

MOZART'S VERY FIRST HORN CONCERTO

Herman Jeurissen

(Translated by Martha Bixler, Ellen Callmann and Richard Sacksteder)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's four horn concertos belong to the standard repertory of every horn player today. There are, in addition, some fragments indicating that Mozart had in mind at least two more concertos. All of these works stem from Mozart's years in Vienna from 1781 to the end of his life.

Mozart sketched out the Rondo KV 371 on March 21, 1781, five days after he had left Munich at the command of his patron, Archbishop Hieronymus Colloredo, to join the court musicians of Salzburg in Vienna to give musical luster to the festivities in honor of the newly crowned emperor, Joseph II. He must have composed the draft of an opening allegro, KV 370b, for a horn concerto in E-flat major at about the same time. In all probability, the Rondo KV 371 formed its finale. The themes of this experimental concerto, KV370b+371, are completely characteristic of Mozart: the march-like opening of the first movement occurs frequently in the piano concertos and the rondo theme set in 2/4 time anticipates the second finale of Figaro (Ex. 1). No trace has been found of plans he probably had for a second movement.

Example 1 consists of three staves of musical notation. The first staff is labeled 'KV 370b Horn in Es' and is marked '(Allegro)'. It shows a four-measure phrase in 4/4 time, starting with a quarter note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, Bb4, and C5, then a quarter rest, and finally a quarter note G4 with a trill (tr) above it. The second staff is labeled 'KV 371 Horn in Es' and is marked 'Allegro'. It shows a four-measure phrase in 2/4 time, starting with a quarter note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, Bb4, and C5, then a quarter note G4 with a trill (tr) above it. The third staff continues the 2/4 time phrase from the second staff, showing a quarter note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, Bb4, and C5, then a quarter note G4 with a trill (tr) above it, and finally a quarter rest.

Example 1

The Allegro KV 370b

In 1856, Mozart's son Carl Thomas (1784-1858), in connection with his father's 100th birthday, cut up a large part of this first movement and distributed the pieces as "Mozart relics." Today, 127 measures of this movement survive, in which, as in the Rondo, the horn part is fully worked out while the accompaniment is only partially indicated.

Two sheets that fit together and have four written sides contain the opening ritornello and the solo exposition (*Neue Mozart Ausgabe* V/14/5: measures 1-71). Furthermore, there are another five shorter fragments that belong together (measures 72-126), but were cut apart by Mozart's son. These smaller pieces had also been written on two sheets originally. This section begins with a B-flat major tutti passage that leads into the recapitulation and ends with the concluding trill of the solo horn. Not all of the fragments have been recovered as yet; there remain two lacunae in the recapitulation and the final tutti is missing.

The beginning of this second section could for reasons of tonality be a continuation from the exposition (this is the order F. Giegling gives the fragments in the NMA edition of the horn concerto), but the result — a first movement without a development — is monstrous in terms of form (Ex. 2).

The musical score for Example 2 consists of six staves. The first staff is for Horn in E♭, starting at measure 68 with a melodic line featuring trills (tr). The second staff is for Horn in E♭, starting at measure 72 with a whole rest. The third staff is for Violin I (VI. I), starting at measure 72 with a melodic line featuring trills. The fourth staff is for Bassoon (Basso), starting at measure 72 with a bass line. The fifth staff is for Violin I & 2 (VI. I & 2), starting at measure 76 with a chordal accompaniment. The sixth staff is for Bassoon (Basso), starting at measure 76 with a bass line. The score includes measure numbers 68, 72, and 76, and trill markings (tr) above notes in measures 68, 72, and 76.

Example 2

In the first movements of Mozart's concertos there are three large tutti sections: an opening ritornello; a second tutti that is set between the solo exposition and the development; and a closing tutti with perhaps the possibility of a cadenza.

In the wind concertos, in order to provide the soloist with a rest, there is always a fourth (small) tutti between the development and the recapitulation, which either leads to the recapitulation (e.g., KV 412, 495) or serves as an introduction to the main theme (e.g., KV 417, 447). In my opinion, the B-flat major section forms such a tutti, one that, like the closely related section in KV 495 (measures 132-142), leads into the recapitulation.

tutti—solo exposition—development tutti—tutti—recapitulation—closing tutti

It is possible that Mozart had postponed working out the middle portion to a later time. However, as there is a g' written into measure 72 (NMA) of the horn solo in fragment KV 370b (in my opinion the final note of the development and not the first of the solo!), it is more likely that a folio with the second tutti and the solo section was lost at an early date. I have reconstructed the movement in this way. For the development, I chose a way of working out the themes in the mediant, g minor, so that it would not become an imitation of the later horn concertos.

The Rondo KV 371

Until now, the Rondo KV 371 was thought to be more or less complete, although oddly structured and atypical for Mozart. It had not occurred to anyone that a full bifolium of the manuscript had been lost. However, at the Mozart Congress in Salzburg on Feb. 6, 1991, the American musicologist Marie Rolf (Eastman School of Music, Rochester) announced that an extra manuscript sheet of this concerto Rondo KV 371 had been rediscovered. (The discovery was first described in Alan Tyson's "A Feature of the Structure of Mozart's Autograph Scores," in *Festschrift Wolfgang Rehm zum 60 Geburtstag*, Kassel, September, 1989.) This manuscript, a bifolium with four written pages, contains 60 measures that belong between measures 27 and 28 of the old edition. In this extra sheet, the theme of the horn part is continued logically (analogously to the corresponding part of the middle section), and in this rediscovered section the second theme (the B section in the "recapitulation") is found in the dominant of B flat major (Ex. 3).

The complete movement thus acquires the usual form of the Viennese rondo and has a logical harmonic construction:

A — B — A — C ————— A — B' — A
 Eb Bb Eb C min, Eb maj/min, Cb maj, Eb

Horn in E \flat

26 etc.

(28)

Example 3

The Historical Background

The question arises for which horn player Mozart sketched these outer movements (KV 370b and 371) of a concerto and why he did not carry out the instrumentation of the work.

On March 24, 1781, only three days after the Rondo KV 371 was written, Joseph Leutgeb (1732-1811), the famous horn virtuoso and cheese merchant for whom Mozart composed his horn concertos, is mentioned in a letter from Wolfgang to his father. From it one may conclude that soon after his arrival in Vienna on March 16, 1781, Mozart had again met this old family friend, who had already asked him for a horn concerto in 1777. However, it would appear from Constanze Mozart's correspondence of 1800 (March 1 and May 12 and 31) with the publisher J. A. André in Offenbach concerning the manuscripts her late husband had left that Leutgeb did not know the fragments of this earliest E-flat major concerto KV 370b and 371, or the later, largely worked out E-major fragment KV 494a. The brittle solo part (i.e., with notes tending to break) of this experimental E-flat major concerto, which was difficult to play on the natural horn of its time, is noteworthy.

Though it is possible to produce tones artificially that do not exist in the overtone series by using the hand-stopping technique, not every tone sounds equally good. Difficulties such as the poor-sounding a $^{\flat}$ on a strong beat in KV 370b (see Ex. 1) are consistently avoided in later works. Furthermore, we do not find the many Pralltriller, the f $^{\flat}$ that does not sound good on many natural horns (Ex. 4) and the low C $^{\flat}$ on the final beat of the Rondo in the later horn concertos that were definitely composed for Leutgeb.

As emerges from Mozart's known concertos, Leutgeb was above all else a specialist in lyrical, broadly melodic passages. There was another horn player, however, with



whom Mozart had friendly relations during the winter of 1780-81: Franz Lang (1752-?), the first horn of the Mannheim, and later of the Munich, court musicians, and the original performer of the obbligato horn part in the aria for soprano and four solo winds "Se il padre perdei" in the opera *Idomeneo* (KV 366), which was first performed in Munich on Jan. 29, 1781. The way the horn solo is written in this aria is very similar to the treatment of the solo part in the experimental concerto KV 370b+371. Here, too, we find the same tessitura (C'-a'), the large register leaps, and the use of f' and C', idiomatic characteristics that normally occur only in the secondary parts.

"Ramm and Lang came home as though intoxicated," wrote a delighted Wolfgang to his father after the very successful first rehearsal of *Idomeneo* on Dec. 1, 1780. Just as Mozart had composed the oboe quartet KF 370 for Ramm, the oboe player, so he could have intended to write a work for Lang. Having left Munich suddenly at the beginning of March on the command of the archbishop of Salzburg, he again met his old friend Leutgeb in Vienna. Perhaps he thought he could kill two birds with one stone with the projected E-flat major concerto KV 370b+371. Whatever his intentions, once in Vienna Mozart lost sight of Lang, and the solo voice of this unfinished concerto was idiomatically completely inappropriate for Leutgeb.

The later horn concertos

It would seem that Leutgeb also did not know (see above) the puzzling fragment in E major KV 494a, the torso of a grandly conceived horn concerto that, in its structure and musical content, is comparable to the great piano concertos. Alan Tyson and Wolfgang Plath date this fragment from late 1785 to early 1786 by means of an analysis of the handwriting and the paper used. It is perfectly possible that Mozart had Leutgeb in mind, but on reflection recognized that a large work that would take some 30 minutes to play would be well beyond Leutgeb's musical pretensions and technical ability. Mozart's four famous horn concertos that are known to have been composed for Leutgeb are conceived very differently. These gratefully written and tightly structured works each display a rich contrast of chiaroscuro, of bright (open) and dark (covered) tones, broadly spun lyrical themes, a cantabile episode in a very different tonality in the development, a second movement romance, and as finale a hunt piece of great virtuosity. However, these concertos (KV 412 [1791], 417 [1783], 447 [1787] and 495 [1786]), as well as the

"Leitgebischen" horn quintet KV 407, contain elements that Mozart reworked from the earliest concerto KV 370b+371.

Reconstruction and restoration

Today, Mozart's earliest horn concerto KV 370b+371 does not present any insurmountable difficulties to the "hand horn" virtuoso. Furthermore, working out this piece fully can help to enlarge the overall picture of the horn literature created by Mozart. Marie Rolf's reconstruction of KV 371, both for horn and orchestra and for horn and piano, is scheduled for publication by Bärenreiter in fall, 1991. In addition, Erik Smith, a producer at Philips, has recently finished an instrumentation of the complete Rondo KV 371, and this edition, as performed by Timothy Brown and the Academy of Saint Martin-in-the-Fields, will appear in November, 1991, as part of Philips' complete Mozart edition. I myself have long been working on the fragments of the first movement of this concerto (facsimiles published in *Das Horn bei Mozart*, Hanz Pizka, 1980; published in the series *Ars Instrumentalis* 74, Sikorski, 1983). Marie Rolf has kindly made the facsimile of the newly discovered sheet available to me.

My experience in reconstructing the fragment KV 370b led me in some places to completely different decisions from those of Erik Smith in working out the final Rondo. The first performance of my version, the first performance in Europe of the completed Rondo, took place on Feb. 15, 1991, in The Hague with the Residenz Orchester. Graeme Jenkins was the conductor and the author was the soloist. My principles for the reconstruction of the concerto KV370b+371 were:

1. The two movements belong together and are closely connected thematically.
2. The relationship between this concerto and Mozart's *Idomeneo*, which was composed during the same period, suggests that one should provide the structure with harmonic elements and orchestration in the same style.
3. Motifs that recur in the known horn concertos and the horn quintet KV 407 were worked out in the same manner as in the later pieces.
4. Unrelated thematic material was avoided as much as possible. When feasible, the lacunae in KV 370b, as well as the missing instrumentation in KV370b+371 were replaced with themes and motifs from the existing material.

As a model for my attempts at reconstruction, I would like to point to the place in the Rondo, where only two tutti measures of the first violin and bass, in addition to the solo voice, survive (Ex. 5).

I reconstructed the bass line in mm. 207 and 208 according to a comparable section that occurs on the newly found sheet and continued the line logically according to my conception.

Both the instrumentation (with violas divisi and sustained tones in the oboe voice) and the harmonic trappings (with dark harmonies in mm. 217 and 218) are completed in the style of *Idomeneo*.

The accompanying motifs for the first violins were taken from the preceding tutti section. Posthumous reconstructions obviously cannot be exactly like original works, but by means of such a completely rational method I hope to have been as faithful as possible to the composer. Moreover, a work that is 85 percent Mozart will always be more interesting than one that is 100 percent by a second-rate composer.

The image displays a musical score for a symphony orchestra, labeled "Example 5". The score is arranged in two systems. The first system includes staves for 2 Oboen, 2 Hörner in Es, Solohorn in Es, Violinen I and II, Bratschen, and Vcl. & Baß. The second system, starting at measure 210, shows the continuation of the strings and woodwinds. The music is in a 3/4 time signature with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). Dynamic markings include *f* (forte) and *p* (piano). The woodwinds play melodic lines, while the strings provide harmonic support with sustained notes and rhythmic patterns.

Example 5



Example 5 (cont.)

Born in 1952, Herman Jeurissen is Principal Horn with the Hague Philharmonic Orchestra. He has written numerous publications on Mozart's music and has also recorded his works.