

Mozart for Wind Octet

Serenades—in E flat major, K 375; in C minor, K 388. Overture & Arias from Act 1 of the opera “La Clemenza di Tito” (arr. Triebensee)

Oslo Kammerakademi / David Friedemann Strunck

Lawo Classics LWC1141

[80 minutes]

This extremely generously filled CD (1 second short of 80 minutes' playing time) is a total delight from first chord to last. As Steinar Granmo Nilsen's informative booklet notes comment, “Mozart wrote outstandingly well for winds, probably better than anyone before him, and also better than most succeeding him ... wind players themselves would say it just lies well on the instrument”! Just how well is manifestly obvious in every bar of Oslo Kammerakademi's performances.

The *Serenade in E flat major*, K 375, was originally written in 1782 for a young girl's name-day, using a Viennese sextet of pairs of *clarinets*, horns and bassoons, the then new-fangled clarinet replacing the more usual oboes of his earlier *harmoniemusik* pieces. Later that year, however, Mozart recast it for octet, adding the 2 oboes to make a richer palette, and then wrote the slightly darker-hued *Serenade in C minor*, K 388, for the same ensemble. The two works make a marvellously contrasted pair.

The leading oboist of his generation, Johann Triebensee (1772-1846) played in several Mozart opera performances as a teenager and was a gifted composer. His marvellously turned suite of arrangements from *La Clemenza di Tito* (something Mozart, alas, did not have time to do before his sudden death in 1791) allows Mozart's wonderful music for this controversial final opera to have a new life. (Triebensee also arranged expertly 19 numbers from *Don Giovanni*, 1/75, 2/81.) It is superbly rendered here by the Norwegian musicians, who have cannily added an ad lib part for timpani for the more dramatic sections. The performances, again, are simply stunning: perfection of ensemble, tuning and musicianship. Strongly recommended! If I could give it six stars, I would!

Guy Rickards