

## MOZART: Piano Concertos 21 & 23

Note by Tom Sharpe

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I can't recall the last time anyone called Sharpe a sensitive person. In fact it must have been before I could announce to the world that I wasn't and it was certainly before I had the temerity to write my farcical novels. Since my first book *Riotous Assembly* was published the critics and certain of the so-called literati – names supplied on request – have generally agreed that I am coarse, vulgar and not to be mentioned in polite literary society. At best I am regarded as a verbal anti-depressant or even as an emetic. It therefore came as something of a shock to be asked to write about Mozart's 21st and 23rd Piano Concertos, played by Alfred Brendel. The shock was intensified by the fact

that in my collection of records, tapes and now CDs I have had, since I could afford them, everything Mozart ever composed; added to which, it happens also that Alfred Brendel has always been one of my heroes. Not that I am claiming for a moment that I am a concert-goer, the last one I went to was in 1950 to hear Cortot in Cambridge, or understand the first thing about music. I merely like the stuff – and the 23rd Piano Concerto has a special meaning for me...

Late one evening in the bar of a Spanish hotel where I used to stay, a woman in her cups who clearly couldn't believe I was a writer asked if she could see my room. *Well...* I hesitated. I can tell you I did. But she being, as she admitted, an antique