

THE USE OF HORNS IN BWV 65 “SIE WERDEN AUS SABA ALLE KOMMEN”



NBA I/5

Zur Edition, pp. V-VI (1975)

Die Überlieferung der Kantate BWV 65 läßt – insbesondere infolge des Verlustes der Originalstimmen – eine Reihe von Fragen offen. So ist es nicht sicher, ob die Hornpartien der Sätze 1 und 6 auf Instrumenten in C-basso oder –alto gespielt werden sollen. Einer verbreiteten Praxis der ersten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts entsprechend, sind diese Partien jedoch wahrscheinlich mit Trompetenmundstücken in C-alto geblasen worden, so daß Bachs Notierung (Umfang c^1 - c^2 bzw. c^1 - b^2) als Klangnotation zu lesen ist.

[The {poor} transmission of cantata BWV 65 – particularly as a result of the loss of the original parts allows a number of questions to remain unanswered. For instance, it is not certain whether the horn parts for movements 1 and 6 should be played on instruments in the C-basso range or {an octave higher} in the C-alto range. According to a widespread practice during the first half of the 18th century, these parts were probably played in the C-alto range using trumpet mouthpieces, so that {accordingly} Bach's notation (from c^1 - c^2 or, as the case may be, c^1 - b^2) should be read as the notes on the page would normally sound.]

NBA KB I/5, (1976)

BWV 65 pp. 12-41

Title: *J. J. Festo Epiphani: Concerto. à 2 Core du Chasse. 2 Hautb. da Caccia. | due Fiauti 2 Violini è Viola con 4 Voci*

Instrument Designations on p. 1 at the beginning of accolades:

2 Cor. (or perhaps “*Cors*”); *Fiauti*, *2 Hautb*, *Violini* p. 5 *Corni* for movement 6

Gisela und Jozsef Csiba, *Die Blechblasinstrumente in J. S. Bachs Werken*, Merseburger, 1994:



p. 45-46 The famous portrait of Gottfried Reiche (copper engraving by Chr. Fr. Rosbach (1727) based on the oil portrait by E. G. Haußmann) depicts him, according to the Csibas, with a *Corno da caccia* in C (one that can play C-alto range from a normally notated treble instrument part or score).

Reiche held the position of 1st trumpet player for performances of Bach's works from 1723 to 1734 in Leipzig. Much thought on the part of Bach experts has been devoted to wondering just why Reiche chose this particular instrument. One simple and plausible explanation is its size and form which would allow Reiche to be shown with his smallest, most compact instrument and not with a more commonly used *Tromba* in C or D which would have been much too long.

Cantata BWV 109 has a *Corne du chasse* part which is notated as sounding in F-major. This part is described by experts as a *Corno da caccia* part, which is not surprising in that generally the designation *Corne du chasse* is simply considered as a French translation of the Italian term for a *Corno da caccia*. However, this is based on an erroneous assumption. In this case it is really a 16-ft long *Corne du chasse*, which is in a special category of instruments sometimes also called a *Corne par force* (*Parforce horn*) which very clearly differs from the *Corno da caccia* and other *Corno* instruments.

Besides the *Corne du chasse* in C (16 ft.) which is tuned an octave lower than the *Tromba* in C, J. S. Bach also used the *Corne du chasse* in C (8 ft.) which is tuned (plays at the same pitch level) the same as the *Tromba in C*. Both instruments have a more widely spreading bell than the *Corno da caccia*. The diameter of the bell (the flared end) is larger than that of the *Corno da caccia*, but smaller than the *Waldhorn* as the latter was developed after 1753. In contrast to the *Corno da caccia*, the tubing of the *Corne du chasse* is narrow and conical and can end at the place where the mouthpiece is attached with a diameter of 6.8 mm. The most prominent feature of the *Corne du chasse* is the size of the large, wide coils (tubing in the form of a circle) the diameter of which can reach 91 cm for the *Corne du chasse* in C (16 ft). A comparison of the sound difference between the *Corne du chasse* in C (16 ft) and the *Corno in C* (16 ft) is that the former has a somewhat brighter sound. The range of notes is the same for each instrument: they can reach up to a ninth above the 16th note in the natural tone row. In BWV 109 the *Corne du chasse* (16 ft) part can start at c^1 and reach up to c^3 . Bach uses the *Corne du chasse* (8 ft), which has the same length as the *Tromba* in C in BWV 65. From an examination of the notes that Bach used in BWV 65 (compared to those used in BWV 109), it is clearly evident that here [in BWV 65] the *Corne du chasse* has to be only half as long as the *Corne du chasse* used in BWV 109 since the notes demanded by the *Corne du chasse* part in BWV 109, specifically d^1 , f^1 , and a^1 , which can only be played on a 16-ft. instrument, do not occur in the *Corne du chasse* part in BWV 65.

BWV 65

BWV 109

p. 102 BWV 65

Corne du chasse in C (8 ft. length)in key of C *Corne* I: notes played in mvt. 1: c^1 e g c^2 d e f g ain key of C *Corne* II: notes played in mvt. 1: c^1 e g c^2 d e f $f^\#$ g a b-flat, b, c^3 in key of C *Corne* I&II: mvt. 6

BWV 109

Corne du chasse in C (16 ft. length) k. (at the sounding pitch)in key of d-minor *Corne* I: notes played in mvt. 1: c^1 d e f g a b-flat b c^2 $c^\#$ d e-flat e f $f^\#$ g a b-flat c^3 in d doric *Corne* I: notes played in mvt. 6: d^1 e f g a b c^2 d e

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In the same way that the *Corno da caccia* in C has the same length as the *Tromba* in C (the sound quality differs between them due to the differences in the construction of the bell), so also can the *Corno da caccia* in D be compared and contrasted with the *Tromba* in D. Handling the *Corno da caccia* with its compactly wound coils is easier than managing the more awkward shape of the *Tromba*. In his entire oeuvre, J. S. Bach uses this instrument [*Corno da caccia* in D] only once: in the bass aria from the *B-Minor Mass*, “Quoniam tu solus sanctus, tu solus Dominus, tu solus altissimus Jesu Christe” This *Corno da caccia* part, as is the case with all of Bach’s *Corno da caccia* parts, is notated in C, for whichever type of *Corno da caccia* part he happened to be writing for, in this instance notated for a *Corno da caccia* in D. The notated c^2 at the beginning of this part is to sound in actuality like a d^2 and not as a d^1 as is commonly heard, because the instrument meant here is 7-ft. *Corno da caccia*. Using the correct transposition will help to avoid the crossing over of the *Corno da caccia* part with the two bassoons, not to mention the fact that the musical symbolism of the text “tu **solus altissimus**” will be enhanced and make more sense.

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Die Entwicklung des romantischen Waldhorns und der Ventiltrompete, so fortschrittlich sie seinerzeit gewesen sein mögen, bedeutet nach dem Maßstab der in dieser Abhandlung dargelegten Erkenntnisse sowohl blastechisch als auch klanglich einen Rückschritt. Theoretisch hätten auch schon zu J. S. Bachs Zeit alle Corno-Stimmen auf nur einem Instrument, nämlich dem 16 Fuß-Corne du chasse in C ausgeführt werden können. Dieses Instrument war in der Lage, alle von J. S. Bach in seinen Corno-Stimmen geschriebenen Töne wiederzugeben. Eine solche Beschränkung des Instrumentariums hätte aber den präzisen und differenzierten Klangintentionen J. S. Bachs nicht entsprochen.

[The development of the romantic *Waldhorn* and the valve trumpet, as progressive as this development might have appeared at that time, was really step backwards if considered according to the standard of the findings of technical feasibility as well as the resulting sound as has been presented in this treatise. Theoretically all horn parts in J. S. Bach’s time could have been played on only one instrument: the 16-ft. *Corne du chasse* in C. This instrument was capable of reproducing all the notes required by Bach in his horn parts. However, such a limitation in the choice of available instruments would not have corresponded to Bach’s precise and differentiated idea of what these parts should have sounded like.]



[11] Quoniam tu solus sanctus

Corno da caccia

Bassono I

Bassono II

Basso

Continuo

This excerpt from Joshua Rifkin's 2006 score for Bach's *Mass in B minor* which appeared in the Breitkopf & Härtel Partitur-Bibliothek as part of the Breitkopf Urtext Series shows the first note of Bach's original notation before the accolade and followed by the part as interpreted by the editor at the lower octave.

11-13)

Corne du Chasse

Bach's own handwriting
BWV 109 Corne du chasse, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Mus. ms. Bach St 56

From Ulrich Prinz *J. S. Bachs Instrumentarium*, Stuttgart-Kassel, 2005:

pp. 141-142

A veritable storm of protest broke out among Bach experts after Friedrich Smend in 1954 had edited the *B minor Mass* in NBA II/1 and the “Quoniam” bass aria appeared with a *Corno da caccia* part notated and printed at the higher octave. The following year it was changed in the next edition by placing an 8 under the treble clef, thus making it sound an octave lower.

In the new edition of the MGG, G. Widholm, in his article on the horn (MGG₂ S, Kassel-Stuttgart, 1996, column 370) states that the recently vehemently discussed question whether the parts for horns in C or D in J. S. Bach’s works, or as the case may be, other composers of that period, should be played on a C basso or D basso or a C alto or D alto or even a coiled trumpet-like instrument has not been conclusively answered; however there seem to be more arguments which favor the lower octave instrument, the ‘true’ horns rather than those in the higher octave.

Prinz thinks he has detected a reason why regular *Corni* in C basso should be used in BWV 65/1: in mm 5 and 49 there is an upward moving series of 4ths in the sequence-like entrances of the pair of horns, the *oboi da caccia* and the violins all the way up to the pair of *Fiauti* (g^1 - c^2 - f^2 - b^2 always in the first instrument of each pair). In the 6th movement both horns playing unison provide the foundation for the ensemble when the continuo pauses for 4 mm (example: mm 5-8, 37-40) and even indicate the pitch for what will follow, thus avoiding false chord progressions.

Bach used the following horn keys for transposing them to C on the basis of what they would sound like at Kammerton pitch:

Corno in C basso BWV 65.

Corno in D basso BWV 60/1; 205; 212/18; 232¹/11.

Corno in F BWV 1; 14/1, 5; 40/1, 7; 52; 83/1; 208; 213; 233; 248^{IV}; 1046; JLB 7.

Corno in G BWV 79; 88; 91; 100; 112; 128/1, 5; 174; 195/6; 212/16; 250-252; Anh. III 166.

Corno in A BWV 60/5; 67/1; 136.

Corno in B alto BWV 14/2; 143.

Corno in C alto BWV 16/3.

Selected and translated by Thomas Braatz © 2010