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History Of Clarinet: An Review

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ABSTRACT:-

The clarinet's predecessor was the chalumeau-the first true single reed instrument. It appeared in the late 1600's and wasn't very flexible and had a range of about 1.5 octaves. Johann Christoph Denner (Nuremburg) and his son, Jacob are attributed to innovating the speaker key which gave the clarinet a larger register. The clarinet overblows at the 12th, the other woodwind instruments overblow at the octave. So, when you play with the thumb and first three fingers of the left hand without the speaker key, you sound the note C. When you add the speaker key, you do not get a Can octave higher, you sound a G, which is the interval of a twelfth. Because of his improvements of the chalumeau J C Denner is said to be the inventor of the clarinet. The clarinet is individual in the shape of its bore, as well. While every other woodwind instrument has a conical bore (yes, even the flute!) the clarinet has a cylindrical bore-it doesn't flare, even though the bell of the clarinet gives that impression. This is why the clarinet overblows at the twelfth and is so laden with overtones, which contributes to its unique sound. In the late 1700's, many improvements were made to the clarinet-more keys were added and the tone holes were experimented with different cuts and such. Iwan Muller (German) developed a thirteen keyed model. This clarinet remained in favor until the late 1800's. Klose and Buffet adapted the Boehm (flute) fingering system to the clarinet ca. 1839-1843. This system is the one most common today, although there are other fingering systems in use such as the Albert and Auler (mostly in Germany.)

KEY WORDS :- Flexible, Instruments, Improvements, Overblows, Sound, Tones

The basset horn is a type of clarinet usually pitched in F. This was the instrument which Mozart composed his Clarinet Concerto and Quintet. His friend, Anton Stadler was a virtuosic basset hornist and Mozart fell in love with the mellow, dark tone of the clarinet.

Some of the more notable works for the clarinet are Mozart's Concerto and the Quintet, Brahms' Two Sonatas Op. 120 and his Quintet. The clarinet's tone is really very complimentary to strings and vice-versa.

Some noted performers are Anton Stadler (late 1700's), Richard Muhlfield (mid-to-late 1800's) and more recently Stanley Drucker (principle of the NY Phil) Richard Stoltzman (freelance soloist) Larry Combs (principle of Chicago Sym.) James Pyne (noted pedagogue at Ohio State Univ.) Anthony Gigliotti (principle of Philadelphia and pedagogue at Temple Univ.) and Jon Manasse, young soloist, faculty at Eastman and recording artist.

Eddie Daniels, Pete Fountain, Benny Goodinan and Woody Herman are probably the most famous of the jazz players.

Key system evolution

The standard Boehm system evolved from the flute Boehm (Theobald Boehm-umlaut over the O) ca. 1830. Basic idea is to place the holes more acoustically than for comfort this was how the earlier system was set up to fit the average hand. With an intricate system of keys and springs, Boehm was able to produce a more in tune and stable instrument. even though the tonal quality suffered from the pure sound of the earlier key systems.

This system has been used on the clarinet, saxophone, oboe and a hybrid is used on the bassoon.

The Albert system of fingering on the clarinet is still in use by some (very few) in the US and some in Europe. The problem with the Albert system is that of cross-fingerings-the very thing that the Boehm system eliminated. These are very complex and pose major technical problems in difficult passages.

The Auler (pronounced oiler) system is the preferred system in Germany. It is altogether different than the Boehm and requires cross-fingerings as well. The Auler clarinet also has roller keys-like those found on a sax.

Clarinet in Romantic Era

The Romantic Era can be viewed as the period when the clarinet came into its own. With technical developments in keywork, improvements in the possible range of the instrument and innovations in sound production and intonation, the clarinet was bound to become a staple in romantic music. Composers began to favor its voice-like cantabile, its remarkable range and its ability to blend with strings, horns and the other members of the woodwind family. It is no wonder that the clarinet became a prominent instrument in the genres of symphonic literature, opera, band music, chamber music and solo literature.

Prior to the 19th century, the clarinet had found a place in the works of Mozart and other classical composers. There is not substantial literature for the clarinet prior to the classical era. The clarinet was still in very infant stages in the Baroque and Rococo eras. There is evidence that the chalumeau, the precursor to the clarinet, appeared in the 16th and 17th centuries.

Johann Denner "invented" an improved chalumeau with seven tone holes and two keys around 1690. The instrument had a range of a twelfth and had a low sound for its relatively small 8 1/4 inch size. This "improved chalumeau" was used by composers such as Telemann in *Carillon for Two Chalumeaux* and by Gluck in *Orfeo*.

In 1700, Johann Denner placed the two keys in such a way that one was capable of overblowing the instrument at the twelfth, giving it a range of almost three octaves. Around 1710, Jacob Denner, son of Johann, experimented more with the placement of the keys and discovered positions that allowed for a clearer upper register which was slightly easier to tune. This innovation is said to have excited Baroque and Pre-classic composers, as now the richness of the clarinet's 'clarion' register, where it is most known for its cantabile and voice-like timbre could be played with greater ease. The third key, enabling the clarinet to play the third line b-natural was added around 1740.

By 1740, Vivaldi had written three concerti grossi for two clarinets and two oboes and Handel wrote an overture for two clarinets and *como di caccia* in the same decade. Karl Stamitz and Georg Fuchs wrote concertos for the members of the Mannheim Orchestra in the decade of 1780 and it is during this time that there was significant experimentation with the bore and the cut of the tone holes. The concertos by Stamitz and Fuchs demonstrate the ease with which players could now pass from the low register to the high register. Tuning and chromatic playing were still great obstacles, but the clarinet was built in various keys to circumvent this problem.

The players in the Mannheim Orchestra were more than likely oboe players and doubled on the three keyed clarinet. By 1778 the five keyed clarinet had appeared and most orchestral clarinet players were indeed clarinet players. although the doubling of oboists on the clarinet continued for some time

after. It was for the five keyed clarinet that Mozart wrote his Concerto and Quintet. It is amazing to imagine one playing the music of Mozart with all of his notes and modulations on an instrument that had only five keys. The writing is extremely idiomatic in that the technical challenges and virtuosic displays sit well within the limits of the instrument. The concerto and quintet were inspired by Mozart's friend and fellow Freemason, Anton Stadler. Stadler's low register is what attracted Mozart most. Mozart often referred to the beauty of the sound of the clarinet with its similarity to the human voice, and once wrote to his father during a trip to Italy that he longed for clarinets in their orchestras.

The five keyed clarinet remained the main clarinet in use in orchestras and solo literature until Ivan Muller's innovations came about in the early 19th century. Beethoven's symphonies were probably played on 5 keyed clarinets until a decade after he died. There were players in the early part of the 19th century that used multi-keyed instruments, but five keyed instruments were still very standard.

Ludwig von Beethoven's early symphonies were often written for clarinet in C, a higher instrument with a tone more like that of the modern E-flat clarinet than of the B-flat clarinet. The parts written for the clarinet in these symphonies are much like that of Haydn's. The clarinet has no major solos or truly idiomatic writing, they are used for harmonic support and do not feature many chromatic passages. It is in the fourth symphony that the clarinet becomes a prominent color in Beethoven's music. There has been speculation that because the clarinet is written in C, that it should be played in modern times either on a C clarinet or an E-flat clarinet because the tone color was what Beethoven had wanted.

Beethoven befriended the Viennese clarinetist Joseph Friedlowsky and often asked for technical guidance on writing for the instrument. Though this friendship resulted in no solo works for the clarinet, the clarinet did acquire a more important role in Beethoven's symphonies. Beethoven is known to have written very creative and technically demanding solos and solis for the clarinet, requiring extremes in range, tonal control, technique and dynamics.

Beethoven's Sixth Symphony is laden with solos for many wind instruments. Near the end of the first movement, the clarinet has a solo passage that requires great control of range, articulation and dynamics. The andante movement provides the clarinet with the opportunity to sing in cantabile style with great arpeggios spanning most of the practical range of the instrument. In the Allegro movement, fear is struck into the hearts of players with a passage of a downward D7 arpeggio in eighth notes requiring rapid, crisp tonguing. The allegretto is noted for its 'cuckoo' motive.

Carl Maria von Weber contributed a great deal to the clarinet literature. There are two concerti, one concertino and the well known solo in the overture to Der Freischütz. Concerto No. 1 in f minor, Concerto No. 2 in E-flat and the Concertino in E-flat were all written in 1811. The works were written for the German virtuoso, Heinrich Baermann. The works all contain highly difficult and technical passages. There are arpeggios throughout demanding great control of range. Some start at the absolute lowest note possible on the clarinet and stretch to the highest notes that one could reach even today. Few compositions written since match Weber's technical demands. Whereas Mozart favored the low 'chalumeau' range of the instrument, Weber preferred the clarion (fourth line D to ledger line C) register. He also seemed entertained by the fact that the clarinet could play a range of almost four octaves. The third movement of the Second Concerto is particularly notorious for its demand of technical facility.

With extended sections of sixteenth note triplets at a bright tempo to be played with virtuosic lightness, Heinrich Baermann must have had incredible technique to play these compositions on an instrument that had only five keys. Ivan Muller may be considered the father of the modern clarinet. Born in Russia, he moved to Paris in 1809 where many of the premiere woodwind makers of the day were located. He began his innovations on the clarinet in 1806, three years after Beethoven wrote his Eroica Symphony, but did not submit his "new" clarinet to the Paris Conservatory committee until 1815.

Possibly the most important contributions that Muller made were not in his 13 key system, but in his cut of the tone holes and the composition of the pads. The tone holes were undercut, meaning that they were not holes like a recorder would have, but were raised and then cut so as to facilitate easier fingering. By placing certain holes higher or lower, the intonation and/or sound could be improved. The obstacle was

that by putting certain keys higher or lower, the player could not reach them. Muller's key system also allowed for extra openings, further improving tone and pitch. This provided a series of extra keys that could open and close in conjunction with the use of other keys and without the need for six extra fingers. The pads on a clarinet to this point had been made of felt. Muller's pads were made of wool and covered with gut or leather. They did not fall off as easily and were more waterproof (an important factor to wind players) than felt.

Muller presented his instrument of thirteen keys and gut pads to the Paris Conservatory in 1815. They rejected it without debate. It was not that Muller had invented something radical with too many keys; the problem that the elders had was that it would eliminate the need for clarinets in various keys. Muller's clarinet boasted a fine tone, was in a convenient size pitched in B-flat and could comfortably play chromatically and in all keys. The elders preferred the difference in tone colors of the clarinets in various keys and claimed that it would be almost blasphemous to eliminate them.

Hector Berlioz composed his *Symphonie Fantastique* in 1830. Almost certainly the clarinetist in the orchestra was solely a clarinet player and not a doubler, and undoubtedly played upon at least a thirteen keyed clarinet. The clarinet was in a heavy state of transition in the middle of the 19th century and players would often have extra keys put on their instruments. There is no true standard than to say that most players used at least a thirteen keyed clarinet and this is what most composers were writing for. Berlioz' *Symphony Fantastique* is most noted for its amazing D clarinet part in the fifth movement. The section is now played commonly on an E-flat clarinet as the D clarinet is practically obsolete.

Berlioz is noted for his innovative orchestration and use of orchestral timbre. His use of the clarinet and its newly extended technical possibilities opened the door for much more use of the clarinet in future compositions. Berlioz understood the variations in tone color, articulation, dynamics and range, not only throughout the instrument but throughout the entire family of instruments. The clarinet's versatility was now in full bloom.

The collaboration of Hyacinthe Klose and Auguste Buffet was an important one to the world of the modern clarinetist. Klose and Buffet selected ideas of T. Boehm and his flute key system and applied them to the clarinet. Because there are fundamental acoustic differences between the flute and the clarinet (the flute overblows at the octave and the clarinet at the twelfth) one could not put a strict Boehm system on the clarinet. Klose and Buffet applied the ring-key system. The rings are placed over the open tone holes and attached to a series of springs and keys that one could not reach with the fingers. The additional keys cover or open holes that bring certain problematic notes better in tune and give other problematic notes a better tone. The patent for this instrument was granted to Buffet in 1844. The French model clarinet has changed little since then. The so called "Boehm" clarinet has 17 keys and 6 rings to this day.

The German clarinet maker Oskar Oehler of Berlin used a key system based very much on Muller's clarinet. The sound of German clarinets differ profoundly from French clarinets. It is a darker, denser sound with a very cylindrical quality. The difference is in the bore, though the key system probably has some influence over the difference in sound quality. Oehler's clarinet has 22 keys, five rings and finger plate. With these additional keys and mechanisms, the tone and pitch of certain notes is dramatically improved. The drawback is that the technique required is far more complex. Quite often French, British or American compositions are more difficult or simply do not work on the German (Oehler) system with the same being true of the opposite. It is perhaps more pronounced in the method and technical studies books of each individual school of playing.

Johannes Brahms is possibly the most important figure in chamber music for the clarinet in the 19th century. Brahms wrote two sonatas, a trio and a quintet for the clarinet. Brahms was exposed to the lyrical capabilities of the clarinet by the playing of Richard Muhlfield, an extraordinary Viennese clarinetist with the Meiningen Orchestra. The technical possibilities of the clarinet had been written well for by the likes of Weber and Rossini in his *Introduction, Theme and Variations for Clarinet and Orchestra*. It was the lyrical, singing quality that had been overlooked for so long.

Although the Brahms' Op. 120, no. 2 is the more popular of his two sonatas for clarinet, Op. 120 no. 1 will be examined. It makes outstanding use of the technique of a player; the performer is required to play in all the registers of the instrument, as though playing a stringed instrument. The works are in fact also regularly performed on the viola. Grand sweeping lines begin with the piano in the opening four measures of the work. The clarinet then takes the line with very melodic intervals in tenths over two different breaks in the instrument's range. The work becomes increasingly chromatic and stays for a good deal of the development in the key of B-flat minor, a key that might have been unthinkable sixty years prior and most unpracticed thirty years before.

The second movement, Andante, is clearly a tribute to the fine singing quality of the clarinet. It sounds as a and one could easily imagine it vocalized. The third movement is a quasi-minuet and trio. The tune is reminiscent of folk music and songs Brahms might have heard in Biergartens of the time. Brahms, having spent a good deal of his early life in Hamburg in brothels and drinking establishments, must have heard very folksy clarinet playing throughout his lifetime. The third movement does not lack class or mock the clarinet, rather it is a polished and complex dance movement. The fourth movement is finale in the most complete use of the term. It requires the player to again display his range and control of it, but also explores in detail the differing types and qualities of articulation. lullaby

Brahms wrote his clarinet sonatas in 1894, three years before his death. The works stand not only as sonata writing in its greatest light, with masterly control form and development, but remains some of the most beautiful and personal music that Brahms composed.

There is much literature for the clarinet written during the Romantic period. For instruments such as the flute, oboe or violin, there has been literature: solo, chamber and orchestral, from all classified periods of Western music. The clarinet, still in its infant stages through the Baroque and much of the Classic periods, did not come to the fore in literature until the early 19th century. There were many improvements to be made on the clarinet before it could perform the demands that players and composers alike desired.

Inventors and players including Ivan Muller, Hyacinthe Klose and Auguste Buffet set new standards for clarinet playing. This laid the path for composers to write more creatively and brilliantly for the clarinet.

The largest body of work for the clarinet was still to come in the twentieth century. Clarinetists and historians do not argue that the most important technical development and increase in importance of the clarinet occurred in the Romantic Period.

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