

A Comparative Analysis of the Different Performance Methods of the First Movement of *Mozart's Clarinet Concerto K622* in the 20th Century

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Abstract: *Mozart's Clarinet Concerto K622* is one of the most famous Concertos in the world. Due to the original score has been lost, Bassett clarinet in G key has gradually stepped out of people's vision in the long history, resulting in 18 versions of score on the world, and there are many completely different recorded versions at the same time. Taking 1970 as a time point, this paper analyzes the recording versions of four international mainstream clarinet masters before and after the 1970s, and horizontally discusses the differences and characteristics of early and late recording, in order to provide reference for clarinet performance and version selection.

Keywords: *Mozart's Clarinet Concerto K622*, Benny Goodman, Reginald Kell, Carl Neidich, Antony Pay, version comparison

Introduction

Mozart's (1756-1791) *Clarinet Concerto K622* is one of the most famous concertos in the world, it was written in 1791 for clarinetist Anton Stadler. A surviving autograph shows that Mozart started the *clarinet concerto* in 1787 for basset horn in G. In this first stage of his composition, he wrote the main melodic line for one hundred and ninety-nine bars. Four years later, Mozart changed the key from G major to A major and changed to the basset clarinet in A instead of basset horn in G. At that time Anton Stadler himself designed the new basset A clarinet himself which goes down to four semitones lower than normal A clarinet. It is a mystery why the original score of Mozart's *Clarinet Concerto K622* was lost, causing a number of composers to guess the original intentions of Mozart after Anton Stadler lost the manuscript. The existing Mozart *Clarinet Concerto* score has eighteen different editions, a performer can choose which one they prefer. (Lawson, 1996)

The aim of this essay is to compare different recorded versions of the work made during the 20th century. This essay is divided into three parts. In the first part, it compares what the different periods recordings have characteristics in common. The second part will discuss the different characteristics between early and recent recordings. The essay will conclude based on the evidence provided.

1. Different periods recordings have different characteristics

1.1 Recordings before 1970s

The early and recent recordings of Mozart's *Clarinet Concerto K622* have many different styles in the solo part, which are played with different articulation, ornamentation and staccato, they appear to be based on the Breitkopf & Hartel·Wiesbaden's edition scores which was the earliest one of three editions, published in 1801. Nevertheless, even the early recordings differ between themselves in their respects.

Two early different recordings are Reginald Kell's version recorded in London with London Philharmonic Orchestra in 1940. Kell was principal clarinetist in leading British orchestras and he was a soloist. The other recording of this period is Benny Goodman's version recorded in Boston with the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1956. Goodman was a famous American Jazz clarinet player. Both performers were typical of their time.

1.2 Recordings after 1970s

The two later recordings were almost recorded around the same time. One is Antony Pay's version recorded in Cambridge with Academy of Ancient Music in 1986, Pay is a clarinetist in England. The other recording of this period is Charles Neidich's version recorded in New York with Orpheus Orchestra in 1987, Neidich is a clarinet player in America. Both performances appear to be based on the Neue Mozart Ausgabe (NMA) in basset clarinet edition score and play on the basset clarinet.

This part will focus on differences in accent playing, dynamics, trills and staccato. The examples in the below comes from both Breitkopf & Hartel·Wiesbaden and Neue Mozart-Ausgabe edition.

1.3 Accent

In the early recordings, both performers prefer to put *sostenuto* in the recordings. At the first note of bar 63 (see Figure 1), Benny Goodman played accent and from bar 134 to 137 (see Figure 2), he based on the playing method of bar 63, he put accent on the first note of each bar. Kell's version did not do that, he played comply with the score and did not put any *sostenuto* or accent in it. But where they do the same thing is in bar 111 (see Figure 3), both performers had put *sostenuto* on the first note, as well as the second note in the following bar (see Figure 4b), which is D. Kell's accent is more exaggerated than Goodman's because he takes more time at this point. Bar 263 is an altered repeat of bar 69 (see Figure 5), each player plays these bars identically, but different to each other.

In the later recordings, Neidich and Pay prefer to add accents and *sostenutos* in the recordings. They both put accents on the first and third notes of each semiquaver groups from bar 134 to 137 (see Figure 6), the aim for the performer is to highlight the main melody which appear at lower parts. The following bars 143 and 144 (see Figure 6) are octave imitation phrases, Neidich and Pay put the accent at the first note of each beat. The same playing method applied in bars 324 to 325 (see Figure 7), they put accent on the first note of each beat in order to emphasize the melody line. In addition, they also added *sostenutos* on the first note of bar 111 and the second note in the bar 112.

Bar 63:

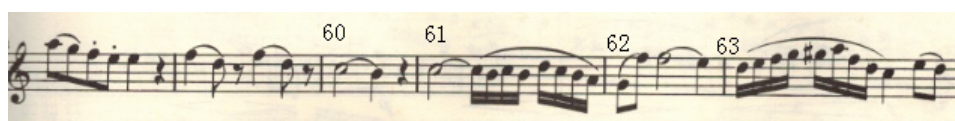


Figure 1. Source: Breitkopf & Hartel·Wiesbaden

Bar 134-137:



Figure 2. Source: Breitkopf & Hartel·Wiesbaden

Bar 111:



Figure 3. Source: Breitkopf & Hartel·Wiesbaden

Bar 112:



Figure 4. (a) original score



Figure 4. (b) Kell and Goodman's edition

Source: Breitkopf & Hartel·Wiesbaden

Bar 69:



Figure 5. Source: Breitkopf & Hartel·Wiesbaden

Bar 134-137:



Figure 6. Source: Neue Mozart-Ausgabe

Bar 324- 325:



Figure 7. Source: Breitkopf & Hartel·Wiesbaden

1.4 Contrasted dynamics

In the early recordings, the two recordings are basically the same when they play low octave imitation phrases. In bar 144 is low octave imitating of bar 143, Kell and Goodman both played the same dynamic from bar 143 to 144 (see Figure 8). Bar 180 and bar 183 (see Figure 9) have two same imitation phrases, both performers played the forte in the first phrase from bar 180 to bar 181 and played piano from bar 182 to bar 183 where the second phrase is the imitation of bars 180 to 181. This gives a very wide dynamic contrast.

On the other hand, Neidich and Pay also played in a similar characteristic on contrasts of dynamics in the later recordings. There are fewer articulation marks in the NMA's edition score. The two performers played the same style from bar 143 to bar 144 (see Figure 8), both of them kept forte in the low octave imitation phrase. There are another two imitation phrases from bar 180 to 183 (see Figure 9), Neidich and Pay played forte in the first phrase and piano in the second phrase from bar 180 to 183.

Bar 143-144:

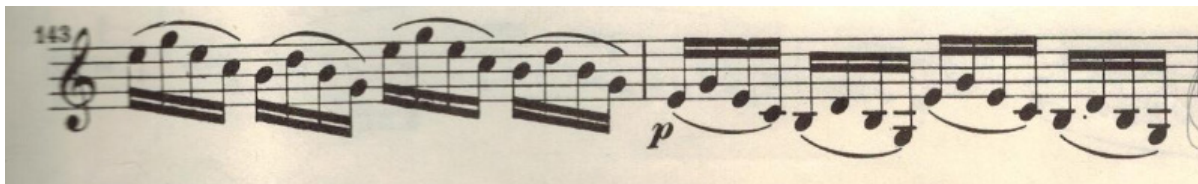


Figure 8. Source: Breitkopf & Hartel·Wiesbaden

Bar 180-183:



Figure 9. Source: Breitkopf & Hartel·Wiesbaden

1.5 Trills

The two recordings show that they are different when playing trills in the early recordings. There are eight trills in the first movement of the clarinet solo part, but half of them are different. The difference is in bars 74, 153, 268 and bar 342, Kell played the trill on the main note, but Goodman played the trill begin from the upper note. On the other hand, bars 225, 226 (see Figure 10) and bar 310 use the same performance method, the performers play trills to start on the main note. Badura-Skoda who based on evidence from Mozart's time and explain that 'A long trill should begin on the main note if the trill is preceded by the upper note' (Todd and Williams, 1991:6). It shows that both Kell and Goodman were comply with the original intended of Mozart from bar 225 to 226.

By comparing the trills in these recordings one found that the performers almost use the same performance method when they are playing trills. Both of them prefer to play trills starting from the upper note except in bars 225 and 226 (see Figure 10). Neidich began trills on the main note in bars 225 and 226, but Pay started trills from the upper note and added turns at the end of each trills between bars 225 and 226. According to Badura-Skoda's theory about trills, it seems that Pay try to attempt the new way instead of comply the old way to display his intention.

Bar 225-226:

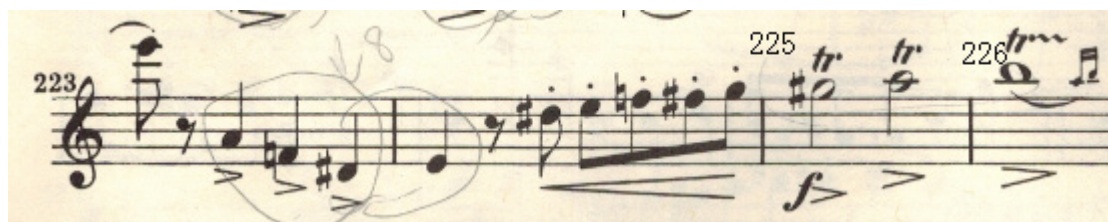


Figure 10. Source: Breitkopf & Hartel·Wiesbaden

1.6 Tonguing

In the early recordings, Kell's version is inverse with Goodman's version when they perform tonguing. Kell's version prefer to play tonguing to comply with the score and change some slurs to tonguing. On the other hand, Goodman prefers to play legato more often, he changes major tonguing parts to slur and change the staccato to legato tongue. For example, there are all staccato in the score from bar 180 to bar 183. (see Figure 7). Kell's version simply played staccato which follows the score.

In the recent recordings, Pay almost complied with the NMA's edition score, but Neidich changed tonguings into slurs occasionally. For example, Neidich changed the tonguings to slurs in bars 143 and 144 (see Figure 8) where Pay played tonguing comply with score in the same place. Nevertheless, there are one place exception from bars 180 to bar 183 (see Figure 9) where both performers played the different performance methods instead of playing comply with score. Neidich played slurs from bars 180 to 181 and then played staccatos from bars 182 to 183, instead, Pay simply played slur rather than all tonguings from bar 180 to 183.

1.7 Vibrato

The two different timbre style was the major differences in the early recordings. Goodman used the Jazz tone colour to perform all Mozart's classical music and employ vibrato into this work. For instant, Goodman played vibrato in bar 91, 187, 191 and from bar 216 to 219. Lawson (1996:73) claim that 'there was much detail which Mozart did not trouble to write into his scores'. Goodman combined the Jazz timbre with classical music, this is a new attempt in the mid 20th century. On the other hand, Kell played extremely firm and smooth sound when he recorded this work.

On the contrary, Neidich and Pay plays the tone colour the same with Kell's. Both plays warm sound perform in the

recent recordings.

1.8 Editing edition

Furthermore, the early recordings displayed the similar characteristics from bar 146 to 147 in the early recordings (see Figure 11), they transposed all four semiquaver of second beat in bar 146 and 147 to an octave higher. Another place is in bar 333 (see Figure 12), they transposed the first and second beat to an octave higher again in bar 333. Lawson (1996) claim that 'as a fuller knowledge of the work's background has become available, it has become customary and accepted practice in performances with normal clarinet to alter details of the transcription in order to achieve an enhanced solo contour'. It seems that the performers goal is to imitate the effect of basset edition score.

On the other hand, Neidich and Pay played basset clarinet in the recent recordings, they did not change registers from the scores.

Bar 146-147:



Figure 11. Source: Breitkopf & Hartel·Wiesbaden

Bar 333:



Figure 12. Source: Breitkopf & Hartel·Wiesbaden

1.9 Embellishment and cadenza

Neidich and Pay added the embellishment and cadenza in the recent recordings, but they played it with a totally differently. Lawson (1996) explained that Mozart did not write his original intentions in the score, but instead he leaves the option to performers with their own interpretations. Both performers played cadenzas in bar 127 (see Figure 13) and bar 315 (see Figure 14) where there are pauses at the end each phrase. In Neidich recording, cadenza dominates for a very long time in bar 315 where Pay played a much shorter and simple version in this bar. However, Pay put embellishments like arpeggio between second and third beat of bar 264 where the thematic recapitulation phrase is back again. The embellishment connects the low F to high B, it makes the thematic recapitulation different with the former theme. Pay also put the arpeggio style's embellishment between bar 217 and bar 218 and between bar 219 and bar 210, it makes the long note phrases more interesting.

Bar 127:



Figure 13. Source: Breitkopf & Hartel·Wiesbaden

Bar 315:



Figure 14. Source: Breitkopf & Hartel·Wiesbaden

Nevertheless, the early performers comply with the normal A clarinet edition's score, they did not add any embellishment and cadenza in the early recordings.

2. Discuss the differences in terms of characteristic between early and recent recordings

2.1 Compare the different types of clarinets between early and recent recordings

In the two different periods recordings, performers use different types of clarinets in recordings. In early recordings pre-1970s, performers use the normal A clarinet, but in recent recordings the choice of instrument has been the basset clarinet instead. Lawson (1996) explain that due to lack of interests in basset clarinet, there were rarely works that were written for this instrument before 1960. As a result, it was common for early performers to play on the normal A clarinet. Nevertheless, Hans Deinzer played on an older style of clarinet in 1973 recording (BASF BAC 3001) and the NMA published the basset's edition score in 1977, it raised up clarinetist interests in basset clarinet and tried to reconstruct the original intention by Mozart. Since then, clarinetists started to play on basset clarinet again in many recent recordings. (Lawson, 1996)

The different types of clarinet have individual edition scores. For instant, the basset clarinet score edition from bars 331 to bar 333 (see Figure 15) repeats the same melody but from bar 333 onwards, each bar is transposed to lower octave from the previous bar. However, the normal A clarinet cannot play the basset clarinet score due to the fact that in bar 333 in basset clarinet edition the score has a low c note which the normal A clarinet cannot reach. Therefore the normal A clarinet's edition transposes into a higher octave in bar 333 and then bar 333 and 332 becomes the same. If a performer plays on a basset clarinet when playing Mozart's *Clarinet Concerto*, it will enhance solo contour which on a normal A clarinet cannot be achieved. Lawson (1996:54) evaluated the characteristic of basset clarinet by stating that it 'nicely illuminate the qualities of the clarinet's different registers'. However, the two early performers in the early recordings have the idea to imitate the effect of basset clarinet. Lawson (1996:53) also explain that 'the arpeggios at bar 146-147 (see Figure 16) were originally pitched an octave lower'. Because the normal A clarinet cannot reach the low C note, thus the later editor composed all first four semiquavers of first beat to higher register in each bar. Nevertheless, Kell and Goodman did not comply with the normal A clarinet edition score, they transposed all semiquavers of second beat in bar 146 and 147 to higher octave like in Figure 17. (Hoepflich, 2008) To sum up, the two types of clarinets have individual characteristic when performers play this work.

Bar 331-333:



Figure 15. Source: Neue Mozart-Ausgabe

Bar 146-147:

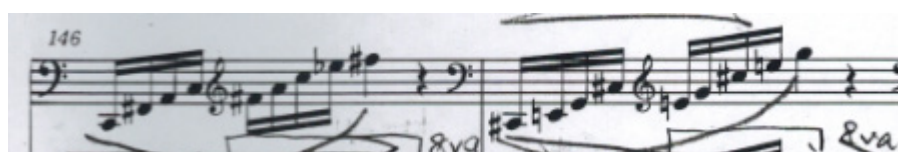


Figure 16. Source: Neue Mozart-Ausgabe

Bar 146-147:



Figure 17. Kell and Goodman's version

2.2 Compare the characteristic of two periods recordings in common with the use of different instruments

Firstly, in both recordings periods, performers tended to add accent and *sostenuto* when performing. For instance, all four performers prefer to put accents on the first note of each beat from bars 134 to 137 (see Figure 2) and play *sostenuto* on the second note of bar 112, even though it is not indicated on the Mozart's autograph. This feature becomes a common style for both early and late recordings. Additionally, in both periods' recordings they keep the same dynamic contrasts, the performers played the *forte* in the first phrase and *piano* in the second phrase from bar 180 to bar 183, despite not showing dynamic marks in the scores.

Interestingly, Kell likes to play trills on main note, but Goodman prefers to play trills starting from the upper note. On the contrary, the recent performers tend to play trills starting from upper note. Larry & Williams (1991:8) illustrate that '... because otherwise some musicians in Salzburg may have begun those trills with the main note. Thus the start on the main note must have been more common in Mozart's time than is generally acknowledged today'. This shows that Kell played trills in a style probably more close to Mozart's intention than others. However, Todd & Williams (1991:10) also claim that 'nowadays nearly all orchestral players start these trills with the upper note, evidently because they are 'well instructed' that a Mozart trill must start from above'. His idea about indicating the recent performers common played the trill start with upper note that is logical.

The major differences between the early and recent recordings are embellishments and the cadenzas, Carl Baermann published the Mozart *Clarinet Concerto* with cadenza in 1870 and other editors before 1950s have published a cadenzas for this work, but both of the early recordings reject to play cadenza. On the other hand, the later performers prefer to add embellishment and cadenza in their recordings. Backofen (1803) states that 'a composer cannot indicate how he would like each note played, but must place his trust in the performer's sensibility' (Lawson, 1962:73). It seems that Mozart did not reject performers who would not incorporate embellishments or cadenza in his works. Both periods performers keep the same tempo in the recordings. However, the length of the recordings varies a lot due to each performer's added individual embellishments, cadenzas and fermata in the recordings. From the beginning of the tutti string session until the first entry of the clarinet solo, all the recordings duration are around 1 minute and 52 seconds. This makes clear that all four performers kept the same tempo when they performed this movement.

3. Conclusion

This study clearly illustrates the different methods of performers from different periods in playing Mozart's *Clarinet Concerto K622*. In the early recordings, two performers played with similar performance practice, mainly due to Kell being Goodman's teacher starting from 1948 (Evans, 1962.), it could be that Kell restricted Goodman from adding embellishment and a cadenza in this work. As a result, both of them played this work to comply with the score and tried to aim for the original intention of Mozart. Robert Philip (1992) explained that 'If early recordings teach us anything, it is that no musicians can ever escape the taste and judgment of their own time' (Lawson, 1996:72). In the later recordings, if performers also comply with the NMA's basset clarinet score, it will be monotonous and cold. However, because performers added the embellishments and cadenzas, it gives audiences a completely new impression of the work. In my opinion, even if we are able to hear Anton Stadler's recording, we do not have to comply with his version, one should try to add new ideas and adapt to distinct features in this work. The later performers played on the basset clarinet which was Mozart original intention, but at the same time later performers added these new elements marking it refreshing for audiences. But the pre 1970s early recordings appear more classical style than the later ones, because they followed the score more rigorously. Therefore, the two periods recordings have individual styles and advantages, recent performers could try to combine the modern elements with classical style to perform this work.

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