

STEVE LUND, MOZART'S 'EROICA' MOMENT: THE D MINOR PIANO CONCERTO #20

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**CD timing goes with Geza Anda and Camerata Academica des Salzburger Mozarteums-----
YouTube:**

- I. [Mozart: Piano Concerto No. 20 in D Minor, K. 466 - I. Allegro](#)
- II. [Mozart: Piano Concerto No. 20 in D Minor, K. 466 - II. Romance](#)
- III. [Mozart: Piano Concerto No. 20 in D Minor, K. 466 – III. Rondo. Allegro assai](#)

(these are listed by movement individually, but each movement use the same thumbnail image)

Also recommended:

YouTube: [Mozart: Concerto for piano and Orchestra \(d-minor\) K.466, Uchida](#)
(Same piece, different performer)

Pre-text & Setting the Scene

- *February 10, 1785*
 - *Mozart's father was visiting at the time (after a long period of absence) and heard the premier of his Piano Concerto #20*
- *Concerto tend to be 3 'Movements' in length*
 - I. Exposition*
 - II. Development*
 - III. Recapitulation*

(Each movement has a 'theme' that can be different from the other movements)

- IV. Coda (a passage that brings a piece, or movement, to an end)*

Movement 1 - Exposition

- **Orchestral Theme 1** (acts like a *ritornello* and has three forms)
- **Orch Theme 1A D minor** Misterioso—very spooky syncopated figure—more of a mood than a melodic form.
 - But this mood music starts to move—upwards in 3s (1-2-3)—quiet and then a little louder and louder than that. So we start with something spooky and now it's building up in intensity. That's the background of the painting of this piece. And if you know Mozart's **Don Giovanni** and you know his **Requiem** (featured in Amadeus), you might know that those pieces are also in D minor and feature this same haunting spirit that breaks out into passion and pathos—without warning. So, fasten your seatbelts! This is going to get bumpy!
- **:30 Orch Theme 1B** The storm erupts---this theme becomes fierce and brutal with a martial edge.
- **1:00 Orchestral Theme 2 F major**—Lovely little exchange that is first heard in the woodwinds—
 - The oboe and bassoon seem to be the parent—and the flute seems to be the child. What are they talking about, may I ask?
 - After the questions and answers and then a lovely **counterpoint** (musical dialogue—one speaks and then the other) that follows—suggesting some harmony or agreement and then uh. . .
- **BOOM! 1:22 Orch Theme 1C D minor**
 - Storm continues and this time its dark momentum pounds along like a railroad train in the dark and then it erupts into a fireball of passion—a **climax** in the highest reaches of the strings—you don't know it yet but this is a foreshadow of how Mozart is going to end this phenomenal journey. You will hear two iterations of the passage without the climax and then two with the amazing climax—after which the orchestra subsides.
- **2:17 Quiet Codetta (Closing)** Lovely short passage to end the opening scene painted by the orchestra.
And then—the moment we've been waiting for--the piano enters:

Movement 1 - Exposition

- **2:28 Solo Piano Theme 1 D minor** - Drop dead lovely theme.
 - The first two leaps octaves and the third is a 10th leap bringing us to the end of the theme that roils with joy followed by a three bar interlude and then—guess what!—back to **Theme 1A Don Giovanni misterioso**.
 - And the piano comes in at the bottom of this sound painting beings to bubble up in the lower regions—as if the spirits called up by the Weird Sisters in Macbeth. Again we are hearing the build up—1-2-3---1-2-3---1-2-3 but notice how Mozart is creating this effect now more or less with the piano—although we still hear the revving slur of notes in the bass strings. Now the piano is climbing up in lightning quick 16th notes. What a fabulous piece of excitement that reaches its height at 3:22!--and then what? Then the passion moves to the pianists left hand—to heighten the fury of this moment! The orchestra tutti closes out the harsh darkness.
- And then light shines in the woodwinds.

Movement 1 - Exposition

- **3:37 Orchestral theme 2 back in F major—**
 - Remember the little question and answer exchange—between “dad and son?”-- this time the piano plays the whiney child voice—and the lovely counterpoint passage following is done with piano and strings for the three little magic turns and then the piano dashes off on a sweet little run in the park.
- **4:01 Piano solo 2 --F major—**
 - is a graceful little tune----actually a priceless piece of joy. Notice the strong beat on the 1. 3,4 / 1 2 3 4/ 1 2 etc---with the sweetest little chord figure following up and down—like toy ships bobbing up and down in the bath tub while the strings accompany—and notice when the piano goes up the strings go down etc. Don't you want to hear that again????

Movement 1 - Exposition

- **4:20**

- Yeah, c'mon Mozart? What a hard heart!—he repeats it YES! But with a new sound—a heart breaking sound! The oboe and bassoon play the tune and the piano plays a delightful run below while the bassoon keeps up with beat like chickens clucking in the hen house.
- WOW! Ok, Mr. Mozart—have it your way.
- This happy little piano figure just keeps us racing along and I don't know about you but I could listen to this breathless racing happy music for the rest of my life but at

- **5:00**

- he starts darkening the mood with some chromaticism (like jazz chords—complex) which tells us that uh maybe this happiness is not going on forever and then at **5:27** the you-know-what hits the you-know-what...

- **5:28**

- BOOM! **Orchestral theme 1B**---fierce and martial—for 7 bars—and then Mozart's lightens the skies a bit and brings in the gentle closing (codetta) that we heard at 2:17.

Movement 1 - Development

- DEVELOPMENT (mess around with a couple themes in any order whatsoever and modulate like crazy!)
- **6:04 Piano Solo 1**—we hear this lovely tune in **F major**—and when he finishes it, the piano and strings extend the mood with a joyful laughing motif.
- **6:20** Abrupt shift to darkness—**Orchestral Theme 1**---uh oh!
- **6:28 Piano solo 1** returns now in **G minor**---as if it couldn't be more beautiful—well listen to it now!
- **6:46 CRASH!** Guess where we are? Yup! **D minor**---4 bars of storm music again (**orchestral theme 1**) (or as the Germans would put it: *Sturm und Drang!*) Modulating now to the V of Eb
- **6:52 Piano solo 1** again—now in **Eb major**—welcome to *Magic Flute* country!

Can you hear the difference? Sweet and sincere statement of the theme! Eb major = TRUTH in Mozart 'music speak'!

- But the theme dissolves as the piano races off in 16th notes all over kingdom come and the strings try to slow it down with the revving up slurs from Don Giovanni in the bass registers. And Mozart does this in the usual three 3s that we are hearing throughout this piece, but while he's keeping the math in order he is also moving up the **circle of 5ths** to **d minor** (1 flat remember)! And that means we are HOME!

Movement 1 - Recapitulation

- RECAPITULATION—(back to the musical themes in the exposition—with some twists here and there.)
- **7:52 Orchestral theme 1A D minor**---back to the beginning—off-beat and weird stuff and then the climbing—as you know! I know, it's not lovely--but it's home! When the piano joins the orchestra, listen for the three rev-ups—and they will come three times altogether, as you know.
- **8:18 Orch Theme 1B storm music** again with the fierce martial component. And then a lightening of the darkness and then the piano comes in and celebrates this with quick triplets. *(Can I say that what I love about all of Mozart's music—esp his piano concertos and his operas is how much of an "Attention Deficit Disorder" he has when it comes to the rhythm. Listen to his rhythm and you will find it change usually about every eight bars. **Nobody can fall asleep to this music. Endlessly new and enchanting!**)*
- **8:40s** Back to the storm--those big crashing octaves in the left hand again—and then with a fierce tutti close out—hold onto your hat!
- **8:51 Orchestral theme 2: F major** Here's the father—son theme again. The oboes and bassoons take the father's part and the piano has Mozart's (pardon!) the son's part. And what playful fun in the counterpoint section—all played by the piano—just listen to that if you want your heart to be glad!
- **9:20 And then Solo piano theme 2 D minor** interrupts. What—minor? YES! How gorgeous can you get! Sad, yes, but so beautiful! Then back to the oboe/bassoon restating the tune with fancy pants piano-man doing the music doodling below. Just listen and drink it in.

Movement 1 - Recapitulation

- Then it's off to the races again for the piano running and jumping and playing this delightful catch me if you can---whirlwind of beauty—until about **10:15** when the piano starts the 1,2,3 revving that you know all about. This is going to knock your socks off, by the way! After racing along, the pianist gives out a trill and at **10:27** starts bass octaves to do the 1,2,3 rev-up and then at **10:38** are three long pheeeeeeenomenal bass sluuuuuuurs—and then a fast and huge triplet climb all the way up to ...
- **10:58 Storm music—the Martial 1B** version of **orchestral theme I**.

And before it can finish---it comes to an abrupt **STOP!**

This, my friends, is everyone's favorite part of a concerto. This is called the **cadenza** and it is *all piano solo with no one else making a sound* and in Mozart's day and rarely but sometimes today it is absolutely improvised by the pianist (like the jazzies do it)!

- I would really like to just ask you to listen for yourself to see which themes are played in this cadenza, but I'll give you a couple hints: in this version listen for the codetta and the solo 2 modulating and the dark Don Giovanni stormy music and the (Ah!) climax music and then a run-up to..

Movement 1 - CODA

- **CODA 12:26**

- Here we go—*Macbeth Act V*---oops sorry, wrong masterpiece!—the end of the line on this dark and furious and gorgeous movement.

- (One commentator I read spoke of the child within Mozart remembering tantrums and innocence and wild-love!)

And what a surprise Mozart still has up his sleeve.

- As expected—he launches into his signature storm music and goes with it all the way (this is the Theme IC climax version—my favorite) first playing through it all without and then with the breathless string **climax**—and he does it once—once without and once with—I know, I know—I want more too!

And then he lets the storm clouds lighten up with the codetta and then quietly returns to the beginning of the piece—quiet off-beat **Theme 1A** with no buildup—no revving and then it's gone. Quietly gone! Peace out!

Movement 2 - Romance

MOVEMENT 2—ROMANCE

Nowhere else will you see in Mozart such diametrical contrast—blissful beauty AND—

is it an outrageous temper tantrum—OR is it something else entirely—a whirling dervish of childish emotion—like a kid at an amusement park—OR a kid just running wild through the woods?

I leave it to you to decide! And notice the endless flow of inventiveness (pure beauty in the first section—moving from theme A and B to the second couplet. This (Mozartville) is where Chopin learns what perfect melody sounds like.)

Movement 2 - Romance

- **Refrain: Theme A piano/orchestra Bb major**
 - (Exquisite nursery rhyme theme of pure innocence)
- **:41 Theme B and then the second half of Theme A**
- **:53—piano and then orchestra**
- **1:16 Codetta--orchestra**
- **1:45 1st couplet: Bb major** piano with string accompaniment
- **2:17 F major**—with a brief foray into F minor and then return to F major—piano and string accompaniment
- **2:38 Codetta** piano and string accompaniment
- **3:06 Refrain** piano and then orchestra

Movement 2 - Romance

- 3:45 *2nd couplet 1st subject--fast and furious—
-pathos/rage/tantrum/excitement—you name it!
Sturm und drang! German for rage against the machine!*
- 4:20 *2nd subject---same temperament but simpler orchestration*
- 5:39 *climax—
and then Mozart applies the brakes on the music—moving from 16th notes to 8th note triplets, to 8th notes and then to*
- 5:58 **Refrain**
Theme A---piano (no orchestra) no repeat
Theme B
Theme A (orchestra returns in last A)
- 6:51 **Codetta**
- 7:09 **Coda—**
oboe and bassoon and flute//piano with gorgeous elaboration at 7:33

Movement 3 - Rondo

EXPOSITION

- Theme
- A :01 Mannheim rocket piano /then orchestra D minor
:15 Tutti Frenzy (like a fuse that is lit—whirling dervish!—Beethoven loved this!)
- B1 :57 Piano theme (similar to Piano solo 1 in M1)
- A 1:05 Mannheim rocket piano with extension
- B2 1:21 Chromatic theme in F minor (very weird and unexpected!)
Happy transition
1:40 gets to F major
- C 2:02 Turkish theme (Buffa) in F major---Woodwinds and piano
- A 2:27 Piano Mannheim rocket
2:39 Frenzy tutti closing—whirling dervish

Movement 3 - Rondo

DEVELOPMENT

- **B1 2:52 Piano theme 1 A minor**
- **A 3:03 Mannheim rocket—piano (A minor)**
3:08 Modulating----(flute/bassoon/piano/strings)
- **B1 3:22 Piano theme 1 G minor (flute/bassoon/piano)**
3:32 Modulating clucking/laughing motif

Movement 3 - Rondo

RECAPITULATION

- **B2 3:58 Chromatic theme in D minor**
4:16 Laughing extension piano and orchestra
- **C 4:26 D minor orchestra (Buffa—weird!)**
4:34 D minor piano
4:40 Laughing motif
Running/pause/trill
- **A 4:58 Frenzy tutti/interrupted—close**
CADENZA—on this recording almost non-existent

CODA—ENDING MATERIAL

CODA – one of the most exciting in all Mozart's concertos!

- **A 5:08 Mannheim rocket on piano for a few bars and then the piano drops the idea and angrily twists off.**
- **C 5:17 D major woodwinds (weird!)**
- **C 5:22 D major piano (bit weird!)**
- **C 5:29 Tutti Fanfare/Burst! 6 bars**
5:35 Piano smooth 6 bars
5:40 Tutti Fanfare/Burst! 6 bars
5:45 Piano smooth 6 bars

CODA—ENDING MATERIAL

C ww

- 5:50 Piano 1 2 3 4 5 6

trumpets

- 5:55 Piano 1 2 3 4 5 6

trumpets WW

- 6:01 Piano 1 2 3 4 5 6

Piano run

WW

- 6:05 Piano 1 2 3 4 5 6

Piano run

CODA—ENDING MATERIAL

WWs clucking

- **6:10 Piano 1 2 3 4 5 6**
/ / /
- **6:15 Tutti rush 1 2 3 4 5 (Ok, fine no 6! We're outa here!)**