



Smithsonian Associates

## The Magnificence of Mozart Concertos

*Dr. Rachel Franklin*

Wednesday, July 24, 2024 - 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. ET

The concertos of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart number among the greatest bodies of work that exist in the Western concert music canon. He composed over 40 for a wide variety of instruments, and without his lifelong fascination with this form we would not have the mighty Romantic and modern soloistic showcases that we love today.

From vivacious early experiments to the magisterial later masterworks, Mozart's sublime invention never dimmed. We explore how he built the modern concerto form with inexhaustible creativity and shaped our contemporary expectations of virtuosity allied with expressive power.

### **July 24 – Form and Function**

Mozart inherited the early concerto structure from such Baroque masters as Vivaldi, Handel, and the Bach family. By the time he'd composed what turned out to be his last concerto masterpiece, he had vastly expanded the form and created a multifaceted vehicle for individual brilliance, rich orchestral variety and profound emotional expression. Over half of these works are for the piano and designed for Mozart himself to perform, clearly revealing the endless beauty of his keyboard vision. We explore the wide differences in sound and technique between a modern piano and the fortepianos of Mozart's time and how that reflects on performances today, experiment with cadenzas, and go in-depth with Mozart's varied approaches to concerto form. Works include K. 271, 466, 488, 491 and many others.

### **W. A. Mozart, 1756-1791**

#### **Concerto in D, No. 5, K. 175**

Geza Anda, Camerata Academica des Salzburger Mozarteums

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qod2rx33uwQ>

Kristian Bezuidenhout explains the fortepiano

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M2JqEKncsyM>

Robert Levin discusses Mozart's Fortepiano

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XA44wda3prE&t=18s>

Concerto in E flat, No. 9, K. 271, "Jeunehomme"

- Artem Belogurov & Postscript

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xbG2luqCzoI>

Concerto in E flat, No. 9, K. 271, "Jeunehomme"

- Alexandre Tharaud, Ensemble Le Balcon, Maxime Pascal

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ozvWLv\\_ILXA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ozvWLv_ILXA)

Concerto in G, No. 17, K. 453

- Olga Pashchenko, Il Gardellino (Fortepiano after Anton Walter, Vienna 1795)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WTwX0sM8hrI>

Concerto in C, No. 21, K. 467

- Lang Lang, Bavarian Symphony Orchestra, Maris Jansons

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y5teaCsm16Y>

Concerto in D minor, No. 20, K. 466

- Mitsuko Uchida, Camerata Salzburg

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yM8CFR01KwQ>

Concerto in A, No. 23, K. 488

- Daniil Trifonov, Israel Camarata, Avner Biron

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-s68kHOnpiE>

Concerto No. 24 in C minor, K. 491

- Murray Perahia, English Chamber Orchestra, Sir Neville Mariner  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NkoEkyFPaX0>

Concerto No. 24 in C minor, K. 491

- Piotr Anderszewski, Sylvain Cambreling, Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yo8j-m0Ctn8>

Robert Levin discusses Mozartian improvisation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uGRdXeH7bIc>

Concerto No. 25 in C, K. 503

- Malcolm Bilson, English Baroque Soloists, John Eliot Gardiner

Concerto No. 25 in C, K. 503

- Rachel Franklin, Washington Sinfonietta, Joel Lazar

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## Concerto Form Glossary

**Cadenza** – **elaborate** solo passage near the end of an aria or concerto movement. Cadenzas are virtuosic and often occur over a sustained cadential 6/4 chord. They end with a V-I progression and are often followed by a coda that closes the movement. Before Beethoven, cadenzas were often not written out by the composer, but left to the performer to improvise

**Coda** – A musical section used to wrap-up thematic material at the conclusion of a piece or movement.

**Concertino** – The small group of soloists in the Baroque concerto grosso form.

**Concerto** – A genre for solo instrument(s) and orchestra, typically in 3 movements following the pattern fast – slow – fast.

**Concerto form** – A special type of sonata form used in the first movement of concertos. Concerto form includes a double exposition, in which the exposition is stated once by the orchestra and once by the soloist before the development begins.

**Concerto grosso** – In the Baroque era, a concerto genre using a group of soloists (the *concertino*) in alternation with the full orchestra (the *ripieno*).

**Development** – The second section of Sonata form. The development section immediately follows the exposition and usually incorporates previously heard thematic material through a series of modulations creating a sense of tonal ambiguity.

**Double exposition** – In first-movement concerto form, a special exposition in which the orchestra repeats the themes after the soloist states them.

**Exposition** – In Sonata form, the opening section, usually consisting of the principal melodic materials that will be heard throughout the work

**Recapitulation** – The last section of Sonata form, following the exposition and development, in which the initial thematic material is repeated, more or less in its original form.

**Ripieno** – In a Baroque *concerto grosso*, the large ensemble that alternates with the *concertino*.

**Ritornello** – In a Baroque concerto, the tutti passage that recurs between solo sections.

**Sonata Form** – At its most basic, a type of music construction prominent in the Classical and Romantic periods, typically consisting of three sections – Exposition, Development, and Recapitulation, occasionally followed by a coda.