

A man with glasses and dark hair, wearing a black shirt, is shown in profile, playing a harpsichord. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting his face and hands against a dark background. The harpsichord is a wooden instrument with a keyboard and a lid that is open.

AAM ACADEMY OF
ANCIENT MUSIC

Mozart's Piano Concertos: completing the cycle

Mozart's Piano Concertos

as you've never heard them before

Today we hail Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart as one of the finest composers ever to have lived and his piano concertos as a pinnacle of classical form in music. But we often lose sight of the fact that during his lifetime Mozart was far better known as a performer than as a composer. Upon his arrival in Vienna in the 1780s, Mozart was the greatest pianist in Europe, a player acclaimed not just for his dazzling virtuosity, but also for his astonishing improvisational abilities.

Determined to recapture Mozart's sense of adventure, the Academy of Ancient Music's founder Christopher Hogwood and the scholar-pianist Robert Levin came together in 1993 to record Mozart's complete works for keyboard and orchestra for the first time ever on period instruments. Levin's interpretation restored improvisation to its rightful place at the heart of each composition. All concertos were recorded with improvised cadenzas, and decorative ornamentation was applied throughout, recreating the approach Mozart would have taken.

Over the course of seven years, Levin and AAM produced eight albums in this style, featuring 17 of Mozart's concertos, a body of work hailed by the *Cambridge Encyclopaedia of Historical Performance* as 'the historical performance movement at its absolute zenith'.

Now more than 20 years since the last release, AAM and Robert Levin are finally completing the cycle with new recordings made over the course of 2021–22. Five albums remain, featuring not only the numbered concertos, but also lesser-known works for keyboard and orchestra, as well as a new discovery and completed fragments.

These new recordings will be released as we approach AAM's 50th anniversary season in 2023–24, and we hope a full set will follow (in collaboration with Decca Records). Upon completion, this will be the first-ever recording of Mozart's complete works for keyboard and orchestra on either modern or historical instruments.

"Levin lives Mozart throughout his entire body, and for every second of the score... he plays the music as if he's writing it himself – for the first time."

Hilary Finch, *The Times*

Robert Levin

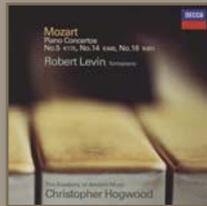
describes the importance of this project

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The cycle of Mozart piano concertos, begun in 1993 with AAM and Christopher Hogwood, is central to my identity as an artist. This was the first cycle to restore the practices of improvisation throughout the concerto, particularly in decoration and cadenzas. The series received highest acclaim in the press and from the listening public, but unfortunately the series remains uncompleted.

Among the works yet to be released are some of the most famous: the concertos Nos. 21 (C major), K467; 24 (C minor), K491; 25 (C major), K503; and 27 (B-flat major), K595, as well as a number of the earlier concertos and those for multiple instruments. The works also include the world premiere of Mozart's recently identified first concerto movement, written when he was eight. This cycle is a central element both in Christopher Hogwood's legacy as founder and leader of the AAM and within my own career, and completing it represents the successful realisation of a project of outstanding significance.

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About Robert Levin

Robert Levin is a renowned pianist, conductor, composer and academic. He has performed throughout the United States, Europe, Australia and Asia on both modern and period instruments with conductors including Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Christopher Hogwood, Sir Charles Mackerras, Bernard Haitink, Sir Simon Rattle, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Nicholas McGegan and Sir Roger Norrington.

Levin has made recordings for labels including Decca, Deutsche Grammophon, Archiv, Philips, ECM, Hänssler, Le Palais des Dégustateurs and Deutsche Harmonia Mundi. These include a Beethoven concerto cycle and the complete Bach harpsichord concertos with Helmuth Rilling, as well as a traversal of the Mozart piano sonatas on Mozart's piano.

Levin has been a passionate advocate for, and student of, Mozart, since he graduated from Harvard University in 1968 with a thesis entitled 'The Unfinished Works of W. A. Mozart'. He has completed a number of Mozart fragments which have been published by Bärenreiter, Breitkopf & Härtel, Carus, Peters and Wiener Urtext Edition.

Levin seeks to re-create the performance practice of the composers' time by improvising cadenzas and shorter embellishments in the composers' style. He also promotes the importance of performing on historical instruments in order to come closer to understanding what the composer intended. "The voyage and discovery of playing on period instruments is to move in a world – physical, emotional and aesthetic – that is inhabited by the geniuses that wrote this music. It brings us very, very close to them."

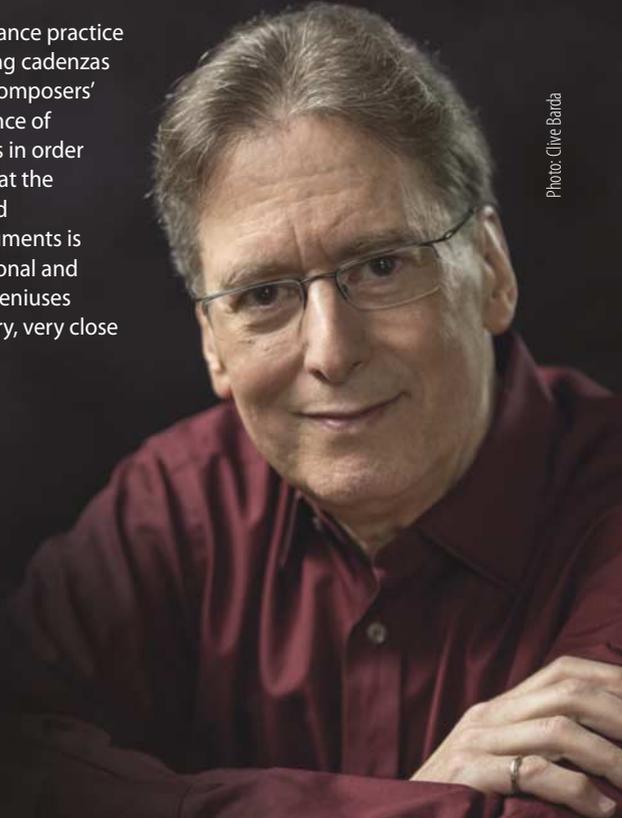


Photo: Clive Barda

Support us

This is an ambitious project, costing £250,000 in total, and we need your support to make it happen. We are offering the opportunity for individual donors to 'sponsor' an element of this initiative:

Robert Levin – £15,000

Richard Egarr (conductor) – £10,000

Additional soloists (additional keyboards, violin and soprano) – £2,000 each

Orchestral musicians – £1,000 - £5,000

Concertos – from £1,500 for a movement to £7,000 for a complete concerto

Cadenzas – £100 - £750

Below are the concertos we will record and the instruments they will be performed on, matching the instruments we believe Mozart would have had available to him at the time of composition:

K107/1 in D
harpsichord

K107/2 in G
harpsichord

K107/3 in E flat
harpsichord

No 5 in D (K175)
version for organ

No 6 in B flat (K238)
tangent piano

No 7 in F (K242)
version for three keyboards:
harpsichord, tangent piano,
fortepiano

No 7 in F (K242)
version for two fortepianos

No 8 in C (K246)
tangent piano

No 10 in E flat (K365)
version for two fortepianos

No 21 in C (K467)
fortepiano

No 24 in C minor (K491)
fortepiano

No 25 in C (K503)
fortepiano

No 27 in B flat (K595)
fortepiano

Aria: 'Ch'io mi scordi di te' (K505)
soprano and fortepiano

Fragment completed by Robert Levin:
Allegro in D (K315f)
fortepiano and violin

Organ Sonata in C (K336)

**Concerto movement in G major from
Nannerl Music Book
(reconstructed by Robert Levin)**
fortepiano

Thank you for your support.

About the AAM

“The rewards are glorious, with Egarr driving the delightfully clean and springy rhythms, every detail sharply defined, each separate timbre there for us to enjoy.”

The Guardian

The mission of the Academy of Ancient Music (AAM) is to explore, preserve and reveal the great treasure house of baroque and classical music. Using historically-informed techniques, period-specific instruments and original sources, we bring music vividly to life in committed, vibrant performances for a global audience.

AAM's programme of concerts and recordings is varied, ranging from music by celebrated composers Bach, Beethoven, Monteverdi and Mozart, to lesser-known and newly rediscovered works. In a typical year, AAM performs 50 concerts in the UK and overseas, reaching more than 25,000 in the concert hall, 125,000 via live-streaming and social media, and 1.5 million through radio broadcasts.

AAM boasts the largest online audience of any historically-informed orchestra in the world, with over a million monthly listeners on Spotify and a digital back-catalogue of over 300 albums from our 48 year history.

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