

The NAXOS logo is located in the top left corner. It consists of the word "NAXOS" in a white, serif font, centered within a blue square. Above the text, there are three stylized white columns, and below the text, there are three horizontal lines, suggesting a classical architectural or musical theme.

MOZART

Piano Concertos Nos. 19 and 25
(arr. Ignaz Lachner)

Alon Goldstein, Piano
Fine Arts Quartet

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

Piano Concertos No. 19 in F, K. 459 and No. 25 in C, K. 503

Arranged for piano, string quartet and double bass by Ignaz Lachner (1807–1895)

Mozart can be credited with developing the genre of the keyboard concerto as one of true significance, moving it out of the realm of lighter music for immediate consumption, though it took time for the importance for his concertos to be appreciated as a body of work precisely because of this preconception concerning the genre. The earliest of them dates from 1767, and the latest from 1791; Mozart's return to Vienna in 1781 initiated a phase of tremendous inventiveness and productivity, as the innovative quality of the piano concertos from this period clearly shows. By the later 1780s the cultural landscape had changed for political reasons, entailing a retrenchment and consequent falling-off in the demand for newly composed concertos. The two recorded here, in elegant chamber arrangements by Ignaz Lachner, are amongst the later works in this genre, *No. 19* dating from 1784 and *No. 25* from two years later.

The *Piano Concerto No. 19 in F, K. 459*, which it seems likely was originally intended for one of the subscription concerts in the Mehlgrube in Vienna in 1785, is sometimes known as the 'First Coronation Concerto', since Mozart performed it in Frankfurt in 1790 on the occasion of Leopold II's election and coronation as Holy Roman Emperor, an event which lasted more than two weeks. The composer clearly anticipated great things of his presence in Frankfurt ('My dear! I will certainly achieve something here', he wrote to his wife, Constanze), and the trip cost him a great deal of money, including the use of a coach and the hire of a servant, but it proved unsuccessful, and his concert was ill attended, being upstaged by an imperial lunch and a military parade.

As for the concerto itself, one can only marvel at what the potential audience missed. The first movement brings into play flowing figuration in the solo piano against the solid martial rhythms of the orchestra, which in fact pervade the entire movement. This dialogue provides a magnificent rhythmic richness as part of a dense development section probably unequalled amongst the piano concertos. The second movement is, somewhat unexpectedly, a colourful *Allegretto* which provides a certain continuity of mood with the opening movement. It has a theme with two subjects, characterised by an elegant melancholy. The end of the movement has been compared by some to Susanna's aria in the fourth act of the opera *The Marriage of Figaro*, written in 1786.

Joshua Rifkin discovered that the central theme of the third movement is derived from a theme in Haydn's *Symphony No. 78 in C minor* from 1782. In fact, the work was written at the time when Mozart was working on his six quartets dedicated to Haydn. Mozart employs startling contrasts of homophony and contrapuntal writing, and there is a series of three repetitions of a fugato, developed further the second time. Such technical description does little to convey the exuberant joy of the movement, however.

The *Piano Concerto No. 25 in C, K. 503* dates from 1786, being finished two days before the '*Prague*' *Symphony in D, K. 504*. The scoring includes trumpets and timpani, but no clarinets, and it was intended for a series of four Advent subscription concerts that Mozart was to give at the casino of Johann Trattner. The concerts did not happen, however, and the first performance was probably at a Lenten concert at the Kärntnertortheater in the following year. The concerto is long and reflective, the first movement being highly symphonic in conception, full of drama and switching between major and minor modes. In fact, it stretches the concerto genre to breaking point; quite apart from the grandiose symphonic dimensions of the first movement, which pits a stately military quality in the orchestra against the soloist's lyrical effusions, the middle movement is also a sonata-form structure, though with no development, and the third also dazzles with contrapuntal pyrotechnics within the context of a formal structure that is at once sonata and rondo. The opening theme is taken from the opera *Idomeneo*, and indeed there is an operatic quality to the whole work, a sense of dramatic dialogue, which seems, in spite of its exuberant, dance-like ending, to have perplexed audiences and critics for decades after its first performance.

The well-travelled Ignaz Lachner's transcriptions of these concertos show a magnificent grasp of Mozart's idiom; he had the capacity to reinvent the music's underlying dramatic scheme (one returns once more to the operatic quality so often to be found in these works) within a chamber context. His transcriptions, practical as they are from the point of view of encouraging more frequent performance, never sound merely workaday; rather, they respect absolutely the originals, incorporating as much of the instrumental detail as is possible but convince the listener that they are genuine chamber pieces. Mozart himself was alive to this possibility, and it is difficult not to feel that he would have approved wholeheartedly of Lachner's versions. The practice of more modest arrangements of larger works was in any case common during this period, and Mozart's concertos were the objects of more than one later arranger's attention.

Mozart Rearranged

The two concertos on the present album are among my favourites in the series. Well, they are all my favourites. There are distinct features, though, in these two concertos that sets them apart from the others. On the one side the lesser performed but highly original *Concerto No. 19*, and on the other side the highly popular and grandest of all – *No. 25*, the so-called ‘*Emperor*’ concerto. Both concertos are highly virtuosic, filled with bravura writing and true showmanship. They also, however, contain some highly witty musical surprises as well as extraordinary magical moments.

Rearrangement of music was very common in the 18th and 19th centuries. Bach rearranged music of Vivaldi for study purposes. Liszt rearranged the Beethoven symphonies or scenes from various operas to be presented at his concerts. The composer and conductor Ignaz Lachner rearranged 19 Mozart concertos, including the two featured on this recording for piano and string quartet with double bass, most likely for the simple pleasure of domestic use – having the opportunity to play these beloved works without the need of a full orchestra.

Mozart arranged four of his earlier concertos – *Nos. 11 to 14* – for piano with string quartet and double bass. These were the first concertos he wrote when he moved to Vienna in 1781. The reason was to make more money by having a version that could be played at home with amateur musicians. The full orchestration of these early concertos is rather modest and as a result, a piano and string quintet version is quite amiable and sounds natural. His late piano concertos, however, are much more complex, elaborate and rich orchestrally. To incorporate the wind parts into the strings, as Lachner did, is trickier and riskier. We are at a danger of losing certain orchestral colours as well as sounding forced when playing material which is suited for winds on strings.

Great music transcends time and place. It survived for centuries well beyond the life of its creators, and it can be interpreted magnificently by a musician regardless of his or her origin. Can *great music* also transcend the particular instruments it was originally composed for? I have heard Bach’s music performed on different instruments, sounding very convincing. I have yet to hear any piece by Chopin sounding good on any instrument other than a piano. What about the music of Mozart? His music is primarily vocal. Even if the instrumentation includes winds and strings, it often tries to imitate the human voice.

Mozart’s piano concertos are like miniature operas. The pianist, usually responsible for several characters – Don Giovanni or Figaro, Susanna or Donna Anna, the Count, or even Antonio the gardener – is conversing with the strings or the woodwinds, each representing a character in the story. When playing with a full orchestra, the pianist’s dialogue with the woodwinds is done while sitting at a distance looking at the conductor. In this current arrangement, as in this recording, the storytelling, the conversation is much more intimate and intense. It is chamber music at its finest.

Listening to familiar music with different instruments might shed new light on things we heard a certain way. The different orchestral colours, the close proximity of the players and the added transparency, might reveal something new in the music which we have not heard before. In such arrangements as these, when a full orchestra is reduced to simply five string instruments, we hear many details more clearly. The different relationships, the different tensions can tell a different story. I believe that when an arrangement is done with integrity, humility and imagination, the result is delightful, bringing new insights into a well-digested score. Such are the arrangements on this recording.

The piano part in these arrangements remains absolutely the same as in the original version. Lachner practically incorporated, as much as possible, the wind parts into the strings. At times, my distinguished colleagues and I made some minor modifications to Lachner’s version, where we thought it to be more in keeping with Mozart’s intentions.

And last but not least, there is a lot to look forward to in these marvellous works. The first movement of *Concerto No. 19* is the only first movement which Mozart wrote in *Alla breve* metre, which gives it a quick and light character. The second so-called slow movement has the very unusual marking of *Allegretto*, which prevents it from being really slow. Don't miss the unexpected changes from major to minor in that second movement. My dear teacher Leon Fleisher would say of this minor mode: 'it hurts so good'. The highly extravagant fugue in the middle of the third movement is a real tour-de-force. In *Concerto No. 25* embrace yourself in the incredible richness of musical ideas featured in the first movement including quotation of the Marseillaise. I find the slow movement to be quite enigmatic with one of the more difficult tunes to play which Mozart ever wrote. The third movement, a masterpiece of tremendous wit and technical wizardry. In the middle of this 'chaotic' movement Mozart has one more trick for us – a new tune, one that is a true mystery of beauty. It is what we call a magical moment!

I hope you will enjoy this world premiere recording of these Mozart arrangements.

Alon Goldstein

Lizzie Burns



Photo: Brandon Ilaw

Musician and educator Lizzie Burns is a sought-after bassist and chamber musician who performs in chamber orchestras, continuo sections, rhythm sections and new music ensembles. She has performed with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, recorded for major record labels and motion picture soundtracks, given dozens of world premieres, is a member of The Knights and A Far Cry, and is on faculty at the Hartt School of Music and the Mannes Conservatory at The New School. Burns works with the International Contemporary Ensemble, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, New Century Chamber Orchestra and East Coast Chamber Orchestra (ECCO). Lizzie Burns attended the New England Conservatory and Boston University. Her primary teachers were Don Palma and Ed Barker.

www.lizzieburnsbass.com

Alon Goldstein



Photo: Christian Steiner

Alon Goldstein has appeared with the Chicago, San Francisco and Beijing Symphony Orchestras, the Philadelphia Orchestra, and the Los Angeles, London and Israel Philharmonic Orchestras under conductors such as Zubin Mehta, Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, Herbert Blomstedt and Vladimir Jurowski. Recent highlights include performances of Prokofiev's *Piano Concertos* with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, Mozart's *Triple Concerto* at Carnegie Hall, and a 17-concert Latin American tour with the Israel Chamber Orchestra. Goldstein's Naxos discography includes Mozart's piano concertos arranged by Lachner with the Fine Arts Quartet (8.573398, 8.573736 and 8.574164), Dvořák's piano trios with the Tempest Trio (8.573279) and Scarlatti sonatas (8.574196). In 2019 Goldstein was inducted into the Society of Scholars of his alma mater, the Johns Hopkins University. A graduate of the Peabody Conservatory, where he studied under Leon Fleisher, Goldstein is also an alumnus of the International Lieven Piano Foundation in Vienna where he is now the artistic director and serves as a faculty member. Alon Goldstein is a passionate advocate of music education, and is also the founder and artistic director of the Emerald Coast Music Alliance in Florida.

www.alongoldstein.com

Fine Arts Quartet



From left to right: Ralph Evans, Efim Boico, Gil Sharon, Niklas Schmidt

The Fine Arts Quartet ranks among the most distinguished ensembles in chamber music today, with an illustrious history of performing success and an extensive legacy of over 200 recorded works. Founded in Chicago in 1946, the Quartet is one of the elite few to have recorded and toured internationally for over three-quarters of a century. The Quartet's renowned violinists, Ralph Evans (prizewinner in the International Tchaikovsky Competition) and Efim Boico (former concertmaster of the Orchestre de Paris under Barenboim) have performed together for 40 years. They are joined by two eminent musicians: violist Gil Sharon (founder of the Amati Ensemble), and cellist Niklas Schmidt (co-founder of Trio Fontenay). Many of the Quartet's recent releases have been selected for inclusion on GRAMMY Awards

entry lists in the categories Best Classical Album and/or Best Chamber Music Performance, and have received multiple awards and distinctions, among them: *Gramophone* Award Winner and Recording of Legendary Status (*The Gramophone Classical Music Guide*), Key Recording/Top Recommendation (*Penguin Guide to Recorded Classical Music*), Editor's Choice (*Gramophone* magazine), two times Critic's Choice (*American Record Guide*), *BBC Music Magazine* Choice, three times Recording of the Year (*MusicWeb International*), and a GRAMMY Award for producer Steven Epstein (*Fauré Quintets* with Cristina Ortiz). The Quartet also received the CMA/ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming, given jointly by Chamber Music America and the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers. Recent releases for Naxos include *Beethoven: Fugues and Rarities* (8.574051), *Dvořák: Spirit of Bohemia* (8.574205) and *Enescu: Early Chamber Music* (8.574487).

www.fineartsquartet.com

Mozart's return to Vienna in 1781 initiated a remarkable period of inventiveness and productivity. In late 1784 he wrote the *Piano Concerto No. 19 in F major*, a work Mozart performed in Frankfurt on the occasion of Leopold II's election as Holy Roman Emperor and which is notable for its rhythmic vivacity and sense of colour. In 1786 he wrote the *Piano Concerto No. 25 in C major* – a work that stretched the concerto genre considerably with its operatic qualities and dramatic dialogue. Ignaz Lachner's ingenious transcriptions show a complete grasp of Mozart's idiom, incorporating much instrumental detail and reinventing the music's underlying dramatic scheme within a chamber context.

Wolfgang Amadeus
MOZART
(1756–1791)

Piano Concertos Nos. 19 and 25

Orchestra parts transcribed for string quartet and double bass
by Ignaz Lachner (1807–1895)

Piano Concerto No. 19 in F major, K. 459 (1784) (transcription pub. 1880)	27:01	Piano Concerto No. 25 in C major, K. 503 (1786) (transcription pub. 1881)	31:15
1 I. Allegro (cadenza by Mozart)	12:16	4 I. Allegro maestoso (cadenza by Alon Goldstein)	15:23
2 II. Allegretto	6:56	5 II. Andante	7:06
3 III. Allegro assai (cadenza by Mozart)	7:49	6 III. Allegretto	8:42

WORLD PREMIERE RECORDINGS

Alon Goldstein, Piano

Fine Arts Quartet

Ralph Evans, Violin I • Efim Boico, Violin II • Gil Sharon, Viola • Niklas Schmidt, Cello
with Lizzie Burns, Double bass

Recorded: 20 **1**–**3** and 21 **4**–**6** July 2022 at the Concert Hall, Dorothy Young Center for the Arts,
Drew University, USA • Producer, engineer and editor: Steven Epstein

Booklet notes: Ivan Moody, Alon Goldstein • This recording is funded in memory of June Ainley.

Cover photo by Niall_Majury (www.istockphoto.com)

© & © 2023 Naxos Rights (Europe) Ltd • www.naxos.com