**Mozart on McNulty Fortepiano Walter by Olga Pashchenko: A New CD Release**

**Introduction to the Collaboration**

The recent release of Mozart's Piano Concertos Nos. 20 and 23, performed by Olga Pashchenko and the ensemble Il Gardellino on a McNulty fortepiano Walter, has sparked excitement among classical music enthusiasts. This collaboration builds upon their previous work on Alpha 726, featuring Piano Concertos Nos. 9 and 17. What sets this release apart is not only the selection of concertos but also the exceptional quality of the performance and the instruments employed.

**Capturing the Essence of Mozart's Favorite Instrument**

The McNulty fortepiano Walter stands as a modern concert-quality replica meticulously crafted by Paul McNulty. Reflecting the pinnacle of piano making, Walter’s fortepianos are revered as symbols of the Viennese Classical period and were notably favored by Mozart himself. McNulty's dedication to unique craftsmanship vividly resurrects the essence of Mozart’s preferred piano, offering listeners a chance to experience these compositions as they might have resonated in the composer's era. The instrument’s nuanced tonal palette, responsive touch, and dynamic range make it a perfect vehicle for interpreting the depth and richness of Mozart's music.

**Piano Concerto No. 20 in D minor**The D Minor Concerto, Piano Concerto No. 20 in D minor, is distinguished by its compelling features. Pashchenko's approach to supporting the opening movements with continuo enriches the ensemble, imbuing the initial segments with harmonious cohesion. This recording excels in capturing exceptional sound quality, deftly balancing the resonance with instrument clarity. The distinct timbre differences between winds and strings achieve an ideal equilibrium, elevating this recording to a standout in historical instrumental performance. Pashchenko’s performance is beautifully complemented by Il Gardellino, resulting in a harmonious interplay between soloist and ensemble, crafting a musically refined performance that captivates the listener.

Pashchenko's phrasing impeccably suits the lyrical essence of the piece, characterized by a melody-focused romantic style devoid of excessive sentimentality. Her piano solo maintains a delicate balance, offering both clarity and nuanced expression. The original cadenza by Pashchenko seamlessly integrates additional thematic material, harmonizing exquisitely with Mozart's composition and enhancing the listener’s enjoyment.

**A Major Concerto: Evolution of Dynamics**

The A major concerto commences with a reserved and conservative tone, gradually unfolding dynamically to create a sweeping emotional landscape. The piano solo echoes the orchestral opening initially, soon transitioning to more pianistic elements such as scalar passages and thematic development. The middle movement of the A major concerto begins gently, with the fortepiano’s distinctive tone and timbre afforded ample space in the acoustic environment. The Pashchenko’s fortepiano and Il Gardellino ensemble maintain a striking contrast between the piano's lightly percussive character and the smoothness of the orchestra, with the woodwind delivering brilliant performances that highlight the composition’s intricate textures.

The finale of the 23rd concerto unveils Mozart’s playful personality, with Il Gardellino producing a splendidly rich sound supported by the recording’s transparent presentation of woodwind runs and the palpable presence of the piano. The transparency and superior integration of the piano within the orchestral texture in Pashchenko's recording offer a fresh perspective. Il Gardellino, celebrated for its expertise in baroque repertoire, demonstrates exceptional skill in supporting these Mozart concertos. This recording stands out for its strong sound quality and effective blending of piano and orchestra, representing a notable achievement in historical performance.

**Conclusion**

In summary, Olga Pashchenko's collaboration with Il Gardellino on the McNulty fortepiano Walter for Mozart’s Piano Concertos Nos. 20 and 23 stands as a remarkable achievement in historical instruments performance. Their meticulous attention to detail and profound musicality breathe new life into these beloved compositions, providing listeners with a fresh perspective on Mozart’s genius through the authenticity of period instruments. The recording not only highlights the technical prowess of both soloist and ensemble but also pays homage to the craftsmanship of the McNulty fortepiano Walter, faithfully recreating the essence of Mozart’s favored instrument. This new release enriches any classical music collection, offering a journey back in time to the heart of Mozart’s musical world, where artistry and historical accuracy converge to create an unforgettable listening experience. Moreover, the performance on the McNulty fortepiano Walter radiates with charm, resonating deeply with contemporary audiences.