



LYR 6020

## **The Soni Ventorum Wind Quintet – The Lyrichord Years Vol. 2**

**Anton Reicha**

**Quintet, Op. 100 No. 4 in E minor**

**Franz Danzi**

**Quintetto No. 3, Op. 51 in F Major**

**The Soni Ventorum Wind Quintet**

*Felix Skowronek, flute, Laila Storch, oboe, William McColl, clarinet  
Christopher Leuba, horn, Arthur Grossman, bassoon*

In recognition of the steadily increasing interest in the wind quintet in recent years, it would seem fitting to present an album coupling works of the two composers who did most to provide the ensemble with its initial repertoire. Franz Danzi and Anton Reicha were both important and influential composers of their time, but the appearance of their names on concert programs today is almost entirely due to their quintets for flute, oboe, clarinet, horn, and bassoon. In his own writing on the subject, Reicha claims credit for the conception of this combination,

while Danzi later seems to have paid his respects by dedicating his own first set of three quintets, Op. 56, to Reicha.

**Danzi** was born in 1763 in Mannheim, the son of a cellist in the famous orchestra there. His early instruction included the study of piano, cello, and composition. He joined the Mannheim orchestra at age 15, later moving to Munich. Here, he began the conducting career that took him to Kapellmeister positions in Stuttgart and then Karlsruhe, where he died in 1826. Danzi's early operas were presented in both Mannheim and Munich, but it was in Stuttgart and Karlsruhe that he became influential as an opera producer and conductor. (Incidentally, one of his duties in Stuttgart was the supervision of wind-instrument instruction in the schools.) Through his esteem for Mozart and particularly the promotion of Carl Maria von Weber, Danzi was regarded as one of the leading exponents of the newly-emerging German opera.

**Reicha**, born in Prague in 1770, left home at age 11 to be educated by his uncle Joseph, a cellist, composer, and conductor in the service of the Oettingen-Wallerstein princes in Swabia. Anton subsequently moved with his uncle to Bonn, continuing his education and joining the orchestra there as a flutist. Leaving in 1794, he spent the next years in Hamburg, Paris, and Vienna. Finally, in 1808, he returned to Paris, settling permanently and eventually becoming a professor of composition at the Conservatoire. He was highly regarded as a teacher and his theoretical works were widely known. Reicha's importance as a national figure was recognized by his appointment to the French Academy in 1835, a year before his death.

Despite the different backgrounds of Danzi and Reicha as composers, both had been exposed in their youth to a high activity of wind performance; Danzi at Mannheim and Reicha at Wallerstein and later Bonn. Both found the quintet combination particularly agreeable and treated it with a highly developed understanding of the instruments and their sonorities. The fortunate convergence of these elements seems to have brought out the best in each composer, the quintets being among their outstanding works.

Of the two, Danzi's writing is perhaps smoother in both melodic and harmonic treatment, the result at least partially of his long association with vocal and operatic works. While the straightforward formal cast of his nine quintets is clearly derived from Mannheim roots, Danzi's chromatic usage identifies him with the beginnings of German romanticism.

Reicha's formal training was primarily Viennese, and combined with his innate sense of innovation and experimentation led frequently to expansive works of daring originality and excitement. As the originator of the quintet combination around 1810, he realized the challenge inherent in the project and recalled the undertaking in his unpublished autobiography:

"A new style of composition was necessary for these instruments. They hold the mean between voices and strings. Combinations of a particular kind had to be devised in order to strike the listener. After much thought and a careful study of the possibilities of each instrument, I made my second attempt and wrote two very successful quintets. A few years later I had completed the six which made up the first book...Encouraged by their success, I wrote eighteen more, bringing the number to twenty-four...If the many congratulatory letters I received can be believed, they created a sensation throughout Europe.

-Felix Skowronek

## **Soni Ventorum (personnel in 1969)**

**Felix Skowronek**, (d. 2006) flute, *Felix Skowronek was a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia (1956) and a founding member of Soni Ventorum. He was solo flute with the Seattle Symphony Orchestra (1956-57, 1959-60), the Casals Festival Orchestra. And the Conservatory of Music of Puerto Rico (1960-1966). He was principal flute with the St. Louis Symphony (1966-1967) and Principal flute, of the Seattle Opera's series of Wagner's The Ring of*

*the Nibelung (1979-1982). An authority on the use of foreign and domestic hardwood species for flute and woodwind instrument manufactures, Skowronek documented the tonal qualities of numerous hardwood species carved into wood flutes and wood flute head joints. His research, performances and lectures throughout the 80's and 90's contributed significantly to the return of the wood flute and the option of using a wood head joint to create specific tonal effects relevant to the specific genre of music to be performed.*

**Laila Storch**, (d.2012) Oboe - *The first woman oboist to graduate from the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia where she studied with Marcel Tabuteau. She was principal oboist with the Houston Symphony Orchestra (1948-1955) and performed in The Bethlehem Bach Festival, the Marlboro Music Festival and the Casals Festivals all for many seasons. She was a member of The American Wind Ensemble of Vienna, the Academy of Music, Vienna and principal oboist, of the Mozarteum Orchestra in Salzburg (1957-1958). Ms. Storch was a soloist and toured with The Robert Shaw Chorale in 1962, she was the author of the definitive biography of Marcel Tabuteau, her teacher from the Curtis Institute.*

**William McColl**, clarinet, *William McColl began playing clarinet at the age of 12. He graduated from the Akademie für Darstellende Kunst in Vienna and was a founding member; Soni Ventorum He was solo clarinet with the Philharmonia Hungarica (1959), and a featured performer of the Casals Festival Orchestra. He was Professor of clarinet at the University of Washington (1968-2006). A specialist in early clarinets and basset horns, he has appeared in numerous international tours, recordings and concert appearances with the Amadeus Winds, the San Francisco Philharmonia, the Boston Handel and Haydn Society the New World Basset Horn Trio, and others and has recorded for the world's top record labels.*

**Christopher Leuba**, french horn, *was member from 1962 to 1963 and from 1968 through 1979 Leuba graduated Carnegie Mellon University under William A. Schaefer and performed with the Pittsburgh Symphony, the Kansas City Symphony, the Chicago Symphony (1960-1962), Minneapolis Symphony (1954-1960, 1963-1968), Philharmonia Hungarica (Vienna; 1958) and the Casals Festivals (1962-1963). He was a teacher at the Conservatory of Music of Puerto Rico, and performed with the Puerto Rico Symphony. Leuba was also Professor of french horn, University of Washington (1968-1979), and taught at numerous top universities since. He was also Principal horn, Portland Opera Orchestra (1984- ) as well as an international soloist and recording artist for Quincy Jones, Sarah Vaughn, Andy Williams and the Bill Russo Band.*

**Arthur Grossman**, bassoon, *a 1955 graduate of the Curtis Institute. He was solo bassoon with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra from 1958 to 1960 and with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra from 1960 to 1961. At the time of this recording, he had performed with the Marlboro Festival and a member of the Casals Festival Orchestra starting in 1962. Grossman moved to Seattle to join the faculty of the School of Music of the University of Washington. Grossman has toured worldwide with Soni Ventorum and as a soloist, and has made more than thirty recordings. He has also served as principal bassoon in the Israel Philharmonic. In January 1988 he became Associate Dean for Arts of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Washington, a position in which he served for ten years.*

*(The following history of the group draws primarily on the original album release notes.  
A complete, annotated timeline of the Soni Ventorum's history and*

*Personnel can be found at <http://www.soniventorum.com>)*

**The Soni Ventorum** Wind Quintet was composed of artists who drew upon widespread backgrounds in the fields of solo, chamber music, and symphonic performance. Its individual members were first-desk players in the symphony orchestras of Chicago, Cincinnati, Houston, Indianapolis, Minneapolis, St. Louis, and Seattle, as well as in the Salzburg Mozarteum Orchestra and the Philharmonia Hungaria of Vienna.

Felix Skowronek and Robert Bonnevie had formed a wind quintet as early as their years in high school together, and later became acquainted with fellow students James Caldwell, Arthur Grossman, Laila Storch when studying at the Curtis Institute. Still later, members of The Soni Ventorum Wind Quintet performed together in the the 7<sup>th</sup> Army Wind Quintet (1957), which complemented the famed 7<sup>th</sup> Army symphony Orchestra during its most brilliant period. The Soni Ventorum Wind Quintet was officially formed in 1961 when Pablo Casals asked its members to form the woodwind faculty of his newly founded Conservatory of Music of Puerto Rico. Recording began in 1963 for the Phoenix label and continues with new releases for Desto, Oryx, and Lyrichord. These recordings soon attracted a rapidly growing and enthusiastic following throughout America and Europe and in the years since, have received great critical praise for unprecedented purity of intonation, beauty of tone, and sensitivity of interpretation.

As the reputation of Soni Ventorum continued to grow, the group was engaged in 1968 for the important, newly created position of quintet-in-residence at the University of Washington in Seattle.

(Originally released as LLST 7216, 1969)

Tracks:

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|--|-------|
| 01 Adagio Allegro (Quint.No 4 E Minor, Op.100 - Reicha)          | 11:54 |
| 02 Andante con Veriazioni (Quint. No 4 E Minor, Op.100 - Reicha) | 5:58  |
| 03 Minuetta Allegro vivo (Quint. No 4 E Minor, Op.100 - Reicha)  | 2:49  |
| 04 Finale Allegro vivace (Quint. No 4 E Minor, Op.100 - Reicha)  | 8:10  |
| 05 Andante sostenuto-Allegro (Quint. No 3 Op. 56 F Maj - Danzi)  | 7:01  |
| 06 Andante (Quint. No 3 Op. 56 F Maj - Danzi)                    | 4:19  |
| 07 Menuetto Allegrotto(Quint. No 3 Op. 56 F Maj - Danzi)         | 4:39  |
| 08 Allegrotto (Quint. No 3 Op. 56 F Maj - Danzi)                 | 3:23  |

Running Time 48:09

*Special thanks to Arthur Grossman and William McColl for their invaluable assistance in helping to bring these wonderful recordings back for new audiences to enjoy.*

Reissue produced and remastered by Nick Fritsch



**LYRICHORD CLASSICAL**

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