

MOZART Concerto for Flute, Harp, and Orchestra.¹ *Sinfonia*

***Concertante for 4 Winds*² • ¹Alan Buribayev, ²Arvid Engegård, cond; ¹Per Flemstrøm, (fl); ¹Birgitte ¹Volan Håvik (hp); ²Pavel Sokolov (ob); ²Leif Arne Pedersen (cl); ²Per Hannisdal (bn); ²Inger Besserudhagen (hn); Oslo PO • LAWO 1071 (57:48)**

This is an absolutely exquisite little disc. Everyone has heard the Requiem more times than they care to remember, and the clarinet concerto is done to death, so a more obscure Mozart work is really worth the listen. This is a stunning collection, with admirable skill in the playing and a wide range of nuances to enjoy.

The concerto for flute and harp, which I had never heard (bar a short excerpt in *Amadeus!*), is a pretty and picturesque romp through extensive scalar patterns and complex ornamentation. The most delicious moments are just flute and harp together, where the players beautifully foster a delicate, sensuous relationship between the two instruments. The *Andantino* movement is my favorite, because the music is at its most tense and feather-like, with glorious swells of string accompaniment and strikingly well wrought arpeggio shapes on the flute. The detail is most impressive: All dynamics are taken at face value or reworked with simple but neat effect. For instance, the flute plays with crescendo and diminuendo around the harp at its one volume, so that their melodies interweave imperceptibly and with great care. The bulk of the work is taken up with classic Mozartian tonal eccentricities and that endless sense of the perfectly carved sculpture: At its worst, the CD occasionally drips into the sensationalism and clichéd romp of the film I mentioned, but actually this is rare and for the most part this is an incredibly impressive rendition of a beautiful work.

The *Sinfonia Concertante* is a different kettle of fish. This feels a little like any Mozart recording on the shelf. Yes, there are well recorded moments of orchestral coherency and control, and the soloists all make a good meal of their parts, but what serious recording doesn't do this? It's just a fairly bland version of something reasonably impressive. It is not Mozart at his best or worst, it is not the orchestra at its best or worst, it is not music at its best or worst; it is just fine. Its value, I think, lies in how it goes with the flute and harp work: It deploys the same kinds of melody, and is structured in a similar way. However, that's not enough to convince me: buy the disc for its first offering, which is excellent. **Dan Sperrin**

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