The opening page to Mozart’s Violin Concerto No. 3 in G (K216)

**LOST AND FOUND**

Several years ago four of the five Mozart Violin Concertos were recovered after having disappeared in the Second World War. Gabriel Banat traces the history of their recovery and Carl Schachter discusses the significance of examining the manuscripts which have recently been published in facsimile.

The last issue of the Köchel catalogue, that hundred year-long attempt to list Mozart’s works in a chronologically ordered fashion, is now obsolete. That issue, published in 1964, 27 years after the previous one, lists over one hundred autograph manuscripts by Mozart as “verschollen” or lost. The good news is that, after being hidden away for over thirty years, they have now been found, although they are still fairly inaccessible to most of us. Among these manuscripts are the original scores of four of the five authentic violin concertos by Mozart. The fifth one in A major, known as the “Turkish” concerto, has been kept in Washington since before World War II, having been separated from the other four since 1842.

While original autographs of the masters are by themselves valuable to collectors, the fact that there were not even photocopies made of these particular works before they were lost, also made them invaluable to the performer and the scholar. According to Ernst Fritz Schmidt (Neue Mozart Ausgabe: Notes, 1976), before their disappearance, none of the missing Mozart scores had ever been examined in the light of “up-to-date musicological technique”.

It was only around the middle of the century that an important new movement towards authentic performance of Baroque and classical works began. Some years later, when I was teaching at a Northeastern College, I discovered in their fine library a number of original 18th century editions which made me more aware of the need to refresh that over-edited repertoire by going back to the original materials. What performer has not wished for a few minutes in the company of Johann Sebastian or Wolfgang Amadeus to clear up that nagging doubt about this suspiciously anachronistic dynamic or that uncharacteristic slur? The appearance of the Bach Sonatas and Partitas for solo violin in a facsimile of the autograph, and the Bärenreiter edition based on it, followed by Henle edition’s Mozart violin sonatas based on the autographs or the first editions, were a revelation. After studying the Bach facsimiles, the need to see Mozart’s MSS became even more evident to me in late 1968, when I had occasion to play the complete Mozart sonatas using the Heine edition. A few minutes before going on stage for one of the concertos, I was shown the autograph of K296, which had just been acquired by the Toscanini Archives at Lincoln Center. I found that I had to change the phrasing of the second subject in the Finale on the spot. It was obvious from the handwritten original that Mozart wanted it that way, and not as it appeared in Heine, based on the first edition of the sonata.

After studying all the MSS of the sonatas I could find, I was anxious to see those of the Mozart concertos. One of these, the Fifth, in A major, K219, was available in a fine edition by Bärenreiter, using as its model the original autograph of that concerto which had been safely preserved at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. But where were the autographs of the other four authentic Mozart concertos? Rudolph Gerber had supposedly based his editions of the Eulenburg scores of the Third and Fourth
Concertos on them, but that was in the early thirties. Since then we had developed a stronger idea of 18th century performance practice and the wish to reproduce them faithfully has become one of the main musical issues of our day. Gerber had been able to study those concertos in the collection of the Prussian State Library in Berlin and reinterpreted Mozart’s gracenotes in the “modern” manner. But now, as the Köchel catalogue stated and as far as anyone knew, they were gone, along with a quarter of Mozart’s other surviving manuscripts, and a king’s ransom of others by Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Haydn, Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer.

It was Mozart’s violin concertos, however, that posed the most frustrating dilemma to the conscientious performer and teacher. Having been published several years after Mozart’s death, popularity contributed to many distortions of the original by all-too-many consecutive editions.

In 1977 the giant publishers Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich offered me an opportunity to publish something of more than routine interest in music. That is when I became seriously involved in research, with emphasis on “search”. I spent a considerable part of my time in the rare book divisions of North American and European Libraries, collecting material for a six volume series called “Masters of the Violin”, consisting of facsimile editions of 17th and 18th century composers. At about the same time some musicologists were becoming aware that the manuscript collection from the Prussian State Library that had been missing and given up as lost, might have survived somewhere in Poland. While working on my series, I received signals that perhaps the Mozart concertos could also be in Poland.

Over a period of time, their history emerged. Early in the Second World War in 1941, following an isolated night raid by British Bombers, the German Government initiated a massive evacuation programme for the valuable materials in the Prussian State Library on Unter den Linden in Berlin. They were dispatched from Berlin in haste but with characteristic orderliness, to 29 locations around the country, where they were stored in castles and monasteries. Seven of these locations received music, both manuscripts and rare printed material. Some of the Mozart autographs, such as the 2nd act of II Seraglio, the “Coronation” concerto, and the letters to his family, went to Kloster Beuron, in Wurttemberg. One act of Idomeneo ended up at Schloss Banz in Franken, a castle that sheltered a great many Bach and Brahms autographs as well. But Berlin’s share of the Mozart collection was sent eastward, first to Schloss Fürstenstein and later, when that location became too popular with the military and the SS, to Kloster Grüssau, a Benedictine monastery in Silesia.

When the war ended, Germany found itself divided into Western allied, and Russian zones of occupation. Berlin, deep in the Eastern zone, was itself divided into four sectors. This politico-military situation had, of course, grave repercussions, including a lengthy period known as the cold war. One of its consequences was that nearly all of the evacuated collections located in Western zones of occupation found their way back to Berlin, but most of those from the Eastern zone did not.

The fact that the former Prussian State Library fell to the Eastern, or Russian, sector of Berlin, might help explain the complicated chain of events that led to the “disappearance” of the Grüssau manuscripts. Nigel Lewis, a British journalist, in his book Paper chase, (Hamish Hamilton, London, 1981) comes close to unravelling the web of political and personal actions that caused the loss and eventual reappearance of these irreplaceable papers. Some of those events will perhaps never be explained, much less proven. The facts, however, together with mostly circumstantial evidence and conjecture, add up to a fairly convincing history.

As soon as the war ended, scholars and musicians began to notice the huge gaps in the Berlin libraries, now divided among East and West, even after repatriation of materials from the “Ausweichstellen”, or hiding places. At least one of them, the American music journalist, Carleton Smith, became a dedicated partisan in the quest for the missing manuscript treasures. Smith even had the connections to move President Truman to ask Stalin at the Potsdam conference about the missing autographs. This was the first of several times when, after investigations, the Russians claimed not to have any knowledge about their fate. Since Grüssau, as the rest of Silesia, was now part of Poland (its Polish name was Drzewsow) Polish authorities were also being pressed for answers about the disappearance of the manuscripts. These inquiries, including a Communist Party-to-Party request in 1966, resulted in repeated protestations of ignorance of the matter by the governments of both countries. As for the libraries in Berlin, there wasn’t even a comprehensive list of the missing scores available. The newly created West Berlin Library had none, and the East Berlin Library, where the music was created and which had expedited the eastward shipments, were not at all forthcoming with the information they possessed: the Verlage-rundlisten, which connected the titles of specific works to the stencilled numbers on the crates containing them. Eventually, hard pressed by anxious research people, officials at the East Berlin Library invented an alleged fire at Kloster Grüssau, which was to have destroyed all the music there. The probability that if the materials had survived the advancing troops they would now be in Russian hands, could explain the defensive attitude of these bureaucrats. West Berlin, apprehensive about its brand new relationship with Poland...
Stylized portrait of Mozart (right) playing the violin with his sister (centre) and mother

and East Germany was also reluctant to press this matter.

A list of works divided according to their evacuation sites was published in the Music Library Association Journal: Notes (Richard S. Hill, Sept. 1946). While the article makes fascinating reading, especially in retrospect, his short list of works gives no indication of the true extent of the numbers involved. Almost 20 years later, the Neue Mozart Ausgabe in Stiftung Mozarteum, 1964, listed 129 manuscripts as missing. Even today, when the story is out in the open, only some unofficial lists exist. One of these was given to pianist Malcolm Frager “in strictest confidence” quite some time before any official announcement was made. Yet as late as 1975 the Polish Ministry of Culture reported that it failed to find anything at all.

By 1968 there was considerable pressure mounting from within and without Poland to reveal the whereabouts of the manuscripts. There had been timid leaks from the small number of people in the know, some of whom felt the burden of responsibility for keeping this secret from scholars and musicians worldwide. The Benedictine monks at Grißau had been expelled to West Germany. One of them, Father Lutterott, later confided on his death-bed that in May 1947 he saw a convoy of trucks take away the crates that lay hidden partly in the organ loft of their monastery and partly behind the altar of the parish church, all through the war years. According to Nigel Lewis, shortly after the war a “visiting Polish commissioner” begged Father Schachter (their abbot) not to reveal to the Russians the existence of the crates of the monastery (ibid, p.134).

Since the beginning of the war Polish intellectuals had witnessed in horror the wanton destruction of their national heritage by the Nazis. They took away everything of national or artistic value that was portable, and were systematically destroying the rest. A Polish refugee in London, Karol Estreich, had been librarian of the Jagiellonian University in Kraków. He was the last of three generations to serve that institution, the entire faculty of which, including Karol’s father, suffered deportation and eventually death at Dachau concentration camp.
An excerpt from a discarded "bravura" passage to the third movement of Concerto No. 4.

He was so successful in this effort that eventually it was Whitehead, the biologist, who was chosen to be notified in March 1977 by a letter from the Yagiellonian University Library, acknowledging the existence of the Berlin Library materials at that institution. The government was to make the official announcement shortly. After the usual suspenseful delay, the announcement was made, followed by an official visit in May of the Polish head of state, Edward Grel, to East Berlin, at which three red boxes containing seven of the autographs from the collections were offered as gifts to the DDR. They included most of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony (the end of the finale was returned to West Berlin by the French), and his Third Piano Concerto, Mozart's Jupiter Symphony and The Magic Flute. In September 1979 Mr. Whitehead was invited to Kraków to see his fish (it was a herring). A small story had been sent out to the news services giving a sketchy and somewhat confused description of the news (NY Times article 1977), not much different from the previous ones that had proved untrue.

In 1981, at about the time Nigel Lewis was publishing his book, I was told by a composition student of the Polish composer Krzysztof Penderecki, then visiting professor at Yale, that the MSS were in Poland, possibly in Warsaw. The Polish composer was a member of a commission which had voted to make them available to visiting musicologists but not to return any more copies to Germany. I eventually learned from a Yale graduate student, Robert Beaser, the true location of the manuscripts. They were, of course, at the Yagiellonian University Library in Kraków. But it was still not at all certain that the violin concertos were a part of the find. Meeting a friend in London who, by chance, was leaving for Kraków the next day, was an opportunity to find out. As it happened, the concertos were there, but it took another three years before all the elements of the complete surviving manuscripts of Mozart written for solo violin and orchestra were together, on clear, first-generation microfilm: the five concertos, K374, 211, 216, 218, and 219, the Adagio in E K261 and the Rondo in Bb K261a. (The MS of a Rondo in C major K373 has been missing for over a century.) One of the concertos microfilms was held up all that time by the imposition of martial law, connected with the "Solidarity" movement, demonstrating how fragile the survival of these irreplaceable objects continues to be. That is one of the reasons we could breathe a sigh of relief when, two years after martial law was lifted, the facsimile volume (see review) was finally published. The 850 numbered copies were as many assurances that Mozart's handwriting will survive.

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