

CHAPTER SIXCLARINET PERFORMANCE PRACTICESummary

The clarinet was an exception among the commoner instruments in that there was a change in its performance practice during the period under consideration which involved the usage of different types of instrument. Earlier practice considered necessary the use of a range of variously-keyed clarinets while by the Empire more varied use was made of fewer types. In addition, the clarinet was increasingly demanded as a soloist, frequently in opéra-comique and melodrama in preference to the flute and oboe.

Method

Written tutors provide information from which deductions have been made about performance practice, and this has been considered together with a series of statistical surveys of music written for the clarinet from 1768 onward. These surveys are all of operatic music (although samples of other music are included) and are based on single movements or sections of an ensemble divided by key. This unit length has been chosen because such movements or sections do not involve changes of instrument within themselves, and because the range of modulation within each movement could only develop to a limited distance from the tonic key. However, overtures and dance movements have been included together with arias and ensembles, even though the range of modulation may be greater or smaller than in the average vocal piece, in the belief that the style of clarinet writing did not differ in the one kind of music significantly enough from the other to warrant a separation in the analysis.

Other information has been taken from manuscript scores and part-books in the Bibliothèque de l'Opéra, the only available contemporary material

remaining that include<sup>5</sup> autograph instructions to or by clarinetists.

1768-88

Francoeur's Diapason général (1772) listed nine distinct sizes of clarinet. The list was taken over (its source acknowledged) in Laborde's Essai sur la musique.

(low) G  
 A  
 B flat  
 B natural  
 C  
 D  
 E flat<sup>1)</sup>  
 E natural  
 (high) F

All these clarinets used the same system of fingering. Those at the extremes in G, E flat, E natural and F were said to be uncommon, and those in A, B flat and natural, C and D "les plus favorables ... Avec ces quatre espèces, on peut exécuter dans tous les tons ... "2) Each kind of clarinet was recognised as the possessor of an individual tone-property. Against Francoeur's descriptions I have added the corresponding ones found in the Conservatoire report on Müller's omnitonic clarinet, 1810.<sup>3)</sup>

G: "L'espèce la plus grande et la plus douce ... le son en est triste et lugubre."

A: "A le son fort doux, beaucoup moins sombre, et a plus d'étendue que celle en Sol ... Elle est propre aux airs tendres et gracieux ..

"Est propre au genre pastoral ... " (Conservatoire)

B flat

or

natural: "A le son plus fort et plus saillant ... elles sont propres aux grands effets, comme Sinfonies, Ouvertures ... "

"Propre au genre pathétique et majestueux ... " (Conservatoire)

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- 1) Baines/WOODWIND p.300 names the E flat as an exclusively nineteenth-century instrument.  
 2) Francoeur/DIAPASON p.27  
 3) Quoted in Rendall/CLARINET p.93

C: "Plus sonore que celle en Si. Elle est propre aux grands effets, comme Ouvertures, bruits de Guerre ... "

"A le son brillant et vif." (Conservatoire)

D: "Très sonore et très saillant ... propre aux morceaux de grand bruit ... "

E: "A le son très aigu et n'est propre qu'aux tempêtes, Combat, natural: Tambourins ... "

F: "Est plus petite que celle en E-si-mi, et a le son plus aigu ... "

The value given by the Conservatoire report to the amenity of variously-keyed clarinets and their different timbres has been mentioned in chapter 4. As late as 1843 Berlioz wrote of the "caractère particulier" of different clarinets<sup>1)</sup> and the need to use the specified instrument in performance.

The case of variously-keyed clarinets is a good instance of literary documentation providing us with a far more exact guide to performance practice than the surviving instruments themselves. The scarcity of surviving labelled sets of French clarinets of the period would make it impossible to conclude with certainty how the basic sizes of C and B flat were used individually, and when each was lengthened by a corps de rechange. Equal quantities of C and B flat clarinets survive, and P. Bate has noted in contrast the rarity of surviving corps.<sup>2)</sup> The best documented instrument a five-keyed one bought in 1794 and made in Paris "years previous", plays in both B flat and A.<sup>3)</sup> Instruments in England actually made with a basic size of A or B natural seem extremely rare around 1800; D clarinets are more common.

#### Usage

Forsyth's observations sum up the problem.

"Some composers of the old French Operatic school ... used to adopt the rather useless method of writing the Clarinet part regularly in the key of the piece. The continual employment of the C-clarinet

1) Berlioz/TRAITE p.137

2) Letter to the present writer.

3) The basic size in B flat. Description and (English) account of purchase in Bessaraboff/INSTRUMENTS p.100

# VARIOUSLY-KEYED CLARINETS, 1768-1788

KEY OF MOVEMENT in increasing order of accidentals:	C	a min	G	e min	F	d min	D	b min	Bb	g min	A	Eb	c min	E	Ab	f min
NUMBER OF MOVEMENTS Containing																
[27 operas] Clarinets "in C	40	6	24	8	21	6	59	-	16	1	14	13	10	10	-	6
[8 operas] in D			2			1	23									
[6 operas] in Bb									5			12	2			1
[3 operas] in Bb														13		
[4 operas] in A							1				4					

Composers analysed :

Cherubini, Floquet, Gluck, Grétry, Martini, Méreaux,  
Paisiello, Philidor, Piccinni

was by no means intended. The transposition and choice of proper instruments was merely left to the copyist or player."

"This [C] Clarinet was slightly harder in quality than either of our present instruments ... but it is a most surprising coincidence that nine times out of ten the desire for this hard tone-quality existed when the key of the piece happened to be C major." 1)

Saint-Saëns, who worked on the Pelletan edition of Gluck's Orphée, pointed out the mistake of regarding a clarinet part written apparently 'for' the C instrument as at all definitive. Old editions do not generally say "en Ut", and providing modern editions with such a label is "attributing to the author a formal intention he never had". 2) In attempting to discover consistent forms of performance practice I have analysed 31 Parisian operas containing clarinets from Grétry's Le huron to Cherubini's Démophon. The table opposite shows the total number of unit movements in any key on any particular clarinet. The total number of operas from which the examples of any one size of clarinet are drawn is shown on the left.

It may be suspected that the overwhelming number of examples of the use of C clarinets cannot be taken literally. The demands for this instrument in four flats and four sharps is in itself extremely doubtful since, as we have seen in chapter 4, Blasius recommended a limit of three in 1802-3. If eighteenth-century instruments had possessed the capability of playing satisfactorily in E major or F minor clarinets in B flat and natural would have been redundant. The presence of demands for variously-pitched clarinets is the clue to performance practice.

#### Numerical conclusions

Even on the numerical level, the information suggests that the keys B flat, E flat and E required the participation of B flat or B natural clarinets in a significant number of cases. In B flat major, 25% of all

1) Forsyth/ORCH pp.255-6

2) Saint-Saëns/MEMORIES p.154

examples specified B flat clarinets, in E flat major almost 50%, and in E major, 57% of all examples specified the B natural clarinet. Moreover, D clarinets were specified in 28% of all examples in the key of D major. Other keys specified less high but not insignificant percentages of variously-keyed clarinets. A clarinets were demanded in 22% of examples in A major. The totals for minor modes on D, C and F do not appear high, but even here 15% of all examples specified instruments other than in C.

There were over twice as many movements in D requiring clarinets than there were in C. This is odd if it is considered with the total of only 28% of examples in D that specified D clarinets, because taking the table as a whole, the only keys in which the use of variously-keyed instruments (i.e. other than "in" C) require the player to perform are C and F major, and D, G and C minor. That is, when one regards the table from the player's point of view, one may say that for example D clarinets in the key of orchestral G major require the player to perform in F major. In sum, 28 examples required him to play in F major, 32 examples in C major, 2 examples in D minor and one each in G minor and C minor. These keys tended to avoid awkward notes already isolated in chapter 4: e' flat, c sharps and g' sharp. They were obviously more satisfactory to play in than keys with sharps like G or D. The probability is therefore that D or even A clarinets were used where convenient before 1788 for pieces in D major.

That flat keys were more satisfactory to play in provides an interesting raison d'être for the variously-keyed instruments: 63% of all examples noted for all clarinets in keys other than C major or A minor were in sharp keys and 62% of examples noted for C clarinets were in sharp keys. This once more suggests regular employment of compensating variously-keyed instruments; almost every key containing more than one sharp or flat engendered some request for a clarinet other than the C clarinet.

### Musical conclusions

Some analyses have been carried out concerning the musical context of movements containing "C" clarinet parts. In practically every movement in D major the context was an overture, a dance or march or a chorus. Often the movement ended or neared the end of an act. There was therefore no significant musical reason to use other than D or C clarinets whose tone is agreed to have been harder than the B or A. In the case of C clarinets in E major the musical contexts were almost always the same. No particularly lyrical writing in such instances could lead one musically to prefer the assumption that B natural instruments were employed through having had a gentler tone: nevertheless Grétry writes in a more melodic fashion than usual for the B natural clarinet in E major in an air from L'amitié à l'épreuve (1771):

The image shows two staves of handwritten musical notation. The top staff is labeled 'CC 1 in Bb' and the bottom staff is labeled 'Voice'. Both staves are in 4/4 time and E major (two sharps). The notation consists of two measures. The first measure contains a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note C5. The second measure contains a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note G4, and a quarter note F4. The notes are written on a five-line staff with a treble clef. The 'CC 1 in Bb' staff has a flat key signature, while the 'Voice' staff has a sharp key signature.

C clarinets were likewise not generally employed in B flat movements of particular lyricism, making it difficult to decide which instruments the players used. But in some cases what is stated to be for the C clarinet is such a clear demand for solo tone that the mellower B flat instrument may well have been heard. Such a case is the introduction to the air, "Calmez vos esprits", accompanied only by strings, in act 2 of Floquet's Le seigneur bienfaisant (1780)



Le seigneur bienfaisant

[ Full score Ex. 13a, p. 182

'Clarinets 1<sup>er</sup> and 2<sup>e</sup>,

Here and in other places may be perceived an undoubtedly new awareness of the powers of the clarinet. In Floquet's example the composer does not actually ask for a clarinet "in C"; as will be noted below, labelling was often haphazard.

Only six operas specified  $\flat$  clarinets and of these, Cherubini's Démophon (1788) was the only example to use these instruments in a noticeably lyrical way: the movements concerned are all vocal airs or ensembles.

Notational peculiarities

The transposition of variously-keyed clarinets caused problems for composer and copyist. It may be reasonably claimed that frequently, the sole reason for the appearance of a supposedly C instrument was that it was not worth the composer's time to write out a transposed clarinet stave in the score, more especially when the clarinet doubled other instruments. The latter was a common occurrence. In the overture to L'amitié à l'épreuve, which is in D major, the instruction appears in the printed score, "Oboe, flutes trav. et Clarinettes qu'il faut transposer en ut". Since the clarinet part actually appears as for a C instrument with a key signature of two sharps, "en ut" refers not to the proposed key of the clarinet, but of the clarinet part. A D instrument was intended, as was also the case in Grétry's L'union de l'amour et des arts (1773). A dance movement in D major, p.38, requires oboes in unison with clarinets; these are given one stave of music, in two sharps. The instruction reads, "Clarinettes comme les hautbois en ut". Similarly on p.85 clarinets in B natural on their own



stave in a dance in E major are labelled "en fa". Comparable labelling systems may be seen in <sup>Ch</sup> Cherubini's Démophon (see below) and in many scores of all kinds after 1789.

A similar but distinct confusion of expression concerned the clarinet in B natural. As the key of B major was never itself used these instruments were chiefly connected with music in E major, and by a metathesis of terms were frequently referred to as clarinets in "Mi". That clarinets in E were not intended is proved by Vandebroek's Traité général and other, slightly later tutors.<sup>1)</sup> A table of written-out transposition examples is printed on p.46 which includes passages in both E and B major with transpositions in F and C major for clarinet in "Mi dieze". The metathesis was sometimes extended to B flat clarinets playing in E flat, which were then called "Mi bémol".

#### Choice of notation

Those composers who specified clarinets other than in C up to 1788 were Gluck,<sup>2)</sup> Floquet, Grétry, Méreaux, Paisiello and Salieri. There would thus seem to be a possible correlation between the specification of variously-keyed clarinets and training and practice in Italy, since Méreaux is the only composer of the above who is known not to have been trained or to have practised composition there. (However, Gossec's additions to Alceste use the B flat instrument whereas Gluck almost always confined himself to the "C" clarinet). Since the practice of varied notation gradually became more widespread in France, more exhaustive analysis would probably show with whom the tendency commenced and how it spread.

#### Cherubini's 'Démophon'

The relationship in the matter of clarinet performance practice between composer, copyist and player is illuminated by a comparison of

<sup>1)</sup> Michel/METHODE and van der Hagen/CLARINETTE

<sup>2)</sup> In Echo et Narcisse only

the manuscript copy score and the original part-book at the Bibliothèque de l'Opéra, Paris. The keys and markings involved in the opera are set out, abbreviated, below.

MOVEMENT	KEY OF PIECE	TYPE OF CLARINET IN COPY SCORE	TYPE OF CLARINET IN PART-BOOK	MARKINGS IN PART-BOOK
ACT I:				
Ouverture	C	C	C	"en ut" (in red crayon)
First chorus	F min	B flat	B flat	"en F" (copyist)
Recitative, "Un murmure"	B flat	B flat	B flat	"en Ut" (copyist) "en Si" (in red crayon)
Scene 8: fanfare	D	D	D	
Chorus, "Ah vous rendez"	C	C	C	
Final chorus	D	D	D	
ACT 2:				
Introduction	E flat	B flat ("Mi bémol")	C	
Air, Néade "Eloignez-vous"	A	A	C	
Scene 3	B flat	B flat	C	
ACT 3:				
Ensemble "Ceder grand roi"	D min	C	C	
Final chorus	D	D	C	

It is assumed that the copy score was taken from the composer's autograph, now lost, and that the diverse types of clarinet demanded in the copy-score reflect Cherubini's customary niceness. The part-book reveals other modes of thought. As indicated briefly above, the house copyist converted all the movements in acts 2 and 3 as for a clarinet in C, disregarding the copy score. Cherubini's indication accorded with the practice that gave

clarinettists the written opportunity to avoid sharp keys, while the copyist of the last two acts adopted the French practice of merely indicating one kind of instrument. This itself demonstrates the lack of control, or desire for this, of composer over copyist. Printed operatic scores, their manuscript originals often destroyed, may well indicate C clarinets to us only as the result of fortuity as well as the composer's convenience.

The red crayon markings of the players, above, are not particularly valuable since they cannot prove that any one kind of clarinet was used at any given moment. It is nevertheless clear that professional players were accustomed to dealing with actual parts written only for C clarinet. The lack of markings by the players in acts 2 and 3 (typical of almost all other similar part-books seen at the Académie) suggests if anything first a reliance on the player's judgement, and second the likelihood that he would use one size of instrument so long as that were feasible. In their clarification of the orchestral key of each movement, the crayon markings emphasise the latter course of action.

#### Circumstantial evidence

An air with clarinets in A in Floquet's Le seigneur bienfaisant, p.166, is followed directly by a chorus with clarinets in B flat. The clarinet part contains a gap of nine bars, Lento, which may have been provided in order that a change of corps de rechange might be effected.

1789-1810

#### Literary evidence

Vandenbroeck's Traité général (ca.1795), designed for the use of composers, lends strength to the evidence for the contemporary use of clarinets in four keys only: A, B flat, B natural and C. A table (p.46) sets out which clarinet was used in each key up to five sharps and three flats.

Piece	Key of clarinet
C, F, G	C
A	A
D	A
B flat	B flat
E flat	B flat
E	B natural
B	B natural (all major mode)

A commentary explained the habitual practice of French composers.

"Cependant la plupart des Compositeurs laissent tous les bémols ou tous les dieses à la Clef; les Musiciens sont bien obligés de connaître toutes les Clefs et la transposition. Nous avons des Musiciens qui se trouvent très embarrassés quand il faut qu'ils transposent, et d'autres à qui cela ne coûte rien par la grande habitude."

The use of C clarinets for F major and the exclusion of D clarinets from G, D and A major are particularly noteworthy. Vandembroeck also provides confirmation here of the ability of players to deal with parts written out entirely for C clarinet but wishing to use other sizes of instrument. However, it appears that there was no case for consistency of ability to be assumed.

The physical nature of clarinets used in the way described above is also given in Lefèvre's Méthode de clarinette (1802), p.138. This account substantially advances our knowledge of the practical situation, and is itself corroborated by the slightly earlier Nouvelle méthode de clarinette by van der Hagen (1798-1800). Lefèvre's explanation states:

"Autrefois, on se servait de 7 différentes clarinettes pour jouer dans les orchestres. Aujourd'hui deux suffisent, avec le corps de rechange, pour jouer dans tous les tons. La première est la clarinette en Ut, son corps de rechange est en Si majeur, la seconde est la clarinette en Si bémol, son corps de rechange est en La majeur ... "

How far back in time before 1795 this particular performance practice extended cannot be judged; that it was accepted officially at the period of the Directory is suggested by records of the Conservatoire prizegiving. The first "prix pour le cours d'étude de l'an V" for clarinet was "deux

clarinettes, l'une en si, l'autre en ut", and was awarded on 24 October 1797.<sup>1)</sup> Other prize-winners received only one instrument each, such as an oboe or a bassoon. The same system continued until at least 1801 when no first prize was awarded for the clarinet. After this, mention of the prizes was not recorded individually to 1810. But in 1817 only one clarinet (or 100 francs) was given.

Clarinets in B flat are referred to as "en si" in van der Hagen's tutor mentioned above and in Michel's Méthode de clarinette (1801-2); there is thus no ambiguity in the nomenclature of these prize instruments. Van der Hagen's and Michel's tutors incidentally provide evidence on performance not found elsewhere. The first states (p.70) that "La clarinette en ré n'est presque plus en usage. Les clarinettes en Mi bémol et en fa ne sont employés que dans les musiques militaire". This shows that the smaller clarinets were more established in military use than might be supposed from surviving music or from modern text-books, building up a separate set of performance traditions outside the concert orchestras. Farmer's Military Music names the Consulate as the period of introduction<sup>2)</sup> which may therefore be slightly too late a date, and names only the F clarinet in this context.

From Michel's tutor stems an interesting hint (p.2) concerning the rise of the B flat clarinet.

"... elle est plus basse d'un ton que celle en Ut ce qui la met dans la nécessité de transposer pour se rapporter à l'unisson des Violons, mais ce léger inconvénient disparaît devant tous les bons Musiciens qui s'en trouvent avantageusement dédomagés par un son plus beau et plus fort et par un doigté plus facile."

Thus an orchestral performer might have played on a B flat instrument by preference, reading from a part for C clarinet, in as many different keys as

1) Pierre/CONSERVATOIRE p.511

2) Farmer/MILITARY p.39, probably after Kastner/MANUEL p.169. A five-keyed F clarinet from the beginning of the 19th century survives in the Bate Collection at Oxford.

# VARIOUSLY - KEYED CLARINETS, 1789-1791

KEY OF MOVEMENT  
in increasing order of  
accidentals:

	C	a min	G	e min	F	d min	D	b min	Bb	g min	A	Eb	c min	E	Ab	f min
NUMBER OF MOVEMENTS Containing Clarinets "in C	43	1	12	2	18	17	40	-	16	3	18	24	8	22	-	3
[2 operas] in D									1							
[7 operas] in Bb									9	1	1	13	1			
[1 opera] in A																2
[TOTAL 27 OPERAS]																

Composers analysed =

Berton, Champein, Dalayrac, Désaugiers, Grétry, Kreutzer,  
L. Jadin, Langlé, Lemoine, Méhul, Rigel, Rochefort, Vogel,  
Zingarelli

his ability to transpose and tackle accidentals would allow. When these difficulties of technique became too great the C clarinet became convenient, because so few parts were transposed for the player's convenience. Michel continues:

"Il est bon cependant de savoir jouer dans tous les tons avec la seule Clarinette en Ut à cause des modulations diézées et bémolisées qui peuvent se rencontrer dans un morceau de musique ... "

What Michel implies (and is not stated by Lefèvre) is that it was common practice to play as far as possible on one or other of the B flat or C clarinets, and not to use the corps de rechange to obtain an instrument in A or B natural. In fact, the rarity of surviving B natural corps bears him out;<sup>1)</sup> moreover, out-of-tuneness increased with the use of the corps, as Catrufo pointed out (see chapter 4, p. 177) which naturally, with the trouble involved in adjustment, militated against their use.<sup>2)</sup>

#### Changes in taste, 1789-1791

A statistical enquiry into 27 operas written in these three years is shown tabulated opposite. Only operas specifically written for the French stage were included. Several features are of interest when comparing this table with that covering a similar number of operas before 1789. The increase in the number of keys in which B flat clarinets were specified is not significant in view of the table covering 1792-95; what is more important is the total increase (from 25 to 37) in the number of movements in E flat including clarinets, whether specified in C or B flat. A slight total increase is likewise perceptible in movements in B flat. D minor was now a much more popular key in which to include clarinets.

On the sharp side not only was there a (temporary) lessening of the popularity of the key of D major, but a radical change in the specification

1) Letter from B. Bate Esq. to the present writer.

2) In the light of this, Rendall|CLARINET pp. 131-2 is inclined to overstress the French use of the B natural clarinet.

of D clarinets. Whereas before 1789 over a quarter of the movements in D major specified D clarinets, between 1789 and 1791 the only two movements to specify D clarinets at all were in E minor and B minor. This suggests first a decline in use, which would be favourably comparable with the literary evidence, and second a sophistication betrayed in the desire for a certain tone-colour in a 'cold' minor key. The instance in B minor is particularly striking (Ex.51). This is from Kreutzer's Lodoiska (1791); not only is the intrinsic quality of the key exploited but high horns in A are also used in order to secure the effect of coarseness.

The general trend towards the adoption of clarinets overall in flat keys, which may be linked with the single instance of an A clarinet specified in D major, is demonstrated by analysis of the keys (other than C and A minor) in which the C clarinet was specified. Whereas before 1789 62% of examples were in sharp keys, the percentage was only 51 during 1789-91.

If the figures in the table are applied so as to simulate the practice quoted earlier from Vandenbroeck's Traité, it may be seen that the clarinet in B flat/A was already employed more frequently than that in C/B natural. (Assuming E minor, D minor played on C clarinet

B minor played on A clarinet

G minor, C minor, F minor played on B flat clarinet)

Clarinet in C	B natural	B flat	A
94 examples	22 examples	81 examples	61 examples
	(total 116)		(total 142)

The same trend towards a hypothetical increase in adoption of the B flat instrument is seen when analysing the table from the player's point of view. Although F and C major and D and G minor were required to be played in the same proportions as before when variously-keyed clarinets were specified (14, 9, 2 and 2 cases respectively) the cases of B flat clarinets in G and A



# VARIOUSLY-KEYED CLARINETS, 1792-1795

KEY OF MOVEMENT  
in increasing order of  
accidentals:

	C	a min	G	e min	F	d min	D	b min	Bb	g min	A	Eb	c min	E	Ab	f min	bb	eb	
[30 operas] Clarinets in C	58	7	23	4	33	23	71	1	42	14	20	40	20	9	-	9	1	1	
[2 operas] in D						2													
[7 operas] in Bb									2	1									
[1 opera] in Bb																			1
[3 operas] in A							7												1

[TOTAL 30 OPERAS]

Composers analysed:

- Berton, Bruni, Candeille, Cherubini, Dalayrac,
- Fay, Gaveaux, Gossec, Grétry, L. Jadin, Langlé,
- Lemoyne, Le Sueur, Martini, Méhul, Méreaux, Rochefort,
- Solié, Steibelt

major meant effective performance in A major and B major. As these were awkward keys, a tonal preference is strongly implied.

#### Choice of notation

B flat clarinets from 1789 to 1791 were specified by Dalayrac, Louis Jadin, Kreutzer, Langlé and Rochefort; of these only Langlé had studied in Italy, but Dalayrac was Langlé's pupil. It is apparent that what may have been an Italian custom was now more common among French composers. Gossec's autographs of the *Te Deum* (1790) (P.3) and *Peuple, éveille-toi* (P.8) show a choice of C clarinets in F major and D minor, but B flat clarinets in E flat major. Giroust's orchestral overture in C minor (ca.1789)<sup>1)</sup> uses B flat clarinets. The composer never studied in Italy.

#### Continuing trends, 1792-1795

Thirty operas were analysed from this period. General increases in the number of operatic movements containing clarinets may be seen. Against 298 examples prior to 1789, 260 examples were counted from 1789 to 1791, rising to 400 in the next three years. The latter figure coincides with the new liberty of the theatres and supremacy of opéra-comique as a genre. Movements in D major resumed about their former number, but movements in B flat and E flat far exceeded former totals. Clarinets were correspondingly required in unusually flat keys not previously noted (see table opposite) and the totals for D minor, C minor and F minor all increased. If the spirit of the time demanded a higher incidence of minor mode expression clarinets were undoubtedly felt equal to the task of giving it musical substance.

As might be expected, B flat instruments maintained their specified rôles in B flat and E flat major. The B natural instrument, in its single specified appearance, seems, as from literary evidence, to have been little used. There was a jump in the number of times A clarinets were written for, significantly tending to be used in place of ordinary G or the now rarer

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<sup>1)</sup> B.N., MS.2081 (autograph)

D instruments, in the key of D major.

Despite the sudden rise in the number of movements in D, the tendency was still towards the greater adoption of flat keys containing clarinets. Only 41% of all examples specifying "C" clarinets (excluding C major and A minor) were now in sharp keys, as compared with 51% in the previous three years and 62% from 1768 to 1788. Following Vandebroek's table once again, analysis also shows that, hypothetically, the preferred use of the mellower-toned clarinets continued to take place at an increasing rate.

Clarinet in C	B natural	B flat	A
148 examples	12 examples	138 examples	100 examples
	(total 160)		(total 238)

Printed parts 1790-1795

A total of 36 pieces of music from these years has been analysed, comprising wind ensemble music, sinfonia concertantes and concertos. This total is not a significant one taking the whole field into consideration, and offers only a restricted range of keys. The table echoes nevertheless the pattern of performance practice that has already been shown in opera.

Key of movement	C	G	F	d min	D	E flat	c min
Movements containing clarinets in C	4	1	18	4	2	-	2
Containing clarinets in B flat						5	

The supremacy of B flat instruments in E flat major is in no doubt. The examples in D major were Devienne's orchestral symphony La bataille de Gemmap (ca.1793) and Le Sueur's Le chant des triomphes (1794) (P.91). It would have been interesting to see whether the educated clarinetists emerging from or still part of the Institut were expected to transpose

republican hymns or ensemble music from printed parts in various keys; but it has been found that apart from the examples in E flat the only commonly used key was F major. This was adequately rendered on the clarinet in C. The production of parts for B flat instruments in E flat major is merely confirmatory.

Consolidation, 1796-1800

A total of 48 operas comprising 464 movements was analysed covering this period. No examples at all were found that specified D or B natural clarinets. The results of breaking down the totals according to the performance practice indicated by Vandebroek were as follows:

Clarinet in C	B natural	B flat	A
176 examples	19 examples	159 examples	110 examples
	(total 195)		(total 269)

This proportion of examples likely to have been played on the clarinet in C/B natural may be expressed as 42%; it compares with 40% for the period 1792-95.

Two factors point to the incipient desire to use the B flat/A clarinet even more extensively. For the first time the clarinet in B flat was specified (three times) in the key of F major. As in the preceding period, F major was a popular key in which to use clarinets; a total of 38 movements was counted. Moreover, the steady growth in the number of examples in E major (from 11 to 18) may be considered with the presence of one demand for the A clarinet in this key, and no demands for the B natural clarinet.

The interest in using clarinets for more uncommon keys was maintained and extended. The number of movements in F minor with clarinets (the overture to Cherubini's Médée is one example) rose to 10. The opening of the second finale to Berton's Montano et Stéphanie (1799), again with clarinets, is really in F sharp minor, although only two sharps appear in

(a) 1801-5

VARIOUSLY-KEYED CLARINETS

KEY OF MOVEMENT

in increasing order of accidentals: C a min G e min F d min D b min Bb g min A Eb c min E Ab f min min b b min

NUMBER OF MOVEMENTS

Containing	C	Bb	A	D	Bb	A	E	E	f#	b b								
[43 operas]	63	8	53	2	44	14	63	2	44	14	29	34	6	9	1	6	-	1
[19 operas]		in Bb	5	-	2	-	2	6	-	20	2	-	26	4	-	-	-	-
[6 operas]		in A	4	2	1		1		9									3
[1 opera]		in D					1		1									

[TOTAL 43 OPERAS]

# Used by the Italian A.F.G. Pacini (1778-1866) in 1805. Pacini arrived in Paris in 1804.

(b) 1806-10

KEY OF MOVEMENT

in increasing order of accidentals: C a min G e min F d min D b min Bb g min A Eb c min E f# min min Ab

NUMBER OF MOVEMENTS

Containing	C	Bb	A	D	Bb	A	E	E	f#	Ab							
[41 operas]	103	15	49	13	47	23	87	8	42	18	35	44	20	24	13	-	3
[18 operas]		in Bb	2	3	1		22	3	25	2							
[6 operas]		in A		2			8		6					2			1

[TOTAL 41 OPERAS]

the key signature. Clarinets made two brief appearances in A flat, a newly observed key, in a recitative in Berton's Le délire, act 1, and the Andante of the first finale of Persuis's Fanny Morna, both 1799. In all these cases the B flat clarinet may have been used, and in one case, Devienne's Le valet de deux maîtres, was asked for. Passages such as Ex.53 from Médée, taken at speed, seem difficult to transpose at sight, but not so awkward once the music has become familiar, owing to the music's symmetries: and such a passage is fairly advanced by the technical orchestral standards of the time.

The choice of clarinet was very gradually accruing to the composer. This is seen partly by the B flat labelling of some clarinet parts in scores from 1796 in spite of the music actually being printed as traditionally, for instruments as though in C. All the cases that have been noted involved the employment of B flat instruments, and were written by Gaveaux (Le petit matelot, Léonore, Sophie et Moncars, Le trompeur trompé), Devienne (Le valet de deux maîtres) and Boieldieu (Beniowsky). An example from 1798 is illustrated in Ex.52. Such forms of labelling in printed scores were used occasionally to 1810, especially in the keys of E flat and B flat major. The practice reflects in general terms one stage in the process by which greater exactitude was achieved in French scores, first discussed in chapter 1, p.//.

#### The B flat/A clarinet, 1801-1810

The tables opposite reveal significant differences from those preceding them in the matter of specification of clarinets in B flat and A. The percentage of examples likely to have been played on this type of clarinet following Vandebroek's guide is almost identical to that in the two earlier periods of analysis: but the differences in the pattern of specification after 1800 show that new considerations may have entered performance practice, rendering Vandebroek's assumptions inaccurate.

In the period 1801-5 E flat clarinets are found to be specified in keys hitherto only the written province of "C" clarinets: C and D major,

and D minor. In addition, the B flat/A instrument was specified in G major and C minor, keys formerly associated with it only in unique instances during 1789-91. Expressed as overall percentages, the specification of B flat and A clarinets was now 18% as against 4.5% in 1796-1800 and 5.5% in 1792-5. The A clarinet was again associated with E major, following the example discussed above. These tendencies are also to be noted, in less emphatic proportions, during 1806-10 when the percentage of examples specified for the B flat and A instruments was 12.5% of the total number. Nevertheless the continued association of the B flat instrument with the keys of C, G and F majors is important.

From the player's point of view, the patterns of specification now imposed by composers themselves required greater technical expertise. In using the variously-keyed instruments suggested from 1801 to 1810 in scores represented in the tables, clarinetists now had to play in the sharp keys of G, D, A, E and A minor in 31 instances.

The unusually large number of movements in C major from 1806 to 1810 is partly due to the existence of larger scale Académie works: Le triomphe de Trajan, Alexandre chez Apelles, Abel and others. While evidence in the following section does not prove the use of anything other than clarinets in C in these instances, Isouard's Cendrillon (Opéra-Comique, 1810) twice demands B flat instruments in C major. During the period 1801-5 identical demands were made by the opéra-comique composers Gaveaux and L. A. Piccinni. Yet the only Académie composers to do this were visitors to Paris, Winter and Paisiello. It is therefore possible that the Académie maintained a tradition of using C clarinets where possible which was not respected in other orchestras. The persistent demands for the clarinet in B flat/A were not, however, by any means exclusively made by composers for the smaller theatres. Catel, Steibelt, Kreutzer and Persuis all appear in scores for

the Académie from 1801 on to require the larger clarinet in keys other than C. The reason for the omission of this key in conjunction with this clarinet may indeed reflect a knowledge of Académie conservatism, since practically all their demands for the B flat or A clarinet run on well established lines in such keys as B flat, E flat, C minor, G minor, A, D and E.

I have already mentioned the Conservatoire's decision to award only a single prize instrument from 1817, presumably that in B flat/A as more appropriate to solo playing.<sup>1)</sup> On the practical level it was far more satisfactory for a player not to have to change from one instrument to another. Blasius's Nouvelle méthode de clarinette (1802-3), p.46, alluded to this hazard, especially prevalent in cold weather with concomitant large and relatively rapid changes of temperature and humidity. Before 1810 or thereabouts such practical circumstances probably helped to retard that general propensity towards the use of the B flat/A clarinet which composers would have welcomed.

#### Académie part-books

The 13 sets of Académie part-books examined dating from 1789-1810 contain no further information as detailed as that found in Cherubini's Démophon. The great majority of music is for the clarinet in "C." Of the 9 operas from 1800 to 1809 whose orchestral material was examined, only Kreutzer's Astianax, Catel's Alexandre chez Apelles, Steibelt's Le retour de Zéphire and Blangini's Nephtali contain movements with music for clarinets in B flat that is reproduced as such in the part-books. The keys in which these movements were written were conservative ones (B flat, G minor, E flat, C minor) and the total number of movements in which this took place is 13. Not even Spontini in his operas insisted on the B flat/A clarinet

<sup>1)</sup> In 1816 Reicha indicated the common existence of three clarinets; his statement is ambiguously expressed and does not distinguish between basic sizes and those altered by means of the corps de rechange. "Il y a 3 Clarinettes, savoir, en La, en Si bémol et en Ut." (Reicha/COURS p.254) This could be taken to mean that players now might possess three separate basic sizes of clarinet, and hence presage the ultimate passing of the C clarinet.



appearing in the copy score or part-books. There is no reason to suppose that a change of performance practice took place during the above decade: no alterations appear in the part-books of those works which, like Astianax, were repeatedly given throughout all or part of this period.

A player's note in the part-book of Catel's Alexandre chez Apelles gives some reason to think that the particular clarinettists involved principally used the C clarinet, only changing to the B flat instrument when the written part demanded, and therefore engaging in no transposition at all. The note, reproduced in context below, is far from conclusive: it might simply have been a timely reminder following a page-turn or inserted to remind the player just of the fact that a solo rather than an ensemble was imminent.

Foliation of score	Key of piece	Type of clarinet indicated both in score and part-book
ff.1-181	C (2 movements)	C
	G	C
	F	C
	D (3 movements)	C
	A	C
ff.216-267	F (3 consecutive movements)	C
f.268	An instrumental recitative, shared with solo bassoons	B flat Player's note: <sup>1</sup> "Il faut prendre la Clari. en Si"
f.277	G min	B flat
f.301	E flat	B flat <u>music by Haydn</u>

<sup>1)</sup> X. Lefèvre was the first clarinet, assisted by L. Lefèvre and E. Soler: ALMANACH/II, 1809

Foliation of score	Key of piece	Type of clarinet indicated both in score and part-book
Act 2		
ff.1-83	C (3 movements)	C
	F	C
	F min	C
f.243	A	A [music by Paer]
f.272	C	C
f.287 (i)	E flat	B flat
f.323	C	C

The obvious explanation nevertheless remains the general adoption of the C clarinet in this case.

#### The clarinet in F

The presence of F clarinets in Grétry and Cherubini as indicated in Rendall's The Clarinet (p.129), I have been unable to isolate. This writer's sources may have been unfamiliar with the notational ambiguities in scores described above. In Lodoiska for example, the part on p.200 is labelled "en Fa" but is actually written out for the B flat instrument. As the key of the aria is F minor there is no possibility that this transposition would have been made to no purpose.<sup>1)</sup>

In 1809 Spontini originally included clarinets in high F in Fernand Cortez. The clarinets do not appear in the printed score, but exist in the Académie part-book, the copy full score and the autograph,<sup>2)</sup> chiefly in act 3. From the copy full score it may be ascertained that the F clarinet at some stage either of rehearsal or of performance, may have been heard in these movements:

- 1) Rendall's adjacent statement that high E flat clarinets appear in several 18th-century opera scores by Cherubini must refer to works preceding Démophon.
- 2) B. de l'Op. A.418a (I-III)

Act 2	p.448 (of printed score)	"Musique barbare dans le lointain"
Act 3	p.476	Opening chorus
	p.518	Solo, High Priest, "Prince, peuple, guerriers"
	p.530	Chorus, "Enchaînons"
	p.550	Ensemble and accompanied recitatives
	p.575	Solo, High Priest, "O douleur", and succeeding final chorus of triumph.

These parts for the F clarinet are also to be seen in the autograph score, subsequently crossed out and rewritten for instruments in C. The part-book, although similarly subjected to alteration, retains F clarinets in the off-stage "musique barbare" in act 2. There is no doubt that Spontini tried or wished to try these instruments experimentally. Something caused him to reject them from act 3, possibly during the process of orchestral refining in rehearsal for which he was notorious, and then to omit them completely from the published score. Anthony Baines has suggested in conversation that early F clarinets were not as raucous in the high register as our equivalents. This being so it is possible that the conservatism, even traditions, of the Académie orchestra lay behind their rejection rather than unsuitability of timbre. But Spontini's autographs show that in general he pruned orchestration in preference to augmenting it.

His original vision was to infuse the orchestral tutti with a tone-colour which would help match the spectacular rescue scene, the climax of the opera; this took place in an exotic temple.

"... les prêtres mexicains peignaient sur ces draperies tout ce qui pouvait effrayer l'imagination, et donner plus d'empire au culte cruel dont ils étaient les ministres. Le tableau principal représente le supplice de la mère d'Amazily ... " 1)

In musical terms the F clarinets, although planned only for use in the tutti, must have been intended to sound prominent simply because of their high

1) Printed full score p.510

tessitura. In such cases as the chorus, p.530, they are in effect in unison with the piccolos, an octave above the clarinets appearing in the printed score. Their projected inclusion represents a singular example of the transference of military performance practice to the lyric stage. The attempt to secure the impression of an unholy sacrifice, grotesquely arrayed, using high clarinets, may even have been known to Berlioz.

#### The position in 1810

However strong the influence of newly arrived composers (for example Isouard, Della-Maria, Pacini, Woelfl) and the statistical evidence for the increasingly regular employment of the B flat/A clarinet, the priority of the C clarinet on paper did not change in some quarters. Le Sueur and Méhul seem virtually never to have left a part other than in C; this is as characteristic of those autographs of Méhul that I have seen as of the printed music. The evidence of the early Prix de Rome cantatas may also bear out the persistence of traditional notational practices at the Conservatoire. None of the six examples studied, written between 1803 and 1810, incorporated other than clarinets in C, even in E major. However, neither were these parts actually labelled, "in C". It may be that it was thought that lack of time rendered transposition undesirable; but there is no definite cause to think so. Rather the official attitude may have been that a simply transposable orchestral part might be left in C except when a solo was required, when a B flat instrument was to be used. Two concertos by Conservatoire members conform to this pattern. The student I. F. Dacosta's first clarinet concerto in B flat (1802)<sup>1)</sup> was printed with the solo part for B flat instrument, but the orchestral parts for C instruments. The

1) B.N., Vm<sup>24</sup>.49; published by Chapelle, 51 Passage des Panoramas. Hopkinson/PUB first lists Chapelle in 1802. The first (unidentified) Dacosta clarinet concerto played at a Conservatoire students' concert was heard on 9 February 1802: Pierre/CONSERVATOIRE p.477

professor Charles Duvernoy's clarinet concerto, in the same key, has the solo part in the autograph score<sup>1)</sup> written out straight away for B flat clarinet. (There are no clarinets in the orchestra.) The third symphony of Reicha,<sup>2)</sup> played at the Conservatoire on 7 May 1809, uses clarinets "in C" throughout, having F major as the key of the principal movements.

In conclusion the clearest feature in a somewhat complicated area of performance practice is the attempt by composers to dictate the use of particular types of clarinet and, following the emergence of two basic sizes, their growing persuasion of the merits of the B flat/A clarinet. A preference by performers for this type cannot be established from the Académie part-books, and in fact a contrary tradition may have obtained. Nevertheless it is practically certain that there was a widespread convention of using the B flat clarinet in E flat or B flat major and their relative minors, and of using the A clarinet in A and D major and their relatives. If Michel was correct, "tous les bons Musiciens" preferred the larger clarinet wherever possible. To such a player only difficult modulations made the use of the C clarinet necessary because parts were chiefly provided untransposed and continued to be so to 1810. But the continuing superior numbers of movements in C, G, F and D major with clarinets was almost bound to guarantee an overall preference for the C instrument if players were unwilling to transpose at sight or, through practical difficulties, to change from one basic size to the other.

<sup>1)</sup> B.N., MS.11454. Dates from before February 1803, when it was given at a Conservatoire students' concert. The MS also states, "Joués au Concert rue de Cléry".

<sup>2)</sup> B.N., MS.14499 (autograph)