

THE EFFECT OF CARL MARIA VON WEBER E FLAT MAJOR OP. 26 CLARINET CONCERTINO ON THE PERFORMANCE OF CLARINET

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Abstract:

Solo and chamber music works for clarinet of Carl Maria von Weber create a quite important part of clarinet repertoire. These works which are also used for training repertoires are the works that provide technical and musical development for the students. Weber clarinet concertino is among these works. This concertino with single part consists of three parts in itself. These are Adagio ma non troppo, Andante and Allegro. There are more or less technical and musical difficulties of the concertino that changes from one clarinetist to the other. However, each teacher and student have his/her own methods to solve these difficulties. What is important is to be aware of these difficulties and to apply a correct way to study it.

In this study, first, some information about Romantic Period music is presented in a historical order, the place and the importance of Weber in the history of music are mentioned, and some methods are described in order to decrease the musical and technical difficulties in clarinet concertino.

Keywords: *Romantic Period, Weber, Clarinet, Baermann, Concertino.*

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INTRODUCTION: ROMANTIC PERIOD

Romantic period is a period which covers entire 19th century. This period reaches out till the beginning of 20th century. This era is the era of Schubert, Chopin, Schumann, Liszt, Berlioz, Verdi and Wagner. However, Romanticism has not just experienced in romantic period but in every period through every artist (İlyasoğlu, 2001: p. 77). When observed generally, it is possible to say that all art is romantic. Therefore, Romanticism is not a phenomenon of a single period, however; it emerged in different forms and times (Taylor, 2013: p. 1). It is possible to see romantic elements even in some works of Middle Ages. When considered from this point of view, mysticism of Bach also could be romantic. It is also possible to say the same thing for Beethoven's revolutionary soul, his passion for nature and excitements. Although Mozart's operas are accepted as the examples of Classicism, Hoffmann talked about the romantic values in these operas. Each work of art has part in it that comes from Romanticism (Selanik, 2010: p.178). An important feature of Romanticism is that its wish to reach out to the past and to the future. Romanticism believes that an endless pursuit for passion and unobtainable is valuable

(Taylor, 2013: p. 1). Romanticism has become an identity for Romantic period since it has been experienced densely in the works of this period (İlyasoğlu, 2001: p. 77).

Romanticism can be characterized as a rebellion against the normative limits of Classic movement. Art in 18th century was created for the joy of a specific class of society; however, it became a means of expression for the composer in 19th century. The work of the composer in Romantic period was the manifestation of subjective emotions. Therefore, the composer attached a great importance to dramatic call through the richness of harmony and the colors of instruments (İlyasoğlu, 2001: p. 77).

Distant key relations in 19th century became an expectation rather than being weird. Main key or dominant axis was weakened by the subdominant direction and the melody was called as theme. Counterpoint was become less important in that period. Orchestral instrumentation was enlarged including piccolo, English horn, contrabassoon. Bass and sometime soprano (Eb) clarinets, trombone, tuba, harp and a long list of percussions (Taylor, 2013: p. 1). Septet and nine-up chords were frequently employed in Romantic period. Chromatism was used in a large scale (Selanik, 2010: p. 178).

The improvements in the expression in music led the developments of instruments. Composers wrote works where technical and musical difficulties existed densely. Virtuosos who performed these works were also trained. Music and poem combined and turned into a recital with a story in this period. The instruments which described the feelings of a romantic composer in the best way were piano and violin. Therefore, the most concertos for piano and violin were composed (Zantur, 2016: p. 7).

The artist in Romantic period got a new function via Beethoven. The artist was not a servant of small communities such as noble families, prinedoms, any more; he/she became a hero who turned out to be the voice of large masses through his/her works and the composer had the freedom he/she wished in this period (İlyasoğlu, 2001: p. 78).

CARL MARIA VON WEBER

Carl Maria von Weber (1786-1826)



Carl Maria Weber who was born in the city of Eutin in Germany was the first great composer of German opera. He was born as a child of a musician family. His father Franz Anton Weber (1734-1812) was the choir master in the churches in Stadmusicus and Eutin. His mother, Genovefa Brenner (1764 - 1798) was Franz Anton Weber's second wife. Due to his parents'

becoming the performers of a travelling opera company, he travelled a lot when he was young and he was a composer who met the music in different cities.

Weber's father had always wanted Weber to grow up as a prodigy just like Mozart. Franz Anton sang to him and taught him to play the piano in order him to learn speaking immediately (Alpay, 2005: p. 47). He received his first basic music lessons from Joseph Haydn's brother Michael Haydn. He learned counterpoint from Michael Haydn, and composition from J. N. Kalcher and then from Abbe Vogler in Munich. He was assigned as the musical director of Breslau Opera in 1804 with the support of Vogler. His opera called *Silvana* was performed in Frankfurt in 1810. He went to Darmstadt since Vogler moved to this city and continued his works in that city. Weber's opera called *Abu Hassan* had a great success in Munich in 1811. Weber who had been continuing to perform piano recitals, was assigned to his first important duty as the director of Prague German Opera House in 1813 (Yılmaz, 2006: p. 34).

Weber was assigned to the Dresten music directorate by the king of Saxonia in 1817. He met Friedrich Kind in this city and wanted him to write an opera reflecting the sensitivity of the German. Kind prepared the lyrics of the opera by utilizing the German fairy tale called *Der Freischütz*. After being worked on these opera lyric for 3 years, he composed his masterpiece *Freischütz*. After the premiere of the work, Weber revolutionized German opera. The first performance of the work was on 18th June 1821 (Yılmaz, 2006: p. 34).

Weber learnt that he had tuberculosis and did not have a long time to live in front of him in the period when he was composing *Euryanthe* opera. He was invited to London to compose operas in 1825. Weber accepted this offer a year later and his illness got worse in that period. *Oberon* opera which he composed for the English was performed in 1826 by the mastership of Weber and had a great success. Weber whose health had got worse died in London, away from his family, in 1826 (İlyasoğlu, 2001: p. 91).

SOLO AND CHAMBER MUSIC WORKS OF CARL MARIA VON WEBER FOR CLARINET

It can be seen from the works Weber composed that clarinet was one of the most favorite wind instruments of Weber. Due to being educational, the works composed for clarinet by Weber are among the essential works education repertoire. These works are as important as “Clarinet Concerto (K622)” of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791), “Sonatas No.1 and 2” of Brahms (1833-1897) and “Clarinet Concerto Op. 57” of Carl Nielsen in clarinet literature.

Clarinet's distinctive, rich and soft tone especially in the chest register and its enabling structure for both romantic and dramatic expression affected Weber very much.

Weber's concertino and first two concertos were composed for leader clarinetist Heinrich Josep Baermann (1784-1847) of the orchestra called Bavaria in Munich. Weber was in cooperation with the leading virtuosos of the period for his career. Just like Weber, Baermann had been in a pursuit to obtain appropriate works for his career. The cooperation between Weber and Baermann became very successful due to Baermann's playing virtuoso and Weber's adaptation Baermann's music career very well. The concertino composed by Weber in 1811 was performed in Munich in the same year (Heidlberger, 2011: p. 262). Weber had offered Baermann to play in a concert for royal family and when this offer was accepted he wrote his concertino for clarinet and orchestra in 3 days. The concert which went great intensified the friendship between Weber and Baermann, and their friendship continued throughout their lives (Alpay, 2005: p. 45).

After the performance of concertino in a successful way, the same year King of Bavaria wanted Weber to write two concertos. Weber completed the works called “Premier Concerto” and “Deuxieme Concerto” in the same year.

Weber started to write “Introduction, theme and variation” for Baermann in 1811 and completed this work in 1813. Weber got the theme from opera “Silvana” No.10 Mechtilde’s Aria (Alpay, 2005: p. 45). Baermann wrote the Adagio variation of this work. Weber wrote clarinet part of Clarinet Quintet for Baermann. Solo and chamber music works for clarinet composed by Weber are listed below in respect to their opus number:

- Concertino for Clarinet and Orchestra Eb Major op. 26 (J109)
- 7 Variations on Silvana theme Op. 33 (1811)
- Quintet for Clarinet and String Quartet, Bb Major Op. 34 (J182)
- Grand duo Concertante, Eb Major, Op. 48 (J204)
- Clarinet Concerto No.1 F Minor Op. 73 (J114)
- Clarinet Concerto No. 2, Eb Major Op. 74 (J118)

Weber was a composer who increased the popularity of clarinet through the works he composed in Romantic period.

CARL MARIA VON WEBER: CLARINET CONCERTINO IN E FLAT MAJOR

The work has a single part however; it consists of three sections in itself. These are Adagio ma non troppo, Andane and Allegro. Adagio ma non troppo section was composed in 3/4 beat.

The orchestra starts the work with a strong minor tone through the tempo in the first part of the work. Then, this strong intro in minor tone fades away and the emotional intro of the clarinet is heard and it transforms the tonality into major. Next, the Andante part starts (Aktüze, 2007: p. 2620). Pianissimo and forte chords in the section till the Andante of the first part in the clarinet party are important in order to display musical expressions. When observed in terms of articulation, not being missed of legatos and staccatos in the ligatures of accents and being practiced of them as stated make musical sentences more understandable.

Andante section was composed in 4/4 beat. In addition to the articulations mentioned in the first section, piano chord till the Allegro section should not be missed.

After the clarinet presents more lively, pastoral atmospheric theme, the orchestra replies it by getting faster. Later, clarinet starts to play the live variations. The second variation in this section is more virtuosos for the clarinet. Semi-quaver notes in clarinet party in this part are a fluent melody along with the rhythmical structure. After this section, the orchestra emphasizes the rhythm. The clarinet plays third variation in a slower (lento) tempo. After this Allegro section starts. It starts with through the leadership of the clarinet again. After the clarinet intro in a lively tempo, orchestra repeats that. After the clarinet develops the theme through arpeggios, the final starts. Clarinet performs virtuosos cadances and after a trill it enables orchestra to present last strong tunes (Aktüze, 2007: p. 2620). Semi-quaver notes are used most frequently in this section of clarinet part of the work and this part is composed in 6/8 beat.

Generally, tone mastery and having the breathe control are quite important elements for the work. Successive technical passages and having far distances of breathing parts can be challenging for the player in terms of providing a good diaphragm breathing and tone mastery. When faced with such a difficulty, the solution is a good diaphragm breath along with a good

condition and long voice practices. Additionally, when the student pays attention to the places to breath helps music sentences not to be separated.

Parts containing semi-quaver notes throughout the work also can sometimes be challenging for the player since they necessitate a rhythmical movement of fingers on the clarinet. To start in a slow tempo is necessary in the practice for this kind of passages. Moving the fingers with on the fret rhythmically while practicing should not be forgotten until reaching the targeted tempo. Each stage of this practice should be accompanied by a metronome. This is because the practices accompanied by a metronome help fingers to get used to in shorter time and aforementioned articulations to be played in a rhythmical way. Scale, tiers, arpeggio and musical octave practices with different articulations can be practiced.

It is necessary to learn about the musical style, life of the composer and the period he/she lived first, to be able to overcome the interpretational difficulties while performing the Clarinet Concertino of Weber which has been played by almost all clarinetists. This helps the player to interpret the work easily.

The most important factor to help resolving the problems during the performances of clarinetists and all performers is practicing consciously. Conscious practice is very important for every player. To perform such practices helps resolving the problems in a short time and to reach the ultimate solution.

CONCLUSION

Clarinet repertoire in Romantic Period enriched with the works of Weber. The works of Weber for clarinet have never lost their importance from that day to present. After Weber's concertino for clarinet and orchestra had been performed, Weber received many orders to compose concertos. There are two clarinet concertos among them (Akkoca, 2004: p. 27-28). The expressional and color richness effect of Romanticism can clearly be seen in this work. The work also has a characteristic that assesses the technical knowledge. However, technical difficulties in the concertino can vary from clarinetist to clarinetist. What is important is that the student not only should follow the methods taught by the teacher but he/she should also determine and use his/her own authentic methods to solve these difficulties.

The importance of articulations to express the musical characteristics of the work is inevitable. This work is such as to guide the clarinetists in terms of technical and interpretational integrity. Concertino has a significant place both in clarinet literature and among a lot of other works composed by Weber in musical history, and this is a factor for this study to be done.

The importance the works of Weber in clarinet repertoire was emphasized, technical, musical and form analysis of the concertino for clarinet and orchestra composed by Weber was performed and the effect of this work on clarinet performance was discussed. In the light of these studies, it has been thought that this study is going to present a new perspective for contemporary clarinetists.

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