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NAXOS

MOZART

Violin Concertos Nos. 3, 4 and 5



Henning Kraggerud, Violin
Norwegian Chamber Orchestra

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Violin Concertos Nos. 3, 4 and 5

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born in Salzburg in 1756, the son of a court musician who, in the year of his youngest child's birth, published an influential book on violin-playing. Leopold Mozart rose to occupy the position of Vice-Kapellmeister to the Archbishop of Salzburg, but sacrificed his own creative career to that of his son, in whom he detected early signs of precocious genius. With the indulgence of his patron, he was able to undertake extended concert tours of Europe in which his son and older daughter Nannerl were able to astonish audiences. The boy played both the keyboard and the violin and could improvise and soon write down his own compositions.

Childhood that had brought Mozart signal success was followed by a less satisfactory period of adolescence largely in Salzburg under the patronage of a new and less sympathetic Archbishop. Like his father, Mozart found opportunities far too limited at home, while chances of travel were now restricted. In 1777, when leave of absence was not granted, he gave up employment in Salzburg to seek a future elsewhere, but neither Mannheim nor Paris, both musical centres of some importance, had anything for him. His Mannheim connections, however, brought a commission for an opera in Munich in 1781, but after its successful staging he was summoned by his patron to Vienna. There Mozart's dissatisfaction with his position resulted in a quarrel with the Archbishop and dismissal from his service.

The last ten years of Mozart's life were spent in Vienna in precarious independence of both patron and immediate paternal advice, a situation aggravated by an imprudent marriage. Initial success in the opera-house and as a performer was followed, as the decade went on, by increasing financial difficulties. By the time of his death in December 1791, however, his fortunes seemed about to change for the better, with the success of the German opera *The Magic Flute*, and the possibility of increased patronage.

The five violin concertos that Mozart wrote in Salzburg in 1775 were performed there by the violinist Antonio Brunetti, a man whom Mozart was later to

describe as a disgrace to his profession, coarse and dirty. Brunetti, a Neapolitan by birth, had been appointed Hofmusikdirektor and Hofkonzertmeister in Salzburg in 1776 and in the following year he succeeded Mozart as Konzertmeister, when the latter left the service of the Archbishop of Salzburg to seek his fortune in Mannheim and Paris. In 1778 Brunetti had to marry Maria Judith Lipps, the sister-in-law of Michael Haydn, who had already born him a child. Mozart himself was fastidious about the company he kept and he clearly regarded Brunetti as uncouth. Nevertheless the exigencies of his profession found Brunetti providing tolerable performances of the concertos. The first soloist, however, seems to have been Franz Xaver Kolb, a Salzburg musician and a competent enough violinist. We hear in passing of these performances by Kolb and by Brunetti in letters from Leopold Mozart to his son written during the latter's absence in 1777 and 1778, letters that paint a clear enough picture of the kind of music-making there was to be had in Salzburg, and from Mozart's own letters, the vastly superior standards of Mannheim, and, given the exaggerations of French taste, of Paris. Limited as it might have been, Salzburg, all the same, offered some opportunities. In 1775 the Archbishop commissioned a setting of a Metastasio libretto, *Il re pastore*, for the official visit to the town of the Archduke Maximilian Franz in April. The violin concertos were written later in the year and, as we have seen, provided at least a reminder of Mozart's achievement during his long absence.

The *Concerto in G major, K. 216*, shares the greater popularity of the last three of the series of five. The opening *Allegro* offers an orchestral exposition in which the principal themes are declared, the first of them having already appeared in *Il re pastore*. The soloist repeats the principal theme and by means of new material leads to the second subject, both duly developed and re-established in the final section of the movement. The *Adagio* is an assured example of Mozart's handling of the solo violin cantilena, a finely sustained violin melody, to

Norwegian Chamber Orchestra



Since its formation in 1977 the Norwegian Chamber Orchestra has secured a reputation for itself for its innovative programming and creativity. The artistic directors and guest leaders of the orchestra have included Iona Brown, Leif Ove Andsnes, Martin Fröst, François Leleux and Steven Isserlis together with the current artistic director Terje Tønnesen, who has held this rôle since the orchestra's formation. The orchestra's international tours to Europe, Asia and North America have received outstanding reviews at many of the world's prestigious concert halls and festivals. With nearly forty recordings to date, the NCO has recorded comprehensive chamber orchestra repertoire with distinguished soloists, including Leif Ove Andsnes, Terje Tønnesen, Iona Brown, Truls Mørk, Lars Anders Tomter and Tine Thing Helseth. Highlights include Spellemannpris winning recordings of Grieg / Nielsen works and Haydn piano concertos with Leif Ove Andsnes. The orchestra draws on an enviable roster of Norwegian and international soloists and has always been dedicated to presenting contemporary music as part of its concert repertoire. The NCO currently presents its own concert series at the University Aula in Oslo and performs in major concert venues in Norway. Since 2011, the NCO has been in close collaboration with the Risør Chamber Music Festival and is now orchestra-in-residence at the festival.

For further information on the NCO, please visit www.kammerorkesteret.no

YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/user/norchamberorch



Facsimile of Mozart's handwriting, taken from the second movement of the *Fourth Concerto*.

which the orchestra provides a subtle foil. This D major slow movement is succeeded by a final *Rondeau* with a profusion of varied ideas in its contrasting episodes, which include dance episodes before the final re-appearance of the principal theme.

The *Concerto in D major, K. 218*, was completed in October 1775. The first movement, a bold *Allegro*, is introduced by a declaration of the principal theme, later to be taken up by the soloist. There is a lyrical slow movement and a final *Rondeau* – Mozart again uses the French spelling of the word – in which two disparate thematic elements are contrasted, the first an elegant *Andante grazioso* and the second a rapider *Allegro*, forming a movement teeming with prodigious melodic invention, including an unexpected dance in G major, a section of it allowing the violinist to provide a drone bass for the solo theme.

The *Concerto in A major, K. 219*, opens with the customary orchestral exposition, followed unexpectedly by an *Adagio* entry for the soloist, the first two notes of the solo violin poised perilously over an abyss of orchestral silence, before the murmur of the moving orchestral accompaniment is heard. This is a prelude to the soloist's own version of the *Allegro*, and subsequent development and recapitulation. The slow movement allows the solo violin to repeat and complete the opening theme, while the middle section offers a contrast of theme and key. This is followed by a final movement in the form of a *Rondeau*, one of its contrasting episodes an example of what passed for "Turkish" music in Austria in the late eighteenth century, a fashionable piece of exoticism.

Keith Anderson

Since these three concertos are used at virtually every audition for positions in orchestras and at music schools and colleges of all levels, they may be among the most practised works in the repertoire, with the exception of the last movements where, usually, the many worn copies of the music strangely lack any markings or signs of use as they are not used in auditions.

Once after performing the *Fifth Concerto* I received a strange compliment from one of the orchestra members. He was also on the committee which decides which violinists are to be accepted into the orchestra. He said "this is the best interpretation I have heard, but if you had auditioned for tutti second violin, you would not have passed to the second round." This comment made me think. I also remember when I was once on a competition jury, a fellow juror told me that if two violinists were equally good technically then and only then should the more musical be chosen. I have also had mothers ask me how I think their children should play so that a particular jury will like them. What kind of world would it be if we did not encourage our young players to find their own voice? Do we want a world where conformity is valued more than engagement and passion?

At the Barratt Due Institute of Music in Oslo and the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester I am now holding classes where harmony, music history, and analysis of scores, are used to generate ideas on the piece of music the students are learning. These classes also incorporate non-traditional methods such as dancing, singing, conducting, improvising and composing. This is to encourage the students to form their own ideas by using all available sources as inspiration, and not start with fingerings, intonation, their teachers' phrasings or what they think someone else might like.

Urtext editions should be looked upon with a certain skepticism. As can be seen in the facsimile of Mozart's handwriting on page 6 (last note of the first solo line), even which notes should be played can be debatable (example taken from the second movement of the *Fourth Concerto*). Bowings and placement of dynamics have often been standardized to overly strict rules even in Urtext editions. Lots of inspiration can be had without your instrument in your hand.

Mozart was nineteen when he composed these concertos. The true sign of a masterpiece must lie in the number of possible interpretations inherent in it.

Henning Kraggerud



Henning Kraggerud

An artist of exquisite musicianship, Henning Kraggerud is invited time and again to join many of the world's most prestigious orchestras, including the Philharmonia, Hallé, Danish National Symphony, the Cincinnati, Baltimore, Toronto and Vancouver symphony orchestras and the Hong Kong Philharmonic. He has performed with the LA Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl and twice at the BBC Proms in London. As soloist and director, he leads ensembles such as the Britten Sinfonia, the Swedish Chamber Orchestra and the Australian Chamber Orchestra. In his native Norway, he is Artistic Director of Arctic Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra.

A dedicated chamber musician, Henning Kraggerud performs frequently in venues such as London's Wigmore Hall, New York's Carnegie Hall and Berlin's Konzerthaus, appearing alongside artists including Steven Isserlis, Joshua Bell, Christian Hadland, Kathryn Stott, Imogen Cooper, Jeremy Menuhin, Leif Ove Andsnes and many more.

In the spirit of the old masters, Kraggerud composes his own music, and in 2014 performed the première of *Equinox: 24 Postludes in All Keys for Violin and String Orchestra*, composed as musical counterparts to a story by world-famous author Jostein Gaarder. The recording was released in 2015, receiving a five star review in *BBC Music Magazine*.

Kraggerud's discography includes many recordings on the Naxos label, including Grieg's *Three Sonatas*, arranged for violin and chamber orchestra by Henning Kraggerud and Bernt Simen Lund [8.573137]. He is a Professor at the Barratt Due Institute of Music in Oslo, and since September 2015 has been International Chair in Violin at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester. Henning Kraggerud plays on a 1744 Guarneri del Gesù, provided by Dextra Musica AS. This company is funded by Sparebankstiftelsen DNB.

This recording forms part of a larger project which includes a Naxos DVD [2.110368] of a concert of Mozart's *Violin Concertos Nos. 3-5* and *Adagio in E, K. 261*, performed by the same artists at Akershus Castle Church. The project has been undertaken with the support of Dextra Musica.



Mozart wrote his *Violin Concertos* in 1775 while still living in his home town of Salzburg and in service to Prince-Archbishop Hieronymus Colloredo. Mozart had already toured internationally and found his parochial environment restricting, but as ever he rose above circumstances to create sublime and thrillingly unconventional masterpieces filled with wit and charm. The finely sustained melodic expression of each concerto's slow centre provides the perfect foil for inventive sparkle in outer movements that include a cheeky reference to the opera *Il re pastore* in K. 216, and an exotic 'Turkish' moment in the finale of K. 219.

Wolfgang Amadeus
MOZART
(1756-1791)

Violin Concerto No. 3 in G major, K. 216	20:21
① I. Allegro*	7:46
② II. Adagio*	7:04
③ III. Rondeau: Allegro	5:31
Violin Concerto No. 4 in D major, K. 218	20:15
④ I. Allegro*	7:16
⑤ II. Andante cantabile*	6:43
⑥ III. Rondeau: Andante grazioso – Allegro ma non troppo	6:16
Violin Concerto No. 5 in A major, K. 219	25:40
⑦ I. Allegro aperto*	8:30
⑧ II. Adagio*	9:34
⑨ III. Rondeau: Tempo di Menuetto	7:36

***ALL CADENZAS COMPOSED BY HENNING KRAGGERUD**

Henning Kraggerud, Violin
Norwegian Chamber Orchestra

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