Among the chamber music of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, his *String Quintet No. 5 in D Major, K. 593* is often cited as one of his finest works. This paper will attempt to examine this string quintet using a series of questions from the second and third chapters of Lewis Rowell's *Thinking About Music* in hopes to grasp a greater understanding of the various factors surrounding this piece.

The first question from Rowell's first section *Questions on the thing itself* to be addressed for Mozart's K. 593 is #2: *By what principals is it the way it is?*(1). Perhaps the first noticeable, and most also basic universal that this piece depends upon is five performers. Unlike the previously examined *K. 355*, which was essentially a solo piece on piano, *K. 593* is intended for a quintet involving multiple performers. With the first universal being the numerical requirement of five performers, the second appears to be the specification of stringed instruments; two violins, two violas, and a cello. Although this piece could technically be performed on other instruments, it seems that this would negate one of the basic universals if it was performed upon other instruments.

With the very basic universals laid down, question #4: *What are its parts?*(2) assists to further analyze the structure of this piece. As previously mentioned, the piece contains five instruments; two violins, two violas, and a cello. In addition to the instruments, the piece's "parts" would also encompass five performers, yet the work also contains musical "parts" so to speak, encompassing a certain melodic and rhythmic structure which is grouped into four parts as movements: Larghetto – Allegro, Adagio, Menuetto – Allegretto, and Allegro. Collectively, the sum of these four parts come together as a whole, to create "standard form". This description relating to standard form and its four movements could also address question #8 of this section, *Has it*

structure?(3).

To address Rowell's next section *Questions of value*, it would be probably most appropriate to begin with question #16 *Is it good?* (4). Although applying this question to the piece may initially appear to seem rhetorical as few would argue that this piece is not good, it is still important to examine why the piece is indeed, good. With this question posed, one could argue that even without going into an in-depth analysis, this is an impressive piece upon first listen to either the trained or untrained ear. The piece is enjoyable to listen to, with a strong sense of thematic development and memorable motif ideas. The performance itself is also superb, and should satisfy the demands of virtually any critical listener. Although this piece may not be the most typical of Mozart's works, structurally resembling in some ways the work of composers such as Haydn, this should definitely not detract from its value.

Perhaps, question #20: *Is it great?* (5) is a more appropriate question for this particular quintet. The last question seemed to establish that the quintet is undoubtedly good, but the realm of greatness is often not only more difficult, but also more subjective to address. Calling this piece "monumental" might seem to be a bit bold; perhaps that term should be used quite conservatively, on rare occasions, but this example of *K. 593* is definitely still a work of surpassing excellence in not only concept, but also in performance. If one were to take the more analytical route, K. 593 also demonstrates excellence in its complexity of structure and thematic development mentioned earlier.

For Rowell's third section: *Questions relating to the observer*, one might begin by applying question #27 *If it is real, how can I know so?*(6) For this question, the most very basic answer would be yes, the piece is real, as its performance has not only been

witnessed by a single listener, but by many others during numerous generations. To argue against the piece's existence would create a circular philosophical problem that could not be objectively solved. With this in mind, it does not appear possible to answer questions like this about the piece's existence in an exact provable or disprovable method such as in science. Still, it would be most beneficial to trust one's senses; aural, as well as visual that this piece is not merely a spectacular auditory hallucination, but a piece of conceived, transcribed, performed and recorded music. The question of accuracy, however, is a very worthwhile aspect of examination. With perception differing from individual to individual, it seems difficult to produce an definite sense of measurement relating to how one accurately an individual perceives this piece. Subjective experience makes this question of perception one of great difficulty to address in others.

While examining the piece in this philosophical realm, it may seem appropriate to also apply question #36 *Does it matter?*(6) Once again, the concept of subjective experience seems to enter into the equation for *K. 593*. This piece most likely does matter to certain individuals in a number of differing ways, however, in a broader philosophical context it may also not matter. It is a piece of music; a very impressive piece, but it's difficult to say that it actually matters in any type of absolute sense. With this said, its sense of meaning or mattering really hinges upon the individual listener, who derives value from it for whatever individual reason they may justify, however large or small.

While looking at the following section: *Questions on the context of the piece*, one might also examine question #37 *when Mozart lived?* (7) This question seems particularly relevant due to the interesting elements in Mozart's *K. 593* that appear to be

influenced by Joseph Haydn's compositional style. According to Danuta Mirka, Haydn appears to have had a direct influence upon various compositional techniques Mozart used in this piece such as slurred motives generating metrical dissonance resembling those in Haydn's *String Quartet in C Major, Op. 54 No. 2* (8). With this said, it seems likely that the unusual finale of *Haydn's Op. 54 No. 2* had quite possibly served as a type of inspiration for Mozart, and helped shape the construction of his quintet; demonstrating an aspect of influence that his contemporaries had upon him. Examples such as this one help illustrate the relevance of examining not only the music of a composer, but also the period that he or she lived in, and also the surrounding influences and factors that helped shape their work.

The final questions being applied to Mozart's *K. 593* are from Rowell's inquiries relating to the less examined aspect in music relating to time. Question #1 of this section asks: *Is time atomistic or continuous?*(9) This is a rather interesting question to apply to music. While musical time appears to reside loosely in "real" time, it still executes itself for the most part as a series of intermittent events. While the works of composers such as John Cage definitely challenge the relationship of music and time, Mozart's *K. 593* fits more within a traditional context of musical time.

While it seems impossible to imagine musical time somehow escaping or existing outside of real time, pieces such as *K. 593* definitely function among their own syncopation; not "syncing" in any particular way to outside time, so to speak. This syncopation leads to the perception of a type of motion, which Rowell suggests could be also be illusionary (10), but this may depend upon the context. While the auditory aspect of music may indeed not flow in a sequential motion such as film strips, its method of

comprehension from musical scores for its performers appears to. Perhaps this is the reason why music is often interpreted as "flowing", or experienced in a type of motion that cannot be seen, or directly witnessed, but still assumed to exist in some form.

Finally, the last question to be addressed is question #12 *Does the time of music have anything in common with the time of sport-"agonic" or contestual time?(11)* Although this comparison may appear to be of distant nature at first glance, it could be argued that a performance of a Beethoven symphony and a sports game do in fact share some similar attributes in relation to time in their rules, and settings of social interaction. For example, while it may be true that a basketball or hockey game lack "movements" in the same sense that a symphony does, these sports games still have timed "periods", or "quarters" which, like movements, utilize time as a method of division to separate segments of performance. Time is also a crucial element to the functioning of both symphonies and sports events. Players who misjudge the rules of sport time often face forms of penalization; potentially jeopardizing their team's performance, while symphony performers who misjudge musical time compromise the integrity of their performance as a collective group. This is without doubt an abstract comparison, but appears to illustrate just how far-reaching the concept of time is in many differing contexts.

In context, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *String Quintet No. 5 in D Major, K. 593* is a work of definite excellence, worthy of examination. Although still generating many uncertainties in a similar manner to Rowell's questions for *K. 355*, this exercise brings to light various additional factors of relevant discussion to the study of this piece and also Mozart's work in general which are also pertinent.

Footnotes

1. Rowell, Lewis. *Thinking About Music: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Music*. University of Massachusetts Press. Amherst. 1985. p. 11

2. Rowell, Lewis. *Thinking About Music: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Music*. University of Massachusetts Press. Amherst. 1985. p. 11

3. Rowell, Lewis. *Thinking About Music: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Music*. University of Massachusetts Press. Amherst. 1985. p. 13

4. Rowell, Lewis. *Thinking About Music: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Music*. University of Massachusetts Press. Amherst. 1985. p. 14

5. Rowell, Lewis. *Thinking About Music: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Music*. University of Massachusetts Press. Amherst. 1985. p. 14

6. Rowell, Lewis. *Thinking About Music: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Music*. University of Massachusetts Press. Amherst. 1985. p. 15

7. Rowell, Lewis. *Thinking About Music: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Music*. University of Massachusetts Press. Amherst. 1985. p. 17

8. Mirka, Danuta. *Metric Manipulation in Haydn and Mozart: Chamber Music for Strings, 1787-1791*. Oxford University Press. 2009. New York. P. 305

9. Rowell, Lewis. *Thinking About Music: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Music*. University of Massachusetts Press. Amherst. 1985. p. 29

10. Rowell, Lewis. *Thinking About Music: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Music*. University of Massachusetts Press. Amherst. 1985. p. 29

11. Rowell, Lewis. *Thinking About Music: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Music*. University of Massachusetts Press. Amherst. 1985. p. 31

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2. Mirka, Danuta. *Metric Manipulations in Haydn and Mozart: Chamber Music for Strings, 1787-1791*. Oxford University Press. 2009. New York.

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