

and the bustle." Leopold had arrived on February 11, the day of the first of the concerts and the occasion of the premiere of the D Minor Concerto. Mozart first played the newly completed K. 467 not at one of his subscription concerts (although he must surely have included it in one of the last of those as well), but at his benefit concert at the National Court Theater on March 10, the day after it was entered into his thematic catalog. A handbill for the concert announced that it would include "a new, just finished Forte piano Concerto," in addition to Mozart playing improvisations (for which he was particularly famed) employing "an especially large Forte piano pedal."

The C Major Concerto gives absolutely no sign of being composed in an atmosphere of "rush and bustle"; neither could the contrast with the stormy drama of its immediate predecessor be greater. The first movement, an expansive Allegro of Olympian grandeur and design is followed by an Andante of sublime beauty made famous in more recent times by its use in the film *Elvira Madigan*. This movement, with its few notes and bare outline, is incidentally a classic example of the manner in which Mozart frequently left himself room to improvise within the context of his own concertos, a technique lately reintroduced by performers such as Malcolm Bilson and Robert Levin. The final movement is an Allegro vivace assai, its evocation of the world of opera buffo typical of many of Mozart's finales, both in concerto and symphony. Like the D Minor Concerto, K. 467 is scored for a large orchestra: flute, pairs of oboes, bassoons, horns and trumpets, timpani and strings.



Mozart

Piano Concertos Nos. 21 and 23

Arthur Rubinstein

Alfred Wallenstein
RCA Victor Symphony Orchestra

Mozart completed this work on March 2, 1786, and most likely played the first performance a few days later in Vienna. For the coronation, in 1781, of Austrian Emperor Joseph II and attendant celebrations, Prince-Archbishop Hieronymous Colloredo of Salzburg moved his entire court to Vienna. He summoned his most famous musical employee, the younger Mozart, who'd been savoring the success of *Idomeneo* in Munich, an opera specially commissioned by the Elector of Bavaria. The reluctant Wolfgang Amadé, by then thoroughly detesting his pfennig-pinching employer, arrived in the Hapsburg capital on March 16. By June 8, he had managed to get dismissed from Colloredo's service (with a boot in the backside), leaving him free to conquer Vienna, which he did with the new Emperor's erratic help. For the next four years, he reigned as Vienna's favorite composer of instrumental music. While he rode the crest, his music was both anticipated and appreciated. In response to public demand between 1782 and 1786, he wrote 14 glorious piano concertos -- Nos. 11 through 24 -- most of them for his own use. No. 23 was intended for the Lenten series of 1786, along with Nos. 22 and 24, the last ones before *Figaro*. While the dates of these concerts have been lost, we know that the A major was an immediate success, and has remained popular ever since, as much for wistfulness as for melodies verging on sublimity. In the company of a flute, two bassoons, two horns, and strings, a pair of clarinets lend the music a moody character.

The Allegro first movement, with double exposition, goes by the

rules of structure for the most part, although there is an incursion of drama in the development section (Cuthbert Girdlestone wrote that "Mozart's daimon...suddenly surges up from the depth") plus a through-written cadenza, rare in his mature concertos.

Rather than an Andante, the slow movement is the only Adagio in all of Mozart's concertos, with melancholy taking center stage that heretofore had hovered in the wings. Startlingly and somberly the key is F sharp minor (A major's harmonic alter-ego), not really leavened by a sweet subject in A major for flute and clarinet that forms the middle part of an ABA structure, despite elements of sonata form.

After two introverted movements, the second one confined to a sickroom, the rondo-finale rallies ebulliently -- an Allegro assai among the most buoyant in Mozart's concerto canon, with key-changes and even high comedy that find the patient recovered and happy, as are all of us who have been worried till now about his health.

In keeping with the Piano Concerto in D Minor, K. 466, the C Major Concerto was composed for the series of Lenten subscription concerts given by Mozart in 1765. This was an extraordinarily busy and successful period of Mozart's life, as we can gauge from a series of letters sent by his father Leopold to Mozart's sister Nannerl, now married and living with her husband in St. Gilgen. "Every day there are concerts; and the whole time is given up to teaching, music, composing and so forth...It is impossible for me to describe the rush

Mozart

Piano Concertos Nos. 21 and 23

Arthur Rubinstein, piano

Alfred Wallenstein - RCA Victor Symphony Orchestra

Concerto No. 23 In A, K. 488

Allegro 11:21

Andante 7:20

Presto 8:00

Concerto No. 21 In C, K. 467

Allegro Maestoso 14:20

Andante 6:28

Allegro Vivace Assai 6:44

Recorded by RCA 1961 Manhattan Center, New York
Engineer – Lewis Layton Producer – Max Wilcox



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