

MOZART

Complete piano music

VOL I

CHRISTIAN
IHLE HADLAND



In the terraced house of my childhood in Stavanger, cable TV was acquired in 1990, and one winter evening there was a knock at the door: My music-loving grandfather had come to watch the film *Amadeus*, which was on very late, I believe it started at 11 p.m. I was allowed to watch the beginning, but was swiftly sent to bed when Mozart's rival, Salieri, attempted to cut his throat. Something must have stirred in me nonetheless, because the very next day I went to the kiosk at Stavanger Hospital and bought a cassette featuring Mozart's piano concertos No. 20 and 21. The wonderful slow movement in number 20 is played during the end credits of the film.

That summer, 1990, I found myself back at Stavanger Hospital—this time to have my tonsils removed. My youngest aunt, only 19 years old but very foresighted, had acquired yet another cassette to alleviate boredom, this time with two Mozart symphonies and *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*, all performed by the Vienna Philharmonic conducted by James Levine. It was played to pieces.

In the winter of 1992, my grandmother's aunt Randi died (I remember her as being as old as Methuselah when she left this world, but I have since checked: She was 91). Aunt Randi left a handsome inheritance of and my grandmother, Austrian to her core, immediately commanded: Everyone to Vienna! At this point, I had been playing the piano for five months, but not much Mozart. My piano teacher Ingeborg Songe-Møller had given me a short piece to glance at eventually, I was fascinated by the



opening thirty-second notes and could not believe that anyone could play so fast on a piano.

So off to Austria grandparents, uncles and aunts, parents, siblings, the whole lot—lodged by Mrs. Breitner at her guesthouse, a grand yellow house west of Vienna, near the city's great forests. My grandmother had told me there was a music shop in Vienna where you could buy every kind of sheet music imaginable... and not long after arriving, I stepped into *Musikhaus Doblinger* near St Stephen's Cathedral for the very first time. What a disappointment! There was no self-service, no way to just wander the shelves and pull out sheet music on a whim. Instead, you had to ask for exactly what you were looking for, and then the stern proprietor would fetch a wooden box from a shelf in the wall, place it on the counter, flip the stack of music upside down, and issue a curt instruction that everything had to be returned in the exact same order. A few minutes later, I left the shop with my first sheet music purchase for my own money: Mozart's piano sonatas volumes 1 and 2, in the blue Henle edition.

Why it was the sonatas, only the gods know, but 33 years later, I sit with the same

blue, now worn-out sheets of music and can only conclude that it was a good purchase.

Mozart composed his first work for piano at the age of five – 5 – years. Nevertheless, it was the violin that was his preferred instrument until he reached adulthood. Only when Mozart approached twenty did he put the violin aside for good.

In his piano music, Mozart captured two perfect trends. First and foremost, the ever-improving quality of the instruments: Unlike his predecessors, Mozart could write elaborate, beautiful slow movements that allowed the piano to sing like any other instrument. This coincided fortunately with Mozart's development as an opera composer and his exploration of the human voice.

In the world of sonatas, Mozart's works have ended up somewhat in the shadow of the sonatas by Haydn, Beethoven, and Schubert. Haydn almost single-handedly created the sonata form and set a standard that all subsequent composers had to relate to. After Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert ensured to break the form with works that in duration and expressive power were difficult to follow up. In the generation between them, Mozart did as he always did: Wrote brilliant music, but without necessarily adding much new to the form. And here we perhaps have the reason why the sonatas are not on everyone's lips, as they should be. But shouldn't it be enough that the music is brilliant?

Mozart had two great role models when he started with his sonatas: The aforementioned Joseph Haydn, and Johann Christian Bach, one of Johann Sebastian Bach's many sons whom Mozart met as a child in London and improvised with. From Haydn, Mozart learned to transfer the orchestra's sparkling energy to the piano, from London-Bach he learned singability and simplicity.

Mozart often wrote sonatas in clusters. The first six were composed, all at once, during a trip to Munich in the spring of 1775, and they are brilliant, sparkling music, as always with Mozart free of cheap effects. Mozart's mastery in the slow movements is evidently here, and the sonatas contain some of his finest movements, captivating in all their simplicity.

Three sonatas were composed during trips to Augsburg and Paris in 1777/78. The journey came to an end when Mozart's mother passed away in a modest attic in Paris. Both the illness and here death were kept secret from his father for a long time. But up to this point the trip was a great success, and sonata number 9 in D major is a highlight with its brisk expression and broad laid-out rondo finale, where Mozart approaches symphonic format in his way of composing for the piano.

The peak of Mozart's production is reached with the four sonatas numbered from ten to thirteen, composed when he was well established in Vienna and in his prime. Mozart's confidence and self-assurance show as he lets all the opening move-



ments unfold at a moderate, cool tempo—the virtuosity comes later. But even in the fast movements, it is the melodic that takes precedence, the swirling runs must be caressed, all rapid notes gently shaped. The opening movement in the F major sonata is like an uninterrupted song, while the finale in B flat major is like a piano concerto, with an inserted cadenza and obvious alternations between the piano and a fictitious orchestra.

After this, Mozart's production of piano sonatas became more sporadic. Many piano students have over the years tried their hands at the opening movement of sonata number sixteen, the so-called "Sonata facile" (which is anything but easy!), but this is a magnificent, miniature work,

three short movements in a perfect take, one of those works where everything feels right.

Mozart's sonata in D major dates from 1789 and was the first of a planned cycle of six. After the well-sounding, but perhaps not very inspired B flat major sonata, Mozart is back on top, where he gets incredible results out of tiny musical building blocks. The first movement is almost like a two-part invention with little chord playing, but Mozart says everything with two simple voices. Turbulent times in Europe (the French Revolution was in full swing at the same time as Mozart composed this sonata) brought nervousness and restraint in the Viennese salons, and the sonata became Mozart's last, just as the piano con-

certo composed the following year became his last.

It has been mentioned earlier that Mozart's sonatas are brilliant, without necessarily being innovative, but in his musical laboratory, Mozart let his hair down when he wrote small pieces for piano. It is uncertain what is Mozart's first work, but in Köchel's catalogue of Mozart's works, the minuet and trio in G major is placed as number one. Composed at the turn of the year 1761/1762 when Mozart was only five years old, the eye for form and contrast is impeccable, even though the piece is naturally very simple in all respects. Five years old, chew on that and listen to the piece again.

The tiny standalone *Allegro* in F major was composed in Switzerland when he was ten years old, and already far more harmonically sophisticated. While the funeral march in C minor bears the subtitle "Marche funebre del Sigr Maestro Contrappunto" – *Funeral March for Mr. Maestro Counterpoint*, this apparently somber composition still carries a hint of whimsy; you can almost hear chuckling in the background. After all, no one is actually dead.

And we still have much to look forward to.

CHRISTIAN IHLE HADLAND

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Christian Ihle Hadland has established himself as a true craftsman of the piano, a musician whose delicate, refined playing and individual touch have led him to the most prestigious stages in the world.

Christian came to international attention in 2011 as a BBC New Generation Artist. As an NGA he performed with all four of the BBC's symphony orchestras and broadcast solo and chamber recitals for the corporation in London. He also made his debut at the BBC Proms in London where he was praised by critics for his 'pearly' and 'otherworldly' sound.

Christian was born in Stavanger in 1983 and received his first piano lessons at the age of eight. At the age of eleven he entered the Rogaland Music Conservatory, and in 1999 began lessons with Professor Jiri Hlinka, both privately and at the Barratt Due Institute of Music in Oslo.

He made his professional concerto debut at the age of 15 with the Norwegian Radio Orchestra (KORK). He has since performed with all the major orchestras in Scandinavia including the Swedish Radio and Danish National Symphony Orchestras, and the Royal Stockholm, Helsinki and Oslo Philharmonics and the Swedish Chamber Orchestra. In the UK he has appeared as a soloist with the Hallé Orchestra, the Royal

Scottish National Orchestra, the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and Manchester Camerata, in addition to his work with the BBC orchestras.

Christian is highly sought after as a chamber musician. He has been Artistic Director of the International Chamber Music Festival in Stavanger, his hometown, since 2010 and is a frequent guest at Wigmore Hall. Christian has performed at the BBC Proms Chamber Music Series and in 2015 gave a three-week tour of Australia with the Australian Chamber Orchestra and mezzo soprano Susan Graham. In 2006, he performed with soprano Renée Fleming at the Nobel Prize Award Ceremony in Oslo.



CHRISTIAN IHLE HADLAND

— *piano*

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART
(1756–1791)

Piano Sonata No. 9 in D major, K. 311/284c

1. *Allegro con spirito* — 04:36
2. *Andante con espressione* — 04:48
3. *Rondo. Allegro* — 06:22
4. *Minuet in G major, K. 1/1e /
Minuet in C major, K. 1f* — 01:44

Piano Sonata No. 16 in C major, K. 545

5. *Allegro* — 04:19
6. *Andante* — 05:05
7. *Rondo. Allegretto* — 01:40
8. *Kleiner Trauermarsch in
C minor, K. 453a* — 02:23

Piano Sonata No. 12 in F major, K. 332/300k

9. *Allegro* — 06:49
10. *Adagio* — 04:23
11. *Allegro assai* — 05:08
12. *Minuet in F major, K. 5* — 00:47

Piano Sonata No. 13 in B-flat major, K. 333/315c

13. *Allegro* — 06:58
14. *Andante cantabile* — 09:38
15. *Allegretto grazioso* — 06:28
16. *Piece in F major, K. 33b* — 01:01



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