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WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART



Gran Partita (arr. C.F.G. Schwencke)

Quatuor Dialogues & Ewald Demeyere



SUPER AUDIO CD

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Gran Partita (arr. C.F.G. Schwencke)

Quatuor Dialogues & Ewald Demeyere

Vinciane Baudhuin oboe

Annelies Decock violin

Mika Akiha viola

Ronan Kerno cello

Ewald Demeyere fortepiano

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756-1791)

Serenade in B-flat major 'Gran Partita' K. 361/370a

Arr. C.F.G. Schwencke

- | | |
|---|-------|
| [1] Largo - Allegro molto | 9:22 |
| [2] Menuetto - Trio 1 - Trio 2 | 7:43 |
| [3] Adagio | 5:40 |
| [4] Menuetto (Allegro) - Trio 1 - Trio 2 - Trio 3 | 5:39 |
| [5] Romance (Adagio - Allegretto - Adagio) | 6:39 |
| [6] Thema con variazioni | 10:51 |
| [7] Allegro molto | 3:33 |

From 'Die Zauberflöte' K. 620

Arr. F.J. Rosinack & E. Demeyere

- | | |
|---|------|
| [8] Bonus track: Der Hölle Rache kocht in meinem Herzen | 2:56 |
|---|------|

total time 52:19

'It seemed to me that I was hearing the voice of God...'

These words, spoken by Antonio Salieri in Peter Shaffer's *Amadeus*, fictional though they may be, are nevertheless accurate in conveying the fascination continuously inspired by the work they refer to.

The Serenade in B flat major K. 361/370a by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, the so-called *Gran Partita* (this appellation is not the composer's), is arguably one of the greatest works in the wind instrument repertoire. It adheres to the Viennese tradition of *Harmoniemusik*-music for wind ensembles intended to add lustre to aristocratic events and banquets-yet transcends the genre by its instrumentation (two basset-horns, two horns and a double bass were added to the traditional octet), its monumental proportions (seven movements) and the richness of its musical inventiveness.

The *Gran Partita* is inextricably linked with the figure of Anton Stadler, the Viennese clarinet virtuoso and member of the imperial *Harmonie*. He is presumed to have met Mozart when the latter arrived in Vienna in 1781, but the first document testifying to their collaboration and friendship is the announcement, published in the *Wienerblättchen*, of the concert that Stadler organised in the spring of 1784:

'Today Herr Stadler senior, in present service of His Majesty the Emperor, will hold a musical concert for his benefit in the Imperial and Royal National Court Theatre, at which will be given, among other well chosen pieces, a great wind piece of a very special kind composed by Herr Mozart.'

The report, written after the event by the critic Johann Friedrich Schink in his *Literarische Fragmente*, leaves no doubt as to the work performed—in fact, there is general agreement today that the *Serenade* K. 361 was commissioned by Stadler, and created for this occasion:

‘Today I have heard a ‘musique’ for wind instruments, in four movements, by Herr Mozart—sumptuous and magnificent! It called for 13 instruments, viz. four horns, two oboes, two bassoons, two clarinets, two basset horns, a double bass, and at each instrument sat a master. Oh! What power! How sumptuous, noble, magnificent!’

Furthermore, it was most probably Stadler who, during a concert tour through northern Europe in 1794, provided Schwencke with the score from which the latter subsequently made an arrangement, renaming it ‘*Gran Quintetto*’.

Christian Friedrich Gottlieb Schwencke (1767-1822), son of a Hamburg town musician, was a pianist, composer, critic and editor. He studied in Berlin with Marpurg and Kirnberger (1782), and at the universities of Leipzig (1787) and Halle (1788/89). After returning to his home town, he succeeded Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach as *Stadtkantor* and *Musikdirector* at the age of twenty-two. The last musician to hold that position, he was responsible for the music of the five town churches, and for the musical education at the *Lateinschule* of Hamburg. He was held in high esteem by his contemporaries as a performer, composer (he wrote cantatas, concertos for piano and for oboe, sonatas for violin and for piano, and lieder), as a severe critic (he wrote chronicles and reviews for the

Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung from 1799 onwards), and was additionally renowned for his boundless admiration for Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. His library catalogue, published upon his death, testifies to this: it includes not only copies of operas, church music, instrumental works and chamber music, but also two autographs by the hand of the master. Schwencke did not merely collect this repertoire, but contributed actively to its dissemination. In order to reach as large a public as possible, he made, and had published, numerous arrangements of famous works by his idol. This practice was common and very popular among music lovers and amateurs. It allowed the revival of masterpieces in the private salons of the aristocracy and rising bourgeoisie, works that might otherwise have sunk into oblivion. Apart from the reductions for voices and piano (including the *Requiem*), and other works, Schwencke made a version for piano quintet of the *Clarinet Concerto* K. 622, a version for string quintet of the *Sonata for Piano Four-Hands* K. 497, and a version for quintet with oboe of the *Gran Partita*.

The front page of the edition by Jean Auguste Böhme, of which different copies are preserved in the libraries of the Royal Conservatory of Brussels and of the *Kloster Einsiedeln* (Switzerland), and in the Royal Library of Copenhagen, displays the following title:

Grand Quintetto pour le Pianoforte
Hautbois, Violon, Viola et Violoncelle
composé par W.A. MOZART
Arrangé d’après la grande Sérénade pour 2 Hautbois, 2 Clarinettes,
2 Cors de Bassette, 4 Cors, 2 Bassons & grand Basson par C.F.G. Schwencke

The front page also contains the following remark, possibly an addition made by the editor for commercial reasons: "NB. The Oboe part can be performed by a Flute, Clarinet or Violin".

In order to replace the thirteen instruments of the original version, Schwencke thus chose to combine two new complementary media emblematic of this period of chamber music: the fortepiano and the oboe quartet. Indeed, the second half of the 18th century saw the advent of new instruments alongside the emergence of new musical genres. The fortepiano differs from its predecessor, the harpsichord, in that it uses a mechanism of hammered instead of plucked strings, resulting in a greater dynamical range. What today is called the Classical oboe has only two keys, like the Baroque oboe, but distinguishes itself from the latter through its narrower bore and smaller holes. As a result, the Classical oboe is characterised by an easier and more extended upper register and a sonority that can in turn be soft, light, clear or pungent. These expressive sound qualities, particularly adapted to the role given to the oboe in the emerging genre of the symphony, were also fully exploited in a new type of chamber music: the oboe quartet. A younger sibling to the string quartet, it combined the oboe with a string trio composed of a violin, a viola and a cello. This genre succeeded those of the sonata with basso continuo, and the trio sonata, which both fell into disuse. Almost two hundred oboe quartets were composed in Europe between 1760 and 1800. Together with the *Harmoniemusik*, they embody the essence of chamber music written for the oboe during that period.

Schwencke's arrangement is a masterpiece of orchestration, a rendering of the original score that is both faithful and richly coloured. He did not merely transcribe the material from one instrument from the version for thirteen to another from the quintet. The melodic material has been ingeniously redistributed amongst the different parts, resulting in particularly varied sound combinations. While the bassoon solos inevitably occur in the cello, or in the left hand of the piano, the oboe, clarinet and basset-horn phrases are variously attributed to the oboe, violin, viola or piano, depending on the circumstances. In addition to its melodic role, the piano naturally ensures harmonic support, thereby efficiently replacing the four horns and the double bass of the original version.

Because the writing in the minuets and trios is less dense, Schwencke here had the opportunity individually to exploit the different colours offered by the quintet: quartet without piano, cello solo, piano solo... In a manner as discreet as it is remarkable, he added a third trio to the second minuet. Absent from the version for thirteen, this little jewel is extremely well integrated into the work, and its authorship has caused much ink to flow: was it composed by Schwencke or by Mozart? To date, the former hypothesis seems more plausible, since no trace of this piece has been found in Mozart's oeuvre.

The adagio, though possibly disconcerting to purists who might regret the absence of the velvety wind accompaniment, remains a superb example of Schwencke's mastery: the piano allies with the cello to form a harmonically rich

and rhythmically imperturbable layer above which the melodic lines of the oboe, violin (clarinet) and viola (basset-horn) can unfold freely.

By way of an unequalled masterpiece of chamber music, this recording wants to restore a tradition and an art that we tend to neglect, if not despise, in the name of our search for authenticity: that of arrangement. Practised by all great masters through the ages, and thus approved by them, it met the needs of a growing market of amateurs and dilettanti amongst the aristocracy and bourgeoisie. Not only was it lucrative for the editors and arrangers, but it contributed to the popularity of the composers as well, both in their native countries and abroad. Moreover, it played a far from negligible social and educational role during the century of the Enlightenment which advocated human emancipation through knowledge, contact with nature, and the arts.

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This High Definition Surround Recording was Produced, Engineered and Edited by Bert van der Wolf of NorthStar Recording Services, using the 'High Quality Musical Surround Mastering' principle. The basis of this recording principle is a realistic and holographic 3 dimensional representation of the musical instruments, voices and recording venue, according to traditional concert practice. For most older music this means a frontal representation of the musical performance, but such that width and depth of the ensemble and acoustic characteristics of the hall do resemble 'real life' as much as possible. Some older compositions, and many contemporary works do specifically ask for placement of musical instruments and voices over the full 360 degrees sound scape, and in these cases the recording is as realistic as possible, within the limits of the 5.1 Surround Sound standard. This requires a very innovative use of all 6 loudspeakers and the use of completely matched, full frequency range loudspeakers for all 5 discrete channels. A complementary sub-woofer, for the ultra low frequencies under 40Hz, is highly recommended to maximally benefit from the sound quality of this recording.

This recording was produced with the use of Sonodore microphones, Avalon Acoustic monitoring, Siltech Mono-Crystal cabling and dCS - & Merging Technologies converters.



www.northstarconsult.nl



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