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Monday Music Memo 35 – 20 November 2023

This is the penultimate issue of Monday Music Memo and I checked back to see whether I had addressed the 'Live, Laugh, Learn' motto of u3a proportionately. Well, I was short of Laugh.

Mozart wrote "A Musical Joke".

Musical Joke (German: *Ein musikalischer Spaß*) K. 522, (Divertimento for two horns and string quartet) is a composition by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. The composer entered it in his *Verzeichnis aller meiner Werke* (*Catalogue of All My Works*) on June 14, 1787. Commentators have opined that the piece's purpose is satirical – that "[its] harmonic and rhythmic gaffes serve to parody the work of incompetent composers" – though Mozart himself is not known to have revealed his actual intentions.

English name

The title *A Musical Joke* might be a poor rendering of the German original. *Spaß* does not necessarily connote the jocular, for which the word *Scherz* would more likely be used. In Fritz Spiegl's view, a more accurate translation would be *Some Musical Fun*. The sometimes-mentioned nicknames "Dorfmusikantensextett" ("village musicians' sextet") and "Bauernsinfonie" ("farmers' symphony") were added after Mozart's death.

Just to prove that I do not have any musical knowledge I listened to it, and it sounded fine to me.

Here are other musical jokes that I do understand.

A percussionist, tired from being ridiculed by other musicians, decides to change instruments. He walks into a music shop and says, "I'll take that red trumpet over there, and that accordion." After a second, the shop assistant says, "OK, you can have the fire extinguisher, but the radiator stays."

Middle C, E flat and G walk into a bar. "Sorry," the barman said. "We don't serve minors."

There are so many jokes about this composer. I could make you a Liszt.

Questions

How many sopranos does it take to change a light bulb? One. She just holds on and the world revolves around her.

What's the difference between a musician and a large pizza? A pizza can feed a family of four.

What's the difference between a conductor and God? God doesn't think he's a conductor.

What is the dynamic range of a bass trombone? On or off.

What's the difference between a Wagnerian soprano and a baby elephant? Eleven pounds.

How many concertmasters does it take to change a light bulb? Just one, but it takes four movements.

And here is one of my own:

"There's this wonderful joke," violinist Anne-Sophie Mutter says, "where apparently Karajan landed in Berlin, and he took a cab. The cab driver asked him, 'Where to, maestro?' And he answered, 'Oh, it doesn't matter. They know me everywhere.'"

Ok, that is enough. Good night!

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Response from Gail Farrenkothen, 23 November:

Was told many years ago that, when Andre Previn went to an audition with Leonard Bernstein for a position with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, Bernstein nodded and said 'play'. Previn looked for a piano, not seeing one, he bowed to an imaginary audience, flicked his tailcoat, sat, showed his cuffs and played on the table. He got the job!