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AN ANALYTIC INTERPRETATION OF THE CLARINET CONCERTO
BY JEAN FRANÇ AIX

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By

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ABSTRACT

AN ANALYTIC INTERPRETATION OF THE CLARINET CONCERTO BY JEAN FRANÇ AIX

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The clarinet concerto of Jean Françaix, a French Neo-classist, is a work that stands alone in the repertoire for clarinet. A thorough study of the background of the composer following an in-depth analysis by the researcher concludes that this work stands alone in importance and ground-breaking in the demands of the soloist and orchestra. The thesis will explore the background of the composer and the introduction about the concerto. The analysis and interpretation of this concerto will both illustrate the performer / researcher's experience and understanding in studying and performing this concerto.

About the composer: Jean René Désiré Françaix (1912-1997)

Jean Françaix was a French composer, pianist and orchestrator. He was born in Le Mans, France and received early music education from his parents who were both musicians: his father was a composer, pianist, musicologist and director of the Conservatoire of Le Mans, and his mother was a singer and teacher of singing. He studied at the Conservatoire of Le Mans and then went to the Paris Conservatory. In Paris, he studied piano with Isidore Philipp and composition with Nadia Boulanger, who was a significant composer and teacher of composition in that era and had taught many students who became important composers in the 20th century.¹

As a pianist, Françaix won a premier prix in 1930 when he studied in the Paris Conservatory. He performed throughout Europe and the United States with his own works and was also an accompanist performing with many fine musicians, especially cellist, Maurice Gendron. His daughter, Claude Françaix, who was also a pianist, was his duet partner and she played his Concerto for Two Pianos with him in the premiere of this work in 1965. Because he was a pianist, piano works make up the majority of his compositions, from the early “Scherzo” for solo piano in 1932, to his late piano chamber works in 1996.²

As a composer, Françaix showed his talent at an early age and was recognized by Maurice Ravel and Marcelle de Manziarly. Ravel wrote to Jean Françaix’s father: “Among the child’s gifts I observe above all the most fruitful an artist can possess, that of curiosity: you must not stifle these precious gifts now or ever, or risk letting this

¹ Muriel Bellier, “Françaix, Jean,” in Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/10083>

² Muriel Bellier, “Françaix, Jean,” in Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/10083>

young sensibility wither.”³ Although he had close contacts with the “Les six” and also appreciated the French Impressionistic music, Françaix did not question the tonality and the traditional taste of French music.⁴ As a neoclassical composer, he always used traditional forms of classical music, especially the sonata form, and his music was quite tonal and kept the French tradition. However, the works of Françaix are absolutely challenging because of the extremely demanding technique, the very delicate melody and the complex rhythm from dance music.⁵

His orchestration is colorful and sparkling. As an orchestrator, he made many arrangements from his own works and works of the other composers, such as Mozart, Chopin and Poulenc. His best-known orchestral arrangement is Poulenc’s *L’histoire de Babar* which was personally requested by Poulenc.⁶

The music of Françaix is elegant, charming and humorous. His goal was “to give pleasure” and he also said: “I wish to be honest: when I am composing, the finest theories are the last things that come to mind. My interest is not primarily attracted by the ‘motorways of thought’, but more the ‘paths through the woods’.”⁷

Jean Françaix received numerous awards during his lifetime: the Prix du Portique in 1950, the Grand Prix du Disque for chamber music in 1954, the Grand Prix du Disque as performer and composer in 1965, the Grand Prix de la Société des auteurs dramatiques in 1983, the Prix Arthur Honegger in 1992 and the Grand Prix SACEM de la musique symphonique in 1992.⁸

³ Muriel Bellier, “Françaix, Jean,” in Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/10083>

⁴ Schott Music, “Jean Françaix – Profile”, <http://www.schott-music.com/shop/persons/featured/jean-francaix/>

⁵ Muriel Bellier, “Françaix, Jean,” in Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/10083>

⁶ Muriel Bellier, “Françaix, Jean,” in Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/10083>

⁷ František Brikcius, “Meet Composer Jean Françaix - Centenaire Jean Françaix - 2012”, <http://www.brikcius.com/News.uk.034.html#Meet>

⁸ Schott Music, “Jean Françaix – Profile”,

About the concerto

A work for the future, possibly, when the instrument has developed further or the human hand has changed. At present, its roulades in the key of B major are beyond almost any player; but the work is a worthwhile challenge, and the A clarinet would probably provide the answer.

Jack Brymer, *Clarinet* (1976)⁹

Jean Françaix composed many works for woodwind instruments and he was experienced in changing the color of music using instrumental timbres. The *Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra* was composed in 1967-68 and was dedicated to Fernand Oubradous, who was a conductor, chamber music teacher at the Paris Conservatoire and bassoonist at the Opéra de Paris. The premiere of this work was on July 20, 1968 and the clarinet soloist was Jacques Lancelot, a French clarinetist.¹⁰

The composer's description of this work can be seen in the following program note:

This concerto is, or at least I hope it is, amusing to listen to. It is a kind of aerobatics display for the ear, complete with loops, wing-turns and nose-dives which are fairly terrifying for the soloist, who needs to have a good stomach and several thousand flying hours under his belt. I must say the poor fellow has been given the full treatment, including a slow movement full of phrases with great charm but little time for breathing—rather like a long glide in a plane which is constantly on the verge of stalling. Finally, the pilot starts his noisy engines again, but remains carefree to the point of swapping his airforce cap for the revolving wig of a clown.¹¹

All four movements of this concerto follow traditional forms. The first movement, *Allegro*, is in sonata form and includes a *cadenza* in the middle of the recapitulation. The second movement, *Scherzando*, is compound-ternary: scherzo-trio-

<http://www.schott-music.com/shop/persons/featured/jean-francaix/>

⁹ Jack Brymer, *Clarinet* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1977)

¹⁰ Bruocsella Symphony Orchestra, "Jean Françaix's Clarinet Concerto,"

http://www.bso-orchestra.be/francaix_concerto_clarinet_en.htm

¹¹ Philipp Cuper, *Copland/ Françaix/ Nielsen: Concertos for Clarinet & Orchestra*, CD, 1992

scherzo. The third movement, *Andantino*, is a slow movement and is a theme and variations. The last movement, *Allegrissimo*, is in five-part rondo form with two *cadenzas*.¹²

¹² There is a detailed analysis in the next chapter of this thesis and the analysis is based on the current edition for clarinet and piano from Éditions musicales transatlantiques Paris. Due to the lack of measure numbers in this version of music, and for the sake of the analysis in this thesis, the researcher numbered the measures.

Analysis

First Movement: *Allegro*

This movement, the longest in the concerto, is in traditional sonata form, with the three sections: exposition, development and recapitulation. There are 207 total measures in this movement with the first 72 measures comprising the exposition, the development is from measures 73 to 108 and the recapitulation is from measures 109 to 207 (the end of this movement). As for the most brilliant part in a concerto, the cadenza, the composer put it in the middle of the recapitulation with 48 measures.¹³

In the exposition, the flute is heard in the first four measures that is the introduction of this movement and then the solo clarinet is heard in the first theme which is from measures 5 to 24. The flute also plays an important role in this movement since it answers to the solo clarinet and frequently leads other woodwinds to complete phrases and parts. The first theme is lively and Françaix uses frequent staccato marks not only in the solo clarinet part but also the orchestral accompaniment to create the lively character. The motif of the first theme is an arch-like phrase that starts and ends in the same pitch and has a peak in the middle of the phrase and this motif that starts from different pitches to make different tone colors are heard from the solo clarinet and orchestra in turns.

Example 1: movement 1 measures 5-6 (the motif of the first theme)



¹³ Aaron Brisbois, *Jean Françaix's Clarinet Concerto: An examination of performance practices* (The University of Oklahoma, ProQuest, UMI Dissertations Publishing, 2012. 3516331.)

After the first theme, the transition that takes place from measures 25 to 42 is full of quick sixteen-notes and triplets. In the transition, the solo clarinet part is difficult with complicated articulations and fast runs of notes while the orchestra keeps playing the motif of the first theme with slight variation and development. Compared to the technically demanding first theme and transition, the second theme is lyrical and tranquil. Françaix uses eighth-notes to construct the solo clarinet part in this section, giving every phrase a different shape and direction even though the materials are similar. While the solo clarinet plays the lyrical melody, there are two layers in the orchestra to make the texture rich and colorful: one is played by flute with sixteen-note and another is the slow moving chord played by strings. The solo clarinet is heard in the ending of the beautiful second theme in measure 68 and a four-bar segue by the orchestra provides a transition to the following development section.

Example 2: movement 1 measures 43-50 (the second theme)

The musical score for Example 2, measures 43-50, is presented in two systems. Each system contains four staves. The top staff is for the Solo Clarinet, marked *dolcissimo*. The bottom three staves are for the Orchestra, marked *pp*. The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is 3/4. The Solo Clarinet part features a lyrical melody of eighth notes. The Orchestra part consists of two layers: a flute-like part with sixteenth-note runs and a string part with slow-moving chords.



In the development, Françaix uses the materials of the first theme from the exposition to emphasize the feeling of joy. Although the materials are originally from the exposition, Françaix still adds some new elements to develop this section, like the triplet, quintuplet and irregular accent. The technical requirements in the development are increased due to the complex rhythms, faster notes and extreme dynamic range.

The first theme returns at measure 109 to begin the recapitulation. After the brief statement of the first theme, the cadenza appears in the middle of the recapitulation from measures 130 to 177. Differing materials that can all be found in the former parts of this movement suggest that the cadenza is separated into five small sections. The materials come from not only the solo clarinet part but also the accompanied figure in the orchestra and Françaix uses only one or two elements to construct every part. Even though Françaix does not use many complicated combinations of materials in each part, the cadenza is still colorful and challenging because of the variable tone colors and characteristics. What follows is a mixture of the two themes from the exposition: the lyrical melodic line and the intense display of technique. Here, the texture becomes more complex due to the four layers playing at the same time but it returns to a simple texture at the end of this movement. The final section of the recapitulation is a nine-measure coda. The coda consists only of sixteen-

notes but the intervals between the notes are small and the entire coda is played at a very soft volume. Although the last phrase starts from the lowest register on the clarinet and gradually ascends to the highest register, the ending still resembles a mysterious disappearance due to the reduced volume and texture and repeated pitches and figures.

Second Movement: *Scherzando*

This movement is a scherzo that replaces the traditional classical minute. It also has three major parts: scherzo (A), trio (B) and scherzo (A'). In this movement, Françaix uses many different ways to obscure the meter: starting phrases on the off-beat, complex articulations and finally, surprise accents. Another compositional device employed is the use of large interval leaps. The notes in the melodic line are quite disjunct and the composer continues to use lightening-fast passages to display a brisk feeling.

The first scherzo, part A, is from the beginning to measure 134. With its different materials and tonal colors, the first scherzo is divided into seven small sections. In the beginning of this movement, the orchestra is heard in the introduction from measures 1 to 12 that is the first section, and then the solo clarinet starts from the off-beat of the second beat in measure 12. The only difference in the two scherzos is that the return has no introduction and the following six sections are repeated. The introduction is comical because Françaix uses many staccato marks and irregular accents to make this opening light and syncopated. The solo clarinet is heard in the main melody of the second theme that is short but tight between phrases and the role of the orchestra is the simple accompaniment to emphasize the clear sound and phrasing of the solo clarinet. The third section is the preparation for the following section and

the atmosphere completely changes in this section with fluid and longer phrases. What follows is the most lyrical part in this movement, even though it is only 13 measures. In this section, Françaix uses mostly eighth-notes rather than the sixteen-notes that he always uses in this movement to show the beautiful tone color of the solo clarinet. At the same time, two totally different layers in the orchestra give this section more distinction: one is the staccato chord and another is a legato arpeggio line.

Example 3: movement 2 measures 58-70

The image displays a musical score for measures 58-70, divided into three systems. The first system is labeled 'Solo Clarinet' and 'Orchestra'. The Solo Clarinet part begins at measure 58 with a dynamic marking of *mp* and features a melodic line of eighth notes. The Orchestra part consists of two staves: the upper staff has a dynamic marking of *pp* and plays a staccato chordal accompaniment, while the lower staff has a dynamic marking of *pp* and plays a legato arpeggiated line. The second system continues the Solo Clarinet melody and the Orchestra accompaniment. The third system shows the Solo Clarinet part ending at measure 70 with a dynamic marking of *ppp*, and the Orchestra part continuing with a dynamic marking of *ppp*. The score is written in a key signature of two sharps (D major) and a common time signature.

The fifth section has similar materials as the ones found in the second section but in a different key; it is like going back to the main theme. The entire part A can also be seen as a small ternary form in the structure: the first two sections belong to part A, the middle two are part B and part A' consists of the last three sections. In part A', Françaix uses the materials from part A, but makes it more complex in the technique and texture. In the solo clarinet part, Françaix uses not only sixteen-notes but also triplets to show the technique of soloist and he adds more layers in the orchestra to display the variable and colorful tone color based on his wonderful orchestration.

Compared to the scherzo, the trio that is from measures 135 to 250 is less complicated. Françaix uses similar materials in this part with the same melody repeated multiple times beginning on different pitches but phrases become longer and technique gets harder gradually. The main melody of the trio consists of quarter-notes, eighth-notes and triplets and it is short and amusing. The orchestration is relatively simple because of the thinner texture and repeated material. The orchestral accompaniment consists of many staccato chords and several short sixteen-note phrases to connect the phrases in the solo clarinet. At the end of the trio, the scherzo material returns as would be expected in compound ternary form.

Example 4: movement 2 measures 146-162 (the main melody of trio)

The musical score for Example 4, measures 146-162, is presented in two systems. The top system shows measures 146-152, and the bottom system shows measures 153-162. The solo clarinet part is in 3/8 time, marked *mf*, and features a melodic line with triplets and slurs. The orchestra part is in 3/8 time, marked *p*, and features a rhythmic accompaniment with chords and triplets. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat).

Third Movement: *Andantino*

This movement, the shortest both in time and number of measures, is the only slow movement in this concerto. It is very unique that Franaix chooses to use a theme and variation form with such a slow tempo. The movement consists of an introduction, theme, three variations and coda. Although each part is brief, the composer creates a colorful and changeable image. The whole movement is like chamber music because there are different kinds of duets consisting of the solo clarinet and one other solo instrument from different sections in the orchestra. The rest of orchestra accompanies the duet except during the introduction.

The solo clarinet is heard alone in the first two measures of the introduction, and then the orchestra joins at measure 3 playing chords to offset the moving melodic line in the solo clarinet part. The introduction ends at measure 8 with solo clarinet alone. The theme begins in measure 9 with the orchestra and the solo clarinet playing the main melody from measures 13 to 28. The duet in the theme part is played by the

solo clarinet and flute and Françaix uses mostly eighth-notes to build these two lines. Both lines are long and lyrical which make the phrasing even harder. The introduction and theme are both connected and at a soft dynamic level.

Example 5: movement 3 measures 13-22 (theme)

The image shows a musical score for two instruments: Clarinet in Bb and Flute. The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The music is in 3/4 time. The first system (measures 13-16) features a Clarinet in Bb part starting with a *pp* dynamic and a Flute part. The second system (measures 17-20) continues the theme. The music consists of long, flowing lines of eighth notes and quarter notes, with some rests and phrasing slurs. A measure number '31' is indicated above the first measure of the first system.

In the first variation, the solo clarinet part is like fluid and delicate background music that consists of fast but smooth runs of triplets, sixteen-notes and thirty-second notes while the oboe is heard in the melody of which material comes from the solo clarinet part in the theme. In variation two, the solo clarinet returns to the legato line but in the lower register while the flute part is the technical passage that consists of thirty-second note. In the last variation, the main melody is played by the strings and the solo clarinet is heard in a series of trills and grace notes resulting in a very bird-like ornamented figure to make a contrast. Because the lines in the former parts are all long, the short trills and grace notes break the line into many small units to give this variation a completely different feeling to the other parts of this movement.

Example 6: movement 3 measures 55-62 (variation 3)

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system shows the Solo Clarinet and Strings parts. The Solo Clarinet part begins with a box containing the number 34. The strings are marked *legatissimo*. The second system continues the Solo Clarinet and Strings parts, with the Solo Clarinet part featuring trills and a final ascending run.

In the coda, Françaix lets the orchestral clarinet and bassoon play the melodic line to answer the solo clarinet which is scored in its low register creating a beautifully blended and warm timbre to conclude the movement. The timbre at the movement's opening is strikingly different since the composer uses the sound of upper woodwinds to play exposed parts with the solo clarinet contrasting with the changed orchestration to close this movement.

Fourth Movement: *Allegriissimo*

This movement is a five-part rondo: A B A' C A'' with an introduction, two cadenzas and coda. Françaix uses the hemiola to make frequent use of changing meter. This movement is joyful with extreme technical demands of the soloist and orchestra. The tempo marking of this movement is the fastest one in this concerto.

The introduction of this movement is from measures 1 to 4 and is heard from the solo clarinet alone introduced by the strong orchestral downbeat. Part A, measures 5 to 57, is a lively part. The solo clarinet and orchestra are heard in turns in the main melody that consists of mostly eighth-notes with tricky articulation and accents with

extreme dynamic changes. Françaix uses many subito markings in this movement and this feature is evident from the very beginning.

Example 7: movement 4 measures 5-12 (the main melody of Part A)



There is a clear pause between Part A and B and the bassoon is first heard to break the gap to start Part B alone. In part B, measures 58 to 113, the solo clarinet part consists of fast runs of sixteenth-note while the orchestral accompaniment consists of the ostinato chord. This is a place in the music that Françaix changes the time signature several times in the solo clarinet part but he keeps using the same one in the orchestra part. The first cadenza appears after part B and displays the three different motives: quick sixteenth-notes, the opening motive consisting of eighth-notes and runs of arpeggios. The dynamic range in this cadenza is huge, that is from *ppp* to *ff* to show the ability of the soloist to control the sound quality and technique at the same time.

Part A' has only 20 measures from measures 146 to 165 and is only played by the orchestra. In this part, Françaix uses the materials mainly from part A and adds some elements he uses in the Part B to enrich the texture and transition to the next part. Part C, measures 166 to 204, Françaix uses the first theme of the first movement from measures 186 to 193, giving the concerto a cyclic connection of the entire work. The time signature changes several times in both solo clarinet part and orchestra, so the texture and phrasing are more complex than the former parts of this movement. Before arriving at part A'', there is a second cadenza which is much shorter and appears easier than the previous one but the ranges of pitch and dynamics are both big and

challenging. This cadenza consists of many quintuplets and ends in four continuous half notes in altissimo range.

Example 8: movement 4 measures 205-215 (the second cadenza)

The musical score for the second cadenza (measures 205-215) is presented in three staves. The first staff shows two measures of music, each with a quintuplet of eighth notes. The first measure is marked *p affectuoso* and the second *fff risoluto*. The second staff shows two measures of music, each with a quintuplet of eighth notes. The first measure is marked *mp* and the second *mf*. The third staff shows two measures of music, each with a quintuplet of eighth notes. The first measure is marked *p* and the second *ff*. The score ends with a double bar line and a time signature change to 6/8.

Part A'' is only 15 measures long and is only played by the orchestra again. Part A'' is similar with Part A' but is less complicated. It functions as the connection and transition between the second cadenza and coda. Finally, Franaix uses the material of part C in the coda so that the solo clarinet and orchestra are tightly connected to build a majestic ending for this movement.

Interpretation

When performing the work with piano serving as accompaniment, the accompaniment is played by two pianos due to the complex texture and complex orchestration. For balance and coherence, the two piano parts are strongly recommended for performance. Two collaborative pianists can play in the performance since there is so much going on in the orchestral reduction. As for the solo clarinet part, the performer should strive to display the variable tone color that the clarinet can make and the spirit of French clarinet music. The following interpretation of each movement focuses on the solo clarinet part from the performer / researcher's point of view via studying and performing this work.

First Movement

Although the staccato is an important feature in this movement, the many legato, complex and variable sixteen-notes should be highlighted more. These fast runs of notes give this movement many different shapes in every phrase and it is a contrast between the lively staccato and smooth legato. Françaix often changes the notes and chords in the repeated phrases that are full of fast sixteen-notes to change the color of the sound, so the player also needs to change the tone color and emotion.

The solo clarinet starts at the downbeat of measure 5 and plays the first theme from measures 5 to 24. There are two sections in this part: the first one is from measures 5 to 12 and the second one is from measures 13 to 24. Although these two sections are almost the same, there are still some different ways of playing due to several slight variations. The pitch of second section is higher than the first one and the second section is also more ornamented due to the use of grace notes. The performer

has chosen to emphasize the accents in the first section and use brighter tone color in the second one to make the difference on the balance of sound.

The transition between the first and second theme is from measures 24 to 42. The features of this part are the complicated articulation and the fluid and fast triplet, and these two features make a contrast of sound effect. The phrases with complicated articulation should be played with clear tonguing to show the nimbleness of tongue while those smooth runs of triplets should be played very legato but precisely to display the finger technique. In the last two measures of this part, a slight ritard is recommended and the dramatic decrescendo that is marked by the composer to display the gradual disappearance should be followed.

Because the transition has a mystic ending and there is a pause between the transition and the second theme, it is like a new start at measure 43. The second theme sounds smooth, beautiful and relaxed due to the use of legato eighth-notes, but the disjunct intervals and pitches of altissimo range are still challenging. There are three sections in the second theme and it is like a mini ternary form, a b a. The first section, part a, is from measures 43 to 50, the middle one, part b, is from measures 51 to 60 and the last one, part c, is from measures 61 to 68. The second section is the longest among these three with higher pitch and the last section is the repeat of the first one. The mood is peace in the entire second theme, so the performer only makes slight dynamic changes but displays the warm clarinet sound and beautiful melodic line to show the pureness of the music.

The development develops the materials mainly from the first theme but the composer makes the technical demands even greater. This part gradually decreases in volume and the role of last several measures even becomes the accompaniment of the orchestra. Françaix uses many chromatic notes to change the color of sound, so the

character also gradually changes and the tone color needs to be different. In the beginning of this part, the color is bright and the mood is excited but the sound gradually goes darker and softer. Françaix does not use the complex articulation in this part, so the variation of tone color is only based on the change of pitch and the control of player.

In the recapitulation, the cadenza comes after a brief return of the first theme. The cadenza is very ornamented due to the complex techniques the composer uses to make it more sparkling. The frequent use of rubato should be employed in this cadenza to emphasize the melodic line under the many grace notes and trills. The huge dynamic range that is from *ppp* to *fff* is also a challenge for the soloist especially playing alone. There are many different materials and characters in this cadenza making it colorful and attractive. The soloist should separate every section and mood clearly to display the contrast and playfulness. The part after the cadenza is dim and mystic because of the key and volume, so performer plays this part with a darker tone color and gives this movement an enigmatic ending.

Second Movement

This movement is playful and charming with pithy phrases. The characters of scherzo and trio present the same humor but in different manners. In the scherzo, the phrases consist of several large and disjunct intervals and should be played short and lightly. On the other hand, the droll character takes on a bigger role in the trio; the dynamic changes, staccato and descending intervals work together to make this character livelier.

There are two characters in the scherzo: one that consists of short slur and staccato sixteen-notes which is cheerful and another that consists of a longer legato

phrase with eighth-notes and sixteen-notes which is slightly darker. The cheerful character takes the major part and another one makes the scherzo more colorful. Playing the section that shows the cheerful character, the tone color is bright and the articulation is clear and short to display the liveliness while researcher focuses on the longer legato phrasing on interpreting another character. The continuity of dynamic is an issue on playing the short phrase because the construction and connection of dynamic cannot be broken by the pause and the tight articulation. Therefore, both the air control and the design of dynamic change should be considered carefully.

The trio is funny and surprising because of the articulation and the big leap of intervals. The performer plays this part more articulate than the scherzo to show the weight of each note. Every phrase ending should be clearly emphasized. The big leap that starts from altissimo note to lower note makes the sound effect that is like the sound of a donkey and player should do a concentrated crescendo from the higher note to the lower one to emphasize this figure. The trio only presents one character that is rather comical but the materials of the scherzo return several measures before the Da Capo to make a transition between the trio and returning scherzo.

Third Movement

This is the only movement that expresses sadness. Comparing it to the other movements, the phrases in this movement are long and slow because Françaix uses eighth-notes and long legato to construct the main melody. Also, the intervals used most frequently are the seconds and thirds instead of the large and disjunct intervals in the other movements. However, Françaix still uses difficult techniques to show the performer's ability when they need to change the mood and tone color immediately. In addition, air control is also an important factor in this movement while playing the

long and expressive phrases. In the whole movement, there are only three kinds of dynamic marking: *mp*, *pp* and *ppp*. Due to the soft volume, the possibility of sound is limited and this is absolutely a challenge for the soloist.

The mood of the introduction, theme and coda are similar but the coda is more ornamented because of the grace note and the phrases in coda are relatively shorter. There is only one *pp* marking in the beginning of the theme, so the performer divides the theme into three different levels presented by dynamic and tone color to build the climax of this part.

The first variation has two sections that the composer uses different materials to display the same fluid and technical character. The first section is more singable because the melodic line is more obvious and the length of each note is relatively longer while the second section consists of all fast moving notes to make a contrast to the next variation. Because of the difference between two sections, the performer plays the first one with more solid sound to emphasize the melody and uses lighter sound and softer volume to play the second section. Variation two is similar with the theme but in lower register. There are three phrases in this variation and there is no dynamic marking, so the performer has marked *mf* in the first phrase to keep the dynamic that lasts from variation one and then marked a subito *piano* in the beginning of the second phrase to build up the volume with the rising pitch to the end of this variation. The feature of the last variation is the fragmentary ornamented figure that can show the ability of soloist about clarity and exactitude of rhythm. This variation is quite delicate but the mood is relaxed, so performer focuses on the main line of melody more than the grace note and trill that add different and variable colors for the melodic line.

In the coda, there are still some ornamented elements remaining from the last variation and this figure creates a surprise for the last part of this movement. The

performer does not make big dynamic contrast in the coda, but the sound is full and warm to highlight the fascinating timbres of the clarinet's two lowest registers.

Fourth Movement

This is the hardest movement in the concerto due to the fast tempo and the frequently changing meters. This movement is electrifying and restless because there is a significant mix of materials in every layer of the texture. Also, the complex texture makes the image colorful and bright. Playing this movement, every technique, like the movement of fingers and tongue and the support of air, is definitely a very challenging issue for the soloist. The very detailed musical ideas abound and make this movement more interesting and distinct. This is the reason why this concerto is so attractive.

The opening is the first challenge of this movement due to the meter that is broken by the grace note, so it is important to count subdivisibly. The complex grace note and articulation are two major figures throughout this movement and appear in the very first part. In this movement, the grace note is as important as the note following it, so the air and tonguing must be well-coordinated. In part A, there are two contrasting sections that use different materials: the first one consists of eighth-notes with grace notes and complicated articulation and the second one consists of fluid legato runs of sixteen-note. The first section should be played articulated and passionate but the second one is softer and smooth with darker tone color. However, the ending of part A comes with a dramatic crescendo to start the next part.

The meter in part B is complex due to the change of time signature in the solo clarinet part. Because the time signature changes several times in the solo clarinet part but it keeps the same in the accompaniment, playing together is challenging. During the rehearsal, two pianists and the performer played every part separately to let

everyone knew the other two parts and then played together in a very slow tempo to make sure every part fit together and every layer could be heard clearly.

The first cadenza starts after part B. There are three sections in this cadenza and each section has a different figure. However, the main character of this cadenza is dramatic. The dynamic range is huge and there are many instances of subito to display the tension of sound. This cadenza is so sparkling and attractive that requires the soloist to play with energy and effort.

Part C is in the duple meter in the most of time rather than the triple meter that is mainly used in the former parts. Due to the change of meter, part C shows a different feeling although the materials are similar with the former parts. Part C is the liveliest part in the whole concerto because of the fast tempo, tight rhythm and articulation and bright even grating sound. The return of the first theme from the first movement brings back the sweet sound of French clarinet music. After a brief mixture of materials from the first theme of the first movement and part C of this movement, the second cadenza starts in a soft volume. The second cadenza has only 11 measures and the materials are quite simple. However, the control of dynamics and of long notes in altissimo are the main attributes that make this cadenza stand out from the others in this concerto.

The final part, coda, consists of the materials from part C but in the lower register. There are three short phrases in the coda and the performer uses different volume levels to build a sparkling ending. The first starts in a strong sound to bring the attention back after a long accompaniment and the second is marked with subito *piano* to make a contrast from the first phrase and to keep the space of crescendo. The second phrase crescendos gradually and the last phrase keeps the crescendo to the last note. The long crescendo is not only for a big sound but also for the clarity of each fast note.

Conclusion

This concerto is a true masterpiece. Because of its addition to the clarinet repertoire, technical demands on the instrument progressed further than ever before. Also, the use of brilliant orchestration illustrating the fantastic color in both the solo clarinet part and the orchestra make this work a true showcase for those involved in performing the work. The concerto creates an attractive atmosphere and provides a rich flavor for not only the performers but also the audience. Every note, phrase and movement is full of humor. This spirit and cleverness is indicative of Françaix's music.

Technique is the biggest issue for playing this concerto and players need abundant practice and patience. Although each movement uses different compositional devices to illustrate Françaix's musical idea, the attribute that is found throughout the entire concerto is the demanding technique. Only after conquering the technique can the soloist study the variable characters and moods in this composition. Françaix uses a comical feeling in many parts of this concerto, except the third movement, but there are still subtle differences in detail to contrast the slight differences between different parts. Therefore, players need to have the ability of slight but obvious differences in interpretation.

Finally, although this concerto brings an incredible challenge to the clarinet repertoire, it is still charming and attractive to clarinet players who consider this concerto is a milestone in the history of the instrument.

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