

# How the hunting horn became a musical instrument

## The relationship between classical music and hunting music

Since the highest antiquity, to call God or, in war as in hunting, the need to communicate at a distance is essential. Wind instruments with or without a mouthpiece, due to their power, robustness and ease of use, are by far the most used.

### Horn and hunting in the Middle Ages

During the Middle Ages, hunters had at their disposal to communicate only simple and usually short instruments, with various names: horns, cornets, huchets, called oliphant when they were made of ivory. Messages could then only pass in two ways. First of all by alternating short sounds and long sounds, a kind of Morse before the letter. Then, from most of these instruments one could draw two sounds, the slender tone and the coarse (or grave) tone. By alternating these two possibilities, one could find a complexity of signals quite sufficient for the needs of hunting. We have, in particular from this period, two books instructing hunters:

- *"Le Trésor de vénerie"*: poem composed in 1394 by Hardouin, Lord of Fontaines-Guérin.

- A hunting book by Jacques du Fouilloux, the first edition of which dates from 1568, which explains: "how the hunters must sound the trumpet" by using these possibilities by mixing the duration of the two sounds. Du Fouilloux's book was very famous. It has been translated into several languages including English and German. It was reissued in 1635. This means that, at least until the middle of the 17th century, the way of communicating in the hunt remains limited to this possibility.

The use of the horn in these conditions obviously cannot give an impression of music, but perfectly codified calls can build up one or more interesting rhythms quite quickly, adjoined with a particular melody to give it relief. This is what musicians coming from Italy to France have noticed in particular.



### Arrival of baroque instruments

Around this time, at the end of the 16th century and the beginning of the 17th century, technical progress allowed the appearance of metal instruments giving a more stable and pleasant sound. Such is the case for wound horns. The introduction of the hunting horn in its new form, as an orchestral instrument is possible.



## **The hunting horn in Europe**

### ***The horn, the hunt and the opera, Italy and France (17th century)***

The story seems to begin with two Italian operas that incorporate the horn for the first time. Michelangelo Rossi (1602 – 1656), put the hunting horn in a choir of hunters presented at the Barberini Palace in 1633 for his opera, *Erminia sul Giordano*, the text of which was written for Cardinal Rospigliosi, the future Pope Clement IX. Francesco Cavalli (1602 – 1676) wrote for his opera, *Les noces de Thétis et Pelée*, the second piece that has come down to us from a brass band for horns. The opera was presented in Venice for the first time in 1639 and then in Paris in 1654.

Quickly, Italians went to France. Henry II marries Catherine de Medici. Henri IV married Marie de Médicis in December 1600. This one brings in his continuation Giulio Caccini, rather known for an *Ave Maria* which would be only a pastiche of the XXth. But Caccini is a true baroque musician.

In France, at the time of Henri IV, during operas, between the scenes, ballets called "ballet de cours" were regularly introduced, the theme of which often had nothing to do with that of the opera represented. ; including hunting scenes with brass bands. For this, French ballet groups were often hired with Italian musicians throughout the first half of the 17th century. It is thanks to these occasions that Cavalli would have discovered the possibilities of the horn as an orchestral instrument, around 1640. It was then that, invited, a group of Venetians came to Paris in 1654 to conduct Cavalli's opera, *Tétis and Pelee*, complete with a hunting band. (1st scene of the 1st act a short brass band with 5 voices: "call to hunt").

10 years later Cavalli's interest in the horn was renewed by Jean-Baptiste Lully. Born in Florence in 1632, Lully arrived in France in 1646. In 1653 he was appointed intendant of the king's musicians then, in 1661, superintendent of the king's music. Lully directs a brass band in 5 parts, *Air des trois valets de chien and chasseurs avec de hunting horns*, for Molière's pastoral comedy, *La princesse d'Elide*. This music was played on the second day of the great festivities: "the pleasures of the enchanted island" at Versailles in 1664, with choirs and ballets (in front of the king himself). During his 15 years as master of the Royal Academy of Music (1672-1787), Lully composed and produced one new opera per year.

Neither Cavalli's fanfares nor Lully's were real melodies. They were much more rhythmic articulations to accompany the dancers in the hunting scenes. But this participation gave the horn the opportunity to refine its score and evolve.

Thus in 1673, Lully presents *Cadmus and Hermione* on a libretto by Quinault. This work is sometimes considered the first French opera. It contains a triumphal march played by trumpet to greet the return of Cadmus victorious from the war. This tune is a real melody. It is still performed today, not only by the orchestras that accompany the opera, but by many trumpet players in D. Note in this regard that the interpretation of each other is quite different (especially in its tempo).

### **In Central Europe**

During the second half of the 17th century, hunting horns increasingly took part, outside France, in ballets and hunting scenes. The oldest evidence of the introduction of the hunting horn, in the manner of Lully, in Germany is attested in Vienna in 1680, taking up the French and Italian styles. The ballet librettos are composed in Linz by the Schmelzer father and son. The horns are associated with the violins.

In the Holy Roman Empire, known horn players of the first two generations came almost exclusively from Bohemia; a few from Saxony or Lower Austria. They were sons of hunters or foresters who had grown up on the lands of the hunting nobility. They had therefore had the opportunity to use the instrument from a very young age (the two Sporck sons, Hermolaus Smekal and Joseph Matiega; as well as Anton Joseph Hampel).

Count Franz Anton von Sporck incorporated the instrument into his orchestra. It was with the performance of his opera, *Die römische Unruhe oder die edelmütige Octavia*, that in 1705, Reinhard Keisers (1674 – 1739) introduced hunting fanfares into his music. It is possible that the young Bach heard Theodorus Zeddelmayer perform these horn fanfares which would have drawn his attention to the instrument and would have led him later to introduce it into his own music. At During the following years, horn players became “full-fledged” musicians in court orchestras. Let's not exaggerate, however. In Handel's opera, *Ariodante*, two horns participate in the orchestra. In this opera which lasts about 3 hours, they only intervene for exactly six minutes in total.

Let us mention, at this stage, Domenico Scarlatti. Born in Naples in 1685, he ended his life in Spain. It is probably at this time that he must hear hunting bells. His sonata K 159 in C major bears the mark. The beginning and the main theme are very explicit.

### **When the hunting horn becomes a musical instrument (18th century)**

Duke Christian of Saxe-Weissenfels organized a big hunt for his 35th birthday, February 23, 1716. The Duke of Saxe-Weimar, Wilhelm Ernst, a close friend, then had a hunting cantata composed with horns on a text by Salomo Franck (1659-1725), set to music by his choirmaster, Jean-Sébastien Bach. This cantata, BWV 208, *Was mir behagt ist nur die muntre Jagd* (Only a good hunt does me good), was performed at Duke Christian's birthday luncheon. As there was not yet a horn player in Weimar, the piece had to be written for Zeddelmayer and a second anonymous horn player. This cantata in G major is in 6/8 and it is probably no coincidence. Bach was then 28 years old and this was one of his first cantatas. It is not religious but secular. Called hunting cantata, to please the duke, it speaks of Diana. This is said to be the first time that Bach introduced a large ensemble of instruments. And, inevitably, since it is an allegory of hunting, two horns. To tell the truth, their role in the orchestra is not essential, but during the second scene: “*Jagen ist die Lust der Götter*” (hunting is the pleasure of the gods) they appear and are clearly distinct. No question of finding a hunting air still practiced today since these will not appear in France, at best, until 10 years later, but the rhythm is already quite characteristic.

The Elector of Saxony became King of Poland as Augustus III. He had hunted a lot with Count Von Sporck in his youth. The horn was his favorite instrument. He has always been a great patron of horn players. Bach had composed the beginning of his coronation mass in 1733. In 1738, he completed his work. The phrase from the Gloria: “*Quoniam tu solus sanctus*” is a horn solo that has become a significant work in the Baroque repertoire. It is interesting to note that in Bach's scores involving a horn(s), Bach still uses, indiscriminately it seems, the French terms of cor, Italian of *corna di caccia* or the German denomination of Par Horn force.

So, from the 20s of the 18th century, the art of ringing reached its “full perfection”. It allows musicians of that time to use it in music, not only as an accompaniment, but with real solo parts. Bach, Händel and Telemann gave the horn its “letters of nobility” by truly using all its possibilities. From the 1930s, the soners, who often played horn and trumpet indiscriminately, abandoned the trumpet for to remain only on the horn and no longer, as before, trumpet players who switched to the horn as needed (Flachs,) .

This transition to "full and complete" music does not in any way prevent the instrument from continuing to be used to musically illustrate moments of hunting, but it does make it possible to broaden the scope of its use.

Johann Joseph Fux (1660 – 1741) includes in the overture of the ballet of his opera, *Méléager*, a melody taken up by Bach 13 years later for the first phrase of his Brandenburg concerto n°1. The tune seems to have remained a classic of hunting bands in Germanic countries, even if it is generally performed more slowly. This tune came to be the symbol of the life of the nobility with the hunts.

### **In England**

In England, at the end of the 17th century, King William III, continually at war with Louis XIV, sought to imitate the splendours of the court of his favorite enemy and surrounded himself with artists and musicians. Purcell produced in this context an opera, *Dido et Aeneas*, (1689) in which a hunt is imagined as the setting when the witches seek to divert Aeneas from Dido's love. A brief hunting rhythm then appears. In 1717, in England, King George I, likes to let it be known, when he travels on the Thames to go from White Hall to Chelsea, that he is on the boat. It is therefore followed by a second boat which plays music powerful enough to be heard from the banks. Handel composed the famous *Water music* for this occasion. The score includes two horns.

### **In Italy**

Domenico Scarlatti (born in Naples in 1685 and died in Madrid in 1757) is a harpsichordist, prolific baroque composer: more than 550 pieces for this instrument. He is not really known as a hunter or a fan of the horn. He ends his life in Spain. It is probably at this time that he must hear hunting bells. His sonata K 159 (according to the Kirk Patrick catalogue) in C major, bears the trace of this. The beginning and the main theme are very explicit. It is also subtitled: “Caccia”; it is naturally in 3 beats, in 6/8.

### **And in France (first half of the 18th century)**

In France, in 1708, Jean-Baptiste Morin wrote a great cantata entitled *La Chasse du cerf* in which each part (songs and trumpets) evokes a moment of hunting from the Revival to the Death of the stag. This work was often repeated, a sign of its success, at a time when, most often, composers wrote for a specific event. Immediately afterwards, the score was put away. It is interesting to note about the score of this work that in his libretto, Morin indicates in the preamble: “I have marked the places where the Trumpe or Trumpet can play; but as it is rare for these kinds of instruments to be in concert, oboes or violins can also supplement. Which clearly shows that the instrument is still only recently accepted as an “orchestral instrument.” » He then specifies : « I used the most ordinary Trumpet and Fanfare tones of the Chasse du Cerf. A sign that, from this date, already more or less codified pieces of hunting calls can inspire a composer. The horn score is written in the first line of the treble clef.

In 1729 Jean Joseph Mouret (1682-1738) was a recognized composer. Within an abundant body of work, he wrote two symphony suites, including a hunting one, which begins with a brilliant trumpet fanfare. This work has often been taken up today, adapted for trumpets and organ. At the end of Mouret's life, the rising star of music was called Jean-Baptiste Rameau. Very shortly after Mouret's suites, Rameau presents his first opera, *Hyppolyte et Aricie*, in 1733. In Act IV, Diane (the gods and goddesses are then easily represented on stage) encourages hunting in a great moment trumpets and songs. Rameau therefore uses the trunk. But remember that Rameau, using the trumpet, did not always write the notes to play, for example in his opera *Platée*. It is up to the instrumentalist to find the most suitable accompaniment! (Bourgue D, 1993)

We should also mention the German composer Johann Friedrich Fasch (1688 – 1758), not insignificant because he was admired by Bach himself who, it seems, borrowed a few phrases from him. Fasch composed a concerto in D major entitled: La Chasse. The horn is present, the rhythm uncharacteristic and, for 11 seconds, a few notes can make one think of a current brass band, except that it cannot really be located.

### **A new coding**

It is in this context that the trunk begins to be used, not only on the occasion of a hunt, but also during the hunt. So, to replace and complete the calls which, since the Middle Ages consisted, as mentioned above, only of two notes of more or less long duration, it becomes possible to codify these calls again, but using several notes. The beginnings of this codification are poorly known, but it can be said that at the end of the 17th century it already existed. Indeed, in addition to the remark by Morin quoted above, we have a first collection, dated 1705, which gives, transcribed by Danican Philidor, a first list of melodic calls for the hunting horn. There are seven, each transcribed twice: in treble clef first, and in C clef third. This marks that there is already a certain tradition and the beginning of codification. None of them, however, corresponds to a fanfare of circumstance still sounded today (neither the Retreat, nor the Sourcillade, today the View). This shows that this tradition is not yet generally or uniformly widespread and that the repertoire remains restricted.

Then comes Dampierre! So the question arises of the real role of the Marquis Marc-Antoine de Dampierre (1676-1756) in this codification. Tradition reports that he was its first promoter through the composition of the main fanfares of circumstances and animals, still practiced today, probably during the year 20 in 18th.

Its role is not so obvious to specify on the basis of the available period documents. The BNF has only one published collection of pieces of which it is written that he is the author. This one is posthumous and dates from 1768. It is entitled: "New brass bands for two hunting horns or two trumpets and bagpipes, fiddles and oboes by M.D. engraved by Mlle Michelon. These are in no way hunting fanfares, but music composed for various instruments including: "two hunting horns". Additional index of the proximity between hunting music and classical music. The precise attribution to Dampierre appears on the notice of the BNF which owns this document, but not on the title page itself.

On the other hand, in 1734, a book of hunting attributed to Jean Serré de Rieux (the title page of the book does not bear the name of the author), *The gift of the children of Latone: Music and the hunting of the deer*, includes an appendix entitled: "Hunting tones and brass bands with one and two trumpets composed by Mr de Dampierre gentleman of the pleasures of the King to make known to the Veneurs the Deer that we court, its various Movements, the various operations of the Hunt, and the place where the occasion said bands were made. There are twenty-two. The attribution to Dampierre is clearly indicated but it remains indirect. Examination of these brass bands indeed shows a real similarity with current brass bands as approved by the FITF (International Federation of Trompes of France), but also real differences. The Daguét only differs by a single note, while the Forhu bears no resemblance to the current brass band bearing this name, neither in the melody nor in the circumstances in which it should sound. The Bat-l'eau and the Sortie de l'eau are grouped together in a single fanfare: "Pour l'eau", just as the two Hallalis are grouped into one. The different heads are very close to the current corresponding brass bands. In this first collection, authors other than Dampierre are mentioned, including King Louis XV himself for two of them and one is unattributed.

In 1930, a work entitled *Les plus belles fanfares de Chasse*, transcribed and reviewed by M. Boursier de La Roche, appeared. Preceded by a study on conures, by Jean Des Airelles and a historical and bibliographical introduction, by Cdt G. de Marolles. In this historical introduction, the Cdt de Marolles recalls the main historical data of the Marquis. He indicates that his fanfares made him famous, but that during his lifetime they were never published but transmitted by tradition. He would have noted them in a notebook which he gave to M Bouron, secretary of the king, whose wife would have participated in their composition. They were published posthumously

in 1778 only. Its exact name would be, Collection of brass bands for the hunt, with one and two trumpets, composed by the late M. le marquis de Dampierre, Paris, M. Le Clerc. It would include twenty-nine brass bands. De Marolles says that there are only two known copies and that he has seen one. (However, in November 2016, at Drouot, an original edition of this collection was offered for an estimated value of €5000. In 2017 a facsimile copy of this work circulated on E Bay).

In this context, what is certain is that from the 1720s codified ringtones began to spread, which are clearly at the origin of those we know today. They evolve gradually over the century, supplemented or slightly amended.

In 1778, Verrier de la Conterie published a treatise on Norman hunting, with, from page 429, "Instructions and preliminary observations on hunting tones", followed by a collection of brass bands (therefore 45 years later Serré's collection). No reference is made to Dampierre. Unfortunately, on the one hand several fanfares are erased and therefore illegible, and on the other hand not all of them appear (in particular the heads). On the other hand, it is undeniable, for those which are still legible, that there is already an evolution. The passage of the water, which was the subject of a single fanfare, takes place in two stages as today (Bat-l'eau and Sortie de l'eau). There are also two fanfares for retirement (Retirement taken and Retirement missed) against only one in Serré and 3 today (Retirement taken, Retirement missed and Retirement of grace). The Hallali notation (there is always only one) is a little closer to ours, like that of the debuché. In other words, he It is clear that the codification of hunting bands was already very advanced towards the end of the 18th century in the sense of the melodies we know today.

Hunters and musicians

Moreover, we know that during this century, it was not the hunters who sounded the trumpet, but professional and appointed musicians according to the crews. We have an Inventory under the Terror of musical instruments recorded among emigrants and convicts (Bruni A., 1890). They are therefore instruments confiscated during the Revolution from the homes of emigrants. The latter are obviously nobles (high or medium nobility), that is to say the only ones who were authorized to hunt under the Old Regime. We could therefore logically think that among the violins, lutes, spinets and other quintons, we would find a large number of horns. However, out of 367 cataloged instruments, there are only 6 horns, called "hunting horns" (and three manufacturers: Raoux, Kerner and Carlin). This therefore means that the horns belong to the ringers, professional musicians (therefore not noble) and not to the hunters. From then on, we understand even better the proximity between classical music and hunting music.

### **Fanfares of veneries in classical music**

In this context, we understand that music composers who introduce trumpets or horns in their pieces, not only can be inspired by hunting in the themes treated and in certain rhythms, but also, are tempted to introduce melodic passages directly inspired by hunting brass band themes that we can still easily recognize today. Obviously this trend can only appear during the second half of the 18th century since this codification is still too new to be widely used during the first half of the century.

A number of cases can be identified.

John Marsh, an Englishman from the second half of the 18th century (1752 – 1828) composed, among at least 39 symphonies, a symphony called The Hunt. No air taken directly from a fanfare of the occasion, but a style that, at times, makes you think of it. Marsh is better known to musicologists for having written a diary for 50 years which gives a number of indications about the musicians of his time.

Carl Stamitz is a German musician of good quality (1745 – 1801). He is the son of a musician, brother of a musician, but has one major flaw, which is to be a contemporary of Mozart. Inevitably, when you grow in the shade of the big oak tree, you have less light. Maybe that's why he's less well known. He composed a symphony in D major entitled *La Chasse*. In the first movement we already breathe a few phrases that evoke a music that we know well. In the third movement, there is no longer any doubt, it is the reprise of the two *Hallalis*, note for note. The work dates from 1772, that is to say at a time when hunting by force was still practiced in Germany (Stamitz died in Jena in 1801) whereas from the 19th century it disappeared from customs in this country.

François-Joseph Gossec (1734-1829), French composer, sometimes considered to have improved the role of brass instruments in symphony orchestras: "he introduced a more vigorous instrumentation and especially took advantage of the resources offered by brass instruments . says the *Dictionary of History and Geography*, Bouillet, Paris, Ed 1895. In 1792 he composed an *Offrande à la liberté* which includes a famous orchestration of the *Marseillaise*. He, like others, wrote a hunting symphony (1776) in the 3rd movement of which we recognize first of all a well deformed "View" (even a *Forhu*, but I believe that it did not exist at that time), then a "Vocelet", practically note for note.

Joseph Haydn (1732 – 1809) who needs no introduction. In his immense work, we find the symphony n ° 73 in D major, called, *The hunt* (1782). The last movement, presto, revolves around a theme in which one cannot fail to recognize a view, even if it has been slightly adapted by the composer's freedom. This movement is repeated, almost note for note, barely shortened, to compose the overture to his opera, *La fedelta premiata*. The same Haydn composed in 1801, a piece entitled, *the seasons*. Naturally autumn evokes hunting. We clearly distinguish: the *Debuché*, the *Vocelet* and the *Hallalis*.

Symphony No. 31 in D major by Haydn is called *Horn Signal*. We must not be deceived. Even if 4 horns are present in the orchestra, the musical inspiration comes rather from the two-note postilion horn than from hunting calls. WA Mozart will take up this theme without ambiguity of name in his serenade K320 entitled, *Posthorn*. Regarding the use of the *Posthorn*, we can also point out the concerto by the Austrian Johann Beer (1655-1700) which clearly indicates for: "*Jagdhorn, Posthorn, Strings and Basse continuo*". The two horns obviously have a different score.

Etienne Nicolas Méhul (1763 – 1817), is a French composer, who, like Gossec was ardently patriotic. During the French Revolution, he composed the *Song of Departure* (1794) to a text by André Chénier, guillotined shortly after. In his work several operas, including, *La Chasse du Jeune Henri*. Work little appreciated by the general public and which is hardly played today, with the exception of its overture. Eight horns illustrate a hunting scene in which we now easily recognize: the *debuché*, the *sight* and the two *hallalis*, grouped into one as in the version by Verrier de la Conterie. This piece is still performed, nowadays, arranged, by trumpet groups in D. It was transcribed for pianoforte by the author himself.

The Mozarts, father and son, are also into hunting, but whether they are too far removed from French hunts or have an imagination that allows them to rethink brass band tunes themselves, it is difficult to locate directly in their works a direct cover of the airs that we still use today, even if the rhythm is not in doubt. Leopold Mozart produces a hunting symphony in F major. The first movement is a hunting rhythm and, if doubt arises, the gunshots produced by the percussion immediately bring the subject back. Precisely, these shots suggest that for him hunting is more a hunt by shooting than by force. The second movement strays from the subject. The third may leave some doubt.

Mozart son (Wolfgang Amadeus) produces a quartet “The Hunt” in B flat major (K 458): “evoking pen-air hunting horns, redolent of fresh air and optimism. » Written in 6/8, the first movement can evoke a hunting rhythm (repeated in the 4th movement). The rest is purely the composer's inspiration.



### Genders move away

At the beginning of the 19th century, Carl Maria von Weber (1726 – 1826), produced another Freischütz (1821), an opera in which it is about a hunter who can only obtain his bride if he kills a white dove from a single gunshot. This is a romantic drama (albeit with a happy ending) in which death and the devil lurk. Faust is not far away and the horns are very present there, in particular in the opening and during a very famous chorus of hunters. And yet, Weber's Freischütz, which speaks only of hunting, is as far from our vengery in its argument as in its musical style. Not a single musical phrase recalls a current marching band. Admittedly the French horn (still natural) plays an important role in it, but it feels more like the ancestor of Wagner than the descendant of Morin. We can see the beginning of the abandonment in Germany of hunting by force which will quickly disappear in favor of more individual shooting, less displaying and therefore more in line with bourgeois morality which is gradually settling in the country.

Between 1802 and 1804, Beethoven wrote and published Piano Sonata No. 18 in E flat major. It consists of four movements. The last one is marked: “presto con fuoco”. It is written in 6/8 time and its liveliness leads Carl Czerny to speak of it as follows: “the finale demands strength and bravery and has the effect of a piece intended for hunting. I let each listener be the judge.

Around the same time (between 1802 and 1817), the Italian composer and violinist Niccolò Paganini composed 24 Caprices for violin, including No. 9 entitled, the hunt, by the maestro. The rhythm of the first phrase leaves no doubt about its inspiration. It seems to be taken directly from the beginning of Scarlatti's sonata K 159, mentioned above.

In 1830, Felix Mendelssohn published the first collection of “Stories without words”, in which we find, Jägerlied (The hunt), inspired by hunting themes. On the other hand, the “Wilde Jagd, by Franz Liszt, one of the Twelve Studies of Transcendent Execution, published in 1826, comes directly from of the genius of the 15-year-old composer. Despite its dotted rhythm and its dizzying series of fourths imitating “Faustian” horns, it owes its title solely to the tradition of hunting music.



Schubert, in his male choirs, introduces a Jagdlied (hunting song) whose rhythm still leaves little doubt about its inspiration.

### *Technical evolution*

During the second half of the 18th century, the technique of using the natural trumpet as a musical instrument evolved: the practice of blocked sounds was discovered by Hampel in Dresden, interchangeable tones appeared in Paris in 1781. Towards the end of the century, the chromatic scale therefore became available on a natural instrument, even if it required great virtuosity from the musician. It is thanks to these techniques that the Mozart father and son or Beethoven can compose works in which the horn (or the trumpet) has a more elaborate score than in the past, real trumpet concertos following the initiative of Telemann.

At the beginning of the 19th century, in 1815, Stötzel invented the pistons (2 then 3 in 1819). These will take nearly a century to establish themselves. Despite the greater facility they provide for the use of the trumpet, many great composers will continue to place natural horns in their orchestras for their sonic particularity. A Schuman who was known to appreciate the valve horn would have used it more widely, but he was not yet sure of finding enough of it. He therefore wrote the parts for horns 3 and 4 for natural horns.

At this point, it is worth emphasizing the position of Brahms. The latter, like his father, practiced the natural horn himself. He considered it more interesting. In his symphonies, in particular, he wrote for natural horn. Certain notes would certainly have been written differently if they had been intended for a piston horn. Mahler, were also interested in the natural horn. But finally, in 1891, a jury decided between the two techniques by recognizing, by 9 votes against one abstention, the piston horn as the most complete instrument. Since then, the great symphony orchestras have used the piston horn. It was not until the second half of the 20th century that the natural horn (usually tone) reappeared in orchestras oriented towards Baroque music.

### **Decoupling**



This technical evolution gradually implies a decoupling between the two types of music. Classical musicians increasingly using the piston instrument to totally abandon the natural horn at the beginning of the 20th century, hunters must gradually learn to sound on their own without professional musicians. In this new context, the use of hunting bells in classical pieces is much rarer. The natural trunk must find (and finds!) new outlets, while also maintaining itself in the hunt. Classical music can still occasionally draw inspiration from hunting themes.

Among the bravura pieces of the symphonic repertoire let us mention the famous call of the French horn, at the beginning of Richard Strauss' "Till Eulenspiegel" (1894), which does not deny a very "sylvan" color.

Pablo Sarasate (1844 – 1908), a gigantic Spanish violinist, produced a piece entitled: "La Chasse" (op. 44) published in 1902. The horn is absent, but the rhythm of certain passages is indisputable.

We can still mention at the beginning of the 20th century an Italian musician, Ottorino Respighi (1879 – 1936). In love with Rome, he composed three pieces: the Pines of Rome, the Fountains of Rome and the Festivals of Rome. In this last piece (1928), autumn obliges, we easily recognize the Bonsoir, the Honors and the Hallalis. This last example seems a bit isolated.

During the 19th century, the natural horn continued its career in hunting, and in municipal bands, but the French horn (with piston) experienced a wider use which clearly moved away from hunting.

When Siegfried finds himself in the evening, alone, in the forest, facing the dragon, he did not really want to hunt it. This is surely why Wagner composed a magnificent horn call for him, but which no longer has anything to do with venerie. As no one comes, Siegfried, therefore kills the dragon and bathes in its blood to acquire his invincibility. The hunt in classical music is dead for the horn. Fortunately a leaf comes to rest between the shoulders of the hero. It is through this weak point that he will be killed. Will this sheet one day allow hunting and hunting music to come together?

We all hope so.

Michel Rouffet, Eric Breton.

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