

**MOZART Complete Flute Concertos.** • Frans Vester, transverse flute; Edward Witsenburg, harp; Mozart-Ensemble Amsterdam, directed by Frans Brüggen. • PRO ARTE 2PAL-2004 (two discs), \$19.96 .

**Concerto in C for Flute and Harp, K. 299 (297c). Concerto in G, K. 313 (285c); Concerto in D, K. 314 (285a). Rondo in D, K.184 Anh. (373). Andante in C, K.315.**

If the listener is willing to make certain allowances, this set can be wonderful listening. The instruments are of the period: natural horns, one-keyed oboes, and in the case of the transverse flute, an instrument which is not tuned in full accordance with our modern standards of proper intonation. In the higher register, the E, A, and D are slightly flat. Chromatics, evidently cruelly difficult to play on this flute practically bereft of mechanism, are always clumsy-sounding and often out of tune as well. Of necessity, the solo playing seems a bit on the careful side. A warning to those with perfect pitch: these performances are tuned to the A of Mozart's time. They sound a full tone lower than present-day ones, and if you expect to hear a "D" on the first chord of the D Major concerto, your stomach may sink to your knees.

Now for the good news. The tone of the transverse flute is hauntingly beautiful, and despite a certain rough-and-readiness, the orchestral playing is probably better than what Mozart was accustomed to hearing. Not only is there an air of authenticity about these performances, but a similar spirit as well. The recording (originally Seon) is excellent, and outside of a slight rumble towards the start of the D Major Concerto, the surfaces were, too. With the reservations detailed above, a heartily recommended production.

**Paul Turok**

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**Wolfgang Amadeus MOZART (1759-1791) - MusicWeb Review Pahud**

Concerto for Flute and Harp [27:51]

Flute Concerto No. 1 [24:32]

Flute Concerto No. 2 [18:44]

Emmanuel Pahud (flute)

Marie-Pierre Langlamet (harp)

Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra/ Claudio Abbado

rec. 22, 24, 28, 29 September 1996, Philharmonie, Berlin

## **EMI CLASSICS 9659372 [71:06]**

Mozart's flute concertos are staples of the repertoire, and as such have been recorded numerous times by some of the greatest flute players, proving something of a test in both style and musicianship. There is undoubtedly an interpretation in existence to suit all tastes. These range from authentic period performances to versions with specially commissioned twenty-first century cadenzas. Most listeners have a clear favourite which is hard to beat. For interest, my own preference is for William Bennett's recording with the English Chamber Orchestra and George Malcolm.

Emmanuel Pahud is without doubt one of the world's finest and most charismatic living flute players. Having heard him live, I was curious to hear this 1996 recording. It didn't disappoint; in fact, it exceeded my already high expectations.

The flute and harp concerto has a beautifully light first movement, played with simple elegance and with a suitably fast tempo to maintain the music's momentum without rushing. The exquisite slow movement is played here with some breathtaking phrasing, and stunning pianissimos. Marie-Pierre Langlamet's harp playing is as impressive as Pahud's flute, and the pair make an excellent duo. The orchestra provides a sensitive and gentle accompaniment with a warm but unobtrusive sound. The final movement retains the lightness of the first, and continues the sense of this as a simple, straightforward interpretation, allowing Mozart's music to speak for itself, with delicate phrasing and a good sense of the musical line. The cadenzas in all three movements have a sense of poise and delicacy, allowing the soloists to shine without interrupting the overall mood of the music.

The G major concerto follows, and the opening is bright and majestic, with clear articulation and a beautiful rich tone from the flute. The orchestra is consistently excellent, with a good balance maintained throughout. Pahud has an impressive evenness of tone throughout the registers, and good control of the tone colour, allowing for subtle timbral shifts which are completely compelling. He has a wonderful sense of style, which captures Mozart's elegance and adds a touch of sparkle to the solo line. The cadenzas are composed by the soloist, and demonstrate inventiveness and imagination without straying from a sense of tradition. The slow movement is faster than some recordings I have heard, which prevents the line from becoming too heavy or over-sentimental. There is much to enjoy about this movement, most notably the well considered phrasing. The finale has a wonderful dance feel, played at a sprightly pace with some admirable technical clarity from Pahud.

The D major concerto possesses the same lightness of touch and healthy attention to detail that makes this recording stand out from many of the others.

You will wonder at Pahud's technical agility, with even fingerwork and clear, precise articulation. The sense of ensemble from the orchestra is spot-on and the choice of tempo in each movement is exemplary. This disc is unquestionably one of the best Mozart flute concerto recordings I've heard, with musicianship and instrumental ability in abundance. Unmissable.

**Carla Rees**

**MOZART Flute and Harp Concerto. Flute Concertos: No. 1 in D, K 313; No. 2 in D, K 314** • Emmanuel Pahud (fl); Marie-Pierre Langlamet (hp); Claudio Abbado, cond.; Berlin PO • EMI 7243 5 56365 2 2(71:06)

A name previously unknown to me, Emmanuel Pahud is clearly a flutist to reckon with. He was born in Geneva in 1970, studied in Brussels, Basel, and Paris, and became principal flute of the Berlin Philharmonic at the age of 22. This recording deserves a place among the best of many good versions of Mozart's three concertante works for an instrument he disliked but nevertheless wrote beautifully for. In direct comparison with Jiří Válek's two-disc Canyon Classics set (more expensive, but also containing the Andante K 315), which I reviewed with some enthusiasm in *Fanfare* 20:4, I find Pahud's technique perhaps a shade bigger and surer, with a ravishingly round and cultivated tone, and the younger man is also more aware of stylistic niceties such as the need for *Eingänge* at various points. He plays his own cadenzas in the two solo concertos, and they tend to be rather more florid and ambitious excursions than those chosen by Válek, but they are none the worse for that.

Both recordings are technically excellent, with harpists well balanced in the Flute and Harp Concerto; the new EMI also scores by having its harpist, the admirable Marie-Pierre Langlamet, participate in the opening ritornello, which lends the initial statement of the main theme additional charm. Tempos in general are a little faster in the new version, and that is a matter of taste: these performances are full of freshness and zest, abetted by some sprightly work from conductor Claudio Abbado; but those who like their Mozart with a touch more of old-fashioned, gallant elegance may prefer the leisured approach of Válek and his brother, Vladimir, who conducts the Czech Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra in the Canyon set.

In this densely populated field, firm recommendations tend to be somewhat arbitrary, for—as my last point implies—much depends on personal preferences. All the fine flutists I know, with the curious exception apparently of Paula Robison, seem to have recorded these works. Those with a taste for the big stars will no doubt opt (if they haven't already done so) for Galway on RCA or Rampal on CBS. Aurèle Nicolet offers polished playing in the Philips Complete Mozart Edition. My colleague John Bauman, in *Fanfare* 21:1, chooses Adorján and Mildonian on Denon.

But I think anyone who buys a copy of EMI's Pahud disc is unlikely to be disappointed. **Bernard Jacobson**

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