ABSTRACT

CREATIVE PROJECT: BRAHMS, DEBUSSY AND BEYOND…A LOOK AT THE CLARINET REPERTOIRE AND THE INFLUENCE BRAHMS HAD ON MODERN COMPOSERS

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This paper explores the relationship between clarinetist Richard Mühlfeld and Johannes Brahms and the influence their relationship had on repertoire for clarinet as well as its impact on modern composers. Mühlfeld was a famous clarinetist during Brahms’s lifetime and influenced him greatly. Brahms was ready to retire from composing when he met Mühlfeld at a rehearsal for the Meiningen orchestra and immediately was impressed and inspired by Mühlfeld’s musicianship. This encouraged him to refrain from retiring and write repertoire for the clarinet.

The relationship between Mühlfeld and Brahms had a great impact on the clarinet world, as Brahms used the clarinet registers and sound in a unique and special way. In addition to Brahms, I explore the solo works of Claude Debussy, George Gershwin, and Shulamit Ran and compare their uses of intervals as well as the range of the instrument. As I analyzed and explored the works of these composers, it became clear to me that they used the clarinet in many similar ways to Brahms. I discuss how each of these composers used the clarinet and explore the ways in which Brahms influenced them and their style of writing.