



MOZART

DDD
8.550874

Symphonies Nos. 15 - 18

Northern Chamber Orchestra
Nicholas Ward



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 - 1791)

Symphony No. 15 in G Major, K. 124

Symphony No. 16 in C Major, K. 128

Symphony No. 17 in G Major, K. 129

Symphony No. 18 in F Major, K. 130

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born in Salzburg in 1756, the son of the violinist and composer, Leopold Mozart, a musician employed by the ruling Archbishop, and a man of some intellectual ability. In childhood Mozart and his elder sister Anna-Maria, known in the family as Nannerl to her brother's Wolferl, toured Europe as infant prodigies, received at court in the countries they visited and providing a general subject of curiosity and interest. The children's education and musical training was supervised by their father, who was quick to realise his son's genius and sacrificed his own career to foster it.

As Mozart grew to manhood there was evident a disparity between his natural expectations and the realities of provincial Salzburg, where an indulgent patron had been succeeded by an Archbishop very much less willing to allow members of his household to absent themselves for months or years on end. Leopold Mozart had, perforce, to be content with his lot as Vice-Kapellmeister, but in 1777 his son left Salzburg, accompanied only by his mother, to seek employment elsewhere, in Munich, Mannheim or in Paris, where, in June, 1778, his mother died. Nowhere did there seem to be a position available in any way equal to what Mozart saw as his desert, and early in 1779 he returned reluctantly to Salzburg, where he was given a position once more, with equal reluctance, by the Archbishop.

The summer of 1780 brought a commission for an opera in Munich. *Idomeneo, rè di Creta*, was staged there with some success in January, 1781. There followed a summons from the Archbishop to attend him in Vienna and an uneasy few months in which the young composer grew increasingly resentful, irked by his subservient position and the refusal of his patron to allow him to earn money and honour by performing before the Emperor. In May there was

an open quarrel, resulting in Mozart's dismissal. For the remaining ten years of his life he was to seek to earn a living in Vienna, independent of a patron, although he was later to be given a relatively unimportant position at court.

The Vienna years, during which Leopold Mozart was no longer at hand to control his son's wilder plans, brought initial success in the opera-house and in the public concerts Mozart gave. His marriage to an impecunious girl, whose earlier acquaintance he had made in Mannheim, when he had courted her sister, did nothing to assist his career, and by the end of the decade he was often depressed by the financial difficulties of the course he had chosen. He died in 1791, at a time when his fortunes seemed about to take a turn for the better. Although he had been ignored by the new Emperor, he had, nevertheless, fulfilled a coronation opera commission in Prague and was enjoying some popular success with his new German opera *The Magic Flute*. The unfinished work he left included a *Requiem Mass*, later completed by his pupil Süssmayer.

During the second half of the century the orchestral symphony, derived in part from the Italian operatic overture of earlier years, assumed increasing importance. Its most common instrumentation, calling for pairs of oboes and French horns, with a four-part string section and possible keyboard continuo, suited very well the resources most often available in the musical establishments of ruling families and the nobility. The four-movement symphony, including a *Minuet* and *Trio* generally as its third movement, opened with an *Allegro* in the tripartite sonata or sonata-allegro form of a two-subject exposition, followed by a development and recapitulation. A contrasting slow movement in a related key was often in ternary form, a central section framed by a repeated opening section. The symphony might be expected to end in a form of rondo, following the key-pattern expected in sonata-form and offering contrasted episodes framed by a repetition of the principal theme.

Leopold Mozart and his son first visited Italy on an extended tour in 1769, during which Mozart wrote his opera *Mitridate, rè di Ponto* for performance in Milan. He returned in 1771 to present his serenade *Ascanio in Alba*, written for

the Archduke Ferdinand and Maria Beatrice d'Este, a princess of Modena. By the end of the year he and his father were again in Salzburg, where Mozart, during the following months, wrote a number of symphonies. The first of these, in A major, is dated 30th December 1771, to be followed by *Symphony No. 15 in G major, K. 124*, dated 21st February 1772, scored for the usual pairs of oboes and horns and strings. All join in the opening of the first movement and the first subject, followed by secondary material and the necessary shift of key before the opening of the central development section, leading to the expected final recapitulation. The C major *Andante* allows the strings the principal theme, briefly punctuated by the wind. The original key of G major is restored, following normal practice, in the *Minuet*, with a contrasting D major *Trio* for strings alone. The last movement again follows what was now established custom in a rondo, its principal theme recurring exactly between the two episodes that intervene, before the final coda.

This symphony was followed by the *Symphony in C major, K. 128*, completed in May 1772. With only three movements, the work is scored, as before, for oboes, horns and strings and it is these last that introduce the first subject, with its triplet rhythms, in contrast to the second subject, marked by the octave leaps of the violins. There is relative daring in the change of key that opens the central development, leading before long to the return of the principal theme in a recapitulation. The slow movement is scored for strings alone, its outer sections, varied the second time, framing varied material at the heart of the movement. The symphony ends with a rondo in which the first of the two contrasting episodes framed by the principal theme is relatively extended in length.

The *Symphony in G major, K. 129*, was completed in the same month. It is scored for oboes, horns and strings and starts with a forthright principal theme, entrusted to the violins, while the first violins later offer the gentler secondary theme, material that serves to open the central development section, a mere 21 bars in length. The movement ends with a recapitulation and a coda that echoes the end of the exposition. The strings introduce the C major

slow movement, soon to be joined by the oboes and horns. The movement has contrasting material at its heart, after which the thematic material of the first part is repeated, with the necessary changes of key to lead to a final C major. The final movement, with its hunting-horn opening, allows its principal theme to appear fully or in part in different keys, notably in the central development section, after which first and second subjects re-appear before the unanimous conclusion.

Mozart's *Symphony in F major, K. 130*, was the work of the same month, May 1772, to be followed by further symphonies during the summer. It is scored for flutes, two horns in high C, two horns in F and strings. The violins start the first movement with a characteristic rhythm, soon joined by the wind, with the two flutes doubling the theme. This leads to a secondary theme for the violins, now in contrasting style and rhythm. The opening figure is heard at the start of the central development, followed by the return of the principal theme proper and a recapitulation of the other material of the exposition. Muted strings start the B flat major *Andantino grazioso*, where again a final section repeats the first, with the necessary adjustments of key, after other material at the heart of the movement. The *Minuet* is repeated to frame a contrasting C major *Trio*, after which the final *Molto allegro* follows the established first-movement pattern to provide a satisfying and brilliant ending.

Northern Chamber Orchestra, Manchester

Formed in 1967, the Northern Chamber Orchestra has established itself as one of England's finest chamber ensembles. Though often augmented to meet the requirements of the concert programme, the orchestra normally contains 24 musicians and performs both in concert and on disc without a conductor. Their repertoire ranges from the baroque era to music of our time, and they have gained a reputation for imaginative programme planning.

Concerts take the orchestra throughout the North of England and it has received four major European bursaries for its achievements in the community. With a series of recordings of Haydn and Mozart symphonies for Naxos the orchestra makes its début on disc.

Nicholas Ward

Nicholas Ward was born in Manchester in 1952, the son of parents who had met as members of the Hallé Orchestra. In consequence music played an important part in his life from childhood, allowing him, after less successful attempts as a pianist, to learn the violin and, at the age of twelve, to form his own string quartet. This last continued for some five years, until he entered the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, where he studied with Yossi Zivoni and later, in Brussels, with André Gertler. In 1977 Nicholas Ward moved to London, where he joined the Melos Ensemble and the Royal Philharmonic, when the orchestra worked under Antal Dorati as its Principal Conductor. He became co-leader of the City of London Sinfonia in 1984, a position followed by appointment as leader of the Northern Chamber Orchestra, of which he became Music Director two years later, directing from the violin. In this form the orchestra has won high regard for its work both in the concert hall and the broadcasting studio.



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STEREO

MOZART

Symphonies Nos. 15 - 18

Northern Chamber Orchestra
Nicholas Ward

DDD

Playing
Time:
57'56''Symphony No. 15
in G Major, K. 124

- | | | |
|---|----------|--------|
| 1 | Allegro | (3:35) |
| 2 | Andante | (4:44) |
| 3 | Menuetto | (2:46) |
| 4 | Presto | (2:28) |

Symphony No. 16
in C Major, K. 128

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|---|------------------|--------|
| 5 | Allegro maestoso | (4:29) |
| 6 | Andante grazioso | (3:19) |
| 7 | Allegro | (4:08) |

Symphony No. 17
in G Major, K. 129

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|----|---------|--------|
| 8 | Allegro | (4:42) |
| 9 | Andante | (4:04) |
| 10 | Allegro | (3:06) |

Symphony No. 18
in F Major, K. 130

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|--------|
| 11 | Allegro | (5:31) |
| 12 | Andantino grazioso | (5:50) |
| 13 | Menuetto | (2:14) |
| 14 | Molto allegro | (6:59) |

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Manchester, on 14th and 15th January 1994.

Producer: John Taylor

Engineer: Harold Barnes

Music Notes: Keith Anderson

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