



MOZART

SONATAS FOR VIOLIN & PIANO
K. 301, K. 304-5 & K. 454

PETER HANSON VIOLIN
ANDREW ARTHUR FORTEPIANO



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

Sonatas for Violin & Piano K. 301, K. 304–5 & K. 454

Peter Hanson *violin*

Andrew Arthur *fortepiano*

About Peter Hanson:

'Performances of exhilarating freshness and verve'
Daily Telegraph

About Andrew Arthur:

'[...] performances characterised by clarity, precision, nuanced responses to changes of expressive tone and emotional temperature, and an admirably flexible reciprocity between all concerned. [...] The abiding, altogether involving impression is one of utter sincerity and refined, fluid finesse'
Classical Ear

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

Sonata in A major, K. 305

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------|
| 1. Allegro di molto | [7:12] |
| 2. Thema – Andante grazioso | [10:56] |

Sonata in E minor, K. 304

- | | |
|----------------------|--------|
| 3. Allegro | [9:39] |
| 4. Tempo di Menuetto | [5:51] |

Sonata in G major, K. 301

- | | |
|------------------------|---------|
| 5. Allegro con spirito | [11:59] |
| 6. Allegro | [5:33] |

Sonata in B-flat major, K. 454

- | | |
|--------------------|---------|
| 7. Largo – Allegro | [11:22] |
| 8. Andante | [8:52] |
| 9. Allegretto | [7:37] |

Total playing time [79:07]



Mozart's Violin Sonatas: Women as Patrons and Performers

Mozart's Six Sonatas for Harpsichord or Fortepiano with accompaniment for a Violin (K. 301–306) were published in early November 1778 by the firm of Sieber in Paris where they were described on the title page as the composer's 'Oeuvre premier[e]' and in a slightly later Amsterdam edition of 1780, they were again designated as his 'Op. 1'. Since Mozart had already composed over 300 works, this may seem a curious description, but they were among the first pieces of his compositional maturity. Four of them were written early in 1778 in Mannheim (where Mozart was eager to secure an appointment at the Court) and the other two in Paris where he travelled with his mother, who had also been with him in Mannheim. They arrived in the French capital at the start of April, but this visit was to be blighted by tragedy when Mozart's mother Maria Anna died in Paris on 3 July 1778. Theirs had not always been an easy relationship. From Mannheim, she wrote in some frustration to her husband Leopold in February 1778 (the month in which the Sonata in G major K. 301 was composed) that Wolfgang 'would rather be with other people than with me, for I remonstrate with him about matters that are not to my taste and he

does not like that ... I am writing this in the greatest secrecy, while he is at dinner.' During this stay, she also reported on her son's musical progress, noting on 11 January that he had already started a set of 'six new trios' (in fact the six piano and violin sonatas K. 301–306, the earliest of which was probably the Sonata in E-flat K. 302). During his time in Paris, Mozart composed several important works, notably the Concerto for Flute and Harp (K. 299) and Sinfonia concertante for wind instruments (K. 297b), both in April, the 'Paris' Symphony (K. 297) before 12 June, and several of his most substantial piano sonatas, notably those in A major (concluding with the famous Rondo 'alla Turca') as well as those in A minor (K. 310), C major (K. 330) and F major (K. 332). In May and June, Mozart composed the ballet *Les petits riens*. In the midst of this burst of creative activity, Mozart also found the time to finish his set of six sonatas 'Opus 1' including those in E minor K. 304 and A major K305.

When the sonatas appeared in print, they carried a dedication 'à Son Altesse Serenissime Electorale, Madame l'Electrice Palatine', that is to say, the Electress (Kurfürstin) of the Rhineland Palatinate, Maria Elisabeth Auguste of Sulzbach (1721–1794). She had married her cousin, the Prince-Elector Karl Theodor (1724–1799)

in 1742. After the death in infancy of their only child in 1761, they largely lived apart, with the Maria Elisabeth making her home – along with an entourage of more than 100 courtiers – at the magnificent baroque castle of Oggersheim (burned down by French Revolutionary troops in 1794), a few miles west of Mannheim. The Princess was a great enthusiast for music and theatre, and after her estranged husband succeeded to the throne in Bavaria and moved his residence to Munich, she remained in Oggersheim and Mannheim, maintaining the richness of the city's musical life.

For Mozart, this grandiose dedication had a very specific aim in view: he was desperate to get out of Salzburg where relations with his employers (particularly Archbishop Colloredo) were at a low point. The capital of the Rhineland Palatinate was Mannheim – which enjoyed a revival of its economy and cultural life during the reign of Karl Theodor and Maria Elisabeth, and which had a particularly magnificent court orchestra. It was here that Mozart hoped to settle in due course, with a post at the royal Court. He arrived at the end of October 1777, leaving for Paris the following March, but returning in November 1778. The set of sonatas was thus in the nature of a job application, though in spite

of presenting the published edition to the Princess himself on 7 January 1779, nothing came of his quest for a permanent post and he had to endure two more years in Salzburg before moving to Vienna. The sonatas have become known as the 'Kurfürstin Sonatas', a reference to the woman to whom they are dedicated.

While the 'Kurfürstin Sonatas' were written as an attempt to secure permanent employment, with an aristocratic dedication, the Sonata for Piano and Violin K. 454 was composed for an outstanding performer: the violinist Regina Strinasacchi (1764–1839). Born in Mantua, she was an alumna of the Ospedale della Pietà in Venice (where Vivaldi had taught from 1703 to 1740). She was not only a brilliant violinist but also a noted guitarist. In the early 1780s she began to tour extensively in Europe and in April 1784 Strinasacchi visited Vienna. Mozart was eager to make the most of this opportunity, especially as she was due to give a concert at the Kärntner Theatre in the presence of the Emperor Joseph II. Mozart wrote to his father that 'we now have the famous Strinasacchi from Mantua here – a very good violinist. She has much taste and feeling in her playing. I am just now writing a sonata which we will play together in the theatre on Thursday at her benefit concert.'

The concert took place on 29 April and as well as the new sonata, Mozart also played one of his piano concertos, probably the G major concerto K. 453. Both works were noted in the handwritten thematic catalogue of his own works that Mozart started in 1784. The entry for the G major Piano Concerto was dated 12 April, and the sonata (described as 'Eine klavier Sonate mit einer Violine') on 21 April. This must have been the starting date since apparently Mozart was only able to complete the violin part before the concert, playing the piano part without music: the Emperor himself reportedly noticed through his eye-glass that Mozart was playing from sheets of manuscript paper with nothing written on them. This sounds like the stuff of after-dinner legend, but in fact the autograph manuscript bears out the story: the violin and piano parts are in different inks, and in places the more elaborate figuration of the piano part had to be squeezed in awkwardly. In spite of its hasty genesis, the music Mozart wrote for Strinasacchi is of the highest quality – but this is unsurprising given the astonishing succession of masterpieces that he wrote during 1784, including the Piano Concertos in G major (K. 453), B-flat major (K. 456) and F major (K459), the 'Hunt' Quartet (K. 458), the Piano Sonata in C minor

(K. 457) and the Quintet for piano and wind instruments (K. 452).

Strinasacchi made a deep impression at her Viennese concert – the performance was a considerable success with the public – and two weeks earlier (15 April) she played at a private concert organised by Prince Kaunitz in which 'the violinist, La Strinasacchi' played duets with Countess Bassewitz at the keyboard (an event noted in the diaries of Count Karl Zinzendorf, who was present). In October 1785 she married the cellist Johann Conrad Schlick (1759–1825) who led the Ducal orchestra in Gotha. Strinasacchi and Schlick toured together and soon after their wedding they were heard by Leopold Mozart in Salzburg, who wrote to his daughter with an eloquent description of her playing: 'She plays no note without feeling, so even in the symphonies she always played with expression. I have never heard a more moving adagio than hers; her whole heart and soul is in the melody she is playing, and her power and beauty of tone are equally remarkable. I believe, as a rule, that a woman of genius plays with more expression than a man.' Leopold's son seems to have realised this too, given the richness and depth of the slow movement of K. 454 which is not only harmonically adventurous but also makes the most of Strinasacchi's cantabile playing. Warmth

and strength of tone was a priority in Leopold Mozart's violin teaching, and he found it in abundance in Strinasacchi's playing; his son Wolfgang's Sonata, written expressly for her, seems to make the most of the same qualities. She also had a reputation as an outstanding quartet player, particularly her performances of Haydn's quartets; during her visit to Vienna in April 1784, she had met Haydn at Michael Kelly's lodgings. She retired from public concerts in 1810, but in the outstanding piece composed with her playing in mind, her legacy lives on in the most memorable way.

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Notes and acknowledgments

The wonderful instruments featured on this recording have provided great inspiration to Andrew and me in interpreting and performing these sonatas by Mozart: the fortepiano is a copy after an original by Walter & Sohn, c.1805 crafted by world-renowned maker Paul McNulty. The violin is a J.B. Guadagnini kindly loaned by the Brough family. Pure gut strings are used. The bow is an original Dodd from 1780s.

I would like to dedicate this recording to the memory of my grandfather, Hector Hanson, pianist (b. 1904). When I was a young violinist, aged about twelve, we played these sonatas together. I will always be grateful for his enthusiasm for Mozart.

Peter Hanson, 2021

Fortepiano supplied by Alexander Skeaping

Keyboard technician: Simon Neal

Pitch: a=430'. Tuning in unequal temperament.





Peter Hanson (violin)

Peter Hanson has been the Concertmaster of Sir John Eliot Gardiner's *Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique* since 1992, when the orchestra recorded their first complete cycle of Beethoven symphonies. Highlights since include appearing as Concertmaster soloist for European and US tours of Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, a 2017 BBC Proms performance of Berlioz's *Damnation of Faust*, major European and US tours of the Berlioz and Verdi Requiems in 2018, including two performances at Carnegie Hall, New York and, in early 2020, performances of all the Beethoven symphonies in Barcelona and New York.

In 1993, Peter formed The Eroica Quartet with colleagues from the world of period instrument performance. The group immediately attracted attention with their vision of a revived Romantic approach to the string quartet literature, from Beethoven to Debussy. Their performance style was so unusual at the time that it struck listeners as radical. The Eroica quickly became established, touring widely across the United Kingdom as well as making visits to France and the US. For Harmonia Mundi USA they recorded the Mendelssohn and Schumann quartets and Beethoven quartets Op. 74, 95 and

135. For Resonus Classics they recorded the original 1825 version of Mendelssohn's Octet, Op. 20 and, more recently, the quartets by Debussy and Ravel. Released to coincide with the 150th anniversary of Debussy's birth, this album represents the first modern recording of the works to feature performances on gut strings and with aspects of period performance.

Peter is also a Director of the Carmel Bach Festival (CBF) in California. His role incorporates solo and chamber-music performances, directing the String Orchestra and appearing as Concertmaster for most of the Festival Orchestra concerts. The CBF Orchestra is flexible with regard to period and modern instruments and style: the 2018 Festival saw a performance of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* at Hz415 on baroque instruments, followed by Piazzolla's *Four Seasons* at Hz440 on modern instruments, with Peter as soloist.

www.peterhanson.co.uk

Andrew Arthur (fortepiano)

Andrew Arthur enjoys a busy and varied freelance career that has seen him perform extensively throughout the United Kingdom and on tour across Europe, South Africa, Canada and the USA. Best-known for his work in the field of historically informed performance, he is in great demand as a director, soloist, accompanist and continuo player, working with many of the UK's leading period-instrument orchestras and professional choirs. Andrew's concerto, recital and chamber-music engagements encompass organ, harpsichord and fortepiano literature and his multifarious CD recordings as both keyboard-player and conductor have been met with wide critical acclaim.

Andrew continues to hold long-term positions as Associate Director of The Hanover Band and as a Director and Principal Keyboardist at the Carmel Bach Festival in California where he and Peter Hanson perform together regularly as a duo partnership and within numerous instrumental ensembles. Andrew is also Musical Director of his own period-instrument ensemble and vocal consort, Orpheus Britannicus, with whom he records for Resonus Classics; in 2019, the ensemble was nominated for an

International Classical Music Award.

Alongside his performing activities, Andrew is Fellow, Director of Music and Director of Studies in Music at Trinity Hall, Cambridge where, in addition to his College responsibilities, he is also an Affiliated Lecturer in the University's Faculty of Music, Coordinator of the University's Organ Scholarship Scheme and Chairman of the University's Organ Scholars' Forum. Amongst his diverse portfolio of musical activities in Cambridge, he works throughout the academic year training the Organ Scholars and conducting the Chapel Choir at Trinity Hall with whom, in addition to their regular schedule of services in the College Chapel, he undertakes a number of concerts, recordings and foreign tours.

www.andrewarthur.com





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Engineer & editor: Paul Crichton

Producers: Roy Mowatt & Andrew Arthur

Executive Producer: Adam Binks

Recorded at 24-bit/96kHz resolution

Cover image: Still-life with Flowers and a Violin (c.1750) by Jean-Jacques Bachelier (1724–1806)

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