

## Mozart: Stolen Beauties

Don Giovanni: *Vi par che un onest'uomo, un nobil cavalier, com'io mi vanto, possa soffrir che quel visetto d'oro, quel viso inzuccherato da un bifolcaccio vil sia strapazzato?*

*Do you imagine that a gentleman, a noble cavalier, as I pride myself on being, could allow that dear little golden face, that sweet beauty, to be stolen by a brutish oaf?*

Mozart left to horn players a lasting legacy of iconic works. Like double bass players, constantly being asked if they 'had wished they played the flute' – strangers whistle the opening bars of the famous Rondo of KV495 to horn players innocently wishing to go about their business. Either that, or they sing 'I found my horn, gorn,' in the immortal words of Michael Flanders.

In this disc we take as our central point one of Mozart's most memorable works for horn – the Quintet in E-flat major, KV407. Rather than choosing the more common path of combining this work with a number of other late 18th- and early 19th-century works for horn and strings, selected from the many unfairly neglected and long forgotten composers of the time, we have illustrated the various ways in which Mozart's works have been 'appropriated' for the horn, or, in one case how Mozart 'appropriated' a work for himself. The repertoire offers us the opportunity to explore the lives of three star horn players from the 18th and 19th centuries – Joseph Leitgeb, Giovanni Punto and Giovanni Puzzi, as well the latter's pupil, Barham Livius, an amateur horn player and London entrepreneur. During this period we also witness some of the most masterful writing for the Classical natural horn (also known as the hand horn) and start to see the early use of valves. The natural horn uses the 'open' natural harmonics of the instrument in conjunction with a way of manipulating these harmonics by use of the right hand in the flared bell of the instrument, which creates a range of new colours.



The disc opens with a work that is still something of a mystery. The theme of the **Air varié pour corno** is none other than that of 'Là ci darem la mano' from Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni*. The source comes from a folio of manuscripts associated with the 19th-century horn player Giovanni Puzzi (1792– 1876), and regrettably the name of the composer is difficult to decipher. Suggestions of 'Finke' or 'Duché' have been made but little concrete evidence has been found as to who the author may be.

Puzzi first came to note when, sometime prior to 1809, he was brought to the attention of Napoleon by Ferdinando Paer (a composer who hailed from Puzzi's home town of Parma) and awarded a place in the Chapelle de l'Empereur. A little while later, thanks to the support of the *prima donna assoluta* Angelica Catalani, he appeared as a soloist at the Parisian Théâtre Italien, later becoming the Théâtre's celebrity *cor solo* (principal horn). After the fall of the Napoleonic empire in 1815, the Duke of Wellington brought Puzzi to England, where he instantly caused a sensation, sharing concert platforms with famous virtuosi instrumentalists and singers such as Liszt, Dragonetti, Lablache, Rubini and Pasta.

*No living player had ever brought such soft and exquisite sounds of melody from a horn; he seemed to achieve the impossible, and was unique as a soloist on that ungrateful instrument.*

The folio was bequeathed to the British Library and contains a miscellany of works that could easily have come from Puzzi's 'gig pad' during his years of fame in the London of the 1820s through to the 1850s. The works – some by Puzzi himself and some dedicated to him – often use as their themes famous opera arias (Bellini's 'Oh! Divina Agnese' from *Beatrice di Tenda*), ballad tunes ('Faithless Emma' by Sir John Stevenson) or patriotic tunes ('God Save the King') of the day, and are scored for various ensembles, all with solo horn as their feature. All the works in the folio demonstrate Puzzi's skill, dexterity and high level of virtuosity, and none more so than this anonymous *Air varié* from 1845.

The *Air varié* opens with a very stately, operatic introduction which leads the listener into expecting a more sombre work. However, the arrival of the famous theme, a perennial favourite for variations and fantasias, launches us into a more playful mood. The first variation simply decorates the theme with running semiquavers, the second is the most flamboyant, with highly articulated scales up and down the instrument, the third plays with syncopated articulation, whilst a surprising fourth variation uses triplet arpeggios (surprising, as its source is a scribbled solo horn line on the final page; the string parts here for this variation have been reconstructed using material from the other variations). The fifth and final variation is in the style of a polonaise, shifting the meter of the work for the first time in the piece. This final variation works itself into a frenzy, suddenly stopping, only to be followed by a peaceful *Andante* reminder of the original theme.



Michael Haydn's (1737–1806) **Romance in A-flat major** for horn and string quartet poses many questions. It is instantly identifiable as a version of the slow movement of Mozart's Horn Concerto in E-flat major, KV447. Which of the two works came first is hard to say. The Mozart concerto was first published by Johann Anton André (Offenbach am Main) in 1800 and André's handwritten date of 1783 can still be seen on the manuscript housed in the British Library. More recent studies of the manuscript paper have suggested a later date of 1787. Haydn's *Romance* is thought to date from 1794 and was first published in 1802. However, there are some slight peculiarities about both works that suggest it may not be as simple as it first seems. The Mozart manuscript starts unusually with the slow movement entitled 'Romance' and 'Larghetto', followed by the third movement and finally the first movement – written later. On closer inspection of the music, the mystery deepens, with each work containing passages that are hard to conceive of having been composed without knowledge of the other's version. Mozart and Michael Haydn were great friends – to the extent that Mozart helped Haydn out in 1783 by 'ghost writing' a set of violin and viola duets that the Archbishop of Salzburg had commissioned from Haydn, and which he, due to illness, had been unable to complete. Other Mozart works, such as the Symphony No. 37 in G major, KV444/425a are, in fact, works by Michael Haydn with some changes by Mozart. One plausible explanation may be that Haydn had also been required to write a horn concerto and, having completed the slow movement, was unable to fulfil the commission and passed the job on to his friend, only to later return to his earlier sketches and complete the work with his original intentions. The main theme of the *Romance* is in many ways more stately and noble than Mozart's version. The gentle, benevolent atmosphere is eventually shattered with a turbulent passage for the strings alone. However this is a passing storm, and the entrance of the horn brings with it a welcome return to calm.



To some, Barham Livius (1787–1865) is remembered solely as a notorious thief. Livius, a dramatist, composer, horn player and pianist, might not have been the most successful entrepreneur in 19th-century London but, for certain, he was prolific – composing incidental music and, in some cases, writing his own plays (*All in the Dark, or, The Banks of the Elbe; Henri Quatre and the Fair Gabrielle; Benyowsky, or, The Exiles of Kamschatkey*). He also had a hand in translating and rearranging works by Auber (*Léocadie* in 1825, *La Muette de Portici* in 1829), Onslow (*Le Colporteur*, 1831) and Weber (*Abu Hassan* in 1823 and *Der Freischütz, or, The Wild Huntsman of Bohemia* in 1824). It is in connection with Weber that he has been remembered – possibly unfairly. Described as ‘Colonel’ Livius ‘of the Hussars’, he arrived in Dresden in 1822. Whilst there, he approached Weber with the aim of acquiring various scores of Weber’s to perform at Drury Lane. The exact details of their deal are unclear but later, after *Der Freischütz* was performed at Covent Garden (not, as promised by Livius, at Drury Lane), it appears that Weber did not receive the monies owed to him that Livius had been contracted to deliver.

Livius studied the horn with Giovanni Puzzi, and his **Concertante for the pianoforte, horn, viola and violoncello arranged from a Sonata by Mozart** is the final work in the folio of manuscripts associated with Puzzi (see above). The ‘Sonata by Mozart’ is, in fact, Mozart’s Trio in E-flat major for clarinet, viola and piano, KV498, also known as the ‘Kegelstatt’ Trio. The original Mozart work was dedicated to Franziska von Jacquin (1769–1850), a piano student of Mozart’s, and sister of Gottfried von Jacquin (1767–1792) with whom Mozart ‘collaborated’ on, or more likely ghost wrote, a handful of works (such as *Als Luise die Briefe ihres ungetreuen Liebhabers verbrannte*, KV520, *Das Traumbild*, KV530, and *Io ti lascio, o cara, addio*, KV621a). The first performance of the ‘Kegelstatt’ (the nickname, thought to be a later appellation, comes from the German for ‘bowling alley’) took place at the Jacquin’s house with Franziska as pianist, Wolfgang playing viola, and the eminent clarinetist Anton Stadler.

The choice of instrument and technique used in this performance of the work is heavily influenced by an instrument in the collection of the Horniman Museum in London. This instrument, made in 1814 by the eminent maker Lucien-Joseph Raoux, is known to have belonged both to Livius and to his teacher Giovanni Puzzi. It was originally a natural horn which at some point, maybe at Livius’s behest, had an additional two-valve sauterelle block added. Sauterelle (French for ‘grasshopper’) is the name given to a set of valves that can be added or removed from the natural horn, and was a clever development of the instrument in the early years of valve playing. Livius’s writing for the horn in the Concertante includes a lot of notes which are not typically found in traditional hand horn writing, whilst some sections are very typical of the earlier technique. This ‘mixed’ technique was very common at the time, using the older hand horn technique in conjunction with the newer valves, thus creating a whole range of new timbres which would have been impossible on the earlier instrument, and would become inappropriate on later instruments. It is this mixed technique that is used in this recording.

As the work progresses, so does Livius’s confidence in writing for such an ensemble. The opening movement is set at a more bracing *Allegro con brio* than Mozart’s original *Andante* marking, and more or less transplants the clarinet part to the horn, leaving the viola part the same, save for a few changes in figuration, and adding the cello part to either bolster or relieve the traditional bass writing of the piano part. In the *Menuetto and Trio*, the cello starts to take on a more provocative role, sharing more of the original clarinet material in the *Trio* whilst the horn rests. Livius boldly alters the structure of Mozart’s original by omitting the final coda of the *Minuet*. The final *Allegretto* is the most developed arrangement of the whole work, with more additions and

creative rewritings than in the previous two movements, enabling each instrumentalist to have moments of exposure and banter.



Interspersed between each of these larger works are three short duets from Giovanni Punto's *Trois duos*. Punto (1746–1803) was born Jan Václav Stich into a family of serfs in Žehušice, Bohemia. The child's musical prowess was noticed by the local Count, who enabled him to travel first to Prague, where he studied with Matiegka, then to Munich to study with Schindelarž, and finally to Dresden, where he studied with leading horn players Hampel and Haudek. Stich fled a life of servitude back home in Bohemia and embarked on what was to be one of the most prominent careers of any natural horn player – under his new, Italianised name of Giovanni Punto.

He composed a large number of works, mainly for horn but also for other solo instruments such as violin (on which he was also a fine player) and flute. His prowess as a horn player was such that it was Punto who was the household name when he and Beethoven premiered Beethoven's Sonata for fortepiano and horn, Op. 17, in Vienna in 1800. Mozart was another great admirer, writing for him in his 1788 Sinfonia concertante (KV Anh. 9 [279B]) and famously commenting to his father Leopold that 'Punto plays magnificently.' Punto was equally admired for his skills as both composer and performer, with Christian Schubart acclaiming him 'indisputably the best horn player in the world...His compositions are as excellent as his performance, only they always demand a master performer – they are not written for amateurs' (*Ideen zu einer Ästhetik der Tonkunst*, 1806).

These three short movements form the second duo (**Deuxième duo**) in a collection of three duets for horn and bassoon published in Paris in 1802. In the spirit of a number of other works on this disc – rearrangements and other appropriations – the bassoon part has here been directly transcribed for cello. Deceptively simple, the compositions require a high degree of fluency with hand technique, as Punto predominantly uses the horn in the middle of its range. In all three movements the two lines are closely intertwined, with each instrument having to move from a melodic to an accompanying role with great swiftness.



*Leitgeb enchanted by his talent for drawing from an ungrateful instrument the most flattering, beautiful and expressive sounds.*

*L'Avant-Coureur, 23 April 1770*

Joseph Leitgeb [Leutgeb] (1732–1811) is well known to many audiences as a horn player and friend of Mozart. He is often remembered today for being the butt of Mozart's ribald jokes (calling him 'Leitgeb, the ox, the ass and the fool'), and for being (erroneously) known as 'the cheese-monger'. Leitgeb gets portrayed as a modest, humble chap, inordinately fortunate to have fallen into the sphere of Mozart and thus to have become the recipient of so many marvellous works by the great composer during the 1780s and 90s – including the **Quintet in E-flat major** (circa 1782–84). Leitgeb, in fact, had a very highly respected career, travelling extensively as a virtuoso soloist

whilst also giving frequent solo performances in his home town of Vienna, where he became the recipient of concertos from a number of leading composers – such as Michael Haydn, Leopold Hofmann and Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf. Sadly, many of the works associated with him are now lost. He was known to have had an extensive collection of manuscripts, including many works by Mozart, but during the last years of his life many were sold off to raise much-needed funds.

One such work may have been the autograph of Mozart's Quintet in E-flat major for horn, violin, two violas, and cello. Sadly, the location of the autograph of this work is currently unknown; its last known appearance was at a sale in London in March 1847. After Mozart's death, the publisher André was pursuing his widow Constanze for a number of manuscripts, including this Quintet, and she assured him that Leitgeb had a copy – but that Leitgeb 'lived in the suburbs' and was proving difficult to track down. André must have managed to find a source as he produced a first edition of the work in Paris circa 1802: it is this edition that we have used for our performance.

This Quintet is considered one of the seminal chamber works for horn. Mozart, a viola player himself, chooses to balance the timbre of the natural horn with two violas rather than the normal string quartet line up. Whilst this might seem counterintuitive—the danger of the similar range and colour of horn and viola somewhat muddying the ensemble—it has the advantage of creating a beautiful balance of the solo horn and solo violin within a particularly melodious ensemble. The opening fanfares of the *Allegro* burst with energy but quickly give way to a more introspective response. The horn writing shows Leitgeb at the top of his game, calling for a range of two and a half octaves, right up to the top of the instrument, with many arpeggio leaps and scales. The horn does not get all the glory, as Mozart provides passages in which the horn and violin spar with one another. The gloriously lyrical *Andante* is at least the equal of any of the concerto slow movements, Mozart exploiting Leitgeb's famous ability 'to sing ... as perfectly as the most mellow, interesting and accurate voice' (*Mercur de France*, 1770). In the final *Allegro* Mozart jettisons the normal hunting idiom that he invariably employs in his other works for solo horn and, instead, makes the finale a rollicking hoe-down, in which he writes for the instrument in a way that perfectly demolishes the belief that the natural horn was in any way a limited instrument.

Anneke Scott



## A Note on Performing Practice

Ironwood's interpretations are informed by the fascinating sound world of turn-of-the-19th-century Europe, when instruments, composition and performance styles were undergoing rapid and, in some cases, radical change. String players continued to play on gut-strung instruments, but these had been modified from Baroque to late Classical set-up to produce more sound and enhance projection. Most string players would have been using transitional (pre-Tourte) or Tourte bows. Cellists continued to play without spikes, with the cello supported between the legs.

Viennese and English (followed closely by French) makers dominated the piano manufacturing scene, producing essentially wooden-framed instruments that were straight or parallel strung with a range of between five and a half and six octaves. Compared with the modern piano, these instruments were lighter and more transparent in sound, with distinct tonal ranges due to stringing

and hammer size and coverings. The era saw the rise of the travelling piano virtuoso who played whatever instrument was to be found, irrespective of style or range.

String players employed a basically pure tone, with subtle vibrato applied only to certain important notes. Portamento or audible sliding was also beginning to be employed as an expressive device to enhance legato and to avoid changing strings so that tonal shading could remain uniform during melodies. String players used a predominantly on-the-string (legato) bowing style with only occasional use of bounced bowings (spiccato and so on) for special effects.

For pianists, legato (rather than non-legato) was becoming the norm unless the composer marked other types of articulation. Pianists, like harpsichordists before them, made particular use of dislocation (separation of melody from accompaniment) and chordal arpeggiation (even when not marked by the composer) to bring out important melody notes, enhance texture and create agogic emphasis. During this era musicians often altered the rhythms in the music to bring out the rhetorical character of a passage or to create variety when passages were repeated. This practice is still well and alive in jazz and popular music performance, but is rarely heard in mainstream classical music performance, where adherence to the composer's notation has become the norm.

Allied to rhythmic alteration was the use of tempo modification. Musicians would change tempo to suit character and mood, to enhance a crescendo or diminuendo, or to delineate structural points in the music. Among the marks of articulation, the slur was considered one of the most important. It signified not only smooth connection (legato) between notes but also a localised phrasing—an emphasis at the beginning of the slur, with a decay in sound at the end of slur, including sometimes a shortening of the final note, and this applied to slurs over two, three, four and more notes.

All of these practices and much more besides are well documented in written sources of the era, and they continued throughout the 19th century and can be heard in recordings by revered 19th-century- trained artists made at the turn of the 20th century.

Neal Peres Da Costa

For more information about this recording, including translations of the liner notes and films about the project, please visit [www.ironwoodchamberensemble.com](http://www.ironwoodchamberensemble.com)

