

# Introduction

French neoclassical composer and pianist. Françaix's talent was encouraged by his family from an early age. His father was the director of the Le Mans Conservatory, a musicologist, composer and pianist, and his mother was a singing teacher. François studied at the Le Mans Conservatoire and the Paris Conservatoire, studying piano and composition with Nadia Boulanger, who began composing at the age of six, in a style heavily influenced by Ravel, and graduated from the Paris Conservatoire in 1930. 8 years later, his piano concerto was performed at the Baden-Baden Chamber Music Festival, with great success. He has been composing ever since, writing 10 ballet scores, movie scores and numerous instrumental pieces. He is also an accomplished pianist, having performed his "Concerto for Two Pianos" with his daughter in 1965. His works follow the French musical tradition, modeled on Chabrier, Ravel, Poulenc, etc., with the supreme aim of "creating pleasure". His works are accessible, passionate and charming, with moments of humor and irony, reflecting a typically French sensibility; François died in Paris in 1997.



About the concerto was actually composed in 1967, when the Fifth Republic of France was at the end of Charles de Gaulle's reign (and of course on the eve of the May Storm of 1968). Although France in the sixties basically showed a strategic contraction of its external affairs, there was a spurt of philosophical, cultural, and artistic development: whether it was the flourishing of structuralist philosophy, or the emergence of the "New Novel" and "New Wave Cinema" in the literature and art, all of them were in the flow of forming a "fault line" with the previous paradigm, and providing the soil for the post-modernist philosophers, such as Foucault and Derrida, to take root and sprout. This work is contemporary and requires great virtuosity on the part of the performer. Rumor has it that this work was originally written for the clarinet in the key of A, but due to the fact that professors at the Paris Conservatoire felt that it was too easy, the published version was only available for the clarinet in the key of B-flat, which added an excessive amount of difficulty, and many performers have praised this work to date. The American clarinetist and educator, Charles Niediesch, described it as follows: "It's a lovely piece, it's funny, it's touching, and it's just music!" Jean Françaix wrote his clarinet concerto in 1967–68 for Jacques Lancelot, who premiered it soon after its completion, and like many solo works over the centuries it was first considered too difficult to be played. Jack Brymer, one of the most prominent clarinetists of the time, wrote about it thus in his book *Clarinet* in 1976: "A work for the future, perhaps, when the instrument has developed further or the human hand has changed. Françaix himself describes it as follows:

**"I hope that this concerto will amuse listeners.  
To play it is another matter. It is like an acoustical  
aerobatics show, with loops, spins and quite  
frightening dives for the soloist, who must be free  
of dizziness and have thousands of flight hours  
under his belt. He is spared nothing – even in the  
slow movement with its long phrases, which is  
enchancing but equally terrifying. To stay within  
the flying metaphor – a little like a plane gliding,  
always just short of falling out of the sky. Finally,  
the pilot starts up his roaring engines again, as  
carefree as if he were exchanging his uniform  
cap for the wild wig of a clown ..."**

References Françaix: Works for Clarinet CD Dimitri Ashkenazy, Ada Meinich, Bernd Glemser, Yvonne Lang, Cincinnati Philharmonia Orchestra, Christoph-Mathias Mueller

# First moment

This concerto was actually created in 1967, when the French Fifth Republic was at the end of Charles de Gaulle's rule (and of course it was also on the eve of the "May Storm" in 1968). Although France basically showed a trend of strategic contraction in the external world in the 1960s, it ushered in a blowout explosion in philosophy, culture and art: whether it was the prosperity of structuralist philosophy or the rise of "new novels" and "new wave films" in literature and art, they all formed a "fault" with the old paradigms in the flow, providing soil for postmodern philosophical masters such as Foucault and Derrida to take root.

The whole piece is a rondo form composed of A+B+A1+C+A2 + cadenza, and the main key of the whole piece is A major. The specific analysis is as follows:

Introduction: 1-4 bars, a total of 4 bars, starting with the main chord of A major and ending with the dominant seventh chord of A major to establish the tonality of the whole melody, and the overall introduction part of the material is the material of the subsequent main theme A section, which is played by the orchestra.

The image shows a musical score excerpt for the first moment of a concerto. The tempo is marked 'Allegro' with a metronome marking of 120-126. The key signature is A major (three sharps). The score is for Clarinette en Si♭ and ORCHESTRE. The introduction is marked with a red box and labeled 'Introduction'. The main theme A is marked with a blue box and labeled 'A. Themes'. The orchestral part is marked with a red box and labeled 'p' (piano). The clarinet part is marked with a red box and labeled 'f' (forte). The main theme A is marked with a blue box and labeled 'mp' (mezzo-piano). The orchestral part is marked with a red box and labeled 'p' (piano). The main theme A is marked with a blue box and labeled 'pp' (pianissimo). The main theme A is marked with a blue box and labeled 'ironico' (ironic). The main theme A is marked with a blue box and labeled '7' (seven).

In this opening excerpt, we can see that the orchestral part is very short, with only four bars, which is rare in traditional concertos. It can be directly seen that in the post-World War II music style, This unconventional composition style is also a common style of neoclassical music. In Boulez's view, what was needed for the new music was a coordinated treatment of all musical elements - not just pitch, but also rhythm, dynamics, body and finally form itself - according to a strict sequential order, leading to a result that was completely divorced from previous musical conventions, as Debussy had done. composers would simply and clearly express their feelings. But when the performer walks onto the stage, after the applause and bow, what comes is tension. So after four bars, you will enter

the solo performance, which is a huge challenge for the performer. First of all, you must prepare your mindset, your fingers and your breathing, especially the first introduction and theme A,. Although the whole concerto is difficult, in the introduction and theme A, the technique is not particularly difficult, but the accent part is very interesting especially bars 5 to 9 All students fall into a misunderstanding, that is, when playing the accent, we breathe harder and pronounce more heavily, which gives the audience a sense of sudden strength. But it is different here. In French music after Debussy, I think that many times the accent is just a change of color, just like the change of tone in French words. So when playing the accents and tonguing of the entire movement, our breath is concentrated. At this time, our upper and lower lips should not bite the mouthpiece tightly, so that the reed has more space to vibrate. Blow the instrument gently, and only use the tongue to help create the effect of the accent. In this way, our accent does not sound like the Eastern European style, which is very powerful and violent. Instead, it has a French color, which is ethereal, vague and humorous.

**Paragraph A:** Composed of bars 5-24, the whole is an 8+8 two-sentence parallelism composed of a and a1, and A 4-bar ORCHESTRE is added to connect the two sentence materials in section A. The overall tonality is still developed in the key of A major, and the theme material is performed by the clarinet part. Finally, the a sentence ends at the closing of the major chord in A major, and the a1 sentence ends at the opening of the dominant chord in A major and enters the subsequent B material

The image shows a musical score for a piece in A major (three sharps) and 4/4 time. The score is divided into three systems. The first system (measures 4-6) shows the beginning of 'Theme A' in the clarinet part, marked with a red box and the label 'Theme A'. The piano accompaniment starts with a piano (p) dynamic and includes the instruction 'ironico'. The second system (measures 7-9) continues the theme, with a red box highlighting measures 7-8. The third system (measures 10-12) features a descending scale in the clarinet part, highlighted by a red box. The piano accompaniment includes a 'b' marking under measure 11. Dynamics range from piano (p) to pianissimo (pp).

In bars 10 to 12, performers need to pay special attention to the performance of the staccato part when playing the descending scale. This is a very controversial topic. In all French works and French clarinet works, performers of this type of music are very coherent, but for students, the difficulty of this staccato part is the coordination of the tongue and

fingers. Because the speed of this movement is fast, if you play too coherently, maybe your 16th notes will not be clear. If your tonguing is too strong, it will break the original style of the music. As we mentioned earlier, most French works require softness rather than strength. I have summarized my own unique method to make this section easier. First of all, we need to understand principle of The principle of staccato . When we learn staccato exercises, the teacher always teaches us in the beginning to use the tip of the tongue to hit the reed, but then we will fall into a misunderstanding. We overuse the tongue and ignore the existence of breath, which is the most important part of wind instruments.参考文献 Clarinetist Anthony. Parr wrote in his article "The Technique of Playing the Clarinet" that the word "with the tongue" is a stumbling block. This is because in common usage, it applies to a single sound (as in "this sound is a uttered sound"). He carries the hint that we begin the sound with the tongue. In fact, the tongue of the head has the same meaning as the light switch that lights up a room. We can't get any more light if we push the switch too hard! However, many people start their learning careers by making such mistakes on the clarinet.

### Add examples and methods

So when practicing this section, I would start with a legato, then divide each measure into four parts, then two 16th notes in a row, and after making sure that I had my own direction for the phrasing of the section, then I would use a staccato, but the tongue must be soft and light, so you can't play this piece with a very thick reed, or it will be a huge obstacle for the staccato.

Ornamental part in bars 21 and 22

The image shows a musical score for two systems. The first system covers measures 20 and 21. Measure 20 is a full measure for the clarinet. Measure 21 is split: the first half contains a clarinet line with a red box highlighting a specific ornamental phrase (a series of sixteenth notes), and the second half contains a piano accompaniment. The second system covers measures 22 and 23. Measure 22 is split: the first half contains a clarinet line with a red box highlighting another ornamental phrase, and the second half contains a piano accompaniment. Measure 23 is a full measure for the piano accompaniment. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 4/4.

The ornamentation of this piece is very interesting, and is a reflection of French humor and abstraction, the overall effect of the performance is like a person burping after eating a full meal, so the intonation of the ornamentation is very important, in the process of playing, don't play the ornamentation too long, so the fingers in the process of touching the keys to be as light as possible, and then here is the soprano range of the clarinet, so the breath support must be sufficient. It is important to have enough breath support, tighten the upper

and lower lips a little bit to ensure the pressure of the breath, and then think of something happy and enjoyable when playing this section, such as children playing with a bouncy ball.

**Paragraph B:** It consists of bars 25-42. The overall material of Section B is relatively complex, consisting of a regular structure of 3+3 phrases composed of b and b1, plus the subsequent 4 bars of supplementation and a connection. The overall tonality changes rapidly, from C major → D major → E major. The theme material of Section A is played by the orchestra, while the clarinet plays a new theme material to contrast with it.

The image displays a musical score for a section of a piece, spanning bars 24 to 30. The score is written for a clarinet (labeled 'cor') and an orchestra. The clarinet part is in the upper staff, and the orchestra part is in the lower staff. The key signature is C major, and the time signature is 4/4. The clarinet part begins with a triplet of eighth notes in bar 24, followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. The orchestra part begins with a triplet of eighth notes in bar 24, followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. The orchestra part is highlighted with a red box, and the text 'The orchestra plays the theme melody' is written below it. The score continues with bars 27 and 29, showing further development of the themes.

The orchestra plays the melody of the theme, which is played by the horn at the beginning of the us twenty-one begins to be played by the horn, and changes to the oboe after bar 27. The clarinet melody, from the main character to the supporting role, at this time the clarinet melody of the playful and cheerful and the trumpet's alto region formed a



stark contrast, in the 26 bars in the F sharp-note in the process of playing the use of conventional fingering is easy to send out the noise should be changed fingerings.

Bar 27 and 29 are some of the more difficult moments for clarinetists. Rapid hexatonic scales can be a real handful, especially in measure 27, and the more difficult moments are in the left hand. Our dominant hand is usually the right hand, however, when we hold the instrument in our right hand, the thumb acts as a lever and the other four thumbs act as levers, saving the rest of the fingers from the rest of the fingers, whereas our left hand hangs in the air with the five fingers feeling underpowered, especially when we play fast this can be avoided by practicing beat by beat. In particular, emphasize the first note of the first row in the practice, and give more support to the fingers with your breath, because our breath is like the bow of a string that needs to help the fingers to move.

**Paragraph A1:** 43-68 stanzas, a2+a3+a4, a 8+10+8 triad structure, of which paragraph a3 is a second-degree progression of the thematic material, which is the same as paragraphs a2 and a4, but there is a gap between them.

The whole of paragraph a3 is a three-sentence structure consisting of a2+a3+a4, of which paragraph a3 is a two-degree upward molding of the theme material, which is in contrast with paragraphs a2 and a4, though they are the same theme material.

The a3 section is a second modal progression upward, which is in contrast to the a2 and a4 sections, which are the same thematic material, but have a certain overall contrast, thus forming a reproduced three-part structure of A+B+A, and the accompanying part are more soothing and calm, forming a genus

The accompaniment is more soothing and peaceful, forming a middle section with a contrast between the overall color and the theme.

The image displays a musical score for a clarinet and piano. The score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of four systems of staves. The first system (measures 40-43) shows a clarinet melody with a 'Theme reproduction' section highlighted in red. The piano accompaniment is sparse. The second system (measures 44-46) continues the clarinet melody with a red box highlighting a specific phrase. The third system (measures 47-49) shows the clarinet melody continuing. The fourth system (measures 50-53) shows the clarinet melody with a red box highlighting a phrase. The piano accompaniment is more active in the later measures.



This section mainly uses the more regular eighth notes with the strings to interpret a very beautiful piece, from an aural point of view, the strings are like a river, the clarinet is like a flat boat on the river, the orchestra is guided by the flute's main theme to the strings, the whole section is very neat, which is also one of the styles of neo-classicism, the use of modern methods to restore classical elements, the playing of theIn the process of this section, you need to play the feeling of emptiness as if you are standing on a cruise ship and following the water waves, you need to pay attention to the intonation of the high G and the ascending F. You also need to pay attention to the intonation of the whole orchestra, if you are working with an orchestra, the flute's intonation tends to be low, and the clarinet's intonation tends to be high, especially when the flute plays soft, the flute plays soft and the clarinet plays soft, it tends to be low, it tends to be high, you can refer to this when practicing. When practicing, you can refer to the tuner

**part C:** Section C is composed of bars 73-98, and consists of two phrases of 8+8, c and c1. Its internal development mode is similar to that of section B. The development of the theme material is handed over to the orchestra, and the theme material played by the orchestra in this section also uses the development method of canon simulation. The clarinet part plays new theme material, which contrasts with the theme material and echoes it as a whole. The clarinet part in this section is composed of a large number of fast-running up and down arpeggios and scales.

72

*mf*

*ff*

*pp subito*

Teme part played by orchestra

74



**partA2:** bars 99-116, a 4+8 bisector structure consisting of a5 and a6, where the linking section still leaves the theme to the orchestra, so that in general the structure of this section should be an 8+8 bisector square structure, with a return to the key of A major, and finally ending on the A major major chord and entering into a massive linking section.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for piano. The first system, measures 102-103, shows a treble staff with a triplet of eighth notes marked 'ppp' and a red box highlighting a phrase in the right hand. The second system, measures 104-105, shows a complex passage with many sixteenth notes in the right hand, also highlighted with a red box, and a more active left hand.

This development part revolves around this theme, using a lot of sextuplets. This part is extremely demanding for the performer, especially the left hand little finger and ring finger techniques are very difficult, because our left hand is not the dominant hand, so there may be some mistakes in the process of practice. This problem can only be solved by decomposing and slowing down. In addition, a lot of scales and gradually progressive and weakening processing are also difficult points in this section.

**Connection:** From bars 117 to 129, the orchestra plays the theme material again. From bar 125 onwards, the clarinet also plays the theme material to echo it. Finally, bar 129 ends with the dominant seventh chord in A major and enters the cadenza.

125

Theme part

128

rall. CADENZA

In tempo

fff

A major D7

The grandeur of the brass instruments brings this theme to life, and then moves on to the cadenza section

cadenza section is one of the most colourful moments in the entire movement, the May storm of the concerto. Rooted in traditional French salon culture, Françoise's music emphasises sensual pleasure and virtuosity, in contrast to the experimental music of his "avant-garde" contemporaries (e.g. Boulez, Messiaen). He himself once said: 'Music should be pleasurable like champagne, not a didactic tool.'

During the Mai 68, many artists (e.g. Godard, Sartre) took an active part in the political movement and advocated the integration of art with social reality. However, Françoise's work has always been far from this kind of thinking, and closer to the position of 'art for art's sake', but in this flashy fragment, I think there are also some descriptions of the scenes during the storm, such as the use of unconventional scales and rhythms, depicting the scenes of car horns and people yelling in the streets.

cadenza section: bars 130-173, with a solo clarinet, has a very large structure, with a wide variety of techniques, and remains in the key of A major, ending with a chord in A major and a coda.

This cadenza are not showy passages completely divorced from the theme of the movement, but rather a distortion and development of the main theme. Françoise deconstructs the core motifs of the first movement (such as intervals and chromatic lines) in fragments, creating a 'miniature theatre' effect through rhythmic reorganisation, tonal contrasts, and tonal ambiguity. The apparently free-flowing florid passages are in fact rigorously structured: they are usually divided into four parts: introduction-expansion-climax-fall, echoing the florid traditions of the classical concerto, but with a freshness given by the use of modern harmonic language (e.g., superimposed chords in the second degree, polytonal fragments). From bar 124 to bar 149 Francaix plays a rhythmic game, constructing

a basic jazz rhythmic pattern through partial eighth and fourth rests and partial ornaments consisting of quadruplets and quintuplets, reflecting the second theme. So the rhythm is the hard part of the exercise, and you can't be too free just because it's a flamenco, but you need to follow the basic rhythm.



Measures 159~167, like a depiction of the beginning of a riot, make extensive use of quadruplets from very weak to sudden strong, and immediately from sudden fortissimo to pianississimo, mapping the sound of cars and the rush of people in a riot or parade. It's important to focus on breathing in this section because there's a lot of extreme weakness, but it's also important to be pianississimo without being weak or too soft, so that everyone in the audience can feel the sensation that comes from playing pianississimo. Especially from bar 165 to bar 167, this is also one of the technical difficulties, the left hand is very heavy, it is recommended to use simple fingerings to play the F sharp and A sharp.



From bar 168 to 173: the pizzicato strings intervene on the first beat of the 168, 169 and 170 bars, and then the clarinet plays a scale of quadruplets and back 16th notes, and then a fast 32nd note descending scale, which is like the last cry of the desperate people in the parade, and then the melody is given over to the bassoon vibrato. Afterwards, the whole melody is given over to the bassoon's vibrato, signalling the end of the storm and the return

of calm.

The image displays a musical score for a cadenza section, spanning measures 168 to 173. The score is written for a solo instrument (likely a flute or clarinet) and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is A major (three sharps). The tempo is marked 'a tempo primo' at the beginning of the section. The score is divided into three systems. The first system (measures 168-170) shows the soloist playing a melodic line with a 'cresc.' (crescendo) marking, while the piano accompaniment provides a rhythmic foundation with 'mf (pizzicato)' and 'f' dynamics. The second system (measures 171-172) features a fast, continuous melodic run in the soloist part, with the piano accompaniment providing a steady, rhythmic accompaniment. The third system (measure 173) shows the soloist playing a final, rapid melodic phrase, with the piano accompaniment providing a final, rhythmic accompaniment.

There are five elements that the performer needs to be aware of when playing this cadenza section:

- 1、 Neoclassical qualities Jean Françaix's music is a blend of baroque counterpoint and jazz rhythmic elements, and the cadenza needs to reflect clear phrasing: even in fast runs needs to be clear.
- 2 、 A sense of humour creates a playful effect through the use of sforzando and accents
- 3 、 Dynamic contrasts and timbres (e.g. instantaneous transitions from pianississimo to fortissimo) are key to expressing tension. When playing pianississimo, keep the breath support to avoid the tone being weak.
- 4、 Avoid 'noise and screaming' when playing fortissimo and enhance resonance through abdominal control. Avoid 'noise and screaming' when playing strongly, and enhance resonance through abdominal control.
- 5、 The interaction with the orchestra implies a response to the orchestra's motives (e.g., string pizzicato rhythmic patterns), and the soloist can improve the corresponding notes slightly to enhance the dramatic effect

**Coda:** bars 173-206, still in the key of A major, the orchestral accompaniment is developed from the A1 accompaniment, while the clarinet plays a more propulsive role to push the piece towards the main chord of A major to form a closing termination to end the piece.

200

202

204

*pp*

*(pp)*

*(pp)*

The coda section depicts a peacefulness after the turmoil, where everything is at peace. It is dim and mysterious due to the colours, so the player needs to interpret this part with a deep bass, giving the movement a mysterious ending.