

PROGRAM NOTES

W.A. Mozart – Sonata in A minor, K. 310

The Sonata in A minor, K. 310 was composed in the summer of 1778, when Mozart was in Paris. It is one of only two piano sonatas that Mozart wrote in a minor key and it has been described as a companion work to the Violin Sonata in E minor, K. 304, written around the same time. Little is known about the genesis of the K. 310 sonata, although Zaslaw and Cowdery quote Charles Suttoni in *The Complete Mozart*, “Among the several explanations that have been suggested, the most prevalent perhaps is that the death of Mozart’s mother on July 3, 1778, after a short, unforeseen illness, gave rise to a deep sense of loss that is reflected in these sonatas. Or perhaps it was the enforced absence from Aloysia Weber, the young Mannheim soprano with whom he had recently fallen in love, that drove him toward a more turbulent minor-keyed creativity.”

The first movement is full of anguish and defiance. Its continuous repeated chords are particularly vivid on the fortepiano – they are obsessive and relentless, a quality that is sometimes difficult to achieve on the modern piano without being too heavy.

The second movement is a tender, expressive aria in sonata form. The sweet outer sections begin with a spacious opening melody that promises consolation, while the turbulent development section moves through various minor keys, bringing back the unrest of the first movement with stark contrasts of tessitura and texture.

The third movement is agitated and relentless in its continuous eighth notes and syncopated accompaniment figures. Charles Suttoni describes it as “a wraith spinning about without ever coming to rest.” There is a brief respite in the middle with a sudden shift to A major, where Mozart layers a cantabile melody in thirds and sixths over the musette-like pedal bass. The movement closes with chordal outbursts that interrupt a soft, falling figure before charging to an abrupt end.

Franz Schubert – Impromptus, D. 935 (Op. 142)

Born in Vienna in 1797, Franz Schubert’s musical style is highly vocal – he composed more than 600 songs in his short life. His instrumental music is saturated with pervasive echoes of song and lyric expression. The four impromptus D. 935 were composed in December 1827.

According to Robert Winter, “The final set of four impromptus (D. 935) was apparently meant as a continuation of the first set. They suggest a four-movement piano sonata in F minor, with the first movement a full-blown sonata, the second a tender minuet, the third a set of variations on the theme from *Rosamunde* (D. 797) also used in the Andante of the A minor Quartet, and the fourth a highly original finale containing some of Schubert's wittiest and most audacious piano writing.” However, the autographs of these impromptus clearly show the title *Impromptus* in Schubert's own hand.

No. 2 in A-flat major is in Minuet and Trio form (or “Ländler and Trio”, as I am personally more inclined to write because of the underlying rhythmic patterns in the left hand). The opening section is innocent in its simplicity, only clouded by a hint of melancholy in the final cadence. The trio, by contrast, is warm and passionate with rolling arpeggios in the right hand outlining a lyrical melody.

No. 3 in B-flat major uses the theme from the *Entr'acte No. 3 in B-flat major* in the incidental music that Schubert wrote for the play *Rosamunde* (D. 797). The five variations express a full range of affects from tenderness to anguish to playfulness and exuberance.

Franz Schubert – Lieder texts and translation

Der Fluß

FRIEDRICH VON SCHLEGEL
D. 693 (1820)

*Wie rein Gesang sich windet
Durch wunderbarer Saitenspiele Rauschen,
Er selbst sich wiederfindet,
Wie auch die Weisen tauschen,
Daß neu entzückt die Hörer ewig lauschen.*

*So fließet mir gediegen
Die Silbermasse schlangengleich gewunden,
Durch Büsche, die sich wiegen,
Vom Zauber süß gebunden,
Weil sie im Spiegel neu sich selbst
gefunden.*

*Wo Hügel sich so gerne
Und helle Wolken leise schwankend zeigen,
Wenn fern schon matte Sterne
Aus blauer Tiefe steigen,
Der Sonne trunk'ne Augen abwärts neigen.*

*So schimmern alle Wesen
Den Umriß nach im kindlichen Gemüte,
Das, zur Schönheit erlesen,
Durch milder Götter Güte,
In dem Kristall bewahrt die flücht'ge Blüte.*

The River

*As pure song curls
Through the murmuring of the wondrous strings,
Finding itself again,
However much the melodies change,
That, captivated anew, the audience listens
forever.*

*So flows, steadfast,
The silver band, twisting snake-like
Through swaying bushes,
Sweetly spellbound
Because they have found themselves anew in
the mirror.*

*Where hills and bright clouds
Gladly reveal themselves, gently rolling,
When in the distance faint stars
Already rise from the blue depths
And the sun's drunken eyes sink downwards.*

*So all things shimmer
In outline in the childlike mind
Which, chosen for beauty
By the goodness of the kindly gods,
Preserves the fleeting blossom in the crystal
waters.*

Die Gebüſche

FRIEDRICH VON SCHLEGEL
D. 646 (1819)

*Es wehet kühl und leiſe
Die Luft durch dunkle Auen,
Und nur der Himmel lächelt
Aus tauſend hellen Augen.*

*Es regt nur eine Seele
Sich in des Meeres Brauſen,
Und in den leiſen Worten,
Die durch die Blätter rauſchen.*

*So tönt in Welle Welle,
Wo Geiſter heimlich trauren;
So folgen Worte Worten,
Wo Geiſter Leben hauchen.*

*Durch alle Töne tönet
Im bunten Erdentraume
Ein leiſer Ton gezogen,
Für den, der heimlich lauſchet.*

Im Frühling

ERNEST SCHULZE
D. 882 (1826)

*Still ſitz ich an des Hügels Hang,
Der Himmel iſt ſo klar,
Das Lüftchen ſpielt im grünen Tal,
Wo ich beim erſten Frühlingsſtrahl
Einst, ach ſo glücklich war.*

*Wo ich an ihrer Seite ging
So traulich und ſo nah,
Und tief im dunklen Felsenquell
Den ſchönen Himmel blau und hell
Und ſie im Himmel ſah.*

The Bushes

*The breeze blows cool and ſoft
Through dark meadows,
And only the heavens ſmile
From a thouſand bright eyes.*

*Only one ſoul ſtirs
Amid the roaring ocean,
And in the ſoft words
That whisper through the leaves.*

*Thus wave echoes wave
Where ſpirits ſecretly mourn;
Thus words follow words
Where ſpirits breathe life.*

*Through all the ſounds
In the earth's many-coloured dream,
One faint ſound echoes
For him who ſecretly liſtens.*

In Spring

*I ſit ſilently on the hillside,
The ſky is ſo clear,
The breezes play in the green valley
Where once, in the firſt rays of ſpring,
I was, oh, ſo happy.*

*Where I walked by her ſide,
So tender, ſo cloſe,
And ſaw deep in the dark rocky ſtream
The fair ſky, blue and bright,
And her reflected in that ſky.*

*Sieh, wie der bunte Frühling schon
Aus Knosp' und Blüte blickt!
Nicht alle Blüten sind mir gleich,
Am liebsten pflückt ich von dem Zweig,
Von welchem sie gepflückt!*

*Denn alles ist wie damals noch,
Die Blumen, das Gefild;
Die Sonne scheint nicht minder hell,
Nicht minder freundlich schwimmt im Quell
Das blaue Himmelsbild.*

*Es wandeln nur sich Will und Wahn,
Es wechseln Lust und Streit,
Vorüber flieht der Liebe Glück,
Und nur die Liebe bleibt zurück,
Die Lieb und ach, das Leid!*

*O wär ich doch ein Vöglein nur
Dort an dem Wiesenhang!
Dann blieb ich auf den Zweigen hier,
Und säng ein süßes Lied von ihr,
Den ganzen Sommer lang.*

*See how the colourful spring
Already peeps from bud to blossom.
Not all the blossoms are the same to me:
I like most of all to pluck them from the branch
From which she has plucked.*

*For all is still as it was then,
The flowers, the fields;
The sun shines no less brightly,
And no less cheerfully
The sky's blue image bathes in the stream.*

*Only will and whim change,
And joy alternates with strife;
The happiness of love flies past,
And only love remains,
Love and, alas, sorrow.*

*Oh, if only I were a bird,
There on the sloping meadow!
Then I would stay on these branches here,
And sing a sweet song about her
All summer long.*

*Translations taken from
Wigmore, Richard. Schubert: The complete song texts. New York: Schirmer, 1988.*