

## 4 The development of the clarinet repertoire

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### 1750–1800

The clarinet's full and penetrating sound made it a popular choice for outdoor ensembles and bands; to realise just how popular, one need only glance at the Harmonie listings in the first edition of Whistling's *Handbuch der Musikalischen Literatur*,<sup>1</sup> which devotes several pages to works for wind band published before 1816. Its uniquely controllable volume made it equally useful for the chamber or concert hall. While the Mannheim court orchestra was not the first to adopt the clarinet as an essential instrument, the orchestra's high standard of performance and its resultant good reputation played a vital part in the adoption of the instrument elsewhere. The repertoire of the instrument's first century included many concertos designed to display its capabilities. In its early days, concertos and orchestral works mainly utilised the clarinet register and the notes immediately above it; the clarinet parts in Abel's Symphony Op. VII/6 (formerly attributed to Mozart as K18) are typical and seldom venture below the throat notes in either part.

Franz Anton Hoffmeister, Mozart's publisher and a popular composer in his own right, wrote concertos, sonatas and pieces for various wind ensembles. While (as is probably true of many composers whose lists of works number hundreds rather than dozens) he could not be accused of originality, his music is competently written, agreeable to play and comfortable for audiences. There are moments of genuine quality; one feels that he scarcely deserves Fétis's unkind comment 'O, sterile fécondité!'<sup>2</sup>

Others who composed concertos included Peter von Winter, who wrote a concertino and a variety of concertante works; Franz Tausch, himself a clarinetist, the range and brilliance of whose concertos give some idea of his quality as a performer though unhappily some of his other works are less satisfying musically; Johann Friedrich Grenser, whose concerto was performed on several occasions by Crusell. Philipp

Meissner is also known to have written variations and concertos for the clarinet, now lost. His surviving works include four quartets for clarinet and strings and a number of duos for two clarinets. Andreas Goepfert, who had studied with Mozart, was a very successful composer as well as an excellent clarinettist. In addition to a concertante for clarinet, bassoon and orchestra and several quartets, his compositions include many sets of duos for two clarinets which still make excellent study works.

The compositions of Carl Stamitz are far more substantial works, although sometimes uneven in quality. In particular, his concerto for two clarinets is an excellent early classical piece, well written and well balanced, and his quartets are also musically satisfying to play. Ignaz Pleyel composed a concerto for clarinet or flute or cello with orchestra; he also wrote a serenade, a nocturne, and trios for two clarinets with bassoon. The sonata by Franz Danzi is a fine work, neither dull nor difficult and useful for study.

But the clarinet's main glory was undoubtedly due to Mozart. His Concerto in A major K622 for clarinet and orchestra is arguably the greatest concerto written for the instrument, as the magnificent Quintet K581 for clarinet and string quartet is the most important of its kind. The slow movements of both concerto and quintet are as near perfection as can be found, while the delightful Trio K498 for clarinet, viola and piano (known as the *Kegelstatt* trio since it was reputedly written during a game of bowls or skittles) is a superbly constructed work which no student of the clarinet should ignore. Mozart's serenades and divertimenti are equally rewarding, both to play and to hear, and the clarinet is used to its best possible advantage in all of them. Choice is always difficult, but, asked to name the finest among these, a majority of players would probably award the crown to the Serenade K361 for thirteen instruments. Under Anton Stadler's influence, the chalumeau register is used to the fullest advantage.

Stadler left us three caprices for solo clarinet. Their novelty value and Stadler's undoubtedly brilliant playing must have made them excellent concert works in their day; consisting of popular melodies (folk tunes and operatic airs) interspersed with roulades and arpeggios, they seem a little disappointing now and in the present musical climate are mainly of historical interest, depending for their effect on the brilliance of the performer rather than on their musical content. His other surviving works also lack depth. From all accounts, Stadler was reputed to have a very good opinion of himself; one wonders whether he realised how much of his reputation he owed to Mozart.

In contrast to Mozart's quintet with its warm brilliance, the clarinet quintet by Andreas Romberg uses the darker-sounding string ensemble of one violin, two violas and cello. The German clarinettist Georg Fuchs studied composition with Christian Cannabich at Mannheim but

spent most of his life in Paris as a working musician and, from 1793 onwards, as a teacher. To this end, many of his compositions are duos for clarinets and arrangements of airs from popular or fashionable operas (e.g. *Les Visitandines* and *The Magic Flute*). Like Goepfert, he wrote a number of duets, also several trios and quartets. Many of these were published during his lifetime.

In France, Mathias Blasius was highly respected as a conductor, but is now better remembered for his compositions. It is a measure of Blasius's quality that Bouffil, himself a superb performer and composer, dedicated his *Trois Grands Duos* Op. 3 to him. Charles Duvernoy worked as a clarinetist in various bands and orchestras, and was respected among his colleagues and by the public both as a teacher and as a performer. His works include three concertos for clarinet and orchestra (the first of which exists only in manuscript), a double concerto with violin, and various other sonatas and duos. Etienne Solère was also a fashionable and popular performer-composer.

The Swiss-born musician Jean Xavier Lefèvre was the most important figure in French clarinet history in the late eighteenth century. The excellently detailed clarinet method which he wrote for use at the newly founded Paris Conservatoire provided a model for future tutors (see figs. 3.2, 8.4). He also composed solos and duets, the sonatas being particularly attractive.

Amand Vanderhagen is best known now for his educational works; his tutor for the clarinet was, in both design and content, far in advance of other tutors current at the time for other instruments. A concerto by him was performed by the clarinetist Labatut in Charleston, South Carolina, on 14 December 1799, and may have been one of the first concertos to be performed in America.

Michel Yost, frequently known simply as Michel, was another public favourite. According to Fétis, Yost had a talent for melody but had not studied composition; he would make a rough sketch of the melody and its requisite decorations, and his friend Vogel would provide the harmonies and orchestration. Whoever was responsible, Yost's compositions, which include several concertos and a number of duos and other works for the instrument, were deservedly popular.

Outside Germany and Austria, Bohemia and its composers seemed to have a particular affinity with the clarinet; at least, many more documented clarinet works have survived there than elsewhere, notably due to the invaluable researches of Jiří Kratochvíl. The two concertos by František Xaver Pokórny are worthy of mention, as are those by Joachim Cron, Antonín Heller, Jan Kalous and the brothers Kozeluch. The horn player Anton Dimler, a member of the Mannheim court orchestra, left three clarinet concertos; these may have been intended for his son, who took up the clarinet at an early age and

became a well-known performer. In addition to his concerto, Heller also wrote pieces for clarinet and featured the instrument in his wind partitas. František Xaver Dušek, Mozart's friend and colleague, composed several partitas, one of which was arranged for three clarinets. Both Johann Wendt and Wenzel Sedlak were also deservedly popular for their Harmonie works, though their skill lay in arrangement rather than in original composition.

Joseph Beer composed several concertos for the instrument and, if the note on the title page may be believed, collaborated with Carl Stamitz on the latter's Concerto No. 11. Beer's works include a concertino for clarinet and orchestra, an *air varié* for clarinet and piano, a number of duets for two clarinets, and a sonata for clarinet and bassoon. Johann Baptist Vanhal, a pupil of Dittersdorf, added two more concertos to the repertoire (one arranged from his flute concerto), a quartet, several trios and two sonatas; the last are his best-known works, and display his melodic talents to the full. The recently republished sonata by the Archduke Rudolph is also of interest.

Josef Fiala wrote a double concerto for clarinet, cor anglais and orchestra. Mozart, who rated Fiala very highly as a conductor, said that some of his works were 'very pretty, and he has some very good ideas'<sup>3</sup> – praise indeed! Wenzel Knežek, now almost forgotten, composed six concertos and also several partitas, one of them for the interesting combination of two clarinets in G, two violas and bass.

Franz Krommer (also found under the Czech spelling as František Kramář) was among the most important of the Bohemian musicians. His output included concertos for clarinet, a fine double concerto for two clarinets, and a number of excellent Harmonie works. Some of the better slow movements have been likened to 'good quality Mozart'. At one time the double concerto was attributed to the Finnish virtuoso and composer Crusell, who arranged it with band accompaniment.

While the clarinet became a popular instrument in England during the last years of the eighteenth century (mainly through its use in military bands), the standard of playing in the provinces was variable and in consequence the country produced few composers for the instrument. Many of the better professional musicians were German or French. Native players such as John Parry (who became solo clarinet in a military band in north Wales when young and went to London to make his fortune as a performer, only to give up the clarinet entirely in favour of playing the cello and composing operas) may not have been unusual. The real exceptions were people like James Hook, for many years musical director of London's Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens, who wrote a clarinet concerto which was probably intended for performance there. The solo part is brilliant, good both to play and to listen to. John Mahon (c. 1749–1834) and his brother William were both performing musicians, but only John composed. His works include concertos for

clarinet, as well as marches for the Oxford Association Military Band, a set of duets incorporating popular airs, and a song, *Hope Thou Cheerful Ray of Light*, which was a great favourite with English audiences until well into the nineteenth century. However, much of the English repertoire of the period consists of popular and educational works or arrangements of church music.

As player and composer, Bernhard Hendrik Crusell overshadowed most of his Scandinavian contemporaries. His concertos are well-constructed works, full of musical feeling and intelligence, and his quartets and duets are also deservedly popular. Nevertheless, some other Scandinavian composers made their way into the public's affections, including the Swedish bassoonist Jean Martin de Ron, reported to be a student of Crusell, who paid implied tribute to the Finnish virtuoso with his *Thème finois avec variations* for clarinet and orchestra. In 1782 the Norwegian Lorents Nicolai Berg secured his place in clarinet history by writing one of the first tutors to recommend playing with the reed downward, which facilitates brilliant staccato playing.

### c. 1800–1850

By the end of the eighteenth century the clarinet had spread across most of Europe, and a few had reached America; concertos and display pieces were still very popular. From the composers' point of view, the instrument had reached the musical limits of its current design and the time was ripe for a surge in technical developments to keep pace with composers' demands.

Many of the concertos and other works by Iwan Müller were intended to display the potential of his new thirteen-keyed clarinet. They are virtuoso pieces and almost all employ the full range of the instrument, from the lowest possible note up to, in several cases, *c'''*. The quality of these notes may have prompted Glinka's comment that Müller had a harsh tone, sounding like the screech of a goose. It would be interesting to know which piece prompted the criticism; making a beautiful sound in the altissimo register is not always easy and may have been even less so then. Glinka perhaps complained about the performer when his criticism might more justly have been levelled against the composer.

Ludwig van Beethoven composed a number of works which gave the clarinet more or less prominence. The Trio Op. 11, written just at the onset of his deafness, was the earliest. It needs superb playing to be fully effective. Beethoven did not seem totally at home with the clarinet, and, while not technically difficult, the work does not feel really comfortable. This may have been either the result of Beethoven's lack of detailed knowledge of the instrument or an expression of the composer's unwillingness to take advice; not without cause was he defined by at

least one offended contemporary as ‘an unlicked bear’. No such reservations haunt the magnificent Septet Op. 20, or the delightful Quintet Op. 16 for piano and winds, both deservedly known and loved, or the Trio Op. 38 (after the Septet).

Carl Maria von Weber’s works, composed in the main for his close friend Heinrich Baermann, are among the best-known and loved works in the nineteenth-century clarinet repertoire, both for their musical content and for their understanding of the instrument. The two concertos are magnificent works, which may fairly be regarded as second only to Mozart’s great concerto. The *Grand Duo Concertant* is superbly idiomatic writing, and while the Quintet for clarinet and strings is not quite on the same level as those of Mozart and Brahms, the world of the clarinet would be much poorer without it. The Concertino does suffer from a slight surfeit of E flat major; but there are worse musical sins, and it is never predictable enough to be tedious. These works are perfectly suited to the idiom of the clarinet then in use; indeed, some bars are more awkward to play on the Boehm clarinet.

The violinist Louis Spohr owed his understanding of the clarinet’s possibilities to his association with the virtuoso player Simon Hermstedt. So much of the clarinet’s repertoire seems to have depended on this type of partnership; whereas the world of the violinist-composer is that of the isolated performer and may be justly regarded as a history of individualists, the clarinet world seems to have recorded a history of friendships. This particular phenomenon is the subject of Pamela Weston’s chapter. Spohr’s four concertos bear witness to Hermstedt’s abilities as a performer, and their idiom is mainly clarinet-based; but some of Spohr’s studies for clarinet are, in their figuration, pure violin music. The *Sechs Deutsche Lieder* Op. 103 for soprano, clarinet and piano are excellent recital works. Spohr also wrote several sets of variations for clarinet and piano and a nonet, the latter being among the best of its kind.

Johann Georg Heinrich Backofen was a many-sided genius, known for his skills as a linguist and portrait painter as well as for his musical abilities. Well known as a performer in his native Germany, he was also a talented composer; among his surviving works is a quintet for clarinet and strings (violin, two violas and cello, as in the quintet by Romberg), as well as a number of concertos and several duos. The flautist Ferdinand Ries composed a trio for clarinet, cello and piano, also several larger ensembles. His slightly older contemporary, Joseph Hummel, a pupil and close friend of Mozart, composed a *Septet militaire*; larger ensembles seem to have been particularly favoured at this period.

Franz Schubert composed few works for clarinet, and one feels the lack of a concerto or a sonata from his hand. But the Octet D803 is a

masterpiece by any standard, and *The Shepherd on the Rock* is possibly the finest work extant for voice with clarinet obbligato.

Peter von Lindpaintner studied with Peter von Winter in Munich, to whom he may have owed some of his knowledge of the clarinet. Admired by Mendelssohn as one of the best conductors in Germany, he produced music characterised principally by attractive melody and skilful dramatic effect rather than originality. Christian Rummel was a clarinettist and violinist as well as a composer, many of whose fantasies and concertos were published in the first half of the nineteenth century. The concerto by Bernard Molique has regained favour; Molique admired and was influenced by Mendelssohn and intensely disliked the 'modern' school of German composition. Ferdinand David, an extremely prolific composer, is now only remembered for his *Introduction and Variations on Schubert's Sehnsucht-Walzer*. A dotted rhythm combined with a descending scale is such a simple idea that its use can, in the context of a work such as Louis Schindelmeisser's concertante for four clarinets, scarcely count as quotation or plagiarism; but to the English ear this work conveys an irresistible suggestion of the morris tune *Country Gardens!*

The compositions of Heinrich Baermann, for whom Weber wrote his masterworks, include concertos, fantasias and *airs variés* with orchestra; among their number are several quartets and quintets, one of the latter containing the famous Adagio so long incorrectly attributed to Wagner.

Mendelssohn's sonata for clarinet and piano was written when the composer was only fifteen years old and, while well constructed, is predictably lacking in depth; of interest from the point of view of the composer's musical development, it makes no great technical or intellectual demands. As Georgina Dobrée has already implied in Chapter 3, Mendelssohn's *Konzertstücke* Op. 113 and Op. 114 for clarinet, basset horn and piano or orchestra are a different matter altogether; brilliant in the more familiar form with piano (as might be expected of anything written for the Baermann family), and superb when orchestrated. Among other works of value is the *Duo* for clarinet and piano by Norbert Burgmüller, unambitious but tremendously talented, who died tragically young.

The three *Phantasiestücke* Op. 73 by Robert Schumann were originally intended for clarinet; the *Romanzen* Op. 94, originally for oboe, are now frequently heard in transcriptions for clarinet. Modern editions for both specify the use of the A clarinet, though some older editions give alternative B $\flat$  clarinet parts. Schumann also wrote a trio for clarinet, viola and piano, *Märchenerzählungen* (Fairy Tales); this is a light but interesting work.

France was richer in players than composers. Prominent among compositions of the period are the trios and duos by Jacques Bouffil,

substantial works with valuable and interesting musical content; not for the beginner or the faint-hearted even now, they were almost certainly written for professional performance. François Devienne provided the repertoire with a number of symphonies concertantes, one for two clarinets and others for clarinet with other instruments. He also wrote a large number of trios which give prominence to the clarinet, and his influence did much to raise the musical standard of French woodwind writing. The two volumes of *Sonatas Op. 3* by François Baissière are comfortable rather than impressive; one or two of them have been thought worthy of reprinting in modern editions.

Hyacinthe Klosé may well be regarded as the father of the modern clarinet, being responsible for the invention of the Boehm clarinet (see page 28). He also composed; his studies and larger concert works are good, but some of the fantasies on operatic airs are rather disappointing. His tutor remained in favour until fairly recently; a very thorough work, it contains useful basic material on points of technique which have not always been dealt with as thoroughly elsewhere.

In England, Cipriani Potter, then principal of the Royal Academy in London, arranged one of his three *Grand Trios* for clarinet, bassoon and piano c. 1824. Among player-composers, Joseph Williams of Hereford wrote some attractive studies which stand on their own as solo works, though there have been plans to provide them with a piano accompaniment. Henry Lazarus, whose life and career covered almost the whole of the nineteenth century, wrote a clarinet method (now a little dated, but still very good for sight-reading material). He also composed, his works being mainly sets of variations on folk tunes and operatic airs. They were very popular on both sides of the Atlantic, appearing towards the end of the century in American editions as standard repertoire pieces.

František Tadeáš Blatt, professor of the clarinet at the Prague Conservatoire, composed a quintet for clarinet and strings, in addition to a number of interesting sets of exercises. The blind clarinetist Joseph Procksch wrote a concerto and a concertino, in addition to fantasies and variations for two clarinets, while Antonín Reicha wrote a number of wind quintets which give the clarinet prominence.

Further south, works by the Swiss composer Xaver Schnyder von Wartensee include a concerto for two clarinets. The nineteenth-century Italian clarinet world was largely dominated by the compositions of Rossini and by the compositions and playing of Ernesto Cavallini, described as the 'Paganini of the clarinet.' An admirer of Rossini, Cavallini acknowledged the older composer's influence in his *Fiori Rossiniana* and *Una Lagrima sulla Tomba dell'Immortale Rossini* – the latter a sensitive and moving tribute to Cavallini's friend and master. Felix Alessandro Radicati, an Italian violinist and composer, who



wrote a concerto for clarinet, was a pupil of Pugnani and an admirer of Boccherini, whose influence permeates his work.

Spain's first important clarinetist, José Avelino Canongia, composed three concertos, a *thème varié* and other items. His works, mainly large and with orchestral accompaniment, are brilliant rather than original; in the rather derogatory words of a younger contemporary – 'like José Avelino – new music, old notes'.

While the clarinet was a popular instrument in Eastern Europe, as in England and Spain, there were few fine players and few native composers for the instrument. Karel Kasimierz Kurpiński was one of the most important Polish composers before Chopin and his concerto is a rewarding and well-written work. His later contemporary, Ignacy Feliks Dobrzyński, was firmly entrenched in the Viennese classical tradition though there is some trace of folk influence in parts of his Duo Op. 47. In Russia, Glinka composed a *Trio pathétique* for clarinet, cello and piano; this is a relatively insignificant work, but is of interest to the clarinetist for the instruction to use vibrato in the slow movement – an unusual feature for the date (1832).

## 1850–1900

The eighteenth century and the early decades of the nineteenth century might be viewed as the age of the showy *air varié*, the virtuoso work with orchestra. This image gradually changed as the nineteenth century wore on, and by the end of the 1840s the earlier flood of wind concertos was slowing down to a trickle. Politically, many of the small courts were being absorbed into larger duchies or kingdoms, with a consequent loss in the number of orchestras available. Socially, the clarinet was becoming more accessible to a wider cross-section of the general public, more an instrument of the drawing room or small concert hall; the improvements in piano manufacture and the instrument's increasing popularity (and accessibility) also had their influence on composers. Fashionably, the musical world was by now in need of a change of colour; Hanslick (himself too bored or too busy to attend the young virtuoso's concert) may have spoken for a large part of the public when he advised Romeo Orsi to '... join an orchestra – that is the place where we know the value of clarinetists, flautists, oboists and bassoonists; the times are past when crowds of these wandering musicians came to give recitals on their boring little pipes'.<sup>4</sup> In the orchestra, repertoire was expanding in the hands of such composers as Mendelssohn, whose clarinet parts are far more demanding technically than those of Mozart.

Old soldiers returning after the Napoleonic and other wars took the instrument from the band to the church and the small concert. While the mid to late nineteenth century still had its full share of large-scale

compositions, it could equally be regarded as the age of the suite of fantasy or characteristic pieces, short pieces in contrasting styles or moods which could be used either as a set or individually according to the requirements of the occasion. From the clarinettist's point of view, Schumann's *Phantasiestücke* are the earliest examples to retain their popularity. His later Danish friend and contemporary, Niels Wilhelm Gade, also wrote a set of four *Fantasiestücke* Op. 43; technically, these are simpler than Schumann's pieces, and the first was frequently used as an encore or short recital piece in its own right. Carl Reinecke wrote his *Fantasiestücke* Op. 22 in 1865, the year after Gade. The genre is represented in Holland by the *Vier Characterstücke* of Theodor H. H. Verhey, and in England by those written by William Yeats Hurlstone; the latter's violin pieces *Romance* and *Revery* [*sic*] have been transcribed for clarinet and are slowly making a place for themselves in the repertoire. Verhey's *Characterstücke* were indeed originally written for clarinet; however, they were also available for cello, and were evidently more popular in that form; by 1911 they had disappeared from catalogues of wind music and even their composer seemed to have forgotten that they had been for clarinet. Verhey also wrote a concerto for clarinet, the nocturne from which makes occasional (and welcome) appearances in anthologies. The serenade for winds by the Dutch composer Julius Röntgen shows Schumann's influence. Max Bruch's *Acht Stücke* for clarinet, viola and piano were written for a domestic group and were designed to suit the skills of the performers; three of them have traces of Hungarian gypsy influence.

If the instrument had to be defined by a colour or a season, the words which occur repeatedly throughout the clarinet's history are: warm, rich, dark, brown and autumnal. And in some respects the clarinet is the instrument of experience, the colour of mature thought for those not actually brought up with it in childhood. The infant prodigy has tended to write for the violin or piano. Clarinet works listed in this chapter are mainly by composers aged at least 25–30+ (quite a mature age in the days of bad hygiene and high mortality), not student works, and they tend, as Brahms's compositions bear witness, to improve with the composer's age. Johannes Brahms wrote his clarinet works near the end of his life; their dedicatee Richard Mühlfeld was loved by audiences for his beautiful tone, and Brahms's two Sonatas Op. 120, Trio Op. 114 for clarinet, cello and piano, and Quintet Op. 115 for clarinet and strings displayed this to its best advantage. Not that there is any lack of technical difficulties; but these works are among the most perfect of their kind, and generously repay the practice necessary to reveal them as such.

Nothing has surpassed the Brahms's sonatas. But Reger's two Sonatas Op. 49, written while under the inspiration of a good performance of

Brahms's works, in many ways equal them. They are finely crafted pieces, attractive and intelligent, which (like his quintet for clarinet and strings) have never had the popularity they deserve. Felix Draeseke also wrote a sonata for clarinet.

The clarinet quintet was a popular late romantic form, but few composers of that time reached the artistic heights of Brahms or Reger; many of those extant tend to be agreeable but conventional, like that by Volbach.

One usually thinks of Richard Strauss as a twentieth-century composer, but he was born in 1864, and composed his *Romanze* for clarinet and orchestra in 1879 while still at school. It is an attractive piece, and has recently been published in a piano reduction.

A short correspondence in *Musical Opinion & Music Trade Review* (March 1893) discussing 'recommendation of good concerted music ... worthy of being listed with Weber's Grand Duo Op. 48 and Schumann's Fantasiestücke Op. 73', gives a clear picture of the public taste of the time. Among the pieces recommended by contributors were, predictably, the works of Mozart, Weber and Beethoven. English composers included in the list were Henry Lazarus, Ebenezer Prout and Charles Swinnerton Heap. The latter studied in Leipzig with Moscheles and Reinecke, and was well known as a conductor and organist as well as a composer. His sonata for clarinet and piano is a substantial work, more satisfying today than that by Prout which sounds somewhat academic and dated. The works of Charles Lethière were also recommended; they are mainly light and showy, and his name is now almost forgotten outside military-band circles. Sonatas listed also included those by Gouvy and Seiffert – and Vanhal, who had apparently never been out of favour. Demersseman's Serenade and *airs variés* by Bauderuc, Berr and Mohr were also mentioned, as was the pastorale *Selanka* by Zdeněk Fibich. Charles Villiers Stanford's *Three Intermezzi* appeared on the list. Stanford composed other works for the clarinet; his concerto and sonata both show distinct traces of Irish folk melody, and his nonet was for many years unjustly neglected.

Swiss composers of this period seemed to favour large-scale works; August Walter composed an octet, and Joachim Raff's *Sinfonietta* Op. 188 for double wind quintet is well known.

Italian music of the period abounds in smaller works, some extremely demanding technically but less interesting musically. However, the concerto by Saverio Mercadante and Domenico Liverani's *Chants religieux* on airs from Rossini's *Stabat Mater* both have musical quality. Ponchielli's quartet for flute, oboe, E $\flat$  and B $\flat$  clarinets is overshadowed by his accompanied duet for two clarinets, *Il Convegno*, one of the great works for that ensemble.

Mabellini's compositions treat the clarinet as a contrasting voice against a brass group. Flugelhorn and baritone saxhorn are featured in

the *Fantasia a terzetto* and in the *Concerto per quartettino*, the trumpet making the fourth partner in the latter.

The clarinet was gradually attracting more attention from native Russian composers. An attractively melancholy work, Sergei Ivanovich Taneiev's *Canzona* for clarinet and orchestra clearly reflects the lyricism of his teacher, Tchaikovsky. The *Konzertstück* with military band by Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov is disappointingly trite; his quintet for piano and winds is much more imaginative and rewarding, both to play and to listen to. Anatoli Liadov's Prelude for clarinet and piano has undeniable charm.

### 1900–1950 and beyond

By now the clarinet was a familiar sound all over Europe and, in the military band, was used in the east from Egypt to Japan. The twentieth century saw the return of the concerto as a popular form, and with it the re-emergence of the solo wind player. The concerto is frequently as much a vehicle for subtlety as for display, many being accompanied by strings only, or strings with harp and/or percussion. (Iain Hamilton's concerto, scored for full orchestra and consequently posing severe balance problems, is a notable exception to this.) At the beginning of the nineteenth century, performers' demands led to mechanical improvements; at the beginning of the twentieth, the demands of composers similarly forced advances in playing technique.

The *Vier Stücke* Op. 5 by Alban Berg, for clarinet and piano, must take pride of place in any listing of clarinet repertoire. While they are not easy, they are extremely rewarding; works of deep feeling as well as intellectual content, they never demand more of the performer than they offer in satisfaction. An ability to flutter-tongue is essential.

The sonata by Paul Juon is rather short, but makes up in quality what it lacks in size. Siegfried Karg-Elert wrote three sonatas, one being for solo clarinet. Viktor Ullmann, like Alois Hába in Czechoslovakia, composed quarter-tone works which included a sonata. The Sonata (1939) by Paul Hindemith is a great work which requires more musical intelligence than technique, and is consequently not as popular as it deserves. His concerto is good, but less memorable; the quartets and duos are also very worthwhile, musically intelligent and rhythmically interesting.

Heinrich Kaminski's quartet for clarinet, violin, cello and piano shows traces of Brahmsian influence, and lacks the austerity so noticeable in his later works. Clarinet quintets were composed by Franz Schmidt, Günther Raphael and Josef Schelb; Schelb and Raphael also wrote other chamber works involving the clarinet. The *Duett-Concertino* for clarinet and bassoon by Richard Strauss is typically florid. Ernst Krenek is probably best known for his jazz-influenced opera *Jonny spielt auf*; the

*Marches* Op. 44 and *Intrada for Winds* Op. 51a were composed during the mid-1920s, when he was working in the opera houses of Kassel and Wiesbaden. His early Serenade Op. 4 for clarinet and string trio is less dissonant, but his style (whether in the short pieces from Op. 85 for four clarinets and for clarinet and piano published under the pseudonym Thornton Winsloe, or in more serious works such as the Trio for clarinet, violin and piano) is very individual and finely crafted.

Alfred Uhl wrote a number of works for clarinet. Difficult, frequently exuberant and always rewarding, they include a *Konzertante sinfonie* with orchestra and *Kleines Konzert* for clarinet, viola and piano, as well as a *Divertimento* for three clarinets and bass clarinet and some extremely worthwhile studies.

The French repertoire was enriched by the Paris Conservatoire's habit of commissioning *morceaux de concert* for its annual competitions. Not all of the composers involved were as colourful as Augusta Holmès; greatly admired by her contemporaries, history has sadly confirmed that her musical talents, though of undoubted quality, were less striking than her personality. Nevertheless, the *Fantaisie* for clarinet and piano, written as a *solo de concours* for the Conservatoire, is an attractive work and, since she had been a pupil of Klosé, is based on a sound knowledge of the instrument's capabilities. Notable among other *solos de concours* are those by André Messager and Henri Tomasi, the latter contributing a concertino. Tomasi also wrote a number of extremely useful smaller works for clarinet and piano.

The *Première rapsodie* by Claude Debussy is probably the best-known clarinet *pièce de concours*; subtly lyrical, it requires very sensitive playing and total command of *pianissimo*.

A late developer musically, Charles Koechlin's almost total lack of self-criticism meant that he seldom revised works with a view to reducing them to the bare essentials. The results are sometimes rather self-indulgent; he was at his most successful as a miniaturist, and his *Idyll* for two clarinets and the *Pastorale* for flute and clarinet are works of undeniable charm. Among other worthwhile small pieces in the French repertoire are the *Aria* by Albert Roussel and the *Andantino* Op. 30 by Florent Schmitt.

The influence of jazz swept across the Atlantic at the end of the First World War, and was quickly adopted by many composers, particularly in France. Arthur Honegger's *Sonatine* is a lively and interesting piece – a little dated by now, but with a jazzy finale which works extremely well. His *Rapsodie* for flutes, clarinets and piano is an oddly melancholy work. The *Sonatine* by Darius Milhaud is characterised by spiky wit and quirky rhythms, as is his later *Duo Concertant*. His Suite for clarinet, violin and piano is in similar vein. More demanding than the Honegger works, they are as satisfying to play. Jacques Ibert composed two entertaining and useful reed trios, as well as a variety of smaller pieces.

Francis Poulenc left the clarinet world richer by several sonatas. The Sonata for clarinet and piano is one of the great works in the repertoire, while the shorter and technically simpler sonatas for clarinet and bassoon and for two clarinets scarcely lag behind in terms of musical content and entertainment value.

The *Quatuor pour la Fin du Temps*, written by Olivier Messiaen in a prison camp during the Second World War, ranks as a contemporary classic, and in spite of its difficulties is an indispensable work for any serious clarinetist.

On the other side of the Alps, the Swiss composer Edward Staempfli wrote a concertino for clarinet and strings, as well as works for wind quintet, and Paul Müller-Zurich composed a *Petite sonate* Op. 37. Constantin Regamey's quintet for clarinet, bassoon, violin, cello and piano, and works by the Russian-born Wladimir Vogel are likewise of interest. However, the best-known and respected work in the Swiss clarinet repertoire is the lively and effective *Capriccio* for solo clarinet by Heinrich Sutermeister.

Among English solo works, Arnold Bax's Sonata is firmly established in the concert repertoire. John Ireland's *Fantasy Sonata* is difficult, especially the opening and the sweeping arabesque figures, and presents a number of ensemble problems. The sonatas by Donald Tovey and York Bowen, while not so well known, are worthy of attention. The sonata for clarinet and piano by Herbert Howells is an excellent work, full of depth, and should not be neglected. The *Pocket-sized Sonatas* Nos. 1 and 2 by the Cardiff-born blind composer and pianist Alec Templeton are lighter, but justly popular. Both are strongly jazz-influenced; the first is possibly the more attractive of the two, and the *ad lib* side drum in the last movement should never be omitted!

Gordon Jacob's works including clarinet are all well constructed, imaginative and satisfying for both players and audiences; among them are a sonatine, a trio, and works for larger ensembles.

The Edwardian composer Richard Walthew wrote a concerto for clarinet and orchestra which has recently been revived and republished, also a trio for clarinet or violin, cello and piano, and a set of four *Bagatelles* for clarinet and piano. The concerto by Gerald Finzi, who died young, is a thoughtful work, while his *Five Bagatelles* for clarinet and piano are among the most popular of English compositions for that ensemble; others which are of interest are Thomas F. Dunhill's lighter *Phantasy Suite* and the *Four Pieces* by Howard Ferguson.

Some of Joseph Holbrooke's works for clarinet are, in terms of dates and numbers, rather puzzling. For the benefit of future generations of scholars who may find conflicting opus numbers and nomenclature confusing, one can only recommend Lowe's small (though not very slim) volume on Holbrooke's life and works; it gives a very clear listing for its period.<sup>5</sup> At the present time, the official canon of Holbrooke's

works includes only *one* clarinet quintet (a synthesis of the stronger movements from the original two quintets). Among his other works, the double concerto *Tamerlane* for clarinet and bassoon is worthy of attention.

Phyllis Tate was at her finest in chamber works, many of which use clarinets to great advantage; among the best of these is the sonata for clarinet and cello (unfortunately seldom heard, although its musical quality merits more frequent performance). Alan Rawsthorne composed a concerto and a clarinet quartet which are unjustly neglected.

The concerto for clarinet and orchestra by Carl Nielsen is one of the twentieth century's classics: brilliant, witty and difficult, it has moments of extraordinary beauty. Other Danish composers to have favoured the clarinet during the first half of this century include Hermann Koppel, who wrote a concerto, variations for clarinet and piano, and also featured the instrument in his Sextet Op. 36; Finn Høffding, whose *Dialoger* for oboe and clarinet is a very useful work; Fleming Weis, with a concertino for clarinet and strings and a clarinet sonata; and Vagn Holmboe, a pupil of Høffding and the most important Danish composer after Nielsen, whose *Chamber Concertino No. 3* Op. 21 is scored for clarinet, two trumpets, two horns and strings. Holmboe also wrote a *Serenade* Op. 3 for clarinet with piano quartet and *Rapsodisk Interludium* Op. 8 for clarinet, violin and piano.

The clarinet was not quite so popular in Norway, though Edvard Hagerup Bull's earlier works included a sonata and Karl Andersen's trio for flute, clarinet and cello. The Swedish composer Edvin Kallstenius composed a clarinet quintet, and a number of his compatriots have written wind quintets. In Finland, Aare Merikanto has featured the clarinet prominently in his works for larger ensembles. Iceland has provided sonatas by Gunnar Reynis and Jon Thorarinson, and a variety of chamber works.

In Belgium and the Netherlands, the clarinet has remained a constant favourite, mainly used for its colour and flexibility in large instrumental groups. Works written by the Dutch composer Jan Ingenhoven during the First World War and the decade following include a clarinet sonata and a *Sonatine* for clarinet and violin. Interesting clarinet concertos were composed by the Belgian composers Joseph Jongen and Georges Lonque (*Idoles* Op. 41), the former a brilliantly extrovert work.

Italian composers have mainly concentrated on vocal works, exceptions being Ferruccio Busoni who wrote an unusual and brilliant Concertino and a gentle *Élégie* for clarinet and piano. Also for clarinet and piano is Scontrino's *Bozzeto*. Alfred Casella's quartet is characterised by crisp diatonic dissonances and clear lines.

In the Spanish-speaking world, Amedeo Roldán, a Cuban composer born in Paris who studied in Madrid, is known for the intellectual content of his works, among which is *Danza Negra* for voice, two

clarinets, two violas and percussion. The Argentinian Juan Carlos Paz composed a sonatina for clarinet and piano, also *4 Piezas* for clarinet. *Chóros No. 2* by the Brazilian composer Heitor Villa-Lobos is for flute and clarinet; his trio for reed instruments is difficult but interesting, and well worth the battle with printing errors. Claudio Santoro, also Brazilian, wrote pieces for clarinet and miniature variations for clarinet and strings; he also composed a number of trios including clarinets, which were withdrawn.

Béla Bartók's *Contrasts* for clarinet, violin and piano (for Benny Goodman) was originally projected as a double concerto for clarinet and violin. However, it was never orchestrated and it is difficult to see how any tonal expansion would have improved the work's intensity. Other interesting Hungarian works include a quartet, *Michaelangelo*, for clarinet, horn, bassoon and piano by Albert Siklós and the Sonata Op. 5 by Hans Kornauth, who also wrote a quintet and a nonet.

The sonatina for clarinet and piano by the Polish composer Anton Szalowski is a brilliant and rewarding work, easy to listen to, yet not as difficult as it sounds in places. His duo for flute and clarinet is equally graceful. Kasimierz Sikorski and Michal Spisak both composed concertos for the instrument.

Chronologically, Leoš Janáček belongs mainly to the nineteenth century; musically, he is very much of the twentieth century, and his most important clarinet works belong to its first two decades. The sextet *Mládi*, for wind quintet with the addition of a bass clarinet, ranks as a major work by any standards; *Řikadla* (Nursery Rhymes) was originally written for women's voices with accompaniment of clarinet and piano but later enlarged to include more songs and more instruments.

Concertos were written by Miroslav Krejčí, Rudolf Kubín and Václav Vačkář; the latter's son, Dalibor Vačkář, composed a *Scherzo & cantabile* for clarinet and piano, also a quartet for reed instruments and piano.

Alois Hába (see fig. 5.2) is probably best known for his experimental compositions, and his sonata for quarter-tone clarinet and piano is an unexpectedly attractive work. Other important or interesting sonatas were composed by Jaromir Weinberger (*Sonatina*), Viktor Kalabis and Iša Krejčí, who also wrote a clarinet quintet and various trios. Jaroslav Ježek composed a quartet for the interesting combination of flute, two clarinets and tuba.

Igor Stravinsky's *Three Pieces for Clarinet*, idiomatic but difficult and first published in 1919, are deservedly well known. The last of these, while reputedly jazz-influenced, owes more to the popular music of its period. Among his other compositions, the *Berceuses du chat* and *Histoire du soldat* are both difficult, but very effective.

Nicolai Berezowsky and Vladímír Kryukov composed concertos (the



former dedicated to Cahuzac), as did the Latvian Jēkabs Medinš. The trio for clarinet, violin and piano by Aram Khachaturian is oriental and exotic in mood. Sergei Prokofiev's *Overture on Hebrew Themes*, for clarinet, string quartet and piano has a similarly florid clarinet part and is worth attention.

In Greece and the eastern Mediterranean countries, the clarinet is still mainly known as a folk instrument; but a number of composers have made interesting additions to its repertoire, notably the Greek composer Manolis Kalomiris (songs with clarinet obbligato), the Yugoslav composers Slavko Osterc (a sonatine for two clarinets), Lucijan Marija Škerjanc (a concerto for clarinet, strings, percussion and harp) and Josip Slavenski, and the Bulgarians Konstantin Iliev and Simeon Pironkov (quintets and trios including clarinets).

In the New World, Aaron Copland's concerto for clarinet, strings and harp is an established favourite among players and audiences. The first part is lyrical, the second part, from the cadenza onwards, jazzy, and all of it good. Sonatas for clarinet were composed by, among others, Leo Sowerby, Bernard Heiden, the conductor and composer Leonard Bernstein, and the musicologist, collector and composer Burnet Corwin Tuthill; the last-named also wrote a clarinet concerto and an intermezzo for three clarinets. Virgil Thomson's *Five Portraits* is scored for four clarinets.

The *Hillendale Waltzes* for clarinet and piano by the pianist and composer Victor Babin are excellent recital pieces for almost any audience, and deserve to be far better known. Other Americans who have composed for the instrument include Hunter Johnson who wrote a serenade for flute and clarinet, also a wind quintet (*Elegy for Hart Crane*). His compatriot, Robert Levine Sanders, wrote a *Rhapsody* for flute, clarinet and bassoon. Elliott Carter's *Pastorale* for clarinet and piano is simple but very pleasant.

The Australian clarinet repertoire is not large, and what exists is in the main too recent to be within the scope of this chapter; but the sonata for clarinet and piano by Margaret Sutherland is worth looking at. The clarinet has also become more popular in the Far East during the last fifty years; the Chinese and Japanese repertoire is expanding steadily, though most of the composers are as yet little known in Europe.

Finally, no listing of this kind can hope to be more than selective; in all periods, for every work mentioned in this essay another score exists, many just as worthy of attention. Much research has been done, and many interesting compositions have been rediscovered during the last twenty or thirty years. But there are still tantalising mentions of works which have not yet come to light; there is still much to explore.