

# Hornrama Code: 29018

Myslivecek, J: Aria from the Opera "Il Bellerofonte" for soprano, Horn and Keyboard

## Josef Myslivecek (1737 - 1781)

Josef Myslivecek was born in Prague in 1737, the son of a miller, and died in Rome in 1781. Regardless of his simple family background, he started out studying philosophy and literature in Prague. Later, having meanwhile become a violinist in a church choir, he took up studying to be a conductor and devoted much of his time to get training in playing the organ. In 1760 his op. 1 was published: six symphonies named after the first six months of the year. The fact that all of them were successes strengthened his resolve to become a composer, and in 1763 he started training his singing technique in Venice. His first opera *Mesfer*, written in 1764, was premiered in Parma. In 1766 he was commissioned to set Bonechi's libretto *Bellerofonte* to music this opera seria was first performed at the Teatro San Carlo in Naples on 20 January 1767. Following this opera, he wrote *Farnace*, a commission from the court of Naples. Subsequent to these first successes, Myslivecek's operas were given in every important Italian city: Turin, Rome, Venice, Bologna, Florence, and Milan.

In 1770 Myslivecek met Mozart in Bologna. In 1772 he, whose fame had already crossed the Italian borders, went to Vienna, and in 1773 his *Erjfile* was performed in Munich. In the years to follow, he wrote yet some more operas, but also instrumental pieces, that Mozart highly appreciated. Since the Italians found it difficult to pronounce Myslivecek's name, they would simply call him "il divino Boemo" or "Venatorini". From a stylistic point of view, his music should most appropriately be designated "Mozartean". According to the judgement of the famous soprano Caterina Gabrielli, nobody wrote so well for vocalists as Myslivecek. His compositions reveal a profound knowledge of both singing technique and the Italian language. He stuck to the da capo aria, yet the adroitness he displayed in his work with the rhythmic, tonal and thematic material is indeed remarkable. He always strove for the "pure beauty of the melody" and for a way of composing that would suit the voice of a singer in any possible respect.

In the original, the soprano aria in hand was scored for an orchestral accompaniment and for an obbligato solo part to be rendered by a French horn. The idea of my arrangement was, however, to make a performance possible even if there is no French horn player.

From this piece is also an arrangement for clarinet (violin), horn and piano (MPS 9409) published by P. Schmitt-Verlag, Koblenz/Rhine.

Peter Schmalfass