

Early Editions of Mozart's Concerto for Bassoon, K. 191

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Little is known about the genesis of Mozart's Concerto for Bassoon, K.V. 191 (183e). Completed in Salzburg, the manuscript of the Concerto was, according to the publisher Johann André, dated June 4, 1774. There are no indications of Mozart's motivation for composing the work, although some have speculated that the amateur bassoonist Franz Thaddäus von Dürnitz, who later discussed commissioning further bassoon concertos, may have been involved in the K.V. 191 Concerto.

Johann André (1775-1842), who took over his father's publishing firm in mid-1799, may have come by the Concerto manuscript in several ways. Mozart's widow, Constanze, sold André approximately three hundred of Mozart's manuscripts in 1800.¹ The bassoonist Dürnitz died in 1803, and his family sold his manuscript collection, which included concertos by several composers, to André as well.² However, Ludwig von Köchel maintained that no manuscripts of bassoon concertos by Mozart were found in Dürnitz's collection.³ Finally, the letters of the Mozart family reveal Leopold's efforts to sell his son's work to publishers as early as the 1770s, so that the manuscript of the Concerto may have been acquired by André considerably earlier than 1800.

Unfortunately, the Concerto manuscript soon vanished. In fact, André noted in his *Kastenverzeichnis* that the manuscript had been stolen.⁴ It has never been located.

Some mystery surrounds the first edition of the concerto. If consulting the *Répertoire International des Sources Musicales* (RISM), *Einzeldrucke vor 1800*, one will find that two early editions and a third reprint based on these two editions by André are mentioned. The first of these has a plate number of 355, and the second has the plate number 2150.⁵ If the earlier plate number is correct, then a first edition of this concerto appeared around 1790, and the second edition was released about 1805.⁶ Copies of the work with the earlier plate number are found in several major collections, among them the Mozarteum's library.⁷ However, Getraut Haberkamp, in his study of Mozart editions, *Die Erstdrucke der Werke von Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart*, points out that the print number 355 did not fall anywhere within the sequence of André's publications at that time, and may have been a misprint, or possibly an attempt on André's part to establish a new numbering system. If Mozart's Bassoon Concerto was indeed his opus 96, as indicated on the title page of the edition, it would more logically have appeared around the time of Op. 95, or 1802.⁸ Yet, even Haberkamp mentions in a tiny parenthetical note that the first violin part to the Concerto is marked as opus 69, rather than 96.⁹ Mozart was notoriously lax about dating his works — how ironic to quibble so today!

The first edition(s) of the Concerto were published by André under the title "Concerto pour le Basson, avec accompagnement de deux violons, alto, basse, deux haut-bois et deux cors . . . oeuvre 96." (A copy of this title page may be seen in volume one of Haberkamp's work.) The appearance of this publication is announced in the music publishing catalogue of the time, *The Handbuch der musikalischen Litterature* (Leipzig, 1817), which lists the work as "Concerto in B, Op. 96, published by André at the price of two florins."¹⁰ Since this *Handbuch* covered all publications issued through 1817, it appears that no other editions of the Concerto had been issued by that time.

RISM lists a third early edition of the Concerto, which was believed to be a contemporary reprint, also published by Chartenton in Paris. A copy of this edition, bearing the questionable "355" plate number, was owned by the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris.¹¹ Haberkamp questions both the origins of this edition and its dating. Clearly, enormous confusion surrounds the early André editions.

An enormous gap exists from the early André editions until the later nineteenth century, when several editions of the Concerto became available. In 1873, C.F. Peters issued the Concerto, arranged by Joseph Werner for the cello.¹² In 1884 an edition was issued in Paris with cadenzas by Jancourt.¹³ Music publication catalogues were issued throughout the nineteenth century by the Hofmeister firm in Leipzig, but there is no mention here of new editions of the Concerto until the 1893 *Handbuch der Musikalischen Literatur*, which lists an edition edited by H. Kling, published by Breitkopf and Härtel between 1886 and 1891.¹⁴

By this time musicology had become a respected academic pursuit, and the works of Mozart were receiving scholarly attention. The great breakthrough in Mozart scholarship came about in the late 1870s and 1880s, with the publication of Mozart's complete works by Breitkopf and Härtel (Leipzig, 1877-87). These volumes quickly became the source for many critical performing editions.

Mozart would have chuckled, or perhaps guffawed, over our scholarly attempts to organize his works. As most eighteenth-century composers, he was not overly zealous about the chronology of his works. Indeed, this trail of Concerto editions reveals not so much about Mozart as about the early nineteenth century, when little emphasis was placed on reviving older music or in producing "correct" editions. We are in today's editions undoubtedly much closer to Mozart's literal compositions, but perhaps the rather spontaneous and uncritical editions of André's time were closer to the spirit of their origins.

End Notes (Early Editions of Mozart's Concerto for Bassoon, K. 191)

- ¹ Otto Erich Deutsch, ed. *Mozart's Catalogue of His Works, 1784-1791* (New York: Herbert Reichner, n.d.), p. 4
- ² Will Jansen, *The Bassoon: Its History, Construction, Makers, and Players* (Buren, The Netherlands: Uitgeverij Frits Knuf, 1978), part V, p. 1638.
- ³ Ludwig Ritter von Köchel, *Chronologisch-thematisches Verzeichnis sämtlicher Tonwerke Wolfgang Amadi Mozart*. (Weisbaden: Breitkopf und Hartel), p. 207.
- ⁴ *Neue Ausgabe Sämtlicher Werke Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart* (Basel: Bärenreiter Kassel, 1981); Franz Giegling, preface to Serie V, Werkgruppe 14, Band 3, p. XI.
- ⁶ *Neue Mozart Ausgabe*, *op. cit.*, p. XI.
- ⁷ RISM provides a complete listing of copies.
- ⁸ Getraut Haberkamp, *Die Erstdrucke der Werke von Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart* (Lützing: Hans Schneider, 1986), pp. 93-95.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 93.
- ¹⁰ *Handbuch der musikalischen Litteratur oder allgemeines systematisch geordnetes Verzeichniss der bis zum Ende des Jahres 1815 gedruckten Musikalien* (Leipzig: A Meysel, 1817), p. 219.
- ¹¹ RISM, *op. cit.* p.
- ¹² *National Union Catalogue, Pre-1956 Imprints* (London: Mansell, 1975), vol. 398. p. 573.
- ¹³ *The Catalogue of Printed Music in the British Library to 1980* (London: K.B.Saur, 1985), vol. 41, p. 33.
- ¹⁴ *Handbuch der Musikalischen Literatur, Zehnter Band, die von Angang 1886 bis Ende 1891 neu erschienenen und neu aufgelegten musikalischen Werke enthaltend* (Leipzig: Friedrich Hofmeister, 1893), p. 516.

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