Wolfgang Mozart  
Born January 27, 1756, Salzburg, Austria.  
Died December 5, 1791, Vienna, Austria.

**Symphony No. 36 in C Major, K. 425 (Linz)**

Mozart composed this symphony sometime after he arrived in Linz on October 30, 1783, and before the premiere there on November 4. The score calls for pairs of oboes, bassoons, horns, and trumpets, with timpani and strings. Performance time is approximately twenty-seven minutes.

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra's first subscription concert performances of Mozart's *Linz* Symphony were given at Orchestra Hall on October 24 and 25, 1913, with Frederick Stock conducting. Our most recent subscription concert performances were given on February 28, March 1, 2, and 5, 2002, with David Robertson conducting. The Orchestra first performed this symphony at the Ravinia Festival on July 10, 1948, with Fritz Busch conducting, and most recently on July 19, 1980, with Kazuhiro Koizumi conducting.

The Chicago Symphony recorded Mozart's *Linz* Symphony in 1954 under Fritz Reiner for RCA. A 1977 performance under Carlo Maria Giulini is included in *From the Archives, volume 9: A Tribute to Carlo Maria Giulini*.

Linz, the capital of Upper Austria and now a large industrial center straddling the banks of the Danube, has given its name to a torte of jam, cloves, cinnamon, and almonds, as well as to this symphony by Mozart. The origins of the Linzer torte are long forgotten. The symphony is better documented, though no amount of information can explain how such impeccable music arose from such unfavorable conditions.

In July 1783, after some deliberation, much procrastination, and several false starts, Mozart and his new wife Constanze set off for Salzburg so that Constanze could meet Leopold Mozart, the man who had carefully arranged virtually everything in his son's life except for this marriage. Although Constanze would later destroy all the letters documenting Leopold's anger at his son's wedding, there was no getting around the strain of living under the same roof for several weeks that summer and autumn. For Constanze it was tedious and miserable; for Wolfgang it was, ultimately, more material for the operas in which he would make something timeless and surpassingly beautiful of human frailty.

On October 26 Constanze sang the high-flying soprano solos in her husband's great C minor mass when it was performed for the first time in Salzburg's Saint Peter's Abbey. The next day, at 9:30 in the morning, Constanze and Wolfgang left Salzburg for Vienna, by way of Linz. Although they were both probably relieved to say goodbye to Leopold and Nannerl (Wolfgang's beloved sister who would later write that her brother had "married, against his father's will, a girl not at all suitable for him"), Wolfgang couldn't resist writing to his father from Linz on October 31, recounting their arrival there the preceding day:

_When we reached the gates of Linz . . . , we found a servant waiting there to drive us to Count Thun's, at whose house we are now staying. I really cannot tell you what kindnesses the family are showering on us. On Tuesday, November 4, I am giving a concert in the theater here and, as I have not a single symphony with me, I am writing a new one at break-neck speed, which must be finished by that time. Well, I must close, because I really must set to work._

Understandable words, for between October 30 and November 4, Mozart had to write a new symphony, copy the parts for the players, and even find time for the luxury of a rehearsal or two before the evening performance. There's something about the matter-of-fact tone of Mozart's letter—"I have not a single symphony with me," as if he had forgotten to pack an extra pair of socks—that suggests he wasn't daunted by the task he had to undertake. Still, producing a masterwork on short notice is no small
accomplishment, even for a composer as facile (in the sense of fluent, assured, and poised) as Mozart.

We know almost nothing about the November 4 concert except that it took place as scheduled, with an orchestra probably supplied by the Thun family (who also provided Mozart's lodging), and that the new C major symphony apparently was finished in time and performed as planned. Mozart presented it in Vienna the next April, where it was billed as “a quite new grand symphony,” the Linz nickname not yet used to give distinction to the town of its birth.

Nothing in the music suggests the haste of its conception. In fact, the opening bars—the first slow introduction in Mozart's symphonies—give the opposite impression: of deliberate, carefully considered music, more deeply serious than customary to open a symphony. (Beethoven is said to have tried to recapture Mozart's achievement at the beginning of a C major symphony he left incomplete before moving on to his First Symphony.) The ensuing Allegro spiritoso is large and ideally proportioned.

The Andante (sometimes mislabeled Poco adagio) admits trumpets and drums into a symphonic slow movement for the first time, lending a mood of tragedy and drama to otherwise gracious and melodic music. Again, Beethoven followed suit—in his First Symphony, in the same key—probably not knowing that Haydn also had begun to include those instruments by then. Haydn's name, in fact, is the one that comes to mind in the minuet and trio, partly because not even Mozart could surpass his older colleague in these traditional forms, although as this music attests, he could still put his stamp on its archaic conventions. (In his next symphony, the Prague, Mozart omits this movement altogether.) The finale, with its unmistakable air of brilliantly wrapping things up—as quickly as possible, or presto, as Mozart dictates—also suggests that Mozart knew his Haydn well and that he was inspired and challenged by this great man whom he would publicly salute, within the year, as his “most dear friend.”

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