

Gaetano Donizetti
Concertino

For English Horn & Piano
(1816)

Arranged by
Nora Post



The *Concertino for English horn and Orchestra* was composed in 1816 by Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848) for Giovanni Carolfi, a fellow student at the music conservatory in Bologna, Italy. Thus, Donizetti would have been less than twenty years old when this piece was written. The *Concertino* was originally written for an English horn in G (as is clearly demonstrated in Donizetti's original score located in Paris at the Bibliothèque nationale de France), most likely written for the leather-wrapped curved or angled English horn of the early 19th century. These leather-wrapped instruments were used for decades in Italy; they were used at the Milan Conservatory up to 1889, and were still being manufactured in Italy as late as 1908.

Having played the modern English horn and piano version of this piece many times, I was always curious what the piece would sound like played on an instrument pitched in G. I decided to make an arrangement putting the written English horn part in C major—exactly how it would have been played in Donizetti's time. My arrangement turned out to be wonderfully idiomatic for the English horn (and would have been a great deal easier to play on an early 19th century Italian English horn). With the English horn part in C major, the piece became much more entertaining and enjoyable—its delightfully campy nature became even more so. Arguing that we can never have too much of a good thing in life, I decided to spice up the existing cadenzas and add some flashy new ones as well. Since Donizetti's fame was as a *bel canto* opera composer, I suspect he would have approved the spirit of these additional operatic cadenzas.

I take real pleasure in thanking my colleagues who helped and encouraged me to rescue this arrangement from a cardboard box in my attic. Kristen Butcher, a graduate student at New York University studying with Humbert Lucarelli, took my hand-written score and entered it into *Sibelius*. Warren Hurley, my web site designer, was so helpful in terms of design and all the technical details. Dr. Lorraine Duso of the University of Central Arkansas proof read everything and helped so much in correcting errors. Cary Ebli, the English hornist of the Toronto Symphony, graciously shared so much helpful information about the piece—including a copy of Donizetti's original manuscript. Cary calls this piece “such a delicious can of worms.” I concur, and can only add that it would not have been half as much fun without him. I am so grateful for everyone's encouragement, assistance and hard work.

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