

CARL NIELSEN'S CLARINET CONCERTO, OPUS 57:
A PERFORMER'S EXAMINATION OF STYLISTIC
AND IDIOMATIC CHARACTERISTICS

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As the works of Carl Nielsen have become increasingly popular, his Clarinet Concerto, Op. 57, has taken an important place in the repertory for that instrument. Some background knowledge can be helpful to the soloist in the performance in a variety of ways. The stylistic traits, for instance, can be useful in determining tempos and interpretation. The influences on the composer could provide some insight into the formal construction of the concerto.

The specific purpose of this paper is to provide a discussion of stylistic traits and performance problems in an effort to make the performer of Nielsen's Clarinet Concerto aware of the technical difficulties that are inherent and to suggest various solutions.

With the performance of this work, there exist many technical considerations which the soloist should recognize. Examinations of the performance problems of Nielsen's Clarinet Concerto are not easily available, and there are very few studies of Nielsen's stylistic characteristics. The realization of this deficiency of material forms the basis for the writing of this paper.

In his last period, Nielsen produced some works which are difficult to perform. The Clarinet Concerto is extremely technical and requires detailed attention to the mechanics of the solo part. However, it may be helpful to study Nielsen's stylistic characteristics before discussing the specific problems of the concerto.

The analysis of the concerto is divided into two sections. The first section will introduce the reader to the stylistic traits of Nielsen's compositions in his later works. It will accomplish this by exploring Nielsen's use of harmony, melody, form, rhythm, and counterpoint in the Clarinet Concerto, as well as some of his other compositions from 1912 on. The second and largest section of the paper will deal with problems encountered during the performance of the concerto, particularly those concerned with fingerings, tempo, articulation, range, dynamics, and ensemble.

Explanation of Terms

Reference to pitches is designated by the following letter system: the designation of each C applies to all notes from that pitch up to and including the B a seventh above.



When citing pitches performed on the clarinet, the written pitches will be mentioned. In all other cases, concert pitch will be used. If a reference is made to a specific key of the clarinet mechanism, e.g., a-flat² key, it will be designated by the note it produces in the clarion register. In the case where the low register key is definitely specified, the notation will include both the chalumeau and the clarion notes by giving the former register first and in parentheses, e.g., (d-flat¹)/a-flat².

"Chalumeau" is the name of the lowest register of the clarinet. The boundaries of this register are e and b-flat¹.

"Chromatic fingerings" are fingerings that are used specifically in chromatic passages. For examples, one may refer to page 43 in the Appendix, letters G, I, and J.

"Clarion" is the name of the clarinet's middle register, which includes all notes from b¹ to c³.

"Forked fingerings," as used in this paper, are fingerings that incorporate only one finger of each hand. Letters A, B, C, and D on page 43 are illustrations.

"Later works" refers to all of Nielsen's compositions written after 1921.

"Progressive tonality" is the constant movement of tonal centers in which the music is continually in a state of tonal flux.

Opus numbers are not used for many of Nielsen's works. For a complete listing of his works with dates and opus numbers when available, refer to Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians or Robert Simpson's Carl Nielsen: Symphonist 1865-1931.

In the Appendix, p. 46 is a chart of some of the regular fingerings referred to in the body of the paper, p. 44 shows a chart of high note fingerings, p. 45 is a chart of special or auxiliary fingerings, and p. 49 has a chart of fingering problems and solutions listed sequentially.

Biography of Nielsen

Carl August Nielsen was born in Nørre Lyndelse near Odense, Denmark, on the ninth of June in 1864. His father was a house painter and country fiddler who owned a small cottage that housed one other family.¹ As the Nielsen family contained twelve children, it was necessary to require each child to support himself as soon as possible. At a very early age, Carl started work-

¹Carl Nielsen, My Childhood in Funden (London: 1953), p. 13.

ing at a nearby brickyard shaping bricks out of clay.² At the age of six he was taken sick with measles and his mother took time to teach him to play some simple Danish folk-tunes on a three-quarter violin that they owned.³ It was one year later that the local village schoolmaster, Emil Petersen, gave Nielsen private lessons on the violin.⁴

In 1873 a musical society was formed that consisted of local musicians, including Nielsen's father. The conductor was named Hansen, and he was an adequate clarinetist. The orchestra consisted of four violins, a viola, a 'cello, a double bass, a flute, a clarinet, two cornets, a trombone, and a triangle and small drum. Carl often accompanied his father to rehearsals and on one occasion he was allowed to play the triangle part.⁵

At the age of nine Carl began playing violin with his father's country band, which was well known all over Funden. The group included at least two violinists, a clarinetist, a drummer, and "Painter Niels" (Carl's father), who played the cornet as well as or better than he played the violin. The clarinetist, named Blind Anders, made a great impression on the young Nielsen.

I soon discovered that the accompanying musicians amused themselves at making variations and free counterparts to the melodies, and soon it was my greatest delight to play one of these parts and in various ways break the rhythm. I feel sure, indeed I know, that my contrapuntal talent was developed this way.⁶

Finding a job to support himself was a difficult task, and it was not until he obtained the position as a regimental bugler in the 16th Battalion Band at Odense, that Nielsen had found a job with which he was satisfied. He practiced hard for the spot and the audition went well. Carl had been taught to play the cornet by his father and at the age of fourteen he left home to

² ibid., p. 24.

³ ibid., pp. 17-18

⁴ ibid., p. 34.

⁵ ibid., p. 55.

⁶ ibid., pp. 78-79

join the 16th Battalion Band at Odense. A few days after he reported to the band master, he was given an E-flat alto trombone with valves and told that he would play both the bugle and trombone. He became familiar with much band music at this time.⁷ In addition to practicing violin and trombone, he was finally able to buy a piano. An old pianist named Outzen, who played in a nearby tavern, agreed to give Nielsen piano lessons in the basement of the tavern during the day. At first they played some classical sonatas for violin and piano by Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. Nielsen brought a copy of Bach's Well-tempered Clavier to his lesson; his study of it introduced him into the strange new world of counterpoint.⁸

As he became more familiar with this music, Nielsen formed a string quartet with three other band musicians and began playing some Haydn, Pleyel, and Onslow string quartets. He composed his String Quartet No. 1 in D minor for this group, and also wrote various trios and quartets for a brass ensemble including cornet, trumpet, alto and tenor trombones.⁹ These pieces were in strict imitation of the classical string quartets he had been playing.¹⁰ His Duette for two violins, violin and piano sonata in G major, and a piano trio in G major were all written between 1881 and 1883. Many of his comrades took interest in these compositions and offered financial assistance if he were accepted to study at Copenhagen. In May of 1883 Nielsen traveled to Copenhagen to audition for Valdemar Tofte and to show his Quartet No. 1 to the head of the Conservatorium, Niels W. Gade. Tofte was in favor of admitting Nielsen to study violin with him, and Gade commented that Nielsen had good compositional form.¹¹ On New Years Day in 1884 Nielsen was admitted to the Conserva-

⁷ ibid., p. 118.

⁸ ibid., pp. 128-29.

⁹ ibid., p. 141.

¹⁰ ibid., p. 142.

¹¹ ibid., p. 164.

torium to study with both Tofte and Gade.

Gade (1817-1890), and I. P. E. Hartman (1805-1900), dominated the musical life of Denmark and greatly influenced the young composers they were in contact with, Nielsen included. It was not until his association with the composition instructors and musical life at Copenhagen that Nielsen became familiar with, and was influenced by, the contemporary compositions of Brahms, Johan Svendsen, and Gade. His compositional efforts were encouraged and he developed an admiration for the composers who showed a firm discipline which produced well-constructed forms.¹² In 1886 Nielsen left the Conservatorium and began teaching violin in order to offset his expenses. Nielsen continued studying composition from Orla Rosenhoff, a theorist and professor at the Conservatorium, and he joined a string quartet.

Between 1886 and 1888 he was busy composing two string quartets, a quintet, and his Little Suite for String Orchestra, Op. 1; the Suite was received well by the public. In 1889 Nielsen began playing second violin in the Royal Chapel Orchestra.¹³ In 1890 he received the Anker stipend from the government, and was able to travel to Germany, France, and Italy. It was in Paris that he met his future wife, the Danish sculptress, Anne Marie Brodersen.¹⁴

Upon returning to Copenhagen, Nielsen resumed his work in the orchestra and in 1892 began composing his first symphony. It was performed in 1894, and it represents the beginning of his mature style. The composition is entirely in the form of the classical style: Allegro, with the exposition repeated,

¹²Robert Simpson, Carl Nielsen: Symphonist 1865-1931 (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1952), p. 3.

¹³ibid., p. 188.

¹⁴Knud Jeppesen, "Carl Nielsen," Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, ed. by Eric Blom (5th ed.; London: MacMillian & Co., 1954), p. 84.

Andante, Scherzo, and Finale.¹⁵ This was possibly the first symphony ever written to end in a different key (C major) than it began (G minor).¹⁶ It was this element of experimentation with tonal centers that was important in shaping the style of Nielsen's later compositions.

His A major Violin and Piano Sonata was finished in 1893. This piece is of significant value in that it took the first steps toward a "combination of contradictory keys" that culminated in the polytonality of Nielsen's Second Symphony written in 1902.¹⁷ Nielsen became interested in the early counterpoint of Palestrina and began studying the renaissance and baroque masters. The outcome of this research was the highly polyphonic choral, "Hymnus amoris," completed in 1896. This work and possibly the E-flat String Quartet of 1897 provided the experience in polyphonic writing that was important to Nielsen in his later works.¹⁸

In 1902 Nielsen conducted the premier of his first opera, "Saul og David," at the Royal Theatre. Upon at least two occasions, Nielsen had attended the performance of Wagner operas, specifically Gotterdammerung in 1891, and Tristan und Isolde in 1894. He found Wagner's liet motiv extremely naive and even comical. This opposition to Wagner's compositional style helped Nielsen to develop his own stylistic characteristics.¹⁹ Unlike Wagner, whose music incorporates romantic virtuosity to exalt the singers, Nielsen uses broad choral fugues.²⁰

Symphony No. 2, The Four Temperaments, was performed in 1901. It is not meant to be a piece of program music because Nielsen was opposed to the idea

¹⁵Knud Jeppesen, "Carl Nielsen: A Danish Composer," Music Review, VII, 3 (March, 1946), 173.

¹⁶Simpson, p. 9.

¹⁷Groves, p. 86.

¹⁸Simpson, p. 191.

¹⁹ibid., p. 192.

²⁰Jeppesen, p. 174.

of music serving to present a crude description of concrete events. Instead, the title should "in itself contain a germ of feeling or movement."²¹ This symphony, unlike his Helios Overture that was to follow, was fairly well accepted by the public. As his compositions grew more dissonant and abstract, the support of the public dwindled until Nielsen had only a small group of followers.

The completion of his Second Symphony and his Helios Overture in 1902 and 1903 marked the end of Nielsen's first period. As he matured, Nielsen moved away from traditional forms and began developing his own ideas of progressive tonality.²²

Maskarade, his only other opera, was premiered in 1906 and achieved widespread acclaim. Both operas illustrate Nielsen's growing ability of combining technical qualities with lyric considerations. The tonal freedom of the F major String Quartet of 1906 was bold and confusing to the public. Saga-Drom,²³ the first of his orchestral tone poems, was completed in 1908. Nielsen's skills as a conductor and composer were highly recognized and when Johan Svendsen retired from his post as conductor of the Orchestra of the Royal Theatre, Nielsen was the logical replacement.

This was a time that presented many difficulties to Nielsen. Most of the public and press did not understand his music. He was not motivated by much of the music he was conducting and began to make minor mistakes in his conducting. He was strongly criticized for his performances of certain works as well as his own compositions. He was also having trouble with his nerves. Nevertheless, he composed some of his most celebrated works during this time. The third symphony, Sinfonia Expansiva, and his Violin Concerto were both

²¹ Simpson, p. 173.

²² Ibid., pp. 4-5.

²³ Ibid., p. 196.

written between 1910 and 1911. The Copenhagen critics finally accepted this Symphony as a monumental work of art, and from 1912 until his death Nielsen was the central figure of Danish music.²⁴

In 1915 Nielsen had become the conductor of the Music Society of Copenhagen, and resigned his post of conductor of the Royal Theatre. This gave him adequate time for composition and he promptly began work on his fourth symphony. It was performed in 1916 and was received enthusiastically. After that he returned to writing for the piano and within the next year he had written Chaconne, Op. 32; Theme with Variations, Op. 40; and the Suite, Op. 45.²⁵

He traveled to Berlin to conduct his works and made repeated trips there, always bringing new pieces to perform. The premier of his fifth symphony was in the autumn of 1921. It was very popular in Germany. In Sweden it caused the audience to flee from the hall because of the drum ad libitum solos in the first movement. His Wind Quintet of 1922 was completed before a minor illness caused by over-exertion.²⁶

In 1923 Nielsen traveled to London for a concert of his fourth symphony, The Inextinguishable; an orchestral work, Pan and Syrinx; and the Violin Concerto played by his son-in-law, Emil Telmanyi. This visit produced very favorable results, and Queen Alexandre was impressed.

Nielsen's sixtieth birthday occurred in 1924 and the people of Denmark paid him homage in a great torchlight procession. His sixth and last symphony was finished in that year. The last few years of his life produced several important works. The Flute Concerto (1926); Three Piano Pieces, Op. 59 (1928); The Clarinet Concerto, Op. 57 (1928); and Commotio for Organ, Op. 58 (1931),

²⁴ Ibid., p. 198.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 202.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 204.

are among the most famous of these compositions. Nielsen was experiencing mild heart attacks during the time these works were being written. In the fall of 1931 he developed a blood clot at the heart and passed away on the third of October in Copenhagen.²⁷

History of the Concerto

Although Nielsen in his earliest compositions wrote mainly for strings, he was a member of an army band and did write some compositions for a brass quartet. In 1914 he composed his Serenata in vano for clarinet, bassoon, horn, 'cello, and double bass. In 1921 he heard the Copenhagen Wind Quintet rehearse parts of Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante in E-flat, for winds and orchestra. It seems possible that Nielsen was inspired by the individual character of each instrument and its relation to the ensemble, because in 1922 he composed his Wind Quintet, Op. 43. This work explores the capabilities of each instrument, especially in the variations of the last movement. Nielsen was pleased with the work and made plans to compose a concerto for each instrument in the quintet.

The members of the quintet were Paul Hagemann, flute; Svend Christian Felumb, oboe; Aage Oxenvad, clarinet; Hans Sørensen, horn; and Knud Lassen, bassoon. The fact that Nielsen was a personal friend of each member of the quintet added incentive to his plan. However, the first concerto was written for Holger Gilbert-Jespersen, who replaced Hagemann in 1926. Nielsen had been busy with his last symphony and was not able to complete the Flute Concerto until October of 1926. Although the audience approved of the concerto as performed in Salle Gaveau, France, Nielsen was dissatisfied and revised the ending before he died.

²⁷ ibid., p. 210.

Two years later the Clarinet Concerto was written. It was performed in a private concert at the summer home of the composer's friend, Carl Johan Michaelsen, on September 14, 1928, with Oxenvad as soloist and Nielsen's son-in-law, Emil Telmanyi, conducting. The public performance was in Copenhagen on October 11 of that year, and it received critical reaction from some and much praise from others. Nielsen was sufficiently satisfied with the piece to have it published in 1931. It was his last composition published before his death.

The scoring of the Clarinet Concerto is for a relatively small orchestra. It calls for two bassoons, two horns, snare-drum, and strings. The Concerto is in one continuous movement which can be divided into three sections that resemble movements. The Clarinet Concerto was followed only by the Three Piano Pieces, Op. 59; Three Motets, Op. 55; and Commotio, Op. 58. In all of his later works the progressive tonality is used. Robert Simpson observes that "the Concerto has what is, for mature Nielsen, one rare feature: it starts and finishes in the same key; the conflict is such as to prevent the music from leaving its starting point."²⁸ It begins in F major and the tonality is pulled in various directions until it emerges in E major. The conflict of these two keys persists to the end of the piece, leaving the listener with a feeling of tonal non-decision.²⁹ While he was in the early stages of writing this Concerto, Nielsen considered using a theme in E major which, as he writes to Telmanyi, is "certainly enormously innocent, indeed, altogether childlike."³⁰ Nielsen asked for Telmanyi's opinion of the theme.

²⁸ Simpson, p. 131.

²⁹ John W. Barker, Notes on record jacket (Nielsen, Clarinet Concerto, Vanguard Turnabout TV 34261).

³⁰ Ibid.

Telmanyi advised against the theme and apparently Nielsen agreed with him. However, Simpson suggests that the effects of this E major theme are portrayed in the E major sections that create the constant tonal conflict between F major and E major.³¹

³¹Simpson, p. 135.

CHAPTER II

STYLISTIC CONSIDERATIONS

A study of Nielsen's style of composition may be helpful in understanding and performing his Clarinet Concerto. The five parameters of music that will be considered are harmony, melody, rhythm, form, and counterpoint. Each will be mentioned as it is used in the Clarinet Concerto, and as it relates to Nielsen's style in his compositions that were written after 1910.

Harmony

"Nielsen's greatest and most far-reaching mastery is of tonality."¹ He views tonality as a vehicle of motion in music and is convinced that to move from one key to another is the essence of musical life. The composer expresses it this way: "If my music has any value at all, then it is in one thing, that it has a certain current, a certain motion, and if that is broken it's no good any more."²

Nielsen's harmonic style includes frequent modulations, many of which are to distant keys. As early as his first symphony, Nielsen had adopted the practice of using opposing keys and writing quick modulations like one from D major to the furthest possible pole, that of A-flat major. This example may be found in the development of the first movement of Symphony No. 1.³

The use of abrupt modulations may have provided Nielsen with the idea of

¹Robert Simpson, Carl Nielsen: Symphonist 1865-1931 (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1952), p. 4.

²Ibid., p. 186.

³Ibid., p. 12.

actually having opposing key centers which would develop a sense of harmonically-derived conflict within his compositions. In his later works Nielsen would define a goal in the form of a home key center, and then he would build his symphony around the procedure of attaining that goal. He makes use of what Simpson calls "contradictory keys."⁴ Two keys may be considered contradictory if both keys are equidistant from the home key. For instance, if the home key is E-flat, then B major and G major are contradictory in that they are a major third (or the enharmonic equivalent) away from E-flat. This example is from the third movement of Sinfonia Expansiva. In the first movement of the last symphony the music strives to return to the G major of the beginning, but succeeds in establishing the keys of a semitone on either side of it. Nielsen reverses the conflict in the clarinet concerto by forcing the solo part to try and escape the key of F major. The clarinet gets as far as E major, but is drawn back to F major for the ending.⁵

At the very beginning of each symphony Nielsen provides various tonal clues as to the subsequent development of that symphony. As Nielsen matures, this foreshadowing of the harmonic process in the symphony is accomplished with increasing subtlety.⁶

In the compositions of his middle years Nielsen frequently employed the device that Simpson names "harmonic collisions."⁷ This occurs when the bass moves stepwise and utilizes notes that do not support the harmony above. It is possible that this technique was instrumental in the development of the polytonality of the later years.

The Clarinet Concerto contains some cases of bitonality. One such

⁴ Ibid., p. 59.

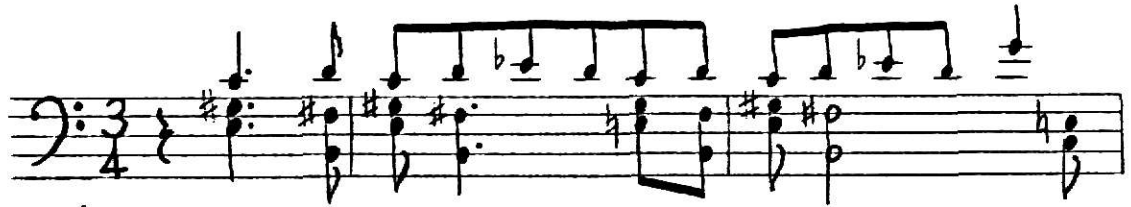
⁶ Ibid., p. 31.

⁵ Ibid., p. 5.

⁷ Ibid., p. 37.

example is found at the Poco Adagio, eight measures before figure twelve. The horn is in the key of C minor, while the two accompanying bassoons are in the key of E major.

Ex. 1



A transposition of this occurs at figure twelve with the clarinet in the key of A minor concert, and the accompaniment in C-sharp major. The first movement of Symphony No. 6 contains frequent areas of bitonality. One illustration is found in measures 81 to 83.

Ex. 2

Tonality in Nielsen's music is the root of its expressive content and the basis for structure. At times the harmony dictates rhythmic and contrapuntal movement. Nielsen does not believe in the significance of a key that is not used in connection with melody, form, and rhythm.⁸ The harmonic element in Nielsen's music encompasses all other elements and must be taken into account when studying his music.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

Melody

Danish folk-music has a very individual flavour: it is uncomplicated, though often irregular in metre, its melody is naturally of Teutonic cast, but it never plods--it always strides or flows; it has the true Nordic clarity of outline, with a certain bluntness, yet it can be gentle and soothing in a very masculine way. One quality that is almost never found in it is sentimentality, and in its freedom from this it has more in common with Norse than with Swedish or German folk-music.⁹

The Danish folk music that is described above is the music that Carl Nielsen grew up with, and was first influenced by. The tunes his mother sang to him, the feasts that he played at with his father, and the army band of which he was a member, fostered a background of Danish folk music that Nielsen always regarded as the basic nourishment of his work.¹⁰

As early as his first symphony Nielsen was capable of sustaining melodies over a long period of time without making harmonic or formal adjustments which could disturb the coherent qualities of the music. One way he accomplishes this melodic inventiveness is to frequently omit the late romantic characteristic of using a half cadence with which to divide the melody symmetrically. At the very point of the half cadence Nielsen might orchestrate his melody totally in octaves to reinforce his belief that the melody is of prime importance.¹¹

Nielsen's themes are practically always based on a diatonic pattern of notes. Often the melodies of his later works will modulate temporarily, but even in the themes of the Sixth Symphony there is an underlying security in a tonal diatonic sequence of notes. One such melody is the theme of the theme and variations in the last movement of the Sixth Symphony, as shown in Ex. 3.

One characteristic of the Danish folk music that greatly influenced Nielsen was its modal flavor. The mixolydian mode, or the major scale with

⁹ ibid., p. 2.

¹⁰ ibid.

¹¹ ibid., p. 17.

Ex. 3

The musical score for Ex. 3 is written in bass clef, 2/4 time, and one flat key signature. It consists of three staves. The first staff begins with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic and features a trill (*tr*) in the fifth measure. The second staff continues the melodic line. The third staff starts with a piano (*poco f*) dynamic and includes markings for *dim* and *calando*.

the flat seventh scale degree, is very frequently used in the folk music and one can see its influence on Nielsen in his use of the flat seventh which is apparent in his melodies from all periods of his composition. Nielsen's use of the minor third in conjunction with the flat seventh is not uncommon. For instance, when writing in a minor key, Nielsen might suddenly have the minor third act as a flat seventh in the major key of the subdominant. The fact that these elements are used in the melodies and not just in a harmonic sense is stylistically significant.

The ability of Nielsen to change character very abruptly is due partially to the mutability of his melodies. The last movement of the Third Symphony is introduced by a very lyrical theme which only twenty-nine measures later is inverted to produce an accented melody which is more suitable for the contrapuntal treatment it receives. Also, highly contrasting themes are found in the Clarinet Concerto. The Poco Adagio before figure twelve is much different from the opening theme or the melody at figure twenty-one.

Nielsen's use of the modal lineal idiom of the Danish folk music is enhanced by the construction, orchestration, and simple diatonic basis of his themes. These traits, in coordination with varied and contrasting thematic material, combine to produce a melodic element that reinforces the unity and

cohesion of the piece.

Rhythm

Nielsen's rhythmic content is also an element of music that cannot be easily separated from his other stylistic characteristics. He uses rhythm to communicate his musical ideas to the performers and listeners in such a way as to contribute to the progress of his music.

Just as Nielsen's music is influenced by the intervals and modal qualities of the folk song, so is his music molded by the rhythms and cadences of the folk music. The Danish songs often include irregular meters and shifting rhythms, but they are continuously flowing and moving the music from the beginning to the end. The variety of rhythmic uses in his music is endless. With only a few exceptions, the music of Nielsen is forever in motion. Melody, rhythm, and harmony are all vital in contributing to this movement. The music from figure fourteen to figure eighteen in the Clarinet Concerto contains an illustration of contrasting rhythmic content by combining the skipping rhythms of the accompaniment with the smooth solo line.

Ex. 4

Andante con moto

Clarinet (as saxnds)

f *molto espress.*

Side Drum

Str. WW *mp*

pizz. *mf*

However, at times Nielsen specifically creates a feeling of suspension by using a simple rhythmic ostinato. The very opening of Symphony No. 5 is one such instance. Other times he will make use of the rhythmic element to disrupt the music. An example may be found in the violent ad libitum snare drum cadenza in the first movement of Symphony No. 5, in which the composer instructs the player to improvise "as if at all costs he wants to stop the progress of the orchestra."¹² Symphony No. 4 uses two pair of timpani, each hammering out a tritone which marks the most turbulent section of that work.

The Clarinet Concerto is striking in its rhythmic content especially because of the use of the snare drum. There are many cases where the solo clarinet and the snare drum are rhythmically contradicting each other. Many times the lyric sections are interrupted by the disruptive rhythms of the snare. Figure five and five measures after figure thirteen both illustrate this.

Ex. 5
a tempo ma tranquillo

The musical score for Ex. 5 consists of three staves. The top staff is for Clarinet (written) in 3/4 time, starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic and moving to forte (*f*). The middle staff is for Side Drum, featuring a snare drum cadenza with a sforzando (*sfz*) dynamic. The bottom staff is for Strings (Str.) in 3/4 time, starting with pianissimo (*pp*) and ending with a decrescendo (*dim.*). The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

¹² ibid., p. 94.

Form

When discussing the music of Carl Nielsen it is important to understand that the formal element of the music is defined completely by the harmonic element. Tonality is the basis for structure. In his later symphonies, with the exception of the first movement of the Sixth, the union of tonality and form becomes so great that the single movements cannot stand alone, and in fact, are at times written with no break in between. The Clarinet Concerto is in one continuous movement which may be broken into three major sections. The Poco Adagio before figure twelve begins the second movement, and the third movement begins with the Allegro Vivace before figure thirty-four.¹³ However, it seems significant to this writer that the piece must be approached as a whole.

It may be said that Nielsen derived his powerful sense of construction from the music of Brahms, which he studied at length.¹⁴ Much of his work does make use of the sonata allegro form, but Nielsen soon decided to fuse the development and recapitulation into one process. He believes that the recapitulation should never hold up the flow of the main idea.¹⁵ Tonally speaking, the development and recapitulation in Nielsen's music is free from the formalistic limitations of the classic sonata allegro form.

Nielsen believed that form was the expression of content. The meaning and ideas he expressed in his music center around the tonal structure and conflict in the piece. It is through this avenue that the performer must comprehend form in Nielsen's works.

Counterpoint

It was in his father's band that Nielsen learned to purposefully break

¹³ ibid., p. 133.

¹⁴ ibid., p. 3.

¹⁵ ibid., p. 14.

the rhythms and play free variations and counterparts to the melodies. When Nielsen began taking piano lessons he was introduced to the music of Bach. At first, the music was confusing because it was unlike the music he was used to. Performance and study of Bach's Well-tempered Clavier provided Nielsen with a basic knowledge of contrapuntal techniques.

The Clarinet Concerto illustrates some use of imitation in that the orchestra often announces a theme which the clarinet later restates. The first theme of the piece is a good example of this technique.

In his last period, from 1922 on, Nielsen developed his polyphonic techniques, which culminated in the Commotio for Organ. In all of his works the fragmentation of themes and derivation of one melody from another is ever present. His Sixth Symphony is rich with fugues, canons and many instances of imitation.

The position of contrapuntal importance in Commotio is pronounced by the composer himself. Commotio consists of two fugues "on to which introduction, linking movements and coda cling like creepers to the trunks of a forest."¹⁶

There exist in the last works many illustrations of four- and five-voice counterpoint. The Sixth Symphony and Commotio are the last polyphonic statements of Nielsen. Like the other stylistic characteristics, counterpoint became an inseparable characteristic of Nielsen's music. Harmony, melody, rhythm, form, and counterpoint all work together to define the style of the composer.

It should be mentioned that John C. G. Waterhouse has written three articles in the Musical Times that view the Clarinet Concerto as the synthesis of Nielsen's compositional output. He suggests that the elements of tonal

¹⁶ ibid., p. 161.

conflict found in the Fourth and Fifth Symphonies and the Violin Concerto of 1912 mark the beginning of a stylistic uncertainty which was only resolved in the Clarinet Concerto.¹⁷

Mr. Waterhouse cannot reconcile the coexistence of the warm diatonic sections that are reminiscent of the earlier works, namely the Sinfonia Espansiva, and the disruptive interactions of the evil elements of his music portrayed by the clarinet and snare drum.¹⁸ An example is in the Fifth Symphony. The first movement contains a significant amount of conflict between the clarinet and snare drum and then abruptly (nine measures before figure 26 in the Skandinaviske Musikforlag score) the music becomes very tonal: "not so much contrasting the preceding sections as completely contradicting them."¹⁹

In his third article, Waterhouse views the Clarinet Concerto as "striking proof that he [Nielsen] had found a new spiritual equilibrium at the deepest level."²⁰ The fact that the entire orchestral fabric is involved in the dissonant turbulence and not only the clarinet and drum, as in the Fifth Symphony, reveals that Nielsen may have attained a stylistic maturity in this work. The brief lyrical sections are to be considered only as moments of repose and they give way to the biting dissonant sections shortly.

It is possible that Nielsen's musical style in the Clarinet Concerto did mark it as the most advanced composition of his output. However, it would require more research into many of Nielsen's other compositions to allow this writer to be in full agreement with Waterhouse.

¹⁷ John Waterhouse, "Nielsen Reconsidered--1," Musical Times, 106 (June, 1965), 426.

¹⁸ John Waterhouse, "Nielsen Reconsidered--2," Musical Times, 106 (July, 1965), 516.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 517.

²⁰ John Waterhouse, "Nielsen Reconsidered--3," Musical Times, 106 (August, 1965), 194.

CHAPTER III

PERFORMANCE CONSIDERATIONS

The repertory of music written for solo clarinet contains many difficult works. The Nielsen Clarinet Concerto certainly belongs in the category of pieces that are of considerable difficulty. Some of the problems that will present themselves to a performer of this piece constitute the discussion found in this section of this paper.

The first performer of Nielsen's Clarinet Concerto was Aage Oxenvad. Shortly after the premiere, Oxenvad made a comment regarding the concerto Nielsen had written for him: "He may well," said Oxenvad of Nielsen, "be able to play the clarinet himself, or else he could never have found exactly the most difficult notes to play on!"¹

This chapter is divided into different sections, each dealing with a separate problem one would encounter in the performance of this piece. The difficulties with fingerings, tempos, articulations, range, dynamics, and ensemble will be examined. The fingering section is the longest and most involved portion because those considerations are among the most important.

Because it is not feasible to quote each example from the music that is referred to in this paper, or to include a copy of the score, it is suggested that the reader acquire the clarinet and piano score published by Samfundet til Udgivelse af dansk Musik, in order to refer to the examples mentioned in the following sections.

¹John Barker, Notes on record jacket (Nielsen, Clarinet Concerto, Vanguard Turnabout 34261).

Fingerings

The problems that present themselves in the area of selecting workable fingering combinations in Nielsen's Clarinet Concerto should receive considerable thought from the soloist. This writer has considered the numerous possibilities and chosen fingerings with a number of criteria in mind. Other fingerings are possible and may be preferred by different individuals. However, this performer is of the opinion that fingerings suggested here are logical and practical and have sufficient merit to receive rather widespread acceptance. The following criteria are used as the basis for the selection of fingerings:

1. Retain hands in correct position as much as possible.
2. Move fewer rather than more fingers.
3. Keep the motion of the fingers in the same hand when possible.
4. Alternate little fingers.
5. Avoid sliding of the fingers.
6. Avoid contrary finger motion.
7. Tonal considerations.
 - a. Intonation
 - b. Response
 - c. Timbre
 - d. Context

The following explanation of these fingerings principles will be supported with selected examples from the Clarinet Concerto. The figure numbers refer to the clarinet and piano score published in 1948 by Samfundet til Udgivelse af dansk Musik. The discussion is based on the application of these principles to a Boehm clarinet (seventeen keys, six rings) built in the key of A.

1. Retain hands in correct position
as much as possible

Moving a hand or finger out of the correct playing position may be the cause of unexpected problems to the performer. Frequently it is sensible to consider other fingering possibilities before adopting a fingering that involves a change in hand position. One difficulty encountered is the realization that the performer may not have enough time to return his hand to the correct position for the succeeding note. In this case, he may not be able to adequately cover the tone holes which could result in a less desirable tone or squeak. A b-flat¹ fingering using the third side key is an example. Many clarinetists would agree this fingering (as shown in the code to Special Fingerings, page 45, letter S12) will produce a clearer tone than the standard fingering. However, in order to finger the side b-flat¹, the first finger of the right hand must move from its normal position to press the third side key. If the notes before and after b-flat¹ would allow the performer enough time to use the side fingering, then it would be a good possibility. One must consider tempo as well as the notes directly preceding and succeeding the b-flat¹. In deciding on the best fingering.

An example of the use of the side fingering for b-flat¹ can be found in the first cadenza in the middle of the ninth score of page three of the clarinet part. The second and third b-flat¹ of that line are suitable places in which to use the side fingering; however, the first b-flat¹ and the a-sharp¹ are preceded by leaps that make the standard, not the side fingering, the best choice. Six measures before [23] and three measures after [23] are other examples of the side fingering for b-flat¹.

2. Move fewer rather than more fingers

In general, fingerings should be sought that involve moving fewer rather

than more fingers. In most cases it is easier to coordinate one or two fingers than it is to move three or more simultaneously. Many examples can be cited, most of which will be obvious to the performer of this piece. The eleventh measure after [2] contains an example. In a measured tremolo between \underline{a}^1 and $\underline{c}\text{-sharp}^2$ above it, the difficulty involved in moving nine fingers is partially resolved by holding the right hand fingers in place. This fingering allows the soloist to move only four fingers in order to achieve a more coordinated effort.

3. Keep the motion of the fingers in the same hand

It is more difficult to achieve a smooth coordination of fingers if the motion is in both hands instead of just one. Therefore, more practice is needed in passages that involve movement of fingers of both hands simultaneously.

There are numerous problems in the Concerto that will be made easier if the motion is confined to one hand. In the fifth and sixth measures after [16], the clarinetist must perform a very quick half step from $\underline{c}\text{-flat}^3$ to $\underline{b}\text{-flat}^2$ twice. This writer suggests fingering $\underline{b}\text{-flat}^2$ by using the small key between the second and third rings of the left hand, as shown on page 43, letter C. This also provides for a logical transition to the \underline{a}^2 that follows in both cases. Any other fingering would require motion in both hands. Similar instances of this fingering are to be found six measures before [17], five measures before [22], and three measures after [27] using the fingering shown on page 43, letter F, for $\underline{d}\text{-sharp}^1$.

Movement from \underline{f}^2 to $\underline{b}\text{-flat}^2$ is executed very easily by using the first finger of each hand for $\underline{b}\text{-flat}^2$ as shown on page 43, letter A. This allows only the second and third fingers of the left hand to move instead of moving

the third finger of the left hand and the first finger of the right hand, thereby using only fingers of one hand.

4. Alternate little fingers

Possibly the most basic fingering problem of young clarinetists is learning the rule of alternating little fingers. A performer of the Nielsen Concerto may not need to review this principle, but it is important enough to be mentioned here. The alternation of little fingers is necessary to avoid sliding from one key to another. On the seventeen-key, six-ring Boehm system clarinet, there is no alternate fingering for \underline{e} -flat², but the little finger of either hand may be used to operate the \underline{d} -flat², \underline{c} ², and \underline{b} ² keys. As \underline{e} -flat² may be operated only with the right hand, this determines a left hand fingering for any \underline{d} -flat², \underline{c} ², or \underline{b} ¹, or enharmonic equivalents, preceding or succeeding it. For example, in a \underline{b} ¹, \underline{c} -sharp², \underline{d} -sharp² passage, \underline{b} ¹ should be fingered using the right hand, and \underline{c} -sharp² using the left hand, which would leave the right hand free to finger \underline{d} -sharp². An example of this is found in the 27th, 28th, and 29th notes from the beginning of the first cadenza. The fourth and fifth measures after [9] also illustrate this principle of alternation.

5. Avoid sliding

The purpose of alternating little fingers is to avoid sliding. However, one must consider all the keys on the clarinet and determine fingerings that will avoid sliding. The standard fingering for \underline{e} -flat¹, as shown on page 43, letter F, works very well in a chromatic passage, but when skipping to \underline{c} ¹ below, it becomes very awkward. To avoid sliding the third finger of the left hand from the small key between the second and third rings of the left hand mechanism to the \underline{c} ¹ hole, it is best to use the bottom side key for \underline{e} -flat¹

and leave the third finger free to play \underline{c}^1 . There are many examples from the Concerto.

In certain passages sliding of a finger is the only possibility. This piece contains a few situations in which sliding is mandatory. The second measure after [1] is one example. The succession of notes is \underline{e} -flat², \underline{c}^2 , \underline{d} -flat², and \underline{e} -flat². As \underline{e} -flat² can be played only with the right hand little finger, the slide is unavoidable and would best come between the first \underline{e} -flat² and the \underline{c}^2 . Four measures after [6] contains an \underline{e} -flat² followed by an \underline{f} -sharp, and an \underline{a} -flat². The \underline{e} -flat² must be played using the right hand and yet the \underline{a} -flat² should be played on the left hand for the best results. (The auxiliary fingering involving the first two fingers of each hand and the left hand thumb would aid the problem technically, but the response is too undependable, especially at a loud volume, for it to be practical.) The slide should occur between the \underline{e} -flat² and the \underline{f} -sharp so that one can slide downward.

6. Avoid contrary finger motion

Finger movement in opposite directions should be avoided as much as possible. The result of contrary motion may be the momentary addition of an undesired note. This is caused when one finger arrives at its destination sooner than the other finger. An illustration of this principle is located one measure before [4], where there is a quick leap from \underline{d} -sharp³ down a major sixth to \underline{f} -sharp². Since \underline{d} -sharp³ is fingered using the thumb, second, and third fingers of the right hand and the first finger and small key between the second and third rings of the left hand mechanism, it would be illogical to finger \underline{f} -sharp² any other way except the fingering shown on page 43 of this paper, letter G. The use of the regular fingering for \underline{f} -sharp² could result

in the momentary addition of \underline{e}^3 , \underline{g}^2 , \underline{f}^2 , or \underline{e}^2 , depending on the coordination of the moving fingers. The first and second measures after [7] also illustrate the use of this fingering for \underline{f} -sharp² in avoiding contrary motion.

Movement between \underline{f}^1 and \underline{f} -sharp¹ is another example of contrary finger motion. In this instance the left hand thumb would be raising while the first finger would be pressing down. The side fingering for \underline{f} -sharp¹ as shown on page 43 of this paper, letter J, alleviates this problem. The second measure before [17] illustrates the importance of that fingering to avoid contrary motion.

7. Tonal considerations

In a discussion of fingering selection, the tonal qualities of a note must be included in addition to the mechanical considerations. The intonation, response, timbre, and context of each note should be observed when selecting a workable fingering. In many cases where more than one fingering is possible standard fingerings are often the best solutions. However, at times auxiliary fingerings are required to achieve the desired outcome. These considerations are discussed under the context section.

7a. Intonation. Fingering selection is not always based on technical problems. The consideration of intonation is an important criterion, especially in exposed or sustained passages. In an extremely rapid succession of notes the importance of intonation as a major influence on fingering selection would decrease.

One of the many examples where intonation plays a deciding role in choosing a fingering may be found nine measures before [9], which involves sustained \underline{f}^3 .

Ex. 6



The closed fingering for \underline{f}^3 , which would serve as a possibility on a B-flat clarinet, produces a very sharp pitch for that note on the A clarinet, and the standard fingering is a better choice in this case.

Instances where the soloist enters on an \underline{f} -sharp³ may be located six measures after [3] and one measure after [25]. The addition of the small key located between the second and third rings of the right hand key mechanism serves the dual function of preventing the pitch from being flat and aiding the response of that note.

A third illustration of fingering possibilities that are based on the intonation of a note is found in the final note of the piece in the solo part. A very soft dynamic level, especially in the chalameau register, will cause many notes on the clarinet to go sharp. To remedy this problem, this performer added the left hand (\underline{f} -sharp)/ \underline{c} -sharp² key to the regular low \underline{a} -flat fingering. An example of this fingering may be found on page 45 under the Code to Special Fingerings, number S10.

7b. Response. The response of a note may be a valid criterion for fingering selection. Certain high notes are at times especially delicate, and in many cases a different fingering will allow a more effective response. The difficulties concerning intonation and fingerings will differ with each individual clarinet and performer. This performer used a Buffet A clarinet, serial number 88540, in performance of the Concerto, and is basing this discussion on

the response of that instrument.

When speaking of response, the main consideration is the attack, or beginning of the note. The initial speaking of a note can present unexpected difficulties, and the selection of the most convenient fingerings should not take precedence over a fingering that might allow the note to speak better. An illustration of this may be located six measures after [3] in the Clarinet Concerto. High f-sharp³ should be attacked firmly and precisely, and the response is very important. The regular fingering or the closed fingering are both satisfactory most of the time. However, in this case, the addition of the right hand fork key will improve the response and pitch of f-sharp³ in addition to making it possible to connect with the succeeding run. See page 44, letter H1 for visual reference to this fingering. There are numerous instances in the Concerto where the response of a given note is such that other fingering possibilities should be investigated.

7c. Timbre. A similar quality that should be considered in selecting fingerings that produce a suitable result is that of tone quality. A change in fingering will often produce a different quality of tone. At times the addition of fingers will shade a note lower in pitch and at the same time tend to focus the tone quality. Such a note is b-flat¹. The regular fingering tends to produce a rather thin, spread sound, whereas the side fingering mentioned above is often too awkward to get at, especially in very legato passages. It is possible to improve this situation by the addition of the second and third fingers of the left hand and the b¹ key. The fingering is also effective while playing at very soft dynamics because it aids in keeping the pitch from going sharp. Examples may be found in one measure before [19] and one measure before [20].

Fingerings on an A clarinet are in some cases different from those of the B-flat clarinet. The use of the e-flat² key on notes above c-sharp³ is one instance of this. In general, the use of the e-flat² key will make the notes above c-sharp³ excessively sharp, whereas on a B-flat clarinet this is not so. Various shadings through slight changes in fingerings should be explored by the soloist so as to achieve the most desirable performance possible.

7d. Context. The context of a given note is dependent on three things: the transparency of the accompanying music, the duration of the note, and the preceding and following notes. Nielsen tends to expose solo instruments in his orchestral works. In the Concerto there are instances of tutti reinforcement, but the majority of the solo part is very exposed. It is because of this fact that in many cases the performer must use regular fingerings to maintain the level of tone quality that is discussed above.

Since the tempos are very often fast, to achieve a smooth effect it is sometimes necessary to use auxiliary fingerings which are inferior tonally. One such example can be found in measures seven and eight after [2]. The d³ may be fingered open by overblowing the open g¹ fingering a twelfth below it. This is by no means a common fingering and should be reserved for tremolos and very fast passages that would otherwise present much technical difficulty. Another example of this fingering occurs one measure before [28].

Four and five measures after [10] contain another uncommon fingering. Neither the regular nor side fingering for e-flat¹ would be feasible in this instance due to the fast tempo. The soloist is advised to use the fingering for e-flat¹ that uses the first finger of each hand and the left thumb, as shown on page 43, letter D. In a long sustained passage the intonation of the

note would be undesirable, but in this example the clarinetist is playing about ten notes per second, which makes intonation a secondary consideration. An example of a related fingering may be found three measures after [9], where one should use the fingering as given on page 43, letter E.

Tempo

Since the Nielsen Clarinet Concerto is a twentieth-century work, this writer has adopted the basic assumption that the tempos and metronome markings were supplied by the composer or by the first performer in consultation with the composer, and that they are therefore significant and to be taken seriously. There are a few metronome markings that signify tempos that are so fast that it is nearly impossible to perform those passages on the clarinet. Figure ten is the passage that presents the soloist with a very difficult sequence of notes at a metronome marking which this writer does not find feasible. The example consists of thirty-second notes played at $\text{♩} = 72$. This marking suggests that the clarinetist tongue nearly ten notes in each second. Based on the background and observation of this performer, it would definitely appear that the metronome marking in this instance is inconsistent with the actual maximum performance possibilities for most clarinetists.

There is also at least one tempo indication that does not clearly state a logical tempo. The example is located at [32]. The Un poco pui mosso before this is based on the Meno of [23] ($\text{♩} = 116$). The tempo indication at [32] is Un poco meno. The thirty-second note triplets at that point in the music are obviously meant to be played slower than the tempo indicates. On recordings of this piece the tempo has been taken at $\text{♩} = 80-104$.

With the exception of the two examples just mentioned, this writer is in agreement with the tempos that are marked and the metronome numbers, and in

performance has varied only slightly from these indications. However, there are various interpretations which seem to use this piece solely as a vehicle for exhibiting the performer's skill. The recording on Columbia record MS 7028 with Stanley Drucker as soloist is one such example. The tempos of the Allegro vivace before [34] and the Allegro vivace thirteen measures after [41] are identical. At times his a tempos are as much as twenty-four metronome markings faster than the original tempo. It is understood that there will be a certain amount of flexibility in different performers' interpretations, but inconsistencies within a single performance are questionable. Perhaps the most noticeable differences will occur in the cadenzas. However, the cadenzas are written in such a manner as to dictate certain guidelines for the soloist to follow which will maintain a consistent relationship with the rest of the piece.

Articulation

The consideration of articulation is an important problem for the performer of Nielsen's Clarinet Concerto because of a number of difficult sections in the piece. When speaking of tonguing specifically, a performer must especially concern himself with the measures which contain rapid tonguing as well as those which have alternation of tonguing and slurring. This section of this paper is devoted to a discussion of these problems.

There are at least three major sections in the piece that create genuine concern to the performer. The eighth score of the third page of the clarinet part is in the middle of the first cadenza. Generally this section is not as much of a problem as other spots because much of it is a repetition of the same note and involves only minor coordination problems.

The most difficult articulation may be found at [10]. As mentioned in

the previous section, the tempo and staccato tonguing create a nearly impossible problem for the clarinetist. The extreme difficulty of the intervals that are involved add to the problem of tonguing almost ten notes per second. An added consideration is the absence of accompaniment in this spot. The solution can be found in adjustment of the tempo.

Another place which involves rapid tonguing is directly following the second cadenza, two measures before [33]. Although the tempo is marked *pui vivo*, it is unaccompanied and can be freely interpreted in relation to the ability of the clarinetist. Coordination is less of a problem in this instance because the notes are tongued in pairs and the leaps are not as difficult as they are in other places.

The sections involving slurring and tonguing alternately are, in many cases, less demanding than the rapid tonguing places. Four measures before [24] is one example. Six thirty-second notes are slurred and followed by four thirty-second notes tongued. This provides the performer with some significant problems. Coordination is made more difficult by the awkward intervals. The last three staves of page eight and the first staff of page nine (in the clarinet score) is an illustration of one of the most difficult passages involving an alternation of tonguing and slurring. The fact that it is part of the cadenza does allow some freedom of interpretation; however, the problems in this section once again are compounded by the wide leaps and various fingering difficulties.

In general, most sections of the Concerto do not contain problems with articulation, although the examples listed above do create some difficulties that cannot be overlooked. When considering these performance problems, one must also keep in mind that the awkward leaps and fingering difficulties affect the coordination between tonguing and fingering. The addition of these finger-

ing problems help make the few articulation difficulties in this piece a genuine challenge.

Range

The consideration of problems produced by extremes in range are not a major concern to the clarinetist. There are technical difficulties due to some high rapid fingering sequences, but in general, the piece is fairly conservative in terms of high notes as used in twentieth-century compositions. The highest written note is a-flat³, and it appears twice. In both places it is written so that it is easily accessible. Two measures after [6] the g-sharp³ is preceded by a rest which provides time to prepare for the note, and the a-flat³ at [11] is preceded by a long run, making it less difficult than if it were approached by leap. There are a total of eight g³, seventeen f-sharp³, and twenty-nine f³, which seems conservative for a twentieth-century work of these proportions.

When speaking of range, one must consider tessitura. There are several locations where a high tessitura is used. Six measures before [4] is one such area where the problem is compounded by some definite fingering difficulties and a rapid tempo, as shown in Example 7. Nine measures before [9] also has a high tessitura but the notes are of longer duration than in the aforementioned example. The dynamic marking is fortissimo, which makes it somewhat easier to sustain high notes. The passage is performed above a turbulent accompaniment, as is the music beginning five measures after [14]. The long duration of the notes and smooth articulation help to make these passages less of a problem for the performer even though it has a high tessitura. Between [26] and [27] is another section with a high tessitura.

The Nielsen Clarinet Concerto has a range that is fairly conservative.

Ex. 7

The musical score for Ex. 7 is divided into three systems. The first system shows the Clarinet (written) part in treble clef and the Side Drum part in 2/4 time. The Clarinet part begins with a *fff* dynamic and features a series of sixteenth notes and triplets. The Side Drum part has a *ff* dynamic and includes a triplet of eighth notes. The second system continues the Clarinet part with *fz* dynamics and the Side Drum part with *fff* dynamics. The third system shows the Clarinet part with *fz* dynamics and the Side Drum part with *p* dynamics, featuring a triplet of eighth notes.

However, there are certain passages that have a high tessitura and, in conjunction with leaps, fingering coordination, and speed, may cause difficulties for the performer.

Dynamics

The dynamics in the Concerto cover the wide range from *fff* to *ppp*, and the difficulty of the solo line is further complicated by sudden contrasts of dynamics. The clarinetist must consider these problems in order to effectively perform the piece.

Fortississimo is found only once in the piece at six measures before [4]. The music is written in a high tessitura and in a rapid manner. Although there are problems involved with this passage, the dynamic marking complements the intense nature of the music. Pianississimo is used at the end of the first cadenza and at the very end of the piece. This is an especially effective device and is used in combination with a marking of calando.

One difficulty involved with the dynamics occurs when abrupt changes in the dynamic levels are notated. The first cadenza is an excellent example. Charles B. Yulish is of the opinion that this use of dynamic changes, the frequent unaccompanied duets with the snare drum, and the solo passages portray Nielsen's view of the clarinet as having more than one distinct personality. He analyzes the clarinet's statements as often being "like those of a schizophrenic who is only briefly in touch with reality."²

The beginning of the piece before [12] contains sweeping crescendos and long drawn-out diminuendos, but, with the exception of the cadenza, few abrupt changes of dynamics in the solo lines.

The piece is often at a very intense level, with the dynamics supporting the harmonic and rhythmic elements. Approximately 48 percent of the music is marked forte or louder, as compared to only 16 percent marked at piano or softer. This fact, in connection with the quick alternation of dynamics that occur especially in the first cadenza and the last movement, necessitate the attention of the clarinetist who is concerned with achieving a realistic performance of the work.

Ensemble

When performing this piece with the piano reduction, it is highly desirable to include the snare drum for an effective performance. There are various passages that present difficulties with regard to ensemble. Five measures after [16] the snare drum part contains even sixteenth note triplets, while the clarinet has dotted sixteenth and thirty-second note patterns above it. Two measures later the rhythms are reversed. The tempo is fast enough to make this section of the piece easier to coordinate than some other places.

²Charles B. Yulish, Notes on record jacket (Nielsen, Clarinet Concerto, Columbia MS 7028).

Nine measures before [28] poses some problems. The snare drum plays thirty-second notes during the rests of the solo line.

The accompaniment often contains sections of three against four or six against four. These problems are compounded when the piano reduction is used. The passage fourteen measures before [41] is one of the most difficult for ensemble of the piece. Nielsen has written a ritard in the music itself and kept the tempo constant. At times the left hand is in strict tempo against the right hand, which is continually increasing the note values. The snare drum is playing quick sixteenth note patterns which confuse the overall ensemble all the more. Careful consideration and solution of these ensemble

Ex. 8

The image displays a musical score for two parts: Snare drum and Piano. The Snare drum part is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a 2/4 time signature. It features a series of rhythmic patterns, including triplets of eighth notes and sixteenth notes, and rests. The Piano part is written on two staves (treble and bass clefs) in 2/4 time. It includes complex rhythmic figures, triplets, and dynamic markings such as *mp*, *dim*, and *pp*. A *ritando* marking is present in the piano part, indicating a gradual deceleration. The score is divided into two systems, with the first system showing the initial rhythmic patterns and the second system showing more complex rhythmic interactions and dynamics.

problems can produce a very desirable performance, whereas to ignore these problems would result in a less polished effect.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY

When studying the music of Carl Nielsen one should be familiar with the influences and circumstances of his life, as well as having a general knowledge of the composer's stylistic traits.

The style of his later period of composition is based on the expression of form, melody, and counterpoint, by employing harmonic means. The movement of the music is in the form of conflict between key centers which is often separated by brief moments of repose. Nielsen's Clarinet Concerto is perhaps the most dissonant, turbulent piece that he wrote. It is an extremely demanding work and contains many performance problems for the clarinetist. Fingering, tempo, articulation, dynamics, range, and ensemble are the most important problems to consider.

Because of the difficult intervals, wide leaps, and rapid tempos, the soloist must take great care in the selection of fingerings. This writer suggests certain criteria as the bases for choosing usable fingerings.

The few inconsistencies with certain tempo markings in relation to the actual maximum performance tempo should be observed and those tempos can be adjusted to produce a more feasible solution. The articulation will become less of a problem when the tempos are reduced. The cadenzas include some articulation and dynamic alternations which cause concern but are left up to the interpretation of the soloist and may be performed according to the relative ability of the clarinetist, providing that the certain guidelines set by

the composer are adhered to. Although the range is not extreme, numerous difficult leaps and a high tessitura in some sections create more difficulties for the performer. The ensemble is problematic, especially when using a piano reduction because of the frequent complex and conflicting rhythms.

This writer concludes that the Nielsen Clarinet Concerto is one of the most important twentieth century works for the clarinet and should not be omitted from a serious performer's repertory. However, this piece requires definite consideration of the problems discussed before workable solutions may be found.

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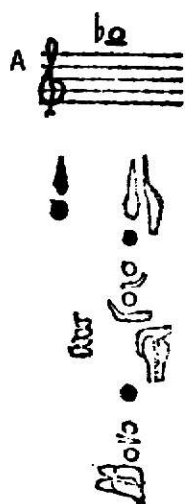
Recordings


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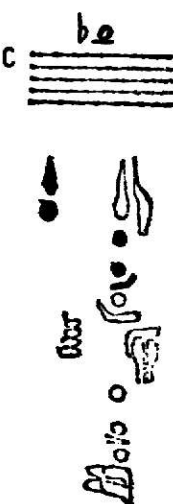
Yulish, Charles. Carl Nielsen's Clarinet Concerto, Op. 57. Columbia, MS 7028.

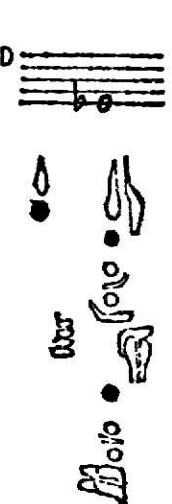
APPENDIX

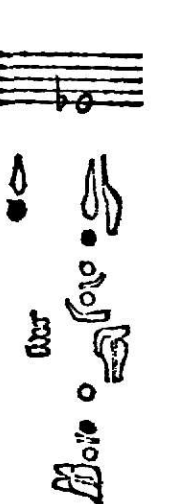
The chart on page 46 is a list of solutions to the fingering problems of the Clarinet Concerto that were used by this performer. The list is arranged sequentially beginning at the first page and proceeding through the piece. The page number, line in the clarinet score, measure number, and beat will help the reader to locate the fingering problems in the music. The note, or sequence of notes, is listed and followed by the fingering code letter. These letters refer to the fingerings as follows:

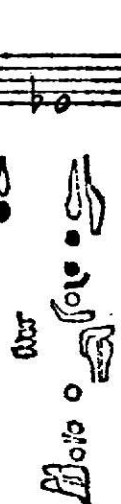
A 


B 


C 


D 

E 

F 

G 

I 

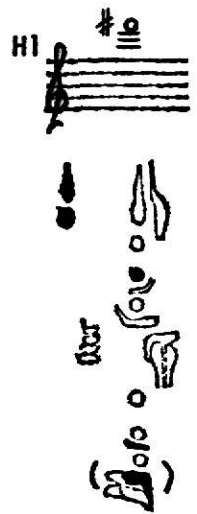


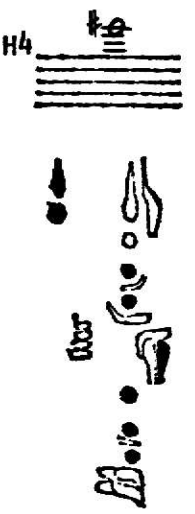
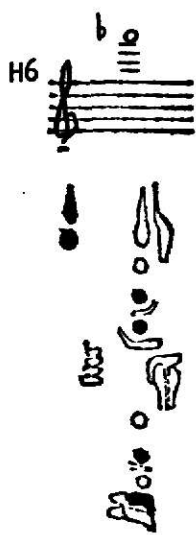
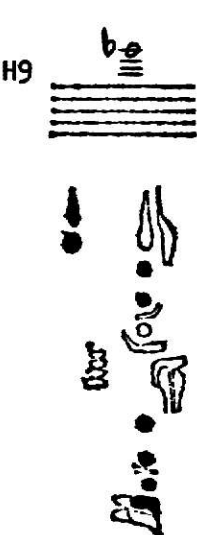
J 

Other code letters are listed below:

- K--slide is mandatory
- L--alternate fingers to avoid slide
- H--refers to high notes found on page 44
- S--refers to special fingerings found on page 45

Code to High Notes

The following examples constitute a guide to all references in the chart on page 46 marked H1, H2, H3, etc.

<p>H1</p> 	<p>H2</p> 	<p>H3</p> 	<p>H4</p> 	<p>H5</p> 
<p>H6</p> 	<p>H7</p> 	<p>H8</p> 	<p>H9</p> 	

Code to Special Fingerings

The following examples constitute a guide to all references in the chart on page 46 marked S1, S2, S3, etc.

The image displays 12 examples of special fingerings, labeled S1 through S12. Each example consists of three parts: a musical staff, a hand diagram, and a keyboard diagram.

- S1:** Musical staff shows a note on the first line (F4) with a fingering symbol '1'. Hand diagram shows the thumb. Keyboard diagram shows the F4 key. Labeled '(open)'.
- S2:** Musical staff shows a note on the first space (C4) with a fingering symbol '2'. Hand diagram shows the index finger. Keyboard diagram shows the C4 key.
- S3:** Musical staff shows a note on the second line (D4) with a fingering symbol '3'. Hand diagram shows the middle finger. Keyboard diagram shows the D4 key.
- S4:** Musical staff shows a note on the second space (E4) with a fingering symbol '4'. Hand diagram shows the ring finger. Keyboard diagram shows the E4 key.
- S5:** Musical staff shows a note on the third line (F4) with a fingering symbol '5'. Hand diagram shows the pinky. Keyboard diagram shows the F4 key.
- S6:** Musical staff shows a note on the third space (G4) with a fingering symbol 'b 4 #'. Hand diagram shows the ring finger. Keyboard diagram shows the G4 key.
- S7:** Musical staff shows a note on the first space (C4) with a fingering symbol '2'. Hand diagram shows the index finger. Keyboard diagram shows the C4 key.
- S8:** Musical staff shows a note on the first space (C4) with a fingering symbol '2 #'. Hand diagram shows the index finger. Keyboard diagram shows the C4 key.
- S9:** Musical staff shows a note on the first space (C4) with a fingering symbol '2 #'. Hand diagram shows the index finger. Keyboard diagram shows the C4 key.
- S10:** Musical staff shows a note on the first space (C4) with a fingering symbol 'b 2'. Hand diagram shows the index finger. Keyboard diagram shows the C4 key.
- S11:** Musical staff shows a note on the first space (C4) with a fingering symbol '2'. Hand diagram shows the index finger. Keyboard diagram shows the C4 key.
- S12:** Musical staff shows a note on the first space (C4) with a fingering symbol '2'. Hand diagram shows the index finger. Keyboard diagram shows the C4 key.

Fingering Solutions

Page	Line	Measure	Beat	Note	Code
1	1	18	2	slide	K
1	3	1	2	Bb	A
1	5	1	1	D	S1
1	5	2	2	F#	S2
1	6	1	2	R.H.+	S3
1	7	2	2	B	I
1	7	4	2	B	I
1	7	4	2	B-C# tr	S4
1	7	5	2	A#	B
1	8	4	2	Eb	D
1	8	6	1	F#	H1
1	9	2	1	A# tr	S5
2	1	1	2	G	H2
2	1	2	2	Bb	B
2	1	3	1	G	H3
2	2	2	1	F#	J
2	2	3	1	F#	G
2	3	6	2	Bb	A
2	4	5	1	Bb	A
2	4	7	1	Gb	G
2	6	5	2	G#	H4
2	6	7	2	E-F#	K
2	9	4	1	Bb	B
2	10	2	1	Bb	A
2	10	3	2	F#	G
3	2	1	1/4	1st B	I
3	2	1	1/2	{ B-C#-Eb } R L R	L
3	3	1	1/4	1st F#	G
3	3	1	1/4	1st A#	A
3	3	1	1/2	Bb	A
3	5	1	1/2	F#	J
3	6	1	1/4	Bb	S12
3	7	1	1/2	4th F#	J
3	9	1	1/2	2nd, 3rd Bb	S12
3	10	1	1/2	last B	I
4	6	1	3	Eb	E
4	6	2	2	{ E-F#-G# } R L R	L
4	6	2	3	{ C-Cb-Db-Eb } L R L R	L
4	8	2	2	F#	J
4	9	2	1	Eb	D

Fingering Solutions--continued

Page	Line	Measure	Beat	Note	Code
4	9	2	2	B	I
4	9	3	1	Eb	D
4	9	3	2	Eb	D
4	10	1	2	Eb	D
4	10	3	4	G	H5
4	11	1	1	Ab	H6
4	12	3	3	Bb	A
4	12	6	2	both F#s	G
4	12	7	1	regular F#	-
5	1	4	1	A#	B
5	1	4	2	A#	B
5	3	4	1	Gb	G
5	6	2	3	Bb	A
5	6	6	1	Bb	A
5	6	7	2	Gb	G
5	6	8	3	Bb	A
5	7	1	2	Bb	A
5	9	3	1	Bb	C
5	9	3	1 & 2	Gb	G
5	9	3	3	Bb	C
5	10	1	1	Bb	C
5	10	1	3	Gb	G
5	11	2	1	{ E-F# R R }	-
5	11	2	3	F#	J
5	11	3	1	F#	G
6	1	4	2	Bb	B
6	1	7	2	Gb	G
6	2	2	1	Bb	A
6	2	2	3	Eb	H7
6	2	3	2	Bb	A
6	2	4	2	Bb	S11
6	4	5	3	Bb	S11
6	7	1	1	B-C# tr	S6
6	7	2	1	G#	H4
6	7	7	1	Bb	C
6	8	4	3	Cb	I
6	9	13	1	C tr	H8
6	10	1	2	Gb	G
6	10	4	1	Bb	S12
6	11	3	1	Bb	S12

Fingering Solutions--continued

Page	Line	Measure	Beat	Note	Code
6	11	1	1	Bb	A
7	1	4	2	Eb-Db	K
7	3	2	2	Gb	G
7	3	3	2	Gb	G
7	4	1	1	G#	G
7	4	4	2	F#	G
7	5	3	1	F#	H1
7	6	1	1	Eb	H7
7	6	1	2	Gb	G
7	8	2	1	Gb	G
7	8	5	2	F#	J
7	8	5	3	D#	F
7	8	5	3	regular F#	-
7	9	5	1	Bb	C
7	11	3	2	Bb	A
7	11	3	2	D	S1
7	11	5	1	Bb	C
8	3	8	2	Bb	A
8	6	2	2	B	I
8	7	1	2	B	I
8	8	1	-	low Cb	I
8	10	1	2	Bb	A
8	10	1	3	Bb	A
9	8	7	1	Bb	A
9	8	8	1	Gb	G
9	9	3	1	Bb	A
9	11	3	1	A#	S7
10	2	1	2	A#	A
10	3	7	1	Db-C	K
10	4	4	1	C#	S8
10	4	4	2	F#	G
10	5	5	2	Bb	A
10	8	4	2	Gb	H9
10	8	6	2	Bb	A
10	9	5	2	A#	S9
10	10	3	2	B	I
10	12	12	1	Ab	S10

The following lists are derived from the preceding chart. The first list contains the number of times each fingering problem occurred in the Concerto. The second list gives each page of the clarinet score and the corresponding number of fingering suggestions that were listed on the chart.

	I		II
A	23	1	12
B	6	2	13
C	6	3	10
D	5	4	14
E	1	5	16
F	1	6	16
G	20	7	16
H	12	8	6
I	10	9	4
J	6	10	10
K	4		
L	3		
S	17		

CARL NIELSEN'S CLARINET CONCERTO, OPUS 57:
A PERFORMER'S EXAMINATION OF STYLISTIC
AND IDIOMATIC CHARACTERISTICS

by

JERRY EDWIN RIFE

B. S., Kansas State University, 1972

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF MUSIC

Department of Music

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1973

Carl Nielsen's Clarinet Concerto, Op. 57, has taken an important place in the repertory for that instrument. It is a very technical composition that presents a sizable amount of performance problems to the soloist. The purpose of this paper is to examine these problems and to offer the solutions that were used by this writer during a performance of the piece.

A biography of the composer, and a brief history of the concerto are included in the introduction. The second chapter contains information about the stylistic traits of Nielsen. His use of harmony, melody, form, rhythm, and counterpoint is presented.

The third chapter contains the most important material. This discussion of performance considerations includes a thorough investigation of fingering difficulties. The problems of tempo, articulation, range, dynamics, and ensemble are also covered. This section frequently contains illustrations from the concerto.

The bibliography is short because of the lack of material available. The appendix contains a chart of over 110 examples that involve special fingerings from the concerto.