

NAXOS

**Paul
WRANITZKY**
(1756–1808)

Orchestral Works • 1

Overtures

Symphony in C major

Symphony in B flat major

**Czech Chamber
Philharmonic
Orchestra
Pardubice**
Marek Štilec



Paul Wranitzky (1756–1808)

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Paul Wranitzky (Pavel Vranický) was born in the southern Moravian village of Neureisch (today Nová Říše, Czech Republic) where he received his first musical training at the local Premonstratensian monastery. After studies in Jihlava and Olomouc, he moved to Vienna in 1776 to study theology at the university, where he also became director of music at the theological seminary.

In 1783 he became music director to Count Johann Baptist Esterházy of Galantha, an amateur oboist and distant relative to Haydn's employer. Upon the count's recommendation, Wranitzky joined the Viennese Masonic Lodge Zur gekrönten Hoffnung, for which he composed songs as well as symphonies. The composer Joseph Martin Kraus (1756–1792) was a visiting member at the lodge in 1783. Kraus, an already established composer, recognised Wranitzky's budding compositional talent and provided encouragement and possibly some lessons. Several early publications also mention Wranitzky as a student of Haydn.

Wranitzky and Mozart became masonic brothers when three lodges merged in 1785. A concert given at the lodge on 15 December 1785 included two symphonies by Wranitzky, expressly written for the lodge, as well as a cantata, a piano concerto and improvisations by Mozart.

In 1785, Wranitzky became orchestra director at the Kärntnertheater and two years later also at the Burgtheater. From the early 1790s until his death he would hold the position of first orchestra director for both court theatres.

Wranitzky's first stage work, *Oberon, König der Elfen*, was premiered by Schikaneder's troupe at the Theater auf der Wieden in 1789. Its success prompted Schikaneder to launch a series of fairy tale operas, with Mozart's *The Magic Flute* from 1791 being the most well known today.

As secretary of the Tonkünstler-Societät from 1794 to 1807, Wranitzky revitalised the society, resolving a dispute regarding Haydn's membership application and welcoming the celebrated master into the society with a glowing speech. Haydn reciprocated by insisting that Wranitzky

lead the orchestra in the society's profitable performances of *The Creation*. Wranitzky's high regard as an orchestra leader is further attested by Beethoven requesting Wranitzky to premiere his *First Symphony* in 1800.

The imperial court favoured Wranitzky with commissions. He became a favourite composer of the Empress Marie Therese (1772–1807), for whose private concerts he served as concertmaster and provided exclusive compositions.

After his sudden death in 1808 his musical legacy was quickly overshadowed by his colleagues and friends Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven. Only in recent years has his music again begun to garner the attention it clearly deserves.

Compared to his exact contemporaries Mozart and Kraus, Wranitzky began his serious compositional activities late in life. While a sizeable body of canons and part songs for male voices were probably produced during his student years, the first datable instrumental compositions are from the early 1780s when he was already in his mid-twenties. However, he quickly made up for lost time and became a very productive composer, notwithstanding his busy rehearsal and performance schedule at the theatres.

While Wranitzky composed in most genres, symphonies seem to have held a special position in his creative interest as he produced them continuously during his career. Today 45 symphonies survive, making him one of the most prolific composers of his day in the genre. During the second half of the 1790s, Wranitzky was the most important symphonist in Vienna. It is therefore not surprising that many features of Wranitzky's style are echoed in the early symphonies of Beethoven.

Die Poststation (1794)

The two-act opera *Die Poststation, oder Die unerwartete Zusammenkunft* was premiered on 17 June 1794 in Frankfurt am Main. The plot takes place at the inn of a mail coach station where several couples of love-struck

travellers are staying overnight. Complications ensue when pursuing family members catch up and a thought-to-be-dead husband unexpectedly returns.

The *Overture* opens with a brief *Poco adagio* introduction which leads into a sonata-form *Presto assai*. The opening statement alternates *forte* orchestral chords with a *piano* rising five-note scale. This motif, together with its descending counterpart, becomes the basis for the secondary theme as well as much of the development section.

Symphony in C major, Op. 19 'Grosse Sinfonie bei Gelegenheit der Erhebung Franzens zum Deutschen Kaiser' (Coronation) (1792)

Emperor Leopold II died suddenly in 1792 after a reign of just 17 months. When the 24-year old Franz II ascended the throne, Wranitzky provided a symphony to celebrate the event. As befits the occasion, the *Grosse Sinfonie bei Gelegenheit der Erhebung Franzens zum Deutschen Kaiser, Op. 19* (*Grand Symphony on the Occasion of the Elevation of Franz to German Emperor*) is grand and celebratory, making ample use of the trumpets and timpani.

A regal *Andante maestoso* introduction leads into an *Allegro vivace* where a sweeping and cheerful theme in the strings soon bursts into festive figurations played by the full orchestra. The celebration hesitates slightly as the development section modulates through minor tonalities before building anticipation for the carefree return of the recapitulation.

In the slow movement, a lyrical theme given by the strings and varied by the woodwinds creates contrast against a stately and darker middle section for the full orchestra. The third movement reverses the order of contrast as the dignified minuet bookends an unpretentious trio scored for solo oboe and strings.

The joy and excitement of the first movement returns with a spacious sonata-form finale. A simple triadic motif becomes the main building block, as it lends itself to thematic interactions between the instruments. The symphony exuberantly concludes amid fanfares, heralding the successful rule of the new emperor.

Symphony in B flat major, Op. 33, No. 1 (pub. 1798)

The set of *Drei grosse Sinfonien, Op. 33* was published in 1798 with a dedication to Baron Peter von Braun, manager of the Viennese court theatres. They bear the hallmarks of Wranitzky's mature symphonic style. The expanded orchestration is masterful with highly independent wind writing, often treating the winds as a *harmonie* ('wind band') group.

Unusual for Wranitzky's late symphonies, the first movement of the *Symphony in B flat major, Op. 33, No. 1* starts without a slow introduction. After a unison opening statement, the *Allegro molto* makes great use of three distinct rhythmic patterns: dotted rhythms, syncopations and triplet figures. Combination and interchange of these rhythms manage to create both cohesion and variety, as well as a formidable momentum throughout the movement.

The pastoral second movement is built as a dialogue between strings and woodwinds. To great effect, muted horns provide a distanced echo to the wind statements. The rural mood continues in the third movement's charming *ländler* trio.

A perky Haydnesque tune opens the rondo *Finale*. The chromatically ascending four-note motif forms the basis of much of the development of the dramatic contrasting sections before being finally restated in the jubilant coda.

Das Fest der Lazzaroni (premiered 1794)

The two-act opera *Das Fest der Lazzaroni* premiered on 4 February 1794 at the Leopoldstädter Theater in Vienna. The plot takes place among the Lazzaroni, the poorest class in Naples, Italy. The son and daughter of the Lazzarone Grisaldo are in love with the daughter and son of the rich mariner Albamonte who opposes the disadvantageous match.

The overture depicts a great storm in the bay of Naples where a ship founders in the raging waves. Wranitzky uses piccolos to depict the howling wind and adds a *timpanone* (a large type of kettle drum) to provide

menacing thunder rolls. The swelling waves are depicted with running scales. Dissonances, tremolos and sudden sforzandos add to the drama. A lyrical melody in the clarinet lends a shimmer of hope but is soon overtaken by the storm. When this theme reappears in the minor mode, it is evident that all hope is lost for the ship, and the overture concludes with a brief coda.

A young nobleman, Cassandri, is rescued from the shipwreck, and soon takes an interest in Albamonte's daughter Rosaura. He hires a band of musicians to

serenade her, a performance which is depicted in the second act *Serenate*. The number is made up of three contrasting sections, fast–slow–fast, creating the impression of miniature movements. The first section features a solo violin, while the following two showcase the wind instruments. After a false ending and a quote from the folk song '*S'isch no nit lang daß's g'regnet hat*, the musicians leave quietly into the night.

Daniel Bernhardtsson

Czech Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra Pardubice



Photo: Frantisek Renza

The Czech Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra Pardubice is valued for its stylistic interpretations and the extraordinary quality of its orchestral sound, and it is rightly ranked amongst the world's leading representatives of Czech musical culture. It often performs at the most prestigious festivals in the Czech Republic and venues throughout Europe such as the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, the Grosses Festspielhaus, Salzburg, the Herkulesaal and the Gasteig, Munich, the Musikverein, Vienna, the Brucknerhaus, Linz, and the Meistersingerhalle, Nuremberg among many others. Outside Europe the orchestra has performed in Japan and toured extensively

around America. The first principal conductor, Libor Pešek, quickly raised the orchestra to a high standard, and subsequent principal conductors have included Marco Armiliato and Mariss Jansons. The orchestra has also welcomed numerous world-renowned soloists such as Isabelle van Keulen, Vladimir Spivakov, Ludwig Güttler, Radek Baborák, Gábor Boldoczki and Sergei Nakariakov. Aside from concerts, the orchestra regularly engages in operatic and theatre projects and has recorded dozens of successful albums on record labels including Naxos, ArcoDiva, Supraphon, Classico, Monitor-EMI and Amabile.

www.kfpar.cz

Marek Štílec



Photo: Daria Kalinowska

Marek Štílec began his musical studies on the violin at the Prague Conservatory and studied conducting with Leoš Svárovský at the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague. Štílec is an alumnus of the International Järvi Academy and Jac van Steen's Emerging Conductors Series, and has participated in the masterclasses of Michael Tilson Thomas and Jorma Panula, among others. He conducts a wide range of leading orchestras, including the New World Symphony, the Ulster Orchestra, Das Kurpfälzische Kammerorchester Mannheim, the Wiener Concertverein Orchester, the Orchestra of the Swan, the London Classical Soloists, the Berlin Camerata, the Kammerphilharmonie Graz and Sinfonietta Bratislava, as well as the top orchestras in the Czech Republic.

www.arcodiva.cz/en/agency/instrumental-soloists/marek-stilec



Paul Wranitzky, after Bossler

Czech-born Paul Wranitzky, a contemporary of Mozart, was the most important symphonist in Vienna at the turn of the 18th century. To mark the ascension to the throne of Franz II in 1792, Wranitzky wrote the grand *Symphony in C major*, a work of regal quality and festive exuberance. Wranitzky's mature symphonic style is on display in the *Symphony in B flat major*, with its expanded orchestral forces, contrasting textures and broad musical invention. Overtures from two operas offer a sampling of Wranitzky's dramatic writing for the stage.



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1 Die Poststation – Overture (1794) Poco adagio – Presto assai	4:51	Symphony in B flat major, Op. 33, No. 1 (pub. 1798)	26:04
Symphony in C major, Op. 19 ‘Grosse Sinfonie bei Gelegenheit der Erhebung Franzens zum Deutschen Kaiser’ (Coronation) (1792)	26:37	6 I. Allegro molto 7 II. Adagio 8 III. Menuetto: Allegretto 9 IV. Finale: Allegro vivace	8:03 5:50 6:11 5:59
2 I. Andante maestoso – Allegro vivace	10:37	10 Das Fest der Lazzaroni – Overture (1794) Adagio – Allegro non troppo	5:35
3 II. Andante con moto	5:59	Das Fest der Lazzaroni – Serenate (1794)	5:28
4 III. Menuetto: Allegretto	3:48	11 Allegro maestoso –	2:33
5 IV. Finale: Presto	6:09	12 Andantino –	0:48
		13 Allegro	2:07

WORLD PREMIERE RECORDINGS

Czech Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra Pardubice
Marek Štilec

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