

7. FRANZ JOSEPH STRAUSS, A JOACHIM OF THE HORN

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Abstract: *Franz Joseph Strauss was one of the brightest horns of the 19th century. He was born in Germany and worked all his life in Munich, being a first - horn player, composer, conductor and teacher. As a composer he wrote two concerts for horn and orchestra and several pieces for horn and piano, most of them, the author singing them in the first absolute audition. As a teacher, he participated in the creation of a German horn school, and his studies for natural horn are still valid today. Difficult and sometimes misunderstood by musicians of the time, Franz Strauss remains a landmark in the history of the horn and a legend in the art of horn performance.*

Key words: *art, horn school, musical instrument, horn*

1. Life and artistic personality

Franz Joseph Strauss was born in Parkstein, Bavaria, on February 26, 1822. From an early age, Franz Strauss showed a penchant for music, with his mother Walter's family having many members who excelled in this field. He received his first musical notions from his uncles, Johann Georg Walter and Franz Michael Walter, who played the violin, clarinet, trumpet and guitar. At the age of five, little Franz began studying the violin (at the age of seven he was already playing in front of the audience), and at the age of nine he took lessons in clarinet, guitar, without neglecting the study of brass wind instruments (trumpet, trombone, horn). . Franz Strauss earned his living from various services: he sang at parties, for a time he was an assistant to the Nabburg trumpeter, and on the recommendation of his uncle Georg Walter, he was employed in the orchestra of Duke Max of Munich at the age of 15. As time went on, he realized that the instrument closest to his soul was the horn, and in Munich Franz Strauss would prove his outstanding qualities as a horn player, teacher, and composer for his favorite instrument. From 1874 to 1889, when his retirement took place, Franz Strauss worked as a first horn player in the Munich Court Orchestra. After the death of his first wife, Franz Strauss meets Josephine Pschorr, one of the five daughters of Georg Pschorr, a wealthy brewer, whom he marries in 1863. From this union two children were born, the eldest Richard (b. 1864) became a famous composer, pianist and conductor and a daughter Johanna (married von Rauchenberger), three years younger.

In her notes, Johanna recounts: Our dear father, who loved us dearly, was stern and quick to anger, so he had to face many hardships because of Richard's playful temperament. My mother, of rare kindness and modesty, always tried to hide her deeds from my father — in the end, my compassionate sister's tears soothed such incidents. Despite his difficult temperament, Franz Strauss was known as the most famous horn player of nineteenth-century Germany. He participated in the premieres of Wagnerian musical dramas (sometimes without much conviction), being highly regarded as an instrumentalist, but often coming

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into conflict with the famous conductor Hans von Bülow and Richard Wagner. It is intolerable! but when he plays the horn, I can't be mad at him, Bülow said.

Franz Strauss was a strong personality, he had a "sharp tongue", very stubborn and sometimes vehement, yet he hid a big heart, a generous character, qualities that are an attribute of the Bavarians. He was a real character, his son said. It would have seemed unworthy of him to change his mind about an appreciation he considered good, and even in his old age he refused to take any of my musical knowledge. Franz Strauss has given recitals and solo concerts with the orchestra, many of them promoting their own horn works. Thus, Concert no. 1 op. 8 in C minor was first sung by the author in the spring of 1865, on March 27, at an Academy concert in the large Odeon concert hall. The concert was repeated in Augsburg on March 10, 1866, in Innsbruck on November 19, 1867, in The Hague on March 18, 1868, in Nuremberg on January 22, 1869. Now at the height of his career, Hans von Bülow named Franz Strauss a Joachim of horn. In 1873 King Ludwig II named him the virtuoso horn player, musician of the Court, and in May 1879 he honored him with the Ludwig Medal for Science and Art. He was constantly involved in the development of the Wagnerian tube. At the premiere of *Auril Rinului* he borrowed a euphony from the military band, but at the premiere of *Walkiria* on June 24, 1870, the horn player played a Wagnerian tuba.



Fig. 1. Father and son – 1904

In his memoirs, R. Strauss recounts his father's relationship with Richard Wagner: Once Wagner passed the "angry" orchestra, saying, "The horns are always dark!" My father replied, "We have every reason to be so; the horn flutes of the Master Singers are in fact flutes for the clarinet ... >>. However, he sang them so beautifully and full of soul, with a splendid tone, that Wagner praised him R. Wagner knew very well the difficulties of the horn scores in his works, so he often understood the "troublemaker" horn player. After the premiere of *Tristan and Isolde*, R. Wagner attached to the last page of the original score of *Horn I* a gilded leaf received as a gift from his friend his *Lorbeer Kranz*. This could mean the great respect that the composer had for the first valuable horn player.

Franz Strauss's musical confession of faith refers to the trinity of Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven. They are joined by Schubert, Weber, Mendelsohn and Spohr. R. Schumann's music was considered too Leipzig. The horn player took part in the

Mozart Concerts in Salzburg each year, and Oberon by C. M. von Weber sang it about 80 times, as evidenced by his musical preferences. *For my father, the activity at the Opera was always a festive activity, wrote R. Strauss. For the heavy horn solos in Beethoven's symphonies, "Freischutz," "A Midsummer Night's Dream," he was preparing for weeks in a row. I still remember very well what a profound impression he always made on the Munich audience in the first part of "The Heroic" (Solo in F Major); in Adagio from the Ninth Symphony (the truly famous passage in Sol b Major).*

After retiring and away from professional worries, the artist Franz Strauss focused entirely on the prosperity of children and grandchildren, on his son's career, which resulted in his recovery from asthma and insomnia in recent years. When Richard Strauss's *Salome* was finished, his father expected him to spend a few days off with his family, but he didn't get it. He died on May 31, 1905, and was diagnosed with pulmonary emphysema. Franz Strauss is one of those unjustly forgotten musicians who were recognized as important personalities in their time. As a horn virtuoso, Franz Strauss became a legend.

2. Creative activity

Franz Strauss's compositions illustrate the adoration of the forerunners of the musicians of Viennese Classicism. Concern for sound is certainly of great importance in his success as a horn player, but it is abundantly reflected in his work. *Fantasy for horn and piano, op.2* opened the way to the realm of creation, Franz Strauss proving real talent in the art of composition. Among his works we mention: *Nocturna op. 7, Concert no. 1 for horn and orchestra op. 8, Romance Les Adieux, Empfindungen am maree (Feelings of the Sea) op. 12, Introduction and theme with variations op. 13, Concert no. 2 for horn and orchestra op. 14, and over the years, at the age of eight, he composed 10 trios for the post horn that accompanied the Bavarian postmen. Franz Strauss is the author of a Horn Quartet (Rondino a la Chasse, Menuet, Gavotte, Oberbayscher Laendle) as well as various marches, waltzes, polkas, mazurkas and other dances.*

In the composition he was a convinced conservative, considering any deviation from the classical formulas as the result of the "demonic" Richard Wagner. This conception was also imprinted on his son. However, the horn works have romantic features in terms of dynamics, ornamentation, agogics, some elements of rhythm or timbre color. Franz Strauss, through his creation, had an overwhelming influence on Richard Strauss. The son will develop and increase the technical possibilities of the horn, the instrument becoming an emblematic one within the symphony orchestra. *Concert no. 1 op. 8, a work sung by Franz Strauss, premiered in Munich on March 27, 1865. The concerto follows the sequence of movements in the classical concerto, fast - slow - fast, but they are performed without pause between them.*

After the analysis of the *Concert no. 1* by Franz Strauss, several elements emerge: the lively and expressive melody blends harmoniously with the moments of instrumental virtuosity, constituting culminations of the exuberant joy of life. The varied rhythm that also contains exceptional divisions dynamizes the musical

flow, and the diverse and contrasting agogic dynamics (*Piu mosso*, *animato*, *Meno mosso*, *Poco allargando*, *Tempo primo*) give a lot of brilliance and originality to the work. The soloist's articulation includes all types (*legato*, *staccato*, *detaché*, with their variants) in an extended scope. Tonal harmony is based on relations of the same name, relative (major or minor), Dominant, Dominant relative, etc., but sometimes there are diminished chords with diminished seventh in various reversals. Among the ornamental elements, Franz Strauss frequently uses apoggiature (single and double), group and trill. The orchestration of the work is performed within the limits of the classical orchestra, with limited sets of wind instruments. The orchestra acts as an accompaniment, sometimes the soloist horn dialogues with the orchestra's solo instruments.

Knowing very well the technical possibilities of the instrument, Franz Strauss manages to make the most of it by creating a work of some value. Concerto for Horn and Orchestra op. 8 in C minor must also earn its deserved place on the concert stages in our *country*. Franz Strauss completed Concert no. 2 op. 14 to 28 February 1870, Munich. The work has the same structure as the previous one (op. 8), the three parts of the concert finding their correspondence in the architecture of the sonata form, the exhibition - p. I development - p.). It is no coincidence that the composer chose the key of E major. Here the horn sounds best, the sounds are rich in harmonics, stable (the first natural horns were tuned in re, fa, mi \flat), and the technical - interpretive virtues of the soloist can be well highlighted. Franz Strauss was a staunch defender of classical traditions and chose this key as his predecessor W. A. Mozart, who wrote three concertos and a Concertino rondo in E major. Later, his son Richard Strauss will write Two Concerts for Horn and Orchestra in Mi \flat .

In the analysis of the Concert no. 2, op. 14, some conclusions can be drawn regarding the musical language: the lyrical, expressive, singable melody alternates with energetic, determined, imposing, generous themes. The melody consists of fragments of ranges, repeated notes, arpeggios in various reversals on an extended scope, with the limits between the sound fa (small octave) - do acute (octave 1). Franz Strauss uses both the middle and treble register more in both concerts, due to the fact that the instrumentalist specialized in the I horn (acute horn). The articulation of the solo instrument encompasses all types (*staccato*, *legato*, *detaché*, *marcato*) in different variants. The rhythm also includes exceptional divisions, the predominant being the triolet with its variants. The tonal dynamics includes the chords of the main steps but also the secondary ones, with some chords reduced with seventh or ninth seventh. Diatonic or chromatic modulations take place in tones close to the basic one, but we also encounter some sudden modulations in distant tones, which give color to the musical discourse.

The orchestration of the work, as in the case of the first concert, is of the classical type with formulas restricted to wind instruments. The dynamic inflections are varied (shades from *pp* to *ff* with multiple crescendos and diminutives), and the various tempos include terms of movement (*Lento*, *Presto*, *Allegro ma non troppo*) but also transition terms (*rall*, *accel*, *tempo primo*) or terms with emotional content (*molto dolce*, *resoluto*). The ornamentation includes a wide range (single and double apogee, group, trill), and as for the timbre, the composer

does not use other special effects, the timbre colors resulting from the combination of some instruments in orchestration. The two horn and orchestra concerts by Franz Strauss are pretentious works, but written with great artistic mastery.

Romantic composers imposed fantasy between musical genres, mainly due to its improvisational character, which developed through a very rich cultivation of the theme with variations. Composers Fr. Liszt, P. I. Tchaikovsky, R. Schumann are joined by Fr. Strauss with his Fantasy for horn and piano in C minor, youth work dedicated to Count Maximilian of Bavaria. **Fantasy** is a reference work in the creation of Franz Strauss. Due to its improvisational character, we found in it delimitations of sections with lied, rondo or scherzo character. For this reason, the paper offers us a wide range of ideas that translate into emotions, feelings and feelings. The free form of fantasy determines an "avalanche" of moods from melancholy, lyricism, dreaming to joy, exaltation, good cheer, gratitude. Franz Strauss composed Nocturna op. 7 in D \flat Major, 4/4, moving Andante quasi Adagio. The work does not pose great difficulties to the soloist, but it requires a good mastery of the instrument. The wide breathing, the sometimes extended scope, the various joints, as well as the elements of rhythm, melody, harmony, ornamentation, agogic or dynamic are problems that the soloist horn player must take into account. Last but not least, the realization of the sound plans must be well thought out and understood.

A good phrasing starts from understanding the ratio accentuated sound - unaccented sound. The metric accent must be accompanied by a small crescendo of the unaccented preceding sound. The final nuance of the crescendo will be the beginning tone of the accentuated sound. This "game" must be performed in the context of the nuance of the moment, following the number and intensity of the metric accents within each measure (for example in measure 4/4 the two accents are different). I think that achieving a balance, from this point of view, leads to a correct phrasing. Obviously, the melodic accents or those imposed by the composer also play an important role.

With Nocturna for horn and piano op. 7, Franz Strauss proves once again the great compositional talent and the power to penetrate the secrets of the instrument. Introduction and theme with variations op. 13, for horn and piano in E flat major, is part of the mature works of Franz Strauss. Like the other works of Franz Strauss, it is conceived in a musical language specific rather to early Romanticism, with a suggestive melody that contains exceptional rhythmic divisions, with a tonal harmonic structure. The piano accompaniment has the role of harmonic support, but also a solo one in interludes, creating together with the solo instrument the musical dramaturgy.

The ambit of the horn includes the limits and \flat , the small octave - and \flat acute (effect $mi \flat 1$), the melodic discourse being varied from the point of view of the joints. The brightly colored dynamics, with shades from pp to ff and dynamic inflections or echo passages (f - p), blend harmoniously with the agogic elements giving color and charm to the musical discourse. The interpretation of the opposite 13 requires thorough study, patience and understanding of the musical text, the difficult passages requiring daily and thorough study.

3. Teaching activity

In 1871 Franz Strauss was appointed professor at the Munich Academy of Music, where he worked until 1896. His last student, Herman Tuckermann, who was recommended to the master by his favorite student Bruno Hoyer, said that the teacher's method was above all in pursuit of sound quality. Franz Strauss always stated: Only by sustaining sound and studying intervals can you acquire a noble tone. He studied with his students both horn concerts and solo works or symphonic works. Franz Strauss left an important source of knowledge and techniques for acquiring skills in the study of the instrument.

The exercises for the natural horn in daily practice (2 volumes) and 17 studies for the chromatic horn on themes from the Beethoven symphonies (op. Posthum), are works of inestimable didactic value. Professor Franz Strauss was concerned with the development of sound amplitude with his students during class. The composers of the time, led by R. Wagner, A. Bruckner, G. Mahler, R. Strauss, used the horn more and more complex in their creations. It is worth mentioning that Franz Strauss never accepted the payment of private lessons, he wanted to share his knowledge and experience with his young collaborators. His human qualities blended happily with his professional qualities. Richard Strauss benefited greatly from his father's advice and extensive teaching experience. True value comes from simplicity and clarity; only what comes from the heart goes to the heart, Franz Strauss confessed to his son when he was 18 years old.

The exercises for the natural horn in the daily study comprise two volumes, the second being consisting of two chapters (A + B). The exercises are aimed especially at instrumentalists who play the natural horn, so the sounds will be emitted based on natural resonance, and the chromatic sounds are realized with the help of the right hand inserted in the flag. To the same extent, the exercises are useful today in the study of the chromatic horn. In the preface of the work Franz Strauss makes a small introduction: The tones [here have the meaning of sounds] that can be made on the natural horn are divided into natural tones (light tones) and the so-called muffled tones. The muffled tones must be performed by stopping the air column more or less. These obstructions of the air column are obtained by using the right hand of the instrumentalist who covers the funnel of the horn. The muffled tones are divided into slightly muffled tones and heavily muffled tones. Therefore, by covering the flag in half (1/2) with the help of the hand, we will obtain a sound with a semitone lower than the natural sound immediately following, and when the flag is clogged by three quarters (3/4), the obtained sound will be with a tone below:

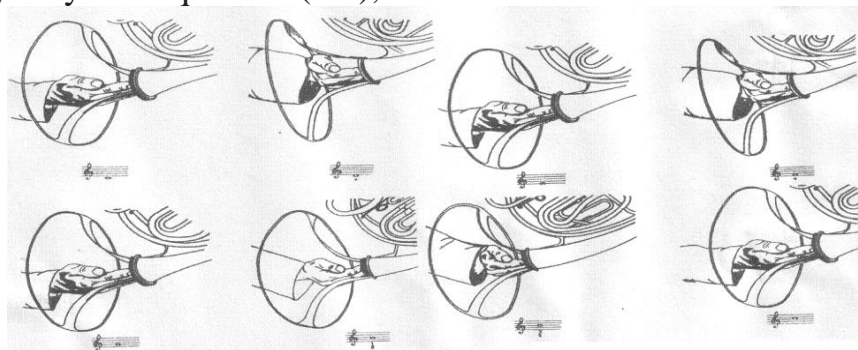


Fig. 2. The position of the right hand in making the muffled sounds in the center octave

This rule applies in general because, as Franz Strauss mentions, there are some sounds that are very difficult to perform, such as (at b, at becar, effect re b, re becar-small octave) or sounds that cannot be performed at all. , such as sounds from mi, low octave (high octave effect) down. In this way, the chromatic range can be achieved throughout the instrument:

Chromatische Tonleiter mit enharmonischer Verwechslung

Ex. 1, Nr. 3 (vol. I), Chromatic range with harmonic exchanges

The exercises are designed from simple to complex, in terms of the ambit of the instrument, the metro-rhythmic difficulties or the ways of articulation.

4. Conclusions

I consider the exercises for the natural horn in the daily study to be very necessary in the study of the instrument, even if today we sing with the chromatic horn. Franz Strauss, through his work, remains an important landmark in the history and evolution of the horn. The European Horn School owes a great deal to him, and his descendants regard him as a horn legend. The young horn players consider him a role model, and his works are part of the universal heritage of the horn and music.

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