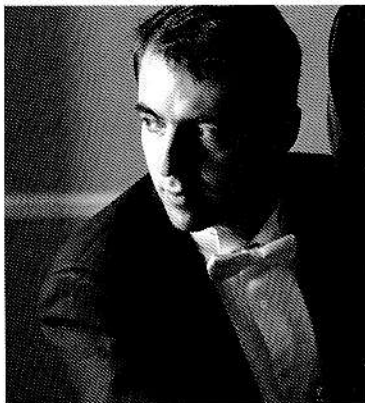
composers -- Aaron Jay Kernis, Steven Hartke, Joan Tower and Charles Wuorinen, among them. As an Artistic Director, Ms. McDermott leads the Ocean Reef Chamber Music Festival in Florida and the Avila Chamber Music Celebration in Curacao. In 2011 she was appointed Artistic Director of the Vail Valley Music Festival in Colorado, and the Curator for Chamber Music at the Mainly Mozart Festival in San Diego. As an Artist Member of The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Ms. McDermott has been featured in retrospective series devoted to the music of Prokofiev and Shostakovich. She released her first recording in 2005 -- *Bach's Partitas and English Suites* (Naxos Music #4) which was the Editor's Choice in *Gramophone* magazine. In 2008 Bridge Records followed with a recording of Gershwin's *Complete Works for Piano and Orchestra* with the Dallas Symphony (BRIDGE 9252), also named Editor's Choice by *Gramophone*. About her recording of the *The Complete Prokofiev Piano Sonatas* (BRIDGE 9298A/C)), *Gramophone* wrote "we have waited a long time for an American pianist of this stature." Her most recent recording was a Chopin recital (BRIDGE 9359).



The Calder Quartet, called "outstanding" and "superb" by the *New York Times* is well known for the discovery, commissioning, and recording of some of today's best emerging composers. The Calder collaborates with artists across musical genres, spanning the ranges of the classical and contemporary music world, as well as rock, dance, and visual arts; and in venues ranging from art galleries and rock clubs to Carnegie and Walt Disney concert halls. The Calder Quartet has toured across North America with So Percussion, and with rockers Andrew W.K. and The Airborne Toxic Event. The quartet has been featured on

KCRW's *Morning Becomes Eclectic*, the *Late Show* with David Letterman, the *Tonight Show* with Jay Leno, the *Tonight Show* with Conan O'Brien, *Late Night* with Jimmy Kimmel, and the *Late Late Show* with Craig Ferguson. The group has long-standing relationships with composers Terry Riley, Christopher Rouse and Thomas Adès. They released a limited edition vinyl release of Riley's *Trio and Quartet* in commemoration of the composers' 75th birthday. An album of works by Rouse, called *Transfiguration*, was released in 2010. After featuring the music of Thomas Adès on their first recording in 2008 the group worked directly with the composer on a performance of *Arcadiana* as part of the Green Umbrella Series at the Walt Disney Concert Hall. The relationship evolved into collaborating on concerts together at the Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra's Konserthuset in 2009, the Melbourne Festival in 2010, and at CAL Performances in 2011. Of the Stockholm performance, the *Guardian* said, "the Calder Quartet played the most insightful and moving performance of Thomas Adès's *Arcadiana* I've ever heard."





Double bassist and composer **David J. Grossman** enjoys a multi-faceted career in the realms of classical and jazz music, performing in concert halls, chamber music settings, and jazz venues worldwide. Born and educated in New York City, he joined the New York Philharmonic as its youngest member in the spring of 2000, and has been a student of Philharmonic bassist Orin O'Brien. He is also a member of the double bass faculty of the Manhattan School of Music. As a soloist and clinician, Mr. Grossman has given recitals and master classes at music schools across the country, including The Boston Conservatory,

Yale School of Music, Hartt School of Music, Penn State University, and New York Summer Music Festival, as well as at faculty recitals at the Manhattan School of Music. He has released two albums — one classical and one jazz — entitled *The Bass of Both Worlds*, available from his website, www.davidjgrossman.com. As a chamber musician, David J. Grossman performs in the New York Philharmonic Ensembles Concerts at Merkin Hall and has appeared at the 92nd Street Y as well as with The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. In 2011 he was a featured artist at the Mt. Desert Chamber Music Festival. As a jazz bass player Mr. Grossman was a member of the Marcus Roberts Trio and has performed with Wynton Marsalis, Lew Tabackin, Toshiko Akiyoshi, and Mark O'Connor; he has recorded with Donald Vega, David Morgan and Loston Harris.



Produced, engineered and mixed by Adam Abeshouse

Assistant: Andy Ryder

Annotator: Malcolm MacDonald

Graphic Design: Douglas Holly

Recorded in December 2012 at the Academy of Arts and Letters, New York City

Photographs:

Anne-Marie McDermott by Matteo Trisolini

Calder Quartet by Autumn de Wilde

David J. Grossman by Henry Grossman

Executive Producers: Becky and David Starobin

For Bridge Records: Barbara Bersito, Brian C. Carter, Douglas Holly

Doron Schachter, Allegra Starobin, and Robert Starobin

Brad Napoliello, webmaster | E-mail: bridgerec@bridgerecords.com

Bridge Records, Inc. • 200 Clinton Ave. • New Rochelle, NY

BridgeRecords.com

ANNE-MARIE McDERMOTT

ON



BRIDGE 9359



BRIDGE 9298



BRIDGE 9252



WWW.BRIDGERECORDS.COM

