

Fritz Reiner was one of the most acclaimed conductors of the 20th century -- noted for the vast range of his repertoire, which included both symphonic and operatic pieces spanning from the traditional canon to contemporary material, he was also an influential educator who counted among his pupils Leonard Bernstein. Reiner was born in Budapest, Hungary, on December 19, 1888; despite earning a law degree from the University of Bucharest, he pursued a career in music, and at age 21 was named chorusmaster of the Budapest Opera. A stint as conductor with the Budapest Volksoper followed before Reiner was chosen in 1914 to serve as principal conductor of the Royal Opera in Dresden, where he collaborated with Richard Strauss on productions of several of the composer's early operas.

In 1922 Reiner left Europe to relocate to America, settling in Cincinnati, OH, and signing on as conductor with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra; a decade later he was tapped to head the orchestral and opera departments at Philadelphia's Curtis Institute of Music, where his students included Bernstein. After next serving as the music director of the Pittsburgh Symphony between 1938 and 1948, he served five years with the Metropolitan Opera. While Reiner's frequent migration might have been attributed largely to a restless creativity, he was also a notoriously difficult personality who frequently alienated those around him -- many of the musicians under his command openly loathed him, although he inevitably inspired the best work of their careers.

Reiner's own best work was undoubtedly his tenure with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, which he elevated into one of the most celebrated ensembles in the world. Moving over to the CSO in 1953, he not only established the orchestra as a top-flight live attraction but also as a popular recording entity -- the countless albums they made for RCA's Living Stereo series during Reiner's decade-long tenure were much acclaimed by collectors for both the power of the performances and the unusually high fidelity of the recordings themselves. Releases like Fritz Reiner Conducts Richard Strauss and Fritz Reiner Conducts Bartók in particular remain definitive interpretations of the composers in question. Health problems forced Reiner to resign his position in 1962, and he died in New York City on November 15 of the following year.



HIGH DEFINITION TAPE TRANSFERS



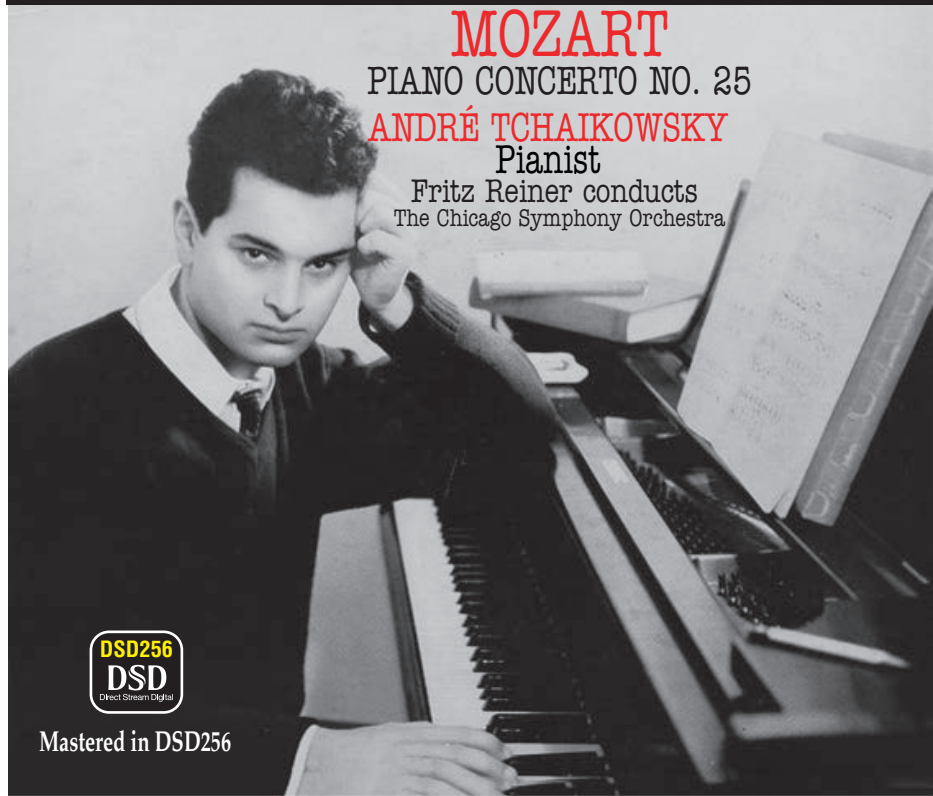
MOZART

PIANO CONCERTO NO. 25

ANDRÉ TCHAIKOWSKY

Pianist

**Fritz Reiner conducts
The Chicago Symphony Orchestra**



Mastered in DSD256

Mozart completed this work on December 4, 1786, and very likely premiered it the following night in Johann Trattner's Viennese Casino. It is scored for single flute, two each of oboes, bassoons, horns, and trumpets, strings, and solo keyboard, of course.

This last of Mozart's four C major piano concertos is a work of immense structural integrity (rather than cultivated thematic charm), employing alternations between parallel major and minor keys throughout. It is furthermore a work whose three movements use sonata-form: pristinely so in the first; without a development section in the second, and as part of a seven-part rondo format in the last (i.e., the development of materials introduced during the first refrain in couplets B and C). Concerto No. 25 and the "Prague" Symphony (D major, K. 504) were composed conjunctively -- Mozart wrote December 4 and 6, 1786, as their completion dates in his Verzeichniss -- for a series of four Advent Akademien in the Casino of his friend Johann Trattner. Evidence suggests that he repeated the concerto on several subsequent occasions, and that Beethoven chose it in 1795 for one of his first Viennese appearances as soloist. "Magisterial" befits the main thrust of the opening Allegro maestoso, the longest movement in Mozart's orchestral canon: 432 measures without cadenza (which surely would have extended it). The outset of his double exposition is built on a C major triad, although subsequent materials and their treatment contain passages of expressive intimacy, not to be confused with softness or effeminacy. As if by Schubert, the music slips in and out of minor keys (always the opposite of prevailing major-keys). The music recalls pensive moments from Figaro when it is not being assertively symphonic -- as if Mozart were getting ready for the "Jupiter" Symphony of 1788.

For the middle movement, a generic Andante tempo marking belies the depth and variety of fantasy in this F major sonatina in triple time. Again, the orchestra plays an exposition with two theme groups before the piano enters, a highly decorated part that doesn't need further embroidery. The prevailing mood is pensive without solemnity; Mozart was too professional by this time to be caught out.

While the manuscript had no tempo marking for the final C major sonata-rondo in 6/8 time, Allegretto has been the consensus ever since Mozart's widow published K. 503 in 1789 (her only venture into business and a failure). The refrain-theme begins with eight measures of gavotte from the ballet music in Idomeneo -- the opera seria Mozart composed six years earlier, at Munich. Although Erik Smith considers this movement "festive," Cuthbert Girdlestone ranks it among the "most serious-minded rondos, [having] nothing of the merry tone of the usual rondo." The first theme is "tinted with melancholy, serious, almost brooding...full of a languishing grace unexpected in a concerto finale." Major-minor mood swings carry over from the first movement until, in couplet-B, "intensity reaches passion." It is "an epiphany" for Michael Steinberg when "the piano, accompanied by cellos and basses alone, a sound that occurs nowhere else in Mozart, [leads to] music whose richness of texture, poignancy and passion astonish us." However, sunlight pours illuminates the final refrain.

Robert Andrzej Krauthammer was born in Warsaw in 1935. He had shown musical talent from an early age, and his mother, an amateur pianist, was teaching him the piano when he was only four years old. His family were Jewish; when the Second World War broke out, they were moved into the Warsaw Ghetto. Krauthammer remained here until 1942, when he was smuggled out and provided with forged identity papers that renamed him Andrzej Czajkowski; he then went into hiding with his grandmother, Celina. The pair remained hidden until 1944, when they were caught up in the Warsaw Uprising, and they were then sent to Pruszkow Concentration Camp as ordinary Polish citizens, from which they were released in 1945. Tchaikowsky's father, Karl Krauthammer, also survived the war, and remarried, producing a daughter, Katherine Krauthammer-Vogt; Tchaikowsky's mother, Felicja Krauthammer (née Rappaport) was rounded up in the Warsaw Ghetto in 1942, and perished in Treblinka. Andrzej Czajkowski, as he then was (he later adopted the spelling André Tchaikowsky), resumed his lessons at age 9 in Lodz State School, under the tuition of Emma Altberg (herself once a student of Wanda Landowska); from here, he proceeded to Paris, where Lazare Lévy took over his education, and where he would also break off relations with his father for many years after an argument. After his return to Poland (1950), he studied at the State Music Academy in Sopot under Prof. Olga Iliwicka-Dąbrowska, and later at the State Music Academy in Warszawa under Prof. Stanisław Szpinalski. Already during his studies he began developing his concert career, displaying his showmanship through public performances of Bach's Goldberg Variations, Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2 and astounding listeners with improvisations on any given theme. From 1951, he took composition classes with Prof. Kazimierz Sikorski.

After his success at the fifth International Chopin Piano Competition, where he won the 8th award (1955), Tchaikowsky left to study in Brussels under Stefan Askenase. As a result of his co-operation with the famous Polish pianist, Tchaikowsky took part in the Queen Elisabeth Music Competition, winning third prize (1956).

In 1957, he gave a series of recitals in Paris, performing all of Ravel's compositions for piano in honor of the twentieth anniversary of the French composer's death. During the same time, he consulted Nadia Boulanger at Fontainebleau in matter of composition, as well as establishing contacts with Arthur Rubinstein.

Despite his success as a pianist, André Tchaikowsky's greatest passion was composition. He wrote a Piano Concerto, String Quartet, a setting of Shakespeare's Seven Sonnets for voice with piano, a Piano Trio and several compositions for piano solo. He began work on an opera, a setting of Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice. He made several recordings of his work for the EMI label.

For RCA Red Seal and Columbia EMI, he recorded works by Bach (Goldberg Variations), Haydn (two Sonatas, Variations in F minor), Mozart (Concerto in C major, two Sonatas and minor works), Schubert (waltzes, ländlers, German dances), Chopin (15 mazurkas) as well as Fauré (Piano Quartet in C minor).

Skull

In accordance with Tchaikowsky's wishes, his skull has been used as a theatrical prop by the Royal Shakespeare Company. Here, actor David Tennant uses Tchaikowsky's skull in a 2008 production of Hamlet.

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The Chicago Symphony Orchestra

- I. Allegro maestoso (Cadenza by A. Tchaikowsky) 16:33
- II. Andante 7:30
- III. Allegretto 8:44 1

Date February 15, 1958 Recorded at Chicago, Ill. USA (Orchestra Hall) by RCA



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