

# BEETHOVEN *transformed* VOLUME 1



# BOXWOOD & BRASS

# Beethoven Transformed, Volume 1

Chamber music for Harmonie  
by Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

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## Boxwood & Brass

Emily Worthington *clarinet*  
Fiona Mitchell *clarinet*  
Anneke Scott *natural horn*  
Kate Goldsmith *natural horn*  
Robert Percival *bassoon*  
Takako Kunugi *bassoon*

About Boxwood & Brass:

*'Boxwood & Brass's sound is nothing short of revelatory'*  
Early Music Today

*'Button-bright performances caught in a sympathetic  
acoustic [...] performed with spirit and vigour'*  
Gramophone

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

## **Septet in E-flat major, Op. 20**

arr. by Carl Czerny (1791–1857)

- |                                  |         |
|----------------------------------|---------|
| 1. Adagio – Allegro              | [10:30] |
| 2. Adagio cantabile              | [7:48]  |
| 3. Tempo di menuetto & Trio      | [3:20]  |
| 4. Andante con Variazioni        | [8:01]  |
| 5. Scherzo & Trio                | [3:09]  |
| 6. Andante alla marcia – Allegro | [8:00]  |

## **Sextet in E-flat major, Op. 71**

- |                     |        |
|---------------------|--------|
| 7. Adagio – Allegro | [9:10] |
| 8. Adagio           | [4:39] |
| 9. Menuetto & Trio  | [2:27] |
| 10. Rondo           | [4:30] |

Total playing time [61:40]



Carl Czerny, engraving by Blasius Höfel after Joseph Lanzedelly (Bibliothèque Nationale de France)

### **Beethoven Transformed Volume 1: Harmoniemusik as chamber music**

Beethoven Transformed is the culmination of a two-year project by Boxwood & Brass exploring the status of wind music in early-nineteenth century Vienna through original and arranged music by Beethoven and his contemporaries. The project aimed to address two questions: what purpose did this music serve, and does understanding this purpose change how we perform it?

Harmoniemusik is usually portrayed as a functional music. In the eighteenth century Harmonien (ensembles comprised of pairs of wind instruments) were a fashionable form of entertainment in the noble courts of Central Europe, playing divertimenti, serenades, and arrangements of popular operas for indoor and outdoor occasions. They owed at least some of their popularity to the enthusiasm of Emperor Josef II, who established a Harmonie-octet at the Viennese court c. 1782: 'a society of virtuosi containing only wind instrumentalists who have reached a high degree of perfection'. The surviving repertoire of this group consists almost solely of opera arrangements made by the principal oboist Johann Wendt.

This makes the Harmonie sound like a cover band churning out popular tunes as background music for parties, in contrast to what we might imagine to be the 'serious' business of performing chamber music to attentive and knowledgeable audiences. In fact, this separation of high and low genres is questionable even in the eighteenth century, when few if any performances were treated with quiet, concentrated listening. After 1800, the idea of Harmoniemusik as 'background music' is even less convincing, as the repertoire becomes ever more ambitious in its scale and challenging in its demands on both players and listeners.

Around this time, chamber music was moving out the private salon and starting to be heard in public concerts attended by both connoisseurs and the general public. Harmoniemusik was often programmed in such concerts, alongside string quartets and piano trios, and it is possible to interpret the increasing sophistication of Harmoniemusik as a response to this change of setting. The two works on this disc encapsulate this moment of transition: Beethoven's Sextet Op. 71, which seems to explore the possibilities for creating a chamber music-like dialogue within the Harmonie; and Czerny's reimagining of Beethoven's

most popular chamber work, the Septet Op. 20, as Harmoniemusik.

### **Sextet in E-flat Op. 71 for two clarinets, two horns and two bassoons**

In August 1809, Beethoven offered the publisher Breitkopf & Härtel his wind sextet, along with two songs, partly as payment for some other items the firm had already published:

The Sextet is from my early things and, what's more, was written in one night. Nothing more can be said about it than that it was written by a composer who has since produced at least a few better works; however, to some people, such works are the best.

Breitkopf published the Sextet as Op. 71 in January 1810, but sketches suggest the piece was probably composed prior to 1796, and certainly show that it could not have been produced 'in one night'. Beethoven's employer at that time was Maximilian Franz, Elector and Archbishop of Cologne and the brother of the Emperor Josef II. Maximilian kept the court in Bonn, where Beethoven spent his formative years along with the horn player and

future publisher Nicolaus Simrock, and the flautist Anton Reicha, later a composer and important teacher at the Paris Conservatoire. The wind music of Reicha's uncle Josef Reicha, who was leader of the court orchestra in Bonn, has been cited as a model for Beethoven's own works.

Beethoven's attempt to distance himself from this early sextet suggests he felt it did not fit with his image as a composer of learned and sophisticated works. However, this attitude was not universally shared. The first known performance of Op. 71 took place as part of a series of subscription quartet concerts given by the violinist Ignaz Schuppanzigh during 1804-5, one of the first series of its kind. The Sextet was the only featured work to be reviewed in detail, the *Allgemeinen musikalischen Zeitung* describing it as 'a composition which shines resplendent by reason of its lively melodies, unconstrained harmonies, and a wealth of new and surprising ideas.' A review of a 'grosses konzertirendes sextet von Beethoven' performed by the clarinetist Franz Tausch in a concert in Berlin in April 1804 may document an earlier performance of the work.

Despite Beethoven's self-effacing comments, the Sextet is not a standard

eighteenth century divertimento. Notably, like the C minor Serenade of Mozart and the later Partitas of Krommer and Triebensee, it abandons the multi-movement divertimento structure and instead uses the four-movement form associated with 'high' genres such as the string quartet and symphony. From a performer's perspective the Sextet also feels different in style and texture to the Harmoniemusik of the eighteenth century divertimento tradition, with the six instruments treated less often as pairs and more as individual voices of equal importance. The dialogue that Beethoven creates in the opening two movements resembles the *style concertant* popular in eighteenth-century string quartets, which were designed to mimic the formal interplay of salon conversation. In the later movements, Beethoven includes typical wind music topics, in particular the hunting calls and rustic dance rhythms of the Menuetto. The march theme of the final 'Rondo' is also a common wind music trope, but it is presented in a refined *piano*, and alternated with conversational episodes – a memory of the parade ground, re-cast to titillate an elegant audience.

### **Septet in E-flat Op. 20, arr. Carl Czerny for two clarinets, two horns and two bassoons**

The Septet for violin, viola, cello, bass, clarinet, bassoon and horn Op. 20 was one of Beethoven's most popular works during his lifetime. It was completed in the late 1790s, shortly after the Sextet Op. 71, and was given its first public performances late in 1799 and in April 1800 by Schuppanzigh and the clarinetist Joseph Beer. Beethoven began the process of publication soon afterwards but, aware of the immense demand for the work and wary of unauthorised distribution, he was very cautious with security surrounding the manuscript. He eventually had to hurry the publisher Hoffmeister along, writing 'Send my Septet into the world a little more quickly – for the herd is waiting for it.' The piece was eventually published in 1802, and many arrangements quickly followed. As well as the piano duet and piano and string ensemble versions that publishers commonly issued to capitalise on popular works, Beethoven suggested to Hoffmeister how the work might be re-worked for flute and strings, and made his own arrangement as the Trio Op. 38 for clarinet, cello and piano. As with the Sextet, however, Beethoven did not see the work's popularity as a good thing,



and his earliest biographers claimed that he grew to hate the way that it overshadowed his other more 'serious' compositions.

Quite how Carl Czerny's wind arrangement of the Septet fits into this picture is somewhat unclear. Beethoven recognised Czerny as a fine young pianist and gave him lessons throughout 1802 and 1803. The two met again in 1804, and Czerny recalled:

From that time on Beethoven was well disposed towards me and until his last days he treated me like a friend. I had to proofread all his newly published works, and when in 1805 his opera *Leonore* was produced he let me make the piano reduction of the score. It is owing to the suggestions he made while I was working on this project that I acquired my skill as an arranger, which became very useful to me in later years.

Czerny was only fourteen in 1805 when he completed his arrangement of the Septet, but he was already busy as a piano teacher. He based the arrangement on Beethoven's original composing draft, which was missing the important revisions

that occurred during its publication process, including changes to tempo indications, some melodic ideas, and the last movement cadenza. Czerny's arrangement is therefore derived from the work as it would have been heard in its first performances c. 1800. In our performance, we have sought to preserve these differences, taking the opportunity to present a rather different version of the music than is usually heard today.

Given the links between Beethoven and Czerny, and the fact that Czerny used the composer's own manuscript to make the arrangement, it is possible that Czerny was working to a commission from Beethoven, as he would do many times in the future. Alternatively, it is also conceivable that Czerny was creating the arrangement for the clarinetist Beer, who we know to have been the final owner of the score that Czerny used. It is also unclear whether Czerny's arrangement was ever performed: unlike Georg Druschetzky's version for nine-part Harmonie, it was never published. The surviving score seems to be a first draft, missing the details of some dynamics and phrasing that would have been added to the parts as they were produced.



Manuscript of final page of Beethoven arr. Czerny: Septet, Op. 20  
(Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Musikabteilung mit Mendelssohn-Archiv)



If Czerny abandoned the project, one reason could be how exceptionally difficult the arrangement appears on the page. The second clarinet and second horn retain most of the solos given to those instruments in Beethoven's original work, with much of the string writing re-cast for the first clarinet, horn and bassoon, but all six instruments have their share of complex and soloistic writing. However, we were fascinated to discover that with the exception of occasionally forgetting that clarinetists need to breathe (which has necessitated a slight redistribution of the parts in some long passages), everything Czerny writes lies within the capabilities of early-nineteenth century instruments. Indeed, his command of colour and ability to push the instruments without being un-idiomatic shows an understanding that belies his youth. Moreover, the removal of the wind/string opposition that characterises Beethoven's original makes Czerny's version feel all the more chamber-like. While it is unusual to find such virtuosic writing in a piece of Harmoniemusik, it fits with the idea of a genre whose boundaries were breaking down, and whose purpose

was increasingly to serve the aspirations of the artists who performed the music rather than the needs of a noble patron.

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## Boxwood & Brass

Boxwood & Brass is a group of exceptional period wind players specialising in the chamber music and Harmoniemusik of the Classical and early-Romantic periods. Musical and scholarly virtuosity go hand-in-hand in Boxwood's projects, as we unearth unknown works from far-flung archives and revive sounds unheard for 200 years. Arrangements made for Harmonien of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries are an important part of Boxwood's repertoire, and bassoonist Robert Percival continues this tradition by creating bespoke arrangements for the ensemble that challenge audiences to hear old music in new ways.

Boxwood & Brass's members perform with the world's leading period-instrument orchestras, including the Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique, Academy of Ancient Music, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, L'Orchestre des Champs Élysées, and Bach Collegium Japan. Boxwood & Brass's concert appearances include the Holywell Music Rooms, St John's Smith Square, and the York Early Music Festival. Boxwood & Brass is ensemble-in-association at the University of Huddersfield and was a

'Making Music' Selected Artist for 2018-19. In 2016, Boxwood & Brass released its debut CD Music for a Prussian Salon on Resonus Classics to unanimous critical praise.

[www.boxwoodandbrass.co.uk](http://www.boxwoodandbrass.co.uk)

### Instruments

- Emily Worthington *clarinet* (by Peter van der Poel after Heinrich Grenser, c. 1810)  
Fiona Mitchell *clarinet* (by Guy Cowley after Heinrich Grenser, c. 1810)  
Anneke Scott *natural horn* (Marcel Auguste Raoux, c. 1820)  
Kate Goldsmith *natural horn* (Courtois *neveu aîné*, c. 1820, kindly loaned by the Bate Collection)  
Robert Percival *bassoon* (by Peter de Koningh after Heinrich Grenser, c. 1810)  
Takako Kunugi *bassoon* (by Peter de Koningh after Heinrich Grenser, c. 1810)

### Performing materials

Beethoven Op. 71: Henle HN992 ed. Egon Voss  
Beethoven Op. 20 arr. Czerny: edited and prepared by Robert Percival from original sources

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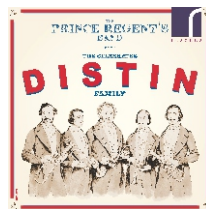
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