Josef Beer

The perfect clarinetist

by

Maryse Legault

A Master's Thesis

Presented to the
Royal Conservatory of The Hague

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements
For the Degree of Master in Music

Under the supervision of Wouter Verschuren

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Introduction

Modern music history, eager to make a smooth and sensible connection between the eras, focus primarily on composers' innovations, sometimes making an exception for the novelty of certain popular instruments by mentioning them in the course of the evolution. The reason might be that written music is the best witness of music of the past time, since it is in one of the only track left by the composer, although lots of mysteries are still remaining about the vast subject of notated music. However, if great composers led the way to open doors in musical traditions since centuries, they were almost systematically helped or inspired by players who were equally responsible for their innovations. Up until the 20th centuries, composers were also players and they composed a fair amount of music for themselves when their instruments were highlighted. But when writing for the others, and especially in the the context of concertos, skillful players were consistently around them. In this perspective, the players had a huge impact on the development of their instrument and repertoire, although they are very rarely mentioned in history books. Some players have been crucial for their instrument, since they were active at the crossroad of eras and thrived towards novelty by means of skills and adventurousness.

When looking at the clarinet history, and more precisely at the players that shaped it in the late Classical and early Romantic eras, one can see the same few names appear: Josef Beer, Anton Stadler, Heinrich Baermann, Bernhard Crusell, Simon Hermstedt… If quite an amount of information is findable on Anton Stadler, mainly because of his ties to a certain Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, or Heinrich Baermann, greatly for his musical friendship with Carl Maria von Weber, little is findable about the other three players. Focusing on the oldest of them, Josef Beer, for the reason I found his years of life extremely remarkable (right at the turn of the 19th century, he would have starter(ed) his career with the very first works for clarinet by Carl Stamitz and finish it when Weber already composed for the instrument, what a leap!) and realized there was not much to read. Skimming through all the clarinet general history books, I was shocked to read that, in his book *The Clarinet; a cultural history,* Kurt Birsak gives this short line of information about Beer in those terms: « **Joseph Beer** (1744-1812) was a member of the court orchestra in Berlin. He is not to be confused with another famous virtuoso. »[1] In short, the only thing to remember about Beer is that we should not mix him with another player. This sentence summarizes the general treatment this player received in contemporary writings on the clarinet. The name of Beer is present in every clarinet source and mentioned as an important player, but the story usually finishes there. Pamela Weston, on in the other hand, is very clear: « the significance of Joseph Beer (1744-1812) in the beginnings of clarinetistry cannot be overestimated. »[2]

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[1] Birsak, Kurt. The Clarinet; a cultural history. Translated from Germany by Gail Schamberger. Druck und Verlag Obermayer GmbH. 1994. p. 96.

[2] Weston, Pamela. Heroes and heroines of clarinetistry. Trafford. 2008. p. 35.

Paired with a not-so-important classical composer (Carl Stamitz), too old to be associated with the first great early-romantic composers (Beethoven, Weber), right in the same time Mozart and his clarinetist Anton Stadler were there to take all the glory, Josef Beer has been put aside and his tremendous impact on the clarinet development and repertoire evolution have been kept in darkness.

In order to enlighten Beer's contribution to clarinet history, it was crucial to built the most extensive biography, a task that was not undertaken until now. Indeed, Josef Beer's biography generally holds within a few lines in history books and authors name him as a compulsory step in woodwind history, without taking time to discuss his career. However, when looking closer to his impact on late 18th and early 19th centuries music for the clarinet, his role is essential and no less surprising. Crossing countries with the army from Bohemia to France, he learned and solidified his instrumental technique there fast enough to become the best clarinet player available in the kingdom of Louis the XVIth. Enjoying a decade of success, mainly due to his warmly applauded appearances at the Concert Spirituel, he left to enjoy the life of a wandering virtuoso before settling down in St-Petersburg where he played for the wealthiest figures of the country, contributing to the thriving of clarinet music. Ten years employed by the Empress Catherine the Great were enough to satisfy Beer who then accepted a position at the King of Prussia's court and finished his life there, playing and teaching fine young musicians.

In order to compile information able to constitute a clear biography, a great variety of sources were studied, including period encyclopedias, daily papers reviewing Beer's public appearances, period writings about related subjects, music manuscripts and first editions, as well as clarinet methods and treatises and secondary sources. Josef Beer having travelled greatly during his career, many sources are in foreign languages: French, Czech, German, Russia, English… the author would like to thank her colleagues for the translation of those sources when it was necessary.

Although a tradition of witting the name of our main character spelled « Joseph » exists, I chose to stick to the German speaking way of writing « Josef », as it was his mother tongue.

Since Josef Beer had a genuinely eventful story, it was essential in this work to try to portrait his way of playing, inter alia by comparing general trends of clarinet playing at the end of the 18th century with reviews of his specific playing in order to pull out conclusions we can apply nowadays on the music he performed. Thus this research concludes with a chapter targeting performance practice and attempting to give clues on historical informed clarinet playing for music setting on the turn of the 19th century. Beer revealed himself as the best example of a player renewing his playing, both technically and musically, during the course of his enlivened life.

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 (…) »[3]. 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.[4] 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.[5]

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[3] 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.

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

[5] 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.[6] 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 ».[7] 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. [8] 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:

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

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

[8] 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.*[9]

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 Paris[10] and Birsak suggests that Beer learned the clarinet watching the other players in the French Guard.[11] 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.[12] 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.

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[9] 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.*

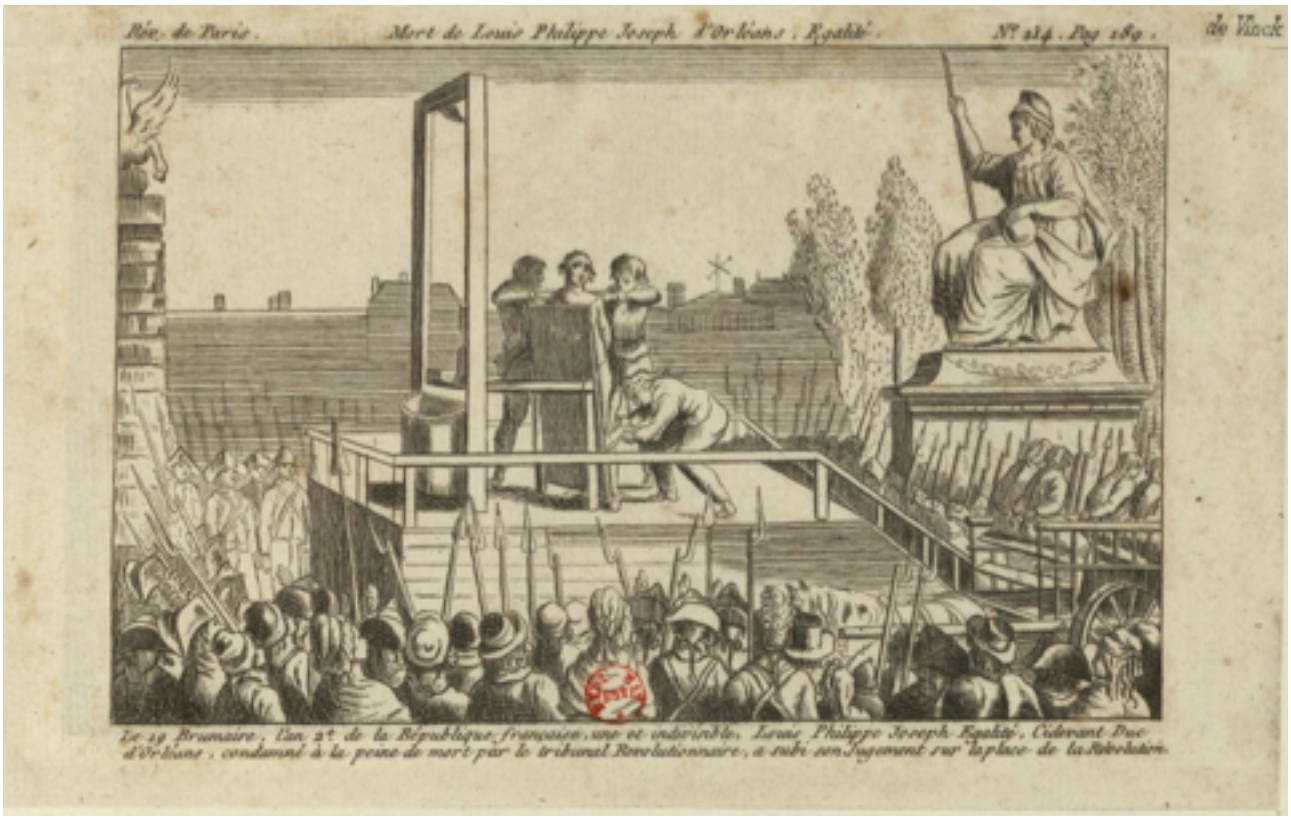
[10] Fétis, F.J. *Biographie Universelle des Musiciens*. Tome 2. Leroux Éditeurs. Bruxelles. 1835. p. 99.

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

[12] 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 pubic 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.[13] 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.[14] 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 orchestra sand 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 competitively 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.[15] Valentin Roeser (ca.

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

[14] Ibidem.

[15] 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.

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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.[16] 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

[16] 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 ».[17] 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.[18]

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 obbligato clarinet and hunting horn.[19] 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 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 obbligato parts for flute, oboe, clarinet and bassoon which were played by the finest musicians available, including Georg Wenzel Ritter on the bassoon.[20] 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

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[17] 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.

[18] Amsterdamsche Courant. 10th of April 1773.

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

[20] 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 vincitore* 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 previdi* (K272) shortly after their first meeting and the recitative and aria *Bella mia flamma, addio* (K528) in 1787 expressively for Josefa. They regularly played together in the 1780s.[21]

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

[21] 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. [22]

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. »[23]

Although Beer did not develop any relationship with Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, he did collaborat closely with Carl Stamitz, who wrote for him most, if not all, of his eleven concertos between 1770 and 1784.[24] Born in Mannheim on the 12th of May 1745, Carl Stamitz's numerous compositions displays 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 is 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 Spitiruel, 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

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

[23] Ibidem.

[24] 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.[25]

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 simnifically the color of the wind choir.

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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 a 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*

[25] 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.[26]

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 month 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*[27], 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*

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

[27] Hoeprich, Eric. Hoeprich, Eric. *The Clarinet*. Yale University Press. 2008. p. 63.

l'usage de ceux qui composent pour la clarinette et le cor, avec des remarries sur l'harmonie et des examples à demux Clarinets, demux 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 therefor 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 eduction, mainly led by his father Johann.

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Beer at the Concert Spiritual: fame and glory

The first appearance of Beer at the Concert Spitiruel, 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 Spitiruel 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.[28] 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 Spitiruel, 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 seams 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 ».[29]

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

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

[29] 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 *Adieux à la Capitale* of Beer)	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. »[30]

The 27 appearances of Josef Beer at the Concert Spiritual 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 1775[31], on December 9th 1776, on March 22nd 1777[32], on July 1st 1777[33], on October 1st and 20th 1777, and were all published by Le Marchand.[34] 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

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[30] 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.

[31] 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.*

[32] Ibidem, p. 430. Translation from original text: *Sonate de Pagani arrangée pour la clarinette par M. Baer, Musician 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.*

[33] 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.*

[34] *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 concertos[35]

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

[35] 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 Fredrick 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.[36] 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 a 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.[37] 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

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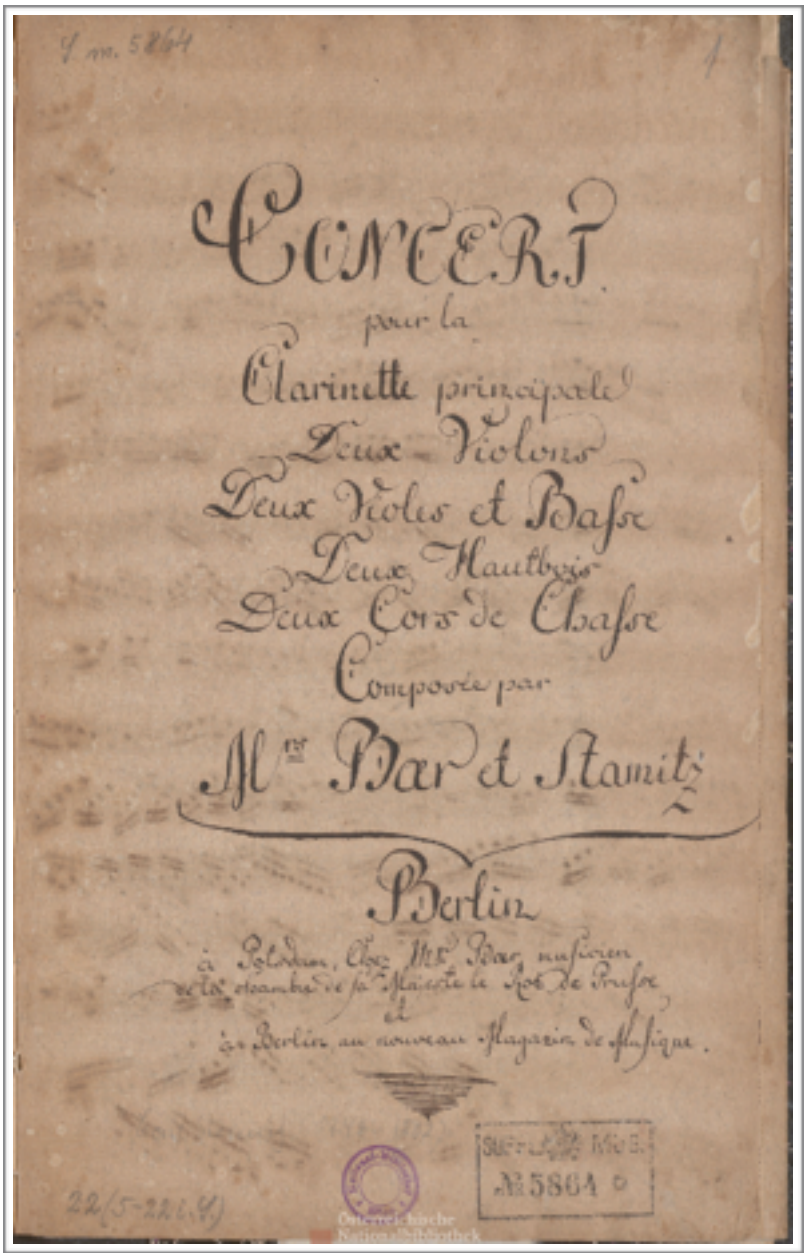
[36] Rice, Albert R. *The Clarinet in the Classical Period*. Oxford University Press. 2003. p.155.

[37] 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 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 composer 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



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

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.[38]

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.[39] 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 realize with mediocre playing. [40] The technical demands of the concertos kept on growing, as the later concertos, such as the 1786 one, asks for a highly skilled player.

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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 »,[41] 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

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

[39] 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.*

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

[41] 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.[42] 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 Spitiruel 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.[43] 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 names 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.

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

[43] 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.*

Beer in Russia

The change of embouchure: a total reformation

Already in 1780, Josef Beer is found to perform in Russia. Having left Paris in 1779 for a tour bringing him first to Belgium, where, according to Fétis in his *Biographie Universelle* he would have heard in Bruxelles the clarinetist Schwartz who impressed him so much with his German-style tone that Beer decided to greatly improve his:

> *Beer, passing through Belgium on his way to Holland, had the occasion to hear Schwartz, regimental bandmaster of Kaunitz, in Brussels; it was the first time that the softness of the German sound had caught his ear; he was enchanted by it, and immediately resolved to set to work to change his style under this influence. In less than six months of study, he succeeded in adding to his admirable accuracy in the execution of difficulties and his beautifully expressive style, the soft quality of sound which was not the least among his cleans of glory, and which he transmitted to his pupil Baermann.*[44]

It is important to underline the general trends of reed positioning toward the end of the 18th century. As Eric Hoeprich points out in his article on the subject,[45] the habit in France, Italy and England was generally to perform with the reed above the mouthpiece, according to a few surviving methods and iconographical evidences from these countries. The Paris Conservatoire accepted the reed-below technique only with after the employment of clarinetist Frederic Berr, as late as 1831. A great number of amateur musicians and perhaps a lack of employment for the clarinetists, as well as a strong tradition of publishing led to a much larger production of tutors and methods in France and England, compare to other countries such as Germany, Bohemia or Austria. The lack of methods in the latter makes it easy to oversimplify the reality of reed-positioning in the 18th century, saying that the general trend was to play reed up. However, as the author mentions it, iconography and

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[44] Fétis, F.J.. *Biographie Universelle des Musiciens*. Paris. 1866, p. 297:
Beer, passant en Belgique pour se rendre en Hollande, eut occasion d'entendre à Bruxelles Schwartz, maître de musique du régiment de Kunitz; c'était la première fois que la douceur du son allemand frappait son oreille; il en fut charmé, et sa résolution fut prise à l'instant de travailler à la réforme de son talent sous ce rapport. En moins de six mois d'études, il parvint à joindre à son admirable netteté dans l'exécution des difficultés, et à sn beau style dans le phrasé d'expression, la moelleuse qualité de son qui n'est pas un de se moindre titres de gloire, et qu'il a transmise à son élève Baermann. (English traduction: E. Hoeprich. The Clarinet. 2008. p.166.)

[45] Hoeprich, Eric. *Clarinet reed position in the 18th century*. Early Music (vol. 12, #1, Feb., 1984). p. 48-55.

study of early clarinetists lead us to a different path. For instance, on the engraving « Lutherie » in their *Encyclopédie*, Diderot and D'Alembert[46] depict a clarinet, visibly using a reed-down system. Moreover, some soloists such as Villement had an engraved portrait of himself made by Pierre Bazin in 1780[47] with his clarinet, showing a reed pointing the lower lip. This is however, an exception in France when taking into account the other evidences pointing towards the general trend of reed-above preference. As one can see, the trends of placing the reed on either the upper or lower side of the mouthpiece was not systematically attached to a country and diversity in the embouchure existed both on the French and German sides. In the specific case of Josef Beer, proofs exist stating he changed drastically his technique in the 1780s. The change of embouchure would be the most plausible change he made. *(*See chapter *Beer and clarinet performance practice)*

Other arguments clarifying the national trends point towards artifacts of the time. When looking at period clarinets available nowadays made by the greatest German makers such as August Grenser (1720-1807), who sold clarinets to some of the finest soloists of the 18th and early 19th century, the absence of a stamp on the mouthpiece can be, as suggested by E. Hoeprich, a « tacit vote on the parts of these makers for a choice of reed position, since German makers are well-known to be eager at stamping their instruments. » The French makers, however, stamp clearly the mouthpieces on the same side than the facing, so that the stamps on all parts would line up.

This way of playing stayed alive for many years in those countries until the beginning of the 19th century, although fierce criticism against this practice was well-established. Christian Friedrich Michaelis (1770-1834), teacher of philosophy and aesthetics in Leipzig, signed the article « Ueber die Klarinette » in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* in March 1808, in which he vividly condemn the French way of playing the clarinet with the reed against the upper lip. According to him:

> *if this instrument is of great interest to the music lover, it is because of its essential qualities, although there are certain aspects regarding its use which must change. First of all, one must stop playing with the reed on top, as the French do, who even recommend doing so in their Méthodes. One will lose of course the extreme high notes, but gain, I would say, the whole instrument. Even holding the instrument is more difficult this way, especially the angle of the head, which is held in an awkward position. How is it possible to produce a*

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[46] Diderot and D'Alembert, *Encyclopédie*. Paris 1751-65.

[47] Portrait of clarinetist Villement (1780) by Pierre Bazin (Amsterdam, Rijksarchief voor kunsthistorische Dokumentatie).

soft and gentle sound if one touches the vibrating of the reed with the teeth? Playing this way it is as inevitable as the swing of a pendulum that the sound will become a shrill. This sound is far less pleasing to the ear than the gentle and round sound of the clarinet, very often similar to the harmonica, without having its irritating glass-like quality.[48]

In any case, there is no teeth mark on the great majority of the surviving mouthpieces. Since clarinet playing is very probably born from oboe technique, the embouchure was until the early 19th century very similar. Ivan Müller (1786-1854), who was playing with the reed against the lower lip in France from a fairly early date, is reported by Frédéric Berr in his *Traité Complet de la Clarinette* published in 1836, that he was « biting » his embouchure, using his upper teeth as an anchorage on the mouthpiece, allowing him more dexterity and freedom. [49] Himself from German origin (he was born in Mannheim and trained in Frankenthal), the acceptance of the German clarinet embouchure through Berr teaching by the Paris Conservatoire is a true conquest over the French tradition.

The six months of work as an autodidact Josef Beer did to achieve his new German-style tone can be a clue that his totally changed his technique and switched from the traditional way to play the clarinet with the reed against the upper lip to the German way to play, the reed leaning rather on the lower lip. The rapidity of Beer's switch of technique might be attributed to the fact he possibly learned to play the clarinet in Bohemia when he was a child, although he perhaps didn't master the instrument at that moment. Remembering his first steps with the instruments, he could have put aside his lately acquired in the army French technique. A switch of technique would have been very realistic as the change Fétis mentions since Beer's French pupil Michel Yost writes, in his own method, that one should place the reed above the mouthpiece:

The embouchure of the clarinet is the easiest of all wind instrument - but one must not put the mouthpiece too far in the mouth, otherwise one will not be able to govern it with ease or give the tonguing at will. One must press the mouthpiece on the inferior teeth and cover the reed with the upper lip without letting the upper teeth touch it, because they give the

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[48] Hoeprich, Eric. *« Regarding the clarinet »: Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung, 1808*. Early Music, Vol. XXXVII, no. 1. Oxford University Press. 2009. p. 89.

[49] Hoeprich, Eric. *The Clarinet*. Yale University Press. 2008. p. 133.

strength to the upper lip to pinch the high tones (…)[50]

The German embouchure eventually established itself as the standard way to play the clarinet, even in countries traditionally in favor of the reed-below position, such as France. The Bohemian of origin Frédéric Berr[51] (originally spelled « Beer »: when arriving in Paris from Mannheim 50 years after his illustrious colleague, the memory of the great Josef Beer and his numerous performances in the capital was so strong, that Frédéric had to change his last name for Berr to be sure to not be confused with his older colleague)[52], teacher at the Paris Conservatoire states in the section « On the necessity of playing with the reed underneath » from his *Traité* that:

> *The advantage of playing with the reed underneath has been shown by the most skillful clarinetists. All artists here (Paris) recognize that no one can obtain the piano and the pianissimo as they do in Germany. The famous Baermann, whom we hear in Paris in 1818, played piano in a way that in fact was unknown here at the time. He played four-bar phrases very loudly, and then repeated the phrase so softly as though it came from another room.*[53]

This theory is very accurate if one would agree that Josef Beer taught himself the clarinet only when he arrived in France in 1763, with the France style of playing as a model, but can also be disputable since he started his career as a *hautboist* in the army. The probable thing is that when he arrived in Russia in the early 1780s, his embouchure technique was changed or soon to be changed, since he then developed characteristics that were later praised as typical to the German style of clarinet playing and were transmitted through his teaching to one of his greatest students, Heinrich Baermann. (see the chapter *The German Years*)

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[50] Yost, Michel. *Méthode de Clarinette*. ca. 1800. p. 3. Translated by the author from original text:
L'Embouchure de la clarinette est la plus facile de tous les instruments à vent - mais il ne faut pas enfoncer le bec trop avant, car on ne sauroit alors le gouverner facilement, ni donner le coup de langue à volonté. On doit apuyer le bec sur les dents inférieures et couvrir l'anche avec la lèvre supérieure sans que jamais les dents d'en haut y touchent, car ce sont elles qui donnent la force à la lèvre supérieure pour pincer les tons aigus (…)

[51] Frederic Berr (1794-1838) is often considered the founder of the later French school of clarinet playing. He was indeed the first to standardize the playing with the reed below, instead of up, as it was the tradition in France. He was active at the Vaudeville Theater, Italian Theater and the Court Orchestra.
Birsak, Kurt. *The Clarinet; a cultural history*. Translated from Germany by Gail Schamberger. Druck und Verlag Obermayer GmbH. 1994. p. 96.

[52] Weston, Pamela. Heroes and heroines of clarinetistry. Trafford. 2008. p 36.

[53] Hoeprich, Eric. *« Regarding the clarinet »: Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung, 1808*. Early Music, Vol. XXXVII, no. 1. Oxford University Press. 2009. p. 93.

A second appointment

Thence to Belgium, Josef Beer's tour brought him to Holland, then to Germany, where he appeared successfully in Berlin[54], to Italy, before he headed in Bohemia to see his parents. Following a straight line to the North, he performed in Poland, where he had to promise to come back again in the future,[55] crossed the Russian border and finally entered St-Petersburg.

When Beer arrived in Russia, the Empress Catherine The Great was on the throne. Her reign was decisive for the growth and development of Russian culture and her inclusion of international artists to the cities' life brought Russia, for the first time in History, on the same height than other cultural European capitals. Indeed, Josef Beer arrived in a moment of real cultural blooming and perhaps contributed himself to the flourishing of artistic innovations.

As Nikolai Findeizen underlines the change of musical life in the capital in his comprehensive two-volume book *History of Music in Russia from Antiquity to 1800*:

> *The second half of the 18th century, presented new problems in this respect: music and theater gradually ceased to serve solely as entertainment for court circles and became part of public life in general. This circumstance, in turn, led to establishment of a Russian public theater and to the emergence of native talents in the realm of theater and music. (…) Musical life gradually relinquishes its links to the caprices of the court and begins to develop independently; previously linked closely to the czars' personal tastes, musical life now becomes separate, conditioned by social trends.* [56]

Public theaters were then flourishing side by side with private concert halls and the diversity of concert was greater then ever. The nobles were investing in private serf orchestras and theaters that allowed them to invite the finest people of the capital. The counts Naryshkins, who had a

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[54] Weston, Pamela. *Clarinet Virtuosi of the Past. 1971*. Emerson Editions. London. p. 35

[55] Ibidem.

[56] Findeizen, Nikolai. *History of Music in Russia from Antiquity to 1800*. Vol. 2 (The eighteenth century). Indiana University Press. Bloomington and Indianapolis. 1928. Reprint of 2008. p. 25

tremendous impact on the development of the traditional horn band,[57] and Sheremetev who was the greatest patrons of arts toward the end of the 18th century and produced numerous memorable events with his private orchestra of no less than 35 musicians in 1800, including two conductors - Stepan Anikievich Degtiaryov and Pyotr Kolmykov - and two foreign well-known soloists, the pianist Meier and cellist Johann Facius. He owned also, beside this large symphonic orchestra, his private ballet companies, opera, brass band, chorus and horn band. This sudden establishment of theaters and serf orchestras by the wealthy ones shows how the music was not exclusively reserved to the tastes of the court and, on the contrary, was spreading to multiple circles and taking over both the capitals and provinces. The golden years of this cultural peak was coinciding with the middle of Catherine II's reign. As Findeizen mentions it, these years were also the time for Russian musicians to be more and more included in courts and theaters along with foreign ones. The taste of Russia had for long been for Italian and French music. Young Russian musicians, such as Dmitry Bortniansky, Berezovsky, Matinsky, Fomin and Skokof, were sent to Italy at an early age to complete their learning in music, returning to Russia with a truly Italian style of writing. It is well established today that Russian music really came to life with Glinka and the following generation, although this assertion can be challenged by the presence of Russian composers in the cultural landscape such as Yevstigney Fomin (1761 - 1800), Vasily Pashkevich (1742 - 1797) and Mikhail Matinsky (1750 - 1820) who really built the Russian opera tradition, using mostly Russian libretti and including folk music in their works, letting aside pioneer symphonists in Russia like Maksim Berezovsky (1745 - 1777).

The Empress was not particularly fond of music, an art she herself explained was only organized noise to her ears. Nevertheless, it was primordial for her to have in her court the best musicians, the most imaginative composers, the brightest of all virtuosi. She wished to keep two orchestras at her service at all time. Being herself a writer, Catherine the Great encouraged the production of theater and literature, as well as opera, a medium for which she occasionally wrote libretti that were put in

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[57] Derived from the hunting tradition, the horn band is a typical ensemble found in Russia. The main characteristic is that it uses long, straight horns of various sizes, each producing one single pitch. Thanks to the experimentation of Jan Mares, when he was employed as the Master of the Hunt and Director of the Court Theaters for the count Semyon Kirillovich Naryshkin from 1751, the horns used in this formation found their definitive peculiar straight shape. Horns from all sizes are used in a horn band, from the largest measuring 98 inches long to the smaller with its short nine inch length, to create a organ-like type of sound. Naryshkin's horn band was well-known for being comprised of up to 32 musicians. The band was used both for inside and outside performances. Many composers, including foreign ones, took interest in this distinctive ensemble and wrote music for it. This is the case of Giuseppe Sarti, who included a horn band in an oratorio he composed in honor of the Prince Grigory Potemkin, Catherine II's lover. Spohr visited St-Petersburg in 1803-1804 and kept a vivid impression of the horn band of 40 musicians accompanying a choir of more than 200 voices, stating it was « giving both majesty and power to the pieces sung by the choir ».

Jaffé, Daniel. *Historical Dictionary of Russian Music*. The Scarecrow Press. Plymouth. 2012. p. 156.

music by the greatest maestros of her court. Many specialized theaters emerged, such as Italian or French companies. It was a statement of wealthiness for nobles to own their own opera company and orchestra to enchant their guests with sumptuous spectacles. The Empress' court was an absolutely flourishing playground for all sorts of arts. In 1791, a list was made of those orchestras letting us have an idea of the size of them: one, comprised of 39 musicians, was serving the dance under the direction of Vasili Pashkevich, and the other one gathering 43 of the best musicians she had on hand, included a harpsichord, as her chamber musicians orchestra conducted by Carlo Canobbio. Both orchestras had a section of no less than three clarinetists. Mooser insinuates that Josef Beer stopped being an orchestra musician quite early in his career in St-Petersburg, for becoming a « chamber musician ». Looking at the detail of this chamber musician orchestra make me think that, perhaps he played less in the « utilitarian » concert, but he might have been the first of three clarinetists, the soloist required only for important occasion, chamber music, solos (concertos) and big obligate parts, like we shall see in the case of Bortniansky.

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Towards the end of 1780, the Gazette of St-Petersburg announced on September 29th two concerts of the great soloist:

> *Mr Beer, virtuoso-clarinetist recently arrived, inform the honorable public that on the coming October 10th and 17th, he will be giving two concerts in the house of S.A. the Prince Potemkin. The first virtuosi of the Chapel of Her Majesty will play in these concerts…*[58]

Unfortunately, the events had to be postponed, as seen in the Gazette of October 6th:

> *Mr Beer has the honor to inform the public that, the coming 10th, in the house of S. A. the Prince Potemkin, he will be giving a concert where we will play different concertos of his*

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[58] Mooser, R. - Aloys. *Annales de la musique et des musiciens en Russie au 18e siècle*. Mont-Blanc. Lausanne. 1948-52. p. 364. Translated by the author from original text: *Mr Beer, virtuose-clarinettiste arrivé depuis peu, informe l'honorable public que les 10 et 17 octobre prochains, il donnera deux concerts dans la maison de S. A. le prince Potemkine. Les premiers virtuoses de la Chapelle de Sa Majesté joueront dans ces concerts…*

composition. Mrs Bonafini, MM. Compagnucci and Bambini will sing, and Mr Paisible will play a violin concerto…[59]

…And postponed a third time, as seen on the Gazette of October 30th:

Mr Beer announces that his first concert will absolutely take place on Sunday November 1st, in the house of the General Chtcherbatchef; he will play diverse pieces of his composition for clarinette…[60]

Josef Beer must have given a strong impression on his public and grew a good reputation, since he rapidly performed for the court, as the advertisement seen in Moscow's Gazette on January 16th shows it:

Mr Beer, came here from Paris, who had the honor to show his art in St-Petersburg in the presence of Her Imperial Majesty and of Their Imperial Highnesses, will give next Thursday, the 21st of the current month, in Her Highness the countess Serguiéevna Saltykov's theater, a great concert in which we will play a lot of concertos and other new musical pieces of his composition, for the clarinet…[61]

As R. Aloys Mooser points out, some primary sources create doubt concerning the exact date Beer left France. Fétis, in his *Biographie Universelle*, states that Beer left the French service only in 1788 and Hugo Riemann in his *Lexikon*[62] implies that Beer left in 1782. Although Beer had a lot of liberty in the following years and could have easily come back to Paris a couple of times, his farewell concert in 1779, contradicts Fétis' and Hiermann's assertions. This statement can, however,

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[59] Mooser, R. - Aloys. *Annales de la musique et des musiciens en Russie au 18e siècle*. Mont-Blanc. Lausanne. 1948-52. p. 364. Translated by the author from original text: *Mr Beer a l'honneur d'informer le public que, le 10 courant, dans la maison de S. A. le prince Potemkine, il donnera un concert ou l'on jouera divers concertos de sa compositions. Mme Bonafini, MM. Compagnucci et Babbini chanteront, et Mr. Paisible jouera un concerto de violon…*

[60] Ibidem. Translated by the author from original text: *Mr. Beer annonce que son premier concert aura lieu absolument le dimanche 1er novembre, dans la maison du général Chtcherbatchef; il jouera diverses oeuvres de sa composition pour clarinette…*

[61] Ibidem, p. 365. Translated by the author from original text: *Mr Beer, arrivé ici de Paris, qui a eu l'honneur de de montrer son art à Saint-Pétersbourg, en présence de Sa Majesté Impériale et de Leurs Altesses Impériales, donnera jeudi prochain, soit le 21 de ce mois, dans le théâtre de S. A. la comtesse Serguiéevna Saltykov, un grand concert dans lequel on jouera beaucoup de concertos et d'autres pièces musicales nouvelles de sa composition, pour la clarinette…*

[62] Riemann, Hugo. *Musik-Lexikon*. Max Hesses Verlag. Berlin. 1919. p.89.

be explained by the fact that another clarinetist with a very similar name, Josef Bähr (1770-1819)[63],,was working in Austria toward the end of the 18th century. Since Riemann attribute to Josef Beer the position of clarinetist at the Oettingen court in Wallerstein from 1787 to 1794, which was the official position of the younger Bähr, we can assume Riemann is mixing incorrectly the two players. Anyhow, I also wish to underline that Beer's name is the very first to appear in Hiermann's list of the great clarinetists, followed by Franz Tausch, Xavier Lefèvre, the Baermanns (father and son) and other players until 1900 (p. 575), which makes him the earliest memorable virtuoso on the clarinet.

Beer seems to have had a strong network of players with whom he enjoyed performing. The name of Henri Paisible, French virtuoso on the violin, conductor, composer and concert manager, comes back a lot in his programs, as well as the name of a friend of the later whom he met in Vienna at the Tonkünstler-Societät and convinced to follow him to Russia, the soprano (and… procurer![64]) Cristoforo Arnaboldi, known also as *Il Comaschino*. The group was also completed by the Czech bassoon virtuoso Anton Bullandt, the Italian violinist Antonio Lolli, who was indeed Paisible's rival. The musicians were playing in various ensemble settings, from orchestra to chamber music, depending on the needs and tastes of the court and the type of event.

Beer left Moscow in company of one of his pupil, Franz Dvorak, also from Bohemia, as mentioned in the Moscow Gazette of February 3rd 1781. Perhaps Beer travelled with him since he went back to see his parents, during his European tour and took him under his wings. Dvorak (or Dworschak), besides being a virtuoso on the clarinet, was a bassoon player and a well-known basset horn player. He had the opportunity to tour with some of the finest players of the instrument, including Vincent

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[63] Josef Bähr was a known soloist mostly in the Viennese circle. He played with Ludwig van Beethoven at the creation of his Quintet opus 16, on April 6th 1797, as well as for the Septet op 20 on April 2nd 1800 and the Sextet op. 71 in April 1805. He was many times preferred to Josef Beer and the Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung said about his playing in Beethoven's Sextet that the clarinet part was « absolutely perfectly played by Bähr and that there will surely be few comparable masters of his instrument ». After his death, at the age of 49 years old, Beethoven then asked Josef Friedlowsky for advices about technique on the clarinet.

Weston, Pamela. *Beethoven's clarinettists*. The Musical Times (Vol. 111, #1534, Dec., 1970). p. 1212.

[64] Mooser, R. - Aloys. *Annales de la musique et des musiciens en Russie au 18e siècle*. p. 247. *Il Comaschino* was known to perform the function of procurer for the libertine count Alexander Bezborodko (1746-1799), Minister of Foreign Affairs, who had a strong appetite for young female artists. Some anecdotes around this character are truly alike some finest stories of the Marquis de Sade in *Les Crimes de L'Amour*! Having met the very young Lisa Fedorova, student at the Theater School and fiancee to Sila Sandounof, a fellow comedian, he decided to seduce her. Very soon, he was pushed away by the faithfulness of the young girl to her lover. He then dismissed Sandounof from the school to attain more easily his libidinous goal, making the directors of the Theater School his accomplices in crime. Fortunately, the Empress, who had strong values about the theater, realized what was going on and took care of the situation. Indeed, Catherine II thought, as stated « *…Comme le théâtre doit être l'école des moeurs, il est désirable que tous ses members se conduisent constamment avec décence, afin que les sentiments de vertu et de pureté qui les auteurs se sont efforcés de susciter par leurs oeuvres, ne soient pas compromis par des actes déréglés*. » (Mooser, p. 418) Although his perfidy, Bezborodko stayed a very important sponsor for St-Petersburg's music and theater scenes.

Springer and Anton David with whom he perform basset horn trios in Germany, Italy, Holland and England.[65] It is also possible they met in Moscow and choose to continue their trip together.

Beer and Dvorak arrived in Warsaw, Poland, where concerts were given in company of the singer G.-B. Brocchi and the violin player Federigo Fiorillo, who chose to perform on the mandolin. Beer played concerts at the public theater on April 20th and 27th, during which some of his compositions were performed, alongside with Haydn symphonies. In the concert of the 20th, given at 6:00 pm, Beer would have made a stellar appearance, delighting his audience with no less than three clarinet concertos, including one by himself, in the first part of the concert, and two in the second one by unspecified author; one described pompously as « A Grand Clarinet Concerto, with Trumpet and Drum »[66]. It is not clear if the event on April 27th displayed the same music.[67]

It is possible Dvorak took part during those concerts, especially since Josef Beer is known to have written three concertos for two clarinets. It is also possible Beer came back at the service of Prince de Lambesc in 1781-1782. [68] He would then had to leave France early in 1782 to travel to Poland for concerts.

As some archive documents prove it and as Mooser underlines it being a truly important event due to the « exceptional value of the artist », Beer was admitted unofficially to the court orchestra of St-Petersburg on May 1st 1782, meaning he probably came back to Russia soon after his concerts in Poland. However, Beer rapidly received the Imperial favors and was considered as a irreplaceable player, as a letter signed by the count A. A. Bezborodko, informing the direction of the Imperial Theaters of Catherine II wish, shows it:

> *…As it was brought to Her Majesty's knowledge that the clarinetist Beer has been employed at the service since May 1st of last year, for concerts as well as for operas, Her Majesty deigned to order Your High Excellency to conclude a contract with the musician, counting*

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[65] Rice, Albert. *From the Clarinet d'Amour to the Contra bass*. Oxford University Press. Oxford. 2009 p. 206

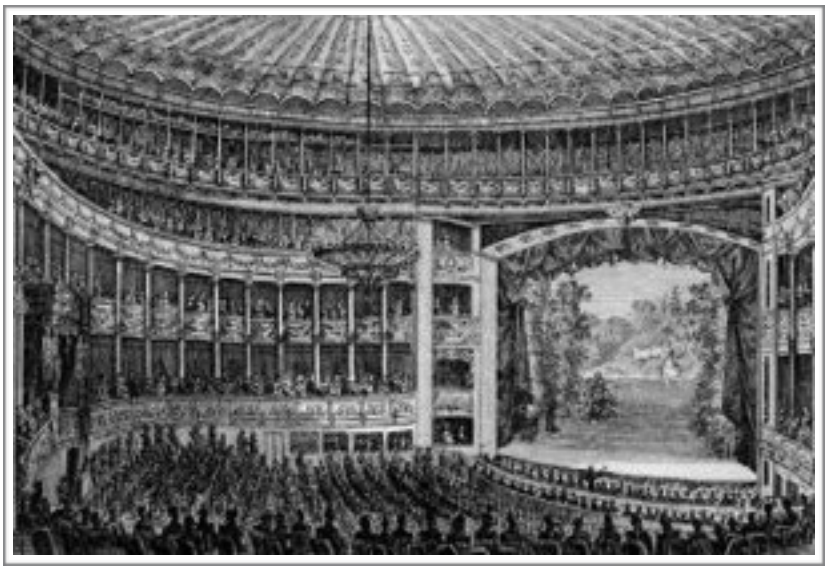
[66] Probably Joseph Leopold Eybler's clarinet concerto: it includes trumpets and drum in the orchestration and was popular enough to be played by famous virtuosi such as Josef Beer.

[67] Weston, Pamela. *Clarinet Virtuosi of the Past*. Emerson Editions. London. 1977. p. 35.

[68] Rice, Albert. *Joseph Beer*. Grove Music Online. Oxford Music. Bibliography updated 30/08/04. Last accessed on July 2nd 2016.

from said May 1st of last year 1782, and this not only for operas, but also for concerts and the table.[69]

The contract with Josef Beer was then concluded and tied him as the concertmaster of the first orchestra for three years to the Imperial court from May 1st 1783 with an annual fee of 1 600 roubles. Beer was thereby receiving the highest remuneration of the court musicians, besides the first violin and conductor of the Italian opera, Carlo Canobbio. This detail is a clue of the importance and value of the virtuoso for the Empress, since the spent of his fee was made in a period of tenuousness in the budget for the arts at the St-Petersburg's court.



Auditorium of Bolshoy (Kamenny) Theater. Engraving by S.F. Galaktionov. 1828.[70]

In 1784, Beer's name is mentioned in an advertisement of February 16th from the St-Petersburg's gazette, announcing a very peculiar piece of music:

On Wednesday the 21st, Mr J. F. Klöffler, maestro di capella of Bentheim-Steinfurt, arrived here recently, will have the honor to give, at the Kamenny Theater[71]*, un great concert in which he will make play the music specially composed by him representing a musical*

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[69] Mooser, R. - Aloys. *Annales de la musique et des musiciens en Russie au 18e siècle*. p. 365:
…Comme il a été porté à la connaissance de Sa Majesté que le clarinettiste Beer fut employé au service depuis le 1er mai de l'année passée, aussi bien pour les concerts que pour les opéras, Sa Majesté a daigné ordonner que Votre Haute Excellence conclue un contrat avec le musicien, en comptant depuis le dit 1er mai de l'an passé 1782, et cela non seulement pour les opéras, mais encore pour les concerts et la table.

[70] Saint-Petersburg Encyclopedia. Accessed on August 30th.

[71] Kamenny, or Bolshoy, theater is today known as the Mariinsky Theater, directed by the famous conductor Valery Gergiev.

battle, which has already been received with pleasure in London, Berlin, Copenhague, Königsberg, etc. The orchestra will be formed of sixty-six people divided in two choruses. At the end of the concert, Mr Beer will play the clarinet; and a symphony with the choirs, in which we will hear an echo, will end the concert…[72]

Josef Beer was particularly appreciated by the Empress. The same year he was officially hired in the court orchestra, he received on October 16th a monetary gift weighting the same amount as his annual fee. Moreover, according to Mooser, Beer was probably removed from his orchestral engagements, since he doesn't appear in a list of the theater musicians published by the newspaper Russische Theatralien in St-Petersburg in October 1784 (the clarinet players mentioned were Joseph Grimm, Georg Brunner and Christoph Schiller). But one must notice that Beer travelled a bit towards the end of that year, notably to Berlin for a concert on August 28th. This list could have been printed for events in which the famous clarinetist was not required, although he was the official first clarinetist. Mooser states that Beer was then only found playing concerts organized at the Winter Palace of the Ermitage in which he performed with a group of exquisite virtuosi related to the chamber orchestra including the singer Luiza-Rosa Todi, *Il Comaschino*, Giovanni-Mane Giornovicchi (Jarnowick) and Anton-Ferdinand Titz, with whom Marina Ritzarev, in her book *Eighteenth-century Russian music* (2006) underlines he played frequently. As said previously, the chamber musicians were indeed gathered as a whole orchestra with two conductors! This small group of virtuosi would be pulled out of this orchestra to play specific chamber music in more intimate settings, for special dinners or exclusive entertainment, and would be invited for soloist appearances. The task to perform only in the concerts given in the Ermitage for the Empress was not a light one, since concerts were performed everyday for the court.[73]

Moscow's public had the pleasure to hear Beer again in February 1785 three times, having asked the Empress to leave St-Petersburg for five weeks for « personal needs ». He played three concerts in which a few of his own compositions, including a *Royal French Hunting Song* and a very special Quintet, performed in company of three fellow musicians from Bohemia playing the oboe d'amore. Many modern sources, including Pamela Weston's works about Josef Beer, talk about a Quintet for

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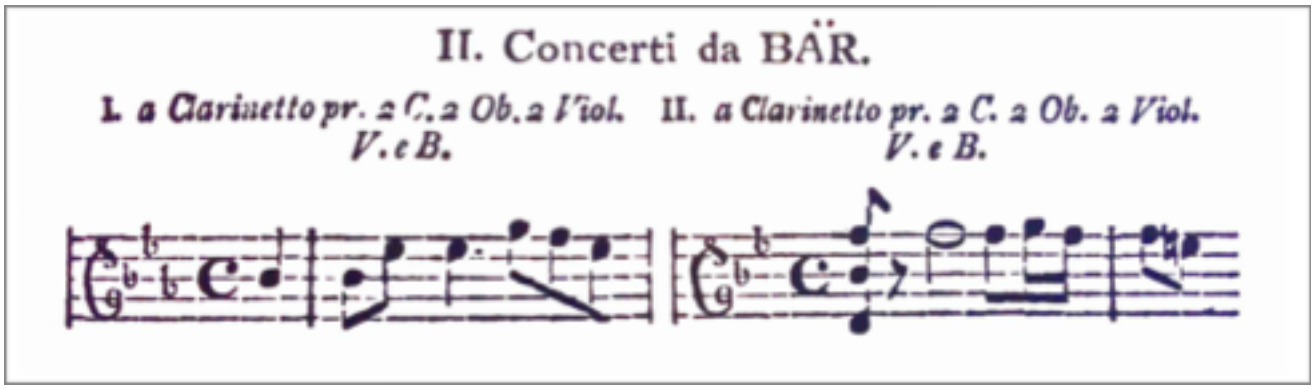
[72] Mooser, R. - Aloys. *Annales de la musique et des musiciens en Russie au 18e siècle*. p. 420: *Le mercredi 21, Mr J. F. Klöffler, maître de chapelle de Bentheim-Steinfurt, arrivé ici depuis peu, aura l'honneur de donner, au Théâtre-Kamenny, un grand concert dans lequel il fera exécuter la musique composée spécialement par lui et représentant une bataille musicale, qui a déjà été reçue avec plaisir à Londres, Berlin, Copenhague, Königsberg, etc. L'orchestre sera formé de soixante-six personnes divisées en deux choeurs. À la fin du concert, Mr Beer jouera de la clarinette; et une symphonie à deux choeurs, dans laquelle on entendra un écho, terminera le concert…*

[73] Ségur, Louis-Philippe de. *Mémoires* tome III, p. 276.

clarinet, three violas d'amore and a hunting horn, but a new translation of the original Russian newspaper add allowed me to discover that the real orchestration include oboe d'amore and not violas; an information that changes a lot the direction of research in order to find the piece. Beer was also accompanied by musicians from Moscow during this concert, among them the cellist Johann-Heinrich Facius.[74] As in Warsaw, Haydn's symphonies were very likely played, although the name of the composer is never mentioned.

On December 18th 1786, probably at the Anitchkof Palace[75], under the patronage of Mr Lyon, Beer participated in a virtuosi concert given by other colleagues including the harpsichordist Minarelli, recently arrived in the capital and played clavichord for the occasion, the singer Luiza-Rosa Todi and Guglielmo Jermolli. Beer found in Minarelli a partner with whom he would later play accompanied by a keyboard instrument.[76]

During his stay in Russia, Beer continued to compose and seek for publishing opportunities. In 1787, Breitkopf editions list two concertos by Josef Beer in their catalogue.



From *The Breitkopf Thematic Catalogue; The Six Parts and Sixteen Supplements 1762-1787*. Edited and with an Introduction and Indexes by Barry S. Brook. Dover publication. New York, 1966. Supplement XVI: 1785, 1786, 1787. p. 860.

Those two themes are not listed in any biography of Beer and constitute a new track for finding Beer's lost music. It is also a clue Beer could have been a more prolific composer than we might think today.

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[74] Findeizen, Nikolai. *History of Music in Russia from Antiquity to 1800*. Vol. 2 (The eighteenth century). Indiana University Press. Bloomington and Indianapolis. 1928. Reprint of 2008. p. 121.

[75] Dmitri Anitchkof was a Russian philosopher living in St-Petersburg at the end of the 18th century.

[76] Stepanov, A. A. « The Clarinet and Clarinet-Players in Russia During the Second Half of XVIIIth Century ». From the history of instrumental music culture. The state institute of the theater, music and cinematography. p. 83 - 97. Leningrad. 1988. (in Russian)

Beer passed by Pressburg in 1789 to give a concert before performing his function of Imperial musician by staying in St-Petersburg until 1790, traveling occasionally to Moscow to give more appearances. The records show that the Imperial Theaters answered positively to Beer's wish of October 11th to travel again to Bohemia on October 23rd:

> *The clarinetist Beer wishing to go abroad to see again his parents, decided to grant him a leave of two months, with the upkeep of his pay, charging him to search, in Bohemia, musicians who could complete the orchestra.* [77]

Beer stayed away for quite some time, since he is reported to play in a concert held at the house of the restaurateur Jahn in Vienna, in March 1791, as the advertisement mentions it:

> *Herr Bähr, Chamber Musician in actual service of H. Russian Imp. Majesty, will have the honor on Friday next, 4 March, to hold a grand musical concert at Herr Jahn's hall, letting himself be heard several times on the clarinet; at which Mme. Lange will sing and Herr Kapellmeister Mozart will play a concerto on the fortepiano. Those who are still desirous of subscribing can be provided with tickets each day at Herr Jahn's. To begin at 7 o'clock p.m.*

This was indeed Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's last public performance with his Bb major piano concerto K.595. The Wiener Zeitung of March 12th immortalized Beer's appearance, stating he « won the unanimous approbation of an audience consisting for the most part of connoisseurs, by his extraordinary skill on the clarinet. »

Josef Beer probably felt a certain urge to conquer new audiences, since he probably prolongated his stay abroad for a few months, being found to perform with great success in Prague as late as March 28th. Thence to Hungary for more performances, he came back to Russia to, soon after, demanding his officially leave of his position in 1792. He possibly signed a contract with the King of Prussia, Frederick Wilhem II, since the latter would have asked Franz Tausch to take « the place of the famous Beer in the court orchestra until the latter returned from Petersburg », in 1791.[78] Perhaps judging that the musician Beer was taking to much liberty with his frequent requests for leaves, the new concert director from Paris in St-Petersburg, Jean-Baptiste Cardon, was considering to make

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[77] Mooser, R. - Aloys. *Annales…* p. 366. Translated by the author from original text: *Le clarinettiste Beer désirant se rendre à l'étranger pour revoir ses parents, décidé de lui accorder un congé de deux mois, avec maintien de ses appointements, en le chargeant de rechercher, en Bohême, des musiciens nécessaires pour compléter l'orchestre.*

[78] Weston, Pamela. *Clarinet Virtuosi of the Past*. Emerson Editions. London. 1977. p. 37.

changes in the small group of chamber musician, including Beer. The direction of the Imperial Theaters thereby answered Beer last request in a report dated April 24th, stating that the virtuoso is from now on free from the service, at his will. It has been reported that Beer left Russia on April 23th 1792 with one of his Bohemian pupil, the oboist Theodor Czervenka, son of a bassoonist from the Viennese court, who became soon after second oboe in the first orchestra of the St-Petersburg's court.[79] The two musicians played together in Riga in 1791, where Czervenka was only fourteen-years-old, and in St-Petersburg, just before Beer's official departure. The well established fact that the young musician was an oboist brings the question of the repertoire he was playing with his master. Apparently, Czervenka learned to perform more than one instrument with his master (who himself grew up learning a few), choosing the oboe in the end for his professional life.

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Music for Beer in Russia

It is known that Josef Beer played in the court orchestra and in opera productions since 1782 and that his talent has there been noticed. It is then possible to draw a line between Beer's playing and a few comprehensive, or should we say flattering, music written for the clarinet for court orchestras and operas from that date. Beer was at the St. Petersburg's court for nearly ten years, and had the chance to meet many talented composers, including Giovanni Paisiello, Giuseppe Sarti and Dmitri Bortniansky. Most of the following works could have very likely been written especially for him, taking in account his personal tastes. It is also possible some clarinet passages were composed with Beer's help for technicalities and lyricism of the instrument and resulted in a more idiomatic form of writing from various composers. Clarinets were present at the Imperial Court since around 1768 with the composer Traetta who wrote obbligato parts for clarinet and bassoon in his opera *Antigone*.

The Russian court had a long love relationship with Italian opera. The first appearance of Italian opera in St-Petersburg was as early as 1736 and never left the musical life, making itself irreplaceable in every wealthy circle. At first, foreign troupes were imported to Moscow and the borders of the Neva river, thanks to diverse impresarios. Although not meant to be eternal, those visits of foreign musicians created a real need for Italian music in educated circles and their taste for the exotic lyrical art always had to be nourished. Because of their almost unlimited financial weight,

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[79] Mooser, R. - Aloys. *Annales…* p. 761.

the official institutions, such as the Imperial Court Theatre, had the chance to chose and invite the finest musicians and had music composed specifically for them. The Italian maestros who lived in Russia and composed remarkable music for the court are numerous: Galuppi, Paisiello, Sarti, Cimarosa, Canobbio, Galletti, Andreozzi… The favorite genre at court was the comic opera, in the sense of a short one-act opera performed by actors who has singing basics more than lyrical singers. As Taruskin points out, « the rise of nationalism occurring at the rise of Romanticism in Russia contributed to kill opera serial, favoring the comedies and opera buffa. »[80] The two Russian composers Pashkévitch and Fomin are known as the masters of comic opera and they brought this style to a further complexity, putting on stage Russian peasant folkloric themes. From around 1770, more foreign composers started to write operas on Russian libretti. Court musicians such as Anton Bullandt, Raupach, Satubinger, Giuseppe Sarti, although late in his career, and Martín-y-soler are among those who took their adopted land's langage very serious, putting in music Russian words. [81]

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The first striking example of clarinet music written during Beer's presence at the opera is Giovanni Paisiello's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, R. 1. 64. Created on September 15th 1782 at the Hermitage Theater of St-Petersburg and composed over a libretto by Giuseppe Petrosellini, the work displays very little clarinet music. Surprisingly enough, one of the only aria with clarinet, *Gia riede primavera* (a soprano aria written for Anna Maria de Bernucci in the role of Rosine) in the third act, is a beautiful solo line accompanied by a solo bassoon which includes a written-out cadenza for the three soloists. (See Appendix 1)

This is no coincidence Paisiello uses the clarinet with a soloistic approach all of a sudden in his Russian career.[82] Before coming to St-Petersburg in 1776, Paisiello worked in Italy where he was one of the first composer to introduce the clarinet in the orchestra in his country. His *I scherzi de amore e di fortuna*, created in Naples in 1771, includes two D clarinets. He also included instruments pitched in C and Bb in one aria of the revised version of his opera *Socrate Imaginario* in 1775. *Il gran Cid* was his last opera written in Italy to include clarinets (in Bb and A), before he moved to the cold Russia.

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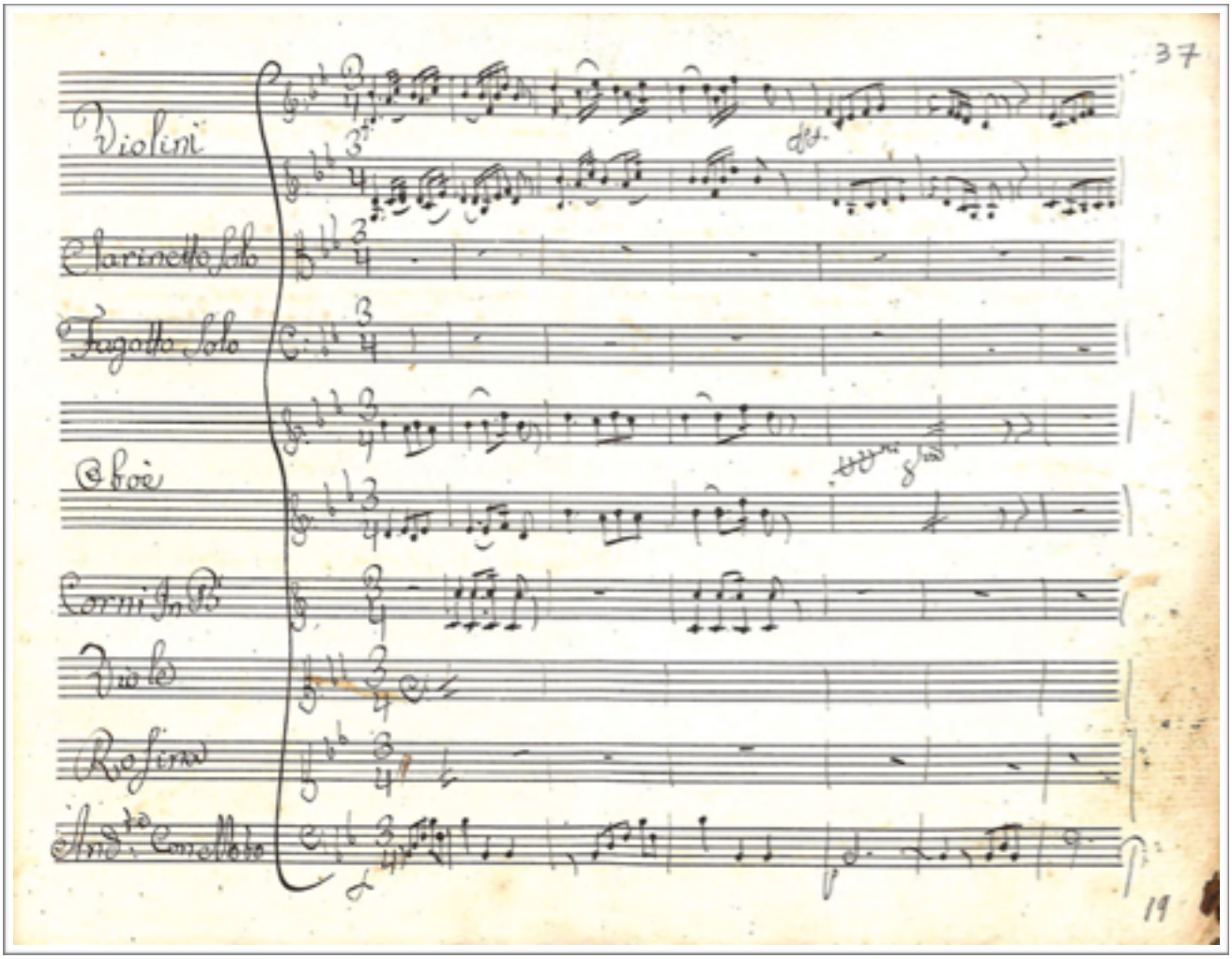
[80] Taruskin, Richard. *On Russian Music*. University of California Press. September 2010. p. 54.

[81] Maximovitch, Michel. *L'opéra russe 1731 - 1935*. L'Âge d'Homme. Lausanne. 1987. p. 28.

[82] Giovanni Paisiello (1740 - 1816) is an Italian composer who has worked in many important courts around Europe. He is well know for his operas and the influence they had on younger composers. He was composer at the court of Catherine II from 1776 to 1783, when he left after a fight with the new theater committee.



Giovanni Paisiello's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia,* R. 1. 64, manuscript score circa 1782. Ricasoli Collection at the University of Louisville Music Library. Third Act, Aria for soprano with clarinet and bassoon solos « Gia riede primavera »

The clarinet part of the opera *Il Barbiere* is very likely written for Josef Beer and the bassoon for Anton Bullandt, his well-known colleague.[83] The fact that the clarinet appears almost only in a very soloistic manner towards the second half of the opera is a clue that the composer wanted to highlight the qualities of one of his player. This change of level expected from the wind instrumentalists is indeed a specificity of Paisiello's mature Russian operas which include *Il Barbiere*, but also *La Serva Padrona,* an operas displaying clarinets in a very flattering way, although not as evidently as in his *Barbiere*. Most of the opera he wrote in Russia have clarinet parts*: Lucinda ed Armidoro* (1777), *Achille in Sciro* (1778), *I filosofi imaginary* (1779), *Il Demetrio* (1779), *Il matrimonio inaspetto* (1779), *La finite amanita* (1780), *and Alcide al Bivio* (1780).

[83] Villinger, Chritine. *"Mi vuoi tu corbellar", die opere buffe von Giovanni Paisiello : Analysen und Interpretationen. Die opere buffe von Giovanni Paisiello*. Tutzing. 2000. p. 95.

Although the clarinet was clearly present at the court before Beer's time, the opera Paisiello wrote while he was there display the most soloist lines for the instrument.[84]

Paisiello uses of the clarinet is soloistic in the first clarinet part, while the 2nd player accompanied in the chalumeau register. The register is treated in a wider manner than usually orchestral clarinet parts. For instance, the score of the opera *La Serva Padrona* asks for a register from c to c''' from the clarinet, which is not that traditional. Clarinets were rather used in the clarion register, playing thirds or sixths.

Paisiello also wrote 24 divertimenti for wind instruments. The harmonie music was probably used in domestic settings, to entertain the guests of Catherine the Great.

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As we might remember, it was said previously that period data demonstrates that both orchestras at the St-Petersburg court were geared with three clarinets, which is a very unusual detail for the time. Most of the orchestra during the same years, for instance in Germany or France, had only two clarinets, when they only had some! This can help us conclude the third clarinet was sometimes the soloist or that the three clarinets could be use in different chamber music settings. In our case, Josef Beer was the extra clarinetist of the first orchestra, the « chamber » one. Two arias written by Giuseppe Sarti could reinforce this theory.

Extremely popular when he was working in Milan as *maestro di cappella*, Sarti was noticed by the Grand Duke Paul of Russia in 1782, who thought he could replace Paisiello wonderfully at the Imperial court. Sarti's lyrical works had a great success and one of his catchiest melody (*Come un agnello*, from the opera *Fra i due litiganti*) was quoted by Mozart in his *Don Giovanni*. By 1784, Sarti had signed a contract with the Empress Catherine II and became the director of the Imperial chapel in St-Petersburg. The years he spent in St-Petersburg are considered to be the peak of his artistic creativity, mastering the art of the comic opera and exploring different languages in lyrical works, including Russian, French and German. One of his great accomplishment is the Russian opera *Nachal'noye upravleniye Olega* (The Eary Reign of Oleg) in 1790, based on a libretto by the Empress herself, he wrote in collaboration with other maestri of the court, Pashkevich and Canobbio. Sarti was sent to a city given to him by Prince Potemkin in far Ukraine to punish him for

[84] Rice, Albert R. *The Clarinet in the Classical Period*. Oxford University Press. 2003. p. 134.

Giuseppe Sarti, *Aria in B for canto solo clarinetto solo, violone due, clarinetti due, corni due, alto viola con organo*. Front page of the manuscript parts, undated for Narodní Muzeum, Prague.

an intrigue he had with the singer Luisa Todi. He took the opportunity to found there a school for singers. But soon after in 1793, the Empress appointed him director of a Conservatory in St-Petersburg inspired by the Italian model of teaching. He contributed to the orchestral life by inventing a device capable of counting vibrations and established the St-Petersburg's orchestral pitch at A=436hz. He left St-Petersburg in 1801 to return to Italy when the Emperor Paul I died.[85]

Two undated sacred arias by Sarti are of crucial interest. Both display a very flourishing soprano line on a latin text, interleaved by a no less virtuoso clarinet. Both are orchestrated for the same instruments: one soprano, one solo clarinet accompanied by two violins, one viola, one basso part (with figures), two clarinets, and two horns. The slight difference in the second aria is that the basso part specifies the organ.

[85]DiChiera, David. *Sarti, Giuseppe*. Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online. Last accessed on July 29th 2016.

Of course, a watermarks test should be run and further investigation should be made to establish the exact dating of those arias and the place they were written, although the parts available nowadays are very likely made by copyists and not autograph, which make this task even harder. Nevertheless, one very honest theory could be that they were written by Sarti, the Imperial chapel composer, for the musicians of the chamber orchestra, comprised of three clarinets. Being an unusual feature of the St-Petersburg's court orchestra, the number of clarinets is a good clue to establish the place the arias were written. Very rare is the music for solo clarinet with two extra clarinets in the accompaniment. Usually, the color of the instrument is reserved for the solo line and should not be « spoiled » by the same texture in the accompaniment. Furthermore, the extremely soloist line for the clarinet was meant for anybody, but a great virtuoso; another special feature of the capital of Russia's chamber orchestra.

Clarinets in sacred music is itself a surprising thing. Religious music with clarinets is something related more often to late baroque music and is more seen in Italy. Perhaps Sarti kept a vivid memory of clarinets in sacred settings and tried to bring this sound to Russia. An instrument often related to pastoral atmospheres, this is extremely rare to hear clarinets in sacred settings, especially before the turn of the 19th century. Even composers well known for their affection for this instrument, such as Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, prefer to let them aside for religious music: the C Minor mass KV427 doesn't have clarinet parts and the Requiem KV626 prefers the tenebrous timber of the basset horns. One of the rare apparition of clarinets in religious music was in France, at the tax-farmer Riche de La Pouplinière's orchestra in the 1750-60s. On Sundays and for festivals, his orchestra, including the clarinets, was performing in the morning preceding the mass and was then providing music for the ceremony. Moreover, each day of the Holy Week had its concert during which the clarinets could be heard alone.[86] Gossec is another composer known to have put clarinets in religious music: his *Messe des Morts* (1760) indeed include a wind section of three trombones, four trumpets, four horns, eight bassoon, and four clarinets. However, as one can notice, the religious use of the clarinet was generally an late baroque or early classical phenomenon.

The arias could have been played by some of the best chamber musicians available and sung by either a soprano of the calibre of Luisa Todi or the castrato *Il Comaschino,* both sharing often the stage with Josef Beer. Giuseppe Sarti is known in Russia to have brought the clarinet music one step further. His opera *I Finti Eredi*, dated 1785, ask for no less than five types of clarinets: one in

[86] Rendall, F. Geoffrey. *The Clarinet, Some Notes on Its History and Construction*. London/Ernest Benn Limited. New York, 1954. p. 76.

A, in Bb, in B, in C and in D. [87] This is something absolutely unseen previously. The use of a B clarinet is extremely rare and its appearance is nowadays only attributed to Mozart who uses it in *Idomeneo*. The use of a small clarinet in D, or piccolo, is also very peculiar in late 18th century, a time when the norm was rather the Bb clarinet along with the C and A. Sarti choice to include the D clarinet in *I Finti Eredi* was no abnormality in his work, since he dared to use the brilliant timber again in the opera *Alceste* in the last act, as well as in the collaborative work *The Early Reign of Oleg*, composed with Cannobio and Pashkevich in 1790. Again, this could be an judicious amalgam of the late baroque sounding of the high-pithed clarinets with the darker classical aesthetic of the instrument.

Sarti's opera *Armida e Rinaldo* (1786) is also great interest in relation with clarinet music. Indeed, the overture of the opera, as well as a few arias, includes many soloistic comments from the clarinet, mostly when the character of Rinaldo is on stage. The aria *Vieni a me sull'ali d'oro* (Rinaldo, Act 1) has also a clearly indicated obbligato part for the clarinet, in which a cantabile melody embroiders the singer's interventions.

Armida e Rinaldo was one of Sarti's great success in Russia. Luisa Todi, the famous soprano who had the Empress protection, played the role of Armida. She had, however, disagreement with Sarti possibly because of her prima donna attitude. The latter asked to have the castrato Luigi Marchesi in the role of Rinaldo, to counterbalance Todi's effect on the cast. The Theater Directorate ordered the opera to be staged twice, once for the benefit of the soprano, as wished the Empress, and once for the benefit of Sarti and his castrato.[88]

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Dmitri Bortniansky was a crucial Russian composer who contributed to the musical transition towards a true nationalism in Russia, with his creativity and popularity, and is considered by many scholars nowadays to be the first classical composer and placed on the same level then

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[87] Stepanov, A. A. « The Clarinet and Clarinet-Players in Russia During the Second Half of XVIIIth Century ». *From the history of instrumental music culture*. The state institute of the theater, music and cinematography. p. 83 - 97. Leningrad. 1988. (in Russian)

[88] Findeizen, Nikolai. *History of Music in Russia from Antiquity to 1800*. Vol. 2 (The eighteenth century). translation by Samuel William Pring ; edited and annotated by Miloš Velimirović and Claudia R. Jensen ; with the assistance of Malcolm Hamrick Brown and Daniel C. Waugh. Indiana University Press. Bloomington and Indianapolis. 1928. Reprint of 2008.

Glinka for his historical significance.[89] Bortniansky studied in Italy and succeeded to Paisiello as court composer for the Empress and was also in charge of giving piano lessons to some of the nobles. His best known music nowadays is the choir concertos, a choral style religious music leading the way to pieces such as Rachmaninov's Vespers. Bortniansky was also an opera composer who, as Paisiello, used the qualities of the players he had in his orchestra. He composed three main operas in the 1780s on French librettos: *Le Faucon* (1786, premiered at Gatchina Theater), *Le Fils Rival, ou la moderne Stratonice* (1787 premiered at Pavlovsk Theater in the court of Paul Petrovich and his small circle appart from the Imperial court) and La Fête du Seigneur. Le Fils Rival, however, demonstrates a greater diversity of musical expressivity and a wider variety of orchestral textures than his two previous opera written in Russia.

Born in Ukraine, in the city of Hlukhiv in 1751, Dmitri Stepanovich Bortniansky started his musical career by joining the school choir of his city at an early age. Very likely because of his easiness for music, he was sent to the Imperial court in St-Petersburg and became one of the most cherished choirboy of the Empress. He developed his voice enough to perform important roles in operas, such as Admetus in *Al'tsesta* by H. F. Raupach.[90] Having started his composition studies with Galuppi in Russia, he followed his master to Italy when he left for Venice in 1769. Bortniansky developed a truly Italian style of writing, as many of his first large scale works from the 1770s may demonstrate it. After a learning journey of ten years in Italy, Bortniansky was called back to St-Petersburg and was appointed assistant director at the Imperial court chapel, in addition to his teaching and composing tasks. When Paisiello left definitively his position in 1783, the Empress gave to Bortniansky one of Paisiello's former tasks; he became Kapellmeister at Maliy Dvor, the court of her son Paul. When at the service of Paul, Bortniansky composed the three operas *Le Faucon*, *Le Fils Rival* and *La Fête du Seigneur.* The music was written on French libretti, as the Empress was a well-known francophile, drawing its main components from the much appreciated *opera buffa*.

In this present work, *Le Fils Rival ou la Moderne Stratonice* is the most interesting opera, due to its great presence of the clarinet. Already in the overture, the brilliant C clarinet steals the show. As it is frequently the case at that time, the clarinet is associated with enchanting pastorale settings. In *Le Fils Rival*, a vocal nocturne includes a clarinet obbligato unrolling itself on a light, transparent

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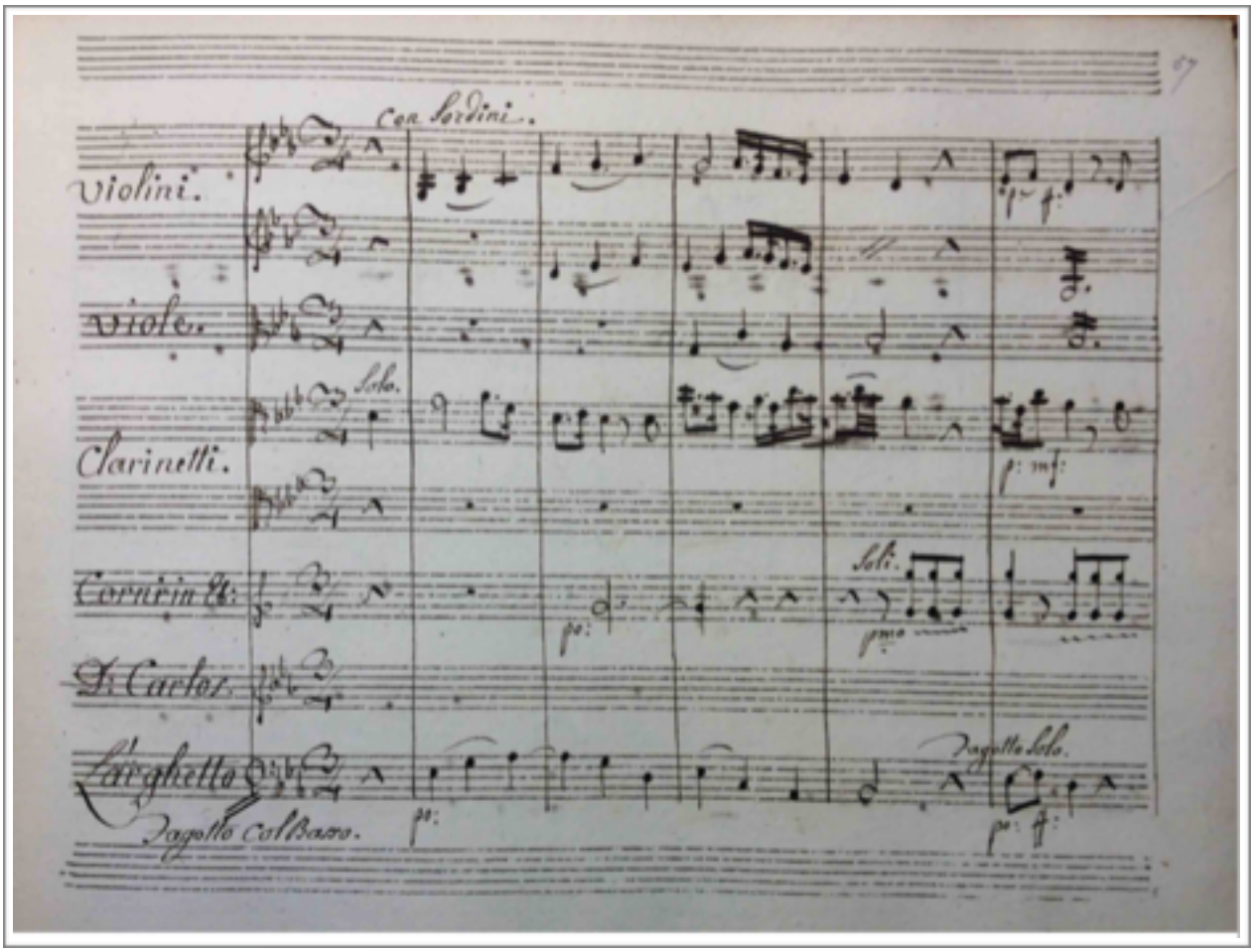
[89] Sapra, Barbara Shcherbakov. *Le Fils Rival ou La Moderne Stratonice (1787)*. Master Thesis. University of California. Los Angeles. 1975. p. 5.

[90] Kuzma, Marika. *Bortnyans'ky, Dmytro Stepanovych*. Grove Music Online. Oxford Music online. Last accessed on 16/10/2016.



Aria of Don Carlos with clarinet obbligato. Act 1. From Le Fils Rival ou la Moderne Stratonice. Manuscript. 1787.

orchestral texture.[91] The role of the clarinet as a leading voice in the wind choir can also be observed by the fact the instrument is notated above all the others in the complete manuscript score in passages putting in evidence the winds, such as the small elegant dance including in the middle of the third act.

The opera *La Cleopatra* written by Domenico Cimarosa (1749 - 1801) was commissioned by the Empress Catherine the Great for her theater at the Ermitage in 1788. Since the includes an extensive clarinet part, it is more than likely that is was intended for Josef Beer, especially since he was in Russia during this year. As one can imagine, ten years of playing in the court of the Empress and in important venues in Russia as a soloist and orchestral musician must have brought to Beer a gigantic amount of music, more or less designed for his specific playing characteristics. It is

[91] Sapra, Barbara Shcherbakov. *Le Fils Rival ou La Moderne Stratonice (1787)*. Master Thesis. University of California. Los Angeles. 1975. p. 51.

impossible to shed light to all of it, though we can acknowledge that clarinet became an important feature in orchestral music in Russia, especially in opera, towards the end of the 18th century, not without the help of the famous soloist who was positioned there.

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Beer was a witness of architectural changes that had an impact on the cultural life of St-Petersburg. In 1783, the Kamenny (or Bolchoï) Theater was built and Paisiello's *Il mondo della luna* was premiered. The Theatre, edified on the order of Catherine the Great in 1781, was meant to allow culture to enter all circles, even the modest ones.

Josef Beer left a deep mark in the Russian musical landscape. By contributing to strengthen the wind sections in operas and being a source of inspiration for composers, he contributed to the blooming of a new operatic tradition leading to composers such as Glinka and Tchaikovsky (who shows his deep respect for Bortinansky's *Le Fils Rival* by quoting note for note a passage in his opera *Pikovaïa Dama)*[92]. As a matter of fact, the clarinet obbligato part in orchestral music in Russia became a frequent thing, perhaps not without the influence of the Bohemian virtuoso.[93] Beer impression was strong enough to leave a trace in the Moscow papers, a few years after his definitive departure from Russia. An advertisement published in 1794 offers a new publication by Beer: a double clarinet concerto, which was very likely played with one of his advanced pupil (perhaps one of the pieces he played earlier on tour with Franz Dworschak or Theodor Czervenka!). Another publicity in Moscow papers dated 1814 advertise Beer's opus 11 for 10 roubles.[94] Beer visibly stayed in memories for years after his departure from the Palmyra of the North.

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[92] Maximovitch, Michel. *L'opéra russe 1731 - 1935*. L'Âge d'Homme. Lausanne. 1987. p. 202

[93] For instance, the Russian composer Yevstigney Fomin (1761-1800) included a solo clarinet part in his melodrama *Orfeo Ed Euridice* that was played at Sheremetev's private theater in 1793 in St-Petersburg.

[94] From « catalogue of different music you can buy in the shop of Karl Lengold in Moscow, 1814. »

The German years

A third position: the King of Prussia's court

Leaving St-Petersburg, Josef Beer went to Prague where he took part in the concert for the coronation of the Emperor Franz II, in July 1792 and where he made a very good impression. [95] On December 21st 1793, Beer received a praising review underlying his extraordinary breath control, a characteristic Fétis mentions with equal enthusiasm: he « possessed the great advantage of being able to regulate his breathing with the greatest ease, so that his countenance had no outward appearance of fatigue while he performed, neither by inflation of the cheeks, nor reddening of the complexion. »[96]

The reason why Josef Beer left the Empress Catherine II in St-Petersburg, besides perhaps wanting a change in his life, was because he accepted a position at the King of Prussia's court. Little information is known about the first years Beer spent at his new position besides that he travelled a lot for tours, having apparently lots of liberty from his employer. Early in 1799, Beer did a small tour that brought him to Copenhague where he performed with the horn player from Berlin Jean Brün, and in Hamburg for a concert on February 25th. According to a critic, he had not the same warmth and technique precision as he used to have.[97] In the following years, Beer did not travel a lot from Potsdam, or only for short stays in cities around such as Gotha or Weimar.

Although Berlin was provided with great players, criticism towards the small size of the orchestras in concerts were often occurring. A reporter in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* of January 1799 complains:

> *Least of all can I accustom myself here to the fact that with the great number of excellent virtuosos in the royal orchestra - such as Ritter the great bassoonist, those two outstanding cellists, the Deports, and their worthy pupils Hausmann and Gross, the excellent violinists Haak, Möser and Seidler, a fine french horn player in Le Brun and two very good*

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[95] Mooser, R. - Aloys. *Annales de la musique…* p.367.

[96] Fétis, F.J.. *Biographie Universelle des Musiciens*. Tome 1. Firmin Didot. 1860. p. 296.

[97] Weston, Pamela. *Clarinet Virtuosi of the Past*. Emerson Editions. London. 1971. p. 38.

clarinetists in Bähr and Tausch - that will all this wealth of virtuosos, no proper concerts on a large scale are given either at court or in the city. To be sure, I have often attended single concert performances by foreigners or by natives of Berlin … but still, there is seldom anything really complete.[98]

The real purpose of this quotation (although musical context in Berlin is passionating) is of course the presence of Josef Beer (here written Bähr) in the list of the outstanding players of the city. Berlin musical scene was indeed facing new aesthetics and the institutions were having trouble to be up to date. Beer would obviously have been playing outside the circle of the King's court, for the pleasure of clarinet enthusiasts in Berlin. Moreover, this complain could explain the rather small orchestration in regards to the date (1807) of Beer's last concerto, which is also the only one edited nowadays as Opus 1. Considering Carl Maria von Weber wrote his Concertino in 1811, orchestrated for strings, flute, two oboes, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets and timpani, Beer's opus 1 seems somewhat economical.

As surprising as it may sound, another clarinetist active from the 1790s was named Josef Bähr. The latter made himself well-known in the Viennese scene by premiering some of the most important works by Beethoven putting the clarinet upfront. Born in 1770, he was employed already at seventeen-years-old by the Prince Kraft Ernst of Öttingen-Wallerstein in Bavaria. In 1797, the young Bähr changed employer and followed the Count Joseph Liechtenstein to Vienna who was bringing his orchestra to the capital for the warm season. The Liechtenstein family had some connection with Ludwig van Beethoven and the composer met with their new talented clarinetist. Their friendship resulted in many clarinet solos composed for Bähr between 1796 and 1802. Their first public collaboration was on April 6th 1797, when they performed together Beethoven's Quintet op. 16 for winds and piano. Josef Bähr is also responsible for the choice of the theme in the final movement of Beethoven's trio op. 11 for clarinet, cello and piano. The theme taken from Joseph Weigl's opera *L'amour mariano* never pleased Beethoven and he admitted he regretted to have written this third movement he found of « lower taste ».[99] Without surprise, modern scholars have for a long time mixed up the two « Beers » and more often amalgamate their two biographies, thinking they were one same person. Happily, this misunderstanding of the sources came to an end in the 1970s, mostly because of the researcher Pamela Weston.

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[98] Ringer, Alexander ed. *The Early Romantic Era; Between Revolutions 1789 and 1848*. Man & Music. 1990. p. 110.

[99] Weston, Pamela. *Clarinet Virtuosi of the Past*. Emerson Editions. London. 1971. p. 40.

In 1807, the Beer based in Berlin performed in Vienna, where he faced the preference of the Vienneses for their own player and received a bitter review in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, where it was staid « our (Josef) Bär surpasses 'the Berlin clarinetist Beer' in the finer manipulation of the instrument ».[100] He also had the unpleasantness be compared unfavorably to his colleague Wenzel Farník, during performances in Prague in the summers of 1807 and 1808.

Those were not isolated reviews, since one of Beer's colleague at the Berlin's court, the horn player Karl Türrschmidt, was also more in favor of the younger Bär, as his letter to his friend Ignaz von Beecké shows it:

> *The gentlemen Witt and Bähr[101] are here, but they are going away tonight. I must confess that everybody liked them very much so that we were sorry the gentlemen hurry home so soon, Witt's symphony was liked very much and also Bähr's blowing, and as we already have a Bähr (Beer) they make a good pair, for our clarinetist is heartily bad, and Witt would be the man who could help us blowers…* [102]

Although this last critic found that Beer was not in his greatest shape towards the end of his life, praise have been tremendously enthusiast after a concert he gave at the Leipzig Gewandhaus on February 16th 1809. Despite his sixty-five years old, it was underlined that his « tone was strong and resonant, but gentle when required, and his finger dexterity was still remarkable as ever. »[103] Sources say he performed a similar program than in Prague: a clarinet extravaganza mixing one of his own concerto and variations on the *Marche des Samnites*, from Grétry's opera by the same name, reputed to have been written expressibly for him by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Unfortunately, we do not know under which circumstances this could have been commissioned, knowing the lower esteem Mozart had for Beer. The manuscript of this piece, only possessed by Beer, has since disappeared, but one can imagine it could have a strong compositional link with Mozart's previous eight variations on the same theme for fortepiano (*Les Marriages Samnites* K.

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[100] Weston, Pamela. *Beethoven's clarinettists*. The Musical Times (Vol. 111, #1534, Dec., 1970). p. 1012.

[101] Witt was a violin player with whom Josef Bähr developed a friendship. They performed a lot of music Witt wrote for his colleague and toured extensively together.

[102] Weston, Pamela. *Clarinet Virtuosi of the Past*. Emerson Editions. London. 1971. p. 39.

[103] Ibidem. p. 38.

352). Pamela Weston states that Josef Beer would have preferred those variations to Mozart's well-known concerto.[104]

Beer as a teacher: thriving of the German school of clarinet playing

In Potsdam, where Beer was mainly positioned, was held a school for military music where he was appointed to teach clarinet to young players. A few of his students would deserve to be mentioned, but his best known was indisputably Heinrich Baermann, who had the joy to receive Carl Maria von Weber's clarinet music. At the age of 11, the young Baermann was accepted at the military school in Potsdam (*Hautboisten*[105] *schule des Militärwaisenhauses*), where he received his first musical instruction. In 1798, he was accepted at the band of the Second Regiment of Royal Prussian Life Guards, and benefited from eight years of clarinet lessons from the great Josef Beer, « his much venerated instructor »[106]. Baermann was rapidly noticed by the Prince Louis Ferdinand who took the clarinetist in his private orchestra in 1804 and complete his formation by sending his *protégé* to Franz Tausch. Although lots of credit in Baermann's formation is given to Franz Tausch, the teacher who built the core of his technique and sound is truly Beer, since he spent the biggest part of his teens as his pupil. As Joseph James Estock points out, « Beer's clarinet playing, his tone, execution, and interpretation, undoubtedly influenced and inspired Bearmann and served as a model for the style that this virtuoso developed ».[107]

Franz Wilhelm Tausch was an important colleague of Josef Beer when he was appointed in Germany. Born in Heidelberg in 1762, Tausch grew up at the Mannheim court, having moved there at the age of three after his father received an invitation from prince Karl Theodor to play the clarinet in the orchestra. Influenced by his incredible musical environment, the young Tausch learned the clarinet from the age of 6 with his father. A true virtuoso, he was playing solos in front of the orchestra already two years after. Jacob and Franz Tausch played together in the Mannheim

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[104] Weston, Pamela. *Clarinet Virtuosi of the Past*. Emerson Editions. London. 1971. p. 38.

[105] Here the use of the word « Hautboisten » designating a military music school reiterates the fact this term « hautboist » at the time indeed meant a military musician playing more than the oboe, since Baermann undertook his clarinet studies with Beer in this school.

[106] Weston, Pamela. *Clarinet Virtuosi of the Past*. Emerson Editions. London. 1971. p. 38.

[107] Estock, Joseph James. *A biographical dictionary of clarinetists born before 1800*. PhD dissertation. University of Iowa, 1972. p. 57.

court orchestra when Franz was still a child. Father and son are responsible for the famous praise Mozart gave to the clarinets when he heard them during his visit to Mannheim in 1778:

> *Oh, if only we also had clarinets! - you cannot imagine the beautiful effect of a symphony with flutes, oboes and clarinets.*[108]

When the Elector Carl Theodor and the Mannheim court moved to Munich in 1777 because of the extinction of the Bavarian line, the young Franz Tausch followed the orchestra and took from then on the opportunity to tour more in Germany and Austria.

From 1789, Tausch was invited to join the dowager Queen's private band. Soon after, in 1791, he was asked to replace Josef Beer in the King of Prussia's orchestra when he was away to St-Petersburg to ask for his official leave. When Tausch was released from this obligation in 1792, he started a concert series at the Hotel Paris in Berlin that knew a great success for many years. The dowager Queen and Frederick Wilhelm II both died in 1797 and Frederick Wilhelm III accessed the throne, asking Tausch to join Josef Beer as a clarinet player in his private orchestra. Chances are Beer and Tausch were frequently on stage side by side.

Tausch and Beer performed together many occasions in soloist context, including for the premiere of Peter von Winter's *Concertino for violin, clarinet, basset horn and bassoon* on April 23rd 1802 in Berlin. The performance, given in the garrison church, was directed by Bernhard Anselm Weber and included also Mozart's aria *Non piu fiori* for soprano and basset-horn obbligato. Tausch was playing the basset-horn for the occasion and Beer the clarinet, while their colleagues Möser and Ritter were respectively on the violin and the bassoon. The piece was performed again in 1804, but this time Tausch played the clarinet and his son Frederick Wilhelm the basset-horn. The manuscript parts of the piece were sold by the publisher Traeg in Vienna. Those are lost nowadays and, although it would be tempting to conclude that the now easily accessible *Concertante* by von Winter orchestrated for violin, clarinet, French horn and bassoon would have been in fact the same piece, John P. Newhill conclusions differ. Indeed, he argues that a extraordinary player such as Franz Tausch would not have agreed to perform on the basset-horn a line so simple as the one in the French horn version of the *Concertante*. Moreover, transposing a part for basset-horn to a French horn or vice-versa is not idiomatic at all and would imply lots of awkwardness. As a last argument, Newhill states that the French horn is playing in thirds with the bassoon, while a true basset-horn

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[108] Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus. Letter to Leopold Mozart December 3, 1778. *Correspondance complète*, edited by Geneviève Geffray. Flammarion. 2011. p. 901.

part would have followed the clarinet by this interval. The conclusion is then that those two pieces, although having a similar orchestration, are two different things and that the basset-horn *Concertante* is lost.[109]

As Tausch and Beer played frequently together in Berlin and Potsdam, one can imagine their style of playing were not very far apart and that they blended well together, since one could replace the other with any problem. That would be one more argument in favor of the thought Beer had a German way of playing, putting the reed against the lower lip, at least at that part of his life. *(We will discuss this problematic later in the chapter about Performance Practice)*. Tausch's tone was remarkably sweet and possessed all the German characteristics of dynamic qualities, tremendous virtuosity and contrasts. Ernst Ludwig Gerber, in his *Neues Historisch-Biographisches Lexicon der Tonkünstler* is enthusiastically describing Tausch's playing:

> *In 1793 I had the opportunity of hearing one of Herr Tausch's favorite quartets with variations at a concert in Paris. What variety in the tonal modifications of the instruments! At one moment it was he soft whispering of the leaves moved by the gentle breath of the zephys, at the next moment his instrument raised itself in rolling and brilliant broken passages above all other instruments in which he most dulcet melodies alternate with each other.*

Gerber visibly prefers Tausch to another famous virtuoso, Anton Stadler, well-known for his collaboration with Mozart and the wonderful music the latter wrote for him:

> *And yet, it is truth that when in 1792 he (Stadler) was heard in Berlin, discriminating and impartial listeners asserted that « he does not have the pleasing soft, smooth tone and tasteful execution by which Herr Tausch usually charms his hearers.*[110]

Tausch is well known for being a pedagogue. He founded the *Conservatorium der Blasinstrumente* in Berlin in 1805 and many talented pupils came to him. Among them, the memorable player and

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[109] Newhill, John P. *The Basset-Horn and its Music*. Printed by the author. 1983. p. 63.

[110] Gerber, Ernst Ludwig. *Neues historisch-biographisches Lexikon der Tonkünstler, Bd 4*. Leipzig. 1814. p. 326.

composer Bernhard Crusell, who received the permission to travel to Berlin from Stockholm to benefit from Franz Tausch specialized clarinet teaching. He received instruction from him during seven month in 1798 and played with some of his students in chamber music settings.[111]

Franz Tausch composed few works that are regrettably hard to find nowadays, both in manuscript or edited form. He wrote no less than six concertos, including two for two clarinets that are among the most challenging music written for the clarinet, his No.2 including a c''' (one octave over the c over the staff!). This register is rarely pushed to the extreme as much as in this concerto, even in the 19th century. Oskar Kroll could not describe better Tausch's concertos: [they] « are brilliant pieces of compostion, full of daring passages and leaps and it is extremely surprising the contemporary clarinetists were able to master them on their technically not as yet very highly developed instruments… Technically, Tausch made greater demands even than Weber and Spoor in their later concertos. »[112]

When he died, Franz Tausch was remembered as a player who had « acquired a rare perfection on his instrument and won over the whole audience by his seductive, gentle tone and tasteful execution. »[113]

The concertos for two clarinets, or Symphonies concertantes, by Tausch are worth of interest in this present research. While his *Concertante No. 2* Op. 26, dedicated to King Friedrich Wilhelm III of Prussia, was composed to be performed with his son Friedrich Wilhelm (1790-1845)[114] who was also a clarinetist, the first *Concertante* Op. 27 was written for another player. Published postmortem by his widow in 1818, No. 2 was premiered by the father and the son in 1805, when the young Friedrich Wilhelm Tausch was fifteen. This *Concertante* displays a rather simple second clarinet part intended for an advanced student, more than for a skillful professional. Franz and Friedrich would have been used to play together concertos for two clarinet and it was reported they did

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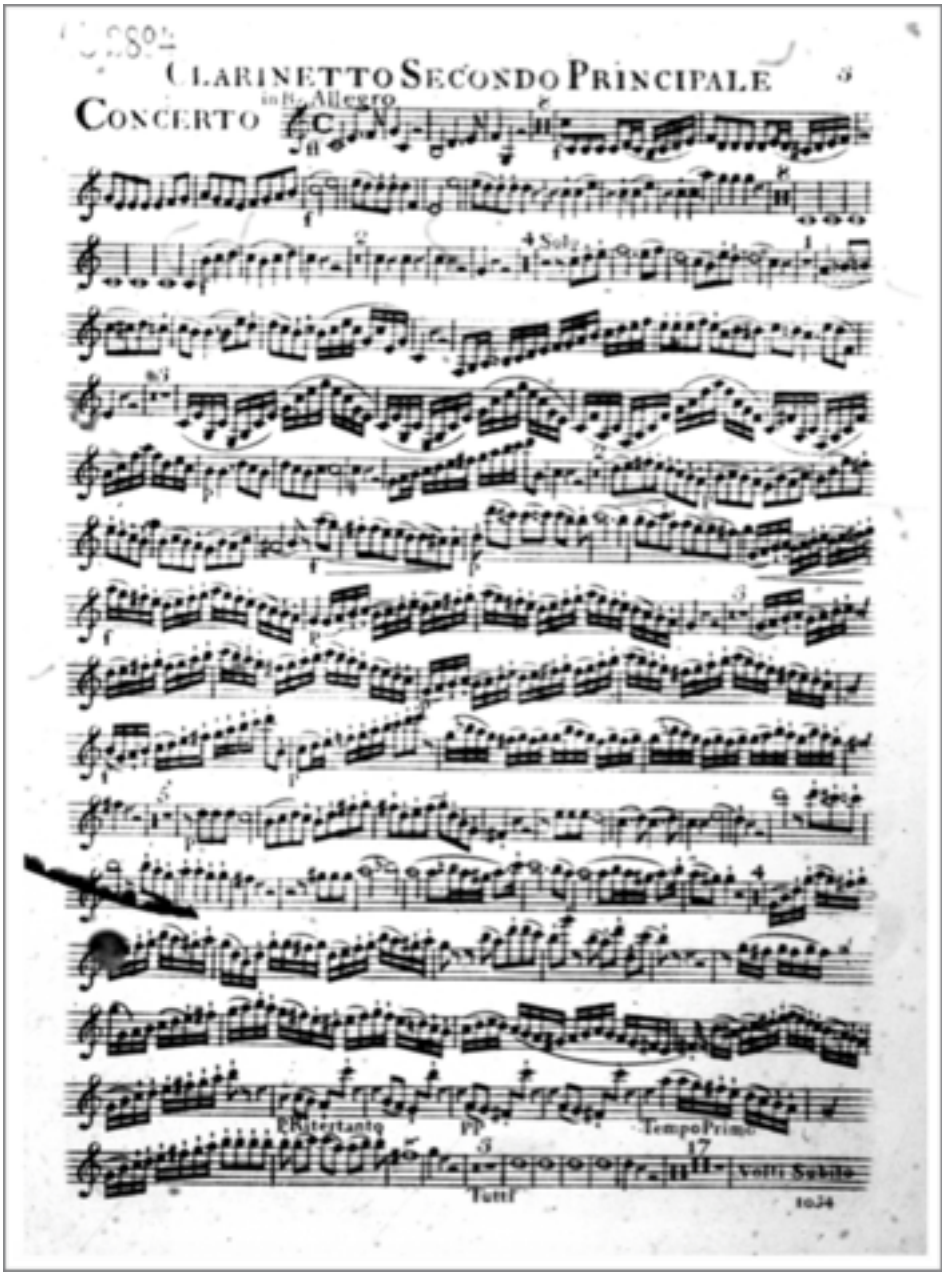
[111] Sacchini, Louis Vincent. *The Concerted Music for the Clarinet in the Nineteenth Century*. Ph. D. dissertation. The University of Iowa. 1983. p. 78-79

[112] Lehto, Gail S. *A selected study of Symphonies* concertantes *for multiple clarinet soloists, 1770-1850, including works by Stamitz, Devienne, Krommer, Tausch, Müller, Schindelmeisser and Baermann*. DMA document. Ohio State University. 2002. p. 64.

[113] Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung, Tausch's obituary, March 19th 1817.

[114] Friedrich Wilhelm Tausch became, unsurprisingly, an incredible player and replaced his father both at the head of his Conservatory and orchestra when his father died.



Clarinetto Secundo Principale. First page. Concertante no. 1, Franz Tausch. Hummel, Berlin. Date unkown. Russian State Library. Moscow.

several performances of different works between 1803 and 1812.[115] Tausch's first *Concertante* is, on the other hand, written for two equally virtuoso players. John P. Newhill guessed that the second part was composed for and played by Josef Beer, which is not impossible at all.[116] Beer had admiration for Tausch and they very likely influenced themselves.

According to Peter Clinch, one of the rare specialist of Franz Tausch, the latter was playing with a five-keyed clarinet, because of the avoidance of the low c#. Beer could have had the same kind of instrument than his colleague. However, since Xavier Lefèvre puts a plate showing a six-keyed clarinet in his method, published in 1802, this is very likely that the key was in use since up to ten-years. It is thus impossible to tell which kind of instrument they both were using.

When looking closely at the second clarinet part in Tausch first Concertante, many features Beer was fond of are present. The extensive use of the very low register, along with the never ending alberti basses with moving bass melody are good examples.

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[115] Titus, Robert Austin. *The Solo Music for the Clarinet in the Eighteenth Century*. State University of Iowa. PhD dissertation. 1962.

[116] Newhill, John P. *The Basset-Horn and its Music*. Printed by the author. 1983.

Beer died at the age of sixty-eight years old at his post on October 28th 1812 in Potsdam. He had tasted a fulfilling life of wandering virtuoso, while enjoying the security of court employments.

❊

I discovered three letters Josef Beer wrote in 1807 to his editor Anton Kühnel, about the publication of his concerto. In the first letter, we discover Beer had already been in contact with Kühnel and that they are discussing the publication of a second concerto (probably Opus 1 in this case). Beer is worried, because since the editor received the music, Napoleonic wars have been declared and the social climate has widely changed. Pretexting the war, the editor doesn't want to pay the promised fee to Beer. The musician is insulted, saying that a contract is a contract and when the fee was chosen, there was no war so it should be respected as is. Beer thinks that he could have received a higher fee from other publishers and ask, since he has not received any payment for month, to have his concerto sent back as soon as possible.

One of most challenging aspect in researching Josef Beer, is the fact his name is spelled in so different ways, depending on the time, the country, the city, the editor, etc… One can find his name with diverse orthography: Beer, Baer, Bähr, Bhère, Pär. The end of the first letter is of great interest, because it sheds light on a part of this problematic. Beer explains that the orthography « Bähr » should be used in the musical and professional occasions, but « Beer » is reserved for family and personal matters. He however concludes that this it is alright if it is mixed up.

The letters can be clues about Beer's personality. He is aware of his worth and wish to be paid respect, but never loose his politeness, although months have passed since his last due payment.

❊

Beer's heritage should not be underestimated. Through the teaching of fine pupils, and more specially Heinrich Baermann, he started a tradition of playing that thrived for years. Baermann, one of the most notorious virtuoso of the past, had a famous pupil of his own: his son Carl Baermann with whom he toured extensively. Carl Baermann is best known for his pedagogical works and for contributing to the improvement of the key-system baring his name, the « Baermann-Ottensteiner » system, based on the one Iwan Müller conceived. In his clarinet method, Carl mentions the teacher

of his father as the only worthy representative of his generation. In his still well-known and used today *Klarinett-Schule,* he demonstrates admiration for Josef Beer's heritage: « Here I would like also to mention those artists who achieved importance or greatness with the clarinet: Backofen, Heinrich Baermann, [Josef] Beer in Berlin, Beer in Paris *(probably Frédéric Berr)*, Beerhalter, Brothers Bender, Blatt, Crusell, Dacosta, Faubel, Friedlowsky, Gambaro, Gebauer, Hartmann, Hermstedt, Klein, Reinhardt, Kotte, Iwan Müller, Seemann, Schott, Tausch who has rendered great services to the instrument. »[117]

Since the German playing tradition finally assimilated the French one, it is safe to say Josef Beer left a strong musical heritage that thrived through the Baermann family teaching and conquered vast audiences as well as numerous disciples.

[117] Baermann, Carl. *Klarinett-Schule von dem ersten Anfang bis zur höchsten Ausbildung des Virtuosen in 2 Teilen oder 6 Abteilungen*. Johann André, Offenbach. Main. 1864. p. 1: *Als ausgezeichnete oder doch bedeutende Künstler auf der Klarinette, verdienen gennant zu werden Virtuosen wie: Backofen, Heinrich Baermann, Beer in Berlin, Beer in Paris, Beerhalter, Gebrüder Bender, Blatt, Grusel, Dacosta, Faule, Friedlowsky, Gambaro, Gebauer, Hartmann, Hermstedt, Klein, Reinhardt, Kotte, Müller (Iwan), Seeman, Schott, Tausch u. a., die sich um das Instrument grosse Verdienste erworben haben.*

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[118] 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[119] and died in

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

[119] 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[120] 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.[121] 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.[122]

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[120] 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.

[121] 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.

[122] 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.[123]

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.*[124]

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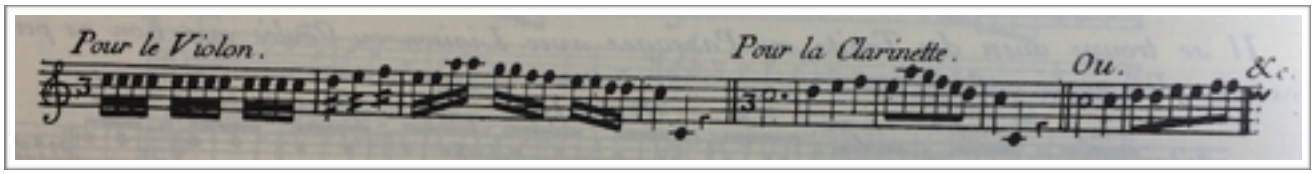
123 Dahlström, Fabian. *Crusell, Bernhard*. Grove Music Online. Last accessed February 24th 2017

124 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. »[125]



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

[125] 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.[126]

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.*[127]

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[128] 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[129] 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.[130] The

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[126] 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.*

[127] 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.

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

[129] 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).

[130] 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[131] 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. »[132]

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. »[133] 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… »[134] 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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[131] 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.

[132] 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.*

[133] 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.*

[134] 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. »[135] 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… »[136] 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. »[137]

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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135 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…*

136 Ibidem.

137 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 »[138], 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

[138] 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?).[139] 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».[140] 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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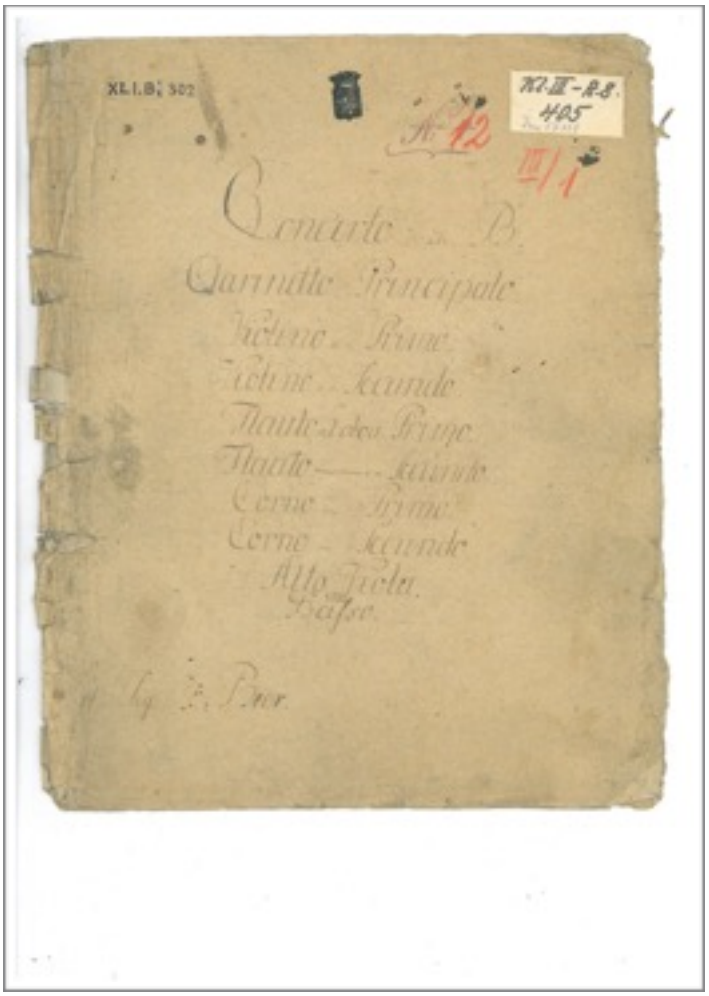
[139] The thriving of elaborated ornamentation in the middle of the 18th-century brought players to use more frequently vibrato, then considered an ornament just as trills or appoggiaturas. It was used mainly where other ornaments were inappropriate or impossible, thus possibly on long notes in decrescendo as Beer played them. Brown, Clive. *Classical & Romantic Performing Practice 1750-1900*. Oxford University Press. Oxford. 1999. Chapter on the Vibrato, p. 517.

[140] 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,

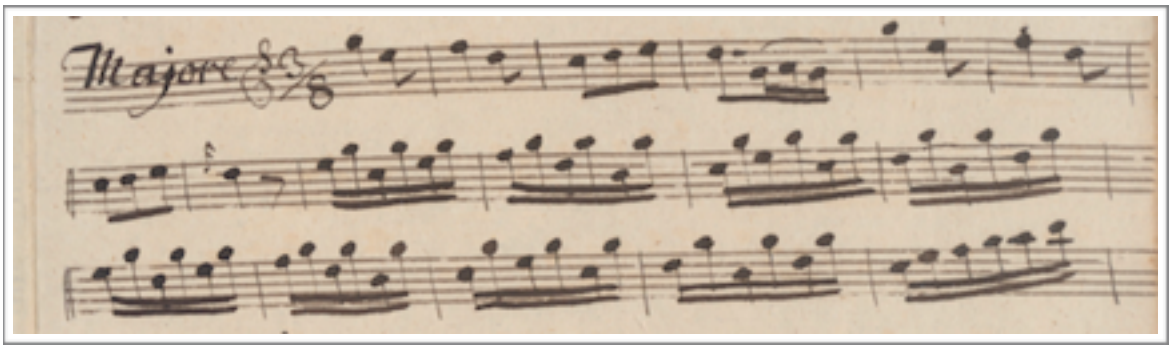
I was able to track down one concerto in Bb written by Beer, held of the Narodni Muzeum in Prague. Although the whole orchestral parts are available, the solo clarinet part is still missing. This concerto could very likely be the one published in 1787 by Breitkopf, since I doubt this work would have 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:[141]

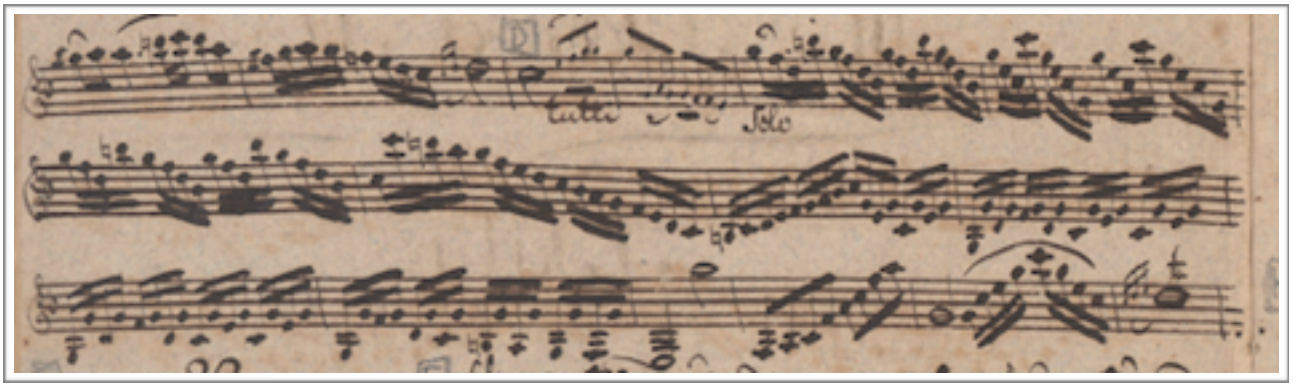


Stamitz. Extract of third movement. *Concerto à clarinette principale in B*. Manuscript. Accessed through Gallica.

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.

[141] 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.

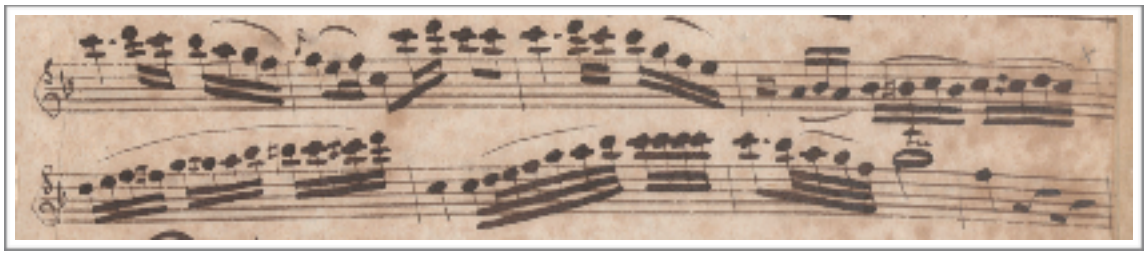


Extract of the first movement. Manuscript of concerto no.6 (Kaiser) by « Mrs Baer and Stamitz », Berlin. Library Fürst Thurn und Taxis, Regensburg.

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.

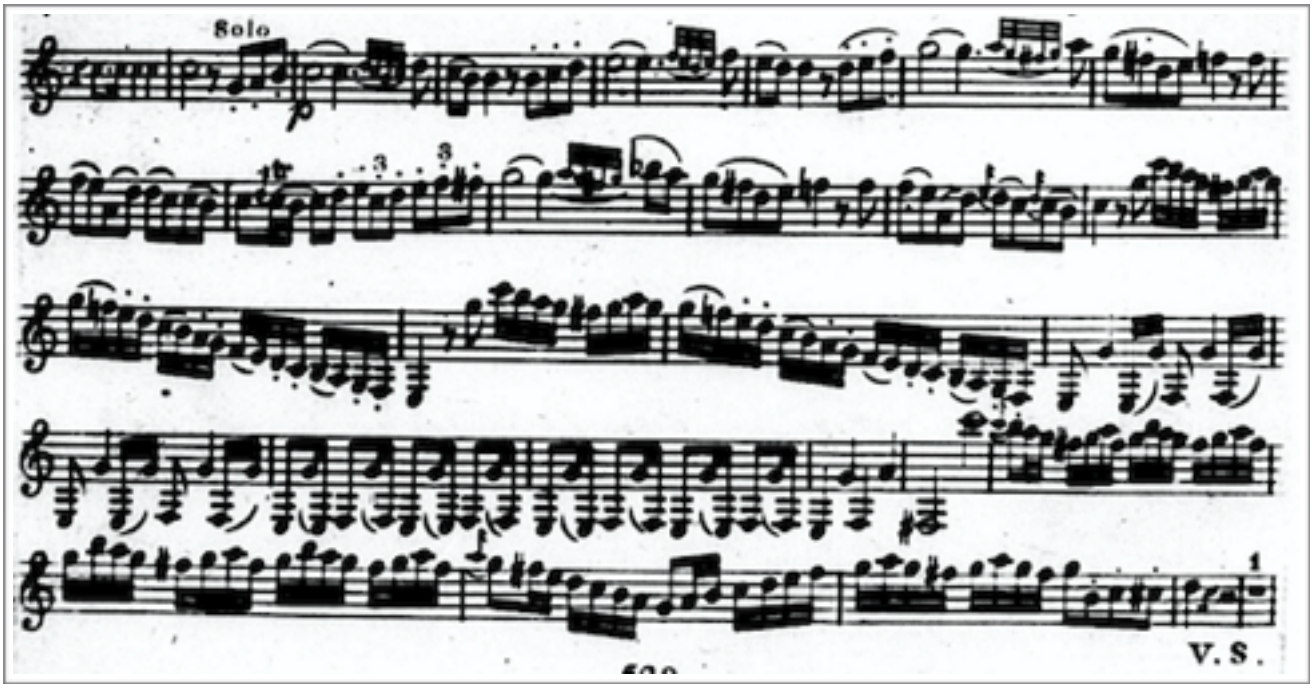
Valentin Roeser, in his *Traité à l'usage de ceux qui composent pour la clarinette et le cor*, advise to avoid both big leaps and chromatic passages, two pieces of advise Carl Stamitz ignored carefully!



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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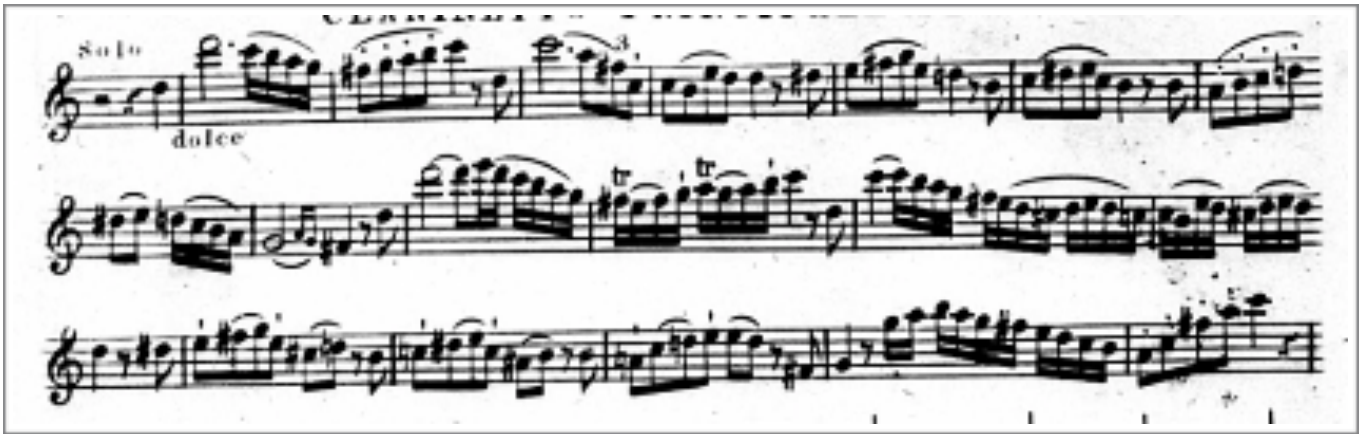
Ornamentation is one of the main skills a soloist deserving this name must develop. The role of ornaments at the end of the 18th century was, as Türk underlines it in his *Klavierschule*, to bring more cohesion to the tones, along with sustaining attention, give emphasis where needed in the piece, make the tune more intelligible for the audience, express and sustain the passions and have the power to bring light or darkness in some passages.[142] 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.

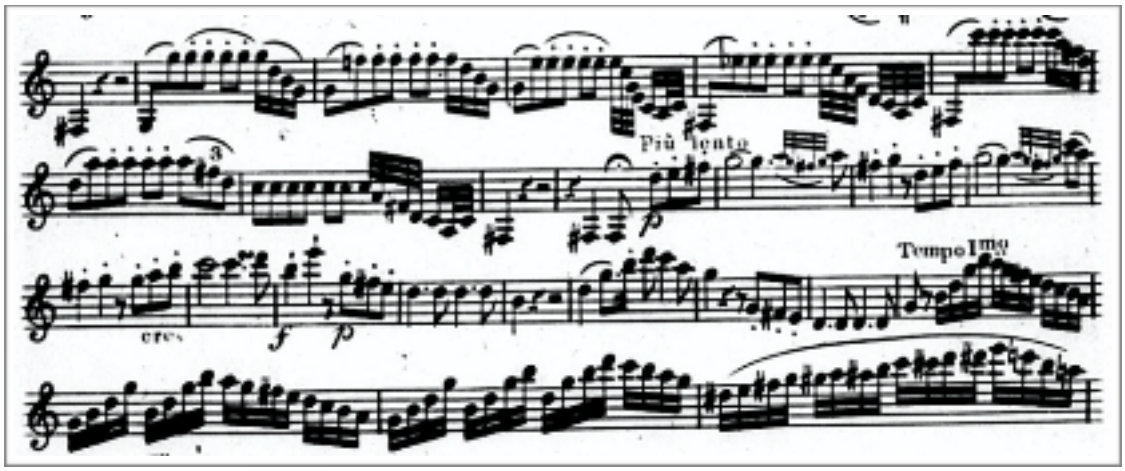
Further examples can be raised from Beer's music. For instance, there is an ornamented passage of great virtuosity in the first movement of his Opus 1 that witnesses both the evolution of the musical writing, desiring to exert a wider control on the performing result of the soloist by means of a greater 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.

[142] 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.[143]



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.»[144] Türk encourages the skillful player to use rubato, along with two other extraordinary means (the hesitation or pushing of the beat and

[143] 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).

[144] 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.[145] 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.[146] 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. »[147] 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. »[148] [149]

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

[146] 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.

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

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

[149] 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 ».[150] 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.[151]

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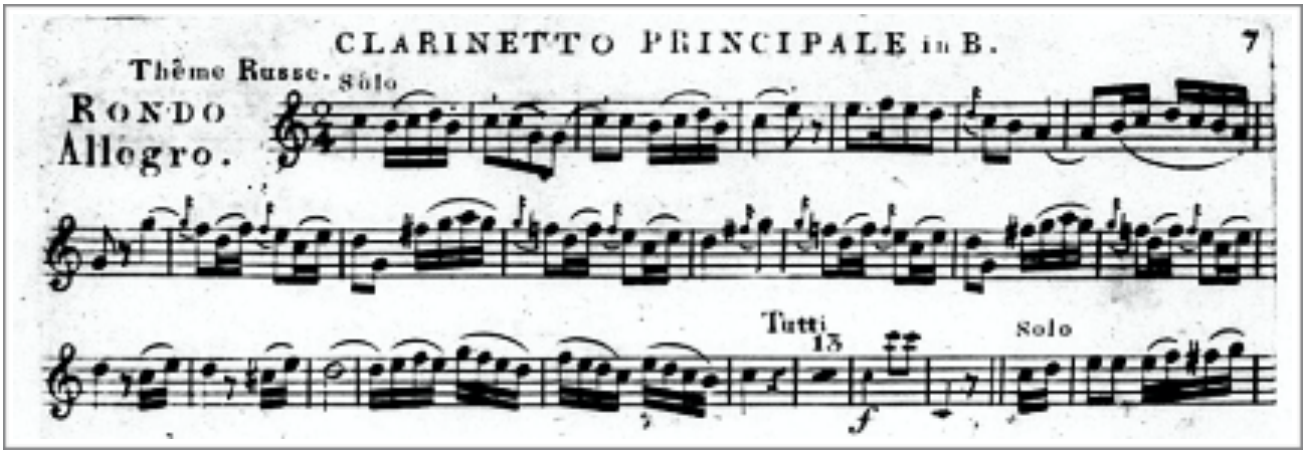
[150] Campbell, Carey Lynn. *To Play or Not to Play: The Soloist's expected Contribution During Tutti Sections of Mozart's Concertos for Strings and Winds*. PhD Dissertation. University of Minnesota. 2008. p. 18

[151] 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.[152]

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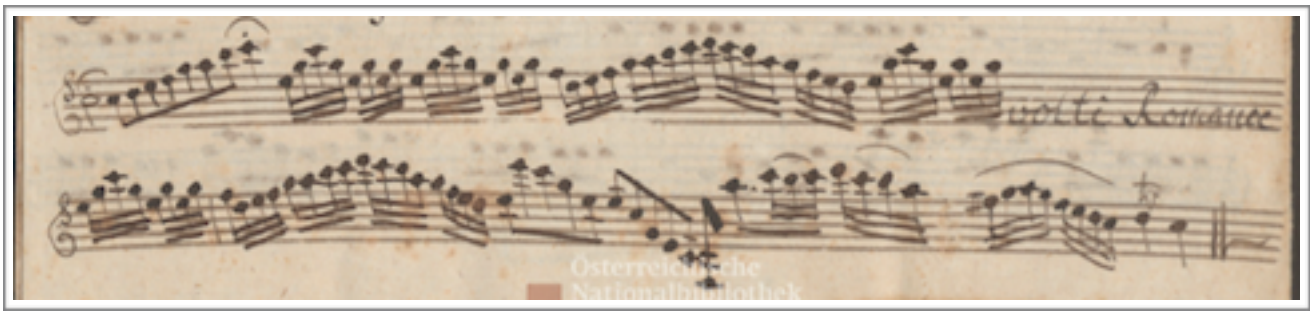
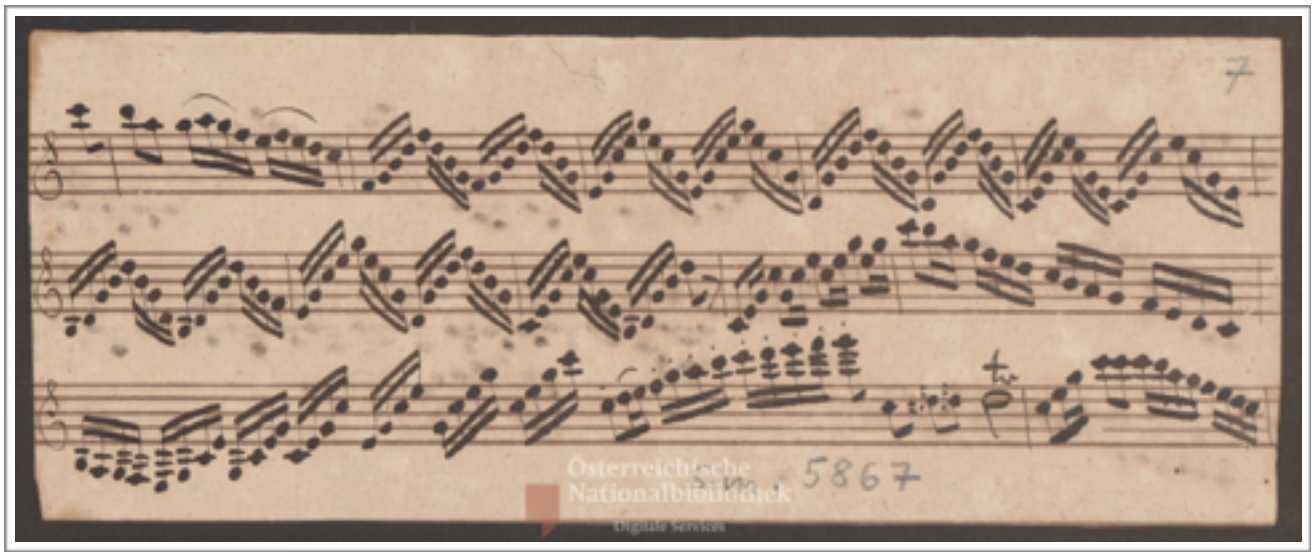
Cadenzas in Beer's performances are rarely commented, nor described. However, one example of a typical cadenza Beer could have played was found with the manuscript of Carl Stamitz concerto no. 3 and two with his no. 10. The concertos being composed specially for Josef Beer, this is very likely that he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

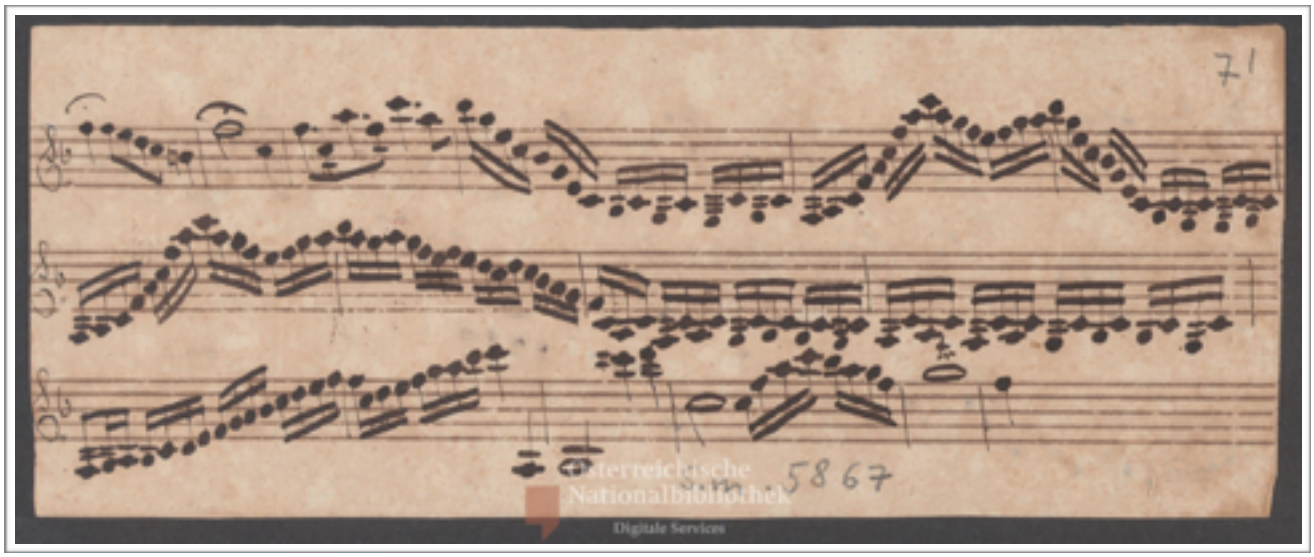


Carl Stamitz. Extract of 1st movement - added cadenza. Concerto no. 3. Manuscript. Österreichsische Nationalbibliothek.

[152] 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. »[153] 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

[153] 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.[154]

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!). [155]

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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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[154] 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).

[155] 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.

Conclusion

Researching Josef Beer, far from dispelling the fog around this player and his time, brings us deeper in troubled water and more questions arise: did Carl Stamitz received a greater help than it is assumed today when he wrote is clarinet concertos? Which kind of instrument(s) did Beer used? If most of his music is considered lost today, will it pop up somewhere, someday? On a more personal note: was he married? Did he had children? Who were his close friends? There is hope to explain a part of those questions in the future, as no researcher has travelled to unveil them with the help of national archives unavailable through Internet. For instance, one of Beer's concerto was last borrowed from a library in Czech Republic in the 1970s by the musicologist Himie Voxman and it was not found since then. It is possible that one day the music file will be found again in a box or under a bookshelf.

The biggest challenge when trying to draw a picture of both life and musical characteristics of Josef Beer is that he lived and performed on three very distinct scenes. The three musical scenes deserve each a whole research and it is complex to cross France, Russia and Germany, brushing an extremely general portrait of those bustling countries at the end of the 18th century. Russia, more than the others, suffers from a deep lack of information about this period, especially in regards to the presence of clarinet and the music written for the instrument, which is surprisingly rich and daring.

A wandering virtuoso half of the time, a faithful court musician the other half, a long-term collaborator, an imaginative composer and arranger, a significant teacher, Beer had tasted all the possible aspect of a musician's life at the turn of the 19th century. One of his greatest qualities was his adaptability: by reforming his embouchure of course, but also when changing drastically his environment and employers, or by adjust his compositions to the aesthetics of each decade.

Testimonies and reviews commenting his playing are highly valuable today, since they give clues on Beer's way of playing and bring to light his audacities and specificities. These chronicles may bring today's players to engage a reflexion towards our assumptions on classical performance. Indeed, soloists such as Beer would have stood out by using original skills or infusing their musical personality into the performances.

Fétis used the right words to describe the unparalleled career and tremendous impact of Josef Beer in the young history of the clarinet: « Reaching the highest degree of his talent, Beer started to be known at the age when attests usually enjoy their renown; but his didn't wait to spread on all Europe. He had no model, since before him the art of playing the clarinet was in a way in its childhood, and we can say that it was him who created this instrument, whose he corrected all the imperfections by force of skills. »[156]

Mostly because of his playing, but also thanks to his teaching, Josef Beer has left a deep mark on the classical and early romantic music scene. His had a significant impact on clarinet history, through various collaborations with composers, both in solo works and orchestral settings. Indeed, Josef Beer's contribution to the development of the clarinet and its literature cannot be underestimated. He should not be confused with any virtuoso, given that his life and incidence on music history is truly exceptional.

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[156] Fétis, F.J.. *Biographie Universelle des Musiciens*. Tome 2. Leroux Éditeurs. Bruxelles. 1835. p.99: *Parvenu au plus haut degré du talent, Beer n'a commencé à se faire connaître qu'à un âge où les artistes jouissent habituellement de toute leur renommée; mais la sienne ne tarda point alors à se répandre dans toute l'Europe. Il n'avait point eu de modèle, car avant lui l'art de jouer la clarinette était en quelque sorte dans son enfance, et l'on peut dire que ce fut lui qui créa cet instrument, dont il sut corriger les imperfections à force d'habiletés.*

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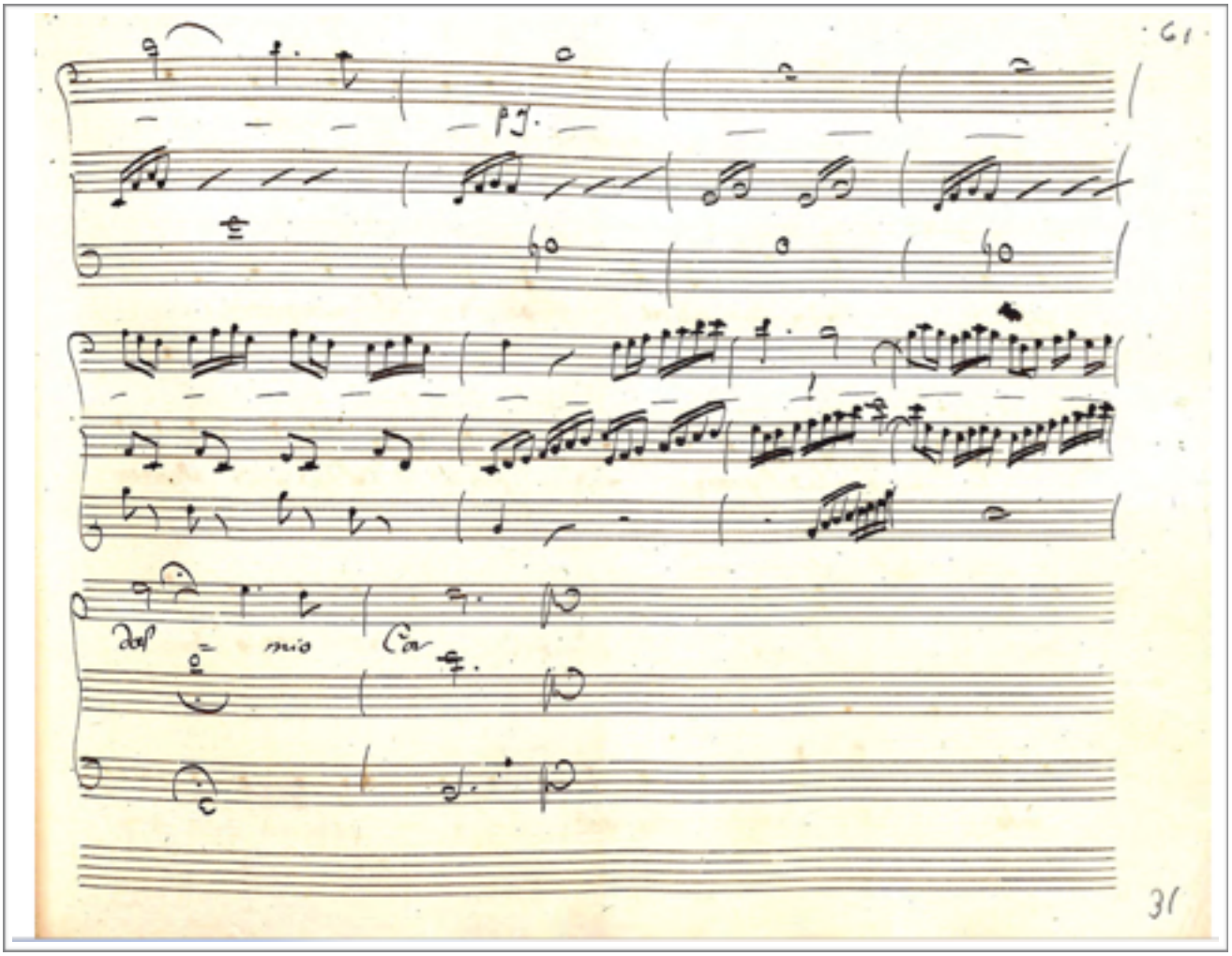
Acknowledgments

The author wishes to thank warmly Mr Albert Rice for the irreplaceable information to this research he shared, as well as Mr Pavel Serbin for his tremendous help searching new documentation about Josef Beer in Russia. Many thanks go also to David Rabonovich, Susanne Herre and Martin Gedeon for their help translating foreign languages. Many affectionate thanks to Jean-Loup Gagnon, for his patience and invaluable help building this research. Immense gratitude is of course sent to Mr Eric Hoeprich for his inspiring teaching, his long-term support and the numerous discussions shared to make the subject evolute. The author also wishes to sincerely thank her parents for their ongoing support and encouragements in the course of these studies.

Appendix

Appendix 1



Giovanni Paisiello's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia,* R. 1. 64, manuscript score circa 1782. Ricasoli Collection at the University of Louisville Music Library. Third Act, Aria for soprano with clarinet and bassoon solos « Gia riede primavera », added cadenza.