MOZART ***Les petits riens***, K 299. **3 German Dances,** K 605. **5 Contredanses,** K 609. ***Das Donnerwetter***, K 534. **Marches,** K 408: **No. 1 in C; No. 2 in D; No. 3 in C. 4 Minuets,** K 601 & • Georg Tintner, cond; Nova Scotia S • NAXOS 8.557243 (74:14)

& **2 Minuets: No. 5; No. 8,** K 585. **German Dances: No. 6,** K 536; **No. 3,** K 567. **Minuet with Country Dance No. 1,** K 463

Mozart's efforts to obtain commissions for operas during his 1778 Parisian sojurn went unrewarded, but he did gain a toehold in the theatrical world via a commission for a ballet, *Les petits riens*, whose existence would probably not be known today if it were not for Mozart's contributions to this opera by one Niccolo Piccini. Mozart was among several composers who chipped in for the final effort, and as conductor Georg Tintner points out, "to this day, one is not quite certain which pieces Mozart did not write . . . one is absolutely certain which [ones] he did write. And so in order to be sure, we do all the doubtful pieces and all [of] his. . . ." The result was that Mozart was never paid and the influential impresario Noverre had the gall to pass the music off as his own!

Fast-forward a decade and a half. We find Mozart in Vienna, married, and still struggling financially. Mozart's unparalleled talent was put to use writing dances for court balls. Held at the Redoutensaal, these affairs were immensely popular with up to 3,000 people in attendance. People from all walks of life and social strata attended.

The dances included here are social, spiritual, and artistic ancestors to those written by the musically fecund Strauss family. Even though these efforts required little of Mozart's genius, he never tossed them off as insignificant. Instead, we find moments of inspiration, like the inclusion of the hurdy-gurdy and sleigh bells in K 601, and even Mozart parodying his own work *vis-à-vis* the inclusion of "Non più andrai" in the Contredanses, K 609. Part of Naxos's ongoing tribute to Georg Tintner, who died in 1999, this release targets a corner of Mozart's *œuvre* that requires no emotional involvement. It is light as a feather and is meant only to entertain, not challenge the intellect.

Symphony Nova Scotia—the only fully professional Canadian orchestra east of Quebec City—is a small, but accomplished ensemble that presents this repertoire in an unbuttoned yet wholly professional manner and fills it with *joie d'vivre*. Whether it's the formality of the courtly minuet or the rustic charm of the Ländler, the character of the music is appropriately conveyed; from first note to last, it's evident that all concerned are having fun, and lots of it!

A disc of delightful miniatures from a conductor sorely missed by the music world.

Michael Carter