

Pianist Arthur Rubinstein was born in Lodz, Poland, on January 28, 1887. He began playing piano at the age of 3, and made his first public performance when he was just 7. One year later, Rubinstein's mother took him to meet violinist Joseph Joachim in Berlin. Awed by the child prodigy, Joachim agreed to provide his musical education. He introduced Rubinstein to Heinrich Barth. Three years later, the young pianist debuted with the Berlin Philharmonic at the Beethoven Saal, where his performance of Mozart, Chopin and Schumann earned reviews praising his sophistication and maturity. In 1906, he made his American debut at Carnegie Hall, where he received a cool reception. Nevertheless, he completed a 75-concert tour of the United States Rubinstein, discouraged by poor critiques, moved to Paris and took a 4-year hiatus.

In 1914, Rubinstein moved from Paris to Spain, where he was praised for his passionate and charismatic performances. His time in Spain led to an extended tour in South America. He later returned to Paris where he lived as a socialite, befriending artists including Cocteau and Picasso. He had a reputation as a hilarious extrovert and a grand storyteller. In 1932, he married Aniela Mlynarski, who was nearly half his age. Their relationship inspired him to settle down and take himself seriously as an artist. After the birth of their first child, Rubinstein began practicing from 12 to 16 hours per day. In 1937, he returned to Carnegie Hall. This time, audiences embraced him. He was heralded as a genius for his interpretation of Chopin's work, which critics saw as a creative revolution.

As World War II began, Rubinstein moved his family to Los Angeles, California. In 1946, he became an American citizen. He toured the world, and his performance in Warsaw garnered a unanimous ovation, the second ever in Polish history. Sadly, Rubinstein lost his family in Lodz, Poland, during the war. Afterwards, he publicly supported Israel. He was honored with a professorship at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Yale, Brown, Rutgers and Harvard also awarded him honorary degrees. He continued to perform until partial blindness forced his retirement in 1976. The same year, he received the United States Medal of Freedom. He died on December 20, 1982, in Geneva, Switzerland. His wife and their four children

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# Mozart

## Rubinstein Concerto No. 24 Rondo, K. 5211

*Orchestra conducted by  
Josef Krips*



One of only two concertos Mozart wrote in a minor key, Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 24 in C minor possesses a much darker, stormier nature than his previous piano concertos. The kaleidoscope of angst and emotions bundled inside of this work are far beyond those presented in Mozart's previous concertos. This paper will look at the ways in which the key signature and composition of this concerto create the storminess being conveyed. A minor key signature establishes a distinctly different character than that of previous piano concertos. The foreboding character set up through the minor key signature is continued through the changes in structure and form, allowing for the introduction of more themes and contrasting ideas than most concertos. The synthesis of themes between orchestra and soloist also work towards the dark and turbulent character presented in this piece. The symphonic instrumentation used for this concerto exceeds the size of the orchestras and instruments in previous piano concertos. The emotional turmoil found in this concerto is displayed through its minor key signature, its expanded form, its moody and contrasting themes, and its large instrumentation. Comparing this work to the K. 488 Piano Concerto in A Major written directly before this, the shifts in character, form and instrumentation complimenting the mood set up by the minor key signature become even more significant.

Premiered in Vienna on April 7 1786 at one of three subscription concerts by Mozart, K491 was the last piano concerto of both his time of highly prolific piano concerto compositions, as well as his "Figaro season." A dramatic change from his previous piano concertos, it was written only twenty-two days after the premiere of Concerto in A Major and is regarded by many to be "one of Mozart's most popular works in any genre." One of Beethoven's favorite pieces, Beethoven commented to his friend Johann Cramer after hearing a later performance of this concerto that "we shall never be able to do anything like that!" Many critics have noted the menacing, emotional mood of this concerto, describing it as having "an unrelenting, tragic character" that has a "gloomy agitation, but . . . a major mood, violent and energetic, to be sure, but not 'tragic.'"

The fact that this concerto is written in a minor key departs from compositional norm of the time. This choice of a minor key illustrates a deliberate conveyance of something different, moodier, and more tempestuous than past concertos. German American musicologist Alfred Einstein, in describing the significance of different key signatures for Mozart observed that "If G minor is the fatalistic key for Mozart, then C minor is the dramatic one, the key of contrasts between aggressive unisons and lyrical passages. The lyrical quality is always taken over by gloomy outbursts." Mozart's use of C minor as a dark and emotional key had a large influence on Beethoven who later wrote his Pathétique Piano Sonata No. 8 in the same key, most likely hoping to express the same emotions of emotional turmoil presented in Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 24.

Having established a turbulent and furious mood through the use of a minor key signature, the form of the piece continues to establish this unique departure from Mozart's previous piano concertos. While Mozart's piano concertos

typically start with a dialogue like interaction between the orchestra and the soloist, K491 does not incorporate any of this direct interaction of dialogue in the initial theme. The first four notes of the orchestral introduction are never played by the soloist. The removal of this dialogue between orchestra and soloist at the beginning creates a more hostile, foreboding sound than the back and forth sharing of themes found at the beginning of previous piano concertos.

The initial orchestral theme is full of passion, emotion, and energy and continues to return, bursting through at the end of each solo passage. Its isolation to orchestral instrumentation gives it a distinct character reserved for the stormy outbursts of emotion found in the piece. Despite any resolution or tranquility found in the preceding soloist passage, this recurring theme continuously brings the piece back to its furious nature. The entrance of this theme is particularly dramatic in the recapitulation at m. 362. After a lengthy run of 16th notes, accidentals, and harmonic transitions in the soloist passage, the orchestral theme's entrance in m. 362 loudly proclaims the return to tonic, the recapitulation of the first theme, and the stormy character of the concerto. The theme is echoed again in the development section in m. 302 still in a minor key, though transposed up to F this time. At each entrance, this theme creates a symphonic sound full of dark storminess.

While the orchestral exposition features a loud symphonic type of storminess, the initial soloist theme takes a slightly more subtle approach to convey the same emotions. While not presenting the giant symphonic sound of the orchestral theme, it still conveys a sense of emotional tension and conflict. However, the tension is created from the large range of the melody rather than by volume and instrumentation. The motives presented by the soloist contain large leaps of ascending and descending pitches depicting struggle and emotional turmoil. The very first two notes of the soloist's introduction in m. 100 contain an octave grace note leap followed by a descending cadence. This descent is immediately countered by yet another grace note octave leap, this time a half-step up from the previous. Countered by a descending cadence, the melody is then brought up again in m. 108. This initial introduction is then interrupted briefly by the initial orchestral theme again. When the soloist makes another entrance, it presents even larger leaps in the melody, this time spanning up to intervals of 10ths and 14ths. Contrasting this upward leaping, the starting note of each phrase descends downwards. The struggle of ascending and descending motives found in the soloist exposition conveys strong emotional conflict and struggle in an entirely contrasting way than that of the orchestra. The synthesis of these themes, written in a minor key creates an intricate storm of emotions and passions. Beginning with a grand symphonic sound, and then proceeding to a series of rising and falling motives in the soloist, the expositional themes of K491 continue the stormy emotional character initially established by the minor key signature.

# Mozart

## Concerto for Piano No. 24 In C Minor

### K.491 - Rondo in A Minor, K.511

Artur Rubinstein, piano - Josef Krips conductor

#### Concerto for Piano No. 24 In C Minor, K.491

1. First Movement: Allegro
2. Second Movement: Larghetto
3. Third Movement: Allegretto
4. **Rondo in A Minor, K.511**

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