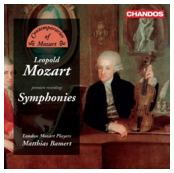
Leopold Mozart - Symphonies (2008)



01. Symphony in C major, C 1- 1. Allegro assai [0:04:01.63] 02. Symphony in C major, C 1- 2. Menuet e trio [0:03:47.40] 03. Symphony in C major, C 1- 3. Andante [0:02:29.20] 04. Symphony in C major, C 1- 4. Presto [0:02:30.15] 05. Symphony in D major, D 17- 1. Presto assai [0:04:29.40] 06. Symphony in D major, D 17- 2. Andante staccato [0:02:22.00] 07. Symphony in D major, D 17- 3. Presto [0:03:04.45] 08. Symphony in C major, D 1- 1. Allegro [0:02:53.50] 09. Symphony in C major, D 1- 2. Menuet e trio [0:04:01.40] 10. Symphony in C major, D 1- 3. Andante [0:03:05.20] 11. Symphony in C major, D 1- 4. Allegro [0:02:23.25] 12. Symphony in G major, G 14- 1. Allegro moderato [0:03:46.00] 13. Symphony in G major, G 14- 2. Adagio [0:02:46.20] 14. Symphony in G major, G 14- 3. Presto assai [0:03:03.20] 15. Symphony (Partia) in C major, C 4- 1. Allegro moderato [0:05:03.45] 16. Symphony (Partia) in C major, C 4- 2. Menuet e trio [0:03:19.65] 17. Symphony (Partia) in C major, C 4- 3. Andante [0:02:42.10] 18. Symphony (Partia) in C major, C 4- 4. Presto [0:01:53.65] 19. Symphony in D major, D 25- 1. Allegro [0:04:24.10] 20. Symphony in D major, D 25- 2. Andante non poco [0:03:35.40] 21. Symphony in D major, D 25- 3. Presto [0:02:35.42]
London Mozart Players
Matthias Bamert – conductor

The revival in performances of the early Italian-Austrian symphony at first bypassed Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's father Leopold, and all the pieces on this disc are receiving their first recordings. Leopold was well known as a symphonist on his own before his son came on the scene. Chronological control over his output has not yet been fully achieved, but the music heard here was likely composed in the 1750s and 1760s. As such, it arose during a time when the symphony coexisted with a host of other multi-movement instrumental genres, which could vary in terms of both forces and function. One of these "symphonies" was labeled as a "parthia," a serenade-like form possibly related to the Feldparthie and intended to evoke a military or hunting atmosphere. That work, here labeled the Symphony (Partia) in C major, C 4, has a lazy noctural atmosphere and actually seems less characteristic of outdoor music than several of the other symphonies, which have active horn parts. This probably shows only that publishers of the

day slapped onto pieces whatever title suited them. The key point is that Leopold Mozart composed fluently in a variety of early symphony types and seems to have used their basic ideas (opening fanfares, solo violin parts in minuets, and a fugal finale all occur along the way here) in something other than purely functional ways. There is no way to be sure about this, inasmuch as little is known of Leopold's career, but the implications of this variety for an understanding of Wolfgang's training are rich: part of the greatness of Wolfgang's music lies in his ability to expand a seemingly generic core into something really unusual. This CD gives listeners an excellent taste of the issues. The music is all sunny and pleasant in the way characteristic of the age, and even listeners completely unacquainted with the early Classical-period symphony will enjoy it. The modern-instrument London Mozart players under Matthias Bamert deal well with the varied textures of the music, executing details like horn trills without flinching, but the combination of a fairly large chamber orchestra and harsh church sound results in string passages that are not quite as silky as one would wish. This is nevertheless recommended as a good place to begin for those who want to grapple with just what it was that Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart heard when he was little, and how it shaped him. ---Jams Manheim, Rovi

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