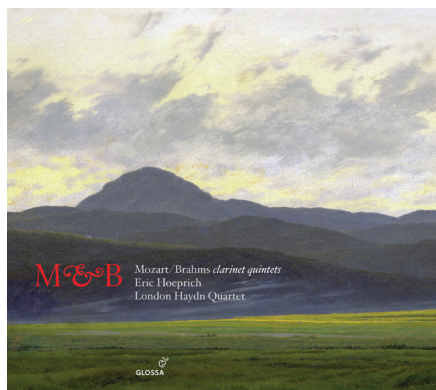


GCD 920607  
 New release information  
 April 2006

# Mozart & Brahms

## Clarinet Quintets by Hoeprich



### Mozart & Brahms Clarinet Quintets

Eric Hoeprich, basset clarinet in A &  
 Ottensteiner-Bärmann system clarinets  
 London Haydn Quartet  
 Catherine Manson, violin  
 Margaret Faultless, violin  
 James Boyd, viola  
 Jonathan Cohen, cello

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#### Programme

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)  
*Clarinet Quintet in A major, KV 581*  
 01 Allegro  
 02 Larghetto  
 03 Menuetto  
 04 Allegretto con variazioni

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)  
*Clarinet Quintet in B minor, opus 115*  
 05 Allegro  
 06 Adagio  
 07 Andantino - Presto non assai  
 08 Con moto

#### Production details

Total playing time: 71'31

Recorded at St Martin's Church, East Woodhay,  
 Hampshire (England), in September 2004  
 Engineered by Niek Wijns & Guido Tichelmanns  
 Executive producer: Carlos Céster

Booklet essay by Eric Hoeprich  
 Design 00:03:00 oficina tresminutos  
 Booklet in English - Français - Deutsch - Español



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#### NOTES (ENG)

These clarinet quintets by Mozart and Brahms represent two pinnacles, not only in the repertoire for the clarinet, but also in the genre of chamber music. Written late in the lives of both composers, they embody the maturity, depth, experience and possibly even a premonition of an other-worldliness soon to be experienced firsthand.

It is significant that both works were inspired by particular clarinet players – Anton Stadler for Mozart and Richard Mühlfeld for Brahms. Both were known as outstanding musicians who also had a predilection for slightly unusual instruments. Stadler had worked together with the instrument maker Theodor Lotz to develop the basset clarinet, an instrument with an extended low range. And Mühlfeld played on slightly out-of-date Bärmann-system clarinets by Georg Ottensteiner, made of boxwood, at a time where most players were using blackwood instruments and a more advanced mechanism.

The clarinets used for this recording reflect the differences inherent in instruments separated by roughly a hundred years. Both are unusual and highly specialized. These boxwood clarinets, together with period string instruments set up with gut strings and played with period bows, create a sound world quite unlike that heard with today's modern clarinets and strings. The possibilities for articulation, dynamics and phrasing, as well as the blend and colourful sound world of the instruments, bring out expressive qualities in the music that might otherwise be more difficult, or perhaps even impossible, to reach.

#### NOTAS (ESP)

Estos quintetos para clarinete representan dos cimas, no sólo del repertorio para clarinete, sino también del género de la música de cámara. Escritos al final de las vidas de los dos compositores, encarnan la madurez, la profundidad, la experiencia y, posiblemente, incluso la premonición de un más allá que pronto iban a experimentar en primera persona.

Resulta significativo que ambas obras se inspiraran en clarinetistas concretos: Anton Stadler en el caso de Mozart y Richard Mühlfeld en el de Brahms. Los dos eran músicos destacados conocidos además por su predilección por los instrumentos ligeramente inusuales. Stadler había trabajado con el fabricante de instrumentos Theodor Lotz para desarrollar el clarinete di bassetto, un instrumento con un registro grave ampliado. Y Mühlfeld tocaba los clarinetes con el sistema Bärmann, ligeramente desfasados, creados por Georg Ottensteiner en madera de boj, en una época en la que la mayoría de los intérpretes usaban instrumentos de madera de granadilla y un mecanismo más avanzado.

Los clarinetes empleados en esta grabación reflejan las diferencias inherentes a instrumentos que distan unos cien años en el tiempo. Los dos son inusuales y muy especializados. Estos clarinetes de madera de boj, junto con los instrumentos de cuerda originales, con cuerdas de tripa y tocados con arcos de época, crean un mundo sonoro totalmente diferente al que se obtiene con las cuerdas y los clarinetes modernos usados en nuestros días. Las posibilidades de articulación, dinámica y fraseo, y la fusión y el colorista mundo sonoro de los instrumentos aportan a la música cualidades expresivas que de otra forma sería mucho más difícil, o quizás imposible, alcanzar.

#### NOTES (FRA)

Ces deux quintettes pour clarinette de Mozart et de Brahms sont deux cimes, non seulement du répertoire de la clarinette, mais encore de toute la musique de chambre. Ces œuvres appartenant à la production tardive des deux compositeurs incarnent leur maturité, leur profondeur, l'expérience et probablement une prémonition d'un autre monde qui n'allait pas tarder à venir.

Il est significatif que ces deux œuvres aient été inspirées par un clarinetiste, Anton Stadler dans le cas de Mozart et Richard Mühlfeld dans celui de Brahms. Tous deux jouissaient d'une réputation d'excellent musicien, qui de plus avaient une prédilection pour des instruments plutôt inhabituels. Stadler avait travaillé avec le facteur Theodor Lotz pour développer le projet du cor de basset, un instrument possédant un registre grave plus ample ; tandis que Mühlfeld jouait sur des clarinettes de Georg Ottensteiner, dont le système Bärmann était légèrement démodé, et qui étaient construites en buis, alors que la plupart des interprètes utilisaient des instruments en ébène et ayant un mécanisme plus perfectionné.

Les clarinettes jouées dans cet enregistrement reflètent les différences dues à des instruments séparés par une centaine d'années. Ces deux instruments sont inhabituels et hautement spécialisés. Ces clarinettes en buis, se mêlant aux instruments à cordes anciens avec des cordes en boyau frottées par des archets d'époque, créent un monde sonore différent de celui que produisent aujourd'hui les clarinettes et les instruments à cordes modernes. Les instruments anciens offrent des possibilités qui leur sont propres : l'articulation, les dynamiques, les phrasés, ainsi que l'équilibre des timbres et la couleur de l'univers sonore, font ressortir des qualités expressives qu'il aurait été bien plus difficile, sans doute impossible, de percevoir dans d'autres conditions.

#### NOTIZEN (DEU)

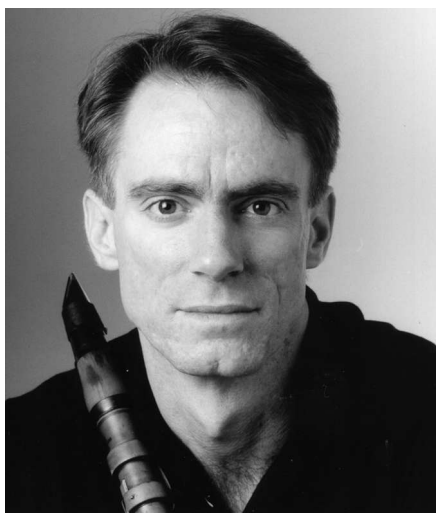
Diese Klarinettenquintette stellen zwei Höhepunkte dar, nicht nur das Repertoire für Klarinette alleine betreffend, sondern weit allgemeiner auf die Gattung der Kammermusik insgesamt bezogen. Jeweils spät in den Leben der beiden Komponisten geschrieben, verkörpern sie Reife, Tiefe, Erfahrung und möglicherweise gar eine böse Vorahnung einer anderen, bald aus erster Hand zu erfahrenen, Weltlichkeit.

Es ist nicht ohne Bedeutung, dass beide Werke von konkreten Klarinetteninterpreten inspiriert wurden – Mozart und Brahms hatten ihre Kompositionen Anton Stadler bzw. Richard Mühlfeld zugeordnet. Beide waren als herausragende Musiker bekannt, denen auch eine gewisse Vorliebe für leicht außergewöhnliche Instrumente eigen war. Stadler hatte mit dem Instrumentenbauer Theodor Lotz zusammengearbeitet, um die Bassettklarinetten, ein Instrument mit ausgedehnt tiefem Register, zu entwickeln. Und Mühlfeld wiederum spielte auf nicht mehr ganz aktuellen Bärmann-Klarinetten von Georg Ottensteiner aus Buchsbaumholz, als die meisten Interpreten bereits Instrumente aus Ebenholz und einen höher entwickelten Mechanismus benutzten.

Die bei vorliegender Aufnahme verwendeten Klarinetten spiegeln die Unterschiede wider, wie sie Instrumenten eigen sind, die ungefähr einhundert Jahre auseinander liegen. Beide sind ungewöhnlich und hoch spezialisiert. Diese Buchsbauminstrumente, zusammen mit historischen Saiteninstrumenten, bespannt mit Darmsaiten und mit alten Bögen gespielt, lassen eine Klangwelt entstehen, die sich deutlich unterscheidet von den modernen Klarinetten und Saiteninstrumenten unserer Tage. Die Möglichkeiten bezüglich Artikulation, Dynamik und Phrasierung, wie auch die verschmelzende und farbenfrohe Klangwelt der Instrumente lassen Ausdrucksqualitäten der Musik zum Vorschein kommen, die auf andere Weise nur schwer, vielleicht gar unmöglich, zu erreichen wären.

## Eric Hoeplich

### A portrait



Eric Hoeplich returns to Glossa on splendid form with two pillars of the chamber music repertory in the *Clarinet Quintets* of Mozart and Brahms. For this release – recorded in the tranquil English surroundings of St Martin’s Church, East Woodhay in Hampshire, Hoeplich is joined by the recently-established and much-lauded London Haydn Quartet.

The Baltimore-born Hoeplich has been a regular performer on Glossa over the years, whether as a soloist, or directing his *Harmoniemusik* ensemble *Nachtmusique* or as the principal clarinetist with Frans Brüggens’ Orchestra of the Eighteenth Century. He is an established and eloquent writer – this latest recording contains another fascinating and entertaining essay signed by Hoeplich, this time on the genesis and early reception of both the Mozart and Brahms pieces. His wide-ranging study of the instrument – succinctly titled *The Clarinet* – will be published shortly by Yale University Press.

The recording brings out the best in modern playing and rigorous study of original performing practices – all five versatile players are adept in a wide range of performing styles. Hoeplich has for many years been an instrument maker himself and here employs carefully-researched copies of clarinets used by the original performers. Meanwhile, the London Haydn Quartet (Catherine Manson and Margaret Fautless, violins; James Boyd, viola and Jonathan Cohen, cello) are engaged in a survey in concert of all the string quartets by Haydn, using gut strings and classical bows.

With Hoeplich the Quartet has been performing the Mozart and Brahms *Quintets* live – a forthcoming Library of Congress, Washington DC, USA concert is part of a series of public engagements which has already included a tour of The Netherlands. Eric Hoeplich has also had a noted recent success in the *Mozart Clarinet Concerto* being accompanied by Nicholas McGegan and the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra (and as with the *Quintet* here his preferred instrument was the basset clarinet).

We tracked down the clarinetist to give us a few pointers to his current thoughts on performing Mozart and Brahms.

*What drew you to recording this pairing of two great chamber works, pinnacles of their genre? How important was the choice of instruments for all five players?*

“You are right that these two works represent the pinnacle of chamber repertoire for the clarinet. Of course, a factor they also have in common is that Mozart and Brahms were inspired to compose their quintets for the same reason: their acquaintance with an exceptional clarinetist playing on an unusual instrument that led them to compose extraordinary music. For both works I’ve tried to manage to play on the instruments that the composers would have expected to hear.

“In the case of the Mozart quintet, the piece was written for, and probably commissioned by, Anton Stadler, who had worked together with a Viennese instrument maker to develop a clarinet with extra low notes. The so-called ‘basset clarinet’ was introduced by Stadler to the Viennese public in 1788, and Mozart wrote the quintet the next year. Stadler is also convincingly associated with many works by Mozart during his years in Vienna, not the least of which is the clarinet concerto, KV622, also written for the special basset clarinet. I built a basset clarinet out of boxwood, based on an engraving from a concert program in Riga, where Stadler performed in the 1790s which I think works very well for both pieces. I always say that the instrument is great – if there are any problems then they’re the fault of the performer!

“As for the Brahms, we actually have many similarities. He was entranced by Richard Mühlfeld’s clarinet playing, who also played on unusual clarinets, made by Georg Ottensteiner of Munich. Just as Mozart, Brahms wouldn’t have written the chamber music for clarinet unless he’d met Mühlfeld, whom he dubbed ‘Fräulein Klarinette’, and with whom he toured widely. The Ottensteiner clarinets were made from boxwood at a time when ebony wood was prevalent. The key system is also slightly more simple than the usual German-system instruments, with something in common with earlier instruments, which were also made from boxwood. These instruments are too difficult to make for someone like me, so I had them built by Jochen Seggelke of Bamberg, based on Mühlfeld’s own clarinets, which are still in Meiningen.

“In addition to these points, there are also the issues of source material and performance practice. For this, it was wonderful to work with the London Haydn Quartet, who are very interested in these aspects of performance, and take the time and trouble to approach the music from the historical perspective. In addition to being a top-level quartet, they are also the perfect colleagues, incessantly searching for meaning in the text and in the available source material, without being pedantic or overbearing. In concerts, I enjoy hearing their Haydn quartets as much as playing a quintet with them!”

*Chamber music is one reflection of your musical activities. What else have you been involved in recently?*

“My other performing activities include the things that have been part of my life for decades, such as the Orchestra of the Eighteenth Century, and my wind ensembles, *Nachtmusique* and Stadler Trio. With all of these groups we’ve made recordings with Glossa, which is always a pleasure. And in addition to these activities, there are many invitations to play solo with other orchestras. I just finished a wonderful tour with the American orchestra, *Philharmonia Baroque*, in San Francisco, and later this year will perform with the *Kölner Akademie*, *Akademie für Alte Musik* (Berlin), *Handel and Haydn Society* (Boston) and several others in this Mozart birthday year.”

*Is your sideline as an instrument ‘artisan’ still active these days?*

“Sadly, my work as an instrument maker is almost non-existent these days. I have the tools and the skills, but no time. Luckily many of my students [Hoeplich teaches at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague and at the Paris Conservatoire] are also making instruments these days, and doing it very well, so it’s not as though this is a general problem.”

*What else is occupying your time or your thoughts at the present time?*

“Recording goes on. I’ve just finished recording the three *Crusell Clarinet Concertos* with the *Kölner Akademie* (this will be released by *ARS Produktions*), and next month will record with the *basset horn trio*, *Stadler Trio* – more Mozart! As for writing, I’m happy to report that this year a book on the clarinet that I’ve been working on for some time will be published by Yale – it is part of a series on instruments, four of which are already out. Very nice-looking books indeed. As for other subjects that I am concerned about, I suppose there are the usual things – world peace, the environment, my students. I do think that by giving as much as we can, we create an environment for positive change in the world, which is something needed at the moment, perhaps more than ever.”

MARK WIGGINS  
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