

Reinhold Friedrich – the high points of the Classical trumpet concerto

It was in 1992 that the Capriccio label released a CD with Reinhold Friedrich, trumpet, and the Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields under the direction of Sir Neville Marriner, presenting the five great Classical trumpet concertos: the two concertos in D major and C major by Johann Michael Haydn, the D major concerto by Leopold Mozart, the concerto in E flat major by Franz Joseph Haydn and the concerto in E major by Johann Nepomuk Hummel. These are undoubtedly the five best known Classical concertos for solo trumpet and indeed the finest works of this genre in many respects. All of these five concertos were written in Salzburg and Vienna during a period of some 40 years, although the three older concertos are significantly different from the two later works in the nature of their solo instrument, their treatment of the orchestra and their musical style.

SALZBURG 1762 – 1765

The court of the Salzburg prince-archbishops offered a remarkably fertile environment for the arts, undoubtedly in part from the desire to rival the opulent provision at the Imperial court in Vienna. Probably drafted by Leopold Mozart, a printed copy of the “Report of the present state of Music for His Grace the Prince and Archbishop of Salzburg in the year 1757” has come down to us. This 16-page document gives short portraits of all the musicians then employed in the Archiepiscopal Court Chapel – in greatest detail and exceptionally positive for Leopold Mozart himself, hence the conclusion that he will have been the author of the report. Serving the Salzburg court since 1743, he relates that in these 14 years to 1757 he had written no fewer than 30 large orchestral serenades and numerous concertos “prepared specially for the Flaute traversiere, Oboe, the Bassoon, Waldhorn, the Trumpet etc.” – which implies that we have regrettably lost a number of trumpet concertos by Mozart senior. As for his Serenades, only one written later has survived (complete with its trumpet concerto), but from a letter of April 10, 1755 by Leopold Mozart to his Augsburg publisher Johann Jakob Lotter we know of at least two further serenades with integrated solo movements for clarino (and horn), which again have not come down to us.

As for the trumpeter, the document’s first-named soloist is “Mr. Johann Baptist Gesenberger, Principal Court Trumpeter, from Bavaria. Is an excellent trumpeter, who has risen in esteem and won great fame in particular through the exceptional purity of his playing, the speed of his runs, and his fine trills”. Either Gesenberger or else “Mr. Caspar Köstler, from the Palatinate, Court and Field Trumpeter. He is a pupil of the most eminent Mr. Heinisch, late of

Vienna; gives the trumpet a fine, most agreeable lyrical tone; has a good manner of delivery, and one hears his Concertos and Solos with much pleasure” ... one of these must be considered the most likely interpreters of the concertos by Michael Haydn and Leopold Mozart, bearing in mind that both Gesenberger and Köstler will of course have given their premiere performances on the natural trumpet then in sole use, lacking devices of any sort to assist playing technique. And then as now, one stands in awe at the exceptional trumpet skills of these musicians!

Johann Michael Haydn: Concerto No. 1 in D major (MH 104, not in Perger, c. 1765)

The two-movement Concerto in D major is actually part of a Serenade in B flat major, presumably written in the late summer of 1765 as a *Finalmusik* marking the end of the Salzburg University semester. The only known source of the work, the Benedictine abbey at Lambach in Upper Austria, shows it to be a *pasticcio* (compilation), although it is not clear who put the work together. The prime source is Michael Haydn’s three-movement Sinfonia in B flat major MH 133; the two final movements come from a Sinfonia by the Lambach composer Joseph Hafeneder (1746 – 1784). The trumpet concerto in D major by Michael Haydn integrated into this Serenade as movements 4 and 5 (known as No. 1, because it is the first known) has gone down as a “world record” concerto on account of the highest composed note in serious music, a note scored as a’” in the first movement. No doubt the skills of Salzburg court trumpeters prompted the choice of this uniquely high note. The manuscript held at Lambach suggests that an equally competent trumpet soloist was available there, or else at the court of the Salzburg Prince-Archbishop Sigismund III. Christoph Graf von Schrattenbach paid a visit with his orchestra at that time to his Lambach colleague, the music-loving Abbot Amandus Schickmayr, and proudly showed off the skills of his travelling top trumpeter in a performance of this Serenade.

Johann Michael Haydn: Concerto No. 2 in C major (MH 60, Perger 34, 1763)

The extensive library of the Benedictine foundation in Göttweig holds a handwritten score by Michael Haydn that includes several instrumental works, including a Larghetto for alto trombone and orchestra and a further two-movement trumpet concerto in C major, which the publisher of the first edition in the early 1970s, Edward H. Tarr, designated No. 2 to avoid confusion. The work is dated 1763, therefore shortly after the arrival in Salzburg of Michael Haydn – who was soon to discover and appreciate the excellent qualities of the court trumpeters there – and accordingly contains extremely ambitious solo passages. This concerto

too may well have originally formed part of a longer Serenade, but to this day it has not been possible to establish its provenance.

The changed approach to the use of the trumpet that had already taken place in Vienna in the 1740s after the death of court Kapellmeisters Fux and Caldara, which was largely the work of their successor Georg von Reutter, took effect in Salzburg two decades later. The new emphasis in musical taste after the death of Emperor Karl VI in 1740 led to the restriction of the trumpet to supporting accents and closing modulations *tutti*; rarely did the first trumpet line rise above a g'' in the score. At the same time, the purely solo works and sections in the operas and masses of Reutter and Wagenseil are all the more extreme in their use of virtuosity – almost giving one the feeling that the composers were distressed by the reduced demands on the court trumpeters and took every opportunity to give them incredibly tricky passages so that they could show what they were made of. This development can be observed in Salzburg in the works of Michael Haydn, and his two trumpet concertos are likewise of breathtaking virtuosity, while the former brilliance of the virtuoso trumpet section in many of his other works falls away to mere workmanlike passages with little chance to show off. The score of the solo line in Concerto No. 2 is thus more what one would expect in a violin concerto and it is hardly surprising that when Michael Haydn wrote his Violin Concerto in G major (MH 52, Perger 60) in 1771, he took over the first movement of this trumpet concerto almost unchanged as the first movement of his new concerto – with the trumpet part assigned with some modification to the solo violin. By the mid-1770s at the latest, the palmy days of clarino (natural trumpet) artistry were over even in Salzburg, but in his two trumpet concertos Michael Haydn applies his whole talent to showing off the qualities of the court trumpeters to best advantage. Perhaps he foresaw that any further development would prove to be a dead end? All the elements that made the trumpet playing of Gesenberger and Köstler sound so special are particularly evident in Concerto No. 2 in C major: the solo part rises repeatedly to e''' – at one point in the first movement to f''' – and there is ample opportunity for trills and virtuoso runs that on the natural trumpet would require unbelievable agility to achieve a flawless performance.

Leopold Mozart: Concerto in D major (LMV IX:13, 1762)

This trumpet concerto in D major by Leopold Mozart, again in two movements, is chronologically the first composition in the present compilation and at the same time one of the last that Mozart completed before devoting all his time and energies to the education and support of his two child prodigies, Wolfgang Amadeus and Maria Anna 'Nannerl'. This work

too is part of a much longer Serenade in D major (LMV VIII:9) which, as mentioned above, is the only one by Leopold Mozart to have come down to us complete. The handwritten parts of the Serenade, which were prepared in about 1760, are kept in the music library of the Benedictine abbey in Seitenstetten and contain several movements for solo alto trombone as well as the trumpet concerto. The interesting thing is, however, that Leopold Mozart wrote down the two movements for solo trumpet separately in a score headed *Concerto per il Clarino Solo. di Leop. Mozart. / in Augusto 1762*. Accordingly there is clear evidence that this concerto and also the two concertos by Michael Haydn are to be regarded as works in their own right, divorced from their original context. These works will again have been written with soloists Gesenberger or Köstler in mind. Court trumpeter Johann Andreas Schachtner, a friend of the Mozart family, who is known to have been in Salzburg from 1754, is another possibility, but we cannot be sure that his trumpet-playing skills were actually sufficient for the performance of such a work. In the Mozart family circle, he normally played second violin in the string quartet and made himself useful as a librettist. Leopold Mozart's concerto is not the technical equal of the two works by Michael Haydn, but in its A-A-B-B sequence the composer gave his soloist ample opportunity in both movements to embellish the solo line in the repeats and add musical ideas of his own. Allowing for the great gaps in Leopold Mozart's extant oeuvre, we must be grateful that this concerto at least has stood the test of time and it is regrettable that none of his other works for trumpet has survived.

As deputy Kapellmeister at the Salzburg court, Leopold Mozart was the superior till his death in 1787 of the court musician and concertmaster Michael Haydn. If we are to believe contemporary reports, Mozart was constantly scheming against Haydn, to whom he was not very close personally and whom he must clearly have envied for his talent. The relationship between his son Wolfgang and Michael Haydn was quite different, characterized by the younger man's admiration for the older. In general the somewhat introverted Michael was overshadowed by his more worldly and good-humoured brother Joseph. All the same, Michael's music is always melodious and shows excellent craftsmanship and he had mastered the art, even in extrovert works in a major key, of adding a touch of melancholy to his composition.

VIENNA 1796 – 1804

Between 1760 and 1790 Europe underwent a musical decline of the natural trumpet – only some north German regional centres such as Hamburg provided significant and difficult parts for the trumpet that were still being played even in the 1780s, as in Carl Philipp Emanuel

Bach's oratorio "The Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus", a work composed in 1774 and still being performed in 1784 with the assistance of Hamburg's highly competent *Ratstrompeter* (city waits). In Vienna, on the other hand, composers greatly simplified the original high trumpet parts for performances of Baroque works from the first half of the 18th century, or replaced them in whole or in part by clarinets; Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart did just that with some works by Handel (notably his *Messiah*). But in Vienna itself, there was a man who was not content with the diminished role of the trumpet: Anton Weidinger (1766 – 1852), one of the Imperial Court trumpeters, who in the mid-nineties of the 18th century devised a technical innovation making it possible to extend the range of the trumpet chromatically in its middle register. Following the example of woodwind instruments, he provided the natural trumpet with small holes at the appropriate places where the pitch of the note could be influenced. These, however, were not directly manipulated by the fingers but could be closed with mechanical keys governed by a spring-lever mechanism – its inventor named this principle an *organisierte Trompete*. The principle sounds simple enough, but Weidinger evidently spent many years refining the system to the point where it would deliver a musically satisfactory rendering of suitable works. He introduced Joseph Haydn to his invention around 1795 and the composer was evidently so enthusiastic that in 1796 he wrote a large concerto for the new keyed trumpet, which regrettably was still too complex for the prototype version of Weidinger's instrument. Far from being discouraged, its inventor persevered with a series of improvements to the mechanism – and on December 22, 1798, he performed the Sinfonia Concertante in E flat major by Leopold Anton Kozeluch, a work scored for the curious combination of trumpet, piano, mandolin, double bass and orchestra. This event is therefore the first documented use of the keyed trumpet in a public concert. The trumpet part of this work contains much melodic fanfare and only a few passages written in the newly accessible chromatic middle octave. However, practical experience led eventually to a satisfactory form of the instrument and Weidinger could set out to revolutionize the trumpet world.

Franz Joseph Haydn: Trumpet Concerto in E flat major (Hob.VIIc:1, 1796)

In advance of the premiere of Joseph Haydn's trumpet concerto, to be performed in Vienna's Burgtheater on Friday, March 28, 1800, an advertisement drafted by Anton Weidinger appeared in the *Wiener Zeitung*. It read as follows: "The Undersigned has secured a performance of a large musical Academy in the city's Imperial and Royal National Court Theatre on the 28th of March. His true intention hereby is to present to the public for their approval the instrument invented by him, and perfected, he flatters himself, after a process of

costly experiment over seven years, namely the organised Trumpet furnished with numerous keys, in a Concerto specially composed for this instrument by Mr. Joseph Haydn, Doctor of Music.” Weidinger here fails to mention his use of the instrument at the end of 1798 in a public performance of Kozeluch’s *Sinfonia Concertante* – presumably the reaction of the audience on that occasion failed to come up to his expectations. Despite the advance publicity, the Viennese audience was only moderately interested in the new instrument and the historic event in the Burgtheater was sparsely attended on March 28, 1800, as the diary entry for that day by Esterházy official Joseph Carl Rosenbaum reveals: “In the evening I was at the Academy of Court trumpeter Weidinger. Therese sang, but very hoarsely. It [the theatre] was empty.”

It is interesting to note that the original autograph title of the composition is *Concerto per il Clarino*, that is to say, without more background knowledge one might assume it was a concerto for natural trumpet, an instrument that was traditionally known as a clarino. Joseph Haydn, well known for his sly musical humour, plays with the audience’s expectations in this work as elsewhere – in the first movement, he introduces the trumpet not with the chromatic passages foreseen by Weidinger but in the “old style” with a single note on the low E flat and then a few bars later with a repeated echo in the clarino register (including a seventh – the 11th natural note, which is actually impure!) on a figure played by the two orchestral trumpets. It is the solo entry proper that is actually an octave lower than expected and thus suitable for the instrument’s chromatic capabilities. In all three movements, the solo part stands out with the lyrical character of its themes and also because of a general preference for the low and middle registers that show off the instrument’s potential in the best possible light. The novelty effect obviously made up for the weakness of sound: the chromatic notes generated by the opening of one or more keys were audibly different in quality from the natural tones, that is to say they sounded significantly duller. There is a revealing passage in a letter of February 14, 1831, from Felix Mendelssohn to the clarinetist Heinrich Baermann: “I must add that the trumpeters play throughout on those confounded key trumpets, which make me think of an attractive woman with a beard or a man with a bosom – it doesn’t get the chromatic notes right and now it sounds like a trumpet castrato, so lifeless and unnatural.” At the premiere of Haydn’s trumpet concerto, of course, these reservations were irrelevant and this is not only the last instrumental concerto by Joseph Haydn but also his most fully developed. The question constantly arises: why were no other pieces written for the key trumpet in Vienna after 1804 following the familiar works by Haydn and Hummel? Apart from the irreconcilable technical shortcomings of the instrument, the problem may have rested with the Imperial court (Weidinger’s employer), because it is documented that

Weidinger made several attempts in the years up to 1815 to appear in concert with his invention but was turned down every time, for instance on the grounds that “the Trumpet concerto does not suit her Majesty the Empress” and “her Majesty has often stated that she can take no particular delight in this Instrument”. All things considered, it is rather regrettable that this splendid concerto is now most often played as the inevitable obligatory test piece for orchestral trumpeters – when Haydn wrote it for a superb soloist, for whom he put all his musical experience and compositional subtlety into the score and, so that he and Anton Weidinger flung open the door to a new trumpet horizon.

Johann Nepomuk Hummel: Trumpet Concerto in E major (S 49, WoO 1, 1803)

There is unfortunately no surviving record of how the premiere of Joseph Haydn’s trumpet concerto in 1800 was received by the public. It seems to have enjoyed modest success at best, even if it was not a failure – it was clearly not the case that famous Viennese composers like Salieri, Vanhal, Wranitzky et al were jostling with one another to write more concertos for Weidinger. Undaunted, the trumpeter continued to promote his own instrument and an 1802 issue of the Leipzig *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* announced: “Public reports advise that the Imperial court trumpeter, Herr Weidenmayer [sic], has invented a trumpet with keys, upon which one may play all the semitones through two octaves with complete purity and sureness.” It is certainly fair to assume that Joseph Haydn, who after all was a witness at Weidinger’s wedding, was also drumming up support for his colleague. Presumably it was Haydn who encouraged his pupil Johann Nepomuk Hummel to write a concerto for Weidinger in the second half of the year 1803. Hummel’s autograph score of the new concerto in E major is dated *Fine, den 8ten Decemb. 803*. The piece was performed with Weidinger as soloist during a *Tafelmusik* at the Imperial court in Vienna held as part of a public New Year’s banquet on January 1, 1804. Upon closer examination of the autograph score, we notice a number of different stages in the composing process: evidently Hummel originally drafted the orchestral score without the solo part. He seems to have added this at the last moment after final instructions from Weidinger immediately before the premiere. That means that he subjected the trumpet part in particular to at least two revisions, involving a substantial abbreviation of the second movement and the alteration of melodic lines, prompted no doubt by Weidinger; this applies to about half of all the trumpet entries. It is not widely known that Hummel also drew upon a number of popular works of the day. There are allusions to Mozart’s “Haffner” Symphony K385 in the introduction to the first movement *Allegro con spirito* and the ambulatory gesture in the second movement *Andante* distinctly reminds one of the slow movement from Mozart’s Piano Concerto in C major K467. And

finally there is a literal quotation in the third movement *Rondò* with a march-like passage from Luigi Cherubini's opera *Les deux Journées* (The Two Days, or The Water-Carrier), which was extraordinarily popular in Vienna in its German version and was given parallel performances in August 1802 in the Theater an der Wien and at the Kärntnertortheater. It is likely that Hummel hoped to benefit from recognition of the theme by a discerning Viennese audience. In contrast to Haydn's concerto, Hummel expressly describes his work as a *Concerto a Tromba Principale*, in other words, a work for low-register trumpet – the old term *Clarino*, which Haydn had used, being obsolete. Only one other contemporary performance of Hummel's trumpet concerto with Anton Weidinger is known, from a musical Academy on Ash Wednesday, February 8, 1815 (3rd movement only); after that the work is consigned to oblivion, bringing to an end the brief interlude of the keyed trumpet in Vienna before the valve trumpet established its superiority.

Ludwig van Beethoven from *Fidelio*

No. 9 Leonore – Recitative and Aria “Abscheulicher, wo eilst Du hin”

For the key of E major, Weidinger chose a new and shorter instrument, which had certainly taken some time to prepare. There are various theories as to why Hummel preferred E major – this change of key can surely only have been made in close co-operation with Weidinger. In part it may have been a bid to impart more brilliance to the trumpet part, and Hummel's decision to leave out the two orchestral trumpets that Haydn prescribed for his own concerto and restrict himself to horns and timpani may be designed to bring the solo instrument centre stage. There is also Reinhold Friedrich's plausible speculation that Hummel had been looking over Beethoven's shoulder, so to speak, when his colleague was composing his opera *Leonore*, drafted from about 1802 onwards as the forerunner of the later *Fidelio*. He seems to have been so delighted by Leonore's recitative and aria “Abscheulicher, wo eilst Du hin” that he transferred sections of it straight into his trumpet concerto and evidently intended to stay with Beethoven's key of E major.

It might also be the case that in his further search for improvements to his instrument, Weidinger was giving preference to sharp keys, as a notice in the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* Nr. 17 of 1815 illustrates: “Mr. Weidinger then gave us a Polonaise by the late Mr. [Antonio Casimir] Cartellieri arranged for the key trumpet. The key-signature (A major) seemed however not entirely successful for this instrument”. Evidently these trials were not always crowned with audible success.

As a reminiscence of Hummel's homage to Beethoven, this CD closes with a rendering of Leonore's recitative and aria from the eponymous opera, written about the same time as the trumpet concerto. Close listening will reveal clear musical parallels between the two works – with Reinhold Friedrich playing Beethoven's original text unaltered.

Arne Thielemann (2026)

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