

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 his clarinet concertos? Which kind of instrument(s) did Beer use? 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 have 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 aspects 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 adjusting 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 artists 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. »¹

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. He 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.

¹ 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.*