

W.A. Mozart, *Concerto for piano and orchestra No. 24, K. 491*



The Piano Concerto No. 24 in C minor, K. 491 is a *concertante* work composed in the winter of 1785–1786 and completed on 24 March 1786. The premiere was on 7 April 1786 at the Burgtheater, Vienna.

The concerto has the following three movements:

1. Allegro
2. Larghetto
3. Allegretto (Variations)

It is scored for flute, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani and strings and is approximately 30 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.

Of the Mozart piano concertos, this one has the most complete scoring. (It is the only one scored for both oboes and clarinets.) It is also the only late Mozart piano concerto in which the soloist plays after the cadenza in the first movement, here adorning an orchestral argument based on the extremely chromatic opening theme of the work with arpeggios, all the way through to the quiet close. It is one of only two minor-key piano concertos (the other being No. 20 in D Minor), and one of only three concertos where the first movement is in 3/4 time (the others being No. 11 and No. 14).

Long considered to be one of Mozart's greatest works, Arthur Hutchings has described it to be the most "concerted" of all the concertos (i.e. the most integrated). Girdlestone has also effectively claimed it as the greatest. Ludwig van Beethoven took particular inspiration for his own music from this concerto. Richard Strauss played his own cadenza for the concerto in 1885.

The work has obvious musical antecedents in Joseph Haydn's Symphony No. 78, also in C minor and from which the Concerto's opening statement is drawn. The concerto was first published in parts in 1800. The manuscript of the concerto resides at the Royal College of Music. Johann Nepomuk Hummel, Mozart's gifted pupil, transcribed the work for solo piano and even wrote his own cadenza for it.