Beer and clarinet performance practice

Technical matters

Along the way of discovering Josef Beer's fantastic biography, one can find out some of the unique characteristics of his playing. Those can lead to understand better the requirements of a good playing and what could and should be the astonishing features of an exceptional playing. Since very little work has been previously done about the clarinetist Josef Beer, it is near to impossible to draw a limpid picture of his way of playing. Seeking to shed light on the unique clarinet playing style of this player, we will discuss the general trends of performance practice at the turn of the 19th century in order to draw a portrait as close as possible to Beer's musical personality.

It is assumed by all of the few scholars who discuss Beer career that he was using a five-keyed instrument and that he didn't change or add keys in the course of his life, but this assumption was never proved. His clarinets were never identified and it is hard to state for sure which kind of instruments he had. The keys appeared gradually on the clarinet over the years since its invention, at the turn of the 18th century. The first key to appear was the speaker/register key (located at the back of the instrument, and activated by the left thumb), the a' key, then the e/b' key, the f#/c#' , the ab/e''b and finally the c#/g#''. According to Fétis, Beer was responsible for adding this last c#/g#''' key, but the assertion is challenged by Lefevre[1] who states in his method that the maker Fritz from Brunswick was indeed responsible for adding the the last keys to the clarinet. I think, however, that one doesn't preclude the other, since the instrument building was an area of commerce in which inventions and novelty were flourishing at an extreme speed, not unlike today's booming electronic market. A similar invention could have thus been invented at different place. Another possibility is that Beer came to Fritz with the request to improve the difficult tuning of the c# and g#''' and the solution Fritz found was the addition of this specific key.

The question of the maker of Beer's clarinets is also a pertinent one, since he travelled a lot and was probably in contact with many instruments of extremely good quality, from prolific capitals in the wind factoring such as Paris and Berlin. Considering he started his professional career in France at the the same time Valentin Roeser published a method for the four-keyed clarinet[2] and died in

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[1] Lefevre, Xavier. *Methode de clarinette*. Nadermann. Paris. 1802. p. 1.

[2] Roeser, Valentin. *Essai d'instruction à l'usage de ceux qui composent pur la clarinette et le cor*. Facsimile from 1764. Reprint Minkoff editions. Genève. 1972.

Germany only one year before Carl Maria von Weber's Concertino, clearly written for an instrument with at least 10 keys[3] came out, it is very likely he updated his instrument at some point in his career. The strongest argument for determining if a piece should be played on a five- or six-keyed instrument is the presence of a C# in the score. Indeed, this note is practically impossible to play (and in tune) without the help of the key. Beer's Concerto Opus 1, dated 1807, don't have any C# in the clarinet part and thus can be played on a five-keyed instrument. However, many passages ask for a brisk, full sounding or fast appoggiatura G#''', a note using the same key. Moreover, since players such as Xavier Lefèvre include a six-keyed instrument in his method in 1802, is it very likely that the key was already in use for some time before he had added the engraving to his work. As late as 1776, an entry in the Diderot and D'Alembert signed by Frederic de Castillon describe in great length the four-keyed clarinet, an instrument that clearly don't allow any player to perform Carl Stamitz's or Josef Beer's works. This conclusion force us to admit Beer had an instrument with the novelty of the fifth-key.

When Beer was positioned in Potsdam, he probably was in contact with the maker Friedrich Gabriel Kirst, who was also working in this city. In 1793, Kirst advertised a luxurious « Bb clarinet of dark ebony wood with two joints, four mouthpieces, three barrels and silver keys » at the price of seven Louis d'or, an expensive price for the time.[4] Beer could have been a potential client for Kirst with his deluxe instruments offer. This is also interesting to notice the four mouthpieces and three barrels the maker offer with the instrument, a clue that players were definitely conscious of the tuning challenges and were looking for a concrete solution. This could also allow the player to play in courts where the standard pitch was different than in the one where they were working usually. Still nowadays, clarinet players often rely themselves on a variety of barrels to hep them adjust their pitch. For instance, barrels tuning the clarinet at A=440Hz or A=442hz are the most frequent used, depending on the standard tuning of each orchestra. As we can see, two barrels can already make a sounding difference of 2 hertz, which is not negligible. As E. Hoeprich points out, this was very likely how Beer was able to travel through Europe and played with a great variety or orchestra, thus pitches.[5]

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[3] Indeed, Baermann bought a 10-keyed clarinet from the makers Griesling & Schlott when he left the army in 1807, shortly after leaving his teacher at the Royal Prussian Life Guards. He would have upgraded for a twelve-keys in the course of the next decade, since witnesses report to have heard him play on such an instrument when he toured in France in 1817-1818.

[4] Rice, Albert R. *The Clarinet in the Classical Period*. Oxford University Press. 2003. p. 39. English traduction by A. Rice from original text: *Eine B Clarinett von schwarz Ebenholz mit 2 Stück 4 Schnabel 3 Birnen und verssilberten Klappen, von Kirst. 7 L'dor.* From Journal für Literature, cxxiii.

[5] Hoeprich, Eric. *The Clarinet*. Yale University Press. 2008. p. 93.

The type of clarinet Beer may have used brings back the issue of his embouchure, or more precisely his very probable change of embouchure in the course of his career. As mentioned previously in the chapter *The Russian Years*, Beer was on tour when he came across the player Schwartz who astonished him with his beautiful German tone. Scholars agree that Beer probably took the decision to change his technique by means of switching his mouthpiece to have the reed on the lower lip. This major change in his playing, occurring probably in the early 1780s, had great incidence on the way he approached the instrument. One other important player seems to have done the same embouchure change, around 1800: Berhnard Crusell, who at that time did extensive travels through Europe, including to Berlin and Potsdam, where he had lesson with Franz Tausch and could have heard Josef Beer.[6]

Indeed, many sounding differences are resulting of the reed-below or reed-above technique. Countless methods give advices on how to create a good embouchure in order to produce a satisfying clarinet tone. Vanderhagen, in his method of 1785, explains how to practice the reed-above technique adequately:

> *I will say, thus, do not put the mouthpiece of the clarinet too high [into the mouth], but only up to the absence of the cut of the reed. (…) Support the mouthpiece on the teeth and cover the reed with the upper lip, in no case touching the reed with the upper teeth, because the upper teeth have to sustain and press on the upper lip in order to pinch the high notes. The lips of the mouth must close firmly for one not to lose air through the mouth.*[7]

The action to pinch mentioned by the above author required to obtain high-pitched notes on the clarinet is a clue that the French technique of playing had a more brilliant sound and that the high register was attained by forcing the sound to break, rather than with a controlled support and use of the tongue's position in the mouth like today's general trends. In his method, Vanderhagen mentions further different types of articulations including the tongued one, underlying he finds it the nicest,

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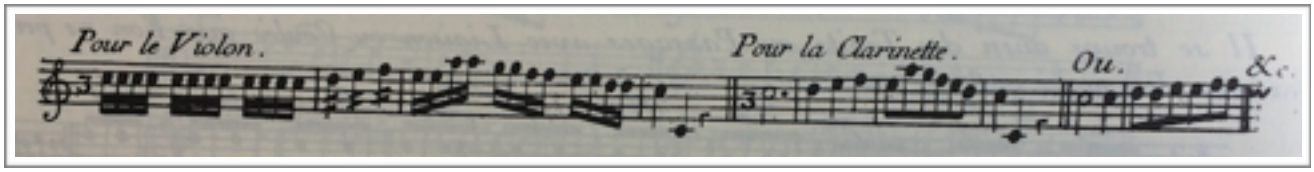
[6] Dahlström, Fabian. *Crusell, Bernhard*. Grove Music Online. Last accessed February 24th 2017

[7] Rice, Albert R. *The Clarinet in the Classical Period*. Oxford University Press. 2003. p. 82. Translated by A. Rice from original text: « (…) je dirai donc qu'il ne faut pas emboucher le bec de la clarinette trop avant. Mais seulement jusqu'au défaut de la taille de l'anche; car en enfonçant la clarinette trop avant dans la bouche, on perd le moyen de la gouverner acause du pincé qui ne peut avoir lieu faute d'élasticité; et l'anche se trouvant appuiée sur le bec de la ligature, ne peut plus agir; il ne faut donc emboucher l'instrument que comme je l'ai dit plus haut, appuier le bec sur les dents, couvrir l'anche de la lêvre supérieure sans que les dents de la rangée supérieure u touchent en aucun cas. Car ce sont les dents qui doivent soutenir et donner de la force pour rincer dans les tons hauts, il faut aussi que les côtés de la bouche soient bien fermés pour qu'on n'entende pas le vent sortir à côté de l'embouchure (…). »

and explains how to execute it with the sound « t » or « d ». The clarinetist Blasius writes likewise in his method dated 1796 advices to play the clarinet with the reed leaning on the upper lip, but strongly recommends the player to cover all the teeth, making sure the mouthpiece nor the reed are touched in any case by them. One of Beer's French pupil, Michel Yost, suggests as late as 1801, that the reed should be facing up and that the mouthpiece could touch the lower teeth, a detail that differs from Blasius' instruction.

The French technique of playing was obviously creating some limitations, especially regarding the articulation. Valentin Roeser, who wrote the first known treatise on how to compose for the clarinet approximately at the time Beer arrived in France, explains why composers should never write repeated sixteenth notes on the clarinet, like it is often written for the violin: « many repeated sixteenth notes are not employed on the clarinet since the lungs must substitute for the tongue stroke, due to the position of the reed under the roof of the mouth. »[8]



Articulation for the violin vs. articulation for the clarinet. Roeser, Valentin. Essai d'instruction à l'usage de ceux qui composent pour la clarinette et le cor. 1764.

Roeser's explanation of the way to compose realistically for the clarinet shows us how articulation, then made by the chest rather than the tongue, was possibly less precise or sharp, certainly less rapid, and that the general sound of the clarinet in France at that time was legato, rarely provided with sparkling articulation, without necessarily being overly cantabile, a characteristic more associated with the German school of playing. The limitation of fast articulation associated with French playing was overcome over time, as glaring evidences can be pointed out in later music; one can think of Mendelssohn's *scherzo* in *Midsummer's Night's Dream* or the final movement his *Italian Symphony* to realize how demanding tonguing has rapidly become with the establishment of the German embouchure technique. Three different kinds of articulation were possible on the clarinet at the end of the 18th century: with the chest, the throat or the tongue. Lefèvre warns the

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[8] Roeser, Valentin. *Essai d'instruction à l'usage de ceux qui composent pour la clarinette et le cor.* Facsimile from 1764. Reprint Minkoff editions. Genève. 1972. p.12.

player who uses the chest articulation, saying this one is very exhausting and keeps one from playing with equality.[9]

Counting a fair amount of disadvantages and detaching itself from the changing aesthetic expectations of the time, the reed-above technique lost adherents all over Europe. Musicians advocating for the reed-below technique started to immerge already in the 1780s. For instance, the Norwegian bandmaster Berg wrote a treatise in 1782 named *Den forste Prove for Begyndere Audi Instrumental-Kunsten* explaining:

> *If you want the clarinet to sound good, you must not put the mouthpiece too far into your mouth, as it must otherwise shriek like happy goose. Instead, the reed is placed on the lower lip, and in this manner you force it with the breath to produce a pleasant sound and tone, using the tongue to separate the notes at your discretion.*[10]

One can notice the fact Berg mentions the tongued articulation, which was probably one of the main differences between the two schools of playing. Indeed, when analyzing Beer's repertoire, one can notice some differences between the French years and the rest of his career, after his technique switch. Many players and thinkers of the later 18th and early 19th centuries were considering the German technique superior in all respects, and this is no coincidence this tradition won the international dispute. Indeed, Froehlich[11] prefers the reed-below technique, arguing the reed-above method « does not allow for the tongue to be used precisely and securely… » In addition, Blatt[12] points out later (c.1828) that the reed-below technique has the superiority to allow the player to use the clearer articulation « tu », which is nearly impossible with the opposite technique, a skill that is imperative to master for every clarinetist, as the instrument should imitate the human voice.[13] The

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[9] Lefèvre, Xavier. *Méthode de clarinette*. Nadermann editor. Paris. 1802. p. 6. English translation by D. Charlton, from original text: *En jouant de la clarinette, il faut éviter de faire agir par secousse, le gosier ou la poitrine, pour donner l'air nécessaire aux articulations, ceux qui jouent du gosier ne peuvent pas exécuter des morceaux vifs, parcequ'ils ne trouvent jamais dans cet organe assez de mouvement et d'agilité pour être d'accord avec les doigts.*

[10] Rice, Albert. *The Clarinet as Described by Lorents Nicolai Berg (1782)*. Journal of the American Musical Instrument Society. V-VI (1979-80), 42-53.p.47.

[11] In his method « Vollständige theorische-praktische Musikschule » (1810-11).

[12] Franz Thaddäus (1793-1856) is a clarinet player from Prague. He was considered one of the finest player of his time by Berlioz and Fétis. We was a great orchestra player, as well as a teacher (as his clarinet method shows it).

[13] Charlton, David. *Classical Clarinet Technique: Documentary Approaches*. Early Music Vol. 16, No. 3 (Aug., 1988), p. 401. F. J. Blatt, *Méthode complette de clarinette* (Mayenne, Paris Anvers, c. 1828).

multi-instrumentist theorist Backofen[14] summarizes the articulation problem, although a bit later, at the time when reed-above technique was really out of fashion: « clarinetists use three ways of articulating notes, with the tongue, lips or throat. The first way is the best… for they (i.e. players using their lips, who also make dreadful faces) slur everything, just as do those who push with the throat. And if the latter do not make grimaces, they yet have another disagreeableness, namely that one hears each throat impulse. »[15]

However, some players spoke in good words about the reed-above embouchure. Claude-François Buteux translated to German the famous method of Xavier Lefèvre, stating he wanted to share the teaching he received from his master. He talks with enthusiasm about the way his teacher was placing the reed: « This principle… has the advantage of giving mobility and sensitivity in performance; greater clarity and bite in detached sounds and generally more strength throughout the instrument's range. »[16] The rather positive review contrats with the usual hard criticism towards the reed-above technique. The strength acquired by this technique Buteux mentions has however the faults that are inherent in its good qualities, namely a limited range of dynamics and hardly any pianissimo possibilities. For some, such as Frederic Berr, « the advantage of playing with the reed below is proven by most skilled clarinetists. All artists admit that nowhere can one obtain piano and pianissimo like Germany. The famous Baermann gave us in Paris in 1818 pianissimo sounds that were totally unknown in France… »[17] Josef Beer was also reputed to have an inimitable decrescendo and breathtaking pianissimos, skills he very likely passed to his protégé in Potsdam and made, in his lineage and with the spark of the reed position, one of the greatest German playing trademark.

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[14] Johann Georg Heinrich Backofen (1768-1839) was a German virtuoso on the harp, clarinet, basset horn and flute, as well as a composer and writer.

[15] Charlton, David. *Classical Clarinet Technique: Documentary Approaches*. Early Music Vol. 16, No. 3 (Aug., 1988), p. 401. J. G. H. Backofen, *Anweisung zur Klarinette nebst einer kurzen Abhandlung über das Basset-Horn* (Leipzig, 1803), English translation by D. Charlton from original text: *Die Klarinettisten brauchen dreierlei Mittel die Noten abzustossen, die Zunge, die Lippen oder die Kehle. Die erste Art ist die beste… denn sie binden alle Noten, eben so wie diejenigen, die mit der Kahle stossen. Fallen auch bey diesen die Grimassen weg, so haben sie wieder eine andre Unannehmlichkeit, nehmlich diese, dass man jeden Stoss der Kehle hört.*

[16] Ibidem. p.398. English translation by D. Charlton from original text: *Ce principe… a l'avantage de faire obtenir de la mobilité et e la sensibilité dans l'exécution; plus de netteté et de mordant dans les sons détachés et généralement plus de vigueur dans toute l'étendue de l'instrument.*

[17] Ibidem, p.399. F. Berr, *Traité complet de la clarinette à quatorze clefs* (Paris, 1836). English translation by D. Charlton from original text: *L'avantage de jouer l'anche en-dessous est démontré par les plus habiles clarinettistes. Tous les artistes reconnaissent que nulle part on ne peut obtenir les piano et les pianissimo comme en Allemagne. Le célèbre Baermann nous a fait entendre en 1818 à Paris des sons pianissimo qui étaient tout-à-fait inconnus en France…*

The reed position, as a matter of fact, made the French and German sound differ greatly. Fétis gives clues on how to differentiate them: « German artists… aim for great sweetness of sound… Here, especially in the school of M. Xavier Lefèvre, one aims for a large sound … one cannot play piano. »[18] This typical French sound was sometimes a chock and source of complain for the advocates of the German clarinet sonority. Mendelssohn, visiting Paris in 1832, was indeed criticizing fiercely the player Isaac Dacosta, first clarinet of the Conservatoire orchestra and pupil of Lefèvre, saying he « shrieks and has a stiff, unpleasant delivery and tone… »[19] This discrepancy of sound is brought to light by the teaching career of Josef Beer and great insight about his change of embouchure can be pulled out of the instruction he gave. This duality in the French and the German school of playing reinforces the theory supposing that Beer changed his embouchure in the course of his life, at some point after he taught Michel Yost and before he met the young Heinrich Baermann. How else could he have formed a pupil in France, known to perform with the reed above the mouthpiece and having a powerful sound, typically *à la française*, but at the same taught the most famous clarinetist, praised for his extreme pianissimo effect and the greatest representative of the German school? Moreover, Beer himself was immortalized in contemporary encyclopedias with enthusiastic reviews about his impressive mastering of dynamics. As David Charlton puts it: « (…) extraordinary as it sounds, Beer co-founded two separate traditions, one French and one German: in Paris before 1780 and in Potsdam after 1792, with Tausch. The second was ultimately destined to replace the first. »[20]

The modification of playing he chose to focus himself on contributed to transform his approach of the instrument and to evolve both technically and musically. In fact, when studying the manuscripts of early concertos written for Beer by Carl Stamitz, one can notice the very simple articulation notated: sixteenth notes are usually grouped under one slur, with rare occasions of two-slurred/two-detached patterns, or two-slurred/one-detached with the triplets. The triplets being the figure receiving the most frequent attention concerning articulation, it is relevant to underline that Vanderhagen explains how to detach the first or last figure of the triplets with the tongue in his method. One should keep in mind, however that if triplets are indeed partly tongued even in the

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[18] Charlton, David. *Classical Clarinet Technique: Documentary Approaches*. Early Music Vol. 16, No. 3 (Aug., 1988), p.398. English translation by D. Charlton from original text: *les artistes allemandes… visent à une grande douceur de son… Parmi nous, et particulièrement dans l'école de M. Xavier Lefèvre, on vise un grand son… on ne peut jouer piano…*

[19] Ibidem.

[20] Ibidem.

French technique, they are slower and more flexible than sixteenth-notes which underlines the lack of velocity of this technique. Very often too in the manuscripts, the faster groups of notes are not marked with any indication, suggesting the composer lets the soloist chose his preference, which would very likely be to slur everything, perpetuating a tradition of writing articulation only when the wish of the composer was going counter-current of the standard way to proceed. The composer could also avoid the effort of writing again a specific articulation on a recurrent motive, previously marked. First editions of Stamitz's concerto have a bit more indication for articulation in the solo part, but often avoid giving any fixed version. The concerto written in collaboration between Beer and Stamitz in 1786 could be considered a middle point in Beer's musical transformation. Perhaps because the soloist was more involved in the composition, there is a totally different perspective regarding the articulation prescriptions. The manuscript asks for more precise tonguing, especially in fast passages, something considered difficult on the clarinet with the reed-above technique, as we have seen previously. Generally speaking, there is a greater amount of sixteenth-notes and they are used in a less adjoining way, as well as for a longer time. In other words, the work treats sixteenth-notes in a more virtuosic manner. The last movement of the 1786 concerto, the Rondo, relevant details adds themselves to the growing list of clues asserting Beer had already changed his embouchure before the composition of this specific work. The overall tempo of the movement is highly vigorous and the sixteenth-notes groups passes in no time. However, the clarinet line demands to detach precisely many of the last note of those group, something near to impossible if the tongue doesn't touch lightly the reed as it is possible with the German reed-below technique. Also, portamentos are notated on same-pitched eight-notes: this sort of articulation is extremely rare in the available Stamitz's clarinet concertos manuscripts. Asking for a clear distinction between slurred, detached and portamento is something attainable only with a great flexibility of sound production.

In all movements of the concerto written in collaboration, the exact word *dolce* comes a few times, meaning there was a request, thus a possibility, for a different sound color. *Dolce* has an implication of dynamic, as an opposition to forte, but also meaning the contrary of « rude »[21], being also a color and affect indication. The *dolce* indication is equally virtually nonexistent in Stamitz's concertos manuscripts. Being one of the main characteristics of the German school of playing, the *dolce* sound inquiry explains very likely that Beer wanted to specify the moments he cared for such a sound in his post-change compositions. Confirming the establishment of his new style of playing, Beer keeps on writing astonishingly precise articulation markings as we can see in the first editions

[21] Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Dictionnaire de musique*. Facsimile of the 1768 edition by Claude Dauphin. Actes Sud. 2007. p. 139.

of his Opus 1. Where Stamitz keeps things simple in the 1770s, Beer brings novelty and refinement. One can deduce the modern approach of Carl Stamitz concertos, if played in an historically informed manner, should be played with a broad and rich sound, without taking too much care for dynamic variety and trying to keep articulation as simple as possible.

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The most important source in contemporary chronicle describing Beer's playing is Joseph Anton Rigger's *Materialen zur alten und neuen Statistik von Böhmen* in which the author draws a very flattering portrait of Josef Beer, who just arrived in Germany at the service of the King when the encyclopedic entry was written. It is said that Beer's talent was extraordinary, especially in the allegro in which one can hear every note, that he has the ability to cheat the ear with his dramatically soft dynamics and possessed an acute mastery of crescendos and decrescendos. The entry taught us too that his control of the *tempo di rubato* was astonishing and that he could imitate the sound of bells by oscillating the sound in the decrescendo (perhaps some use of vibrato in long tones?).[22] Beer's playing in allegros was brilliant, while his adagios were cantabile. He knew how to make his playing speak and how to surprise his audience (perhaps with ornamentation?). He was able to put a smile on the most serious person's face with his instrument. The entry also says that he played the clarinet with extraordinary ease and confidence, even when he performed extremely long concerts during which never showed signs of fatigue and his cheeks never became red or inflated. This last detail could be a clue that Beer's set-up (i.e. his mouthpiece and reed choice) was on the light side and that he was looking for ease and flexibility, more than power. In comparison, Anton Stadler was becoming so red and his cheeks inflated so much, that he was nicknamed « red currant».[23] Stadler had possibly a stronger set-up with a lot of resistance and perhaps less flexibility in his sound, since he had to use such a force that his face was changing color.

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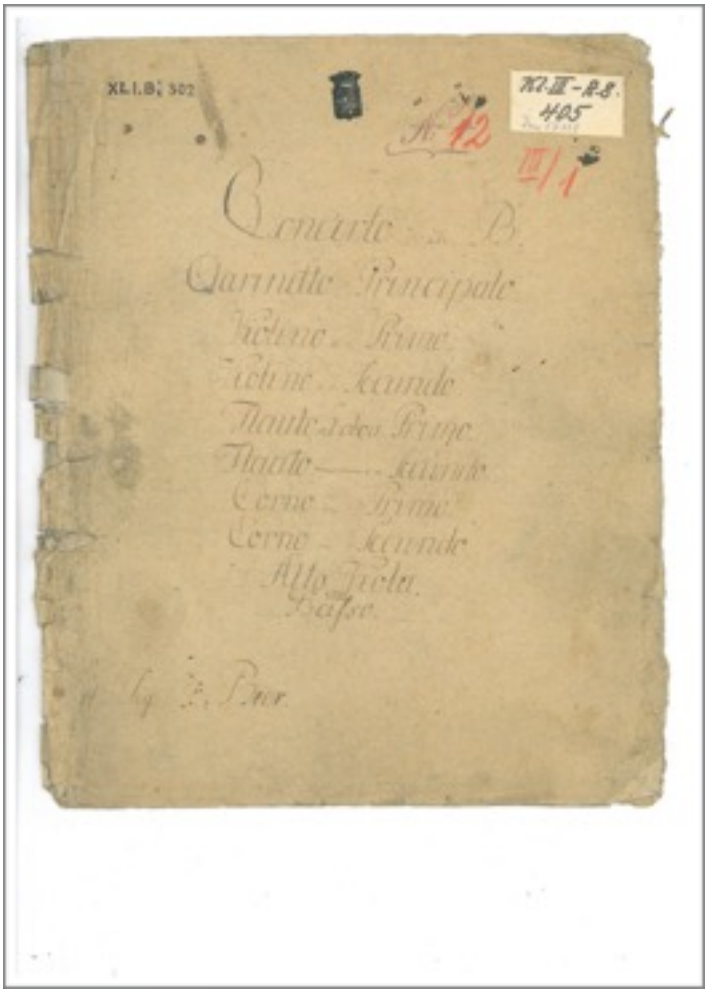
[22] The thriving of elaborated ornamentation in the middle of the 18th-century brought players to use more frequently vibrato, then considered an ornament just as trills or appoggiaturas. It was used mainly where other ornaments were inappropriate or impossible, thus possibly on long notes in decrescendo as Beer played them. Brown, Clive. *Classical & Romantic Performing Practice 1750-1900*. Oxford University Press. Oxford. 1999. Chapter on the Vibrato, p. 517.

[23] Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus. In a letter to his wife from Frankfurt am Main, dated 30 September 1790, Mozart called his friend Stadler « red currant face ». Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus. *Correspondance Complète*. Translated by Geneviève Geffray. Flammarion. Paris. 2011. p. 1668.

Josef Beer the soloist

In the light of biographical information, one can realize how prolific a composer Beer really was. The fact that most of his music is nowadays lost makes it difficult for us to understand the extend his compositional work. But the many advertisements, the catalogue entries in publishing houses and the actual music draws a clearer portrait of Beer the composer. Indeed, we know he composed at least two sonatas for clarinet and bassoon based on pieces by Pugnani (1775), one *Adagio, Air and Seven Variations (1782)*, one *Fantasia (date unknown)*, one *French Royal Hunting Song (in the 1780s)*, *Quintet for clarinet, horn and three oboe d'amore* (in the 1780s), Concerto no. 1 in E flat (Breitkopf & Härtel 1785), Concerto no. 2 in B (Breitkopf & Härtel 1787), Concerto in E flat written with Karl Stamitz (Berlin 1793), Concerto in unknown key (Berlin 1794), Six duos concertinos (Naderman 1802), Concerto in Bb Opus 1 (Kühnel 1807), Concerto in Bb (date unknown) and three concertos for two clarinets in unknown keys (one mentioned in Moscow News in 1794).



Josef Beer. *Clarinet Concerto in B*. Front page of the manuscript. Clarinet part still missing today. Narodní Muzeum,

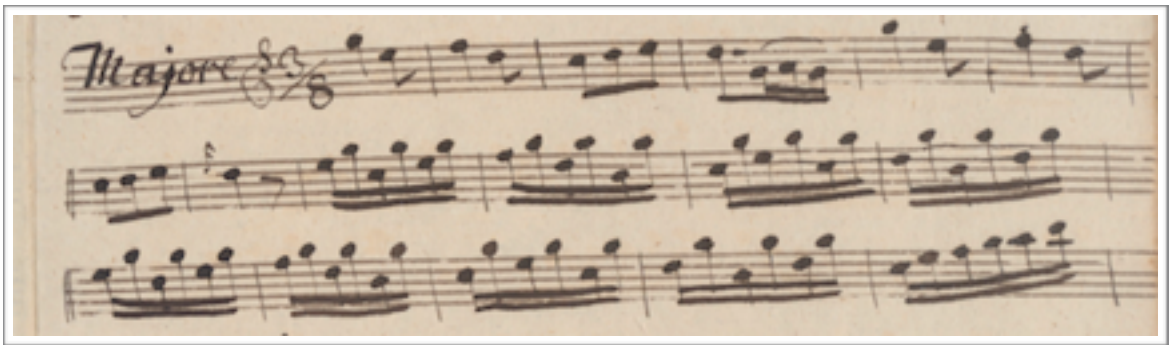
I was able to track down one concerto in Bb written by Beer, held of the Narodni Muzeum in Prague. Although the whole orchestral parts are available, the solo clarinet part is still missing. This concerto could very likely be the one published in 1787 by Breitkopf, since I doubt this work would have been written later than this date, since the harmonica structure is still very simple. Indeed, the orchestral parts reveal a rather harmonically simple concerto, possessing the main characteristics of Stamitz's orchestral writing and following the same form (allegro moderato, adagio, rondo allegretto). Since the clarinet part stays a mystery, it is obviously impossible to establish to what extend Beer wrote for the clarinet in an original way in this work, but one can notice the straightforward

treatment of the orchestra that will evolve considerably towards Opus 1.

Building clarinet literature

When Beer started his career in the 1760s, the clarinet was still a young instrument and few extensive solo works existed. Thus, Stamitz's corpus of nearly ten concertos for the clarinet consists of a significance milestone in the clarinet history. It goes without saying that Stamitz could not have achieve this without the help of his collaborator Josef Beer. One can also deduce some of the features typical to Stamitz's clarinet music might have come from the easiness of Beer's to perform them and he then contributed to enrich and solidify clarinet literature.

Stamitz's clarinet concertos display a certain amount of technical « clichés » that Beer definitely mastered and popularized. As Michael Jacobs points out, among those clichés can be listed what he calls the « umspielungen », or the repetition of a broken chord:[24]

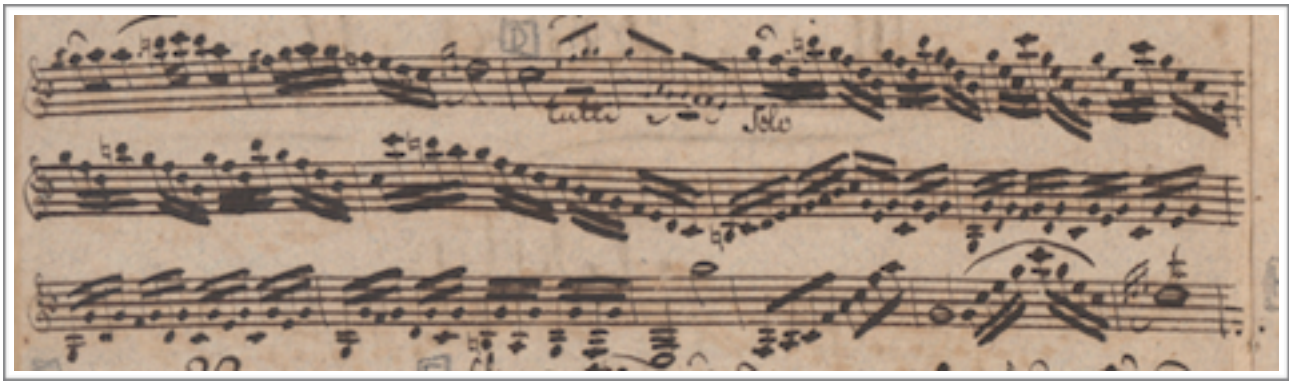


Stamitz. Extract of third movement. *Concerto à clarinette principale in B*. Manuscript. Accessed through Gallica.

This is the kind of effect that was used also in improvised cadenzas, as shown later in manuscripts on page 73. It was a relatively easy feature to gain speed in the figures and show off great virtuosity. Jacobs mentions other typical features in Stamitz concertos that were very likely Beer's specialities. The extreme leaps are an extremely clarinetistic ingredients in a dramatic culmination of a florid passage is one them.

[24] Jacobs, Michael. *Die Klarinettenkonzerte von Carl Stamitz*. Breitkopf & Härtel. Wiesbaden. 1991. p. 31.

The leaps became a very lyrical tool for later composers, such as Carl Maria von Weber, who perhaps discover the dramatic power of it with the help of his talented collaborator and pupil of Beer, Heinrich Baermann.

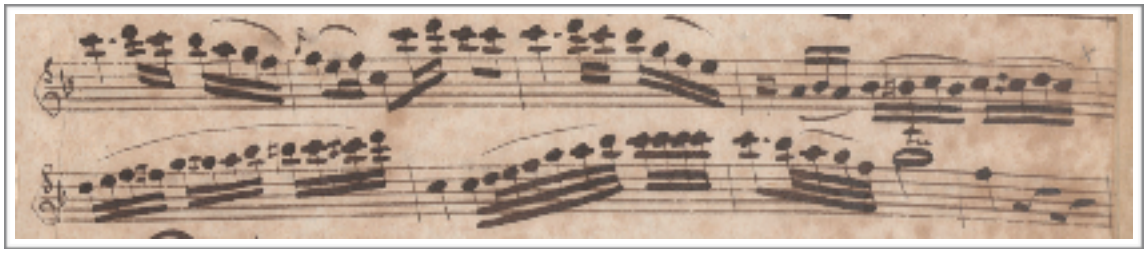


Extract of the first movement. Manuscript of concerto no.6 (Kaiser) by « Mrs Baer and Stamitz », Berlin. Library Fürst Thurn und Taxis, Regensburg.

Another type of leaps frequently used is the octave jumps. Where players such as Franz Tausch jumped rather in the extreme altissimo register (attaining notes over the C''''), Josef Beer preferred to show the warmth of his low register.

Josef Beer. Extract of 1st movement. Concerto op. 1, Kühnel edition. 1807. British Library.

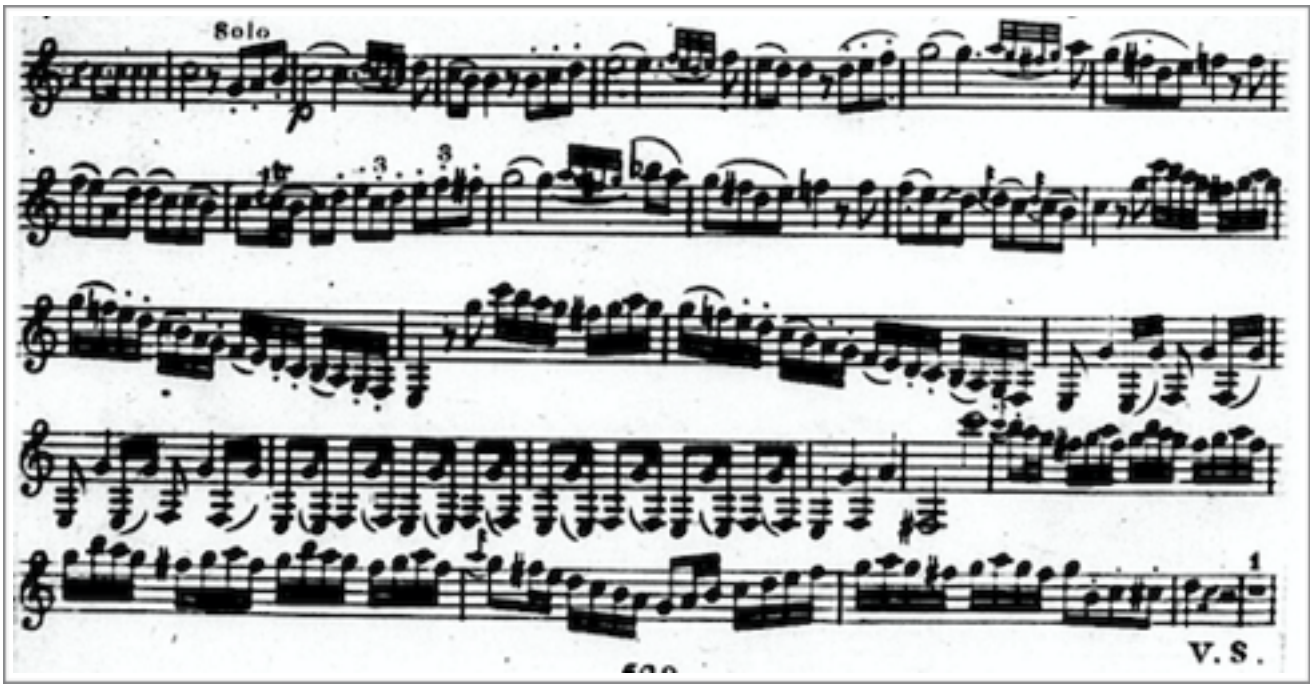
Valentin Roeser, in his *Traité à l'usage de ceux qui composent pour la clarinette et le cor*, advise to avoid both big leaps and chromatic passages, two pieces of advise Carl Stamitz ignored carefully!



C. Stamitz. Extract of 1st movement, concerto no. 10. Manuscript.

Indeed, chromaticism became more and more used in his concertos, possibly because of the addition to keys which made it easier than on Roeser's instrument.

Beer was known to be fond of low notes and to achieve impressive leaps from the chalumeau register to the clarion. His precision in extensive passagework, which were common in his repertoire, was famous internationally. He was reputed to have excellent breath control. The piece by Beer republished in the 1970s as Opus 1 is an excellent example of many of his favorite features. Published initially in 1807, near the end of Beer's life, the concerto is a real catalogue of Beer's performance skills and ornamentation ideas. The piece is of excellent quality and could be considered the climax of Beer's capacities. The opening of the clarinet solo gives a taste of how much Beer liked to show off his low register. The music in the fourth line of the extract above gives



Josef Beer. Extract of 1st movement, Concerto op. 1, Kühnel edition. 1807. British Library.

a very refreshing flavor by its stubbornness and the low notes passage finish with a dramatic extreme leap, typical in clarinet repertoire.

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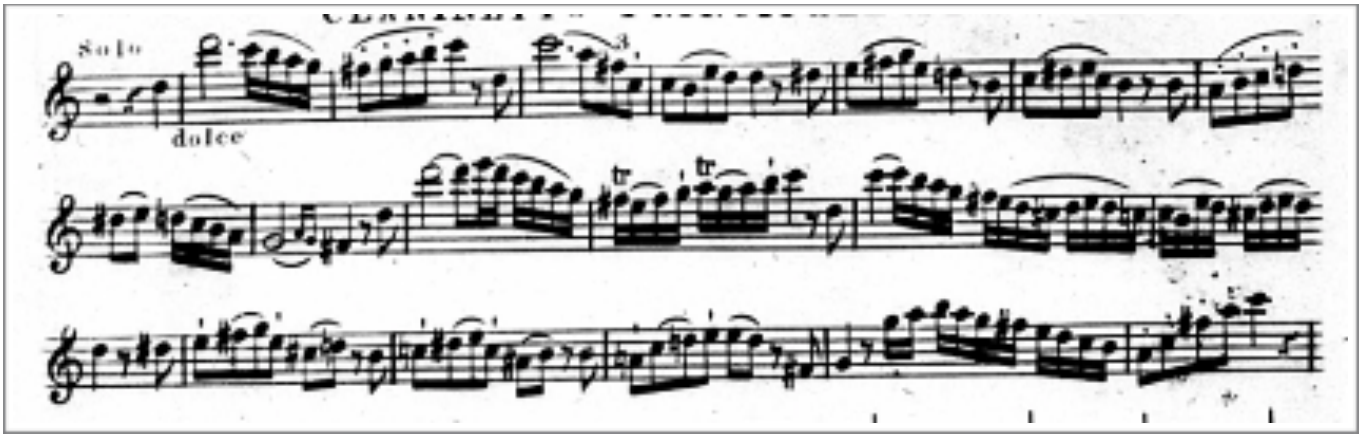
Ornamentation is one of the main skills a soloist deserving this name must develop. The role of ornaments at the end of the 18th century was, as Türk underlines it in his *Klavierschule*, to bring more cohesion to the tones, along with sustaining attention, give emphasis where needed in the piece, make the tune more intelligible for the audience, express and sustain the passions and have the power to bring light or darkness in some passages.[25] Ornaments were thus expected and the talent of a player could be judged by the quality and creativity of his own additions to the music. Therefore, Beer was indisputably ornamenting any music he was playing in the fashion of his time, in harmony with his personal tastes. The following passage of Stamitz and Beer's concerto (1786) has the interest (of showing) to show us how Beer would have ornamented a simple melody. He adds quite a lot of extra material, change some rhythm, spread his impressive technique. Indeed, as we saw earlier in the French chapter, the later concertos might have benefited of Beer's insight and more technical details are written on the page.

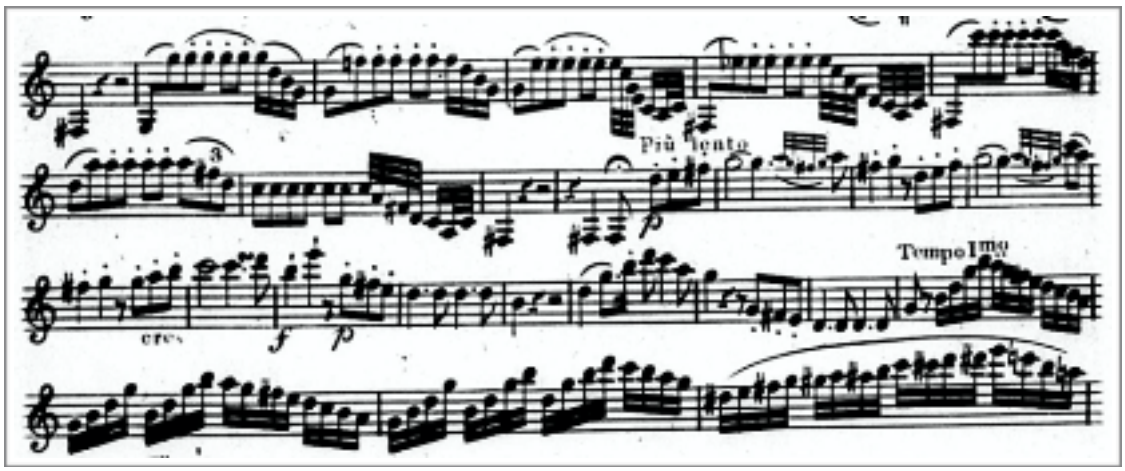
Further examples can be raised from Beer's music. For instance, there is an ornamented passage of great virtuosity in the first movement of his Opus 1 that witnesses both the evolution of the musical writing, desiring to exert a wider control on the performing result of the soloist by means of a greater amount of indication, and the will of Beer to show off his personal virtuoso skills by immortalizing them on the paper. This ornamented passage is a clue on how much Beer would have added to a simpler melody in one of Carl Stamitz concerto. Looking at his own music, it doesn't make any sense that Beer would have played Stamitz's melodies plain, without adding anything.



Josef Beer. Extract of 1st movement, Concerto op. 1, Kühnel edition. 1807. British Library.

[25] Türk, Daniel Gottlob. *School of Clavier Playing. (1789)* Translation by Raymond H. Haggh. University of Nebraska Press. Lincoln & London. 1789. p. 229.

The precision of Josef Beer's passagework was greatly complimented. The following passage, using again the extremely low register of the clarinet, is an example of figures that can be played only with a great precision to be accurately achieved.[26]



Josef Beer. Extract of first movement, Concerto op. 1, Kühnel edition. 1807. British Library.

Another feature of Beer's playing is also actually written down: his mastering of the *tempo di rubato*. The *Piu lento* passage, sounding a bit like a recitativo, must entirely be led by the soloist with great freedom and reveals the tempo liberty Beer was eager to take, how his taste brought him to exacerbate expressivity with the help of extreme tempo changes. Beer's mastering of the *tempo di rubato* can bring questioning on our current way of playing music of the classical era, which is often very square. Already at Beer's time, an advanced musician was expected to deviate from the beat in order to give an interesting performance and this deviation is an organic response towards musicality and expressivity. Indeed, as Clive Brown puts it: «Throughout the Classical and Romantic periods there was a general recognition (…) that, as long as certain aesthetic borderlines were not crossed, holding back some notes and hurrying others was not merely permissible but was an indispensable adjunct of sensitive performance.»[27] Türk encourages the skillful player to use rubato, along with two other extraordinary means (the hesitation or pushing of the beat and

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[26] Although the author wished to brush superficially the subject of ornamentation at the end of the 18th century, this is a theme that requires a whole study in itself. Many period and modern sources deal with this subject. For more information, consult among others Daniel Gottlob Türk's *School of Clavier Playing* (1789).

[27] Brown, Clive. *Classical & Romantic Performing Practice 1750-1900*. Oxford University Press. Oxford. 1999. p. 375.

avoidance of a steady beat) to underline the expressivity of a passage, when it is not specified by the composer. He continues stating that passages with a furious, raging, of forceful character could be played with an accelerando.[28] With this point of view, the *minore* of the third movement of Beer's Opus 1 could include an accelerando, starting from the pickup. Josef Beer possibly acquired his effective *tempo di rubato* at the contact of Carl Stamitz, whose main master in Mannheim was Christian Cannabich (1731-1798). The latter was praised by Schubart to achieve with brilliancy the subtile and delicate art of the orchestral rubato, something that requires an extremely strict discipline from each musician under the guidance of the leader - the concertmeister, but sometimes and in this case the soloist.[29] Beer might have been influenced by his Mannheim colleague while he built himself as a musician in Paris and developed with him his refined *rubato* sense.

One can imagine the sound of the orchestra, waving through time in unison, as the definition of rubato by Thomas Busby's implies it: « An expression applied to a time alternately accelerated and retarded from the purpose of enforcing the expression. »[30] According to C.P.E. Bach, the absence of rubato or the wrong use of it, systematically leads to a poor performance. But when some advise to use this effect with parsimony, others tend to introduce it regularly within a piece and show obvious tempo changes. *Tempo di rubato* has always been a slippery ground; not everyone agree on how, when and how much to perform it. Considering Beer writes a clear tempo change twice in the first movement of his Opus 1, I would deduce he was rather fond of obvious changes, thus falls in the second category of *rubato* enthusiast. However, a majority of musical authorities were much more in favor of a discreet rubato and the general thought was, from the 18th century to the beginning of the 19th, to keep a steady beat under any changes occurring in the melodic tempo, although this general rule was ignore mostly by solo instrumentalists. The sure thing: « The ability to employ agogic accentuation effectively, where appropriate, continued to be regarded throughout the nineteenth century as an essential aspect pf more advanced artistry. »[31] [32]

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[28] Türk, Daniel Gottlob. *School of Clavier Playing. (1789)* Translation by Raymond H. Haggh. University of Nebraska Press. Lincoln & London. 1983. p. 359.

[29] Stowell, Robin. *'Good Execution and Other Necessary Skills': The Role of the Concertmaster in the Late 18th Century*. Early Music, Vol. 16, No. 1 (Feb., 1988). Oxford University Press. pp. 21-33.

[30] Busby, Thomas. *A complete Dictionary of Music*. Richard Philipps. London. 1806. Entry: Tempo rubato.

[31] Brown, Clive. *Classical & Romantic Performing Practice 1750-1900*. Oxford University Press. Oxford. 1999. p. 54.

[32] As for the theme of ornamentation, tempo di rubato at the turn of the 19th century is a vast subject that requires a thesis of its own. For more details about this performance practice, see: Clive Brown's *Classical & Romantic Performing Practice 1750-1900*. Oxford University Press. Oxford. 1999.

As it was frequently the case at the end of the 18th century, Beer was in all likelihood playing a section of the opening tutti with the orchestra, thus giving his tempo, testing his reed and communicating the spirit, as the participation of the soloist in the orchestra will greatly affect the sound of the musical result. He would not have played the whole thing, since one should not spoil the « novelty of the soloist's entrance ».[33] Along with the *konzertmeister*, he would have led the orchestra in concerto performances, the beating-time conductor as we know it today being inexistent. Indeed, all the solo clarinet parts contain the first violin line for the first bar (between 6 and 13 measures notated) before the official entry of the soloist. The amount of implication of the soloist in the leading aspect of the orchestra at the turn of the 19th century is a delicate subject that has not been thoroughly searched and should be as it is a vast and inspiring subject. Nevertheless, this leading responsibility was in this case the only possibility Beer had to achieve his great flexibility in tempo and dynamics. The absence of a central leadership outside the orchestra changes drastically the dynamic within the ensemble and allow the musicians to be superiorly responsive to the clarinet soloist.[34]

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Beer's stay in Russia left a mark in his spirit and he probably was influenced by some of the music he heard while being there. The last movement of Opus 1 is a proof of this: called « Thême Russe », the Rondo uses an Ukrainian song called *Oi, poslala mini mati*.

The Russian theme calls for a rustic sound and a folkloric attitude. Many ornaments, like in measure 12, accentuate the dancing, syncopated rhythm, and should be played crisply and the slurring offbeat underlines the dancing character of the tune. Russian opera, at the end of the 18th century,

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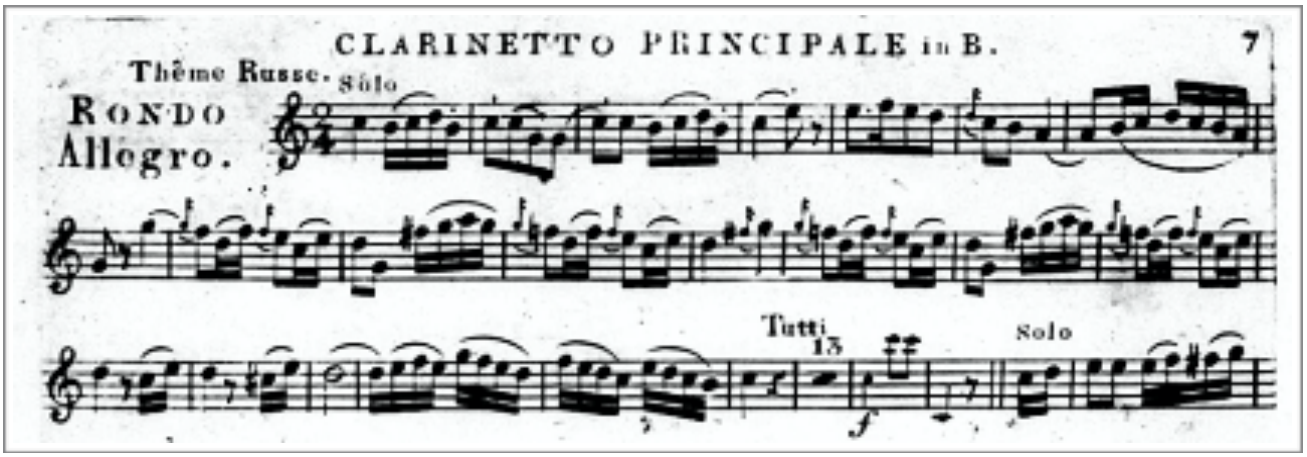
[33] Campbell, Carey Lynn. *To Play or Not to Play: The Soloist's expected Contribution During Tutti Sections of Mozart's Concertos for Strings and Winds*. PhD Dissertation. University of Minnesota. 2008. p. 18

[34] As Grétry writes it in his Memoires: « *each musician is obliged to have an eye on the singing actor ; it is the only way he can accompany well ; it is impossible when one hits him every beat ; because he cannot and shouldn't follow two persons at the same time*. » (Translated by Jean-Loup Gagnon from original text: « *chaque musicien est obligé d'avoir l'oeil sur l'acteur chantant; c'est la seule manière de bien accompagner : il en est dispensé quand on lui frappe chaque mesure; car il ne peut et ne doit pas suivre deux personnes à -la- fois*. »)
Grétry, André Ernest Modeste. Mémoires, ou essaie sur la musique (Paris, 1789) p.49

For more details about leadership practices, see: Zaslaw, Neal and John Spitzer. The Birth of the Orchestra; History of an Institution, 1650 - 1815. Oxford University Press. Oxford, 2004. p. 387-393.



Josef Beer. Extract of third movement, Concerto op. 1, Kühnel edition. 1807. British Library.

had a strong connexion with folklore music and even foreign composers were using well-known local tunes in their works as thematic material, achieving a typical national sound.[35]

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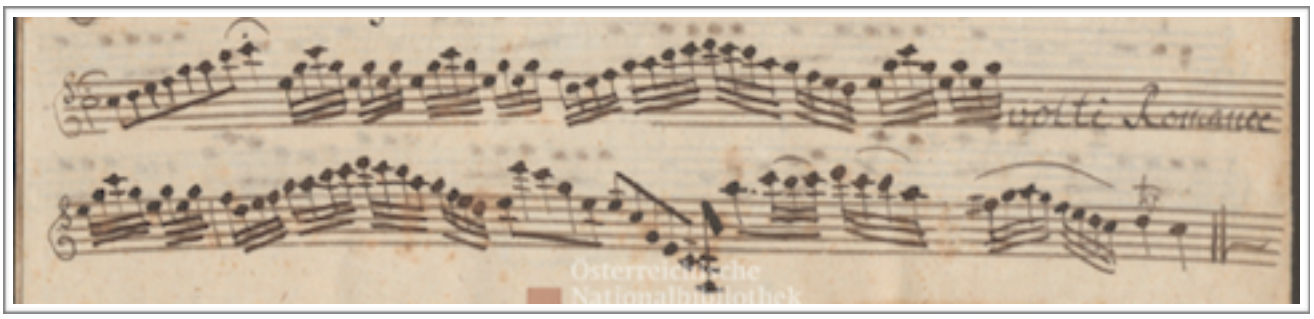
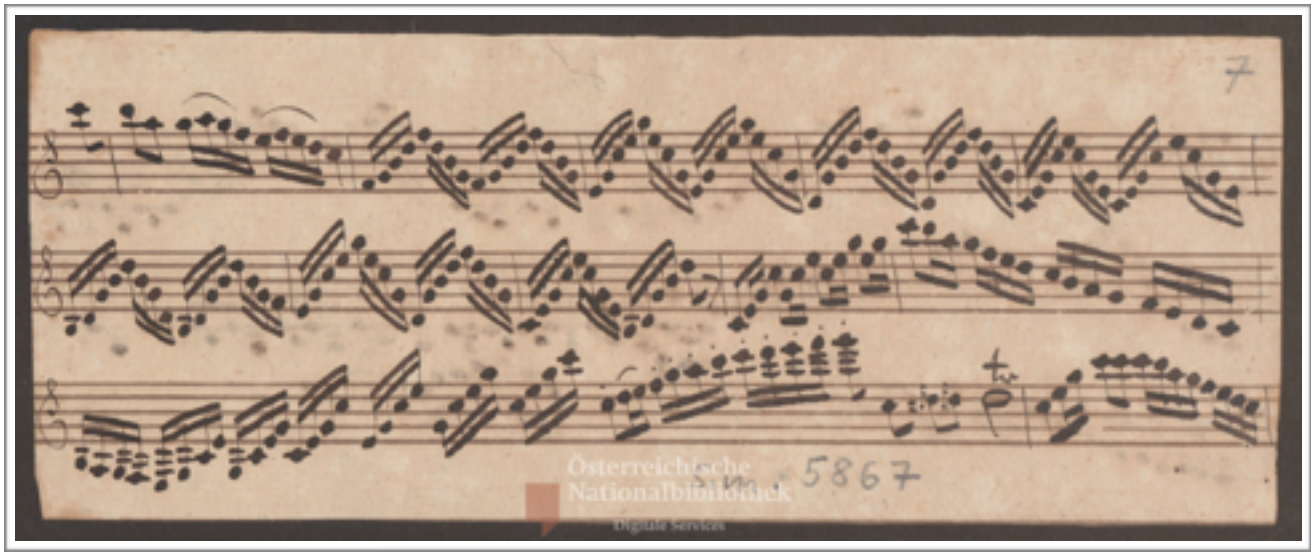
Cadenzas in Beer's performances are rarely commented, nor described. However, one example of a typical cadenza Beer could have played was found with the manuscript of Carl Stamitz concerto no. 3 and two with his no. 10. The concertos being composed specially for Josef Beer, this is very likely that he played those cadenzas at least once in his performances or played something similar.

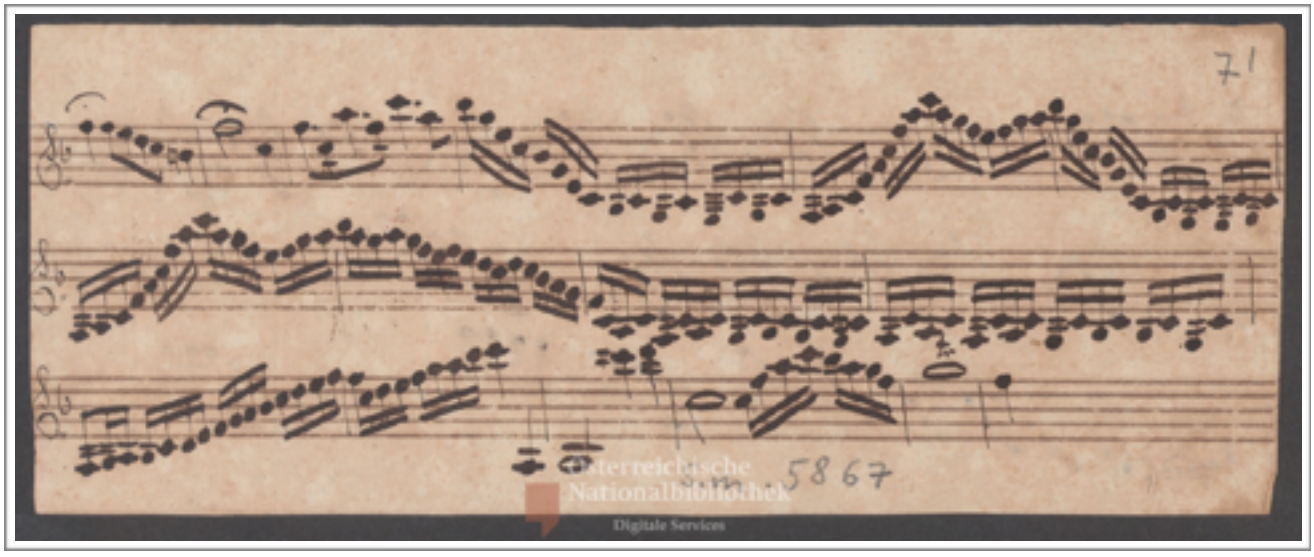


Carl Stamitz. Extract of 1st movement - added cadenza. Concerto no. 3. Manuscript. Österreichsische Nationalbibliothek.

[35] Seaman, Gerald. *Folk-Song in Russian Opera of the 18th Century*. The Slavonic and East European Review, Vol. 41. No. 96 (Dec., 1962), The Modern Humanities Research Association and University College London, School of Slavonic and East European Studies. pp. 144.



Carl Stamitz. Extract of 1st movement - added cadenza no. 1 (anon.). Concerto no. 10. Manuscript. Österreichsische Nationalbibliothek.



Carl Stamitz. Extract of 1st movement - added cadenza no. 2 (anon.). Concerto no. 10. Manuscript. Österreichsische Nationalbibliothek.

The general trend for cadenzas in the second half of the 18th century could be summarized by the words Quantz uses in his treatise : « they must be short and fresh, and surprise listeners, like a bon mot. Thus they must sound as if they have been improvised spontaneously at the moment of playing. »[36] Quantz also advises to avoid introducing to many ideas in one cadenzas, as the harmonic possibilities are restricted and underlines that one cadenza is enough for a piece. Since the

[36] Quantz, Johann Joachim. *On Playing the Flute*. (1752) Translated and edited by Edward R. Reilly. Faber and Faber. London. 1985. p. 182.

breath is a crucial part in wind music, the cadenzas were, as mentioned, rather short, compared to keyboard ones. The cadenzas found in Stamitz's concerto fall more or less in those parameters, having a small amount of ideas which relate mainly to the initial material of the music. Nevertheless, if many writers advocate for a short cadenza from singers and wind players, we can deduce that some musicians were in fact exaggerating and pushing the limits of an accepted duration.[37]

The performance of Beer on the day of Christmas 1778 at the Concert Spirituel was reviewed satirically by someone who demonstrated no fondness in virtuoso playing in any instrumental music, preferring simplicity overall, and complained about the unreasonable length of the clarinetist's cadenza (160 seconds!). [38]

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Performance practice is a crucial element for anyone interested in delivery a historically informed playing. Relating Josef Beer's eventful biography to concrete playing national trends was essential in the present work. The change of embouchure he chose to make in the early 1780s can bring today's clarinet players to reconsider their approach of music written for Beer, depending if it was before or after his technical change. For instance, when playing Stamitz's concerto written in Paris and premiered at the Concert Spirituel, one can imagine a broad, brilliant sound and a legato-dominated played, with little sharp articulation. On the other hand, music composed after 1780, such as the concerto Beer and Stamitz wrote in collaboration, should benefit the embouchure change Beer made and include precise tongued articulation, as well as extreme dynamics. This

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[37] For an in depth discussion of the subject of cadenzas in the 18th century, see David Lasocki and Bethy Bang Mather's The Woodwind Cadenza: a workbook (1978).

[38] Mercure de France, January 5th 1779: Le Directeur de ce Concert, M. le Gros, qui cherche tous les moyens de le rendre chaque jour plus intéressant, doit sans doute gémir de ne pouvoir déterminer la plupart des Virtuoses à suivre son exemple, c'est-à-dire, à imiter la belle simplicité de son chant dans leur musique instrumentale. La simplicité, le naturel, ne font-ils donc pas le complément de la perfection, le caractère distinctif des chef-d'oeuvres en tous genres? N'y a t'il point de mieux entre les airs du Pont-neuf & ces pièces de bravoure, dont le Public ne saisit ni les détails, ni l'ensemble? Depuis vingt ans il se plaint des Virtuoses, qui, au lieu de chant, s'obstinent à lui faire entendre des batteries insignifiantes, des arpegio variés à l'infini, des roulades éternelles & monotones; lieux communs surannés, parures bisarres & superflues, qui remuent l'organe de l'ouie, sans jamais pénétrer jusqu'au siège des passions, & qu'on est toujours tenté de comparer à ces vieux monumens d'architecture gothique surchargés d'ornemens aussi ridicules, aussi désagréables pour les yeux que pour la raison. Sont-ce les Musiciens qui doivent nous asservir à leurs caprices? Le Public fait la loi à l'Opéra, à la Comédie Italienne, à la Comédie Françoise; il la donne aux Peintres, aux Sculpteurs, aux Architectes, & même aux Gens de Lettres: pourquoi, dans les Concerts, n'aurait-il pas le même empire sur les Musiciens? **Qu'un joueur de clarinette soutienne une cadence pendant 160 secondes**; qu'un joueur de violon rassemble 80 triples croches sous un seul coup d'archet; que sa main fasse des sauts périlleux, comme un danseur de corde; si ces tirs de force ne tendent point au but de l'Art; si, loin de plaire, ils fatiguent, & réveillent des sentimens pénibles, ne sommes0nius as en droit de les proscrire? Et les joueurs d'instrumens ne doivent-ils pas enfin renoncer à un genre qui n'a d'autre mérite que la difficulté vaincue?

concept can be apply to virtually any clarinet piece of this period, knowing the national embouchure trend of the concerned work.

In light of Josef Beer's unexpected playing characteristics, including his well appreciated *tempo di rubato*, or his peculiar use of the vibrato in long tones, as well as extreme dynamics towards pianissimo, one can consider the highly creative approach some of the player of the 18th century must have had in regards to solo music. Thus, today's clarinetists (or any musicians) shouldn't be enclosed in a systematical metronomic pulsation through the piece, nor in any supposed decorum in relation with dynamics. When it comes to solo music at the turn of the 19th century, the soloist is king and have power over his audience by all the musical means of his or her fantasy.