

HOFFMEISTER'S MAGIC FLUTE · Vol. I

Chamber Music by Franz Anton Hoffmeister (1754-1812)

Boris Bizjak *flute* · Lana Trotovsšek *violin*

PIATTI QUARTET:

Nathaniel Anderson-Frank *violin*, Michael Trainor *violin/viola**

Tetsuumi Nagata *viola*, Jessie Ann Richardson *cello*

Quartet in C minor	[13:22]	8	II Adagio	3:43
for Flute, Violin and Cello, H.5929		9	III Allegretto	4:00
1 I Allegro	6:05	Trio (Sonata) in D major [11:25]		
2 II Andante	3:16	for Flute, Violin and Cello, Op.11 No.3		
3 III Allegro non molto	4:01	10	I Allegro	5:15
Trio (Sonata) in B flat major	[15:25]	11	II Adagio	3:29
for Flute, Violin and Cello, Op.11 No.2		12	III Allegretto	2:41
4 I Allegro	7:00	Flute Quintet in E flat major [17:09]		
5 II Andante	3:43	for Flute, Violin, Two Violas* and Cello, Op.3		
6 III Allegretto-Allegro	4:42	13	I Allegro	7:25
Duetto in G major	[14:00]	14	II Andante	4:45
for Flute and Violin		15	III Allegretto	4:59
7 I Allegro	6:17	Total duration: 71:26		

Recorded live at St Nicholas Church, Thames Ditton on December 2-3, 2019

Producer: Siva Oke

Recording Engineer: Oscar Torres

Front cover: Frederick the Great, *Flute concert at Sanssouci*, 1852.

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Design: Andrew Giles

Booklet Editor: Michael Quinn

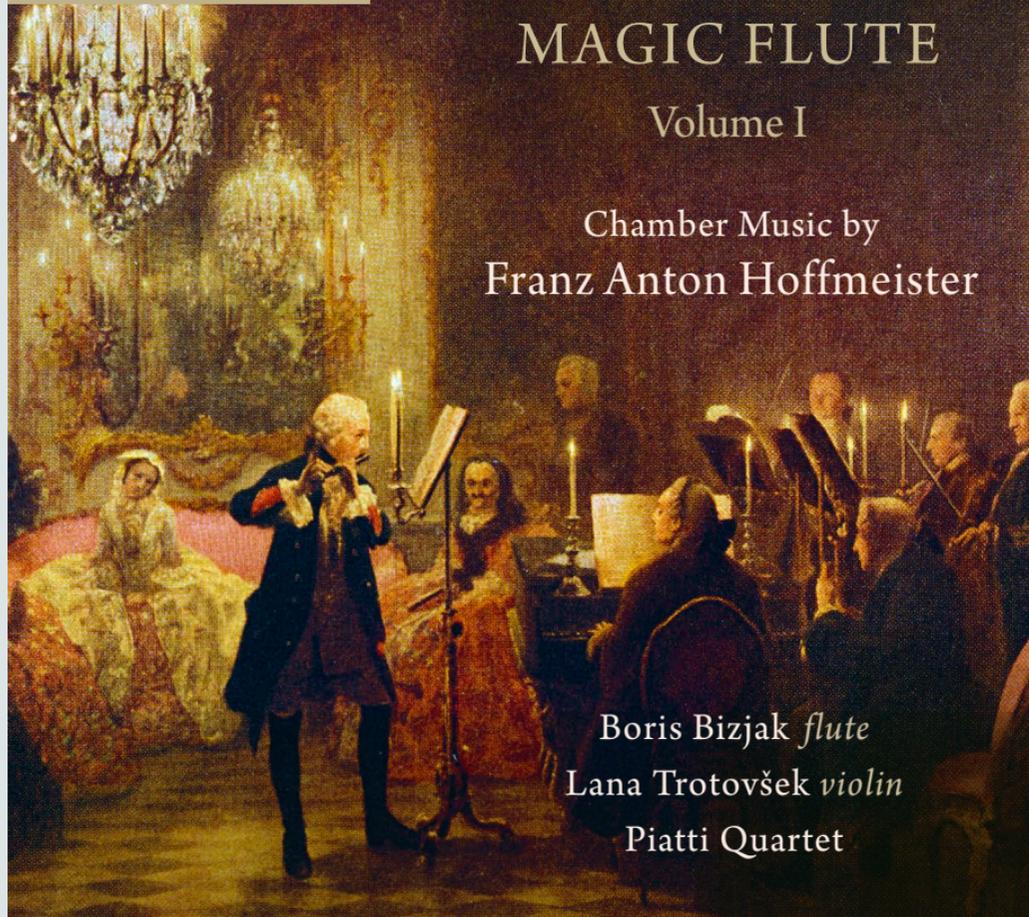
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MAGIC FLUTE

Volume I

Chamber Music by
Franz Anton Hoffmeister

Boris Bizjak *flute*
Lana Trotovsšek *violin*
Piatti Quartet



Born in Rottenburg am Neckar, some 50 kilometres south-west of Stuttgart, in 1754, Franz Anton Hoffmeister moved to Vienna at the age of 14 in 1768 to study law. Music was the centre and increasing focus of his life, however, and his compositions were beginning to be published as early as 1783. On the completion of his law studies, he established his own music publishing business in 1785.

Vienna had become an important centre for music publishing only comparatively recently, breaking the hold that Paris, London and Leipzig had had on the industry for so long. The earliest major publishers in the Austrian capital were Italian engravers, Torricella and the Artaria brothers, the latter enterprise the dominant force of music-publishing in the city until at least 1800.

The trade expanded early in the 19th century, partly thanks to the enthusiasm for amateur music-making. Much of the Viennese publishing output was for chamber music (as opposed to the songs which were the speciality of Paris and London), and a huge advantage for the industry in the city was the fact that truly major composers – Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert – were actively producing there; and they did honeydrop their works to the most attractive outlets among all the publishing houses.

Possibly the most spectacular example of this home advantage was the coup brought off by the publisher Anton Diabelli when he gave a simple waltz theme to around 50 composers and commissioned each of them to send back

a variation on it for piano. Not only was he able to publish that compendium, he also had the bonus of publishing the no fewer than 33 variations sent to him by Beethoven. These Op.120 *Diabelli Variations* would become one of the most monumental works in the entire canon of music for the piano.

A charming characteristic of the Viennese publishing style was the old-fashioned, slightly decrepit appearance of the pages. Perhaps because of the busy turnover there was no time to clean the plates properly before each re-use, consequently a patina built up in the scores.

This was the business world into which Hoffmeister entered, opening his own shop, later entering into partnership with other publishers, including one with Ambrosius Kühnel, far away in Leipzig, where there was competition with the mighty firm of Breitkopf und Härtel, which had been founded as early as 1719.

The composers listed in Hoffmeister's catalogues included Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven (who once obsequiously signed off an apologetic letter for tardiness to Hoffmeister as "your brother, Beethoven"). His chief publishing interest was chamber music, with its eager flock of amateur players, and among the many commissions he made were three Piano Quartets by Mozart.

When the publication of the first of these in 1785, the G minor K478 (Mozart's earliest essay in the piano quartet form), resulted in financial disappointment Hoffmeister released Mozart from the remainder of his contract, although Mozart did go on to compose a second, in E-flat (K493). As a fellow Freemason,

later in the decade Hoffmeister responded to a distressing begging letter from Mozart, making him a substantial loan.

But Hoffmeister was getting into financial trouble himself, the bewildering amount of music he was composing distracting him from his publishing. He withdrew from business totally in 1806, dying in 1812.

The tally of Hoffmeister's compositions is comparable, in sheer volume, to Don Giovanni's substantial catalogue of conquests: many operas, 66 symphonies, around 60 concertos, dances, a huge amount of chamber music and arrangements of works by other composers, with his works heard all over Europe.

On this disc we hear first recorded performances of several of the many chamber works he composed featuring the flute, a favoured instrument of the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

Despite the spotlight on the wind instrument, these works are genuine chamber music with much interplay between the performers. It is striking how many of the movements here begin with an anacrusis (the upbeat preceding a strong beat). What is striking as well is this apparently part-time composer's confident manipulation of keys. On this recording Boris Bizjak is playing a hand-built, open-keyed Yamaha flute made from grenadilla (African blackwood), aged between five to seven years, long also the material of choice for clarinet makers; the keys are silver. The instrument creates a warm,

organic sound closer to that of a classical period instrument than metal flutes, which first came into existence in 1877. Lana Trotovšek plays a 1750 Pietro Antonio dalla Costa violin, with a particularly forward, eloquent tone.

Combining *Sturm und Drang* (Storm and Stress) with *Aufklärung* (Enlightenment), C minor was a key which brought so much profound drama out of classical composers – Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven in particular – and the **Quartet in C minor for Flute, Violin, Viola and Cello** (H.5959) offers evidence of how it inspired Hoffmeister.

This quartet is dramatic, taut, urgent, and the notes bound between the registers from every instrument. In the opening *Allegro* the interplay between flute and strings is vibrant, interrupted only by an arresting flute cadenza, and the ending is engagingly subtle.

Unusually, the ensuing *Andante* is cast in the tonic major key, C major, instead of the conventional A-flat or F major. This is another of Hoffmeister's serenade-like movements, but the strings contribute plenty of suspense beneath the flute's lyrical vocalising.

The *Allegro non molto* finale's variations pulse with syncopations (again very much *à la* Mozart) and ends with a charming coda.

The *Allegro* first movement of the **Trio in B-flat major** (though both of the Trios heard on this recording were described as 'Sonatas' in the printed parts) **for Flute, Violin and Cello**, Op.11 No.2, opens with the flute's bubbling

statement of the tonic key, and immediately the cello adds its own bubbling to the first of the flute's many leaps across the ranges. An early succession of pause-marks inspires embellishments from the flautist, and soon there are some truly spectacular jumps across that instrument's registers. The whole movement is a blend of busy rhythmic activity interrupted by ornamented pauses, the energy reinforced by *sforzando* accents and sudden dynamic contrasts.

An operatic atmosphere pervades the *Andante* middle movement with all three instruments combining in an almost vocal interplay, and with a cadenza from the flute interrupting the action midway through. The influences here on Hoffmeister seem to go further back than Mozart, and there are reminders of the *Orpheus and Eurydice* of his great predecessor in the composition of operas, Christoph Willibald Gluck.

Hoffmeister cannot resist exploiting the range of the flute, and even during the opening four-bar phrase of the concluding *Allegretto* he cascades the instrument down two octaves. The variations continue with prominence for the cello, and then effervescent violin triplets. The tempo changes into 'hunting' mode for a spectacular coda.

The **Duetto in G major for Flute and Violin** is a genuine partnership of spectacular display between the two instruments, with plenty of opportunity for flute ornamentation and cadenzas, but also demanding multiple-, even quadruple-stopping from the violin.

In the opening *Allegro* there is delicious interplay between the leaping flute and busy violin, and a general sense of exuberance, lavishly decorated with ornamentation and cadenzas, the one at the end of the movement improvised by Bizjak and Trotošek themselves.

The *Adagio* is a heady serenade, languorously losing its sense of time-signature, and ending with a double-stopped violin coda. Echoing the B-flat major Trio, another *Allegretto* 'hunting' finale follows, the flute agile and flourishing with cadenzas.

The *Allegro* opening movement of the **Trio in D major** (also for Flute, Violin and Cello; Op.11 No.3) seems to be exhilaratingly bucolic, perhaps *à la* Vivaldi. The strings are exuberant, the flute exults in its leaps between the ranges, and there is throughout a contredanse feel with a strong rhythmic impulse and drone basses from the cello. We also get a punning hint of Papageno, the Buttons figure from Mozart's pantomime for grown-ups, *The Magic Flute*.

As in many of the works on this release, Hoffmeister often uses the flute as an inverted pedal, holding a note aloft while the string players are busy in a lower register.

The *Adagio* central movement is unusually deeply felt (the tempo indication implying as much), and has resonances of the slow movement of Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante for Violin and Viola, K364. There is an almost vocal expressiveness, resulting in a recitativo passage to end the movement. Flute leaps and violin triplets decorate the air-clearing *Allegretto* rondo finale.

Even before the early Op.3 **Quintet in E-flat major for Flute, Violin, Two Violas and Cello** begins one again thinks of Mozart, not only because E-flat was one of that composer's favourite keys, but also because of the use of two violas, a feature of some of his chamber works (and of some orchestral movements requiring a divided viola section). Hoffmeister in fact composed two concertos for viola, the then Cinderella of an instrument; unfortunately, he failed to publish them.

There is indeed a Mozartian atmosphere as the *Allegretto* begins, with chromatic enhancement of the melody line in the flute and a busy, ticking accompaniment from the strings. A sudden downward flourish from the flute at the end of the opening statement announces what is to be a characteristic of Hoffmeister's writing for the instrument, great leaps between the registers even within single beats.

The second subject is introduced by the first viola, subsequently taken up by the violin, the flute then returning with a skittish commentary on proceedings.

Hoffmeister brings a variety of textures to the development section, manipulating the tension until an improvised flute cadenza prepares the way for the recapitulation. From here until the end of the movement, the flute's athletic leap-frogging is even more spectacular than before.

If Mozart had written the ensuing *Poco Adagio* we would be describing it as a Salzburg Serenade, so sweetly perfumed is its atmosphere, and midway

through there comes an episode which would not be out of place in the slow movement of any Mozart concerto.

The *Allegretto* finale is a sequence of variations on a minuet-like theme, with the first variation entrusted to the flute's unconventional string quartet complement, the second giving prominence to the cello while the flute dreams in more rarefied realms two octaves higher. Then comes virtuosity from the flute before a Haydnesque reflection from the strings alone. The flute returns to join its colleagues for an ending of great exuberance.

All the works on this disc reveal how accomplished a composer was Hoffmeister, and how shrewdly as a publisher he catered for his customers, keenly aware of their multifarious tastes. Perhaps in the heat of composition, however, he overlooked the commercial need to accommodate the technical limitations of his largely amateur clientele. Hoffmeister the composer was neglecting the pragmatism necessary for a music publisher; his works fell between two stools, and subsequently into neglect. It is only now that professional musicians are exploring and discovering the manifold rewards of his vivacious and well-crafted music.

Christopher Morley © 2020



Photograph: Marco Borggreve

“Boris Bizjak’s performance was a triumph. His technique completely transcended the barriers that the instrument puts in the way of a performer”

Dnevnik (Slovenian newspaper)

London-based Slovenian flautist **Boris Bizjak** graduated from the Academy of Music in Ljubljana and the Ecole Normale de Musique de Paris ‘Alfred Cortot’, where he obtained the Diplôme Supérieur de Concertiste guided by renowned French flautist Pierre-Yves Artaud.

Boris is a winner of international and national flute competitions. His prizes include the First Prize of the International Flute Competition in Picardie (France) and two First Prizes from the Slovenian National Flute Competition.

He has performed chamber music with Natalie Clein, Yuri Zhislin, Natalia Lomeiko, Fleur Barron, Gareth Lubbe, Lana Trotovšek, Janis Kelly, Dmitry Sitkovetsky, Guy Johnston and Simon Lane.

Boris has appeared as a soloist with the Chamber Orchestra of Slovenian Philharmonic under Dimitry Sitkovetsky, City of London Chamber Orchestra, London Euphonia Orchestra, Symphony Orchestra of the National Theatre Maribor under Milivoj Šurbek, Solisti Divini and the London Brandenburg Soloists. He appears regularly at Ljubljana Festival, Purbeck Festival and Emilia Romagna Festival.

His first CD release with flutist Marko Zupan and pianist Yoko Misumi, *Music for two Flutes and Piano*, features a world premiere recording of Duet in C minor by Johannes Frederik Fröhlich and a new arrangement for two flutes of W.A. Mozart’s Sonata for Two Pianos in D major, K.448/375a. In 2016, he released a CD of sonatas by Martinů and Poulenc with pianist Maria Canyigueral.



Photograph: Marco Borggreve

Lana Trotovšek has appeared with some of the world's finest orchestras since making her debut with the Mariinsky Theatre Orchestra/Valery Gergiev performing Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No.1 in 2012.

In 2014, she toured with the Moscow Soloists/Yuri Bashmet and in 2016 performed with the London Symphony Orchestra/Gianandrea Noseda. Her recent schedule included Deirdre Gribbin's *Venus Blazing* Violin Concerto for BBC Radio 3's *New Music Show* (Ulster Orchestra), Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto (Royal

Philharmonic Orchestra/Raphael Payare), Mendelssohn's E minor Violin Concerto (RTS Symphony Orchestra, Belgrade) in Shanghai's Oriental Arts Centre and a Wigmore Hall recital which *The Strad* described as "remarkable".

In recent years she has collaborated with Tan Dun and the Orchestra Teatro Verdi and the Shanghai and Slovenian Philharmonics, as well as the Sarajevo Philharmonic Orchestra/Uroš Lajovic, the RTV Slovenia/George Pehlivanian, Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra and the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, where *The Philadelphia Inquirer* declared her "an emerging voice to watch".

In 2016-18, she performed double violin concertos with Sergej Krylov and the Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra on a number of occasions including the Al Bustan Festival, Lebanon. In 2017, she toured with John Malkovich and I Solisti Aquilani, performing Bach's A minor Violin Concerto at festivals in Emilia-Romagna, Ljubljana and Mittelfest. She is marking Beethoven's 250th anniversary in 2020 with performances of the complete Sonatas for Violin and Piano with Maria Canyigueral in Belgium, Slovenia, Spain and the UK.

She has appeared in festivals at Rheingau, Aix en Provence, Aldeburgh, Santander, Dubrovnik, Bad Kissingen, St Magnus (Orkney) and Shanghai.

Lana Trotovšek lives in London and is a Professor at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance. She maintains close ties to her native Slovenia, performing there frequently and is a visiting Professor at Ljubljana's Academy of Music.

She plays a 1750 Pietro Antonio dalla Costa violin.

www.Lanaviolin.com

 @LanaTrotovsek



Photograph: Viktor Erik Emmanuel

The Piatti Quartet are one of the most distinguished quartets of their generation. Prizewinners at the 2015 Wigmore Hall International String Quartet Competition, they have performed in all the major venues and festivals around the UK, and

given concerts throughout the world, with national broadcasts on BBC Radio, ABC (Australia), RTÉ (Ireland) and France Musique (France).

The Piattis are renowned for their diverse programming and for passionate interpretations across the spectrum of quartet writing. World premieres are regularly performed alongside old masterpieces and the Piattis are particularly known for expanding the quartet genre through their collaborations with leading British composers, including Mark-Anthony Turnage, Emily Howard, Joseph Phibbs and Gavin Higgins.

Recently the Piattis continued their connection to Mark-Anthony Turnage with the world premiere of his Fourth String Quartet, *Winter's Edge*, at the Klarafestival, Brussels. Co-commissioned by the Quartet, Wigmore Hall and Flagey ASBL, they gave the UK premiere at Wigmore Hall.

The Quartet's other lauded recordings have been released on the Linn Records, NMC and Champs Hill labels. Recent seasons have included debuts in Rotterdam, Istanbul and Barcelona, and at the Aldeburgh Festival. At the 2015 Wigmore Hall International String Quartet Competition, the Piatti Quartet won Second Prize as well as the St Lawrence SQ prize and the Sidney Griller Award for the best performance of Mark-Anthony Turnage's *Contusion*.

The Piatti Quartet takes its name from the great 19th-century cellist Alfredo Piatti, who was a leading professor and exponent of chamber music at the Royal Academy of Music.

www.piattiquartet.com

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