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MOZART



by Arrangement Volume Two

**Six Sonatas, Op. 2
Nos. 1, 3 and 6**
for piano and violin
transcribed for two pianos
by Stephen Yates

Sonata in F major, K376
Sonata in B flat major, K378
Sonata in E flat major, K380

Daniel Herscovitch, piano
Phillip Shovk, piano

FIRST RECORDINGS

MOZART: SIX SONATAS FOR TWO PIANOS I

by Steven Yates

The year 1781 was a turning-point in Mozart's brief but spectacular career. Having provoked his former employer, the Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg, into dismissing him, the 25-year-old composer was released from his duties as a musician to the court and, more importantly, from his own family obligations – and was now free to think of starting one of his own. His formative years, spent visiting Europe's great capitals, lay behind him and his prospects seemed promising. The Vienna where he arrived in March 1781 was a thriving, cosmopolitan city ruled by an idealistic but demanding young ruler who had succeeded to the throne only the year before and was eager to make changes. In Joseph II (1741–90) Mozart found a patron who soon took an active interest in the new career of the former child-prodigy as one of the first freelance professional musicians.

One can be fairly certain that the two men had many things in common, most notably their criticism, often bitter and sometimes bordering on the sarcastic, of such figures of authority as the church, Salzburg and parents. Both wished to show the world what they were capable of, and both in their own way displayed an almost overwhelming confidence in their own abilities, even though they had as many detractors as they had admirers.

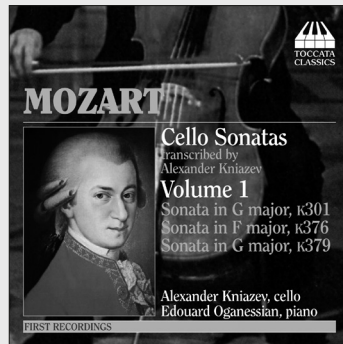
For a young man with the appropriate social connections, Vienna in the 1780s could be an exciting place to live. Many contemporary observers commented on the air of change and enterprise brought on by the far-reaching reforms instigated by the new monarch, much to the annoyance of the deeply entrenched conservative elite that surrounded him. Indeed, Joseph managed to offend almost everyone – including, on one occasion, the Pope: Joseph closed three Viennese monasteries during the state visit of Pope Pius VI in 1782. The purpose of the pontiff's visit was to try dissuade the monarch from continuing his anti-clerical policies, but the Emperor, though outwardly polite, nonetheless managed to continue to push forward his enlightened ideas on the separation of church and state. Unfortunately, his achievements were overshadowed by a number of difficulties during the last years of his reign, among them a costly war against the Ottoman Empire, an economy weakened by high inflation and, to make matters worse, the beginnings of a revolution in France. By the end of 1789 the dream had all but ended and most of what Joseph II left was soon dismantled by his brother, Leopold II, who succeeded him on his death in February 1790.

Best Australian Pianist Prize. He was awarded a Best Accompanist prize at the Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow in 1994.

Phillip Shovk has performed to loud acclaim in the USA, Belgium, France, Germany, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, Russia, Georgia, Singapore, China and New Zealand. He has also adjudicated at many of Australia's leading competitions, including the Sydney International Piano Competition, Sydney Eisteddfod, Yamaha Youth Competition and Hephzibah Menuhin Competition; he has also been a jury member of the Concours Animato in Paris, the New Zealand National Concerto Competition and the Singapore National Piano Competition. He has taught at the Conservatoire Rachmaninoff in Paris and the Australian Institute of Music and is presently Lecturer in Piano and Accompaniment at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. He has just released a CD of Tchaikovsky and Mussorgsky on the Brisbane-based Master Performers label.

When not performing, accompanying and playing chamber music, he can be found body-surfing, playing chess or Scrabble, reading, solving cryptic crosswords or drinking wine.

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'highly effective cello transcriptions of three of the master's violin sonatas. There are even places in these works where the cello's greater depth and range is preferable to the original, resulting in a more equally balanced and stimulating dialogue with the piano'

Erik Levi, *BBC Music Magazine*

'Mozart has not only been transcribed for cello and piano; he has been Romanticized. And it works wonderfully well in these meltingly lovely performances by Kniazev and Russian pianist Edouard Ognessian. This is a special release, particularly if you already know this music. You will be surprised.'

Robert Reilly, *Crisis Magazine*

Daniel Herscovitch was born in Melbourne. He studied with Alexander Sverjensky at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and then with Rosl Schmid in Munich. While living in Germany he performed extensively on the Continent and in Britain and also undertook three extensive Australian tours. He performed at several important European festivals, in Berlin, Zagreb and elsewhere, such as at the Saarbrücken Tage der Neuen Musik, and many of his performances were broadcast by the BBC and other European networks.



Since returning to Australia he has been active in solo and chamber music and his concerto repertoire ranges from Mozart to Bartók and Berg. He has appeared in all the major Australian cities and has performed at the Sydney and Melbourne Festivals, the Adelaide Festival of the Arts and Roger Woodward's Sydney Spring Festival of New Music. Other musicians he has appeared with include Jane Manning, Ole Böhn and Wanda Wilkomirska. He makes regular visits for concerts and master-classes to the United States, Great Britain and mainland Europe. He has toured New Zealand, including appearances at the Bay of Islands Festival, and in recent years he has visited Indonesia on an annual basis.

His repertoire ranges from Bach to Carter, and he has given many world premieres of both contemporary music and seldom-performed older music. His recordings have appeared on Continuum, Wirripang, Tall Poppies and ABC Classics labels. His CD with Julie Adam of the complete Grieg transcriptions of Mozart piano sonatas for two pianos was a first recording, and his most recent releases were of the Chopin Sonatas (including the Cello Sonata) and a CD of Australian piano trios, including the complete trios of Peter Sculthorpe.

Phillip Shovk is one of Australia's foremost concert pianists, chamber musicians, accompanists and pedagogues. After initial lessons with Anatole Miroshnyk in his native Sydney, he continued his studies with George Humphrey at the Sydney Conservatorium High School from where he graduated with the Frank Hutchens Prize as the most promising performer of his year. He then furthered his studies at the Moscow State Conservatory, studying with Valery Kastelsky (himself a student of the legendary Heinrich Neuhaus) and graduating as a Master of Fine Arts with highest marks in all musical subjects. In 1987 he became a Laureate at the Vienna da Motta competition in Lisbon and in 1988 at the Sydney International Competition, where he was awarded the Hephzibah Menuhin Prize and the



When the prestigious publishing house of Artaria brought out the set of six sonatas published as Mozart's Op. 2 – his first Viennese publication – they were following a path established at the turn of the eighteenth century, when a composer's first opus often consisted of twelve sonatas for solo violin or twelve trio sonatas; in time the number was reduced to six or sometimes three. By the third quarter of the eighteenth century sonatas for a keyboard instrument with or without violin accompaniment became increasingly popular, leaving the violin virtuosi of the day to publish violin sonatas in the old way. The newer type of keyboard sonata often had an accompanying violin that could be omitted with no huge loss to the music. More rarely, one comes across sonatas where the violin part was written as an *obbligato*, that is, its presence is essential to the musical discourse and cannot be left out. The six sonatas of Luigi Boccherini's Op. 5 (G25–30; 1769) are examples of this *obbligato* genre, as are many unpublished sonatas by Johann Christian Bach. Mozart was familiar with those of Joseph Schuster (1748–1812), which were published in 1777 as *Divertimenti di camera* but they are in fact true sonatas for violin and keyboard where both instruments are treated more or less equally, the violin parts being more elaborate; the beginnings of a true dialogue can be heard emerging from the musical discourse.

The Op. 2 set of accompanied sonatas manifests Mozart's desire to impress and even at times astonish the performer – and it's important to remember that such a publication would have been directed principally at players rather than listeners. His mastery of musical language, the supreme logic in his imaginative manipulation of form and above all the sheer beauty of much of the music represented something quite new and intriguing to the people who first played this music. Indeed, one reviewer¹ wrote:

These sonatas are the only ones of their kind. Rich in new ideas and in evidences of the great musical genius of their author. Very brilliant and suited to the instrument. At the same time their accompaniment of the violin is so artfully combined with the clavier part that both instruments are kept constantly on the alert; so that these sonatas require just as skilful a player on the violin as on the clavier [...].

These sonatas were dedicated to a rich bourgeoisie, the 23-year-old Josepha Barbara von Auernhammer (1758–1820). Mozart began to give her piano lessons in June 1781. In a letter to his father of 27 June 1781 Mozart wrote that 'the young lady is a fright, but plays enchantingly'² – although he may have had deliberately exaggerated his pupil's character and appearance in order to placate his father, who was deeply suspicious of any female likely to threaten his primacy in his son's allegiances. Her musical talent was considerable: she composed herself (chiefly sets of keyboard variations, skilfully written), and was a good enough pianist to perform Beethoven's First Piano Concerto, Op. 15, shortly after its completion.

¹ F. C. Cramer, writing in the *Magazin der Music* in 1783; quoted in Alfred Einstein, *Mozart: His Character, His Work*, transl. Arthur Mendel and Nathan Broder, Oxford University Press, Oxford and London, 1945, p. 256.

² *The Letters of Mozart and his Family*, ed. Emily Anderson, Macmillan, London, 1938, Vol. 3, p. 1112.

An account survives of the first run-through of these sonatas, played from the publisher's proofs, thanks to Mozart's long-standing friend, Abbé Stadler, who wrote:

Miss Auernhammer played the forte-piano, Mozart accompanied her not on the violin but on another forte-piano. I was completely entranced by the playing of the master and pupil.³

I came across Stadler's comment in the booklet essay Andrew Manze wrote to accompany his splendid recording of some of the sonatas;⁴ and when Manze went on to speculate that 'these (and other?) violin sonatas might legitimately be arranged for piano duet', I realised then and there that such an idea offered a number of exciting possibilities.

I made the first of these arrangements, of the Sonata in F major, No. 3 in the original publication and K377 in Köchel's catalogue of Mozart's music, in 2009; three years later the Sonata in F major, K376 (No. 1 in the original publication), brought the task to its conclusion. The journey has been a remarkable one for me as an arranger and as a musician. It has been a rare privilege to have the opportunity to become so intimately acquainted with these six examples of Mozart's superlative craft.

The main difficulty in arranging these works for the medium of two pianos lies in the fact that all you have in front of you is one complete piano part and a single-line violin accompaniment. From the very beginning I had the sound of the harpsichord and Viennese fortepiano in my mind's ear, so much so that I knew the second piano part had to be treated as an equal partner and not function as mere accompaniment to the first and that I had to be careful that the new keyboard part should not go beyond the resources of the harpsichord or the Viennese fortepiano of Mozart's time. A transparent sound was required, and so the voicing of chords was crucial in achieving a truly balanced sound. Of course, Mozart's own practice provided a superb model to follow; for example, the sudden changes of register in the widely spaced piano chords that are such a feature of the first movement of the Sonata in E flat major, K380 [7], proved to be particularly instructive on how carefully the composer considered this aspect and just how little one had to change the text, if at all. On the other hand, I avoided taking Mozart's own compositions for four hands and two pianos as models because I found that his treatment of the musical material was so unlike that found in the Op. 2 sonatas that I felt it wiser to start afresh and find solutions in the music itself.

The imitative writing and the frequent dialogue between the two instruments, especially in the *concertante* passages where each instrument sounds as if it were the soloist in a double concerto, were relatively straightforward to organise. Other accompaniment figures in the violin, especially those using long, sustained

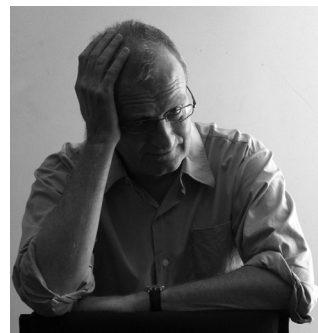
³ Quoted, in a translation by T. Olsson, in the booklet notes to Harmonia Mundi HMU907380, p. 3. The original source is probably the *Eigenhändig geschriebene Selbst-Biographie des Hochwürdigsten Herrn Maximilian Stadler*, a manuscript held in the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna, from around 1816–26.

⁴ With Richard Egarr, fortepiano, on Harmonia Mundi HMU907380, released in 2005.

tones, proved more problematic. Compromises had to be made and new keyboardist figurations devised.

In many instances I wanted to realise the quasi-orchestral textures found in the original. Johann Christian Bach's Sonata in G major, Op. 15, No. 5,⁵ for two keyboards, published in 1778 (making it closely contemporary with Mozart's Op. 2 sonatas) provided many an elegant solution to some of the problems I encountered. In some passages I had to take my courage in both hands and recompose the music – not with the intention of improving it but in the hope that I was doing what a professional musician of Mozart's time would have done when faced with the same challenges. The *Allegro* first movement of the F major Sonata, K376 [1], is in a fairly orthodox sonata-form, but I felt the overall musical flow was enhanced when half a bar was added to bars 27–28. At times I felt some kind of introduction was required; for example, in the slow movement, *Andantino sostenuto e cantabile* [5], of the Sonata in B flat sonata, K378, the original launches into the opening theme without any preparation and so, to prepare the listener, I devised an introduction based on material found later in the movement; for the same reason a bar of pure accompaniment in the manner of the opening of Mozart's Symphony No. 40 in G minor, K550, was added to the opening of the first movement of this Sonata. Finally, for the last movement, a rondo [9], of the Sonata in E flat, K380, a short coda was attached to the original ending from bar 192 onwards in order to provide a suitably grand conclusion to the set.

Stephen Yates, born in Newcastle, New South Wales, in 1957, studied violin, piano and composition there until 1980 when he enrolled at the New South Wales Conservatorium of Music. Although he has written for theatre, dance and marionettes, his preference is to compose music for chamber ensembles and solo instrumentalists with a special fondness for the harpsichord and voice. Over the years his work has been performed, broadcast and recorded in Australia, the United Kingdom and elsewhere in Europe, the United States, South East Asia and China. Much of his music exists in private collections and has yet to be published, although some works have been published by Currency Press, Wirripang Publications and Allans in Australia and Trinity College in the UK.



⁵ In addition to the duo sonata, Bach's *Four Sonatas and Two Duets*, Op. 15, contains two trios with violin and cello (No. 1 in C major and No. 2 in A major), three sonatas for keyboard and violin (No. 3 in D major, No. 4 in B flat major) and a sonata for keyboard duet (No. 6 in C major).