

Rondo for Piano and Orchestra in A major, K. 386

By WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Born January 27, 1756 in Salzburg, Austria;

Died December 5, 1791 in Vienna, Austria

Mozart wrote the Rondo in A major at around the same time as his three first Vienna piano concertos, nos. 11, 12 and 13.

When the autograph manuscript was sold, Mozart's widow and her helpers apparently were unable to locate the concluding pages, although some notations on it and contemporary correspondence show that they attempted to find the ending. Constanze Mozart sold the manuscript on November 8, 1799 to J. A. André, apparently with these final pages still missing, a fact that was unknown until Alan Tyson discovered them in the British Library in 1980. Before this, the rest of the autograph had been dismembered and scattered, and the only known version that was complete was Cipriani Potter's piano arrangement from about 1838.

Musicologist, Alfred Einstein, used this and the two leaves of the score then known to be extant, and published a reconstruction of the rondo in 1936, and further leaves that came to light were assembled in the Neue Mozart-Ausgabe (Serie V, Werkgruppe 15, Band 8) and in a 1962 completion by Paul Badura-Skoda and Charles Mackerras. The final leaves discovered by Tyson have now been incorporated into a supplement to the NMA (Serie X, Werkgruppe 31, Band 3).

The Rondo is marked *allegretto*, giving the piece a lively but unhurried feel. The piece is begun, as with much of Mozart's concerto work, by the strings, who play the piece's main theme. Again, typical of the beginning of Mozart's piano and orchestral works, the piano only enters after about a minute of orchestral playing. It too plays the main theme, but in a very intimate and graceful manner. A second theme then follows, and mixes frivolous, playful elements with introspective, dreamier sections. The original theme then repeats, to be followed by another different melody. This melody is more imposing and serious than its precursors, until it wonderfully leads back into the original melody. The Rondo in A Major is structured in a typical rondo form, characterized by the recurring reappearance of a main theme (A) interspersed with contrasting episodes (B, C, D, etc.). Mozart's mastery lies in his ability to maintain unity throughout these contrasting sections while showcasing diverse musical material. The piece finishes with a coda in true rondo form to give an A-B-A-C-A-D structure.

Mozart's "Rondo in A Major for Piano and Orchestra" stands as a testament to his remarkable ability to blend captivating melodies, structural ingenuity, and orchestral finesse. This work encapsulates the joyous spirit of Mozart's music, inviting listeners on a journey through a series of musical vignettes that showcase his unparalleled mastery of form and expression. As the piano and orchestra engage in a lively dialogue, the Rondo remains a shining example of Mozart's enduring impact on the classical music repertoire, a timeless testament to his legacy as a composer of unmatched brilliance.