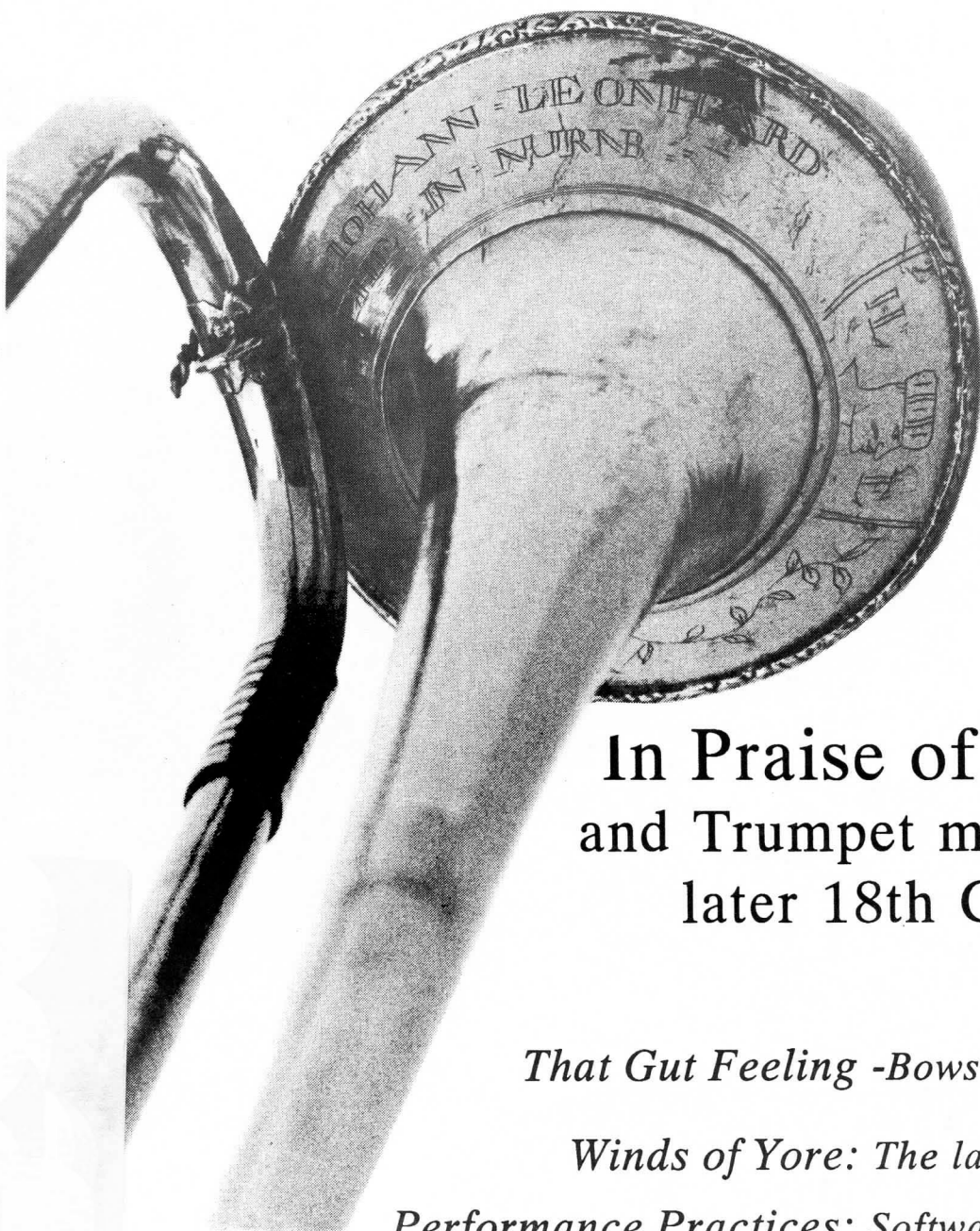


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IN PRAISE OF EDWARD H. TARR

AND IN DEFENSE OF THE TRUMPET MUSIC OF THE LATER 18TH CENTURY

Christopher Brodersen

Despite not playing the instrument, I have an uncommon interest in the natural trumpet, largely because of my good fortune to have as a friend the great American trumpeter Edward H. Tarr. Although we have been out of touch now for several years, I still recall with fondness the times I stayed with Ed in his house on the Oberer Rheinweg in Basel and shared meals with him and his family. Ed was also very generous to include me in two of his projects, the Altenburg translation and the book *Die Trompete* (first published by Hallwag in German and now available in an English translation from the Amadeus Press), by allowing me to contribute photographs and an illustration.

To my mind, Edward H. Tarr is one of the great pioneers of the natural trumpet in the 20th century. He is, of course, the first major performer after Walter Holy to play the instrument extensively in public. More importantly, he is the first musician to build an international career around the natural trumpet. Certainly he is *the* consum-

mate scholar of the instrument, having contributed several articles on the



Ed Tarr trying out an Adolf Egger reproduction of a keyed trumpet, with son Philip.

trumpet and related subjects to the *New Grove's*. Above all, he is a superb teacher and his greatest legacy surely must be his many fine pupils. But it was his playing of the natural trumpet on recordings—many now almost 30 years old!—that attracted me originally. I still find Ed's playing, compared to that of the present crop of players, to be more consistently exciting, cultivated, and musical than just about anybody else's.

Ed Tarr's list of recordings from the 60's and 70's contains many gems that cry out for re-release on CD. Chief among these, I think, is the two LP set entitled "Musikalische Feste in fürstlichen Gärten" ("Festival Music in Princely Gardens"). This set featured first-time recordings, on historical instruments or otherwise, of much extraordinary music for winds, including a piece for 12 trumpets and orchestra by Schmelzer (complete with ringing high C's) by Zelenka, a delightful little march for trumpet, oboes and bassoon by Handel, and an unusual solo concerto for trumpet and winds by Molter. The LP that probably first served to introduce Ed Tarr's natural trumpet playing to a

larger public was “Die Kunst der Trompeter” (“The Trumpeters’ Art”), first released in Europe on the Electrola label, and later available in America on the Nonesuch label as “The Art of the Baroque Trumpet”. It included several unusual items such as the anonymous Italian fanfare that later wound up in the theme music for the movie *Rocky*(!), and the famous Altenburg concerto for seven trumpets. With this last item hangs a rather droll story that is illustrative of Ed Tarr’s sense of humour.

Ed described to me the difficulty of assembling seven leading specialists on the natural trumpet to record the Altenburg work (this was about 1965). Because of impossible schedule conflicts, it was decided to record the piece on two days, Choir I recording on day one, Choir II on day two, with the timpanist playing through to provide continuity. Ed even pointed out to me one spot where the timpanist rushed a measure, thereby causing innumerable retakes before it came out right. I thought nothing of it at the time, but when I later examined the names of the trumpeters in Choir II and tried to find them listed in the Schwann Artist Catalogue, I realized Ed Tarr had pulled a fast one on me! He had assured me that the players (Hans Richter, Michael Steiner and Manfred Krämer) were well-known trumpeters from German radio orchestras, but in fact these were pseudonyms for Ed and his buddies doing some rather fancy double tracking!

It was during the early 70’s that Ed also shared with me some of his insight into trumpet music of the later 18th century, along with his dissatisfaction with the generally held view that trumpet technique went into decline during this period. This is at best a half-truth that has been repeated and reinforced, amazingly enough even in college textbooks, until it has the strength of law and becomes capable of swaying a performer’s outlook on music of the period. The truth is that there were many composers active during the later 1700’s who wrote demanding solo music for the (natural) trumpet. Among them are: Franz Xaver Richter, Joseph Riepel, Johann Matthias Sperger, Johann Wilhelm Hertel, Johann Michael Haydn, Leopold Mozart, Georg von Reutter the younger, Carl Friedrich Christian Fasch, and even

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, with an early concerto presumed lost. The latter 18th century in fact represents the high water mark for solo trumpet music, as there are almost no 19th century concertos for the instrument, certainly none after the two of Haydn and Hummel that has become established in the standard repertoire, and the 20th century is not much better in that regard.

In order to underscore this point, Ed recorded two trumpet concertos from the period by Sperger and Michael Haydn that originally appeared on Eurodisc 87 815 MK around 1973. Haydn’s concertos (there are two) are noteworthy in that the solo writing for the natural trumpet is much more demanding than anything from the Baroque era, perhaps even setting some kind of record, as the trumpet consistently climbs to (written) high D, E, F, and once to G above high C. Moreover, the high notes are approached by large intervals rather than by stepwise motion. This results in a quantum leap in technical difficulty over what is found in the usual Baroque concerto of Torelli or Telemann. Nor is this kind of writing confined to the concertos of Michael Haydn, but is found in the works of several of the composers listed above as well.

The Michael Haydn trumpet concertos are also valuable in that they afford a glimpse into what the lost trumpet concerto of Wolfgang Amadeus might have sounded like, as Michael Haydn and the young Mozart may have written for the same (undetermined) trumpeter. Indeed, it is fascinating to speculate about the quality of the trumpet playing at the Salzburg court at this time, and about the trumpeters who inspired this music: Caspar Köster, J.A.Schachtner, and J.B.Resenberger. Resenberger was praised by Leopold Mozart in print in 1757 for being a ‘splendid trumpeter who has made himself famous through his extraordinary purity in the upper register and the ease with which he plays fast passages and trills’ (my translation).

It is clear that there is a small but important body of trumpet literature waiting to be recorded, if only the right performer on the natural trumpet were to step forward and team up with the right period-instrument orchestra, conductor, and label. Curiously, the one Classical-era trumpet concerto which

has been recorded on a period instrument, the wonderful Concerto in E-flat major of Joseph Haydn, represents a deviation from the main body of music for the instrument, as it was originally written for a *keyed* trumpet devised by Anton Weidinger around the turn of the century, and not the valveless, natural trumpet. Certainly Friedemann Immer’s recording of the work with Christopher Hogwood and the Academy of Ancient Music fills a gap in the catalogue, but even this needs to be re-recorded by an artist with more drive and personality than Immer demonstrates. The companion piece to that work should be the superb Concerto in E major by Johann Nepomuk Hummel, also written for Weidinger. *Note: as I was preparing this article for publication, I learned of a new recording of the Haydn concerto by Mark Bennett and the English Concert under Trevor Pinnock (Archiv CD 431 678-2). I managed to audition the CD and it does represent a substantial improvement over the Immer/Hogwood recording.*

Apart from the solo trumpet music of the period, trumpeters usually see the orchestral music as boring and unchallenging. When a classical symphony is programmed, trumpeters often regard it as a chance to lie back and take it easy, saving their chops for the big Tchaikovsky symphony that ends the concert. Certainly this attitude is reinforced by many conductors’ way with the music. There can be no argument that the orchestral trumpet music of the Viennese Classics is many degrees simpler than the solo music, but there are many glorious moments, particularly in the symphonies of Mozart and Joseph Haydn, that go largely unnoticed by musicians and audiences alike.

I gained an idea of Ed Tarr’s stance towards the trumpet in the Classical orchestra when I accompanied him to a rehearsal of the Basel Chamber Orchestra (see photo). Ed was playing principal trumpet at the time (c.1971) as a favour to someone, I believe. The main work to be rehearsed that day was Mozart’s Symphony No 36, K.425, the “Linz”, the only one of Mozart’s mature “trumpet-and-drum” symphonies that does not possess terribly adventurous trumpet parts. Yet the way Ed and his second forcefully played the



Ed Tarr rehearsing the Mozart Symphony No. 39 with the Basel Chamber Orchestra.

rather ordinary measure-to-measure harmonic reinforcement found in the work, this piece gained considerably in interest and excitement for me. And when the one "juicy" spot for the trumpets came up (the final measures of the last movement), the effect was thrilling. Suffice it to say that I have not heard it done this way before or since, either on recordings or in live performance.

I am sure Ed would second me when I say that the orchestral trumpet parts of Mozart and Haydn remain poorly served on records, even with the emergence in the past 10 years or so of several fine period instrument orchestras specializing in this repertoire. It is ironic that the situation improves somewhat when it comes to recordings of Beethoven symphonies. Conductors feel obliged to bring out the trumpet parts of this composer, yet in reality Beethoven's trumpet writing is quite a bit simpler and less interesting than that of Mozart and Haydn. This distorted perspective reappeared recently in the form of Nikolaus Harnoncourt's recording of the complete Beethoven symphonies. To insure that the trumpet parts receive full prominence (one might even say over prominence), Mr Harnoncourt went to the trouble of using natural trumpets in what is otherwise a modern instrument group: the Chamber Orchestra of Europe. Yet in

his many recordings of Mozart and Haydn symphonies, he fails time and time again to take full advantage of the many truly sensational moments for the trumpets in these scores.

In so doing, Harnoncourt and others are simply perpetuating an entrenched tradition—equally strong in the Early Music world—that feels it necessary to "softpedal" the trumpet parts in Mozart and Haydn. The result is that we more often hear Beethoven's rather boring reiteration of tonic and dominant (usually at the expense of the rest of the orchestra) while much more compelling trumpet music in Haydn and Mozart (often ranging up to g" with the trumpets in thirds) remains buried in the orchestral fabric. The problem is not so much that conductors such as Harnoncourt fail to turn up the volume at the appropriate moments (there is always plenty of that), but that they fail to bring out actual *melodies* in the trumpets.

It would be a Herculean task to completely document the many neglected trumpet "licks" in the symphonies of Haydn and Mozart—certainly beyond the scope of this article! More likely material for a doctoral dissertation, if it hasn't already been attempted. I propose, therefore, to examine one movement of one symphony, the *adagio/allegro* first movement of Symphony No.39 in E-flat major, K.543 by

Mozart, to get an idea of what is missing from even the most up-to-date performances on period instruments.

The most striking aspect of this movement is the initial statement of the main theme, given by the trumpets and horns beginning in measure 54 (music example no.1). It is of course the trumpets that should be heard ringing out above the rest of the orchestra, but most of the time one has to strain to hear them at all. The high g's in measure 60, sounding b-flat", are in the *clarino* register normally associated with Baroque trumpet writing, and it is a shame that players and conductors never take full advantage of this passage, which with exposition repeat is heard a total of three times. Perhaps this neglect has to do with most conductors' perception of the work—something about "autumnal beauty" and all that. Clearly, the work is a *heroic* symphony along the lines of Beethoven's "Eroica", and the trumpet parts should be handled accordingly.

Which brings me to another odd fact of music history: why is it apparently that no writer of liner notes has ever noted the similarity between the first movements of Mozart's Symphony No.39 and Beethoven's Symphony No.3 Op.55, the "Eroica"? Both movements are in the same key and time signature and have roughly the same scoring. Even their main and secondary themes are remarkably similar. Did Beethoven know the Mozart work and use it as a starting point for his "Eroica"? Perhaps. Where Beethoven departs most from Mozart's model (if that's what it is) is in the treatment of the main theme. It is only heard in its entirety in the coda, in its final, most heroic statement with the trumpets intoning the beginning. Strangely, Beethoven has the trumpets *leave off* after two measures, and instead play five measures of repeated eighth notes on g (music example no.2). The second half of the theme, in the dominant, is not heard at all from the trumpets. The effect is disappointing, ever jarring, as if Beethoven had exercised poor judgement in scoring by not letting the trumpets play through (there is no technical reason why the trumpet of Beethoven's day could not do this). Most conductors of period instrument groups of course stand by the *Urtext*, but this is one instance where one might at least consider the possibility of rewriting the passage.

ex. 1 *2 trumpets in Eb:*

ex. 2 *2 trumpets in Eb:*

ex. 3 *2 trumpets in Eb:*

ex. 4 *2 trumpets in Eb:*

ex. 5 *2 trumpets in Eb:*

Weingartner was one conductor who had no reservations about revising Beethoven's scoring, and his version of measures 657 through 662, along with his version of similar passages in the other symphonies, was heard almost exclusively until conductors recently began returning to the *Urtext*. But Weingartner made the mistake of keeping the trumpets in *octaves* all the way through, so that the second trumpet part becomes unplayable on a natural trumpet. To hear the theme thus played, in octaves on two valved trumpets, is completely out of character for Beethoven's time, something like seeing a motorcar in a movie about the Middle Ages.

Harnoncourt notes the compromised nature of Beethoven's coda in the liner notes to his set of the complete symphonies, but keeps the *Urtext* anyway, citing the rather lame excuse that Beethoven intentionally wrote it this way to convey the idea contained in the

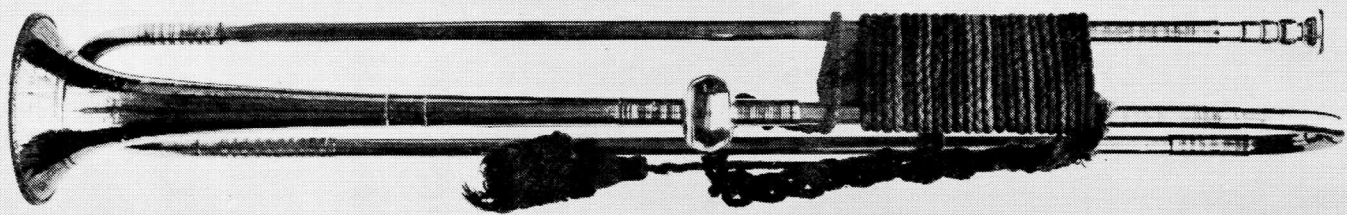
(second) dedication of the work, that is, that the symphony was written "in memory of a great man".

Of the several available period instrument recordings of this work, the best one so far to deal with the passage (as written), and with the trumpet parts in the work as a whole, is the one by Frans Brüggen and the Orchestra of 18th Century (Philips CD 422 052-2).

To get back to Mozart, it is noteworthy how even the *tutti* passagework for the trumpets has substance, starting in measure 71 (music example no.3). Or consider the passage starting at measure 124 (music example no.4). A dramatic flourish in the trumpets concludes the movement (music example no.5). Even before the conclusion of the movement, the listener should have the feeling that the trumpets have dominated the scoring, that the leading voice in the wind choir has been the first trumpet. Sadly, this is almost never the case. The best period-instru-

ment recording of Symphony No.39 up until now has been Frans Brüggen's with the Orchestra of the 18th Century (Phillips CD 422 389-2), with principal trumpet David Staff. The trumpets are generally heard to good effect from within the orchestral fabric, but for some curious reason Brüggen does not bring them out much in the main theme and coda.

I have one more complaint about the natural trumpet in orchestral music, namely that present-day players seem content to play a series of isolated notes with no connection whatsoever. You may think this is the ultimate heresy, but isn't it possible to play a musical *phrase* once in a while? Perhaps that is what was so compelling about Ed Tarr's playing—that with such a simple part he nonetheless was able to make *music* out of it. The phrase and dynamic markings I have added to the musical examples are intended to give an idea how this music can, in the



A Trumpet of Johann Leonhard Ehe in the collection of Edward H. Tarr.

right hands, be raised above the level of the military band.

Mozart's Symphony No.39 is of course just the tip of the iceberg. There are countless other scores of Mozart, Haydn, and lesser composers containing "buried treasure" waiting to be unearthed. The later London symphonies of Joseph Haydn, in particular, have some of the boldest trumpet writing of all, no doubt inspired by English trumpeters who traced their lineage back to the days of the Shores.

I hope that I have awakened in you the desire to hear more of a very neglected aspect of the Classical era, whether it be the solo concertos or the inaudible trumpet parts in orchestral scores. If, after hearing the umpteenth routine performance of a Classical symphony in which the trumpets have again been squelched, and you feel that your "consumer rights" have been violated, then perhaps you will be moved to ask the conductor (as I often have) why he even bothered to have the trumpets play—why didn't he just send them home?

RECORDINGS

Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to provide a list of Edward H. Tarr's pioneering recordings, all on CD and available through the CONTINUO MARKETPLACE. Sadly, not a single one has made it to CD, and the LP's have long since disappeared from the stores. Instead, what follows is a representative list of current recordings of the music that Ed and his colleagues specialized in, by the present-day "young lions" of the natural trumpet world:

J.S. Bach, Brandenburg Concerto No.2 in F major, BWV 1047 Michael Laird, trumpet, with the English Con-

cert and Trevor Pinnock (CONTINUO MARKETPLACE #2922-\$15.19 Archiv CD 410 500-2). The best rendition of this fiendishly difficult trumpet part on CD, by the senior British performer on the natural trumpet.

G.F. Handel, Water Musick Fred Holmgren, first trumpet, with the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and Nicholas McGegan (CONTINUO MARKETPLACE #1088-\$16.68 Harmonia Mundi CD HMU 907010). The most stylish and exciting trumpet playing to be heard in *Water Musick* on CD, by the leading American exponent of the natural trumpet.

Italian Baroque Trumpet Music Stephen Keavy and Crispian Steel-Perkins, trumpets, with The Parley of Instruments (CONTINUO MARKETPLACE #1318 -\$15.53 Hyperion CDA 66255). Much of this music, including the wonderful *Suonata a 7 con due Trombe* by Franceschini, was first recorded by Ed Tarr and gang, and this recording by two of Britain's leading players is a good introduction to the literature.

J.S.Bach, Weihnachtsoratorium, BWV 248 Crispian Steel-Perkins, first trumpet, with The English Baroque Soloists and John Eliot Gardiner (CONTINUO MARKETPLACE #2923 -\$28.99 Archiv 2-CD 423 232-2). This score is a close rival to the Second Brandenburg in the demands it makes on the trumpeter(s), especially the "killer" first trumpet part in the final chorus, no.64. I doubt if anyone could improve upon Steel-Perkins's performance.

Baroque and Brass The Haarlem Trumpet Consort, directed by Friedemann Immer (CONTINUO MARKETPLACE #947 -\$16.97 Tel-

dec CD 8.42977 ZK). A compilation of trumpet ensemble music very similar to Ed Tarr's first discs, this CD includes a splendid performance of the Altenburg *Concerto a VII Clarini con Tympani*—with no double tracking! All the solos and first trumpet (clarino) parts are handled by Friedemann Immer, Germany's leader player of the natural trumpet.

Antonio Vivaldi, Concerto in C for Two trumpets, (CONTINUO MARKETPLACE #2924 -\$15.19 RV 537) Mark Bennett, first trumpet, with The English Concert and Trevor Pinnock (included on the CD "Christmas Concertos", Archiv CD 435 262-2). The spiffiest performance of Vivaldi's warhorse on CD, by England's hottest new player.

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