A Multiple-Woodwind Recital Analysis

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A MULTIPLE-WOODWIND
RECITAL ANALYSIS

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INTRODUCTION

This paper is written as an analysis of the musical form and interpretation of five selections presented in recital on May 26, 1958. Where possible, a brief sketch of the composer has been included to aid in an understanding of the composition.

The five numbers presented are listed below:

Oboe:
Sonate pour Hautbois-----C. Saint Saëns
1. Andantino
2. Allegretto
3. Molto Allegro

Flute:
Polonaise and Badinerie------J. S. Bach

Bassoon:
Capriccioso-----------------P. Jeanjean

Clarinet:
Prelude et Rigaudon----------E. Avon

Alto Saxophone:
Concerto in E Minor---------J. Gurewich
3. Presto
SONATE pour HAUTBOIS, Op. 166

1. Andantino
2. Allegretto
3. Molto Allegro

CHARLES CAMILLE SAINT-SAÉNS
(October 9, 1835-December 16, 1921)

In an article on "Musical Anarchy", Saint-Saëns once described the ultra-modern composer as "...he who musical sensibility is properly developed is not he who, tasting wine, can give you the growth and the vintage year. It is he who partakes with equal tolerance of heavy wine or light, whisky or brandy, preferring that which most burns his throat. It is not he who appreciates ingeniously contrived changes of tonality, giving the theme new and undreamt-of significance,—it is he who, being at home in all tonalities, unceasingly piles up dissonances never prepared and never resolved, snorting his way through the musical field like a wild boar in a flower garden."¹

No small quote can adequately depict the irascible old gentleman who in his eighty-seventh and final year of life composed his oboe sonata which is the subject of these pages. This particular quote, however, serves as a vivid illustration of his complete candor in criticizing the current musical trends in which he disdained to participate.

¹ Daniel Mason, From Grieg to Brahms (New York: Macmillan Co., 1927) p. 239.
In an age when Romanticism was reaching its peak, Saint-Saëns studiously controlled the emotional element in his own music and viewed his contemporaries' emotional freedoms with disgust. On one occasion, Paderewski performed one of Saint-Saëns' piano works on a state occasion to signify the cordial political relations between France and Poland. Paderewski, a romanticist, repeatedly arpeggiated chords in the composition. The typical romantic device so infuriated Saint-Saëns that he arose from his seat and corrected Paderewski's interpretation—to the embarrassment of the silent guests.2

Both in his music and in his life, Saint-Saëns managed to adhere to two principles that cast some light upon his compositions—"Keep free from all exaggeration" and "Preserve the soundness of your mind's health".3 His music is distinguished by the intellectual and emotional restraint exercised in melody, harmony, and rhythm. The studiously restrained melodic line is cleverly given continuity and color by the ingenious use of harmony and rhythm.

The effect of his admiration and study of the works of Bach and Handel are apparent in his compositions even though he was personally opposed to the performance of their works.


His opposition to these performances was based on a belief that programs should emphasize the latter classicists and the then present composers.4

Harmonically, Saint-Saëns progresses in logical patterns—usually utilizing the secondary sevenths, dominants, and frequent suspended thirds. His ninths and elevenths are consistently prepared and always smoothly resolved. The resultant effect is smooth harmonic compatibility in relation to direction and color.

Rhythmically, Saint-Saëns is far from staid or stoic, but engages a continuous pulsation and avoids rhythmic formlessness.5 Rhythmic interest is frequently quickened by clever devices involving rapid changes from duple rhythms to triple rhythms and vice-versa. As a result of his adherence to the basic pulsation, his music generally maintains a clarity of purpose that creates an impression of the beauty of simplicity based upon complexities.

The first movement or Andantino section in three-four time opens in the key of D major. The legato style and the reasonably slow tempo make no great technical demands on the performer. The section does require a strict adherence to phrasing and balance with the piano score—which is treated in all respects as an integral part of the composition.


In the thirty-fourth measure a modulation is accomplished through a sub-mediant seventh chord to the key of E flat and the new section begins with a repetition of the melodic figure used in the fourth measure elevated one-half step. Through the first fourteen measures in the new key, much use is made of the dominant pedal tone (B flat) upon which are super-imposed various tonal and atonal progressions. Sixteenth note rhythm patterns are firmly established in both the oboe and the piano. Abruptly, at the nineteenth measure, the oboe breaks the established sixteenth note pattern with a series of arpeggiated triplets in anticipation of the transition to the original key of D major. Throughout the transitional section, the oboe and the piano alternate duple and triple figures until the original theme appears at a gradual ritard.

At the tempo I°, the oboe and the piano repeat the first section with the only deviation being a slightly fuller scoring for the piano. The first movement concludes with a sustained tonic in the oboe and a sequential repetition of the opening motif in the piano.

The second movement opens with sustained arpeggiated chords utilizing pedal tones of the tonic B flat on the piano interspersed with oboe recitatives "ad libitum".

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At the conclusion of the recitative introduction, the piano establishes a nine-eight rhythmic figure comprised of quarter notes followed by eighth notes. By centering the melody around the third and fifth scale degrees, a reflective mood is established in the melody.

Although the key is B flat major, a minor element is repeatedly used without involving a true key change. The measures are alternated repeatedly from strong primary chords sounding B flat major to minor secondary chords sounding G minor as in the example shown below.

In the thirty-second measure, the principal theme is re-stated on the same scale degree but with the key center now based on G major. After six bars of the
principal theme, a return is made to B flat major. The principal theme, the secondary theme, and the transitional material are developed to the conclusion of the nine-eight section.

At the conclusion of the section, the recitative series are again stated—much in the same manner as in the introduction to the movement.

The third movement in two-four time and molto allegro makes much use of the alternated triple and quadruple rhythms. To add further rhythmic interest, the oboe and piano frequently combine triple and quadruple rhythms so that they are sounding three against four.

Two principal themes are used throughout the movement. The first theme is a rhythmic, staccato melody and the second is a legato melody accompanied by arpeggiated sixteenths.

Harmonic interest is created by frequent modulations. Although only six key changes are indicated in the score, the tonal center is changed much more frequently by the use of pivot chords.

The technical problems of the third movement are somewhat alleviated by the use of auxiliary fingerings. Some of the auxiliary fingerings making passages more easily accomplished are as follows:

1. In measure forty, the F to G trill is more easily

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*The many instances requiring the "forked" F are not enumerated due to the general use of this fingering.
accomplished if the F is played with the "forked" fingering and the trill made by the right hand first finger only.

2. In measures 44, 48, 57, 102, and 106, the C sharps and D flats should be played with either the first finger of the right hand only or with no holes covered.

3. In measure eighty-six, the melody line should be altered as indicated in the following example to adapt it to those oboes that do not have the auxiliary C key.

Written:

Performed:

Although the composition utilizes harmonic and rhythmic elements of the romantic era, the over-all style is that of the classical period and care should be exercised to avoid affectation in performance. Emotionalism should be as studiously controlled as color and interest permits. Saint-Saëns should be treated with depth and sincerity but never without restraint.
The life of Johann Sebastian Bach was dedicated to the medium of the organ. Not only were the vast majority of his compositions written for the organ, but his instrumental compositions were based on the methods and diction of organ music. The fugue principles and the contrapuntal character are apparent even in the lightest dance tunes. His dedication to the organ was not a matter of chance—in fact, hardly a matter of choice. Born to a family with a musical history of about two hundred years, he was probably instructed in the organ as a matter of trade. Since the best posts available were usually religious posts, it was quite natural that young boys that aspired to earn a living in music would be expected to be first and foremost, organists.

Bach's first instruction in music came from his father who began teaching him the violin at the age of eight years.


Following the death of his father and mother when he was ten, he lived and studied with an older brother in Ohrdruf. At the age of fifteen, he went to Luneburg and sang in the Saint Michael's school choir. While at Luneburg, he became acquainted with French music that was performed by orchestras in that vicinity. 9

His first appointment was at the age of eighteen as a violinist in the court-orchestra of Prince Johann Ernst. After a few months, Bach learned of a position as organist in Arnstadt and secured it. 10 Although he is believed to have written some secular music at this time, most of his work was at and for the organ. Until he was twenty-eight, he held positions as organist in several churches. During this period he gained recognition for his ability as a performer and for his knowledge of organ construction. Frequently he was asked to supervise the construction of new organs. 11

Due to the difficulty of living harmoniously with his church superiors, he accepted a position as Kappelmeister to Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Cothen. 12 Since this position was not of a religious nature, Bach found himself composing

10. Ibid., p. 19.
11. Ibid., p. 25.
more and more in the secular vein. Although a chronological listing of the preserved Bach literature is an impossibility, it is believed that the majority of his secular music was written at that time.\textsuperscript{13}

In May of 1727, he was appointed to a post at Leipzig and remained there until his death in 1750.\textsuperscript{14} During these years, his compositions were largely sacred.

Although he established himself as Germany's number one organist relatively early in life, it was not until Mendelssohn and Franz began to publicize his works that he became known as a composer—nearly 100 years after his death.\textsuperscript{15}

The Polonaise and Badinerie under discussion was probably written during his stay at Cothen.

The Polonaise, a Polish dance, is in the key of $B$ minor and begins with a moderato three-four with subdivided beats at a tempo of approximately seventy-six beats per eighth note.

An understanding of the dynamic practices of the period is essential to a correct presentation of the composition. Most of the dynamic variations used in the period


\textsuperscript{15} Op. cit., p. 22.
were based on the dynamic levels available on the clavi-chords and organs. Since dynamic levels were obtainable only at fixed levels by the use of pedals, few crescendoes and decrescendoes are found in the original works. Most of those found in the newer publications have been added by those editing the compositions.

The most common practice of dynamic alteration was to play the original statement of the theme at the "forte level and an answering statement at the "piano" level or degrees of each.

The structure of the first section of the Polonaise lends itself to the standard dynamic interpretation. It opens with a four-bar phrase at the "forte" dynamic level and repeats the four bars at the "piano" level. The next eight bars are divided into an antecedent phrase at the "forte" level and a consequent phrase at the "piano" level.

In the second section, the original melody is stated in the piano as the flute plays a contrapuntal variation comprised of sixteenth and thirty-second notes that create a "doubled meter" effect. The form of the second section is the same as the first section.

At the conclusion of the second section, a Del Capo effects a repeat of the original twelve bars.

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Although the composition is rhythmically a Polonaise, the form follows what is now known as the Minuet and Trio in ternary form.

The greatest technical problem in the Polonaise is probably one of breathing. This is especially true in the Trio, where no points of rest are given. In the Bach style the phrase endings are continued by broken chords into the next phrase. Although no evidence is available, there is a strong possibility that the "Suite in B Minor" was originally written for violin. Two alterations of the melodic line are acceptable in alleviating the problem. As suggested in the Himie Voxman edition of this piece, slight ritards at the end of the phrases are helpful to the performer. The second possible alteration is the omission of "weak" sixteenth notes at the end of the phrases to permit a continuous tempo. Those omitted by this performer are shown in the examples below:
The second main section or the Badinerie is in the key of D major and is performed in a presto two-four rhythm.

The same dynamic contrasts are made in the Badinerie as were made in the Polonaise.

Breathing in this section is no problem due to the points of rest established at the end of each two bar phrase.

Strict attention should be paid to staccato and legato markings throughout the section. The contrast of antecedent and consequent phrases is heightened by the articulation markings added to the "forte-piano" combinations.

Although no auxiliary fingerings are absolutely essential for execution of either the Polonaise or the Badinerie, there are several instances of A sharps that are played somewhat easier by the use of the right hand first finger instead of the thumb A sharp and a few instances of F sharp that respond better with the use of the right hand second finger instead of the third.

Although Bach is usually thought of in terms of religious music, the Polonaise and Badinerie should not be permitted to become solemn or reflective. The Polonaise should be treated "strictly as a march-past" and the Badinerie in a bantering manner.17

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17. Ibid., p. 557.
Composers who have written music primarily for solo wind instrument performance are generally not accorded equal recognition with orchestral and piano composers. The following three men, Paul Jeanjean, Edmond Avon, and Jascha Gurewich are significant composers of woodwind literature but have not been accorded recognition by any of the available biographical sources or histories of music.

The following information about each of them has been deduced in large part from the publisher's residence, interpretation markings, and dedications.

The solo literature and instrumental methods of Paul Jeanjean are well known among woodwind performers. He is of French origin and composes in the style of early French impressionists or late romanticists. His materials are available in the United States through the Alfred Music Company of New York.

Edmond Avon, also of France, was at one time a professor at the Conservatoire de Paris and later an officer of public instruction. For his composition, Prelude et Rigaudon, he was awarded the first prize of the Paris Conservatory.
Jascha Gurewich is one of the outstanding composers of saxophone literature of the present day. His various works are published through the Rubank Music Company of Chicago.

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CAPRICCioso

PAUL JEANJEAN

Written in the traditional French style, Jeanjean's Capriccioso makes great use of the song element in the melody. The rhythms are in a free style with considerable romantic crescendos, decrescendos, rallentandos, accelerandos, and holds.

The composition, written in the manner of the caprice, is based on an irregular form. The sections are A, B, C, B, D, A, and Coda. The A section is in B flat major and should be performed at a moderato tempo. The melody is lyrical in character and is phrased in three bar sections.

The B section is in F major and is considerably lighter in character than the preceding section. The phrasing now reverts to the more conventional four bar groupings and utilizes a slightly more detached type of articulation.

The C section is transitional in character and returns via a dominant seventh to the re-statement of the B section. The D section returns to the key of B flat with the modulation occurring in the one bar piano introduction. In this section several tempo fluctuations are indicated. The D section concludes with a rallentando into a re-statement of the A section. After a brief lento section in D flat major, the composition ends with a brief technical display of thirty-second note patterns and triplet sixteenths.
A few auxiliary fingerings are required for smooth execution. Most frequently required is the "thumb" B flat in executing passages combining G or A flat with B flat. The "thumb" F sharp is recommended in the descending scale pattern two bars before the return of the B or Allegretto section.

Since the performing directions are in French terminology, the following definitions are offered as a guide to interpretation: 18

Bois--woodwinds
Cordes--strings
leger--light, nimble
precis--exact, precise
pressez--accelerate
tres--vary
sans--without

Prelude et Rigaudon

Edmond Avon

This composition is written in the simple rondo form with an introduction and a coda. The introduction or prelude utilizes a series of clarinet cadenzas based on the tonic, supertonic, and dominant triads.

At the conclusion of the prelude, the rondo begins in the key of C major at an allegretto tempo. Rhythmic interest is heightened by the use of six note figures answered by eight note figures. Due to the large number of notes per beat, the tempo must be held at a comfortable tempo to maintain clarity in the melodic line. The A section concludes with a cadenza type ending that is played rhythmically except for the holds.

The B section is stated in the related minor and calls for a slightly faster tempo. The general melodic character is maintained by the use of six note patterns.

The recurrence of the A section is varied only at the conclusion where the cadenza is altered to include rapid triplet figures in descending patterns.

The C section is in the key of the subdominant and consists of one full repeated section divided by an interlude. The principal theme of the C section is related rhythmically
and melodically to the B section. Considerable use is made of displaced accents.

Following a re-statement of section A, the composition concludes with an elongated coda designed to display the virtuosity of the performer through a series of arpeggiated figures played in a "brilliante" manner.

The selection of the key of C major for the clarinet eliminates the need for many auxiliary fingerings. In the tenth and thirty-eighth measures of the C section, however, the use of the left hand auxiliary C sharp facilitates execution. In the case of a few trills and in the rapid passages, the use of the C to D trill key (second space A flat key) also aids performance.

Since the performing directions are again in French terminology, the following additional definitions are offered:19

- cedez—decrease
- delicatement—delicately
- doux—soft, sweet
- peu—little
- vite—quickly

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Written in the modern idiom, the third movement utilizes many harmonic dissonances and rhythmic pyramids between the saxophone and the piano. A favorite device is the statement of a rhythmic pattern by the saxophone and an immediate answer of the same by the piano. As the piano answers, the saxophone simultaneously states a new figure. In several instances, this device is carried through a number of phrases.

The movement opens in the key of C major for the saxophone. The principal theme of the first section is of a light, staccato nature that moves freely and independently of the piano accompaniment. Accented second beats and varied articulation add to the general effect of gaiety that prevails in the section.

The second section, in E major, maintains the same presto tempo but eliminates the accents and requires a more legato articulation. Softer dynamic levels add to the calmness of the section as a contrast to the exuberance of the first section.

At the conclusion of the second section, the piano adopts a lento tempo in four-four time. The saxophone and
the piano perform a brief interlude of dolce, legato melody in alternating phrases. The lento melody is interrupted by the saxophone's performance of a rapidly ascending scale of the dominant of the key of C and the first section returns—again at the presto tempo.

The first section is re-stated briefly and the saxophone enters upon a "brilliante" conclusion that is somewhat similar to an extended coda.

The technical difficulties of this movement are largely a matter of speed and smoothness of execution. In several instances, the right hand C trill key proves advantageous in the performance of passages utilizing combinations of the notes B and C. In the B section, the runs in E major are made easier by the retention of the articulate G sharp key. Two measures before the lento, the D sharp is more easily played by using the left hand B key and the right hand high E key.

In general, the movement should be performed lightly and in the spirit of a caprice.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY


