

Joseph Haydn – Concertos for Oboe Trumpet Harpsichord (1992)

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Joseph Haydn – Concertos for Oboe Trumpet Harpsichord (1992)



Oboe Concerto in C, H.VIIg: C1 1. 1. *Allegro spiritoso* Paul Goodwin 10:47 2. 2. *Andante* Paul Goodwin 5:16 3. 3. *Rondo (allegretto)* Paul Goodwin 5:08

Trumpet Concerto in E flat, H.VIIe No.1

4. 1. *Allegro* Mark Bennett 6:38 5. 2. *Andante* Mark Bennett 3:41 6. 3. *Allegro* Mark Bennett 4:19

Concerto For Harpsichord And Orchestra In D Major, Hob.XVIII:11

7. 1. *Vivace* The English Concert 7:59 8. 2. *Un Poco Adagio* The English Concert 7:46 9. 3. *Rondo All'Ungherese* The English Concert 4:35

Paul Goodwin, oboe Mark Bennett, trumpet Trevor Pinnock, harpsichord English Concert dir. Trevor Pinnock

Joseph Haydn is universally acknowledged as the father of both the string quartet and the symphony. In his long and estimable career, he transformed the two genres from Gebrauchsmusik to full-fledged concert-hall staples. Because Haydn's concertos seldom figure in concert programs or broadcasts, it is not so well known that he was also an accomplished and rather prolific composer of concertos. Among these there are a total of 15 (!) works for keyboard (harpsichord, organ, and piano) and ensembles of varying sizes (concertos, concertinos, and divertimentos). The old saw that Haydn was a rather mediocre keyboard player has long been buried. His statement to Griesinger that, "I was no mean keyboard player and singer" was clearly an understatement, because the quote continues, "I could also perform a concerto on the violin."

Haydn wrote four concertos for the violin, three for the cello (one of each is lost), two for horn, and one for trumpet. There are lost concertos for contrabass, flute, and bassoon, and several questionable works for various instruments, including one for oboe. Because of the bicentennial of Haydn's death this year, much of this repertoire and other formerly dark corners of his massive catalog of works have again come under scrutiny, are being exhumed, and many have found their way to the recording studio for the first time. Many of the concertos can be found in

the hefty but sensibly priced 150 CD set of Haydn's works on Brilliant Classics, and there is a smaller set of the concertos on Naxos. I'm not going to get into the pros and cons of this trio of concertos, two of which are also found in each of those sets, because that's not why we're here; I'll reserve my remarks on those items for another issue.

The Keyboard Concerto, played here on a bright-toned harpsichord copied in 1982 by David Way from a Henri Hemsch instrument (c. 1755), and the Trumpet Concerto, executed on a Robert Vanryne copy of an original by Johann Frank (Nuremberg, c. 1810), are confirmed to be authentic Haydn. The former may have been written for performance in the mid 1780s at the Esterháza court, or as a response to an external commission, perhaps for Fräulein von Hartenstein, a student of Leopold Kozeluch. Regardless of the circumstances surrounding its birth, the Concerto proved to be Haydn's most popular during his lifetime; it was published a number of years after its composition (but still in the 18th century) by eight different firms in Vienna, Paris, London, Amsterdam, Berlin, and Mainz.

The history of the Trumpet Concerto is less extensive. It's the later of the two authentic concertos, dating from the mid 1790s. It stems from a commission from the Viennese court trumpeter Anton Weidinger, who for a number of years had been tinkering with the old valveless trumpet, looking for a way to allow it to play notes over and above the fundamental ones that composers would usually notate in their symphonies and concertos. The art of the Baroque clarino had gone the way of chaff, so trumpet-writing was, -in a word, boring. Weidinger's souped-up version of the instrument had five to six holes bored in it, each covered by a padded key. The opening and closing of these keys in various combinations produced the missing notes. Hence the name Klappentrompete, or keyed trumpet. Weidinger, his keyed trumpet, and Haydn's concerto for it made the rounds, and several instrument makers hopped aboard the Weidinger bandwagon, producing the Klappentrompete until early models of the valve trumpet appeared after 1820.

The story behind the Oboe Concerto is more interesting. It first came to light in 1926, when it was published by Breitkopf & Härtel. The edition was predicated on the only extant copy of a manuscript held in Zittau (Saxony), to which the word "Haydn" was added by a different and later hand; in spite of continuing efforts, musicologists have yet to disprove this attribution. The concerto isn't found in either the Entwurf Katalog or Haydn Verzeichnis (both of which the composer prepared), but then neither is the Keyboard Concerto also included on this 1985 Archiv release. While the Keyboard Concerto is written for what I tend to call the default ensemble of the period (strings, augmented by pairs of oboes and horns), the Trumpet Concerto adds pairs of flutes, oboes, bassoons, horns, trumpets, and drums to the string ensemble. The Oboe Concerto is not quite as elaborate in scoring; in addition to the soloist, the score requires pairs of oboes, horns, trumpets, a single bassoon, drums, and the usual strings.

When originally released, these performances were considered by many to be ne plus ultra . In the intervening years, other contenders have entered the ring for the keyboard and trumpet concertos, but apparently none for the Oboe Concerto. There is a sleek and suave recording of the Keyboard Concerto on period instruments with Ronald Brautigam and Lars-Ulrik Mortensen's Concerto Copenhagen on BIS, and the Trumpet Concerto has been redone on period instruments twice, but the only remaining release in the catalogs is by Crispian Steele-Perkins and Robert King's band, The King's Consort (Hyperion).

Even though the newer recordings benefit from over two decades of improvement in period-instrument performance and a somewhat less top-heavy sound than that found on this Archiv release, Trevor Pinnock, his soloists, and the band can't be topped for overall energy, joie de vivre , and musicianship. The tempos are bright but not excessively so, and the phrasing is impeccable. Freshness and intelligence are found here along with technical agility and radiant warmth when required. Finally, these participants offer interpretations that bring much pleasure to the listener and also display a keen understanding of the music and how to make all of the elements come together for a top-drawer release. ---FANFARE: Michael Carter, arkivmusic.com

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