

2017

A master's recital in horn

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A MASTER'S RECITAL IN HORN

An Abstract of a Recital

Submitted

For Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Music

Casey M. Chlapek

University of Northern Iowa

December 2017

This Study By: Casey M. Chlapek

Entitled: A MASTER'S RECITAL IN HORN

has been approved as meeting the thesis requirement for
the Degree of Master of Music

Date _____ Dr. Yu-Ting Su, Chair, Thesis Committee

Date _____ Dr. Melinda Boyd, Thesis Committee Member

Date _____ Dr. Rebecca Burkhardt, Thesis Committee Member

Date _____ Dr. Patrick Pease, Interim Dean, Graduate College

RECITAL APPROVAL FORM

This Recital Performance By: Casey M. Chlapek

Entitled: A MASTER'S RECITAL IN HORN

Date of Recital: November 9th, 2017

has been approved as meeting the recital requirement for
the Degree of Master of Music

Date _____ Dr. Yu-Ting Su, Chair, Thesis Committee

Date _____ Dr. Melinda Boyd, Thesis Committee Member

Date _____ Dr. Rebecca Burkhardt, Thesis Committee Member

Date _____ Dr. Patrick Pease, Interim Dean, Graduate College

ABSTRACT

Casey Chlapek performed his graduate horn recital on November 9, 2017 at 6:00 pm in Davis Hall of the Gallagher Bluedorn Performing Arts Center on the campus of the University of Northern Iowa. He was assisted by pianist Natia Shioshvili. This recital represents the partial fulfillment of obtaining a Master of Music degree in Horn Performance. The program included works by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Jan Koetsier Sigurd Berge, Carl Nielsen, and Jean Françaix. This abstract examines each piece in the context of its composer's total musical output, explores the purpose and circumstances of composition, and provides brief comments regarding the music for both listeners and performers.

Horn Concerto No. 4 in E-flat Major, K. 495 (W.A. Mozart)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) is well-known as both a child piano prodigy and prolific composer. Throughout his life he composed numerous pieces featuring horn, many of which he intended for a family friend, Joseph Leutgeb. As a child, Mozart met Leutgeb on tour with his father in Salzburg, where Leutgeb served as a court musician, and their friendship endured through the remainder of Mozart's life.¹ While early research regarding Leutgeb is founded on careless inaccuracies or assumptions, recent research reveals that Mozart's concertos tell a great deal about Leutgeb as a horn player.²

¹ Barry Tuckwell, *Horn* (London: Macdonald & Co., 1983), 130.

² Michael Lorenz, "A Little Leutgeb Research," *The Horn Call* 44, no. 2 (February 2014): 68.

While Mozart's horn concertos appear musically commonplace in comparison to his other solo compositions, they stand out among the horn solos composed by his contemporaries. The limitations of the technologically primitive natural horn resulted in compositions that catered to the instrument's shortcomings through sparse chromaticism and lyrical melodies that suffered from brevity. Mozart managed to circumvent these limitations thanks to Leutgeb's atypical playing abilities. John Humphries comments on a performance review regarding Leutgeb's strengths as a performer:

Although he was probably never in the front rank of contemporary virtuosi he was certainly a fine and musical player whose real talent lay, according to the *Mercure de France*, not in pyrotechnics but in his 'ability to deliver a singing adagio as musically and as accurately as the most mellow voice'. Mozart never asks him to attempt the virtuoso lines which his contemporaries often required.³

The performance review explains Mozart's reasoning for composing expansive and lyrical middle movements in his complete concertos. Additionally, Leutgeb's impact on the compositions is evident in their tessituras. Although K.495 is often labeled as *Horn Concerto No. 4*, it is the second composed by Mozart.⁴ As with an earlier concerto, K. 417, it showcases Leutgeb's abilities in the high register. Later concertos contain a narrowing tessitura over time, which is often attributed to Leutgeb's declining performing abilities as he aged.⁵

Mozart added the label "Ein Waldhorn Konzert für den Leutgeb," to K. 495, in large part due to the themes that resemble hunting calls in the third-movement rondo.⁶ In

³ John Humphries, *The Early Horn: A Practical Guide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 12.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 87.

⁵ Humphries, *Early Horn*, 87.

⁶ Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *Horn Concerto in E-Flat major for Horn and Orchestra KV 495*, preface by Franz Giegling, trans. by J. Bradford Robinson (Kassel: Bärenreiter-Verlag, 2003), VI.

addition to the hunt-inspired themes in the third movement, the first and third movements are principal examples of the light and playful movements expected of Mozart. Mozart drafted the manuscript in multiple colors of ink, said to both help and distract Leutgeb, and this lighthearted gesture reflects the character of the outer movements.⁷ However, the concerto contains a contrasting songlike middle movement, subtitled “Romance,” which is expansive in duration and showcases Leutgeb’s supposed strengths. In fact, the movement is so exceptional that it is often extracted as a standalone solo.

On modern valve horns, Mozart’s concertos present far fewer challenges than Leutgeb faced nearly 250 years ago. Modern horns enable smoother lyrical lines and unaffected tone through chromatic passages, but their increased weight somewhat encumbers attempts to maintain the light character expected of the outer movements. Other challenges also remain, such as the sixteenth notes in the high register throughout the first movement and a variety of lip trills. Specifically, non-cadential trills in the first movement require conviction and rhythmic precision to exist within their respective phrases. The middle movement acts as a test of endurance due to its duration, a test that persists through the third movement. Performers are also tasked with providing both a cadenza in the first movement and an *Eingang* in the third, which are opportunities to showcase both their technical prowess and creative intuition.

Concertino for Horn and Piano, Opus 74 (Jan Koetsier)

Jan Koetsier (1911-2006), born in Amsterdam, found immense success first as a conductor, and then a composer. Koetsier’s family moved to Berlin when he was a

⁷ Daniel Bourge, *Conversations about the Horn* (Paris: International Music Diffusion, 1996), 82

toddler, where he later studied conducting. Due to the political situation leading up to World War II, Koetsier left Berlin and found work touring the Netherlands as both a pianist and a conductor. After the war he attained the position of second conductor of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, which ultimately led to numerous other conducting positions. He retired from conducting and teaching in 1976 and directed his energy toward composition.⁸

Concertino for Horn and Piano, Opus 74, represents a handful of trends found in Koetsier's solo works for brass. In regard to accompaniment, Koetsier originally composed his concertinos with orchestral accompaniment. Within a five-year span that began just after his retirement, Koetsier composed a concertino for horn (1977), tuba (1978), trumpet (1980), and trombone (1982), all of which were later arranged for piano accompaniment.⁹ The concertinos each follow many structural and characteristic styling of traditional concertos, especially his *Concertino for Horn and Piano*, Opus 74.

In many ways, Koetsier's Opus 74 parallels classical concertos. Koetsier's first movement is fast and in a vague sonata form, followed by a slower second movement, and finally concludes with an incessant rondo with the instruction "*in modo di perpetuum mobile*." Throughout, the piece features simple but sometimes florid melodies atop complex and intriguing harmonies in the accompaniment. The first movement begins with declamatory statements in the horn that frequently exchange with sweeping lyrical melodies. Mystery intrigues listeners in the second movement thanks to complex

⁸ Stephanie Mauder, "Jan Koetsier Biography," Jan Koetsier Foundation, accessed March 2, 2017, http://www.jan-koetsier.de/bio_eng.php.

⁹ Ibid.

harmonies in the accompaniment. Instances of canon add to the mystery as the instruments stalk one another to the movement's conclusion. The final movement lives up to its distinction as "perpetual motion," as the pulse relentlessly drives the music forward. Koetsier indicates *brillante* near the piece's conclusion as the horn races and soars toward a heroic ending, but ultimately creeps away after a brief restatement of the rondo's refrain.

The primary challenges of performing this concertino lie in technique, collaboration, and endurance. Technical challenges, such as the sixteenth-note passages in the first movement and the triplet arpeggios near the conclusion, require preemptive subdivision of rhythms and absolute confidence by the soloist. Challenges in collaboration exist as tempo and meter changes within movements are often sudden and without much musical preparation. Finally, the duration of the entire piece nears twenty minutes and ventures into the high register numerous times on the final page. Soloists must ensure utilization of proper technique throughout the piece in order to maintain energy and ability in the finale.

Horn-lokk (Sigurd Berge)

Sigurd Berge (1929-2002) was a twentieth-century Norwegian composer. Berge's portfolio contains fewer works than the program's other composers, but he composed for an astounding variety of ensemble types. An obituary published in 2002 states, "His production encompass[ed] a wide range of styles, including traditional [tonal style], twelve-tone music . . . educational work as music for school orchestras and recorder

ensembles, electronic music, multi-media compositions, stage music for television, chamber music, etc.”¹⁰ Appropriately, Berge’s two greatest interests in composition were music for educational ensembles and Norwegian folk music. As a result, Berge is recognized as much for his contributions to music education as he is for his compositions.¹¹

Horn-lokk, an unaccompanied horn solo composed in 1972, expresses Berge’s interest in Norwegian folk music. Berge composed the work for fellow Norwegian Frøydis Ree Wekre, a renowned performer and teacher, and only the second female president of the International Horn Society (1998-2000).¹² Their shared Norwegian heritage serves as inspiration for Berge’s *Horn-lokk*. In four sections, the majority of the piece vaguely resembles traditional horn signals with melodies inspired by Norwegian folk music.¹³ The composition also serves as an educational showcase of the horn and testament to Wekre’s abilities as a player, as its tessitura and required techniques result in a challenging performance.

Berge’s *Horn-lokk*, which means “horn call,” contains some traits reminiscent of traditional horn calls and techniques that emulate distant or echoing horn signals. The music diverges from the mood and character of traditional horn calls due to its more complex tonality. Chromaticism—impossible on traditional hunting horns— results in more dissonant intervals uncommon in both traditional functional and musical horn calls.

¹⁰ Mie Sundberg, “Composer Sigurd Berge is dead,” Norwegian Public Broadcasting Corporation, February 6, 2002, accessed March 4, 2017, <https://www.nrk.no/kultur/komponisten-sigurd-berge-er-dod-1.855912>.

¹¹ Sundberg, “Berge is dead.”

¹² “Frøydis Ree Wekre,” International Horn Society, accessed March 4, 2017, <https://www.hornsociety.org/26-people/honorary/94-froydis-ree-wekre>.

¹³ Ibid.

As a result, the piece lacks the heroic quality of popular horn call melodies, such as Siegfried's call in Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* or the trio in Beethoven's Third Symphony. Rather, the *Horn-lokk* grieves as the melody remains trapped in quiet, haunting repetitions rather than triumphant proclamations. The only respite from the repetitions comes at the climax when the horn releases an exhausting and cathartic outburst of fury.

Horn-lokk presents performers with a multitude of challenges in three main areas: those that come inherently with unaccompanied solos, tessitura, and the inclusion of complex techniques. The difficulties present in unaccompanied pieces arise from the freedom of rhythm and tempo. Rhythmic flexibility acts as a double-edged sword, for it creates a dependency on the performer for pacing and choosing tempos that best serve the music.¹⁴ Berge aids the performer in his varying notation of time between phrases, but the pacing still relies heavily on the performer's interpretation of the notation. Aside from pacing, Berge asks for several techniques used sparsely in the program's other repertoire, such as lip trills and stopped horn. Beyond executing these skills proficiently, performers must place them in context of the piece to maintain a unified musical presentation. The stopped horn, for example, often echoes the immediately preceding music, and it therefore creates a muffled response, reminiscent of an actual echo. Finally, Berge tests the performer's range, as he pushes the horn's high and low registers to their extremes on multiple occasions.

¹⁴ Sarah Schouten, "Horn-Lokk," HornRep, last modified 2017, accessed September 10, 2017, <http://www.hornrep.org/index.php/8-reviews/16-horn-lokk>.

Canto Serioso (Carl Nielsen)

Carl Nielsen (1865-1923) was a Danish composer who composed for a multitude of genres and ensembles. Originally for horn and piano, Nielsen composed *Canto Serioso* in 1913 as an audition piece for the fourth horn position in the Copenhagen Opera Orchestra. Elly Bruunshuus Petersen suggests that Nielsen composed the work in a matter of days, as auditions for the position were held exactly three weeks after the orchestra publicly announced the vacancy.¹⁵ Additional circumstantial evidence, including the presence of sketches on the reverse pages of compositions from the same year, confirms that Nielsen composed the piece in 1913 for the auditions. However, it is uncertain why Nielsen never published the piece, even though he arranged it for a cellist in 1930. Its publication occurred posthumously, in 1944.¹⁶

Today, most low-horn orchestral auditions rely often on cello compositions played at their original pitch, orchestral excerpts, and solo pieces by Mozart or Strauss that reside in the core of standard horn repertoire. These pieces all present technical challenges and opportunities for musicians to demonstrate their musicality. *Canto Serioso*, although intended specifically as a brief audition piece, is still performed for auditions and even recitals because it satisfies these requirements for technical demonstration and musical expression. The piece is brief, recording timings average between three and four minutes, and the horn's tessitura resides relatively low, never advancing above the treble-clef staff. It begins at a tranquil *andante sostenuto*, the horn constantly imitating the piano's lyrical melodies. This responsive motion continues into

¹⁵ Carl Nielsen, *Canto serioso*, ed. Elly Bruunshuus Petersen (Copenhagen: Edition Wilhelm Hansen, 2003), xxvii.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, xxviii.

the next *adagio molto* passage. The *adagio molto* passage transitions from lyrical melodies to more disjunct rhythms and melodies that derail the music harmonically, manifesting tension that is heightened by constant push-and-pull of tempo. Alleviating the tension is a descending cadenza-like passage in the horn, which ultimately returns to passages reminiscent of the piece's tranquil beginning. Push-and-pull remains in the form of abrupt tempo changes until the piece finally settles to its conclusion.

In addition to the ever-present challenges of the horn's low register, such as intonation and projection, Nielsen asks the soloist to utilize a variety of articulations throughout the tessitura while also maintaining strict adherence to nearly constant expressive markings regarding dynamics and tempo alterations. These factors all serve as an opportunity for the performer to exhibit their abilities in the low register, again both technically and expressively. Collaboration between the performers requires immense understanding and preparation, especially through the constant tempo changes near the piece's conclusion. Additionally, understanding of the score and rubato tendencies of each performer also allows for seamless exchanges in imitative phrases throughout.

Canon à l'octave (Jean Françaix)

Jean Françaix (1912-1925) was a twentieth-century French composer who composed works for a wide spectrum of ensembles, many unconventional. His prolific compositional career resulted in a handful of works becoming standard in the horn repertoire. Aside from his *Canon*, Françaix also composed two woodwind quintets, a horn quartet, a *Divertimento* for horn and piano, and numerous chamber pieces that

include horn. Despite his diverse portfolio of compositions, critics often accused his compositions of being limited to a “light-hearted, ecstatic and eclectic” style, a designation embraced by Françaix and evident in his *Canon à l’octave*.¹⁷

Canon à l’octave is an extremely short piece for horn and piano which lasts barely more than one minute at its brisk designated tempo, *allegro vivo*. The two performers stay in simple canon, playing the same melody a beat apart throughout the entire piece. The close proximity of the canon differentiates it from more traditional canons due to the unconventional harmonies and clusters that inevitably result from premature layering of undeveloped ideas. Prolific syncopation and sporadic *marcato* accents greatly increase the complexity of the melody and, therefore, canon. These *marcato* accents enhance the playfulness of the skip-filled melodies by making them less predictable, a key trait in Françaix’s characteristic humor.

The canon requires that performers maintain steady tempo and strictly adhere to Françaix’s incessant markings. Precise implementation the variety of articulations is the first step in communicating humor, but exaggeration is necessary for even the possibility of specific details being audible through the thick ensemble texture. With that in mind, some details inevitably become muffled in the dense layering of the canon, but well-executed accents and *subito* dynamic changes will break through the texture, surprising and humoring audiences.

¹⁷ Hans-Jürgen Schaal, “Meister Der Fröhlichen Diversität: Zum 100. Geburtstag von Jean Françaix (1912-1997),” *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 173, no. 3 (2012): 47.

Conclusion

The repertoire on the recital exhibited a plethora of horn techniques in drastically different contexts. Opening the recital with a Mozart concerto presented the audience with a familiar musical style from which the other pieces diverged. Koetsier's *Concertino* immediately followed the Mozart and demonstrated relatively modern compositional techniques in a piece that otherwise shared numerous similarities with the Mozart. Exposed elements in both the Berge and Nielsen required conviction and confident interpretation from the soloist, while the Françaix relied on mechanical tempo and stern attention to detail. The entirety of the recital's literature provide the soloist with generous opportunities to demonstrate his understanding of the music through proficiency of a variety of techniques on the horn and enhanced expressive abilities cultivated during his graduate studies.

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School of Music

University of Northern Iowa

presents

Casey Chlapek, Horn

assisted by:

Natia Shioshvili, piano

In partial fulfillment of the requirement
for the Master of Music degree in Performance
From the Studio of Dr. Yu-Ting Su.

Horn Concerto No. 4 in E-flat Major, K. 495.....Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756-1791)

Allegro maestoso
Andante cantabile
Allegro vivace

Concertino for Horn and Piano, Opus 74.....Jan Koetsier
(1911-2006)

Allegro molto
Intermezzo
Rondo

Intermission

Horn-Lokk.....Sigurd Berge
(1929-2002)

Canto Serioso.....Carl Nielsen
(1865-1931)

Canon l'Octave.....Jean Françaix
(1912-1997)

Davis Hall, at 6:00 P.M.

Thursday, November 9th, 2017