

SOMMCD 066

derniers concertos de Mozart) et encore une fois le soliste introduit de nouveau matériel avant de permettre à l'orchestre de réintroduire le sujet principal. Plus tard nous retrouvons la petite phrase excentrique notée dans le premier mouvement du concerto de piano No. 21, K467 – encore une fois en ut majeur.

Encore un mouvement central en style de sérénade – l'*andante* en fa majeur – amène un *rondo* qui s'ouvre d'un motif de danse *siciliano*. Peu de temps plus tard se trouve un interlude profondément expressif, un *adagio* dans la clef tragique d'ut mineur. Cet "ombre sur les réjouissances" va retourner avant que le mouvement finit avec un *pianissimo*, une marque favorite de Mozart dans ce trio adorable de concertos.

© 2007 Christopher Morley

*Traduction:* Denys Becher et Nadia Jackson

---

Our discs are available worldwide from all good record shops. In case of difficulty and for further information please contact us direct: SOMM Recordings, Sales & Marketing Dept., 13 Riversdale Road, Thames Ditton, Surrey, KT7 0QL, UK.

Tel: +(0)20-8398 1586. Fax: +(0)20-8339 0981. Email: [sales@somm-recordings.com](mailto:sales@somm-recordings.com)

Website: <http://www.somm-recordings.com>

---

**WARNING** Copyright subsists in all Sommm Recordings. Any unauthorised broadcasting, public performance, copying, rental or re-recording thereof in any manner whatsoever will constitute an infringement of such copyright. In the United Kingdom licences for the use of recordings for public performance may be obtained from Phonographic Performance Ltd., 1 Upper James Street, London W1R 3HG



# Mozart

## Piano Concertos

KV 413, KV 414 & KV 415

MARK BEBBINGTON Piano  
ORCHESTRA OF THE SWAN  
DAVID CURTIS Conductor

Mozart had been writing piano concertos since the age of 11, transcribing into concerto format solo keyboard works by various composers. The manuscripts are mostly in the hand of Leopold Mozart; a touching indication that the father was devotedly acting as copyist to his precocious son.

The three concertos of K107 were transcriptions of keyboard sonatas by Johann Christian Bach, who had taken the eight-year-old Wolfgang under his wing in London, when the Mozarts stayed for 16 months in the English capital during a lengthy tour of western Europe. So it was only with K175, officially the fifth concerto in the list of Mozart's 27 concertos for piano, that we find totally original material coming from the young composer's pen.

It could be argued that Mozart never actually settled upon a fixed template for his piano concertos, each of his mature examples having fascinating formal, textural and sound-world characteristics of its own. But certainly several among the earliest works in the series he wrote once the touring years of his youth were well and truly over show a high degree of experimentation, beginning with Piano Concerto No. 9, K271 in E-flat, where the piano enters as soon as the second bar, and the progress of whose finale is interrupted by a gracious minuet.

The experimentation continued even after Mozart's eventual move to Vienna, when he decided in the autumn of 1782 that he needed some new concertos which would confirm his reputation as both a piano virtuoso and as a composer. These would become the three works on this disc, K's 413, 414 and 415. On December 28 of that year he wrote to Leopold back home in Salzburg:

"These concertos are a happy medium between what is too easy and what is too difficult; they are very brilliant, pleasing to the ear, and natural, without being vapid. There are passages here and there from which the connoisseurs alone can derive satisfaction; but these passages are written in such a way that the less learned cannot fail to be pleased, though without knowing why."

Displaying what he hoped was a shrewd business sense in underlining these works' flexibility in performance, the composer advertised in the *Wiener Zeitung* of January 15 1783: "Herr Mozart, Kapellmeister, wishes to announce to his esteemed public the publication of three new, recently completed piano concertos. These three concertos may be performed not only with an accompaniment of large orchestra and winds, but also *a quattro*, namely, with two violins, one viola and violoncello."

After a poor response from the public, Mozart offered the set of concertos to the Parisian publisher, Jean Georges Sieber, who had just issued the composer's great set of sonatas for piano and violin, K301-06:

"This letter is to inform you that I have three piano concertos ready, which can be performed with full orchestra, or with oboes and horns, or merely *a quattro*. Artaria wants to engrave them. But I give you, my friend, the first refusal."

In the event it was indeed the Vienna publisher Artaria who printed the works, and this represents the only occasion in Mozart's lifetime that any of his piano concertos appeared in print. The composer himself played these works on various occasions, with several permutations in the accompaniment, within a few months of their completion.

First in this trio of concertos is Piano Concerto No. 11, K413 in F major. Its opening movement is a sturdy triple-time *allegro*, with genuinely independent writing for all four string parts, including the usually "poor-relation" violas. The piano enters with a gentle new idea before taking up the first subject and proceeding with spectacular hands-crossing virtuosity. There is a later a dramatic, rhythmically jagged passage preceding some emotional chromatic writing.

The ensuing B-flat *largo* whispers the sultry air of a serenade, *pizzicato* lower strings reinforcing the languorous atmosphere, before the finale's minuet, opening with a subtly descending two-octave scale in the bass line, brings much textural and dynamic contrast until its *pianissimo* conclusion.

Piano Concerto No. 12, K414 in A major, announces at the start of its *allegro* first movement a motif derived from the notes of the key chord, much in the transparent manner of several of Mozart's other compositions in the same tonality. It continues with a generous outpouring of melody which is again characteristic of the composer's works in this luminous key, and it is worth pointing out that a little turning figures soon after the soloist's entry prefigures a similar moment in the succeeding concerto, K415. There is more crowd-pleasing cross-hand activity, too.

The D major *andante*, like its opposite number in K413, opens *sotto voce*, and bears some thematic links with its own immediately preceding opening movement. It also carries a quotation from Mozart's much-loved J.C. Bach, who had died in this year of 1782. The piano enters in a rich, chordal, hymnic style before releasing itself into wonderfully fluent elaborations, and the movement ends in a seductively "come hither" *pianissimo* conclusion.

In the sonata-rondo finale Mozart teases his listeners with postponed repeats of his main theme, dazzling their ears instead with a cascade of new ideas. Significantly, he subsequently wrote out cadenzas for all three movements, revealing how much he himself loved this concerto.

Concluding the trio is Piano Concerto No. 13, K415. This is a different kind of work, its open, C major key implying a spacious symphonic expansiveness, with its optional full orchestral scoring, and with motifs which indeed summon a more rigorous kind of treatment. There is a confidence in the way Mozart deliberately seeds his material with quirky phrase-lengths and then assimilates these oddities into the overall scheme of things which seems particularly aimed at pleasing the “connoisseurs”.

The *allegro* first movement opens with a stealthy march-like tread (a recurring feature in so many of the succeeding concertos by Mozart), and once again the soloist enters with new material before allowing the orchestra to re-introduce the initial subject. Later there follows that eccentric little turning melody already noted in the first movement of K414, here undergoing a passage through a variety of implied keys. Semiquaver passage-work in the movement looks forward to similar material in the first movement of Piano Concerto No. 21, K467 – again in C major.

Another serenade-like central movement, the F major *andante*, is followed by a *Rondeau* which begins with a *siciliano*-like dance motif which could easily find its way into *Le Nozze di Figaro* of a few years later. And there is in fact a deeply expressive operatic interlude soon afterwards, when the music changes to a tragic C minor *adagio*. This spectre at the feast will return later, along with a clouds-dispelling solo cadenza before the movement ends in a rustling *pianissimo*, one of Mozart’s favourite dynamic markings in this loveable trio of concertos.

© 2007 Christopher Morley

...this jewel of an ensemble ... a gutsy and versatile group... **The Guardian**

...a brilliant performance... **Daily Telegraph**

... a clear, warm-toned performance... a radiant lyrical splendour... **The Independent**

Under the direction of Artistic Director **David Curtis**, **Orchestra of the Swan** has achieved national recognition for outstanding performances, innovative programming and an accessible style of presentation. Orchestra of the Swan performs with passion and is highly respected for its commitment to new music and has commissioned work from John Woolrich, Tansy Davies, Joe Duddell, Errollyn Wallen, Paul Patterson, Joe Cutler, Oscar Bosch, Joanna Lee, Dobrinka Tabakova and many others in the last few years.

The Orchestra’s home is at the Civic Hall, Stratford-upon-Avon where it has been based since its inception; and it has developed residencies in Cheltenham, Redditch and Bedworth and performs at major concert venues and festivals including Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Warwick Arts Centre, St. John’s, Smith Square, the Three Choirs Festival, St. George’s Brandon Hill Bristol, Lichfield Festival and Deal Festival.

In Autumn 2008 Orchestra of the Swan takes up a new post as Associate Ensemble at the newly refurbished Birmingham Town Hall.

The critical acclaim which has greeted **Mark Bebbington’s** recent performances and recordings has singled him out as a young British pianist of the rarest refinement and maturity. Increasingly recognised as a champion of British music, Mark has recorded extensively for SOMM Recordings in its “New Horizons” series, to unanimous critical acclaim.

His release of solo piano works of Ivor Gurney and Howard Ferguson earned him a \*\*\* rating in the 2005/6 Penguin Guide to Classical CDs for “an outstanding performance and recording in every way”. In addition, Mark has the distinction of being the first solo pianist to be invited to record at Birmingham’s Symphony Hall. His highly acclaimed disc of piano music by Malcolm Arnold and Constant Lambert (SOMMCD 062) was recently selected as ‘Editor’s Choice’ in Gramophone magazine. Over recent seasons Mark has toured extensively throughout Central and Northern Europe, the Far East and North Africa. Within the UK, he has appeared with the London Philharmonic and Philharmonia Orchestras at major concert halls, and on BBC Television and Radio, as well as on Radio France. Conductors with whom he has worked include Norman Del Mar, Sir Georg Solti, Douglas Boyd, Charles Hazelwood and William Boughton.

Recipient of numerous international awards and prizes, including a Leverhulme Scholarship and a Winston Churchill Fellowship, Mark studied at the Royal College of Music with Phyllis Sellick and Kendall Taylor and in Italy with Aldo Ciccolini.

Depuis l’âge de 11 ans Mozart avait écrit des concertos de piano, tout en transcrivant en forme de concerto d’œuvres de clavier solo par divers compositeurs. Les manuscrits sont écrits pour la plupart de la main de Léopold Mozart, indication touchante du dévouement de son père qui servait de copiste à son fils précoce.

Les trois concertos de K107 furent des transcriptions de sonates de clavier par Johann Christian Bach, qui avait pris Wolfgang, âgé de huit ans, sous son aile protectrice à Londres où les Mozart avaient passé 16 mois au cours d'une tournée longue de l'Europe occidentale. Ce n'est donc qu'avec le K175, en principe le cinquième de la liste des 27 concertos de piano de Mozart, que nous trouvons de la musique vraiment originelle du jeune compositeur.

On peut soutenir que Mozart ne s'est jamais décidé pour un modèle fixe de concerto de piano: chacun de ses exemples mûrs démontre des caractéristiques de forme, de texture et de sonorité propres à lui. Mais une fois finies les années de tournée de sa jeunesse, ses concertos démontrent un haut degré d'expérimentation, à partir du Concerto No. 9, K271 en mi bémol, où le piano entre à la deuxième mesure, et où le finale est interrompu d'un menuet élégant.

L'expérimentation continuait même après le déménagement de Mozart à Vienne. Pendant l'automne de 1782 il décida qu'il lui faudrait de nouveaux concertos pour consolider sa réputation comme virtuoso de piano et comme compositeur. Cette décision a occasionné les trois œuvres sur ce disque, K413, 414 et 415. Le 28 décembre de la même année il écrit à son père:

“Avec ces concertos j'ai trouvé un juste moyen entre la difficulté et la facilité excessives. Ils sont brillants, ils font plaisir à l'oreille, ils sont naturels sans insipidité. Il y a par-ci et par-là des passages que les connaisseurs seuls sauront apprécier à leur juste valeur; mais ces passages feront plaisir aussi aux moins érudits, sans qu'ils savent pourquoi.”

Mozart démontra, comme il espérait, son bon sens des affaires en soulignant la flexibilité des œuvres. Il inséra l'annonce suivant dans le *Wiener Zeitung* du 15 janvier de 1783: “Le maître de musique M. Mozart veut annoncer à son public estimé la publication de trois concertos de piano récemment composés. On peut interpréter ces trois concertos non seulement à l'accompagnement d'un grand orchestre, mais aussi *a quattro*, avec deux violons, alto et violoncelle.”

Suite à une réponse décevante du public, Mozart offrit les concertos à l'éditeur parisien Jean Georges Sieber, qui vint de publier ses six sonates pour violon et piano, K301-6. “Cette lettre vous informe que j'ai trois concertos de piano, qu'on peut donner avec accompagnement d'un grand orchestre, ou avec hautbois et cors seulement, ou *a quattro*. Artaria veut les graver, mais je vous en offre, mon ami, la préemption.”

En effet, ce fut l'éditeur viennois, Artaria, qui a imprimé les concertos. C'est la seule apparition imprimée d'un concerto de piano de Mozart du vivant du compositeur. Mozart lui-même a interprété ces œuvres à diverses occasions quelques mois après leur composition.

Le premier de ce trio de concertos, c'est le Concerto de Piano No.11, K413 en fa majeur. Son mouvement d'ouverture est un *allegro* vigoureux à trois temps, avec des parties vraiment indépendantes, y comprise celle de l'alto, si souvent négligée. Le piano entre avec un nouveau thème doux avant d'aborder le premier sujet qu'il développe avec des croisements de mains virtuosiques. Plus tard, un passage dramatique amène du chromatisme émotionnel.

Le *larghetto* en si bémol qui suit a l'air d'une sérénade chuchotée. Les cordes basses *pizzicato* augmentent l'atmosphère langoureux. Le finale en menuet s'ouvre d'une gamme basse descendante de deux octaves, qui finit *pianissimo*.

Le Concerto No. 12, K414 en la majeur, annonce au début de son premier mouvement un motif dérivé des notes de l'accord de sa clef, d'une façon transparente qui rappelle plusieurs autres compositions de Mozart dans la même tonalité. Il continue d'un épanchement généreux de mélodie caractéristique des œuvres du compositeur dans cette clef. Il vaut remarquer qu'une petite figure mélodique qui suit l'entrée du soliste préfigure un moment semblable du concerto suivant, K415.

L'*andante* en ré majeur, comme son équivalent du K413, s'ouvre *sotto voce*, avec des liens thématiques au mouvement précédent. Il a aussi une citation de l'ami bien-aimé de Mozart, J.C. Bach, qui est mort cette année de 1782. Le piano entre d'un style de cantique avant de se développer avec une série d'élaborations d'une fluidité merveilleuse. Le mouvement finit d'un *pianissimo* séduisant.

Dans le finale en forme de sonate-rondo Mozart taquine ses auditeurs avec des reprises différées du thème principal, pour leur éblouir les oreilles d'une cascade de nouvelles idées. Plus tard il a ajouté des cadenzas à tous les trois mouvements, ce qui révèle combien il aimait ce concerto.

Le Concerto No. 13, K415, conclut ce trio de concertos. C'est une œuvre tout à fait différente, avec l'orchestration alternative pour grand orchestre; la clef d'ut majeur suggère une expansivité symphonique.

Le premier mouvement, *allegro*, s'ouvre d'un pas de marche furtive (un trait récurrent de beaucoup des