

## ROLES FOR THE HORN IN DANZI'S TRIO IN F MAJOR, OP. 23

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Horn players traditionally have had few opportunities to perform chamber music with strings. With a few exceptions, such as the trio of Brahms and the horn quintet of Mozart, the combination of horn and violin seems to be one that composers have approached with caution. Franz Danzi's *Trio, Op. 23*, for horn, violin, and bassoon is an overlooked but effective work that uses the capabilities of the three instruments to good advantage. In this article I will examine the Trio in light of the norms for horn writing in the Classical era and identify the changes in the role of the horn after the trio was re-orchestrated as a wind quintet. Finally, I will speculate on the circumstances under which Danzi composed this piece.

Franz Danzi (1763-1826) was the son of a Mannheim court musician. A cellist like his father, Danzi played first at the musically rich electoral court in Mannheim, then at the Munich establishment under Carl Theodor. Eventually he held the post of deputy Kapellmeister in Munich, and he would spend time later in similar engagements at Stuttgart and Karlsruhe. In the course of his duties at Munich, Danzi composed in a variety of genres. Chamber music was a significant part of his output, with works ranging from string quartet and wind quintet to combinations that may best be described as experimental.<sup>1</sup>

Some time between 1800 and 1805, Danzi composed a six-movement work for horn, violin, and bassoon, the *Trio in F major, Op. 23*. The work remained in manuscript until 1915, when it was published by Breitkopf & Härtel; it was re-issued in 1963 by Simrock. The work has attracted little attention over the years from historians and horn players alike, just as Danzi himself is frequently overshadowed by his contemporaries Haydn and Mozart, or neglected in light of his successors, such as Carl Maria von Weber.<sup>2</sup>

The *Trio* has six movements: a sonata, theme and variations, first minuet, larghetto, second minuet, and rondo. The first movement is an excellent example of the way in which Danzi was able to reconcile the various colors, articulations, and idioms of the three instruments. In fact, it seems that the unusual instrumentation may have required some more inventive handling of melodic material than that of a more standard wind quintet or string quartet. The high tessitura of the violin, along with its wide range and fully chromatic capabilities, forms a foil for the middle voice of the horn and its more limited range and tonal spectrum. The bassoon, like the violin, is agile and fully chromatic, filling out the lower octaves of the texture. The violin and horn overlap in the rich lower part of the violin's range and the brilliant high register of the horn. While the ranges of the horn and bassoon overlap to a greater extent, the bassoon is strongest at the point where the horn's harmonic series has its widest gaps. In fact, the nature of the horn writing largely ignores the lower "second horn" pitches and generally avoids crossing below the bassoon.

While the technique of hand stopping adds some chromatic possibilities to the harmonic series of the natural horn, the fact remains that it cannot realize equally all twelve pitches of the chromatic scale, as can the violin. Although hand horn players strive for an even sound, attempting to disguise the differences between open and stopped notes, some pitches are notoriously unstable in intonation and distinctive in timbre. Composers have grappled with this problem, sometimes by using the characteristic sound of fully stopped notes as colorful melodic inflections. Such effects are essentially short-term solutions, however, and the greatest difficulties are associated with a musical form that relies on modulation, such as the sonata-allegro. The horn is quite comfortable playing melodies presented in the dominant of its principal key, but forays into other tonal areas may be less satisfying for the listener and less enjoyable for the player. Likewise, any melody that appears in the dominant key in the exposition must reappear in the tonic in the recapitulation. Thus a secondary theme that fits the horn in one key may also have to fit the horn in another key. Such balance in melodic control characterizes Danzi's piece.

The initial measures of the Allegro give immediate precedence to the violin in a vigorous ascent reminiscent of the Mannheim symphonic rocket. At measure 7, the horn briefly takes melodic control, only to be interrupted by a restatement of the opening motive by the violin (Example 1).

The image displays a musical score for three instruments: Violin, Horn in F, and Bassoon. The score is in 3/4 time and marked 'Allegro'. The Violin part begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and a rapid ascending scale. The Horn in F and Bassoon parts enter at measure 7 with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The score continues for several measures, showing dynamic changes from *p* to *f*.

### Example 1

Franz Danzi, Op. 23, first movement; mm. 1-10.

The bridge to the second thematic area offers a view in miniature of Danzi's careful exchange of melodic materials. The bridge, a phrase extension of the restated opening theme, concludes with a C-major arpeggio. The horn underscores the eighth and sixteenth notes in the violin, echoed by the bassoon an octave lower (Example 2). These measures demonstrate nicely the register overlap between horn and bassoon, as well as the way in which the slower note values consistent with the horn can be combined with the agility of the violin.

### Example 2

Op. 23, first movement, mm. 18-20.

The second theme itself consists of new melodic material in the bassoon, accompanied by the violin in the same register. A cantabile melody reminiscent of Mozart's horn concerti does not appear until much later, in m. 45. Once it begins, the horn is allowed to state the entire phrase, including its colorful chromatic passing tones. The uneven timbre of the horn on the partially closed written *b'* underscores the "strong-weak" trochaic sighs within the melody. The violin takes up the melody for the second half of the double period, reiterating the horn line an octave higher (Example 3).

The idea of melodic exchange has apparently proven so fruitful in this movement that Danzi takes the principle further than he needs. In the recapitulation, the *dolce* second theme, now transposed to F major, could easily accommodate the horn. However, Danzi chooses to play with registral changes possible on the violin, and the melody is scored as a violin solo. Rather than placing the theme low in the overall pitch spectrum to fit the horn, or writing a stratospheric horn line, Danzi uses the two upper octaves of the violin. The horn meanwhile copies exactly the accompaniment figure previously allotted to the violin. There is a certain playfulness as the three instruments borrow characteristic gestures from each other. Similarly, in the passagework that follows this period, the horn gets a chance to display the sixteenth notes that could easily be reserved for the violin, as in fact they were in the exposition.

The second movement, a theme and variations, gives the three instruments solo opportunities in which to display their characteristic idioms. The violin and bassoon each have the customary brilliant solo variations, accompanied respectively by the other instruments. In the F-minor variation the horn shows itself in the melodic role that was characteristic of the solo horn of the Classical period.

Violin *p*

Horn in F *dolce*

Bassoon

Vln. *p*

Hn. *p*

Bsn. *p*

## Example 3

Op. 23, first movement, mm. 45-52.

Even more striking in this regard is the fourth movement, the Larghetto. Throughout this expanded binary form the violin and horn exchange delicate phrases. While the violin maintains a high profile because of its range and constant presence, the horn is given pitches

Violin *p* *sotto voce*

Horn in F *p* *sotto voce*

Bassoon *p*

Vln. *sf*

Hn. *sf*

Bsn. *sf*

## Example 4

Op. 23, fourth movement, mm. 11-20.

whose timbres enhance the harmonic color. For example, the phrase in measure 11 finishes with the partially and fully stopped written  $f'$  and  $eb'$  to increase the impact of the fully diminished seventh chord on the second beat (Example 4).

The first minuet is unremarkable for the horn player, but gives the bassoon much longer solo passages than in any other movement, with the exception of the theme and variations. The second minuet exploits the open pitches of the horn to such a degree that the horn seems to evoke not only its hunting ancestry, but its contemporary orchestral style as well. Likewise, the rondo features the horn with a hunting type of melody in compound meter, and the only instance of the characteristic “horn fifth” in the entire work (Example 5).

The image displays two systems of musical notation. The first system includes Violin, Horn in F, and Bassoon parts. The Violin part consists of eighth-note patterns. The Horn in F part features a melodic line with some rests. The Bassoon part has a simple harmonic accompaniment. Dynamics are marked as  $p$  and  $p$  dolce. The second system includes Violin, Horn, and Bassoon parts. The Violin part continues with eighth-note patterns. The Horn part has a melodic line with some rests. The Bassoon part continues with a simple harmonic accompaniment.

### Example 5

Op. 23, sixth movement; mm. 1-8.

Naturally the favorite harmonic device of the horn fifth is less likely to occur between two dissimilar instruments, such as horn and bassoon. However, the lack of this gesture in the Trio also stems from the treatment of the horn as a melodic instrument, rather than a harmonic supporter, the role the horn customarily plays in the Classical symphony. In the development of the Classical wind quintet, the horn usually performs a similar harmonic function, filling in the middle of the texture, much as the viola does in the string quartet. Danzi was an admirer of Anton Reicha, as was his (Danzi's) young friend Carl Maria von Weber. Following descriptions of Reicha's experiments with the genre in the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*, Danzi composed several groups of wind quintets.<sup>3</sup> Schlessinger and Janet et Cotelle published the quintets of Op. 56 in 1821, and André followed with Opp. 67 and 68 in 1824.<sup>4</sup> Surprisingly enough, the second quintet of Op. 68 turns out to be a re-orchestrated version of the Trio. One may wonder whether Danzi needed a “quick fix” for the publisher or whether he wished to experiment further with the materials of the Trio.

Regardless, the transformation to a quintet is more than a simple division of the violin part between the oboe and flute, or filling in the sparse triadic textures to four and five voices. The material is completely reworked.

The most obvious large-scale change is the reduction of movements from six to four, eliminating the Larghetto and the first minuet. The wind quintet of the time followed the established model of string quartets of Haydn's later years in using for its four movements a sonata form, a slow movement in ternary form or theme and variations, a dance, and a rondo. In Danzi's quintet version of this piece, the first movement itself is transformed, with significant additions and deletions of material. In the exposition, while the presentation of the first tonal area remains intact, the bridge to the second tonal area is expanded from three measures to six measures. The second theme is stated twice in the trio version, but only once in the quintet version, as though the quintet players had made a cut from

Allegro

The musical score is arranged in two systems. The first system includes parts for Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in B $\flat$ , Horn in F, and Bassoon. The second system includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet in B $\flat$  (B $\flat$  Cl.), Horn (Hn.), and Bassoon (Bsn.). The tempo is marked 'Allegro'. The score shows the first six measures of the piece. The Flute part starts with a rest, followed by a melodic line. The Oboe part starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic and a melodic line. The Clarinet in B $\flat$ , Horn in F, and Bassoon parts start with a forte (*f*) dynamic and a rhythmic pattern. The Violin part starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic and a melodic line. The score is written in 2/4 time and features various dynamics including forte (*f*) and piano (*p*).

### Example 6

Danzi, Op. 68, first movement, mm. 1-11.

measure 42 of the trio to measure 61. The closing material in the exposition, a reiteration of the cadence that takes four measures in the trio, is expanded to twelve measures in the quintet. The development and recapitulation undergo similar surgery. To summarize, melodic repetition is eliminated, but cadential filler is expanded.

Even in the first few measures, the new character created by the changes in orchestration is evident (Example 6). Three major points become apparent in this comparison. First, one may note that the horn and bassoon play much more subservient roles in the quintet. Second, the previous timbral exchange between violin and horn become less pointed when shared by the upper winds. Likewise, the experimental figures in melody and accompaniment so readily exchanged within the trio are lost in the move to the quintet.

At the same time, the accompaniment styles actually change. The standard accompaniment figure for winds is a downbeat in a low instrument, usually bassoon, and reiterated off-beat notes in the horn, clarinet, and occasionally oboe. This figure allows the harmony to fill out consistently in four voices, with complete triads. It generates more surface activity than the thinner trio texture, but in this instance seems to accomplish less. A similar phenomenon occurs in transitional passages, with the most significant re-writing in the quintet. The cadence prior to the second theme, for example, is extended by several measures, apparently to emphasize harmonic arrival, as though having more players might require greater emphasis of the tonic (Example 7). The imbalance in participation is clear in the busy scales for flute, with the oboe and clarinet assisting, while the bassoon fills in at the quarter-note level and the horn merely holds a pedal point. Later, in the development section, the effective use of silence in the trio version is obliterated by this sort of harmonic filler in the quintet.

From the solo horn player's point of view, the re-orchestration to a wind quintet is an unqualified disaster. With a part no longer intended for a specific, artful musician as may be the case with the Trio, but rather for the faceless consumer and amateur, the horn is relegated almost exclusively to an accompanimental role. The range shifts to the conservative low-horn tessitura, and the number of pitches requiring hand-stopping is greatly reduced. The opening horn solo of the second minuet, for example, sounds an octave lower in the quintet version. Elsewhere in this context, the horn functions in the orchestral and supportive ensemble role, rather than that of the soloist. Significantly, the *Larghetto*, omitted from Op. 68, is the horn's most lyrical movement in Op. 23.<sup>5</sup>

The quintet version of this material is a product of Danzi's interest in the development of the wind quintet, which occurred late in his life. The trio version did not enjoy widespread publication or (apparently) even lasting fame at Munich. The timbral combinations are tricky to handle for both composer and performers. While the piece may have been simply an experiment, there are a couple of indications that suggest a possible context for the composition of this unusual work. By 1783 Danzi was a chamber musician in the electoral court at Munich and in 1796 was made Deputy *Kapellmeister*. In June 1800 Danzi retired from his court position upon his wife's sudden death. His first patron, the magnanimous Carl Theodor, was succeeded by Maximilian IV Joseph, who did not fully support Danzi's efforts to establish German opera, and began to reduce the operating budget of the musi-

The image displays a musical score for five woodwind instruments: Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in B $\flat$ , Horn in F, and Bassoon. The score is in common time (C) and features a key signature of one flat (B $\flat$ ). It is divided into two systems. The first system shows the initial entries of the instruments, with dynamic markings of forte (*f*) appearing in the Oboe, Clarinet, Horn, and Bassoon parts. The second system continues the development of these parts, with further dynamic markings and articulation.

### Example 7

Danzi, Op. 68, first movement, mm. 18-25.

cal establishment. It was not until 1807 that he took up another court position, this time at Stuttgart. From a comparison of dates of surrounding opus numbers, it seems that the Trio dates from this peculiar lacuna in Danzi's official life, circa 1800 to 1805.<sup>6</sup>

While the foregoing discussion provides background for the work, there is a more practical matter that should be noted. The trio is carefully crafted as a high-horn piece, certainly written in the soloistic style associated with sonatas and concerti. A very brief examination of the solo horn parts of three of Danzi's works, the Trio, Op. 23, the Concerto in E major, and the Sonata in E $\flat$  major, Op. 28, give a more complete picture of Danzi's predilections in horn writing. The concerto, dated before 1790, is quite clear in defining a high-horn range. The lowest pitch is only *g*' and there are several instances of *c*<sup>m</sup> as well as, on one occasion, *d*<sup>m</sup>. The consistency of the writing in the upper tessitura suggests that the concerto was intended for a specific horn player who specialized in the high register.

On the other hand, the Sonata has a clear second- or low-horn range, including the low *c* and the factitious *f*. While the solo line does not avoid the upper register, it makes considerably more use of the middle and lower ranges of the instrument.

Returning to the central work, the Trio stakes out middle ground. The horn never descends to *c'*, nor does it ever ascend as high as *c''*. The writing tends to be melodic rather than flashy or acrobatic, and could even be characterized as conservative. The emphasis on line as supposed to registral shifts suggest that the Trio was indeed intended for a high player. Andrew Kearns strengthens this supposition when he writes that it is the “cantabile quality of these [kinds of] melodies, combined with some characteristic stepwise figures, that identify them as first-horn melodies, although their performance by a second hornist is not out of the question.”<sup>7</sup>

If one looks around the musical world of Munich in 1800, there are some names that have survived for the speculation of modern scholars. Since the Trio is such a one-of-a-kind, “specific” work, it is not unreasonable to assume that Danzi had a horn player in mind when he wrote it. Pizka mentions that the hornists Martin and Franz Lang moved from Mannheim to Munich in 1800. He also mentions that Anton and Ignaz Böck were hired as court hornists in Munich earlier, in 1791.<sup>8</sup> Certainly a piece of chamber music intended for use within the court establishment may have been composed and performed without great ceremony by local musicians.

Another interesting candidate is Karl Franz (1738-1802), who was the celebrated first horn in Haydn’s establishment at Esterháza from 1763 to 1776. Having featured prominently as a master of the extreme high range as well as the incongruous factitious notes of the low register, Franz left Esterháza and played for several years in Cardinal Bathiany’s establishment at Pressburg (now Bratislava). Most important, in 1787 he became a chamber musician, or *Kammermusicus*, at the Munich electoral court, where Danzi too was beginning his court career as a cellist. Danzi composed the Concerto of 1790 for Franz, and Franz remained at Munich until his death, which falls near the wide range of dates for the Trio Op. 23.<sup>9</sup> Recent scholarship on Franz Danzi, however, strongly suggests that the Trio is more likely to have been composed in 1805. The Trio Op. 23 itself is not mentioned in the catalog of Danzi’s works in the second edition of *New Grove*, although many of the surrounding opus numbers that were previously undated now show dates of composition.<sup>10</sup>

Lacking further information, the process of deduction has its limitations. But one can imagine Danzi composing this unusual chamber work in the years following his wife’s death, having dismissed himself from the unrelenting bustle of court musical life and the frustration of working under a new, less musically enlightened patron. Perhaps the work was performed among his sympathetic friends from court. While the piece is not necessarily a neglected masterpiece, it is still a worthy example of the evolution of chamber genres and of musical tastes outside Vienna. The stylistic writing for high horn is clearly defined, while the interaction between the disparate forces of bassoon, violin, and horn is characterized by equality of melodic material. The absence of such writing for horn in the quintet version, along with the lessened melodic independence of the participants, serves only to accentuate the grace of the original work. Danzi’s interest in orchestration and sensitive use of the

chromatic notes of the hand horn can be viewed on their own merits, rather than as a foil for the romanticism of the next generation, or the elegance of contemporary Vienna. It seems that the Trio, while passed over in the “test of time,” still has much to offer.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, online version, ed. Laura Macy (London: Macmillan, 2001), s.v. “Danzi, Franz,” by Paul Corneilson and Peter M. Alexander. The Trio Op. 23 is the most peculiar of these experiments, but there are several quartets, such as Op. 56, that combine a single woodwind with violin, viola, and cello.

<sup>2</sup> Leuchtmann and Munster, for example, place the composers of the Mannheim electoral court in a transitional role: “Despite such honored names as Cannabich and Toeschi, the Mannheim composers did not reach their former standing in Munich; they did not create anything equivalent to the Viennese Classical tradition, but with Winter, Danzi, and Franzl they prepared the ground for the Romanticism of Weber and Spohr.” *New Grove*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, s.v. “Munich,” by Horst Leuchtmann and Robert Münster.

<sup>3</sup> *Die Musik in Geshichhte und Gegenwart*, ed. Friedrich Blume (Kassel: Barenreiter, 1952), s.v. “Danzi, Franz,” by Wilhelm Virneisel.

<sup>4</sup> Franz Danzi, *Quintett F-dur*, Op. 68 no. 2 (Leipzig: Peters, 1982). See the publishing history in the preface.

<sup>5</sup> The horn player may at least be consoled that the opening melody of the rondo remains intact.

<sup>6</sup> *New Grove*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., s.v. “Danzi, Franz.”

<sup>7</sup> Andrew Kearns, “Clarino Horn, Hand Horn, and Virtuosity in the Late Eighteenth-Century Horn Concerto,” *The Horn Call Annual* 3 (1991): 19.

<sup>8</sup> Hans Pizka, *Hornisten-Lexicon* (Munich: Hanis Pizka 1986), 322-24.

<sup>9</sup> These facts are listed severally in Kearns, “Clarino Horn, Hand Horn, and Virtuosity,” p. 5; Pizka, *Hornisten-Lexicon*, p. 134; and Paul Bryan, “Haydn’s Hornists,” *Haydn Studien*, Band III, Heft 1 (January 1973): 52-59, here 55 (but not correlated in reference to anything except the concerto of 1790).

<sup>10</sup> *New Grove*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., s.v. “Danzi, Franz.”