

Reviews of Mozart Flute Concertos

"It's homegrown, it doesn't cost much, and it doesn't last long. But reservations about the performances on this disc are no more in order than excuses that are sometimes made for the works themselves. I have seldom enjoyed them so much.

Judith Hall has come late to the soloist's art; but her stint at the Royal Opera has given her enough understanding of Mozart as aria writer for hers to be a truly magic flute. Nowhere is this more true than in the slow movements, particularly that of the D major Concerto, where the simplicity of Hall's long, clear and clean lines does away with any of the lurching mannerism which so often masquerades for affect in this movement.

The opening of this K314 Concerto gives the first taste of her nimble, unbreathy timbre, effervescent, but without too many bubbles. And its finale has all the fun of the Seraglio, with elegant curlicues of figuration and sustained notes bounced on the breath, keeping the movement full of light. For K313 she saves her most sophisticated phrasing, with meticulous preparation revealing itself in an almost improvisatory ease. I like the poise of her tip-toeing cadential phrases: I welcome, too, the nicely judged cadenzas which never outstay their welcome. Just as Peter Thomas responds to Hall's imaginative artistry, so the Philharmonia warm to their leader with playing of eager, immediate response, caught in a close, though not suffocating, acoustic." GRAMOPHONE

Flute and Piano Reviews

"Earlier in the evening, in the Purcell Room, Richard Rodney Bennett and Susan Bradshaw gave a programme of piano duos, interspersed with flute music from Judith Hall.

..Miss Hall chose three works from the oldest contemporary and played them with beautiful phrasing and an almost uncanny knack with colour. Best of all was her generation and sustaining of the exasperated lyricism of Frank Martin's Ballade, though her rescuings of Rivier and Ibert were also impressive." The Times

"Her phrasing and rhythmic definition brought the work (Hindemith's Sonata) to brilliant life, and her capacity to make powerful statements with a normally retiring instrument was astonishing. Nor were grace and wit at all lacking" The Times

"Virtues that it (Dutilleux's Sonatine) had obviously inherited from the exquisite Fantaisie of Fauré and shared with Poulenc's Sonata, Roussel's Joueurs de Flûte and the eloquent Ballade of Frank Martin were not only a decorous craftsmanship, but a succinctness and formal economy that yet allowed for a considerable diversity of grace, brilliance and wit.

And the flautist's flawless pointing of each of these qualities showed her to be a complete master of every facet of the instrument, of its supple lyricism and silvery virtuosity, its intimacy and potential for the more powerful gesture." The Daily Telegraph

"A truly sensitive partnership, Judith Hall and Jan Latham-Koenig revealed in their recital of music for flute and piano a deep understanding of 20th-century French music for which they have an undoubted flair, capturing the fluid sensuality and often rapturous nature common to the idiom of a wide number of composers though each so markedly individual in style.

Their greatest test was undoubtedly the final section of Messiaen's "Le Merle Noir". Fiendishly exacting with rhythmic complexity at breakneck speed, this beautifully sculpted piece altogether was given a brilliantly lucid performance, quite amazing after Honegger's exquisite essay

"Romance," gentle and-poignant in its harmony, and playing which quite touched the soul." The Daily Telegraph