

Analysis of mozart's string quintet no. 3

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Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart Quintet No. 3 in C major, K. 515 Andrew McGuire
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Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was a prodigy of his time, and arguable the greatest of all time. This paper will discuss an analysis of his third-string quintet in C major, K. 515. Through this piece in Sonata Form, we will dissect the exposition, the development, the recapitulation, and the coda; along with an analysis of the quintet, we will briefly discuss parts of Mozart's life, as well as look at the background of the Viola Quintet No. 3 in C Major, K. 515.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born into a musical family after his sister Nannerl, by his father and mother Leopold and Anna Maria. His beginnings would originate in Salzburg, Austria (Eisen). As much is known about the education of little Wolfie we see that his father Leopold is responsible (Jeffery). We also discover that it was not just his musical education that concerned his father but other areas as well, such as arithmetic, reading, writing, and literature (Eisen). Much is not known about the mother of Mozart. She was born into a middle-class non-musical family.

His father, on the other hand, was an accomplished musician and teacher born into life as a choirboy. The nearest compositions to Wolfie's K. 515 are a second string quintet K. 516 and one of his better-known Operas Don Giovanni. Taking a short break from Don Giovanni Mozart would set off to write a pair of string quintets. K. 515 and K. 516. Written the age of 31, the better-known two of the pieces is the G minor quintet (K. 516), and the C major quintet (K. 515) is regarded as the finer of the two. Almost a month

would separate the composing of the sister quintets both written for double viola.

During the time of the second quartet would be the passing of his father, and some say that there may be a relation between the key of the g minor and the passing (Christiansen). This dual viola is different for the time, even given that Mozart preferred viola, was seen as odd. The number of his six viola quintets is seen as rare in comparison to the 66 cello quintets written by Boccherini. Even though these quintets maybe rare in amount, many consider them the finest of the string quintet repertoire (Christiansen). The finer of our finest quintets begins in C major. The longest part of the first movement is undoubtedly the exposition.

In the first of the one hundred and thirty-one measures of the exposition, we see our first theme (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Ninety-four measures later we see our second theme (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Throughout the piece, we will see our two themes return continuously in multiple keys. Anytime we see theme one return we see the two lines played between only the first violin and the cello. We see similar segregation for theme two with the first and second violins. The one time we see the violas given a theme to play is in the coda and will be discussed later, this theme we will see is theme two in C major.

Listening further we discover that our development turns out to be the shortest part of the piece (Absil). Theme one reappears again at the beginning of the development section, only this time we see the theme appearing in the dominant of the piece (see Figure 3).

Figure 3

As the development progresses we also see theme two return as well in its original key, the harmonies we see differently, only briefly because it will be what leads us into the recapitulation (see Figure 4).

Figure 4

At the end of our very brief development, we arrive at our recapitulation.

In the recapitulation, we see the return of both of our themes in the tonic key. Throughout the recapitulation we see our theme variations return as well in the tonic key. What is found most notable about the recapitulation is the way it ends. One might assume that it would end on the tonic or dominant, because of its movement to the coda, however, we find the end of the recapitulation as a $vii^{\circ}65/V$ (see Figure 5).

Figure 5

We can argue the beginning of the Coda here because of the bar of rest. This theory separates the two sections allowing us to make a clear observation where one ends and the other begins.

As with codas, we find our final theme in the piece the part proceeding the measure of rest (see Figure 5). Delving deeper into the coda we find theme two reoccurring in the tonic key, this time not segregated by instrument

parts. For the first time in the movement, we see the two viola parts obviously playing what is the theme (see Figure 6), right before we see the second viola briefly mingle with the cello.

Figure 6

After the brief return of theme two between the cello and violas, we end happily on the tonic of the piece. Overall I thoroughly enjoyed this piece.

Not only this piece but also this assignment. It is one thing to sit in class and read about and take notes over the sonata-allegro form. It is completely another to be expected to dive deeper into a piece and try to figure out its innermost workings. As a violist, I also appreciate the fact that Mozart went against the normality of the cello quintet and wrote a viola quintet. The fact he was willing to go against what was expected of him by society makes me respect him as a composer even more. After a glimpse into the life of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, we have discussed his Quintet No. 3 in C major.

Discussed its themes and their placement, as well as briefly the variations of these themes. We also saw a brief glimpse into history around the time that the K. 515 and what could be considered its sister K. 516 were written.

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