

## J. PEZEL'S MUSIC FOR THE ENSEMBLE OF COPPER WIND INSTRUMENTS IN THE CONTEXT OF GERMAN TRADITION OF 17<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

VICTOR SLUPSKIY<sup>1</sup>

**SUMMARY.** The creative activity of Johann Pezel, the then-known multiinstrumentalist, whose creative path and kind of activity reflects the life and status of the musician of the Baroque era, is analyzed in the article in the context of the development of the German ensemble performance on copper wind instruments of the 17th century. It is noted that the motivation for the appearance of works for the ensemble of copper wind was a purely practical need to replenish the repertoire of urban performers. The works are written considering the technical capabilities of the instruments and follow the specifics of the genre-style tendencies of German instrumental music of the 17th century. The subject matter and methods of analysis should be distributed to the composer's work of J. Pezel's contemporaries, who also created music for the ensemble of copper brass, and to include their works in the repertoire of current performers.

**Keywords:** German musical culture of the 17th century, J. Pezel's music, musician-multiinstrumentalist, ensemble of copper wind instruments, cornet, trombone.

### Introduction

The ensemble art of playing brass instruments is an important component of modern instrumental performance. Together with the solo and orchestral performance, it forms a holistic triad that covers the leading directions of the academic performance process. Known since ancient times, the art of ensemble playing on brass developed in close connection of sociocultural processes with the evolution of instrumentation, performing

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<sup>1</sup> *Professor PhD, Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky Academy of Music, Department of Brass and Percussion Instruments, slupskiy@gmail.com*

practice and composer's creativity and gained a striking outbreak in the early Baroque period. In modern art criticism, the ancient period of the history of ensemble performance on copper wind instruments has not received proper study and scientific substantiation, so its research seems necessary and relevant. Among the numerous national schools of the seventeenth century, we choose German, taking into account its significant contribution to the development of the brass band. The purpose of the research is to study the creative path of the famous at that time and currently forgotten German multi-instrumentalist Johann Pezel and to analyze the musical compositions he wrote for an ensemble of brass instruments.

### Literature Review

The works of J. Pezel were studied mainly by German and American musicologists by H. Riman<sup>2</sup>, A. Schering<sup>3</sup>, V. Peterson<sup>4</sup>, A. Simpson<sup>5</sup>, etc. However, in these works there is practically no analysis of the ensemble music we are studying for brass instruments. The authors set themselves other tasks – to find documents and musical works, to establish facts of the biography, to make a biography of a creative way, etc. Therefore, the appeal to the analysis of the mentioned musical works in this article is determined by practical needs and performed in order to cover the work of J. Pezel as one of the most prominent German musicians of the seventeenth century, the author of a large number of interesting but virtually unknown music for the brass band. An important motivational aspect is to bring to the attention of the performing community information about an interesting but little-known ensemble repertoire that should be included in training and concert programs.

Studies on brass instruments and the art of ensemble playing (by R. Laptev, S. Proskurin, O. Fedorkov, A. Baines, T. Herbert, D. Guion), on the medieval traditions of urban performance on wind instruments (by H. Moser, V. Slupskyi, R. Baroncini, E. Bowles, T. Collins, D. Guion), on genres and forms of instrumental music in the Baroque period (by Yu. Bocharov, E. Nazarova) and others were added to J. Pezel's analysis

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<sup>2</sup> Riemann, Hugo. *Musical Dictionary*. Moscow-Leipzig: P. Jurgenson, 1901-1904.

<sup>3</sup> Schering, Arnold. *Johann Pezel Turmmusiken und Suiten. Vorwort*, in: *enkmäler Deutscher Tonkunst. Erste Folge*. Bd. LXIII. Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1928, (p. V-VIII).

<sup>4</sup> Peterson, Wayne C. «Johann Pezel: Stadtpfeifer-composer», a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Music at The Kansas State University at Manhattan, 1975.

<sup>5</sup> Simpson, Adrienne. *Johann Pezel*, in: *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians (A–Z)*. 29 vols. London, 2000. CD-ROM.

of music. The materials contained in them became the context for determining the essence and specificity of works for the ensemble of brass wind instruments by J. Pezel.

## Discussion

In the context of German ensemble music for the brass instruments of the seventeenth century the figure of composer and multi-instrumentalist **Johann Pezel** (1639 – 1694) stands out. He was a multifaceted gifted and educated man, possessed of literary talent and spoke several languages [19]. J. Pezel's multifaceted talent was not limited to music, he was also known as the author of at least three literary musical-aesthetic works, which, unfortunately, were not preserved, but were mentioned in the "Musical Lexicon" by J.G. Walther (1732) – "Observationes musicae" (? 1683), "Infelix musicus" (1678), "Musica politico-practica" (1678)<sup>6</sup>. All this, despite the lack of reliable data on the humanitarian education of J. Pezel, testifies that he was a highly educated person, a specialist in German and foreign literature, as well as fluent in Italian<sup>7</sup>.

Information about his musical training is also quite limited. The beginning of J. Pezel's musical activity was associated with the violin performance. The lists of musicians of the German city of Leipzig for 1664 indicate that he was admitted to the position of the fourth member of the Kunstgeiger Skirmish Ensemble in the famous Leipzig Church of St. Thomas. However, among the group of urban musicians (staffpipers), the ensemble of violinists was considered less prestigious and lower paid compared to the quartet of wind instruments. The last ones were valued higher and were taken more often by participating in important festive ceremonies, and enjoyed certain economic benefits – free living at the expense of the city treasury, the opportunity to have more private students, and attractive employment prospects<sup>8</sup>. Better financial support of the musicians of the winds was often an incentive for the violinists to master additional wind instruments. Such a path of achievement of creative and financial success is obviously chosen by Kunstgeiger J. Pezel, beginning to master the performing art of the trumpeter-clarinist. However, according to the well-known German researcher A. Schering, in 1669, when the first collection of his works for the "Musica vespertina" wind instrument ensemble

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<sup>6</sup> Walther, Johann Gottfried. *Musikalisches Lexicon*. Leipzig: W. Deer, 1732, p. 475.

<sup>7</sup> Simpson, Adrienne. op. cit.

<sup>8</sup> Peterson, Wayne C. op. cit., p. 5.

was published in Leipzig, J. Pezel still worked as a city violinist<sup>9</sup>. Perhaps it was her appearance that helped the composer, whom H. Riemann calls “a diligent composer of instrumental music, especially for wind instruments”<sup>10</sup>, attract attention to his talent and gain permanent work among the better paid and respected urban musicians.

At the end of 1669 or the beginning of 1670, J. Pezel finally achieved his goal and became an urban staplefire of the brass band, because he perfectly mastered the clarino performing style. He held this position until 1681, at the same time acting as a Psalmist at Leipzig Church of St. Thomas. In 1677, J. Pezel applied to appoint him to the office of cantor. Despite the musician’s considerable performing and composing skills, his candidacy was rejected because of his former affiliation with the Catholic Church<sup>11</sup>. Dissatisfied with the church decision and frightened by the epidemic of the plague that has befallen Leipzig, J. Pezel decides to leave the city and moves to Bautzen, where he also receives the position of head of city musicians. Here he continues to work fruitfully on the creation of a new ensemble repertoire for brass instruments and in 1685 publishes a large series of plays for two cornets and three trombones under the name “Fünff-stimmigte blasende Music”, to which it included 76 intrades, alemandes, chimes, sarabands, gigs and other plays.

The most “distinguished musician of all the German state-bifiers of the Baroque era”<sup>12</sup> died on October 30, 1694.

J. Pezel was one of the most educated and talented state-bifiers of Leipzig. He is compared with the great Gottfried Reiche – trumpeter of J.S. Bach, author of works for brass instruments. G. Reiche arrived in Leipzig in 1688 and, like J. Pezel, traveled all the way from the city musician from Kunstgeiger to the head of the staffifiers, and by the time of of J.S. Bach’s arrival (1723) to the city he already had the fame of a prominent trumpeter.

J. Pezel’s creative heritage consists of several hundred pieces for wind and string ensembles. According to A. Schering, it is an important link connecting German music from H. Schütz to J.S. Bach<sup>13</sup>; at the same time, it has significant influence of Italian and French musical styles. J. Pezel wrote his works for a practical purpose: until the middle of the XVIII century wind music was heard twice from the Leipzig city tower or town hall, so there was a need for repertoire of J. Pezel, as a composer and performer, joined

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<sup>9</sup> Schering, Arnold. op. cit., p. V.

<sup>10</sup> Riemann, Hugo. op. cit., p. 1018.

<sup>11</sup> Peterson, Wayne C. op. cit., p. 7.

<sup>12</sup> Schering, Arnold. op. cit., p. V.

<sup>13</sup> Idem.

the process of writing and performing this music. As a former Kunstgeiger, he did not leave his fellow violinists without attention, so his opuses were often intended for both wind and string ensembles.

It was created for such an alternative composition of pfeifers or “skilled violinists” that “*Musica vespertina lipsiaca*” was written (“Evening Music of Leipzig”, 1669). It consists of five suites for a 5-voice ensemble of wind or string instruments, and each includes traditional Baroque suite dance pieces – *Allemande*, *Courente*, *Sarabande*, *Gigue*, and additional – *Sonate* (I-V), *Praelude* (II-IV), *Intrade* (V), *Ballett* (I, III), *Brandl* (I), *Gavotte* (III, V), *Ballo* (IV, V). Additional performances include dance (*Ballett*, *Brandl*, *Gavotte*, *Ballo*) and “abstract”<sup>14</sup> (*Sonate*, *Praelude*, *Intrade*). All five suites are opened by the Sonata, in suites №№ 2-4, followed by the Praelude, which is replaced by Intrada in suite № 5.

40 sonatas of the cycle “*Hora decima*” (“Tenth Hour”, 1670), is one of the first samples of a collection of works for an ensemble of copper wind instruments in German music. The creation of tower non-signal music for musicians to perform at 10 o'clock in the morning was quite natural: “from the towers, not only signal music but also choirs, excerpts from spiritual vocal and instrumental works, and so forth”<sup>15</sup>. The composer explains his creative conception by the fact that tower musicians can use their trombone and zinc playing to “... kindle Christian hearts for praise and glorification of the Lord”<sup>16</sup>. This design is embodied in the form of 40 small, non-programmatic instrumental works that were called sonatas in the tradition of the era – “an authorial, not quite genre-accurate designation”<sup>17</sup>.

In the early Baroque period, the name “sonata” was very common and was not tied to a specific, well-defined and stable genre-structural model. If at the end of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries sonatas were called works intended for instrumental playing (as opposed to cantatas intended for singing), then in this name were designated instrumental parts of vocal-instrumental works and operas, or “the first movements of cycles, including dance suite”<sup>18</sup>, and subsequently spread to independent one- or multi-movement instrumental opuses.

<sup>14</sup> Bocharov, Yuri. *Da chiesa e da camera*, in: *Starinnaya muzyka*, 3-4 (53-54), 2011, p. 20.

<sup>15</sup> Proskurin, Sergei. «Trumpet in the Baroque Era: Instrumentation, Repertoire, Performing Traditions», a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Music at The Rostov State Conservatory named after S.V. Rachmaninov, 2005, p. 46.

<sup>16</sup> Schering, Arnold. op. cit., p. VII.

<sup>17</sup> Proskurin, Sergei. op. cit., p. 74–75.

<sup>18</sup> Nazarova, Ekaterina. *Viennese sonatas of the mid-17th century for violin with continuo in the history of the genre*, in: *Nauchnyy vestnik Moskovskoy konservatorii*, 1 (24), 2016, p. 63.

Sonatas for J. Pezel's Wind Ensemble is an important step towards the emergence of a new type of ensemble performance that is unrelated to the signal-fanfare functions of brass instruments and their participation in ceremonies. Despite the fact that in the preface and the score the author indicates the possibility of the ensemble of stringed instruments, the initial purpose of these works for winds affects the nature of the theme and the choice of tonalities, among them the most "comfortable" for brass instruments C major, G major, F major, E minor, A minor.

The figurative content of the works are various in nature of the theme: solemn (Sonatas № 1, 2, 39), restrained, focused (Sonatas № 5, 13, 30), lyric (Sonata № 27), dance (Sonatas № 3, 6), mobile (Sonatas № 4, 14), lively, motor (Sonatas № 12, 14, 30). According to the conditions, all the magnitudes are small in size, written in the pace of Adagio. Most "Hora decima" sonatas have the same structure and consist of two movements, and a small number are one-movement (Sonatas № 3, 14, 30, 39).

With the example of "Hora decima" it is possible to observe different tendencies of formation of an instrumental cyclic composition for brass instruments in the German musical culture of the early Baroque period. The first of them corresponds to the peculiarities of a binary polyphonic cycle, such as "prelude / fantasy – fugue", in which the first movement is inferior to the scale of the more sophisticated and content-rich second, which accounts for the main semantic emphasis of the work (for example, Sonata № 13). In the sonatas of the second, larger group, the first and second movements are equivalent and complement each other both in the absence of contrast and in its presence, mainly at the intonation-thematic and, rarely, metric level.



### J. Pezel. "Hora decima". Sonata № 1. Party Cornetto I (manuscript)

The absence of established genre traits influenced the composition and dramaturgical features of sonatas, examples of which are Sonatas №№ 1 and 2.

In the small two-movement **Sonata № 1** (C major), each of the parts is based on comparisons of structures of homophonic harmonic and polyphonic texture. In Movement I (Adagio), the homophonic harmonic type of presentation is already evident in the first theme, performed by the entire five-piece brass band, consisting of two cornets and three trombones (alto, tenor, bass). The main thematic material is entrusted to the first cornet, whose full tune, mostly in tertiary, is supported by the second cornet.

Sonata (Nº 1)  
Adagio

Hora decima, Leipzig 1670

Cornetto vel Violino primo

Cornetto vel Violino secondo

Trombone vel Viola prima

Trombone vel Viola seconda

Basso Trombone vel Violone

### J. Pezel. "Hora decima". Sonata № 1. Movement I

Their parties are built on a smooth, gradual movement within the second octave and are more individualized than monorhythmic trombone parties containing the tone of the chord texture<sup>19</sup>.

Then the homophonic harmonic texture gives way to a polyphonic presentation, and the ensemble voices become equal. The ratio of instruments is also subject to change: the polyphonic deployment of a new theme based on the downward movement of the tertiary begins in the bass trombone party, to which the cornet I is added late.

Adagio

Cornetto vel Violino primo

Cornetto vel Violino secondo

Trombone vel Viola prima

Trombone vel Viola seconda

Basso Trombone vel Violone

### J. Pezel. "Hora decima". Sonata № 1. Movement I

<sup>19</sup> Proskurin, Sergei. op. cit., p. 53–54.

In the future, the topic is presented with tertiary duplication in different tone pairs (cornet II – bass trombone, cornet I – alto trombone), and again *stretto* in the final construction. In the following imitations of Movement I, pairs of instrumental combinations occur again (cornet II – tenor trombone, cornet I – bass trombone).

The Movement II (*Adagio*) is written in three-meter long 3/2 and contains new material. The initial theme of the choral texture demonstrates the equality of all the parties of the ensemble, which are practically in one rhythm throughout the whole ten-stroke construction.

**E.g. 4**



**J. Pezel. "Hora decima". Sonata № 1. Movement II**

The following section is approximated to the shape of the fugue with a short reprise. Singing cornets and a bass trombone, which doubles as a tertiary, are used to perform a small theme based on the chanting figure, while the alto and tenor trombones perform middle voices. The choral sound completes the Movement II of the whole ensemble (the last 7 volumes), which gives the composition a logical completeness and creates the features of reprise.

Similar compositional techniques are available in **Sonata № 2** (C-major), which is also two-movement. Movement I (*Adagio*) open with a five-voice ensemble that performs the original theme of a choir composed entirely in homophonic harmonic texture. The rhythmically active fanfare motif of four eight-lengths in the first cornet party further forms the basis of an intense rhythmic and melodic movement that encompasses all the voices of the ensemble. In this case, the monorhythmic nature of the choral texture is maintained throughout the presentation of the theme, until the final cadence.

E.g. 5

Sonata (Nº 2)  
Adagio

A musical score for a five-part ensemble. The score is written in 3/2 time and consists of five staves. The top staff is in treble clef, and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The middle three staves are in alto clefs. The music is in a key with one sharp (F#) and features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests.

J. Pezel. "Hora decima". Sonata Nº 2. Movement I

In the future, the rigorous chord sound is inferior to the more advanced imitation-polyphonic presentation, with the appearance of new thematic material whose intonation-rhythmic contour is characterized by greater liveliness, sophistication, and a certain technical complexity for all members of the ensemble.

Movement II (*Adagio*, 3/2) opens with the solemn sound of a five-voice chorus, followed by a more accelerated fugue section. Its motor theme begins with the cornet II, which draws its energy into the intensive movement of all the members of the ensemble.

E.g. 6

A musical score for a five-part ensemble, labeled "Adagio". The score is written in 3/2 time and consists of five staves. The top staff is in treble clef, and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The middle three staves are in alto clefs. The music is in a key with one sharp (F#) and features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests.



**J. Pezel. "Hora decima". Sonata № 2. Movement II**

The composer's skill and ingenuity allow J. Pezel to organize the presentation of the thematic material in such a way as to combine the chord texture naturally and logically with the polyphonic techniques of working with the theme. For example, in the one-piece *Sonata № 3 F major* melody line of the upper voice in the initial three-stroke accompanies the bass-like downward movement of the bass part in the octave range, which further moves into the first cornet part and forms imitations. In the future, this topic varies widely, and its rhythmically transformed version gains imitative-polyphonic development.

**E.g. 7**

**Sonata (№ 3)  
Adagio**



**J. Pezel. "Hora decima". Sonata № 3**

In *Sonata № 12 G major* polyphonic technique becomes the basis of interesting rhythmic transformations of the theme, which in double reduction takes place in all the voices of the ensemble.

## Sonata (№ 12)

Adagio

## J. Pezel. “Hora decima”. Sonata № 12

Functional distribution of parties in sonatas for brass instruments by J. Pezel is mostly stable and completely in line with the traditions of ensemble instrumental performance of the time. All five instruments, regardless of the intonational, rhythmic and tessitric complexity of the material, are involved in the construction of the imitation-polyphonic texture. The bass trombone party in Movement II of Sonata № 4 F major, which has octave jumps of eight, in Sonata № 6 A minor, where the jump for an increased octave of F - F sharp, as well as in Sonata № 12 G major and № 13 G major, containing complex intonation constructions of sixteen durations, is indicative.

In episodes of choral and homophonic texture, the functions of the ensemble's voices change. When performing topics in the choral texture, sometimes there is a minor and inconspicuous “complication” of the first cornet party, while in homophonic harmonic constructions, the distribution of the ensemble into three functional groups is more common: salting the first and second cornets, filling the middle range and bass trombone foundation. The bass part is important and diverse: the bass trombone harmoniously supports the sound of the solo cornets, complements the soloists' dialogue, or even performs a less developed and melodically meaningful party than other ensemble voices (Sonatas № 4, 6, 12).

Adagio

### J. Pezel. "Hora decima". Sonata № 13

**"Fünf-stimmigte blasende Music"** ("Five-part Wind Music", 1685) is a corpus of 76 pieces for an ensemble of brass instruments written in different genres, including dance miniatures (*Allemande, Courente, Bal, Sarabande, Gigue*) took an important place in the non-dancing Intrade.

The dance pieces are dominated by a homophonic texture, based on a melodic duet of 1 and 2 cornets, supplemented by a developed bass voice (bass trombone) and middle voices containing harmonic filling (alto and tenor trombones, see *Allemande № 17, Courente №№ 18, 36, Bal №. 24*). However, the collection contains plays of pieces choral texture, dominated by monorhythmic (*Sarabande № 30, 63*), as well as imitation-polyphonic texture, with imitation in pairs of upper and middle voices (*Allemande № 60*), or those that are close to the fugue in form and features (*Courente № 61, Gigue № 64*).

But the greatest variety in the work with thematic material, ways of organizing the texture and building forms J. Pezel demonstrates in Intradas. So, in the small two-movement *Intrade №13 C major* uses a form of a fugue with polyphonic texture in the middle register. The leading importance of the alto and tenor trombone parties is emphasized by their assignment of the initial tense presentation of the theme in the first section of the play.

E.g. 10

Intrade (N° 13) Fünff-stimmigte blasende Music,  
Frankfurt a.M. 1685

Cornetto I

Cornetto II

Trombone Alto

Trombone Tenore

Trombone Grosso

J. Pezel. "Fünff-stimmigte blasende Music". Intrade № 13

In *Intrade №35 G major*, the choral texture of the initial two-stroke is further stratified into three layers: a melodized lower voice and two one-tone monorhythmic duets of cornets and trombones; at the same time, the main thematic load also falls on the party of alt and tenor trombones.

E.g. 11

Intrade (N° 35) VIII

Cornetto I

Cornetto II

Trombone Alto

Trombone Tenore

Trombone Grosso



**J. Pezel. "Fünf-stimmigte blasende Music". Intrade № 35**

In *Intrade № 59 C major* combines homophonic and polyphonic texture, the united voices contain elements of contrast and imitation polyphony. The finale of *Intrade № 71 C major* features a two-tone canon of cornets with a brilliant, fanfarely baroque theme, accompanied by a duet of alto and tenor trombones against the backdrop of a simple and clearly constructed functional-harmonic bass trombone line.

**E.g. 12**

Intrade (№71) XVI

**J. Pezel. "Fünf-stimmigte blasende Music". Intrade № 71**

Thus, in the Intradas of the collection “Fünf-stimmigte blasende Music” there is a certain evolution of the functions of the voices of the instrumental ensemble of copper brass: from the Renaissance model with juxtaposition of one-timbre duets (2 cornets – 2 trombones) and harmonic support in the party bass trombone, medium-sized parties who teach thematic material and adorn themselves with active upper voices, and attempts to combine different timbre in imitation constructions, pending the approval of a new principle of the distribution of the functions of voices in the ensemble, which arises with the appearance of a homophonic harmonic texture and is indicated by the leading melodic role of the top pair of voices.

An analysis of the works of J. Pezel for the brass ensemble reveals several innovative features that characterize these works not as applied (signal) but as purely musical:

- 1) approval of the 5-voice quantity of instruments (two cornets and three trombones).
- 2) multifunctionality of parties and gradual stabilization of functions of votes.

An important factor is the emergence of different ways of combining copper wind instruments in an ensemble:

- 1) juxtaposition of one-timbre duets (2 cornets – 2 trombones) with harmonious support in the bass trombone party.
- 2) forming an ensemble with thematically leading middle parties adorning active upper voices.
- 3) strengthening the equality of all parties in polyphonic parts.
- 4) the combination of different timbre when performing polyphonic themes in imitation constructions.
- 5) approval of typical functions of a homophonic harmonic texture with a leading melody in the upper voice, which is the focus.

An ensemble of brass instruments by J. Pecel – two cornets and three trombones – appeared in the images of that time.

Figure 1.



“Wedding Procession” (Germany, about 1590)

## Conclusions

The creative activity of J. Pezel reflects the life and status of the musician of the Baroque era in the context of the development of the German ensemble performance on copper wind instruments of the 17th century. The study of J. Pezel's life-creativity makes it possible to conclude that this musician made a significant contribution to the formation of a multi-genre repertoire for ensembles of brass instruments. In his works for brass ensembles, J. Pezel overcomes the framework of the signaling functions of the tower trumpet repertoire and opens the way for the development of full ensemble music. J. Pezel's works reflect the stylistic features of his era and are extremely attractive for contemporary performance. Prospects for further research consist in spreading of the subject of the article and methods of analysis to the works of contemporaries J. Pezel, who wrote for the brass band, and to include this music in the repertoire of contemporary performers.

*Translated by Iryna Koval*

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