

NAXOS

GERMAN FLUTE CONCERTOS

Peter von Winter
Franz Lachner • Antonio Rosetti

Bruno Meier, Flute
Prague Chamber Orchestra



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Peter von Winter (1754–1825): Flute Concerto Nos. 1 and 2 in D minor *

Franz Lachner (1803–1890): Flute Concerto in D minor

Antonio Rosetti (c. 1750–1792): Flute Concerto in E flat major

Under the title *German Flute Concertos* four hitherto unrecorded and so far mostly unpublished flute concertos are brought together on this recording. Their composers were active in Germany and, with the exception of Antonio Rosetti, who was born in Leitmeritz (Litoměřice) in northern Bohemia, they all also originated from Germany. Furthermore, all three had something else in common – that in their times they were held in high esteem both as composers and as Kapellmeisters and orchestral conductors, but that after their deaths, for whatever reasons, they quickly fell into oblivion, a fate, however, which Rosetti at least seems to have escaped. In the nineteenth century, unlike in the eighteenth, concertos for wind instruments, and for the flute in particular, were relatively few. Alongside composers such as Danzi, Krommer, Witt, Romberg and Reinecke are Peter von Winter and Franz Lachner who are among the few (non-flute-playing) composers of the early and high romantic period who left behind worthwhile concertos for the flute.

The four concertos represented here span half a century, from the classical period (Rosetti) through the early romantic (Winter) and up to the romantic period (Lachner). The choice of minor keys for three of the four works already raises them above music for mere social entertainment. The orchestral forces of each work are different and tonally varied as well. The size and colour of the orchestra depends on when each was written – Rosetti's concerto is scored simply for strings, two each of oboes and horns as well as *basso continuo*. In the first of Peter von Winter's concertos there are two bassoons and a flute, while in the second there are two bassoons, trumpets and timpani. The size of the orchestra in Franz Lachner's one-movement concerto reaches almost 'romantic' proportions, enlarged particularly by two clarinets; furthermore the

double-basses sometimes have an independent part.

The soloist has arranged the recording of these four concertos especially for this release. Because of the single existing autograph scores (Winter and Lachner) and a single copy of the first edition (Rosetti), performance material had to be prepared specially for this recording.

Peter von Winter was one of the most productive composers of his era but one who nevertheless fell into oblivion soon after his death. Recently, however, there have been efforts to revive his countless instrumental and stage works. The music-lover of today is most likely to know of Winter's highly successful *Das Labyrinth oder Der Kampf mit den Elementen* (The Labyrinth or The Struggle with the Elements), a continuation of *The Magic Flute*, first performed in 1798, together with his greatest success, the opera *Das unterbrochene Opferfest* (The Interrupted Sacrifice), from two years earlier. Winter's relationship with Mozart, however, was extremely tense, as we know from Mozart's own writings, and can surely be accounted for by Winter's slightly choleric personality. He was born on 28th August 1754 in Mannheim and, from a young age, worked as a violinist and double-bass player in the leading orchestra in Europe at that time, the Mannheim court orchestra. It is possible that Winter was taught by the famous theoretician Abbé Vogler but he later tried to play down his influence. In 1778, along with a large part of the Mannheim court, Winter decamped to Munich, where the electoral prince Carl Theodor, according to the Wittelsbach rules of succession, succeeded the electoral prince from Bavaria, Max Joseph III, who had died. It was in Munich that Winter's rapid rise began and it culminated in 1798 when he was appointed *Kapellmeister* at the court chapel there. In this capacity he was responsible for directing performances of

* Numbering: Bruno Meier

church music and of Italian opera. Early on in his time in Munich Winter undertook extensive tours. His first, with the clarinetist Franz Tausch, was to Vienna in 1780, where he took the opportunity of studying with Antonio Salieri. Further tours in the following decades, in which he enjoyed success with a multitude of operas, took him to Paris and London, among other places. At the end of his life (he died in 1825) Winter was again working mostly in Munich.

Apart from his dramatic works Winter left us an important *Requiem* as well as instrumental works. Of these, the wind concertos stand out. As well as those for clarinet, bassoon and oboe are the two concertos for flute, recorded here for the first time. According to the title-pages of the manuscript autographs, which are kept in the Bavarian State Library, both concertos were dedicated to the court orchestra's flute player Johann Nepomuk Capeller and date from 1813. Capeller was an important and enigmatic figure in the history of flute playing and flute design. From 1797 he worked in the Munich court orchestra and was the teacher of Theobald Boehm, who in 1832 revolutionised flute playing and flute design with his 'ring key' mechanism. Capeller himself was not an instrument builder but sought advice from the Munich wind instrument-maker Michael Fiegel when designing his revolutionary flute with nine keys.

The first of the two concertos, in D minor, is actually in one movement but is in four distinct sections and so is in the concertino tradition. In this work Winter created unity by using recurring thematic material across 'movement boundaries' but, in spite of all the melodic charm and technical mastery, it is hard completely to avoid the impression that individual sections are strung together and do not add up to a convincing whole. Winter was part of the Mannheim tradition, which had different priorities, above all in its formal aspects, from the Viennese classics. One should not expect here the rigorously of a Mozartian concerto movement. The orchestral exposition presents a series of themes. The sombre basic mood is outlined in the main theme given out by the strings playing piano. Above all, the contrasting D minor march-theme which

follows, played by the wind, assumes importance in the course of the work. The soloist introduces himself with his own *cantabile* theme, whose wide intervals would not have been disowned by opera composers. The rest of the movement strings together new themes and new tonal areas. The work attains a special tonal charm by its frequent alternation of major and minor sections. After a development section of dialogue between soloist and orchestra the movement ends, not with a recapitulation, but with an *Adagio*, a gently-rocking *siciliano* which takes the place of a slow movement. The third movement actually begins with the opening motif of the main theme, then leads into a sequence of four variations which varies the above-mentioned march-theme in a highly virtuosic way. The coda is a sort of recapitulation which creates an arc back to the beginning of the work, but now brightened into a friendly D major. The variation principle continues to have its effect, however, and it pervades the recapitulation. Finally, like a reflection of the beginning, comes the coda which reverts to the minor, with flute figurations and alternating octaves that demand much of the soloist.

Winter's *Flute Concerto No. 2*, also in D minor, is based on more conventional classical models in its three-movement structure. The soloist is allowed to display his virtuosity, and not only in the development section, a reference back to Winter's musical colleague Capeller in Munich. The first movement is dominated by a majestic march theme, whose dotted rhythm shapes further sections of the movement. The gloomy minor, with its dramatic gestures, quickly gives way to a lighter major tonality. It is interesting to note that, in the orchestral exposition, subsidiary themes are denied to the soloist for the time being so that he can introduce a new lyrical theme. The soloist only takes up the orchestra's themes in the recapitulation. Similarly, the soloist's first entry is innovative. Instead of presenting his own solo he virtually 'creeps in' to the movement at the end of the orchestral exposition. The short idyllic and lyrical *Adagio* instils a calming influence whose darkness is quickly overcome in

its middle section. The movement ends in a recitative-like chord on the dominant which leads straight into the last movement. All the themes of this Rondo-Finale are dominated completely by the typical *polacca* rhythm which is present in the orchestra almost throughout, while the soloist expounds on them with lyrical themes of his own or decorates them with virtuoso figurations. The confrontation between the solo instrument and the orchestral wind players towards the end of the movement is particularly effective, before the work ends in a splendid D major.

Incidentally, it is worth mentioning that this concerto, as Bruno Meier has detected, was the obvious inspiration for the *Flute Concerto in D minor* by the Swiss composer (born in Neuchâtel) Edouard Dupuy (1770-1822) which appeared in 1814, one year after Winter's concerto. The main theme and several solo passages in the first movement are more or less identical, as is the structure of the last movement. Whole sections were borrowed by Dupuy and in part were altered slightly by him.

Franz Lachner was born in 1803 in Rain am Lech into a musical family – his father was municipal organist of the local Catholic parish church. Like five of his siblings, the best-known being Ignaz and Vinzenz, he took up a musical career, although he was destined originally for the clergy, and he was to become one of the most important musical personalities of the first half of the nineteenth century. He received his education from Caspar Ett, organist of St Michael's church in Munich and at an early age was an instrumentalist in the orchestra of the Isartor Theater. Further studies followed in Vienna with Simon Sechter and Abbé Maximilian Stadler and it was in Vienna that Lachner's meteoric rise began. It was here that he quickly gained entry to Schubert's circle of friends. He promoted Schubert's music all his life and also made the acquaintance of Beethoven. At the age of 23 he became assistant *Kapellmeister* at the Kärntnertheater, the royal-imperial court opera, and was appointed the first *Kapellmeister* for opera two years later, with Lachner's duties really more as conductor than composer. His

reputation was founded on his 32-year period of work in Munich where, after a two-year interlude as grand ducal *Hofkapellmeister* in Mannheim, he was appointed royal Bavarian *Hofkapellmeister* and first *Generalmusikdirektor* (a title conferred specially on him). It was here that he formed the Munich court orchestra, which achieved national importance. The orchestra gave many first performances and presented to the Munich public many significant works of the past, including Bach's *St Matthew Passion* in 1842. Alongside his duties as a conductor, his fame as a composer dwindled, although he left behind an extremely large body of work. Alongside the large-scale French-inspired opera *Catharina Cornaro*, countless church music works, eight symphonies, orchestral suites and, above all, 350 songs stand out. All his life the Viennese classics and especially Schubert were Lachner's composing models. But to perceive Lachner as a mere classical imitator is too simplistic, in spite of the indisputable classical echoes in his music. For contemporaries such as Schumann or even Tchaikovsky Lachner was regarded highly as a guardian of the tradition, but even his admirers must acknowledge that he was occasionally guilty of a dry academicism. In Munich he crossed swords with Richard Wagner, whose music he rejected, although that did not stop him putting on some of his works there. It was Wagner's 'seizure' of Munich that compelled Lachner reluctantly to resign his post there in 1868.

The autograph copy of Lachner's *Flute Concerto in D minor* is housed in the Bavarian State Library in Munich. It is dated 1832 and so comes from Lachner's time in Vienna and it remained unpublished during the composer's lifetime. This concerto is in one main movement, but it is different from the first Winter concerto, which is also neither concertino nor Konzertstück, in that its single-movement structure mostly conceals its latent multi-movement potential. Lachner's early works exude none of that dryness mentioned above. The solo instrument blossoms virtuosically, above all in its highest register where it is pushed to the limit. The busy work is shaped by

the majestic march rhythm of the main theme which marks out the intersections as the piece develops. Lachner comes up with some surprising ideas. Most unusual is the entry of the solo flute which is prepared for by a *fortissimo* crash in the orchestra in the dominant key. The lyrical subsidiary theme which was introduced in the exposition remains in the orchestra, while the soloist plays a new theme, though one admittedly derived from the subsidiary theme. Instead of the expected solo cadenza at the end of the work there follows a short interpolated *Adagio*, before the soloist brings the work to a brilliant conclusion in the coda.

Antonio Rosetti (otherwise known as Anton Rösler) was born around 1750 probably in Leitmeritz in Bohemia. The exact date of his birth is shrouded in mystery, as are his youthful years, which has led to confusion and misrepresentation about Rosetti's identity among early lexicographers. He probably received his musical education from Jesuits in Bohemia before he made his way abroad. What is certain is that he took up a post with a Count von Orlov in Russia and from 1773 was in the service of the hereditary Count Kraft Ernst von Oettingen-Wallerstein. From this time he assumed the Italian version of his name, like many other musicians, particularly those from Bohemia - among them the famous horn-player Punto. At first he was a double-bass player (and liveried servant) then in 1774 was promoted to court musician. Finally, in 1785, he succeeded Joseph Reicha as *Hofkapellmeister*.

Rosetti turned the Wallerstein court orchestra into one of the leading ensembles of the day, and not only in Germany, as Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart argues in his *Ideen zu einer Ästhetik der Tonkunst*. Very soon Rosetti emerged with a large number of compositions to his name. Alongside countless symphonies, solo concertos, and pieces for wind ensemble were works written for the church. The *Requiem* which he wrote in 1776 for Countess Maria Theresa was heard again in an expanded version at the funeral service for Mozart in Prague in 1791. Rosetti's name became well known in Europe on account of his various sojourns abroad and he formed relationships with

publishers in Paris, which eventually led to his becoming one of the most published composers in Europe. In 1789 Rosetti exchanged his Wallerstein post for that of *Kapellmeister* at the court of Duke Franz Friedrich I of Mecklenburg-Schwerin in Ludwigslust, where the greater number of household musicians available allowed him to write large choral works, such as the oratorio *Jesus in Gethsemane*. The esteem in which Rosetti was held was demonstrated by the fact that a copy of his oratorio *Der sterbende Jesus* (The Dying Jesus) was found among Mozart's possessions after his death.

Among Rosetti's substantial number of compositions, works for wind instrument and orchestra assume a prominent position. According to the thematic catalogue of his works (Sterling E. Murray, *The Music of Antonio Rosetti, A Thematic Catalog*, Warren, Mich. 1996) he wrote about sixty solo concertos, among them thirteen for flute, twelve for horn as well as further works for oboe, clarinet, bassoon and two horns. For the most part they were all written for the outstanding wind players of the Wallerstein court chapel. There is a famous silhouette of the Wallerstein Harmonie (wind band) with which Rosetti played as a double-bass player.

The *Flute Concerto in E flat major, RWV C19*, assumes a special rôle here in that it is the only work included in a major key. It was published by the J.J. Hummel company in Berlin in 1782. Only one single copy of this publication now remains, which is in the Royal Library in Copenhagen, while the autograph copy has been lost without trace. According to contemporary publishers' catalogues it must have been written before 1778. Rosetti later (probably in about 1780) re-worked it as a horn concerto and this version was published by Le Menu and Boyer in 1782. Although both concertos are identical for long stretches, there are nevertheless some noticeable differences.

The first four bars of the orchestral introductions are completely different and in the first two movements of the horn version in particular Rosetti has shortened the recapitulation by seventeen bars. With the exception of the second movement the solo part of each work suits the

technical possibilities of these two very different instruments and the ambition of these virtuoso pieces.

The soloist on this first recording has provided the concerto with cadenzas, entries and transitions as well as inserting ornaments. The continuo part on the recording has been improvised from the figured bass part. The characteristics of most of Rosetti's flute concertos – catchy themes, a rigorous solo part which explores the expressive possibilities of the solo instrument as well as rich melodic, harmonic, rhythmic and dynamic contrasts – apply also to this work. If one wanted to claim for it fulfillment of lofty entertainment then Rosetti's mastery is evident in many details. He reveals a commanding, thoroughly original approach to structure.

The descending triadic opening theme appears once again at the end of the recapitulation, forming a framework, while the dotted character of this theme is present throughout the whole movement. On the other hand, the soloist's main theme arises from an earlier incidental motif from the end of the orchestral exposition. The weighty middle movement, in C minor, is a real sonata movement and is in sharp contrast to the cheerful first movement. The dotted rhythm of the funeral-march-like

main theme, given out in unison by the strings, evokes the spirit of the first movement, but is here transformed into something darkly tragic. The incidental theme brightens up proceedings, but not for long. The last movement is cheerful and dance-like in character. A virtuoso episode in B flat major, as well as one in C minor are set against a Rondo theme which is probably based on a Bohemian folk-dance.

'... it is Rosetti who has improved on the form of the instrumental concerto, who has shortened the interminable *ritornelli*, who has interpolated appropriate places of rest for the solo part and who has combined brilliance of performance with elegance through the example and instruction set by his compositions. He has brought to instrumental practice an outstanding thoroughness and, in this, he puts to shame many a *Kapellmeister* from bigger courts.' This appreciation of Rosetti's skill as a composer can be found in the *Musikalischen Korrespondenz der Deutschen Philharmonischen Gesellschaft* and it surely applies to all four concertos, recorded here for the first time.

Stephan Hörner

English version by David Stevens

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Bruno Meier

Bruno Meier was born in Switzerland and studied the flute with André Jaunet in Zurich, Marcel Moysse at Brattleboro (USA) and Peter-Lukas Graf at the Academy of Music in Basel, where he was awarded a concert diploma with distinction. He went on to work as a teacher and as principal flautist with a number of well-known chamber orchestras. His concert tours have taken him to Switzerland, Germany, England, the Czech Republic, Russia (1982 and 1990) and Belarus (1996/7, 1999, 2001 and 2003), where he has held master-classes at the Minsk Academy of Music. In the wake of numerous gramophone and radio recordings he has worked increasingly in the studio. In addition to his wide-ranging work as a practising musician, he has also been increasingly active in recent years as a musicologist, researching hitherto unknown works for the flute that he has then gone on to record. This aspect of his work has resulted in world-première recordings of flute concertos by Josef Mysliveček, Johann Baptist Vanhal, Franz Krommer, Antonio Rosetti, Joseph Reicha, Friedrich Witt, Peter von Winter and Franz Lachner. Together with the Stamitz Quartet, he has recorded the nine flute quintets of Mozart's contemporary Franz Krommer. His subsequent work with the Stamitz Quartet and the Prague Chamber Orchestra has been acclaimed all over the world. But Meier's wide-ranging repertory includes not only music by forgotten composers from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and mainstream works for the flute, it also embraces little-known pieces from the Baroque to the present day. Bruno Meier plays a 14-carat gold flute by Verne Q. Powell. www.brunomeier.com

Prague Chamber Orchestra

The Prague Chamber Orchestra, originally and still generally performing without a conductor, boasts a unique position among Czech ensembles. It was initially formed on the initiative of principal players of the Czechoslovak Radio Symphony Orchestra, but has worked independently since 1965. With a wide repertoire, a significant element remains the work of older Bohemian composers, in addition to modern and contemporary music. The orchestra, now managed by the players, has made a large number of recordings and won international awards, working with distinguished conductors, as well as with leading soloists. Foreign tours have taken the orchestra to Latin America, the United States and Canada, and Japan, as well as to the Republic of Korea, Malaysia and Singapore. The orchestra's concert-masters are Antonín Hradil and Pavel Safařík.

Jaroslav Tůma

Jaroslav Tůma was born and educated in Prague. He graduated from the Prague Conservatory and the Academy of Musical Arts, where he now teaches organ performance and improvisation. While still a student, he won prizes at several international competitions, including Linz, Prague, and Leipzig. In addition to being a concert organist, he also performs on harpsichord, clavichord, and fortepiano. He is known throughout the world for his improvisations, which earned him first prizes at both the Haarlem and Nuremberg competitions, and has been guest performer at the Prague Spring Festival, Musikfestspiele in Dresden, and the Flanders Festival, continuing his concert career in prestigious venues in Europe, the United States, and Japan. A champion of new music, he also performs works by his contemporaries and is himself a composer of some note. He records for radio, television, and numerous recording companies, with a discography of fifty solo recordings, including a release of the complete *Well-Tempered Clavier* of J. S. Bach performed on clavichord.

Photo: Klaus Hennich



Bruno Meier *left*
Prague Chamber Orchestra *below*

Photo: Prague Chamber Orchestra

