

## New Classical Tracks: Anne-Marie McDermott & the Calder Quartet

by [Julie Amacher](#), Minnesota Public Radio

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ST. PAUL, Minn. — Pianist Ann-Marie McDermott has long dreamed of recording a Mozart album. As a result, she had very definite ideas of the sound she was looking for when she recorded her latest album, *Mozart: Piano Concertos*.

"I would say the most important quality I wanted to capture in recording Mozart was the living dynamic joy of this repertoire. I didn't want it to sound like we had sat in a recording studio for three days and tried to make everything perfect. Of course that's what we did. But I wanted to make sure we were able to capture the spontaneity of this music and the joy and the sparkle."

That's a very tall order, according to pianist Anne-Marie McDermott. She recently released her first Mozart recording, which presents three of the composer's early piano concertos in a unique way.

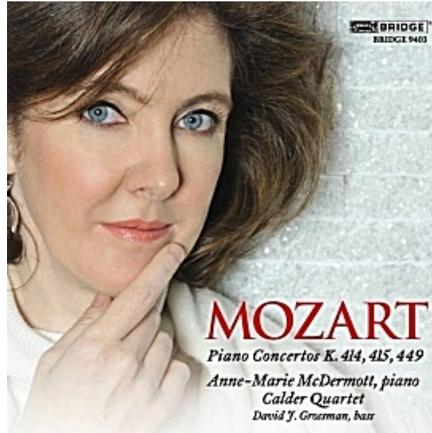
"For years I have dreamed of making a Mozart recording. And this particular project was always my first choice — recording these particular Mozart piano concerti with string quartet as Mozart had indicated they could be done. Because it provides a different listening experience with this repertoire to hear it with a smaller ensemble, it really brings such an intimacy and such a personal character to this repertoire."

"I put the project off for a period of time while I was really kind of researching and getting to know different string quartets. And the Calder Quartet when I first worked with them and got to know them — it seemed like the perfect fit. I think their desire for exploration as musicians, their cutting edge attitude about what they're doing and most importantly their tremendous, innocent enthusiasm about making music really permeates everything that they do."

Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 13 in C Major, K. 415 opens this recording. Anne-Marie says it's magical from the very beginning.

"You know what always gives me goose bumps every single time, the opening of that concerto. How brilliant was Mozart? It starts on a single note, middle C. One note with a bit of a military rhythmic element to it, tremendous energy underlying it, and this is the opening of the concerto."

For me, what stands out in Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 12 in A major is the andante where Mozart quotes part of



*Mozart: Piano Concertos K 414, 415, 449 (Chamber Version)* (Courtesy of Bridge Records)

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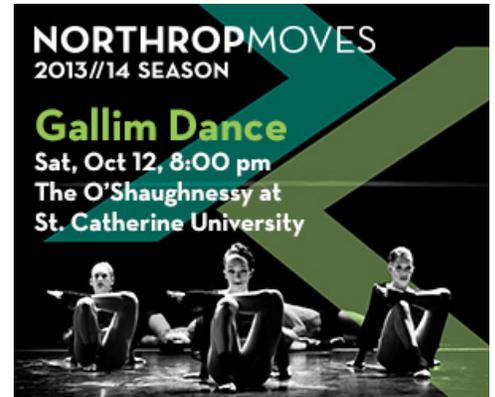
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an opera by Johann Christian Bach. McDermott agrees, "The second movement feels very operatic. And also very harmonically rich."

She further explains, "When the piano first presents the theme after the opening tutti, so to speak, with the string quartet, there's kind of a twist harmonically that when I first was learning it, I stopped for a minute and I said, 'Oh. Wow.' I wasn't expecting where it was taking me."

Bassist David Grossman joins McDermott and the Calder Quartet for Mozart's Piano concerto No. 14 in E flat Major, K. 449. This is a work that many, including McDermott, believe is revolutionary because it's the most virtuosic of Mozart's early works.

"I felt very strongly that for 449 I really wanted to include a double bass," says McDermott, "There's a fatter sound that's required for 449. It's a little bit richer and bigger in scope. And of the three concerti on this recording, I feel like 449 is the one that actually has the most interaction between the piano and the strings, particularly in the last movement."

"When you're trying to find what makes Mozart such a genius when so much of the content sounds so simple — it's very hard to put words to that," McDermott concludes, "But I think we all have the same reaction to Mozart in that it speaks to us in a very deep way, a very profound way."

By presenting these early Mozart piano concertos in a string quartet setting, McDermott and the Calder Quartet offer you a chance to hear Mozart in way he sanctioned, yet is rarely recorded. A new layer in a composer whose depths we already love.

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