

ARTIST'S PROGRAMMING VISION AND MUSIC NOTES

Many of the piano compositions of Mozart's early years did not need to be written down because the composer himself improvised them. The exceptions were pieces that involved a musical partner - in the case of the **B flat Sonata for 4 hands** (written in his 18th year) it was his sister Nannerl. While the outer movements of this sonata appear to be in the character of a reduction of a light-hearted symphonietta, the slow movement, very much a piano piece, is a model of refinement in its melodic content and voice leading. It is in this movement that Mozart is already revealed in his true maturity.

Five Keyboard Pieces: It is interesting to speculate as to why Wolfgang Mozart did not complete the **G minor Sonata KV 312**. The existing Allegro movement, dated variously at 1774 or 1790, is a strikingly beautiful work featuring developmental passagework of breathtaking originality. If it existed as the first of a three-movement Sonata it would no doubt be a favourite of pianists. Mozart's other **Sonatensatz, in B flat major KV 400**, was completed only to the point of recapitulation and finished by his pupil Maximilian Stadler. In the autograph score there is a joking reference to Mozart's wife Constanze and sister-in-law Sophie, the point being a comparison of two similar phrases. Perhaps the piece had a private story that Mozart preferred unfinished. In any case, it remains a joyous bit of virtuosity that deserves more frequent hearing.



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

The **Adagio in B minor KV 540** is considered by many critics to be Mozart's single finest composition for piano solo. Certainly in its quality of sustained pathos it stands alone in the Mozart canon. Equally special are the **Menuett KV 355** and little **Gigue KV 574**, which both date from a private sketchbook ca. 1789-90. Marked by radical chromaticism, both pieces were jotted down as experiments and never meant for publication. The writer Paul Hamburger noted that the minor-key fugal subject of the Gigue yielded a tone-row just one note short of twelve. One is left with astounding predictions of what Mozart may have discovered harmonically, had he lived just a bit longer. (*Sara Davis Buechner*)

For Mozart, the key of A minor was one of despair - either overtly or more covered (as in the Rondo K.511). **The Sonata KV 310**, written in Paris in 1778, is a work full of darkness and mostly unrelieved

intensity. Even the mood of the second movement, although beginning with a soaring and optimistic melody, eventually disintegrates and reverts to a throbbing and heart-rending pulsation. The last movement is lighter in texture but shadowy and agitated, interspersed only by a short musette section. It is a deeply personal work, unlike any of the other sonatas by either Mozart himself or any other composer.

Sonata in C major for four-hands KV 521; This most elegant and classically structured of duo-sonatas dates from May of 1787, as evidenced in a letter of Mozart's friend Baron von Joaquin advising that his sister begin practicing her part of the work immediately, "for it is rather difficult." These difficulties, however, seem to lie not so much in the technical execution of the work (as they do in the companion Sonata in F major KV 497), but in pacing, tonal control, contrapuntal clarity and command of its large-scale proportion - qualities this work shares with similar C major pieces of Mozart like the Piano Concerto KV 503 and the "Jupiter" Symphony. Although the complexity of developmental passage-work (particularly in the concluding Rondo) demands an intimate touch and attentive choreography on the part of the players, the overall impression of the work is one of symphonic size. It was an impression made keenly on Schubert, who clearly looked towards this work when composing his own larger compositions in the same genre. (*Jane Coop*)

