

11. Une journée d'Été dans le Jura

Fantaisie pittoresque pour 4 trompes de chasse

Henri Kling
(1842-1918)
ed. William Melton

Kling, Henri Adrien Louis

(born 14 February 1842 in Paris; died 2 May 1918 in Geneva)

Kling was the son of a French mother and German father. The family soon left Paris for the father's hometown of Karlsruhe, where the young Henri experienced the death of his mother. When the child began to learn the horn he was fortunate to study with a master, Jacob Dorn. The artistic highlights of Kling's teenage years were a slew of Wagner productions mounted by Karlsruhe opera director Eduard Devrient. These made the city's artistic reputation, and turned the young hornist into a great admirer of Wagner (he would later commission a Wagner memorial in Mornex in the Savoy). At nineteen Kling won the solo horn post in Geneva, to which he would add the post of professor at the Conservatoire (horn and solfège, later theory). He also became an adopted son of Geneva, taking Swiss citizenship in 1865.

Kling was a dynamo, and orchestra and conservatory were not enough to keep him occupied. As other notable horn virtuosos have done, Kling published a horn method (*Méthode pour le cor*, the autograph of which is housed at the library of the Geneva Conservatoire [Rmg 467] with the author's inscription 'Genève 1865, H. Kling'), etudes, arrangements, and editions of the literature (he made piano reductions of Mozart's concerti and *Concert Rondo*, and Weber's *Concertino*). In fact, Kling went much further, authoring methods, etudes, and solo editions for many other instruments (including flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, trumpet, viola, bass, piano, guitar, mandolin, zither, banjo, xylophone, snare drum, etc.).

Kling took on posts as organist, singing teacher and conductor, and collected volumes of Swiss folksongs, Christmas carols and children's songs. He also composed well over 500 works with opus numbers and many more without.

These included the Symphony in D major, four operas that were performed in Geneva, a horn concerto and sonata, overtures, chamber music, vocal music (choruses, Lieder) and salon pieces. Contemporary Alfred Remy dismissed the latter as 'mediocre', but they were undeniably popular, and several of them are preserved in early Edison cylinder recordings.

Something of a cottage industry, Henri Kling was also a productive writer. In his unique position straddling two cultures and publishing simultaneously in two languages, he had a distinguished reputation in both French and German-speaking lands (English translations would also follow). Books included a biography of Mozart, and influential methods for composition, orchestration, conducting and transposition. Kling contributed many articles to Swiss, French, German and Italian journals, on expected subjects like Giovanni Punto or the hunting horn, but also on folk music, Beethoven, Wagner, and even further afield to Schiller, Rousseau and Martin Luther. 'Henri Kling', scholar Willy Tappolet concluded of this *Officier d'Académie de France*, 'was one of the most fruitful and versatile of the Genevan composers'.

Kling's devotion to the hunting horn included an intimate knowledge of the French trompe de chasse, and his comprehensive *Method for Hunting Horn*, published by Louis Oertel of Hanover, offered hunting signals from both French and German traditions. The Method also included Kling's original quartet *A Summer Trip in the Jura Mountains, Picturesque Fantasy for 4 Cors de Chasse*. Kling arranged his set of musical postcards as follows:

- a) Departure for the Mountains (Allegretto)
- b) A Rest under the Trees (Andante sostenuto)
- c) Dance on the Green Meadow (Tempo de valse)
- d) Evening Bells (Moderato)
- e) Happy Return (Marcia Allegro brillante)

A number of alterations in technique will evoke a hint of the sound of the *trompe* on a modern double horn: 1st and 2nd valves depressed on the F horn will yield the natural harmonics of the traditional key of D, a brighter sound is gained with an open right hand and bell held free from the body (the *trompe* is typically held by one arm alone with the bell completely free, but the weight of the double horn prevents this) and the employment of a

constant, fast vibrato adds the final touch. To the fourth section, 'Evening Bells', Kling added, 'The exact artistic execution of the bell effects is left to the discretion of the player, so long as the intended result is achieved'.

Text by William Melton