



# ALEC FRANK-GEMMILL

## *BEFORE MOZART*

**Notable concertos for horn in the time before Wolfgang Amadeus, including neglected Haydn and a Neruda rarity of extreme virtuosity**

BIS 2315 SACD Release date: 27 April 2018



Following his critically acclaimed debut CD on BIS last year (*A Noble and Melancholy Instrument* - shortlisted for a 2018 BBC Music Magazine Award), Alec Frank-Gemmill takes another interesting journey of discovery into early horn repertoire. Imagination, style and virtuosity are his companions, along with the Swedish Chamber Orchestra and conductor Nicholas McGegan.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's works for horn and orchestra are the most outstanding in the repertoire and, such is their popularity, the sound of the horn and Mozart are virtually synonymous. Furthermore, although they were written for the early valveless horn, they still define the sound of today's modern instrument. With this album Frank-Gemmill aims to broaden that definition with early 18<sup>th</sup> century concertos written for solo horn that present a different perspective on the instrument.

As well as concertos by **Christoph Förster**, **Telemann**, **Leopold Mozart** and **Haydn** (the neglected Horn Concerto No 1 in D major), the CD recital includes a work by Bohemian composer **Johann Baptist Georg Neruda**. Although this piece was actually intended for the early horn, its high register and the extreme virtuosity required to play it have put it out of reach for many horn players and it is consequently more often performed by trumpet players. The concerto has only been recorded once before in its true state – many years ago by the celebrated musician and teacher, Ifor James.

Frank-Gemmill comments: "From the outset, my aim with this disc was to show that there are great concertos for horn written prior to those of W.A. Mozart – in a time when the horn was quite a different animal and also a serious solo instrument. There are all sorts of interesting colours and characters in this music which have nothing to do with the unremittingly jolly horn music of Wolfgang Amadeus in his concertos."

Like his BIS debut CD, this recording was also realized with the support of the Borletti-Buitoni Trust which made Alec a Fellowship winner in 2014.

**RELEASE DATE: 30 March 2018 BIS 2315 SACD**

Further press information: **Debra Boraston** for Borletti-Buitoni Trust  
T. +44 (0) 1424 883307 M. +44 (0) 7989 434388  
E. [debra@henrymoorestudio.co.uk](mailto:debra@henrymoorestudio.co.uk)



Review CDs available from **Philippa Chamberlayne**, Select Music  
T. +44 1737 645 600 E. [pchamberlayne@selectmusic.co.uk](mailto:pchamberlayne@selectmusic.co.uk)

## NOTES TO EDITORS

### CD Repertoire

<b>Christoph Förster</b> (1693-1745)	Horn Concerto [No 1] in E flat major
<b>Georg Philipp Telemann</b> (1681-1767)	Horn Concerto in D major, TWV 51:D8
<b>Johann Baptist Georg Neruda</b> (c1708-c1780)	Horn Concerto No.1 in E flat major
<b>Leopold Mozart</b> (1719-1787)	Sinfonia da Camera (Sinfonie in D major, VII:D5)
<b>Joseph Haydn</b> (1732-1809)	Horn Concerto No.1 in D major, Hob. VIId:

### **Alec Frank-Gemmill**

*"a phenomenon with a tone of golden purity, wraparound warmth and ecstatic afterglow"* Financial Times

*"a player of rare composure and subtlety"* The Guardian

- Recipient of a Borletti-Buitoni Fellowship 2014 and currently a member of the BBC New Generation Artists scheme.
- Professor of Horn at London's Guildhall School of Music and Drama.
- Frequently plays guest principal horn with Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra and Chamber Orchestra of Europe.
- Chamber music collaborators include pianist Alasdair Beatson and violinists Alexander Janiczek, Philippe Graffin and Pekka Kuusisto, as well as period instrument group Ensemble Marsyas.
- Has appeared as soloist with BBC Symphony Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, BBC Philharmonic, Konzerthausorchester Berlin, Düsseldorfer Symphoniker, Sinfonietta Köln and Scottish Chamber Orchestra, of which he is Principal Horn.
- Soloist in numerous festivals including East Neuk, Spitalfields, Ryedale, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and St. Magnus. A regular at Open Chamber Music at Prussia Cove.
- Began playing horn aged 10 (tenor horn at 6) and period instruments at 19. Studied in Cambridge, London and Berlin. His teachers have included Hugh Seenan, Radovan Vlatković and Marie-Luise Neunecker.
- Repertoire extends from Baroque to contemporary.

**INSIGHT FILMS:** Alec's perception and wisdom is demonstrated in a series of short films introducing a range of period horns. His personal enthusiasm, humour and natural eloquence give rise to compelling stories about the instruments, each one a character in itself. He charts the progression from the simplicity of the natural horn to the convoluted array of *pumpen*, piston and rotary valves of the later models, by way of an assortment of removable and extendable crooks. He also relishes the complexities and trickeries of breathing, fingering and handstopping techniques required to master them and bring out the full palette of notes, intonation and expression.

[http://www.bbtrust.com/2014/fellowships/alec\\_frank-gemmill\\_1.html?view=video](http://www.bbtrust.com/2014/fellowships/alec_frank-gemmill_1.html?view=video)

Photograph by Jen Owens