
DISSERTATION

Presented to the Graduate Council of the North Texas State University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

By

John William Petersen, B. A., M. M.

Denton, Texas

December, 1977

The lecture recital was given on July 25, 1977. Transcriptions and arrangements for clarinet and piano of nineteenth-century Italian opera were popular during the virtuoso wind era and are representative of an important phase in the history of clarinet playing. Arias of Rossini and Verdi and a fantasia based on Rigoletto were performed during the lecture recital.

In addition to the lecture recital, three other public recitals were performed, including solo compositions for clarinet and chamber works including clarinet.

The first recital was on November 26, 1973, and included works of Crusell, Whittenberg, Vaughan Williams, and Hindemith.

The second recital, on November 11, 1974, consisted of works by Brahms, Tartini, Carter, and Bartók.

The third recital, on August 12, 1976, included works by Brahms, Clyne, Schumann, and Debussy.

All four programs were recorded on magnetic tape and are filed with the written version of the lecture material as a part of the dissertation.
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1977
Tape recordings of all performances submitted as dissertation requirements are on deposit in the North Texas State University Library.
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NORTH TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY
presents
in recital
JOHN PETERSEN, clarinet
assisted by
Jean Mainous, piano
Elisabeth Adkins, violin
Marilyn Rietz, cello
Monday, November 26, 1973 5:00 p.m. Recital Hall

PROGRAM

Concerto in F Minor, Op. 5 ......................... Bernhard Crusell
   Allegro
   Andante pastorale
   Rondo—Allegretto

Three Pieces for Clarinet Alone, Op. 29 ............ Charles Whittenberg

Six Studies in English Folk-song .............. Ralph Vaughan Williams
   Adagio
   Andante sostenuto
   Larghetto
   Lento
   Andante tranquillo
   Allegro vivace

INTERMISSION

Quartet (1938) ..................................... Paul Hindemith
   Mässig bewegt
   Sehr langsam
   Mässig bewegt, Lebhaft,
   Ruhig bewegt, Sehr lebhaft

Presented in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Musical Arts
North Texas State University  
School of Music  

presents  

**John Petersen, clarinetist**  

assisted by  

Louise Lerch, pianist  
Loren Laing, violinist  

Monday, November 11, 1974  
8:15 p.m.  
Recital Hall  

Sonata in E♭ Major, Opus 120, No. 2...Johannes Brahms  
Allegro amabile  
Allegro appassionato  
Andante con moto—Allegro  

Concertino.................Giuseppe Tartini—Gordon Jacob  
Grave  
Allegro molto  
Adagio  
Allegro risoluto  

Intermission  

Pastoral (1940)....................Elliott Carter  

Contrasts (1938)....................Béla Bartók  
Verbunkos (Recruiting Dance)  
Pihenő (Relaxation)  
Sebes (Fast Dance)  

*Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree  
Doctor of Musical Arts*
North Texas State University  
School of Music  
presents  

John Petersen,  
clarinetist  

Donald Patterson, pianist  
Richard Pliler, violist  

Thursday, August 12, 1976  
Recital Hall, 6:30 p.m.  

program  

Sonata in F minor, Opus 120, No. 1 .................. Johannes Brahms  
Allegro appasionata  
Andante un poco Adagio  
Allegretto grazioso  
Vivace  

Variations for Unaccompanied Clarinet (1975) ............. Malcolm Clyne  
First Performance  

intermission  

Märchenerzählungen, Opus 132 ..................... Robert Schumann  
Lebhaft, nicht zu schnell  
Lebhaft und sehr markiert  
Ruhiges Tempo, mit zartem Ausdruck  
Lebhaft, sehr markiert  

Première Rhapsodie .................................. Claude Debussy  

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Musical Arts
North Texas State University
School of Music
presents

The Virtuoso Clarinet:
Arrangements from
Nineteenth-Century
Italian Opera

A Lecture Recital

John Petersen, clarinetist
Donald Nobles, pianist

Monday, July 25, 1977
Recital Hall, 6:30 p.m.

program

"Una voce poco fa" from il Barbiere
di Siviglia ........................................... Rossini-Langenus

"Ernani! Ernani involami!" from Ernani ........ Verdi-Clappé

Fantasia di Concerto su motivi del
Rigoletto di G. Verdi .............................. Luigi Bassi

Presented in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree Doctor of Musical Arts
THE VIRTUOSO CLARINET:

ARRANGEMENTS FROM NINETEENTH-CENTURY ITALIAN OPERA

In *Music in the Romantic Era*, Alfred Einstein writes that "at the same time [the Romantic movement] was reviving the past and manifesting its own tendencies towards extreme intimacy and absorption, it raised virtuosity to unprecedented heights."\(^1\) The concept of virtuosity did not originate in the nineteenth century. The sixteenth-century lutenists and gambists developed a remarkable technical skill, which was later seen in players of the harpsichord and violin. The vocal flexibility found in the castrati and the prima donnas of the eighteenth century was truly virtuosic. This vocal display carried over into the nineteenth century, and artists found a public which not only enjoyed but demanded virtuosity in instrumental and vocal music.

The primary instrumental vehicles for this new virtuosity were the piano and the violin. There is evidence of it in Beethoven's music (i.e., the Rondo of the *Waldstein* Sonata), and in the music of Weber brilliance takes over completely. Virtuosity on the piano reached its ultimate with Liszt. On the violin Paganini was unmatchable, and his program in Breslau in 1829 illustrates how virtuosity in music had made

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its impact: Between movements of a Beethoven symphony he played a "Grand Concerto," an "Adagio and Rondo with Bell," "Variations for the G-string on the Prayer from Rossini's Mosé," and "Variations on Nel cor piu non mi sento."²

Transcriptions and arrangements of original music were popular. Paganini's music for the violin was transcribed for piano. Pianists wrote and performed arrangements of symphonies and etudes; they also composed paraphrases, variations, and fantasies based on other composers' music. Often composers turned to opera for their thematic material. Liszt wrote an entire series of transcriptions based on operatic works of Bellini, Donizetti, Meyerbeer, Mozart, and Verdi. In his transcription of Norma, Liszt gave a concentrated summary of the whole musical content of Bellini's opera.

The virtuosic demands placed upon violinists and pianists were felt by wind players as well. The rise of virtuoso wind music began near the end of the eighteenth century and lasted until about 1840. There was an abundance of wind players during this time. "According to reports from Vienna, there were in that city many more wind-instrument soloists than solo violinists or pianists."³

Innumerable clarinetists were being trained. In 1795, when the Paris Conservatoire was founded, there were no less

²Ibid., p. 51.
than twelve clarinet teachers. The 104 pupils enrolled contributed to the long list of clarinet virtuosi actively performing. Many played in military bands and in theater and concert orchestras. The most outstanding clarinetists gave successful concert tours.

With the large number of performers, a great deal of new music was demanded by the public, and as a result, each clarinetist often commissioned works and sometimes wrote his own. The use of operatic themes for compositions was not new to the wind player, the custom dating back to the time of Mozart when wind arrangements of operas were commonplace.

In line with the vocal display of the period, the wind player was expected to offer technical display, and the operatic transcription was one type of composition used for this. Italian opera transcriptions appear most frequently, offering an opportunity for virtuosity and a genre which was familiar to audiences. Popular arias were commonly transcribed for the clarinet and included on recitals. There were arrangements of opera overtures, preludes, and intermezzi as well. Most often used was the fantasia, which combined variation and obligato as compositional techniques and allowed the performer the greatest opportunities to demonstrate his technical prowess.

Unfortunately, there was no clarinetist-composer with the abilities of Liszt to add to the clarinet literature. Louis Spohr and Carl Maria von Weber gave some works based
on opera to the literature, due primarily to their close associations with clarinet virtuosi.

Simon Hermstedt's fine clarinet playing inspired Spohr to write, in addition to his other works for clarinet, his Variations, Opus 34, based on his opera Alruna. Hermstedt toured extensively playing Spohr's music wherever he went. For the Frankenhausen festival of 1811 Spohr wrote his Potpourri for clarinet on two themes from Winter's Opferfest, Opus 80.

Weber's close association with clarinetist Heinrich Baermann also brought a wealth of literature to the repertoire. They toured together and sometimes collaborated on the music. While in Prague on one such tour, they were to play a concert in the house of Count Firmian. Pamela Weston gives this description:

Some of the local dilettanti, meeting the musicians the evening before and finding they had nothing but solo pieces with them, insisted they should perform a duet. What should they do, how to get over their difficulty? In vain did Baermann and Weber think up the most ridiculous excuses, and it was past midnight when they left the irritated dilettanti, who had extracted a promise to produce a duet. In the grey dawn Weber sprang out of bed with the idea that together they should compose some variations on a theme from his opera Sylvana. They worked feverishly, Baermann supplying the Adagio variation and trimming the clarinet part. By midday they had finished and were rehearsing the Seven Variations, Op. 33.4

Aside from those written by Weber and Spohr, most of the operatic transcriptions were composed by the clarinetists themselves. Baermann wrote a fantasy, *Souvenirs de Bellini*, *Opus 52*. Another German clarinetist, Iwan Müller, known primarily for his improvements of the clarinet mechanism, wrote a fantasy based on *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. The most notable of several Italian clarinetists who wrote fantasies was Ernesto Cavallini. He was admired by both Rossini and Verdi, and he inspired Verdi to write for the clarinet. The obligati and cadenza for the clarinet found in *La Forza del Destino* was written with Cavallini in mind. In addition to his remarkable playing, Cavallini did some composing. The operatic fantasy on *La Sonnambula* which he wrote typifies most of the operatic fantasies which were written. His works were always composed with a view towards expressing his own virtuosity. For the principal melodies, he usually employed the chalumeau or clarion register with many embellishments. A well-known melody was always used for his theme and variations, followed by an Allegro finale that required a dazzling technique and brought the composition to a close with a *quasi sempre accelerando*.5

While the popularity of the operatic fantasy dwindled after the middle of the nineteenth century, its presence continues to be felt. Clarinetists in this century still

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turned to the opera, particularly the aria, for some of their repertoire.

Throughout its history, the clarinet has had a close association with the voice. Opera composers gave the clarinet an important role in their music, and many writers in the nineteenth century likened the clarinet to the voice. The English clarinetist Thomas Lindsay Willman (?-1840) performed frequently with a soprano, Mrs. Salmon, prompting the singer Henry Phillips to comment "... when Willman accompanied her it was difficult at times to distinguish the voice from the instrument."° Like the voice, the clarinet offers a variety of tonal colors as it moves from one register to another, and the clarinet's range matches that of the soprano voice.

Rossini's "Una voce poco fa" from Il Barbiere di Siviglia, an aria still popular today, was frequently played by clarinetists in the nineteenth century. Iwan Müller performed in Venice in December of 1827, playing his own Third and Sixth Concerti, Variations on an Original Theme, a set of variations on Carafa's "O cara memoria," and an arrangement of Rossini's cavatina "Una voce poco fa."°

Gustave Langenus was a Belgian-born clarinetist who played in orchestras in this country from 1910 through 1923.

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°Pamela Weston, op. cit., p. 164.
He was an important clarinetist and teacher in the history of American clarinet playing, particularly through his *Method for Clarinet*. Langenus wrote an arrangement of Rossini's aria which presents it in a slightly abbreviated form. The introduction is shortened from the original thirteen measures to four, giving only the opening motive, the strong dotted rhythms which Rossini used to refer to Lindoro, and its pianissimo answer, as it occurs twice in Rossini's score:

Langenus gives the clarinet Rosina's part as it was written until she sings "Il tutor ricuserà." During the next four measures Rosina sings her lyrics on a repeated F-sharp, which Langenus probably felt would lose its effect when played on a wind instrument. The rest of the Andante is a repetition of what has already happened melodically, so Langenus deleted this as well.

Rossina began the second part of the cavatina with the melody given first to the flute and clarinet in unison. It is Rosina's melody, which Rossini himself thought suitable
for the clarinet to play. Langenus then did not include this orchestral introduction in his arrangement, but gave the piano a measure of introduction, taken from the violin part of Rossini's score. The clarinet plays twenty-eight measures of the Moderate which takes Rosina through her text once. The next seven measures of Rossini's score has writing for the voice similar to that in the Andante where notes are repeated without melodic significance. The clarinet is given the second theme one last time and then jumps to the coda. The last orchestral tutti is left out of the arrangement except for the final two measures.

Langenus included this aria in a collection of other arrangements he had done. None is technically difficult, and they were intended as works he could give to his students to play. To allow this cavatina to be more playable, he deleted nearly all of Rossini's embellishments and added his own interpretive markings. Some articulations are changed (usually slurs are added) to enhance the flow of the vocal line.

For this performance, I am including the embellishments which were in Rossini's score. I have altered some of Langenus' articulations to match the libretto. The repetition of "e cento trappole prima di cedere. . . .," which was left from the arrangement will be played. The practice of ornamenting the repetition of the second theme of the Moderate will be observed.
In a performance of the aria, the character of Rosina must carefully be depicted. Ornaments which fit the intention of the words and music should be chosen. "Those which paint a grandiose feeling would not suit the aria of Rosina. The feeling of the piece must match the feeling of the ornaments." Stendhal describes Rosina's cavatina as delicious; "she herself is gay and lively, but rather too cock-sure. There is a good deal of unnecessary self-assertiveness in the song of this innocent young ward, and a good deal too little love. Possessed of so much intrepidity, how can she fail to outwit her wretched guardian?" 

Verdi's aria "Ernani, Ernani involami" opens the second scene of the first act of his opera Ernani. As the curtain rises, Donna Elvira, sitting sadly alone, tells us that it is midnight, and her guardian Silva has not yet returned. She wishes she were rid of him forever, and her thoughts are with her young lover, Ernani. She then breaks into the cavatina, which is Verdi's first aria to achieve "concert-hall" status.

The Andante of the cavatina is a rondo structure, \( a \ a^1 \ b \ a^2 \ c \ a^2 \). The slow 3/4-9/8 swing, which is typically Verdian, is there:

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Fig. 2—Giuseppe Verdi, "Ernani, Ernani involami," from Ernani, arranged by A. A. Clappé, meas. 7-9.

Between the cavatina and the ensuing cabaletta in faster tempo, there is a chorus sung by Elvira's attendants who bring presents from her guardian. This section is, of course, left out of the concert version of the cavatina. She then sings her cabaletta ("Tutto sprezzo che d'Ernani"), saying that she despises all jewels and trinkets that do not speak to her of Ernani. Verdi has marked the cabaletta text in parentheses, indicating that it is a footlight piece, where the singer should advance to the footlights and sing directly to the audience.

The arrangement for clarinet and piano by Clappé is true to Verdi's score, more so than the Langenus arrangement of Rossini's aria. Both sections of Verdi's cavatina lend themselves well to the clarinet.
Preserving Verdi's key of B-flat Major, Clappé has added an introduction before the andantino that is adapted from the cabaletta's main theme:

![Musical notation](image)

**Fig. 3**—Giuseppe Verdi, "Ernani, Ernani involami," from *Ernani*, arranged by A. A. Clappé, meas. 1-5.

From the Andantino on, with only minor changes in articulation, the clarinet and piano reduction is given as Verdi originally intended, even to the inclusion of his cadenza at the close of the Andantino. Just prior to the repetition of the cabaletta, the arrangement has an additional cadenza included for the clarinet.

Luigi Bassi was another of the Italian clarinetists of the nineteenth century who channeled some of his efforts into composition. Only his *Fantasia* based on motives from Verdi's *Rigoletto* remained popular in the clarinet repertoire, and it is probably the most often played work from the realm of operatic transcriptions of the virtuoso era.
Bassi begins the Fantasia with eleven measures from Verdi's "Prelude" transposed down a step from C Minor to B-flat Minor. But rather than Verdi's quiet sostenuto opening, the Fantasia begins with the forte curse motive from the sixteenth measure of the opera:

![Music notation](image)

Fig. 4--Luigi Bassi, Fantasia di Concerto, meas. 1-11

The clarinet is introduced with a florid cadenza which leads directly into the first section of the Fantasia. But Bassi's "first act" is from Verdi's second act, Rigoletto's "Signori in essa é tutta la mia famiglia." Even then, Rigoletto's melody is not there, just his accompaniment. Bassi has given the clarinet the unison part Verdi scored for flute, oboe, and first violin. The rest of the accompaniment is given to the piano. Verdi's key of B-flat Minor is preserved in the Fantasia.
After sixteen measures the clarinet breaks away into sweeping arpeggios and a descending chromatic scale leading to D-flat Major in preparation for Rigoletto and Gilda's duet, where Rigoletto is singing "Piangi, piangi, fanciulla."

The melody and its accompaniment are given to the piano while the clarinet plays an arpeggiated obligato. Bassi probably included this duet in the Fantasia because Verdi scored this section for two clarinets playing the melody in thirds with the voices.

In spite of his move from the "Prelude" of the opera over to the second act, Bassi has maintained some of Verdi's
continuity. Bassi used B-flat Minor in his "Prelude" as a preparation for Verdi's key of B-flat Minor in Act Two. The opening clarinet cadenza is an elaboration of Rigoletto's cadenza preceding his recitative and duet with Gilda. The modulation to D-flat Major is in Verdi's score too, and the duet is in its proper place, although Bassi has abbreviated everything.

After a brief cadenza which leads to B-flat Major, Bassi turns to the third act of Rigoletto and Verdi's famous quartet with the clarinet playing the Duke's "Bella figlia dell'amore," just as Verdi uses the clarinet with this same melody as a motive for the Duke later in the opera. Bassi has given the melody intact, but when Verdi brings in Maddalena, Bassi jumps eighteen bars, and giving the clarinet an embellishment of Gilda's part, leaves Verdi's accompaniment as is:

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**[Musical notation image]**
As the quartet develops in its eight-measure phrases, Bassi's clarinet becomes more agitated until all quiets down just before the final cadence. On Verdi's last fermata rest, Bassi sends the clarinet into a cadenza; the piano finishes by itself. Bassi's decision to change Verdi's key of D-flat Major to B-flat Major allows the clarinetist to play in his key of C Major, facilitating the difficult runs and arpeggios. Bassi seems to end his first act with the grand quartet.

After a brief pause, Bassi uses fourteen measures of the bright Allegro for the banda from the introduction to the ball scene at the beginning of the opera. The clarinet comes in with a short passage which Bassi himself composed. With this, Bassi introduces Gilda's aria "Caro nome" a half-step higher in F Major to give the clarinet an easier key in which to play. Bassi presents only the first ten measures of the aria as Verdi wrote it and goes to the cadenza, after which the first section of the aria is concluded. Bassi
repeats these first sixteen bars then, only in variation form similar to what Verdi wrote for Gilda, but more demanding in range and agility.

Following a piano interlude taken from the chorus "Scorrendo uniti remora via," Bassi gives a dramatic recitative to the clarinet followed by the Duke's aria "Parmi veder le lagrime." Bassi has included all of the Duke's aria with some embellishment and has provided a longer cadenza to lead into the Fantasia's finale.

The finale is the most virtuosic section for the clarinet, with a continuous display of scales and arpeggii. Verdi's melodies are not here, only a motive from the "Prelude" is developed briefly, but Bassi breaks away from it quickly. The Fantasia ends as does Verdi's opera: the opening "curse" motive is heard twice more.

Throughout the Fantasia, the clarinet portrays either Gilda or the Duke, as their voices are both in the clarinet range. In the two sections where Rigoletto is present, he is heard either only in the piano or else just his accompaniment figure is given without his melody. Bassi has not transposed parts to accommodate the clarinet range.

What is heard, then, from Bassi's Fantasia is an instrumental sampling, a potpourri, of Verdi's opera. But more than that, there is a representation of an important phase of instrumental literature and technique.
At the dawn of modern instrumental art, virtuosity was one of the great impelling forces in music. We are indebted to it for the creation of important forms and for ceaseless emulation, mother of progress. Even its lowest manifestations have brought some new resources to truly creative artists. And if one must formulate a conclusion, . . . there can be virtuosity without music. There cannot be, and there never could have been music without virtuosity.10

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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