

Karl Ristenpart

Born: January 26, 1900 – Kiel, Germany Died: December 24, 1967 – Lisbon, Portugal

The German conductor, Karl Ristenpart, created three orchestras in his lifetime and is mostly remembered for his outstanding recordings of Bach and Mozart in the fifties and sixties with the Saar Chamber Orchestra for the French labels Les Discophiles français, Erato and Club Français du Disque, which were later released by various American (notably Nonesuch) and Japanese labels on both LP and cassette.

Karl Ristenpart studied at the Stern Conservatory in Berlin and in Vienna. In 1932 he became the conductor of a little string ensemble in Berlin, called the Karl Ristenpart Chamber Orchestra and composed mainly of women. In 1946 his clean political record allowed him to be entrusted with the production of orchestra music for the "Radio in the American Sector of Berlin" (RIAS). There he recorded music from Monteverdi to Igor Stravinsky with the RIAS-Choir, the RIAS-Chamber Orchestra and often also with the RIAS-Symphony Orchestra. In parallel, with his Karl Ristenpart Chamber Orchestra and with soloists like Agnes Giebel, Helmut Krebs and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, he also produced an impressive J.S. Bach concert cycle from 1947 to 1952. The growingly difficult political and economic situation in Berlin in the early fifties led him to accept an offer to create a chamber orchestra for the Saar Radio in the Fall of 1953.

This new Saar Chamber Orchestra was much appreciated from the very beginning by the top French instrumental soloists such as flautist Jean-Pierre Rampal and his Quintette à vent Français. Approximately 170 albums featuring Karl Ristenpart and this Saar Chamber Orchestra with the works of 50 composers (mostly from the baroque and early classical eras but also award-winning records of B. Britten, Roussel and Paul Hindemith pieces) have been marketed all over the world. Ristenpart's lasting fame as an interpreter of mostly Bach and Mozart overshadowed the fact that his Saar Chamber Orchestra actually recorded works by some 250 composers, at least half of them considered modern or contemporary, for the Saar Radio.

Karl Ristenpart died after a heart-attack while on tour in Portugal with the Chamber orchestra of the Gulbenkian Foundation in December 1967. After 4 years under Antonio Janigro, the Saar Chamber Orchestra merged with the Saarbrücken Radio Symphony Orchestra in 1973.

# MOZART FOUR PIANO CONCERTI

ROBERT VEYRON-LACROIX, Piano  
SAAR RADIO CHAMBER ORCHESTRA  
KARL RISTENPART



The significance of Mozart's first visit to Paris with his sister and father in 1763 – where during their stay of five months the children created great enthusiasm in court circles – was nothing compared with that of London. For it was in London in 1764 that Mozart made the acquaintance of a new, strange world, whose great qualities captivated him immediately and for ever: there was Handel, whose personal friend, Smith, was still living, and there was the Italian opera. But more importantly still, there was the circle of Bach's pupils, including Karl Friedrich Abel and Johann Christian Bach, the youngest son of the great Bach. Without in any way minimizing Leopold Mozart's importance, it is fair to say that it was from the "London Bach" that Mozart learned most. It was also through his friendship with Johann Christian Bach that the nine-year-old Mozart discovered the older master's Harpsichord Sonatas, Op. 5. Mozart, anxious to investigate all new styles, made use of Johann Christian's collection as a basis for an exercise in instrumentation. He chose three of the sonatas (Nos. 2, 3, and 4) and, deciding to transform them into small concerti, selected an instrumental group (two violins and bass) in dialogue with the keyboard instrument. In this way, Mozart spread and amplified Bach's pleasant and gracious musical invention amongst the instruments divided into Tutti and Soli. The 1st Concerto in D major, K.107, is in three movements: an opening Allegro evocative of a serenade with piano concertante. At times, the Bach-Mozart relationship is noticeable through the rhythm of the Tutti which is too strongly marked for Mozart, while the polyphony is too apparent. The Allegro is followed by an Andante – a fresh Romance – while an elegant divertissement in a tempo di Menuetto with guitar-like pizzicati ends this charming work. The Allegro of the Concerto in G major, K.107 (No. 2) consists of one of Johann Christian Bach's most fluid and eloquent melodies which seems, oddly enough, to be much nearer Mozart's style than the ideas found in the D major work. In two movements, the work is completed by an Allegretto with variations displaying a simplicity of writing coupled with an entertaining rhythm texture. The 3rd. Concerto, K.107, in E flat major, also consists of two movements – Allegro and Allegretto; its overall style ranges from a playful

and flippant style galant to spacious and dramatic progressions. Mozart apparently remained quite fond of these little works: he played them often throughout his career and subsequently even wrote cadenzas for the D major concerto's first movements. Incidentally, it is not surprising to find these works played on the piano instead of a harpsichord, for it was in 1765 that Mozart first played on the new instrument: an English pianoforte built by Burkard Tshudy and intended for the King of Prussia. Before engaging himself in the composition of purely original concerti, Mozart was to write other arrangements: the concerti K.37, 39, 40 and 41 of 1767 which were adapted from sonata movements of the Paris school (Raupach, Honnauer, Schobert, Eckard) and from a score by C. P. E. Bach. In these, however, Mozart became a true orchestrator by adopting the usual instrumental formula of the time: two oboes, two horns and string quintet. It was not until 1773, however, that Mozart was ready for the complex form of the concerto; two years were then devoted to writing a number of concerti for violin. Three works for the piano appeared in 1776: the Concerti K.238, 365 (for 3 pianos) and the present Concerto in C major, K.246. Combined with the instrumental forces mentioned previously, Mozart adopted the three-movement Italian style, while the writing of the five violin concerti gave him a thorough grounding in the "sonata," "lied," and "rondo" forms which, for him, became the framework of his concerti and symphonies. The opening Allegro aperto of the C major Concerto is a brilliant movement which perhaps can be described as being more Mozartian in its style and melodic lines than in its purely expressive aspect. But it is in the Andante that can be found the emotion and mystery, the subtlety which Mozart can create from the sonorities of a traditional instrumental formula; here, the melodic material is passionately lyrical, while the final Rondo exhibits the mischievousness and humour of the twenty-year-old composer. – Adapted from Notes by Olivier Alain.

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**ROBERT VEYRON-LACROIX, Piano**  
**SAAR RADIO CHAMBER ORCHESTRA**  
**KARL RISTENPART**

- Concerto in C Major, K. 246
- 1 Allegro aperto 7:02
  - 2 Andante 8:55
  - 3 Rondo 6:34
- Concerto in D major, K. 107, No. 1
- 4 Allegro 5:10
  - 5 Andante 4:45
  - 6 Tempo di menuetto 3:47
- Concerto in G major, K. 107, No. 2
- 7 Allegro 3:54
  - 8 Allegretto 4:10
- Concerto in E flat major, K. 107, No. 3
- 9 Allegro 5:25
  - 10 Allegretto (rondo) 4:08

**Transferred from World Tape Club 4-track tape**  
**Date of Recording: 1964 Recorded by Erato**



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