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WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Piano Quartets K. 493 & K. 478

Kuijken Piano Quartet



SUPER AUDIO CD

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756 - 1791)

Piano Quartets K. 493 & K. 478

Kuijken Piano Quartet

Veronica Kuijken fortepiano

Sigiswald Kuijken violin

Sara Kuijken viola

Michel Boulanger cello

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756 - 1791)

PIANO QUARTET K. 493

[1] Allegro	14:30
[2] Larghetto	12:55
[3] Allegretto	9:01

PIANO QUARTET K. 478

[4] Allegro	14:53
[5] Andante	7:02
[6] Rondo	8:09

total time 66:34

For anyone wishing to approach any type of music, a 'virginal' listening experience, I believe, is the best possible choice. For those of us who have mastered score-reading, could that alone be enough, and ultimately perhaps the true essence? (Naturally, I can ask this only about notated music.) So, paradoxically, are we closest to that essence when listening inwardly to music in our heads?

I was asked to write something about the music presented on this recording. For those who wish to read on, please feel free, but doing so is by no means compulsory.

The two piano quartets, written in 1785 and 1786, are all-encompassing – the appeal of a piano concerto in miniature on the one hand, and the mystery and intimacy of the most heavenly chamber music on the other. Mozart created this genre practically from scratch. Indeed, his treatment of these four instruments as equal partners was unheard of in his day. The silence, both empty silence and full silence, I experience in the slow movement of the second piano quartet, is like a balm, while the intense power of expression of both opening movements leaves me speechless.

I enjoy looking at the connections Mozart himself made between different works in his oeuvre. The most obvious example can be heard in the finale of the G minor quartet (specifically in bars 60 to 63 for those following along in the score). These four structurally rather unimportant bars, which appear here only once, were reused identically by Mozart just three months later, right down to

the key, in the Rondo in D Major, K. 485 for piano. Yet now they are catapulted into the main theme and are put through their paces, tonally speaking. Additionally, there are bars 5 and 6 of the first movement of the E-flat major piano quartet, which strongly evoke bars 3 and 4 of the sonata for two pianos, written five years earlier. Mozart places the two bars right at the beginning of both pieces to conclude the very first phrase of the exposition. I also hear the finale of the 'Kegelstatt' Trio, K.498, written two months after the E-flat piano quartet, in the aroma of a theme in the first movement (starting in bar 59). And to complete the picture, I can't help sensing Die Zauberflöte foreshadowed in the finale of the G minor quartet (but you'll have to find out where for yourself!).

Because it was no longer possible for our uncle and brother Wieland Kuijken to embark on the adventure of this recording with us, we called on Michel Boulanger, with whom we had previously performed the Schubert quintet. Let me thank him here for his invaluable musical contribution, as I do my father and sister, of course!

I sincerely hope you enjoy the recording.

Veronica Kuijken

Translation: Josh Dillon/Muse Translations

Veronica Kuijken

Veronica Kuijken (b. 1978) has studied piano in Brussels (with Daniel Blumenthal), violin in Londen and Winterthur (with David Takeno and Rudolf Koelman), and has specialised in Zürich for lieder and French song (with Irwin Gage). She performs regularly in recitals with Stephan Genz, Philippe Huttenlocher and Stephan MacLeod. After 6 years as a repetiteur at the cembalo for baroque singing (at the Centre de Musique Ancienne de Genève), Veronica has been engaged since 2004 as a piano accompanist at the Haute Ecole de Musique in Lausanne. This has allowed her to collaborate with musical personalities such as Christa Ludwig, Emmanuel Pahud, Sophie Cherrier and Barthold Kuijken.

With her sister Marie, she has recorded a selection of Mozart's works for four hands/two fortepianos, and with 'La Petite Bande' two Mozart pianoforte concertos, both for the Challenge Classics label. She regularly performs in the Salle Gaveau (Paris).

In 1997, she was a member of the Gustav Mahler Youth Orchestra as a violinist; with Sigiswald, Sara and Wieland Kuijken, she has recorded the string quartets of Debussy, Schumann and Beethoven Op. 59, as well as Schubert's string quintet.

Since 2014, Veronica Kuijken has been qualified as a coach in the Cantienica®-Method for Bodyform and Posture, which she teaches in the Zoé birth house (in Moudon, Switzerland), and at the Haute École de Musique in Lausanne.

Sigiswald Kuijken

Sigiswald Kuijken was born in 1944 close to Brussels. He studied violin at the conservatories of Bruges and Brussels, completing his studies at the latter institution with Maurice Raskin in 1964. He came into contact with early music at a very young age, together with his brother Wieland. Studying on his own, he gained a thorough knowledge of specific 17th- and 18th century performance techniques and conventions of interpretation on violin and viola da gamba. This led to the introduction, in 1969, of a more authentic way of playing the violin, whereby the instrument was no longer held under the chin, but lay freely on the shoulder; this was to have a crucial influence on the approach to the violin repertoire and was consequently adopted by many players starting in the early 1970s.

From 1964 to 1972, Sigiswald Kuijken was a member of the Brussels-based Alarius Ensemble (with Wieland Kuijken, Robert Kohnen and Janine Rubinlicht), which performed throughout Europe and in the United States. He subsequently undertook individual chamber music projects with a number of Baroque music specialists, chief among which were his brothers Wieland and Barthold and Robert Kohnen, as well as Gustav Leonhardt, Frans Bruggen Anner Bylsma and René Jacobs. In 1972, with the encouragement of Deutsche Harmonia Mundi and Gustav Leonhardt, he founded the Baroque orchestra La Petite Bande, which since then has given innumerable concerts throughout Europe, Australia, South America, China and Japan, and has made many recordings for a number of labels (including Deutsche Harmonia Mundi, Seon, Virgin, Accent, Denon, Hyperion and Challenge Classics).

In 1986 he founded the Kuijken String Quartet (with François Fernandez, Marleen Thiers and Wieland Kuijken), which specialises in the quartets and quintets (with Ryo Terakado as first violist) of the Classical period. Recordings of quartets and quintets by Mozart and Haydn have appeared on Denon. Since 1998 Sigiswald Kuijken occasionally brings together two generations Kuijken (his daughters Veronica and Sara and his brother Wieland) to perform string quartets of later periods (Debussy, Schumann, Beethoven, Schubert) often combined with Lieder by Marie Kuijken, soprano and also daughter of Sigiswald, and Veronica Kuijken, piano. Recordings of the two generations have been made for Arcana and Challenge Classics.

In 2004 Sigiswald Kuijken reintroduced in practical performance the Violoncello da spalla (shoulder cello, very probably the instrument Bach had in mind when writing his six cello solos): concerts and recordings of Bach and Vivaldi. From 1971 to 1996, Sigiswald Kuijken taught Baroque violin at the Koninklijk Conservatorium in The Hague and from 1993 to 2009 at the Koninklijk Muziekconservatorium in Brussels. In addition, he has for many years been in demand as a guest teacher at a number of institutions (including the Royal College of Music in London, Salamanca University, the Accademia Chigiana in Siena, the Conservatoire of Geneva, the Musikhochschule of Leipzig). Since 1998, Sigiswald Kuijken occasionally conducts "modern" symphonic orchestras in romantic programs (Beethoven, Schumann, Brahms, Mendelssohn).

On 2 February 2007, Sigiswald Kuijken received an honorary doctorate of the KU Leuven. He was granted in February 2009 the prestigious "Life Achievement Award of the Flemish Government". In September 2015, Kuijken was awarded the Golden Medal of the Royal Flemish Academy of Arts and Sciences of Belgium, followed in January 2016 by the Career Award of KLARA, the Flemish Classical Radio.

Sara Kuijken

Born in Asse (Belgium) in 1968, Sara Kuijken began her music studies in her home town before going on to study viola with Professor E. Schiffer at the Royal Conservatory of Brussels where she was awarded First Prize in 1989 and the Higher Diploma in 1992, both with distinction. She completed her studies with Professor J. Kussmaul at the Sweelinck Conservatory in Amsterdam, gaining her UM Diploma in 1995.

In 1993, together with seven other young musicians, she co-founded the chamber music ensemble Oxalys, with whom she performed a wide range of chamber music, spanning from Mozart to the present day, specialising in French impressionism (Debussy, Ravel and others) and also in contemporary Russian chamber music, with composers including Shostakovich, Gubaidulina, Shost and Süsslin. With Oxalys, she gave many concerts both in Belgium and abroad, and also participated in the ensemble's first two CD recordings.

From 1994, Sara Kuijken started learning the baroque violin with her father Sigiswald, and went on to play with La Petite Bande as well as other period instrument ensembles including Ricercar and Atys. In 2004, she became her father's assistant for his baroque violin class at the Royal Conservatory of Brussels; she remained in that position until his retirement in 2009.

In 1998, another new family project was initiated, using both period and modern instruments: the "Two Generations Kuijken". Not only have the Kuijkens performed myriad concerts in this constellation, but they have also made several CD recordings, in which Sara features as a violist – their releases include chamber music by Debussy, Schumann's String Quartets, Beethoven's "Razumovsky" String Quartets and String Quintet and Schubert's String Quintet (with Michel Boulanger's participation).

Michel Boulanger

Michel Boulanger earned the first prize and higher diplomas in cello and chamber music at the Royal Conservatory of Brussels, going on to study at the Musikhochschule in Cologne and regularly participating in masterclasses with Janos Starker and Steven Isserlis. From 1989 to 1991, he studied with Janos Starker at Indiana University in Bloomington where he specialized in historical performance at the IU Early Music Institute. He completed his training in Baroque cello with Hidemi Suzuki in Brussels, earning first prize.

Boulanger is internationally active in leading ensembles such as La Petite Bande, Il Fondamento, Anima Eterna, Il Gardellino and l'Orchestre des Champs-Elysées. He performs regularly in chamber ensembles including the Kuijken Piano Quartet and has collaborated on various CD recordings in Europe and Japan.

As co-founder of Traffik Theater, he appeared in numerous music theatre productions for children throughout Europe and the US from 2003 to 2013.

In 2016, he created a sociocultural project called Traffik Klassik to rediscover forgotten eighteenth- and nineteenth-century chamber repertoire and incorporate it into innovative, contemporary concert programming.



Pour ceux qui veulent partir à la découverte de la musique, quelle qu'elle soit, l'écouter et la ressentir à l'état vierge est selon moi le plus beau choix. Pour ceux d'entre nous qui maîtrisent la lecture des partitions, peut-être cela suffit-il déjà, ...et est-ce finalement même le plus important ? (Bien sûr, je ne peux le dire qu'à propos de la musique transmise par écrit.) L'écoute immatérielle, à l'intérieur de nous-même, est-elle peut-être, aussi paradoxal que cela puisse paraître, ce qui nous permet d'approcher la musique au plus près?

On m'a demandé d'écrire un texte sur cette musique – un texte sur cet enregistrement. Si vous êtes intéressé, vous pouvez poursuivre votre lecture – mais vous pouvez aussi vous en passer!

Les deux quatuors pour piano et cordes (écrits en 1785 et en 1786) possèdent tout: d'une part, l'allure de mini concertos pour piano, d'autre part le mystère et l'intimité de la musique de chambre la plus céleste. Mozart créa ce genre entièrement à partir de rien, pour ainsi dire: la façon dont il présente ces quatre instruments en partenaires égaux, n'est pas du tout de son époque. Le silence – tant vide que plein – que je ressens dans la partie lente du second quatuor, est tel un baume pour moi, tandis que la forte expressivité des deux premiers mouvements me laisse muette.

J'aime examiner les liens que Mozart tisse une fois de plus avec son œuvre : l'exemple le plus flagrant est offert dans le finale du quatuor en sol mineur (mesures 60/63 pour qui lit la partition). Ces quatre mesures plutôt dénuées d'importance sur le plan structurel, et qui n'apparaissent qu'une seule fois,

furent réutilisées trois mois plus tard à l'identique – jusque dans la tonalité – et bombardées thème principal du Rondo en ré majeur KV 485 pour piano solo. En tant que telles, il les a parées de tous les atours possibles de tonalités. De surcroît: les mesures 5/6 de la première partie du quatuor pour piano et cordes en mi bémol majeur évoquent fortement les mesures 3/4 de la sonate pour deux pianofortes, composée cinq ans plus tôt. Dans les deux cas, Mozart place les deux mesures au tout début du morceau, en conclusion de la toute première phrase d'exposition. J'entends également le finale du Trio Kegelstatt KV. 498, composé deux mois après ce même quatuor en mi bémol, dans le sillage d'un thème de la première partie (mesure 59 et suivantes). Et pour compléter le tableau, je ne peux m'empêcher de discerner une "Flûte enchantée" avant la lettre dans le finale du quatuor en sol (cherchez l'endroit!).

Comme il n'était plus possible pour notre oncle et frère Wieland Kuijken de nous accompagner dans l'aventure de cet enregistrement, nous avons fait appel à Michel Boulanger, avec qui nous avons déjà enregistré le Quintette de Schubert. Je le remercie vivement d'être la personne et le musicien qu'il est, de même que je remercie, bien sûr, mon père et ma sœur !

J'espère que cette musique vous plaira...

Veronica Kuijken

Traduction: Brigitte Zwerver-Berret/Muse Translations

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.



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Executive producer: Anne de Jong
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A&R Challenge Classics: Anne de Jong
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