

Niklas Eklund Reviews

Haydn; Hummel; Neruda Trumpet Concertos Invigorating and consistent readings of favourite trumpet concertos - Gramophone Review

[View record and artist details](#)

Author: Jonathan Freeman-Attwood

Purists might disagree but the early keyed-trumpet patented by Anton Weidinger for the Haydn and Hummel concertos is hardly the finished article in the search for a reliably engineered chromatic trumpet. It plays all the notes previously unplayable on a 'natural' trumpet but is primitive, leaks air and it takes a high-wire circus act to make it sound agreeable (as Crispian Steele-Perkins does so remarkably in his Hyperion recording). The other extreme is the strident perfection of modern brass technology, exhibited here by Niklas Eklund – a player many will recognise as the soloist in Naxos's series of effortlessly-delivered Baroque sonatas on 'natural' trumpet, upon which he is justly recognised for his sweet high register and beguiling articulation.

He returns here to more general concerns of mainstream trumpet playing under the watchful eye of Roy Goodman, bringing to these two old war-horse concertos (along with the facile Neruda as the late-comer of the 'Classical' trumpet concerto triptych) an irreverent, and even slightly iconoclastic demeanour, especially to the outer movements of the Hummel. There is lyricism, too, but in sharp relief to a prevailing light, 'salon' characterisation, especially in the Hummel and Weber Variations (one of the earliest for the valved trumpet). Eklund doesn't seem quite as comfortable in the Haydn, where he too often jumps the gun and resists tonal refinement, but it is still a creditable performance.

There are many stylish moments and Goodman shapes the Swedish Chamber Orchestra beautifully. The prize for me is the silky, languid playing of the second movement of the Hummel in which we hear familiar music performed with new shards of elegance and vitality. It is the sense of vigour brought to well-worn territory which makes this an overall decent bet.

Trumpet Concertos - MusicWeb Review

Johann Nepomuk HUMMEL (1778-1837) Trumpet Concerto in E major s49;

Jan Kriehle NERUDA (1707-1780) Trumpet Concerto

Bedrich Divis WEBER (1766-1842) Variations in F major

Joseph HAYDN (1732-1809) Trumpet Concerto in E flat major Hob VII:1

Niklas Eklund (trumpet)

Swedish Chamber Orchestra/Roy Goodman

Rec. Orebro Concert Hall, Sweden, October 1999

NAXOS 8.554806 [57.15]

Many of you will remember the days of vinyl when on one side of the LP would be the Haydn concerto and on the other the Hummel; old bedfellows indeed and nicely contrasting. But nowadays when an hour is the 'norm' for a recording music-lovers demand more and so this fascinating and unique collection comes together. These four composers each tackle the trumpet concerto quite differently. They come from slightly different periods of music history and from differing European centres.

It may be helpful to look at these pieces chronologically and to consider how the instrument developed from about 1780 until the 1830s. As was the case with most wind instruments at this time manufacturers and makers were experimenting with differing bore sizes, valves and even holed instruments and length of tubing.

In the 18th Century the importance of the trumpet sank to the status of the ordinary and was not even highly esteemed in the orchestra, having a restricted range. For this reason few innovations were made for most of the century. Originally the trumpet was in D making (and I'm sorry to be a bit technical here) the Hummel concerto in E major, not in F# for the trumpet as it would be for a Bb instrument, but in the much more manageable key of D. There were also trumpets in F and in A.

The keyed trumpet with five keys proved a short term innovation, this helped increase the range especially in the lower register. In his booklet notes Keith Anderson mentions that because of the so-called harmonic series more notes were available in the upper register. These keys made an increase of pitches possible throughout its range.

So you have to imagine that the concerto by the Bohemian composer Neruda was written for such a trumpet and in an early classical almost Baroque style. The first movement reminded me of C.P.E. Bach in one of his less anarchic moods. It is still accompanied by harpsichord continuo which for some listeners can be an annoying feature. Roy Goodman has modern instruments at his disposal in the Swedish Chamber but they are strongly aware of the stylistic considerations in regard to bowing techniques. Even so it is a strong sound and the harpsichord as a consequence seems to me to be rather closely miked.

Haydn's concerto dates from c.1800 and was written for the keyed trumpet and for its inventor, Anton Weidinger, who gave its first performance. Again Roy Goodman allows the harpsichord a strong prominence. Haydn explores the possibilities of the new instrument particularly in the fast finger-work needed for the justly famous Rondo finale.

Next, comes the Hummel concerto; apt really because Hummel took over at the Esterhazy's after Haydn's retirement. This concerto dates from 1803 and was also

composed for Weidinger. Its rather pompous opening is certainly Mozartian but now there is no harpsichord. The work has a sonata-form first movement of nearly ten minutes with its length being dictated by an opening orchestral ritornello stating the two subjects. It lasts exactly two minutes before the soloist enters

The concerto by Bedrich Weber which dates from 1828, is, in my view, a third rate work by an astonishingly conservative composer. His long and influential life and many years at the Prague Conservatoire as its principal must have held back the course of Czech music considerably. He apparently hated Beethoven, Berlioz and Carl Maria von Weber. His variations are predictable but I think the most virtuoso pieces on the CD. The last one is a distinctly lack-lustre 'Tempo di Polacca'. Perhaps its performance is at fault the Swedish orchestra being unable to raise the enthusiasm.

Of course all this talk of trumpet development is superfluous in that Niklas Eklund uses modern instruments. For the Neruda and Haydn he selects the Eb. For the Hummel the choice falls to the trumpet in the bright key of E and for the Weber a conventionally pitched trumpet in Bb.

Roy Goodman is the right man for this music. In my book this is the most enjoyable performance of the Hummel I have ever heard, being well shaped and with ideal tempi and balance.

So, all in all, this is a commended recording of both standard and unusual repertoire. It is well worth investigating.

Gary Higginson

Trumpet Concertos - ClassicalNet Review

- **Johann Nepomuk Hummel**: Trumpet Concerto in E Major
- **Jan Křtitel Jiří Neruda**: Trumpet Concerto in E Flat Major
- **Bedřich Diviš Weber**: Variations in F Major for Trumpet and Orchestra
- **Franz Joseph Haydn**: Trumpet Concerto in E Flat Major, Hob. VIIe:1

Niklas Eklund, trumpet

Swedish Chamber Orchestra/Roy Goodman

Naxos 8.554806 DDD 57:15

Swedish trumpeter Niklas Eklund recorded five wonderful and varied volumes of "The Art of the Baroque Trumpet" for Naxos, and now he is moving into Classical repertoire. Eklund was born in the southern city of Göteborg in 1969. (I've lived there at different times – nice place!) Eventually, his studies took him to Basel, and he held a position with the Basel Radio Symphony until 1996, when he decided to pursue a solo career. Basel's loss was Naxos' (and our) gain. Soft or loud, his tone is attractive, and he carefully shapes his phrases as well as his individual notes, extracting all the meaning and expression that lies within them. Possessed of a strong technique, he uses it for the good of the music, not for the gratification of his ego. Every trumpeter worth his salt has played and recorded the Hummel and

Haydn concertos, but Eklund is in the considerably smaller company of those who perform these works as music, not as virtuoso vehicles. He and Goodman (a veteran of many "authentic performance practice" CDs on the Hyperion and Nimbus labels) take fast movements at a sensible (i.e., "authentic") tempo. The slow movements are melting, but not exaggerated. The Swedish Chamber Orchestra provides accompaniments well suited to Eklund's scale and style.

The Hummel and Haydn works are familiar, but perhaps a word or two needs to be said about the other two. Jan Křtitel Jiří (aka "Johann Baptist Georg") Neruda was a Bohemian composer who was active first in Prague and then in Dresden. A generation older than Haydn, he sits at the border between the Baroque and Classical eras. His shapely concerto has more in common with Haydn's works than with Johann Sebastian Bach's, however. Bedřich Diviš (aka "Friedrich Dionys") Weber also was Bohemian. His dates are 1766-1842, making him a near contemporary of Hummel. He remained in and around Prague most of his life, and was a noted academic. Like his teaching, his Variations are conservative. I don't know if his teaching was enjoyable, but his Variations are.

The Hummel and Haydn works are played on a keyed trumpet, which was developed around 1813. The Bohemian works were written for the keyed trumpet's predecessor, the valve trumpet. Eklund plays all four on modern keyed trumpets.

The engineering is warm and satisfying. If you're looking for a modern recording of any of these works, Eklund should satisfy you nicely.

Reinhold Friedrich Reviews

Haydn/Hummel/M Puccini - BBC Magazine Review

Our rating: 4.0 out of 5 star rating

COMPOSERS: Haydn/Hummel/M Puccini

LABELS: Capriccio

WORKS: Trumpet Concerto in E flat; Trumpet Concerto in E; Concerto for Flute, Clarinet, Trumpet & Horn

PERFORMER: Reinhold Friedrich (keyed trumpet)Wiener Akademie/Martin Haselböck

CATALOGUE NO: 10 598 DDD

The keyed trumpet is a fiendish instrument. Invented by the Viennese trumpeter Anton Weidinger at the end of the 18th century, it astonished contemporary audiences by its ability to produce a full chromatic scale, thereby extending the melodic possibilities of the trumpet quite considerably. Although it could produce a 'gentle' tone, the instrument nevertheless had inherent sound problems, and the more promising valve mechanism soon came into use. It seems ironic, then, that the trumpet's two best-known works, the concertos by Haydn and Hummel, were

conceived for this instrument.

Trumpeter Reinhold Friedrich's previous recording of these two concertos – on a modern instrument – is the best in the catalogue and, unsurprisingly, this new release displays equally his thoughtful, original interpretative powers and technical assurance. The performance of the Wiener Akademie under Martin Haselböck is marred somewhat by the recessed recording, which loses some of the clarity and immediacy offered by the English Concert, accompanying Mark Bennett in his rival version of the Haydn. A curiosity lies in wait at the end of the disc in the form of the concerto by Michele Puccini (father of Giacomo). Dating from 1838, this piece provides evidence that the keyed instrument remained popular in Italy long after the appearance of the valve trumpet. Deborah Calland

Wynton Marsalis Reviews

Haydn, Hummel, L. Mozart: Trumpet Concertos Review by Richard S. Ginell AllMusic Review: 4*/5* Rating

His first classical album having been released simultaneously with his second jazz album, *Think of One*, the 21-year-old Wynton Marsalis found himself in the position of being the most celebrated purveyor of both the classical and jazz repertoire since Benny Goodman. His debut takes him to the core of the small solo trumpet concerto repertoire with three pieces from the classical period by Haydn, Hummel, and Leopold Mozart, and thus, directly into competition with more experienced, full-time classical trumpeters. Technically, there is nothing wanting in Marsalis' playing; he pulls off the fanciest, most difficult figurations with hardly a care. His experience as an improviser is also an asset; he makes up his own marvelous cadenza in the first movement of the Haydn concerto, beginning with a pair of musical questions which he boldly proceeds to answer and continuing with other dialogues and wide leaps, all thoroughly within the classical style. Ain't no jazz here; Marsalis sticks commendably to his brief. If there is a fault with these performances, though, it is that Marsalis is often too academic and cautious, particularly in the slow movements, phrasing smoothly and evenly but without the imagination of other players. Raymond Leppard and the studio-bound National Philharmonic of London provide solid, lively, meticulously balanced, mostly brisk-paced orchestral support everywhere on the disc, which, on the strength of Marsalis' jazz notoriety, became a classical best-seller.

Alison Balsom Reviews

Haydn & Hummel: Trumpet concertos/Balsom - ClassicsToday

Victor Carr Jr Artistic Quality: 10 Sound Quality: 10

Trumpeter Alison Balsom's bold and brilliant playing engenders a fresh-eared listening of the warhorse Haydn and Hummel concertos. Balsom's robust phrasing combined with a confidence that never turns cocky reminds us of the trumpet's history in battle and regalia. But it's not all fanfare and bluster as Balsom produces beautiful, round tone throughout the range, even in the instrument's challenging low notes. There's also much warmth and feeling in her playing, very different from the reserved cool of Wynton Marsalis in his debut recording featuring these same works.

The program steps backward to the baroque era with the Torelli and Neruda concertos, both appealing works featuring masterful trumpet writing. Again, Balsom dispatches these with winning panache. The Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen provides bracing and lively accompaniment under Thomas Klug's leadership, something you can easily hear as EMI's vivid recording places Balsom in a natural-sounding perspective with the orchestra. There's plenty to enjoy here—certainly for trumpet aficionados, but those just who enjoy great music making will be pleased as well. [10/28/2008]

Haydn, Hummel: Trumpet Concertos Review by James Manheim

AllMusic Review Rating: 4*/5*

With the large selection of recordings on the market for both the **Haydn** and **Hummel** trumpet concertos, the browser might be forgiven for wondering whether British trumpeter Alison Balsom's no-neckline look might be the chief attraction here. It's not the case, and Balsom crafts a distinctive interpretation of these familiar works within the category of modern-instrument, chamber-orchestra readings. Annotator **Jonathan Freeman-Attwood** points out an interesting feature of the **Haydn** concerto's outer movements: the composer's humorous treatment of the fanfares conventionally associated with the trumpet. The instrument seems to be trying to assert itself against the flow of melody characteristic of **Haydn's** time. Balsom catches this humor with restrained playing that has an unmistakably sly quality. She also handles the virtuoso demands of the **Hummel** concerto effortlessly; offers very languorous, lovely slow movements; and switches gears into a sparer idiom for the Trumpet Concerto in D major by **Giuseppe Torelli**, which would have originally been played on a natural trumpet. The **Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen**, with Balsom apparently conducting from the trumpet, offers support in keeping with the general mood. The only complaints, and they are small ones, are that the program ends with a thud with the slight trumpet concerto (originally for hunting horn) by Jan Neruda and that the program is short at under 53 minutes. The shorter concertos would have worked better as

an entr'acte, with the **Hummel** at the end. The sound, captured at a Lutheran church in suburban Bremen, is on the bright side, but reveals Balsom's subtle approach nicely. The buyer new to these familiar trumpet pieces can choose this release with confidence.

MusicWeb International Review

Alison Balsom (trumpet)

Johann Nepomuk Hummel (1778-1837)

Trumpet concerto in E flat major (1803)

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

Trumpet concerto in E flat major (1796)

Giuseppe Torelli (1658-1709)

Trumpet concerto in D major

Jan Křtitel Jiří Neruda (1711-1776)

Trumpet concerto in E flat major (ca 1760s)

Die Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen

rec. 2008, Evangelish-Lutherische Kirche, Lunsen, Germany

Originally released on EMI

Warner Classics 2162130 [53]

Alison Balsom must be a concert promoter's dream: she is young, beautiful and very talented. This is her fourth CD for EMI, and the first to concentrate on concertos. The earlier discs were predominantly transcriptions and miniatures – see Christopher Thomas's [review](#) of her Debut album EMI 5756832. Now with the two staples of the repertoire – Haydn and Hummel – she has demonstrated the desire to be taken seriously.

Let me get the only two negatives out of the road first: the programme is somewhat unbalanced, presenting as it does, the two "big" concertos first, and secondly, it is a rather miserly running time. Yes, there aren't that many trumpet concertos, but sub-hour CDs these days are really not acceptable, not matter how well played.

Be in no doubt: this is very, very well played. Balsom's tone is silky smooth, yet bell-like in its clarity. There is no harshness at all in her playing, even in phrases of extreme difficulty. I have seen the adjective "poetic" applied to this recording in another review – I couldn't agree more. Her playing brought to mind the great Maurice André in its sheer musicality.

Lest you start to think that this is all honeyed and amorphous, please don't – there is great verve and spirit in the faster movements; the opening of the final movement of the Hummel bears witness to this. The solo part in the Torelli rings out bright and clear, and even the relatively mundane Neruda sounds as good as it probably ever will on record. I heard this in concert in the gardens of the palace of Würzburg and even those extraordinarily grand surroundings could only elevate it to the ranks of pleasant!

My standard for many years for the Haydn and Hummel has been Håkan Hardenberger with Sir Neville Marriner and the Academy on Philips 4202032: a superior coupling of concertos by Johann Hertel and Johann Stamitz. Listening to the two led me to the conclusion that Hardenberger's athleticism was trumped by Balsom's musicality – I wanted to listen to the latter again straight away.

I also found in the process of writing this review that Norway has its own Alison Balsom: her name is Tine Thing Helseth, and she too is beautiful, young and blonde. Earlier in 2008, she also released a CD which has the Haydn, Hummel and Neruda concertos (Simax PSC1292) – instead of the Torelli is a transcription of an Albinoni oboe concerto. However, comparisons with Balsom vanished as soon as the music began – I listened to it via my Naxos Music Library subscription. Helseth is totally overshadowed by Balsom.

The conductor-less Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen are equal partners in this endeavour: they are fleet, crisp and totally attuned to Balsom's playing. I would love to hear them by themselves in Mozart and Haydn symphonies. They are far superior to the Norwegian Chamber Orchestra who play quite limply, and much better recorded than the ASMF who sound like they are in the next building.

There is a seven minute EMI promo video on [YouTube](#) if you would like to hear Balsom talk about the Haydn, and see her play at the recording session.

I see that ArkivMusic have included this CD in their top recordings for 2008. I can't disagree: it will be in my Recordings of the Year for 2009. I won't discard the Hardenberger because of the couplings, but Alison Balsom is tops in Haydn and Hummel.

David Barker

Hakan Hardenberger Reviews

HAYDN Concerto in E^b for Trumpet and Orchestra, H. VIIe:1. Concerto in C for Organ and Orchestra, H. XVIII.1. Concerto in D for Horn and Orchestra, H.

VIII:3. • Friedemann Immer, keyed trumpet; Timothy Brown, natural horn; Christopher Hogwood, chamber organ, harpsichord, conductor; Academy of Ancient Music. • L'OISEAU-LYRE 417 610-2 (compact disc [DDD]; 53:06).

HAYDN Concerto in E^b for Trumpet and Orchestra, H. VIIe:1. HUMMEL Concerto in E for Trumpet and Orchestra. HERTEL Concerto in D for Trumpet and Orchestra. STAMITZ Concerto in D for Trumpet and Orchestra

(reconstructed by Boustead). • Hakan Hardenberger, trumpet; Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, conducted by Neville Marriner. • PHILIPS 420 203-2 (compact disc [DDD]; 58:36).

Despite the similarity in period and in part material, these two fine discs inhabit very different interpretive worlds. It is a pleasurable shock to move from the Haydn trumpet concerto as played by Hardenberger at the end of his disc to the Immer account which opens the other CD. Immer makes clear in his lucid notes the highly experimental nature of the recording, which involves the revival of a transitional

instrument that survived two decades until the valved trumpet's appearance, but aimed to refine the natural trumpet by the addition of keys permitting a chromaticism that heavily influenced Haydn's composition. Although the concerto was commissioned by Anton Weidinger in 1796, the difficulty of performing the work on the keyed trumpet postponed its debut until 1800. That difficulty is still apparent in Immer's gallant rendering, where intonation is not of gold-medal quality. The timbre of the instrument, surprisingly, is far closer to Timothy Brown's horn in the Hob. VIII:3 (which itself approaches tuba range and timbre momentarily in the Adagio) than to Hardenberger's modern trumpet. Christopher Hogwood supplies not only his usual bracing support as conductor but a lilting rendering of the solo part in the organ concerto. An engagingly adventurous disc and a nice retrospective on Haydn—or should we make that retrogression, since the chronological movement in the recording is from 1796 to 1762 to 1756? The Hardenberger disc is even more attractively recorded than the quite appealing Hogwood. Neville Marriner and his modern-instruments orchestra are poised and effortlessly dancelike, with a characteristic but nonetheless captivating lightness of touch. In terms of material, the program keeps getting better and better, opening with the relatively lightweight Hummel, continuing with the darker-hued Heitel, the very convincing reconstruction of Alan Boustead or Bousted of the Stamitz. (He is listed under both spellings, and the work is listed as a first recording on the cover.) The Haydn crowns the disc, and here Hartenberger adds to his stunning interpretive contribution the composition of a cadenza based on the original but improving upon it without excessive flag or mirror-waving. The young Swede, the subject of charmingly ingenuous biographical notes in the booklet, is an exceptionally gifted performer. Interested in the rapprochement between jazz and classical music, I was struck by the mention of his father's love of Louis Armstrong, which prompted his making a Christmas present of his son's first trumpet, as well as the artist's own admiration for jazz trumpeters, particularly the ill-fated Clifford Brown. Perhaps, reversing the path of Wynton Marsalis, Hardenberger will extend his recording schedule from classical to jazz.

Edward Strickland

This article originally appeared in Issue 11:6 (July/Aug 1988) of *Fanfare Magazine*.

Amazon Comments by Teb Libbey & an Amazon customer

Hakan Hardenberger possesses a polished technique, a clear tone, and a smooth legato, and his playing is superb. A few examples of questionable musicianship (such as the undue stress he puts on the resolution of trills) point to the fact that he is a not-yet-fully-educated virtuoso. One might prefer a somewhat less bright, more mellow and burnished sound, but the technique and control the trumpeter exhibits are not to be faulted. He offers an excellent

cadenza, true to the style of the period. Sir Neville Marriner and the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields do a smashing job with the rest of the piece. Philips's engineering is excellent, though the trumpet is larger-sounding and closer than it should be--a small flaw. --*Ted Libbey*

David Kemp - Amazon Reviewer - 5*/5*

It's a rare treat for a reviewer when he can throw caution to the winds and go out on a limb for a musician. This is such an occasion for me. Hakan Hardenberger is a phenomenon. I think he is the Babe Ruth, the Wayne Gretzky, the Michael Jordan, the Vladimir Horowitz, the Jascha Heifetz of trumpet players.

This is the Swedish trumpeter's first recording, made in 1986 when he was only 25 years old (in the cover photo he looks like a boy). The first time I played it, my jaw dropped and I could hardly believe my ears. His playing was a revelation--absolutely stunning. I'd never heard trumpet playing like his. In my opinion, with his first two CDs young Hardenberger not only moved into the top rank of trumpeters; he swept right past his competitors to the head of the class. I've compared a number of his baroque concerto performances, here and elsewhere, with those of other famous trumpeters, and he always comes out on top. I believe he is in a league of his own. He has everything: virtuosity and technique to burn, dead-on intonation, clean trills, smooth legato, expressive shading, beauty of tone, brilliant high notes, enormous dynamic range. He is also a sound musician, with taste and a sense of style. His arsenal is complete and unassailable; there is no chink in his armor. The ASMF under Marriner provides exemplary support, but the star here is clearly Hardenberger.

The trumpet has always been a difficult instrument to record and reproduce accurately. Here, although the excellent digital recording presents Hardenberger very much front and center, it captures the timbre, "bite," and wide dynamic range of his trumpet with exceptional vividness and fidelity. On a top-quality playback system, he sounds like he's standing right between the speakers playing for you. And what playing it is! Not to be missed.

This CD contains only four concertos, with a total playing time of 58:36. A better way to buy this material is to get the Philips Duo (two generously filled CDs--72:55 and 78:27--for the price of one) entitled Famous Classical Trumpet Concertos, all played by Hardenberger, which includes everything here, plus most of the contents of two later CD's. It's a good buy, and if you're going to own only one collection of baroque trumpet concertos, this is the one I'd recommend.

Hardenberger's second CD, of Telemann Trumpet Concertos, also accompanied by the ASMF, this time under Iona Brown, was recorded in 1987 (again on Philips). It too is superb, fully as impressive as his first CD, but unfortunately none of it is included in the Philips Duo recommended above, so you have to acquire it separately. It's well worth it.

Long live the king!