
The Impact of the Mozartean Cadenza from the Classical Era to the Romantic Era: A Case Study of K. 466

Jessica Carter

Classical music scholars acclaim the piano concertos of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart as some of the finest instrumental works in Western Music. Generations of musicians, including subsequent compositional masters such as Beethoven, have been influenced by his piano concertos. Compositionally speaking, the structure of his concertos, specifically their first movements, have intrigued many scholars and musicologists, most notably Cuthbert Girdlestone and Arthur Hutchings.¹ Their book became the first of many extensive analyses of the harmonic and melodic structures of Mozart's works. However, according to Vincent C. K. Cheung, few scholars contribute thoughtful attention to Mozart's original piano cadenzas.² This is because several of his original cadenzas were never heard by a public audience because he, himself, considered them to be his own private property. However, he often taught from his own cadenzas—the surviving ones. This is important to note because despite the fact that few of his original cadenzas have survived to the level of concerto as a whole, the ones that did have served as a model for future composers in both their exploration and creation of their own work as well as in extending Mozart's work. This is a concrete example of the impact that Mozart had on his counterparts and thus its significance in the world of classical music.

1 Arthur Hutchings, *A Companion to Mozart's Concertos*. London: Oxford, 1950.

2 Vincent Cheung, "Mozart's Transformation of the Cadenza" 1997.

There have been several cadenzas for Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 20, K. 466 written for the first and third movements by different composers, such as Beethoven, Hummel, Brahms, and C. Schumann. Throughout these works, there is individuality in the stylistic traits of each composer, yet there remains concrete loyalty and respect of the prototypical piano cadenza as presented by Mozart in his original cadenzas. The cadenzas presented in these pieces exercise the harmonic and melodic rules coined from previous concerto compositions and refined by Mozart. By exploring literature written in relation to the specific cadenza for K. 466, this paper will illustrate how Mozart contributed to the evolution of the piano concerto cadenza from the Classical era of music to the Romantic era, in juxtaposition to a standard Romantic-style piano concerto cadenza. Through this research we will see that Mozart's cadenzas have a strong and enduring influence on piano cadenzas as a whole, beyond just the shift from the Classical era to the Romantic era.

The term "cadenza," the Italian word for cadence, is derived from the embellishments presented in classical concerti.³ The state of the cadenza around the year of 1750 was closely linked to the emergence of ritornello form in the concerto and the aria, which was designed to ornament repetitions. However, the function of cadenzas can be traced back further: to intensify the effect of the closing cadence.⁴ Later, the rise of the opera in the late 17th century gave way to the improvised cadenza, which contained non-thematic passages distinct from the cadenza's parent musical work. By the mid-18th century, the primary function of the cadenza was to display the soloist's skill and power at the end of a concerto. Today, the cadenza is defined as a virtuosic musical passage inserted near the end of a concerto movement or aria. This is usually indicated by a fermata over an inconclusive chord, such as the cadential 6-4 chord.⁵

The cadenza was intended to show off the performer's inventiveness, expression, style and skill. Because of this, Classical period cadenzas—although improvisatory in nature—followed specific stylistic characteristics in relation to their length, approach and exit, rhythm, melodic material and harmony. From a theoretical perspective regarding musical form, the cadenza of the Classical period was a harmonic expansion between the tonic 6-4 chord and the dominant 5-3 (root) position chord leading to the final authentic cadence of the movement. This cadence was followed by a short coda or a sequence of codettas. Harmonically, the cadenza did not stray away from its home key. Furthermore, most of the implied harmonies present were tonic, subdominant, or dominant

chords. Melodically, cadenzas consisted of "smaller melodic figures and free meter containing asymmetrical phrases."⁶ According to Johann J. Quantz in his treatise *On Playing the Flute*, "the object of the cadenza is simply to surprise the listener unexpectedly at the end of the piece and to leave behind a special impression on his heart."⁷ However, the strict virtuosity of the early Classical cadenzas are believed to have not satisfied Mozart's stylistic and compositional desires.⁸

In order to examine how Mozart guarantees the cadenza as a crucial component of the concerto as a whole, it is necessary to explore the fundamental structure of the "Mozartean" concerto. According to Cheung, Mozart's compositional design for his concertos has an intimate yet subtle relationship with the structure of the Mozartean cadenza.⁹ The double exposition form in the first movement has the orchestral exposition of the first and second subjects in the tonic key, followed by the solo exposition, which brings the second theme to the dominant key area. The solo exposition usually ends in a trill. After the development, the recapitulation presents themes from the solo exposition, and remains in the tonic key area. The orchestra then concludes the movement by repeating some materials in the orchestral exposition. However, this section is interrupted by the cadenza. The double-exposition form is exceedingly repetitive, and thus Mozart rarely follows this form strictly in his mature concertos.

In Mozart's cadenzas, there exists a problem of consistency from the previous forms presented in concertos prior to Mozart's. There is a lack of balance in the concerto due to the emergence of the cadenza. This went against the ideals of the Enlightenment. The issue of continuity within the form of his cadences is resolved with two strategies: through harmonic and thematic structural variance.¹⁰ Firstly, all quoted materials in the cadenza are cemented together by unrelated passages. Secondly, the order of the quoted material is different from their parent movement. Lastly, the middle section contains more quoted themes while the other two sections are focused around transitions and bravura passages.¹¹ Because of this, quoted thematic materials in the cadenza are reshuffled within a three-part framework.

Conversely, the cadenza has the same underlying principles of construction as its parent movement, which creates a sense of indispensability for the cadenza, as opposed to the semblance of an unnatural insertion at the end of the movement, as was often exemplified by Mozart's contemporaries.¹² This became the most important strategy for inserting

6 Abraham Veinus, *The Concerto*. New York: Dover Publications. 1964.

7 Eva Badura-Skoda, *Interpreting Mozart on the Keyboard*. London, 1962.

8 Philip Whitmore, *Unpremeditated Art – The Cadenza in the Classical Keyboard Concerto*, 1991.

9 Vincent Cheung, "Mozart's Transformation of the Cadenza." 1997.

10 Girdlestone, Cuthbert. *Mozart and his Piano Concerto*. New York: Dover, 1964.

11 Abraham Veinus, *The Concerto*. New York: Dover Publications. 1964.

12 John Corina, "The Cadenza Problem in Classical Concerto Movements." *The Journal of the*

3 Karafotis, Samuel, "The Composition and Performance Practice of the Cadenza in the Classical Era." 2009.

4 Arthur Hutchings, *A Companion to Mozart's Concertos*. London: Oxford. 1950.

5 John Corina, "The Cadenza Problem in Classical Concerto Movements." *The Journal of the International Double Reed Society*. 1975.

a cadenza at the end of a movement of a Mozartean concerto—an ideal exercised by those who would later write their own cadenzas to Mozart's concertos. This ideal can be further investigated regarding his Piano Concerto No. 20, K. 466.

With such composers who were also talented musicians and performers, such as Mozart and Beethoven, the cadenza reached its height as an outlet for unstructured improvisation. The composition of cadenzas for Mozart concertos was entrusted to, in consequence, distinguished pedagogues who did indeed understand how to write brilliantly for their instrument. However, these individuals may not have necessarily understood, as the composer did, how to write music.¹³ The Piano Concerto No. 20 in D-Minor was given its premiere in Vienna, Austria, on February 22, 1785, with Mozart, himself, at the piano as the soloist.¹⁴ According to Cuthbert Girdlestone, the D-Minor Concerto is one of the six late piano concertos for which no written cadenzas by the composer have survived. Unfortunately, his original cadenza is lost.

However, the dark drama and sheer romanticism of Mozart's K. 466 has attracted many composers and pianists to write their own cadenzas for this concerto. Whether to imitate the composer of the concerto or wholly to project one's own musical interpretation onto the cadenza is entirely up to the performer. Ideally, upon studying various 19th-century and 20th-century cadenzas, with an understanding of Mozart's own musical language, musicians are able to gain the crucial skills and artistic muse to combine their own composition with a Classical era masterpiece.

The first published cadenza for this concerto was written by Beethoven in 1795, a decade after Mozart wrote the concerto.¹⁵ Beethoven's cadenzas to the first and last movements of K. 466 are heard more frequently than any other cadenzas. As Beethoven's only cadenzas to a Mozart concerto, the cadenzas are a unique testament to his great admiration for Mozart, as well as his reaction to the concerto itself. The first movement cadenza is unmistakably "Beethovenian." The harmonic language, the register of the keyboard employed, and the overall construction of the cadenza all deviate from Mozartean models. According to Philip Whitmore, "[Beethoven's cadenza] is an instance of developmental treatment rarely encountered in Mozart cadenzas."¹⁶ Although the melodic material is Mozart's, the touch and rhetoric is emphatically Beethoven's. In Richard Kramer's *Cadenza Contra Text: Mozart in Beethoven's Hands*, the author observes, "The struggle inherent in all of Beethoven's music asserts itself from the very beginning." The sudden alterations in register

and the extreme distance between the right and left hands is a Beethovenian stylistic trait that immediately draws the listener to a completely different soundscape.



Example: Beethoven's Cadenza for Mozart Piano Concerto in D-Minor, K. 466, first movement, mm.1-8

Each of the three musical ideas, which make up the ominous opening of the movement, the triplet motive, syncopated triads, and the melody played by the strings is juxtaposed with each other. Beethoven begins in the key of E-flat—the Neapolitan, flat-II. It would have been impossible for Mozart to begin a cadenza in or on the Neapolitan: Whether virtuosic or thematic, his openings tend fundamentally to imply or to prolong the dominant, because that harmony is needed for preparing and leading into his characteristic return to a secondary solo theme in the home key.

Another cadenza considered here was written by Mozart's pupil, Johann N. Hummel, who was both a formidable pianist and composer of his time and is an important figure in understanding some of the musical traditions of the "Mozartean" cadenza.¹⁷ Like all previously discussed cadential compositions, Hummel's cadenza for K. 466 may also be divided into three sections. The introduction and a rather lengthy closing section elaborate the main part of the cadenza, which utilizes the second theme of the movement. This main section, which is preceded by the virtuosic introduction, begins with the sequential statements of the second theme. The theme in D-minor, at first, gives the impression of being a direct quotation from the recapitulation. However, the expectation of the Neapolitan is shortly unrestricted, as Hummel simply transposes the first part of the phrase to G-Minor, C-Major, and then to F-Major in m. 11, as shown in the next example.

International Double Reed Society, 1975

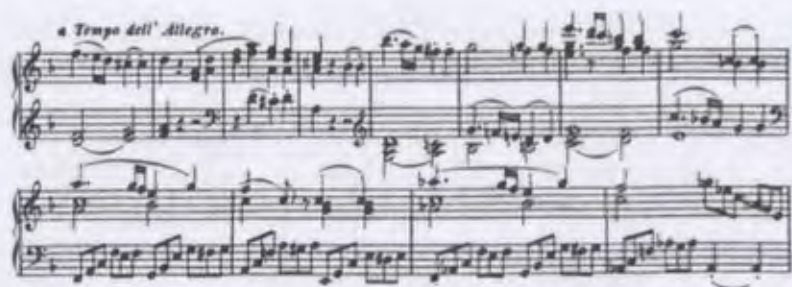
13 Richard A. Kramer, "Cadenza contra text: Mozart in Beethoven's Hands," *19th Century Music*, 1991.

14 Kramer, 127

15 Matthew Bribitzer-Stull, "The Cadenza as Parenthesis: An Analytic Approach," *Journal of Music Theory*, 2006.

16 Bribitzer-Stull, 241.

17 Vincent Cheung, "Mozart's Transformation of the Cadenza," 1997.



Example: Hummel's Cadenza, for Mozart Piano Concerto in D-Minor, K. 466, first movement, mm. 3-14.

What follows in mm. 15-20 originates from the transitional passage played by the soloist in the exposition of the first movement. The increasing movement and agitation of the first section of the cadenza climaxes in a sequence of three diminished seventh chord sequence from m. 31 to 33 (not shown). The cascading arpeggiation of the augmented-sixth chord in m. 34 quickly and unexpectedly relieves the tension built up so far from m. 20. The dominant arrival in m. 36, approached by a long descending bass line, closes the first section and leads to the second section of the cadenza.

Hummel's cadenza is full of excitement and virtuosity. Often, a cadenza presents a musical idea (usually borrowed from the movement), which is rhythmically altered in diminution and harmonically altered in transposition.¹⁸ Often, composers writing for Mozart's work will take a motivic idea and present it within the harmonic sequence of their cadenza composition in order to both complement the parent work and to pay homage to the original composer before adding their own individualistic style to the work. The musical idea that is used may or may not be subject to a note-for-note repetition, and it may also involve harmonic alterations. This compositional technique does not necessarily require smooth harmonic transition, yet it allows for quick movement toward or away from any implied key.

A third example considered by a Romantic era composer is the cadenza written by Clara Schumann for Mozart's K. 466 concerto. The cadenza written and performed by Clara Schumann is, on the surface, similar to Brahms's version—to be discussed later—in the choice of the musical materials quoted, the texture, and the compositional technique employed to present the musical materials. There is little doubt among music theorists that one cadenza was inspired by the other.¹⁹ However, the structure and harmonic balance of the two cadenzas differs significantly regarding their usage of the thematic content. Clara Schumann tends to articulate the beginning of each section by the change of theme, key,

18 Corina, 1975

19 Girdlestone, 56

and overall mood. As a result, she offers a more sectionalized cadenza. Schumann's cadenza tends to build excitement and tension and relax in several places throughout the cadenza, which prevents the work from having an excessive amount of tension.

Her tempo markings, such as *Allegro* and *con bravura*, mark the beginnings of the key change or the thematic materials quoted. After a virtuosic section with broken octaves in the beginning, a descending bass line, A-G-F#-E-D, leads to the B-minor thematic quotation in m. 16. The bass line movement of the first section is shown in the example below. The 16-note tremolo in the left hand accompanies the soloist's second theme from m. 15. The harmony, stable and expected at first, starts to move forward from m. 24. As shown in the example, Schumann fragments the second part of the theme and quickens the harmonic movement.



Example: Clara Schumann's Cadenza for Mozart Piano Concerto in D-Minor, K. 466, first movement, mm. 27-31.

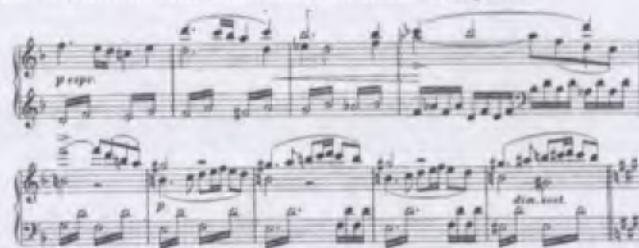
The harmonic urgency accompanied by *accelerando* intensifies with the quotation of the transitional material that follows. Marked *con fuoco* and *fortissimo*, the vigor of the left hand's broken octaves and the dotted rhythm and chords in the right-hand is short-lived, and all quickly simmers down to the sixteenth-note transition in m. 38, where Schumann re-builds drama towards the D-major arrival in m. 44. The triplet arpeggios and the chromatic bass movement (F#-F-E-D#) lead to the next section of the cadenza, which serves to prepare for the final build-up to the end.

As in Brahms's version, the first theme for the soloist is accompanied with ascending arpeggios in the left hand. Using the bass, E, as a dominant pedal point, the tension builds and the figuration creates a sense of improvisation. Rather than relieving the tension as in Brahms's version, the intensity of the pedal point escalates with the chromatic bass movement from E up a perfect fourth to an A.

As mentioned earlier, Johannes Brahms also composed a cadenza for this Mozart concerto. Brahms performed K. 466, himself, in January of 1856 in Hamburg. In his performance, he incorporated his own written

cadenza. Adventurous harmonies throughout the cadenza never sound aimless because of strong bass line support. The themes from the movement are presented in new light without altering their basic elements. In the course of 81 measures, Brahms takes the listeners through a fantasy on the themes related to the movement while retaining his basic sense of counterpoint and structure.²⁰ The cadenza is divided into three sections. The first and closing sections both utilize the soloist's closing material in the exposition and the recapitulation.

Brahms achieves cyclic unity by engaging the same material for both the beginning and the end of the cadenza. The longer middle section from mm. 13-66 quotes a variety of themes from the movement and is emphatically Romantic in tradition with its use of chromaticism and non-harmonic tones. The themes Brahms develops in the middle section of the cadenza subdivide this section into two parts.



Example: Brahms's Cadenza for Mozart Piano Concerto in D-Minor, K. 466, first movement, mm. 13-21

The transitional materials from the movement are used to link one theme of the cadenza to the next. This practice shows Brahms's carefully planned thematic system in connecting his own compositional material to Mozart's.²¹

The first section, from mm. 13 to 35, quotes the second main theme of the movement, accompanied by the nervous energy of a left-hand tremolo.²² The use of rigid repetition of an idea is avoided by Brahms's gradual development of the theme. Set in two-voice counterpoint, the conversation between voices continues to move the harmony in unexpected ways (including a deceptive cadence in m. 15). The previous example shows the technique of inverting and varying the theme.

Within the earlier thematic quotation, Brahms treated the original idea motivically by developing and transforming a fragmented theme: the original phrasal structure in the movement. This thematic quotation therefore contrasts with the earlier iteration, displaying Brahms's

complete mastery in treating a theme in various ways.²³ The thematic quotation continues to expand the harmonic realm, without ever settling in one key. Instead, an ascending arpeggiated left-hand accompaniment appears at the end of the first phrase.

Ironically, several composers continued this tradition in composing cadenzas long after Mozart's death regarding their own music. One is Sergei Rachmaninov in his piano concerto compositions—most notably his Piano Concerto No. 1 in F sharp minor, Op 1. Despite this work having not been written for Mozart nor with Mozart in mind, there are several stylistic traits that are distinctly Mozartean.

The first piano concerto, dedicated to Alexander Siloti—Rachmaninov's cousin—was completed on July 6, 1891. It was the eighteen-year-old Rachmaninov's first work of importance.²⁴ The movement begins with an introduction marked *vivace*. Bassoons, clarinets, and horns present an opening fanfare for two measures. The solo piano enters in measure three with a grand downward octave sweep over the entire keyboard at the fortissimo dynamic level. The octaves lead to a series of dramatic chords in m. 9. Horns, trumpets, and strings join the piano at this point for presentation of material resembling the pianistic style of the C-sharp minor prelude. A cadenza passage in the piano, at m. 13, leads to the presentation of the first subject at m.16.

Part one of the first subject, mm.16-24, is given to the orchestra. First and second violins state the subject. This subject is essentially a two-measure idea. Mm. 16-17 are treated sequentially up a fifth in mm. 18-19. Measure 20 begins a downward sequence. Rachmaninov has given the listener a typically Romantic subject—with its seeming longing for the impossible. A transition marked *vivace* begins in mm. 32. Part one, mm. 32-47, has a special marking of *leggiere*. Accompanied by light chords in the bassoons, clarinets, and strings, the piano is involved with stylistic keyboard jumps. Rachmaninov has borrowed from another mode in this section. Ten measures of an orchestral tutti, the *vivace* theme based on introductory material, lead to a piano cadenza in m. 224.

Like the cadenzas in this study, Rachmaninov's piano cadenza is in three parts. Part one is essentially a brilliant fantasia based on the introduction.²⁵ First subject material appears in mm. 244-252. Part two of the cadenza, centered in D-flat Major, begins in m. 253. Treated in a "Chopin-esque" fashion, this section is a remnant of the *meno mosso* of the transition to the second subject. In the following example, the first subject is shown ending on a fortississimo, at m. 263.

20 Vincent Cheung, "Mozart's Transformation of the Cadenza." 1997.

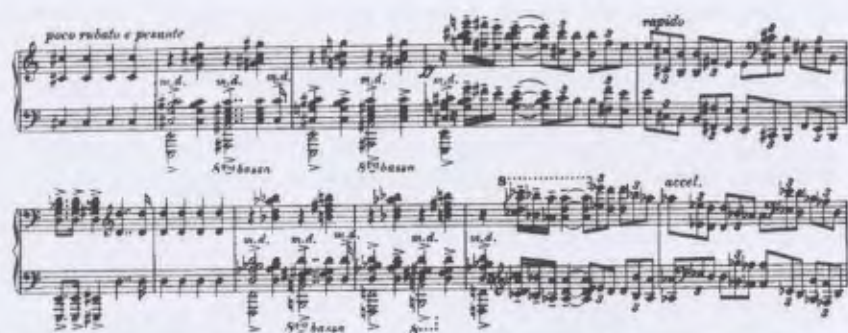
21 Brittizer-Stull, 245.

22 Karafotis, Samuel, "The Composition and Performance Practice of the Cadenza in the Classical Era." 2009.

23 Levin, Robert D., "Instrumental Ornamentation, Improvisation, and Cadenzas," in *Performance Practice: Music after 1600*. 1989.

24 Bertensson, Sergei and Jay Leyda, *Sergei Rachmaninoff: A Lifetime in Music*. Washington Square, New York: New York University Press, 1956.

25 Bertensson, Sergei, 35



Example: Rachmaninov Piano Concerto No. 1, first movement, Cadenza, mm. 224-23

Part three of the cadenza is a maestoso statement of the first subject. The amount of tension created by this section is finally relieved at the vivace of m. 278. In mm. 285-286, the motive from part one of the transition is heard as an accompaniment pattern from m. 290—leading from a piano dynamic level to a fortissimo level at m. 292. A downward scale-like figure from the upper range of the keyboard brings the movement to a conclusion.

As stated before, Mozart treated his cadenzas as his own personal property, as opposed to material for publication. Because of this, there are not many surviving examples of his original cadenzas. However, the fact that so many cadenzas survive that were influenced by Mozart's structure speaks volumes to the influence he had on subsequent composers, despite the fact that composers after Mozart had little original cadential material to go by regarding their own compositions. Because of this, we can view Mozart's cadenzas as a transition between the cadenzas of the Classical period and the Romantic period.

Specifically regarding Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 20, K. 466, there have been a number of different cadenzas written for the first and third movements by different composers. The cadenzas presented for this piece exercise the harmonic and melodic rules coined from previous concerto compositions and refined by Mozart. Mozart's contribution to the evolution of the piano concerto cadenza—and essentially cadenzas as a whole—from the Classical era of music to the Romantic era in juxtaposition to the standard Romantic style piano concerto of Sergei Rachmaninov, is indicative of the timeless influence of Mozart's creative innovations.

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