

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

by

JERRY EDWIN RIFE

25
349 5839

B. S., Kansas State University, 1972

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

Approved by:

Frank M. Sidorofsky
Major Professor

LD
2668
R4
1973
R52
C.2
Document

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author wishes to express his sincere appreciation to Dr. Frank Sidorfsky for his guidance and critical evaluation of this report.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION	1
Explanation of Terms	
Biography of Nielsen	
History of the Concerto	
II. STYLISTIC CONSIDERATIONS	13
Harmony	
Melody	
Rhythm	
Form	
Counterpoint	
III. PERFORMANCE CONSIDERATIONS	23
Fingerings	
Tempo	
Articulation	
Range	
Dynamics	
Ensemble	
IV. SUMMARY	40
REFERENCES CITED	42
APPENDIX	43

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.