

Theses of a DLA doctoral dissertation

Krisztina Tötös

Manifestations of the development  
of the clarinet and the clarinet playing  
in the orchestral repertoire

Supervisor: Mátyás Antal

The Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music

Doctoral School of Arts and Cultural History no. 28

Budapest

2012

## **I. Preliminary**

My choice of subject was inspired by more than 15 years of professional experience in the field of orchestral playing. During this time I had the opportunity to study hundreds of symphonic works from different periods and genres. In my professional activity I always have been highly interested in questions of orchestration and instrumentation, and the longer I studied them, the more interesting connections I found between clarinet parts of the works, particular traits of composer or historic period and the special properties of the instruments used in that era. I felt special interest in studying the initial period of the history of the clarinet, as in the use that these early composers make of the clarinet in their orchestral works seems evident that they treated this new instrument different from the other woodwind instruments that by that time were technically much more advanced. It is also interesting to explore which composers, when and in which of their works used clarinets, and when not and why, as well as to study what aspects affected their choice in this matter.

I didn't find a solid, summarized research on this topic. There are some didactical works about composition and orchestration from different periods which – first of all the chapters about the use of wind instruments – contain instructions on the use of clarinets, too. As an example I would like to mention some of the most well-known and most significant works: the course-books of orchestration of Albrechtsberger, Rimsky-Korsakoff, Berlioz. I also found works studying especially the literature for clarinet though these principally focus on the solo repertoire and on the chamber music with clarinet and they only contain a few examples of orchestral clarinet writing. Of these works I found most useful and valuable the books of Eric Hoeprich and Albert R. Rice. There are also several studies about the history of the technical development of the clarinet but these hardly contain any information on the literature of the instrument.

I didn't find any specialized work that studies especially the integration of the clarinet in the orchestra and the development of its use as an orchestral instrument.

## II. Primary sources

As I explained in the previous section, most of the specialized resources I based my research on can be classified into these three types:

- works on the technical development of the clarinet;
- works about the specific clarinet repertoire;
- works containing general instructions on instrumentation and orchestration.

The most useful sources for this research turned out to be the following ones:

- CARSE, Adam: *The History of Orchestration*. New York: Dover Publications, 1964.
- KUNITZ, HANS: *Die Instrumentation*. Teil IV: *Die Klarinette*. Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1972.
- RICE, ALBERT R.: *The Baroque Clarinet*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- RICE, ALBERT R.: *The Clarinet in the Classical Period*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

- HOEPRICH, ERIC: *The Clarinet*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008.

A part from the information found in these works my primary resources have necessarily been the scores of the studied pieces themselves.

### **III. Methods of the research**

As I proposed to myself to follow the changes in the orchestral use of the clarinet parallel to its technical development, I built up my research plan and methodology as it follows:

1. the point of reference throughout the dissertation which gives an axis to all research in music history is the description of the technical development of the instrument;
2. in the next phase I made a search to find which works of which composers contained clarinet parts in the examined period (ca. 1700-1900);
3. I looked after what instructions are to be found about the use of the clarinet in various works on orchestration written by composers of different periods;

4. at last, the most extensive part of the research has been studying and comparing the scores of the pieces I found in this matter and selecting the ones that are most adequate to illustrate the integration process of the clarinet to the symphony orchestra. I tried to analyse the clarinet parts in the meaning of the information found in the third phase and knowing the technical features described in the first one, then to summarize their most typical properties and to outline the process of the integration.

#### **IV. Achievements**

The main goal of my research has been to chart the orchestral literature containing clarinets and to analyse the changes in the use of clarinets from the point of view of a clarinet player. As I mentioned in the Preliminary, it was my own professional experience that led to this choice.

In consequence of the character of the subject– and as it is the nature of a DLA dissertation – I did not have the objective to present new original research results. But it

still was my aim to hunt up and assemble dispersedly documented information about the topic and to analyse and organize it from a new and individual point of view which enriches the literature of my speciality.

In that respect I think my dissertation has fulfilled its goals. As an outcome of the analysis and comparison of the studied works from the point of view of a clarinet player I created an essay that can be a useful teaching material in secondary or higher education or even for orchestral musicians starting their career. It can be helpful for those who wish to be acquainted with the incredibly rich and diversified orchestral literature of the clarinet, but apart from being a continuous essay it can also be used as a handbook or didactic reference work when looking for information or concrete examples about how a composer or a musical era made use of the clarinet.

## **V. Documentation of the professional work regarding the subject of the dissertation**

Due to the quantity of these concerts it would be impossible to enumerate all the performances that are connected with the subject of this dissertation.

Principally the following professional activities are to be mentioned: during almost two decades of collaboration in a symphony orchestra I had the opportunity to participate at the performance of hundreds of symphonic works, operas, oratorios and masses, among these I performed many of the works discussed in my dissertation.

Many of these concerts were recorded on CD or DVD.

The experience I gained with the performance of these works suggested me to work out this topic in my dissertation and helped me to filter the studied material through the practical point of view of a clarinet player, until it finally becomes a living knowledge.