

legendary violinists Enescu and Thibaud, though he did not formally study with either. Szeryng also thought about pursuing composition as a career, and for six years took lessons from Nadia Boulanger.

At the outbreak of war in 1939 Szeryng enlisted with the Polish army. Being fluent in seven languages, he was assigned to General Sikorski as a translator, with whom Szeryng helped to relocate hundreds of Polish refugees in Mexico. During the war Szeryng gave hundreds of concerts for Allied troops around the globe, and in 1943, during a concert series in Mexico City, was invited to take over the string department at the University of Mexico. Szeryng accepted the offer, and assumed his duties in 1946.

He spent the next ten years in Mexico, and eventually took citizenship there. Performing infrequently, Szeryng was largely forgotten in the musical centers of Europe. A chance encounter with fellow Pole Artur Rubinstein in Mexico City convinced Szeryng to re-enter the musical scene. A New York debut in 1956 immediately established Szeryng as a leading violinist of the day, and for the next 30 years Szeryng divided his time between a globe-trotting concert schedule and his teaching duties in Mexico.

As a violinist Szeryng was unique; sometimes criticized for being too restrained, he was nevertheless capable of playing with warmth and fire when he felt compelled to do so (as in his magnificent performances of the Sibelius concerto). His excellent recordings include two full sets of the Bach Sonatas and Partitas, as well as the major violin concertos in the repertory (he has also championed and recorded the work of many composers from his adopted country of Mexico). Recordings of the Beethoven and Brahms sonatas with Artur Rubinstein are particularly rewarding. Of note also is Szeryng's world-premiere recording of Paganini's E major Violin Concerto No. 3, which Szeryng himself reconstructed from parts held in the archives of the legendary Italian violinist's heirs.

Szeryng could at times be somewhat inconsistent. In live performances his calculated precision might turn cold, and in later years it is rumored that troubles with alcohol led to a somewhat deteriorated technical ability. Until his death in 1988 he traveled with a Mexican diplomatic passport, and was involved in various humanitarian projects through the United Nations; Szeryng never ceased believing in music as a unifying, healing power.

MOZART

Sonatas For Piano And Violin K.379, K. 547

INGRID & HENRYK
HAEBLER & SZERYNG



Composed in April 1781, the present sonata is one of the last works composed by Mozart while he was in the service of the Archbishop Hieronymus Colloredo of Salzburg. Early in March, Mozart, who had only recently returned from Munich after supervising the first performances of his opera *Idomeneo*, was summoned by the Archbishop to Vienna along with other members of the archiepiscopal retinue. On April 8, the Archbishop held a concert at the home of his brother, Prince Rudolph Joseph Colloredo. Later that night, Mozart sat down to write to his father Leopold: "Today (for I am writing at eleven o'clock at night) we had a concert where three of my compositions were performed -- new ones, of course; a rondo for a concerto for Brunetti [Antonio Brunetti, the Archbishop's concert-master], a sonata with violin accompaniment for myself [the present work], which I composed last night between eleven and twelve (but in order to be able to finish it, I only wrote out the accompaniment for Brunetti and retained my own part in my head): and then a rondo for Ceccarelli [the castrato Francesco Ceccarelli, also in the service of the Archbishop], which he had to repeat." This passage casts interesting light on the status of the violin and piano duo sonata in Mozart's time, making it clear that the violin part was still looked upon as essentially an accompaniment to the keyboard part. Despite this clear suggestion of the dominance of the keyboard part, Mozart's sonatas were in reality increasingly working toward a greater degree of equality between the two instruments. There are few signs of the haste with which the work was composed. Unusually it opens not with a quick movement, but a rather serious *Adagio* which is followed by an intense *Allegro* in G minor. The final movement is a theme and variations. The G major Sonata was first published in 1781 by the Viennese house Artaria along with the sonatas K. 296 and K. 376 to K. 380, a set of six issued as "Op. 2." The set also found its way to Paris, where Mozart's previous group of violin sonatas (K. 301 to K. 306) had been first published in 1778, being brought out there by Boyer in 1785.

This is Mozart's last sonata for violin and piano. The nickname it sometimes carries, "For Beginners," is related to the composer's description of it in those words, and his further comments suggest it should be called a sonata for piano "with violin." In any event, he apparently intended the work to serve pedagogical purposes, as well as musical ones. Its structure is highly unusual, with an

opening Rondo marked *Andante cantabile*, followed by what would be a more normal first movement -- an energetic sonata-allegro panel. The finale is unusual too, a theme and variations, with the violin cut out of the fifth variation altogether. The first movement is lovely in its gentle playfulness, the jaunty main theme sounding much more lively than its *Andante* marking would normally suggest. The piano dominates, though the violin has a major role in introducing the lively second subject and singing its version of the main theme. The more animated central panel features a theme that comes in delightful descending phrases brimming with sunshine and cheer. A more subdued alternate melody offers deft contrast, and the whole movement features many colorful exchanges between the two instruments. The theme and variations finale opens with a lyrical *Andante* theme whose simplicity and songful charms are irresistible. The variations offer a mixture of the playful and songful, of the lively and lovely. The aforementioned fifth is the most memorable of them all, the piano's dark intimacies captivating the ear.

Polish-born violinist Henryk Szeryng was probably the finest product of Carl Flesch's legendary teaching career. Possessing an iron technique and a musical intellect of rare insight, Szeryng established himself as one of the pre-eminent concert violinists of the post-World War II decades.

Szeryng was born in 1918 to a wealthy Polish industrialist whose wife had a great love of music. Studies on the piano were abandoned for the violin, though Szeryng remained skilled at the keyboard for the rest of his life. Szeryng progressed quickly on his new instrument and by age nine was sufficiently proficient to perform the Mendelssohn concerto for famed violinist Bronislaw Hubermann, a friend of the family. On Hubermann's advice Szeryng was sent to Berlin to study with Carl Flesch; Szeryng would later declare that his technical prowess was solely due to that masterful teacher's influence. Two years later in 1933, Szeryng made his debut performance in Warsaw with the Beethoven concerto under Bruno Walter. That same year he embarked on a minor concert tour, soloing with orchestras in Bucharest, Vienna, and Paris.

Szeryng immediately took to the city of Paris and settled there for a period of further study and growth as a performer. There he came under the influence of

Mozart

Sonatas For Piano and Violin, K.547 & K.379 *Henryk Szeryng, violin - Ingrid Haebler, piano*

Sonata For Piano And Violin In G, K. 379

1. Adagio - Allegro 8:10
2. Tema Con Variazioni 9:12

Sonata In F, K.547

3. Andantino Cantabile 4:03
4. Allegro 6:30
5. Tema (Andante) Con Variazioni 7:32

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