

# Philadelphia Inquirer

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Excerpt:

## Classical

### **Mozart Piano Concerto No. 24 in C minor, Symphony No. 40 in G minor, Masonic Funeral Music, and "Amen" from the Requiem**

*Robert Levin, piano; New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, Nicholas McGegan conducting.*  
(NZSO Live \*\*\*\*)

Though the Philadelphia Orchestra's popular guest conductor Nicholas McGegan is hardly underrepresented in the recording market, his discography is almost all from the baroque period. But as his Haydn program this week at the Kimmel Center is likely to show, there's much more to him than that. This live Mozart recording from New Zealand definitely has the marks of a live performance with slight ensemble lapses, but how long has it been since you've heard a Mozart performance that truly cooked?

Given McGegan's orientation toward historically informed performance, the *Symphony No. 40* emerges with a trim silhouette and a low-fat sonority, plus this conductor's trademark rhythmic spring - and the firm pulse that goes along with that. Few recordings have brought out the marvelous antiphonal effects that come with Mozart's fugal writing. All these things taken together make the music feel as if it was written yesterday - even more so in the concerto, with pianist Robert Levin improvising provocative, always musical ornaments. Available at [www.nzso.co.nz](http://www.nzso.co.nz).

- *David Patrick Stearns*