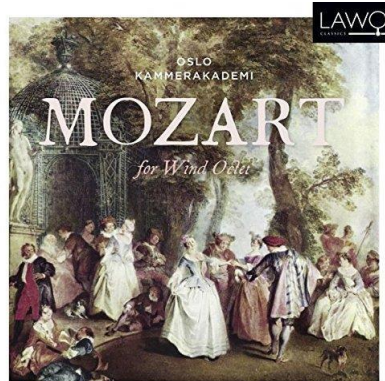


MOZART Serenades for Winds: in E \flat , K 375; in c, K 388. **MOZART-TRIEBENSEE** *La clemenza di Tito*: Overture and Arias • Oslo Kammerakademi • LAWO 1141 (79:59)



Mozart for Wind Octet
AUDIO CD; IMPORT
Imports

It was a 1972 recording of Mozart's Wind Serenade in B \flat , K 361, the "Gran Partita," by the winds of the Collegium Aureum, an early period instruments ensemble, that impressed the greatness of Mozart's wind music upon me. Aside from the group's technically superb playing and lively interpretation, it was the sound—the instruments' clarity, blend, and individual timbres—that gave the performance its character. The same qualities are present in these taut, vibrant performances by the Oslo Kammerakademi, led by the Oslo Philharmonic's principal oboist, David Friedemann Strunck. The Kammerakademi plays on modern instruments, except for natural horns, combining modern virtuosity with historically informed performance practice.

Other than the "Gran Partita," Mozart's finest wind serenades are the two presented here. The C-Minor is equally or better known in its transcription as the String Quintet, K 406, in which it takes on a different feeling; more searching, perhaps, and more *cantabile*, at least in the recent, very sensitive performance by the Dover Quartet with Michael Tree. The wind octet version, which I prefer, feels more ceremonial, and is able to suggest the feel of the music being played outdoors. Here, and in the genial, melodically inventive Serenade, K 375, the occasional whoop and pleasingly raucous quality of the Oslo Kammerakademi's horns adds a special touch of atmospheric color to the ensemble's sound.

Groups of four to eight wind players known as *Harmonie* ensembles became popular as court entertainment in the late 18th century, mostly playing arrangements. The oboist Joseph Triebensee (1772–1846) adapted excerpts from approximately 80 operas, including most of Mozart's, for use as *Harmoniemusik*. His arrangements of the Overture and 10 arias from *La clemenza di Tito* generously fills out this disc. Ever since Andrew Porter's efforts at rehabilitating this opera's reputation, back in the 1980s, I have paid it increasing attention, growing more and more convinced of its greatness, mainly due the melodic distinction of its arias, and have come to regard it as what Porter called "a kind of crown of Mozart's career." There are few recordings of these wind arrangements, which are played beautifully here, and amount to much more than just filler. All in all, this is a flawless Mozart recording. **Paul Orgel**

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