

Jean-Baptiste Krumpholtz - Harp Concertos Vol. 1 (1996)

Written by bluesever

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Harp Concerto No.1 in E flat major, Op.4 1. *Allegro* 2. *Adagio* 3. *Allegro assai* Harp
Concerto No.2 in B flat major, Op.4

4. *Allegro mode* 5. *Adagio* 6. *Rondeau*

Harp Concerto No.5 in B flat major, Op.7

7. *Allegro mode* 8. *Andante con Variatione "O ma tendre musette"* 9. *Rondeau. Allegro*

Jana Bouskova - harp Prague Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra Jiri Belohlavek - conductor

Jean-Baptiste Krumpholtz was the greatest harp player of the Classical era, and the composer of some of the most significant music in the early repertoire of the instrument. His father was an impoverished bandmaster in bonded servitude to the local nobleman, Count Kinsky. The father taught Jean-Baptiste (then known by the Czech version of that name, Jan Krtitel) to play the horn. A new Count Kinsky took over in 1758 and sent the boy off to Vienna to study the horn so that he could return and keep up the Count's band.

However, the boy's mother was a harpist, who had also taught her son to play that instrument. In Vienna, he concentrated on the harp, causing trouble with the Count. So instead of returning home, he joined a regimental band as a hornist; an uncle was also a member of that band. The regiment was in the Netherlands, and from there he managed to get to Paris.

Working with a manufacturer, Naderman, Krumpholtz developed a new form for the harp. It had 24 strings, eight of which were made of metal. Seven pedals altered the pitches of the strings, and an eighth opened a set of five shutters in the instrument's resonator, to allow a fuller volume of sound.

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Krumpholtz's original prototype is now in the Kunsthistorische Museum in Vienna. The new instrument came with a repertoire ready-made by Krumpholtz, who had been specializing in composing for harp since the latter days of his studies with Haydn in 1775. He had numerous concertos with harp, sonatas, and other solo and chamber music compositions, all featuring the harp. His music has the beauty one expects (perhaps stereotypically) from harp compositions, but they are also evidence of fertile and inventive musical mind; they are more than just a pretty sound. They keep up (and actually are a little ahead of) the new possibilities in modulation that Krumpholtz was developing with his new pedal harp. He also wrote a harp method privately for a German baroness. It was published posthumously.

Krumpholtz's compositions remain important in the repertoire of the harp, and were of major importance in setting the style for harp music. Furthermore, his improved instrument was the direct forerunner of the modern harp with double-action pedal mechanisms. ---Joseph Stevenson, allmusic.com

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