

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart 1756 – 1791

According to his sister, Mozart at the age of three would pick out thirds on the family clavier for the pleasure of it. As history shows, he went on to create miracles of sound across every emotion. He was born in Salzburg, Austria in 1756 and began composing as a child, while much of his childhood was spent traveling and performing.

One runs out of superlatives trying to do justice to the quality and originality of his work, and the abundance of output. With his friend Joseph Haydn he ushered in a new era of music – the Romantic era. Anyone learning about his relatively short life must also pay tribute to his resolve and courage. He died, poor, in Vienna, of typhus at the age of 35.

The ('great') G minor Symphony No.40 (1788) is the second last symphony Mozart wrote and is placed with his finest work. This guitar transcription of excerpts was done as an exercise after reading Schoenberg's analysis of them in his Structural Functions of Harmony, one of several very illuminating books he wrote on composition. Mozart has few peers when it comes to this kind of elaborate development.

Of moderate difficulty for the guitarist, the passages are charming played at a pace that suits. They don't need to be played at tempo for the scintillating counterpoint and rich harmonic transformations to be fully revealed. Bar numbers are from the symphonic score.