



*more than the score...*

W. A. MOZART

Sonata in C major

'Sonata facile' K545

for piano solo

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Presented by Daniel Grimwood

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# Daniel Grimwood

*talks about*

## Mozart's 'Sonata facile' in C major

The word 'sonata' derives from the word *sonare* meaning 'to sound'. Typically, in the Classical period, this would be a work of two or three movements: the first movement in sonata form, meaning that we have two or more contrasting ideas that are then developed and then heard again, followed by slower movements and finishing with a rondo or a minuet or some such.

This piece uses an Alberti bass, which is named after the composer who, even if he didn't invent it, used it very extensively, and it thereafter became stock material for a few generations of composers. It's a brilliant device because it establishes harmony and tonality, and it also gives us a rhythmic drive. It has the energy of repeated chords, but it's smoother and propels forwards.

### Scales and arpeggios

In the first two bars of this sonata, we have a microcosm of the entire journey of the movement. We start in the tonic key of C major. We go to the dominant and we come home again. This first movement also very brilliantly lays out the absolute fundamentals of piano playing: arpeggios and scales. The opening melody is an arpeggio and Mozart uses that to generate other arpeggio flourishes. The second unit of music contains a sequence of scales accompanied by two-voice chords in the left hand.

The scales here must be melodic and they must be played as smoothly as possible. The first thing to think about is how, exactly, we transition the thumb underneath the third finger. Ideally, the movement of the hands should be as smooth as possible. As soon as the thumb has played the first note, it must already be travelling to its next position. That is done through pulling the thumb under and also by moving the wrist outwards. On the way down, similarly,

by moving the hand inwards and bringing the wrist inwards, the fourth finger is already there ready to pass over the thumb. There are no sudden or jerky movements.

You'll also notice that when you play scales like this there is a natural movement of the hand. On the way up, in order for the thumb to move under the fingers, you will arch downwards and outwards. On the way down you'll move inwards and upwards. This is because on the way up the thumb is going under; on the way down the fingers are going over.

We have chords that punctuate the third and fourth beats of the bar underneath the scales and they must be very delicately marked,

*In the first two bars of this sonata, we have a microcosm of the entire journey of the movement* but they should also reveal a hidden chorale underneath. We need to have that harmonic process in our minds when we are playing, particularly to bring out the rather delicious harmony here. The difficulty of the left hand in this section is lightness of the thumb. I think a very good way of practising it is with the thumb held down, first of all, trying to

keep the hand as still and quiet as possible so that the fingers are doing the work. We're trying not to flap the thumb off the keys. We're trying to keep it inside the key so we can control it better.

### Repeats and ornaments

Repeats in a movement such as this, I feel, should most definitely be observed. They affect the architecture of the whole sonata and how

# Sonata in C major

'Sonata facile'

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

K545

**Allegro**

(mf)

tr

5

8

(cresc.)

11

(stacc.)

(f)

(p)

14

tr

17

tr