



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: Complete String Trios

aud 97.773



[American Record Guide](#) January 2021 (- 2021.01.01)



Mozart's Divertimento K 563 is widely regarded as the finest string trio ever written. It is in 6 movements rather than the usual 4, and the title is Divertimento, but don't let those aspects of the work turn you off to it; it is not a mere diversion. It has some of Mozart's loveliest writing for strings. It is also one of his longest chamber works, clocking in at threequarters of an hour. I assure you that Mozart didn't pad the material to fill time, either. Every note counts. Jacques Thibaud String Trio was founded in 1994 at the Arts University in Berlin. Their current membership is violinist Burkhard Mais, violist Hannah Strijbos, and cellist Bogdan Jianu. They play well together and perform this work with more taste and sense of proportion than some other groups I've heard. I can recommend this performance, but they are up against stiff competition. Isaac Stern, Pinchas Zukerman, and Leonard Rose made a very fine recording in 1975. Gidon Kremer, Kim Kashkashian, and Yo-Yo Ma made a wonderful recording in 1985. That is my favorite. It is exquisitely polished yet very soulful. The musicians really sing and produce ravishing sounds (unusual for the perpetual enfant-terrible Kremer). The classic recording is by Jascha Heifetz, William Primrose, and Emanuel Feuermann from 1941. It shows its age, yet it is the most brilliant ever made. Some may not like it because of the exhibitionism of the players, all of whom were the greatest virtuosos of their age, but I like hearing such assured playing where all technical obstacles are surmounted with effortless aplomb and panache. The works I had never heard before are the 5 Preludes and Fugues. Except for the first three Preludes, all of the material was arranged from music of Bach. They are pleasant to listen to, but not masterpieces, and the three Preludes composed by Mozart don't sound quite right coming before the more severe music of Bach.

Audio 10/2020 (- 2020.10.01)



KLANG TIPP

KLASSIK-HIGHLIGHT

Abseits der vielen Mozart-Hits bietet diese CD Aufnahme-Raritäten aus dem großen Oeuvre dieses einzigartigen Komponisten: Auch die Streichtrios belegen Mozarts Meisterschaft – und seine Beschäftigung mit dem Werk Johann Sebastian Bachs. Das seit mehr als 25 Jahren bestehende Jacques Thibaud String Trio interpretiert die Adagios und Fugen sowie das Divertimento KV 563 mit Eleganz, Ausdruck und tänzerischem Schwung. Das Zusammenspiel der drei Streicher besticht überdies durch Präzision und Leichtigkeit. Dazu passt, dass das Klangbild schön natürlich und ausgewogen ist. Als Zugabe bekommt man noch zwei Stücke als kostenlosen Download. Eine lohnende Entdeckung.

[De Gelderlander](#) 22-08-20 (- 2020.08.22)

source: <https://www.gelderlander.nl/luister-mee/...>

 de Gelderlander

Mozarts hoge eisen zijn gesneden koek voor het Jacques Thibaud String Trio

Het bekende Jacques Thibaud String Trio speelt de Adagios und Fugen KV 404a als welkome aanvulling op het Divertimento in Es, KV 563 en zet daarmee eerdere uitvoeringen meteen in de schaduw. [...] Op sommige momenten krijg je als luisteraar het idee dat hier niet drie maar vier strijkers aan het werk zijn. Zo vol en intens is de klank. Typisch een album dat binnenkort in de prijzen zal vallen.

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

[Der neue Merker](#) 22.08.2020 (- 2020.08.22)

source: <https://onlinemerker.com/cd-wolfgang-ama...>



Bewegende dynamische Momente

Das Jacques Thibaud Streichtrio lässt die kontrapunktischen und harmonischen Feinheiten dieser Werke in facettenreicher Weise Revue passieren. [...] Die Dreistimmigkeit wirkt dabei höchst transparent und ausgeglichen. [...] Insbesondere die Ausdruckstiefe [...] sticht leuchtkräftig hervor und berührt den Zuhörer.

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

[Fanfare](#) February 2021 (- 2021.02.01)

fanfare

A year ago, in 43:3, I reviewed virtually this identical program, performed by the Ssens Trio, and gave it a rave review. This release by the Jacques Thibaud String Trio is deserving of an equally rave recommendation, albeit for a reading of Mozart's great string trio, the Divertimento, K 563, that differs markedly in approach from that of the Ssens Trio.

First, however, let me clarify why the two programs are virtually identical. Mozart transcribed for string trio five fugues by J. S. Bach and one by Wilhelm Friedemann Bach, prefaced four of them with Preludes of his own composition, and two of them with Preludes by their own composers. Here they are: [...]

The Ssens Trio included only the first three in the above table. The only reason I can think of for why is that they believed, or were told by their recording team, that there wasn't enough space for more of them, even though the total timing of the disc ended up at just under 67 minutes. Here, the Jacques Thibaud Trio and their recording team found room for two more of numbers—4 and 5—for a total disc timing of 82 minutes on the nose. But there still wasn't room for the last of them. However, Audite has made it available as a free download from its website, audite.de.

Now, to the differences between the two performances of the Divertimento. The Ssens's approach is serious—scrupulous in its observance of the written notes and immaculate in its execution. The players genuflect in the presence of a masterpiece, perhaps the masterpiece of the string trio literature. It's a divertimento in form—i.e., six movements with the customary two menuettos found in such works—but a

string trio—i.e., violin, viola, and cello—in its instrumentation. It's also a late work in Mozart's canon, 1789, the same year that saw the composition of the Clarinet Quintet, K 581, and the antepenultimate string quartet, the No. 21 in D Major, K 575. These were works of a certain gravity, calling for readings respectful of their import.

But we don't need Peter Shaffer and Miloš Forman's movie, *Amadeus*, to know that up until his last days, Mozart could be a potty-mouthed cutup with a fun-filled zest for life. His association with Emanuel Schikaneder and the impresario's folk theater tells us that, as does Mozart's divertimento, *Ein musikalischer Spaß* (A Musical Joke), K 522, another relatively late work dating from 1787, and his funning around with Anton Stadler and the latter's basset horns and clarinets. The Jacques Thibaud Trio hears Mozart's string trio divertimento with different ears, ears that are attuned to a good deal of levity in the score, some of which, to be honest, I'd never really heard before.

I always knew that the theme and variations movement (4) was fall-down funny because I've played the work before. We even sang "Jack and Jill went up the hill ..." to its side-slipping chromatic slithers. And its looney-tune, animated-cartoon finale was laugh-out-loud too. But I never thought the Menuettos could contain the giggles that the Thibaud players find in them. Listen to the little flip phrasings and portamentos that poke fun at the stylistic formalities, turning the aristocratic politeness into parody and caricature. Even the Adagio (2) and more so the minor-key variation in 4 are articulated with a crocodile-tears, faux-tragic expression that brings a smile to my face.

To achieve these effects and affects, the players do take liberties—a little rubato here, a stretched ritard there, inhaling pauses and exhaling sighs—but all of it conveys a sense of personal familiarity the players have with who Mozart really was. He wasn't a carved alabaster figurine set upon an ivory pedestal. Perhaps more often than not, he could be that potty-mouthed cutup with a fun-filled zest for life depicted in *Amadeus*.

The Jacques Thibaud Trio has decided to have fun with the Divertimento, and, for me, it works wonderfully. I think I would sooner listen to this performance of the piece than I would any other; it's irreverent and utterly delightful. The prize-winning Jacques Thibaud String Trio has been around since 1994. The ensemble has received worldwide acclaim, more than justified I would say based on this release. Among the ensemble's previous albums have been a disc of string trios by Cras, Reger, Dohnányi, and Kodály, reviewed and recommended in 38:3 by Richard Kaplan, and a disc of trios by Milhaud, reviewed and recommended in 41:4 by Michael De Sapio. The Thibaud's latest effort goes to the very top of my list. The best in virtuosity applied to the best in music-making.

Fono Forum Dezember 2020 (- 2020.12.01)

FONO FORUM
KLASSIK JAZZ HIFI

Alle reden 2020 über Beethoven (oder über Corona) – aber hier wird ein Mozart geliefert, der den Bonner Querkopf sozusagen überspringt. Das abgründig schöne Streichtrio-Divertimento von 1788, Mozarts längstes Kammermusikstück, zeigt, dass Wolfgang Amadés Entwicklung, hätte er länger leben dürfen, wohl eher in Richtung Schubert gegangen wäre – und eine so selbstverständlich präsente und exzellent aufeinander abgestimmte Formation wie das Thibaud-Trio vermag das auch genau zu zeigen: in der durchwärmten, melancholisch grundierten Gelassenheit des Klanges, die in den langsamen Sätzen bis ins tief Schmerzliche reicht; im Reichtum der harmonischen Entwicklungen wie der generell lyrischen Grundhaltung, die alles Theatralische hinter sich gelassen hat.

Hinzu kommen die mit viel Stilgefühl – des Komponisten und der Interpreten! – angelegten Bach-Bearbeitungen Mozarts, und weil die – auch klangtechnisch hervorragende, gleichermaßen körperhaft plastische wie durchsichtige – CD damit nach 82 (!) Minuten sozusagen bis zum überlaufen

gefüllt ist, gibt's den Rest vom Label per Gratis-Download dazu: eine Gesamtschau mit Referenzcharakter.

Einwände? – Vielleicht wäre manchmal, zum Beispiel in den beiden Menuetten, dynamisch noch etwas mehr herauszuholen gewesen. Aber das grenzt schon an Nörgelei und darf nicht am Zugreifen hindern – denn was immer einer bisher von Mozart kennen mag: Ohne das Streichtrio weiß er noch nicht alles über ihn.

Neue Musikzeitung 8. Oktober 2020 (- 2020.10.08)

source: <https://hoerbar.nmz.de/2020/10/mozart-st...>

HörBar

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neue musikzeitung

[...] das große Divertimento KV 563 erfordert einen anderen Zugang, einen eleganteren Ton, eine subtilere Kommunikation – Anforderungen, die das Ensemble mit seiner Erfahrung fraglos auf hohem Niveau erfüllt

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

Stereoplay 10|2020 (- 2020.10.01)

KLANGTIPP

Kassizistische Klarheit

Unverändert lassen die Interpreten den Geist der Komposition leben: präzise in der Artikulation, gleichberichtigt in der Dreistimmigkeit, unzimperlich im Ton, elastisch in Dynamik und Phrasierung.

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

stereoplay

Stretto – Magazine voor kunst, geschiedenis en muziek augustus 7, 2020 (- 2020.08.07)

source: <http://www.stretto.be/2020/08/07/mozart-...>

Uitermate verfijnd



Naast het bekend Divertimento, K. 563, staan op deze cd de 6 Preludes en Fuga's van Bach, K. 404a, evenals het fragment K. Anh. 66 voor Strijktrio. Mozarts Divertimento in Es, K. 563, voor viool, altviool en cello, werd gecomponeerd in 1788 en opgedragen aan Michael Puchberg, vriend en mede Vrijmetselaar van Mozart, die vaak hulp bood in de financiële nood van de jonge componist. Het was niet het eerste werk dat gecomponeerd werd voor strijktrio. Er waren reeds werken gecomponeerd voor viool, altviool en cello door bv. de Tsjechische componist Václav (Wenzel) Pichl, en nog eerder was er werk voor twee violen en contrabas gecomponeerd, waarschijnlijk gebaseerd op de triosonate. De première van Mozarts Divertimento vond plaats tijdens een reis door Duitsland, in Dresden in april 1789, met Anton Teyber viool, Mozart zelf, altviool, en Antonín Kraft, cello. Tussen april en juni 1789 reisde Mozart nl. met vorst Karl Lichnowsky over Praag, Dresden en Leipzig, naar de Pruisische koning Friedrich Wilhelm II. in Potsdam en Berlijn.

In het Divertimento in Es, de toonaard met de symbolische drie bémols zoals in “De Toverfluit”, creëerde Mozart een meesterwerk, episch, fijn geproportioneerd en ernstig, maar toch gevuld met de ontembare humor van de componist. Hoe bescheiden de bezetting ook lijkt, de muziek is rijk aan stemvoering, compositorische inventiviteit en gevarieerd samenspel. Maçonnieke idealen en symbolische getallen zijn overal aanwezig. Mozart behandelde elk van de drie strijkers als de eerste onder zijn gelijken, nu eens als aanvoerder van de melodie, dan eens als begeleider, of samenspelend in duo, afwisselend met één van de twee anderen.

Mozart maakte zijn arrangementen voor private, zondagse bijeenkomsten in het huis van de Oostenrijkse diplomaat van Nederlandse afkomst, baron van Swieten (foto's), waar hij de altvioolpartij speelde. Van Swieten stond nl. bekend als een groot en actief muziekliefhebber. Hij organiseerde op zondagochtend om 12 uur concerten in de bibliotheek (foto) of in zijn appartementen in hetzelfde gebouw. Hij was de stichter van de Gesellschaft der Associierten voor de uitvoering van oude muziek en oratoria en bestelde bij Mozart de bewerking van vier werken van Georg Friedrich Händel: Acis en Galathea, Messiah, Ode for St Cecilia's day en Alexander's Feast.

Hij liet Mozart, die hem steeds ‘Van Suiten’ noemde, kennismaken met de fuga's van Bach. Mozarts vrouw, Constanze Weber (foto), was meteen verrukt van deze muziek en drong bij Mozart aan om ook fuga's te componeren. Niet lang na het overlijden van Mozart kwam Van Swieten in diens gezinswoning langs. Hij regelde Mozarts eenvoudige begrafenis en verzorgde een voorziening voor zijn zoon om in Praag te studeren. Van Swieten organiseerde ook een van de eerste uitvoeringen van Mozarts Requiem in januari 1793.

Mozarts studie van de oude meesters zou een belangrijke invloed blijken te hebben op zijn eigen, latere composities. Het zesdelig Divertimento, K. 563, uit 1788 wordt beschouwd als hét strijktrio bij uitstek. Het is kamermuziek van de hoogste orde, met rijke harmonieën en zorgvuldig uitgewerkt contrapunt. Hier stelde Mozart hogere technische eisen aan de uitvoerders dan in zijn vioolconcerti of zijn Sinfonia concertante, K. 364, voor viool, altviool en orkest. Met slechts 3 partijen bereikte Mozart verbazingwekkend veel diepte, met dubbelsnaren die soms de klank van een kwartet imiteren. Alle drie strijkinstrumenten worden gelijk behandeld, elk op zijn beurt neemt het voortouw, en ook de altviool en de cello kregen bijzondere melodielijnen. Dit prachtig werk bevat het volledig potentieel van het strijktrio-samenspel.

De enige andere complete werken voor strijktrio van Mozart zijn de Preludes en Fuga's (VIII, XIV en XIII) van Bach, die Mozart heeft getranscribeerd. Door drie preludes aan zijn Bach-arrangementen toe te voegen, bereikte Mozart een indrukwekkende symbiose tussen Bachs muzikale taal en zijn eigen stijl. Bachs invloed is overigens ook in het Divertimento te horen, vooral in de polyfonie van de mineur variatie van de Andante-beweging, een thema met vier variaties. De preludes en fuga's zijn unieke documenten van Mozarts studie van Bach. Ze bevatten drie fuga's uit het Wohltemperierte Clavier, een fuga uit Die Kunst der Fuge en een fuga uit een orgelsonate, en een fuga van Wilhelm Friedemann Bach. Vier van de preludes zijn waarschijnlijk van Mozart zelf, terwijl Mozart twee preludes uit Bachs triosonates voor orgel koos. De uitvoerders zijn Burckhard Maiss, viool, Hannah Strijbos, altviool en Bogdan Jianu, cello.



Mozart was admitted as an apprentice mason to the lodge known as Zur Wohltätigkeit (Beneficence) in December 1784; within months he would achieve the most senior rank of master mason and over subsequent years he would embrace his new status with sufficient zeal to produce a heap of music for the organisation. Freemasonry is of course ultimately a brotherhood and Mozart was never too shy to exploit its benefits when he encountered his well-documented financial problems in his latter years. A key figure in the lodge at the time was the textile merchant Michael Puchberg (1741-1822); Mozart's friendship with him was both timely and convenient as his fiscal situation worsened. His requests for loans from Puchberg at this time increased in both frequency and desperation. It is revealing then that the Divertimento in E flat, K 563 was written for the individual who effectively financed its composition. In comparison to many of Mozart's late masterpieces it is little known; its designation as a String Trio (as opposed to a Quartet) may have proved a hindrance in this regard as may its 'heavenly length' – at 45 minutes its dimensions far exceed any other chamber work he composed. Nor should the appellation Divertimento lull the unsuspecting listener into assuming it is all as light as air. Of its six movements the two Minuets (movements 3 and 5) might fit that bill but the outer Allegros incorporate unexpected changes of mood while the second movement Adagio is surely as perfect and profound as any other single span of Mozart's chamber music.

The more familiar the Divertimento becomes the more it seems to creep up on one. It is neither recorded nor played especially frequently (Amazon lists 13 recordings although I suspect others are available as part of 'complete works' packages) but then it is a trio, and as such tends to be of interest to either scratch groups of star soloists or ensembles dedicated to the form, and they aren't exactly thick on the ground. I seem to recall I received the Hyperion recording by the Leopold Trio (review) as a fortieth birthday gift what seems like aeons ago – I wasn't a great Mozartean at the time and it gathered dust on my shelves for a good few years before a broadcast during a BBC lunchtime concert prompted me to give it a spin. I was soon hooked by both the piece and the marvellous recording (it was The Times 'Disc of the Year' in 2002) and have never felt the need to find an alternative.

Enter the Jacques Thibaud String Trio; their spirited yet extremely musical account has distinctive qualities and certainly dragged me out of my comfort zone. I'm familiar with a couple of their previous Audite discs of twentieth century fare (invigorating Milhaud and Martinu - review, and a collection of Reger, Dohnanyi, Kodaly topped by the magnificent, underappreciated trio by Jean Cras on AUDITE 97534) and their open-hearted, vivacious playing on those issues is present here in spades. In my experience the Audite engineers typically strive for a sound picture which leaves little to the imagination, a vivid, close-up image which in many cases approaches what one might hear in a live recital sitting close to the stage. It is an approach which can pay thrilling dividends (eg in the outstanding Mendelssohn cycle by the Mandelring Quartet (review) and in many of the Quartetto di Cremona's fine Beethoven Quartet recordings). In terms of the present issue my initial impression on hearing the opening bars of the Divertimento's initial Allegro was that the alpine freshness comes at the expense of domestic intimacy, especially compared to the Hyperion disc. But it's extraordinary how quickly the ear adjusts and one settles back to enjoy the Thibauds' scintillating, characterful playing. The beating heart of the work surely lies in the great second movement Adagio; I was aghast to find the Thibauds' clip three and a half minutes off the Leopold's timing for this panel – it certainly doesn't feel too fast. In terms of comparing the two performances I suspect listeners' preferences are more likely to be determined by the very different sonics – the exquisitely realised chamber mood of the Hyperion or the concert hall precision of the Thibauds. The latter are wonderfully lithe and mobile in the two Minuet movements whilst they find elegance and wit aplenty in the delicate intricacies of the theme and variations of the Andante that separates them. Their Allegro finale is robust and refreshing. If Mozart's solo writing is unusually virtuosic for a string trio (as the booklet suggests) the Thibauds' approach utterly eschews unnecessary showiness but retains a level of compulsive excitement. I was certainly glad to have made the acquaintance of this new reading of the Divertimento – although it is unlikely to displace the Leopold Trio's account in my affection it offers a valid, bracing alternative. Perhaps one that's better suited to the quality speakers in the living room, enabling the connoisseur to reserve the Leopold disc for cold

winter West Pennine nights under the duvet with a decent pair of headphones and a tot of Jura.

The disc is entitled, rather grandly, Mozart's 'Complete String Trios'; in fact the coupling consists of five (out of a set of six) Adagios and Fugues K404a. These were among the fruits of Mozart's intensive study of Johann Sebastian Bach's fugues, investigations he conducted with his friend (another patron) Baron Gottfried von Swieten early in 1782. The first three feature Adagios of Mozart's own devising, while the fourth and fifth Adagios and all five of the Fugues are basically three-part arrangements of Bach's own music. Unsurprisingly the latter are drawn from the '48' and 'The Art of Fugue'. (A sixth Adagio and Fugue after Wilhelm Friedemann Bach is available from Audite as a free download, together with an Allegro string trio fragment in G minor, identified as K 562e; I haven't as yet listened to these). Whilst these pairings are far from insubstantial, they are but chippings from the master's workshop in comparison with the mighty Divertimento; having said that they are perfectly satisfying in their own right and superbly played and recorded, an apt homage from one great master to another.

Norbert Hornig has contributed a most informative note for this issue which has been neatly translated. It completes a most generously filled issue replete with distinguished playing and sound.

www.pizzicato.lu 07/08/2020 (- 2020.08.07)
source: <https://www.pizzicato.lu/mozarts-streich...>



Mozarts Streichtrios

Mozarts Divertimento KV 563 und die Adagios und Fugen KV 404a nach Bach – die einzigen Werke, die Mozart für Streichtrio komponierte – hat das Jacques Thibaud Trio für Audite aufgenommen. Die drei Musiker spielen klangvoll und rhetorisch, räumen aber auch der musikalischen Tiefe und Gedankenfülle, die aus Mozarts spätem, kurz nach seinen drei letzten Symphonien entstandenem sechssätzigem Divertimento dringen, den richtigen Platz ein. Die Interpretation geht weit über den reinen Unterhaltungscharakter des Werkes hinaus, den sein Titel vermuten lässt.

Die Thibauds bieten auch in den Adagios und Fugen nach Bach ein im Klang bestens ausgewogenes, nuanciertes und kunstvolles Spiel.

The Jacques Thibaud Trio has recorded Mozart's Divertimento K. 563 and the Adagios and Fugues K. 404a after Bach – the only works Mozart composed for string trio. The three musicians play sonorously and rhetorically, but they also give the right place to the musical depth and wealth of ideas that fill Mozart's late six-movement Divertimento, written shortly after his last three symphonies. The interpretation goes far beyond the purely entertaining character of the work that its title suggests. The Thibauds also offer in the Adagios and Fugues after Bach a well-balanced, nuanced and artful playing.

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