

Josef Beer in France

Bohemia was, in the eighteenth century, a real cradle for all sorts of instrumentalists who joined prestigious orchestras around Europe, due to the exceptional musical education that was provided in the country. This was especially true for wind players, since as Charles Burney puts it: « (...) the Bohemians [were] remarkably expert in the use of wind instruments, in general (...) »¹. For this reason, Burney calls Bohemia the « Conservatoire of Europe ».

We are at the starting point of the long journey consisting of Josef Beer's passionating life.

Beer's youth

Born on May 18th 1744 in Pastviny (today Grünwald, near Munich) in the North-Bohemian region of Leutmeritzer, Josef Beer spent his childhood cultivating his love for music. His father, a schoolmaster, taught his children from a very young age various musical instruments he had at home and two of Josef's younger brothers became talented horn players. It is not clear which instrument Josef learned when he was a child, but he surely touched the violin, since he kept on playing it all through his life and was still known as a good violinist as late as 1808, at the end of his life.² He certainly touched the horn like his brothers and perhaps even the clarinet, an instrument not unknown in Bohemian cities.

When the Seven Years War (1756 - 1763) started, battles in the North of Bohemia forced the Beer family to move South and settled in Moldau (today Vltava), near the banks of the river of the same name. In this city, the young Josef refined his musical knowledge with a teacher named Kleppel and developed his technique on both the horn and the trumpet, instruments Pamela Weston claims he favored the most.³

¹ Hogwood, Christopher and Jan Smaczny. The Bohemian Lands. *In The Classical Era, from the 1740s to the end of the 18th century*. Edited by Neal Zaslaw. Macmillan. 1989. p. 208.

² Meusel, Johann Georg. *Teutsches Künstlerlexikon oder Verzeichnis der letztlebenden Deutschen Künstler*. Lemgo in der Meyerschen Buchhandlung 1808. p. 63.

³ Weston, Pamela. *Clarinet Virtuosi of the Past*. Emerson Editions. London. 1971. p. 30.

Music was more important in elementary schools in Bohemia than any other subjects. As Charles Burney explains it, classes of Bohemia were filled of children from both sexes between six and eleven years-old learning the violin, the oboe, the bassoon and other instruments, as well as learning how to write and read music.⁴ The clarinet, however, was not part of the school's curriculum. Although the great majority of those young musicians were destined to become lackey or street musicians, Burney brings another possibility to the most talented ones: « ...now and then, indeed, a man of genius amongst them becomes an admirable musician, whether he will or no, but, when that happens, he generally runs away, and settles in some other country, where he can enjoy the fruit of his talents ».⁵ This description could not fit better to the young years of a certain Josef Beer!

The story says he left his home without a word to his parents, excited to become a field trumpeter for the Emperor at the age of 14. Soon after, he enrolled in the Austrian military band where he served in the Seven Years War (1756-1763). Sources are not agreeing exactly on the instrument he held in the army. Most of the authors write about Beer as a trompeter, without any doubt. But another reliable primary source, Riegger's *Materialen zur alten und neuen Statistic von Böhmen*, points out Beer was indeed a « hautboist » in the army.⁶ One can dig deeper in the signification of the word hautboist, or hautboy, in mid-eighteenth century Bohemia and discover that an employed musician in the services was not tied to one specific instrument, but was in fact expected to perform on several of them, including the trumpet, the oboe, sometimes the bassoon and the timpani. The teaching of both his father and Kleppel in Moldau had equipped Beer with a solid experience on several instruments, making him a great asset in a military band.

Soon after his sixteenth birthday, Josef Beer left the Austrian military band to join the French troops and became eventually the conductor of the Guard. He then took the opportunity to travel to Paris when the war ceased around 1763. This decision was extraordinary wise for the rest of his career. As Leopold Mozart writes it to his son a couple years later, Paris is the place to be:

⁴ Burney, Charles. *Voyage musical dans l'Europe des Lumières*. Translated, presented and annotated by Michel Noiray. Flammarion. Paris. 1992. p. 368.

⁵ Burney, Charles. *The Present State of Music in Germany, The Netherlands, and United Provinces*. Volume II. London. 1775. p. 24

⁶ Riegger (Ritter), Joseph Anton Stephen von (ed.). *Materialen zur alten und neuen Statistik von Böhmen*. Bohemia. Leipzig, Widtmann. 1787-93 - from Duke University - Durham, W. C. Music - 780.011 R554V, p. 137.

*Go to Paris! and soon. Take place nearby great Lords, aut Caesar aut nihil. This is from Paris that a man's renown and glory reach the whole world; nobility consider talent people with great deference, esteem and courtesy, - one can discover a way of living that contrasts surprisingly with the rudeness of our German gentlemen and ladies, and this is where you will perfect yourself in French.*⁷

According to the little literature treating about Josef Beer's life, it is during his first months in Paris that he heard the clarinet for the first time and was so impressed that he decided to switch instrument, learning the whole technique as an autodidact. The legend goes even further, saying that after only four months of diligent study, he appeared publicly for the first time as a soloist. Since he appeared to be a fast learner from the start of his career (becoming a military musician at an early age), this is not impossible he learnt clarinet very fast. Nevertheless, Fétis mentions Beer would have received lessons on the clarinet while being in Paris⁸ and Birsak suggests that Beer learned the clarinet watching the other players in the French Guard.⁹ Others say his learned his instrument under the patronage of Valentin Roeser, which is extremely possible since Roeser was also employed at the Duc D'Orléans' court.¹⁰ Anyway we choose to understand the story, he became known as the best clarinetist in France and was so acclaimed the Duc d'Orléans, Louis-Philippe-Joseph, bought Beer's release from the French army in 1767 to have him in his private orchestra. Beer stayed in the Duke household as a musician in the *Garde du Corps* until 1778 and then changed appointment to join the Prince de Lambesc court, before leaving the French capital definitely in 1779.

⁷ Geffray, Geneviève, ed. *Mozart - Correspondance complète*. Flammarion. Paris. 2011. Leopold Mozart letter to his son in Mannheim, February 12th 1778, p. 680: *Va à Paris! et bientôt. Prends place auprès des grands seigneurs, aut Caesar aut nihil. (...) C'est de Paris que le renom et la gloire d'un homme de grand talent parviennent au monde entier; la noblesse y considère les gens de talent avec la plus grande déférence, estime et courtoisie, - on y découvre une manière de vivre qui contraste étonnamment avec la grossièreté de nos gentilshommes et dames allemands, et c'est là que tu te perfectionneras en français.*

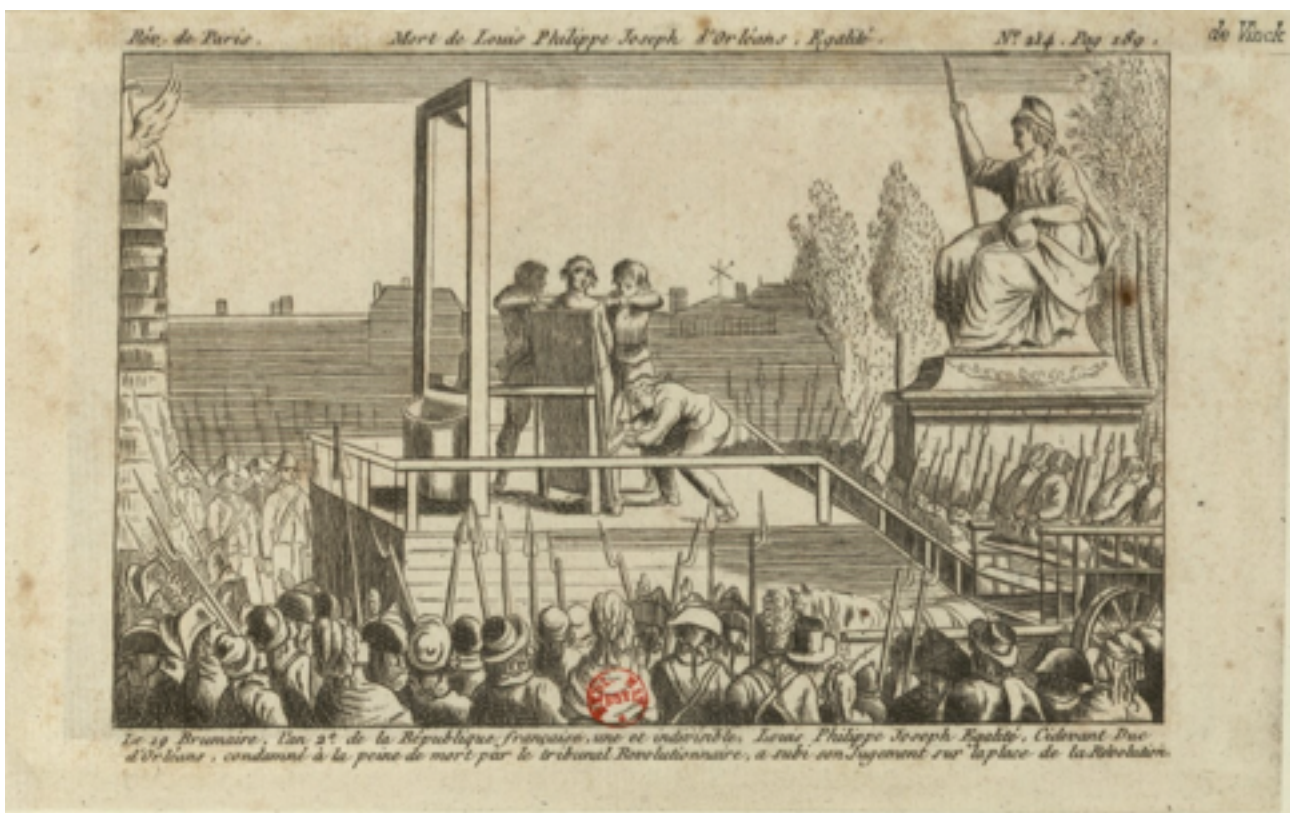
⁸ Fétis, F.J. *Biographie Universelle des Musiciens*. Tome 2. Leroux Éditeurs. Bruxelles. 1835. p. 99.

⁹ Birsak, Kurt. *The Clarinet; a cultural history*. Translated from Germany by Gail Schamberger. Druck und Verlag Obermayer GmbH. 1994. p. 138.

¹⁰ Born in Germany circa 1735, Valentin Roeser was a clarinetist, composer and author of numerous crucial publications for the early classical clarinet. He was active in France from the 1760s and was employed by the Duc D'Orléans from 1766. He obviously had some contact with Beer after he was recruited by the same employer.

A first appointment

Louis-Philippe-Joseph D'Orléans was one of the most wealthy noble towards the end of the 18th century. Great-grand-child of the Regent, he was open to the revolutionary ideas and became an active member of the Revolution, breaking his tied with the royal family. From September 15th 1792, he even asked the population to be called, along with his family and his progeny, « Égalité », a name that differentiated him through-out history. A well-known *libertin*, the Duke acted as an agitator in the crucial times of the Revolution, but was condemned by the Revolutionary tribunal as many of his noble fellows and guillotined on November 9th 1793 (or on the 19th Brumaire of the second French Republican year).



Death of Louis Philippe Joseph d'Orléans Égalité: le 19 brumaire, l'an 2.e de la République française (November 9th 1793). Stamp, unidentified. Source Gallica, last accessed on February 2nd 2017.

Beer's appointment at the Duc D'Orléans (1747-1793) court allowed him to be in contact with a great deal of first class musicians and they certainly helped him build his soloist career in Paris. The Duke's wife, madame de Montesson, had a special affection for music and held close to her a solid small orchestra, in which were appointed composers such as the Chevalier de Saint-George who was employed at her private theater until 1785, at the death of the Duke. Philippe-Égalité was the inheritor of the Palais Royal, where the Académie Royale de Musique was held and he had a few

lodges that communicated directly to his apartments, available for him at any time. He contributed to make important architectural changes to the palace, especially in the interior court and theater was performed as well.

Aristocratic orchestras in France in the 18th century were greatly financed and way more numerous than public orchestras. They importantly contributed to the thriving of orchestral and lyrical music, being real test benches for new instrumentalists before they were pushed on the public scene. Private orchestras were also ideal for the development of new genres and fresh aesthetics, having as a public the vastest number of connoisseurs and amateurs reunited. Some aristocrats had a truly remarkable list of employees; for instance the Duc de Noailles had the good fortune to gather at his court composers such as Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Johann Christian Bach and Carl Stamitz, all three considered stars at their time.¹¹ His court orchestra was indeed a gathering point for cosmopolitan artists in the 1770s.

Contrary to public concert institutions, such as the Concert Spirituel, aristocratic orchestras are very little documented, which makes any research about them closer to archeology, as David Hennebelle points it out in his book about the subject.¹² The great flexibility of the orchestra personnel, as well as the diversified tasks of the musicians don't help to grasp the true nature of those private orchestras and to draw a clear picture of their size, repertoire and the expectations they needed to fill, either playing for the dinner time, the chapel, balls or other events. The last third of the 18th century, namely at Josef Beer's time in France, private orchestras became highly popular and more numerous than ever, demonstrating the keen interest of the nobles for music, and were used as a factor of competitiveness between aristocrats. The wind section was particularly well furnished, as the German genre of *Harmoniemusik* was extremely fashionable, hence the importance of having good wind instrumentalists, often of German origin, in private orchestras. Compositions made specifically for the aristocratic context were written mostly for six wind instruments, namely two horns, two bassoons and two clarinets. For sure, the Duke D'Orléans had his own wind ensemble and Beer certainly played an important role in it. The biggest part of the repertoire of the wind harmonies was transcriptions and arrangements. This formation was chosen over the full orchestra mainly for economical reason, especially between 1760 and 1770.¹³ Valentin Roeser (ca.

¹¹ Hennebelle, David. *De Lully à Mozart; aristocratie, musique et musiciens à Paris (XVIIe- XVIIIe siècles)*. Époques. Champs Vallon. Paris. 2009. p. 87.

¹² Ibidem.

¹³ Ibidem, p. 231.

1735-1782), employed at the Duc D'Orléans' court until 1770, was an important actor in the production of transcriptions for wind ensembles. He published many suites from well-known opera of the time, including *Soirées de Bagnolet ou 1ère suite d'ariettes d'opéras-comiques pur 2 clarinettes, 2 cors & 2 bassons* (1768), no less than forty similar suite written between 1771 and 1779 and some *Divertissements militaires*.

Aristocratic orchestras were most of the time comprised of a steady core and invited extra musicians depending on the occasion. The main task of a court instrumentalist was to be appreciated and answer all the orders and needs of his noble protector.



The Parisian public did not have a good experience with early clarinets in the past, being used to an almost aggressive sound. Beer's first appearance as a soloist must have been an event, since the French capital's public was not used at all to hear a true clarinet virtuoso. Michel Yost, one of Beer's pupils in Paris, wrote about his master in his method:

The first virtuoso who became famous 30 years ago in clarinet concertos was a German named Bauër; he played all kinds of music on the C clarinet, which leads me to believe that the one in B flat was invented after his time...

Yost's naivety is somehow striking, since the B flat clarinet was of course invented before Beer's time and even received some fine works before Beer's first appearance. Johann Stamitz concerto in 1754-55 for B flat clarinet, as we shall see later, is a good example!

Beer did a first trip to London in 1772, but very little information is known about this journey, except he made a successful appearance. F. Geoffrey Rendall mentions in his book *The Clarinet* a memorable concerto played at the Oxford Music Room in 1772; this performance could very likely be Josef Beer's.¹⁴ Although she is one of the only author who did a deeper biographical work on Josef Beer in English language, Pamela Weston doesn't mention Beer's appearance in Holland in 1773. According to Monique de Smet, it was reported by the s'Gravenhaegse courant (daily paper) of Friday the 27th of March 1773 that he took part of a benefit concert in the profit of the first violin of the Count of Orange's court orchestra, Malherbe, with other musicians including Farge, Zingoni and the young ladies Le Roi who sang arias and trios, as well as the oboe player Ramm. In the

¹⁴ Rendall, F. Geoffrey. *The Clarinet, Some Notes on Its History and Construction*. London/Ernest Benn Limited. New York, 1954. p. 78.

paper, Beer is described as the first clarinet of « Monseigneur le Duc d'Orléans ».¹⁵ As more primarily sources show it, Beer is also reported to have played on April 13th 1773 in Amsterdam at the *Salle des armes* during which he played concertos, as well as quartets.¹⁶

Beer stayed possibly for a few months in Holland, since he is also found to perform a great concert again at the *Salle des armes* in Amsterdam in company of the first horn of the Prince Guillaume V, Spandau, on November 30th 1773. They both played solo concerto, but also played together a quartet with obligato clarinet and hunting horn.¹⁷ The piece was probably tailor-made for them and composed by one or the other with the help of his colleague. Beer went to London twice, before and after his Dutch stay, and probably stayed out of France for actually one year and a half.

During his second trip to London, Beer is found to take part in the first London performance of Johann Christian Bach's cantata *Amor vincitore* given on April 15th 1774 at Carlisle Home as a benefit concert. Beer stayed in London for a few weeks, since the concert was performed again on May 2nd at King's Theater for the benefit of the oboe player, Johann Christian Fischer. The cantata for soprano, castrato, chorus and orchestra includes an aria with obligato parts for flute, oboe, clarinet and bassoon which were played by the finest musicians available, including Georg Wenzel Ritter on the bassoon.¹⁸ There is a doubt on which instrumentalists performed first the cantata *Amor vincitore*, since two of the prefaces to Richard Maunder's exhaustive modern edition of J.C. Bach cantatas are contradicting each others. Maunder, in the thirteenth volume (with the preface dated 1988), states the information previously mentioned, while the fifteenth volume (with the preface dated 1986) says that *Amor vincitore* was composed specifically for the Mannheim court and could not have been performed, nor composed, earlier than August 1774. If this would be true, the clarinetist put forward would have been Franz Tausch. However, the preface contained in the fifteenth volume admits there is not proof of a possible previous performance of the cantata and this is the reason for the hasty conclusion. In my opinion, the cantata could have very likely be performed in Mannheim in August 1774 as an official German premiere, but could also have been tried out in London previously in April. Since there is no other cantata by J.C. Bach having the

¹⁵ De Smet, Monique. *La musique à la cour de Guillaume V, Prince d'Orange (1748-1806) d'après les archives de la Maison Royale des Pays-Bas*. Oosthoek's Uitgeversmaatschappij B.V. Utrecht. 1973. p. 49.

¹⁶ *Amsterdamsche Courant*. 10th of April 1773.

¹⁷ Possibly one of Carl Stamitz's quartet using clarinet and horn, along with strings.

¹⁸ Maunder, Richard, ed. *The Collected works of Johann Christian Bach 1735-1782. Cantatas: Three Cantatas from Eighteenth-Century Manuscript and Printed Sources*. Vol. 13. Garland Publishing Inc. New York and London. 1989. Preface. p.viii.

characteristics of *Amor vincitorem* known today, it safe to conclude, as the author of the preface (dated 1988) for the thirteenth volume does, that it was the cantata performed by Beer in April 1774.

In 1778, Beer's employer the Duke D'Orléans retired himself to his country estate and preferred to entertain with opera. Wishing to stay in the capital and live his true calling as a virtuoso, he asked his pupil Étienne Solère to take over his position at the Duke's court. He could also have received a more lucrative offer from Prince de Lambesc and preferred to stay in the capital with a new appointment. This is the same year Leopold Mozart wrote to his son, on June 29th:

Mme. Duschek has sent me a letter of introduction to a certain virtuoso on he clarinet, M. Joseph Beer, who is in the service of the Prince de Lambsec, Chief of Equerry to the King of France. Tell me whether I am to send it to you. Try to see M. Beer.

Josefa Duschek, born Hambacher, was a soprano from Bohemia. She has been Frantisek Xaver Dussek's pupil before becoming his wife on October 20th 1776. The family visited Salzburg at many occasions, given that Josefa mother was living there. In 1777, they met the Mozarts with whom they kept a musical relationship throughout the years. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart composed the recitative and aria *Ah, Io prevedi* (K272) shortly after their first meeting and the recitative and aria *Bella mia fiamma, addio* (K528) in 1787 expressively for Josefa. They regularly played together in the 1780s.¹⁹

Wolfgang answered to his father's advice, with his unique colorful pen:

As for the letter of recommendation to Herr Beer, I don't think it is necessary to send it to me: so far I have not made his acquaintance; I only know that he is an excellent clarinet player, but in other respects a dissolute sort of fellow. I really do not like to associate with such people, as it does one no credit; and, frankly, I should feel positively ashamed to do so - even if he should do something for me! But, as it is, he is by no means respected here - and a great many people do not know him at all. Of the two Stamitz brothers only the younger one is here, the elder (the real composer à la Hageneder) is in London. They indeed are two wretched

¹⁹ Poštolka, Milan. *Dušek, Josefa*. Grove Music Online. Last accessed: October 23rd 2016.

scribblers, gamblers, swillers and adulterers - not the kind of people for me. The one who is here has scarcely a decent coat to his back. ²⁰

Many factors could be pointed out to understand the harshness of this letter towards Josef Beer. Pamela Weston explains that Wolfgang's mother had died in his arms a couple of days before. One could also remember that the Stamitz always represented some kind of threat for Mozart who wished to have been employed at the Mannheim court, where the Stamitz were born and have been rejected. Beer's affiliation with such people would just bring anger, as seen in the letter, to the young sensitive Mozart. As Weston mentions, Beer could indeed have « done something » for Wolfgang, considering the musical reputation he had and would grow. As she says: « Had Mozart written a concerto for Beer, who was about to launch out on an extensive tour to the furthest parts of Europe, his composition might well have fared better at the outset than was the case with his masterpiece of 1791. Instead, he waited thirteen years to write for the other « dissolute fellow », Anton Stadler, who did not have the same international reputation as Beer. »²¹

Although Beer did not develop any relationship with Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, he did collaborate closely with Carl Stamitz, who wrote for him most, if not all, of his eleven concertos between 1770 and 1784.²² Born in Mannheim on the 12th of May 1745, Carl Stamitz's numerous compositions display his strong Mannheim heritage, using all the known characteristics of this school of writing: constructing thematic material, dynamic effects, homophonic orchestral textures... As almost all the members of the Mannheim orchestra, Carl Stamitz was trained as a child by his father Johann Stamitz. The latter died when he was only eleven, thus he received the rest of his musical education from other important musicians at the court, such as Christian Cannabich, Ignaz Holzbauer and František Xaver Richter. He was appointed officially in the Mannheim court orchestra from 1762 to 1770. Then, he left for Paris to start making a living as a virtuoso on the violin and the viola. From 1771, he was employed by the Duke Louis de Noailles and published a great variety of instrumental music. Carl appeared a large number of times as a soloist at the Concert Spirituel, often in company of his younger brother Anton, with whom he left Mannheim originally. Carl Stamitz's new life in the French capital brought him to meet influential musicians who had, in their way, an impact on his

²⁰ Weston, Pamela. *Clarinet Virtuosi of the Past*. Emerson Editions. London. 1971 p. 30.

²¹ Ibidem.

²² Rendall, F. Geoffrey. *The Clarinet, Some Notes on Its History and Construction*. London/Ernest Benn Limited. New York, 1954. p. 80.

career. Among them, François-Joseph Gossec, Jean-Georges Sieber, Simon Leduc and of course, Josef Beer.²³

Carl Stamitz was not unfamiliar with the clarinet when he arrived in Paris and met the soloist Beer. His father, Johann, had a very special history with this instrument. Known to have composed the very first solo concerto for the clarinet as a classical B-flat instrument in opposition to earlier works for a more baroque instrument such as the concertos by Molter or the various pieces by Vivaldi or Graupner), his refreshing inclusion of the clarinet in the orchestra changed significantly the color of the wind choir.



The impact of Johann Stamitz on the development of clarinet repertoire

Johann Stamitz (1717-1757) was born in Bohemia and developed his exceptional musical skills in the Jesuit gymnasium in Jihlava from 1728 to 1734. He then entered the Faculty of Philosophy at Prague University. Stamitz parents died soon after and he decided to head to Palatinate, as he was not able to find a properly paid position as a virtuoso musician in Bohemia. He probably entered Mannheim court's orchestra in 1741, at the age of 24. It is precisely at that time that the successor of the recently passed away old Elector Palatine, Carl Theodor, took the commands of the court. The young elector rapidly made the court a sumptuous and extraordinarily rich place for science, commerce and especially *arts*. Johann Stamitz's talent and creativity had then the chance to be fully appreciated.

Stamitz became *konzertmeister* of the court in 1745 or 1746. From that time, he had the power to lead and built the sound of his orchestra. His task was divided in many spheres, including composition, teaching and leading the orchestral performances. Thanks to Stamitz, Mannheim orchestra gained an international reputation as an ensemble capable of an astonishing precision and most surprising dynamic effects, while building a new instrumental style, detached from the usual imitation of singing. Charles Burney travelled to Mannheim and had been delighted by the court's orchestra:

I cannot quit this article, without doing justice to the orchestra of his electoral highness, so deservedly celebrated throughout Europe. I found it to be indeed all that its fame

²³ Wolf, Jean K. and Eugene K. Wolf. *Carl Philipp Stamitz*. Oxford Music Online. Accessed on September 10th 2016.

*had made me expect: power will naturally arise from great number of hands; but the judicious use of this power, in all occasions, must be the consequence of good discipline; indeed there are more solo players and good composers in this, than perhaps in any other orchestra in Europe; it is an army of generals, equally fit to plan a battle as to fight it.*²⁴

The orchestra, qualified as « indisputably the best in Germany » by Leopold Mozart, was well-known for his constant alternation of pianos, fortes, his impressive crescendos and his dramatic grand pause gesture. The independence of the wind choir from the strings is undoubtedly another important characteristic of the compositions for the Mannheim orchestra. The orchestra had certainly a great influence of the way Wolfgang Amadeus, who stayed in Mannheim for four months in 1777, treated winds in his symphony, since he wrote to his father from the court:

« Ah, if only we too had clarinets! You cannot imagine the glorious effect of a symphony with flutes, oboes and clarinets. »

Johann Stamitz worked in 1754 and 1755 in Paris and wrote there specifically for clarinet in symphonies. He was then working for Alexandre Le Riche de La Pouplinière, the *Fermier General* in that time who was also a very important sponsor in the Parisian musical life who had his own talented orchestra. Johann Stamitz was for two years conducting this orchestra, succeeding Jean-Philippe Rameau and preceding François-Joseph Gossec. Stamitz composed three symphonies including clarinet parts during his years in Paris and we can see through those the evolution of the instrument and the development of its character. The first Symphony in D major would definitely suit a two- or three-keyed D instrument, while the third Symphony in Eb requires Bb clarinets with at least four keys. This could show the first steps of Johann Stamitz towards the writing of his clarinet concerto, in which put up front a virtuoso and flourishing line for a Bb instrument with four or five keys. But as Eric Hoeprich points out in his book *The Clarinet*²⁵, the exact moment and place of the transition of the two- or three-keyed D and C clarinets, the mostly common set of clarinets in the Baroque music, becoming the standard set used from the Classical era - that is five-keyed clarinets in C, Bb and A - is rather unclear. The first treatise to mention this Classical standard set of instruments is « Gamme de la clarinette » by Valentin Roeser. The author is also known to be the first to have written in 1764 a compositional treatise for the clarinet: *Essai d'instruction à*

²⁴ Zaslaw, Neal and John Spitzer. *The Birth of the Orchestra; History of an Institution, 1650 - 1815*. Oxford University Press. Oxford, 2004. p. 386.

²⁵ Hoeprich, Eric. *The Clarinet*. Yale University Press. 2008. p. 63.

l'usage de ceux qui composent pour la clarinette et le cor, avec des remarques sur l'harmonie et des exemples à deux Clarinets, deux Cors et Bassons. It is interesting to notice that the musical examples given in this method are written by Johann Stamitz. The five-keyed clarinet cannot, however, be linked to a specific country, as the Baroque clarinet is related to Germany, although the French five-keyed might have appeared a little later than the German one.

The manuscript of the early clarinet concerto by Johann Stamitz, preserved at Thurn und Taxis Hofbibliothek at Regensburg, Germany, state: CONCERTO a 7 Stromenti / Clarinet Principale Tone B / Violino Prima et Secundo / Corno Primo et Secundo in B / Alto Viola et Basso / del Sign. Stamitz. Among the Baroque characteristics seen in Johann Stamitz, one can notice the great use of the very high register of the instrument, especially in the first movement, reminiscent of the trumpet-like quality appreciated in the baroque period and the highly ornamented adagio that is not far away from late Baroque aesthetics. Although some characteristics are close to the Baroque, many other features open doors to the later classical clarinet style that will reach its full maturity with works such as Bernhard Crusell's concertos, Josef Beer's works or Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's K522; for instance, the use of the low register and wide dramatic leaps, florid passagework, contrasting articulation, Alberti basses...

It is difficult to talk about a proper Mannheim concerto style, since the great majority of musicians of the court were invited from diverse parts of Europe and were often offered trips, especially to Italy, to improve their technique or musical skills. It is therefore very hard to tell if a concerto written by a member of the Mannheim court was written for this court, or for musicians in Paris, Italy or elsewhere. This is especially true with what we could call the first generation of « Mannheimers ». The later generations were trained personally by Johann Stamitz, a teaching that was ensuring a great unity in the orchestra and led probably to the well-known reputation of the Mannheim court's orchestra.

Carl Stamitz is, nevertheless, a good example of a Mannheim-trained composer who left the court with a strong musical education, mainly led by his father Johann.



Beer at the Concert Spirituel: fame and glory

The first appearance of Beer at the Concert Spirituel, as indicated before, was with a concerto written by Carl Stamitz performed on December 24th 1771. It was reported in the *Mercure de*

France of January 1772. A few musical periodicals reported nearly thirty appearances of Beer in programs at the Concert Spirituel and he may have played more in unlisted occasions. In December 1771, Beer played a clarinet solo for the first time since twenty-one years and managed to erase the memory Paris had of a sometimes harsh, shrill sound.²⁶ Beer became in high demand at the Concert and left a deep heritage in the Parisian scene. Indeed, he led the way to other younger clarinetists who made hear themselves at the Concert Spirituel, including some of his students as Rathé, Michel Yost or Étienne Solère. Rathé was renowned to have a « lively heat from the head and a big strength in the chest » and his low notes were so loud and of a different color than his medium or high register that it seems as they came from another instrument. Michel Yost, however, was famous for his bright sound and « clear volubility », a characteristic often attributed to Josef Beer as well, and appear to have brought the clarinet performance to a « rarely attained degree of perfection ».²⁷

Listed solo performances of Josef Beer at the Concert Spirituel

Date	Commentary	Source
December 24th 1771	M. Beere, ordinaire de musique de S.A.S. Mgr le Duc d'Orléans, a exécuté un concerto de clarinettes de la composition de M. Stamitz fils	Mercure de France, January 1772 Volume II, p. 153
March 25th 1772	M. Baër, ci-devant de la Musique de S.A.S. Mgr le Duc d'Orléans, a exécuté un concerto de Clarinettes	Avant-coureur des spectacles, 1772, p. 201
April 17th 1772	(...) M. Baër, célèbre par son talent à adoucir le jeu de la clarinette (...)	Avant-coureur des spectacles, 1772, p. 267
May 28th 1772	M. Baer ci-devant de la musique de S.A.S. Mgr le Duc D'Orléans, a exécuté avec applaudissement un Concerto de Clairinette (sic) de Stamitz	Mercure de France, June 1772, p. 149
June 18th 1772	M. Baër a fait entendre un concerto de Clarinette	Avant-coureur des spectacles, 1772, p. 397
April 7th 1775	Le Concert du Vendredi 7 avril, a été parfaitement rempli par (...) un concerto de clarinette parfaitement exécuté par M. Baer, qui met dans son jeu beaucoup d'âme & de goût	Mercure de France, April 1775, Volume II, p. 181

²⁶ Pierre, Constant. *Histoire du Concert Spirituel, 1725-1790*. Pierre: Huegel, 1975. p. 150.

²⁷ Ibidem, p. 214.

Date	Commentary	Source
May 1775 (exact date unknown), could be more than one event	M. Baer a exécuté avec un talent supérieur plusieurs excellents morceaux de clarinette	Mercure de France, May 1775, p. 164.
December 25th 1776	M. Baer a exécuté un Concerto de clarinette	Mercure de France, January 1777, p. 183
February 2nd 1777	M. Baer jouera un nouveau Concerto de Clarinette, de sa composition	Journal de Paris, February 2nd 1777, p. 3
March 16th 1777 (first concert of the new direction of the Concert Spirituel)	M. Baer a exécuté avec succès, un nouveau Concert de clarinette	Mercure de France, April 1777, p. 159
March 25th 1777	M. Baer jouera un nouveau Concerto de Clarinette	Journal de Paris, March 25th 1777, p. 3
March 29th 1777	M. Baër exécutera un nouveau Concerto de clarinette	Journal de Paris, March 29th 1777, p. 4
April 4th 1777	M. Baer exécutera un Concerto de clarinette	Journal de Paris, April 4th 1777,
May 18th 1777	M. Baër exécutera un Concerto de clarinette	Journal de Paris, May 18th 1777, p. 2
September 8th 1777	M. Baër exécutera un Concerto de clarinette	Journal de Paris, September 8th 1777, p. 3
November 1st 1778	M. Baër exécutera un nouveau Concerto de clarinette de sa composition	Journal de Paris, Novmber 1st 1778, p. 1223
November 1st 1778	Un Concerto de clarinettes joué par M. Baer, & qu'on a trouvé digne de ceux que cet habile virtuose a déjà fait entendre, & toujours avec succès	Mercure de France, November 1778, p. 177
December 25th 1778	M. Baer exécutera un Concerto de clarinette	Journal de Paris, December 25th 1778
December 25th 1778	Les trois concertos du lendemain, exécutés sur la clarinette par M. Baer(...)	Mercure de France, January 5th 1779
March 25th 1779	M. Baer exécutera un nouveau Concerto de clarinette de sa composition	Journal de Paris, March 25th 1779, p. 337
March 29th 1779	M. Baër exécutera un nouveau Concerto de clarinette de sa composition	Journal de Paris, March 29th 1779, p. 354
April 1st 1779	M. Baër, exécutera un Concerto de Clarinette	Journal de Paris, April 1st 1779, p. 365
April 2nd 1779	M. Baër, exécutera un Concerto de Clarinette	Journal de Paris, April 2nd 1779, p. 370
April 5th 1779	M. Baër exécutera un Concerto de clarinette	Journal de Paris, April 5th 1799, p. 382

Date	Commentary	Source
April 9th 1779	M. Baer exécutera un Concerto de Clarinette	Journal de Paris, April 8th 1799, p. 394 and April 9th 1799, p. 397
September 8th 1779	M. Baër exécutera un nouveau Concerto de clarinette	Journal de Paris, April 6th 1779, p. 1016
November 1st 1779 (Concert <i>Adieux à la Capitale of Beer</i>)	M. Baër exécutera, pour la dernière fois, un Concerto de clarinette de sa composition	Journal de Paris, November 1st 1799, p. 1246

In a later comment in the *Mercure de France* dated November 6th 1779, one can read about Josef Beer, that «though there is little fecundity in the compositions of this virtuoso, we constantly admired his themes, his agile passagework, and above all his beautiful execution. »²⁸

The 27 appearances of Josef Beer at the Concert Spirituel between 1771 and 1779 prove he was a very appreciated musician on the Parisian scene. Of great interest is the three times Beer is known to have performed a concerto of his own. Most of the advertisements do not mention the composer's name, thus it is then difficult to know exactly how many works he composed while in Paris. His debut as a solo composer according to this list could be guessed to be in early 1777. However, he previously arranged violin sonatas by Pugnani for clarinet and bassoon: they were advertised in newspapers on April 10th 1775²⁹, on December 9th 1776, on March 22nd 1777³⁰, on July 1st 1777³¹, on October 1st and 20th 1777, and were all published by Le Marchand.³² Pamela Weston dates Beer's first composition 1782; he would have published an *Adagio, Air and Seven Variations* at that moment. However, as we saw earlier, Beer had already composed when he was in France in the 1770s. She also includes in the list of Beer's composition a *Fantasia*, six *Concertos*

²⁸ Translation from original text: « Quoiqu'il y ait peu de fécondité dans les compositions de ce Virtuose, on a constamment admiré ses sujets, ses passage heureux, et sur-tout sa belle exécution ». Jacobs, Michael. *Die Klarinettenkonzerte von Carl Stamitz*. Breitkopf & Härtel. Wiesbaden. 1991. p. 93.

²⁹ Devriès-Lesure, Anik. *L'édition musicale dans la presse parisienne au XVIIIe siècle - Catalogue des annonces*, p. 345: *Sonate de M. Behr, pour la clarinette & le basson, mise au jour par M. Germain, Prix 24s. Chez l'éditeur (Germain), maison du Sieur Le Marchand, rue Fromenteau. 10 avril 1775.*

³⁰ Ibidem, p. 430. Translation from original text: *Sonate de Pagnani arrangée pour la clarinette par M. Baer, Musicien de S.A.S. Mgr Le Duc D'Orléans. Prix 1 liv. 4 s. Chez Mad. Lemarchand, rue Fromenteau et de l'Opéra. 9 décembre 1776 et 22 mars 1777.*

³¹ Ibidem. Translation from original text: *Sonate de clarinette & de basson par M. Pugnani, arrangée par M. Bher. Prix 1 liv. 16 s. Chez Mad. Lemarchand, rue Fromentau. 1er juillet 1777, 1er et 20 octobre 1777.*

³² *Almanach musical pour l'année 1778; Découvertes, concernant la musique faites ou publiées en 1777.* Minkoff, reprints of Paris Editions 1775-1783. Geneva 1972. p. 513: *Sonate de Pugnani, arrangée pour une clarinette & un basson, par M. Baer. Chez Mde le Marchand, 1 l. 4 f.*

and three Concertos for two clarinets. We will discuss the topic of Beer's music in the performance practice part of the present work.

Beer's next compositions were dated late 1778 and March 1779. I assume the next concerts in March and April, when the publicity claims he would play a « new concerto of his composition », were reprises of the same work he performed on the 25th of March, taking into account the closeness of the concerts and the lack of time he would have to learn two different concertos. Only twice the name of Stamitz was officially mentioned, but I think it is safe to assume many of Beer's appearances were including solo works by his collaborator, since four times he played a « new clarinet concerto ». Those were very likely Stamitz's works.

Carl Stamitz's clarinet concertos were numerated in various ways and it is nowadays difficult to have a clear idea of their chronology.

Michael Jacob's chart of the different classifications of Stamitz's clarinet concertos³³

Kaiser	Sieber	Bosse	Tuthill	Newhill
Nr. 1	Nr. 1	Nr. 4	Nr. 4	Noé 4
Nr. 2	Nr. 2	Nr. 5	Nr. 5	o.n.
Nr. 3	Nr. 3	Nr. 6	Nr. 6	Nr.5
Nr. 4	Nr. 5	Nr. 7	Nr. 7	Nr. 6
Nr. 5	Nr. 6	Nr. 8	Nr. 8	Nr. 7
Nr. 6		Nr. 11	Nr. 11	Nr. 10
Nr. 7		Nr. 3	Nr. 3	Nr. 3
Nr. 8		Nr. 1	Nr. 1	Nr. 1
Nr. 9		Nr. 2	Nr. 2	Nr. 2
Nr. 10		Nr. 10	Nr. 10	Nr. 9
Nr. 11		Nr. 9	Nr. 9	Nr. 8

According to Michael Jacob, the fact that Stamitz lived a life of wandering virtuoso for many years explains why his music is spread in various libraries around Europe. However, all his clarinet music

³³ Jacobs, Michael. *Die Klarinettenkonzerte von Carl Stamitz*. Breitkopf & Härtel. Wiesbaden. 1991. p. 12

was published in Paris, thus all his clarinet music was composed while he was in Paris, expressly for the clarinetist Josef Beer. Carl Stamitz also had an agreement with Frederick the Great in Berlin to send him his clarinet music. This would explain why in 1786, the Berlin court commissioned a clarinet concerto to Carl Stamitz, a wish possibly manifested by Beer.³⁴ The concerto was then published in 1793 or 1794, which would explain the text on the title page stating that Beer is a musician of the King of Prussia's court (he was since 1792). The *Berlinisch Muzikalisch Zeitung*, dated October 26th 1793, advertise a « Concert pour la Clarinette principale, 2 Violons, 2 Violes et Basse, 2 Hautbois, 2 Cors de chasse » written by both « Baer » and Stamitz. The year Albert Rice suggest for the composition of the piece, 1786, is very likely since in the 1790s Carl Stamitz was not in the best dispositions for writing and sending music to his old friend. In the 1790s, Stamitz was in Greig (Voigtland), busy taking care the daughter he had in July 1792 with Maria Josepha Pilz, whom he married a bit before 1790. It has been reported that his ill wife and young child kept him from traveling a lot for concerts. However, he still sent music to many nobles, including the King of Prussia, the Prince of Orange and the court of Oettingen-Wallerstein. Very little information is available today about the kind of compositions he sent and it is difficult to evaluate if he continued to write clarinet concertos, in particular for Josef Beer. In the summer of 1786, however, Carl Stamitz was negotiating a contract with the King of Prussia who was guaranteeing a payment for anything he would compose for the Berlin court.³⁵ A clarinet concerto for one of the most famous soloist of the time would have been a good place to start. Very little information is available on the whereabouts of Beer in 1786 and since he was touring a lot, he might have stayed at the Prussia court and gave the King the idea of commission a concerto to his old Parisian partner. This specific concerto is of great interest because of its uncertain authorship: two names figure on the cover page and the first is unmistakably Josef Beer's. This specific concerto was certainly the last possible collaboration between the two musicians and should be considered apart from the others.

Many scholars who deliberated about this inception issue, including Pamela Weston and Helmut Boese, conclude that Carl Stamitz is the real composer of the two, thus Beer only contributed to the work by virtuoso passages and give ideas about thematic material. However, I think this conclusion could be rephrased with a wider consideration of the context of the composition of the work. Weston, however, underlines the fact that this work is more complete than the nine previous

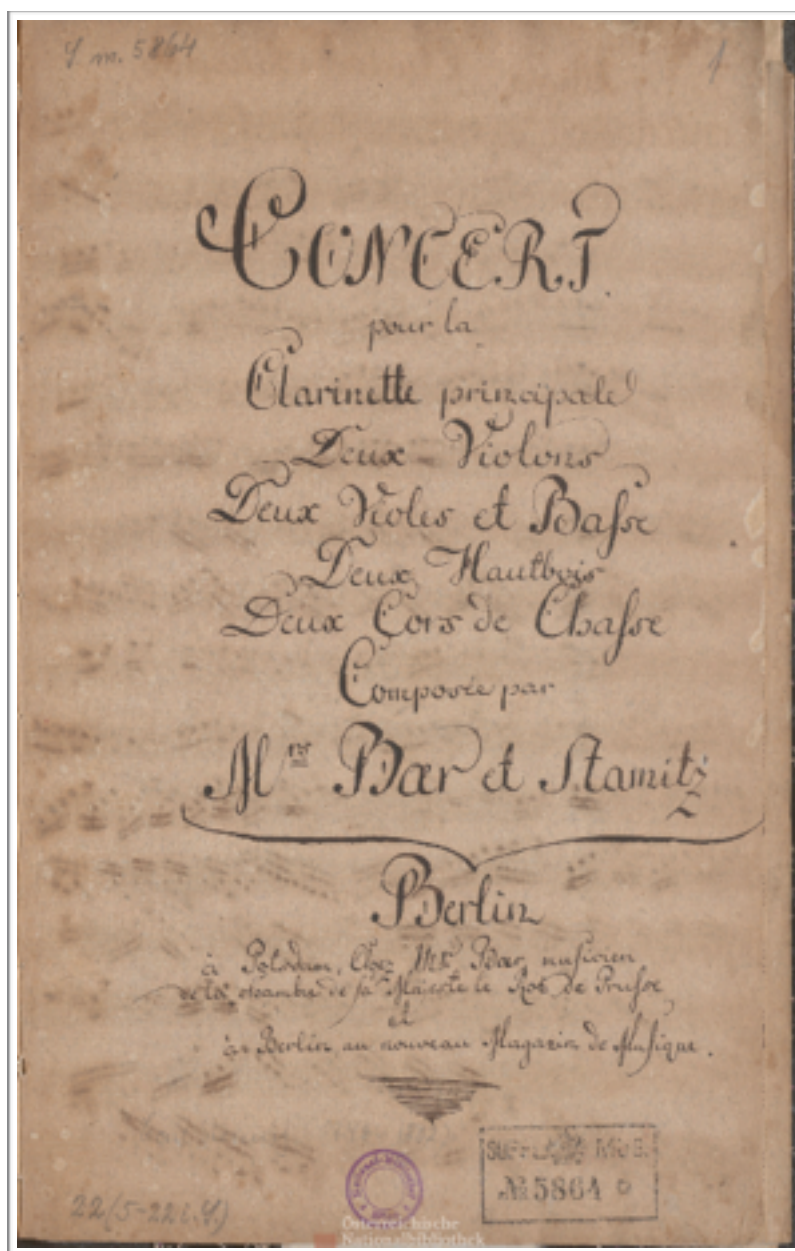
³⁴ Rice, Albert R. *The Clarinet in the Classical Period*. Oxford University Press. 2003. p.155.

³⁵ Wolf, Jean K. and Eugene K. Wolf. *Carl Philipp Stamitz*. Oxford Music Online. Accessed on February 5th 2017.

concertos Stamitz wrote, we could then conclude that the contribution of Josef Beer made a big difference in the written result.

Beer might have kept the concerto as an exclusivity until 1793 or 1794 when it was ready for publication. As one can notice, at the bottom of the page, it says « At Potsdam, at Baer's place, chamber musician of the King of Prussia ». Beer was not employed at the King of Prussia's court until 1792.

Considering Beer was a composer as well, albeit we unfortunately have not many other works to compare his style, I suggest he had a greater role than only a provider of technical material. The



Cover page of the manuscript of concerto no.6 (Kaiser) by « Mrs Baer and Stamitz », Berlin. Library Fürst Thurn und Taxis, Regensburg.

concerto, written for a B-flat instrument, includes a lot of identical thematic material found in the concerto reputed to be Stamitz's first, this one written for a C instrument. The fact that the notes played by the clarinet are exactly the same (and not transposed to sound the same pitch in the two pieces), could be the result of a mechanical memory developed by the performer, and in this case, the composer, who preferred to rely on his learned skills rather to compose a brand new line. Lastly, this concerto written in Berlin is technically speaking the most sophisticated work in the clarinet concerto collection by Carl Stamitz, implicating it was very likely written by a close disciple of the instrument. Surprisingly enough and although the cover page of the piece clearly indicates Beer as

the, or at least one of the, composer of the work, modern editions completely ignore this fact, attributing it only to Carl Stamitz and even omitting to mention the authorship problem in their prefaces.³⁶

This concerto written in 1786, acting as a pinnacle in Stamitz's clarinet music, would not have been the first collaboration between Beer and the composer. Indeed, the *Almanach Musical pour l'année 1778* learns us that not less than four concertos for the clarinet by « MM. Stamitz & Baer » were published by Sieber in 1777.³⁷ This proves a true collaboration between the two men did occur and resulted in the publication of works. This is not impossible that all clarinet music by Stamitz was written in close partnership with Beer and that the authorship of these works could also be challenged. Michael Jacobs underlines that the solo part in the clarinet concertos played in 1777 set high standards for technical skills for the player and his instrument. He also states that it should be assumed the works written between 1770 and 1790 were not only playable for « primitive clarinets » such as Beer's one, but could attain a high level of artistic satisfaction, since Beer achieved to have his name in all the contemporary and future dictionaries something he could not have realized with mediocre playing.³⁸ The technical demands of the concertos kept on growing, as the later concertos, such as the 1786 one, asks for a highly skilled player.



Beer as a teacher in France: solidification of the French school of clarinet playing

Josef Beer had fine pupils while in Paris and contributed to found the French school of clarinet playing, characterized by a brightness of sound, brilliance and volubility. Among them, Michel Yost (1754-1786), whose popularity made later scholars confuse his first name with his principal characteristic « Célèbre », ³⁹ Étienne Solère and Rathé. All three played frequently at the Concert Spirituel and some published a considerable opus. Yost was the son of a Trumpeter in the French army and learnt the oboe as a child, until later he heard Beer on the clarinet and chose this

³⁶ Forward of Carl Stamitz Konzert für Klarinette und Orchester Es-Dur, edition Kunzelmann.

³⁷ *Almanach musical pour l'année 1778; Découvertes, concernant la musique faites ou publiées en 1777.* Minkoff, reprints of Paris Editions 1775-1783. Geneva 1972. p. 761: *Quatre concertos de MM. Stamitz & Baer, pour la clarinette ; chez M. Sieber, 4 l. 4 f.*

³⁸ Jacobs, Michael. *Die Klarinettenkonzerte von Carl Stamitz.* Breitkopf & Härtel. Wiesbaden. 1991. p. 26.

³⁹ Forward of Carl Stamitz Konzert für Klarinette und Orchester Es-Dur, edition Kunzelmann: « (...) *The writing of concertos for the clarinet during the time he lived in Paris may have had its cause in the fact that the composer Célèbre Michel wrote more than 16 concertos for the clarinet and others which were much played during this period.* »

instrument for good.⁴⁰ With his strong eagerness, Michel, as he was known in France, he made fast progress as Beer's pupil and, according to Fétis, rapidly became a rival for him at the Concert Spirituel, where he played his own virtuosic concertos. Michel Yost became an important figure in the French clarinet tradition, published a method, and taught the one who later would represent the peak of the school: Xavier Lefèvre. Well-known for his method dated 1802, published in the context of standardization of the playing through teaching at the Paris Conservatory, recently founded over a military band school, Lefèvre was one of the major virtuoso on the clarinet in the 18th century. Born in Lausanne, Switzerland, on March 6th 1763, Lefevre became a member of the Gardes Françaises in 1778 and later of the Garde Nationale from 1789 to 1795. Lefèvre was also heard at the Opéra, where he was employed from 1791 to 1817. He had the good fortune to keep his post as first clarinetist at the Imperial Chapel, when it became the Royal Chapel again with the return of monarchie in 1814. Although he had a great popularity at the Concert Spirituel for his several virtuosic appearances, he left France very rarely. Lefèvre was one of the first teacher of the Paris Conservatory, when the institution was created from the already existing basis of military band, in 1795. He taught many pupils who became well-known performers at their time, including César Jannsen, Claude François Butueux and Bernhard Crusell. Lefèvre wrote a clarinet method still used today, especially by historical clarinet players, including a collection of progressive sonatas and comprehensive set of exercises, in which he gives a short, but meaningful tribute to his late master Michel Yost.⁴¹ This method is an example of what skills were expected to develop by anyone entering the Conservatory in the clarinet class and wishing to exit with a professional status. The method is important for this very nature, since most of the previous methods we have on the clarinet, including, Vanderhagen's, Corrette's, Blasius', were often used for amateur playing. Lefèvre received the honor of being named Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur in 1814. Lefèvre represents in a way the climax of the French school playing that, soon after him, vanished with the help of Frederic Berr who reformed the embouchure technique in France, in favor of the German one as we shall see later.

⁴⁰ Titus, Robert Austin. *The Solo Music for the Clarinet in the Eighteenth Century*. State University of Iowa. PhD dissertation. 1962. p. 249.

⁴¹ After a written example of the highest notes available on the clarinet (up to c'''), Lefèvre gives credit to his master, the famous Michel. This small tribute can give a clue on the playing of high notes tradition that was already well established in France from the 1780s and possibly the 1770s. Lefevre, Xavier. *Methode de clarinette*. Paris. 1802. p. 6: *Cet exemple comprend tous les sons aigus qu'il est possible de former sur la clarinette, un artiste aussi recommandable par ses vertus que par ses talens les mit en usage: c'est le célèbre Michel, qu'une mort prématurée enleva à trente deux ans, aux arts et à l'amitié; je soulage la douleur que me cause encore sa perte, en rendant à sa mémoire le tribut de louanges qui est dû à un tel maitre, et j'avoue que si j'ai quelques succès c'est à ses soins que j'en suis redevable.*