

W.A. Mozart

Piano Concertos

C major, K.415

C minor, K.491

Martin Helmchen

Netherlands Chamber Orchestra

Gordan Nikolić



SUPER AUDIO CD

HYBRID MULTICHANNEL

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Piano Concerto No. 24 in C minor K. 491

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------|
| 1 Allegro | 14. 14 |
| <i>Cadenza: Lars Vogt</i> | |
| 2 Larghetto | 7. 37 |
| 3 Allegretto | 9. 14 |

Piano Concerto No. 13 in C major K. 415

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------|
| 4 Allegro | 10. 43 |
| <i>Cadenza: W. A. Mozart</i> | |
| 5 Andante | 9. 01 |
| <i>Cadenza: W. A. Mozart</i> | |
| 6 Rondeau (Allegro) | 9. 11 |

Martin Helmchen, piano

Netherlands Chamber Orchestra

Gordan Nikolić, Leader

Recorded April 2007 at the Philharmonie, Haarlem, The Netherlands

Executive / Recording Producer: Job Maarse

Balance Engineer: Jean-Marie Geijsen

Editing : Matthijs Ruiter

Total playing time : 60. 13

The Steinway & Sons grand piano has been supplied by Ypma Piano's

Alkmaar - Amsterdam

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Mozart's Piano Concertos K.491 and K.415

When I asked Job Maarse in February what he had in mind for our first CD, he replied as follows: "Why not two Mozart concertos?". I was immediately enthusiastic, as I just happened to be – and still am – in a "Mozart" phase. But my next thought was: would it not be better to select something more unusual for a solo début CD? For instance, repertoire to really make people sit up and notice? After all, Mozart again, right after the intensely celebrated Mozart year? Although one cannot help but think this, these thoughts soon disappear when one considers the constant miracle of Mozart's music: it never becomes a drag, and even after having been doled out in the maximum daily "dose" for the past year, his compositions occupy an increasingly large place in our hearts. It is truly "eternal music", and recordings made in 100 years' time will still be exciting and justified, not just because there is a different person to interpret the music and different audiences to hear it. In that respect, I would like to express my

special thanks to PentaTone for granting me the extraordinary freedom, from the start, of recording the repertoire that means most to me artistically at that moment.

Why did I happen to choose precisely these two concertos, given the choice of the entire marvelous universe of Mozart concertos? Mozart's piano concertos are a part of every pianist's life, from a young age onwards, and the Piano Concerto in C, K.415 was the first piece that I was allowed to play with an orchestra as a child. I shall never forget the feeling of bliss, when the sound of my piano joined that of the orchestra to form such a miraculous entity. To this day, I still have a special love of making music together with others, each instrument complementing the other. Once again, the Piano Concerto in C minor, K.491 was the first of the "major" concertos to grab me at an early age, due to the tragedy and dark expressivity contained within. Both works form a tremendous contrast, which is immediately apparent when comparing the C-minor episode in the third movement of K.415 with the basic mood of K.491. The same key,

yet two different worlds – the first is one of beauty, which communicates happiness despite all the sorrow, a naïve lament, which reminds one of Barbarina's "L'ho perduta... me meschina!" from Figaro; the second, full of despair, dark foreboding and tension, leaving behind a feeling of deep distress.

While I was working on the C-minor concerto, there was a moment when I felt I was learning more about Mozart than I would have learned through reading a whole pile of books. My revered teacher Arie Vardi gave me a copy of the manuscript to study, and drew my attention to some peculiar caricatures of faces, which Mozart had drawn in the first movement between the notes. Upon closer observation, one can see that an attempt he made to draw a repeat sign probably failed, leaving it to look rather like a distorted face. So he made a game of it by also drawing these weird faces in similar places. In other words, in the most dark and moving music that one could ever imagine, he also included grimaces and pranks. A characteristic of Mozart, which leaves us feeling totally bewildered, and which we do

not come across in such a fashion in any other composer.

The cadenza for the first movement in K.491, which I play on this recording, was written by my good friend Lars Vogt. I heard him playing it once in a concert, and immediately felt that this expressed my own idea of a cadenza for this concerto more aptly than any of my own attempts. I would also like to thank Gordan Nikolić and the Netherlands Chamber Orchestra for the delightful experience of the recording sessions, which were characterized by spontaneity, the pleasure of making music, and a shared love of Mozart.

Text: Martin Helmchen

English translation: Fiona J. Stroker-Gale

Mozart Piano Concertos

On August 4, 1782, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart married his beloved Constanze Weber in the Vienna Stefansdom. The previous month, his opera *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (= The Abduction from the Seraglio) had received its première in the Burgtheater. In all respects, it was

a busy period, as it is clear from a letter penned by Mozart to his father on December 28: "The entire morning, until 2 in the afternoon, is taken up with lessons, then we eat, and after sitting at table I have to grant my poor stomach an hour for the digestion: then all that remains is the evening during which I can write something, and not even that is certain, as I am at times invited to Academies. At present, I still need to write two more concertos for the subscription concerts. The concertos strike a balance between the serious and the light, they are very brilliant, pleasant to the ear, natural, without sounding vacuous: here and there, I make sure that the connoisseur can also reap satisfaction from the work, yet in such a manner that the non-connoisseur is also satisfied, without perhaps quite understanding why."

The piano concertos to which Mozart was referring, and which he was planning to perform during his subscription concerts the following year, were the Piano Concertos Nos. 11 – 13 (K. 413 – K. 415). These concertos prove Mozart to be a pure-bred musical entrepreneur. Naturally, he had written the concertos for his own performance

purposes, and he was painstakingly careful that no-one got their hands on the manuscripts before the first public performances: however, he offered the concertos to various publishers almost immediately.

As is clear in the above-mentioned fragment taken from a letter, Mozart had already taken into account in his style of writing that the concertos should appeal to both the professional and the amateur musician. Furthermore, he had made sure in the orchestration that the winds were not given any "independent" parts, thus making it possible to do without them, if so required. This increased the appeal of the works for the many 'Liebhaber' (= devotees), the (noble) amateurs who played music together privately within their circle of friends, and would therefore be able to perform the piano concertos to the accompaniment of a string quartet.

In the *Wiener Zeitung* (= a Viennese newspaper) of January 15, 1783, Mozart announced that interested parties could order the three piano concertos from him in manuscript copies – however, this offer was valid only for those who had also subscribed to

his Academies. Unfortunately, this announcement probably did not have the expected result, because by April Mozart was offering the concertos to various publishers. Mozart's father, Leopold, was afraid that his son had offered the works at too high a price. However, Mozart reacted to this with marked self-assurance: "Please do not fear that the three concertos are too expensive, I believe that I am earning one ducat for each concert – and then I would like to see how one of them could be copied for a ducat! They cannot be copied, as I will not relinquish them before receiving a certain number of subscriptions. They have been placed in the *Wiener Diarium* for the third time now: I have offered the subscription tickets since the 20th of this month for 4 ducats to be paid in cash only, and during the month of April, the concertos can be collected from me upon return of the ticket – my dear sister will send the cadenzas and entrances (= kind of improvised cadenza) shortly; I have not yet changed the entrances to the Rondo, as I always play whatever comes to mind when performing this concerto."

Life remained busy for Mozart in 1783. As a solo pianist, he was invited to play so often, that he was performing at some venues almost every week. And his friends also regularly asked him to perform as guest soloist during their concerts. Thus Mozart's sister-in-law, Aloisia Lange – the first Madame Herz in *Der Schauspieldirektor* (= The Impresario) and Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* – gave an Academy on March 11, 1783, which Mozart also attended. He wrote as follows to his father: "Yesterday my sister-in-law Lange gave her Academy at the theatre, during which I also played a concerto. The theatre was very full, and I was once again received by the local audience in such a delightful manner, that it has given me true pleasure. Although I had already left the hall, the audience would not stop applauding, and I had to return to repeat the Rondo; the ovation sounded like a true 'cloudburst'. This augurs well for my own Academy, which I will be holding on Sunday, March 23."

The concerto performed by Mozart is probably the same one he played during his own Academy, i.e. the Piano Concerto in C, K.415. Quite a lot

is known about that Academy, which was held at the Nationaltheater on March 23. The concert took place right in the middle of the carnival season, traditionally the busiest period in the music world, before the closing of the theatres for Shrovetide. In general, the Nationaltheater was used for German-language theatrical performance; however, every so often concerts were also held there. It was a theatre where the 'beau monde' and the plebs met and mingled, as described in Johann Pezzl's 'Sketch of Vienna' from 1786: "It is always a pleasure to sit in the pit before the curtain rises. The members of the high society arrive in their best attire, their expressions are engaging and pleasant, completely in accordance with the adage 'Spectatum veniunt, spectantur ut ipsae' (= they come to see and to be seen themselves). They form a collection of unusual men: ministers, whose faces mirror important plans, generals with scars received in wars fought in defence of the fatherland. I cherish watching these people as much as I enjoy the spectacle on stage. Especially, I watch all the people who are generally occupied with serious matters, but now shake off their

worries and laugh, flirt, tease and make jokes amongst their groups of friends."

If we are to believe the composer, Mozart's concert must have been an enormous success. Even the emperor was present during the concert, which was a special honour. On March 29, Mozart described the concert to his father Leopold, emphasizing the fact that the emperor remained for the entire duration of the concert, which was apparently remarkable at the time. "I believe that it is not necessary to write to you in great detail of the success of my Academy, you will perhaps already have heard of it. Enough, the theatre could scarcely have been more full, and all the boxes were occupied. However, what gave me most pleasure, was that His Highness the Emperor was also present, and that he enjoyed himself so much, and applauded my music so loudly. It is unusual for him to part with his money before entering the theatre, otherwise I would have had every right to hope for more, for his satisfaction was limitless. He sent 25 ducats."

During the eighteenth century, newspapers did not often publish

reviews of concerts. Neither yet did the phenomenon of the music magazine exist. One of the first publications entirely dedicated to music to appear was Cramer's *Magazin der Musik*, which included a short article referring to Mozart's Academy on May 9, 1783, in which once again the presence of the emperor was given a special mention. "This evening the famed Herr Cavalier Mozart held a musical concert at the Nationaltheater, during which musical works from his oft-praised pen were performed. The concert was attended by an extraordinarily large audience, and the two new piano concertos and other fantasias played by Herr Mozart on the fortepiano were greeted with loud applause. Our emperor, who remained for the entire concert, against his custom, gave the composer such a hand of applause, the likes of which have ne'er been heard in this venue. The takings from the concert are estimated at around 1,600 florins."

Although it is difficult to ascertain the present-day value of such an amount, it is fair to state that Mozart certainly did well out of this Academy. In the light of this kind of reporting, it becomes clear that the romanticised

stories of Mozart as a misunderstood, poverty-stricken artist are basically a set of fabrications.

The Piano Concerto in C, K.415, begins with the martial motif that may rather be considered as Mozart's musical signature. The presence of trumpets and kettledrums, and the key of C major, reinforce the majestic character of this opening movement. During the eighteenth century, a direct relationship still existed between the choice of keys and their individual effect. The theoretician Schubart describes the key of C major as "pure, innocent, simple, naive"; his Italian colleague Galeazzi calls it "grandiose, militaristic, serious, majestic"; and the French composer Gretry mentions the terms "noble and honest." The great masterpieces written by Mozart in this key – which include the Piano Concertos K.476 and K.503, the String Quintet K.515 and, naturally, the Jupiter Symphony K.551 – prove that he must have sensed the same kind of association. The character of the Andante is pastoral. The final Rondo resembles a gigue. The entrance of the piano after the opening tutti is striking: an extremely serious adagio, which returns to the exuberance of the main

theme only by means of an improvised cadenza ('Eingang').

In 1786, Mozart was also extremely busy. That year, he composed three piano concertos, of which the one in C minor is the second – the other two are in E flat, K.482 and A, K.488. After these works, Mozart set the genre to one side. Only after two years had passed, did he write the famous *Coronation* Concerto, which he first performed in 1789. At that time, Mozart was probably also working on his final piano concerto, the one in B flat, K.595; however, he did not complete the work until January 5, 1791. It is often said that Mozart's popularity took a nose-dive during those years, and that this was the reason for his performing less frequently – and thus also writing less new piano concertos. However, this assumption can be disproven easily, if we look at the demand for his music. His works were still being published and sold, and his teaching practice was flourishing. The actual reason is more likely the fact that the concert scene, supported to a large extent by the aristocracy, had been put somewhat on the backburner, due to the Turkish war. The economic slump caused by

this war led to the dissolution of court orchestras, and the well-to-do – who had always subscribed to Mozart's concert series in the past – increasingly failed to appear. They simply did not have the money for this any more, or they had fled the city of Vienna in the meantime in order to seek refuge elsewhere.

Nevertheless, Mozart was prospering, thanks to lucrative opera assignments. In February, his new Singspiel *Der Schauspielfeldirektor* (= The Impresario) had received its première in the orangerie at the Schönbrunn palace; and a month later, he conducted the revised version of his opera *Idomeneo* at the palace of Prince Auersperg.

On April 7, 1786 Mozart performed in his last concert of the season at the Burgtheater. We know little about the programme, but it is likely that his performance included his new Piano Concerto in C minor, which he had completed on March 24, according to his own catalogue. Now, in this case, 'completed' is a rather grandiose term, for the solo part was only sketched in, as we can see in the existing manuscript. Furthermore, there are some

contradictions between the piano part and the orchestral parts. The reason for this is simple: Mozart was just too busy. Not only had the revision of *Idomeneo* taken up a great deal of time, in addition, he had been performing in various concerts and was planning to give the première of his new opera *Le nozze di Figaro* on May 1. Preparations for this event were also underway. As Mozart had written the piano concerto for his own performing purposes, and therefore simply improvised the solo part on the spot, it was not necessary for him to write down all the details. It was not his custom to completely specify all points in his composition, until he actually published a concerto. However, the work was never published during Mozart's lifetime, which explains the ramshackle condition of the material.

The Piano Concerto in C minor, K.491 is one of only two piano concertos written by Mozart in a minor key (the other being the Piano Concerto in D minor, K.466). Both works demonstrate the more dramatic side of Mozart's personality. The D-minor concerto is generally associated with his opera *Don Giovanni*. The

Piano Concerto in C minor was one of Ludwig van Beethoven's favourites, and he used the introductory motif in his own Piano Concerto No.3, which is written in the same key.

Mozart experiments with the form in his Piano Concerto in C minor. The sombre opening is already unusual. But even more remarkable is the manner in which – during the first movement – Mozart already begins the development whilst in the middle of the exposition, thus demolishing the pillars of the formal structure. The final movement is a series of variations on a dark theme, with the contours of the rondo form clearly visible in the background. There are two variations in the major key, which form an almost serenade-like intermezzo with solo contributions from the winds. It is a shame that we do not possess any contemporary reviews of, or reactions to, this remarkable concert. Without a doubt, the thematic wealth and power of the work must have been overwhelming, perhaps eliciting just such a reaction as is described by Mozart's colleague Karl Ditters von Dittersdorf: "Mozart is without a doubt one of the greatest original geniuses ever to have

lived. To this day, I have never met a composer with such a wealth of ideas. I just wish he were not quite so wasteful of them. The audience is not permitted to regain its breath: for when one is trying to savour one beautiful idea, another wonderful idea is sure to turn up, supplanting the previous one. And this happens so continuously, that in the end one is no longer capable of retaining any of these gems."

Ronald Vermeulen

English translation: Fiona J. Stroker-Gale

Martin Helmchen

Martin Helmchen was born in Berlin in 1982. He received his first piano lessons at the age of six. From 1993 until graduating from school in 2000 he was a student of Galina Iwanzowa at the Hanns Eisler Academy in Berlin. After 2001, he studied with Arie Vardi at the "Hochschule für Musik und Theater" in Hannover. His career received its first major impulse after winning the Clara Haskil Competition in 2001.

Orchestras with which Martin Helmchen has performed include: the Deutsche Sinfonie-Orchester Berlin, RSO Stuttgart, Bamberg Symphoniker, NHK Symphony Orchestra, Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra, Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, Royal Flemish Philharmonic, BBC Symphony Orchestra, and the chamber orchestras of Zurich, Amsterdam, Vienna, Lausanne, Cologne and Munich. He has worked with conductors such as Marek Janowski, Philippe Herreweghe, Marc Albrecht, Vladimir Jurowski, Jiri Kout, Bernhard Klee, and Lawrence Foster.

Martin Helmchen has been a guest at the Ruhr Piano Festival, Kissinger Summer Festival, the Festivals in Lockenhaus, Jerusalem, Spoleto (Italy), the Rheingau Music Festival, the Spannungen Chamber-Music Festival in Heimbach, the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Festival, the Schwetzingen Festival, the Schleswig-Holstein Festival, as well as the Marlboro Festival in Vermont (USA).

Chamber music is a highly valued part of Martin Helmchen's life, which he always includes in his performance programme. For years now, he





has collaborated closely with Boris Pergamenschikow till his decease in 2004; at present, he regularly gives concerts and recitals with Heinrich Schiff. Furthermore, he has partnered Gidon Kremer, Christian Tetzlaff, Isabelle Faust, Daniel Hope, Antje Weithaas, Tabea Zimmermann, Sharon Kam and Lars Vogt.

The young pianist Martin Helmchen has already been awarded two of the most important prizes in the music scene: the Crédit Suisse Award and the ECHO Klassik. He received the Crédit Suisse Young Artist Award in September 2006. The prize included his début with the Vienna Philharmonic under Valery Gergiev, performing Schumann's Piano Concerto during the Lucerne Festival. He was awarded the ECHO prize jointly with cellist Danjulo Ishizaka, as "Nachwuchskünstler des Jahres" (= up-and-coming artist of the year).

Martin Helmchen has signed an exclusive contract with the Pentatone Classics label.

Gordan Nikolić

Gordan Nikolić was born in 1968 and began playing violin at the age of seven. In 1985, he entered the Musikhochschule Basel to study with violinist/conductor Jean-Jacques Kantorow. Four years later, he graduated with the highest honours, as both teacher and soloist. He also worked with Lutoslawsky and Kurtág and developed an interest in both Baroque and contemporary music. He is the recipient of several international awards, which include the Tibor Varga, Niccolò Paganini, Città di Brescia, and Vaclav Huml prizes.

In 1989, he was appointed Leader of the Orchestre d'Auvergne, which he conducted regularly from his leader's chair: for instance, during a tour of Germany in 1993. In 1996, he was appointed Leader of the Lausanne Chamber Orchestra, and later he also became Leader of the Chamber Orchestra of Europe. In 1997, he was invited to become Leader of the London Symphony Orchestra.

In 2005, Gordan Nikolić was invited by the London Symphony Orchestra to be the soloist in three important

projects: Schumann's Violin Concerto under Daniel Harding, Brahms's Violin Concerto under Sir Colin Davis, and Beethoven's Triple Concerto, with pianist Emmanuel Ax and cellist Tim Hugh, under Bernard Haitink at the Barbican Centre in London.

He has conducted the Chamber Orchestra of the London Symphony Orchestra, the Orchestre National d'Île-de-France, the Manchester Camerata, and the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, among others: during the 2005/2006 season, he conducted the Orchestre de Lille.

Since 2004, he has been Artistic Director of the Nederlands Kamerorkest (= Netherlands Chamber Orchestra), which is based in Amsterdam. With this orchestra, he has programmed various memorable productions, such as Stravinsky's *L'histoire du soldat* with kinetic painter Norman Perryman, and Weill's *Die sieben Todsünden* with theatre company Dogtroep. Nikolić has already recorded several CDs with the Netherlands Chamber Orchestra, which include works by Britten, Bartók and Hartmann, among others.

In 2000, he was appointed "Prince Consort Professor" for string ensembles at the Royal College of Music. Since September 2003, he has also been a professor at the Guildhall School of Music. In the Netherlands, Nikolić also teaches at the Rotterdam Academy for Classical Music.

Gordan Nikolić has a special interest in chamber music, and is regularly invited to perform at various festivals. These include the Musique à l'Empéri Festival, Edinburgh Festival, Daytona Music Festival, Chaise-Dieu Festival and the London Proms, where he has performed with such musicians as Vladimir Mendelssohn, Pieter Wispelwey, Christophe Coin, Eric Le Sage, Maria João Pires, Mikhaïl Pletnev, Emmanuel Ax, Leif Ove Andsnes and Tim Hugh. Recently, he has joined the Vellinger String Quartet.

He has performed as a soloist with the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, the Orchestre Symphonique de Bâle, the Combattimento Consort Amsterdam, the Israel Chamber Orchestra and the London Symphony Orchestra. In 2001, he played the Walton Violin Concerto with the

London Symphony Orchestra under André Previn. In 2003, he performed the Brahms Double Concerto with the London Symphony Orchestra under Bernard Haitink, which was recorded for the 'LSO Live' label, as well as Paganini's Violin Concerto No. 1 in five concerts in Holland. He gave the première of James MacMillan's Violin Concerto, Deep But Dazzling Darkness, under the baton of the composer with the London Symphony Orchestra.

Gordan Nikolić has made many recordings for various labels (including Olympia, Lyrinx and Syrius), exploring the lesser-known violin repertoire. One of his recordings, dedicated to Vivaldi, was nominated "Recording of the Month" in Holland, and his Bach recording received an award from DRS3, Switzerland's cultural radio channel.

Gordan Nikolić plays a Lorenzo Storioni violin dating from 1794.

Nederlands Kamerorkest

The Nederlands Kamerorkest (= Netherlands Chamber Orchestra) was founded in 1955 and gave its first

concert that year during the Holland Festival. Szymon Goldberg – the legendary violinist, conductor and pedagogue – was artistic director of the ensemble for the first 22 years. Goldberg then appointed David Zinman as second conductor (alongside himself) and, jointly, they raised the level of the orchestra to equal that of any top international chamber ensemble. They were succeeded in 1979 by Antoni Ros Marbà, who led the orchestra until 1986. From 1986 to 2002, Hartmut Haenchen was chief conductor of the ensemble, with Philippe Entremont as permanent guest conductor.

Since 2003, Yakov Kreizberg has been chief conductor of the Nederlands Kamerorkest. In September 2004, top violinist Gordan Nikolić was appointed Artistic Director and Leader of the Nederlands Kamerorkest. As such, he regularly leads the orchestra from within.

The Nederlands Kamerorkest gives about 25 concerts per year in the major Dutch concert halls, including the Concertgebouw. Each season, the orchestra also accompanies a number of productions of the Nederlandse Opera at the

Muziektheater in Amsterdam. Apart from the many Rossini and Mozart operas, the orchestra has performed numerous contemporary operas to great critical acclaim. For instance, the world-première of Alexander Knaifel's *Alice* in September 2001; and the production of *Tea* by the Chinese/American composer Tan Dun in January 2003 was also a major success. In March 2005, the orchestra accompanied Bellini's opera *Norma*, and performances of Rossini's *Il barbiere de Siviglia* are scheduled for January 2006. In autumn 2006, the orchestra will accompany the Nederlandse Opera in the Mozart-Da Ponte trilogy at the Amsterdam Muziektheater.

The Nederlands Kamerorkest has toured extensively to countries such as the United States, Middle and South America, Canada, Australia, Japan, China and almost all European countries. It has performed at many festivals, including the Wiener Festwochen, Prager Frühling, Edinburgh Festival, Granada Festival and La Folle Journée (Nantes 2002).

Since its foundation, the Nederlands Kamerorkest has worked with prominent guest conductors such

as Darius Milhaud, Rudolf Barshai, Carlo Maria Giulini, Erich Leinsdorf, Yehudi Menuhin, Hans Vonk and Edo de Waart. The numerous world-famous soloists who have performed with the orchestra include Elly Ameling, Maurice André, Martha Argerich, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Alfred Brendel, Gidon Kremer, Radu Lupu, Anne-Sophie Mutter, Isabelle van Keulen, Jean-Pierre Rampal, Marie-Claire Alain, Han de Vries and Mstislav Rostropovich. During a successful three-year project, Christian Zacharias performed Mozart's complete piano concertos from behind the piano.

The Nederlands Kamerorkest has an extensive repertoire available on CD. Some recordings dating from the LP era – which include a Mozart Piano Concerto featuring Martha Argerich, and Szymon Goldberg's Bach programmes – have since been re-released on CD for their historic value, and new CD recordings on the PentaTone label are scheduled. (Please surf to www.orkest.nl to view the orchestra's comprehensive discography.)

During the 2005-2006 season, the Nederlands Kamerorkest celebrated its 50th anniversary with an anni-

versary concert at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, among others.

Mozarts Klavierkonzerte KV491 und KV415

Als ich Job Maarse im Februar 2006 fragte, was er sich für unsere erste CD vorstellte, sagte er „Warum nicht zwei Mozart-Konzerte?“. Ich war spontan begeistert, da ich mich gerade in einer „Mozart-Phase“ befand und befinde, aber mein zweiter Gedanke war: sollte man für die Solodebut-CD nicht nach etwas Außergewöhnlichem suchen, nach Repertoire, das aufhorchen lässt? Mozart, und das ausgerechnet nach dem wahrlich intensiv begangenen Mozart-Jahr? Diese Gedanken mögen sich für einen Moment aufdrängen, verflüchtigen sich jedoch schnell, wenn man sich an das immer wieder erfahrbare Wunder erinnert, dass sich Mozarts Musik niemals abnutzt, sondern einem auch und gerade nach einem Jahr Höchstdosis immer und immer mehr ans Herz wächst. Es ist „ewige Musik“, und nicht nur aufgrund des Wandels der Interpretations- und Rezeptionsgewohnheiten wer-

den Neuaufnahmen auch in 100 Jahren noch spannend sein und ihre Berechtigung haben. In diesem Zusammenhang möchte ich meine besondere Dankbarkeit PentaTone gegenüber ausdrücken, dass ich von Anfang an die wirklich außergewöhnliche Freiheit genieße, das Repertoire aufzunehmen, das mir künstlerisch momentan am meisten bedeutet.

Warum habe ich mich nun bei der Auswahl aus dem wunderbaren Universum der Mozart-Konzerte gerade für diese beiden entschieden? Jeden Pianisten begleiten Mozarts Klavierkonzerte von klein auf, und das C-Dur-Konzert KV415 war das erste Stück, das ich als Kind mit Orchester spielen durfte. Nie werde ich das Glücksgefühl vergessen, als sich auf einmal das eigene Spiel mit dem Orchester zu etwas so Wunderbarem verband. Die besondere Liebe zum gemeinsamen, einander ergänzenden Musikk machen prägt mich bis heute.

Das c-Moll-Konzert KV491 wiederum war das erste der „großen“ Konzerte, das mich in seiner Tragik und düsteren Expressivität schon früh nicht mehr losließ. Die beiden Werke bilden einen immensen Kontrast, der

auch gerade beim Vergleich der c-Moll-Episode im dritten Satz von 415 mit der Grundstimmung von 491 deutlich wird. Die gleiche Tonart, und doch zwei Welten – hier eine Schönheit, die bei aller Traurigkeit Glück vermittelt, eine naive Klage, die an Barbarinas „L’ho perduta... me meschina!“ aus dem Figaro erinnert; dort Verzweiflung, Düsternis und Zerrissenheit, die tiefe Erschütterung hinterlässt.

Beim Studium des c-Moll-Konzerts gab es einen Moment, in dem ich das Gefühl hatte, mehr über Mozart zu lernen als durch viele Bücher. Mein verehrter Lehrer Arie Vardi gab mir eine Kopie des Manuskripts zur Ansicht und lenkte meine Aufmerksamkeit auf seltsame Karikaturen von Gesichtern, die Mozart im ersten Satz zwischen die Noten gezeichnet hatte. Bei genauerer Betrachtung bemerkt man, dass ihm wohl einmal ein Wiederholungszeichen missglückt war, so dass es wie ein schiefes Gesicht aussah. Daraus machte er ein Spiel, indem er auch an parallelen Stellen diese verschrobenen Köpfe zeichnete. In der düstersten und ergreifendsten Musik, die man sich nur vorstellen kann also Grimassen und Alberei. Eine Eigenschaft Mozarts, vor

der man mit Fassungslosigkeit steht und die uns sonst wohl bei keinem Komponisten so begegnet.

Die Kadenz zum ersten Satz von 491, die ich hier spiele, stammt von meinem guten Freund Lars Vogt. Ich hörte sie einmal von ihm gespielt im Konzert und hatte sofort den Eindruck, dass hier meine Vorstellung von einer Kadenz zu diesem Stück treffender verwirklicht ist als in allen eigenen Versuchen. Danken möchte ich auch Gordan Nikolić und dem Netherlands Chamber Orchestra für das beglückende Erlebnis der Aufnahmetage, das durch Spontaneität, Freude am Musizieren und Liebe zu Mozart geprägt war.

Concertos pour piano K.491 et K.415 de Mozart

Lorsque je demandai à Job Maarse, l'en février dernier, ce qu'il avait à l'esprit pour notre premier CD, il me répondit : « Pourquoi pas deux concertos de Mozart ? ». L'idée m'enthousiasma tout de suite, car j'étais justement – et suis toujours – dans une phase « Mozart ». Ma deuxième

pensée fut toutefois : ne vaudrait-il pas mieux choisir quelque chose de moins courant pour un premier CD solo ? Par exemple, un répertoire qui fait se dresser les gens sur leur chaise et écouter vraiment ? Encore du Mozart, juste après l'année Mozart déjà si abondamment célébrée ? Bien que ces pensées vous viennent sans que vous vous en rendiez compte, elles s'évanouissent rapidement lorsque l'on considère le miracle constant qu'est la musique de Mozart. Jamais assommantes même après avoir été diffusées tous les jours à dose maximale tout au long de l'année passée, ses compositions occupent une place de plus en plus grande dans nos cœurs. Il s'agit-là véritablement de « musique éternelle », et tous les enregistrements réalisés pendant un siècle entier demeureront excitants et justifiés, et pas uniquement parce que leurs interprètes et leur public seront différents. À cet égard, je désire tout spécialement adresser mes plus vifs remerciements à PentaTone pour m'avoir accordé, dès le début, l'infinie liberté d'enregistrer le répertoire qui me tenait le plus à cœur, artistiquement parlant, à ce moment-là.

Pourquoi ai-je opté précisément

pour ces deux concertos, considérant le choix offert par tout le merveilleux univers des concertos de Mozart ? Les concertos pour pianos de Mozart font partie de la vie de tout pianiste, dès son plus jeune âge, et le Concerto pour Piano en Ut, K.415, fut le premier morceau qu'enfant, je fus autorisé à jouer avec un orchestre. Je n'oublierai jamais le sentiment de délice qui se fit maître de moi lorsque le son de mon piano se joignit à celui de l'orchestre pour former une miraculeuse entité. Jusqu'à ce jour, je voue un amour tout particulier au plaisir de jouer de la musique avec d'autres, tous les instruments venant se compléter mutuellement. Encore une fois, le Concerto pour piano en Ut mineur, K.491 fut le premier des concertos « majeurs » à m'émouvoir, alors que j'étais enfant, de par sa tragédie et sa sombre expressivité. Les deux œuvres offrent un énorme contraste, qui saute aux yeux dès que l'on compare l'épisode en Ut mineur du troisième mouvement du K.415 avec l'humeur basique du K.491. La même clé, mais deux mondes différents. Le premier n'est que beauté, communiquant le bonheur malgré toute la peine, une lamentation naïve,

qui rappelle l'un des « L'ho perduta... me meschina ! » de Barbarina dans Figaro. Le deuxième, gorgé de désespoir, de pressentiments sombres et de tension, laisse derrière lui un sentiment de profonde tristesse.

Lorsque je travaillai au Concerto en Ut mineur, j'eus à un moment donné le sentiment d'en avoir appris davantage sur Mozart que si j'avais lu toute une pile d'ouvrages. Mon révérend professeur, Arie Vardi, me donna une copie du manuscrit mon étude, et attira mon attention sur d'étranges caricatures de visages, que Mozart avait dessiné dans le premier mouvement, entre les notes. En les observant de plus près, on constate qu'il a essayé de reproduire un signe particulier et qu'il a probablement échoué, le faisant ressembler à un visage distordu. Il en fit donc un jeu et dessina également ces drôles de têtes dans des endroits similaires. En d'autres termes, dans la musique la plus sombre et la plus émouvante que l'on puisse imaginer, il avait également inclus des grimaces et des farces. C'est l'une des caractéristiques de Mozart, qui nous laisse totalement perplexes, et qui ne se retrouve de la même façon chez aucun

autre compositeur.

La cadenza du premier mouvement du K.491, que je joue sur cet enregistrement, a été écrite par mon grand ami Lars Vogt. L'ayant une fois entendu la jouer en concert, j'ai tout de suite senti qu'elle exprimait, plus justement que mes propres tentatives, l'idée que je me faisais d'une cadenza pour ce concerto. Je désire également remercier Gordan Nikolić et l'Orchestre de Chambre des Pays-Bas de la délicieuse expérience que furent les sessions d'enregistrement, qui se caractérisèrent par leur spontanéité, le plaisir de jouer de la musique, et un amour partagé de Mozart.

Texte : Martin Helmchen

Traduction française : Brigitte Zwerver-Berret



Polyhymnia specialises in high-end recordings of acoustic music on location in concert halls, churches, and auditoriums around the world. It is one of the worldwide leaders in producing high-resolution surround sound recordings for SA-CD and DVD-Audio. Polyhymnia's engineers have years of experience recording the world's top classical artists, and are experts in working with these artist to achieve an audiophile sound and a perfect musical balance.

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Polyhymnia International was founded in 1998 as a management buy-out by key personnel of the former Philips Classics Recording Center.

For more info: www.polyhymnia.nl

Polyhymnia ist eine Aufnahmefirma, die sich spezialisiert hat in der Einspielung hochwertiger musikalischer Darbietungen, realisiert vor Ort in Konzertsälen, Kirchen und Auditorien in aller Welt. Sie gehört zu den international führenden Herstellern von High-resolution Surroundaufnahmen für SA-CD und DVD-Audio. Die Polyhymnia-Toningenieure verfügen über eine jahrelange Erfahrung in der Zusammenarbeit mit weltberühmten Klassik-Künstlern und über ein technisches Können, das einen audiophilen Sound und eine perfekte musikalische Balance gewährleistet.

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Polyhymnia est spécialisé dans l'enregistrement haut de gamme de musique acoustique dans des salles de concerts, églises et auditoriums du monde entier. Il est l'un des leaders mondiaux dans la production d'enregistrements surround haute résolution pour SA-CD et DVD-Audio. Les ingénieurs de Polyhymnia possèdent des années d'expérience dans l'enregistrement des plus grands artistes classiques internationaux. Travailler avec ces artistes pour obtenir un son audiophile et un équilibre musical parfaits fait partie de leurs nombreuses expertises.

La plupart du matériel d'enregistrement de Polyhymnia est construit ou considérablement modifié dans nos locaux. Nous mettons notamment l'accent sur la qualité du parcours du signal analogique. C'est la raison pour laquelle nous élaborons et construisons nous-mêmes la plupart du matériel électronique de la chaîne d'enregistrement, y compris préamplificateurs et électronique interne des microphones.

Polyhymnia International a été fondé en 1998 suite au rachat de l'ancien Philips Classics Recording Center par ses cadres.

Pour de plus amples informations : www.polyhymnia.nl

Technical Information

Recording facility:

Microphones:

Microphone pre-amps:

DSD recording,
editing and mixing:
Surround version:

Polyhymnia International BV

Neumann KM 130, Schoeps MK 2 & DPA 4011 with Polyhymnia microphone buffer electronics.

Custom build by Polyhymnia International BV and outputs directly connected to Meitner DSD AD converter.

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Microphone, interconnect and loudspeaker cables by van den Hul.



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