

The NAXOS logo is a blue square with the word "NAXOS" in white, serif, all-caps font. Above the text are three stylized white columns, and below it are three horizontal lines.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF THE HORN

Concertos for Two Horns

HOFFMEISTER
L. MOZART
POKORNÝ · WITT

Jacek Muzyk,
Horn primo

Daniel Kerdelewicz,
Horn secondo

Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra

JoAnn Falletta

The Golden Age of the Horn

Concertos for Two Horns

The 18th century saw the elevation of the horn as a solo instrument in classical music. With composers beginning to write for hand-stopped instruments during the 1760s and 1770s, players were rewarded with concertos from Haydn and W.A. Mozart, works forming the backbone of any soloist's repertoire today. Yet they do not tell the full story, for a number of increasingly high-profile virtuosos had begun to commission concertos across Europe, often for two or more horns. That this music has not surfaced until recently is principally on account of the high tessitura required of the players, along with some misplaced doubts around the musicality of the works.

The concertos for two horns on this album show that in fact compositional techniques were in rude health, in spite of the players being asked to scale ever greater technical heights. There was also an increased willingness for non-specialist composers to write for the instrument, ultimately leading to Beethoven, who enlisted the virtuoso Giovanni Punto for his *Horn Sonata* of 1800 while raising the horn's profile in symphonies and chamber works.

Friedrich Witt, whose first instrument was the cello, was born in the same year as Beethoven. The two composers were unexpectedly linked in a case of mistaken identity, where Witt's '*Jena*' Symphony in C major was wrongly attributed to Beethoven until as recently as 1957. Witt entered the court of Oettingen-Wallerstein in the late 1780s, where he wrote three concertos for the famed horn players, Joseph Alois Anton Zwierrina and John Nagel, thought to have been published in 1795.

The *Concerto for Two Horns in F major* heard here has a substantial first movement introduction, setting the scene for the horns to play at each end of the register, with Witt writing some particularly athletic music. The strings play a major role in the dialogue, briefly diverting into the minor key as the themes are developed. The *Romance* is cast in B flat major and begins with the two horns playing a tender legato theme, taken up by the strings, before the lively *Rondo* theme is given out by the horns, supported by oboes and brightly characterised strings. By using a triple time metre, Witt writes very danceable thematic material.

Franz Anton Hoffmeister is known today principally in the field of music publishing, where he founded a firm that would later become C.F. Peters. His clients included Mozart and Beethoven, whose first symphony he published in December 1801. He was also a prolific composer, with a sizeable body of chamber music featuring the flute, along with more than 50 symphonies.

Hoffmeister's *Concerto for Two Horns in E flat major* bears an inscription confirming it was also written for 'Messieurs Nagel et Zwierrina'. Its purchase was secured in 1792, but the piece is thought to have been written around a decade earlier. Nagel, a high horn specialist, would have likely played the *primo* part and Zwierrina, a low horn virtuoso, the *secondo* part. As would often be the case, the concerto's first movement is as long as the second and third combined, in this case featuring a genial first subject. In the development section the horns play cat and mouse, alternating quickfire exchanges with legato passages at close intervals that take the *primo* part all the way up to a top B flat. Hoffmeister also chooses to label his slow movement *Romance*, a tender utterance in A flat major where the horns link in a close melodic embrace, often playing with the same rhythm. The finale begins with a deceptively delicate theme, played by the soloists in thirds, before they embark on a series of increasingly challenging and virtuosic takes on the tune, finishing with a flourish.

That the horn was already enjoying a greater profile before the 1770s is evident in the works of Leopold Mozart. Born in Augsburg in 1719, Leopold was a prolific composer before his attentions turned to encouraging and promoting the musical exploits of his children, Wolfgang Amadeus and Maria Anna. Of particular interest are at least 30 serenades, with solo parts for instruments drawn from the orchestra, and the *Sinfonia da caccia*, extravagantly scored for four 'hunting horns' and strings.

Leopold's *Concerto for Two Horns in E flat major* dates from 1752, before the hand techniques for horn were developed in Salzburg, where it was written. Perhaps because of this the horns and strings are more closely aligned, the latter beginning the concert in high spirits with scurrying figures, before the horns join them, initially doubled at the melodic interval of a sixth but soon with challenging figures in the higher register. The slow movement is delicately poised, set in C minor but spending more time in the concerto's 'home' key, where the soloists play softly in a cantabile style. The finale has an attractive triple-time lilt, the strings' good-natured tune taken up by the horns who add glissandi for extra shine. There are agile exchanges between the two soloists, contrasted with a more dotted tune from the strings.

František Xaver Pokorný was born in Mies, Bavaria, in 1729. After studying at Regensburg he moved to the 18th-century musical hotbed of Mannheim, working under Johann Stamitz, Franz Xaver Richter and Ignaz Holzbauer. It is thought the virtuoso horn player Beate Pokorný may have been his sister, and she would have been the ideal foil for his compositions, which include as many as 50 symphonies. Pokorný drew admiration for his advanced writing for brass instruments, and at the court of Oettingen-Wallerstein, between 1745 and 1766, he wrote a number of concertos and symphonies to feature the horn players Friedrich Domnich and Johann Türschmidt. Together with Antonio Rosetti, the court's Kapellmeister, he wrote some extremely demanding concertante works for them to play.

Pokorný's concerto is scored for the two soloists, two flutes and string orchestra. The horns play along with the strings as the orchestral exposition unfolds, before taking over in close harmony. The part-writing shows the ability of the virtuosi to play high notes with very little musical support, save for that of their partner at a melodic interval of a sixth or more. Pokorný stays in the home key for a graceful *Larghetto*, where the soloists enjoy lyrical writing, with high trills commonplace in the upper part. A short but fiendishly difficult cadenza, featuring a top 'A', is complemented by the flutes. To complete his challenge to the virtuosi Pokorný writes a crisp *Presto* third movement, its theme presented by the strings but soon dominated by the exuberant soloists with their bright, bustling tunes.

Ben Hogwood

Jacek Muzyk



Photo: Anna Dzięgiel

Polish French horn player Jacek Muzyk earned Master's degrees at the Academy of Music in Krakow and the Mannes School of Music in New York. He continued his education at The Juilliard School and Rice University, and in 2016 attained a Doctorate in Music. After returning to Poland, he worked with orchestras including Sinfonia Varsovia and the Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra. In 1999, he was nominated as principal horn for Krystian Zimerman's Polish Festival Orchestra. In 2002 he moved to the United States, where he played with the Houston Grand Opera and Dallas Symphony Orchestra, before being appointed principal horn of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra. He has made guest appearances with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and served as principal horn with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and has appeared with various other orchestras across the United States as well as internationally, often performing as a guest soloist. Muzyk has given numerous masterclasses and recitals, and has made many solo recordings. www.jacekmuzyk.com

Daniel Kerdelewicz



Photo: Patti DiLutis

Daniel Kerdelewicz was raised in Czeremcha, Poland. At 15 he travelled 300 miles to study horn at the Karol Krupiński Military Music School. He received his Master's degree from the Karol Lipiński Academy of Music in Wrocław while performing in the Representative Band of the Polish Armed Forces, NFM Wrocław Philharmonic and the Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra. While in Poland, he premiered Wojtek Blecharz's *Concerto for Horn, Saxophone and Orchestra*. In 2009, Kerdelewicz was invited to join the Buffalo Philharmonic as acting associate principal horn by JoAnn Falletta, and won the position in 2010. He has since performed, recorded and toured with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Boston Pops and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, as well as appeared as guest principal horn of the Charlotte Symphony. Kerdelewicz credits his music education to his teachers and mentors Brygida Muchowiecka, Adam Wolny, Jacek Muzyk and William Caballero. During the summer he also performs with the Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra as third horn.

Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra



Composition, and its recording of Richard Danielpour's *The Passion of Yeshua* (Naxos 8.559885-86) with the Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus received a GRAMMY Award for Best Choral Performance.

Founded in 1935, the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra (BPO) is Buffalo's leading cultural ambassador, presenting more than 120 classics, pops and youth concerts each year. Since 1940, the orchestra's permanent home has been Kleinhans Music Hall. In 2022, it made its 25th appearance at Carnegie Hall, celebrating the life and works of former BPO music director Lukas Foss. Over the decades, the BPO has matured in stature under leading conductors William Steinberg, Josef Krips, Lukas Foss, Michael Tilson Thomas, Julius Rudel, Semyon Bychkov and Maximiano Valdés. During the tenure of JoAnn Falletta, the BPO has rekindled its distinguished history of radio broadcasts and recordings, including the release of over 60 albums of diverse repertoire on the Naxos and Beau Fleuve Records labels. The Philharmonic's recording of John Corigliano's *Mr. Tambourine Man: Seven Poems of Bob Dylan* (Naxos 8.559331), featuring soprano Hila Plitmann, received GRAMMY Awards for Best Classical Vocal Performance and Best Classical Contemporary

www.bpo.org

JoAnn Falletta

Photo: Enid Bloch



Multiple GRAMMY-winning conductor JoAnn Falletta serves as music director of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra (BPO) and music director laureate of the Virginia Symphony Orchestra. She has guest-conducted many of the most prominent orchestras in America, Canada, Europe, Asia, and South America. As music director of the Buffalo Philharmonic, Falletta became the first woman to lead a major American orchestra. With a discography of over 125 titles, she is a leading recording artist for Naxos. Her GRAMMY-winning Naxos recordings include Richard Danielpour's *The Passion of Yeshua* (8.559885-86) and John Corigliano's *Mr. Tambourine Man: Seven Poems of Bob Dylan* (8.559331), both with the BPO, and Kenneth Fuchs' *Spiritualist* with the London Symphony Orchestra (8.559824). Falletta is a member of the esteemed American Academy of Arts and Sciences, has served as a member of the National Council on the Arts, is the recipient of many of the most prestigious conducting awards and was named *Performance Today's* Classical Woman of the Year 2019 and one of the 50 great conductors of all time by *Gramophone* magazine.

www.joannfalletta.com

The 18th century established the horn as a solo instrument, with virtuoso players commissioning concertos throughout Europe. The technical demands required to play hand-stopped instruments meant that many such concertos have not surfaced until recently. An exact contemporary of Beethoven, Friedrich Witt makes athletic use of the horn's range in his *Concerto in F major*, which is also a feature of the cat-and-mouse interplay in Hoffmeister's *Concerto No. 3 in E flat*. Expressive lyricism is present in such works as Leopold Mozart's elegant and refined *Concerto for Two Horns in E flat major*, while the graceful *Larghetto* in Pokorný's *Concerto for Two Horns in F major* is framed by two exuberant outer movements.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF THE HORN

Friedrich Witt (1770–1836)

Concerto for Two Horns and Orchestra

(No. 3) in F major (1797)

17:40

1 I. Allegro

9:39

2 II. Romance

4:02

3 III. Rondo: Allegro

3:59

Leopold Mozart (1719–1787)

Concerto for Two Horns and Strings

in E flat major (1752)

12:27

7 I. Allegro

4:13

8 II. Andante

5:32

9 III. La Caccia: Allegro

2:42

Franz Anton Hoffmeister (1754–1812)

Concerto for Two Horns and Orchestra

No. 3 in E flat major (1783)*

26:44

4 I. Allegro

13:34

5 II. Romance: Poco adagio

4:54

6 III. Allegretto

8:16

František Xaver Pokorný (1729–1794)

Concerto for Two Horns and Orchestra

in F major (date unknown)

14:15

10 I. Allegro

6:32

11 II. Larghetto poco andante

5:06

12 III. Finale: Presto assai

2:37

***WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING**

Jacek Muzyk, Horn primo • Daniel Kerdelewicz, Horn secondo
Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra • JoAnn Falletta

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