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Woodwind Performance

Reading between the (Ledger) Lines: Performing Mozart's Music for the Bass Clarinet*

Robert Adelson

Prior to World War II, the musical world existed in a state of blissful ignorance with respect to Mozart's works for the clarinet. Few musicians could have foreseen the tremendous series of revelations which would both enrich and complicate their understanding of these beloved compositions. It was in August 1948 that the British musicologist George Dazeley published a groundbreaking article in which he boldly stated: "It is . . . the writer's opinion that the solo part in the published text of the concerto [K622] . . . is not as Mozart originally wrote it, but has been adapted to bring it within the usual compass of the clarinet."¹ Dazeley argued persuasively that Mozart's Concerto, his Quintet K581, and several other works were

* I would like to express my gratitude to Arthur Ness (Boston) and Harry Joelson-Strohbach (Stadtbibliothek, Wintherthur) for their assistance with this research. I would also like to thank Christopher Hogwood (Academy of Ancient Music) for bringing to my attention the André viola arrangement of K622.

¹ George Dazeley, "The Original Text of Mozart's Clarinet Concerto," *Music Review* 9 (1948), 166.

originally composed for a clarinet with a lower range extended to a low c. This instrument, now commonly referred to as a basset clarinet (not to be confused with the basset horn), seems to have been the fruit of a creative partnership between Mozart, his clarinetist friend Anton Stadler, and the clarinet maker Theodor Lotz. Dazeley concluded his article with a challenge to test his hypothesis in the concert hall: "It rests with some public-spirited firm of instrument makers to construct an A clarinet with basset horn compass, hand it over to one of our basset horn specialists, and so make it possible for the musical public to hear at any rate the Concerto in something like its original and authentic form."² Even though the autographs of the Concerto and Quintet are lost, these works are now regularly performed in reconstructed versions on basset clarinets of various designs in both concerts and recordings. What was only fifty years ago a radical hypothesis has now become the status quo, leading one critic to write: "The revival of the basset clarinet . . . has progressed to the point where it seems likely that performances of the Mozart concerto on a modern clarinet . . . will soon be considered unacceptable."³ This progress can be largely attributed to the symbiotic relationship—mirroring the Mozart-Stadler-Lotz triangle—between musicologists, clarinetists, and instrument builders.

Despite the remarkable discoveries of the last fifty years, clarinetists and musicologists are still grappling with the same questions posed by Dazeley in 1948: In the absence of autographs, what specific passages in the Concerto and Quintet are in need of reconstruction? What kind of instrument was Stadler's basset clarinet? Finally—and perhaps most importantly—how do we go about performing these works today?

This study aims to celebrate the discoveries of the past half century by focusing on some findings from this period which still await integration into performance. I will first review the major achievements since 1948, assessing the present state of knowledge. I will then suggest several areas which might serve as possible sources for further research into textual and performance practice issues. Finally, I will discuss the musical, historical, and practical context for the

² Dazeley, "Original Text," 171.

³ Harry Haskell, *The Early Music Revival: a History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1988), 190-91.

basset clarinet, and will offer some unexpected candidates for basset-clarinet repertoire.

I. RESEARCH AND EXPERIMENTATION: 1948-1997

The heyday of the basset clarinet was regrettably brief. It seems to have been developed around 1788—late in the careers of both Mozart (d. 1791) and Lotz (d. 1792). Stadler, the last surviving member of the original partnership, died in 1812, and with his death, the association of the basset clarinet with Mozart's solo clarinet works faded into oblivion. As the 19th century progressed, few remembered the pioneering musical-organological achievements of Stadler and Lotz. In 1869, Eduard Hanslick simply remarked that Stadler "made a few improvements to the clarinet," without specifying these improvements or linking them to any repertoire. Two pieces of the puzzle did survive into the 19th and 20th centuries, however: scattered references to the existence of extended-range clarinets, and the realization that several of Mozart's opera arias were written for such an instrument (Ferrando's aria "Ah lo veggio" from *Così fan tutte* and Sesto's obbligato aria "Parto, parto" from *La clemenza di Tito*).⁴ Both Roland Tenschert and Willi Reich wrote papers in the 1930s discussing both Stadler's interest in extended-range clarinets and Mozart's clarinet writing, but neither made the crucial connection to the Concerto and Quintet.⁵ In 1939, Sir Donald Tovey assessed the surviving manuscript sources of Mozart's clarinet music as demons-

⁴ For early references to the basset clarinet, see C.F. Pohl, *Denkschrift aus Anlass des hundertjährigen Bestehens der Tonkünstler-Societät* (Vienna, 1871), *Joseph Haydn* (Berlin, 1875-82); Oscar W. Street, "The Clarinet and Its Music," *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 42 (1915-16), 89-115. "Parto, parto" continued to be published with basset notes intact throughout the 19th century; early editions of "Ah lo veggio" retained some basset notes and placed others up an octave.

⁵ Roland Tenschert, "Fragment eines Klarinetten-Quintetts von W.A. Mozart," *Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft* 13 (1930-31), 218-22; Willi Reich, "Bemerkungen zu Mozarts Klarinettenkonzert," *Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft* 15 (1932-33), 276-78. Oskar Kroll was also aware of the basset clarinet when writing his book *Die Klarinette* in the 1930s, but this work was not published until 1965.

trating "a manifest absence of mind as to the downward compass of the instrument."⁶

Dazeley's article of 1948 was remarkable for its daring hypothesis based on two arguments for which the evidence was ultimately circumstantial. First, since we know that Stadler's basset horns (in F and G) and B-flat clarinet (used for "Parto, parto") descended to a low c, it would stand to reason that he would have outfitted his A clarinet with such an extension.⁷ Second, many passages in the Concerto (as well as a few in the Quintet) reveal evidence of rewriting to fit the range of the standard clarinet: "Further investigation shows several places in each movement where a kind of "fault" (in the geological sense) occurs; a whole section of a phrase seems to have slipped an octave relative to the rest, so that descending scale passages suddenly rise a seventh, and arpeggio phrases rise or fall a sixth instead of continuing smoothly."⁸

In an uncanny coincidence, the Prague musicians Jiří Kratochvíl and Milan Kostohryz arrived at similar conclusions to Dazeley—also in 1948. Although Dazeley's findings were published first, Kratochvíl went one step further and reconstructed the text of the entire Concerto for the first modern performance on basset clarinet by Josef Janous.⁹ In 1956, Kratochvíl himself gave the first modern basset clarinet performance of the Quintet, and published several articles on reconstructions of Mozart's basset clarinet music.¹⁰

⁶ Donald Tovey, *Essays in Musical Analysis* 6 (London, 1939), 27-28.

⁷ Dazeley did not, however, follow this line of thinking to its ultimate conclusion; namely, that Stadler's C clarinet also would have had an extension to a low c. Although this is possible, no extant music for C clarinet shows basset notes.

⁸ Dazeley, "Original Text," 167.

⁹ Performed in Prague on 21 June 1951 on an instrument built by Rudolf Trejbal.

¹⁰ Jiří Kratochvíl, "Betrachtungen über die Urfassung des Konzerts für Klarinette und des Quintetts für Klarinette und Streicher von W.A. Mozart," *Internationale Konferenz über das Leben und Werk W.A. Mozarts* (Prague, 1956), 262-71; "Ist die heute gebräuchliche Fassung des Klarinettenkonzerts und des Klarinettenquintetts von Mozart authentisch?" *Beiträge zur Musikwissenschaft* 2 (1960), 27-34; "Otázka původního znění Mozartova Koncertu pro Klarinet a Kvintetu pro Klarinet a smyčce," *Hudební věda* (1967), 44-70.

Despite the research of Dazeley and Kratochvíl, firmer evidence was needed in order to corroborate their speculations. This came with the discovery of an 1802 review of the Concerto in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, in which the anonymous reviewer explicitly stated that the work was written for a clarinet with a low c, and was later revised—and rather poorly at that.¹¹ The reviewer cited many specific passages as having been altered from the basset clarinet; most of them corresponding to the conclusions reached by Dazeley and Kratochvíl. This discovery of the *AmZ* review is usually credited to Ernst Hess, who published his finding in 1967; but in fact, this major advance in research had also been made, and six years earlier, by a young Harvard graduate student, Arthur Ness, who discussed it in great detail in his unpublished 1961 thesis.¹²

Many of Ness's findings were original, and have not found their way either into other writings on the subject, or into performances of the music. In addition to his discovery of the *AmZ* review, Ness made two important contributions to the field. First, he discussed the implications of the only extant source material in Mozart's hand for the Concerto: a draft of the first 199 measures of the first movement, intended as a concerto for basset horn in G. This fragment is catalog-

¹¹ *Allgemeine musikalischen Zeitung*, IV, cols. 408-13.

¹² Ernst Hess, "Die ursprüngliche Gestalt des Klarinettenkonzerts KV622," *Mozart-Jahrbuch* (1967), 18-30. This article was originally presented as a lecture in Salzburg. Arthur Ness, *Some Remarks Concerning the Basset Clarinet and Mozart's Concerto* (unpublished Master's thesis, Harvard University, 1961). Colin Lawson has noted that "as early as 1941 future members of the Galpin Society had become aware of the *AmZ* review." See his *Mozart, Clarinet Concerto* (Cambridge, 1996). The review was also cited in *Handbuch der musikalischen Literatur*, ed. Carl Friedrich Whistling and Friedrich Hoffmeister (Leipzig, 1817), 196n; and the *Register zu den ersten zwanzig Jahrgängen der Allgemeine musikalischen Zeitung, 1798-1818* (Leipzig, 1818), 123. Most obviously, the review was cited in the first edition of the Köchel catalogue of Mozart's works. See Ludwig Ritter von Köchel, *Chronologisch-thematisches Verzeichnis sämtlicher Tonwerke Wolfgang Amadé Mozarts* (Leipzig, 1862), 489. The reference to the review was inexplicably omitted from the subsequent revisions of the catalogue until the sixth edition (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1964), when it was reinstated.

gued as K621b, and is part of the Rychenberg-Stiftung at the Stadtbibliothek, Winterthur.¹³

Second, he subjected the early prints (by Breitkopf and Härtel, André, Pleyel, and Sieber) and contemporary arrangements to a rigorous analysis. Ness's conclusion that the Breitkopf edition appeared first is substantiated by internal evidence, as well as by correspondence between the firm and Mozart's biographer Franz Xaver Niemetschek.¹⁴ This conclusion allowed Ness to construct a genealogy of sources, which distinguishes derivative sources from those closer to the now lost autograph manuscript. But demonstrating the close relationship of some of the arrangements, Ness argued for their consideration as sources for information about the original contour of the solo part (including basset notes), as well as a virtual treasure trove of information about period performance practice. Among these arrangements, Ness called particular attention to a piano quintet arrangement of K622 by C.F.G. Schwencke (1767-1822), and a piano-quartet arrangement of K581 by an unknown editor.

The 1960s marked the end of the era of textual research and the true beginning of experimentation by performers and clarinet-makers.¹⁵ This led to the first recording on a modern-system basset clarinet by Hans-Rudolf Stalder, playing a clarinet made by F. Arthur Uebel.¹⁶ In 1978, Stalder gave the first performances on a basset clarinet fashioned from boxwood according to a hypothetical 18th-century design. Since that time, several leading players (including Antony Pay, Colin Lawson, Alan Hacker, and Eric Hoeprich) have performed and recorded Mozart's basset clarinet works on instruments of various designs. The influence of these period-style performers on the modern clarinet community has been great; currently the major firms such as Buffet, Selmer, and Wurlitzer, all offer basset clarinets

¹³ Of course, this fragment had been known for a long time; it was part of the collection of Mozart autographs bought from Constanze Mozart by the publisher Johann André after Mozart's death.

¹⁴ Ness, *Basset Clarinet*, 35-37.

¹⁵ The *Neue Mozart-Ausgabe* did not release an edition of the Concerto until 1977, with a reconstruction for basset clarinet by Franz Giegling. The standard clarinet version included in this edition was not substantially different from the early Breitkopf and André prints.

¹⁶ Ex libris EL 16545.

for sale, and some modern players have performed and recorded the Concerto and other works on these modern basset clarinets.

In 1992, the American musicologist Pamela Poulin retraced Stadler's 1791-96 tour of the Baltic states, and discovered several concert programs which show an engraving of Stadler's basset clarinet.¹⁷ This engraving was used as the basis for a reconstructed instrument made by Eric Hoeprich, who also used this instrument for performances of the Concerto and Quintet. The engraving is the first information since 1801 yielding any specifics about Stadler's clarinet, and will likely serve as the basis for future attempts at reconstruction. Furthermore, Poulin's discoveries in Riga have raised hopes for the eventual surfacing of the autographs of the Concerto and Quintet.¹⁸

II. NEW DIRECTIONS

Textual Research

The determination of which passages originally utilized the basset register remains the most problematic aspect of any attempt at reconstruction. Nearly every study since 1948 has concluded that the only relevant sources are the Winterthur manuscript and the *AmZ* review. These sources are of limited use, however, as the first only pertains to the first 199 measures of the first movement of the Concerto, and the second only refers to selected passages in the Concerto—neither yield any information about other movements, the Quintet, or other works.

Ness's research, however, suggests the wealth of information contained in the contemporary arrangements. Particularly when the clarinet material is given to an instrument whose lower range is not as limited—the piano, for example—many passages become clear. Schwencke's piano-quintet arrangement of the Concerto is the most important for understanding the original text, as it was published

¹⁷ Pamela L. Poulin, "Anton Stadler's Basset Clarinet: Recent Discoveries in Riga," *Journal of the American Musical Instrument Society*, 22 (1996), 110-27.

¹⁸ There is possibly more basset-clarinet music by Mozart that has not survived, including a first movement of a possibly-completed Quintet in B flat, K516c (Anh. 91). See Alan Tyson, *Mozart: Studies of the Autograph Scores* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987), 341n.28.

between 1799 and 1805, and may well have been based on crucial, now lost, manuscript sources.¹⁹ It therefore may be an even more accurate representation of the original solo part than the early published versions for the clarinet.

For the most part, Schwencke validates the speculations Dazeley and others made based on internal evidence, but there are some surprises. In a controversial passage at the end of the slow movement of the Concerto, Schwencke's rendition makes a downward leap of a ninth to a low c, the lowest note on the basset clarinet (Ex. 1a). This has long been recognized as a passage originally placed in the basset register, and clarinetists have posed many different solutions, usually involving a straightening-out of the phrase contour (Ex. 1b-d). Schwencke would not have been likely to include this leap had it not been present in his manuscript sources.

Example 1 (a-d). K622/2, mm. 95-98

¹⁹ Schwencke owned many valuable Mozart autographs. The catalog of his library notes a handwritten copy of the Mozart Clarinet Concerto from which he prepared the arrangement. See *Verzeichniss der von dem verstorben Herrn Musikdirektor C.F.G. Schwencke* (Hamburg, 1824), no. 424. Ness (41ff) surmised that this manuscript may have resurfaced in the Prague National Library (Prague, Státní knihovna CSR: *M. II. 15.*) Upon later examination, this manuscript seems to be nothing more than a copy of one of the early prints, prepared for Frantisek Tadeás Blatt (1793-1856).

Corroborative evidence for the shape of this passage comes from another important contemporaneous source: Sarastro's music in *Die Zauberflöte*. Consider Sarastro's impressive entry in the Act I Finale; he concludes his passage with a leap of a tenth to a low F (on the word "doch") in his "basset" range (Ex. 2). This is truly a parallel passage to that from the Clarinet Concerto, featuring a downward leap of more than an octave to a strikingly low note, which then continues to a final cadence.

Example 2. *Die Zauberflöte*, Act I Finale, scene 18, mm. 419-425

420 SARASTRO:

Zur Lie - be will ich dich nicht zwin - gen, doch, doch geb' ich dir die Frei - heit nicht.

An early piano-quartet arrangement of the Clarinet Quintet also offers provocative solutions for reconstruction.²⁰ In the traditional version of the Quintet, the scale in m. 41 makes a reverse turn (Ex.

²⁰ The arranger is unknown, and Köchel mistakenly attributed the work to Josef Gelinek, a Viennese composer and pianist who knew Mozart. Actually, the arrangement was *dedicated* to Gelinek, a recipient of other Mozart dedications. See Ness, *Basset Clarinet*, 24n4.

3a). Internal evidence is insufficient here; in the interest of reconstructing the original melodic contour, one would not want to deny Mozart the possibility of reversing the direction of a scale for musical effect. The piano-quartet arrangement continues the scale downward to a low bass c (Ex. 3b). An arranger would not have made this alteration had it not been present in his source, as it significantly changes the rhetorical effect of the cadence from interrogatory to declamatory.

Example 3. K581/1

a. traditional version



b. piano-quartet arrangement



Interestingly, the evidence offered by the piano quartet arrangement suggests *less* bass clarinet writing than previously assumed from internal evidence. Most clarinetists who have attempted bass clarinet reconstructions have been tempted to expand the leaps in Variation I of the Finale to showcase the bass clarinet c and d. The piano-quartet arrangement, however, is more conservative than the traditional clarinet version, even though these side leaps would have been eminently playable on the piano (Ex. 4).²¹

²¹ Of course, this is not to say that Stadler might not have reset some of these notes into the bass clarinet range as a kind of ornamentation; perhaps on the repeat of the variation.

Example 4. K581/4/variation 1

Traditional version (upper line) and Piano-quartet arrangement (lower line)

a. traditional version

b. piano-quartet arrangement

5

5

9

9

13

13

a.

b.

a.

b.

a.

b.

a.

b.

p

fp

tr

tr

The contemporaneous arrangements of both the Concerto and Quintet also offer interesting insights into how musicians of Stadler's time might have embellished the solo parts. Again, Schwencke's score is the most intriguing, his source was close to the lost autograph. Much of it is highly embellished, particularly in the Adagio (Ex. 5). Ness noted that Schwencke also published an arrangement of Mozart's Wind Serenade K361 with little or no ornamentation. This suggests that it was not part of his approach to add this himself,

and the ornamentation may instead have been present in the manuscript copy he used in preparing his arrangement.²²

Example 5. K622/2, mm. 33-54: traditional and Schwencke arrangement

The image displays a musical score for Example 5, K622/2, mm. 33-54, comparing traditional and Schwencke arrangements. The score is arranged in two columns. The left column shows the 'Traditional' arrangement for Treble (T) and Soprano (S) parts, starting at measure 33. The right column shows the 'Schwencke' arrangement for Treble (T) and Soprano (S) parts, starting at measure 36. The Schwencke arrangement includes extensive ornamentation, such as grace notes and trills, particularly in the Soprano part. The score continues with measures 42-45, showing further differences in phrasing and ornamentation between the two versions.

²² An edition based on Schwencke's arrangement of the Concerto, and retaining his ornamentation, has just been published by Universal Edition (edited by Pamela Weston).

The early prints and arrangements also offer clues as to the notated ornamentation that might have been present in the original autograph. Ness observed the similarities in various arrangers' approaches to ornamenting identical phrases, and suggested that, rather than being merely coincidental, these similarities might have indicated common assumptions or ornaments present in the earliest manuscript sources. For example, in measure 70 of the first movement of the concerto, the clarinet's high *b*⁷ half note is given a trill and resolution in both Schwencke and an arrangement for viola and orchestra published by André.²³

A more interesting example is to be found in the principal theme (and later derivations thereof) in the same movement. In Schwencke, Müller, and André,²⁴ we find a turn (Ex. 6). Schwencke's score has this turn in almost every occurrence of this motive, including the opening statement of the theme in the orchestra, and in the opening solo statement. Even in the imitative passages, Schwencke uses the turn in both clarinet and orchestra (Ex. 7).

Example 6. K622/1, mm. 57-58 (Schwencke, Müller, André)

²³ Schwencke includes the trill in this passage both in the exposition and recapitulation, André only in the recapitulation.

²⁴ André includes this turn in m. 176 only.

Example 7. K622/1, mm. 316-18 (Schwencke)

In the traditional clarinet version (deriving from the Breitkopf and André scores), this ornament only appears once, in the violin and viola echo of the clarinet in m. 65 (Ex. 8). Significantly, this instance is not in the Winterthur manuscript. It would seem strange to have this prominent ornament *only* buried in the strings, and *never* in the solo part. The proliferation of turns in Schwencke and other sources raises suspicions that this ornament may derive from Stadler's original manuscript. If so, there is no reason to assume that the string turn in m. 65 has any authority (it is after all from an arrangement, just like all the other turns). If it existed at all in the original score, it might have been in a more prominent voice; perhaps the solo part itself.

Performance Practice Research

Poulin's unearthing of iconographic evidence about Stadler's basset clarinet is a major contribution to our understanding of Mozart's original conception. Prior to this, the only evidence had been this somewhat vague description by Bertuch (1801) in the *Journal des Luxus und Moden*:

His [Stadler's] instrument does not, as is usual, run straight down to the bell. About the last quarter of its length is fitted with a transverse pipe from which the projecting bell flares out further. The advantage of this modification is that the instrument gains more depth by this means and in the lowest notes resembles the horn.²⁵

²⁵ Friedrich Bertuch, "Wiener Kunsnachrichten," *Journal des Luxus und Moden* 16 (October 1801), 543-44. Translated in Lawson, 45.

The Riga engraving depicts a clarinet with a small, wooden, bulbous bell—like those on *clarinettes d'amour*, projecting out from the player. Information contained in the Riga programs is corroborated by several similar instruments with the same bulbous bell from the early 19th century, and by a draft of a letter from Stadler to the instrument maker J.B. Tietzel ordering “a new type of clarinet d’amour.”²⁶

Example 8. K622/1, mm. 65-66 (traditional clarinet version)

Cl. 65

V.I. 65

V.II. 65

Va. 65

Vc./B. 65

p

Although the strange shape of Stadler’s basset clarinet is clear from the Riga engraving, another aspect of it is more ambiguously represented; one that has an even greater bearing on the sound it produced: the number and location of keys it possessed. Poulin rightly states that the engraving probably shows a five-keyed design (not

²⁶ Poulin, “Stadler’s Basset Clarinet,” 116.

states that the engraving probably shows a five-keyed design (not counting the extra keys for the basset notes).²⁷ But it is also entirely

FIGURE 1. Stadler's basset clarinet, as represented in the concert program of 27 February 1794. The Latvian Academic Library, Department of Rare Books and Manuscripts, Collection of Theater Zettels (1782-1914).



²⁷ Lawson states that the number and location of keys "cannot be gleaned from the Riga sketch." Lawson, *Clarinet Concerto*, 48.

possible the artist produced this aspect of the engraving from memory, simply showing the keys found on clarinets with which he was most familiar.²⁸ Arguing in favor of a minimally-outfitted clarinet is the fact that Stadler was born in 1753, and probably learned the clarinet at a time when five-key instruments were clearly the norm. He may also have begun his musical education on another wind instrument with few keys; many clarinetists at the time also played oboe.²⁹ Many players were slow to adapt to changing instrument design; Jean Xavier Lefèvre (1763-1829) only switched from a six-key to a thirteen-key clarinet at the age of 61. On the other hand, Stadler was clearly a pioneer in instrument technology and would therefore have welcomed additional keys. At the heart of the debate is the sound of chromatic notes; whether they should be played with keys (resulting in a more homogenous sound and equal-tempered intervals) or with cross-fingering (resulting in more veiled tone quality and idiosyncratic intonation). This difference would be important in passages such as mm. 272-82 of the *Concerto's* first movement. Moreover, with a five-keyed clarinet, the rapid arpeggios in m. 138 of the same movement would necessarily have sounded with a noticeably sharp low b.

Hoeplich's attempt at building an instrument patterned after the illustration resulted in a clarinet whose basset notes are relatively muted in character; absent is the large, sonorous quality produced by basset horns or basset clarinets with brass bells.³⁰ But how does this

²⁸ There are several inaccuracies in the Riga engraving which Poulin omitted from her analysis. First, the mouthpiece is clearly shown with the reed facing upwards (in relation to the curved neck of the instrument). As Stadler probably played with the reed against his lower lip, this is most likely an error. More importantly, however, the top of the clarinet is twisted the wrong way, so that it protrudes in the same direction as the bell. The instrument would actually be unplayable in this position; the neck should curve toward the player, while the bell should project out away from the player. This artistic license was probably taken in order to provide a symmetrical canopy for the text of the concert program the engraving adorned. It does, nevertheless, demonstrate that organological accuracy was not the artist's first priority.

²⁹ Stadler and his brother were also able to play violin and viola. See Pamela Poulin, "A Little-known Letter of Anton Stadler," *Music and Letters* 49 (1988), 49-56.

³⁰ Hoeplich has described the sound of the basset notes on his reconstructed instrument as having "more roundness and more precision" than basset-horn style

quality compare with Bertuch's description—the only known account of the *sound* of the basset register on Stadler's basset clarinet: “in the lowest notes [it] resembles the horn”³¹ Perhaps Bertuch was simply struck by the effect of the clarinet producing such low notes. This is possible, but one would have to assume that he—or any knowledgeable musician of the time—would have been familiar with sound of a basset horn with a brass bell, and would have used this as the point of comparison.

These problems are familiar ones to scholars of musical iconography; how to relate the visual to the aural. These issues may be resolved as more extant basset clarinets surface, and reconstructions are put to the test of performance, as Hoeprich has done.

Another unresolved issue, one directly related to the acoustical properties of the solo clarinet, is that of orchestral size for the Viennese concerto of the 1790s. Poulin has unearthed an advertisement for Stadler's performance of a basset-clarinet concerto (perhaps that of Mozart) in Warsaw on 11 September 1792. This advertisement makes special mention of performance by “the Russian Orchestra having 130 members.”³² No doubt all of these musicians took part in the performance of the “National Symphony” by Jan David Holland (1746-1826), also on the program; but we do not know how many of them accompanied Stadler on his concerto. Neal Zaslaw has studied iconographic evidence of concerto performances in the 18th century, and has noted that the overwhelming majority of pic-

reconstructions (i.e. with brass bells). See the interview with Hoeprich, “Toutes les voix de la clarinette,” *Le Soir* (Brussels), 20 and 21 July 1994, 31. The author has heard performances by Hoeprich on this instrument, both of the Quintet (Boston, 1993) and the Concerto (Montreux, 1996). The smaller sound of the basset notes—as compared with the basset horn and other models of basset clarinets—was confirmed by these performances. Hoeprich made an exceptional recording of both the Concerto and Quintet in 1985 (with Frans Brüggen and the Orchestra of the Eighteenth Century, Phillips 420 242) on an earlier basset clarinet of his own making with a brass bell and *Kasten* (a boxlike addition containing three parallel tubes to extend the instrument's length) like those of a basset horn.

³¹ “in den letzten Tönen mit dem Waldhorn Ähnlichkeit hat.” Translation in Lawson, *Clarinet Concerto*, 45.

³² Pamela Poulin, “An Updated Report on New Information Regarding Stadler's Concert Tour of Europe and Two Early Examples of the Basset Clarinet,” *The Clarinet* 22.2 (1995), 24.

tures show one string player on a part; even for keyboard concertos and opera arias.³³ Zaslaw argues that varying sizes of string sections might have depended on the wind scoring; a work like the C-minor Piano Concerto K491 (for an orchestra of flute, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, and timpani) might have necessitated more strings. If this is true, then Mozart's Clarinet Concerto would be the perfect candidate for performance with single strings; no other Mozart concerto has such a light scoring for winds (pairs of flutes, bassoons, and horns).³⁴

This practice has been corroborated by Dexter Edge, who has studied extant manuscript performance material in Austrian archives and found that in most instances only single parts survive.³⁵ Several sets of multiple parts clearly indicate that in the solo passages of concerti, the strings were reduced to one player of one stand per part.³⁶ Edge did not limit his study to keyboard concertos, nor concertos of Mozart; rather, he examined "the Viennese concerto in general from around 1750 until the 1790s."³⁷ Edge concluded from this evidence that "in Vienna, ensembles accompanying concertos may often have been quite small, sometimes consisting of just one string player on a part."³⁸ This might have been the case for Stadler, as he traveled around Europe eager to display his new basset clarinet; he might not always have had the fortune to cross paths with a Russian orchestra of 130!

³³ Neal Zaslaw, "Contexts for Mozart's Piano Concertos," *Mozart's Piano Concertos: Text, Context, Interpretation*, ed. Neal Zaslaw (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 7-16.

³⁴ Most other Mozart concerti use oboe as the treble wind voice, resulting in a more penetrating tone than the flutes of K622. The Horn Concerto K447 only uses pairs of clarinets and horns; but again, the clarinets would be more penetrating than flutes. It is interesting to note that Mozart did not indicate bassoons on the first page of the Winterthur fragment.

³⁵ Dexter Edge, "Manuscript Parts as Evidence of Orchestral Size in the Eighteenth-Century Viennese Concerto," *Mozart's Piano Concertos*, 427-60.

³⁶ Edge, "Manuscript Parts," 440-41.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 427.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 427.

The findings of Edge and Zaslaw suggest that a "chamber performance" of the Clarinet Concerto would be at least an option. This kind of performance would alleviate many of the balance problems inherent in a performance of a classical clarinet concerto on a box-wood instrument. It must be remembered that Mozart originally conceived of this work as a concerto for a basset horn in G—an instrument that could not possibly project over a large ensemble. Perhaps this is yet another example of why we should, as Edge maintains, "abandon the notion of the concerto as an inherently competitive genre, and the notion that the concerto is, by definition, orchestral in the modern sense of the word."³⁹

Reducing orchestral forces immediately raises the question of solo participation in the orchestral *ritornelli*. Although this is a more or less accepted practice for keyboard instruments (which also function as continuo instruments) and strings (which blend into the orchestral sonority), the special color of the clarinet is more problematic. Dazeley argued against the practice:

the published versions [of the Concerto] show the clarinet in unison or octaves with the first violins in the tutti, a feature which has often been commented on . . . Since on the present hypothesis the whole clarinet part has been through an adaptation process, there is no reason to regard this as having Mozart's authority. He would hardly have smeared clarinet colour over the violin part in this way; a radically different matter from allowing a solo violin or viola to play in the tutti, or supporting them on a piano during a piano concert.

Lawson is willing to allow slightly more solo participation, still noting that in 18th-century clarinet concerti "solo involvement in tutti has a far greater influence on tone-colour than is the case with concertos for such instruments as the violin or bassoon."⁴⁰ He speculates that "Stadler may have played at the very opening of the work (perhaps for eight bars or so), in the concluding bars of the first movement, and at the very end of the work. Conversely, solo participation in the Adagio tutti would clearly detract from the dia-

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 446

⁴⁰ Lawson, *Mozart, Clarinet Concerto*, 78.

logue which lies at its very heart.”⁴¹ In his study of contemporary manuscript performance material for Mozart’s piano concerti, Edge stated:

It is virtually certain that soloists in eighteenth-century Viennese concertos had the option of playing and probably were expected to play during tutti, *except when the timbre of the solo instrument contrasted sharply with that of the other instruments of the ensemble*; this reservation applies, for example, to concertos for harp, mandolin, and, to a lesser extent, oboe. [emphasis added]⁴²

It is not clear whether the tone of the clarinet would be considered to contrast or blend with the string sound. Some recent recordings have begun to experiment with the clarinet playing in the tutti passages, a sonority reminiscent of the doubling of clarinet and violin parts in the first and second movements of the Piano Concerto in A (K488). Although the historical performance movement has yielded a wealth of information concerning performance practice appropriate to Mozart’s music, much of it remains ambiguous when applied to wind instruments.

III. A CONTEXT FOR THE BASSET CLARINET

Conventional wisdom says that only a handful of works were written for the basset clarinet. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that little music was *published* for it. Indeed, it would have made no business sense to publish music for such an obscure instrument.⁴³ “Parto, parto” and “Ah lo veggio” are not really exceptions; although published with basset notes, the economics of a basset clarinet pale in comparison with the costs of producing the operas themselves. Moreover, composers of Mozart’s time would not have expected much income from the sale of full scores to operas (as opposed to arrangements for domestic use, and other chamber music works). Music written for or by individual basset clarinetists might

⁴¹ Lawson, *ibid.* Lawson performs the Concerto as he has described in his 1990 recording with the Hanover Band, directed by Roy Goodman (Nimbus NI 5228).

⁴² Edge, “Manuscript Parts as Evidence of Orchestral Size,” 445.

⁴³ Even Stadler’s own published compositions for the clarinet bear evidence of basset writing re-routed to fit the ordinary clarinet compass. See Ness, *Some Remarks concerning the Basset Clarinet*, 16-17.

have circulated in manuscript, as was the case with Stadler's copies of Mozart's Quintet and Concerto. But could music have been performed on basset clarinets which was neither published nor written in manuscript?

If we want to get a better idea of what music was actually performed on the basset clarinet, it may be more worthwhile to consider this question from the standpoint of *practice* rather than text. Despite the accomplishments of the past fifty years, an overly text-based approach has reached its limits; counting ledger lines and hunting for suspiciously-redireceted phrase contours can only yield so much information.

First it will be necessary to consider how the basset clarinet was viewed in the 18th century. Almost all sources clearly state *two* advantages of the instrument: deeper tone, and extended range. Bertuch's review claimed that "the advantage of this modification [i.e. the extra length] is that the instrument *gains more depth* by this means."⁴⁴ A Berlin newspaper described Stadler's clarinet as differing from a standard clarinet "not only through its construction but also by [having] a greater range of lower pitches, *a full sound* and a compass of four complete octaves."⁴⁵ In at least two instances, the extended range was almost an afterthought to the improved tone. A Hannover critic, for example, described Stadler's clarinet as "differentiated otherwise from the normal [clarinet] by means of another construction, *making possible a softer tone* and also a compass of four full octaves."⁴⁶ Similarly, a Lübeck writer enthused "This instrument differs from the normal [clarinet] through its special construction, *through its softer tone*, as well as having a compass of four full octaves."⁴⁷ The nearly identical wording of these last two advertisements—both from Stadler's tour—resembles a modern press release, perhaps originating with Stadler himself. Indeed, this deepening and darkening of the tone would have been noticed by any cla-

⁴⁴ Emphasis added. Lawson, *Mozart, Clarinet Concerto*, 45.

⁴⁵ Emphasis added. "Berlinische Nachrichten," *Spensersche Zeitung*, 26 January 1792. Translated in Poulin, *The Clarinet*, 24.

⁴⁶ Emphasis added. *Hannover'sche Anzeigen*, 7 September 1795. Translated in Poulin, *The Clarinet*, 25.

⁴⁷ Emphasis added. *Lübeckische Anzeigen*, 10 September 1794. Translated in Poulin, *The Clarinet*, 25.

rinetist, and is corroborated today by modern reproductions of all types. This is apparent on all non-basset notes, but especially those that are played with most of the tone holes covered, for example e through a and b' through e". When these tone holes are covered by fingers and pads, most of the sound issues from the bell, and the tone is therefore deepened by the extended length of the basset clarinet. On any clarinet, when tone holes are uncovered, most of the sound issues from the tone holes themselves, rather than the bell.

It is important to remember that extended range and softer, fuller tone are *both* essential qualities of basset clarinets, but musicologists usually focus on the extended range as it is the only one that remains in texts, in the form of basset notes.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, there are important passages in Mozart's basset-clarinet works that use no basset notes, yet still profit from the deeper sound of the basset clarinet. As just one example, the recapitulation of the first movement of the Quintet (mm. 118-124) with its many "covered notes" (see above) is rewarded with a soft and glowing quality when a basset clarinet is employed. Furthermore, there seem to be no basset notes whatsoever in the larghetto of the Quintet; yet the softer tone of the instrument (again, through the frequent use of "covered notes" in the theme and elsewhere) blends perfectly with Mozart's subtle scoring for two muted violins and unmuted viola and cello. This effect was undoubtedly "intended" by Mozart, in the same way that he specified the rare clarinet in B natural for one aria in *Idomeneo* and one in *Così fan tutte*, when he could have just as easily called for the more common A clarinet.⁴⁹

It is therefore obvious why a clarinetist *circa* 1800 would want to buy a clarinet with more depth of tone. But let us look at how these instruments were marketed. In April, 1803 the Viennese instrument maker Franz Scholl advertised basset clarinets in B flat and C he had manufactured, claiming that they were "newly designed and consi-

⁴⁸ It is admittedly difficult to compare the tonal qualities of standard box-wood clarinets and their basset counterparts, as clarinetists do not perform Mozart's Concerto and Quintet on non-basset period instruments. Moreover, recordings are unable to fully capture this subtle, yet striking, difference in tone quality.

⁴⁹ See Daniel Leeson, "Mozart and the Clarinet in B-Natural," *The Clarinet* (November/December, 1991), 50-52. Arthur Ness has also noted a reference to the clarinet in B-natural in the Attwood Studies (personal communication of 9 May 1997).

derably improved." Scholl promoted his extended-range clarinets by stating "[the clarinets] extend two tones lower, that is to low c, which since one has the tonic note for cadences, always produce a good effect."⁵⁰ Why should someone want to buy a clarinet with an extended low range if there was no music published for it? To whom was Scholl appealing? Certainly not to composers, unless they also happened to be clarinetists. A composer would be wary of writing basset notes unless, like Mozart, he knew a player who had a basset clarinet. The only explanation is that Scholl's customers would have used the extended range by altering existing compositions for the standard clarinet, either through ornamentation or re-writing.

In this context, let us return to Stadler. Was Stadler's basset clarinet his principal performing instrument, or did he use traditionally constructed instruments for music without basset notes, reserving his special basset clarinet for works like Mozart's Concerto and Quintet that explicitly call for basset notes? Contemporary accounts suggest that the basset clarinet was an "improvement" he and Lotz made to the clarinet; a new type of clarinet which was superior to the standard clarinet, not only in range, but also in sound quality.⁵¹ If this is true, then there would have been no reason for Stadler to have

⁵⁰ "Anzeige von verbesserten und neu erfundenen Blasinstrumenten," *Kaiserlich Wiener Zeitung* (Vienna, 2 April 1803), 1174. Translated in Ness, *Some Remarks concerning the Basset Clarinet*, 155.

⁵¹ A reviewer for the Berlin *Musikalische Korrespondenz* claimed that Stadler had "improved his instrument with the addition of some low notes" (*Numero XIX*, Berlin, November, 1790, 145ff., trans. in Ness, *Some Remarks*, 11). Similarly, a reviewer in Hannover remarked that he played on "an improved clarinet of his own invention" (quoted in George Fischer, *Opern und Concerte im Hoftheater zu Hannover bis 1866*, Hannover-Leipzig, 1899, 60, trans. in Ness, *Some Remarks*, 11-12). In his 1803 clarinet and basset horn tutor, C.F.G. Backofen also praised the basset clarinet: "A new and splendid invention is the clarinet now made like the basset horn in Vienna. It has low d and c notes, which improve the clarinet so much since (to cite but one of the more important advantages, it has the root tone c which it lacked up until the present in its favored key C) it now has three complete octaves which every clarinetist can easily play; this is not the case with every wind instrument, for the bassoon also has three octaves, but requires a fair grade of virtuosity in order to have them under one's fingers" (*Anweisung zur Klarinette nebst einer kurzer Abhandlung über das Basset-Horn*, Leipzig, n.d., 35, trans in Ness, *Some Remarks*, 16).

reverted to his old standard clarinet. There is no evidence to suggest that Stadler played a non-basset clarinet after 1788, or that he played his basset clarinet on some pieces, and a standard clarinet on others. This might explain what is presumed to be Mozart's conservative use of the basset clarinet in *Così fan tutte* (only in "Ah lo veggio") and in *La clemenza di Tito* (only in "Parto, parto"). It is not just these arias, but rather *all* the clarinet parts in these operas which were written for the basset clarinet. Rather than switching to his basset clarinet just to play these arias with basset notes, Stadler surely would have played the instrument throughout the entire opera. While this practice would not make a noticeable difference in the case of *Tito*, it certainly would in *Così*, an opera where the clarinet plays an important musical and dramatic role. Indeed, this would argue for the performance of all Mozart's post-1788 clarinet music on basset clarinets, a practice which would yield a subtle yet noticeable deepening and darkening of tone color. Not to do so would be to overemphasize the importance of basset notes in a text and underemphasize the actual reality of tone color and practicalities of performance.

The aria "Ah lo veggio" is in itself evidence that Stadler employed the basset clarinet as his normal orchestral instrument, and not only as a special solo instrument. The basset notes provide a discreet accompaniment to the voice, and are not even particularly audible in most performances. Most interesting is that these basset notes appear in the second clarinet part, presumably played by Stadler's younger brother Johann, also a member of the court orchestra.⁵² Of course, it is possible that the brothers exchanged parts for this aria, but is more likely that Johann also had a basset clarinet. This aria is a perfect example of the two properties of the instrument; the second part exploits the extended range while the first part exploits the tone quality. Perhaps it is not coincidental that the first part features many of the "covered" notes that would be most affected by the added length of the instrument (Example 9).

⁵² It has long been thought that Anton played second clarinet to Johann, although this seemed to be true only in the Emperor's *Harmonie* during the period 1782/3-1788. From 1788, Anton played first clarinet in the *Harmonie*; he seems to have played first clarinet in the court orchestra from February 1782. See Ernst Ludwig Gerber, *Historisch-Biographisches Lexikon der Tonkünstler*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Breitkopf, 1790-92), 2:556. The *Staats-Schematismus* (Vienna, 1788) in the Austrian National Library, lists Anton as first clarinet and Johann as second clarinet in the court orchestra.

Example 9. *Così fan tutte*, “Ah lo veggio” (Act II, no. 24)

Cl. I

78

sf p *sf p* *p*

Cl. II

78

sf p *sf p* *p*

If the basset clarinet became Stadler's principal performing instrument, then it would be important to explore the implications for performance practice of other works by Mozart that do not employ basset notes. The “Kegelstatt” Trio K498, for example, was composed in 1786—just prior to the invention of the extended range instrument—and a surviving autograph in Mozart's hand confirms the absence of basset notes in the original conception of the work. We know, however, that Stadler performed this work on his Baltic tour; a concert announcement informs us of a performance in Ham-

burg on 29 November 1794.⁵³ The only other work Stadler played on this program was “Parto, parto,” which is scored for basset clarinet in B flat. It would not make sense to assume that Stadler used two different instruments for this program, especially when all the evidence points to Stadler using the basset clarinet as a way of attracting attention on this tour. In fact, it seems that all the other works known to have been performed by Stadler on this tour were for the basset clarinet (including concerti by Mozart and Süßmayr) or the basset horn. One would hardly expect that Stadler, after having just performed “Parto, parto,” would have thought to himself, “now I am to play Mozart’s Trio, which was composed eight years ago, before Lotz and I invented the basset clarinet; therefore, I will be scrupulously authentic and play it on the standard clarinet I used at that time.” At the very least, the practical difficulties involved with touring Europe carrying and maintaining basset horns and *two* sets of clarinets in different keys—basset and non-basset—would argue for Stadler’s having switched to using exclusively basset instruments for all clarinet music.

As discussed above, performance of the “Kegelstatt” Trio on the basset clarinet would add a depth and warmth to the clarinet sound. Given 18th-century ornamentation practice, we might also assume that Stadler would have altered passages to showcase his new instrument. One opportunity for basset notes would be the *Eingang* in the first movement (m. 54). A surviving cadenza from a clarinet concerto by Joseph Michl suggests that Stadler might have included basset notes in such improvisatory moments.⁵⁴ Other possibilities would be the near-basset accompaniment figures in the third movement (mm. 73-76) and the rising arpeggios in m. 120, 128, and 150 (modified to begin in the basset range) (Ex. 10).

⁵³ Poulin, *The Clarinet*, 25.

⁵⁴ Colin Lawson, “The Basset Clarinet Revived,” *Early Music* 15 (1987), 493. Discussing the Joseph Michl cadenza, Lawson states that “Such use of a basset clarinet for existing works was clearly another area of Stadler’s activity.” Pamela Poulin (“The Basset Clarinet of Anton Stadler,” *College Music Symposium* 22, 1982, 73) also conceded that “Stadler may also have taken existing compositions and added notes where appropriate.” Poulin incorrectly stated that Arthur Ness discovered the Michl cadenza. In a personal correspondence with the author, Arthur Ness noted that the discovery should be properly attributed to Albert Rice.

Example 10. K498/3, (a) mm. 73-76.



(b) m. 120 (and 150)



(c) m. 128



All of these examples from the third movement could have been altered as a way of varying the passage on the repeat. Other Mozart works that may have been altered by basset-clarinet players such as the Stadler brothers would include the second-clarinet parts to the following:

Symphony no. 39, K543 (3rd mvt., trio)

Così fan tutte, duet with chorus "Secondate aurette amiche"

Minuet no. 4, K568 (mm. 13-16)

German Dance no. 4, K600 (mm. 9-10)

If Stadler performed the “Kegelstatt” Trio on basset clarinet on his tour, he may very well have done so earlier in Vienna. But some may object to using Stadler’s post-1788 performances of a 1786 work as a guide for performance practice; after all, Mozart might have considered this to be a desecration of his original text. Surely our standard should be what Mozart himself would have done. But since Mozart was not a clarinetist, this is an impossible standard—or is it?

In 1785, when Leopold Mozart came to Vienna to visit his son, he was so impressed by Wolfgang’s busy schedule of concertizing that he wrote to Nannerl: “Since my arrival your brother’s fortepiano has been taken at least a dozen times to the theatre or some other house. He has had a large fortepiano pedal made, which is under the instrument and is about two feet longer and extremely heavy.”⁵⁵ This “fortepiano pedal” (now referred to as a pedal board) was essentially a separate instrument, on top of which the fortepiano rested.⁵⁶ The pedal board was operated with the feet, like the pedals of an organ, and extended the lower range of the piano by two octaves, so that the lowest note was the lowest C of the modern piano.

For the purposes of the present discussion, this instrument can be considered a “basset piano.”⁵⁷ Eva and Paul Badura-Skoda noted: “Mozart would scarcely have had a pedal piano built without some special reason. He certainly used it quite often to extend the compass in the bass, or to double important bass notes and motives.”⁵⁸ Mario Mercado observed:

While it has disappeared, it is known that Mozart employed the expanded instrument for the Vienna subscription concert to performances as well as for improvisation. Mozart probably played independent bass parts on this pedal board as well as

⁵⁵ Letter of 12 March 1785. Emily Anderson, *The Letters of Mozart and His Family*, 3rd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1985), 888-89.

⁵⁶ For photographs of surviving examples of pedal boards, see Eva and Paul Badura-Skoda, *Interpreting Mozart on the Keyboard*, trans. Leo Black (New York, 1962; reprint New York: Da Capo, 1986), plates opposite pages 6 and 12.

⁵⁷ It may even have been Mozart’s experimentation with the pedal board that inspired Stadler and Lotz to invent the basset clarinet.

⁵⁸ E. and P. Badura-Skoda, *Interpreting Mozart*, 14.

doubling bass passages of the left hand; thus his hands were free for filling in and varying the keyboard texture. The use of the pedal board, particularly in connection with improvisation, serves as a reminder of Mozart's predilection for performing on the organ.⁵⁹

In scouring Mozart's piano works for basset notes, however, one comes up nearly empty-handed. Only in his D-minor Concerto K466 does one find notes that could only have been played on a pedal board.⁶⁰ As is the case with Mozart's basset-clarinet works, however, it is clear that these low notes would have been employed in countless other—albeit unnotated—contexts. Leopold claimed that between his arrival in Vienna (11 February 1785) and his letter mentioning the pedal board (12 March), Mozart performed in several *Akademie* which included the Piano Concerti K466, K456, and K467.⁶¹ We do not know how the pedal board would have been used in these concerti, but a handbill for Mozart's Burgtheater concert on 10 March offers some clues: “not only a *new*, just *finished Forte piano Concerto* [K467] will be played by him, but also an especially *large Forte Piano pedale* will be used by him in *improvising*.”⁶² When the Danish musician and actor Joachim Daniel Preisler visited Vienna in 1788, he wrote in his diary:

Sunday the 24th August. In the afternoon, Jünger, Lange and Werner came for us, to Kapellmeister Mozart's. The hour of

⁵⁹ Mario Mercado, *The Evolution of Mozart's Pianistic Style* (Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992), 21.

⁶⁰ First movement, mm. 88-91, *NMA*, Serie V/15/6, 10-11. See also Hans Engel and Horst Heussner, Preface *NMA*, Serie V, *Konzerte*, Werkgruppe 15; *Konzerte für ein oder mehrere Klaviere und Orchester mit Kadenzten*, Band 6 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1961), xiv-xv. These low notes could only have been played with the feet on a pedal board, as both hands are busy with the other printed notes. E. and P. Badura-Skoda, *Interpreting Mozart*, 205, write: “It is a pity that these very important notes have to be omitted nowadays. In recordings or broadcasts, when the listener does not see what is happening, one can have these important notes played by the violinist who sits nearest the bass notes of the piano.”

⁶¹ Otto Erich Deutsch, *Mozart: a Documentary Biography*, trans. Eric Blom, Peter Branscombe, and Jeremy Noble (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966), 236-39.

⁶² Deutsch, *Mozart*, 239.

music I heard there was the happiest ever granted to me. This little man and great master improvised twice on a pedal piano, so wonderfully! so wonderfully! that I did not know where I was. Weaving together the most difficult passages and the most ingratiating themes.⁶³

Another witness to this afternoon of improvisation was Michael Rosing, who accompanied Preisler:

24th August, 1788: about 4 in the afternoon, Jünger, Lange and Dr. Werner came to take us to Kapellmeister Mozart's—he played free fantasias for us in such a way that I longed to be able to do the same myself; particularly his pedal in the second fantasia made the greatest impression. Happy and overwhelmed at having heard Mozart, we returned to the city.⁶⁴

These accounts attest to Mozart's use of the pedal board in improvisations, but provide no evidence of whether Mozart ever sanctioned the addition of basset notes to his pre-existing compositions. Apparently he did, if we believe the report of the Viennese physician Joseph Frank, who took twelve piano lessons from Mozart in 1790:

I played him a fantasia he had composed [the Fantasy in C Minor K 475]. "Not bad," he said to my great astonishment. "Now listen to me play it." Wonder of wonders! Under his fingers the piano became quite another instrument. He had reinforced it with a second keyboard that served as a pedal.⁶⁵

Mozart would undoubtedly have left his pedal board in place under his piano (Leopold dubbed it "extremely heavy"), using it when he saw fit: on some works, but not on others.⁶⁶ In the same way, Stadler probably played exclusively on his basset clarinet in the

⁶³ Joachim Daniel Preisler, *Journal over en Rejse igiennen Frankerige og Tydskland i Aaret, 1788* (Copenhagen, 1789). Trans. in E. and P. Badura-Skoda, *Interpreting Mozart*, 13.

⁶⁴ Trans. in E. and P. Badura-Skoda, *Interpreting Mozart*, 13.

⁶⁵ Hermann Abert, *W.A. Mozart* (Leipzig, 1919), 1007n. Trans. in E. and P. Badura-Skoda, *Interpreting Mozart*, 14.

⁶⁶ Mozart presumably continued to use the pedal board, as it was listed in the inventory of his belongings at his death. See Deutsch, *Mozart*, 586.

1790s and beyond. Both extended instruments could do anything their standard counterparts could do. Sandra Rosenblum speculates that the pedal board might have also been used as a way for keyboard players to practice organ technique at home.⁶⁷ Similarly, it could be argued that Stadler's exclusive use of the basset clarinet would have enabled him to practice his basset-horn technique, as both instruments used the same keys operated by the right-hand thumb for the basset notes. The bulky presence of the pedal board would not have noticeably affected the sound of music that did not employ the extended compass, however, while the basset clarinet had the benefit of improved tone.

While it would be illogical to argue that all of Mozart's post-1785 piano works were "composed" for the pedal-board piano, there is some truth to the statement that all of his post-1788 clarinet works were in a sense "composed" for the basset clarinet, for they were written for Stadler. In this context, the words of Carl Dahlhaus seem particularly relevant:

If music is viewed less as a corpus of works than as an event, a "communicative process," then the main emphasis of musical philology and the compiling of musical editions no longer falls exclusively on "authentic" texts, i.e., those reflecting the intentions of the composer. On the contrary, inauthentic versions, being documents of particular modes of reception, enjoy equal rights as historical evidence, particularly if they were widely used in their own time.⁶⁸

While the basset clarinet does not appear to have been widely used, it was certainly exploited by Stadler, a close associate of Mozart,

⁶⁷ Sandra P. Rosenblum, *Performance Practices in Classic Piano Music: Their Principles and Applications* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), 415n9. This theory is supported by the following passage in an undated letter from Mozart's student Thomas Attwood to an unidentified correspondent: "He [Mozart] was so fond of Sebastian Bach's Preludes & Fugues that he had a separate Pianoforte with Pedals, fixed under the Other." Cited in Cliff Eisen, *New Mozart Documents: a Supplement to O.E. Deutsch's Documentary Biography* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 39.

⁶⁸ Carl Dahlhaus, *Foundations of Music History*, trans. (from *Grundlagen der Musikgeschichte*) by J.B. Robinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 39.

and the inspiration for his greatest works for the instrument. Therein lies the central problem of performing Mozart's basset-clarinet works today; they were written for a specific person and his special instrument. If, however, we understand that having a basset clarinet meant deciding when and on what works to play it, altering pre-existing compositions when desired, then the emphasis is shifted from texts to practice, and the responsibility shifts from the shoulders of the editor to those of the performer.

We can begin to accept this responsibility by understanding how Mozart viewed the expressive potential the basset clarinet. Comparing his style with that of Süßmayr (one of the only other known composers for the instrument) we find two very different approaches. Süßmayr saw the basset clarinet as an opportunity to display a four-octave range (also made possible by Stadler's apparently limitless technique in the altissimo register) (Ex. 11).⁶⁹

Example 11. Süßmayr Concerto



Mozart, however, avoided this register—his Concerto only calls for one high f'''; a high e''' would seem to be the implicit upper limit of his range.⁷⁰ His reticence to write altissimo passages earned him praise from an *AmZ* reviewer in 1808: "It only spoils things to de-

⁶⁹ Süßmayr's Concerto had been long thought unfinished. Pamela Poulin, however, recently discovered a mention of a performance of the work by Stadler in Riga on 5 March 1794. See Poulin, *The Clarinet*, 24.

⁷⁰ The high g''' in the third movement, m. 92 is probably a transposition from a lower registration in the original version.

mand too much [in the altissimo register], to pursue caprices instead of exploiting the beauties of an instrument."⁷¹

Mozart saw in the bass clarinet an opportunity to replicate an operatic dialogue on a single instrument. The bass clarinet was simply an extension of what he was already capable of doing in the compass of the standard clarinet, yet it gave him more freedom. Consider the following passage from the first movement of his concerto (Ex. 12).

Example 12. K622/1, mm. 115-123



The lower phrases are a note for note parallel of a passage in the Act One quintet from *Die Zauberflöte*—a passage which also makes use of alternating dolce phrases, as in the Concerto (Ex. 13). Similarly, a passage from the Act II Trio features exchanges between Sarastro and Tamino and Pamina and Papageno, both Queen of the Night and Sarastro. And in this, it—like Tamino's flute—was truly “magic.”

The bass clarinet could do what no other wind instrument of Mozart's time could do; it could be both Tamino and Pamina, both Papageno and Papagena, both Queen of the Night and Sarastro. And in this, it—like Tamino's flute—was truly “magic.”

⁷¹ March 1808, col. 386. Trans. in Kurt Birsak, *The Clarinet: a Cultural History*, trans. by Gail Schamberger (Buchloe, 1994), 87.

Example 13. *Die Zauberflöte*, Act I, Quintet, no. 5

61

1st & 2nd Ladies

61

3rd Lady

61

Tamino

61

Papageno

Statt Haß, Ver - leum - dung, schwarz - er Gal - le bestünde

Statt Haß, Ver - leum - dung, schwarz - er Gal - le bestünde

Statt Haß, Ver - leum - dung, schwarz - er Gal - le bestünde

Statt Haß, Ver - leum - dung, schwarz - er Gal - le

61

f

Ob. I

Viol.

Va. *p*

Fag. *p*

1, 2 L.  Lieb' und Bru - der - bund! Statt Haß, Ver - leum - dung, schwarz - er Gal - le

3 L.  Lieb' und Bru - der bund! Statt Haß, Ver - leum - dung, schwarz - er Gal - le

T.  Lieb' und Bru - der - bund! Statt Haß, Ver - leum - dung, schwarz - er Gal - le

P.  ...und Bru - der - bund! Statt Haß, Ver - leum - dung, schwarz - er Gal - le

 *sf* *f*

+Vc. & B.

73
1, 2 L. *p*
be - stün - de Lieb' und Bru - der - bund.

73
3 L. *p*
be - stün - de Lieb' und Bru - der - bund.

73
T. *p*
be - stün - de Lieb' und Bru - der - bund.

73
P. *p*
be - stün - de Lieb' und Bru - der - bund.

73
p
73

Detailed description: This is a musical score for a vocal ensemble and piano. It consists of five staves. The first four staves are for vocal parts: 1, 2 L. (First and Second Ladies), 3 L. (Third Lady), T. (Tenor), and P. (Piano). The fifth staff is for the piano accompaniment. The music is in a minor key and begins at measure 73. The vocal parts enter with a melodic line, and the piano accompaniment provides harmonic support. The lyrics are 'be - stün - de Lieb' und Bru - der - bund.' The piano part features a complex rhythmic pattern in the right hand and a more rhythmic bass line in the left hand.

Example 14. *Die Zauberflöte*, Act II, Trio, no. 19

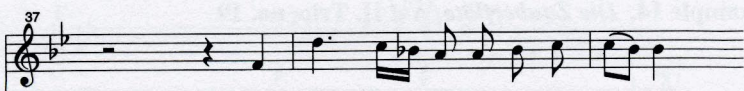
33 Pamina
Wie bit-ter sind der Trennung Leiden!

33 Tamino
sein. Wie bit-ter sind der Trennung Leiden!

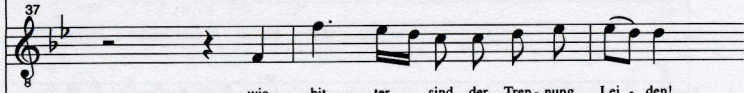
33 Sarastro
sein. Die Stunde schlägt nun müßt ihr scheiden, die Stunde

33 Ob. Fag.

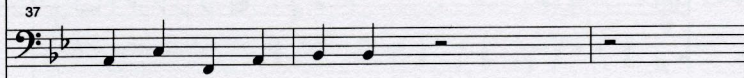
37


P.  wie bit - ter sind der Tren - nung Lei - den!

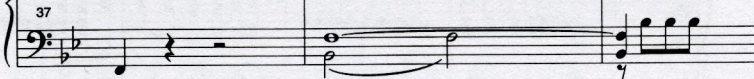
37

T.  wie bit - ter sind der Tren - nung Lei - den!

37

S.  schlägt, nun müßt ihr schei - den!

37 

37 

Example 15. K622/1, mm. 205-210

The musical score for Example 15, K622/1, mm. 205-210, is presented in two staves. The upper staff is for the Basset Clarinet, starting at measure 205. The lower staff is for the piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The clarinet part features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the piano accompaniment provides a rhythmic foundation with eighth notes in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand.