



(LEMS 8054)

MOZART
THE 1788 TRIOS
THE QUEEN'S CHAMBER TRIO
Robert Zubrycki, violin
Peter Seidenberg, cello
Elaine Comparone, harpsichord

THE TRIOS
Trio in E Major (KV 542)
Allegro / Andante grazioso / Allegro
Trio in C Major (KV 548)
Allegro / Andante cantabile / Allegro
Trio in G Major (KV 564)
Allegro / Andante / Allegretto

NOTES ON MOZART AND THE MUSIC

Mozart composed his last three symphonies and his last three trios in the same year. The Trio in E Major, dated 22 June 1788, is the first of the final three. Only four days later Mozart completed his Symphony #39 in E-Flat (KV 543) and within six weeks finished Symphony #40 in G minor (KV 550) and the "Jupiter," Symphony #41 in C Major (KV 551). Mozart entered the Trio in C Major in his work catalogue on 14 July

1788 and the Trio in G Major came along in late October. Artaria published the C Major and E Major Trios along with K 502 (Trio in B-Flat Major) in 1788 as Op.15/9. The Trio in G Major was first published in Storace's Collection of Original Harpsichord Music, issued by Birchall and Andrews in London in 1789. Mozart designed his trios for publication and for his own performances with talented amateurs such as his friend and patron, the wealthy Viennese merchant Michael Puchberg. Puchberg, who played the violin, was a fellow Mason (although not a member of Mozart's lodge, Zur Wohltätigkeit) and frequently loaned the composer money. Mozart's financial problems in summer of 1788 intensified as his surviving letters pleading for Puchberg's help testify: "...If you should find it inconvenient to part with so large a sum at once, then I beg you to lend me until tomorrow at least a couple of hundred gulden, for my landlord in the Landstrasse has been so importunate that in order to avoid an unpleasant incident

I have had to pay him on the spot and this has made things very awkward for me." By this time Mozart had four children, the youngest born on December 27. His wife had spent much time in the spas of Baden taking expensive cures for ill health and frequent pregnancies and his subscription concerts (for which subscribers paid in advance) had lapsed. While he could command fees for performing or conducting his music, the absence of copyright laws allowed publishers to print or re-print his music at will without paying him, thus depriving him of income. His fame and popularity from the success of his operas grew abroad but the 1788 revival of Don Giovanni in Vienna fell flat, according to the recollection of his librettist Lorenzo da Ponte many years later. In another letter to Puchberg in July, Mozart wrote: "Owing to great difficulties and complications, my affairs have become so involved that it is of the utmost importance to raise some money on these two pawnbroker's tickets. In the name of our friendship I implore you to do me this favor; but you must do it immediately!" The Trio in E Major figures twice in his correspondence. To Puchberg: "When are we to have a little musical party at your house again? I have composed a new trio..." And to his sister Nannerl in Salzburg: "Invite him [Michael Haydn] to your house at St. Gilgen and play to him some of my latest compositions. I am sure he will like the Trio..." Mozart himself took the trio with him to Germany where he apparently introduced his new symphonies. He also performed it at the Saxon court. The Trio in G Major was thought by some to be an earlier piano sonata because of the existence of an autograph of the keyboard part, but in fact Mozart composed it as a full trio in 1788. Of the Trio in C Major, we have no knowledge of any occasions or performances by Mozart.

NOTES ON THE KEYBOARD TRIO

The keyboard trio claims two forbears: the trio sonata and the accompanied keyboard solo. In the trio sonata, a bass instrument, such as the viol, cello or bassoon, doubles the line played by the keyboardist's left hand. The keyboardist improvises an accompaniment of chords and melody over this shared bass line, guided by figures indicating chords, creating the basso continuo. Together, the bass instrument and keyboard provide support for two other, usually treble, lines. Such an arrangement requires four musicians to play the three lines of a trio. Examples of trio sonatas include myriad works by Corelli, Vivaldi, Telemann, Handel, Johann Sebastian and Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, among many others.

C.P.E., a quintessential keyboardist, goes off the beaten track a bit by specifying that the keyboardist's right hand may substitute for a flute or violin in a trio sonata, while his father's Six Sonatas for Violin and Obbligato Harpsichord (actually trio sonatas) obligate the harpsichordist to play one of the treble lines. In these pieces, J. S. offers an optional viol part that doubles the harpsichordist's left hand.

As the title suggests, the "accompanied keyboard solo" features the keyboardist in the primary role with, in most cases, an accompanying violin. Jean Joseph de Mondonville (1711-1771) may have composed one of the earliest examples of such a piece in his F Major Sonata. C.P.E. Bach and Mozart both wrote sonatas for violin and harpsichord that qualify as accompanied keyboard solos. Early on, composers such as Karl Friedrich Abel and John Christian Bach added to these keyboard and violin duos a cello part that doubled the bass, thereby creating the first keyboard trios. J. C. Bach, in his later trios, varied the cello's role with melodic material independent of the keyboard's bass line. Mozart built on all these ideas in his trios. In his 1776 Divertimento in B Flat Major for Keyboard, Violin and Cello (KV 254) composed in Salzburg, he gave the violin and cello rudimentary parts—the cello doesn't even go so far as to double the bass line—with the keyboard in the primary role. The obvious reason for this approach would be that the piece functioned as a showpiece for him. His musical colleagues may have been amateur musicians or his patrons (as was Puchberg.) But in the 1786 Viennese trios, Mozart began increasing the participation of both violin and cello with more challenging material. By the time of his last three trios in 1788, the violin part demands a virtuoso and the violin/cello duo functions (in addition to its accompanying role) as an independent unit, an equal partner to the keyboard.

German and Austrian composers were not the first or only ones to create trios in which the keyboard figured prominently. Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764) flourished in a musical culture rich with solo keyboard works. In addition to his three slim volumes of harpsichord solos, he composed five suites for harpsichord with two accompanying instruments (flute or violin and viol or cello.). While Rameau maintained that the suites were practically as effective without the other two instruments as with them, he frequently gave these instruments important melodic material that acted not as an accompaniment but as a true counterpoint to the harpsichord's lines.

NOTES ON KEYBOARD INSTRUMENTS

In the scientific classification of instruments, both the harpsichord and piano belong to the group known as chordophones [Greek chordos, string; phonos, sound], which is further broken down into categories of zithers, lutes, lyres and harps. Since both instruments are essentially boards with strings stretched between the two ends, they fall into the board zither category. Among the board zithers are the psalteries (plucked string instruments such as the harpsichord, virginal and spinet); dulcimers (instruments whose strings are struck by hammers such as the piano and the Hungarian cymbalom); and the clavichord (whose strings are touched by metal tangents.) So the harpsichord and piano relate to one another as do their ancestors, the psaltery and dulcimer. The earliest records of what may possibly have been harpsichord-like instruments date from the 14th century. In 1387 the Spanish king, John I of Aragon, wrote a letter to Duke Philip the Bold of

Burgundy in the hope of obtaining from him an *echiquier*, an instrument semblant d'orguens, *qui sona ab cordes* (similar to the organ, but sounding with strings.) This instrument was probably the same as the English *chekker* and the German *Schachtbret* (quillboard), which was mentioned in a poem from 1404, *Der Minne Regeln* (The Rules of the Troubadour) by Eberhard Cersna. Both the etymology of the name and the nature of the instrument are obscure. Curt Sachs assumed that it was an upright harpsichord while F. W. Galpin theorized that it was a clavichord with a hammer action anticipating that of the piano. The original description mentioned only a checking device and no hammers.

Around 1400 the word *clavicymbalum* occurs in various manuscripts. It points to the addition of a keyboard (*claves*) to an earlier instrument (*cymbalum*)—probably a psaltery. Crow quill plectra came into use around 1500 and for the next 300 years, plucking keyboard instruments proliferated in a variety of shapes and constructions throughout Europe and the British Isles under different names. We find instruments in the shape of a long wing (harpsichord, *clavicembalo*, *clavecin*, *virginal*); a rectangular box (*virginal*, *spinet*, *spinetto*); a pentagonal box (*spinetto*); an upright box (*clavicytherium*); and, of a short wing extending diagonally (*spinet*).

The origin of the piano, or at least of its distinguishing device, the hammer action, is usually traced back to the activities of Pantaleon Hebenstreit. He invented the *pantalon* (a dulcimer with 185 strings played with two small hand-held hammers) around 1690 and he subsequently toured Europe as a virtuoso of the instrument. Gottlieb Schröter, one of the various “inventors” of the piano, admitted in 1717 that Hebenstreit’s playing had inspired his invention of a hammer mechanism which, however primitive, made it possible to play “soft and loud” on the harpsichord.

Several years earlier in 1709, a more perfect hammer mechanism had been invented by Bartolommeo Cristofori (1655-1731) of Florence, very likely without any knowledge of Hebenstreit, who is not known to have played in Italy. Gottfried Silbermann, most famous of early piano makers, appropriated Cristofori’s idea, which ultimately led to the work of Johann Andreas Stein in 1770. Stein created the German or Viennese action which delighted Mozart when he visited Stein’s workshop in 1777. Under the hands of Stein’s son-in-law Johann Andreas Streicher, this became the typical Viennese instrument—similar in shape to the harpsichord, elegant in appearance as well as in sound and with a very light action. In the meantime, English piano makers were also at work. There, thanks to John Broadwood (1732-1812), the instrument acquired various features which were destined to be of great consequence for its further development, and which separated it finally from its predecessor, the harpsichord. Among these was a much heavier structure, allowing for greater tension of the strings and giving the instrument more sonority; the two pedals of the present piano (patented in 1783); and, an action known as English action—much heavier than the Viennese action, but also more expressive and dynamic.

In the late 18th century the piano gradually displaced the harpsichord. But the original editions of almost all of Beethoven’s sonatas up to Opus 27 bear the inscription: *Pour le*

Clave in ou Pianoforte (For the Harpsichord or Piano). It shows that harpsichords were still widely used around 1800 and that music publishers were anxious to accommodate the players and owners of the old instruments as well as those of the more modern ones. People of that era, while ultimately accepting and adjusting to the intriguing new piano technology and sound, seemed less in a hurry than their 21st century counterparts to dispose of an instrument that had served them so well for so long.

THE TRACKS

Trio in E Major (KV 542)

1. Allegro - 8:30
2. Andante grazioso - 4:33
3. Allegro - 7:59

Trio in C Major (KV 548)

4. Allegro - 8:19
5. Andante cantabile - 10:16
6. Allegro - 5:06

Trio in G Major (KV 564)

7. Allegro - 8:45
8. Andante - 6:06
9. Allegretto - 4:52

THE QUEEN'S CHAMBER TRIO

Violinist Robert Zubrycki, cellist Peter Seidenberg and harpsichordist Elaine Comparone form the core of The Queen's Chamber Band, a 10-member New York City-based ensemble that since 1996 has enriched Manhattan's cultural life with its annual concert series in major halls and churches. They created The Queen's Chamber Trio out of enjoyment of each other's musicianship and love for the great trio literature commonly performed today on violin, cello and modern grand piano.

The Trio made its New York debut at Carnegie's Weill Hall in September of 2002 with a concert of music by Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven entitled "A Viennese Threesome." The Queen's Chamber Trio has taken as its *raison d'être* the perusal of chamber music literature with keyboard during the time when the fortepiano began to usurp the popularity of the harpsichord as the primary accompanying and solo keyboard instrument of the day. With a hammer action instead of a plucking mechanism, the fortepiano allowed the player to make gradual dynamic changes. Previously, the harpsichordist would manipulate two keyboards, moving between the two or combining their sounds, in order to achieve dynamic contrast.

The music composed for keyboard during this time (approximately 1775-1810) was stylistically interchangeable between harpsichord and piano, except for the slight proliferation of dynamic directions like piano, forte and, less commonly, crescendo and diminuendo. Even into the 19th century, composers tended to use these directions sparingly. While the harpsichord is unable to deliver gradual increases and decreases in volume, we feel that the singular, sparkling sound of plucked strings more than makes up for this deficiency. In the 1780s, musicians who elected to play contemporary music on harpsichord instead of fortepiano might be categorized as reactionary; but in this day and age, our approach is decidedly revolutionary. Elaine Comparone For this recording Elaine Comparone plays her 1968 replica of a 1720 Blanchet harpsichord built by William Dowd (Cambridge, Massachusetts) with a disposition of two sets of 8' strings, one set of 4' strings, a lute stop and hand coupler. Robert Zubrycki plays a 1700 violin made in Milan by Giovanni Battista Grancino with a bow made in the 1920s by Alfred Larmy of Paris. Peter Seidenberg plays a cello known as "Ex Romberg", made in Rome by David Tecchler in 1703. His early 19th century bow was made by Tourte in Paris. Both violin and cello have modern set up, tuned to A 440.

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THE QUEEN'S CHAMBER TRIO

Violinist Robert Zubrycki serves as Concertmaster of the St. Peter's Bach Festival Orchestra and principal violin in the Orchestra of St. Ignatius. He is a member of American Symphony, Solisti New York, Opera Orchestra of New York, Stamford Symphony Orchestra and performs at the OK Mozart and Bard Festivals. As chamber musician he has performed with the Lincoln Center Institute and Philharmonia Virtuosi. Robert is a member of the Abaca String Band. On Broadway he was Assistant Concertmaster for Swan Lake and principal violin for "La Bohème." Cellist Peter Seidenberg served for four years as Principal Cellist with Century Orchestra Osaka and performed throughout Europe, the US and Asia, making his concerto debut in 1983 with the Chicago Symphony. He has been soloist with the DePaul Chamber Orchestra, the Eastman-Rochester Philharmonic and the New American Chamber Orchestra.

Peter was a founding member of the Elements String Quartet. He has played with members of the Cleveland, Tokyo, Juilliard and Emerson Quartets and has participated in the Marlboro, Aspen and Norfolk summer music festivals.

Since her acclaimed New York recital debut as a Concert Artists Guild award winner in 1970, harpsichordist Elaine Comparone has maintained a varied career as recitalist, soloist with orchestra, chamber musician, organist and choir director, recording artist, impresaria, teacher and collaborator with composers, choreographers and video artists. A former Fulbright Fellow and Affiliate Artist, she has taken her harpsichords to

performances in every state of the continental United States. In France and Italy she has performed her unique interpretations of Scarlatti. In 1978 she founded Harpsichord Unlimited, a non-profit organization dedicated to stimulating interest in the harpsichord as a living, contemporary instrument. In 1992 she formed The Queen's Chamber Band, modeled after the ensemble created by the "London Bach" for Queen Charlotte, wife of "Mad" King George III.



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