

PROGRAM NOTES

J. Haydn - Sonata in E-flat Major, Hob.XVI:52

Written in 1794, this is the last of Haydn's piano sonatas and also one of the most well-known. It was written for Therese Jansen, an excellent pianist living in London when Haydn visited there in the 1790s. This sonata is one of six works that Haydn dedicated to Jansen. The other pieces are three piano trios (*Hob.XV:27-29*) and two piano sonatas (*Hob.XVI:50-51*). The *Piano Sonata in E-flat Major, Hob.XVI:52* was not published until 1798, and it is interesting to note that Jansen was the dedicatee of the autograph score but not the first published version, which listed a Magdalena von Kurzbeck.

This sonata is in three standard movements, fast-slow-fast. It makes use of unusual harmonies and is full of contrast. The first and third movements are virtuosic and orchestral in texture. They also feature Haydn's characteristic wittiness, a feature that is especially vivid on the fortepiano because of the instrument's timbre and smaller range compass. The second movement is sweet and wistful, its opening motif returning throughout the movement to haunt listeners. It also begins in E major, a stark contrast to the E-flat major of the first movement. The middle section is more passionate and largely in E minor.

W.A. Mozart – Rondo in A minor, K.511

The *Rondo in A minor, K.511* is a late work, dated by Mozart in the autograph and his personal work catalogue as 11 March 1787. Together with the *Rondo in D Major, K.485* and the *Rondo in F major, K.494*, these three pieces make up the large-scale works that Mozart wrote instead of piano sonatas during the years 1786/87.

The *Rondo in A minor* is melancholic and highly chromatic. It is in 6/8 time, resembling a *siciliano* in its lilt and minor key tonality. Although the work follows the standard rondo form, the middle sections are extensive, often modulating to distant keys. Throughout the rondo, Mozart provides contrast between the different sections by alternating minor and major tonalities. A central section in A Major offers a ray of sunshine within the wistful *siciliano*. Mozart also creates a lesson on embellishment out of this rondo by writing out different melodic decorations for the opening theme every time it returns. The piece ends with an extensive coda built on the opening theme.

W.A. Mozart – Sonatas for Piano and Violin

Sonata in E Minor, K.304

Sonata in A Major, K.305

These two sonatas were composed in 1778 when Mozart was in Paris. Both sonatas are in two movements. The K.304 sonata is often mentioned in relation to the *Piano Sonata in A minor, K.310* because of its tempestuous and dramatic nature, and also because both works were written around the same time Mozart's mother passed away.

The *Sonata in E Minor, K.304* is tragic and passionate. Hermann Abert writes that "The opening movement is a constant battle between weary resignation and uncontrollable defiance; rarely did Mozart write wilder unison passages or more searing syncopations." (Abert, *W.A. Mozart*, p.521)

The second movement has a feeling of wistful melancholy. It starts as a graceful, aristocratic minuet, but soon evolves into a more passionate declamation with octaves in the bass and an increasing sense of urgency with syncopated trills in both the violin and piano. Maynard Solomon writes that the second movement of this sonata "seems to describe a three-stage descent – from an ideal outer reality to a troubled inwardness, with the moment of symbiotic fusion reserved for the trio section at the movement's very center." (Solomon, *Mozart: A Life*, p.198-199) The central E Major trio is a brief consolation from the anguish. Solomon calls the trio "a moment of symbiotic fusion, a discovery of the inmost retreat, providing release from strife." (Solomon, *Mozart: A Life*, p.200)

The *Sonata in A Major, K.305* is the complete opposite of the K.304 sonata in terms of character and affect. While the K.304 is serious, dramatic and even angry at times, the K.305 bubbles with joy and effervescence. The K.305 sonata opens with an extroverted unison passage for both instruments. The lilting 6/8 time signature combines with frequent contrasts in dynamics, texture, articulation and harmonies to give it an earthy and effusive personality.

The second movement is a set of theme and variations. More graceful and poised than the first movement, it opens with a cantabile theme that is heard mainly in the piano. It shares the lilt of the first movement, except in an andante 2/4 meter. A series of six variations with contrasting affects allow both the violin and piano to shine. The movement ends with a bubbly 3/8 dance in the final variation.