

Violin Concerto in D K218

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756-1781)

Allegro

Andante cantabile

Rondeau: andante grazioso — allegro

As a child, Mozart's reputation as a prodigy was primarily due to his prowess at the keyboard, but he was obviously no mean fiddler, since at the age of 18 he was *Konzertmeister* in the service of the Archbishop of Salzburg. It's probable that he himself played the five violin concertos which he wrote at that time, although there is some evidence that he wrote them for his Salzburg friend Joachim Kolb, or for Antonio Brunetti, another violinist of the Archbishop's court orchestra. He never wrote another, as far as can be authenticated, although piano concertos continued to pour from him throughout his life.

Mozart himself was by his father's account, a player with potential to become "the finest violinist in Europe." Leopold Mozart was, as always, speaking with promotion and encouragement of his son in mind, but he was also a good judge: he had published an influential text on violin-playing several years earlier. While young Mozart was certainly capable, he seems to have viewed playing violin as a somewhat unpleasant chore, and he abandoned the violin in favor of the keyboard almost as soon as he moved out from under his father's wing.

Not that one can detect any detachment in the way Mozart writes for the instrument. These are youthful works, which still bear some traces of the old Baroque concerto in their formal outlines. However, they are also amazingly cosmopolitan in style. Mozart had spent most of his young life travelling across Europe as a child prodigy, performing on both violin and harpsichord. Though Leopold never realized his goal of finding a lucrative court post for Wolfgang, his son picked up something equally valuable along the way: musical styles from across the Continent. The violin concertos bear traces of all of the Austrian, German, Italian, and French courts he visited as a child.