

W.A. Mozart, *Concerto for flute and orchestra No. 1 in G major, K.313*



The Concerto for flute No. 1 is divided into three movements:

1. **Allegro maestoso**
2. **Adagio ma non troppo**
3. **Rondo: Tempo di Menuetto**

The piece is scored for orchestral strings, two oboes (which are replaced with two flutes in the Adagio movement), and two horns. It is approximately 24 minutes long.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (27 January 1756 – 5 December 1791), was a prolific and influential composer of the Classical era. He composed over six hundred works, many acknowledged as pinnacles of symphonic, *concertante*, chamber, piano, operatic, and choral music. He is among the most enduringly popular of classical composers.

Commissioned by the Dutch flautist Ferdinand De Jean in 1777, Mozart was supposed to provide four flute quartets and three flute concerti, yet he only completed two of the three concerti: K. 313 being the first. The work was probably performed there by Johann Baptist Wendling, the solo flutist of the Mannheim Orchestra.

In respect to the concertos, only one new one was completed, this one in G major. Mozart was able to supply a second one (K. 314) by adapting the Oboe Concerto he had composed two years earlier for the Italian oboist Giuseppe Ferlendis, and De Jean must have known it was not a new work, since the Mannheim oboist Friedrich Ramm had been performing it frequently. An isolated *Andante* in C major (K. 515) was also composed for flute and orchestra at that time, possibly intended for a third concerto, or more likely as an alternative slow movement for the Concerto in G major, whose highly personal and expressive *Adagio* may have been too demanding for De Jean. The flute quartets were not entirely new, either, and there were only four of them, instead of the six De Jean expected. In any event, the notion of "an instrument I cannot bear" is simply not borne out in any of these works, and most particularly not in this concerto, which the great Mozart scholar Alfred Einstein described as having been "written *con amore* from beginning to end."

The aforementioned *Adagio* is surely the crown of the work, but the vivacious outer movements are fully worthy of it. The very substantial opening movement (*Allegro maestoso*) would suggest that writing for the flute was the very stimulus Mozart needed to give of his best, while the concluding Rondo (*Tempo di menuetto*) is, in Einstein's words, "a veritable fountain of good spirits and fresh invention."