

Quintet in G minor, K. 516 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

The C major and G minor quintets that call for a second viola are products of 1888, the third-last year of Mozart's life. Because of their key signatures and corresponding content, they are inevitably compared with his two final symphonies. There, however, the order is reversed: one moves from the darkness of the G minor to the heroic exuberance of the *Jupiter*. Attempts are made to explain the gravity of K. 516 through the illness of the composer's father, who died only days after its completion, or through poverty (although others assert that Mozart was doing quite well at this time). It is perhaps best to take the quintet at face value and turn to Alfred Einstein's movingly poetic description of the work. "What takes place here," Einstein wrote 60 years ago, "can be compared perhaps only with the scene in the Garden of Gethsemane. The chalice with its bitter potion must be emptied, and the disciples sleep. Compare the rare movements in the minor in Haydn, who cannot bring himself to remain in gloomy darkness, but writes the recapitulation in the major; Mozart concludes the exposition in the relative major, but in the recapitulation returns inexorably to the minor. There is no escape. And the *Minuet* says nothing else but: 'Not as I will, but as thou wilt.' In the *Trio* a ray of divine consolation falls from the clouds, but the return to the main section is of course inevitable. The *Adagio non troppo* is a prayer—the prayer of a lonely one surrounded on all sides by the walls of a deep chasm: the many 'solos,' the enharmonic change before the return to the tonic, are symbolic. The final movement is introduced by a kind of darkly heroic cavatina of the first violin and then turns to G major, but it is the disconsolate major that Mozart utilizes in so many of his last works. The theme of this *Rondo* seems somewhat too trivial to serve as the resolution of the three preceding movements, and creates a slight shock each time it reappears after the 'episodes.'" K. 516 is, Peter Hugh Reed posits, "a sonata tragica."

—Program notes by Andreas Anderswo

String Quintet in C Major

Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf was a violinist and composer of instrumental music and of light operas—these operas established the form of the *singspiel* (a comic opera) in the German language. A brilliant child violinist, Ditters played regularly at the age of 12 in the orchestra of Prince von Sachsen-Hildburghausen and later in the orchestra of the Vienna opera. He became friendly with the composer Christoph Gluck and accompanied him in 1761 to Bologna, Italy. There, Ditters gained considerable celebrity with his violin playing. In 1765, he became director of the orchestra of the bishop of Grosswardein and wrote for it his first opera, *Amore in musica* ("Love in Music"). His first oratorio, *Isacco* ("Isaac"), was also written during this time. Ditters was one of the earliest composers of the Viennese Classical school. His symphonies, which are often of great interest, display many elements reminiscent of Haydn, including a pleasing wit, asymmetrical phrases and folklike material. His violin concerti are worthy of study, and his concerti for harp, flute, harpsichord, double bass and other instruments are performed and recorded. As an opera composer, Ditters is chiefly remembered for his lighthearted and sometimes sentimental singspiels.

Duo for Violin and Piano

Aaron Copland was an American composer, composition teacher, writer on music, and conductor, who was instrumental in forging a distinctly American style of composition. He is best known for his works from the 1930s and 1940s, including *Appalachian Spring*, *Billy the Kid*, *Rodeo* and *Fanfare for the Common Man*, which were written in a deliberately accessible, populist style. His Duo for Violin and Piano, transcribed by the composer at the request of the Juilliard Quartet's Robert Mann from a version for flute and piano, combines this same sense of vernacular with a more modern aesthetic, at times dreamy and hypnotic, at times rhythmic and vital.

Spiegel im Spiegel

Spiegel im Spiegel, composed in 1978, shortly before Pärt left Estonia, is an ethereal lullaby. It moves at an unvarying pace and is built from the simplest of musical materials: a continuous broken-chord pattern, subject to only the most subtle harmonic shifts, in the right hand of the piano; bell tones, deep in the bass and high in the treble, for the left hand and long-held notes moving by fundamental intervals in the viola. There is not a single chromatic note in the entire work. The title of *Spiegel im Spiegel*—"Mirror in the Mirror"—suggests the additive growth of its viola line, which moves progressively from three initial notes—one above and one below the pitch A, the work's gravitational center—to ultimately encompass complete scale sequences, much as facing mirrors create a perpetually expanding visual image. —Program notes by Richard Rodda