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■Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

■Symphony No. 31 D Major K. 297 “Paris” (20')

Mozart was young, vibrant, and perhaps a little arrogant when he arrived in Paris in the spring of 1778. He visited the French capital to seek for an employment because he had been fed up with his position in Salzburg, a small independent prince-bishopric city where extravagant secular activities were restricted. Prior to Paris, however, Mozart had gone to Munich and Mannheim without much success. In Paris, he fared even worse. People there did not treat Mozart well, and his mother fell ill and subsequently died in July 1778. He left Paris in September that year.

Mozart composed his Symphony No. 31 in D Major, K. 297, *Paris*, as its subtitle suggests, in Paris. It was commissioned by Joseph Legros, the director of the *Concert Spirituel*, an organization that regularly offered public concerts. The first public performance of the piece took place on June 18, 1778. Mozart then replaced the Andante second movement with another one (which is rarely performed today) and introduced it in a concert in the following month. The *Paris* Symphony was received well; the *Concert Spirituel* kept it in their repertoire for a while. The piece comprises three movements, lacking the minuet movement popular in Viennese symphonies. At the beginning of the finale, Mozart intentionally avoids the full orchestra sound against the expectations of the Paris audience. After brief introductory measures, however, Mozart initiates the jolly fanfare-like main theme played by every member of the orchestra, making the listeners smile.

[Akira Ishii]