

Violin Concerto No.5 in A Major, K. 219 (Turkish)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Written: 1775

Movements: 3

Style: Classical

Duration: 31 minutes

Our times have seen an interesting new development in the relationships between parents and children. The term for it is *nesting*. After having declared their independence and left home, children have discovered just how good they really had it. They return home to live with good ol= mom and dad. When Mozart was nineteen, he had already been on the road for years, seeking a lucrative appointment as a court musician. By 1775, it was time to nest. Mozart was primarily a pianist, but he got a job as violin concertmaster in the same court orchestra in Salzburg that his father had been playing in since 1743! Even though Mozart was depressed at having to work for an overbearing employer in what was—for him—a provincial town, he managed to churn out more than 100 compositions in about two years. In the space of less than seven months he wrote five violin concertos, all of which he performed himself.

If you have ever learned about the ^Atextbook@ concerto form ^B which amazingly few concertos really follow ^B Mozart=s violin concertos can be full of surprises. His fifth concerto starts out innocently enough in a fast tempo with the orchestra introducing the various themes. Normally you=d expect the violin

to enter and restate those melodies. Not so! Mozart slams on the brakes and gives the violin a slow serene tune for several measures. When he finally restarts the faster tempo, he has the violin play *another* new melody. And at the end of the movement, instead of the standard flash and dash, it ends abruptly with an upward figure, almost like a question. From start to finish Mozart takes us through one surprising turn after another. The second movement is almost an aria for violin with the orchestra relegated to the role of a mere accompanist. Most classical concerto third movements are *rondos*, where a main alternates with subsidiary themes, and that is the case here as well. Instead of a fast romp, Mozart gives us a stately dance in three, a minuet. And just when you think you've got the alternating between primary tune and secondary tunes figured out, the meter changes into two beats and Mozart throws in some Hungarian dance tunes. (For the Austrians, anything east of Austria was "Turkish," hence the subtitle for this concerto.) With a wink of the eye, Mozart brings back the minuet and ends the concerto. Like the first movement it almost ends with a question.

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