

A4

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756-1791)

CD1

SERENADE IN E FLAT MAJOR NO.11 K.375

1 I. Allegro maestoso 7'11

2 II. Menuetto 3'49

3 III. Adagio 5'16

4 IV. Menuetto 2'43

5 V. Allegro 3'27

SERENADE IN C MINOR NO.12 K.388

6 I. Allegro 8'03

7 II. Andante 3'49

8 III. Menuetto in canone. Trio in canone in rovescio 3'47

9 IV. Allegro 6'01

TOTAL TIME CD1: 44'14

NICOLAS BALDEYROU | ALEXANDRE CHABOD CLASSICAL CLARINET

GABRIEL PIDOUX | HÉLÈNE DEVILLENEUVE CLASSICAL OBOE

DAVID DOUÇOT | THOMAS QUINQUENEL CLASSICAL BASSOON

DAVID GUERRIER | HUGUES VIALLOON NATURAL HORN

YANN DUBOST DOUBLE BASS

CD2

SERENADE IN B FLAT MAJOR NO.10 K.361 "GRAN PARTITA"

1 I. Largo. Molto allegro 2 II. Menuetto. Trios I & II 3 III. Adagio 4'53

4 IV. Menuetto. Allegretto. Trios I & II 5 V. Romanze. Allegretto 6'51

6 VI. Tema con variazioni 8'49

8'39

4'48

9'30

7 VII. Finale 3'30

TOTAL TIME CD2: 47'07

NICOLAS BALDEYROU | FRANCK AMET CLASSICAL CLARINET

GABRIEL PIDOUX | HÉLÈNE DEVILLENEUVE CLASSICAL OBOE

ALEXANDRE CHABOD | FRANÇOIS MIQUEL CLASSICAL BASSET HORN

DAVID DOUÇOT | THOMAS QUINQUENEL CLASSICAL BASSOON

DAVID GUERRIER | HUGUES VIALLOON | ANTOINE DREYFUSS | ANNE BOUSSARD

NATURAL HORN

YANN DUBOST DOUBLE BASS

MOZART: COMPLETE WORKS WITH CLARINET, VOL.1

BY NICOLAS BALDEYROU

Mozart always had a special affinity with the wind instruments: for him they were essential components of his musical expression. They are the hallmark of his genius as an orchestrator, showing his ability to get the best out of the instrumental resources of his period, and his enthusiastic fondness for them is displayed in his piano concertos, symphonies and operas, where the winds often play a leading solo role. For Mozart, writing for these instruments was an opportunity to explore new sounds and techniques, at a time when wind instrument-making was evolving at pace.

THE RISE OF THE WIND ENSEMBLE

In 1782, the Austrian Emperor Joseph II founded a wind octet, the Imperial and Royal 'Harmonie', which was rapidly imitated by the Viennese nobility – the term 'Harmonie' for a wind ensemble referring rather to the art of orchestrating entertainingly than to the science of harmony. This tradition, originating in Bohemia, saw the formation first of all of the wind sextet, then of the octet, after adding two clarinets to the ensemble. The clarinet, whose build developed extremely rapidly around this period, allowed pianissimo sonorities and subtly shaded nuances far more easily than the oboe. The wind octet came to achieve a sound textural balance approaching that of the string quartet, with well-defined roles for each of its instruments.

NEW REPERTOIRE

With the promotion of wind instruments at the Imperial Court and in the palaces of the nobility, a whole new repertoire emerged. The wind ensemble, until then restricted to the use of the military band or the dance, attained the status of chamber music. Mozart's Serenades, for example, could be played either in the open air or inside the palace. In general, the wind band repertoire tended towards transcriptions from popular operas of the day – Mozart himself transcribed his opera Il Seraglio (Die Entführung aus dem Serail) for wind octet.

THE SERENADES K.375 AND 388

Mozart composed his Serenade No.11 in E flat major, K.375 for sextet in Vienna in the autumn of 1781, for the Feast of Saint Teresa, and in 1782 transcribed it for octet, hoping that this work would impress the Chamberlain of the Imperial Court with its combination of elegance and virtuosity, in the typical style of a Viennese divertimento. The Serenade No.12 in C minor K.388 goes well beyond the normal framework of a serenade in its formal rigour and serious mood. The key of C minor is comparatively rare but always emotionally significant in Mozart, and this work explores more profound expressive regions, anticipating the style of his later works, while also exploiting to the utmost the possibilities offered by exceptional virtuoso clarinetists, such as the brothers Stadler.

THE GRAN PARTITA K.361

The Gran Partita is an exceptional work, both in its length, and in its line-up of as many as thirteen instruments. Composed some time in the early 1780s and first performed at the Burgtheater in Vienna, in its extended seven movements it resembles an imaginary opera on a grand scale. In this pinnacle of the wind ensemble repertoire, Mozart enriches the bass register by adding bassoon and a contrabass. Intended as a concert work, this piece likewise far surpasses the bounds of a serenade in both style and scale, rising to the level of Mozart's greatest symphonies and operas.

WHY PERFORM THIS MUSIC ON PERIOD INSTRUMENTS?

Performing Mozart on instruments of his own time provides an authentic and revelatory experience for both performer and listener, despite the technical challenges it presents. These instruments, with their diverse palette of sonorities as well as their limitations, offer a unique kind of colouring for the musical discourse, harmonically as well as melodically, and reveal a natural phrasing totally in keeping with the aesthetic of contrasts so dear to Mozart. In their attempts to imitate the human voice, the wind instruments of the period accentuate their humanity and individuality. Using these instruments enables us to rediscover Mozart's music in all its original richness and complexity, offering a sound experience that is closest to the composer's intentions, and

revealing the intrinsic logic of his works.

NICOLAS BALDEYROU AND THE NICOLAS BALDEYROU ENSEMBLE

Over the past few years, Nicolas has come to be regarded as one of the most remarkable soloists of his generation. Forging a unique path in the contemporary musical landscape, this 'concert performer well-armed against all challenges' (Diapason) has shown a mastery and versatility that transcends all periods and styles, navigating his way through every repertoire, as much at home on the early clarinet as on the modern instrument.

A winner of prestigious international competitions, such as the ARD Munich (Germany), the Dos Hermanas Competition (Spain) and the ICA Young Artist Competition (USA), Nicolas has been invited to perform in the world's major concert halls – Carnegie Hall in New York, the Concertgebouw Amsterdam, the Philharmonie de Paris, Salzburg Mozarteum, Vienna Konzerthaus, Bunkamura Orchard Hall in Tokyo, and the Grand Hall of the Moscow Conservatory.

As a soloist, he has appeared with leading orchestras, including the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Radio France Philharmonic Orchestra, French National Orchestra, Czech Philharmonic, Sinfonia Varsovia and the Saint Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra. A precocious talent, he had the early opportunity of working with legendary conductors such as Carlo-Maria Giulini, Claudio Abbado, Bernard Haitink and Kurt Masur.

Conductors he has collaborated with more recently include Myung-Whun Chung, Alain Altinoglu, Pablo Heras Casado, Mikko Franck and Fabien Gabel.

Today Nicolas is one of the most sought-after chamber music partners, sharing the concert platform with pianists Bertrand Chamayou, Nikolai Lugansky and Martha Argerich, violinists Renaud Capuçon and Svetlin Roussev, viola player Antoine Tamestit, and the Modigliani, Ébène and Chiaroscuro Quartets.

Encounters with Nikolaus Harnoncourt and Sir Roger Norrington made a crucial impact on his musical career, stimulating – for more than a quarter of a century – his keen interest both in early instruments and in constant historical research, ensuring that his performances are always imbued

with the highest possible degree of authenticity. Nicolas has recently featured as clarinet soloist (on a period instrument) with Les Musiciens du Louvre under Marc Minkowski and the Concert de la Loge directed by Julien Chauvin.

This first album inaugurates his collaboration with the Alpha Classics label, in recording the complete chamber and concertante music of Mozart on historic instruments, alongside some of the finest of today's solo artists across the generations, in the Ensemble Nicolas Baldeyrou. What they all have in common is demandingly high standards, boundless enthusiasm, and a sense of joy in working together. They have gathered around Nicolas' federalist spirit to refresh their favourite repertoire, energized by the most up-to-date musicological and practical research into the interpretation, instrumental history and style of the Classical period.