

A HISTORICAL AND ANALYTICAL EXAMINATION OF THE STRAVINSKY *OCTET FOR
WIND INSTRUMENTS*, WITH A GUIDE TO PERFORMANCE PREPARATION

OF THE TWO TRUMPET PARTS

James J. Wood, Jr., B.M., M.M.

Dissertation Prepared for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

May 2007

APPROVED:

Keith Johnson, Major Professor

Eugene M. Corporon, Minor Professor

John Holt, Committee Member

Terri Sundberg, Chair of the Division of
Instrumental Studies

Graham Phipps, Director of Graduate Studies in
the College of Music

James C. Scott, Dean of the College of Music

Sandra L. Terrell, Dean of the Robert B. Toulouse
School of Graduate Studies

Wood, James J., Jr., A Historical and Analytical Examination of the Stravinsky *Octet for Wind Instruments*, with a Guide to Performance Preparation of the Two Trumpet Parts. Doctor of Musical Arts (Performance), May 2007, 53 pp., 3 tables, 15 musical examples, discography, 16 titles, bibliography, 17 titles.

The *Octuor pour instruments a vents* (or *Octet*), written in 1922-1923 by Igor Stravinsky, is a piece in three movements for a curious assortment of instruments: two trumpets, two trombones, flute, clarinet and two bassoons. It is one of four influential chamber works for winds by Stravinsky to include trumpet. Of these pieces, the *Octet* contains the fewest number of players but is no less complex and important in Stravinsky's oeuvre. The *Octet* helped mark the beginning of the neoclassical period in twentieth-century music.

Chapter 2 examines the life and musical background of the composer. It also reveals the history surrounding the origin of the *Octet* and its role in neoclassicism. Chapter 3 discusses the role of the *Octet* in the wind ensemble and orchestral repertoire, and includes a representative performance history, including the premiere. Chapter 4 provides analytical insights into the construction and format of the piece. Chapter 5 provides suggestions regarding style in Stravinsky's music, including interviews with important figures in the trumpet world. Chapter 6 concludes the guide with specific suggestions regarding preparation and performance of the *Octet*.

Copyright 2007

by

James J. Wood, Jr.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge the following for their willingness to assist in the “Performance Preparation” section of this thesis: Vincent Cichowicz, Charles Schlueter and Chris Gekker.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
LIST OF TABLES	v
LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES	vi
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. ORIGIN OF THE <i>OCTET FOR WIND INSTRUMENTS</i> AND ITS PLACE IN NEOCLASSICISM	2
Life and Compositional Background of Stravinsky Up to the <i>Octet</i>	
Definition of Neoclassicism	
Origin of the <i>Octet</i> and Its Role in Neoclassicism	
3. THE <i>OCTET'S</i> PLACE IN THE WIND ENSEMBLE AND ORCHESTRAL REPERTOIRE	13
Performance History	
4. ANALYTIC REMARKS	23
5. STYLISTIC AND PERFORMANCE SUGGESTIONS	29
Stravinsky's Use of the Trumpet	
Style in Stravinsky's Music	
Interviews	
6. GUIDE TO PERFORMANCE PREPARATION OF BOTH TRUMPET PARTS	40
DISCOGRAPHY	50
BIBLIOGRAPHY	52

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
1. University Performances of the <i>Octet for Wind Instruments</i>	18
2. Professional Performances of the <i>Octet for Wind Instruments</i>	19
3. Complete Programs with the <i>Octet for Wind Instruments</i>	20

LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES

The musical examples included in this document are reprinted
by kind permission of Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.

	Page
1. Stravinsky, <i>Octet for Wind Instruments</i> , Second Movement, mm. 1-2	27
2. Stravinsky, <i>Octet for Wind Instruments</i> , First Movement, mm. 1-4.....	31
3. Stravinsky, <i>Octet for Wind Instruments</i> , Second Movement, mm. 15-16	32
4. Stravinsky, <i>Octet for Wind Instruments</i> , Second Movement, mm. 46-51	32
5. Stravinsky, <i>Octet for Wind Instruments</i> , First Movement, mm. 42-46.....	43
6. Stravinsky, <i>Octet for Wind Instruments</i> , First Movement, mm. 71-73.....	43
7. Stravinsky, <i>Octet for Wind Instruments</i> , First Movement, mm. 108-110.....	43
8. Stravinsky, <i>Octet for Wind Instruments</i> , First Movement, mm. 114-122.....	44
9. Stravinsky, <i>Octet for Wind Instruments</i> , First Movement, mm. 125-127.....	44
10. Stravinsky, <i>Octet for Wind Instruments</i> , First Movement, mm. 159-166.....	45
11. Stravinsky, <i>Octet for Wind Instruments</i> , Second Movement, mm. 15-16	46
12. Stravinsky, <i>Octet for Wind Instruments</i> , Second Movement, mm. 27-33	47
13. Stravinsky, <i>Octet for Wind Instruments</i> , Second Movement, mm. 46-51	47
14. Stravinsky, <i>Octet for Wind Instruments</i> , Second Movement, mm. 83-89	48
15. Stravinsky, <i>Octet for Wind Instruments</i> , Third Movement, mm. 78-86.....	49

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Igor Stravinsky remains one of the most recognized composers of the twentieth century for many reasons. His life story, like that of many other artists living in Europe and Russia in the early and mid-twentieth century, includes relationships with some of the most influential artists of his generation, music influenced by the tumultuous happenings going on around him and a necessity to flee his homeland, first to Europe, and finally to America. His body of work contains hundreds of pieces covering a myriad of genres and styles. While he may be most famous to the general concert going public for his larger instrumental and choral works, much of Stravinsky's output came in the form of chamber music and solo vocal and instrumental works. Among these works was the *Octet for Wind Instruments*, a piece that helped mark the beginning of the compositional style known as neoclassicism. Since its composition, the *Octet* has held a special place in the wind-band and orchestral repertoire. Its musical and technical genius has been solidified by the numbers of performances and recordings of the work.

CHAPTER 2

ORIGIN OF THE *OCTET FOR WIND INSTRUMENTS* AND ITS PLACE IN NEOCLASSICISM

Life and compositional background of Stravinsky up to the *Octet*

Igor Fyodorovich Stravinsky was born in Oranienbaum, now known as Lomonosov, Russia, on June 17, 1882. He was born into an upper-class and musical family—his mother Anna played piano and sang, and his father Fyodor was a well-known bass-baritone in the Russian opera world. As such, the family had musical connections with the most distinguished musicians of the time—Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908), Alexander Borodin (1833-1887) and Modest Mussorgsky (1839-1881), to name a few. Igor was trained on the piano at a young age, and undoubtedly was exposed to numerous live concerts and recitals, many with his father performing. At nineteen Igor entered law school at St. Petersburg University, but put much of his effort into his unceasing passion for music. He continued studying piano as well as counterpoint and harmony with more accomplished teachers. By this time Stravinsky was composing regularly (although many works from this time were lost), and after befriending Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's son, Vladimir, came under the supervision of the composer himself. Although a professor there, Rimsky-Korsakov discouraged Stravinsky from attending the Conservatory. He suggested that Igor would be overwhelmed with work from that institution in addition to his university load, and that, in Stravinsky's words, ". . . as I was

twenty, he feared I might find myself backward in comparison with my contemporaries, and that might discourage me.”¹ In 1905, political strife in Russia meant the closing of the University, and Stravinsky was never able to graduate. By this time though he was experiencing some success as a composer. Under Rimsky-Korsakov’s guidance, Stravinsky wrote several works, including *Symphony in E-flat major* (1905—1907), *Le Faune et la bergere* for Voice and Orchestra (1907) which shows the influence of Debussy, and an orchestral fantasy entitled *Fireworks* (1908), written to celebrate the wedding between the composer Maximilian Steinberg (1883-1946) and Rimsky-Korsakov’s daughter Nadia.² These early works show the composer’s experimentation with orchestration and form and an adherence to the Russian nationalistic school. Stravinsky’s genius, however, began to show in his first work of significance, *The Firebird*.

Russian Nationalism

In 1908 the ballet impresario Serge Diaghilev (1872—1929) of the Ballets Russes (based in Paris) heard Stravinsky’s *Scherzo fantastique* and invited him to orchestrate part of the ballet *Chopiniana*. Diaghilev then commissioned Stravinsky (after having asked three other composers first) to write the music for the ballet *Zhar’-ptitsa* (*The Firebird*) (1909—1910), a popular Russian fairy tale.³ The music was characteristically Russian sounding—much of the music was similar to the style of Rimsky-Korsakov (already well-known in Western Europe) and made use of Russian folk songs. The ballet

¹ Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: A Critical Survey* (New York: Philosophical Library, Inc. 1948), 15.

² White, *Stravinsky, A Critical Survey*, 21.

³ *Ibid.*, 24.

enjoyed tremendous success at its Paris premiere in 1910, and Stravinsky became an instant celebrity. Stravinsky left Russia and moved to Paris, where he and Diaghilev continued the successful collaboration over the next few years and produced two more ballets: *Petrushka* (1910—1911) and *Le Sacre du Printemps (The Rite of Spring)* (1911—1913). *Petrushka* premiered in 1911 and was one of Ballets Russes' most successful productions. *The Rite of Spring*, however, received a different reaction from the ballet's patrons. The premier performance of the ballet on May 29, 1913, caused a riot—not strictly because of the music, although it may have contributed—but the discontent was directed largely at the choreographer, Nizhinsky. In this third ballet Stravinsky broke away from the earlier two and, in keeping with the setting of the ballet in primitive Russia, included more primitivism in the music. Rather than recognizable folk tunes, Stravinsky used simple diatonic themes, broken into fragments and re-ordered—a far cry from what the Parisian public was accustomed to hearing.⁴ These three works exemplify Stravinsky's "Russian period," through his use of Russian folk songs, their similarity to Rimsky-Korsakov's instrumentation and their scoring for large orchestras.

Having left Russia and now France for Switzerland in 1914, Stravinsky found himself cut off from his family and business resources, including the Ballets Russes, which was operating at a substantially lower budget than in previous years. Consequently he started writing for smaller ensembles, which would require less financial backing.⁵

L'Histoire du soldat (A Soldier's Tale) (1918) sprang from an idea to write a piece in

⁴ Ibid., 39.

⁵ Scott Charles Lubaroff, *An Examination of the Neo-classical Wind Works of Igor Stravinsky: The Octet for winds and Concerto for Piano and Winds* (Lewiston, New York, The Edwin Mellon Press 2004), 20.

ballet fashion for a small contingent of dancers and musicians. This work, it was hoped, could be performed in smaller venues, even outdoors, as a traveling ensemble that would tour the cities and smaller towns in Switzerland.⁶ Like the *Octet*, *L'Histoire* is a chamber work with a curious instrumentation: clarinet, bassoon, cornet, trombone, percussion, violin and double-bass; in Stravinsky's words, this "include[s] the most representative types, in treble and bass, of the different instrumental families."⁷ As we shall see later in the discussion of the *Octet*, dreams play a recurring role in Stravinsky's compositional process; one of the themes in *L'Histoire* came to Stravinsky in a dream, as he claimed happened in *The Rite of Spring*.⁸ As Scott Lubaroff notes in his book, *L'Histoire* gives us a taste of Stravinsky's deepening affinity toward wind instruments, as well as his increasing use of families of instruments in color and texture.⁹ Interestingly, this use of instrumental families is a particular feature of the *Theme and Variations for Band*, Op. 43a (1943) by Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951), a composer with whom Stravinsky had a tumultuous relationship.

Toward Neoclassicism

Diaghilev again approached Stravinsky to orchestrate the music for a ballet, this time based on music by the eighteenth-century composer Giovanni Battista Pergolesi (1710-1736), with set designs by Pablo Picasso. The ballet *Pulcinella* (1919), was

⁶ White, *Stravinsky, A Critical Survey*, 77.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 79.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 80.

⁹ Scott Charles Lubaroff, "An Examination of the Neo-classical Wind Works of Igor Stravinsky: The *Octet for Winds* and *Concerto for Piano and Winds*", (D.M.A. Dissertation, Michigan State University, 2001), 21.

inspired by the characters of the sixteenth-century commedia dell'arte,¹⁰ a trend popular at the time (Arnold Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* was also written during this period). As with *The Firebird*, Diaghilev had originally approached a different composer, Ottorino Respighi (1879—1936), to orchestrate. After Respighi declined, Diaghilev presented Stravinsky with a series of eighteenth-century pieces attributed to Pergolesi (later much of the music was reattributed to Pergolesi's contemporary Domenico Gallo {1730—?}). Stravinsky's revision of Pergolesi's music was fairly minimal: he broke up the continuity of the formal melodic lines through repetition of phrases or the lengthening thereof, and distorted the harmonic rhythm.¹¹ This endeavor did not make Stravinsky's turn toward neoclassicism complete, although he did admit that the experience opened his ears to a new direction: "*Pulcinella* was my discovery of the past, the epiphany through which the whole of my late work became possible."¹² Indeed, this discovery of the past was to become the foundation of neoclassicism.

Definition of Neoclassicism

The term "neoclassical" as it was known in the 1920's was rooted in a political and cultural movement, largely based in France. It developed out of a growing anti-German sentiment that pervaded throughout Western Europe following World War I and leading up to World War II. In artistic circles, this anti-German mentality was associated with Romantic and Expressionist art traditions; musically, Romanticism was symbolized

¹⁰ Robert Craft with Igor Stravinsky, *Memories and Commentaries* (London: Faber & Faber, 2002), 139.

¹¹ Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: The Composer and his Works* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2nd Ed., 1979), 284.

¹² Craft, *Memories and Commentaries*, 138.

by the work of Wagner and Mahler, whose works epitomized the Romantic ideals of the spiritual and transcendental. Music became free of the rules and limits placed upon it in the Classical era, giving way to freer forms conjured from the imagination of composers. Romantic music became associated more with literature than in the Classical era and thus became more programmatic in nature, with the belief that music could express emotions more eloquently than words themselves. Stravinsky, not one to shy away from advertising his opinions, let his view of Wagner and his music be known in letters and interviews. Stravinsky's opinions of Wagner gives us an idea as to where his own music was headed: "There is no musical form in Wagner: he reduces such form to the servitude of the text, whereas this ought to be the other way around."¹³ Consequently the seemingly sentimental and emotional lines, harmonies and forms associated with his music were frowned upon in the neoclassical movement. Composers such as Stravinsky, Béla Bartók, Paul Hindemith, Sergei Prokofiev, Darius Milhaud, Francis Poulenc and Erik Satie turned in some degree to a revitalized "common practice" harmony that was considered less emotional, and to the forms of the Baroque and Classical periods: sonata form, symphony form, etc. - thus the term "neoclassical." Counterpoint was especially important to Stravinsky: "It is the architectural base of all music, regulating and guiding all composition. Without counterpoint, music loses its consistency and rhythm."¹⁴ (As explored later, counterpoint is a principal feature of the *Octet*.) Despite the return to these

¹³ Scott Messing, *Neoclassicism in Music: From the Genesis of the Concept Through the Schoenberg/Stravinsky Polemic* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 1966), 122.

¹⁴ Messing, 133.

older, sectional forms and harmonies, these features were mixed with more dissonance, frequent use of ostinato, complex rhythms and unique instrumental combinations, creating a characteristically twentieth century style. Stravinsky's neoclassical era ended with the opera *The Rake's Progress* (1951).

Origin of the *Octet* and its role in Neoclassicism

Stravinsky started composing the *Octet for Wind Instruments* in Biarritz, France, in late 1922 and finished the work in Paris on May 20, 1923. It was first published by Edition Russe de Musique in 1924, and later by Boosey and Hawkes. The score is dedicated to Stravinsky's second wife, Vera de Bosset. The manuscript now lies in the Stiftung Rychenberg, in Winterthur, Switzerland.¹⁵

Stravinsky discussed the genesis of the *Octet* with his longtime friend and biographer Robert Craft:

The *Octuor* began with a dream in which I saw myself in a small room surrounded by a small group of instrumentalists playing some very attractive music. I did not recognize the music, though I strained to hear it, and I could not recall any feature of it the next day, but I do remember my curiosity—in the dream—to know how many the musicians were. I remember too that after I had counted them to the number eight, I looked again and saw that they were playing bassoons, trombones, trumpets, a flute and a clarinet. I awoke from this little concert in a state of great delight and anticipation and the next morning began to compose the *Octuor*, which I had had no thought of the day before, though for some time I had wanted to write an ensemble piece—not incidental music like *Histoire du Soldat*, but an instrumental sonata.¹⁶

¹⁵ White, *Stravinsky: The Composer and his Works*, 308.

¹⁶ Robert Craft with Igor Stravinsky, *Dialogues and a Diary* (London: Faber & Faber, 1968), 39.

The reference to Stravinsky's desire to write a sonata shows the composer's neoclassical focus at the time, the sonata form being a product from centuries earlier. He mentions it again later: "My appetite was whetted by my rediscovery of sonata form" ¹⁷ (The form of the piece will be discussed below in the chapter on analysis.)

In the discussion Stravinsky went on to describe the compositional process: the first movement was written, then the waltz (Variation C) of the second movement. The theme of the second movement was then based on the waltz. He then wrote Variation A, which is repeated within the movement as a prelude to the other variations. The last variation is the *fugato*, and the theme is presented in alternating pairs of like or same instruments. The third and final movement was written to contrast the harmonic tension built up in the final measures of the previous movement. Stravinsky points to Bach's two-part inventions and the final movement of his own *Piano Sonata* as influences while writing the final movement. Stravinsky expounded on the "terseness" and "lucidity" of Bach's music, both characteristics of neoclassicism. ¹⁸

In the January 1924 issue of the magazine *The Arts*, Stravinsky published an article titled "Some Ideas About My Octuor". ¹⁹ Here the composer addressed his choice of instruments, the form of the piece and his opinions on interpretations of the piece in performance—many of these comments can be related directly to the core of neoclassicism.

Regarding his choice of instrumentation, Stravinsky wrote:

¹⁷ Ibid., 40.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ White, *Stravinsky: The Composer and his Works*, 574.

Wind instruments seem to me to be more apt to render a certain rigidity of the form I had in mind than other instruments—the string instruments, for example, which are less cold and more vague. The suppleness of the string instruments can lend itself to more subtle nuances and can serve better the individual sensibility of the executant in works built on an ‘emotive’ basis. My Octuor is not an ‘emotive’ work but a musical composition based on objective elements which are sufficient in themselves.²⁰

This last sentence could be used to describe neoclassicism in music in general. The lack of obvious emotive elements was paramount in the neoclassical movement, a clear departure from the German Romanticism that was so highly repulsive to French composers of the time. Stravinsky achieved this goal of an “objective” rather than “emotive” work using many techniques: instrumentation, as noted above for the “cold” and “rigid” timbres, dynamics, form and harmony. Stravinsky took an interesting view of dynamics:

The reasons why I composed this kind of music for an octuor of [winds] are the following: First, because this ensemble forms a complete sonorous scale and consequently furnishes me with a sufficiently rich register; second, because the difference of the volume of these instruments renders more evident the musical architecture. And this is the most important question in all my recent compositions. I have excluded from this work all sorts of nuances, which I have replaced by the play of these volumes. I have excluded all nuances between the *forte* and the *piano*; I have left only the *forte* and the *piano*. Therefore the *forte* and the *piano* are in my work only the dynamic limit which determines the function of the volumes to play.²¹

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., 575.

While his comments regarding the natural dynamic differences between instruments are clear, his statement that he only used *forte* and *piano* is not factual. In reality the *Octet* includes dynamics throughout the range, from *pianissimo* to *fortissimo*. (Chris Gekker discusses Stravinsky's use of dynamics in chapter 5 below). Stravinsky makes it clear, however, that these directions are to be taken quite literally.

Betraying his mindset at the time, Stravinsky goes on to address the musical function of the *Octet*.

This sort of music has no other aim than to be sufficient in itself. In general, I consider that music is only able to solve musical problems; and nothing else, neither the literary nor the picturesque, can be in music of any real interest. The play of the musical elements is the thing.²²

The struggle between programmatic and absolute music was clearly a central theme in the difference between Romantic and neoclassical music. (In a curious coincidence, American composer Charles Ives published his "Essays Before a Sonata"²³ in 1921, in which the composer addresses this same question of programmatic versus absolute music in detail. Ives was decidedly on the other side of the aisle, arguing that all music is, to some extent, programmatic). Interestingly, this last statement of Stravinsky's contradicts the music that made him famous—namely, the music for the ballets of Diaghilev, which by their very nature depict the picturesque.

In his article on the *Octet*, Stravinsky makes a determined effort to exercise control over the performances of this work by examining the concept of interpretation.

²² Ibid., 577.

²³ Charles Ives, *Essays Before a Sonata* (W.W. Norton & Co., New York, 1962).

Since this subject is in the realm of the performance guide of this thesis, discussion of this issue will be addressed in the “Guide to Performance Preparation” below.

Stravinsky revised many of his works, including the *Octet*. The reasons for his revisions weren't entirely musical; as the United States and the Soviet Union had failed to sign the Berne Copyright Convention, all of Stravinsky's pre-1931 compositions were in the public domain in the United States. Thus, he revised many of his pre-1931 works to regain the copyright on them.²⁴ The revisions of the *Octet* in the 1952 version were small. According to White, the repeat of sixteen measures in the *Finale* was written out, the metronome marking for Variation D was changed from quarter-note=189 to quarter note=160, three notes were altered in the clarinet part one measure before the fugato, and the French stylistic directions were removed. Some dynamics were changed minimally throughout as well.²⁵

Stravinsky's *Octet* is widely considered to be the first work of any composer to completely embody the ideal of the neoclassical movement. It is a clear departure from the overly emotional compositions of the Romantic era through its return to Classical forms, the obvious use of counterpoint, a smaller and clearer sense of orchestration, use of ostinato, exploration of disjunct intervals in melodies and complex rhythms.

²⁴ White, *Stravinsky: The Composer and his Works*, 107.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 313.

CHAPTER 3

THE *OCTET*'S PLACE IN THE WIND ENSEMBLE AND ORCHESTRAL REPERTOIRE

The *Octet* is a work often claimed by the wind ensemble world as one of its own. Indeed, almost every work written solely for winds by a composer of Stravinsky's stature, whether written in the twentieth-century or before, has been assimilated into the wind ensemble repertoire. Works by such composers as Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791), Ludwig Van Beethoven (1770-1827), Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847), Franz Krommer (1759 -1831), Anton Dvorák (1841-1904) and Hector Berlioz are to be found on programs of the modern day wind ensemble. Like many of these works, however, the *Octet* was composed in a time when wind bands were not often performing works of such a serious nature; indeed, the wind ensemble as it is known today did not exist. Rather, the professional and university bands of the day in the United States and around the world were military and concert bands, primarily performing transcriptions of orchestral overtures and symphonies, solo music, marches and popular music of the time. In the United States, the Goldman and Sousa Bands were two of the most famous of these professional ensembles. However, it wasn't until 1942 that the Goldman Band first performed a concert consisting entirely of original wind band works.²⁶ Thus, smaller

²⁶ Frank L. Battisti, *The Winds of Change: The Evolution of the Contemporary American Wind Band/Ensemble and its Conductor* (Galesville, MD: Meredith Music Publications, 2002), 37.

original works for mixed winds such as the *Octet* were not performed by bands, but by orchestral chamber players or dedicated “new music” groups.

The advent of the modern wind ensemble did not come until 1952, when Frederick Fennell formed the Eastman Wind Ensemble at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York. Fennell wrote the following in his program notes for a concert given by the ensemble on March 20, 1960: “. . . In establishing the Wind Ensemble. . . we would confine our rehearsals and performances to the study of the original music written for the massed wind medium. . . .”²⁷ This was the first ensemble to do so on a permanent basis. “. . . I wanted a carefully-balanced instrumentation capable of performing styles from the 16th century and moderate-sized chamber music to Paul Hindemith’s new Symphony in B-flat.”²⁸ Indeed, it was this ensemble concept of Fennell’s that allowed the *Octet* and other chamber pieces for winds to finally be associated with an ensemble other than orchestral chamber winds or “contemporary music” groups. Today, the *Octet* is rarely found on a typical orchestra concert—if symphony players perform the piece, it is generally on a chamber music program. It is not usually programmed with larger orchestral works. This can be attributed to the fact that the piece is, after all, a chamber work for eight musicians. The halls normally used for orchestra concerts are rather large for works so small. Stravinsky offers a solution to this problem: “The stage of the Paris Opera seemed a large frame for only eight players, but the group was set off by screens,

²⁷ Richard Franko Goldman, *The Wind Band*, (Boston, Allyn and Bacon, 1962), p. 138, cited in Battisti, *The Winds of Change*, 56.

²⁸ Frederick Fennell, “Growing as a Conductor”, *The Instrumentalist* 41 (April 1987), p. 51, cited in Battisti, *The Winds of Change*, 54.

and the sound was well balanced.”²⁹ This separation of performance venues and size of instrumentation does not necessarily hold true for the wind ensemble because of the nature of the group—designed from its inception not to be beholden to the number of performers in any given piece. Evidence of this is offered in the “Performance History” chapter below.

Stravinsky’s compositions have influenced countless composers, and the *Octet* is no exception. The tone colors produced from the unique instrumentation used in the *Octet* inspired composers to experiment further with similar combinations, if not the same instrumentation exactly. Colin McPhee (1900—1964) composed the *Concerto for Piano and Wind Octet* in 1928, undoubtedly influenced by the *Octet for Wind Instruments* and *Concerto for Piano and Wind Instruments*. According to Frank Battisti, the work is “typical of the neoclassic inspired works composed in the 1920’s”³⁰ and is scored identically to Stravinsky’s *Octet*. Karl Kohn (b. 1926) wrote *Impromptus* in 1969 for the same instrumentation as the *Octet*, as did David Heuser (b. 1966) in his *Octet (1997)*. Heuser has this to say about Stravinsky’s influence: “The instrumentation of my *Octet* is the same as Stravinsky’s *Octet for Winds*. Although this piece is not an homage to him, his influence on my music has been at times palpable. If any part of this work is for him, it is the opening movement.”³¹

Stravinsky was not the only composer to write for winds in the 1920s and 1930s.

Paul Hindemith (1895—1963), Edgard Varèse (1885—1965), Vincent Persichetti

²⁹ Craft, *Dialogues and a Diary*, 40.

³⁰ Battisti, 36.

³¹ Non Sequitur Music, updated January 17, 1998, available from <http://www.nonsequiturmusic.com/octet.htm>; Internet; accessed 14 August, 2006.

(1915—1987), Ernst Krenek (1900—1991), Darius Milhaud (1892—1974) and Francis Poulenc (1899—1963) were among many composers to write music for winds, both for full band and mixed wind ensembles.³²

Stravinsky's output for winds, while small in comparison to his total body of works, is substantial in its impact on the wind world. In his book The Winds of Change, Frank Battisti has quoted several studies and surveys asking wind conductors to name the most significant works for winds ever written. Almost universally, three works are at the top of those lists: *Octet for Wind Instruments*, *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* (1920), and *Concerto for Piano and Wind Instruments* (1923—24), the latter of which is Stravinsky's other neoclassical work for winds. Battisti, one of the foremost wind ensemble conductors of the twentieth century, has called the *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* "arguably the most significant work to be composed for winds since Mozart's *Serenade No. 10*, K. 370a (formerly K. 371)."³³

The following works, while not written solely for winds, show Stravinsky's appreciation of the myriad tone colors he was able to create from their use. In 1920, Stravinsky wrote a Suite based on the original music of *L'Histoire du Soldat*, scored for four winds, violin, string bass and percussion. *Ragtime for Eleven Instruments*, using 5 winds, 4 strings, cimbalom and percussion, was written in 1918. *Circus Polka* (1942) was written for band, and is a spoof on orchestral transcriptions for band, quoting musical themes from Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893), Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975) and Franz Schubert (1797-1828). The *Ebony Concerto* was written for the Woody

³² Battisti, 36.

³³ Battisti, 31.

Herman band in 1945. In 1952 Stravinsky rescored his *Concertino* for string quartet (1920) for ten winds and violin and cello obbligato, naming the newly scored piece *Concertino for 12 Instruments*.³⁴

Performance History

The *Octet for Wind Instruments* was premiered at the Paris Opera House on October 18, 1923, at a Koussevitsky Concert. Stravinsky himself was the conductor.

Since its composition, the *Octet* has been performed countless times around the world. Its standing as a work of musical genius, its unique but accessible instrumentation and its historical significance make it a popular work to include on a myriad of ensemble's programs. Indeed, the tables below show the variety of ensembles that perform the *Octet*: wind ensembles, orchestral chamber groups and new music ensembles. The *Octet*, while technically and musically challenging, is not difficult enough to prevent college groups from performing the work. Table 1 below shows a sample listing of performances in the United States of the *Octet* by university ensembles. Table 2 shows a similar listing of performances by professional groups.

³⁴ Battisti, 31.

TABLE 1. UNIVERSITY PERFORMANCES

University of Iowa Center for New Music, William Hibbard, cond., University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA, 27 September 1969.

Yale Wind Ensemble, Thomas C. Duffy, cond., Woolsey Hall, Yale University, New Haven, CT, 2 December 1982.

Eastman Wind Ensemble, Donald Hunsberger, cond., Eastman School of Music, Rochester, NY, March 1965, October 1977, May 1988.

Yale Concert Band, Thomas C. Duffy, cond., Woolsey Hall, Yale University, New Haven, CT, 14 February 1992.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology Wind Ensemble, Frederick Harris, cond., Kresge Auditorium, MIT, Boston, MA, 5 May 2001.

Ithaca Brass and Ithaca Wind Quintet, no conductor, James J. Whalen Center for Music, Ithaca College, Ithaca, NY, 8 November 2001.

The Ohio State University Wind Ensemble, Russel Mikkelson, cond., Weigel Hall, OSU, Columbus, OH, 31 October 2002.

Cornell University's Ensemble X, Mark Scatterday, cond., Barnes Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, 21 February 2002.

University of Iowa Chamber Orchestra, Lucia Matos, cond., Clapp Recital Hall, University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA, 13 October 2002.

University of Hawaii Contemporary Music Ensemble, Peter Askim, cond., Orvis Auditorium, University of Hawai'i, Manoa, HI, 20 March 2003.

TABLE 2. PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCES

St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble, Abraham Goodman House, New York, NY, 24 October 1984.

Boston Chamber Ensemble, S.M. Clark, cond. St. Cecilia's Church, Boston, MA, 27 October 1995.

Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra of Boston, Gunther Schuller, cond., Sanders Theatre, Harvard University, Boston, MA, 1 April 2002.

Los Angeles Philharmonic New Music Group, Esa-Pekka Salonen, cond., Zipper Hall, Colburn School, Los Angeles, CA, 12 March 2001.

United States Military Academy Band Concert Band, Major William Garlette, cond., Thayer Hall South Auditorium, West Point, NY, 19 March 2001.

Pittsburgh Symphony Brass, no conductor, Carnegie Music Hall, Oakland, PA, 12 February 2002.

The United States Army Field Band Chamber Winds, Paul Bamonte, cond., Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Baltimore, MD, 10 February 2002.

The United States Army Field Band Chamber Winds, Shawn Hagen, cond., Interlochen National Music Camp, MI, 8 July 2004.

Philadelphia Orchestra, no conductor, The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, Philadelphia, PA, 27 February 2005.

Symphony Silicon Valley Chamber Music, California Theatre, San Jose, CA, 17 January 2006.

Table 3 provides a sampling of complete programs that included the *Octet*. The programs shown demonstrate the dichotomy of programming trends between wind ensembles and orchestras. Wind ensembles may program smaller chamber works with

larger full-scale works, or they may perform a program of only chamber music. Orchestras tend to program solely large-scale or chamber works; a mixture of both is rare—notice the lack of programs that include the *Octet* with a major work for orchestra. Table 3 also shows, however, the diverse makeup of ensembles that can perform the *Octet*: wind ensemble, orchestra or “new music group.”

TABLE 3. COMPLETE PROGRAMS WITH THE *OCTET*

New England Conservatory Wind Ensemble³⁵

Frank L. Battisti, Conductor

18 November 1971

<i>Concerto Grosso a Quattro Chori</i>	Gottfried Stölzel/Rogers
<i>Serenade in d minor, Op. 44</i>	Antonin Dvořák
<i>Sonata XIX a 15</i>	Giovanni Gabrieli
<i>Octet for Wind Instruments</i>	Igor Stravinsky
<i>Music for Prague, 1968</i>	Karel Husa

Eastman Wind Ensemble

Donald Hunsberger, Frank Battisti,

H. Robert Reynolds, Frederick Fennell, Conductors

7 October 1977

<i>Suite Francaise</i>	(Hunsberger, cond.)	Darius Milhaud
<i>Octet for Wind Instruments</i>	(Battisti, cond.)	Igor Stravinsky
<i>Scenes Revisited</i>	(Reynolds, cond.)	Verne Reynolds
<i>Symphony in B-flat</i>	(Fennell, cond.)	Paul Hindemith

³⁵ Battisti, 92.

TABLE 3 – *Continued*

Boston Chamber Ensemble

S.M. Clark, Conductor

27 October 1995

<i>Octet for Strings</i>	Felix Mendelssohn
<i>Octet for Wind Instruments</i>	Igor Stravinsky
<i>From the Forest of Chimneys</i>	Joelle Wallach
<i>Turn of Five</i>	Arthur Welwood
<i>Symphony No. 3</i>	Charles Ives

Ithaca College Wind Ensemble³⁶

Stephen G. Peterson, Conductor

James Park, Graduate Assistant Conductor

11 October 1998

<i>An Outdoor Overture</i>	Aaron Copland
<i>Colonial Song</i>	Percy Grainger
<i>Desi</i>	Michael Daugherty
<i>Octet for Wind Instruments</i>	Igor Stravinsky
<i>Symphony in B-flat</i>	Paul Hindemith

United States Military Academy Band Concert Band

Major William Garlette, Conductor

19 March 2001

<i>Octet for Wind Instruments</i>	Igor Stravinsky
<i>Prelude, Fugue and Riffs</i>	Leonard Bernstein
<i>Creation of the World</i>	Darius Milhaud
<i>Liturgical Fanfares</i>	Henri Tomasi

³⁶ Battisti, 174.

TABLE 3 – *Continued*

Cornell University's Ensemble X

Mark Davis Scatterday, Conductor

21 February 2004

<i>Three Pieces for String Quartet</i>	Igor Stravinsky
<i>Trois Poemes de Stephane Mallarme</i>	Maurice Ravel
<i>Octandre</i>	Edgard Varèse
<i>Two Poems of Konstantin Bal'mont</i>	Igor Stravinsky
<i>Three Japanese Lyrics</i>	Igor Stravinsky
<i>Octet for Wind Instruments</i>	Igor Stravinsky

Symphony Silicon Valley Chamber Music

17 January 2006

<i>Octet for Wind Instruments</i>	Igor Stravinsky
<i>Till Eulenspiegels</i>	Richard Strauss
<i>Oboe Quintet</i>	Arnold Bax
<i>Piano Quintet</i>	Antonin Dvorák

Philadelphia Orchestra Chamber Music

27 February 2005

<i>Sonatine for brass quintet</i>	Eugene Bozza
<i>Piano Trio No. 1 in D minor, Op. 32</i>	Anton Arensky
<i>La Revue de cuisine</i>	Bohuslav Martinu
<i>Octet for Wind Instruments</i>	Igor Stravinsky

CHAPTER 4

ANALYTIC REMARKS

The first movement, *Sinfonia*, is in sonata form. Stravinsky stays true to traditional sonata form in that it contains an introduction, exposition, development and recapitulation. The functions of each section—introducing or expanding themes and keys—are fulfilled, but in Stravinsky’s own unique fashion. Rather than a tonic-dominant relationship, there exists a half-step relationship, E^b and D, then D to D^b. Chromatics are often used to blur the tonality, making direct key relationships less obvious to the listener. The rehearsal numbers in the score and parts correspond closely to the formal sections of each movement.

The introduction is in ternary form, in the key of E^b. As in Classical sonata form, the introduction serves to set up the tonic, E^b, with a B^b dominant 7th chord in mm. 41.

	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>A</u>
measure:	1-4	5-32	33-41
harmony:	E ^b	E ^b -C-chromatic	Dominant chords in brass, leading to B ^b dominant 7 th chord

The exposition introduces two themes, again adhering to traditional sonata form. The first theme, however, is traditionally in the tonic, the second theme in the dominant. Here, the second theme is a half-step lower than the first theme. The first theme appears in mm. 42 in all instruments but the second trombone (which has an inversion of the first three notes), the second in mm. 71 in the first trumpet.

	<u>1st theme</u>	<u>1st theme</u>	<u>1st theme</u>	<u>2nd theme</u>
measure:	42-48	49-56	57-70	71-76
key:	E ^b	E ^b	E ^b -D	D
	<u>2nd theme</u>	<u>2nd theme</u>		
	77-81	82-86		
	shifting	A ^b /D ^b		
	tonality			

The development contains shifting tonal centers, and is highly chromatic. The keys of C, G, E and B^b are found in this section. A new motive appears in the clarinet in mm. 101.

	<u>1st section</u>	<u>2nd section</u>	<u>3rd section</u>	<u>4th section</u>
measure:	87-94	95-103	104-111	112-127
key:	C	chromatic	G	E/B ^b

The recapitulation gives rise to an interesting question: where does the recapitulation actually begin? The most obvious place would seem to be mm. 152, rehearsal number (#) 21, because of the reappearance of the tonic and of the first theme in the trumpet. This is where the recapitulation would traditionally begin. Lubaroff presents mm. 128 an alternate option. The second theme appears here in E—neither the tonic nor the original key of the second theme, D^b. Lubaroff suggests that Stravinsky's unique interpretation of sonata form reverses the traditional order of theme presentation in the recapitulation (first theme, then second) to second theme, then first. Lubaroff explains the odd key relationship by suggesting that Stravinsky maintains the half-step motion that occurred in the exposition. Rather than E^b to D, we now have E to E^b.³⁷

³⁷ Lubaroff, 54.

If we consider that mm. 152 would give us only one key and one theme before the end of the movement, regarding mm. 128 as the beginning of the recapitulation would make the form complete with two keys and two themes. Stravinsky's focus on form in his writings as a major aspect in the creation of this work would suggest this to be a more logical conclusion. Boone places the recapitulation at mm. 122, in the middle of an iteration of the second theme. This seems an unlikely possibility.

<u>2nd theme</u>	<u>Contrapuntal Transitional Material</u>	<u>1st theme</u>	<u>1st theme/coda</u>
128-138	139-151	152-166	167-175
E	E/E ^b	E ^b	E ^b

The form of the second movement is self-evident from the title, *Tema con Variazioni*, in the key of D. This was the first time Stravinsky used the theme and variations form in a composition. The form of the movement is slightly unusual:

Theme - (Variations) A - B - A - C - D - A - E

The theme is fourteen measures long. According to Lubaroff, the theme is based on an octatonic scale, divided into pitch class sets.³⁸ The scale and sets are as follows:

	Pitch Class		Pitch Class
	0 1 3 4		0 1 3 4
Scale:	A - B ^b - C - C [#]		D [#] - E - F [#] - G

These sets are re-ordered throughout the movement to produce motives such as in the opening two bars (example 1):

³⁸ Lubaroff, 48.

example 1.

0, 1, 3, 4

24 Andantino ♩ = 92

Flauto

Clarinetto in Sib

ben cantabile mp

As the detailed analysis of pitch class settings in this work is not in the scope of this thesis, I will refer the reader to Scott Lubaroff’s book, listed in the bibliography, for a more thorough analysis.

Variation A is described by Stravinsky as the “ribbons of scales” variation,³⁹ written as a prelude to the others.

	1 st section	2 nd section	3 rd section	4 th section
measures:	15-18	19-22	23-24	25-26
material from mm:	1-4	5-8	9-10	11-14

Variation B is made up of three sections:

	1 st section	2 nd section	3 rd section
measures:	27-34	35-45	46-56
material from mm:	1-3	5-8	1-4
Key:	E	Modulation	D

Variation A appears as before, mm. 57-67.

As mentioned earlier, the waltz of Variation C is the basis for the theme of this movement.

³⁹ Craft, *Dialogues and a Diary*, 40.

	<u>1st section</u>	<u>2nd section</u>
measures:	68-97	98-122
material		
from mm:	1-8	9-14
key:	A	A

Variation D begins with an introduction for eight measures, featuring a memorable ostinato in the bassoons. The melody then appears in the trumpets in unison, doubling the octave. New material is introduced in the second^d section.

	<u>Introduction</u>	<u>1st section</u>	<u>2nd section</u>	<u>3rd section</u>
measures:	123-130	131-155	156-175	176-208
material				
from mm:		1-14	new material	123-130, 1-8
key:	A	A	various	A

Variation A appears as before, mm. 209-219.

Variation E is a fugue. It is highly chromatic, leading ultimately to the key of C. It is the slowest variation of the movement, allowing the chromatic harmonies to create an eerily somber tone. As mentioned previously, the melody is traded between the instrumental pairs—flute and clarinet, bassoons, trumpets and trombones. The melodic line is almost a direct quote of the theme, but altered in the placement of octaves. The Fugue can be sectionalized according to melodic handoff between instruments:

measure:	220-223	224-229	230-233	234-242
instrument:	bsn. 1	clar.	Tpt. 1	flute/clar.
	243-247		248-251	252-258
	flute/clar., bsns., tpts.		flute/clar.	flute/clar.
				259-264
				bsns.

The *Finale* is in the form of a five-part rondo with a coda, and is an exercise in superior contrapuntal writing. The movement begins with two-part counterpoint between

the bassoons and expands to four-part counterpoint, while connective melodic and harmonic material and flows underneath.

A:

<u>1st section</u>	<u>2nd section</u>	<u>3rd section</u>	<u>4th section</u>
1-10	11-19	20-29	30-37
C	C	C	C/A

B:

<u>1st section</u>	<u>2nd section</u>	<u>3rd section</u>	<u>4th section</u>
38-44	45-48	49-55	56-59
A/C/F	chromatic	chromatic	C

A: Material from first A section

<u>1st section</u>	<u>2nd section</u>
60-79	80-91
C	A ^b

C: New material introduced in mm. 109 in tpt. 1 and tbn. 1, which will be used later in the coda.

<u>1st section</u>	<u>2nd section</u>	<u>3rd section</u>
92-108	109-116	117-127
A ^b	chromatic	chromatic

A: Melody in the first trombone, augmented into quarter-notes. The 3rd section begins the transition to the coda.

<u>1st section</u>	<u>2nd section</u>	<u>3rd section</u>	<u>4th section</u>
128-135	136-147	148-153	154-159
chromatic	chromatic/C	C	C

Coda: in key of C, mm. 160-186

CHAPTER 5

STYLISTIC SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Stravinsky's Use of the Trumpet

Stravinsky has given the trumpet world some of its most complex and challenging music. Many of Stravinsky's trumpet parts appear on orchestral audition lists because they require virtuosic skills of control, delicacy and flexibility. In the February, 1994 *International Trumpet Guild Journal*, William Stowman published a list of the most requested excerpts in auditions for principal trumpet of one hundred symphony orchestras in North America.⁴⁰ In that list, five of Stravinsky's works appeared. The three major ballets that define his Russian period, *Petrushka*, *The Rite of Spring* and *The Firebird* are all represented, with *Petrushka* appearing as the second most requested excerpt. Also appearing are *L'Histoire du Soldat* and *Pulcinella*.

These pieces all have Stravinsky's signature musical characteristics: atypical use of accents, shifting pulses and rhythmic intricacy. Stravinsky makes liberal use of the entire range of the trumpet, extreme use of dynamics and varied and specific use of articulation. At the 1977 *International Trumpet Guild Conference*, Charles Gorham, then Professor of Trumpet at Indiana University, gave a clinic titled "Orchestral Styles." He said this about Stravinsky: "Stravinsky. . . calls for a terse style with repetitive melodic fragments, ostinatos, mixed multiple articulation and other techniques which fit his style

⁴⁰ William Stowman, "A Survey of Orchestral Audition Lists for Trumpet: An Update," *International Trumpet Guild Journal* 18, no. 3 (February 1994): 50.

of rhythmic energy and colorful orchestration. In Stravinsky’s orchestra, the trumpet replaces the horn as the most important brass instrument, and it is exploited in almost every conceivable way.”⁴¹ Indeed, within the same piece the trumpet may be used as a fanfare instrument, a percussive instrument or a melodic instrument. *Petrushka* is a prime example. Parts can range from loud and forceful, as in the “Second Part” from rehearsal numbers 100 through 101, where the first trumpet is marked *triple forte* with a straight mute and with accents; to light and delicate, as in the *Ballerina’s Dance* of the same piece, which is marked *mezzo forte* and *piano*, alternately staccato and slurred; to melodic, as in the “Valse” of the same piece, marked *mezzo forte* and “*ben cantabile*,” trading off with a flute.

In the *Octet for Wind Instruments*, similar examples of these extremes are found throughout. In the *Tema con Variazioni*, the first and second trumpet have slow *pianissimo*, staccato eighth notes on the offbeats for fourteen measures (example 2).

example 2.

The musical notation for Example 2 consists of two staves. The top staff is for Trombe I in Do and the bottom staff is for Trombe II in La. The music is in 2/4 time and features a series of eighth notes on offbeats. The dynamic marking is *pp stacc.* (pianissimo staccato). The notation includes a brace over the first two measures and a fermata over the first note of the second measure in both staves.

This is immediately followed by a fast *forte*, accented and staccato with a two octave, double-tongued run in the first trumpet and a lower run in the second (example 3).

⁴¹ H.M. Lewis, “The 1977 ITG Conference,” *International Trumpet Guild Journal* 2, (October 1977): 34.

example 3.

26, Var. A



I in Do
Tr.
II in La

Later in the movement, the two trumpets have a melodic duet marked *piano* and *cantabile*, accompanied by the rest of the octet (example 4).

example 4.

30



I in Do
Tr.
II in La

The trumpets often have melodic lines in the *Octet*. Rarely do the trumpets, especially the first, play supportive material under the other instruments in the group. The non-melodic music found in the trumpet parts are usually *tutti* sections. If the trumpets are found accompanied, they generally do so together. Contrapuntally, the trumpets are used together and with the other instruments in much the same manner. Rehearsal numbers 16 to 17 is a typical passage that demonstrates the equal use of instruments in a complex contrapuntal manner, using both trumpets, both bassoons and clarinet.

Style in Stravinsky's Music

Words are inadequate when it comes to the discussion of music. "Style" or "sound" are concepts that can only be appreciated and understood after listening to the music under consideration. Only then will the descriptive prose take on meaning.

Every composer's music brings with it a preconceived notion of how it is "supposed" to be performed. This is based on the experience and training of the musician(s) performing the work, as well as musical tradition. Stravinsky's works bring to mind some universally acknowledged concepts of style, particularly when it comes to his brass writing. Much of Stravinsky's music could be described with words such as staccato, detached, pointed, fierce, deliberate and exaggerated. One only needs to hear the composer's suite from *The Firebird* to understand these adjectives in context. As a trumpet player, this means that articulation and dynamics are particularly important, the extremes of which must be studied and practiced diligently. Conversely, there are parts in Stravinsky's music that are very lyrical, often accompanied by the words "ben cantabile," which means "well-sung" or "singing". The trumpeter must be able to change gears quickly to deliver the proper sound demanded of the music. While style is certainly subjective, Stravinsky commands a certain expectation of clean aggressiveness. In a review of a performance of the *Octet* in the *New York Times Magazine*, reviewer Tim Page said: ". . . Things got off to a rather shaky start with a performance of Igor Stravinsky's 'Octet' which lacked the composer's requisite snarl."⁴²

Tom Booth, member of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra since 1977, described Stravinsky's style in a master class at the International Trumpet Guild Conference in 1988: "Stravinsky, like Mahler, is very precise about his editing. In general he requires a somewhat shortened note length style, perhaps on the opposite end of the spectrum from

⁴² Tim Page, "Music: Work by Zwilich," *New York Times Magazine*, 25 October 1984, p. 26.

Bruckner. Every editorially suggested nuance should be exaggerated in Stravinsky's works."⁴³ This sentiment is echoed in the interviews transcribed below.

Interpretation is at the core of musicianship. A performer is not defined by the ability to play the notes on the page, but by the ability to create music from those notes. Stravinsky, in his article "Some Ideas About my Octuor," addressed the issue of interpretation.

The aim I sought in the Octuor, which is also the aim I sought with the greatest energy in all my recent works, is to realise a musical composition through means which are emotive in themselves. These emotive means are manifested in the rendition by the heterogeneous play of movements and volumes.

This play of movements and volumes that puts into action the musical text constitutes the impelling force of the composition and determines its form.

A musical composition constructed on that basis could not, indeed, admit the introduction of the element of 'interpretation' in its execution without risking the complete loss of meaning.

To interpret a piece is to realise its portrait, and what I demand is the realization of the piece itself and not of its portrait.⁴⁴

With these words, Stravinsky demanded of the performers of this piece an absolute adherence to the printed music: tempos, dynamics, expressive markings, etc. His theory was that the music speaks for itself, and any emotive elements need not be added by the performer. When asked about this issue, the performers below provided a unified response: Stravinsky himself was the worst offender in interpreting his own music. In performances with the composer conducting, Vincent Cichowicz stated, ". . . during

⁴³ David Alexander and Britton Theurer, "The 1988 ITG Conference: A Synopsis," *International Trumpet Guild Journal* 13, no. 1 (September 1988): 44.

⁴⁴ White, *Stravinsky: The Composer and his Works*, 575.

several years of performing under him, I found that his performances varied!”⁴⁵. Chris Gekker echoes this sentiment: “I just don’t believe he meant much of what he wrote. . . . Certainly his own performances are plenty dramatic and flow with the musicianship of someone who is fully engaged in their musical expression.”⁴⁶ This statement is key when it comes to the reality of preparing and performing a work. In preparing the *Octet* for this project, I communicated Stravinsky’s wishes to the rest of the performers. While the group tried to maintain strict adherence to the printed tempos and dynamics, there were always factors that made it impossible to play the ink exactly, such as the players’ abilities to play some of the parts as quickly as marked and as cleanly as desired, the varying opinions of the length of pause that should be given to the commas appearing throughout the final 33 measures of the work, etc. The one aspect of performing a work that defies a composer’s wish to play the music “as written” is the inherent musicianship of the performer. One cannot help, in the face of such excellent music, to follow the line of the melody and respond to what one hears. This is the element of music that is undeniable. Performing in the correct style is important, but once that has been established it is the performer’s prerogative to play the music as he or she feels. That is the beauty of live music.

Interviews

For this thesis, I requested the input of three of the finest trumpet performers and educators in North America. They were sent a series of questions regarding their views of

⁴⁵ Vincent Cichowicz, Interview by author, e-mail, Elkridge, Maryland, 21 August 2006.

⁴⁶ Chris Gekker, Interview by author, e-mail, Elkridge, Maryland, 21 August 2006.

Stravinsky's music. All three were kind enough to answer these questions, which are recorded below.

Vincent Cichowicz was a member of the Chicago Symphony brass section from 1952 to 1975. Prior to the CSO, he was a member of the Houston Symphony. Mr. Cichowicz was on the faculty of Northwestern University from 1959 to 1998, and is known as one of the foremost brass pedagogues in the world. He performed under Stravinsky's baton multiple times with the Chicago Symphony.

Charles Schlueter was principal trumpet of the Boston Symphony Orchestra from 1981 to 2006. Prior to his appointment in Boston, he held the same position in the Minnesota Orchestra, the Milwaukee Symphony and the Kansas City Philharmonic. He was also associate principal trumpet in the Cleveland Orchestra under George Szell. Mr. Schlueter has been on the faculty of the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston since 1981.

Chris Gekker is currently on the faculty of the University of Maryland. He was a member of the American Brass Quintet for eighteen years, and taught on the faculties of the Juilliard School, the Manhattan School of Music and Columbia University. He was principal trumpet with the Orchestra of St. Luke's and frequently performed and recorded as principal with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra. Mr. Gekker has performed and recorded with many jazz and commercial artists, and he has also performed frequently for television and movies. He has three recordings of the Stravinsky *Octet for Wind Instruments* to his credit, one uncondacted, the other two under conductors Robert Craft and Gunther Schuller.

The following questions were presented to Mr. Cichowicz (VC), Mr. Schlueter (CS) and Mr. Gekker CG)⁴⁷.

1: Describe the Stravinsky “style” or “sound” from a trumpeter’s perspective. Are there any key adjectives that come to mind when you think of Stravinsky’s music?

CS: This is one of the great Stravinsky works for imagination and use of colors and contrasts. It’s sort of the same Stravinsky of *Rite of Spring* and *Petrouchka*, but in miniature, so obviously everything is scaled down – in terms of dynamics.

CG: Clarity of execution. A warm but light tone quality, singing without obvious vibrato, a good spinning sound. Intelligent, dance-like rhythmic phrasing.

2: Should the style in which you play the Octet or other of Stravinsky’s chamber works be different than the style used in Stravinsky’s large orchestral works?

CS: Yes, as referred to above; but everything is more transparent, and it’s necessary for the brass to blend and contrast with the woodwinds; style is still Stravinsky; angular, pointed and then very lyrical also.

CG: More conversational, less attention to any sense of heightened projection. The two parts are different, the C part would have been played on a smaller C than we use nowadays. The A trumpet is rather big, and if we line up the old F trumpet with Stravinsky’s C, the A falls right in between. I recommend using a deeper cup mouthpiece, [on the second part] to make the two trumpets sound more contrasted. (Of course they must blend well at times).

⁴⁷ Vincent Cichowicz, Interview by author, e-mail, Elkridge, Maryland, 21 August, 2006. Chris Gekker, Interview by author, e-mail, Elkridge, Maryland, 21 August, 2006. Charlie Schlueter, Interview by author, e-mail, Elkridge, Maryland, 21 August, 2006.

3. *As a performer, how much of the composer's background or the piece's history do you bring to your interpretation of the music? Do you think this is important?*

CS: I'm not sure that knowledge would make that much difference. The music itself will pretty much dictate how it "needs" to be played.

CG: It is important to me, but truthfully it doesn't make anyone play the piece better. I just think it's strange not to know about the music we're playing, whether it improves our performance or not.

4: *Are there any specific performance issues you associate with the Octet?*

CS: Only that there are some tricky places, rhythmically, and technically. I can't remember if I have done this without a conductor with [Boston Symphony Orchestra] Chamber Players; we always do *L'Histoire* without a conductor. I think the *Octet* needs a conductor more than *L'Histoire*.

5: *The first trumpet part is written in C, and is generally performed on C trumpet. The second part is written in A, and includes a low concert E. Should the second A part be played on C or B-flat? Should the Bb player transpose or use a written out part?*

CS: Originally the second part was written for cornet; should be played on a B-flat instrument, whether or not it is a cornet or trumpet. If the second player can't transpose, then he/she better copy it out for B-flat.

VC: The first trumpet should be played on C and the second part on Bb.

CG: The C part is really good on E-flat, in fact, which is nowadays closer to the size of the old Martin or Selmer C's. I don't know how the A part could be played on C. I

think an educated player should be able to transpose it but if someone wants to write it out, fine.

6. Do you have any recollections regarding the performance or recording of the Octet or any of Stravinsky's works?

CS: I played it with Arthur Weisburg conducting the first time (about 45 years ago); I have done it with [Eric] Leinsdorf and [Andre] Previn here.

VC: While Stravinsky claimed that his music was to be “performed” and not “interpreted”, during several years of performing under him, I found that his performances varied!

CG: So many I couldn't begin to answer. I think 12 or more cd's, many many concerts. I've really learned a lot each time. One thing I'll say, it's not the “abstract” music so many of us thought years ago, there's a lot of folk roots, and so much heartfelt expression.

7. (Solely for Mr. Gekker) Compare the differences between your recordings of the Octet that were conducted, and that which wasn't. How did your experience change?.

CG: No real difference. Good conductors don't get in your way, and good ensembles that are not conducted play with incredible discipline and rigorous attention to detail. Conducted or not is not the issue, simply the level of musicianship in the room.

8. (Solely for Mr. Gekker) Stravinsky demanded in his program notes for the Octet that his piece be played exactly, not interpreted. So, when you performed/recorded the Octet, did the conductor and/or performers seek to "play the ink" as exactly as you could, or was there some "interpretation" in the performances?

CG: That's a tough question with Stravinsky. I just don't believe he meant much of what he wrote. Certainly his own performances are plenty dramatic and flow with the musicianship of someone who is fully engaged in their musical expression. (Then again, many of his recordings he just started, and Robert Craft would do the bulk of). Some of the conductors that Stravinsky praised the most are not known for "objectivity". I really think he was reacting to an older, 1800's style of expression that was so over the top, so artificial that "newer" conductors like Mengelberg and Furtwangler—who we see as very "romantic"—were admired by Stravinsky for their consummate musicianship.

The performers were also invited to add any comments they felt were appropriate to the subject.

CG: When I recorded it with Gunther Schuller, he insisted that the commas at the end were put in by Stravinsky because the French musicians at the time (c. 1922) were chronically sloppy about cutoffs and ensemble in general. So they shouldn't be overdone, just avoid holding notes too long, "bleeding" into beats where the notes are not indicated. A couple of other details: sforzandos are always in context, dynamically, and often exist "within piano". "Meno forte" is used a lot by Stravinsky, it just means "softer than what has just happened" or "less loud" so in fact it could mean anything from fortissimo to pianissimo, depending on the preceding dynamic. The slow music in the second movement is the dramatic center of the whole piece, this is what Stravinsky heard in a dream and led to him composing the whole *Octet*.

CHAPTER 6

GUIDE TO PERFORMANCE PREPARATION OF BOTH TRUMPET PARTS

One of the most efficient ways to become familiar with a piece is to listen to recordings of the work. There are many recordings of the *Octet*, including three with Chris Gekker. A list of recordings can be found in the discography at the end of this document. An examination of the recording of the *Octet* performed by the Boston Symphony Chamber Players⁴⁸ featuring Armando Ghitalla and André Come on trumpet reveals some thoughts to consider for performance.

Sinfonia

The exaggeration of dynamics is immediately apparent. The *poco sforzando-piano* in the first measure is done quickly, to make way for the woodwind lines. At #6, the *forte* is played more like *fortissimo*, and the accents are brought out. The note lengths are deliberate—the first three notes of the 2/4 are held full value, in sharp contrast to the staccato notes that follow (example 5).

example 5.

Tr. I in Do, Tr. II in La



⁴⁸ Boston Symphony Chamber Players, *Johann Strauss: Walzer*, Deutsche Grammophon 463667-2, 2002, Compact Disc.

Articulation and note length go hand in hand, and Armando Ghitalla adheres greatly to the printed directions. The sixteenth-note run three measures before #10 appear to be single-tongued, giving a clarity to the individual notes. Three measures later, the articulation/length markings are indicated by a staccato with a line underneath. This indicates a clear front with a sustained note length, but with a small amount of space between the notes (which adds to the clarity of the following note) (example 6).

example 6.

Tr. I in Do 

Four measures before #16, the second trumpet has triplet sixteenth-notes, marked mezzo-forte and *leggiero*, or “light”. As is performed by André Come, these figures must be brought out enough to be heard under the *forte* and *fortissimo* of the woodwinds and lead into the first trumpet sixteenth-note run into #16 (example 7).

example 7.

Tr. II in La 

#17 indicates *leggierissimo* (very light) for both trumpets, which have staccato eights in hocket. These must be played even shorter than the staccato notes found previously (example 8).

example 8.

Musical score for Example 8, measures 17 and 18. The score is for two trumpets (I in Do, II in La) and two trombones (Tr., II in La). Measure 17 shows a melodic line for the first trumpet and a more active line for the second trumpet. Measure 18 shows a melodic line for the first trumpet and a line for the second trumpet with a *sub.* marking. The dynamic marking *leggierissimo* is present in measure 17.

Again, the *sforzando* in the measure before #18 must be exaggerated, to make a dramatic difference from the *pianissimo* held notes in the previous bar (example 9).

example 9.

Musical score for Example 9, measure 18. The score is for two trumpets (I in Do, II in La) and two trombones (Tr., II in La). Measure 18 shows a melodic line for the first trumpet and a line for the second trumpet with a *sforzando* marking. The dynamic marking *sforzando* is present in measure 18.

Each member of the octet must be aware of more than their companion instrument. Style and dynamics must be matched across the ensemble, as various instruments have similar or *tutti* music. Such an example can be found three measures after #22 to #23. The first trumpet has a countermelody with the flute and clarinet, while the first trombone has the main theme. The upper three instruments must match relative volume as well as matching the cut off of the held notes over the bar lines (example 10).

example 10.

22

Fl.
Cl. in Sib
I
Fag.
II
I in Do
Tr. *subito*

23

Fl.
Cl. in Sib
I
Fag.
II
I in Do
Tr.

Be sure to sustain the volume, style and energy found at #23 until the end of the movement.

Tema con Variazioni

The staccato eighth notes from #24 to #26 must be played with extreme care. Balancing with the other instruments is of utmost importance and is difficult to achieve on the trumpet. As in the first movement, the dynamic shift from pianissimo to forte should be exaggerated at #26. Since the scales at #26 are so quick, it is difficult to play each note staccato as marked. Deliberate fronts to the notes will achieve the desired effect (example 11).

example 11.

26, Var. A

I in D
Tr.
II in C

One of the second trumpet's few melodic opportunities occurs three measures after #28. The style should be martial and deliberate, and the sixteenth-notes should be staccato, matching the ostinato eight-notes in the bassoons and trombones (example 12).

example 12.

28 VAR. B
♩ = 120-126

Ghitalla and Come bring out the solo/duet at #30, slightly louder than the *piano* marked. As they are the only melodic lines occurring, this is a personal choice—the nature of the instrument and scoring will allow the lines to be heard no matter how soft. There appears the stylistic marking *cantabile*, however, giving the trumpeters a certain amount of liberty with dynamics and emphasis within the line (example 13).

example 13.

30

The second trumpet has a solo at #34, marked *marcato* and *piano*, with each note underlined with a *tenudo* mark. This combination of markings may appear confusing,

however Come achieves the desired effect by putting a thick tongue on the front of each note and holding it full value, and making sure to adhere to the staccato markings on the penultimate note of each phrase (example 14).

example 14.



Variation E features the entire group playing slow, slurred eighth-notes, with the dynamic *piano*. The texture here is the most important thing, and the trumpeters, especially the first, must not be heard above the rest of the ensemble.

Finale

It is very easy to let the tempo in the *Finale* become frenzied and rush. Care must be taken by the entire ensemble to keep the tempo set at the beginning of the movement by the bassoons.

The contrapuntal trumpet duet at #65 must maintain the style set forth by the bassoons in the previous measures. The first part in particular has a difficult job of controlling the awkward interval leaps while maintaining a pianissimo and staccato but forward moving line. Close attention must be paid to the accents in the upper line as well (example 15).

example 15.

The image shows two musical staves for trumpets. The first staff is for Trumpet I in the key of D major (I in Do) and the second is for Trumpet II in the key of A major (II in La). The first example shows a melodic line starting with a half rest followed by a series of eighth notes, marked *p leggiero*. The second example, starting at measure 65, shows a more complex melodic line with various intervals and dynamics, marked *pp subito* and *stacc. sempre*.

Four measures before #71, the first trumpet has a one and a half-octave scale, marked *piano*. Maintaining the dynamic will be easier if the player thinks of a decrescendo leading into the sustained last note, as dynamics tend to grow with increased range.

The length of silence attached to the commas found at the end of the movement must be agreed upon by the players. This should not present an issue if players are listening to one another.

The influence of jazz on Stravinsky's compositional style shows in the trumpet duet beginning at #74. This section that concludes the piece should be played lightly, with a somewhat humorous air.

General Comments

While the first trumpet part has more melodic function than the second part, there should not be much difference between how the parts are played, except for what is marked in the score. The second part does not necessarily take on a supportive role, but is in fact its own entity.

The first trumpet part is written for “Trumpet in C.” Taking into consideration the range of the part, (B-flat below the staff to B-natural above the staff) and the technical virtuosity required, there are at least two options a trumpeter has in deciding which instrument to use: C trumpet or E-flat trumpet. In today’s usage, the E-flat trumpet has two functions: to replicate the composer’s intention, such as in Franz Joseph Haydn’s or Johann Nepomuk Hummel’s concertos for trumpet; or to make a piece containing difficult passages easier to play even though it was not written specifically for E-flat trumpet, such as the *Octet*. The technical passages that demand fast tonguing and delicate range, such as the passages at rehearsal #6, #26 and two measures before #65, are somewhat easier on E-flat than C because of the smaller size of the horn. The trade-off is the difference in timbre of the instrument. Since the second trumpeter will probably play a B-flat trumpet, the difference in sound between the two horns will be considerably more noticeable than if one played C and one B-flat. If one wishes to extend the timbral differences between the two trumpet parts, the E-flat is a viable option. Considering Stravinsky’s deliberate use of instruments to create a specific textural sound, the E-flat would seem to be an appropriate choice for the *Octet*. The piece is more often performed, however, on a C trumpet. The part is written in C, so there is no need to transpose, and C trumpets are more commonly owned than E-flats. Also, despite its larger size than the E-flat, there is still a timbre difference between the C and B-flat. Chris Gekker’s suggestion that the second player perform this piece on a mouthpiece with a deeper cup will help exaggerate the timbral differences between the two trumpets.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Gekker, 21 August, 2006.

Seating arrangement for the *Octet* is a subjective decision. Two seating arrangements make immediate sense:

- Score order, left to right from the conductor's point of view: flute, clarinet, bassoons, trumpets, and trombones.
- Sonority—highs and lows sitting next to each other: flute, clarinet, trumpets, bassoons, and trombones.

Final Thoughts

The *Octet for Wind Instruments* is a work of considerable significance to the music world and is genuinely enjoyable to performers and listeners alike. It is hoped that this guide will prove to be of assistance not only to trumpet players but to all musicians involved in the performance of this piece.

DISCOGRAPHY

The number of recordings of the *Octet for Wind Instruments* has increased exponentially in the last two decades. In his 1972 dissertation on trumpet in chamber music, Dalvin Lee Boone reported only three recordings of the *Octet*.⁵⁰ There are now at least nineteen available. What follows is a representative list of the recordings currently available.

Althammer, Walter. *Stravinsky: L'histoire du soldat; Octet*. Ottavo Recordings 50074, 2001. Compact Disc.

Bernstein, Leonard. *Bernstein conducts Stravinsky and Ravel*. Pearl 66, 1999. Compact Disc.

Boston Symphony Orchestra. *Stravinsky: L'Histoire du Soldat; Octet; Milhaud: La Création du Monde; Bernstein: I Hate Music*. RCA Victor Gold Seal 09026-68101-2, 1997. Compact Disc.

Boston Symphony Chamber Players. *Johann Strauss: Walzer*. Deutsche Grammophon 463667-2, 2002. Compact Disc.

Canadian Chamber Ensemble. *Ragtime: Stravinsky, Milhaud, etc.*. CBC SMCD 5159, 1997. Compact Disc.

Detroit Chamber Winds. *Stravinsky: Symphonies of Wind Instruments, etc.* Koch International Classics 3-7211-2, 1996. Compact Disc.

Harmonie Ensemble. *Hommage a Stravinsky: Histoire du Soldat, Premieres & Rarities*. Koch International Classics 3-7438-2, 2001. Compact Disc.

⁵⁰ Dalvin Lee Boone, "The Treatment of the Trumpet in Six Published Chamber Works Composed Between 1920 and 1929." (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Illinois, 1972), 26.

- Hollywood Symphony Soloist. *The Wind and the Willows*. HSO 334, 2004. Compact Disc.
- Järvi, Neeme. *Stravinsky: Ragtime; Octet; The Soldier's Tale; Petruschka*. Chandos 9291, 1994. Compact Disc.
- London Sinfonietta. *Stravinsky: Pulcinella, etc.* Sony 45965, 1991. Compact Disc.
- London Sinfonietta. *The Essential Igor Stravinsky*. Sony 89910, 2003. Compact Disc.
- Netherlands Wind Ensemble. *Stravinsky: Symphonies of Wind Instruments; Octet*. Chandos 9488, 1998. Compact Disc.
- New Music Studium. *Igor Stravinsky: L'Histoire du Soldat; Octet*. Arts Music 47357, 1996. Compact Disc.
- Orchestra of St. Luke's, Robert Craft, cond.. *Stravinsky: The Composer, Vol. 3: Perséphone*. Music Masters Classics 67103-2, 1995. Compact Disc.
- Orpheus Chamber Orchestra. *Shadow Dances: Stravinsky Miniatures*. Deutsche Grammophon, 453458, 2000. Compact Disc.
- Prague Chamber Harmony. *Stravinsky: L'histoire du soldat; Symphonies of Wind Instruments*. Supraphon SU 3168-2 911, 1999. Compact Disc.
- Royal Symphonic Band of the Belgian Guides. *Igor Stravinsky: Octet, Petrouchka, Ebony Concerto*. Mirasound 500.087, 1996. Compact Disc.
- RSO Chamber Ensemble. *Stravinsky: The Soldier's Tale; Octet; Janáček: Capriccio*. Alba 120, 2005. Compact Disc.
- Schuller, Gunther. *Arnold Schoenberg: Pierrot Lunaire, Igor Stravinsky: Octet*. GM 2030, 1992. Compact Disc.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Battisti, Frank L. *The Winds of Change: The Evolution of the Contemporary American Wind Band/Ensemble and its Conductor*. Galesville, MD: Meredith Music Publications, 2002.
- Boone, Dalvin Lee. "The Treatment of the Trumpet in Six Published Chamber Works Composed Between 1920 and 1929." Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Illinois, 1972.
- Cichowicz, Vincent. Interview by author, e-mail, Elkridge, Maryland, 21 August 2006.
- Cippola, Frank J., and Hunsberger, Donald. *The Wind Ensemble and its Repertoire: Essays of the Fortieth Anniversary of the Eastman Wind Ensemble*. Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 1994.
- Craft, Robert with Stravinsky, Igor. *Dialogues and A Diary*. London: Faber & Faber, 1968.
- _____. *Memories and Commentaries*. London: Faber & Faber, 2002.
- Gekker, Chris. Interview by author, e-mail, Elkridge, Maryland, 21 August 2006.
- Johnson, Keith. *The Art of Trumpet Playing*. Denton, Texas: Gore Publishing, 1994.
- Lubaroff, Scott Charles. *An Examination of the Neo-classical Wind Works of Igor Stravinsky: The Octet for Winds and Concerto for Piano and Winds*. Lewiston, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2004.
- Machlis, Joseph. *Introduction to Contemporary Music*. Toronto: W.W. Norton & Company, 1979.
- Messing, Scott. *Neoclassicism in Music: From the Genesis of the Concept Through the Schoenberg/Stravinsky Polemic*. Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 1966.
- Schlueter, Charlie. Interview by author, e-mail, Elkridge, Maryland, 21 August 2006.
- Simms, Bryan R. *Music of the Twentieth-Century: Style and Structure*, 2nd ed. New York: Schirmer, 1996.

- Stravinsky, Igor. *Octet for Wind Instruments*. New York: Boosey & Hawkes, 1952.
(Revised Score).
- White, Eric Walter. *Stravinsky: The Composer and His Works*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1979.
- _____. *Stravinsky: A Critical Survey*. New York: Philosophical Library, Inc., 1948.
- Whitwell, David. *The history and literature of the wind band and wind ensemble*. Northridge, CA: Winds, 1982—1984.