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Giovanni Punto (1746-1803) Cor basse célèbre

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2. The Only and True Method

Introduction

Circa 1794, Punto proudly published the *Seule et Vraie Méthode pour apprendre facilement les Élémens 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 Exercise 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 mute[101] 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, *c*1762)[106],

[101] Humphries, J.: *The Early Horn, a practical guide.* Cambridge, 2000; 10
[102] See figures 1.7 and 1.8
[103] Domnich, H.: *Methode 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/biographien/152-hampel-anton-joseph.html Accessed 18 June 2022
[106] Ibid.

and an anonymous horn concerto in D from the Lund collection[107] 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-partials 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.

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[107] Anonymous*: Horn Concerto in D major, Lund 13.* Manuscript. No. 13 of Wenster Catalogue (Litt. 1/13) Universiteitbiblioteket 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* (*c*1762), 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-partials, 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.

Figure 2.5
Hampel, Horn Trio no. 1

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.

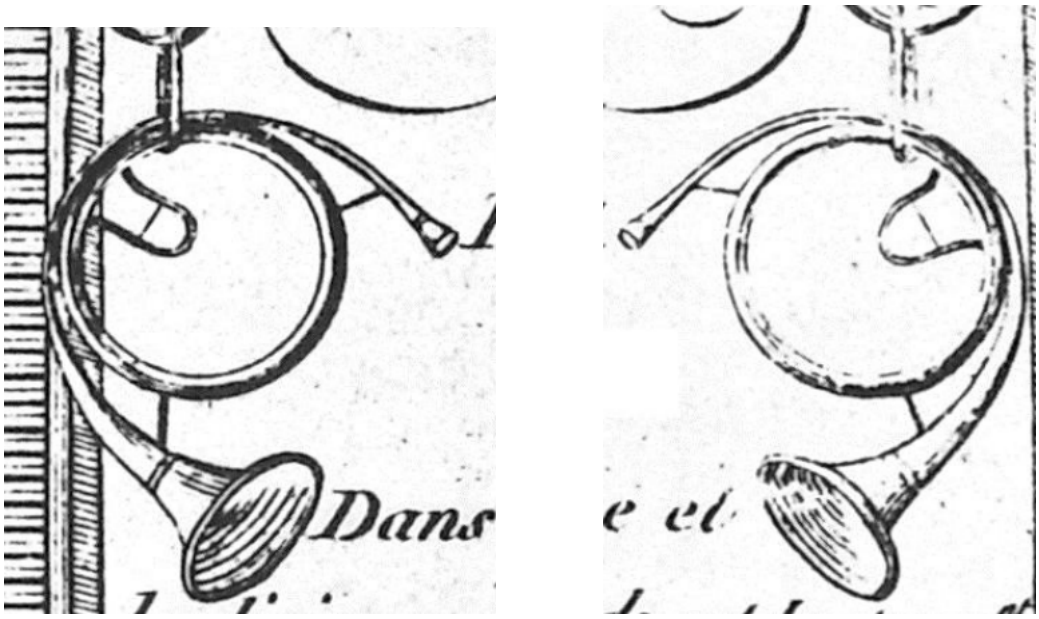

Figure 2.7
The two horns (with remnants of text) on the title page of the *method*

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 etroitte* (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 1740[115], 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).

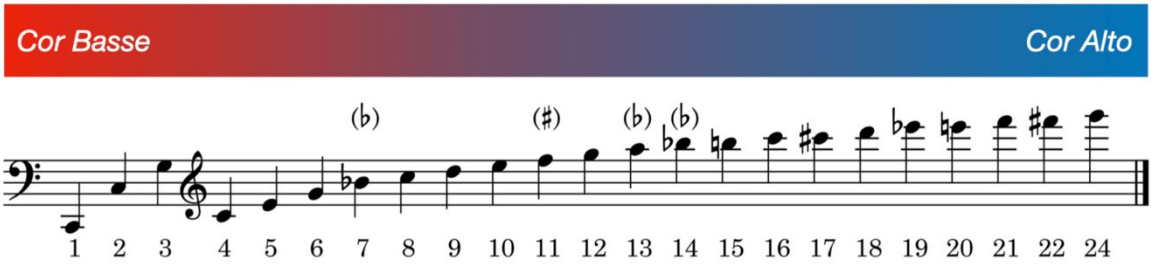

Figure 2.8
The harmonic series and the different ranges of the cor basse (low horn) and the cor alto (high horn), plus their overlap. The flats and sharp in brackets indicate the natural pitch compared to well-tempered tuning; the 7th, 13th and 14th harmonics are a fraction too low; the 11th harmonic 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, Dauprat[117] 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, 1**5**
[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, FIutes, 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 arrètés par l'insufisance 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, fiutes, 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.: *Methode 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 Thürrschmidt (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♭, 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. &c.* after the c''', suggesting the sky is the limit).

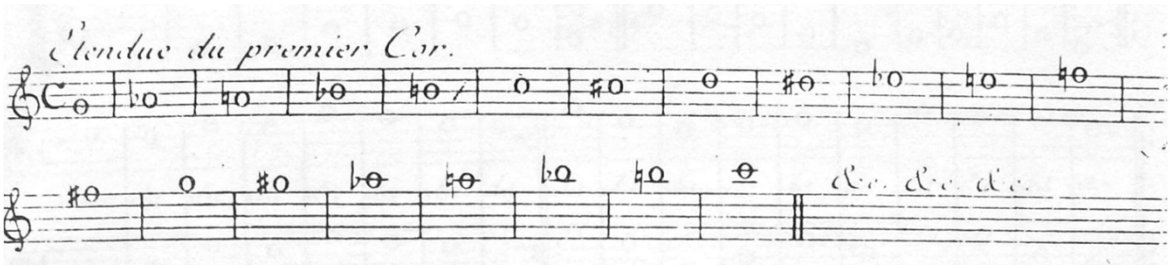

Figure 2.9
Seule et Vraie Méthode, range of the first horn

[126] Fitzpatrick, 219
[127] Dauprat, 10

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.

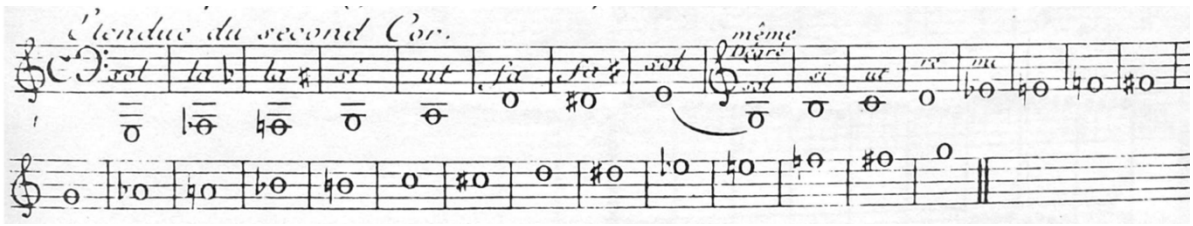

Figure 2.10
Seule et Vraie Méthode, range of the second horn

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 elèves* 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 stärkeste 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 iedes 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 eight 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 S*eule 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
Vandenbroek, Horn Method page 14, excerpt

Figure 2.14
Vandenbroek, 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] Vandenbroek, 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 S*eule 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

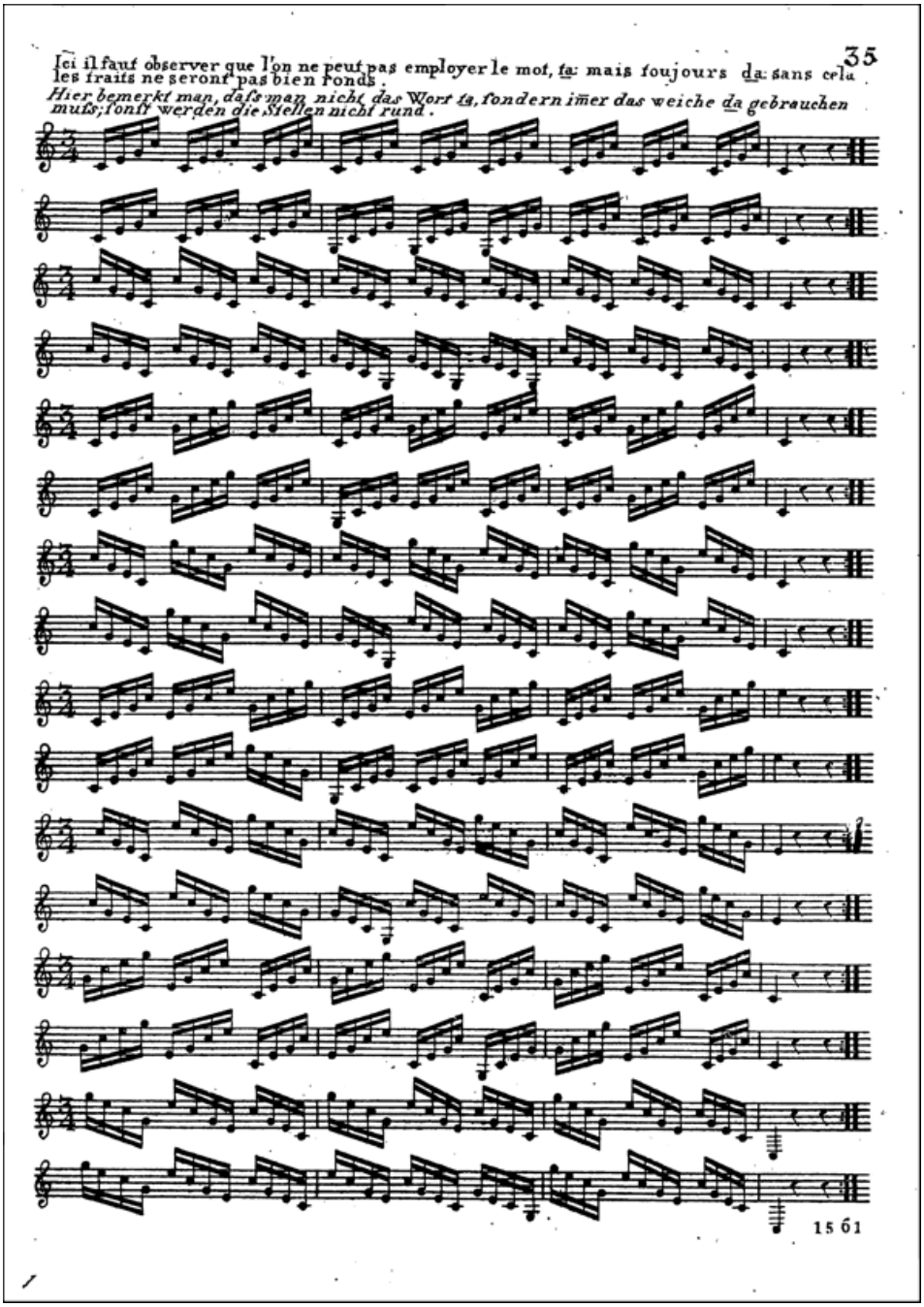

Figure 2.16
Page 35 of Punto's *Daily Exercises*. Translation of the text at the top of the page: *Here one should notice not to use the word 'ta', but always the soft 'da'* (das weiche 'da' in German*), otherwise the notes will not sound nicely round*.

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-partials 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 easy 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 occurence. Domnich, the former student of Punto, is quite clear in his 1807 *Méthode de premier et de second cor:*[143]

> A la même epoque, le hautbois, bien éloigné du point de perfection ou il est parvenu de nos jours, etait 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 dispose 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 etait haussé d'un demi-ton. Ce fut pour lui un trait de lumière, et son genie étendant rapidement une découverte due au hazard, 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 server 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 lipping 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/~jqerics/natural_horn.htm accessed 20 January 2022
[148] Fitzpatrick, 182
[149] Morley-Pegge, *The French Horn,* 90
[150] Ibid.; 86

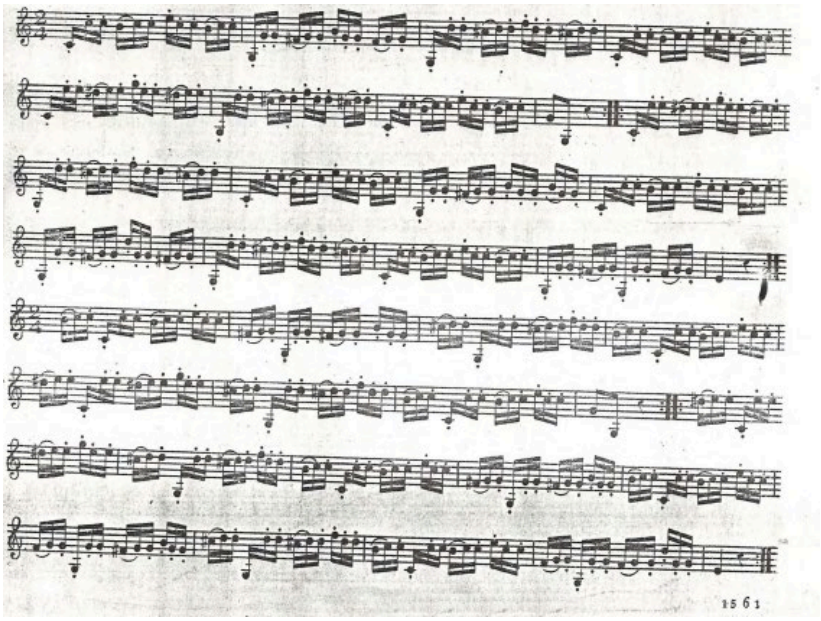

Figure 2.19
One of Punto's *Daily Exercises*, page 53, with non-partial usually approached from the nearest harmonic

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.

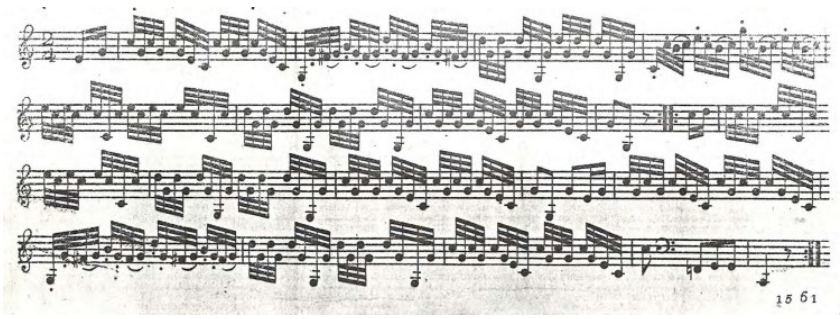

Figure 2.20
The last of the *Daily Exercises*, page 56, with stopped notes, including the heavily stopped F

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-partials. (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 b♭' 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 Ponto (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 jamaise placer ces deux intervalles ensemble parraport que le La est trop bas et le Fa est trop haut cela feroit une dissonante 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-partials- 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 Mozart[161] and Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach[162] 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

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[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 Franceso 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 ò Flauto traverso.* Hamburg, 1728/1732
[166] Quantz, chapters xii and xiii
[167] Tartini, G.: *Traité des Agrémens 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

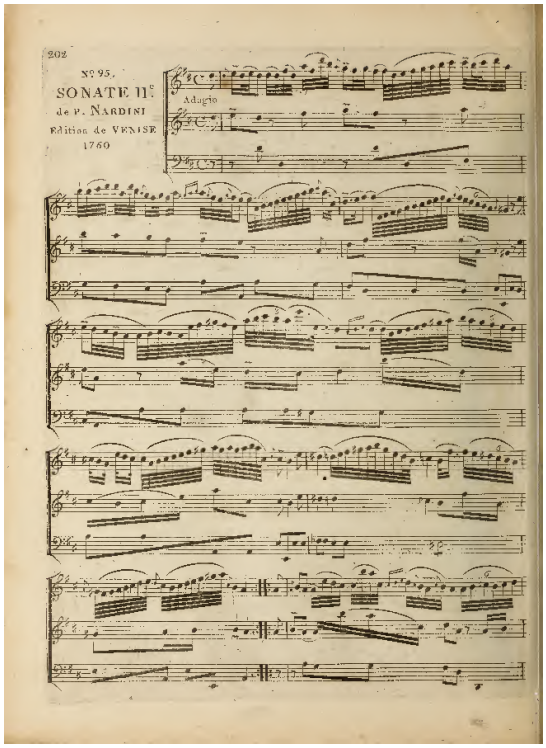

Figure 2.21
The first page of an *Adagio Brodé* by Nardini
The staff at the top presents the suggested embellishment of the middle staff melody

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 agrémens 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

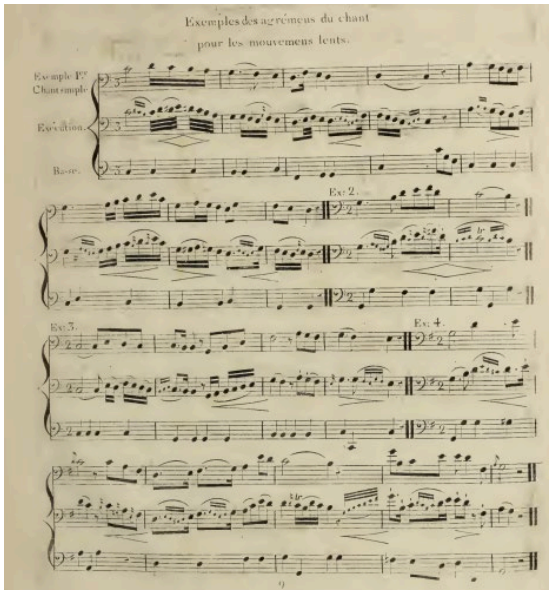

Figure 2.22
Examples of 'vocal embellishments' in Ozi's *Nouvelle Méthode*

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 Brüchle (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 Brüchle, 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 agrémens* (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 Agrémens 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]

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[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 agrémens.
> *(*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]

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[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

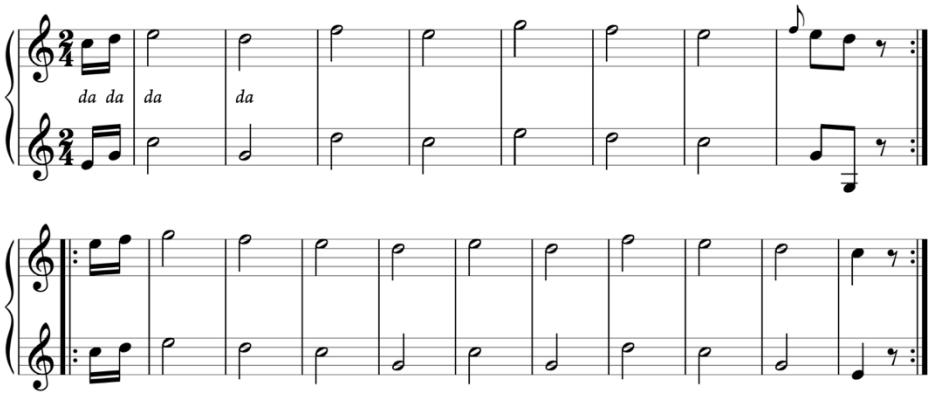

Figure 2.23
Seule et Vraie Méthode, page 6, main theme

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 (Figure2.27):

Figure 2.27
Seule et Vraie Méthode, page 28, appogiaturas

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♭', 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 today[194]), 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