

**TWO SOLO DE CONCOURS FOR FLUTE:
DUTILLEUX'S SONATINE AND JOLIVET'S CHANT DE LINOS**

A RESEARCH PAPER

**SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS**

FOR THE DEGREE

MASTERS OF MUSIC IN FLUTE

BY

DARA STUCKER

DR. KIRBY KORIATH – ADVISOR

BALL STATE UNIVERSITY

MUNCIE, INDIANA

DECEMBER 2009

Introduction

The *Conservatoire Nationale Supérieur de Musique de Paris*, also known as the Paris Conservatory, significantly contributed to the flute repertoire of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It was in the 1940s that two particularly significant pieces were commissioned by the Conservatory to be used for the *Solos de Concours*, compositions that were written for students to play in their final examinations. *Sonatine* by Henri Dutilleux (1943) and *Chant de Linos* by André Jolivet (1944) were written one after the other for the *concours* and continue to be two of the most important and most frequently performed pieces of French flute repertoire.

This paper will explore the origins of and performance issues related to these two pieces. It will begin with an overview of the Paris Conservatory and its contribution to flute literature because a significant number of works for flute that are considered standard flute literature today were written specifically for the purpose of being used as *concours*. The following section will include a description of the two flute teachers that helped shape the *French Flute School* during the 1940s: Marcel Moyse and Gaston Crunelle. These two players had differing philosophies but both contributed greatly to setting the standard for flute sound and technique during that time. The final two sections, a large portion of the paper, will take a closer look at the two pieces themselves. Each section will begin with information about Dutilleux or Jolivet, followed by suggestions for performance based on the *French Flute School* as understood by the author.

The Paris Conservatory

The *Conservatoire Nationale de Musique et de Declamation* opened in 1796 with a faculty of operatic singers and wind players. Into the opening years of the twenty-first century, the conservatory has only had fourteen directors. Claude Delvincourt was the director during most of the 1940s. The conservatory became renowned early on for its excellent training of instrumentalists, its publication of many treatises, and its establishment of a free library.¹

The requirements for admission to the school have not varied much over the past 200 years. A 1956 study of European conservatories explained the competitive audition process, “A concerto, performed from memory, and sight-reading which is presented by the jury, and preparation of an assigned composition to be performed before the jury within a week following the students’ initial appearance.”²

As a student of the conservatory, an instrumentalist passed through two cycles of study. The first cycle included solfege, analysis, and instrumental sight-reading. The second cycle was only the study of their instrument. During the second cycle students attended weekly master classes of like instruments. During the 1940’s, when Gaston Crunelle was the flute professor at the conservatory, the master classes were scheduled three times a week for four hours each.³

After completion of these two cycles, the students enter the *concours*. This final examination was an opportunity for students to win *Premier Prix* (First Prize). More than

¹Kathleen Roberta Cook, *The Paris Conservatory and the solos de concours for flute, 1900-1955*, DMA diss, (University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1991) 2.

² William D. Revelli, “Music Study, A Comparison Between America and Europe,” *Tempo* (Autumn 1956): 10.

³ Cook, *The Paris Conservatory and the solos de concours for flute, 1900-1955*, 6.

one first prize might be awarded because the students are judged against a set standard rather than competing for one *First Prize*. Before 1970, the conservatory commissioned a specific solo that would test the students' abilities of articulation, finger technique, breathing, phrasing, interpretation and overall musicality. The piece was published only one month before the *concours*.⁴

From this tradition of the *concours* comes a significant number of works for flute that are considered standard flute literature today. The wealth of twentieth-century French flute repertoire that tests the limits of a flute player's technique can largely be attributed to the Paris Conservatory.

The French Flute School in the Early 1940s

Whether or not there is an actual *French Flute School* of playing that would differ from the goals and aesthetics of other flute players world-wide continues to be debated.

According to Michel Debost, the *French School* of playing,

“is a systematic and thorough way of teaching the basics of playing an instrument. There is nothing secret about the French school, no secret recipes as in French or Chinese cooking; the French school is simply a practice. Just as the Russian or Juilliard school of playing the violin is a common reference, the French school of flute playing means using the instrument fluently and flexibly through articulation, dexterity, and tone production.”⁵

One largely accepted view is that the *French Flute School* can be characterized by the style and technique taught and demonstrated by the flute professors of the Paris Conservatory during any period in question. If this is so, then one only needs to examine

⁴ Ibid., 9.

⁵ Charles Andrews, “Michel Debost Teaches how to Learn,” *Flute Talk* 9, No. 5 (January 1990): 9.

the influence of Marcel Moyse and his successor Gaston Crunelle to have a greater understanding of the *French Flute School* of the early 1940s.

Marcel Moyse is considered to be one of the most influential players and teachers of flute in the twentieth century. Even during his time at the Paris Conservatory, when still a student of Taffanel, Moyse's voice-like sonorous sound was noted by colleagues and professors. Alfred Cortot, accompanist for Taffanel's class in 1906 stated, "Moyse's flute spoke a more emotional language, inventing colour-mixtures previously unheard, with a denser sonority. It resonated like the human voice rather than any other instrument."⁶ That same year, Moyse won the aforementioned *First Prize*. After holding principal flute positions in opera orchestras, Moyse became a sought-after recording artist for phonograph companies as well as being known as the premiere flute player in Paris.⁷

Moyse began teaching at the Paris Conservatory in 1931. He stressed singing through the instrument. This philosophy inspired his book of operatic aria transcribed for flute called *Tone Development Through Interpretation*. He said of flute players, "I am persuaded that it is in the sonority, in the power of expression that they have to concentrate their efforts to hold the attention of the public and the true artists. Pure technique is essential, but is only a limited means, and should never be the only aim."⁸

Moyse left his position as Professor of Flute at the conservatory in 1941 and fled to St. Amour when Nazis invaded Paris. He did not feel safe because his surname "Moyse" could be translated to "Moses." He was replaced by Gaston Crunelle. Crunelle

⁶ Cook, *The Paris Conservatory and the solos de concours for flute, 1900-1955*, 43.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁸ Cook, *The Paris Conservatory and the solos de concours for flute, 1900-1955*, citing Marcel Moyse, "Marcel Moyse on Flute Playing," *Symphony* (June/July 1949).

was also a product of the conservatory, having studied with Philippe Gaubert and winning *First Prize* in 1919. Although not as well known a performer as Moyse, his studio was comprised of several players that became world-renowned soloists. Flute super-stars such as Michel Debost, Jean-Pierre Rampal, and James Galway were part of this talented class. Michel Debost says of his teacher, “Crunelle tried to help flutists learn to express themselves musically but also efficiently and comfortably; hence a constant and patient emphasis on instrumental playing. ‘Work on your tonguing,’ he would say, ‘you will have a good tool in your toolbox.’”⁹ This recollection by Debost demonstrates a clear contrast in focus between Moyse and Crunelle. However, it is a combination of their philosophies that helped form the *French Flute School* style of playing during this period. The *concours* that were written during this time demanded an arsenal of different tones, colors and sonorous expression as well as flawless technique. Dutilleux’s *Sonatine* and Jolivet’s *Chant de Linos* are two examples of these demanding pieces.

A Closer Look at Two *Concours*

***Sonatine* by Henri Dutilleux**

Sonatine by Henri Dutilleux was commissioned by Claude Delvincourt, then director of the Paris Conservatory, for the *Solo de Concour* of 1943. Dutilleux’s early works, including *Sonatine*, show the influence of Ravel, Debussy, and Roussel.¹⁰ John Bacellona describes this style as “sophisticated in harmony and coloring, his

⁹ Michel Debost, “Gaston Crunelle,” *Flute Talk* 9, No. 8 (April 1990): 30.

¹⁰ Caroline Potter, “Dutilleux, Henri,” *Oxford Music Online* <http://oxfordmusiconline.com> (accessed 7/29/2009): 1.

compositions grow through the continual metamorphosis of motives.”¹¹ Dutilleux later rejected this style, finding it unoriginal, and expressed disdain for all his compositions written before his *Piano Sonata* (1948).¹²

Although he disowned his earlier works, *Sonatine* for flute remains a staple of the repertoire, a sonorous landscape on which to explore many techniques.¹³ The *Sonatine* has been used repeatedly as a *solo de concours* since its premiere because it displays a flutist’s expressive and technical capabilities.¹⁴ The piece has been assigned an 8 out of 9 ranking (9 being the most difficult) in the well-respected Leduc Scale of Difficulty. Caroline Potter claims that this piece was considered to be virtually unplayable at the time it was composed, and notes that it is now performed regularly by collegiate-level students.¹⁵

This one-movement work is divided into three distinct sections: Allegretto, Andante, and Anime. Dutilleux also included two cadenzas. One can hear Debussy’s influence in the opening measures largely due to the soft and sustained pedal and long flowing lines. The 7/8 meter wavers between 4+3 and 3+4 creating a less perceptible metric pulse, another characteristic of Debussy. The beginning is marked *sans nuances* (without nuance), but this marking is often ignored as performers want to make the most of this opening motive. John Barcellona cautions players that the piano begins with the

¹¹ John Barcellona, “Performing Dutilleux’s *Sonatine*,” *Flute Talk* (December 1994): 13.

¹² Potter, “Dutilleux, Henri,” 1.

¹³ Susan Goodfellow and Katherine Kemler, “Two interpretations of Dutilleux’s *Sonatine*,” *Flute Talk* 20, No. 4 (October 2000): 11.

¹⁴ Barcellona, “Performing Dutilleux’s *Sonatine*,” 13.

¹⁵ Caroline Potter, *Henri Dutilleux: His Life and Works* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Co., 1997) 7.

theme and the flute should remain in the background.¹⁶ This can be accomplished by using a tone color that melts into the piano sound, also beginning with a fuller sound to avoid any large crescendo into the upper registers. The rhythm must be exact but void of accents to create a fluid tone throughout the phrases.

After the piano introduces a jolly motive, the flute's theme is embellished with runs and grace notes. It is important not to rush but to keep the runs and grace notes close to the primary notes. Focusing on the skeleton of the phrases will help to keep the line moving and legato even with the embellishments. The section ends with an ascending line that requires light and crisp double tonguing, which will be continued in the following cadenza.

The first cadenza is marked *avec fantasia*, which means "with imagination." The composer gives the performer opportunities for creativity during the cadenza. Each group of ascending runs are slurred and then followed by descending tongued passages. This creates great contrast in tone and texture within the cadenza. Each passage of the cadenza is traditionally performed with an *accelerando*. The performer must make it his or her own, by experimenting with *rubato*, tone color, and articulation. The slurs are notated, but the player must make choices regarding the extent of accents and note lengths. Flute players must decide how long to linger on the high notes marked with *fermata*. Playing with the lengths of the different *fermatas* will help create excitement.

As the piano introduces the melody in the *Andante* section it is accompanied by syncopated chords. This should encourage the flute player not to drag when the flute takes over the melody. Again, the runs are for embellishment and should not take away

¹⁶ Barcellona, "Performing Dutilleux's *Sonatine*," 13.

from the long lines created by the principle notes of the melody. Because the texture of the piano accompaniment is thick, projecting in the lower register is another challenge for the flutist. Broken fragments from the previous cadenza lead into a turbulent piano solo, which is followed by the *Anime* section.

Caroline Potter states that the *Anime* section has “motoric rhythms and spiky texture, reminiscent of Roussel.”¹⁷ The spiky texture she is referring to is undoubtedly the beginning of this section where the flute plays a high staccato motive. It cuts sharply through the staccato accompaniment in the piano. Throughout the *Anime* section, one can find examples of these “motoric” rhythms that Potter links to Roussel. This third and final section of the piece is propelled first by the sixteenth-note rhythms and then chains of sixteenth-note triplet figures that barrel through to the final statement of the opening theme.

Dutilleux’s *Sonatine* challenges a flute player’s articulation and dexterity, which surely intrigued flute professor Gaston Crunelle. There is great difficulty in phrasing with a sustained rich tone throughout all of the finger-twisting and tongue-twisting. It is the phrasing with a rich tone that would be the focus of a teacher like Marcel Moyse. It is the combination of these characteristics that make this piece a truly *French Flute School* inspired work, perfect for the *Solo de Concours*.

¹⁷ Caroline Potter, *Henri Dutilleux: His Life and Works*. 40.

Chant de Linos by André Jolivet

Claude Delvincourt (director of the Paris Conservatory) commissioned André Jolivet to write a piece for flute for the *concours* in 1944 requesting specifically that it be difficult. *Chant de Linos* (1944) is known to be one of the most technically challenging pieces in the flute repertoire. The piece reflects several aspects of Jolivet's style during this period.

Jolivet was first exposed to atonal music at a series of concerts in honor of Schoenberg's visit to Paris in 1927. These concerts ignited in Jolivet an enthusiastic interest in this approach to composition.¹⁸ Jolivet then became a student of Varese in 1930. Barbara L. Kelly notes, "Varese's impact is evident in Jolivet's experimentation with sound-masses, acoustics, orchestration and atonal (though non-serial) methods."¹⁹

A characteristic that would stay with Jolivet throughout his compositional career was use of ritual, incantation and initiation practices as subject matter and inspiration for his music. Jolivet first found inspiration from the music of African and East Asian traditions.²⁰ Olivier Messiaen shared this interest in the spiritual and emotional aspects of music, which led to formation of the group known as "La jeune France." The two composers, along with Daniel-Lesur and Yves Baudrier, "sought to enhance spiritual value of music and emphasize its human qualities."²¹ They found these qualities lacking in the music of Stravinsky's neo-classicism, Satie, and Les Six. During the war Jolivet

¹⁸ Andree Martin, "A Performance Guide to Jolivet's *Chant de Linos*," *Flute Talk* (February, 2004): 14.

¹⁹ Barbara L. Kelly, "Jolivet, Andre," *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online* <http://oxfordmusiconline.com> (accessed 7/29/2009): 1.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.

²¹ Martin, "A Performance Guide to Jolivet's *Chant de Linos*," 14.

was less concerned with atonality. While striving for relaxation, his music became more lyrical. Kelly describes Jolivet's work after 1945 as a balance between his accessible lyricism and earlier experimentation.²²

Chant de Linos is a perfect example of Jolivet's interest in ritual. Kathleen Cook cites a description of Jolivet's style by Arthur Hoeree that relates directly to *Chant de Linos*: "Jolivet's art was dedicated to restoring music's original ancient sense, as the magical and incantatory expression of the religiosity of human communities."²³ The piece's title translates to "Song of Linus," and Linus is a Greek mythological figure who is said to have invented melody and rhythm. Linus taught music to Orpheus and Heracles, who killed him by striking him with a lyre. Jolivet's piece is a lament for Linus' tragic death.

Chant de Linos is full of abrupt character changes. Lamenting melodies are interrupted by "cries" in the high register of the flute and dance-like sections. With the lamenting melodies serving as an A section and the cries, cadenzas and dance sections in between the A laments, John Barcellona finds a "quasi rondo form."²⁴ He calls the opening section, "a powerful and shocking introduction that transports listeners into the metaphysical universe and the age of Greek antiquity."²⁵

This first section of the piece exploits the whole range of the flute and sounds somewhat like a cadenza with the alternating of long trilled notes and flurries of running thirty-second notes. Although the opening 16 measures sound improvisatory, flutist

²² Kelly, "Jolivet, Andre," 1.

²³ Cook, *The Paris Conservatory and the solos de concours for flute, 1900-1955*, 108.

²⁴ John Barcellona, "A Performance Guide to Jolivet's *Chant de Linos*," *Flute Talk* 15, No. 5 (January 1996): 12.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 12.

Andrée Martin warns that they be performed with exact rhythms, with trills that increase in speed and intensity, adhering to the *ffp*<*ff* marking.²⁶ This section requires the extreme technical dexterity that will be demanded throughout each of the cry and wailing sections. Paying specific attention to the mechanics of the left hand can help smooth thirty-second note passages and help achieve clarity.

The second section introduces the lamentation melody. The melody is first presented in the low register of the flute. It makes a steady climb toward the middle register before a sudden interruption of the cries in the extreme high register with flutter tonguing, accents, and grace notes. The lament is presented a total of seven times, each time followed by the aforementioned cries, but it is varied each time so that a recurring statement feels more like a mutation of the original statement rather than a variant. The lament statements varied by extension throughout the entire range of the flute, embellishment with grace notes and added underlying rhythmic pulse.

Jolivet includes two dance sections in *Chant de Linos*. The dance theme features articulated sixteenth-note patterns in the low register with a quick 7/8 meter, which creates a challenge in observing the *ff* dynamic marking. Attention to embouchure first, followed by a light but accurate tongue, will prove helpful in projecting over the piano. The second section of dance music transitions into the coda by initiating sixteenth-note triplet figures.

²⁶ Martin, "A Performance Guide to Jolivet's *Chant de Linos*," 14.

Kathleen Cook calls the coda, “the most idiomatic of the fast, technically difficult sections.”²⁷ She suggests using harmonics, over-blowing the lower octave fingering, for a specifically troublesome passage three measures from the end. She comments that this work may need to be practiced and performed several times before consistent results are achieved.²⁸ For many, this piece remains a work in progress for several years.

The same challenges faced by the flute player in Dutilleux’s *Sonatine* are found in *Chant de Linos* (*Chant de Linos* being arguably much more challenging). From Delvincourt’s commission of a “difficult” piece for the *concours* came this formidable piece by Jolivet. It certainly demands sonorous tone and incredible technique. *Chant de Linos* is another perfect example of a piece commissioned for the Paris Conservatory *Solo de Concours*, based on Michel Debost’s description, “The French school of flute playing means using the instrument fluently and flexibly through articulation, dexterity, and tone production.”²⁹

The Dutilleux and Jolivet *concours* for flute share characteristics with many of the *concours* that followed. There are a significant number of *concours* for flute that share the same three-sectioned one-movement form as *Sonatine*. *Chant de Linos* set a new standard for difficulty. Jolivet’s *concour* continues to be one of the most technically difficult pieces in the repertoire. Most *concours* that followed are more technically challenging than the *concours* commissioned before *Chant de Linos*.

Many thanks are due to the Paris Conservatory, for the significant quantity and quality of French flute literature composed as *concours*. The pieces examined here are

²⁷ Cook, *The Paris Conservatory and the solos de concours for flute, 1900-1955*, 109.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 109.

²⁹ Andrews, “Michel Debost Teaches how to Learn,” 9.

two of the most well-known pieces in the repertoire. They are popular for both their demanding technique and aesthetic qualities. The traditions of the French flute school continue with each performance of these pieces.

Sources Consulted

- Andrés, Charles. "Michel Debost Teaches How to Learn." *Flute Talk* 9, No. 5 (January 1990): 8-12.
- Barcellona, John. "A Performance Guide to Jolivet's *Chant de Linos*." *Flute Talk* 15, No. 5 (January 1996): 12-15.
- Barcellona, John. "Performing Dutilleux's *Sonatine*." *Flute Talk* 13, No. 4 (December 1994): 13.
- Clayton, April. "The French Flute Sonata and Sonatine from Debussy (1915) to Boulez (1946)." DMA diss, Juilliard School, 2001.
- Cook, Kathleen Roberta. "The Paris Conservatory and the solos de concours for flute, 1900-1955." DMA diss, University of Wisconsin, 1991.
- Debost, Michel. "Gaston Crunelle." *Flute Talk* 9, No. 8 (April 1990): 29-30.
- Goodfellow, Susan and Kemler, Katherine. "Two interpretations of Dutilleux's *Sonatine*." *Flute Talk* 20, No. 4 (October 2000): 11-16.
- Guarnuccio, Bryan Arthur. "André Jolivet *Chant de Linos* (1944): A sentential analysis." MM thesis, Bowling Green State University, 2006.
- Jolivet, André. *Chant de Linos*. Leduc, 1946.
- Kelly, Barbara L. "Jolivet, André." *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*. <http://www.grovemusic.com> (accessed July 29th, 2009).

Martin, Andrée. "A Performance Guide to André Jolivet's Chant de Linos." *Flute Talk* 23, No. 6 (February 2004): 14-15.

Potter, Caroline. "Dutilleux, Henri." Oxford Music Online.
<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com> (accessed July 29th, 2009).

Potter, Caroline. *Henri Dutilleux: His Life and Works*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Co., 1997.

Revelli, William. "Music Study, a Comparison between America and Europe." *Tempo* (Autumn 1956): 10-15.