

CONCERT PROPOSAL

World premiere of a newly discovered keyboard concerto by

JOSEF MYSLIVECEK (1737-1781)



Known to many as 'il divino Boemo', Josef Myslivecek was a close friend and mentor of Mozart who lived a lifestyle so scandalous that he shocked Wolfgang Amadeus himself at times. He enjoyed great success on the international stage, both as an operatic and a symphonic composer, and was well established in his career when he met the young Mozart in Bologna in 1770. Myslivecek helped Mozart secure engagements and became a role model to him, both personally and musically. He is the most mentioned composer in the Mozart correspondence and the only one of whom Mozart spoke with affection and respect. Myslivecek contracted syphilis later in life and lost his nose during the course of a botched operation intended to cure his venereal disease. After deceiving Mozart's father in a business transaction, Myslivecek and the Mozart family became estranged and Myslivecek ultimately died disfigured and in poverty.

While many of Myslivecek's works fell into obscurity after his death, there was a strong move to revive his output during the twentieth century and there are now numerous recordings of his symphonies, operas, string quartets, wind octets and other chamber music. His concertos for violin, cello and flute are widely played and his second concerto for keyboard in F major is frequently broadcast on Czech radio. The first keyboard concerto in B flat major, however, has never been published and there is no record of it being performed.

Pianist Clare Hammond recently acquired a copy of the only known manuscript of the keyboard concerto in B flat major which she has typeset, creating orchestral parts and composing cadenzas. She is keen to premiere the work with the Aurora Orchestra. The concerto itself should be of great interest both to Mozart aficionados and to the general public. In the event of a premiere, it should be possible to secure feature articles in classical music magazines and radio coverage, either on BBC Radio 3 or Classic FM.

The concerto is in 3 movements and lasts 12 minutes in total. It could be programmed with other works by Myslivecek including:

- One of his 45 symphonies, most of which last between 8 and 15 minutes.
- Violin Concerto in C major (13') or Violin Concerto in F major (19'30)
- Flute Concerto in D major (18')
- Cello Concerto in C major (19'30)
- One of his 3 Wind Octets, lasting between 8 and 15 minutes. These are widely regarded as some of the finest examples of 18th-century wind ensemble music.
- One of his many Wind Quintets, lasting between 4 and 9 minutes.

Most of these works have been recorded and are available through the Naxos Music Library. A performance of the flute concerto with Ana de la Vega and the ECO is available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=8lMag2ehtic

Alternatively, Myslivecek's keyboard concerto in B flat major could stand alongside a concerto by Mozart. Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 5 in D major K. 175 is the first wholly original concerto that Mozart wrote and was composed just three years after he met Myslivecek in Bologna, when he was still very much under the musical influence of the older composer. The two works complement each other beautifully.

"I know what Myslivecek's sonatas are like, for I played them in Munich. They are quite easy and pleasing to the ear. I should advise my sister, to whom I send my most humble greetings, to play them with plenty of expression, taste and fire, and to learn them by heart. For they are sonatas which are bound to please everyone, which are easy to memorise and very effective when played with the proper precision".

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART
in a letter to his father, 13 November 1777

"There is no other composer in his entire life for whom Mozart expressed such affection."

DANIEL FREEMAN
Scholar and biographer of Myslivecek

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