

Mozart • Serenade in B-Flat Major, "Gran Partita"

Stuttgart Winds
[Tacet](#) L209
180-gram LP
2015

Music 
Sound 

by [John Crossett](#) | March 9, 2016

Picking the best piece of music Mozart ever wrote is akin to picking the most beautiful contestant in the Miss Universe pageant. It's all a matter of taste, but you know that no matter which one you choose, you won't be making a mistake. Mozart wrote many of the finest works in the classical repertoire, so choosing just one is extremely difficult, if not impossible.

But were I pressed to choose my own personal "best," my vote would go to the work under review here, the "Gran Partita." This is not the name Mozart gave it, which was simply Serenade in B-Flat Major, but it's how we've come to know it. This composition for twelve wind instruments and string bass was most likely composed 1781 or 1782 and is made up of seven movements and plays at just under an hour. To me, the manner of this composition illuminates all that makes Mozart compositions so significant. The wit, humor, joy and fullness of life expressed in these seven movements speak to me of a man who loved life and loved filling it with music that would brighten any day and could be hummed along with.



Tacet, for those of you unfamiliar with the label, offers recordings in all available mediums, but when recording for vinyl release, they strive to keep all aspects in the analog domain. They are also big proponents of using tube microphones whenever possible, thus giving their recordings a certain glow that can only come from an all-analog recordings made with tube mikes. I also have this recording on high-res Blu-ray Disc, so I can thus attest to this from personal experience. The sonics of the Blu-ray, while quite good, simply lose out to the sense of realness that the LP offers without breaking a sweat. I could pick out each of the thirteen musicians or simply luxuriate in the overall sonic splendor. I could hear the stark contrast between the sound of the bow across the bass stings versus the sound of air being passed through the wind instruments, both of which were far closer to what I hear live. There was also an excellent sense of the different shapes of those woodwinds. Tacet is now a label I eagerly look for, knowing that their LPs in particular have the promise of spectacular sound.

My personal gold standard for this work has always been the performance taken from the score for the film *Amadeus*, as performed by Sir Neville Marriner and the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields. As for the Stuttgart Winds' performance, I was pleasantly surprised to find that it wasn't played either too fast, thus robbing the music of its emotion, or too slow, which lessens the piece's ability to touch, dragging out the emotion. While it might be just a touch on the slow side compared to the way I have learned to appreciate it, it is not annoyingly so -- just a tad slower than I'm used to. However, all the joy, verve, humor and love of life are there, all ready to carry you away as only a Mozart composition can.

This is an LP to cherish, either for a lover of classical music in general, for an audiophile (especially), or for a Mozart fanatic. I am all three, so this LP will not stray far from my turntable. ☺