



C. F. Abel, Concerto E-Dur, S-Skma VO-R, Titelseite
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Unsere Ausgabe

Die Quelle dieses Konzertes befindet sich in Esplunda in Schweden (Stiftelsen Esplunda Arkiv & Bibliotek). Es ist uns nicht gelungen, einen Kontakt zu dieser Bibliothek herzustellen. Eine Kopie der Quelle ist aber in Stockholm in der Musik- und teaterbiblioteket, Musikverket, zugänglich. RISM-Sigel und Signatur dieser Kopie lauten **S-Skma VO-R**, Karteikarte 26408200. Die Quelle besteht aus sieben Einzelstimmen mit insgesamt 40 Seiten.

Der Titel lautet *Concerto Ex E#.* | A. 7. Strom: | *Violino Principale* | *Violino Primo* | *Violino Secondo* | *Cornu Primo* | *Cornu Secondo* | *Alto Viola* | *con* | *Basso* | *Del Sign: Carl Friderich Abel.* Der Kopist ist nicht bekannt. Eine weitere Quelle dieses Konzertes gibt es nicht. In einem Addendum zu Knape's Werkverzeichnis⁵ trägt das Konzert die Nummer WKO 233. In dem geplanten neuen Werkverzeichnis⁴ ist es unter AbelWV F22 verzeichnet.

Unsere Ausgabe folgt der Quelle sehr genau. Bei den Orchesterstimmen haben wir die Artikulation vereinheitlicht und vervollständigt, um die Probenarbeit zu erleichtern. Die Solostimme haben wir im Urtext belassen. Alle unsere Änderungen und Ergänzungen sind im Kritischen Bericht auf S. X aufgeführt oder wie üblich gekennzeichnet: Binde- und Haltebögen sind gestrichelt, sonstige Ergänzungen stehen in eckigen Klammern. Von der Quelle abweichende Vorzeichen stehen in Klammern und Warnungsvorzeichen sind nicht extra gekennzeichnet.

Ich danke Dankwart von Zadow für den Klavierauszug, Michael O'Loghlin für die Einführung und Thomas Fritsch für das Lektorat und die Anregungen zu dieser Ausgabe.

Günter von Zadow
Heidelberg, Februar 2022

Introduction

Abel's Biography and Legacy

Born in Cöthen in 1723, Carl Friedrich Abel's first position was in the Dresden orchestra from about 1743, possibly after studying with J. S. Bach in Leipzig. Probably in 1755, Abel embarked on a long and poorly documented journey, although we do know that he visited the Goethe household in Frankfurt. He arrived in London some time before 5 April 1759, the date of his first concert there. Abel soon became known for his performances on the viola da gamba and the harpsichord, his compositions, and his direction and promotion of concerts. His partnership with Johann Christian Bach commenced in 1763, and two years later they started the

Bach-Abel concert series, which enriched the musical life of London until 1782. During Mozart's visit to London in 1764-5, he was mentored by the two more senior German composers. In 1782 Abel embarked on a trip back to Germany, including a richly rewarded performance for the Prussian crown prince Frederick William. Abel spent the last two years of his life back in London, still active as a musician and a member of fashionable society. In 1787 he died there, and many thought it was the end of an era. His obituary in the *Morning Post* said that "his favourite instrument [the viola da gamba] was not in general use, and would probably die with him"¹ and over 20 years later Goethe remembered him as "the last musician who handled the viola da gamba

¹ Cited in Walter Knape, Murray R. Charters and Simon McVeigh, "Abel, Carl [Karl] Friedrich", *Grove Music Online*, ed. Laura Macy [http://www.grovemusic.com].

with success and applause.”² Abel’s contemporary, the famous music historian and commentator Charles Burney, remarked that Abel’s “invention was not unbounded, and his exquisite taste and deep science prevented the admission of whatever was not highly polished.”³

Abel’s formative years coincided with the “new simplicity” or *galant* revolution: counterpoint became less significant, melody became simpler, and symmetry gained significance at all levels, from motives and phrases to entire movements. Unlike today, the public wanted new music; but like today, they wanted to be able to understand and respond to it without too much effort. The new style was driven by Italian opera and symphony composers. Abel’s colleague J. C. Bach would have learned it during his seven years working in northern Italy. Abel never went to Italy, but his first position was as a member of the Dresden court orchestra, which was directed by Johann Adolph Hasse, who had studied and worked successfully in Italy, and brought the Italian style back to Dresden.

Perhaps no eighteenth-century composer is now in as much need of a reassessment as Abel. The forthcoming catalogue of his works⁴ will contain about 400 entries, of which only 233 are listed in the 1971 catalogue by Walter Knappe.⁵ Apart from the works for viola da gamba, the newly discovered works mainly have been found in various German collections, and are thought in general to date from Abel’s early years in Germany, before he left for London. Abel was prolific in the three most significant instrumental forms, symphony, concerto and sonata, and also wrote many short single-movement pieces. The concerto is the least represented instrumental form, with 29 works, not all of which have survived. There are eleven surviving flute concertos, making it his most favoured concerto solo instrument; his other concertos are for keyboard, violin, cello, horn, viola da gamba, and oboe.

Abel’s Concerto Form

In 1711 Vivaldi published his famous collection of concertos, *L’estro armónico*, op. 3. These revolutionary works became the model for successive generations, especially German composers, and their influence can be traced through to Mozart’s mature

concertos. It is easy to see how Abel, immersed in the Italianate style of the Dresden court orchestra, became an early adopter of the new form. The Germans were generally less flexible in their interpretation of the genre than Vivaldi himself. They adhered strictly to the now familiar three-movement form, in which two outer fast movements in the tonic key flank a central slow movement in a related key. Each movement is built on the ritornello principle: the movement commences and ends with a ritornello comprising a strong statement of one, or usually more, themes by the full orchestra, contrasting with the intervening solo sections or episodes, in which the soloist is accompanied much more lightly. The most generally popular variant has four ritornellos and three solos, but in the outer Allegro movements, Abel often employs the five-ritornello, four-solo form. An important structural characteristic of the form as employed by Abel and most of his contemporaries is that the ritornellos are harmonically stable, while the episodes provide the necessary modulations away from, and then back to the tonic. Solos will be interrupted by orchestral interjections of brief motives from the ritornello.

It is worth emphasising that Abel and his compatriots used the ritornello form for all three concerto movements. These movements are not in sonata form, but irrespective of the number of sections, they can be notionally mapped against the three large parts of that form. The first part, or exposition, comprises the first ritornello and the first solo, which modulates to the dominant or the relative major. The central part would become the development in sonata form, but here there is no working over or developing of the themes presented in the exposition. Instead, new and contrasting ideas are introduced. As in a development section, it is here that the harmony reaches its greatest distance from the tonic; but in Abel’s concertos that is not very far, usually the minor third or sixth degree in a major-key movement. The recapitulation usually occurs at the second-last ritornello in both four-ritornello and five-ritornello forms; after this, the harmony remains bound to the tonic.

Theorists of the later part of the eighteenth century give two distinct and potentially conflicting

² Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Aus meinem Leben: Dichtung und Wahrheit*. (München: Wilhelm Goldmann Verlag, 1961).

³ Charles Burney, *A General History of Music from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period* (London 1776–1789). Qtd in Knappe, Charters and McVeigh.

⁴ Günter von Zadow, *Catalogue of Works of Carl Friedrich Abel (AbelWV)*, forthcoming, planned for 2023.

⁵ Walter Knappe, *Bibliographisch-thematisches Verzeichnis der Kompositionen von Carl Friedrich Abel (1723–1787)* (Cuxhaven, 1971).

purposes which the concerto serves: to show the virtuosity of the soloist, and to depict a dialogue between two different characters. Heinrich Christoph Koch's rhetorical ideal describes Abel's concertos well. He makes a rather beautiful and very appropriate analogy with the ancient Greek tragedy,

"... where the actor expressed his feelings not to the audience but to the chorus, which however became involved in the action down to the last detail, and at the same time had the right to take part in the expression of feelings."⁶

Cadenzas

In both the first and second movements of this concerto, at the end of the final solo section, there is a fermata marked over a six-four chord. As always, this signals the need for an improvised or prepared cadenza at this point. As with many aspects of eighteenth-century music, our most informative source of information on the cadenza is provided by Quantz.⁷ It is worth remembering that despite its title, Quantz's book is a treatise for the amateur not just on flute playing but also on all aspects of performing, understanding and appreciating music. The chapter on cadenzas gives advice for both singers and instrumentalists. After stating twice that cadenzas have developed through free inspiration and without rules, Quantz proceeds to give a quite alarming number of rules for constructing them. The most famous of these is that singers and wind players must complete their cadenza in one breath, whereas cadenzas for stringed instruments can be as long as the player wishes, although here also, short and sweet is better than long and annoying. Quantz also says that cadenzas are appropriate only in slow movements or serious fast movements; he gives a list of unsuitable fast movement time signatures, which includes every one except C and 4/4. This means in effect that cadenzas belong only in first and second movements, not in bright finales. This advice is clearly relevant to this concerto: the first two movements require cadenzas, but the third movement does not, and any cadenza there would serve only to interrupt the cheerful flow of the music. Quantz also advises that the cadenza should flow from the main *affect* of the movement, and include some of the pleasing melodic ideas of the movement.

This concerto

Walter Knappe was apparently aware of the existence of this work, but was unable to locate it where he was seeking around Berlin, until he was advised in 1977 that a manuscript source had been found in a country estate in Sweden.⁸ It is difficult to date Abel's many unpublished works, but this seems to have hallmarks of a later work, possibly written in the 1780s during Abel's time in Berlin and Potsdam. Whereas the concertos known to date from Abel's early German period do not require horns, this one does. These would have been easily available in Berlin, but also in London during Abel's time there. Abel's harmonic conservatism has been mentioned above, but a review of some early and late sonatas seems to suggest that his later works are more daring in this respect. The solo part is quite virtuosic, has a wide range of over three octaves from g sharp on the G string up to c sharp⁹, and there are also subtleties in the articulation markings which might suggest composition later in the century.

One of the more compelling indications that this is a late work is found in the structure of the **first movement**, which is closer to the ritornello/sonata form hybrid exemplified by Mozart's concertos than Abel's early concertos. There are four ritornellos and three solos. As in the classical or Mozartian form, we have here in the first ritornello (or orchestral exposition) identifiable first and second subjects rather than a collection of ideas, and these subjects are then repeated in the first solo (or solo exposition), the second subject appearing in the dominant, as expected. At this point Abel reverts to his earlier plan. The second ritornello is an abbreviated repeat of the first, in the dominant. The second solo makes only a fleeting reference to the first subject (two notes a fourth apart, in bars 105 and 107) and quotes a brief motive from the second subject (bars 117–120). There is therefore no sense of a true development section, but rather a fertile collection of new ideas. However, the recapitulation, which occurs here at the third solo, returns to the Classical model. If this is indeed a late work, it would have been written up to a decade after Mozart's five violin concertos. We have no evidence that these works were performed in London or that Abel knew them,

⁶ Koch, Heinrich Christoph, *Versuch einer Anleitung zur Composition*, 3 vols (Leipzig: Böhme, 1782–93, facs. rep. Hildesheim: Olms, 1969), p. 332.

⁷ Quantz, Johann Joachim, *On Playing the Flute*, trans. Edward R. Reilly, 2nd ed (London: Faber and Faber, 1985), Chapter 15.

⁸ Walter Knappe, „Nachträglicher Fund zur Karl-Friedrich-Abel-Gesamtausgabe“, *Musikforschung* (32) 1979, p. 419–421.

but he was certainly aware of the latest trends, and could be expected to adapt his style accordingly.

In this movement the first subject is typically strong and forthright, but the second subject (bar 15) is unusual, even idiosyncratic, and deserves some discussion. A rising pattern based on the diminished seventh chord is played in thirds by the two violin sections, and answered by the viola and bass descending in thirds. It seems a little gauche, but Abel must have liked it, as it appears frequently throughout the movement. Its appearance in the first solo (bar 66) seems well disguised: melodically, it retains only the overall rising shape and the implied diminished harmony, but the descending lower strings answer, now played by the violin sections, shows that this is indeed the same subject. In the recapitulation it reappears in close to its original form at bar 178.

The **second movement** has four ritornellos, all except the final one commencing with the first theme. The first ritornello is quite long for an Abel slow movement. The recapitulation occurs at the third ritornello (bar 69); the third and fourth ritornellos together form an abbreviated repeat of the first, interrupted in bar 72 by the third solo and later, the cadenza. The movement is a typically expressive Abel Adagio, with several dissonances either written out or as appoggiaturas. Abel (or the copyist) has marked every occurrence in the ritornellos of the most dissonant passage (end of bar 10) forte, echoing the rule articulated by C.P.E. Bach and others that dissonances must be played stronger than the following consonance.

Vivace is a very frequent tempo marking for Abel's **final movements**, and it is today probably the most misunderstood eighteenth-century tempo marking. Whereas the famous Maelzel metronome, and the understanding of modern musicians, place Vivace as a tempo considerably faster than Allegro and only one step below Presto in speed, in the eighteenth century this was not the case. Those historical treatises which give a hierarchy of tempo markings invariably place Vivace as slower than Allegro. With the exception of two gavottes, Abel's Vivace finales are always in triple time, and almost always based on the minuet, at least initially. There are even two sonatas in which the finale is marked

with both "Vivace" and "Tempo di Minuetto," either in different sources or the same source.⁹ As with this concerto, such movements normally begin with one or two four-bar phrases which are characteristic of this dance, then expand on and diverge from this pattern, so as to create a more substantial sonata or concerto movement. Every section of this movement begins with the same four-bar theme, except the second solo (bar 99) and the final ritornello (174) which is in effect a resumption of the third. This movement contains a rare exception to the rule that ritornellos are harmonically stable: the third ritornello (bar 130) modulates from C sharp minor back to E major, and the tonic recapitulation happens at the third solo (142) instead of Abel's more usual choice of a ritornello. Perhaps the most impressively virtuosic passage is found at bar 152 in the final solo; but this is easier than it sounds, due to Abel's judicious use of the open strings.

As always with Abel and his German contemporaries, appoggiaturas are ubiquitous and essential to the style. It is worthwhile to consider the quite clear and relevant instructions on appoggiaturas from Quantz and C.P.E. Bach: they are played on the beat, taking time from the following note; if the note is dotted, the appoggiatura takes two-thirds of its value.¹⁰ Both authors mention the special case where a note with an appoggiatura is followed by a rest. Here, the appoggiatura takes the value of the main note, and the main note is moved into the rest, thereby abolishing it. This type of appoggiatura is found in all three movements of this concerto. This last rule seems difficult to accept for many musicians, and as always, its observance or not is up to the performers.

Conclusion

It is no coincidence that the name Mozart has appeared in this introduction. During his time in London, Mozart copied Abel's Symphony in E flat, op.7 no.6, which was long thought to be Mozart's own work. Abel's style shows surprising similarities to Mozart's: above all, the apparently endless resource of charming melodies. With their skilful use of passing dissonances, many of Abel's melodies are quite similar to Mozart's. As an innovator, neither composer ranks with the older C. P. E. Bach or the

⁹ Abel, Sonata no. 6 in E minor from *Six Easy Sonatas* [sic] (Heidelberg: Güntersberg, 2005), G063; Abel, *Suonata per il Violino Solo e Cembalo in G major* (Heidelberg: Güntersberg, 2019), G350.

¹⁰ Quantz, Chapter 8. Bach, Carl Philipp Emanuel, *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments*, trans. William J. Mitchell, (London: Cassell, 1949), Chapter 2, Part 2.

younger Beethoven, and Abel even less so than Mozart. Both composers have a charming facility to introduce new and unexpected themes into their development and solo sections. In the area of harmony, Abel is again the more cautious composer, rarely venturing outside the circle of closely related keys. This is not meant to suggest that Abel is merely a pale imitation of Mozart. Like any significant composer, he has some aspects in common with his contemporaries, and some which are uniquely his own; and all of them are well worth finding and enjoying.

Michael O’Loughlin
Brisbane, February 2022

Our Edition

The source of this concerto is in Esplunda in Sweden (Stiftelsen Esplunda Arkiv & Bibliotek). We did not succeed in establishing contact to this Library. However, a copy of the source is accessible in Stockholm at the Musik- och teaterbiblioteket, Musikverket. The RISM siglum and shelfmark of this copy are **S-Skma VO-R**, index card 26408200.

The source consists of seven separate parts with a total of 40 pages. The title reads *Concerto Ex E#*. | *A. 7. Strom:* | *Violino Principale* | *Violino Primo* | *Violino Secondo* | *Cornu Primo* | *Cornu Secondo* | *Alto Viola* | *con* | *Basso* | *Del Sign: Carl Friderich Abel*. The copyist is not known. There is no other source of this concerto. In an addendum to Knape’s catalogue of works⁵ the concerto bears the number WKO 233. In the planned new catalogue of works⁴ it is listed under AbelWV F22.

Our edition follows the source very closely. In the orchestral parts we have standardised and completed the articulation to facilitate rehearsal work. We have left the solo part in the urtext. All our amendments and additions are listed in the Critical Report or marked as usual: slurs and ties are dotted, other additions are in square brackets. Accidentals differing from the source are in brackets and warning accidentals are not specially marked.

I thank Dankwart von Zadow for the piano reduction, Michael O’Loughlin for the introduction and Thomas Fritzsich for the proofreading and suggestions for this edition.

Günter von Zadow
Heidelberg, February 2022

Kritischer Bericht *Critical Report*

Wir vermerken die Schreibweise des Originals, wenn diese von unserer Edition abweicht. T1 = Takt 1, N1 = Note 1

We indicate the original reading, if it differs from our edition. T1 = bar 1, N1 = note 1

Allegro Moderato T1	Satzbezeichnung <i>movement name</i> in Violino Principale: Allegro ma non Troppo
Allegro Mod. T5 VPrinc+V1+2 N1–4	
Allegro Mod. T10 Cor1	
Allegro Mod. T49 Va	
Allegro Mod. T101 Cor2	
Allegro Mod. T126 VPrinc	

Allegro Mod. T127 B	
Allegro Mod. T145 B	
Allegro Mod. T158 VPrinc N5–8	
Allegro Mod. T160 V1	
Allegro Mod. T169 VPrinc N1–6	
Allegro Mod. T171 V2	
Allegro Mod. T178 Va	
Allegro Mod. T195 VPrinc N5–8	
Allegro Mod. T200 V2 N1–4	
Allegro Mod. T211 Cor1	