

A note of introduction: In June 2008 in the Konzerthaus in Vienna, Volkmar Braunbehrens gave the introductory talk to a concert program that featured the Russian pianist Evgeny Kissin and the Kremerata Baltica and included performances of Mozart's piano concertos in D-minor (K466) and B-flat major (K595). This is a translation of his remarks.

Volkmar Braunbehrens

„Hier ist doch gewis das Clavierland!“ – Mozart in Vienna

“THIS IS VERY DEFINITELY THE LAND OF THE PIANO!”: In June 1781, this is what the twenty-five year old Mozart in Vienna is writing to his father in Salzburg. I propose to concern ourselves, therefore, with nothing more than these six words: „Hier ist doch gewis das Clavierland!“.¹ What was it about this “Clavierland” Vienna? What did he mean by these six words? What was on his mind? How did this determine steps he was to take, how did it influence his work as a composer? In short, our concern here embraces essential aspects of Mozart's last ten years, the Vienna years. And of course, it is not just a matter of Wolfgang Mozart alone, but of the whole aspect of music life in Vienna in these times, of unique and distinctive features of social life in this metropolis.

When he was writing this comment, Mozart had been in Vienna for eleven weeks (a city he had, of course, known as a child and teenager from three previous visits: altogether 521 days or, if you will, some 17 months, with 70 days – or slightly more than two months – coming at a time when he was 17 years old). Even though almost eight years had gone by since the last visit, still, he knew Vienna well. Moreover, he had its comparison with Paris firmly in mind, with Italy too, but also memories of the “Great Journey” through Europe, even though by now those travels lay some fifteen years in the past. As a musician whose major instrument was the piano (along with the violin and the viola), one cannot quarrel with the soundness of his judgment. Mozart surveyed the musical world not only as a composer but especially through the eyes of the keyboard performer.

As a composer, he had already engaged with every musical form, with music for the church as well as all forms of instrumental music from the smallest groupings for domestic music-making to highly demanding chamber music, from music for those festive occasions prompting the great serenades to symphonies and major concertos for solo instruments. And in particular, Mozart had already made a name for himself as an opera composer – with ten noteworthy and demanding works accomplished – take, for example, “Idomeneo.”

1. Letter of 2 June 1781; *Mozart: Briefe und Aufzeichnungen (MBA)*, ed. Wilhelm A. Bauer and Otto Erich Deutsch with Joseph Heinz Eibl (Kassel, 1962-75); vol. iii, 125.

Even so, Mozart was perceptive enough to see that his start in Vienna necessarily had to begin as a pianist, for that is what this sentence – “This is very definitely the land of the piano!” – in essence meant to convey. Or formulated more precisely: as a keyboard virtuoso putting himself forward at the piano with his own works and thus making himself known as a composer with hope for further commissions. No other expectation was realistic. Even if there were those in Vienna who could remember back to the boy-wonder Mozart, now as an adult and a professional musician, he was essentially known only from hearsay. Vienna had heard none of his mature works out of the Mannheim and Paris years, none of those from the last years in Salzburg, nor had he performed here as a pianist since his *Wunderkind* days.

Under these circumstances, it would have been completely unreal to think of an appointment in Vienna. Leaving aside the fact that no free position was to be had, he was utterly lacking in the necessary experience and authority. For a post as *Kapellmeister*, especially in Vienna, Mozart was simply still too young.

Naturally, he had personally conducted many performances, in other words, had had experience in holding rehearsals and acting as director, but he had not yet held the office of *Kapellmeister*, that pivotal function in the music business. It was one that combined the work of composer with the management of and responsibility for orchestral- and opera-performances, one which, along with the creative work of a composer, equally involved that of the practicing musician (as the lead violinist or cembalist), responsible not only for the program and for future concerts but also for providing the scores, hiring the musicians and singers, etc., in short, numerous purely administrative duties. (If you want a more detailed picture of what this involved, you need only take a look at Haydn’s responsibilities as *Kapellmeister* to Prince Nikolaus Esterházy.)

Naturally, every composer in these times was eager to receive a *Kapellmeister*’s position, for it offered substantial income along with the security of a normally lifelong engagement, and it guaranteed the performance of his own works, the composing of which was an important aspect of the contractual agreement.

As we all know, never in the course of his 35 years did Mozart receive the position of *Kapellmeister*. Whether this is something to regret for the years of his life in Vienna is highly questionable. Of course, how well he might have been able to cope with the institutional and organizational burdens of such a position is something we’ll never know. One thing is clear, though: he would then have been able to compose only a fraction of the works realized in his Vienna years.

(And in this case, which works would we be willing to do without...? If he had had the function of a *Kapellmeister* at the Nationaltheater, “Die Zauberflöte”, just to pick one, could never have been written. Nor would there have been time to compose most of the Vienna piano concertos – some 17 in number – to say nothing of much of his chamber music. Instead there might indeed have been a few more operas. Keep in mind, though, that Mozart perennially had problems

finding opera librettos he considered acceptable and he would likely have had to write operas with unsatisfactory or inferior librettos. Like Salieri, for example. For as *Kapellmeister* he would have been required to deliver up one or two operas every year. If you mull the matter over further, then – reflecting simply on the actuality of the demands – you end up imagining a very different Mozart from the one we have come to know. Quite a different prospect indeed.)

As piano performer, on the other hand, Mozart was a true virtuoso of his instrument. Which means: persons came to his concerts not only to hear his latest works but also, and especially, to marvel at his performance at the keyboard. For the years reaching into the first third of the 19th century, it was customary for a virtuoso instrumentalist to compose his own concertos, ones to take with him on tour. One of the best examples of this – one still significant for us today – was the violinist Nicolò Paganini; in the realm of the piano, think on such 19th century figures as Johann Nepomuk Hummel, Frédéric Kalkbrenner, and Sigismund Thalberg. In such cases, it was the potential for virtuoso display that stood in the foreground, with the performer's own compositions intended primarily to serve this virtuosity. The compositional innovativeness of these concertos and their claim as works of art tended to be rather secondary.

With Mozart, it was otherwise: each work made its demand both as a composition and as an artistic expression. In other words, Mozart is first and foremost a composer and his virtuosity at the keyboard exists to serve the work and help to make these new works known. At the same time, the display of virtuosity – the demonstration of superb keyboard skill before an audience, with its implied public challenge to other pianists – can lead to substantial concert proceeds and is, obviously, a matter of great economic importance. In Mozart's public concerts, those moments received with particular enthusiasm came when, alone at the piano, he would improvise or half-improvise piano variations: in other words, performing works not yet fully composed and thus showing off, spontaneously and entertainingly, in dialogue with his audience, so to speak, the wealth of his musical inventiveness as well as his brilliant keyboard technique. (Incidentally, early on Beethoven too performed publicly in this way, earning stormy applause for his improvisations and fantasies.) And the proceeds from these concerts constituted the principal source of Mozart's income in these first Vienna years.

Briefly put, a composer would use the instrument that he had mastered to an exceptional, perhaps even virtuosic degree as the medium by which he made himself heard. And this was so well into the 19th century, even though there always were exceptions, composers who for whatever reason deliberately refrained from the practice. Joseph Haydn, for example, avoided appearances as a piano virtuoso. And Leopold Mozart is a particularly noteworthy exception. In a relatively short span of time as a highly productive composer, many of whose works have gone missing – with some 60 symphonies alone –, he wrote many concertos but evidently not a single one for the violin, even though this was his chosen instrument and the one for which he was to write one of the most important musical didactic works of the 18th century.

Let's return now to those six words about *das Clavierland Wien*. As a keyboard virtuoso, Mozart knew what he was talking about. Being without a fixed and steady income meant being dependent on concert appearances, on piano students, and on the sale of compositions in the retail market for sheet music. From the outset, that had to be the basis for organizing his life in Vienna, for making himself known and then – with the best of luck – receiving commissions for compositions. And for all this, he reckoned that his chances in Vienna were especially good.

The sentence “This is very definitely the land of the piano!” is linked directly with Mozart's dismissal from his service for the Archbishop of Salzburg, and thereby hangs a tale. The entire Mozart family never got along with Archbishop Count Colloredo, unlike the amicable relationship enjoyed with his predecessor, Archbishop Count Schrattenbach. The details of the mutual difficulties need not concern us here, but realistic considerations were at their core. The Archbishop, an apostle of the Enlightenment and, by the way, not without musical interests and abilities, took the view that a person of such exceptional talent as Mozart was not to be held in Salzburg over the long term. And objectively considered, he was right. Salzburg, in those days, was a small, provincial, narrow-minded town of some ten thousand inhabitants. Such music as there was was essentially court music, apart from occasions offered by university end-of-the-year ceremonies, which gave rise to serenades by Mozart. As a religious principality, Salzburg of course provided occasion for much church music; an opera house, on the other hand, was understandably out of the question. And for Mozart, who from early years on had yearned to write operas, this town offered hardly any hope of developing in this direction. Moreover, programs of public concerts were virtually unknown.

Archbishop Colloredo was not prepared to grant Mozart any special privileges. As a result, Mozart felt he was being treated badly and his true talents accordingly unappreciated. He detested the town and was perpetually in pursuit of a way to escape from his Salzburg circumstances. The separation from his Salzburg duties was finally achieved in an escalating one-on-one dispute that Mozart provoked with the Archbishop. It was ratified by the legendary kick in the pants delivered by Count Arco, who actually had only wanted to mediate in the matter.

To Mozart, it was clear that, given the fully unknown circumstances he now found himself in, he could fail: a new position – in Vienna, now – was nowhere to be seen. And it was this that was the subject of the extensive correspondence between Mozart and his father in 1781, from March to June. Faced with his father's reproaches for having taken a rash, premature, and ill-considered step, Mozart had to justify himself. And given the unusually close cohesion of the Mozart family, this meant that, with every letter, Mozart sought anew to win his father's approval and dispel his fears that this step could be disastrous not only for Wolfgang but for the entire family.

Being a superbly gifted letter-writer, Mozart pulled out all the stops to portray Vienna's musical circumstances and his own prospects in this musical metropolis in the rosiest imaginable colors. The useful acquaintances, including Joseph II, are listed in detail, the many and varied concert opportunities, the substantial fee-paying possibilities from the first lady pupils are mentioned, there is already even the prospect of a "*teutsche Oper*". And by the way, Archbishop Colloredo "is hated here and most of all by the emperor."² – meaning: in Vienna, people understand fully why Mozart quit his service. And to win over his father completely, he announced that "to show you I'm not going hungry here I'll be sending you a little money with the next post."³ Four weeks later, the sum of 30 Dukaten (or 135 Gulden)⁴ is mentioned (in terms of today's purchasing power that would amount to some 4,000 Euro).

Despite there being no position in prospect, Mozart sought to convince his father that Vienna, nevertheless, offered the best of chances for a musician of his talents. And thus it came to that word of the "Clavierland" Vienna. One might also suspect that it was one of those occasional bits of blarney that Mozart served up in his own justification, a fanciful characterization of the situation in Vienna, a kind of "Potemkin village." Mozart was known for his propensity for overly optimistic views of future prospects and it was precisely this that his father, an extremely sober, sceptical man inclined to worry, held against him especially. He saw this as a refusal to face facts and evidence of his son's immaturity. In short, we must address just what it was about this "Clavierland" Vienna and how Mozart as pianist and composer went about dealing with his assessment.

If we consider just the first six weeks after Mozart's arrival in Vienna on 16 March 1781, then we see that in this brief period Mozart had three concerts as part of the Archbishop's retinue and another three in other places, one of them being a concert in connection with the Tonkünstler-Societät at the Nationaltheater. In addition, he had been invited to give yet another concert, at the home of the Countess Thun with the Emperor in attendance, but was kept from doing so by an obligation of the Archbishop's. Never before had Mozart experienced such a frequency of demands for concert appearances.

But this was something quite new for Vienna too. In Maria Theresa's times (that is, until 1780), there were hardly any public concerts in Vienna, leaving aside the three to five concerts (each year) given by the Tonkünstler-Societät to raise money for the funds earmarked for musicians' widows and children.⁵

2. Letter of 9 May 1781; *MBA*, iii, 111.

3. *Ibid.*

4. Letter of 2 June 1781; *MBA*, iii, 125.

5. See Mary Sue Marrow, *Concert Life in Haydn's Vienna: Aspects of a Developing Musical and Social Institution*, *Sociology of Music* No. 7 (Stuyvesant, N.Y., 1989). I am drawing upon Marrow's detailed study of Viennese concert life in these times, with particular reference to the "Public Concert Calendar" that Marrow includes as an appendix.

Private concerts hosted by members of the nobility or by ambassadors also appear to have taken place rather seldom, perhaps five to ten a year. And where solo concerts with orchestral accompaniment were concerned, these mostly involved violin or flute concertos and almost never ones involving the piano. In other words, up to now concert life in Vienna was little developed and offered small occasion to speak of a “Clavierland”; perhaps it was simply that there were too few outstanding pianists. And yet, these first weeks of Mozart’s in Vienna gave grounds for very great hopes indeed.

Moreover, in these first six weeks, he had been busy renewing old acquaintances and making new ones. And in most cases, a piano was not merely metaphorically in the background but was present in reality: Prince Golitsin, for whom Mozart was to give a series of concerts in the coming years; Countess Wilhelmine Thun-Hohenstein, who owned a “lovely” fortepiano from Johann Andreas Stein in Augsburg and played an important role in Vienna’s music life into the Beethoven years; Count Johann Philipp Cobenzl, court vice-chancellor to Chancellor Kaunitz, and his cousin Countess Marie Karoline Rumbeke, who was to be Mozart’s first piano student; Baron Johann Gottlieb von Braun, about whom “everyone says he is the greatest piano enthusiast”⁶; the Auernhammer family, whose daughter Josepha was to be one of the best of Mozart’s pupils; and finally the Mesmer family, with the comment “his son plays magnificently”⁷, an accolade seldom made by Mozart, and in this case one concerning a fifteen-year old.

These names signify immediately that the “Clavierland” Vienna was one spanning across the circles of the aristocracy as well as members of the middle class. Certainly the tradition of the Habsburg court played an exemplary role in this. Not only were all the Habsburg emperors from Ferdinand III (1608-1657) to Joseph II musically trained but their many brothers and sisters, the archdukes and archduchesses, as well. The 16 children of Maria Theresa had learned to play the piano as a matter of course, and many of them other instruments as well, and they could all sing. For all this, competent music- and piano-teachers were available in Vienna. (I would mention at least one of them – Anton Stepan – who though almost completely forgotten today was an important composer besides. In recent times, two CDs devoted to his music have appeared with piano sonatas and surprisingly good “capriccios”.) And it is little wonder that the families of the nobility were eager to be a match for the Court. Music lessons were of great importance, too, for the bourgeoisie on the rise, either in important official positions or as manufacturers and wholesalers enjoying new wealth. Social life enhanced by music making was seen as a key of sorts to advancement in society. Learning to play the piano soon was simply “the proper thing to do” in the educated classes (who constituted a much smaller proportion of the population then than they do today).

6. Letter of 24 March 1781; *MBA*, iii, 98.

7. Postscript to letter of 28 March 1781; *MBA*, iii, 101.

Generally speaking, the word “clavier” or “piano” meant a *Flügelinstrument* (a keyboard instrument that was wing-shaped [wing in German = *Flügel*]), in other words, a large cembalo – the fortepiano or *Hammerflügel* that had existed since around 1760 was not yet widely available. Nevertheless, with the titles of their published works composers let there be no doubt of their preference for the fortepiano. And as soon as the fortepiano had been perfected technically, it quickly became the instrument of choice.

We must ask ourselves, however, where all these fine instruments were coming from, for Mozart undoubtedly was speaking of fortepianos (or *Hammerflügeln*) and not about cembalos or clavichords. When he first arrived in Vienna, relatively few such instruments were available to be loaned out often and transported as necessary for concerts. At first it was primarily instruments produced by Johann Andreas Stein in Augsburg, who had learned his trade from Silbermann in Strassburg. Then came the great success of the piano builder Anton Walter in Vienna, who had started with a workshop of his very own. In the ten years from 1780 to 1790 alone, he sold 350 pianos, ranging in price from 50 to 120 Ducats (or about 7,000 to 16,000 Euros today). Nor was he the only piano manufacturer around, there were at least three more. When you reflect that the Vienna of those days had some 5,500 houses of residence in which something over 200,000 persons lived, then these are impressive numbers. It is apparent that in Vienna, just since 1780 or thereabouts, there had been a considerable increase in the spread of fortepianos and with it, naturally, the number of piano students.

There is another exceptional Viennese circumstance worthy of mention. Under Empress Maria Theresa, there was continuous Court life of an extensive and imposing character. Now, however, from 1781 on and throughout the ensuing Josephine decade, this was fundamentally changed. Emperor Joseph II, twice widowed and without children, dispensed almost entirely with the trappings of Court life, with ceremonial Court occasions, invitations, and other representational doings. He chose to live in but few of the rooms of the Hofburg, in modest middle class circumstances, with only a few valets and servants. He even went to the extent of having windows of the Hofburg nailed shut to save on the need for guards. On the other hand, the aristocracy, who were present in great numbers, Vienna being the capital city of the Habsburg Empire – some twelve princes and 60 counts lived here – these nobles understandably had no desire to make do without an active social life and accordingly they turned to organizing parties, balls, and concerts to be held in their own palaces. In effect, the Court life had been decentralized to the families of the nobility. And when Emperor Joseph wished for diversion and entertainment, that is where he went.

As a consequence, a great mingling of the social classes was set in motion to a degree little found elsewhere. Wealthy merchants, wholesale entrepreneurs, and bankers, feeling free to emulate the nobility, began themselves to extend invitations widely to concerts and the like, and members of the nobility were pleased to come. In any event, the Nationaltheater, the Opera, was open to everyone who could afford the price of admission. And the imperial Augarten was opened to the public, with concerts promptly being presented there – under the aegis of a bourgeois concert organizer.

All these things were clear signs of a cultural opening with the growing participation of the bourgeois middle classes, fostered by an emperor who, with his Tolerance Edict of 1781, the liberalization of civil and law codes, and a reform program reflecting tenets of the Enlightenment, had himself substantially contributed to modernisation of the society. For the city of Vienna, this meant the emergence of a political and cultural openness beyond anything ever known under Maria Theresa.

Mozart, with his seismographic feel for social revolution, was to profit considerably from these changes. Of course, nothing went as fast as hoped: that first year in Vienna was difficult and his income quite unsatisfactory. He only kept his head above water by giving piano lessons – but at least with his pert self-assurance, he demanded and got payments well in excess of the low fees customary at the time. A piano lesson with Mozart cost the equivalent of about 70 Euro; that may sound modest, but a bricklayer would have had to work four and a half days for such a sum. Even a middle-level public official, or a teacher, or a surgeon would never have been able to afford these lessons; a weekly piano lesson would have taken half their income. For the affluent nobility, on the other hand, or for rich merchants or industrial employers – such as the bookshop owner and printer Johann Thomas von Trattner, the timber merchant Franz Kajetan von Ployer, and others – such a fee presented no problem, particularly since the contact with Mozart carried with it a prestigious cachet.

With the coming of autumn of 1782, however, an unparalleled success story began for Wolfgang Mozart, one based fundamentally on his taking full advantage of his competence as a pianist. No other musician far and wide can be said to have performed so often before the public, and almost always with new or still unknown works. In the next four years, Mozart appeared in at least 70 concerts or performances, ranging from concerts in private homes to semi-public concerts at palaces of the nobility, from concerts in association with other musician friends to those of the Tonkünstler-Societät – and, in addition, altogether twenty concerts under his own sponsorship.

And it was just in these years, too, that concert life in Vienna flowered and developed. The number of public concerts doubled and tripled, and those privately organized (semi-public) concerts in the aristocracy's palaces or at ambassadors' residences grew to the same extent. And something else besides: in a quarter to a third of these concerts, it was the piano that assumed center place as the virtuoso instrument, something that before was rather the exception. But that's not all: in almost half of the concerts involving a keyboard, Mozart was present as the soloist.

We are fully justified in saying that Mozart had taken "Clavierland" Vienna by storm, despite the first year's difficulties. But more than that, Mozart had contributed decisively to bringing the "Clavierland" into being; it is hardly an exaggeration to say that it was to his credit. When Leopold Mozart came to Vienna for a visit in 1785, he could readily see it for himself. After four weeks there, he was complaining in a letter to Nannerl: "If only the concerts were

over: it's impossible to describe all the problems and commotion: since I've been here, your brother's fortepiano has been taken at least 12 times from the house to the theater or to another house"⁸ – in other words, almost every other day. And on the other hand, in the spring 1784, Mozart himself was beginning to feel the strain: "by the way, I've recently /:to tell the truth:/ become a bit weary – from so much playing – and it's no small honor for me that my audience never is"⁹. It is the lament of the sorcerer's apprentice: the spirits he has summoned forth he can never banish.

Given his narcissistic personality, Mozart thoroughly enjoyed these concert appearances, even if he may sometimes have found them tiring. For they served simultaneously to give him a tremendous creative stimulus towards greater achievement as a composer, one that the external pressures obviously increased. When we take a good look at this period of extensive concertizing – that is, at the four years from the autumn of 1782 into the late autumn of 1786 – so it was a period when he felt driven to a truly incredible amount of composing. Consider: 12 piano concertos, 11 piano works, and 7 chamber works with piano. In addition, there were: 7 string quartets, 2 further concertos, 2 symphonies ("Linz" and "Prague"), the C-minor mass, and numerous dances, works for winds, a cantata, and lieder.

At the same time, Mozart's lifelong yearning to compose operas was not forgotten and by the end of these four years had found its fulfillment. ("Die Entführung aus dem Serail" had come in 1782, just before these four "piano years.") To the works of the "piano years" enumerated above came the following: 12 major concert arias or arias for insertion in the operas of other composers, the opera fragments "L'oca del Cairo" and "Lo sposo deluso", the music for "Der Schauspieldirektor", and to crown it all, "Le nozze di Figaro", certainly the most complicated and demanding opera Mozart had ever composed.

In these days, there were really only two comparably capable composers whose creative achievements were similarly extensive: the one was Joseph Haydn, almost 25 years older than Mozart, and the other was Johann Baptist Vanhall, a composer highly regarded by Mozart and one regrettably now largely forgotten. Vanhall was 17 years older than Mozart and had been particularly productive between 1762 and 1778. It was he – and not Mozart, for example – who also was the first composer and freelance musician who had seriously ventured to live solely from his composing, without the support of a fixed position.

In the cases of Haydn and Vanhall, when we compare the two, one can recognize similar personal strategies for dealing with the public. Haydn was tied to his position with the Esterházy family. Because he was no pianist of note and therefore had hardly any chance for public appearances, he deliberately – and

8. Letter of 12 March 1785; *MBA*, iii, 379.

9. Letter of 10 April 1784; *MBA*, iii, 309.

with great success – sought out contacts with music publishers in Paris to escape his isolation. The publication of his symphonies and quartets enabled Haydn to establish himself throughout Europe without the need of personal appearances. His later visits to England were but the crowning conclusion to his musical career.

Vanhall was also disinclined to appear before the public and sold his important symphonies and concertos first in copies and later in frequent printings. His extensive chamber music compositions and especially his piano works that were well suited for piano students found their way in printed editions throughout Europe.

Mozart, on the other hand, published comparatively little and when, then mostly works for the piano or for chamber music with piano, and usually only after he had himself presented these works before the public. Only 5 of the 17 piano concertos composed in his Vienna years were published, and of the symphonies, only two. This makes readily clear the worth that Mozart placed on presenting his own works to the public himself, hoping thereby to profit from their success. Economically speaking, it is hard to understand why Mozart gave so little attention to the sale of his works in printed editions. But for him, “Clavierland” Vienna was not a public marketplace to begin with, but rather, and especially, the audience for his personal appearances. And it was in his personal interpretations, more than anything else, that Mozart believed he could make his way.

Once he had succeeded with “Figaro” in establishing himself firmly in the “grand opera” scene, however, this changed with a rush. From then on, Mozart hardly appeared publicly – it would be a mistake, of course, to regard this as a sign that he had suddenly lost his audience. For it is now evident that the core of his composing – leaving opera aside – had shifted to works little involving the piano, to chamber music for example. After 1786, relatively few works for solo piano were created and only two more piano concertos. From this point on, “Clavierland” Vienna as such was of lesser importance to him, but opera correspondingly more, and there even came a new departure in the direction of the symphony, which with the “Jupiter” symphony, its dimensions and its intellectual demands, permitted an almost revolutionary glimpse into the future of the symphony.

That Mozart no longer – or hardly ever – made public appearances as a pianist was bound to have some effect on Vienna’s concert life. The number of concerts – public or semi-public, before the nobility or in private – seems to have changed but little, leaving aside the two war years 1789 and 1790 (after 1800 they even show a sharp increase), but the number of concerts with the piano as solo instrument went sharply down, because there was no substitute for pianists of Mozart’s rank. (It was only with Beethoven’s appearances after 1795 that the triumphant march of the fortepiano as the leading concert instrument went forward, making concert life since then no longer imaginable without it.)

Mozart was regarded as a difficult composer, for active musicians in particular who were accustomed to playing new music “prima vista” from the score and relying thereby on the usual fare. And it was just this that could not be done with Mozart. In his advanced compositions, surprises and harmonic changes occur constantly and in close proximity, and one must first of all recognize his often unusual accentuation, the unexpected harmonic twists, etc. before they can be brought to a meaningful sequence. For the most part, there are no simple, catchy passages such as you find in “Eine kleine Nachtmusick”, but rather small contrasts and deliberate disruptions or at least unexpected enrichments of the “filo”, of the music’s unbroken, ongoing thread, and it is they in particular which make for the music’s enveloping and irresistible appeal. All in all, with Mozart, one can speak of a dramatic, you might even say, a theatrical approach to music.

A notable example for this fundamental character of his music, one more dramatic than tragic, is the D-minor piano concerto. Mozart wrote it for one of his subscription concerts (and played it, by the way, in the presence of father Leopold). It is one of those concertos that no longer lends itself to social chitchat but rather, from the very first notes, casts its spell over the listeners, demanding their full attention. It takes for granted a listener fully concentrated on the work, undistracted, in a contemplative mood devoted solely to the work itself. Listeners like this, of the kind we quite normally expect in today’s concert halls, were only starting to emerge with the first of the great public concerts in a concert hall suitable for them – in other words, in Vienna and with Mozart as one of the protagonists. It was just this D-minor concerto that became the most often performed of Mozart’s piano concertos in the 19th century – with pianists like Felix Mendelssohn or Clara Schumann, while the great virtuosos such as Franz Liszt never performed Mozart in public (presumably they found Mozart too hard to play).

We must picture Mozart at the piano not as one sunk solely in contemplation of his instrument, brooding over the many different facets of the music, preoccupied only with performing them most correctly, but rather as a pianist confidently in command of his art, constantly with an eye on his listeners, taking careful account of whether what he was doing was coming through, in other words, as someone who for this very reason eagerly sought contact with his audience to see if the response was there. We can readily imagine the inner satisfaction Mozart must have felt as he came to the end of the inexpressibly nostalgic F-sharp minor Adagio of the A-major piano concerto (K.488) and was already keenly anticipating the *Salto mortale* to the high spirits of the concluding rondo about to come. The F-sharp minor had played its important part as the transcending contrast to the sparkling A-major finale.

In quite a different way entirely, Mozart must have enjoyed the moment in the last of his piano concertos – in B-flat major, K.595 – when the listener suddenly hears the lied, “*Komm, lieber Mai, und mache die Bäume wieder grün*” and recognizes an old folksong, at least in its first moments. With such “catchy inserts”, Mozart facilitated the access to a music that, closely heard, is extremely complex and subtly worked out, one that reveals subtleties and nuances anew with each hearing. Thanks to records, broadcasts and concerts, this music is

very familiar to us, at least in its general contours. For Mozart's contemporaries, on the other hand, it was often looked on as overloaded and "difficult". Mozart endeavored to compensate for the "difficulty" with his personal charm and the charm of the music. Perhaps this was his way of responding to his father's demand "not to forget the so-called popular."¹⁰

Without exaggeration, we can say that Mozart helped set standards for the concert life of Vienna. "Clavierland" Vienna was not there for him to discover, rather he was one of its important founders. His rather high-flown statement, "hier ist doch gewis das Clavierland", was more prophesy than fact and the worried scepticism of his father was not entirely unfounded. But he brought this admittedly self-encouraging prophesy to fruition. And in so doing, Wolfgang Mozart was one of the co-founders of Vienna, the Music Metropolis.

10. Letter of 11 December 1780; *MBA*, iii, 53.

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