

LEMS 8087



## ***The Queen's Chamber Band* plays Mozart** **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)**

*Sonata for Violin & Harpsichord in A Major, KV 526*  
(Composed in Vienna, 1787)

*Molto Allegro*  
*Andante*  
*Presto*

From the time Mozart was 6 years old until several years before his death, he composed at least 36 authenticated sonatas for keyboard and violin. He found these works well suited to his expressive nature, allowing him to express his deepest, most intimate feelings. In two notable instances Mozart expressed grief over the death of a beloved composer and friend by incorporating quotations from the dead composer's work into his own. He used this commemorative device in the second movement of his piano concerto KV 414 when John Christian Bach died, and in the *Presto* finale to the A Major Sonata, KV 526 at the time of Carl Friedrich Abel's death.

Since we offer perhaps the first recording of Sonata KV 526 in an interpretation with harpsichord as the keyboard instrument of choice, I found interesting Ernst Fritz Schmid's preface to his 1960 edition for G. Henle Verlag. He gives two contradictory statements about the instrumentation of the A Major Sonata: "...the second Hoffmeister sonata KV 526 distinctly designates the *Pianoforte*. Then later he writes, "the two Hoffmeister sonatas" (of which KV 526 is one) designate the choice of "*Fortepiano ou Clavecin*." I have not had the opportunity to view the manuscript, so I cannot offer the last word on this little inconsistency. Since in his dynamic indications Mozart has notated

several *crescendi*, I must assume that he had in mind the fortepiano, at least for those particular measures! Otherwise I have followed the dynamics that my instrument allows, even the quick changes between *piano* and *forte* that require me to move from one keyboard to the other.

In the late 18th century the piano gradually displaced the harpsichord. But the original editions of almost all of Beethoven's sonatas up to Opus 27 bear the inscription: *Pour le Clavecin ou Pianoforte (For the Harpsichord or Piano)*. It shows that harpsichords were still widely used around 1800 and that music publishers were eager to accommodate the players and owners of the old instruments as well as those of the more modern ones. People of that era, while ultimately accepting and adjusting to the intriguing new piano technology and sound seemed less in a hurry than their 21st century counterparts to dispose of an instrument that had served them so well for so long.

*Keyboard Quartet in G minor, KV 478*

*Allegro*

*Andante*

*Rondeau*

Showing exceptional musical precocity, Mozart played the harpsichord at three and composed his first little pieces at five. His older sister Maria Anna ("Nannerl") was also a brilliant keyboard player. Their father Leopold, violinist and composer, took the children on extended tours of various European courts where he exploited their talents. They frequently traveled with a folding harpsichord, though one wonders about the necessity of supplying an instrument at courts where harpsichords abounded. They visited Holland, Switzerland, Munich, Vienna, Frankfurt, Brussels, Paris and London. There Mozart met and studied with John Christian, the "London Bach."

The last nine years of Mozart's life were a juxtaposition of financial troubles with an astonishing outpouring of masterpieces in almost every genre. In 1785 he frequently played string quartets with Karl von Dittersdorf and Haydn. Mozart dedicated six string quartets to Haydn, who regarded him as the greatest composer of the day. On October 16 of that year in Vienna, he completed the first of his two keyboard quartets, the G minor, KV 478. At that time he also began work on *Le nozze di Figaro*. Symphonies, more operas and many commissions and concerts followed but still financial pressures continued to plague him. He received a commission for six string quartets from King Friedrich Wilhelm II of Prussia, a cellist, but composed only three. He vied with Antonio Salieri for the position of Kapellmeister for Leopold II, but did not succeed. Ill health overcame him in December of 1791 and he died without finishing his *Requiem*, which had to be completed by his pupil Süssmayer. He received a cheap funeral with others who had died at the same time. The location of his grave remains unknown.

## *The Queen's Chamber Band*

In 1762, John Christian Bach, youngest son of the old master, Johann Sebastian, journeyed to London for a lucrative position with the King's Theatre. Shortly thereafter, he was appointed Music Master to Queen Charlotte Sophia (wife of "Mad" King George III) and the Royal Family. With a few close musical friends, the "London Bach" formed an ensemble to entertain Her Majesty in her private chambers: *The Queen's Chamber Band*.

It is in this spirit of intimate, personal performance that Elaine Comparone, "a harpsichordist with few equals" (Donal Henahan, *The New York Times*), has successfully recreated *The Queen's Chamber Band* with nine distinguished soloists, whose mastery of both solo repertory and chamber music thrills audiences worldwide.

The ensemble unites breathtaking virtuosity, profound historical knowledge, and extraordinary musical sensitivity to achieve a distinctive post-modern synthesis of historically-informed performance, vitality, and immediacy. Playing a combination of modern, antique, and replica instruments, the *QCB* demonstrates annually its commitment to music of our time by closing each New York City concert season with a climax of newly-composed works for harpsichord, instruments and voices.

**ROBERT ZUBRYCKI**, a founding member of *The Queen's Chamber Band*, currently serves as concertmaster for the St. Peter's Bach Festival, principal violin with the Orchestra of St. Ignatius, and as member of the American Symphony Orchestra, Opera Orchestra of New York and Stamford Symphony Orchestra. As violinist for the Abaca String Band, he performed at the White House, the Chautauqua Institute, Newport Music Festival and recently toured the Northwestern States. Summers find him performing at the Bard Festival with the American Symphony.

Violist **VERONICA SALAS** earned her Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the Juilliard School and has appeared as soloist with the Aspen Festival Orchestra, Southern California Symphony and as duo soloist with Heifitz protégé Eric Friedman. She frequently performs as soloist with the Colonial Symphony, of which she is principal violist. She also serves as principal violist with Opera Orchestra of New York and performs with Mostly Mozart, American Composers Orchestra and the Brooklyn Philharmonic.

Cellist **PETER SEIDENBERG** served for four years as principal cellist with Century Orchestra Osaka. He has performed throughout Europe, the US and Asia, making his concert debut in 1983 with the Chicago Symphony. He has been soloist with the DePaul Chamber Orchestra, the Eastman-Rochester Philharmonic and the New American Chamber Orchestra. He has played with members of the Cleveland, Tokyo, Juilliard and Emerson Quartets and has participated in the Marlboro, Aspen and Norfolk music festivals.

Since her acclaimed New York recital debut as a Concert Artist Guild award winner, harpsichordist **ELAINE COMPARONE** has maintained a varied career as recitalist, soloist with orchestra, chamber musician, organist and choir director at First Moravian Church, recording artist, impresaria, teacher and collaborator with composers, choreographers and video artists. A former Fulbright Fellow and Affiliate Artist, she has taken her harpsichords to performances in each of the continental United States. In France, Italy and England she performed her unique interpretations of Scarlatti. In 1978 she founded Harpsichord Unlimited, a non-profit organization dedicated to stimulating interest in the harpsichord as a living, contemporary instrument. In 1992 she formed *The Queen's Chamber Band*, modeled after the ensemble created by the "London Bach" for Queen Charlotte Sophia, wife of "Mad" King George III. Adelphi University recently appointed her Professor of Harpsichord.

Harpsichord by William Dowd: Cambridge, 1968  
Recording Engineer: David Barnes  
Producer: John Ostendorf  
Recorded at the American Academy of Arts & Letters

**Sonata for Violin & Harpsichord  
in A Major, KV 526 (Composed in Vienna, 1787)**

1	Molto Allegro	10:45
2	Andante	11:21
3	Presto	8:04

**Keyboard Quartet in G minor, KV 478**

4	Allegro	11:42
5	Andante	7:40
6	Rondeau	8:21

57 minutes 53 seconds total running time



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