



Mozart & Poulenc

Double & Triple Piano Concertos

MARI KODAMA · MOMO KODAMA · KARIN KEI NAGANO
ORCHESTRE DE LA SUISSE ROMANDE · KENT NAGANO



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Piano Concerto No. 7 for 3 Pianos in F Major, K. 242, "Lodron" (1776)		
1	I. Allegro	8. 51
2	II. Adagio	7. 43
3	III. Rondo. Tempo di minuetto	5. 50

Karin Kei Nagano, Piano 1
Mari Kodama, Piano 2
Momo Kodama, Piano 3

Piano Concerto No. 10 for 2 Pianos in E-Flat Major, K. 365 (1780/81)		
4	I. Allegro	10. 08
5	II. Andante	6. 56
6	III. Rondo	6. 53

Momo Kodama, Piano 1
Mari Kodama, Piano 2

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)

Concerto for 2 Pianos and Orchestra in D Minor, FP61 (1932)		
7	I. Allegro ma non troppo	7. 43
8	II. Larghetto	5. 15
9	III. Finale	5. 20

Mari Kodama, Piano 1
Momo Kodama, Piano 2

Total playing time: 64. 42

Orchestre de la Suisse Romande
Guest concertmaster Federico Kasik

Conducted by Kent Nagano

Music Copyright Poulenc Concerto: Éditions Salabert, Paris



Making music with family members is always something very special. The level of intimacy is incomparably higher, the shared understanding often deeper, the tension more exciting and grueling, because it always involves personal relationships that go far beyond professional music-making. Once we actually succeed in letting ourselves be carried away together by the music, magic unfolds, which in turn affects our personal relationships deeply.

This project has more than just fulfilled our expectations.

A dream has come true.

Tomoko Kodama

Atsuko Kodama

Kurtis

K. Naga

Family ties from Mozart to Poulenc

“How did the family line-up and the selection of works for this recording come about? Our long-time producer Job Maarse played the crucial role,” Mari Kodama recalls. “As a young man, Job heard Mozart’s Double and Triple Piano Concertos interpreted by the famous French pianist Robert Casadesus, his wife Gaby and son Jean. These musical family ties fascinated him and so he suggested this extraordinary ‘family album’ to Kent, Momo, Karin and me, which we then happily realized together.”

Since Antonio Vivaldi and Johann Sebastian Bach, concerts for two or more instruments of the same provenance have been widely known and popular with audiences. Until the second half of the 18th century, this instrumentation tradition for keyboard instruments was continued primarily by Bach’s sons Johann Christian and Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach. The

concertos K. 242 and K. 365 by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) recorded here belong to this small, genre-specific but quite interesting corpus of works.

The **Concerto for three pianos and orchestra in F Major K. 242**, considered Mozart’s third piano concerto, was composed in February 1776 in Salzburg. It is a commissioned work and therefore occupies a special role in the series of 23 completed piano concertos by Mozart. The noble patron was the music-loving Countess Antonia Lodron, who ordered the piece for herself and her two daughters Maria Aloisia and Maria Josepha — hence the nickname “Lodron Concerto”. While the thirteen-year-old Aloisia and her mother had advanced pianistic skills, Mozart had to keep the technical requirements for the third piano, intended for the eleven-year-old “Pepperl”, rather modest.

Mozart himself performed his “Triple Concerto” several times in the original form of the work for three pianos, recorded here by Karin Kei Nagano (Piano I), Mari Kodama (Piano II) and Momo Kodama (Piano III), amongst others on October 22nd, 1777 in a concert in Augsburg together with the cathedral organist Johann Michael Demmler and the piano maker Johann Andreas Stein.

We don’t know exactly why Mozart decided to later rework this concerto for two pianos; it is obvious, however, that he wanted to raise the pianistic demands placed on the two soloists to an equally high level. The fact that Mozart wrote to his father Leopold in 1781 to send him copies of the “2 Concerts for 2 Pianos” — meaning the K. 242 and K. 365 concertos — for planned performances in Vienna proves that he attached a high value to this new version. The orchestral line-up of the “Triple Concerto” K. 242 consists of two oboes, two horns and strings, similar to

the other two piano concertos K. 238 and 246 written in 1776. The first movements of these early Salzburg concertos all follow the sonata main movement pattern, which overarches the tutti ritornelles and solo episodes. The three-part middle movements show echoes of the aria form and the final movements are each designed as a Rondo.

The first movement of K. 242 opens with a march-like main theme consisting of chord figurations, which Mozart juxtaposes with a lyrical side theme. Elegantly flowing episodes with ornaments and runs in the solo instruments enrich the dialogic interplay. Mozart’s art is particularly evident in the transparency and clarity of the structure, which is not a given with three solo pianos. “To us, despite the relatively low pianistic requirements, the Piano III is just as important as the other two solo parts in the larger context,” emphasizes Mari Kodama.



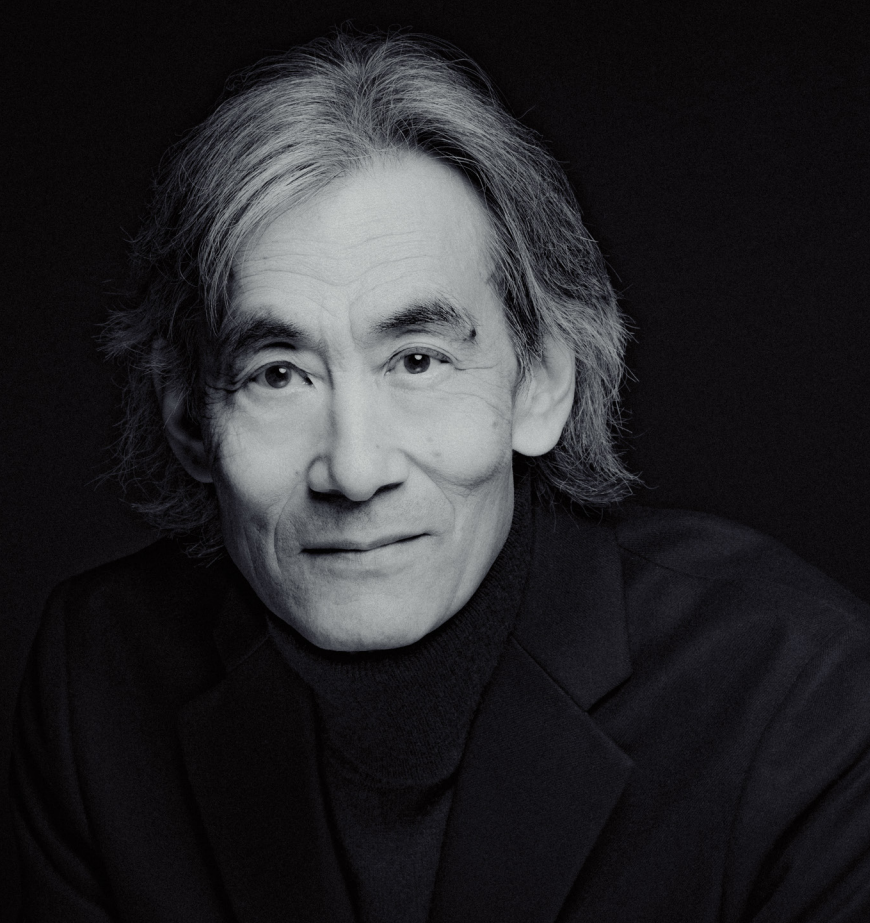
In the Adagio, the strings accompany *con sordini*, i.e. with mutes, and thus create an intimate, slightly enchanted atmosphere in which the pianos make music quite expressively, but at the same time cantabile, with chromatic clouding and varied voice leading.

The primarily dance-like Rondo finale is opened with a noble gesture by pianos I and II. Before the couplet begins, the soloists play miniature cadenzas, giving them the opportunity to showcase their individual expression.

The sisters Mari and Momo Kodama describe themselves as “very different pianists, looking for a common journey of interpretation”. And how does Mari Kodama’s daughter Karin fit into this music-making? “Unlike my sister and I, both of whom were primarily influenced by the piano, Karin grew up musically in a world dominated by symphony and opera. She therefore plays very naturally,

vocally and melodically and develops a deep musicality. This complements Momo’s and my playing wonderfully in this triple concert and we — as old birds! — also allow it because it is very simple and natural,” says Mari Kodama, providing an insight into the pianistic family ties.

Paper studies and manuscript comparisons offer vague information about the time when the **Concerto in E-Flat Major for two pianos and orchestra K. 365/316a** was written. Accordingly, the “Double concerto” could have been created at the turn of the year 1780/81, but certainly after the big trips to Mannheim and Paris. We know that Mozart performed his E-Flat Major concerto — the orchestral line-up now expanded to include clarinets, trumpets and timpani — together with Josepha von Auernhammer on November 23, 1781 and May 26, 1782 in Vienna, i.e. with that piano student, which became immortal in literature thanks to Mozart’s drastic words: “The young lady is a monster but plays delightfully”.



Mozart had composed K. 365 to be played together with his sister Nannerl, who also publicly performed the F Major concerto in the version for two pianos with him. However, the E-Flat Major concerto speaks a completely different, much more personal musical language. After an energetic unison beginning, the first movement offers a true wealth of thematic material, which is expanded in a concertante-musical manner and gives the two soloists (here Momo Kodama (Piano I) and Mari Kodama (Piano II) ample opportunity to interpret the motivic elements to each other in such a virtuosic way that it resembles throwing balls to one another. “It’s so much fun to make music together here,” says Mari Kodama, “especially because, particularly in the first movement, Mozart makes the conversations, the common conversation with his sister Nannerl between the two pianos, beautifully visible musically. And that’s exactly what my sister and I try to do here — we interrupt each other like Wolfgang and Nannerl and discuss things

humorously, without being bothered about differences of opinion,” she describes the interaction. “We have often played the Double concerto in changing roles. What’s new is that Kent was now at the helm and inspired us greatly with his experience and his overarching conducting perspective.” Despite the differentiated wind section, the orchestra chiefly has a supporting function in the first movement. It only emerges more independently in the B-Flat Major Andante, when at times the solos skilfully surround the wind voices with ornaments. The light-hearted Rondo finale uses the main theme of an Augsburg joke song “The Cat Won’t Stop Catching The Mouse” (Die Katze lässt das Mäusen nicht). The fact that the contrapuntal middle section modulates to C Minor does not in the least cloud the image of unadulterated musical joy. And so what remains is entertaining, cheerful, convivial music — but in the noblest sense of the word. Or, to put it in Mari Kodama’s words: “The piece is a jewel, a treasure!” A Mozartian, playful and elegant lightness

is also evident in the third work on this recording, the **Concerto for two pianos and orchestra** by Francis Poulenc (1899-1963). The name Poulenc is rarely mentioned without being directly associated with the group of composers “Les Nouveaux Jeunes”, a handful of musical innovators who, since Henri Collet’s famous articles from January 1920, are referred to as “Les Six”. And Poulenc’s “oeuvre, which oscillates between surrealism, nightclub and church music” (Rosteck), impresses thanks to its originality, clarity and comprehensibility.

Poulenc, who stylistically can be assigned to an idiosyncratic, unconventional Neoclassicism, had one musical god: Mozart. A god to whom he also paid homage in his concert, interpreted here by Mari (Piano 1) and Momo Kodama (Piano 2). This music blends, seemingly carelessly, yet powerfully, the invisible boundaries of compositional styles. “Momo and I had performed this piece together about fifty times before recording it. But we worked very intensively with Kent

again to find a chamber-musical approach — both for Mozart and Poulenc. In Poulenc, Kent recommended that we strictly adhere to the pace set by Poulenc, especially in the finale. “Momo and I always played it slower in the past, but now the celebration intended by the composer comes out much stronger,” Mari Kodama explains. What are the pianistic challenges of this work? “The work is very rhythmic, but many of the notes — similar to some syllables in the French language — are not ‘pronounced’ but connected in a subtle, delicate way. It’s highly complex, but ultimately leads to a swing that Momo and I have to create on the piano.”

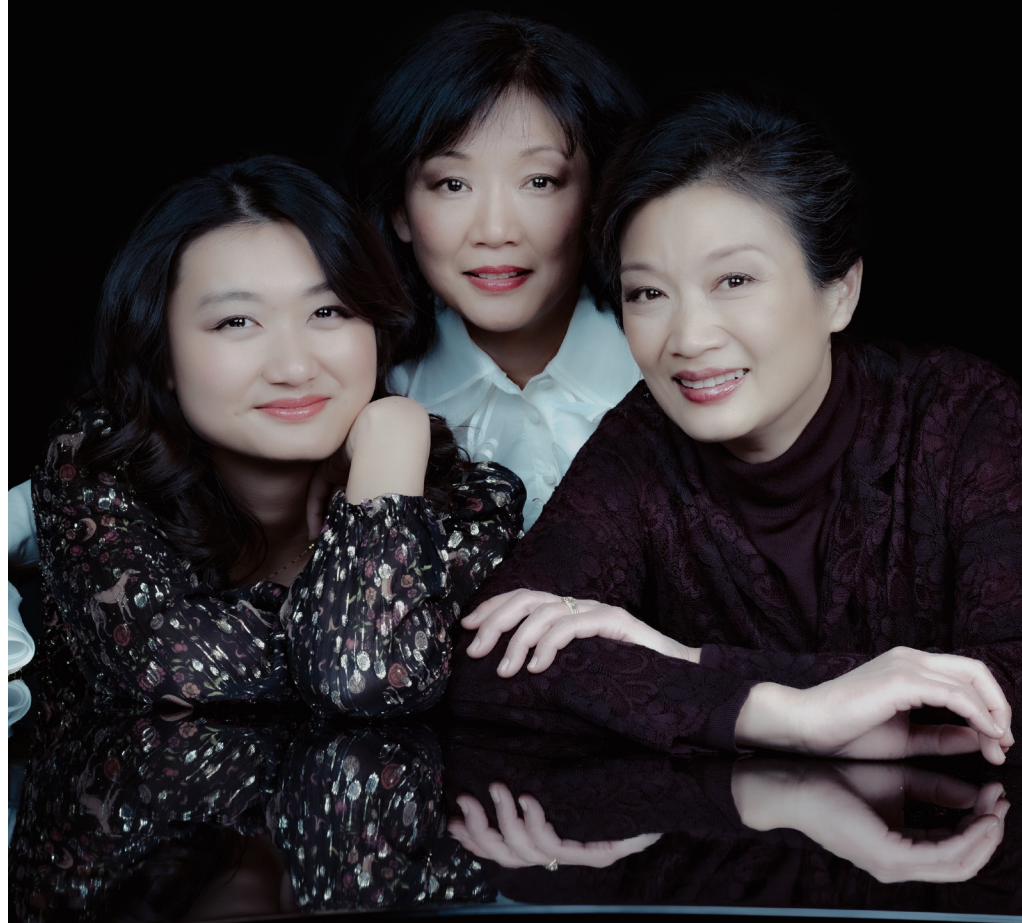
The work was written in 1932, when the composer had already largely abandoned Cocteau’s demand for an authentic “musique française de France” and also used elements of the Classical-Romantic tradition. Despite that, Cocteau’s criteria are still recognizable.

The concert is an entertaining string of different musical elements and associations. Mari Kodama adds: "For me it is a very French work. You can literally smell the scent of decadence, champagne, bon vivant life. It's full of joy of life, always with a touch of irony, not really taking anything seriously. Something is floating in the air. In French they say 'blagues' to describe this slightly jokey state." In the first movement there are dancing echoes of French vaudeville, but also of Prokofiev, Stravinsky and Rachmaninoff. Towards the end, the musical imagination even wanders off into distant Asia. Balinese sounds, which Poulenc encountered at the 1931 Paris World Exhibition, create an exotic atmosphere (using six-tone rows, parallel fourths and hypnotizing repetitions). In the second movement, Mozart — Poulenc's ideal of classical "entertainment" — comes into play, only in a slightly alienated shape, but is soon transferred to a French sound world. "The Larghetto is in fact a homage to Mozart," specifies

Mari Kodama. The ghosts of Chopin and Rachmaninoff appear here and there. The third movement is a fireworks display of a wide variety of ideas. "This is totally crazy! One rushes from one scene to the next," says Kodama. Again you can hear vaudeville sounds, but also jazz à la Gershwin; Rachmaninoff appears again and the Balinese motif also returns. The wonder of this charming work, sparkling with "French" esprit, is the artful way in which Poulenc brought the disparate material together, and in the truest sense of the word, "composed" it.

Jörg Peter Urbach

(English translation by Calvin B. Cooper)



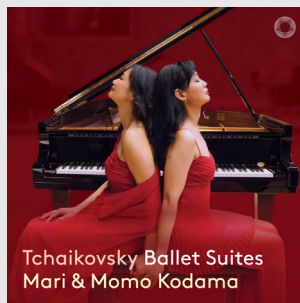


A key cultural player in French-speaking Switzerland, the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande is the region's leading symphony orchestra and the principal orchestra of the Grand Théâtre de Genève. Comprising 112 musicians, the OSR is one of the world's leading orchestras. Founded in 1918 by Ernest Ansermet, the OSR has a strong reputation both in French-speaking Switzerland and internationally. Today, it perpetuates its values of openness, sharing and creation.

The OSR also carries out its mission of cultural mediation, education and promotion of its heritage through numerous activities. Mixing styles and eras and on the eve of its second century of existence, the OSR resolutely aims to be a transmitter of culture and emotions.

The OSR is supported by the City of Geneva, the Republic and Canton of Geneva and the Canton of Vaud.

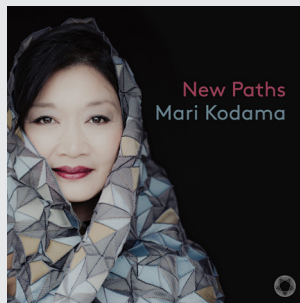
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O S R



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