

Mp3 Mark Kramer Trio - Mozart Jazz Symphony

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The lifelong marriage between classical and jazz music is exemplified in this jazz version of Mozart's famous Symphony in G Minor on the Eroica label. It is one of a kind. Truly. 10 MP3 Songs JAZZ: Traditional Jazz Combo, EASY LISTENING: Mature Details: The Mark Kramer Jazz Trio Mark Kramer - piano Gary Mazzaroppi - bass John Mosemann - drums In the late 1970s jazz pianist Mark Kramer played tenor and soprano recorders in a recorder quartet with a group of friends which met weekly. As the skill of this amateurish group increased, so did their repertoire. The group often enjoyed playing arrangements of the Bach Brandenburg concerti, and available selections from some of Mozart's operas (e.g., the Magic Flute). At that time Mark analyzed and re-orchestrated an entire Mozart symphony (K.550, No. 40, G minor) for his quartet of recorder friends. The quartet eventually performed the work for its own amusement. When the recorder quartet disbanded a few years later, the score was stored in Mark's basement. Kramer discovered the full cache of recorder music nearly 2 decades later. Working with the rearrangement of the G minor for recorders as well as with Mozart's original score, he reharmonized the symphony into jazz and arranged it for a jazz piano trio. The rules of the effort were: 1) the sequence of all sections would stay intact, 2) all principal expositions, subthemes, and developmental sections would remain, 3) the jazz piano and bass would play all melodies, points and counterpoints in real time, 4) the original textures and dynamics would be maintained as much as possible, 5) improvisational sections would be identified and would occur on the original harmonic structures by MOZART, 6) improvisations would be full-out jazz statements, and 7) that this would be a work which would stand on its own merit. The recording of the first movement was completed in 1998, 210 years after the symphony was originally penned. Whereas entire jazz albums are often completed in a day or 2, it took about 8 hours for the trio to get through the 15 minutes that comprise the first movement of the symphony. Gary Mazzaroppi (long time bassist with the Mark Kramer Trio, and also with pianist Marion McPartland and the late guitarist Tal Farlow) was faced with executing intricate lines that would have ordinarily been played by woodwinds or other orchestral instruments. But that was not a stumbling block. Pianist Kramer needed to find just the right balance between jazz chord voicings, and melodic

independence of right and left hands. But that was not a stumbling block. John Mosemann, drummer and long time member of the trio, had to find just the right feels and dynamics for the every changing kaleidoscope which defines MOZART. But that was not a stumbling block. How were they to improvise on chord progressions that were not indigenous to jazz? But that was not a stumbling block. In fact, there were no serious technical impediments. However, there was an active and intense search by the members of the trio to realize this classic work in jazz. How were they to make this a serious statement, without it being just "jazzed-up", corny, etc? Some of the passages were tortuous and required rehearsal and multiple takes. However, the real time-consuming effort was in the conceptualization. The first movement was completed. But the trio moved on to a score of other projects and commitments. However, in late 2003 Mark once again came across the first movement they recorded. He played it for his production partner, legendary jazz bassist Eddie Gmez. Eddie loved it. It was good. Why not finish? For one thing, the electronic versions of the manuscripts had been lost in a computer glitch. Therefore, the jazz arrangement of the last three movements needed to be reconstructed. Notwithstanding, in early 2004, the original trio (Mazzaroppi, Mosemann, and Kramer) recorded Movements 2 and 3 in a few sessions, and movement 4 a few more. Thus, this work has its origins in 1788 (when Mozart first wrote it); the jazz version was begun in 1998 and happily finished about 6 years later, 216 years in the making.

About Symphony number 40. Of the three last symphonies Mozart wrote, the middle one, the Symphony no. 40, is the best known. Indeed, it is one of the most familiar of all Mozart's works, its high profile challenged only by such enduring favorites as *Eine kleine Nachtmusik* and *The Marriage of Figaro* Overture. Although reasons for popularity are always difficult to determine, one factor in this case may be the choice of key. The symphony was written in the key of g minor, a rare choice for Mozart, who showed a strong preference for cheerier major keys. In fact, of his forty-one symphonies, only two use minor keys; similarly, of twenty-seven piano concertos, all but two use major keys. Given the gloomy days that Mozart was enduring, his selection of a dark and brooding key seems predictable. However, there is more at work here than one man's daily sorrows. At this time in history, German and Austrian composers were increasingly drawn to the "Sturm und Drang" ("Storm and Stress") movement, a school of thought that also affected artists and writers. They began to compose music that was the audible expression of angst.

REVIEWS "It is remarkable to hear perhaps the most beloved Mozart symphony played in a jazz style. True, these days it is more or less commonplace for arrangers to take classical themes and jazz or pop

them 'up'. That is not what this is. The Mark Kramer Trio has literally played the entire symphony including in each movement all principal themes, secondary themes, and developmental sections true to form. This alone - that is, reducing the score to piano bass and drums - would have been considered a monumental achievement. But, this CD is more than that. Mark's reharmonization is sophisticated, masterful, harmonious, and thoroughly progressive. If anything he clarifies the underlying logic of the symphony. In addition, jazz improvisations occur frequently based on Mozart's delineated harmonic structures. Perhaps, the richest feature of this outing is the seamless blending of true no-holds-barred jazz improvisations superimposed on a strict structure. Yet, the entire work stays within a jazz idiom. Though some of the fugue type sections are reminiscent of a 'Swingle Singers' approach, the trio never ever stays there for long. Rather, the group's uniquely relaxed and lyrical, sometimes brooding, sometimes triumphant style infuses the soundstage." Dr. W. Davis Jerome, Rutgers University. The Mozart Society, Music Director and Conductor. "An entire Mozart Symphony performed by a jazz trio? Perhaps it took a classical violinist turned jazz pianist to pull this one off. Mark Kramer and his trio have done a very hip thing here. Mark Kramer, a uniquely gifted jazz pianist, seems to hold the lonely niche of transforming unlikely material into jazz (e.g. The Rolling Stones in Jazz [STONEJAZZ: Forte/Lightyear/Warner Bros.], Evita en Jazz [Telarc International.] Add to that list his uncanny ability to interpret a complete symphony by Mozart. Jazz bassist Gary Mazzaroppi, with Mark's trio for about 10 years, and also frequently heard accompanying Mary McPartland on NPR's piano jazz, essentially fills an essential melodic role in this neo-Mozartian "ensemble." Drummer John Mosemann adds a kind of melodic drumming, in which the textures he creates take on an orchestral dimension. In some ways his understated style makes all this work. It is difficult sometimes to tell where the written music ends and the trio's complicated spontaneous interactions begin. The whole jazz symphony flows beautifully and is bursting with surprise, beauty, and at times pathos. This work is a landmark, and rich as anything!" Herbie Hancock, Jazz Pianist

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