


## An ingenious 'time-travelling' approach to these concertos

### Mozart

Flute Concertos (cadenzas by Aho) – No 1, K313; No 2, K314. Andante, K315. Rondo, KAnh184

Sharon Bezaly // Ostrobothnian Chamber Orchestra / Juha Kangas

BIS  BIS-SACD1539 (56' • DDD)

Concertos – selected comparison:

Pahud, BPO, Abbado (7/97) (EMI) 556365-2

Dubbed in France 'the Paganini of the flute', likened to David Oistrakh and Vladimir Horowitz for her flair and virtuosity, Israeli flautist Sharon Bezaly follows her stunning disc of contemporary Nordic concertos (reviewed last issue) with delectable performances of the familiar Mozart concertos. The composer famously protested that he loathed the flute, though he was far too much of a pro to slip from his customary fastidious standards. In the fast movements he is at his most puckish and insouciant, while the slow



ones, especially the *Adagio ma non troppo* of the G major, infuse graceful *galanterie* with exquisite poetry.

To both concertos, plus the two separate movements (of which the D major Rondo is a transcription of the dapper C major Rondo for violin, K373), Bezaly brings pure, delicately coloured tone – beautiful throughout its range – phenomenal agility and breath control, and an impish sense of fun. The *Allegros* have an elegant bounce, with soloist and the ever-alert Ostrobothnian Chamber Orchestra relishing their quickfire interplay. Repeats are always a cue for imaginative new phrasings; and time and again Bezaly provokes a smile with her playfully varied bravura passagework. Compared with the equally dazzling though rather more urbane Emmanuel Pahud, Bezaly opts for a lighter tonal palette and favours a cooler, simpler (and arguably more Mozartian) approach in slow movements. Where she steps right out of period is in the cadenzas. Specially written by Kalevi Aho, these refract and fragment Mozart through a



Sharon Bezaly: phenomenal agility and an impish sense of fun

21st-century prism, exploiting the whole compass of the flute and giving Bezaly scope to explore intriguing new colours. Purists may throw up their hands. But if you can adjust to the time-travelling you may find Aho's cadenzas ingenious, entertaining and strangely touching. **Richard Wigmore**

## Bezaly on Mozart and the flute

After failing to complete a commission to compose three short concertos and a couple of flute quartets for the Dutch amateur flautist Ferdinand Dejean at Mannheim in early 1778, Mozart wrote to his father that 'I am, as you know, always reluctant if I have to write for an instrument that I can't stand'.

Sharon Bezaly believes Mozart's alleged dislike of the flute is not much more than an entertaining anecdote for concert programmes: 'If you look at Mozart's symphonies

and piano concertos there are a lot of really beautiful flute parts. If he hated the flute that much he could have employed other wind instruments to take on such prominent functions in the music instead. Furthermore, there was something odd about this commission: he just couldn't deliver it on time and he had become distracted by falling in love with the singer Aloysia Weber.' These circumstances might have led to an impulsive remark to his father that should not be taken as gospel.

Bezaly compares Mozart's music to Japanese drawings 'in which you have very few lines but it all adds up to a very

strong picture. If you overdo it you really miss the point because it has a kind of simplicity in its penetration of the heart'. This attitude is a legacy from Bezaly's period as principal flautist in the Camerata Academica Salzburg under Sándor Végh, who 'was wonderful at concentrating upon the intense simplicity and emotion in the music'. Bezaly endeavours to capture that paradox of liveliness and simplicity, although her approach is unconventional.

She is, too, a passionate champion of contemporary composers. Sally Beamish has just written a new concerto for her, and her most recent album,

'Nordic Spell', features three new concertos written for her by Scandinavian composers.

'During the last few years I have been fortunate to have first-rank composers writing for me, such as Kalevi Aho, who is like Mozart in that he is spontaneous and his music just flows on to the paper – he still writes by hand. So I asked him if he would like to provide cadenzas. People will raise their eyebrows the first time they hear them but I think they really make sense and grow out of the concertos. I wanted to do something that really contributes to the music, not just play a lot of scales going up and down.' **David Vickers**