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Giovanni Punto (1746-1803) Cor basse célèbre

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Giovanni Punto (1746-1803)

Cor Basse Célèbre



Teunis van der Zwart

Giovanni Punto (1746-1803)

Cor Basse Célèbre

Proefschrift

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de graad van doctor aan de Universiteit Leiden,
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In herinnering aan het lid van de promotiecommissie Kenneth Montgomery († 5 maart 2023)

Abstract

My research focused on how the horn player Giovanni Punto sounded when he impressed audiences throughout Europe, and which elements of his playing might contribute to a more diverse performance practice of solo horn parts and chamber music for horn from the classical period.

I have immersed myself in the life, techniques, and influence of this traveling horn virtuoso. Important facets of Punto's heritage seem to have faded from the collective consciousness of horn players and their audiences over the past two centuries. The chapters of this thesis all explore that lost legacy.

I describe relevant facts from Punto's life, his connections with other horn players and composers, and the reactions of critics to his performances, from which conclusions can be drawn about sound and technique. I have paid much attention to the legacy of his teacher Anton Joseph Hampel, the alleged inventor of the stopped notes (a technique of producing tones outside the harmonic series by manipulations of the hand in the bell of the horn). The student Punto proves to be more reserved than his teacher in using this relatively new method of hand stopping.

A different sound ideal, with a distinction in timbre between cor alto (high horn) and cor basse (low horn), more diversity in articulation and the addition of more or less spontaneous ornamentation, are the most striking differences between what is documented in sources from the performance practice around 1800 and the current standard.

Around 1794, the *Seule et Vraie Méthode pour apprendre facilement les Élémens des Premier et Second Cors* (single and true method for easily learning the elements of the first and second horn) appeared under the names of Hampel and Punto. In 1795, Punto published a book of etudes, *Étude ou Exercice Journalier, Ouvrage Periodique pour le Cor* (Daily Exercises for the Horn). Both publications have constantly been on my music stand for the past years. Through continued theoretical/practical study of these sources, I hoped to gain the tacit knowledge that would bring me closer to the maestro's distinctive playing style. I have spent countless hours on the subtleties of articulation on the horn described in the *Seule et Vraie Méthode*. Perhaps the most important aspect of the *Méthode* is the

addition of ornamentation to the melody, a performance strategy that has largely fallen into disuse among horn players. I combined literature research with empirical research by devoting daily study time on the horn to the many variations on a theme in the *Méthode*. In the end it turned out to be a relief to no longer have the literal reproduction of the printed musical text as the main goal. More freedom in performance led to more excitement on stage.

Various sources describe how Punto caused a stir with double tones and even chords on the horn. Despite its reputation as a cheap trick, I explored the capabilities of these multiphonics and analyzed the few available notated examples from the classical period for their feasibility.

The notion that Punto, the celebrated horn virtuoso of the eighteenth century, was a specialist on the cor basse, the low horn, resonates throughout my thesis. Besides the descriptions of the distinctive sound of this instrument, my own experiences with typical cor basse mouthpieces with a relatively wide inner rim have proved most relevant to the research. The timbre of the instrument becomes substantially darker, less concise, and therefore airier when using the larger mouthpiece prescribed in historical methods. Moreover, this mouthpiece model facilitates the execution of fast broken chords that are so typical for cor basse parts.

My research shows that Beethoven, who shared the stage with Punto and wrote his Sonata for piano and horn, op.17 for him, was aware of the distinction between the different horn types and opted for the mellower, velvety sound of the cor basse for horn solos in some of his orchestral works.

The thesis is accompanied by a CD with works for cor basse and piano from the time of Punto and shortly afterwards.

Finally, I express the hope that my research will inspire more diversity in the performances of horn players, and that it will thus make an important contribution to a multi-colored concert practice.

Samenvatting

Mijn onderzoek richtte zich op de vraag hoe de hoornist Giovanni Punto klonk toen hij furore maakte in heel Europa, en welke elementen van zijn spel mogelijk bij kunnen dragen aan een meer diverse uitvoeringspraktijk van solistische hoornpartijen en kamermuziek voor hoorn uit de klassieke periode.

Ik heb mij verdiept in het leven, de technieken en de invloed van deze rondreizende hoornvirtuoso's. Belangrijke facetten van Punto's erfgoed lijken de afgelopen twee eeuwen uit het collectieve bewustzijn van hoornisten en hun publiek te zijn verdwenen. De hoofdstukken van dit proefschrift onderzoeken allemaal die verloren erfenis.

Ik beschrijf relevante feiten uit het leven van Punto, zijn connecties met andere hoornisten en componisten, en de reacties van critici op zijn optredens, waaruit weer conclusies te trekken zijn over klank en techniek. Veel aandacht schonk ik aan de erfenis van zijn leraar Anton Joseph Hampel, de vermeende uitvinder van gestopte noten (een techniek om tonen buiten de harmonische reeks te produceren door middel van manipulaties van de hand in de hoornbeker). De leerling Punto blijkt in het gebruik van deze relatief nieuwe methode van het handstoppen terughoudender te zijn dan zijn docent.

Een ander klankideaal, met onderscheid in timbre tussen cor alto (hoge hoorn) en cor basse (lage hoorn), grotere diversiteit in de articulatie en de toepassing van min of meer spontane versieringen, zijn de meest opvallende verschillen tussen wat gedocumenteerd is in bronnen van uitvoeringspraktijk rond 1800 en de huidige standaard.

Rond 1794 verscheen de *Seule et Vraie Méthode pour apprendre facilement les Élémens des Premier et Second Cors* (Enige en ware methode om gemakkelijk de elementen van de eerste en tweede hoorn te leren) onder de namen Hampel en Punto. In 1795 publiceerde Punto een boek met etudes, *Étude ou Exercice Journalier, Ouvrage Periodique pour le Cor* (Dagelijkse Oefeningen voor de Hoorn). Beide publicaties stonden de afgelopen jaren stevast op mijn lessenaar. Door voortdurende theoretisch/praktische bestudering van deze bronnen, hoopte ik de impliciete kennis te verwerven die mij dicht bij de kenmerkende manier van spelen van de maestro zelf zou brengen. Ik besteedde talloze uren aan de in de *Seule et Vraie Méthode* beschreven subtiliteiten van articulatie op de hoorn. Misschien wel

het belangrijkste aspect van de *Méthode* is de toevoeging van versieringen aan de melodie, een uitvoeringsstrategie die grotendeels in onbruik is geraakt bij hoornisten. Ik combineerde literatuuronderzoek met empirisch onderzoek door dagelijks studietijd op de hoorn in te ruimen voor de overvloedige hoeveelheid variaties op een thema in de *Méthode*. Het bleek uiteindelijk een opluchting om niet langer de letterlijke weergave van de gedrukte notentekst als hoofddoel te hebben. Meer vrijheid in de uitvoering leidde tot meer opwinding op het podium.

Verschillende bronnen beschrijven hoe Punto furore maakte met dubbeltonen en zelfs akkoorden op de hoorn. Ondanks de reputatie van goedkope truc, onderzocht ik de mogelijkheden van deze multiphonics en analyseerde ik de beschikbare genoteerde voorbeelden uit de klassieke periode op hun uitvoerbaarheid.

De notie dat Punto, de gevierde hoornvirtuoos uit de achttiende eeuw, een specialist was op de cor basse, de lage hoorn, klinkt door in mijn hele thesis. Naast de beschrijvingen van de kenmerkende klank van dit instrument, zijn mijn eigen ervaringen met typische cor basse mondstukken met een relatief wijde binnenrand het meest relevant gebleken voor het onderzoek. Het timbre van het instrument wordt wezenlijk donkerder, minder kernachtig en dus luchtiger bij gebruik van het in historische methoden voorgeschreven grotere mondstuk. Bovendien faciliteert dit model mondstuk in niet geringe mate de voor cor basse partijen zo typische snelle akkoordbrekingen.

Mijn onderzoek toont aan dat Beethoven, die met Punto het podium deelde, zich bewust was van het onderscheid tussen de verschillende hoorntypen, en voor hoornsolo's in een aantal van zijn orkestwerken koos voor de mildere, fluwelen klank van de cor basse.

Bij de thesis is een CD gevoegd met werken voor cor basse en piano uit de tijd van Punto en vlak daarna.

Tot slot spreek ik de hoop uit dat mijn onderzoek zal inspireren tot meer diversiteit in de uitvoeringspraktijk van hoornisten, en dat het daarmee een belangrijke bijdrage levert aan een veelkleurig muziekleven.

Table of content

Abstract.....	4
Samenvatting	6
Acknowledgements.....	10
0. Fundamentals and principles.....	14
Octave Designation	14
Harmonic Series	14
Stich/Punto.....	15
The Horn	15
Crooks.....	15
Cor Alto and Cor Basse	15
Alto and Basso crooks.....	16
The Method and the Daily Exercises.....	16
Lip bending and hand stopping	17
Embellishment and Improvisation.....	18
Original French.....	18
Introduction.....	19
1. Context and Biography.....	23
1.1 General development of the horn between 1680 – 1780.....	24
1.2 Jan Václav Stich in Bohemia	33
1.3 Stich becomes Punto.....	39
1.4 Giovanni Punto in Europe, a traveling virtuoso	41
1.5 Giovanni Punto in Bohemia.....	50
2. The Only and True Method.....	53
2.1 Hampel's heritage.....	54
2.2 First and Second, High and Low Horns	59
2.3 Articulation	65
2.4 Hand stopping and lip bending.....	71
2.5 Embellishment and Variations.....	81
2.6 Embellishment in early horn methods	86
2.7 The <i>Seule et Vraie Méthode</i> as a catalogue of embellishment	87
3. Giovanni Punto and the terzo suono.....	96
3.1 Multiphonics avant la lettre	96
3.2 Horn chords in the time of Punto	98
3.3 Examples of written-out multiple-pitch sonorities on the horn.....	100

4. Ludwig van Beethoven and the Cor Basse	105
4.1 Solos for Low Horn in Orchestral Works.....	105
4.2 Piano Concerto no. 5.....	107
4.3 Symphony no. 7	109
4.4 Symphony no. 8.....	110
4.5 Overture to Fidelio.....	111
4.6 Leonore Overture no. 1.....	112
4.7 Symphony no. 9.....	113
5. Horn and Piano: a Cor Basse Recital	115
5.1 The instrument	115
5.2 The mouthpiece.....	116
5.3 Giovanni Punto, Horn Concerto no.1 in E Major, published 1777	121
5.4 Beethoven, Sonata for Piano and Horn op. 17, published 1801.....	125
5.5 Franz Danzi (1763-1826), Sonate pour le Piano-Forte avec accompagnement d'un Cor ou Violoncelle, op. 28, published 1804.....	131
5.6 Ferdinand Ries (1784-1838), Grande Sonate pour le Piano-forte, Cor ou Violoncelle, op. 34, published 1811.....	135
6. Critical overview of literature	139
Sources until 1850	139
Modern literature	140
Conclusions.....	144
Bibliography	148
Annex 1 Letter to Raoux.....	158
Annex 2 Selective List of Punto's Published Works	161
Curriculum Vitae	163

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I consider the *Orchestra of the Eighteenth Century* to be my musical roots. Thanks to all colleagues of this musical family, I learned that a warm and friendly atmosphere goes very well together with top-level performances. I especially thank Donna Agrell for pointing out the path of artistic research and for supporting me all these years. Eternal thanks to the late Frans Brüggen for his visionary artistic leadership, and to the legendary director Sieuwert Verster for his unwavering enthusiasm, friendship, and trust.

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For years I hung out with my horn buddy Erwin Wieringa. He was the first to show me that it is possible to spontaneously improvise on the unruly natural horn.

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I owe many thanks to the Royal Conservatoire The Hague, my home institution, notably former principal Henk van der Meulen, and vice-principal Martin Prchal, for the encouragement and the space I was given to complete this thesis. A lot of thanks also to Brigitte Rebel, my closest colleague, for all the cheerfulness in our office, even in the busiest times.

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Without the help of Graham Nicholson, I would never have been able to build the necessary mouthpieces.

Thomas Hiebert, one of the pillars of period horn research, generously shared his discovery of multiphonics in a manuscript by horn player Mayr and his thoughts on it.

I am grateful for the engravings that Kathryn Zevenbergen made and look back with enormous pleasure on our wonderful discussions.

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Ik prijs mij gelukkig dat mijn ouders mijn promotie nog mee kunnen maken. Niet alleen hebben ze mij altijd veel liefde gegeven, zij geven mij ook het mooiste voorbeeld door tot op zeer hoge leeftijd kalm mee te bewegen met de tijd, en zonder zichzelf te verliezen het leven door zich heen te laten stromen.

Giovanni Punto (1746-1803)

Cor Basse Célèbre



Figure 0.1
Portrait of Giovanni Punto, drawn by Charles-Nicholas Cochin and engraved by Simon Charles Miger, 1782

0. Fundamentals and principles

Octave Designation

The octave designation chart used in this thesis:



Figure 0.2
Octave designation chart

All pitches refer to written rather than sounding pitch, unless noted differently.

Harmonic Series

The Harmonic Series (figure 0.3) form the basis of any natural brass instrument. The flats and sharp in brackets indicate the natural pitch compared to well-tempered tuning; the 7th, 13th and 14th harmonics are a fraction too low; the 11th harmonic is a fraction too high. The partials are numbered according to their place in the series, rather than their position above the fundamental:

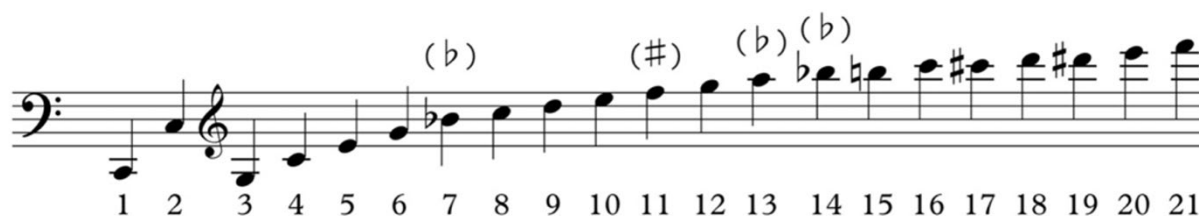


Figure 0.3
Harmonic series

Stich/Punto

The subject of this thesis was born Jan Václav Stich, used the German name Johan Wenzel Stich, and adopted the pseudonym Giovanni Punto at the beginning of his international career. Mixed forms and corruptions of these names also appear in sources. For the sake of clarity, I will only use the name Stich for the first period of his life, up to the escape: from then on, I will consistently switch to Punto.

The Horn

In retrospect, the horn was classified by type and era: the *hunting* horn, the *natural* horn, the *baroque* horn, the *classical* horn, the *hand* horn. I avoid those terms as much as possible to bypass the erroneous suggestion of standardization and strict dividing lines, and to indicate that the instrument was simply called horn at any point in history.

Crooks

A crook is a piece of tubing that can be added to or removed from the horn in order to change its length, and as a result the pitch. A different length gives a different fundamental and its corresponding harmonics. 18th century horn parts were almost always notated in C major. Composers indicated the key—the crook—at the top staff. For example, *Horn in F* means the horn player applies the F crook and can thus produce the overtones of the harmonic series of F, plus the non-partial harmonics derived from it. Notated C sounds like F. An important aspect of historical performance practice on the period horn is the palette of sound colors provided by all the different crooks. With any change of crook, in fact the instrument, with its characteristic features and timbre, is being altered. Each crook length requires a specific approach of embouchure, tongue, air flow, and hand technique.

Cor Alto and Cor Basse

As discussed in detail in chapter 2.2, horn players and composers in the 18th century made a clear distinction between the range and sound of the first and second horn, leading to the implementation of the terms cor alto and cor basse by Louis François Dauprat (1781-1868) in his 1824 horn tutor.¹ Throughout this thesis I use the terms alternately:

¹ Dauprat, L-F.: *Méthode de Cor-Alto et Cor-Basse, Part 1, 2 and 3*. Paris, 1824; 15

- 1st horn, high horn, or cor alto
- 2nd horn, low horn, or cor basse

Alto and Basso crooks

The terms alto and basso also have another meaning for horn players and 18th century composers. C and B \flat (sometimes also A) are the crooks that exist in 2 versions, alto and basso, each providing very different sound characteristics.

- *Horn in C-basso, or horn in low C*, is constructed by using the long C crook, resulting in sounding down an octave from notated pitch. The timbre is dark, like open strings on the cello.
- *Horn in B \flat -basso, or horn in low B \flat* , is constructed by applying the long B \flat crook (normally the low C crook plus a one tone coupler), sounding down a major ninth from notated pitch. The sound is dark and bronze, resembling open strings on the violone.
- *Horn in B \flat -alto, or horn in high B \flat* , means the horn player should apply the short B \flat crook, sounding down a whole tone from notated pitch. Bright sound, like a trumpet in B \flat .
- *Horn in C-alto, or horn in high C*, means the horn player must use the short C crook: notation coincides with concert pitch. Very bright sound, like a trumpet in C.

The Method and the Daily Exercises

During the 1790s, Punto published the *Seule et Vraie Méthode pour apprendre facilement les Éléments des Premier et Second Cors* (the only and true method to easily learn the elements of the first and the second horns)² and *Étude ou Exercice Journalier, Ouvrage Periodique pour le Cor* (Study or Daily Exercise, Periodic Work for the Horn).³

² Hampel, A.J. and Punto, G.: *Seule et Vraie Méthode pour apprendre facilement les Éléments des Premier et Second Cors, Composée par Hampl et perfectionnée par Punto (son élève)*. Paris, c1794, 3/1798

³ Punto, G.: *Étude ou Exercice Journalier, Ouvrage Periodique pour le Cor*. Paris, 1795

Both publications turned out to be crucial for my research. For reasons of readability, in my thesis I refer to those tutors as:

- *Seule et Vraie Méthode, Méthode, or Method.*
- *The Daily Exercises.*

Lip bending and hand stopping

Bending harmonics with lips and airflow has been practiced since at least the 17th century and is still used by brass players in the 21st century to make minor intonation corrections. Often the technique is applied unconsciously. Today, especially in jazz, brass players bend notes for special effects.⁴ In this thesis, the term lip bending refers to a technical skill enabling a player to correct the pitch of a partial (for instance the 11th harmonic that is too sharp, or the 13th harmonic that is too low), or to reach a pitch that is completely out of the harmonic series (factitious notes).

Although the term might suggest differently, the lip bending technique results in an alteration of the pitch that is immediate; the player then lands directly on the desired note.

During the 18th century, horn players developed hand stopping. Manipulating and bending harmonics by use of the hand in the bell is a technique still taught to today's valve horn players and used almost instinctively when correcting pitches.

The basics of hand stopping, or hand technique, are simple. If the hand (normally the right hand) is held inside the bell, it can assert control over timbre and pitch:

- Moving the hand slightly inwards makes the horn longer and lowers the pitch of a blown partial with about a semitone, if supported by liping the pitch down. The sound will become veiled.

⁴ Campbell, M.: *Historically Informed Horn Playing in the Early Eighteenth Century Tradition*. Thesis, Sydney, 2019: 16

- Moving the hand outward has the opposite effect, and raises the pitch of the partial, but only up to about a quarter tone, if supported by lipping the pitch up. The resulting sound is bright.
- 'Stopping' the bell forcefully with the hand makes the horn shorter and raises the pitch of a blown partial with a semitone, if supported by strongly lipping the pitch up. The result is a blaring and brassy sound. (*Cuivré* in French, *Schmetternd* in German.)

In practice, the best result is obtained with a combination of lip bending and hand stopping. Generally, the lower the partial, the easier it is to be forced down with the lips and airstream, together with a little support of the hand in the bell. In this video I demonstrate lipping down the 2nd harmonic of E \flat (notated c) to the factitious notated G on an orchestral horn by Courtois Neveu Aînée, aided by a cor basse mouthpiece with an inner rim width of 19 mm.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHwY3hKfkpl>

Embellishment and Improvisation

Embellishment and improvisation are terms I use to denote pitches played that are not written into the printed score, whether done spontaneously or prepared in advance.

Original French

While some of the quoted texts may be somewhat excruciating for the French speaking reader, I prefer to cite spelling and grammatical peculiarities without correcting mistakes.

It's fine to assemble the shards of a lost performance tradition, but how much better to reinvent it. Richard Taruskin.⁵

Introduction

As an active member of the early music movement since 1988, I have been extremely privileged to share the stage with wonderfully gifted natural horn players from all over the world. From 1999 onwards, I present masterclasses, and I have been teaching natural horn at the Conservatories of Amsterdam and Den Haag. With my colleagues and with my students I have always tried to emphasize the variety in sounds of our instruments and the diversity of our music making, fighting the modern idea of standardization. No two period horns sound the same. Moreover, the nature of the instrument itself is diverse, with the different crooks that all have their individual sound and character, and with the variety of timbres due to the subtle use of the right hand in the bell of the horn to manipulate tones outside the harmonic series.

The original claim of the early music movement, namely that of an Authentic Performance Practice, has become obsolete since early music performer and musicologist Richard Taruskin (1945-2022) disapproved it in his much-discussed essay *The Limits of Authenticity: A Contribution*, first published in 1984.

Many, if not most, of us who concern ourselves with “authentic” interpretation of music approach musical performance with the attitudes of textual critics, and fail to make the fundamental distinction between music as tones-in-motion and music as notes-on-page.⁶

The terminology commonly used today is 'Historically Informed Performance Practice', which leaves a healthy space for doubt and experimentation.

⁵ Taruskin, R.: 'On Letting the Music Speak for Itself: Some Reflections on Musicology and Performance' in: *The Journal of Musicology*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 1982; 343

⁶ Taruskin, R.: 'The Limits of Authenticity: A Contribution', revised version, in: *Text and Act, Essays on Music and Performance*. Oxford, 1995; 70

In the same article Taruskin advocates practicing on period instruments for the purpose of an alienation effect that forces one to approach the music more freshly, more direct, more attentive. The following quote perfectly summarizes what I experienced during my research:

Experiments based on historical research serve the same purpose for performers: they open their minds and ears to new experiences, and enable them to transcend their habitual, and therefor unconsidered, ways of hearing and thinking about the music.⁷

With the recognition of its achievements over the past decades, the danger of imitation and equalization is lurking, even within the originally progressive and idiosyncratic early music movement. To my reassurance, the debate about different types of horn in different regions and eras, the question whether the right hand was placed in the bell or not during a great deal of the 18th century, the search for historical mouthpieces, are all examples of ongoing research and debate in the ranks of sincerely interested period horn players, often leading to fascinating results on the stage.

In 1796, the *Jahrbuch der Tonkunst* (1796) in Vienna and Prague reported:⁸

In betracht der Menge seiner Töne, ist dieses Instrument arm, so viel reicher aber in seiner Wirkung, wegen der Rundung und Völle seiner Töne, und wegen seinem Bebeklang. Der Komponist, welcher das Horn gut zu nützen weis, kann merkwürdige Sensationen dadurch erregen: er kann nach belieben ausmalen (...)

(This instrument is poor in the quantity of its tones, but so much richer in its effect, because of the roundness and fullness of its tones, and because of its resonance. The composer who knows how to use the horn well can arouse remarkable sensations with it: he can paint as he pleases [...])

In our times the period horn is often considered an unruly, unpredictable instrument.

Conviction prevails among horn players that the simplest parts can only be executed at an acceptable level of accuracy on the natural horn with utmost control and lots of luck. I never accepted this negativism. Playing the colorful horn concertos of Haydn and Mozart, so full of character and shifting emotions, I just could not believe those should be performed with fear and tension.

I took full responsibility in my role as a natural horn performer and teacher when I decided to use the practical skills and the tacit knowledge I gained over many years, to study a

⁷ Ibid. 79

⁸ Schönfeld, J.F.: 'Horn' in: *Jahrbuch der Tonkunst von Wien und Prag*, 1796: 193-194

palette of historical playing techniques and sound related material issues, hopefully contributing to more heterogeneity in the concert halls. What better way to do this than an investigation into the equipment and playing style of a pivotal figure, one of the most celebrated eighteenth-century horn virtuosos, praised by Mozart and Beethoven?

The main questions of this research are:

What did horn virtuoso Giovanni Punto (1746-1803) sound like, and what elements of his playing potentially contribute to a more diverse treatment of the horn in our times?

What do his teaching materials, the reports about his performances and the fame he acquired among the famous composers Mozart and Beethoven contribute to our knowledge of the period horn?

I started my studies with a historical investigation of Punto's life and career, attempting to establish the context of a traveling virtuoso in the second half of 18th century Europe. Soon, the research evolved towards a practical, experimental investigation of performance-related issues.

To better understand the subject of my research, I put his *Méthode* and his *Daily Exercises* on my music stand and practiced both for many years.

By considering the *Method*, for the largest part a *theme and variations*, as a catalog of embellishments and improvisations, I hoped to achieve a looser, more spontaneous approach to written music of the same period.

Practicing on increasingly wide rimmed mouthpieces seemed the best way to discover and develop the sound characteristics and typical features of the low horn, the cor basse.

Chapter 1 starts with a description of the development of the horn in the years between 1680 and 1780, and places Punto in the center of those changes. In an overview of his life and its context it becomes clear Punto was a driving force in the dissemination of new playing techniques all over Europe, including London. There is not much verifiable information about the life of the virtuoso and some of the famous stories can be attributed to mythmaking. Some information based on hidden or lost documents nevertheless was considered. Non-verifiable information is not included, although it contributed to the legend of one of the first itinerant horn players, a key figure in the development of the instrument.

Both the *Method* and the *Daily Exercises* that Punto published in the 1790s are addressed in detail in chapter 2.

The investigation of the written information in these tutors, reveal almost forgotten aspects of playing the period horn, especially on the subject of diversified articulation.

At the end of chapter 2, I go deeper into the musical material and one of the most prominent aspects of the *Méthode*, embellishment. During Punto's lifetime, the second half of the eighteenth century, musical decoration was not only accepted, but also required of the performer. Punto's *method* proves that even the unruly horn, in the hands of the virtuoso player, is suitable for this defining aspect of performance practice.

Chapter 3 highlights a special way of adorning music for horn, with the use of multiphonics. A description of the extended technique, and the laws of nature that underlie it, is accompanied by some very scarce examples of written multiphonics from the time of and immediately after Punto.

In chapter 4, I explore Punto's influence on Ludwig van Beethoven. I will look specifically at 2nd horn solos in some of his orchestral works, trying to find evidence that the composer expected them to sound different from the 1st horn.

The sound and performance technique of the cor basse, Punto's specialty, is further described and explored in chapter 5 in relation to the musical works I recorded as part of this research project.

Analysis of the horn parts of one of Punto's horn concertos, and of sonatas by Beethoven, Danzi and Ries, serve as examples of the characteristics and the virtuosic use of the low horn between the 1770s and 1811.

1. Context and Biography



Figure 1.1
Mosaic of Punto's portrait, logo of the Základní škola Jana Václava Sticha-Punta in Žehušice

This chapter provides an overview of the life and times of Punto in an attempt to understand some of the crucial aspects of his playing technique against the background of the developments of the horn, of society, and of the musician's profession in the second half of the eighteenth century. First of all, the instrument gets the attention it deserves. Punto enters the scene at a time when the horn has already developed locally from a signal instrument (the hunting horn) to a more fully-fledged instrument that is part of orchestras, and which is even played as a solo instrument. Most of all Punto's studies in Dresden proved to be crucial for the dissemination of a new horn type and new horn playing techniques invented by members of the local *Hofkapelle*. He was the one to spread the new style of horn playing and set the standard throughout Europe in the 33 years between his escape from serfdom and his triumphant return to Bohemia as a stage celebrity.

1.1 General development of the horn between 1680 – 1780

An important moment in the history of the horn was the visit by Count Franz Anton von Sporck (1662-1738) to the court of Versailles in the spring of 1680. At the occasion he was fascinated by the sounds of the hunting horns and left two trumpeters from his entourage, Wenzel Sweda (c.1638-c.1710) and Peter Rollig (1650-1723), behind to take lessons and subsequently bring the French horn and its playing technique home to the hunting fields and court orchestras of Bohemia. By then, the horn was already known in Germany and Bohemia, as a signal brass instrument used during hunting events. The many types of horns used in Europe prior to the emergence in 17th century France of the broad circle, or hooped, horn (on which future developments of the orchestral horn were based) are illustrated in Mersenne's *Harmonie universelle* of 1636 (figure 1.2).⁹

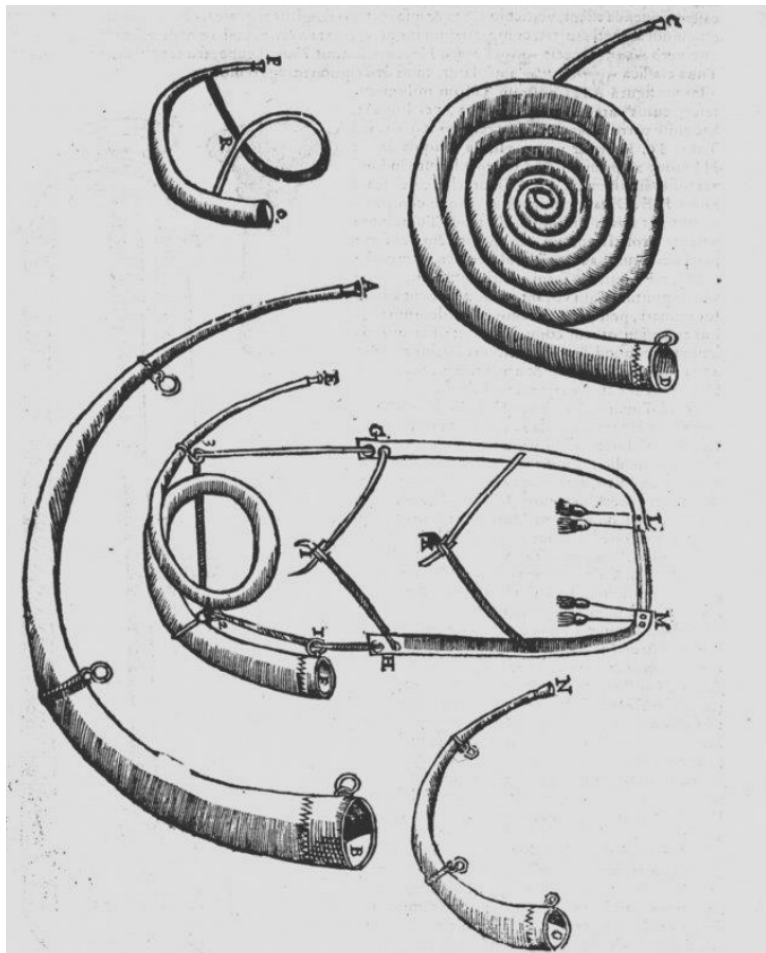


Figure 1.2
Different horn types in the chapter Harmonicorum of Mersenne's *Harmonie universelle*, 1636

⁹ Mersenne, M.: *Harmonie universelle*, Paris, 1636; 103

The fully circular horns, (*trompes de chasse*) were probably used in an orchestral setting for the first time by Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632-1687), at Versailles in 1664.¹⁰

The appearance of the new instruments, the *improved hunting horns*, as Morley-Pegge calls them, (see Figure 1.3) is also documented by an engraving by Israël Silvestre, *Les plaisirs de l'Isle enchantée, ou les festes et divertissemens du Roy à Versailles* (published c1676), portraying a scene from the comedy.¹¹

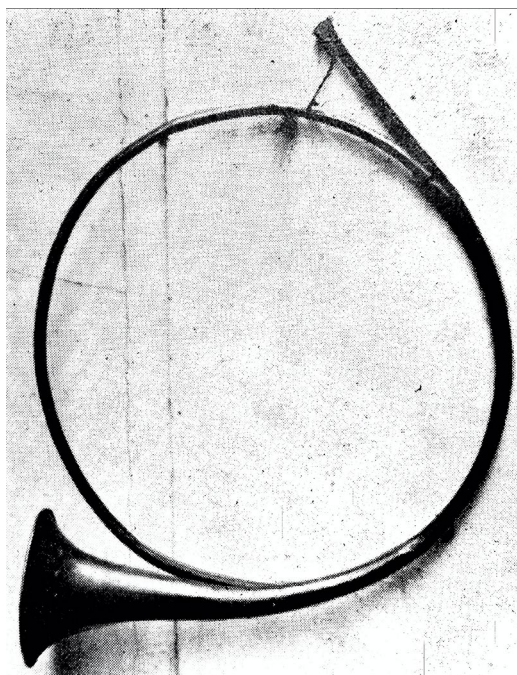


Figure 1.3
Trompe de Chasse, France, end of 17th century¹²

Lully was not the only one adding horns to the orchestra. Although the horn was still strongly associated with the hunt and offered the notes of the harmonic series only (see Figure 0.3), it began to be deployed as an instrument in mixed ensembles towards the end of the 17th century.

Around the second half of the 18th century, the horn still was most of all in use as part of the aristocratic hunting establishments. The best players, though, were drafted into their masters' house orchestras, giving impulses to the artistic development of the instrument.¹³ Critical to the evolution of its playing technique and its development into a true orchestral

¹⁰ Morley-Pegge, R.: *The French Horn, Some Notes on the Evolution of the Instrument and of its Technique*. London, 1960, second impression 1978; 16,17

¹¹ Meucci, R. and Rochetti, G.: 'Horn, History to c1800' Grove Music Online.

<https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000013353?rskey=1I2KIh&result=1#omo-9781561592630-e-0000013353-div1-0000013353.3> Accessed 1 April 2023

¹² Morley-Pegge, *The French Horn*, Plate II, 1

¹³ Morley-Pegge, *The French Horn*, 83

instrument were the design of a more compact and handier model and the addition of crooks, starting at the beginning of the 18th century in Austria,¹⁴ and being common by the 1740s. A crook is a piece of tubing, normally coiled, inserted between the mouthpiece and the body of the horn, or alternatively (after 1750) at the middle of the horn corpus. By changing the crook, the horn player changes the pitch of the instrument, which makes it possible to alter the fundamental note of the harmonic series.¹⁵ Between the different crooks the variation in timbre is considerable. The earliest surviving system of crooks consisted mainly of couplers, often stackable small pieces of tubing, adding length to the horn, (figures 1.4 and 1.5).

The addition of crooks made it possible for composers to expand the use of the horn in more keys during one piece and experiment with the different timbres of the horns of varying length. Already in 1724, Händel used a combination of horns in different keys in his opera *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*, HWV 17, innovatively pairing two horns in A with two horns in D in the first Chorus, and two horns in G with two horns in D in the final Sinfonia of the opera.



Figure 1.4
Waldhorn by Friederich Ehe, Nuremberg, around 1730.
Now in Sammlung Alter Musikinstrumenten of the Kunsthistorisches Museum (Vienna)

¹⁴ Hiebert, T.: 'The horn in the Baroque and Classical periods.' In: *The Cambridge Companion to Brass Instruments*. Cambridge, 1997; 104

¹⁵ Baines, A.: 'Crooks, (Fr. *corps de rechange*, *ton de rechange*; Ger. *Stimmbogen*)' *Grove Music Online*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.06865> Accessed 23 May 2023

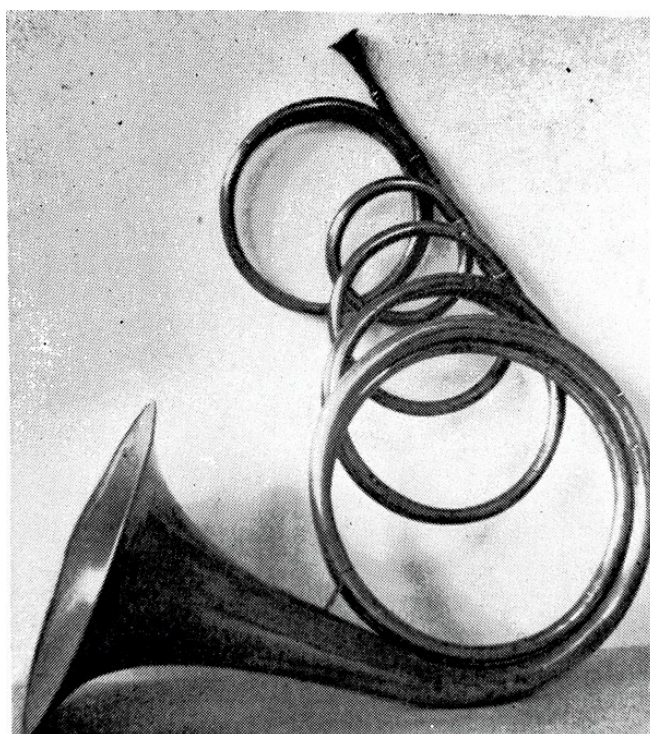


Figure 1.5
Horn with 'coupled' crooks. No inscription, possibly English, 18th century¹⁶

When using multiple couplers, the instrument easily gets wobbly and too thick to hold comfortably. Couplers were generally abandoned after 1750 (but the system continued well into the 19th century) with the introduction of a series of separate crooks to be inserted in the narrow end of the horn corpus. A customary set of crooks contained the keys of C-alto, B \flat -alto, A, G, F, E, E \flat , D, C-basso, and B \flat -basso.¹⁷ It should be noted that B \flat -basso normally consists of the C-basso crook plus a one tone coupler. Figure 1.6 shows an example of an orchestral horn with the set of crooks. The C-alto crook is missing and does not seem to have been included as there is no space reserved for it in the original horn case.

¹⁶ Ibid.; Plate III, 1

¹⁷ See chapter 0 for a discussion of alto and basso crooks



Figure 1.6

Orchestral horn by Courtois Neveu Aînée, with complete set of crooks, Paris, between c1802-1809. Collection of the author

Dating from 1753 at the latest is the Inventionshorn (*figures 1.7/1.8*), developed by the famous horn player Anton Joseph Hampel in collaboration with the instrument maker

Johann Georg Werner of Dresden.¹⁸ This type of horn is distinguished by a fixed mouth pipe and different interchangeable tuning slides or slidable crooks to be placed in the middle of the body of the horn. With this innovation the instrument could be tuned more accurately. Another advantage is the constant length of the mouth pipe regardless of the crook used, making the instrument more accurate to play. The distinctive crooks lower the basic pitch from the key of E down, while from F up the inserted crooks have their own mouth pipe attached.



Figure 1.7
Earliest surviving example of an Inventionshorn, by Johann Gottfried Haltenhof
(1776, now in the Musée de la Musique, Paris) Photo: Thierry Ollivier

¹⁸ Morley-Pegge, *The French Horn*, 20



Figure 1.8

The different crooks of the Haltenhof Inventionshorn, to be inserted in the place of the tuning slide. The crooks with attached mouthpipes are clearly visible in the top row

Photo: Thierry Ollivier

The next model of a horn with tuning-slide crooks in the center of the instrument was the cor solo (figures 1.9-1.11), invented by Raoux in Paris in the years before 1780. This horn type was played by many of the famous soloists of the time, -and well into the 19th century- including Duvernoy, Dauprat and Gallay. Due to its construction with the fixed lead pipe, the cor solo responds very well to the input of the performer, but can only be played with the crooks D, E \flat , E, F and G. This type of horn is not suited for orchestral playing, with the lowest and highest crooks missing. In addition, changing the crooks, often necessary for orchestral horn players and virtually unnecessary for soloists, is a time-consuming affair on this instrument because the slidable crooks fit snugly into two lengths of tubing that connect them to the body of the horn. Hence the name cor solo.



Figure 1.9
Cor solo by Couesnon, with E \flat crook, Paris, 1900. Collection of the author



Figure 1.10
Cor solo by Couesnon, with G crook, Paris, 1900. Collection of the author.



Figure 1.11
Complete set of crooks of cor solo by Couesnon, Paris, 1900; Left to right: D, Eb, E, F and G. Collection of the author

Developments in horn design in the 18th century were meager. A more interesting evolution was that of hand stopping, the technique that was applied first by Bohemian horn players in Dresden, during the first half of the 18th century. Since hand technique increased the number of non-harmonic notes available to horn players, a parallel can be drawn with the ongoing addition of keys to woodwind instruments in the 18th century. Like all composing instrumentalists, the horn soloists who performed their own concertos often were at the forefront of developments. In the Baroque period, the emerging extended technique of lip bending and/or hand stopping non-partials led to composers using the soloistic as well as the orchestral horn in a much more melodic way than before, most notably in the case of low horn parts. The polyphonic baroque style gradually evolved into the more monophonic classical style, with the texture of the orchestra becoming less braided. As a result, orchestral horn parts acquired a fundamental harmonic and often rhythmic function, playing the notes of the harmonic series almost without exception. Hand technique became the exclusive domain of the itinerant virtuoso horn soloist.

A hundred years after Sporck's 1680 visit to Versailles and the resulting introduction of the French horn and playing technique in Bohemia, Ernst Ludwig Gerber (1746-1819), the author of a famous dictionary of musicians, pointed out that the Bohemians' progress on the horn was unparalleled and that a musical capital like Paris itself depended on Bohemia to get good horn players.¹⁹

1.2 Jan Václav Stich in Bohemia

Punto could not have been born in a better place and at a better time to play a decisive role in the development of the horn in the second half of the 18th century. His cradle was in the middle of the horn country of Bohemia. Midway through the century when the horn underwent such profound changes, on 28 September 1746, he was born as Jan Václav Stich at the old chateau in Žehušice, near Čáslav in central Bohemia. The French horn player Henri

¹⁹ Gerber, E.: 'Horn', in: *Neues historisch-biographisches Lexikon der Tonkünstler, Zweiter Theil*. Leipzig, 1814; 281

Kling (1842-1918) mentions 1748 as the year of birth.²⁰ He probably mistakenly copied that from François-Joseph Fétis (1784-1871), the influential music critic whose article in his *Biographie Universelle* Kling quotes a lot.²¹ However, the birth certificate shows conclusively that Jan Václav Stich was born in 1746.

The chateau in Žehušice already had a venerable history, dating back to the 14th century.²² Michael Oswald, Count of Thun-Hohenstein, bought the estate in 1661²³, and it stayed in the possession of the family until well into the 20th century.

According to registry records, Jan Václav Stich's parents appeared in Žehušice in the 1730s. They became subjects of Count Thun with the whole family and with all the consequences of serfdom.²⁴ Father Václav was the personal coachman of the countess, and mother Kateřina had to work in the chateau kitchen.²⁵

The young Jan Václav probably received an introduction to music as a pupil in the local village school. Most Bohemian children were extremely well trained in music from an early age. As Charles Burney (1726 – 1814), the famous English traveling music historian, reported in 1772:

...not only in every large town, but in all villages, where there is a reading and writing school, children of both sexes are taught music.²⁶

Burney visited the village school in Čáslav, less than 10 kilometers from Žehušice, where he observed boys and girls from six to ten or eleven years old playing string and wind instruments.²⁷ The Piarist *Landschulen* (rural schools) and *Gymnasia* (colleges) as well as seminaries administered by Jesuits, offered excellent programs in music.²⁸

As Stich's contemporary and compatriot, violinist/composer Franz Benda (1709-1786) describes in his autobiography:

²⁰ Kling, H.: 'Giovanni Punto, célèbre corniste,' in: *Bulletin français de la S.I.M.*, vol. IV. Paris, 1908

²¹ Fétis, F.-J.: 'Stich, connu sous le nom de Punto', in: *Biographie universelle des musiciens et bibliographie générale de la musique*, Vol.8. 1866-8; 285-6

²² Sedlacek, A.: *Castles, chateaux and fortresses of the Kingdom of Bohemia I. Chrudimsko*. Prague, 1882

²³ <http://www.Žehušice.cz/Žehušice/hornforum/zpravy/2001-12/JVStich.htm> Accessed 6 january 2022

²⁴ Serfs were bound to land and had to obtain the permission from their manorial lords when they wanted to move.

²⁵ <http://www.Žehušice.cz/Žehušice/hornforum/zpravy/2001-12/JVStich.htm> Accessed 6 january 2022

²⁶ Burney, C.: *The Present State of Music in Germany*. London, 1775; 4

²⁷ Ibid.;

²⁸ Murray, S.A.: *The Career of an Eighteenth-Century Kapellmeister: The Life and Music of Antonio Rosetti*. Rochester, 2014; 14

....I went to the town school and learned to read, write and sing so that the first music groundwork was laid.²⁹

Next to receiving singing lessons, Stich started playing the violin and horn. Especially on the latter instrument he made promising progress, no doubt to the delight of the count. The Von Thun family was obsessed with the horn. At times in the 18th century, 6 to 8 horn players were appointed to the court of Žehušice.³⁰

As Sterling E. Murray states in his immersive book on Antonio Rosetti (c1750-1792), musicians of court orchestras were often recruited from the ranks of families of servants. In case of exceptional talent, they were sent to well-known teachers at the expense of their noble lords.³¹

That is exactly what happened in Žehušice. In 1761, Count Thun sent the then fifteen-year-old Stich, together with another young serf, the nineteen-year-old František Weisbach, to study horn with Joseph Matějka (1728-1804) in Prague and with Jan Šindelář (c.1715-c.1770) in Munich. Subsequently Stich studied (in the company of no fewer than three other horn players from Žehušice, according to the Czech musicologist Tomislav Volek),³² with Anton Joseph Hampel or Hampl (1705-1771) and Karl Haudek (1721-1802), also a former student of Šindelář,³³ in Dresden.

Although Stich was sent abroad to complete his education, all his teachers were Bohemian compatriots. Already in the first half of the eighteenth century a strong horn heritage existed in Bohemia and spread from there across Europe. The special association of the horn with Bohemian musical culture is also emphasized by Murray, when writing about the long-standing tradition of excellent Bohemian horn players in the Wallerstein Hofkapelle.³⁴

The choice for Hampel and Haudek as horn teachers in Dresden was an obvious one. Already in the first half of the eighteenth century, the Dresden court orchestra must have had a spectacular horn group, with Haudek and Hampel as the most celebrated exponents. The volume and technical demands of surviving horn parts written for the Dresden players are

²⁹ Quoted in Lee, D.A.: *A musician at court: an autobiography of Franz Benda*. Detroit, 1998; 4

³⁰ Volek, T.: 'Die Mannsfeldschen und die Thunschen Hornisten', in: *The horn in the past and present of Czech music*. Prague, 1983; 44

³¹ Murray, 95-96

³² Volek, 45

³³ Volek, 44

³⁴ Murray, 254

impressive. A striking amount of orchestral music written for Dresden by composers such as Johann David Heinichen (1683-1729), Johann Georg Pisendel (1687-1755) and the Bohemian Jan Dismas Zelenka (1679-1745), contains soloistic horn passages that testify to a high level of virtuosity.³⁵ Scores clearly demonstrate the interest of players and composers in innovative use of the high, clarino-register style for the first horn and a new, specialized style of low horn playing for the second horn. In many cases, horn parts do not merely present the second horn as the shadow of the first horn, as in so many scores from different times and places, but as an independent instrument, using non-partial and acrobatic leaps in its middle and low register. Especially the range of the low horn was extended with tones alien to the harmonic series, leading to the development of hand stopping technique. Additional horn parts by Pisendel to a 1740 violin concerto in D major by Franz Benda (1709-1786) present evidence of this new style (figure 1.12). In the score the two top staves were originally left open, and the horn parts were added in the handwriting of Pisendel, the concertmaster of the Dresden Orchestra, suggesting a collaborative experiment of him and the horn players.³⁶ The two horns start as a neighboring duo, but grow apart whenever there's a chance for the low horn to strengthen the bass line. A new texture is created, with the low horn becoming part of the bottom of the orchestra.

³⁵ Hiebert, T.: 'Virtuosity, experimentation, and innovation in horn writing from early 18th-century Dresden,' in: *Historic Brass Society Journal* 4, 1992; 112-159

³⁶ *Ibid.*: 127

Concerto. a 5. 1740 in F#m del G. Fr. Benda. 1.

Allegro ma non molto.

Corno I *ma. pia. for.*

Corno II *for.*

Viol. Conc.

Viol. Primo. *tr. for.*

Viol. Secondo. *for.*

Alto Viola. *for.*

Basso. *for.*

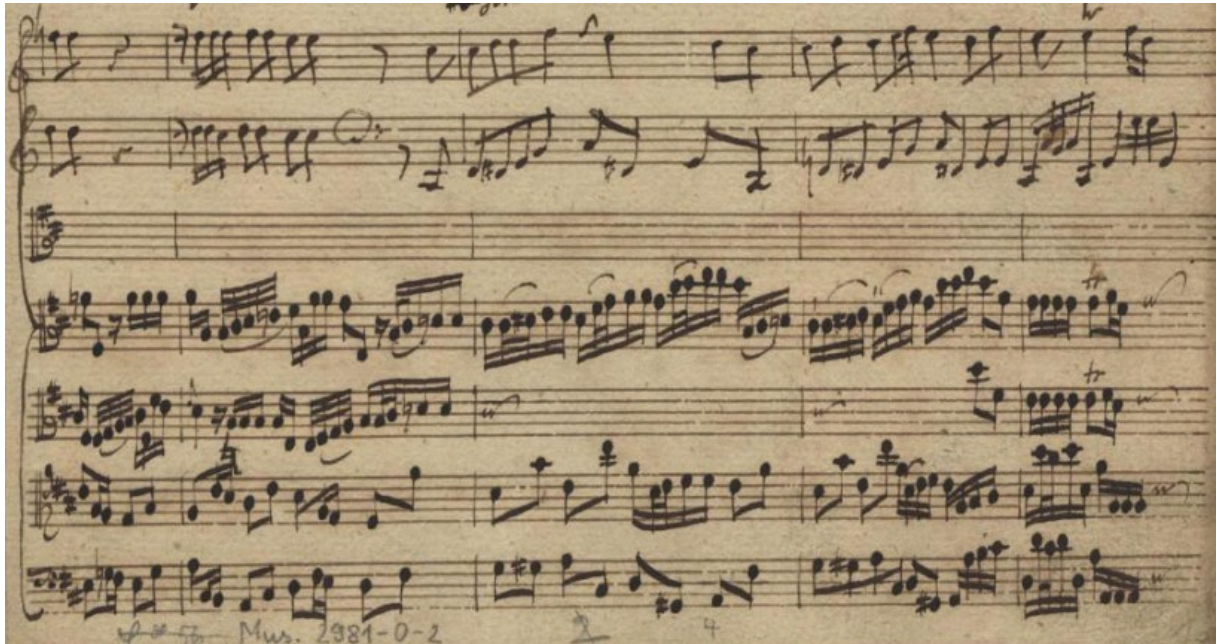


Figure 1.12

Benda/Pisendel, Violin Concerto in D. Virtuoso low register playing for the 2nd horn. Horns in D.

The exposure to this eminent quality of soloistic and orchestral performance will undoubtedly have contributed to the development of the young Stich. Meanwhile Count Thun must have been convinced that his young horn players would enrich his court *Kapelle* with new musical styles from Dresden upon return.

In chapter 2.1 I will discuss the contributions of Hampel to the development of the horn and his major influence on Stich in more detail.

1.3 Stich becomes Punto

In 1764, his education as a horn player completed, Stich returns to the estate of Thun in Žehušice. After the metropolitan Dresden, with the illustrious court orchestra where Zelenka held sway, it must have been difficult to get used again to the customs and the quality of life and music in the provincial Žehušice. Service soon became very difficult for the young, ambitious, and cheerful Stich, who was not allowed to wear a sword.³⁷ How important a sword was for young men becomes clear when Benda, in his Autobiography, describes how happy he is when he finally earns enough money to buy one.³⁸ Stich's displeasure grew, and the prospect of an international career increasingly attracted him, like so many of his Bohemian countrymen.³⁹

Four years later, in May 1768, Stich escaped, in the company of four colleagues, probably from Karlsbad, the summer residence of count Von Thun. The count immediately sent soldiers after him. The arrest warrant gives a unique description of the looks of young Stich. He would have been of average height, pale, with a flaky face (*mitler Statue, bleich und blattermaasigen Angesichts*).

Stich performed under the name of Bomba in Germany, was discovered, fled again, now to Italy, where he soon changed his name into Giovanni Punto, both severing ties with his native country and marking his new international career with a proud new name in the language of music.⁴⁰ At home in Žehušice, mother Kateřina, then Václav's widow, was sent to prison to atone for her son's disobedience, and died there five months later.⁴¹

According to Gerber, the soldiers sent after Stich had orders to smash his teeth if he refused to travel home with them. A horrifying story for any wind player.

Dem Grafen Thun war kaum ihre Entweichung hintergebracht worden, als er sogleich befahl, ihnen nachzufeßen und besonders Stichen ausfindich zu machen, und, wenn man sich seiner Person nicht bemächtigen könnte, doch wenigstens zu suchen ihm die vordern Zähne einzuschlagen.

³⁷ Gerber, E.: 'Stich genannt Punto (Johann Wenzel)', in: *Neues historisch-biographisches Lexikon der Tonkünstler, Zweiter Theil*. Leipzig, 1814; 281

³⁸ Quoted in Lee, 13

³⁹ Murray, 97

⁴⁰ At the time it was not unusual for a musician to choose a pseudonym in Italian, the language of western music. For instance, the Spanish composer Vicente Martín Y Soler (1754-1806) preferred to be called Vincenzo Martini, or Ignaz Martini.

⁴¹ Volek, 46

(No sooner had Count Thun been informed of their escape than he immediately ordered them to be caught, and Stich especially to be found, and if his person could not be seized, at least to try to break his front teeth.)⁴²

Horace Fitzpatrick, in his at times rather romanticizing book on the Austro-Bohemian horn tradition, also reports on the endangered front teeth. In what reads like an exciting script, he describes how Stich ran away to Germany, together with four other musicians, ...*hotly pursued by minions of Thun, who in his fury at the loss of such a jewel from his orchestra, ordered them either to capture Stich alive or at least to knock out his front teeth.*⁴³

Volek, who had access to the archives of the Von Thun family, has read the *Haftbefehl* (arrest warrant) and did not find in it any comment about the teeth of the young Stich.⁴⁴

Both Gerber⁴⁵ and Kling⁴⁶ mention Stich's escape to the Holy Roman Empire. That sounds like a bonus ingredient for an increasingly intriguing story, the legend of the horn virtuoso. In fact, though, in the 1760's Central Bohemia was part of the same Holy Roman Empire. Howsoever, Stich eluded the soldiers and escaped into regions where Count Thun could assert no power.

Although brave and thrilling, the story of the escape to freedom was not uncommon in Bohemia at the time. Serfdom slowly ceased to exist, and musicians were subject to a substantive change of values in the musical environment with an increasing focus on the individual musician.⁴⁷ According to Czech musicologist Václav Kapsa, not all Bohemian musicians were serfs, some of them were born free or obtained freedom from their lords without major problems. In principle, serfs were bound to the estate they belonged to, and had to obtain permission from their manorial lords, when they wanted to travel. In the same context, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart officially had to request to leave service in Salzburg (and he left without permission!).⁴⁸

Jan Václav Stich disappeared from Bohemia, to be reborn as Giovanni Punto, the virtuoso horn player who would travel large parts of Europe performing as a soloist and court musician, showing off his skills with pieces he soon started to compose for his own use in the

⁴²Gerber, 'Stich', 281

⁴³ Fitzpatrick, H.: *The Horn and Horn-Playing and the Austro-Bohemian Tradition from 1680 to 1830*. London, 1970; 168

⁴⁴ Volek, 46

⁴⁵ Gerber, 'Stich', 281

⁴⁶ Kling, 'Giovanni Punto', 1066 etc.

⁴⁷ Quoted in Lee, Prologue, 8, 18, 22, 23. Benda fled from the court of Count von Kleinau. Upon return, many years later, he obtained his freedom by offering the Count a riding horse plus 200 Gulden.

⁴⁸ Kapsa, V.: personal email, 9 December 2020

fashionable Galant style that seems to have been developed to please the ever more refined aristocracy. Breitkopf's catalogue of 1778 lists pieces composed by Punto, however the majority of his works were published in the 1780s and 1790s.⁴⁹

Although bearing his name, the compositions for horn and strings, or horn and orchestra had maybe not always flown from his pen, if we are to believe his rival horn player Carl Türirschmidt (1753-1797). According to Gerber, he accused Punto of plagiarism for his first and second horn concertos.⁵⁰

Punto might have been a little too easy on the subject of attribution, he was certainly not alone. Murray found horn concertos by Rosetti in archives under the names of Punto, Carl Stamitz, Mozart, and both Joseph and Michael Haydn.⁵¹ In many cases, publishers who were after monetary gain should be held partly responsible for conflicting attributions.

1.4 Giovanni Punto in Europe, a traveling virtuoso

After his successful escape from serfdom, the newborn Giovanni Punto lived the life of an itinerant musician, an entrepreneur with a growing reputation, while at the same time finding refuge and a more stable income as a member of court orchestras.

In 1768 he obtained a short contract with the orchestra of Josef Friedrich Wilhelm (1717 - 1798), prince of Hohenzollern-Hechingen.

A longer period of stability followed, 1769-74, when he was in the service of Emmerich Joseph von Breidbach zu Bürresheim (1707 – 1774), the archbishop-elect of Mainz.⁵² This lord did allow him to travel. But his ambitions were not yet satisfied, and when he found out that a horn player could not become the concertmaster of the Mainz orchestra, and that he was still far from being recognized as a master on the violin, he soon left this court as well.⁵³

In 1772, Punto demonstrated hand stopping to an English audience on his first trip to London.⁵⁴ Although one of the first, Punto did not have the premiere. Thomas Hiebert, in an

⁴⁹ Morley-Pegge, R. revised by Fitzpatrick, H. and Hiebert, T.: 'Punto, Giovanni [Stich, Johann Wenzel (Jan Václav)]' Grove Music Online. <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.22558> Accessed 6 January 2021

⁵⁰ Gerber, 'Stich', 283

⁵¹ Murray, 254

⁵² Miller, J.: The Life and Works of Jan Václav Stich (Giovanni Punto); a Checklist of 18th Century Horn Concertos and Players; an Edition for Study and Performance of the Concerto No. VI in E♭ by Giovanni Punto (Ph.D. diss.). Iowa, 1962; 39

⁵³ Gerber, 'Stich', 281

⁵⁴ Morley-Pegge, 'Punto, Giovanni [Stich, Johann Wenzel (Jan Václav)]'.

article on the Egerton Manuscript Collection,⁵⁵ and John Humphries⁵⁶ provide evidence that the technique must have been introduced in England before 1770.

The anonymous author of *New Instructions for the French Horn*, printed in the 1770s, was quite critical about the new skill:

Mr. Ponto (sic) and many others, famous on this Instrument, constantly uses this method, by which means the halftones are expressed, which is not to be done by any other method, but it is deemed by Judges of the Horn that the principle (sic) beauty, the Tone, is greatly impaired thereby.⁵⁷

Burney much later remembered how the proudly presented *new technique* sounded like someone who tries to scream in vain while having a nightmare.⁵⁸ In 1772, though, when he had a fresh memory of hearing Punto perform in Koblenz, he was less whiny and reported:

The Elector has a good band, in which M. Punto, (Ponto? [sic]) the celebrated French horn from Bohemia, whose taste and astonishing execution were lately so applauded in London, is a performer.⁵⁹

That year of 1772 Punto was much in demand as a musician on the London stages, often playing his own horn concerti. Most of the critics resort to superlatives when describing the successes of these performances.

But the concerto Punto played on the 11th of March at Drury Lane at the end of the first part of Händel's *L'Allegro ed il Penseroso*, did not meet with great enthusiasm in the *Theatrical Review*.

What this Gentleman executes with the Horn, is very surprising, but, not being suited to the genius of the Instrument, it is not productive of any good effect, when considered musically; as a matter of novelty it may surprise and please, on which account, it is worthy the notice of the curious.⁶⁰

Clearly, not everyone was won over yet by the charms of hand stopping. Still, it must have been a very successful time in London for Punto. He played one concert after another and

⁵⁵ Hiebert, T.: 'Extraordinary horn writing in The Egerton Manuscript Collection: A contribution to the history of the horn in mid-eighteenth century England', in: *Jagd- und Waldhörner, Geschichte und musikalische Nutzung. Michaelsteiner Konferenzberichte Band 70*, Augsburg, Michaelstein, 2004, 246

⁵⁶ Humphries, J.: "'This French-horn Gentleman...'" Giovanni Punto in London', in: *Historic Brass Society Journal*, volume 3, 2021, 15-34

⁵⁷ Anonymous: *New Instructions for the FRENCH— HORN, Containing the most modern and best methods for Learners to Blow*. London, c1772-9, 4

⁵⁸ Burney, C.: 'Horn,' in Abraham Rees, *The cyclopædia: or, Universal dictionary of arts, sciences, and literature*. London, 1820, 18:200.

⁵⁹ Burney, *The Present State of Music*, 74

⁶⁰ Humphries, "'This French-horn Gentleman...'", 16

already in 1773, he traveled to London again. This time he met with Willem Spandau (1741-1806), principal horn at the court of William V, Stadtholder of the Dutch Republic in The Hague. The two early exponents of hand stopping even performed as a duo, Spandau on first horn, Punto by nature on second.⁶¹ Next to performing horn concerti and the occasional double horn concerto, there were opportunities for chamber music with other famous instrumentalists like Carl Friedrich Abel (1723-1787), the composer and viola da gamba player, who, in 1764 or 1765, established the famous Bach-Abel concerts (with Johann Christian Bach [1735-1782]), and Johann Christian Fischer (1733-1800), the German composer and oboe virtuoso.

An etching by James Bretherton (c1730-1806), figure 1.13, showing Abel, Punto and Fischer playing together, is interpreted by Humphries as a possible proof of alcohol abuse by the musicians.⁶² Studying other engravings of Bretherton, it becomes clear the artist was specialized in caricatures, and one should include the drawing of these three musicians in that category.

⁶¹ Ibid. 20

⁶² Ibid. 20



Figure 1.13
Concerto Spirituale, etching of Abel, Punto and Fischer, by James Bretherton, 1773

The enormous success of Punto's solo performances was certainly not limited to London. During the years of 1776-1778, he performed on 49 occasions at the *concerts spirituels* in Paris, often playing his own concerti.⁶³

In 1778, The famous Paris horn builder Lucien-Joseph Raoux (1753-1821) made him a silver cor solo.⁶⁴ In the same year Punto met Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart in Paris. Mozart wrote to his father that "Punto plays magnifique" after he heard him perform at the Concert Spirituel.⁶⁵ As Kling wrote:

Un tel éloge donné à Punto par un musicien de la valeur de Mozart, équivaut à un brevet de haute capacité.⁶⁶
(Such praise given to Punto by a musician of Mozart's caliber, is equivalent to a patent of high capacity.)

Mozart composed the now lost Sinfonia Concertante K. 297b/Anh.C 14.01 for Punto and other noted soloists (Johann Baptist Wendling, flute; Friedrich Ramm, oboe; Georg Wenzel Ritter, bassoon) who were eager to perform together.

As Robert Levin argues, the director of the *concerts spirituels* at the time, Joseph Legros (1739-1793), seems to have commissioned Mozart's symphony concertante for four winds and orchestra for two specific performances. These performances did not take place, because the parts were not copied from the score in due time.⁶⁷ Levin continues to explain that probably Giuseppe Maria (Gioacchino) Cambini (1746-1825), a composer famous for his symphonies concertantes, was the evil genius behind the delay that led to the cancellation. On May 1, 1778, Mozart wrote to his father that he met Ramm and Punto again at the Concert Spirituel when they asked him indignantly why his Symphony Concertante was not performed while Cambini's piece for the same instrumentation was on the program. The mistake, whether or not initiated by Cambini, lay with Legros, who had forgotten to have the work brought to the copyist.⁶⁸

As Fétis recalls later, his father had heard Punto in 1780 and was very impressed. According to the father, Punto had the most beautiful sound one could imagine, an extremely touching

⁶³ Pierre, C.: *Histoire du concert spirituel 1725-1790*, Paris, 1975

⁶⁴ Meucci and Rochetti, 'Horn, History to c1800'

⁶⁵ Mozart, W.A.: letter to his father, Paris, 5 April 1778

⁶⁶ Kling, 'Giovanni Punto', 1066

⁶⁷ Levin, R.D.: *Who Wrote the Mozart Four-Wind Concertante?* Stuyvesant, NY, 1988; 5

⁶⁸ Mozart, letter to his father, Paris, 1 May 1778

way of singing on the horn, and perfect precision. Father Fétis also reported the silver horn that Punto played, *...because he preferred the more pure and penetrating timbre.*⁶⁹

In 1781, Punto entered the service of the Prince-Archbishop of Würzburg, as a member of the court orchestra.⁷⁰ Punto did not stay long in lovely Würzburg, because in 1782 he was offered a position in the orchestra of the Comte d'Artois (later to become Charles X of France) who apparently adored the horn, in Paris.⁷¹ The conditions sound like a dream; the assurance of leave for solo concert tours and a lifelong pension. In 1787 the virtuoso indeed took a leave of absence to tour as a soloist in the Rhineland. As Murray writes, it was quite common that members of court orchestras were allowed occasional concert tours, while their salaries continued to be paid. This seemed to be a way of enhancing the court's reputation as a musical center.⁷²

On his third and last trip to London, 1788, Punto became a regular performer at the Pantheon Concerts, organized by the German soprano Gertrud Elisabeth (Madame) Mara (1749-1833).

Thanks to in-depth research by Humphries, we now have at our disposal several reviews from these concerts that contain a lot of information about the musician Punto and his playing style.

His performance of 28 February impressed the reviewers of both the *Morning Post*⁷³ and the *Morning Herald*.⁷⁴

The novelty of the night, and a most surprising novelty indeed, was the French Horn Concerto by PONTO, (sic) which, for rapidity of execution, taste, and softness, exceeded anything we ever heard.

...it was beyond every idea of perfection, and will amply reward for the engagement, as the many present will not be gratified with once hearing.

Punto also made an appearance in another concert series. He received outstanding reviews for his debut concerto at The Professional Concert on 3 March, with the *Morning Chronicle* describing his playing as⁷⁵

⁶⁹ Fétis, F.-J.: 'Punto', in: *Biographie universelle des musiciens, Volume 8*. Brussels, 1844; 285

⁷⁰ Fitzpatrick, 170

⁷¹ Fétis, 'Punto', 285

⁷² Murray, 102

⁷³ *Morning Post*, 29 February 1788, p. 2, col. 4.

⁷⁴ *Morning Herald*, 1 March 1788 p. 3, col. 3.

⁷⁵ *Morning Chronicle*, 4 March 1788, p. 3, col. 2.

...one of the most wonderful efforts of human excellence. The command he possesses over the instrument is truly surprising, insomuch that while he produces notes by far more sonorous and powerful (than) ever exhibited, he has the art of making it, at other times, as soft and tender as the German flutes of Florio or Tacit (sic).

The newspaper *The World* was equally astonished ⁷⁶

Punto, if it is the same Punto who was in England some years since with Sponda (sic) is much improved. The French Horn, is with him so managed, that it could accompany a Piano Passage, of a Soprano Singer in a room.

Punto was back at the Pantheon Concerts of Madame Mara on Wednesday 5 March, when things obviously did not go so well. A review following the 7 March concert, wrote that Mr Ponto's (sic) horn concerto was very superior to his performance of last Wednesday, *indeed astonishingly so, and seemed as an effort to retrieve his reputation, somewhat diminished by his first essay.*⁷⁷

The *Morning Chronicle* enjoyed Punto's performance of 10 March at the Pantheon, and called his concerto *innovative and astonishing*,⁷⁸ but the *Morning Post* was more aloof: ⁷⁹

Ponto (sic) and Fischer were much applauded, the former in particular, whose concerto on the French Horn exceeded every idea and expectation though the sounds might sometimes resemble an ill wind.

Not many horn players would like to see their tone compared to the sounds of an ill wind.

After a last concert at the King's Theatre, on 22 May 1788, Punto returns to Paris, where the French Revolution starts in 1789.

Punto's patron, Comte d'Artois, an extremely conservative nobleman, probably one of the very reasons for the French revolution, is ordered by his brother King Louis XVI to flee the country soon after the storming of the Bastille, 14 July 1789.⁸⁰

Punto, the horn virtuoso, finally manages to become violinist-conductor at the Théâtre des Variétés Amusantes in Paris, a position he held from 1789 - 1799.⁸¹ This new job did not prevent him from remaining active as a horn player, teacher, and composer. Entirely in the spirit of the French Revolution, Punto composed two short pieces for singers and large

⁷⁶ The World, 4 March 1788, p. 3, col. 2.

⁷⁷ Morning Herald, 8 March 1788, p. 3, col. 3.

⁷⁸ Morning Chronicle, 12 April 1788, p. 3, col. 2.

⁷⁹ Morning Post, 12 April 1788, p. 3, col. 2.

⁸⁰ Tikkanen, A.: 'Charles X' In: Encyclopaedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Charles-X> accessed 10 August 2022

⁸¹ Morley-Pegge, 'Punto, Giovanni [Stich, Johann Wenzel (Jan Václav)]'

orchestra, *Hymnes à la Liberté*, during this period. The full title of a composition for three baritons (*basses de taille*) and orchestra reads: *Hymne à la Liberté en trio avec grand orchestre pour le jour du repos de la première décade de Frimaire à la fête de la raison célébrée à Rouen par ordre du consul général de la Commune le 29 Brumaire l'an 2d de la république française une et indivisible. Paroles du citoyen L'Aîné* (figure 1.14). The other Hymn to Freedom is titled: *Descends du haut des cieux: hymne à la Liberté*. (Libretto: Judlin.)



Figure 1.14
Title page of Punto's composition *Hymne à la Liberté*, 1794.

Between 1792-1795, the first edition of the *Seule et Vraie Méthode* for horn was published.⁸² Did Punto publish this *Méthode* to support his application for the position of teacher at the new Conservatoire de Paris? Constant Pierre⁸³ describes how Punto came to meet the administration of the school to ask for a job. Is that why he used the name of his former teacher Hampel on the title page? *Composée par Hampl et perfectionnée par Punto, son Elève*. It certainly was a nice application letter, addressed to young horn players and

⁸² Hampel/Punto, *Méthode*

⁸³ Pierre, C.: *Le Conservatoire National de musique et de declamation - Documents historique et administratifs*. Paris, 1900; 106

young composers, the *Seule et Vraie Méthode*, descending from the great Hampel, and perfected by his famous pupil Punto.

But the style of the music in the *Method* does not relate to the surviving works of Hampel and has strong similarities to the rest of Punto's oeuvre. Reason for me to not believe Punto and to regard the *Seule et Vraie Méthode* exclusively as his own work from now on.

The Conservatoire did not hire him, according to the documents of the administration because the school did not take any more professors.

Punto's fixed position, since 1781, in the orchestra of Count of Artois, the brother of Louis XVI, cannot have been a good condition for a career within a school founded by the French revolutionary forces.

He was passed by no fewer than four horn players linked to the *Garde nationale*, the French military force, founded in 1789 during the French Revolution. Antoine Buch (n.d.), Jean-Joseph Kenn (1757-1840), Frédérique Duvernoy (1765-1838) and Punto's private student Heinrich Domnich (1767-1844) were appointed instead of the great Punto.⁸⁴

Also in 1795, Punto published his *Étude ou Exercice Journalier*, from here called the *Daily Exercises*, a book with basic etudes for cor basse (see chapter 2.4).⁸⁵

According to Gerber, the period as violinist-conductor at the Théâtre des Variétés Amusantes was unsuccessful. Still, Punto, not yet cured of his obsession to lead (*Direktionssucht*), continues to try his luck on the violin. In 1800 he disgraces himself by playing violin in Mehul's *Sinfonie de Chasse* at a concert in Vienna. Gerber is scathing in his judgment; to his honor, one wished he would never have played it on the violin, ...*zu seiner Ehre wünschte (man) er möchte Sie nie vorgegeigt haben*.⁸⁶

Later that year Punto meets Ludwig van Beethoven in Vienna, who then just premiered his Septet op. 20 and his first Symphony. This encounter leads to one of the pinnacles in the literature for horn, although Beethoven postponed working on the promised composition until one day before the concert. On April 18, 1800, the two virtuosi premiere Beethoven's Sonata for pianoforte and horn, opus 17, in the Burgtheater, at a concert organized by Punto

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Punto, *Étude*

⁸⁶ Gerber, 'Stich', 281

for his benefit.⁸⁷ Unfortunately, Joseph Haydn, one of whose symphonies was performed in the same concert, is unable to attend due to illness.⁸⁸

A month later Beethoven and Punto perform the piece again, this time in Pest, Hungary, where a local music critic commented: *...who is this Beethoven? His name is not known to us. Of course, Punto is very well known.*⁸⁹ We can only hope Punto stayed in town long enough to read such flattering comment.

1.5 Giovanni Punto in Bohemia

In 1801, for the first time in more than three decades, Punto returns to Bohemia. No longer threatened by an arrest warrant, he plays a concert in Prague, as a soloist with orchestra, demonstrating his virtuosity in several of his own horn concertos. The *Prager Neue Zeitung* reported,

Punto received enthusiastic applause for his concertos because of his unparalleled mastery, and respected musicians said that they had never before heard horn playing like it... In his cadenzas he produced many novel effects, playing two- and even three-part chords.⁹⁰ It demonstrated again that our fatherland can produce great artistic and musical geniuses.⁹¹

A year later Punto is touring his native country again, this time with the Bohemian-born pianist/composer Jan Ladislav Dussek (1760-1812).⁹² On the 16th of September 1802 they play a concert in Čáslav, Dussek's place of birth, in Punto's home district. According to Fétis they perform the Beethoven Sonata, amongst other pieces.⁹³ What other pieces remains the question. Did Dussek write a sonata for horn and piano for the occasion? Dussek certainly did not shy away from the genre; he composed no fewer than 65 violin sonatas.

⁸⁷ Wegeler, F.G and Ries, F.: *Biographische Notizen über Ludwig van Beethoven*. Koblenz, 1838; 98-9

⁸⁸ Vignal, M.: *Joseph Haydn*. Paris, 1988; 585 The meeting did take place less than a year later, on January 30, 1801. On that day Haydn conducted two of his symphonies, and Punto and Beethoven repeated the sonata op. 17, at a benefit concert for war victims in the Grosser Redoutensaal in Vienna. Ibid. 598

⁸⁹ Morley-Pegge, *The French Horn*, 153

⁹⁰ For a discussion about producing multiphonics on the horn, see chapter 4

⁹¹ *Prager Neue Zeitung*, no. 39, Prague, 1801; 473. Quoted by Diabac, J.B., in: *Allgemeines historisches Künstler-Lexikon für Böhmen und zum Theil auch für Mähren und Schlesien*. Prague, 1815; 210-11

⁹² Morley-Pegge, 'Punto, Giovanni [Stich, Johann Wenzel (Jan Václav)]'.

⁹³ Fétis, 'Punto', 137

Presumably, Punto also wanted to shine in one or more of his own concertos. In those years it was quickly becoming fashion to arrange orchestral pieces for fortepiano. Being such a virtuosic piano player and productive composer, Dussek must have been able to arrange the relatively simple orchestral scores of Punto's concerti on the spot.

In the same year, after a short trip to Paris, Punto developed pleurisy (*Brustwassersucht*), or as Morley-Pegge calls it ...*chest dropsy or hydrothorax*.⁹⁴ Miller writes ...*fluid in the pleural cavity, then a common illness amongst wind players*.⁹⁵ Did wind players borrow each other's instruments without taking care of the indispensable hygienic measures?

Jan Bohumir Dlabac (1758-1820), a Bohemian music scholar, reported that Punto died on February 16, 1803, in Prague. Three days later he was buried at the general cemetery at *Kleinseite*, a central Prague neighborhood. On the 26th of February, Prague musicians gathered to perform Mozart's Requiem at a funeral mass organized by the Music Society of Prague.⁹⁶

His tomb was inscribed:

Omne tulit punctum Punto, qui Musa Bohema. Ut plausit vivo, sic moriente gemit.
(Punto received all the applause. As the Muse of Bohemia applauded him in life, so she mourns him in death.)

Giovanni Punto, the famous horn player with the lifelong ambition to find recognition as a violin player, who fled from serfdom to spend a life as a traveling virtuoso, receiving the admiration of courts and audiences all over Europe, was buried in Prague, less than 100 kilometers from his native soil.

Zehušice, today a village of 825 inhabitants⁹⁷, honors Jan Václav Stich as its most famous descendant. The *Czech French Horn Society of Jan Václav Stich-Punto* is based in Žehušice. Since 2016 the community is the proud owner of the *J.V. Stich-Punto bench*, unveiled under anachronistic valve horn fanfares in the open air.⁹⁸ The local elementary school is called *Základní škola Jana Václava Sticha-Punta Žehušice*. The school's logo is a mosaic of Punto's well-known portrait (see figure 1.1).

⁹⁴ Morley-Pegge, *The French Horn*, 153

⁹⁵ Miller, 45

⁹⁶ Dlabac, J.B.: *Allgemeines historisches Künstler-Lexikon für Böhmen und zum Theil auch für Mähren und Schlesien*. Prague, 1815; 211

⁹⁷ <https://www.czso.cz/csu/czso/population-of-municipalities-1-january-2021> Accessed 30 April 2021

⁹⁸ <https://youtu.be/h6K2-NCaQJc> Accessed 21 January 2022



Figure 1.15
Stich/Punto memorial plaque in Čáslav, close to Žehušice

For a letter by Punto to Raoux, *facteur de cors*, see Annex 1

2. The Only and True Method

Introduction

Circa 1794, Punto proudly published the *Seule et Vraie Méthode pour apprendre facilement les Éléments des Premier et Second Cors*, (only and true method to easily learn the elements of first and second horn),⁹⁹ followed in 1795 by *Étude ou Exercice Journalier, Ouvrage Periodique pour le Cor* (Study or Daily Exercise, Periodic Work for the Horn).¹⁰⁰ The different elements of the *Method* and the *Daily Exercises* and their relation to Punto's playing technique and sound are discussed in the chapters below.

2.1 argues the legacy of Hampel, according to Punto the main author of the *Method*.

2.2 describes the differences in playing technique and timbre between the high and the low horn, so important for understanding the performance practice of the 18th century horn.

2.3 goes deeper into the aspect of articulation, by examining the indications in the text of the *Method* and the syllables printed in the music of both the *Method* and the *Daily Exercises*.

2.4 welcomes the reader into the realm of lip bending and hand stopping (necessary techniques to perform non-harmonics on the natural horn) and argues that Punto, although one of the exponents of the then relatively new technique, was quite conservative in the application.

2.5 explores embellishment as an expression of style and as the main pedagogical tool of the *Method*.

⁹⁹ Hampel/Punto, *Méthode*

¹⁰⁰ Punto, *Étude*

2.1 Hampel's heritage

On the front page of the *Seule et Vraie Méthode*, Punto modestly admits that the tutor is not his work alone; this is the *Method* that he inherited from another Bohemian horn player, arguably his most important teacher Anton Joseph Hampl, or Hampel.

Composed by Hampl, it says, the *Seule et Vraie Méthode* was perfected by Punto, his pupil. As already mentioned in chapter 1, Hampel was a member of the Dresden Hofkapelle from 1737 until about 1768. He invented an early non-transposing mute¹⁰¹ and designed the Inventionshorn.¹⁰² The young Stich must have gained experience with this type of instrument at the latest when he studied with Hampel in the early 1760's.

According to Heinrich Domnich (1767-1844), a pupil of Punto, Hampel was also the inventor of stopped notes on the horn.¹⁰³ I refer to chapter 2.4 for an in-depth discussion of the history and noble art of hand stopping.

It was Hampel who extended the range of the horn downwards by developing the mid and low registers. During the decades he worked in Dresden, the second horn parts became more independent of the first horn, leading to two different types of horn playing, later called *cor basse* and *cor alto*.¹⁰⁴

A set of pieces for three horns has been found by the editor and specialist in historical horn repertoire Robert Ostermeyer in the Bibliothèque National de France. The collection contains over 60 trios for 3 horns marked *di Anton Hampel* and 15 trios marked *del Sigl, Giov. Wencessla Stiech*,¹⁰⁵ who can only be Jan Václav Stich, alias Giovanni Punto.

Hampel composed at least two concertos for two horns in D. He may have composed the duets and trios by 'Mr. Humple' in *A Collection of Duets for French Horns* (London, c1762)¹⁰⁶,

¹⁰¹ Humphries, J.: *The Early Horn, a practical guide*. Cambridge, 2000; 10

¹⁰² See figures 1.7 and 1.8

¹⁰³ Domnich, H.: *Méthode de Premier et de Second Cor*. Paris, 1808; iii, iv

¹⁰⁴ For an extensive discussion of the two horn types, see chapter 3

¹⁰⁵ Ostermeyer, R.: 'Hampel, Anton Joseph' <https://www.french-horn.net/index.php/biographie/152-hampel-anton-joseph.html> Accessed 18 June 2022

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

and an anonymous horn concerto in D from the Lund collection¹⁰⁷ has been attributed to him.¹⁰⁸ See figures 2.1 and 2.2.

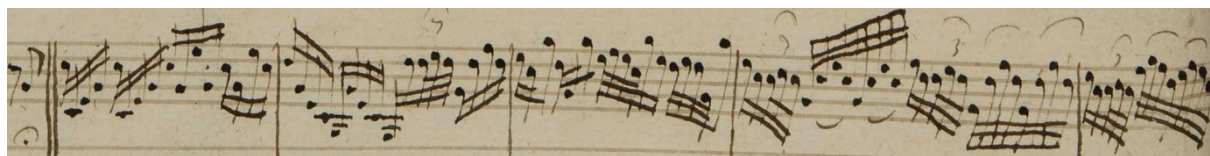


Figure 2.1

The opening phrase of the solo part of Horn Concerto in D, Lund 13, attributed to Hampel. Solo Horn in D, treble clef.



Figure 2.2

A detail of the slow movement of the Horn Concerto in D, Lund 13, attributed to Hampel. Solo Horn in D, treble clef.

Hampel and his Dresden colleagues played an important role in the development of the horn as an orchestral and soloistic instrument. As mentioned in chapter 1, the technical demands of soloistic and orchestral horn parts written during Hampel's tenure for the Hofkapelle in Dresden are impressive. By training great horn players like Punto, the new ways of playing the horn started to disseminate all over Europe.

In this respect, it should be noted that the classical, monophonic style that began to emerge from about 1760, left little or no room for virtuoso orchestral horn parts. Composers and composing performers continued to exploit the extreme possibilities of the instrument in their horn concertos, including a steadily growing number of non-partial notes approached by lip bending and hand stopping. An overwhelming majority of orchestral horn parts of the second half of the 18th century, though, are constrained to simple fanfares and pedal notes.

¹⁰⁷ Anonymous: *Horn Concerto in D major, Lund 13*. Manuscript. No. 13 of Wenster Catalogue (Litt. 1/13) Universiteitsbiblioteket Lund.

The library at the University of Lund, Sweden, contains one of the largest collections of horn music from the first half of the 18th century. The manuscript contains 18 pieces, ranging from trio sonata to concerto. Virtually all the composers of the collection had at least some connection to Dresden, and the scores may have been transcribed by a travelling horn player during a visit to that city.

¹⁰⁸ Rasmussen, M.: 'The Manuscript Katalog Wenster Litteratur I/1–17b (Universitetsbiblioteket, Lund): a Contribution to the History of the Baroque Horn Concerto', *Brass Quarterly*, 5. 1961–2; 135–152

One can only guess what Hampel's actual share in the *Seule et Vraie Méthode* was. The style and required playing technique of the music in the *Method* does not reflect that of the horn Concerto in D, Lund 13, nor of the surviving fragments of his *Lection Pro Cornui* (c1762), a volume of etudes for horn that was in the collection of the Dresden State Library but got lost in the second world war.¹⁰⁹ Morley-Pegge has seen the manuscript and he quotes three staves with beginnings of typical exercises in his book *The French Horn* (see figure 2.3).¹¹⁰



Figure 2.3
The only surviving fragments of Hampel's *Lection pro Cornui*, as replicated by Morley-Pegge

The etudes in *Lection Pro Cornui* consist of soloistic feats, much like those in Punto's *Daily Exercises*.¹¹¹ Both present exercises in horn acrobatics.

¹⁰⁹ The Dresden State Library preserved under Ms. 30 qu4° *Lection pro Cornui*, Sigr. AJH, which, however, today is listed as a war loss.

¹¹⁰ Morley-Pegge, *The French Horn*, 202

¹¹¹ Punto, *Étude*



Figure 2.4
Punto, *Daily Exercises*, page 40, excerpt

Yet there are also differences. It is noticeable that Hampel goes through the register of the horn with giant leaps up to more than 2 octaves. With Punto, despite the displayed virtuosity, the tones are closer together and only exceptionally exceed one and a half octaves, as can be seen in figure 2.4.

The surviving music of the *Lection pro Cornui* includes several notes remote from the harmonic series. A developed hand stopping technique and very strong and flexible lips are necessary for the execution. Punto never gets that adventurous in the *Daily Exercises* and uses only the most accessible non-partialis, requiring no more than a rudimentary hand stopping technique combined with lip bending. Chapter 2.4 provides more information about playing non-harmonics on the natural horn.

A comparison of the music for three horns both these composing horn players published, confirms the above observations. Hampel (figure 2.5) is more adventurous in his use of the high horn, which still resembles the clarino style writing of the baroque era with virtuosity at the peaks of the harmonic possibilities of the instrument. The third horn is often residing in the lowest regions of the range, not shunning heavily stopped tones. As a result, the chords

are widespread. Punto (figure 2.6) uses stopped notes only sparingly and is normally less extreme with the highest and the lowest notes, generally leading to close harmony.

Nr. 1 Intrada

Figure 2.5 shows the musical score for 'Hampel, Horn Trio no. 1'. It is an 'Nr. 1 Intrada' in 3/4 time. The score is written for three horns. Horn 1 has a trill at the end. The music includes various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and triplets.

Figure 2.5
Hampel, Horn Trio no. 1

Nr.1 Adagio

Figure 2.6 shows the musical score for 'Punto, Horn Trio no. 1'. It is an 'Nr.1 Adagio' in 3/4 time. The score is written for three horns. Horn 1 has a trill at the end. The music includes various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and triplets.

Figure 2.6
Punto, Horn Trio no. 1

2.2 First and Second, High and Low Horns

The title page of the *Seule et Vraie Méthode* opens very promising.

Within a setting crowned with wings, waves, and curls, and adorned with some rather rural musical instruments (including decorative rather than illustrative horns, see figure 2.7), the reader is said to have in his hands the single and true *Méthode* for easily learning the basics of first and second horn.

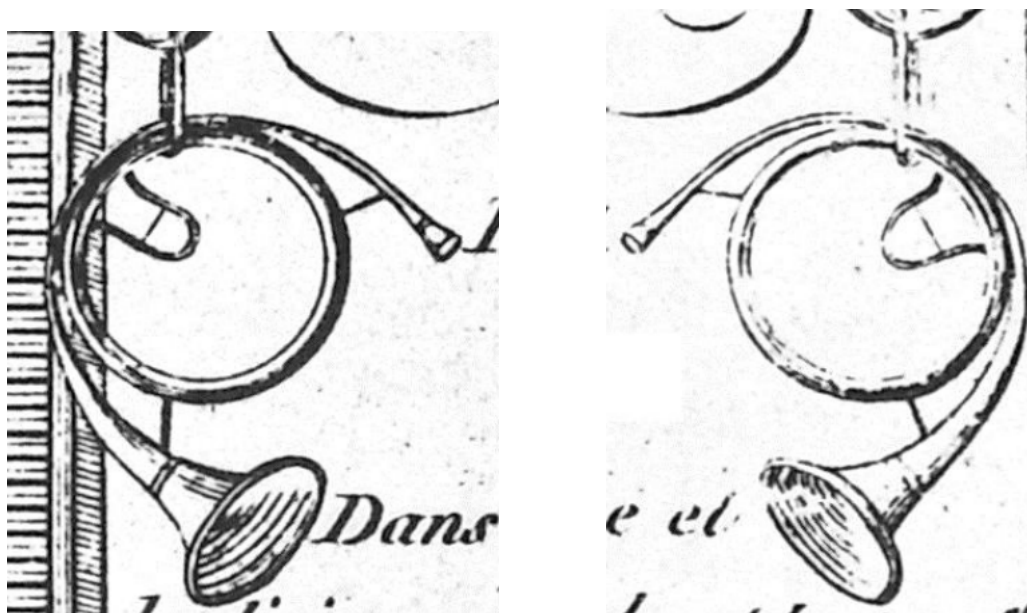


Figure 2.7
The two horns (with remnants of text) on the title page of the *method*

Right at the start, the author states this is a *Method* for the two types of horn. The complete tutor turns out to be an instruction book for two equally treated instrumentalists, a high horn player and a low horn player.

Clearly, the intention was to go through the entire training as a duo, practicing instructive duets together. Whether two pupils cooperatively worked their way through the *Méthode*, or played together as master and apprentice, the foundation of the *Méthode* is to learn and develop as a duo, very much resembling the daily life of an orchestral horn player.

A *Nota* at the bottom of page 1 is dedicated to the *jeunes Eleves Compositeurs* (young student composers), not uncommon in instrumental tutors of the period.

Pour faire connoître aux jeunes Eleves Compositeurs les Eléments ou etendue de premier et second Cors.
(To introduce young student composers to the elements or range of first and second horns.)

In one long sentence the author explains there is a difference in range between the first horn and the second horn. The reason for this is simple; the first horn player normally uses a *très étroite* (very narrow) mouthpiece, compared to the *très large* (very large) mouthpiece of the second horn player.¹¹² As we know from different sources, the narrow mouthpiece is needed for the high part of the first horn range, while the large mouthpiece offers benefits for the low tessitura of the second horn player.

It is striking that the *Seule et Vraie Méthode* presumably was going to be consulted by young composers, and that this advice is addressed to them, and not to the horn players themselves. The explanation for this we can find in what Dauprat, a student of Punto, describes in his 1824 horn method, namely that the student, or rather the teacher, should make a choice between the high horn or the low horn in the very first lesson.¹¹³

Dauprat also tells several stories of illness or death that befell players who attempted to change from one type of mouthpiece to the other; the best possible outcome he envisioned would be mediocrity.¹¹⁴ While these stories should be viewed as hyperbole, there must be a nugget of truth within the dire warnings: namely, that it is difficult to be good at both, and that the embouchure tends to react better when required to learn only one or the other of these genres of horn playing. As so often, the development into specialization was caused by practical and physical reasons, in this case the wide range of the horn as an instrument.

With the rise of the classical orchestra, from about 1740¹¹⁵, in which the horn as an instrument had to cover the complete range of more than four octaves, horn players developed into specialists for either high horn (first horn), or low horn (second horn). With the exception of the trombone -traditionally divided into alto, tenor, and bass trombone- there was no other wind instrument in the (pre-)classical orchestra with such a strong range specialization as that of the first or second horn player. First horn players specialized in playing high melodies, which, due to the harmonics being closer together, required very few

¹¹² Hampel/Punto, xx

¹¹³ Dauprat, 19

¹¹⁴ Ibid.; 16-17, especially notes 2 and 3 on page 17

¹¹⁵ Spitzer, J. and Zaslaw, N.: *The Birth of the Orchestra: History of an Institution*. Oxford, 2005; 307

non-harmonic tones.¹¹⁶ Second horn players became experts at gracefully leaping about the harmonic series, as was required to play in harmony with the first horn in orchestral and chamber music. Consequently, two mouthpieces of different diameter were necessary, one with a relatively small inner diameter of the rim for the high horn player and one with a relatively big inner diameter of the rim for the low horn player.

Low horn parts cover harmonics no. 1 - 12 (sometimes 13). High horn parts cover harmonics no. 4 – 16 and higher (see figure 2.8).

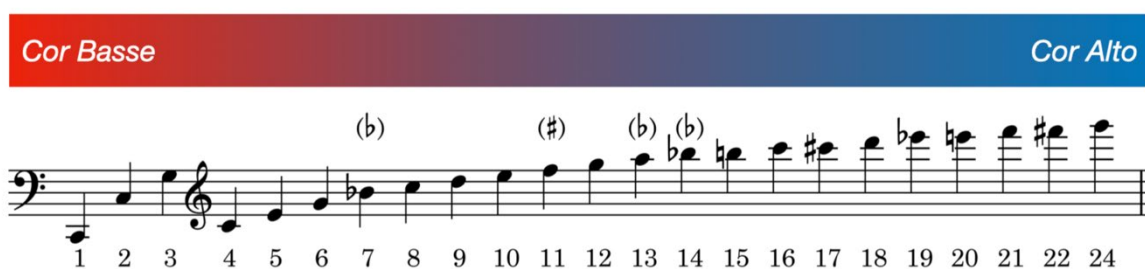


Figure 2.8

The harmonic series and the different ranges of the cor basse (low horn) and the cor alto (high horn), plus their overlap.

The flats and sharp in brackets indicate the natural pitch compared to well-tempered tuning; the 7th, 13th and 14th harmonics are a fraction too low; the 11th harmonic is a fraction too high. The 23rd harmonic between f^{###} and g^{'''} is omitted here because it is not used in 18th century Western music.

Notes in between the harmonics are reached by using the embouchure in a most flexible way (bending or lipping the notes up or down) and/or closing the bell of the instrument with the hand to a certain degree (hand stopping). The low horn player had to use much more lip flexibility plus hand stopping to cover the bigger gaps between the lowest partials than the high horn player. Thus, low horn players became the specialists for correcting the pitch and coloring the notes with the use of the hand.

In his horn method, Dauprat¹¹⁷ invented the terms cor alto and cor basse, to better define the two “genres” of horn that already existed from about 1760.¹¹⁸ Dauprat chose this nomenclature because of the similarities in range and pitch of the first horn and the viola, and of the second horn and the cello.

...surtout, pour mieux définir les deux genres de Cor, que nous avons substitué aux anciens titres de Premier et de Second Cor, les dénominations comparatives de Cor-alto et de Cor-basse. Celles-ci sont basées sur les rapports intimes d'étendue et de

¹¹⁶ Extremely high horn parts from the Baroque are sometimes called “clarino horn parts”, a reference to the same range and style of the baroque trumpet.

¹¹⁷ Dauprat, 15

¹¹⁸ Humphries, *The Early Horn*, 11

diapason qui existent entre le premier Cor et l'Alto, ainsi qu'entre le second Cor et la Basse.¹¹⁹

(...above all, to better define the two kinds of Horn, we have substituted for the old titles of First and Second Horn, the comparative denominations of *Cor-alto* and *Cor-basse*. These are based on the intimate relationships of scale and pitch that exist between the first Horn and the Viola, as well as between the second Horn and the Bass.)

In studying Dauprat's and other horn methods published in Paris between 1764 and the end of the long 18th century, such as the ones by Valentin Roeser (1735-1782),¹²⁰ Duvernoy,¹²¹ Domnich,¹²² as well as *Traité général De Tous Les Instruments A Vent* (General Treaty Of All Wind Instruments) by Othon-Joseph Vandenbroek (1758-1832),¹²³ it becomes apparent that horn teachers and players indeed made a clear distinction between high horn (*cor alto*) and low horn (*cor basse*) with their respective timbres. Dauprat, in a little more extensive quote on the subject:

...qu'il n'en est pas des Cors comme des Violons, Flutes, Hautbois, Bassons, etc qui peuvent indifféremment exécuter l'une ou l'autre des deux parties écrites pour leur instrument, tandis que les Cors, au contraire, ne pourraient, dans bien des cas, changer de parties sans se trouver arrêtés par l'insuffisance de leurs moyen. Les voix de Tenore et de Basse taille offrent encore une comparaison d'autant plus juste de l'instrument dont il s'agit, que l'une ne saurait dispenser de l'autre, leur utilité étant la même au Théâtre que celle des Cors à l'orchestre.¹²⁴

(...the horns are not like violins, flutes, oboes, bassoons, etc. who can indifferently perform one or the other of the two parts written for their instrument, while horns, on the contrary, cannot, in many cases, exchange parts without being blocked by the insufficiency of their means. The voices of Tenor and Bass offer an all-fairer comparison of the instrument in question, as one cannot replace the other, as with the horns.)

Gerber went much further in the distinction between the different timbres of first and second horn when he compared a pair of horn virtuosi with a flute accompanied by a gamba in his dictionary of musicians.¹²⁵ Quite remarkable, but certainly not uncommon in the 18th

¹¹⁹ Dauprat, 14-15

¹²⁰ Roeser, V.: *Essai d'instruction à l'usage de ceux qui composent pour la clarinette et le cor. Avec quelques remarques sur l'harmonie et des exemples à deux clarinettes, deux cors, et deux bassons*. Paris, 1764

¹²¹ Duvernoy, F.: *Méthode pour le Cor*, Paris, 1802

¹²² Domnich, 23

¹²³ Vandenbroek, O.: *Traité général De Tous Les Instruments A Vent a l'usage es Compositeurs*, Paris, c.1793; 2

¹²⁴ Dauprat, 7

¹²⁵ Gerber, E.L.: 'Spörken', in: *Historisches-Biographisches Lexicon der Tonkünstler*. Leipzig, 1792

century, is the emphasis on the softness of both high and low horn in this comparison.

Gerber seems to have collected his information from the low horn specialist Carl

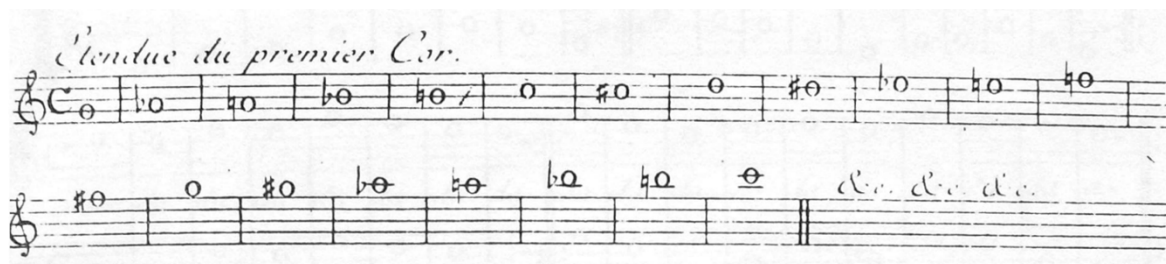
Thürschmidt (1753-1779).¹²⁶

All the aforementioned authors of horn methods presented the different dimensions of typical mouthpieces for the two different horn genres. The *Seule et Vraie Méthode* is the least specific, writing about the high horn mouthpiece being narrow and the low horn mouthpiece being large. Other authors are more precise: the inner dimensions of the rim were described as from 15 to 17 mm for cor alto and from 18 to 20 mm for cor basse.

Without providing details, Dauprat also mentioned the fact that horns with wider bell throats were more applicable for cor basse players.¹²⁷ Some horn builders, such as the Kretzschmann family in Strasbourg (c.1830), made horns in pairs, numbering the horn with a relatively narrow bell throat for cor alto with a “1”, and the horn with a relatively wide bell throat for cor basse with a “2”. In general, the wider the throat of the bell, the darker the sound of the horn.

Back to the *Seule et Vraie Méthode*. The author, logically not aware of the nomenclature Dauprat coined 30 years later, gives an overview of the tonal possibilities of the *first* and *second* horn (figure 2.9).

He argues the specialized range of the first horn can only be successfully used for the crooks of C-basso, D, E \flat , E and F. For G and higher crooks, the composer should take care not to write higher notes than g $''$. Most natural horn players will be grateful for this statement. Quite remarkably, the scope (*etendue*) of the first horn starts from the g $'$ (and ends with &c. &c. after the c $'''$, suggesting the sky is the limit).



No other author of a horn method confines the lower range of the first horn like this. Even more surprising, in the music of the *Seule et Vraie Méthode* the range of the first horn is almost completely restricted to notes from c'' and higher. It is only in the Adagio in the minor key that starts on page 83, and in the very last piece, the *Menuetto en Variation pour le Second Cor* (pages 85, 86), that the first horn occasionally goes down to g'.

Was it considered beneficial for the first horn player to abide in the highest regions of the instrument only? From my own experience, it helps when performing extremely high horn parts if one can stay at the heights of the instrument without occasionally descending to lower terrains that require a more relaxed embouchure.

The given domain of the second horn (figure 2.10) includes factitious notes in the lowest register under the second harmonic (most of them not used in the music of the *Method*) but omits the difficult to master A that appears in Hampel's *Lection pro Cornui* and in the Concerto in D, Lund 13, attributed to him. See figures and 2.2 and 2.11.

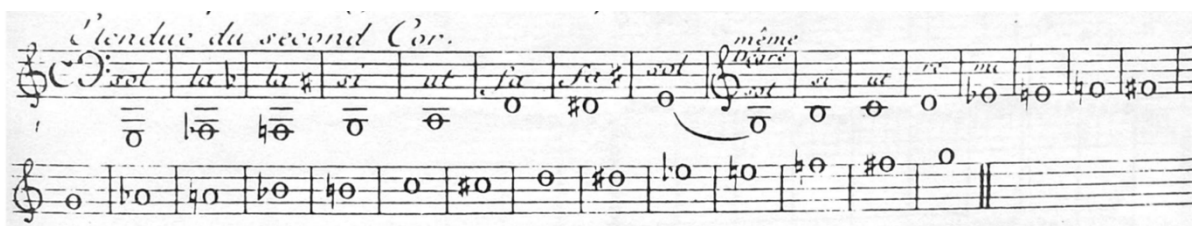


Figure 2.10
Seule et Vraie Méthode, range of the second horn



Figure 2.11
One of the few surviving fragments of Hampel's *Lection pro Cornui*,
treble clef, with the heavily stopped A in the second bar. Treble clef.

In this context it is worth mentioning that Punto's *Daily Exercises* are almost exclusively in the domain of the low horn player.

2.3 Articulation

Already on the title page of the *Method*, the author emphasizes the importance of articulation, and instructs the *jeunes élèves* to pronounce different syllables to elicit beautiful sounds from the horn.

For long notes, the *Méthode* prescribes to use the word 'Daon'.

De prononcer en appliquant son premier coups de langue le mot DAON en frappant fort avec la langue et diminuant le son ensorte qu'il produise le même effet que le tintement d'une cloche.

(To pronounce by applying the word DAON by striking hard with the tongue and decrease the sound so that it produces the same effect as the tingling of a bell.)

The use of the 'D' instead of a 'T' at the beginning of a long note, even with the advised hard strike, automatically creates a brief moment in which the tone is blown up, as it were.

Indeed, like the tingling of a bell.

As the Dutch flutist Frans Vester (1922-1987) pointed out in his book on W.A. Mozart's works for wind instruments,¹²⁸ this bears striking resemblance to what Leopold Mozart writes in his *Versuch* about the performance of long notes.

Jeder auch auf das stärkste ergriffene Ton hat eine kleine obwohl kaum merkliche Schwäche vor sich: sonst würde es kein Ton, sondern nur ein unangenehmer und unverständlicher Laut seyn. Eben diese Schwäche ist an dem Ende jedes Tones zu hören.

(Every note, even the strongest, starts with a small, although hardly noticeable, weakness: otherwise it would not be a note, but only an unpleasant and incomprehensible sound. This same weakness can be heard at the end of every note.)

For dry or sharp tonguing (*le coup de langue sec*) the instruction is to use the word 'Ta', while in the Adagio's the syllable 'Da' should be applied. At the first 11 pages of the *Méthode*, these syllables are added to the beginnings of the musical exercises, below the notes in question.

Long notes are always indicated with 'Daon' indeed.

The syllable for shorter notes seems to depend on the intended effect, sharp or slow, 'Ta' or 'Da'.

In contradiction to the text on the title page, in the music of the *Method* the use of 'Da' is

¹²⁸ Mozart, L.: *Versuch einer gründlichen Violinschule*. Augsburg, 1756; V §3, quoted by Vester, F.: *W.A. Mozart, over de uitvoering van de werken voor blaasinstrumenten*. Amsterdam, 1995; 25

not limited to notes in slow tempo; the author also prescribes those for diatonic sixteenths, whilst repeated eighth notes and repeated sixteenths are to be pronounced with 'Ta'. See figure 2.12.



Figure 2.12
Page 7 of the *Seule et Vraie Méthode*

This counterintuitive articulation works very well on the horn, making melodic lines of sixteenth notes sound vocal and fluent. The importance the *Seule et Vraie Méthode* attributes to a great variety of articulation is clearly adding to the diversity of performance practice.

Vandenbroek, the Belgium horn player and composer, continues and expands the tradition

in his method for horn in what looks like a challenging system (figures 2.13 and 2.14).¹²⁹



Figure 2.13
Vandebroek, Horn Method page 14, excerpt



Figure 2.14
Vandebroek, Horn Method page 16, excerpt

For comparison: Philip Farkas, in his authoritative 1956 horn method, states there are only two general types of articulation, with and without the tongue, producing legato and staccato.¹³⁰

The text of the *Seule et Vraie Méthode* does not discuss legato playing. In the musical exercises, though, sometimes the word 'Tahit' or 'Dahit' is added to two slurred notes. After experimenting with these words for a while, I found out this brings a very elegant

¹²⁹ Vandebroek, O.: *Méthode nouvelle et raisonnée pour apprendre à donner du Cor*. Paris, 1797

¹³⁰ Farkas, Ph.: *The Art of French Horn Playing*. Berkely, 1956; 49

shape to a legato, especially when slurring from an open note to a stopped one or vice versa. In these cases, the 'hit' provides the delicate extra push to overcome the difference in resistance between two consecutive notes of such dissimilar character.



Figure 2.15
Page 8 of the *Seule et Vraie Méthode* with examples of the 'dahit' articulation

Also for syncopations the author writes an additional 'hit' (see figure 2.15, fifth and sixth staves), indicating an extra impulse on the silent beat. To my surprise, practicing and applying this articulation led to a charming *mezza di voce* effect on the horn. It makes one

think that the performance style in the second half of the 18th century might have been unimaginably different from what we can guess today. Some things are hard to comprehend in retrospect. 18th century composers and performers could very well have had a dissimilar musical vocabulary from the one we nowadays presume.¹³¹

Like in the *Seule et Vraie Méthode*, in his *Daily Exercises* Punto pays ample attention to the syllables 'Ta', 'Da' and 'Daon', needed to pronounce the different notes. Again, he advocates the use of 'hit' for the second note in a slurred passage, which might lead to more activity in the throat than modern tutors deem desirable.

For the execution of sixteenth arpeggio's, he prescribes the use of the syllable 'Da' rather than 'Ta' (figure 2.16), *sans cela les traits ne seront pas bien ronds* (otherwise the passages will not be nicely round).

As a conclusion, using the different articulations suggested by the *Seule et Vraie Méthode* and the *Daily Exercises* brings about the sensation of speaking the music, which obviously contributes to the musical dialogue, so vital to the music of the baroque and classical periods.¹³²

¹³¹ Gjerdingen, R.O.: *Music in the Galant Style*. Oxford, 2007; 4

¹³² Harnoncourt, N.: *Musik als Klangrede. Wege zum einen neuen Musikverständnis*. Salzburg/Vienna, 1982; 171-182

35

Ici il faut observer que l'on ne peut pas employer le mot, *ta*; mais toujours *da*; sans cela les traits ne seront pas bien ronds.
 Hier bemerkt man, daß man nicht das Wort *ta*, sondern immer das weiche *da* gebrauchen muß; sonst werden die Stellen nicht rund.

15 61

Figure 2.16

Page 35 of Puncto's *Daily Exercises*. Translation of the text at the top of the page: *Here one should notice not to use the word 'ta', but always the soft 'da' (das weiche 'da' in German), otherwise the notes will not sound nicely round.*

2.4 Hand stopping and lip bending

Without any further explanation, the author of the *Seule et Vraie Méthode* presents the different ranges of the two horn types including many non-partial notes that can only be reached with a certain degree of manipulation with the lips and mouth and/or the hand inside the bell of the instrument. This takes us into the realm of non-harmonic horn tones, where the magic of lip bending and hand stopping reigns supreme.

The horns that Count von Sporck imported to Bohemia in the 1680's (see chapter 1) were traditionally played with the bells open and up in the air. As a result, these instruments could produce harmonics only, and moreover with a 'natural' intonation, meaning particularly the 11th and 13th partial not corresponding with well-tempered tuning. The desire to play those notes in tune led horn players to adopt the technique of lip bending. A well-trained brass player can move the pitch of single notes up or down by increasing or decreasing lip tension. In the case of a natural brass instrument the semitones close to the harmonic series can be reached relatively easily with this technique.

With music written in the first half of the eighteenth century for the Dresden Hofkapelle as one of the earliest examples, from about 1750 notes more remote to the harmonic series start to appear frequently in horn parts. To produce these notes on the natural horn, the player needs to apply a combination of lip bending and manipulation of the hand inside the bell (hand stopping).¹³³ By maneuvering with the hand inside the bell, horn players can quite easily improve intonation (in exactly the same way as 21st century valve horn players do; more covered to lower the pitch and a more open for the opposite result) and indeed play pitches outside the harmonic series.

Dauprat, in his *Méthode* (1824) writes that until 1750 it was common to play the horn with the bell up in the air, like the contemporary hunting horn, and that some horn players kept doing so until about 1800, mainly to play *forte*. This points to the survival of a much older way of playing and confirms the many pictures of the period showing the horn being played

¹³³ Meucci, R. and Rochetti, G.: 'Horn, (iii) Crooks and hand technique' Grove Music Online. <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000013353?rskey=1l2KIh&result=1#omo-9781561592630-e-0000013353-div1-0000013353.3> Accessed 10 October 2022

in such a position, even if some visual artists seem to exaggerate for pictorial or caricature reasons. See figure 2.17.



Figure 2.17
c. 1755, Musical Gathering, sketch possibly by James Verture. <http://horniconography.com/>

Dauprat noted that some horn players refused playing with the hand outside the bell because they perceived a decrease in the reliability of attacks and intonation.¹³⁴

¹³⁴ Dauprat, 158

As briefly discussed before, Domnich mentioned Hampel as the inventor of stopped notes. His experiments with mutes, related by Domnich in his *Méthode* of 1807/8,¹³⁵ led Hampel to develop and codify hand stopping, in order to improve intonation and increase the melodic possibilities of the horn. According to Domnich, Hampel's application of hand stopping occurred mainly in slow movements.

It is not clear how reliable Domnich is, being an indirect observer living in a later period. Thomas Hiebert convincingly argues that horn players in Dresden must have already used the technique in the 1720s at the latest, before Hampel's arrival in 1737.¹³⁶ It seems justified to say that Hampel learned the basics from the older horn players he got to know in Dresden. The technique was practiced in different places and passed on from master to apprentice. Most likely, Hampel modified and organized the method of hand stopping and taught the principles of what was then still a novelty to outsiders.¹³⁷

According to Hiebert, not only Hampel, but all horn players of the Dresden Court Orchestra seem to have played with the hand inside the bell of the horn as standard.¹³⁸ Reading what Roeser formulated in 1764, I come to a different conclusion. Roeser's description of the technique of hand stopping sounds like horn players started to introduce the hand sporadically inside the bell (when it was required for a particular non-harmonic or passage) but kept on playing without the use of the hand for most of the time.



Figure 2.18
Range of the horn, as given by Roeser, page 14

Below the overview of the range of the horn (figure 2.18), Roeser writes:

Les tons que j'ai marqué de cette croix, sont trop hauts, mais on les peut faire justes en mettant la main dans le pavillon du cor.¹³⁹

¹³⁵ Domnich, iii, iv

¹³⁶ Hiebert, 'The Horn in the Baroque and Classical Periods,' 103-114

¹³⁷ Fitzpatrick, 85

¹³⁸ Hiebert, 'Virtuosity,' 112-159

¹³⁹ Roeser, 14

(The tones that I have marked with the cross are too high, but they can be corrected by putting the hand in the bell of the horn.)

By using the hand stopping technique, new notes alien to the harmonic series, became available for the horn virtuoso. These stopped notes, with their more nasal timbre, at the same time allowed the horn to be used effectively in dramatic spots for expressive purposes.¹⁴⁰ As Jeffrey Snedeker points out in his book *Horn teaching at the Paris Conservatoire*, Roeser lived in Paris for much of his professional life, at least from 1762, so we can safely assume that the hornists Punto met in the French capital were aware of the method Roeser advocates.¹⁴¹

Like Punto, the Dutch Spandau, -with whom he performed in London (see chapter 1)- was an early exponent of hand stopping and, after hearing him in concert, the author John Hawkins in 1776 wrote knowledgeably about the improvements which this could bring. Until then, players had had considerable difficulties in minor keys as they could not easily play the minor third in tune. Hawkins commented particularly that in a passage in C minor, *...all the intervals seemed to be as perfect as in any wind-instrument; this improvement was effected by putting his right hand into the bottom or bell of the instrument and attempering the sounds by the application of his fingers to different parts of the tube.*¹⁴²

In the early 19th century, Hampel was credited as the inventor of hand stopping, some 50 years after the occurrence. Domnich, the former student of Punto, is quite clear in his 1807 *Méthode de premier et de second cor*:¹⁴³

A la même époque, le hautbois, bien éloigné du point de perfection où il est parvenu de nos jours, était un instrument aigre, criard et peu propre à l'accompagnement d'un chant gracieux ou d'un morceau d'expression. Quand on l'employait à cet usage, on avait coutume, pour l'adoucir, d'introduire du coton dans la concavité du pavillon. Hampl, un des plus célèbres cors du temps, conçut l'idée de substituer cette méthode à celle des sourdines. Il fit un tampon de coton disposé de manière à remplir l'objet qu'il avait en vue. Sa surprise fut extrême, la première fois qu'il s'en servit, d'entendre que son instrument était haussé d'un demi-ton. Ce fut pour lui un trait de lumière, et son génie étendant rapidement une découverte due au hasard, il vit le moyen, en présentant et retirant alternativement son tampon, de parcourir

¹⁴⁰ Hiebert, T.: 'Hampel (Hampl, Hampla, Humpl), Anton Joseph', Grove Music Online.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.12292> Accessed 4 March 2022

¹⁴¹ Snedeker, J.: *Horn teaching at the Paris Conservatoire, 1792 to 1903: the transition from natural horn to valved horn*. New York, 2021; 12

¹⁴² Hawkins, J.: *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music*. London, 1776; 4:144, quoted by Humphries, Punto in London.

¹⁴³ Domnich, iii, iv

sans interruption l'échelle diatonique et chromatique de toutes les gammes. Alors il composa pour le Cor une musique nouvelle, où il fit entrer des notes qui jusques-là lui étaient étrangères. Quelque temps après, ayant remarqué que le tampon pouvait être avantageusement remplacé par la main, il cessa de se servir du tampon.

(At the same time, the oboe, far from the point of perfection to which it has reached in our day, was a sharp, shrill instrument, and little suited to the accompaniment of a graceful song or a piece of expression. When it was used for this purpose, it was customary to soften it by introducing cotton into the cavity of the pavilion. Hampl, one of the most famous horn players of the time, conceived the idea of using this method instead of using a mute. He made a cotton plug or stopper arranged so as to fill the object he had in view. His surprise was extreme, the first time he used it, to hear that his instrument was raised by a semitone. It was for him a ray of light, and his genius rapidly extending a discovery due to chance, he saw the means, by presenting and withdrawing his plug alternately, of traversing without interruption the diatonic and chromatic scale of all the keys. So he composed new music for the Horn, into which he introduced notes which until then had been foreign to him. Sometime later, having noticed that the stopper could be advantageously replaced by the hand, he ceased to use the stopper.)

Although Hampel was not the sole inventor of hand stopping on the horn,¹⁴⁴ his experiments with mutes led him to develop and systematize hand stopping to increase the number of possible notes on the horn.

Reading Domnich's text carefully, I conclude that Hampel discovered to his amazement how the horn becomes shorter and thus a semitone higher by forcefully closing the bell.

This was the real discovery, the novelty that Jan Václav Stich became acquainted with when he went to study with Hampel in Dresden.

Just about every horn player experiences that the pitch of the horn can easily be lowered by liping the tone down with the embouchure, supported by a right hand that gently covers the bell.¹⁴⁵ But that the instrument sounds a semitone higher by means of closing the bell with a strong hand combined with increased lip tension, that was Hampel's major contribution. It seems to me, the conclusion of the Australian horn player and scholar Robert James Stonestreet, namely that Hampel should be credited for the *perfection* of hand

¹⁴⁴ Fitzpatrick, 85

¹⁴⁵ Bate, Ph., Revised by Campbell, M.: 'Stopped notes (ii),' Grove Music Online, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.53897> Accessed 15 August 2022

stopping, is debatable.¹⁴⁶ John Ericson, professor of horn at Arizona State University, puts it better when he states that Hampel gets the credits for *codifying* this innovation.¹⁴⁷

As mentioned, the *Seule et Vraie Méthode* remains silent about stopped notes, the author apparently not being too keen to reveal its secrets. Was it really, as Fitzpatrick says, a trade secret?¹⁴⁸ One might think this is somewhat romanticized.

I am convinced that any natural horn player who finds out that when the hand moves in the area of, or further inside the bell, this influences not only the tone color but also the pitch, will then gratefully start experimenting with the discovery. About the same year Roeser explains the application of non-harmonic, stopped notes in his 1764 *Essay*, horn player Jean-Joseph Rodolphe (1730–1812) used hand stopped notes in his performances.¹⁴⁹

If the skills were kept secret to outsiders, why then would Punto have given a demonstration of the new hand stopping technique in London, 1772?¹⁵⁰

Anyway, the technique is not needed for at least 95 percent of the material of the *Seule et Vraie Méthode*. The *Daily Exercises* require some rudimentary hand stopping of the kind explained by Roeser.

It is only on page 83 and 84, in an Adagio, that more remote non-harmonics appear in the *Méthode*. On all previous pages the student is solely confronted with partials and with notes so close to these they can be bent to the correct intonation with good lip technique and a little help from the right hand.

We find the same strategy in the *Daily Exercises*:

Only on page 44 does the first f' appear, a very mildly stopped note. Page 46 shows the first a', also a note that requires little hand action on the horn. The stopped notes are almost always alternating with partials, which makes them easier to execute. See figure 2.19.

¹⁴⁶ Stonestreet, R.J.: *Historical developments in writing for low horn*, (Ph.D. diss.). Tasmania, 2014; 18

¹⁴⁷ Ericson, J.: *The Natural Horn and Its Technique*, self-published. https://www.public.asu.edu/~jgerics/natural_horn.htm accessed 20 January 2022

¹⁴⁸ Fitzpatrick, 182

¹⁴⁹ Morley-Pegge, *The French Horn*, 90

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*; 86

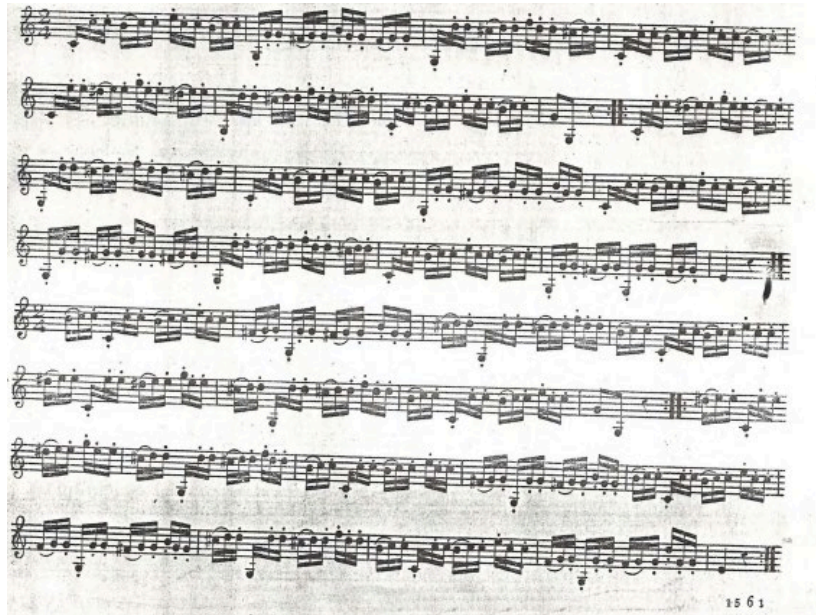


Figure 2.19

One of Punto's *Daily Exercises*, page 53, with non-partial usually approached from the nearest harmonic

On page 51 the first a'' shows up. One page later, things finally get a bit more challenging for the hand with f#, b', c# and d#: all tones that can only be produced with a firm stopping technique. Finally, on page 56 (figure 2.20), the first forcefully stopped tone, the low F, appears.



Figure 2.20

The last of the *Daily Exercises*, page 56, with stopped notes, including the heavily stopped F

The few bars that we still have of Hampel's *Lection pro Cornui* go much further into the area of deep hand stopping, just as the horn concerto attributed to Hampel shows a much more elaborated use of remote non-partial. (See figures 2.2 and 2.3)

Hampel writes non-harmonics that do not appear in the *Method* and that Punto completely ignores in the *Daily Exercises*. The B in the fourth bar of the extracts, nor the E in the penultimate bar of the second staff of figure 2.3 occur in the *Method* or the *Daily Exercises*.

Strangely enough, also the bb' in the second bar of the last line (normally slightly low and therefor easily corrected with lip bending) is non-existent in the *Daily Exercises*. In the third bar before the end, just like in the Horn Concerto in D attributed to him, Hampel again writes the very difficult A that Punto avoids.

Hampel uses fully stopped notes in scales (figure 2.3, fragment 22) and even in chromatic passages (figure 2.3, fragment 21). The *Seule et Vraie Méthode* and Punto's *Daily Exercises* never do that.

Looking at the use of stopped notes in both Hampel's *Lection pro Cornui* and the to him attributed Concerto in D, Lund 13, it is hard to believe the *Seule et Vraie Méthode* is almost entirely the composition of Hampel, only perfected by his pupil Punto. In terms of playing technique, the *Method* and Punto's *Daily Exercises* seem to go back in time. Was he conservative in his attitude to the horn and was that part of his success?

Many *jeunes élèves* of today are particularly keen on finding out the secrets of the hand in the bell. Maybe Punto put the emphasis where it should be, with the harmonic series. It is in that selection of sounds where horn players spend a huge part of their professional careers. In orchestral music of the classical period, the horn hardly gets away from the good old partials. That is where the instrument plays its harmonic and coloring function. The majority of (pre)classical symphonies were written with a purely natural horn in mind. In an overwhelmingly large number of cases, orchestral horn players did not need hand stopping and had no reason to even put the hand inside the bell.

As horn player and researcher John Manganaro writes, initially hand stopping technique was the sole domain of solo and chamber music horn parts.¹⁵¹

The anonymous author of *New Instructions for the French Horn* (c1780) states:

Should you want to use the chromatic tones, you may hold the Horn with your left or right hand as near as you can to the mouth-piece, the bell to bear against your side, one hand must be within the edge of the bell ready to put into the pavilion or the bell of the horn as notes may require, but this will be better found out by practice than it is possible here to describe. Mr Ponto (sic) and many others, famous on his instrument, constantly uses this method, by which means the half tones are expressed, which is not to be done by any other method, but it is deemed by judges of the horn that the principal beauty, the tone, is greatly impaired thereby.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ Manganaro, J.: horniconography.com accessed 22 april 2023

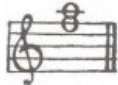
¹⁵² Anonymous, *New Instructions*; 4

If this observation is correct, in 1780 Punto used the hand technique Roeser described in his *Essay*, playing the harmonic series as open as possible, the hand resting outside the bell, ready to be inserted for non-harmonics. The author of *New Instructions for the French Horn* was not alone in his criticism. Charles Burney, in the article on the horn he contributed to in 1803 for Rees's *Cyclopædia*:

It must, however, be discovered by every discriminating hearer, that the factitious half notes that are made by the hand in the mouth of the instrument, are sounds of a different quality from the natural tones of the instrument. We have often thought that Punto (sic), with all his dexterity, produced some of these new notes with similar difficulty to a person ridden by the nightmare, who tries to cry out but cannot.¹⁵³

As the notated music of the *Daily Exercises* demonstrates, Punto is reticent about the tonal possibilities of the instrument. In the introduction of the *Seule et Vraie Méthode* the author explains that the young composer writing for two horns, should never use the combination f'' - a'' because it will lead to a terrible dissonance, with the a'' being too low and the f'' being too high.

Il faut aussi que le jeune Compositeur fasse bien attention de ne jamais

placer ces deux intervalles ensemble  par rapport que le La est trop bas et le Fa est trop haut cela feroit une dissonance terrible.

(The young composer must also be very careful never to place these two intervals together because the A is too low and the F is too high, that would make a terrible dissonance.)

This seems like a confusing recommendation. First the author gives an overview of all possible notes of the natural horn, -partials and non-partial- including factitious tones in the lowest regions plus the always very shaky d', and thereafter warns against using two tones that often occur together in (orchestral) literature. The *Seule et Vraie Méthode* does not follow its own advice. In the exercises of the *Method*, the major third f'' - a'' shows up many times, even on strong beats.

However, the comment makes sense when it comes to the orchestral players who do not use the hand in the bell at all to play relatively simple accompaniment parts, something that was still prevalent in the 1790s. In the 'uncorrected' harmonic series indeed the f'' (11th

¹⁵³ Burney, 'Horn', 18:200.

partial) is sharp, and the a'' (13th partial) is flat, creating a too small major third when played together.

If the horn player is trained to play with the hand inside the bell, there are two options.

The f'' should be corrected to well-tempered tuning by lipping down and gently covering the bell with the hand inside.

To adjust the a'' the horn player can either play it lipped up and with the hand entirely removed from the bell, or lipped down and with the bell completely closed.

In both cases the combined interval major third is easy to control, the intonation manageable, the timbre interesting and quite pleasant. The advice against the combined interval f'' – a'' in horn parts is ignored by many composers, including Punto, which proves that the technique of playing the horn with the bell entirely open fell into disuse by 1800.

Starting with the experiments and performances of the Dresden Court Orchestra in the first half of the eighteenth century, the development of hand stopping went on throughout the century, eventually leading to the invention of the valves in 1814 and the fanatical defense of the natural horn by the first generations of teachers at the Conservatoire de Paris.¹⁵⁴

Punto was still cautious about the use of stopped notes, limiting his music largely to the harmonic series and its most approachable derivatives, not sharing information about the technique. Vandenbroek in his 1797 horn method illustrates different hand positions for non-partials and explains how these should be supported by the throat.

Pour prendre tous les semi-tons justes: beaucoup qui exigent d'être donnés par le gosier et soutenus par le souffle du gosier au lieu du souffle de la langue.¹⁵⁵
(To produce all the right semi-tones: many require to be made by the throat and sustained by the breath of the throat instead of the breath of the tongue.)

Nineteenth century horn methods by Louis François Dauprat (1781-1868) and Jacques-François Gallay (1795-1864)¹⁵⁶ demonstrate a much more daring attitude to the non-harmonic possibilities of the natural horn, as if the instrument is unobstructed by any obstacle.

¹⁵⁴ See for instance; Snedeker, *Horn teaching*

¹⁵⁵ Vandenbroek, 4

¹⁵⁶ Gallay, J.F.: *Méthode pour le cor*. Paris, 1843

2.5 Embellishment and Variations

The period of musical embellishment

Starting around 1600 with the practice of basso continuo,¹⁵⁷ until at least the 19th century, notation in many cases provided a framework for improvisation, leading to distinctions between written and performed pitches and rhythms, by the use of a variety of decorations. Composers expected performers to treat the notes they provided as a starting point for embellishment and extempore improvisation, especially in repeated sections.¹⁵⁸

During Punto's entire life, the second half of the 18th century, embellishment played an essential role in the performance of music. In his treatise *Versuch einer Anleitung die Flöte traversiere zu spielen*, Johann Joachim Quantz (1697-1773) advocates the use of musical decoration.¹⁵⁹ The *Versuch* was published in 1752, when Punto was 6 years old.

Der simple Gesang muss im Allegro, eben so wohl als im Adagio, durch Vorschläge, und durch die andern kleinen wesentlichen Manieren, ausgeziehret und gefälliger gemacht werden: nachdem es jedesmal die vorkommende Leidenschaft erheijchet. (In the Allegro, as well as in the Adagio, the simple song must be embellished and made more pleasant by appoggiaturas and by the other small essential grace notes, as the occurring passion requires.)

Anton Reicha (1770-1836) describes the era 1770-1810 as 'the period of musical embellishment.'¹⁶⁰ This period almost coincides with Punto's musical career as a performer/composer.

Next to Quantz and Reicha, also Leopold Mozart¹⁶¹ and Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach¹⁶² emphasized the importance of decorating music with extempore ornamentation. Not only his compositional qualities, but certainly also his skills and flair as an improviser determined

¹⁵⁷ A basso continuo (through bass or thoroughbass; Fr. basse continue; Ger. Generalbass) is an instrumental bass line which runs throughout a piece, over which the player improvises ('realizes') a chordal accompaniment. The bass may be figured, with accidentals and numerals ('figures') placed over or under it to indicate the harmonies required. Continuo realization is essentially an improvised art, and much remains undocumented and ambiguous; most figured-bass methods were published to teach the elements of harmony rather than the art of accompaniment.

Williams, P. and Ledbetter, D.: 'Continuo [basso continuo] (It.)' Grove Music Online.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.06353> accessed 8 September 2023

¹⁵⁸ Neumann, F.: *Ornamentation and Improvisation in Mozart*. Princeton, 1986; 275

¹⁵⁹ Quantz, J.J.: *Versuch einer Anleitung die Flöte traversiere zu spielen*. Berlin, 1752; 117, §26

¹⁶⁰ Reicha, A.: *Cours de composition musicale ou traité complet et raisonné d'harmonie pratique*. Paris, 1816; 12

¹⁶¹ Mozart, L.: *Versuch einer gründlichen Violinschule*. Augsburg, 1756

¹⁶² Bach, C.Ph.E.: *Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen. Part 1*. Berlin, 1753. *Part 2*; Berlin, 1762

the fame of the performer throughout the 18th century.¹⁶³ Extempore elaboration of all kinds of music was endemic and, in many respects, fundamental to the aesthetic experience of composer, performer, and listener alike.¹⁶⁴

In an earlier period, Telemann published his *Methodical Sonatas for violin or flute and continuo* in 1728/1732.¹⁶⁵ He wrote these sonatas to teach amateurs to play in the style of the virtuosi, specifically with respect to the practice of proper ornamentation. For this purpose, he wrote out the possible embellishment for the slow movements.

In the same tradition we find didactic compositions like *L'arte di suonare il violino* (The art of playing the violin), 1750, by Francesco Geminiani (1687-1762) and *Sonaten mit veränderten Reprisen* (Sonatas with altered Recapitulations) that Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714-1788) published in 1760.

Quantz argues variety in repeats to be supplemented above all in the Adagio, but also in the Allegro, when the melody is simple. However, the main notes of the melody should remain recognizable despite the variations and adornments.¹⁶⁶

Composer and virtuoso violin player Giuseppe Tartini (1692-1770) wrote a book on ornamentation that was published after his death.¹⁶⁷ His most famous pupil, Pietro Nardini (1722 – 1793), particularly famed for his performance of slow movements,¹⁶⁸ continued this tradition. Nardini's art of embellishment is documented in the 1798 publication of *l'Art du Violon* by Jean-Baptiste Cartier (1765-1841).¹⁶⁹ Cartier copied three of Nardini's *Adagios brodés* (embellished adagio's), a simple melody over a bass line, with an extra staff presenting the virtuosic decoration of the tune (figure 2.21).

¹⁶³ McVeigh, S.: 'Performance in the "long eighteenth century": an overview'. In: *The Cambridge History of Musical Performance*. New York, 2012; 505

¹⁶⁴ Brown, C.: *Classical & Romantic Performance Practice 1750-1900*. New York, 1999; 415

¹⁶⁵ Telemann, G.Ph.: *Sonate Metodiche à Violino Solo o Flauto traverso*. Hamburg, 1728/1732

¹⁶⁶ Quantz, chapters xii and xiii

¹⁶⁷ Tartini, G.: *Traité des Agréments de la Musique*. Paris, 1771

¹⁶⁸ Dellaborra, M.T.: 'Nardini, Pietro' Grove Music Online

<https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000019572?rskey=hO4FvR&result=1> accessed 18 August 2022

¹⁶⁹ Cartier, J-B.: *l'Art du Violon*. Paris, 1798

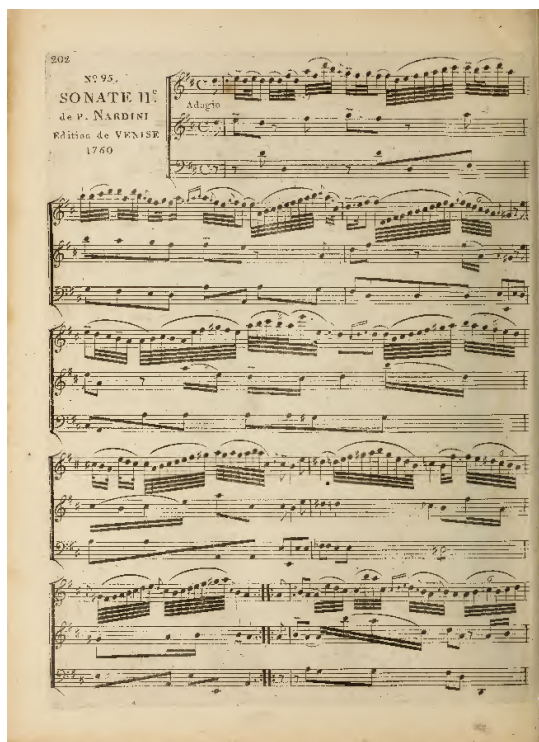


Figure 2.21

The first page of an *Adagio Brodé* by Nardini

The staff at the top presents the suggested embellishment of the middle staff melody

Étienne Ozi (1754-1813), the first bassoon teacher at the Conservatoire de Paris, does the same in his Method for bassoon.¹⁷⁰ In the chapter *Exemples des agréments du chant pour les mouvements lent* (examples of vocal embellishments for slow movements) he writes a bass line with a simple tune on top; on a staff in between these two lines, he writes virtuosic embellishments over the melody (figure 2.22).

¹⁷⁰ Ozi, E.: *Nouvelle Méthode de basson*. Paris, 1803

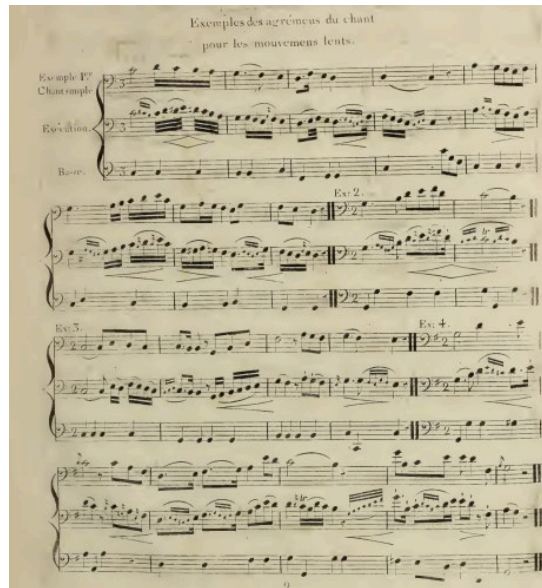


Figure 2.22
Examples of 'vocal embellishments' in Ozi's *Nouvelle Méthode*

Three decades after the death of Punto, about 1832, Louis Spohr (1784-1859), still made a clear distinction between a 'fine' and a 'correct' style, rejecting the latter.¹⁷¹ For him, the 'correct' performer demonstrated adherence to the text, whereas the 'fine' performer used the musical notation as a basis for tasteful modifications and elaborations, meant to strengthen the emotional eloquence.

The musical stars of the late 18th century, the traveling virtuosi, all seemed to have belonged to the 'fine' performers. Reviews never praise their skills to literally render the music at hand but do rave about their ability to move audiences and be moved themselves through the music. Especially in non-orchestral contexts, written down music above all served as a point of departure, a recipe to which the player was expected to add his own interpretation within the structure and boundaries of the musical language of place and time.

The main sources for historical information about the horn, do not mention the subject at all. Morley-Pegge focusses on the evolution of the instrument, materials, makers, and players.¹⁷² Kurt Janetzky (1906-1994) and Bernhard Brüche (1942-2011) give a concise overview of the history of the horn and its players.¹⁷³ Punto is praised for his virtuosity and is

¹⁷¹ Spohr, L.: *Violinschule*. Vienna, c.1832; 181

¹⁷² Morley-Pegge, *The French Horn*

¹⁷³ Janetzky, K. and Brüche, B.: *Das Horn*. Mainz, 1984

said to be a shining star in the sky of the horn guild. But, reading this book, one can only guess what that virtuosity entailed.

Also Fitzpatrick, in *The Horn and Horn Playing in the Austro-Bohemian Tradition 1680 - 1830*¹⁷⁴, demonstrates his affection for the word *virtuoso*, without really explaining its meaning. He does mention the 1801 review in the *Prager Neue Zeitung* that raved about *variations* as an asset of Punto's playing, but forgets to elaborate on the deeper meaning of that sentence.¹⁷⁵ In the section with the for this research so promising title *The virtuoso hand-horn style: some notes on technique*¹⁷⁶ the author indeed eloquently discusses the *...good singing technique* and the *...smooth handstopping technique* of Punto,¹⁷⁷ but does not mention style at all. Nothing about the *variations* and no word about the delicate style and good taste that Punto apparently possessed, and which brought him fame as one of the most celebrated horn players in history.

An important book on brass instruments in general, Anthony Baynes' (1912-1997) *Brass Instruments*,¹⁷⁸ remains silent on the issue of improvisation and embellishment.

In his excellent article *The Horn in the Baroque and Classical periods*,¹⁷⁹ Hiebert pays a lot of attention to the topics hand stopping, cor basse and cor alto, but apparently, and very unfortunately, did not have enough pages at his disposal to shed light on the fine style of the historical horn soloists.

A more recent standard work by John Humphries, *The Early Horn*, is less evasive on the subject and mentions ornamentation as a vitally important feature of musical style. As Humphries writes *.....in general, however, the horn repertoire from the period calls for little more than trills and appoggiaturas*.¹⁸⁰ How come? It is true Quantz wrote "some persons greatly abuse the use of extempore embellishments", but why put the emphasis on restraint without even starting to explore the possibilities?

¹⁷⁴ Fitzpatrick, 170

¹⁷⁵ Ibid. 171

¹⁷⁶ Ibid. 178

¹⁷⁷ Ibid. 183

¹⁷⁸ Baines, A.: *Brass Instruments, their history and development*. London, 1976

¹⁷⁹ Hiebert, 'The Horn in the Baroque and Classical periods.'

¹⁸⁰ Humphries, *The Early Horn*, 75

2.6 Embellishment in early horn methods

What did horn methods of the period around 1800 write about extempore embellishment? Duvernoy does not spend many words on the subject. In his horn method he explains that small, added notes occur and that they should not distort the bar. Duvernoy calls the grace notes *notes de goût* (notes of taste),¹⁸¹ a term explained by Reicha as follows:¹⁸²

C'est avec raison qu'en France, on appelle les petites notes, Notes de goût; car c'est lui qui en dirige l'emploi, surtout lorsqu'elles sont places dans la Mélodie.

(It is with good reason that in France, we call the grace notes, notes of taste; for it is the taste that directs their use, especially when they are placed in the melody.)

Domnich explains the various notated decorations. He allows the student freedom of implementation. After his interpretation of the *Grupetto*, he writes ...*on peut l'orner de cette manière et de beaucoup d'autres* (one can adorn it in this manner and in many others).¹⁸³ And further on, in the article *Du Goût et de l'expression*; ...*C'est lui qui dirige le musicien dans le choix des agréments* (On taste and expression: it is the taste that guides the musician in the choice of the embellishments).¹⁸⁴

Also horn colleague Dauprat, whose *Méthode* is one of the most comprehensive pedagogical works for any musical instrument,¹⁸⁵ warns against excessive use of embellishment. But he does write an elaborate chapter *Sur les Agréments de la Musique*, (On the Ornaments in Music). Dauprat advocates tasteful use of ornaments, in order to bring variety to the music, and to give color, character and life to even the simplest things. He explains the relationship of ornaments with the underlying harmony and structure and warns that also a devoted horn player will never become a real virtuoso if he rests content with the mastery of purely mechanical difficulties, and is not a little versed in the study of harmony and composition.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸¹ Duvernoy, 8

¹⁸² Reicha, 90

¹⁸³ Domnich, 23

¹⁸⁴ Ibid. 92

¹⁸⁵ Snedeker, J.: 'Method for High-Horn and Low-Horn by Louis-Francois Dauprat.' In: *Historic Brass Society Journal* 09, 1997

¹⁸⁶ Dauprat, 150-151

Not a word about the horn being too vulnerable to deal with extempore embellishment. On the contrary. In the same chapter, Dauprat introduces Etudes nos. 3 and 4,¹⁸⁷ with simple themes, and explains those would be ...*bare, cold, and monotonous* if performed with unembellished notes. At the same time the author recommends discretion and sobriety, and advises to use the presented overload of ornamentation for the purpose of study only.

La netteté, la légèreté et la grace sont les qualités qu'on acquiert par l'exercice bien dirigé de ces agréments.

(Precision, lightness, and grace are qualities acquired by well-directed practice of these ornaments.)

Obviously, for Dauprat and contemporaries the horn was an instrument that contained these qualities, and they were to be obtained by training and digesting an abundance of ornaments.

Kling, in his trilingual horn method, puts it even more poignantly in the conclusion of his exemplary chapter *The Embellishments in Music*:

Much variety may be imparted to different passages by the judicious use of the above graces, and the most simple passages may, in thus giving them added color, character and animation, be greatly embellished thereby.¹⁸⁸

With these distinguished horn players and their methods in mind, it becomes clear that the natural horn has been a full member of the musical instrument family, and that the advices and instructions of the great musical thinkers of the baroque, classical and early romantic period most certainly apply to it.

2.7 The *Seule et Vraie Méthode* as a catalogue of embellishment

In this respect it is most interesting to have another look at the *études* for two horns in the *Seule et Vraie Méthode*.¹⁸⁹ Already on page 6, second system, the author introduces a simple two-part melody in horn fifths, a straightforward theme of 8 + 10 bars, basic material that horn players should be able to produce flawlessly in any key (Figure 2.23).¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁷ Ibid. 155

¹⁸⁸ Kling, H.: *Horn Schule*, Hannover, 1865; 51

¹⁸⁹ Hampel/Punto, *Méthode*

For a discussion on the method and the co-authorship with Hampel, see chapter 2.1

¹⁹⁰ For a discussion about the syllables indicated between the staves, see chapter 2.3

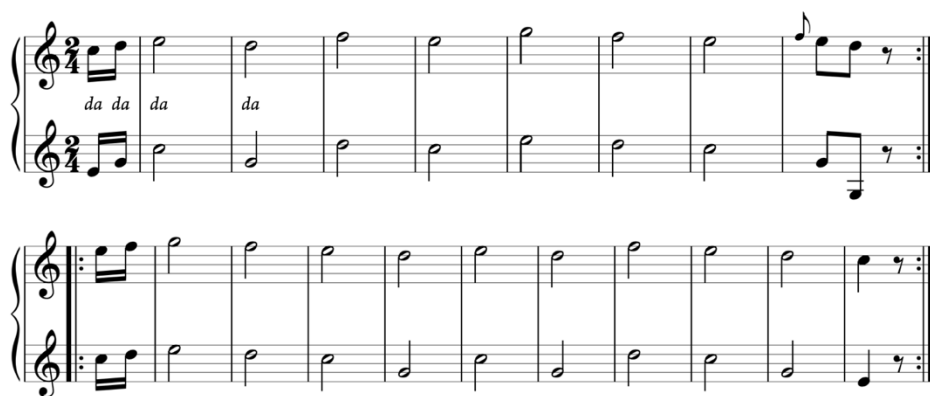


Figure 2.23
Seule et Vraie Méthode, page 6, main theme

The *Method* subsequently uses this melody to vary and embellish it endlessly for the next 80 pages, until the end of the book. In the beginning the students get to practice quite obvious rhythmic variations such as eighths, triplets and sixteenths, but from page 8 onwards, also pitches that differ from the original melody appear in the music, like the passing notes at the end of almost every bar in the variation reproduced in figure 2.24:



Figure 2.24
Seule et Vraie Méthode, page 8

Further variations that introduce a new rhythm, always first return to the basic melody, like this example on page 10 (figure 2.25),



Figure 2.25
Seule et Vraie Méthode, page 10

which is then also embellished melodically on the subsequent page (Figure 2.26). Note the use of the harmony f'' - a'' in bar 3, despite the advice in the introduction of the *method* to avoid this combined interval (see chapter 2.4).



Figure 2.26
Seule et Vraie Méthode, page 11

Some versions of the melody are extremely sober, interspersed with variations that contain more playful adornment and great challenges in scope and technique. The appoggiatura, already used in bar 8 of the main theme (Figure 2.23), appears for the first time as an addition to other notes of the melody on page 28 (Figure 2.27):



Figure 2.27
Seule et Vraie Méthode, page 28, appoggiaturas

Between page 28 and page 41, which is almost halfway through the *Méthode*, there is not a single version of the theme without grace notes.¹⁹¹

Both horn parts, cor alto and cor basse, have an equal share in the etudes. Every student, the high and the low horn player, learns to deal with the phenomenon of embellishment in a playful way, and in their own characteristic idiom. In the variation on page 55, see Figure 2.28, the cor alto is challenged most with scale figures in sixteenth notes.

¹⁹¹ Duvernoy, 8



Figure 2.28
Seule et Vraie Méthode, page 55, cor alto virtuosity

The etude on page 71 demands typical acrobatics from the cor basse (Figure 2.29). Repeated quick jumps of more than one octave require a skillful technique and strong nerves.



Figure 2.29
Seule et Vraie Méthode, page 71, cor basse acrobatics

Arriving at page 83, the students must be ready to have an extremely flexible embouchure and suppleness in the articulation to make the kind of agility in Figure 2.30 possible. Both horns are challenged with big intervals, the first horn going up to the 20th harmonic in bar 5. The short trills (bars 2, 4 and 8) and rapid turns (bars 9-11) add to the virtuosic demands of the cor alto.



Figure 2.30
Seule et Vraie Méthode, page 83, with an agile cor alto part

Only at the end of the *Method* fully stopped notes appear. Still using variations on the basic melody, the author composes three Adagios in written c minor. Figure 2.31 shows the third Adagio, page 84. The high horn player will have to practice coordination of the lips and hand inside the bell to produce a smooth alternation between the harmonics and non-harmonics. The low horn has to fully hand stop the d', the a \flat ', and the f', and needs well trained ears and lips to successfully perform the modulations in the second half of the etude.



Figure 2.31
Seule et Vraie Méthode, page 84, variation in the minor key

By now the successful horn student has mastered most technical challenges of the instrument and its basic idiom by practicing the full catalogue of embellishments offered by the *Single and True Method*, a tutor that joins a long tradition of using decoration and variation as a didactic model.

Whether this was the *Méthode Punto* inherited from Hampel, or solely his own, he must have been a master in performing modifications and variations on the spot. It is certain that the possibilities of embellished or improvised repeats played an important role in solo pieces of the long eighteenth century.¹⁹²

And indeed, in a review of his 1801 concert in Prague with Beethoven, the critic of the *Prager Neue Zeitung* was impressed by the musical variations Punto chose.

Die gewählten Variationen enthielten wirklich musikalische Neuheiten.¹⁹³
 (The chosen variations contained real musical novelties).

The *Seule et Vraie Méthode* offers us an impression of a carefully crafted horn technique and represents a sure guide to the extempore ornamental practice of Punto.

¹⁹² Raff, Ch.: '»Veränderte Reprisen« in der Claviermusik der Wiener Klassiker?' In: *Musiktheorie im 19. Jahrhundert*. 11. Jahreskongress der Gesellschaft für Musiktheorie in Bern 2011. Bern, 2017; 274

¹⁹³ Quoted by Dlabac, 213

The performance practice of extempore embellishment and improvisation continued well into the 19th century (and many traces can still be found in jazz and popular music today¹⁹⁴), when a slow but radical change took place in the role and principles of composers, and thus in the interpretation of their written music. A view in which much music had at least an element of improvisation gradually turned into an aesthetic of the all-governing composer. The notion that pitch-specific western musical notation is strict and compelling, has only grown throughout the 19th century.¹⁹⁵

Embellishment, extempore ornamentation, improvisation; the main 20th century horn tutors avoid the topic completely. The focus is very much on posture, breathing, two ways of articulation (staccato vs legato), sound production and accuracy. All of these separate factors cannot be overrated, since they indicate the competences today's horn players have to master. It is a pity, though, that less attention is devoted to the actual music the horn is the vehicle for. The recommendations of Quantz, L. Mozart, C.Ph.E. Bach and Reicha about extempore embellishment will always apply to music from their time. Or did their recommendations not count for an instrument as difficult to keep in check as the horn? A comparison with jazz might be useful. Nowadays there are very few horn players who venture into improvised jazz. The instrument has the reputation of being unruly; indirect, slow, and risky due to the harmonics being so close. *The not very flexible horn is actually totally unsuitable for jazz music*, thus jazz horn player Morris Kliphuis in an interview in *De Volkskrant*, 14 May 2018. Although there are a number of successful jazz horn players on the planet (Kliphuis certainly being one of them), and although there is a growing number of methods for jazz horn, in general the horn has the reputation of being a squirrely instrument, useless for performing fast flexible and agile melodic lines that are so much in demand in jazz improvisation. The occasions when I had the opportunity to play on valve horn in a big band, I certainly experienced the limits of my instrument. Compared to the deftly articulating trumpet and the extremely flexible trombone, the horn is an indirect, slow responding brass instrument. Moreover, due to the big range of the instrument, the upper

¹⁹⁴ Kreitner, K., Jambou, L., Hunter, D., Carter, S.A., Walls, P., Ng, K-M., Schulenberg, D., and Brown, C., 'Ornaments' Grove Music Online <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.49928> accessed 31 December 2020

¹⁹⁵ Bent, I.D., Hughes, D.W., Provine, R.C., Rastall, R., Kilmer, A., Hiley, D., Szendrei, J., Payne, T.B., Bent, M., and Chew, G., 'Notation' Grove Music Online, 2001
<https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.20114> accessed 29 December 2020

octave moves through the diatonic and even chromatic spheres of the harmonic series. In the heat of the improvisation, it can be difficult to find out what pitch one is actually playing.

These rather negative connotations nowadays seem to apply to an extreme degree to the period horn that lacks the relative security of valves. It is not without reason that in our times the instrument bears the nickname *Glücksspirale* (Wheel of Fortune) in Germany.¹⁹⁶ Indeed, one of the most heard remarks about the natural horn is that it is such a risky and difficult to master instrument. Players are supposed to be satisfied when they hit the majority of the notes. Nothing should distract them from the ultimate goal of literal reproduction of the printed music.

Studying and practicing the *Seule et Vraie Méthode* offers the period horn player a way out of the constraints of the meticulously obedient replication of the written notes. The *Method* of Punto demonstrates the possibilities of a playful, diverse, and artistic interpretation of the musical text. By adding grace notes and embellishment to the music, the horn player diminishes the fear of *cracking* notes. It is all in the game.

¹⁹⁶ Ely, N. 'Authentischer Brahms' https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/authentischer-brahms.727.de.html?dram:article_id=101135 Accessed 28 August 2020

3. Giovanni Punto and the terzo suono

3.1 Multiphonics avant la lettre

The concert Punto and Beethoven played in Prague in 1801, was reviewed in the *Prager Neue Zeitung*:

Dieser Vortrag auf einem sonst so beschwerlichen Blasinstrumente war ganz Gesang, sowohl in der Höhe als Tiefe. In einigen theils angenehmen, theils erschütternden Kadenzen blies der Künstler sogar Doppel- und dreifache Töne. Die gewählten Variationen enthielten wirklich musikalische Neuheiten.¹⁹⁷

(This performance on an otherwise onerous instrument was totally vocal, both in the high and low register. In some partly pleasant, partly shattering cadenzas the artist executed even double and triple tones. The chosen variations contained real musical novelties.)

The only feasible extended technique to produce double tones and chords on the horn, is playing one note on the instrument and humming another one ‘through’ it. If the frequencies of these two sounds are harmonically related, a combination tone or resultant tone will be perceived. The best result gives a pure fifth.

The effect of sounds generated by a normally monophonic instrument where two or more pitches are heard simultaneously, today is called multiphonics.

Generating multiple-pitch sonorities on a brass instrument like the horn, relies on the performer producing one tone in the normal way, with the lips vibrating against the mouthpiece, while humming a second tone with impeccable intonation and dynamic balance. Additional sum and difference tones are created by the mixing of the two tones in the body of the instrument. This is the basis of the extended technique of playing double notes and chords on the horn, which has been known and practiced since the 18th century.¹⁹⁸

As the British-South African musicologist Percival Kirby (1887-1970) explains, when the ratio of two frequencies sounding together is the same as those of two tones from the harmonic

¹⁹⁷ Quoted by Dlabac, 213

¹⁹⁸ Campbell, M.: ‘Multiphonics’ Grove Music Online. <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.43536>
Accessed 1 July 2022

series, 'the listener hears not only the two notes (...) but also the combination tones produced by the sum and difference of their frequencies.'¹⁹⁹

For instance, if the note played on the horn has a frequency of 200 Hz and the sound sung 'through' the horn a frequency of 300 Hz, both the difference tone of 100 Hz and the summation tone of 500 Hz will be audible too as a result. In practice, the difference tone is usually clearly audible, whilst the summation tone is more difficult to discover within the spectrum of overtones that is typical for a good horn sound. The best effect is achieved when the difference tone is lower than the lowest played or sung tone, as in the example above. In that case the 'missing fundamental' will be very audible.

The same phenomenon is applied in hi-fi loudspeakers, and used in organs when there is not enough space available to build the longest of the organ pipes; two shorter pipes with harmonically related frequencies produce the sensation of a lower note, the fundamental of the relevant harmonic series.

For an introduction and discussion about the phenomenon of the missing fundamental, I refer to the in this case well-documented page from Wikipedia on the subject.²⁰⁰

Hearing and distinguishing chords is a combination of physical sensations and personal interpretation and has been subject to debate since Hermann von Helmholtz (1821-1894), the genius German physicist and physician, was the first one to describe the perception of sound in scientific terms.²⁰¹

For most brass players the skills needed to produce multiphonics are not so easy to master and most of all require well trained ears.²⁰² The technique of simultaneously playing and singing on the horn certainly was in use around 1800²⁰³, but silently disappeared from the scenery until composers started applying it again in the experimental music of the 20th century.

¹⁹⁹ Kirby, P.R.: Horn Chords: an Acoustical Problem', in: *The Musical Times*, 66, 1925; 811–813

²⁰⁰ 'Missing Fundamental' https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Missing_fundamental Accessed 21 June 2022

²⁰¹ Von Helmholtz, H.: *Die Lehre von den Tonempfindungen als physiologische Grundlage für die Theorie der Musik*. Heidelberg, 1862

²⁰² Mikulka, M.: *A Practical Method for Horn Multiphonics*. Self-published, n.d.; 4

²⁰³ Coar, B.: *The French Horn*. DeKalb, Illinois, 1947; 53

3.2 Horn chords in the time of Punto

Dauprat briefly discusses horn chords in his *Method*, as we will see later.²⁰⁴ For now it is sufficient to mention that according to Dauprat one needs to play low notes and sing the high ones, with the head voice.

Kling is more elaborate in his *Horn Schule*. He criticizes horn virtuoso Eugène Vivier (1817-1900) for claiming the discovery of the acoustic phenomenon of horn chords in 1843 and mentions Weber's *Concertino for Horn and Orchestra* (1806, revised 1815) as an example of notated multiphonics. He also refers to the information in the *great* method for horn by Dauprat. Unlike Dauprat, Kling argues that it does not matter whether one sings the highest or the lowest of the two notes. In his experience, if the performer creates a sixth or seventh in this manner, a *sympathetic* note will occur, creating a chord (figure 3.1). Funny enough Kling does not mention the fifth as a means to easily give birth to a horn chord.

He seems to be raving on the possibilities for the expert player to delight and astonish an audience with multiple-pitch sonorities on a horn and writes examples of chains of chords (figure 3.1) to be produced in this manner, but then sadly concludes with the remark that serious artists will abstain from this trickery and charlatanism.²⁰⁵

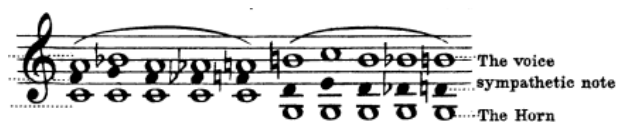


Figure 3.1
Example of horn chords in Kling's *Hornschnle*, page 73

Back to the review of Punto's 1801 Prague concert, quoted at the beginning of this chapter. The critic mentions the fact that Punto produced double tones and *even* chords. If we consider the chords as exceptional manifestations of horn technique and the double tones as more common, then suddenly a whole range of possibilities arises.

²⁰⁴ Dauprat, 152

²⁰⁵ Kling, *Horn Schule*, 72-73

Double tones, by simultaneously playing and humming, are in principle possible with all combinations of tones if they are within the range of the horn and the voice, and as long as the performance is impeccable. If slightly out of tune, annoying ‘beats’, will appear.²⁰⁶ A master like Punto must have been perfectly capable in avoiding those beats.

Kenn, one of the great cor basse soloists of the Paris Opera, who was amongst the first natural horn teachers of the Conservatoire de Paris, where he taught Dauprat²⁰⁷, wrote double tones for the low horn in one of his duos for two horns (figure 3.2).²⁰⁸



Figure 3.2
Excerpt from a duo for two horns by Kenn, with double tones in the second horn part

Kenn’s use of double tones, in an otherwise strictly traditional horn duo, and not in the showcase of an acrobatic solo cadenza, could indicate that horn players did this more often, without composers bothering to notate the option. Kenn found it worth to write the double tones down, whilst they never occur in Punto’s written compositions, as far as we have those available today. In fact, the double tone Kenn writes on all downbeats of the excerpt, the combination of the third and fifth harmonics, leads to the additional difference tone, the fourth harmonic, plus the summation tone, the 8th harmonic. See figure 3.3.



Figure 3.3
Expected sounding result of g plus e’

If composers left a lot to the imagination and good taste of the performer²⁰⁹ (naturally assuming the latter was familiar with the musical language of the period and region), this

²⁰⁶ Mikulka, 34

²⁰⁷ Ostermeyer, R.: ‘Kenn, Joseph’, <https://www.french-horn.net/index.php/biographie/113-joseph-kenn.html> Accessed 29 August 2019

²⁰⁸ Kenn, J.: *XXV Duos pour deux Cors, Op.2*. Bonn, 1800

²⁰⁹ Goehr, L.: *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*. Oxford, 2007; 163

certainly also applies to the music that Punto wrote for himself. It is tempting to experiment with double tones in Punto's compositions and in pieces that were written for him. All we can say for sure is that in 1801 in Prague, in his solo cadenzas, Punto produced double tones and even chords on the horn.

Was it ...*a shoddy trick of no artistic value*, as Morley-Pegge²¹⁰ found it important to state, or another proof of Punto's artistic mastery?

It is interesting to read what Dauprat writes about the topic in relation to Punto:

Il en est de même des doubles sons que l'on fait sur quelques notes graves du Cor, et auxquelles on joint les sons de la voix de tête qui sortent par les narines. Les jeunes gens à qui l'on donne le moyen de produire ces doubles sons, y parviennent presque aussitôt. *Punto* qui les faissait beaucoup mieux que tous ceux qui s'en sont mêlés depuis, en avait lui-même la facilité et le ridicule.

Laissez donc aux charlatans les moyens extraordinaires, qui ne conviennent qu'à la médiocrité, qui n'étonnent que les ignorans, et que repoussent également les connaisseurs et les vrais Artistes.²¹¹

(It is the same with the double sounds that are made on certain low notes of the horn, and to which are added the sounds of the head voice coming out of the nostrils. Young people who are given the means to produce these double sounds succeed almost immediately. Punto, who did them much better than all those who attempted them since, himself admitted how easy and ridiculous they were. Let us therefore leave to charlatans these extraordinary exploits, which only befit mediocrity, which astonish only the ignorant, and which connoisseurs as well as true artists reject.)

3.3 Examples of written-out multiple-pitch sonorities on the horn

Whatever the esthetic judgement will be, Punto was in excellent company. The musical discovery of combination tones is credited to Tartini, the violin player and music theorist. Tartini emphasized the practical and pedagogical use of the phenomenon; intonation of double stops on the violin can be judged by carefully listening to the difference tone, the *terzo suono*.²¹²

Living in a century that was highly interested in novelties, Punto was not the only one who learned about this 'trick' and used it to the astonishment of his audiences. There are at least

²¹⁰ Morley-Pegge, *The French Horn*, 91

²¹¹ Dauprat, 152

²¹² Tartini, G.: *Trattato di musica secondo la vera scienza dell'armonia*. Padua, 1754

three examples of notated multi-pitch sonorities for horn in classical music, one of those very well-known amongst horn players.

A copy of Antonio Rosetti's horn concerto in E \flat major (C49), probably in the hand of horn player Joseph Michael Mayr (1751-1807), includes written out cadenzas and lead-ins.²¹³ In such a lead-in for the third movement, figure 3.4, the part indicates double tones, generating horn chords when performed well.

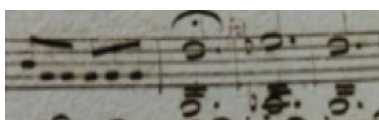


Figure 3.4

Lead-In with double tones for third movement of Rosetti's horn concerto in E \flat major, probably by Mayr

Problematic is the lowest note of the double tone right after the fermata. According to Hiebert there is no solution to this spot other than this is a progression from a Perfect 5th to a Diminished 7th and back to a Perfect 5th.²¹⁴ The fifths are not in question, the seventh is. As written in the manuscript, with the F \flat in the bass, the middle interval is a Major 7th, which does not work. Hiebert's solution is to interpret the F \flat as a F \sharp /G \flat . That way the riddle is solved with intervals that make sense in this context.

The approach is the same in the written-out cadenza to Weber's Concertino (figure 3.5), an example of horn chords from the time just after Punto. Different from the examples studied above, by Rosetti (or in fact by Mayr) and Kenn, Weber writes the complete chords that he is expecting, without making clear which notes are to be played, which are to be sung, and which are the expected result of those.

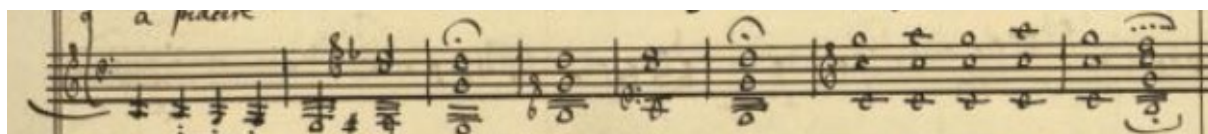


Figure 3.5

Written out horn chords in the solo cadenza of Weber's Concertino for horn

²¹³ Manuscript copies of parts at UC Berkeley (n.d.). Autograph score at the Oettingen-Wallersteinsche Bibliothek in Augsburg. ...Concerto in Dis... 1779 in Wallerstein. Pour Monsieur Dürschmied – probably Carl Türschmidt (1753-1797), a horn player at the Wallerstein Court. (Information generously provided by Thomas Hiebert.)

²¹⁴ Personal correspondence with Thomas Hiebert

In his already mentioned article on horn chords, Kirby states that Weber was wrong in some cases.

It seems quite certain that all the chords cannot have been played as written.²¹⁵

Musicologist Birchard Coar is more hard-hearted and does not seem to care:

None of the chords can be produced exactly as they stand. (...) The chords as given were to serve merely for an indication (...) to think otherwise would be to suppose that Weber was a fool.”²¹⁶

Horn player and composer Michael Mikulka, in his method for multiphonics, has the same idea and even provides no less than five alternatives to the music Weber composed.²¹⁷ Also Warner ten Kate, a professional horn player and scientist working in the acoustic industry, thinks Weber did not fully understand the nature of horn chords. According to him, the cadenza could be played like in figure 3.6:

The musical score is titled "Andante" and is in 3/4 time. It consists of four staves. The first staff is "Voice in E", the second is "Horn in E", the third is "Diff in E", and the fourth is a lower section with "Vc.", "Hn.", and "Df.". The lower section includes fingerings and harmonic series numbers (1-5) for the horn. The bottom staff shows the harmonic series for the horn: IV, I6/4, V, I.

Figure 3.6

Warner ten Kate, the solo cadenza for horn in Weber's Concertino. The numbers indicate the partials of the harmonic series. Only difference tones are added in the staff at the bottom. The much weaker summation tones are left out for the sake of clarity.²¹⁸

²¹⁵ Kirby, 812

²¹⁶ Coar, 92

²¹⁷ Mikulka, 115-116

²¹⁸ Ten Kate, W.: Personal correspondence

Weber originally wrote his Concertino in 1806 for Dautrevaux²¹⁹ from Karlsruhe, and revised it in 1815 for another German horn player, Rauch²²⁰ from Munich.²²¹ Whether the chords were already there in the lost version of 1806, we do not know. For whomever he wrote the multiphonics, the composer knew the soloist. It is conceivable Weber attempted to write down as adequately as possible the chords he had heard the soloist play on occasion. The horn player would know what to do. I argue it is possible to emphasize one or two harmonics in the tonal spectrum of a horn tone when humming a certain pitch with it. The chordal result of intervals other than 5ths becomes so complicated, that one can benefit from it by provoking a desired remote partial to resonate. Especially when the played note is a stopped one at the very bottom of the horn range, like the F#, the lowest note of the first horn chord in Weber's Concertino, the generated multiple-pitch sonority will be weak and blurred, at the same time providing opportunities to highlight certain overtones. With the tacit knowledge of the virtuoso, the soloist can take advantage of this twilight zone of horn acoustics.

As far as I know, there is one more example of notated multiphonics in classical horn literature. Josef Rudolf Lewy (1802-1881) was one of the great pioneers of the valve horn. However, from the instructions in his demanding 12 Etudes for horn accompanied by piano it becomes clear he kept using the hand horn technique whenever this seemed desirable.²²² In the 2nd and 4th of the 12 Etudes, Lewy wrote horn chords (see figure 3.7).



Figure 3.7
The last bars of Etude II, Andante, by Lewy. Horn in F

²¹⁹ First name and dates cannot be found.

²²⁰ First name and dates cannot be found.

²²¹ Morley-Pegge, *The French Horn*, 147

²²² Lewy, R.J.: *12 Etudes pour le Cor Chromatique et le Cor Simple, avec accompagnement de Piano*. Leipzig, c1849; 2

Again, the notation of the chords raises questions. How should we interpret the g'' that appears over an already sounding interval in the fourth bar of this excerpt and again three bars later? Is this also a matter of highlighting certain overtones?

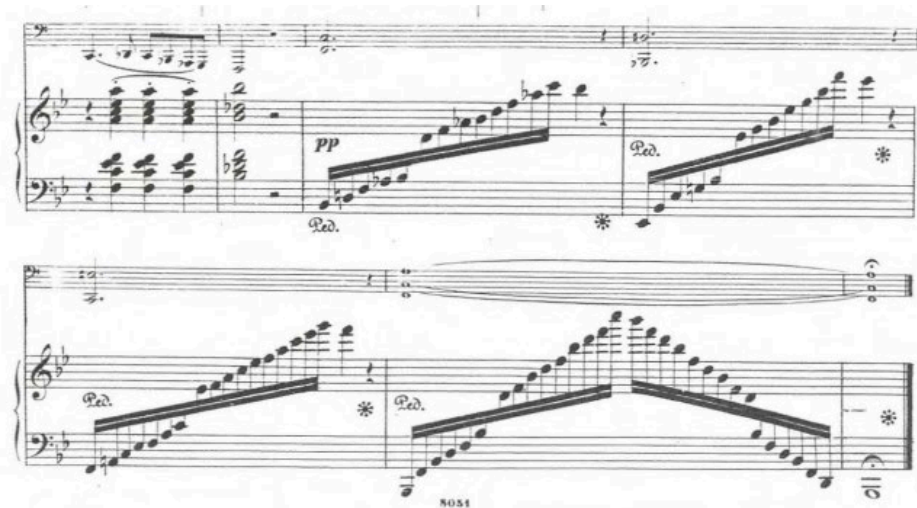


Figure 3.8
The conclusion of Etude IV, Maestoso ed un poco Allegro, by Lewy. Horn in F

Also the final example, figure 3.8, is slightly ambiguous.

In the third bar of the excerpt, Lewy writes a double tone, F – c. Two bars before the end the same double tone comes back, in this case crowned with the resulting summation tone a. (If the F is the 2nd harmonic, the c is the 3rd harmonic, leading to the summation tone of the 5th harmonic, being the written a.) How Lewy expects the a to resonate in the final chord, but not in the first spot, remains a mystery to me.

The above shows, in addition to the ambivalent attitude that horn players and composers had regarding the artistic value of multiphonics, that there was still a lot of unclarity about the possibilities of this extended technique. Except for the double tones noted by Kenn, the examples described above from horn music in and just after Punto's time contain ambiguities and inconsistencies. My conclusion is that wind players often knew what to do to surprise the audience with multiphonic sounds on a brass instrument, and that only a few composers have made attempts to notate this *shoddy trick*.

4. Ludwig van Beethoven and the Cor Basse

With the almost complete loss of a richly varied musical articulation on the horn, the emerged dominance of the valve horn with its homogeneous sound over the complete register and regardless the key of the score, and with the neglect of the art of extemporaneous ornamentation, much diversity and variation disappeared from the performance styles of horn players. The same applies to the differences in timbre between cor alto and cor basse, with their specialist mouthpieces.

When composing chamber music pieces with two horns, like the Sextet for two horns and strings op. 81b, and his Octet for wind ensemble op. 103, Beethoven clearly had a true cor alto and a true cor basse player in mind, uniquely and effectively using both genres in a way that emphasized their technical and timbral differences. In his chamber music with a single horn, -the Quintet for winds and piano op. 16, the Sonata for piano and horn op. 17, and the Septet op. 20- the horn parts are undoubtedly written for a cor basse player.

I argue that Beethoven knew very well what timbre to expect when he composed specific solo passages for low horn, also in several of his orchestral works.

4.1 Solos for Low Horn in Orchestral Works

In the vast majority of the orchestral scores from the classical period it appears that composers did not set out to highlight the different timbres of the cor alto and cor basse. Dauprat points out in his Method that although solos in the orchestra were normally written for the first horn, the second horn player also got his share.²²³ Morley-Pegge states that a cor basse player was often the principal in large orchestras and that the tone of the cor basse was generally preferred to that of the cor alto.²²⁴ Although Joseph Fröhlich praised Punto's silvery bright tone, he also raved about his varied tone color in the same article.²²⁵

²²³ Dauprat, 16

²²⁴ Morley-Pegge, R.: 'The Evolution of the Modern French Horn from 1750 to the Present Day', in: *Proceedings of the Musical Association, 69th Session, 1942-3*; 41

²²⁵ Fröhlich, J.: 'Horn', in: *Encyclopädie Der Wissenschaften Und Künste (1834), Zweite Section 11*. Graz, 1969; 7

Most interesting is what the Almanach Dauphin 1785 writes as a caption for Punto's portrait:

Ce virtuose a trouvé l'art de vaincre toutes les difficultés de cet instrument et d'en adoucir les sons.²²⁶

(This virtuoso has succeeded in vanquishing every difficulty of the horn and in softening its sounds.)

Strong evidence of expected sound differences between cor alto and cor basse I found in a number of orchestral works by Beethoven, an extremely innovative composer who was always keen to discuss instrumental possibilities with players.²²⁷ This is what the American librarian and journalist Alexander Wheelock Thayer (1817-1897) wrote in regard to the meeting of Punto and Beethoven at the time of the composition of his opus 17:

Beethoven's delight in any one whose skill afforded him new experience of the powers and possible effects of any orchestral instrument is known to the reader.²²⁸

Beethoven composed notable examples of timbre distinctions between high and low horn in his Piano Concerto no. 5, his seventh, eighth, and ninth symphonies, in the Overture to Fidelio, and in the first Leonore Overture. In all these cases he trusted the second horn player to perform both short and long solos, something he never confided to any other second wind players in his orchestral works. By the time Beethoven wrote the longest and most important of these solos, the illustrious lines for fourth horn²²⁹ in his ninth symphony, he was completely deaf. His inner ear must have remembered the typical mellow sounds of the cor basse.

²²⁶ *Tablettes de Renommée des Musiciens (Almanach Dauphin)*. Paris, 1785, quoted in: Morley-Pegge, *The French Horn*, 174

²²⁷ Lawson, C.: 'Beethoven and the Development of Wind Instruments', in: *Performing Beethoven*, ed. Robin Stowell. Cambridge, 2005; 80

²²⁸ Thayer, A. W., Edited, revised and amended from the original English manuscript and the German editions of Hermann Deiters and Hugo Riemann, concluded, and all the documents newly translated: *The Life of Ludwig van Beethoven, Volume 1*. New York, 1921; 267

²²⁹ The fourth horn in fact is the second horn player of the two horns in Eb.

4.2 Piano Concerto no. 5

393 **Allegro**

Clarinet in B \flat

Bassoons

Horns in E \flat

398

Figure 4.1
Beethoven, Piano Concerto no. 5, op. 73 (1809-1811) first movement, Allegro, bars 393-402

In the first movement of Beethoven's fifth Piano Concerto the low horn must risk performing a leap of an octave and a half to perform two bars of solo in a register that the high horn could easily cover (figure 4.1). The danger of cracking the first f' after such an awkward leap was taken into account by Beethoven as a necessary risk to achieve his wish for the typical velvety sound of the cor basse. The low horn is playing in dialogue with the clarinets, whilst the conclusion of the passage is for both clarinets and the cor basse in bars 401-402.



Figure 4.2

Beethoven, Piano Concerto no. 5, op. 73 (1809-1811) third movement, Rondo Allegro, bars 304-308. Horn in Eb

A striking moment in the third movement of the same piece occurs in bars 305-306, figure 4.2. The piano and orchestra fall silent, and the floor is given to a lone solo for the low horn, playing a downward scale starting on one of the highest notes of the range, and answered one bar later and one tone higher by the first oboe, first clarinet and first bassoon in unison.

4.3 Symphony no. 7

Allegretto

114

Flutes

Oboes

Clarinets in A

Bassoons

Horns in E

p

II.

Figure 4.3

Beethoven, Symphony no. 7, (1811-1812) op. 92, second movement, Allegretto, bars 114-122, wind parts only

In Beethoven's seventh symphony we see the same jump from c' to f'' in the low horn part, this time as an exact imitation of the solo of the first clarinet two bars earlier. (Figure 4.3) Again, there is no practical reason why the high horn player could not play this solo line. Also in this example there is a connection between the low horn and the first clarinet, playing a dialogue.

4.4 Symphony no. 8

Tempo di Menuetto

Clarinets in Bb

Horns in F

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Contrabass

Figure 4.4
Beethoven, Symphony no. 8, op. 93 (1812-1813) third movement, Tempo di Menuetto, bars 52-56

The third movement, *Tempo di Menuetto*, of Beethoven's eighth symphony, contains another convincing example of an expected difference in timbre between cor alto and cor basse, and again there is a connection between cor basse and clarinet. See figure 4.4. In the bar after the second ending of the trio, a sequence starts between horn one and horn two, the latter in unison with the first clarinet. For both first and second horn players it would have been much more comfortable if the specialist for high notes, the first horn, performed all four bars with the same motif. It can only be the wish for and the expectation of a darker sound from the cor basse to blend with the Bb clarinet that urged Beethoven to compose the passage like this.

4.5 Overture to Fidelio

The image shows a musical score for two instruments: Clarinets in A and Horns in E. The tempo is marked 'Allegro'. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score begins at bar 49. The Clarinet part is mostly silent, with a few notes appearing later. The Horn part features a solo for the second horn, marked 'II. Solo' and 'p' (piano). The solo line is a descending scale-like passage that ends with a leap down to the second harmonic. The score continues to bar 54, where the Clarinet part begins to play, imitating the Horn's solo. The score ends with 'etc.' indicating further music.

Figure 4.5
Beethoven, Overture to Fidelio, op. 72, (1814) Allegro, bars 49-59, clarinet and horn parts only

The exposed solo for second horn in the Overture to Fidelio, figure 4.5, is a typical cor basse line, with the end going down in leaps to the second harmonic. The first three and a half bars, though, could easily be covered by the first horn, the cor alto. Starting in bar 53, the first clarinet imitates the cor basse.

4.6 Leonore Overture no. 1

181 Adagio ma non troppo

Clarinet in B \flat

Horns 3 and 4 in E \flat

185

188

Horn II Solo

The musical score for measures 181-190 of Beethoven's Leonore Overture no. 1, Adagio ma non troppo, features the Clarinet in B \flat and Horns 3 and 4 in E \flat . The score is written in 3/4 time and includes dynamic markings such as *p*, *p cresc*, *f*, *cresc.*, *sforz*, and *p*. The Horn II Solo is marked in measure 188.

Figure 4.6
Beethoven, Leonore Overture no. 1 op. 138, (1807) Adagio ma non troppo, bars 181-190
horn 3 and 4 and clarinet parts only

In his first Leonore Overture, Beethoven also writes a solo for low horn, figure 4.6, this time in the fourth horn part, in unison with the first clarinet, with no other apparent reason than a preference for the color of the cor basse, playing in a relatively high register, to mix with that of the clarinet.

4.7 Symphony no. 9

The image displays a musical score for Horn 4 in Eb, spanning measures 82 to 98. The tempo is marked 'Adagio'. The score is written in a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb). Measure 82 begins with a *pp* (pianissimo) dynamic and a *dolce* (sweet) marking. The melody starts on a low note and moves stepwise upwards. Measures 88 and 93 show more complex rhythmic patterns with slurs and ties. Measure 96 is marked 'Solo' and features a rapid ascending scale, with a *cresc.* (crescendo) marking below it. The score concludes in measure 98 with a sustained note.

Figure 4.7

Beethoven, Symphony no. 9, (1823-1824); third movement, Adagio molto e cantabile: horn in Eb, bars 82-98

In this last and famous example from Symphony no. 9, figure 4.7, the high horn does not appear at all. Although some modern editions indicate that the first horn should take over the solo at the beginning of bar 90, right where the G-clef reappears, Beethoven deliberately composed this long solo for the lowest horn of the orchestra. In his score he explicitly wrote “*sempre corno secondo*”, meaning the second horn of the pair of Eb horns. If one of the horn players had a velvety sound—even more so after playing two extensive movements in Bb-basso, the longest and darkest of the horn crooks—then it was the cor basse player who performed this lowest part. This celebrated solo for low horn shows Beethoven’s profound understanding of the instrument’s potential and his manner of utilizing the cor basse to its utmost capacity. After exploring the deepest abysses of the horn range in bar 89, the cor basse player climbs triumphantly to the highest peaks of his peculiar instrument, culminating in one of the ultimate demonstrations of hand stopping technique in bar 96, a written scale of Ab, before being joined by other mellow wind instruments—the first bassoon, first clarinet, and first flute—in bar 97.

The material of this long solo bears some similarities with the Adagio near the end of the *Seule et Vraie Méthode*, figure 4.8.²³⁰



Figure 4.8
Seule et Vraie Méthode, Page 83

The genius composer Beethoven knew what tonal color to expect when writing for cor alto or for cor basse. Period horn players can only do justice to the intention of the composer by using mouthpieces of appropriate dimensions.

²³⁰ Hampel/Punto, 88

5. Horn and Piano: a Cor Basse Recital

As a vital part of this dissertation, I recorded, together with the piano player Alexander Melnikov, a CD with music composed by and for Punto, supplemented with two pieces from the period immediately after his death—which were clearly influenced by the Beethoven Sonata op. 17 and are therefore part of Punto's legacy—with a cor solo and a typical cor basse mouthpiece.²³¹ This chapter describes and discusses the material used, and argues the structural elements and performance techniques of the chosen repertoire

5.1 The instrument

For this recording I hesitated for a long time between my orchestral horn, built by Courtois Neveu Aînée, rue des Provaires, Paris, between c1802-1809,²³² and my cor solo by Couesnon, Paris, 1900.²³³

The orchestral horn by Courtois dates from the period immediately after the death of Punto. The Couesnon cor solo has been built almost one hundred years later, but still perfectly represents the model of the French cor solo, as developed by Raoux.

Recording the CD on the cor solo, the type of elite instrument Punto and other virtuosi of the period used, had my preference. From 1797, with Dauprat as the first, generations of exceptional horn players received a Raoux cor solo as a prize for their graduation with the distinction *premier prix* from the Conservatoire de Paris. The cor solo thus became even more the symbol of top-notch horn players.²³⁴ Playing this horn, with the fixed lead pipe as opposed to the wobblier set-up on the terminal-crooked orchestral horn, is an artistic delight. Most of all the sensation of being in touch with the heart of the horn, not hindered by a loose crook at the beginning of the instrument is what made the difference for me.

²³¹ Van der Zwart, T. (horn), Melnikov, A. (piano) CD: *Horn and Piano: A Cor Basse Recital*, Harmonia Mundi HMM905351, 2022

²³² Waterhouse, W.: *New Langwill Index: a dictionary of musical wind instrument-makers and inventors*. London, 1993: 72 See figure 1.6

²³³ See figures 1.9-1.11

²³⁴ Scott, A., Chick, J. and Myers, A.: 'The Cor Solo, History and Characteristics.' In: *Historic Brass Society Journal* Volume 31, 2019; 12

In his *Méthode*, Dauprat describes the cor solo as more graceful to play and easier to hold, but he is critical about the time it takes to change the set-up.²³⁵ The disadvantage of the more cumbersome way to change crooks in comparison with the orchestral horn was irrelevant for my purpose. As was custom for horn solo repertoire of the period, the pieces recorded on the CD do not require any crook change in or in between movements. Stability, smoothness, and evenness of the instrument, plus the ease of control for the performer were frequently mentioned as advantage points in responses to a recent enquiry among experts by experience.²³⁶

5.2 The mouthpiece

Valid reproduction of classical horn mouthpieces of the second half of the eighteenth-century is problematic due to the paucity of surviving examples and the inability to accurately match them to the horns for which they were made. Mouthpieces are not easy to identify. They are almost never dated, signed, or even marked, unlike the horns they seem to belong to. They should be viewed as personal objects that were and are almost never sold with the instrument, making it impossible to know if the sound and response of a particular period mouthpiece on a particular period horn do justice to the intentions of the builder and the original owner. Purchasing a combination of a period horn with a mouthpiece gives no guarantee they were ever used together.²³⁷

Although modern copyists may suggest differently, until the industrial revolution mouthpieces were made by hand and standardization was not an issue. An accurate picture of the range of historical mouthpieces is hard to obtain.²³⁸

We know from surviving copies and from drawings in early 19th century tutors that most horn mouthpieces from the second half of the 18th century were entirely conical.²³⁹

²³⁵ Dauprat, 4

²³⁶ Scott, Chick and Myers, 23

²³⁷ Seraphinoff, R.: 'Early horn mouthpieces', in: *Historic Brass Society Journal*, Volume 1. 1989; 93-100

²³⁸ Campbell, 71-2

²³⁹ Fitzpatrick, *The Horn and Horn-Playing*, 155-157

Because the body of the mouthpiece normally was hammered from a single piece of sheet metal (usually brass, sometimes silver or nickel silver), the walls are much thinner than later types, which are turned from a solid cylinder of metal.

The cone, or funnel, generally reaches the smallest point at the very end, inside the horn.

The rim can vary greatly in both internal diameter and thickness but is generally quite flat, resulting in relatively sharp edges.

The combination of the funnel shape and the relatively thin, hammered brass contributes to diversity in timbre, with the sound easily becoming fuzzy in piano and brassy, *cuivré*, in forte. Making musical use of the differences between open and stopped notes is relatively uncomplicated with the classical mouthpiece type because the color of the sound is less defined and less fixed than on its modern equivalent.

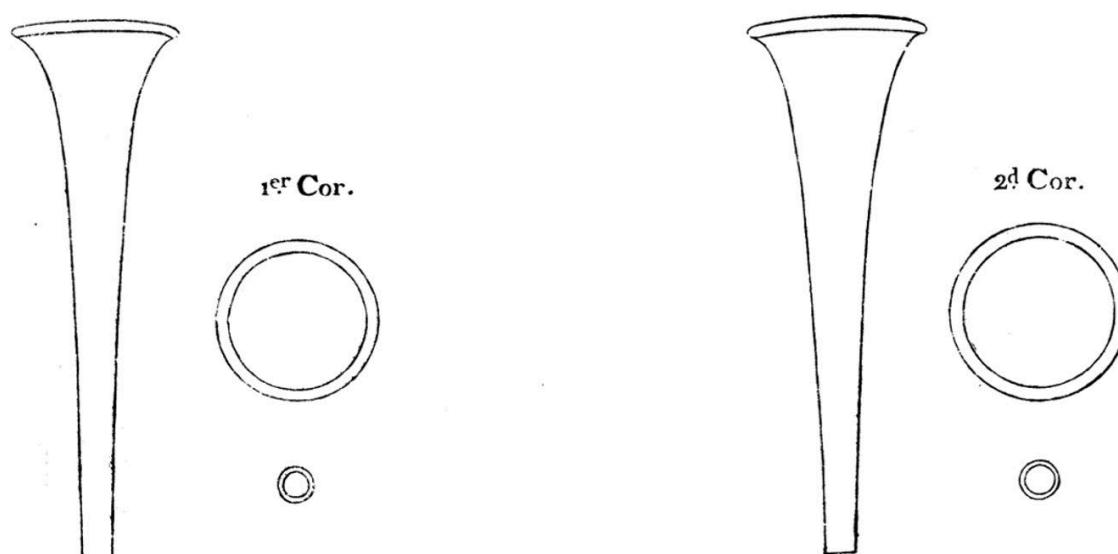


Figure 5.1
Drawings of mouthpieces for high horn (left) and low horn (right). Domnich, *Méthode*, 8

As discussed earlier, the *Seule et Vraie Méthode* mentions the necessity of a small mouthpiece for cor alto and a large mouthpiece for cor basse without revealing more details. How small or big one can only guess. Slightly later Parisian methods provide more information through drawings and measurements.

Inner rim dimensions given in horn methods by Duvernoy, Domnich (figure 5.1) and Dauprat range from 16 to 17 mm for the cor alto mouthpiece, up to 18 to 20 mm for the cor basse mouthpiece. (For comparison: 17 to 18 mm is average for the modern mouthpiece.)²⁴⁰ Referring to the drawings in Domnich's and Dauprat's Methods, and with the invaluable help of brass instruments maker and trumpeter Graham Nicholson, I made three low horn mouthpieces myself by hammering and soldering sheet brass into the desired shape. See figures 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4.



Figure 5.2

The three cor basse mouthpieces I made.

The mouthpiece on the left is the one I played for the CD recording. The one on the right has a rim made of ebony.

²⁴⁰ Morley-Pegge, *the French Horn*, 102



Figure 5.3
The same mouthpieces: same order, different angle



Figure 5.4
The cor basse mouthpiece with an inner rim of 19 mm I used for the CD recording

Here is a sound example of the first 36 bars of Beethoven Sonata op. 17, performed on a period horn by Courtois Neveu Aînée with a cor alto mouthpiece, NH172 by Werner Chr. Schmid, with an inner rim diameter of 17,2 mm:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=augol1tRCb0>

A sound example of the same excerpt on the same horn, this time with a cor basse mouthpiece, NH190 by Werner Chr. Schmid, with an inner rim diameter of 19 mm, can be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RKwhetBqH34>

In these sound samples the use of the different mouthpieces provides a noticeable divergence in overall timbre and a range of nuances in tonal colors between open and stopped notes.

- With the cor alto mouthpiece the sound is centered, bright, and crisp. The timbre distinctions between open and stopped notes are obvious.
- The cor basse mouthpiece makes the horn sound warmer, darker, more velvet. The timbre distinctions between open and stopped notes are subtle.

Barely noticeable for the listener, but ever more for the performer, is the increased facility on the low horn mouthpiece—after getting used to the wide rim—for the execution of quick runs and jumps.

The musicians in the videos:

Olga Pashchenko, fortepiano, and Teunis van der Zwart, horn.

5.3 Giovanni Punto, Horn Concerto no.1 in E Major, published 1777

Almost any horn player will disagree with Charles Rosen when he is critical about Mozart's horn concertos and writes *...slight and often perfunctory, they are full of splendid details, lacking only seriousness—which is not to say that the serious works lack humor.*²⁴¹ However, these seem entirely appropriate words for Punto's concerto form, the main vehicle of his acclaimed virtuosity and musical taste. His homophonic, early classical style is mostly inconspicuous, charming, and a bit void. There are similarities with the *...sophisticatedly*

²⁴¹ Rosen, C.: *The Classical Style. Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven*, Revised edition. London, 1976: 214

*smooth and courtly flat style of Johann Christian, the 'London' Bach.*²⁴² In the last quarter of the 18th century music was a social grace, whether performed at the courts or at the emerging public concert venues. The mostly relaxed and jovial atmosphere of Punto's chamber music and concertos was intended to charm while providing a framework for virtuoso showing off whenever that was appropriate.

The fact that his horn concerto no. 1 has been attributed to composers such as Carl Stamitz (1745-1801),²⁴³ Antonio Rosetti²⁴⁴ and Ignaz Pleyel (1757-1831)²⁴⁵, says something about Punto's qualities as a composer. Although not in the ranks of the very best, he could withstand the comparison with solid craftsmen.

Ostermeyer rejects the attributions to Stamitz, Rosetti or Pleyel, as he effectively points out that the first edition of the concerto was published in 1777 at Sieber, Paris, under the name of Punto.²⁴⁶ Furthermore, the 3 incipits from horn concertos by Stamitz in the Breitkopf catalog 1782-1784,²⁴⁷ only show some idiomatic relationship with the opening of this concerto. There is no literal similarity.

The attribution to Rosetti is based on a copy in Müller's *Leihbibliothek*, a not so reliable collection of copies from the first half of the nineteenth century, which has been kept in the Prague National Library since 1934.²⁴⁸ Ostermeyer argues that there are major stylistic differences between this concerto and compositions by Rosetti from the same period. For similar reasons, the attribution to Pleyel must be rejected.

²⁴² Ibid. 47

²⁴³ Gerber, 'Stich', 283

²⁴⁴ Murray, S.: *The Music of Antonio Rosetti (Anton Rösler) ca. 1750-1792: A Thematic Catalog*. Michigan, 1996; C51

²⁴⁵ Stift Melk, Library, Signatur IV 337

²⁴⁶ Ostermeyer, R.: *Giovanni Punto, 1. Concerto E-Dur für Horn und Orchester*. Werningerode, 2011; preface

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

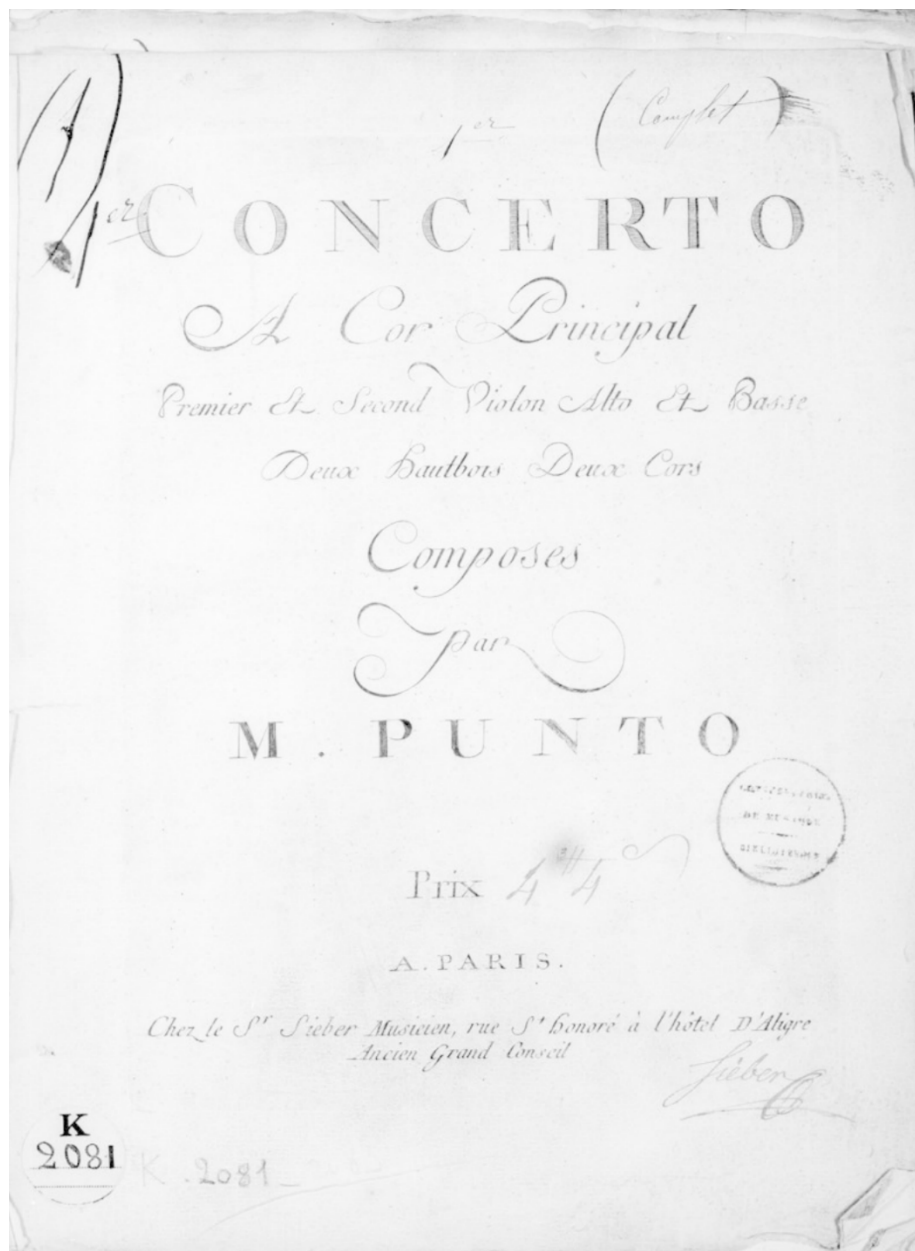


Figure 5.5
Title page of the first edition of Punto's Horn Concerto no. 1. Paris, 1777.

The score of the present Concerto no. 1 in E major (figure 5.5) is set for strings, 2 oboes or 2 flutes, 2 horns in E, and solo Horn in E.²⁴⁹

The first movement, *Allegro Moderato*, is composed in an early classical, monophonic style, while still relying heavily on the orchestral ritornelli from Baroque concertos such as those by Vivaldi. Already in the first theme (figure 5.6) the horn exceeds the official range of the cor basse by a major second, demonstrating that the inconvenient a'' belonged to Punto's arsenal.

²⁴⁹ Although 2 oboes are mentioned on the title page of the first edition, Figure 5.5, the set contains parts for 2 flutes instead.

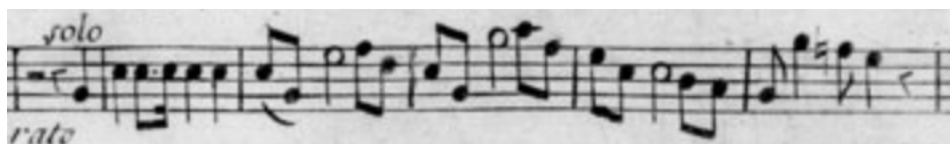


Figure 5.6

Punto, Horn Concerto no. 1, first movement, beginning of the solo horn part. Treble clef, horn in E

Although non-partial harmonics are not shunned, with the factitious G in bar 191 as an extreme example (figure 5.7), the solo part always stays close to the harmonic series. Most passages can be performed with a combination of lip bending and some hand action in the bell of the instrument.



Figure 5.7

Punto, Horn Concerto no. 1, second movement, bars 190/191. Horn in E

The overall feeling of the movement is a pleasant and entertaining E major, notwithstanding regular moments of virtuosic splendor of the solo horn with rapid sixteenths and triplets in runs or arpeggios.

Things are different in the second movement, the *Adagio*. In the key of E minor, the emphasis in the horn part is much less on the harmonic series and the hand in the bell will have to effectively mold many non-partial harmonics. The result is a much darker, sometimes ghastly sound, for example in bars 52/53 (figure 5.8), which greatly enhances the harmonic elaboration in this dramatic movement. Lament of love, grandeur, melancholy, horror and shivers (*Klage der Liebe, Erhabenheit, Melancholie, Schrecken und Schauer*)²⁵⁰: it is all within reach of the competent and sensitive soloist in this *Adagio*.



Figure 5.8

Punto, Horn Concerto no. 1, second movement, bars 51-54. Horn in E

²⁵⁰ J.F. Schönfeld, 'Horn' in: *Jahrbuch der Tonkunst von Wien und Prag*. Prague, 1796: 193

Not much hand stopping is needed in the third movement, an unpretentious *Rondo a la Chasse* in which the horn mainly is presented as a hunting or signaling instrument, as was custom in horn concerti of the period.²⁵¹

Yet also this movement offers plenty of options for virtuosic braggery in acrobatic passages, such as in bars 93-97 (Figure 5.9) and bars 153-160 (Figure 5.10). Moreover, in addition to the solo cadenzas in the first and the second movement, Punto allowed himself no less than 5 *lead-ins*²⁵² to stun his audiences in this final movement.



Figure 5.9

Punto, Horn Concerto no. 1. Bars 93-97 of the third movement require flexible lips and a rapid tongue. Horn in E



Figure 5.10

Punto, Horn Concerto no. 1, third movement, bars 155-161. Horn in E. Most of all in bars 156 and 160 the soloist needs to rely on great accuracy, speed and coordination of lips, tongue, and hand.

5.4 Beethoven, Sonata for Piano and Horn op. 17, published 1801

Beethoven's Sonata op. 17 in F major, written for and premiered by him together with Punto,²⁵³ and said by Humphries to be the oldest surviving piece for horn and piano,²⁵⁴ is clearly intended for a cor basse specialist, as the opening statement (figure 5.11) already demonstrates.²⁵⁵ This is a horn call that proudly presents the lowest two octaves of the

²⁵¹ See for instance the last movements of Mozart's concertos for horn, KV 412, KV 417, KV 447 and KV 495

²⁵² *Lead-ins*, or *Eingänge* (singular *Eingang*) are ornamental passages that lead to a theme. *It can start freely (....) more commonly it serves to connect the end of one phrase to the beginning of another.* See Neumann, 264

²⁵³ Noonan, F. (translation): *Beethoven Remembered: The Biographical Notes of Franz Wegeler and Ferdinand Ries.* London, 1998; 71

²⁵⁴ Humphries, *The Early Horn*, 90

²⁵⁵ Most of the solo repertoire for horn, and chamber music with one horn in the period around 1800 is written in the cor basse range.

instrument. After the piano introduces the first theme, both instruments together repeat the horn signal in a slightly reduced version, before the horn plays the first theme with effectively placed stopped notes on the downbeats of bars 14 and 16, providing brassy sonority to the suspensions, followed by the resolutions on harmonics.

Allegro moderato.

L.v. Beethoven, Op. 17.

CORNO in F.

PIANOFORTE.

p

cresc.

p

cresc.

p

Figure 5.11
The first page of Beethoven's Sonata for piano and horn op. 17

The contrasting, more pensive character of the second theme (figure 5.12) is colored by the dominance of the stopped b' and $c\sharp''$. Played softly, these notes will sound veiled, and it is not hard for the horn player to considerably adjust the open notes to a more covered timbre as well.



Figure 5.12
Beethoven, Sonata for piano and horn op. 17: first movement, second theme, bars 30-36. Horn in F

During the entire sonata, the horn part does not exceed the twelfth harmonic, and the for the low horn typical fast passages with large intervals and broken chords occur in the first and the third movement.



Figure 5.13
Beethoven, Sonata for piano and horn op. 17: Final bars of the first movement, with typical cor basse leaps rapidly going through the almost complete range of the instrument. Horn in F

Beethoven explores the lowest register of the horn, challenging the horn player to perform the factitious G under the second harmonic (figure 5.14), which is also the lowest note in Punto's first horn concerto (see figure 5.7).

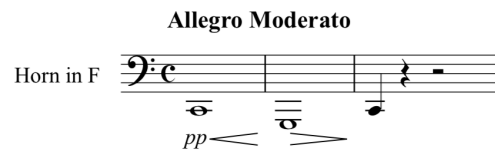


Figure 5.14
Beethoven, Sonata for piano and horn op. 17, 1st movement, bars 160-162. Horn in F

According to the *Seule et Vraie Méthode*, Punto must have played the piece on an *embouchure très large*, a typical cor basse mouthpiece.²⁵⁶ This will have facilitated him to not only produce the low notes and the quick arpeggios but must also have been beneficial to execute the following excerpt (figure 5.15) in which partials and non-partial alternate in a demanding way, giving great vigor to the performance.



Figure 5.15
Beethoven, Sonata for piano and horn op. 17, 1st movement, bars 98-100. Treble clef, horn in F

²⁵⁶ Hampel/Punto, 1



Figure 5.16
Beethoven, Sonata for piano and horn, op. 17, complete second movement. Horn in F

In the short second movement (figure 5.16) Beethoven cleverly uses the sonorities of the stopped horn notes, the notated $e\flat''$, $d\flat''$ and, to a somewhat lesser extent, f'' on heavy beats to emphasize the key of F minor.

Although they can be shaped into an effective musical ghost scene, the 18 bars of the *Poco Adagio, Quasi Andante* make the impression of a rush job. As discussed in chapter 1, the work had to be done too quickly for the premiere. Did Beethoven leave himself a lot of space to improvise in the last bar in order to save the movement? After all, the sonata was

published as a piece for fortepiano *with* a horn, or cello, as is clearly stated on the title page of the first edition (figure 5.17).



Figure 5.17
Title page of Beethoven's Sonata for piano and horn op. 17, first edition, Vienna, 1801

The final movement is more elaborated. The *Rondo Allegro Moderato* returns to F major and brings the listener another wealth of hornistic features. This is not a traditional Rondo in hunting horn idiom, like Mozart and Punto used to write, but a playful display of lovely lyrical melodies interspersed with acrobatic jumps and protrusive rhythmic passages. The tritone $b - f''$ in the main theme (see figure 5.18) is effectively highlighted by the hand technique that is required in combination with some lip bending. The f'' will almost naturally get a brutal sound emphasizing the *sforzando*.



Figure 5.18

Beethoven, Sonata for piano and horn op. 17, third movement, bars 4-9, beginning of main theme, with tritone in bar 6.
Horn in F, treble clef

In bar 137 (see figure 5.19), the subito fortissimo very effectively appears on a $b\flat'$, a tone that is naturally too low on the horn and that is commonly corrected by (partially) removing the hand from the bell, creating a rugged sound that reinforces the dominant 7 chord of $B\flat$ major, before returning to F major.



Figure 5.19

Beethoven, Sonata for piano and horn op. 17, third movement, bars 133 – 140. Horn in F

A stereotype arpeggio, figure 5.20, reminding the listener of the opening statement of the first movement, concludes the piece.



Figure 5.20

Beethoven, Sonata for piano and horn op. 17, third movement, bars 165 – 167. Horn in F, starting with treble clef

5.5 Franz Danzi (1763-1826), Sonate pour le Piano-Forte avec accompagnement d'un Cor ou Violoncelle, op. 28, published 1804

Franz Danzi was a German composer and conductor. The way in which he combined harmonious adventurousness with a rather rigid approach to classical forms makes him one

of the forerunners of Romanticism. Today he is best known for his nine wind quintets that demonstrate a high degree of craftsmanship.²⁵⁷

Written shortly after Beethoven's successful Horn Sonata op. 17, Danzi might have used this piece as a model. As the title of the present work suggests, the piano is the dominant instrument in this piece, although the horn, or the cello, is not merely limited to an accompanying role. We know that Beethoven wrote opus 17 especially for Punto, and later, for commercial reasons, added an alternative cello part for the first edition. In Danzi's case it is not known for whom he wrote the solo part. Did the composer not necessarily have the horn in mind when he composed this sonata? Studying the score, it becomes clear that Danzi wrote specifically for the horn and even more precisely for the low horn.

Although American horn player Bradley Alan Tatum suggests Danzi composed the sonata for Türschmidt, there is no proof for this.²⁵⁸ For sure Danzi must have had a more than capable cor basse player in mind considering the numerous challenging passages.

The classical features of the low horn are all there: most of the time the emphasis is on the harmonic series, with lyricism in the upper octave of the range, factitious notes in the lowest register, harmonically effective use of stopped notes, and rapid arpeggios.

A novelty is the arpeggio in notated G major (figure 5.21), in the *Allegro* of the first movement, bars 153-155. The d' is relatively remote from both partials c' and e', making it necessary to manipulate a lot with hand and lips. Difficult enough to produce in slow music, in rapid leaps one needs a high level of facility to *catch* this note.



Figure 5.21
Danzi, Sonata for piano and horn, op. 28, first movement, bars 153-155. Horn in Eb

During the second movement, *Larghetto*, the horn stays in the confined register of the Cor Mixte,²⁵⁹ the one and a half octaves between notated c' and g". What makes this *Larghetto*

²⁵⁷ Würtz, R., Corneilson, P., Alexander, P.M. and Höft, B.: 'Danzi, Franz (Ignaz)' Grove Music Online <https://doi.org/10.1093/omo/9781561592630.013.90000380263> accessed 30 March 2023

²⁵⁸ Tatum, B.A.: *Austro-German classical era horn works: a study in style and performance practice*, (Ph.D. diss.). Maryland, 2010: 10

²⁵⁹ Humphries, 19

ingenious is the fact that it is written in the subdominant $A\flat$ major, thus giving the partials and their derivative non-harmonics of the $E\flat$ horn a different chordal function than usual, adding to the diminished sonorities of Danzi's mildly daring harmonic language.

The harmonic center of gravity in this movement is not at the root note of the horn, the notated C (the sounding $E\flat$), but a fourth higher, at the notated F (the sounding $A\flat$). Especially the d' used melodically three bars before the end, and the f' with which the horn concludes the movement are non-partial notes that require full hand stopping and very flexible lips, resulting in distinctive groaning sounds, (figure 5.22).

Incidentally, Mozart, in his third horn concerto KV 447 in $E\flat$, KV 447, also composed the second movement, *Romanze*, in $A\flat$ major.



Figure 5.22

Danzi, Sonata for piano and horn, op. 28, second movement, bars 83-85. Horn in $E\flat$

In the third movement of Danzi's op. 28, *Allegretto*, the horn appears the least soloistic and often is limited to accompanimental figures. Pedal tones color the harmonies, the lowest factitious notes provide bass lines (figure 5.23) or the bass of a cadence (figure 5.24).

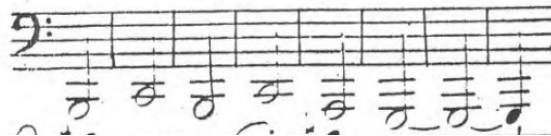


Figure 5.23

Danzi, Sonata for piano and horn, op. 28, third movement, bars 62-70. Horn in $E\flat$

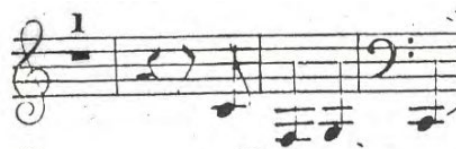


Figure 5.24

Danzi, Sonata for piano and horn, op. 28, third movement, bars 120-122. Horn in $E\flat$

Sporadically, the virtuosic piano part is interrupted by fast broken chords in the horn. In bars 241 and 245 (figure 5.25) the horn player must produce a couple of extremely unruly A's. Here Danzi might have envisioned the cello. If not, he relied on the highly advanced hand horn player he had in mind.

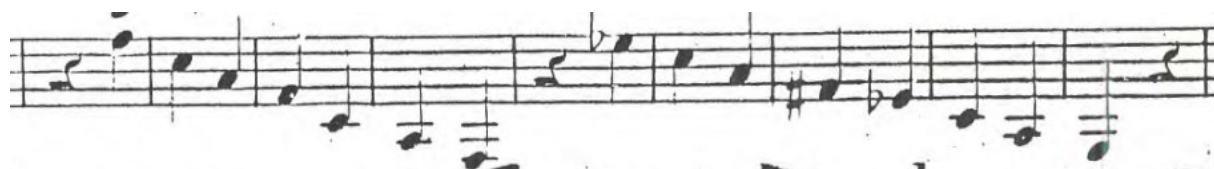


Figure 5.25

Danzi, Sonata for piano and horn, op. 28, third movement, bars 238 – 246. Horn in Eb, treble clef

The sonata ends with a bold conclusion in the low register, once more emphasizing the charm of the cor basse, figure 5.26.



Figure 5.26

Danzi, Sonata for piano and horn, op. 28, third movement, bars 274 – 277. Horn in Eb

5.6 Ferdinand Ries (1784-1838), Grande Sonate pour le Piano-forte, Cor ou Violoncelle, op. 34, published 1811

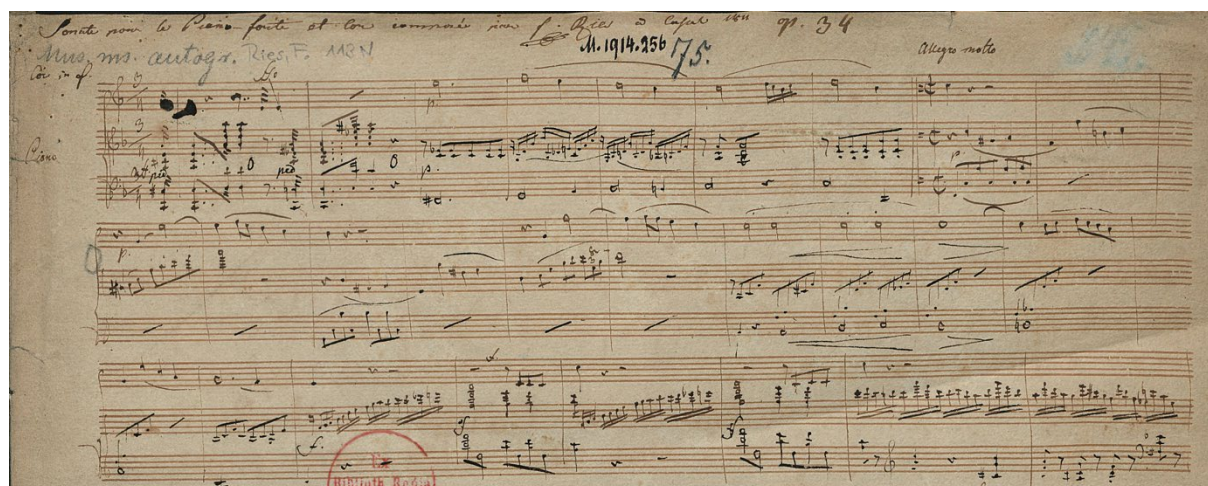


Figure 5.27
Ries, Sonata for pianoforte and horn, op.34, autograph, 1811.

Pianist and composer Ries was Beethoven's secretary, copyist, and piano student in the years 1801-1804 in Vienna. In this period, he was taught composition by Johann Albrechtsberger (1736-1809).²⁶⁰ Although Ries was not in Vienna when Punto and Beethoven met and premiered the sonata, he could very well be the source of the story about the last-minute genesis of the Beethoven Horn Sonata op. 17, as discussed in chapter 1.4.

Later editions of the sonata by Ries include a cello part as an alternative to the horn. The autograph (figure 5.27) is written for pianoforte and horn exclusively. Published only 10 years after Beethoven's opus 17, in this Sonata, Ries explores the idiom of the cor basse in a way that is both indebted to the works of Punto and Beethoven, and innovative.

After a short introduction, *Larghetto*, Ries starts the *Allegro molto* in a manner reminiscent of Beethoven. A lyrical theme begins with the same ascending sixth and then seventh that Beethoven uses in the first theme of his sonata op. 17 (See figure 5.11, bar 12 and further for Beethoven op. 17, and figure 5.27, bar 10 and further for Ries op. 34).

Throughout the first movement, Ries uses rhythmic signals that help build tension (although they can also appear lame) and expressive scale passages including stopped notes.

²⁶⁰Hill, C.: 'Ries, Ferdinand' Grove Music Online. <https://doi.org/10.1093/omo/9781561592630.013.90000380382> Accessed 25 March 2023

The brassy half stopped f'' stresses the dissonance in the dominant 7th chord in bar 103 (figure 5.28), and an explosive open bb' has the same function in the parallel place of the recapitulation (figure 5.29), demonstrating Ries truly understood the tonal powers of the horn.

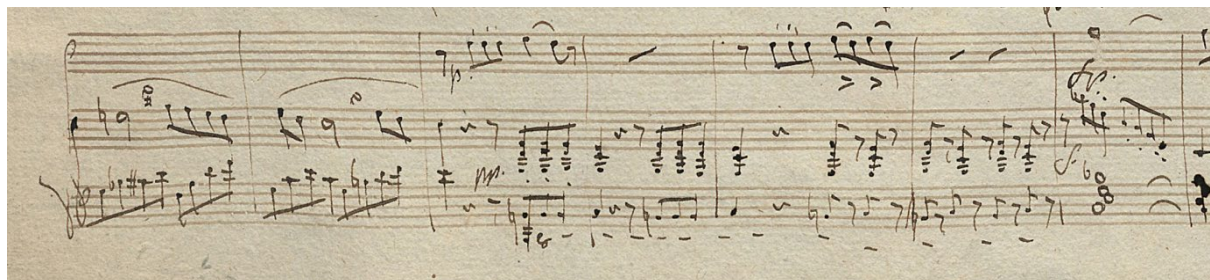


Figure 5.28

Ries, Sonata for pianoforte and horn, op. 34, first movement, bars 97-103. Horn in F.
The brassy sounding partly stopped f'' functions as the dissonance in the dominant 7th chord in bar 103.

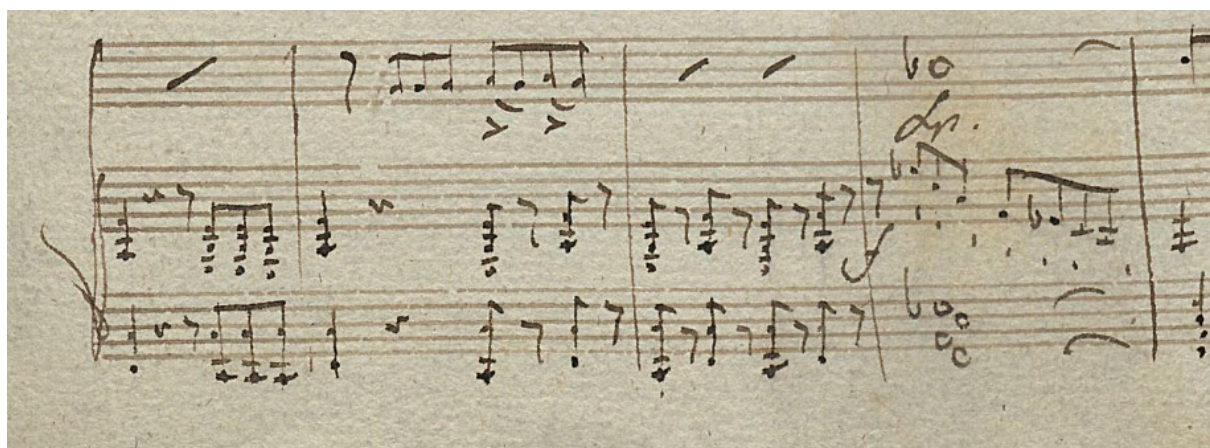


Figure 5.29

Ries, Sonata for pianoforte and horn, op. 34, first movement, bars 279-282. Horn in F.
The strong and open bb' stresses the dissonant tone of the dominant 7th chord in bar 282.

The unavoidable cor basse arpeggios add much to the drama of the movement. And Ries continues where Beethoven left off. Extreme jumps in bar 113 (figure 5.30) and the huge

leaps—a broken chord over 2.5 octaves—in bar 301 (figure 5.31) are prime examples of the ongoing development of a virtuosic low horn style.



Figure 5.30

Ries, Sonata for pianoforte and horn, op. 34, first movement, bars 113-117 with a two octave jump and pulsating rhythms. Horn in F, treble clef



Figure 5.31

Ries, Sonata for pianoforte and horn, op. 34, first movement, bars 301-321 with rhythmic signals, challenging arpeggios, and gymnastic jumps. Horn in F

In the second movement, an *Andante* in 9/8, Ries writes simple lyrical lines in the horn part, alternated with expressive slurs over several octaves, followed by a bass line that can only be executed successfully thanks to the large cor basse mouthpiece (see figure 5.32). Deep hand stopping and powerful lip bending is needed to mold the 3rd harmonic g all the way down to the non-partial e in bar 29.



Figure 5.32

Ries, Sonata for pianoforte and horn, op. 34, second movement, bars 22-29: note the slurs over more than 2 octaves in the second and third bar of the excerpt, and the bass line with notes alien to the harmonic series in bars 27-29. Horn in F

The last movement, *Rondo*, provides the same picture. Pronounced rhythmic horn passages alternate with lyricism making use of sturdy notes in the middle register and a distinctly virtuosic hand-horn technique. Once again there are huge intervals that need to be covered in fractions of a second. But it is all possible on the cor basse, and it leads to an increasing

spectacle, resulting in one of the most exciting and circus-like endings of the solo horn literature (figure 5.33).

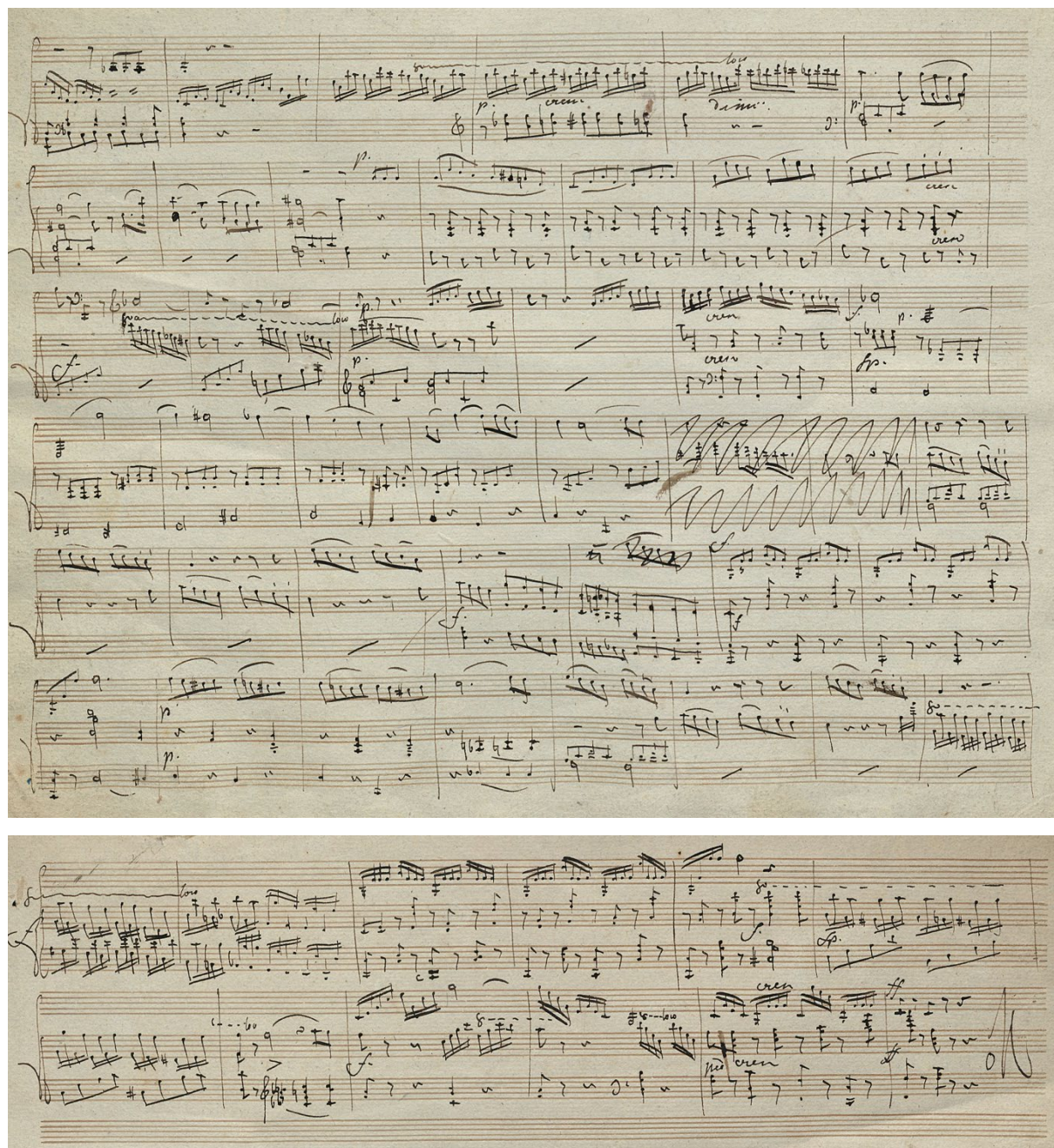


Figure 5.33

Ries, Sonata for pianoforte and horn, op. 34, conclusion of the third movement, Rondo Allegro, last two pages of the manuscript. Horn in F.

6. Critical overview of literature

The critical overview of literature in this chapter focuses on various sources that contribute to the understanding of horn virtuoso Giovanni Punto (1746-1803) and the elements of his playing that potentially contribute to a more diverse treatment of the horn in contemporary times. The sources discussed in this chapter are categorized into two sections: sources until 1850 and modern literature.

Sources until 1850

The *Seule et Vraie Méthode*, and the *Daily Exercises* were the most important sources in my quest for the sound and playing technique of Punto. Learning to ‘speak’ the various articulations, building up flexibility and musical imagination by practicing the embellishments in all the different variations, and gradually mastering the offered horn acrobatics, was my alternative way of studying with the maestro himself.

Texts in horn methods by (almost) contemporaries of Punto were extremely helpful and in other cases contributed to a healthy confusion. Most information found in Dauprat’s comprehensive and very informative *Méthode de Cor-Alto et Cor-Basse*, I trusted because it appeared only about 20 years after Punto’s death, and because it fits in with the few texts and the many études in the *Seule et Vraie Méthode*.

We have a few short and glowing concert reviews from the Prager Neue Zeitung, from which interesting conclusions can be drawn. More reviews of the London concerts have been preserved, and those provide a varied picture. Sometimes Punto had a bad day.

Charles Burney heard Punto perform on several occasions and commented on these concerts in his 1775 publication *The Present State of Music in Germany*, and in his article on the Horn in Rees’s *Cyclopædia* of 1820, 18 years after the death of Punto.

In 1775 Burney remembers how Punto's taste and impeccable execution were applauded in London. In 1820 he is critical about Punto's sound in stopped notes. Reading these comments helped me nuance my opinion about Punto.

Gerber shared interesting facts about the introduction of the horn in Bohemia in the article 'Spörken' in his *Lexicon*, edition 1792. In the new lexicon of 1814, he devotes an article to 'Punto', being very critical about his skills on the violin in connection to his ambition to become *Kapellmeister*, which gave me a greater understanding of the character of the subject of my investigations.

An article in the *Biographie universelle des musiciens*, titled 'Punto', and another one, more than 20 years later, titled 'Stich, connu sous le nom de Punto',²⁶¹ both by Fétis, contain some not verifiable information, especially around Punto's escape from serfdom, which contributed much to the mythmaking. For an impression of the sound of the famous horn player, we must make do with Fétis' memory of an enthusiastic account of his father who once attended a Punto concert.

Kling's article 'Giovanni Punto, Célèbre Corniste (1748[sic]-1803)' lifts the myths into the 20th century by copying anecdotes (including the wrong year of birth) from Fétis, but also mentions the important historical meetings with Mozart and the frustrating circumstances that made it impossible to perform his *Sinfonia Concertante* in 1778.

Modern literature

'Punto, Giovanni [Stich, Johann Wenzel (Jan Václav)]', the Grove Music Online article written by Morley-Pegge, and revised by Fitzpatrick and Hiebert, offers a great starting point for anyone who wants to know more about the historical figure Punto.

The Grove Music Online article *Horn* includes the very helpful chapters *Horn, History to c1800* and *Horn, (iii) Crooks and hand technique* that most of all helped me to put my experiences with period horns and playing technique in a broader perspective.

²⁶¹ Fétis, 'Punto', 285

Anyone doing research on Punto and aspects of horn playing in the 18th century cannot ignore Fitzpatrick's book *The Horn and Horn-Playing, and the Austro-Bohemian Tradition from 1680-1830*. This title pops up in almost every article or book concerning the historical horn, and in several publications of a more general musical character. Partly due to the quality stamp of the publisher, this was considered a standard work for a long time. Problematic is the amount of highly anecdotal information, often impossible to verify. More than is desirable, the author seems to be romanticizing his subject.

A more reliable source is *The French Horn*, by Morley-Pegge. Especially the chapter *The evolution of playing technique* was very useful for my research, since it provides detailed and verifiable information gathered from a large number of sources.

I owe much to Humphries' 2000 publication, *The Early Horn: A Practical Guide*. This book delivers what it promises: concise historical information, combined with the author's hands-on experience with historical horns.

Humphries article 'This French-horn Gentleman... Giovanni Punto in London', published in 2021, is a gold mine for musicians trying to understand the life of the itinerant virtuoso Punto. Due to only flimsy evidence, I do not share Humphries' conclusions about Punto's alleged alcohol consumption.

Hiebert has been invaluable to this research. His article about horn playing in early 18th century Dresden, is thought provoking, and extremely clarifying at the same time.²⁶² Much of my understanding about the period horn I owe to his chapter *The Horn in the Baroque and Classical Periods*.²⁶³

Coar was one of the first in modern times to write about high and low horns. For me it was a revelation to read in his book *The French Horn* (1947) that the sound of the cor basse was long considered the ideal horn sound.

The paragraphs about the solo for low horn in the slow movement of Beethovens 9th Symphony (in the chapter *Beethoven – the progressive*), gave me the idea to elaborate on the solo's for cor basse in other orchestral works by Beethoven.

²⁶² Hiebert, 'Virtuosity,' 112–59

²⁶³ Hiebert, 'The Horn in the Baroque and Classical Periods', 103-114

Manganaro's website horniconography.com served me extremely well in finding historical depictions of horns and their players.

Unfortunately, Branberger's book with the promising title *Jan Václav Stich - občan Punto*,²⁶⁴ turned out not to be a biography, but a novel sprung from the author's imagination. The book could not be used for this dissertation.

Many articles and books helped me to think outside the boundaries of the horn player, and to nurture my understanding of 18th century music. These publications have been most valuable in this respect:

Gjerdingen's *Music in the Galant Style*, provided insights in the development of musical styles in the 18th century, and made me aware of Punto's modest but effective craft as a composer.

Rosen's wonderful book *The classical style* is a point of reference for anyone writing about 18th century performance practice. The chapter *The Concerto* served me to better understand the most ambitious vehicle of the virtuoso.

The chapter *Changes in Musical Style*, in *The Historical Performance of Music*, by Lawson and Stowell, helped me to better grasp the big developments of music in the 18th century.

Murray's magnum opus *The Career of an Eighteenth-Century Kapellmeister*, not only provides a detailed description of Rosetti's life and music, it also beautifully illustrates everyday musical life in an 18th century European court. Thanks to Murray, my image of Punto traveling from one noble household to another became much more accurate and detailed.

²⁶⁴ Branberger, J.: *Jan Václav Stich - občan Punto*. Žehušice, 2012

For the chapter on horn chords or *terzo suono*, I made grateful use of the insights provided by Campbell in the Grove Music Online article 'multiphonics'.

Von Helmholtz's intriguing work *Die Lehre von den Tonempfindungen als physiologische Grundlage für die Theorie der Musik* offered a fascinating understanding of the experience of music, and opened up a whole new perspective for the musician I am.

Conclusions

In conclusion, this research has delved into the life, techniques and influence of renowned horn virtuoso Giovanni Punto, with the aim of understanding his sound and playing style, exploring how his decisive contributions may motivate a more diverse treatment of the horn in our time. Punto was not the only itinerant 18th century horn virtuoso, but he was notable for his ability to capture the imagination of his contemporaries and leave a lasting impression on later horn players and music lovers alike. Significant components of Punto's heritage seem to have faded from the collective consciousness of horn players and their audiences over the past two centuries. The chapters of this thesis all explore that lost legacy. While it remains impossible to fully replicate Punto's sound due to the obvious lack of recordings and the differences in historical context and circumstances, the concept of Historically Informed Performance Practice (HIPP) has provided a framework for studying and understanding the performance style of musicians of the past.

The study commenced with an examination of Punto's biography, chapter 1, providing insights into the context of a traveling virtuoso in the late 18th century. While limited verifiable information exists about Punto's life, careful consideration of available resources establishes him as a pivotal figure in the dissemination of new playing techniques across Europe during a transformative period for the instrument. Crucial was his time as a student in Dresden, where he became acquainted with a revolutionary way of playing the horn at the time, in which the role of the more independent low horn is particularly striking, including the technique of hand stopping developed or at least codified by Punto's teacher Hampel. Important were his encounters with Mozart and Beethoven, who both wrote music for him.

Through a combination of historical investigation, musical analysis, and empirical research involving practical experimentation and performance, this research has shed light on the rich and diverse world of the period natural horn and its possibilities for expressive performance. Through years of dedicated practice, using my skills and tacit knowledge as a specialist horn

player, I have tested Punto's written and musical information, ultimately bringing it to life on stage. This hands-on approach has provided valuable insights into aspects of Punto's legacy.

Several key elements of Punto's playing have been explored in this research. Central to this thesis were his published works, particularly his *Method* and *Daily Exercises* from the 1790s, which have been thoroughly analyzed in chapter 2.

These texts have revealed forgotten aspects of period horn playing. One notable aspect is the revival of the cor basse, the low horn, which served as a counterpart to the more prevalent cor alto, the high horn. Punto's expertise as a low horn player and his specialized use of a larger mouthpiece have revealed the potential for producing a darker, more velvety sound on the horn. Furthermore, the adoption of cor basse mouthpieces has facilitated the performance of challenging arpeggios, often encountered in soloistic low horn parts of the classical period repertoire.

Both the *Méthode* and the *Daily Exercises* demonstrate a particular emphasis on a rich variety of articulation. Through the exploration of this technique, it became evident that the period horn, in the skillful hands of a virtuoso like Punto, was capable of expressive and rhetorical playing, enriching the musical experience. The practice of embellishment and improvisation, a common performance strategy in the classical period, has been rekindled through the exploration of Punto's *Method* as a catalogue of adornments for the horn, leading to more spontaneous and engaging performances.

Chapter 3 focused on a unique form of musical adornment for the horn known today as multiphonics. By examining the laws of nature that govern this extended technique and investigating rare examples of written multiphonics from Punto's era, this study has shed light on the distinctive and captivating possibilities offered by this approach.

Chapter 4 explored Punto's influence on Ludwig van Beethoven. By closely examining solos for low horn in selected orchestral works by Beethoven, I have sought to uncover evidence suggesting that the composer envisioned a distinct sound for the second horn, potentially drawing inspiration from his musical encounters with Punto.

Chapter 5 delved further into the cor basse, Punto's specialty, and its performance technique and characteristics. Through an analysis of the horn parts in Punto's horn concerto no. 1 and sonatas by Beethoven, Danzi, and Ries, I have highlighted the virtuosic use of the low horn during the late 18th and early 19th centuries, showcasing the unique qualities and expressive potential of the low horn.

This research has sought to challenge the prevailing notion that the natural horn is an unruly and unpredictable instrument. By studying Punto's techniques, this research has demonstrated the potential for a looser and more spontaneous approach to written music of the classical period. In addition, it has emphasized the importance of heterogeneity in concert halls, resisting the threat of standardization that creeps into the field of early music.

Ultimately, the culmination of this research is the CD recording, "Music for Cor Basse and Fortepiano," in collaboration with pianist Alexander Melnikov. The recording serves as a resounding testament to the artistic exploration and dedication undertaken throughout this study, with the cor basse resonating in its intended colorful manner.

In conclusion, this thesis has provided valuable insights into the sound, techniques, and legacy of Giovanni Punto, offering a more nuanced understanding of his contributions to horn playing and the broader realm of musical performance. By embracing historical investigation, practical experimentation, and musical analysis, this research has illuminated new paths for contemporary musicians to explore, fostering a deeper appreciation for the rich diversity of the natural horn and its potential for expressive and captivating performances. The revival of the cor basse and the reintroduction of diverse playing techniques showcased in this research hold great promise for the future of period horn playing. By encouraging students to specialize in low horn playing and utilize appropriate mouthpieces, a resurgence of the almost forgotten dark horn sound can be anticipated, accompanied by the facility to tackle the most demanding repertoire of the period. Overall, without this research I would not have discovered the rich palette of the low horn sound, the excitement of extempore improvisation, and the enormous variety in articulation as described in historical tutors. To take full advantage of those discoveries, I should have started this research decades ago. Now I can only hope that the next generations of period

horn players will carry on the work and bring back to the stages the full experience of diverse horn playing as it was demonstrated by Punto and his contemporaries.

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Annex 1 Letter to Raoux

In November 1797, Punto wrote a letter to Raoux, *facteur de cors*, while being in Rouen. The letter is in poor French.

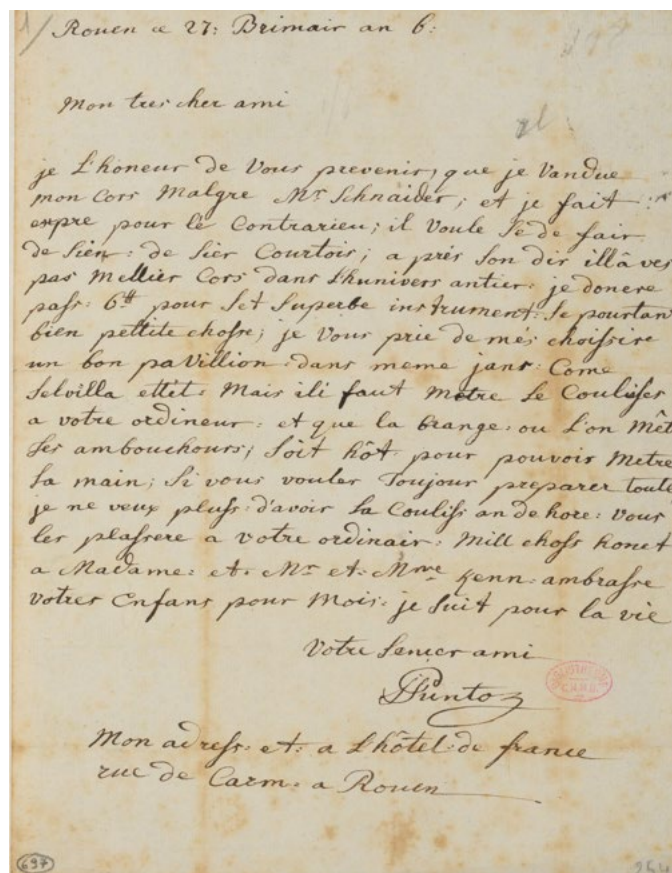


Figure Annex 1

Punto's letter to Raoux, 1779, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris

Letter to Raoux, original French version:

Rouen ce 27: Brimair an 6

Mon tres cher ami

je l'honneur de vous prevenir, que je vandue mon cors malgre mr Schnaider; et je fait expre pour le contrarier; il voule se de fair de (du) sien : de (sier) Courtois; a prés son dir illâ ves pas mellier cors dans l'hunivers antier : je donere pas: 6 (?) pour set superbe instrument : se pourtant bien pettite chose ; je vous prie de més choisir un bon pavillion: dans meme janr : come seluilla ettèt : Mais il faut metre le coulisser à votre ordineur : et que la (brange/frange) : ou l'on mètte les ambouchours ; soit hôt pour pouvoir metre la main; si vous vouler toujours preparer toute, je ne veux plus : d'avoir la couliss an de hore : vous les plassere a votre ordinair : Mill choss honet (?) a Madame: et Mr. et Mme Kenn : ambrasse votres enfans pour mois : je suit pour la vie

votre sincer ami

G. Punto

Mon adress: et: a l'hôtel: de france

rue de Carm a Rouen

Letter to Raoux, English translation:²⁶⁵

Rouen, 17 November 1797,

My very dear friend,

It is my honor to inform you that I have sold my horn, despite Mr Schneider. And I did it deliberately to annoy him. He wanted to get rid of his (horn), from sir Courtois. According to him, there was no better horn in the whole universe. I would not give 6 (Francs?) for this superb instrument. And yet, it is very little thing. I beg you to choose for me a good bell, in the same kind that this one had. But it is necessary to put the tuning slide as usual, and that the (branch) where we insert the mouthpieces is high so it is possible to put the hand. If you

²⁶⁵ Translation by Pierre-Antoine Tremblay.

still want to prepare everything, I do not want to have the tuning slide on the outside: you will place it as usual. A thousand honest things to madam, and to Mr and Mrs Kenn. Kiss your child for me. I am for life

your sincere friend,

G. Punto

*My address is at the hotel of France
Carm Street in Rouen*

In the first half of the letter, we get to know the ironic side of Punto. *I would not give 6 (Francs?) for this superb instrument.* ‘Superb’ instrument is what he obviously meant to write. The request for a good bell is interesting. Standardization was not yet common in brass instrument building. Period horns by one maker show different sizes and shapes. The passage about the placement of the mouthpiece could refer to the angle between the lead pipe, ...*where we insert the mouthpiece*, and the bell. On some horns this angle is too narrow to comfortably maneuver the right hand inside the bell. It is also plausible that Punto meant he wanted a good spot for the left hand to rest under the lead pipe and first brace as to hold the horn comfortably and be able to maneuver the right hand with ease. The repeated comment about the tuning slide may be related to a previous experiment; this time Punto wants it to be placed at the usual spot, at the center of the horn. Remarkably, a cor solo does not have an extra tuning slide. The crook itself can be pulled or pushed in order to fine-tune the horn. Punto, the owner of a silver cor solo that Raoux made him in 1778, is ordering a more common orchestral horn, a cor d’orchestre, with tuning slide, maybe to use for orchestral playing and/or chamber music.

Annex 2 Selective List of Punto's Published Works

Concertos for Horn and Orchestra (strings, 2 oboes, 2 horns: unless otherwise stated).

No.1 in E (2 flutes as a possible alternative to 2 oboes)

No.2 in E

No.3 in F

No.4 Lost

No.5 in F

No.6 in E \flat

No.7 in F (2 oboes as a possible alternative to 2 flutes)

No.8 in E \flat (string orchestra)

No.9 Lost

No.10 in F

No.11 in E

No.12 Lost

No.13 Lost

No.14 in F

No.15 Lost

No.16 Lost

*Concerto F major 'Stockholm'*²⁶⁶ (2 clarinets or 2 oboes, 2 horns)

Concerto for 2 horns and orchestra

Concerto for clarinet and orchestra

Chamber Music

Sextuor op. 34, horn, clarinet, bassoon, violin, viola, bass.

6 Quartets op. 1, horn, violin, viola, bass. Lost.

6 Quartets op. 2, horn, violin, viola, bass. Lost.

²⁶⁶ Unpublished concerto, copy in the Music and Theatre Library in Stockholm.
<https://www.corno.de/shop/concertos/Horn-Orchester/rom375.html>
accessed 15 May 2023

6 Quartets op. 3, horn, violin, viola, bass.

3 Quintets Op. 4, horn, flute/oboe, violin, bass.

3 Quartets Op. 18, horn, violin, viola, bass

3 Quatuors favoris, flute, violin, viola, bassoon (arrangement of op. 18)

Sonata op. 76, horn and bassoon

3 Duo's, horn and bassoon

6 Trios, flute/violin, viola, bass

6 [3] duos op. 5, 2 violins (nos.4–6 by J.A. Fodor)

Several collections of Duo's for two horns and Trio's for three horns.

Singers and Orchestra

Hymne à la liberté, three baritons and orchestra

Descends du haut des cieux: hymne à la liberté, singers and orchestra

Pedagogical works

Seule et Vraie Méthode pour apprendre facilement les Éléments des Premier et Second Cors...

composée par Hampl et perfectionnée par Punta son élève.

Étude ou Exercice Journalier, Ouvrage Périodique pour le Cor.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, likely reading 'Punta', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Curriculum Vitae

Teunis van der Zwart was born in Katwijk, the Netherlands, 13 April 1964.

From 1981 he studied horn as a major subject at the Royal Conservatoire of The Hague and obtained his degree in teaching in 1986. From 1986 to 1988 he studied at the Conservatory of Maastricht where he graduated as a Performing Musician.

Van der Zwart has been active as a period horn specialist in orchestras, chamber music ensembles and as a soloist, performing all over the world, and making highly acclaimed CD recordings.

As a teacher, jury member, and lecturer, he appeared in numerous masterclasses, festivals, and conferences.

Many of his former students from the conservatories of Amsterdam and The Hague hold important positions in early music.

Today, Teunis van der Zwart has a very talented natural horn class at the Royal Conservatoire The Hague, at which institution he is head of the early music department.

His PhD research was conducted at the Academy of Creative and Performing Arts at Leiden University and at docARTES.