

**NAXOS**

# Music for Euphonium and Orchestra

**ROGGEN**

**MOZART**

**WEBER**

**TCHAIKOVSKY**

**BALISSAT**

**Roland Fröscher,  
Euphonium**

**Cappella Istropolitana  
Dominique Roggen**



## Music for Euphonium and Orchestra

Roggen • Mozart • Weber • Tchaikovsky • Balissat

As a composer, Dominique Roggen immerses himself in the contrapuntal techniques, forms and syntax of the Baroque. His *Concerto in B flat major for euphonium, strings and basso continuo* is no. 7 in a series of “anachronistic concertos”, concertos written for instruments which were invented and developed long after the Baroque period, such as the accordion, the soprano saxophone, and the euphonium.

The first and second movements of this concerto are reminiscent of a typical instrumental concerto of the early eighteenth century. The third movement, a *Bergamasca helvetica absurda* (Absurd Swiss Bergamasque), is an Italian dance which is underpinned by a ground, an ostinato figure similar to a *chaconne* or a *passacaglia* but with the difference that various *intermezzi* are incorporated into the structure.

In the *Bergamasca* there is a short *bourrée*, a recitative and a fugue which unusually not only changes suddenly from a 4/4 into a 3/4 beat, but also uses the Swiss folksong *luegtivo Barge u Tal* as a cantus firmus.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born in Salzburg in 1756, the son of a court musician who, in the year of his youngest child's birth, published an influential book on violin-playing. Leopold Mozart rose to occupy the position of Vice-Kapellmeister to the Archbishop of Salzburg, but sacrificed his own creative career to that of his son, in whom he detected early signs of precocious genius. With the indulgence of his patron, he was able to undertake extended concert tours of Europe in which his son and elder daughter Nannerl were able to astonish audiences. The boy played both the keyboard and the violin and could improvise and soon write down his own compositions.

Childhood that had brought Mozart signal success was followed by a less satisfactory period of adolescence

largely in Salzburg under the patronage of a new and less sympathetic Archbishop. Like his father, Mozart found opportunities far too limited at home, while chances of travel were now restricted. In 1777, when leave of absence was not granted, he gave up employment in Salzburg to seek a future elsewhere, but neither Mannheim nor Paris, both musical centres of some importance, had anything for him. His Mannheim connections, however, brought a commission for an opera in Munich in 1781, but after its successful staging he was summoned by his patron to Vienna. There Mozart's dissatisfaction with his position resulted in a quarrel with the Archbishop and dismissal from his service.

The last ten years of Mozart's life were spent in Vienna in precarious independence of both patron and immediate paternal advice, a situation aggravated by an imprudent marriage. Initial success in the opera-house and as a performer was followed, as the decade went on, by increasing financial difficulties. By the time of his death in December 1791, however, his fortunes seemed about to change for the better, with the success of the German opera *The Magic Flute*, and the possibility of increased patronage.

Mozart wrote his only surviving bassoon concerto in Salzburg in 1774, possibly for Freiherr Thaddäus von Dürnitz, an enthusiastic amateur for whom he later wrote a piano sonata, as well as three other bassoon concertos and a bassoon sonata, for which Mozart was perhaps never paid, a debt being implied in a later letter by Leopold Mozart to his son, then in Munich. The concerto, in the usual three movements, makes a useful addition to the exiguous solo repertoire for the euphonium.

Carl Maria von Weber was the son of Franz Anton Weber, the uncle of Mozart's wife Constanze, and, like his brother, at one time a member of the famous Mannheim

orchestra. At the time of Weber's birth in 1786 his father was in the service of the Bishop of Lübeck, but later established a peripatetic theatre company. Weber's early musical gifts were encouraged by his father, who saw in him the possibility of another Mozart, and, during his itinerant childhood, there were lessons with Michael Haydn, Joseph Haydn's younger brother, in Salzburg. There were later lessons with the Abbé Vogler and an early position as Kapellmeister in Breslau, brought to a premature end through the hostility of musicians long established in the city and through the accidental drinking of engraving acid, left by his father in a wine bottle. His subsequent employment at the court in Württemberg ended when his father became involved in seemingly dubious financial dealings.

Weber's career continued, at first principally as a pianist, and then by his involvement with opera, a form with which he had been familiar since childhood. His opera *Der Freischütz* remains the quintessential German romantic opera, first given in Berlin in 1821. It was followed by the heroic-romantic opera *Euryanthe* and then by *Oberon* for London. The latter work was first given in London in 1826 under the composer's direction, although by now his health was deteriorating, his condition aggravated by the English weather. He died on 4th June, on the eve of his departure home to Germany.

In 1811 Weber wrote a concertino and two concertos for the clarinetist Heinrich Bärmann, performed first in Munich, with the encouragement of the court, and then forming part of their repertoire in a successful concert tour. Weber's bassoon concerto was written in Munich in the same year, and may have been performed there by the court orchestra bassoonist, Georg Friedrich Brandt. The first recorded performance, however, took place later, in Prague. Like the clarinet concertos, the bassoon concerto has a markedly operatic character, the composer exploiting the emotional range of the solo instrument, its rhetoric in the slow movement and humour in the final

rondo. In transcription it makes an effective addition to euphonium repertoire.

Piotr Il'yich Tchaikovsky retains his position as the most popular of all Russian composers. His music offers obvious superficial charms in its winning melodies and vivid orchestral colours. At the same time his achievement is deeper than this, however tempting it may be to despise what so many people enjoy. Trained at the newly established St Petersburg Conservatory, after earlier employment in the Ministry of Justice, he taught at the parallel institution in Moscow, until the intervention of a patron, Nadezhda von Meck, released him from what seemed increasing drudgery. This change in the course of his life coincided with an unsuccessful marriage that was brought to an end after a few months. His relationship with Nadezhda von Meck was very different, as the two were never to meet face to face, while moral and financial support was to continue until the final years of his life.

Tchaikovsky's sudden death in St Petersburg in 1893 caused contemporary speculation and has given rise to further posthumous rumours. It has been suggested that he committed suicide as the result of pressure from a court of honour of former students of the School of Jurisprudence, when an allegedly erotic liaison with a young nobleman seemed likely to cause an open scandal even in court circles. Officially, however, his death was attributed to cholera, contracted after drinking undistilled water. Whether the victim of cholera, of his own carelessness or reckless despair or of death deliberately courted, Tchaikovsky was widely mourned.

For the slow movement of his *String Quartet No. 1 in D major, Op. 11*, Tchaikovsky made use of a folk-song, *Sidel Vanya*, that he had noted down during a visit in 1869 to his sister and brother-in-law at Kamenka in the Ukraine. The popularity of this *Andante cantabile* later worried him, since it seemed that this was all people wanted to hear of his music in one or other of the many

transcriptions that arose. The quartet itself was written in 1871 for performance by colleagues at the Moscow Conservatory at the opening of a concert of his works on 28th March at which Turgenev was present. The work was dedicated to Tchaikovsky's friend, the botanist Sergey Alexandrovich Rachinsky. The familiar B flat slow movement, which brought tears to the eyes of Tolstoy when he first heard it, is in the original version entrusted to muted instruments, while the D flat major theme that forms the central section is accompanied by the plucked notes of the cello in a repeated pattern. Tchaikovsky later transcribed the movement for cello, one of a number of such subsequent arrangements by others.

Jean Balissat's *Capriccio* for euphonium and orchestra (2005) was commissioned by the High School for Music, Berne (Switzerland) for the Soloists' Diploma Examination for Roland Fröscher, a brilliant young euphonium virtuoso. The *Capriccio* consists of four movements, played *attacca*: the first, marked *Moderato*, presents the main theme in the form of a recitative which is then

developed lyrically. The motifs of soloist and orchestra are refined and interwoven until they culminate in a vehement climax, with violent glissandi from the euphonium being answered three times by the orchestra. The *Lento espressivo* fulfils a desire of the soloist for long expressive *cantilenas*, for which he has a particular fondness. The *Finale* is a technical challenge for the soloist. In this movement, which is full of contrasts, the work's principal themes are combined, to a greater or lesser degree. The *Capriccio* was given its première on 1st July 2005 in the Great Hall of the Casino in Berne, with Roland Fröscher (euphonium) accompanied by the Berne Symphony Orchestra conducted by Matthias Kuhn.

**Dominique Roggen, translated by David Stevens**  
(Roggen)

**Keith Anderson**  
(Mozart, Weber, Tchaikovsky)

**Jean Balissat, translated by David Stevens**  
(Balissat)

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Belcke: *Fantasia, Op. 58*

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## **Roland Fröscher**

Roland Fröscher was born in 1977 in Belp, near Berne, Switzerland. After completing his training as a primary school teacher, he went on to study euphonium at the Conservatoires of Berne and Lausanne under Roger Bobo. He was awarded the Teaching Diploma with Distinction in summer 2002. He also studied “School Music II” at the University of Berne. In summer 2005 he was awarded the Soloists’ Diploma, with Distinction, having studied under Thomas Rüedi, and was also awarded the Orchestral Direction Diploma, having completed a course under Dominique Roggen. Fröscher has appeared as a guest soloist with various ensembles, symphony orchestras, brass bands and wind orchestras, in Europe as well as in Canada and the USA. Fröscher also enjoys a busy concert schedule as a chamber musician, performing with the renowned tuba quartet Les Tubadours as well as pianist Jean-Jacques Schmid. He is conductor of Brass Band Rapperswil-Wierenzwil, and teaches euphonium at the Musikschule Region Gürbetal and the Hochschule der Künste Bern. Fröscher has won numerous prestigious competitions and awards, which include: national youth championship events (SSEW, SSQW); the Friedl-Wald competition (2003); “Brass Player of the Year” at the Hochschule der Künste Bern (2004); third prize at the International Euphonium Competition in Lieksa, Finland (2004); the Tschumi Prize (2005). [www.rolandfroescher.ch](http://www.rolandfroescher.ch)

## **Capella Istropolitana**

Capella Istropolitana was founded in 1983. The orchestra has performed in nearly all European countries, as well as in the United States, Canada, Japan, Korea, China, Macao and Hong Kong. Its extensive repertoire includes recordings of German and Italian Baroque, Classical, Romantic and twentieth-century works. To date, eighty CDs have been issued, two of which achieved Platinum sales. In 1991 the orchestra was made “Chamber Orchestra of the City of Bratislava” by the City Council of Bratislava, in recognition of its artistic achievements.

## **Dominique Roggen**

Dominique Roggen was born in Münsingen, near Berne, Switzerland. After working as a primary school teacher he studied the viola with Max Rostal and completed his conducting studies with Rudolf Kempe in Munich. After winning a prize from the Hermann-Suter Foundation he continued his studies with Seiji Ozawa and Leonard Bernstein in the USA. There followed a variety of successful jobs, as a director of music in the concert hall and in the theatre. Roggen is active in CD recordings, radio and television broadcasts and has held guest-conductorships in many European countries as well as in the USA and Japan. He is the founder and long-time director of the Berne Baroque Ensemble. In 1983 Roggen became the first Swiss conductor to be invited to conduct the most famous symphony orchestras in the People’s Republic of China – the Central Philharmonic Orchestra in Beijing and the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra. He is Professor in Conducting at the Hochschule der Künste Bern (HKB) and in 1987 became Chief Conductor of the chamber orchestra “*Tempo Giusto*”. Roggen is regarded as a distinguished all-round musician. Not only has he gained a varied repertoire through his long-held position as principal viola of the Chamber Ensemble of Radio Berne and as a member of the Berne Symphony Orchestra, but he is also highly successful as an extremely imaginative arranger and composer. He has a special affinity with eighteenth-century music and his virtuoso technique marks him out as a specialist in neoclassical music.



**Dominique Roggen** *Photo by André Roulier*

The euphonium is said to have been invented in Weimar in 1843. In German and Russian military bands it came to replace the bassoon, suggesting that transcriptions of works for bassoon should make an interesting and useful addition to euphonium solo repertoire. This recording includes two original works for euphonium, and transcriptions of bassoon concertos by Mozart and Weber, with an effective transcription of Tchaikovsky's *Andante cantabile*.

## Music for Euphonium and Orchestra

**Dominique ROGGEN (b. 1948)**

**Concerto in B flat major for euphonium, strings and basso continuo**

9:32

- |   |                              |      |
|---|------------------------------|------|
| 1 | Allegro                      | 3:29 |
| 2 | Andantino                    | 2:03 |
| 3 | Bergamasca helvetica absurda | 4:00 |

**Wolfgang Amadeus MOZART (1756–1791)**

**Concerto in B flat major for bassoon and orchestra, K. 191 (cadenzas by Dominique Roggen and Roland Fröscher)**

17:06

- |   |                          |      |
|---|--------------------------|------|
| 4 | Allegro                  | 6:53 |
| 5 | Andante ma adagio        | 6:13 |
| 6 | Rondo. Tempo di menuetto | 3:58 |

KulturStadtBern



**Carl Maria von WEBER**

(1786–1826)

**Concerto in F major for bassoon and orchestra, Op. 75**

17:20

- |   |                       |      |
|---|-----------------------|------|
| 7 | Allegro ma non troppo | 8:14 |
| 8 | Adagio                | 4:23 |
| 9 | Rondo: allegro        | 4:41 |

**Pyotr Il'yich TCHAIKOVSKY**

(1840–1893)

10 **Andante cantabile**

(arr. Roland Fröscher)

7:10

**Jean BALISSAT (1936–2007)**

**Capriccio for euphonium and orchestra da camera**

15:52

- |    |                           |      |
|----|---------------------------|------|
| 11 | Moderato quasi Recitativo | 3:46 |
| 12 | Scherzando                | 3:10 |
| 13 | Lento espressivo          | 4:29 |
| 14 | Finale                    | 4:26 |

**Roland Fröscher, Euphonium**  
**Cappella Istropolitana • Dominique Roggen**

Includes Free Downloadable Bonus Track (Belcke: *Fantasia, Op. 58*) available at [www.classiconline.com](http://www.classiconline.com). Please see booklet for full details.

Recorded at Moyzes-Saal, Bratislava, Slovakia, 31 October to 4 November 2005 • Producer: Karol Kopernicky  
Engineer: Otto Nopp • Editor: Ladislav Krajčovič • Booklet notes: Keith Anderson, David Stevens, Jean Balissat  
Publishers: Powermusic<sup>1-3, 10</sup>, Breitkopf & Härtel<sup>4-9</sup>, Bim Music<sup>11-14</sup> • Cover: Roland Fröscher (André Roulier)



8.570725

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Playing Time

67:19



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Booklet notes in English