

CD Review by [Paul Orgel](#)

MOZART *Das Traumbild. Sehnsucht nach dem Frühlinge. Das Lied der Trennung. Die betrogene Welt. An Chloë. An die Freundschaft. Als Luise die Briefe ihres ungetreuen Liebhabers verbrannte. Abendempfindung. Eine kleine deutsche Kantate. Das Veilchen. And die Freude. Ich würd' auf meinem Pfad. Brüder, lasst uns lustig sein. Die Zufriedenheit. Der Zauberer. An die Einsamkeit. And die Beschiedenheit. Geheime Liebe. Im Frühlingsanfang. Daphne, deine Rosenwangen. Komm, liebe Zither* • Marianne Beate Kielland (mez); Nils Anders Mortensen (pn) • LAWQ 1111 (65:15)



Whispering Mozart
AUDIO CD; IMPORT
Lawo Classics



There are approximately 30 solo songs by Mozart with piano accompaniment. The majority of them are in strophic form and intended to be presented in the “plain and simple, true and pure” interpretation urged by Goethe, but being the genius that he was, Mozart found ways to explore varied approaches to text setting in many of them, and their musical style also varies considerably. *Als Luise die Briefe*, K 520, for instance, is a dramatic *scena*, as is the more ambitious *Eine kleine deutsche Kantate*, not usually found in recording of Mozart’s songs but programmed here. *Abendempfindung*, K 523, a through-composed Lied that anticipates Schubert’s mature style, is probably his finest achievement, but there’s not a single selection among the songs that doesn’t engage my interest, or possess real charm.

In a booklet note, the Norwegian mezzo-soprano Marianne Beate Kielland, explains that the challenge of performing Mozart’s songs is to not violate their simplicity with excessive pathos or outpouring of feeling. She describes singing them as “whispering the words and melodies to the few who have gathered in your living room to listen,” hence the album’s title: *Whispering Mozart*. But I wonder whether the word “whispering” loses something in translation from

Norwegian, because in English it mostly connotes absence of sound, and Kielland invests each song with richly produced, and entirely appropriate vocalism. Hers is a rich mezzo voice, evenly supported throughout its registers. She has fine legato and breath control, and the ability to communicate warmth of spirit, and happily, her wish to sing in a simple, artless manner doesn't inhibit or miniaturize her expressivity. The songs' straightforwardness remains intact. Kielland's voice reminds me a little of Janet Baker's, and, her slightly Scandinavian accented German, Anne-Sophie von Otter's, two mezzos who are also complete musical artists.

The great Lieder singer Mitsuko Shirai, a mezzo with a brighter timbre and less placid manner than Kielland's, also offers 21 Mozart songs on a treasurable 1990 Laserlight disc. The program mostly overlaps with Kielland's, though Shirai includes *Ridente la calma*, K 152, an Italian canzonetta, and two delightful French songs, *Dans un bois solitaire*, K 308, and *Oiseaux, si tous les ans*, K 307. Shirai's husband, pianist Hartmut Höll, brings more sparkle to the accompaniments than the unobtrusive Nils Anders Mortensen for Kielland, and her deeper performance of *Abendempfindung* brings a lovelier atmosphere to its reflective musings. Nonetheless, I would have trouble recommending one of these recordings over the other. I wouldn't want to be without the warm, soothing approach that Kielland calls "whispering." **Paul Orgel**

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