

Senior Honors Clarinet Recital

by

**Benjamin Griffith
with René Henry**

Dr. Caroline Hartig, advisor

Caroline A. Hartig

**Ball State University
Muncie, Indiana**

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the following people:

Dr. Caroline Hartig, Associate Professor of Music Performance, Clarinet at Ball State University, for her patience, instruction, and encouragement over the past four years. You have taught me so much about playing the clarinet.

Barbara Briner-Jones for her time and effort to accompany me on the piano.

René Henry for agreeing to join me in this recital and for her friendship and encouragement. I could never have done it without you.

Mary Behler, Betheny Heinz, Jennifer Perry, and Sarah Watkins for putting in the time and effort to put together the Beethoven Sextet. I really appreciate all of your sacrifices.

And I would like to thank my parents and family for their unending love and support throughout my growth and development as a musician. I am where I am because of you.

Abstract:

It is my philosophy that a great musician makes a great music teacher. And as a musician, there are decisions that have to be made when it comes to performing in a concert or recital. One of the decisions to make is what pieces should be included in the repertoire. When choosing pieces, I had to take into account my playing ability and the technicality of the pieces under consideration. When considering choosing music for a band when I am teaching, I will have to take the same considerations into account. I will need to think about the ability of my students and the technical demands that the music will put on the students. The following is my rationale for the pieces that I chose to perform for this recital.

The Sonata No. 2 in Eb Major, Opus 120 by Johannes Brahms is a beautiful, lyrical piece of music. And even though the notes and the rhythms of the part do not look that complicated, Brahms weaves in a number of difficulties. There are multiple times where he used hemiola, two against three, between the piano and the clarinet. This piece also is very challenging for its artistic expression. With Brahms' music, there is always more to the piece than just the notes on the page. There needs to be an expression of the performer in the music that evokes some kind of emotion. It is because of these different challenges that I chose to perform this piece. It is both lyrical and challenging, allowing me to grow as a performer.

The *Rhapsody for Clarinet* by Willson Osborne is an unaccompanied piece for solo clarinet. The tempo fluctuates throughout the piece, allowing the mood to change slightly. The meters also change throughout, allowing certain passages to move more smoothly. The piece also exemplifies a slow lyrical section that occasionally accelerates into a more technically challenging passage before going back to the slower, lyrical tempo. This piece is challenging in that it is the clarinet performing by itself. This allows for the performer to be a little more flexible with tempo and allow the performer to express himself a little more outside the strict tempos of accompanied playing. It is true that you do not want to stray too far away from the printed tempos, but it allows more liberty to be taken than to follow a strict tempo. And that is why I chose this piece for this recital.

The Sonata for Clarinet, Opus 167 by Camille Saint-Saens is grand solo for the clarinet. Just like the Brahms, it is very lyrical and is deceptively difficult. The part does not look too complicated, but a performer must make more from the notes that are printed on the page. The very lyrical opening section can become very expressionistic. The middle section is where the most difficult passages of the piece are, with flowing sixteenth notes in the piano and clarinet. And this flowing excitement eventually subsides and returns to the more lyrical phrases. This piece was chosen because it shows how musical a clarinet player can be. I learned early on that there is more to this piece than just the notes and dynamics written on the page. This piece, along with the Brahms, has allowed me to grow as a solo performer.

The Sextet for Winds, Opus 71 by Ludwig van Beethoven was chosen for several reasons. One reason being that I enjoy ensemble playing. Another reason being that a majority of the two movements chosen features the first clarinet. And the final reason being that chamber ensemble playing is not very easy and is a little different than playing a solo or in a large ensemble. Balance and blend issues become more fragile. The last movement is the capstone of the piece. It combines a lot of soloistic passages that are passed about the ensemble, but the first clarinet seems to dominate. Since this piece was written in a different time, a different approach and understanding of the music must be made before it can be performed. There were some things that meant something a little different than what we use today, which created some challenges in preparing this piece. In conclusion, this piece was chosen because of its challenges not only in the ensemble playing, but also learning and playing in the style that Beethoven had written the piece in.

This project was to allow me the opportunity to learn and grow as a musician so that when I teach, I will be a better teacher. In order to teach music, the teacher must be a competent musician. This project is a demonstration of my competency as a musician.

Advisor: *Caroline A. Hartig*

René Henry

&

Benjamin Griffith

assisted by Barbara Briner-Jones and

the BSU Woodwind Sextet

in a Clarinet Recital



Featuring...

Brahms, Rabaud, Osborne, Weber,
Saint-Saëns, and Beethoven

5:30pm

Wednesday, October 23rd

Pruis Hall

**RENE HENRY
BENJAMIN GRIFFITH
clarinet
in a
JUNIOR-SENIOR RECITAL
with
Barbara Briner-Jones, piano
Bethany Heinz and Sarah Watkins, bassoon
Mary Behler and Jennifer Perry, French horn**

- Sonata No. 2 in E-flat Major Op. 120 Johannes Brahms
I. Allegro amabile (1833-1897)
- Solo de Concours Op. 10 Henri Rabaud
(1873-1949)
- Rhapsody for Clarinet..... Willson Osborne
(1906-1979)
- ... Intermission ...
- Concertino for Clarinet Op. 26..... Carl Maria von Weber
(1786-1825)
ed. Don McCathren
- Sonata for Clarinet in E-flat Major Op. 167 Camille Saint-Saens
I. Allegretto (1835-1921)
- Sextet for Winds Op. 71 Ludwig van Beethoven
II. Adagio (1770-1827)
IV. Rondo, Allegro

Rene Henry and Benjamin Griffith are students of Caroline Hartig.

For Benjamin Griffith, this recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Honors Program at Ball State University.

PRUIS HALL
Wednesday, October 23, 2002
5:30 p.m.

Series LVII
Number 37

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PROGRAM NOTES

Compiled by Benjamin Griffith

1. Sonata for Clarinet and Piano No. 2 in E \flat Major, Op. 120 by Johannes Brahms

Upon hearing Richard Muhlfeld playing the clarinet in 1894, Brahms was inspired to write two duo sonatas for clarinet and piano. "Brahms often composed pieces in pairs, the second complementing the first in mood and manner. Standing in marked contrast to the restless opening gestures of the F-minor sonata is the gently undulating amabile melody that initiates the E \flat -major sonata. [T]he 'turn' motive at the head of the theme finds immediate and dynamic development, as is Brahms's manner, but impassioned outbursts are rapidly quelled. The theme in the dominant provides a close cannon between clarinet and piano, yet the affect is not learned, so deftly is the counterpoint sketched; a second section in this key is all rippling triplets against soaring dupe melody. The genial flow of this sonata-form movement is not even interrupted by clear-cut sectional divisions into exposition, development, and recapitulation. This mood piece, so unlike the virile assertive allegros of most sonatas, ends *molto dolce, tranquillo*."

Bozarth, George (1999). "Two Sonatas for Clarinet and Piano in F Minor and E \flat Major, Opus 120" The Compleat Brahms: A Guide to the Musical Works of Johannes Brahms. editor Leon Butstein. W.W. Norton & Company: New York. 101-103.

2. Rhapsody for Clarinet by Willson Osborne

When Willson Osborne began work on Rhapsody, he wrote it for bassoon. But early on, he decided he would make it suitable for the clarinet as well. Because it was initially written for the bassoon and then later for clarinet also, this accounts for the lack of extremely high notes in the clarinet. Osborne makes use of the Oriental technique of variation, which takes song-like fragments and either develops them or continues them with active coloratura passages. "Although Rhapsody was written as abstract music, it does present a series of shifting emotional states, and this goes so far as to be one of its most salient characteristics. But my belated discovery of it--at a considerable distance--I suddenly felt that I was hearing a lonely shepherd piping in a Turneresque, Mediterranean landscape--pouring out his joys and sorrows, his longings and exultations. But I hasten to add that it was not composed with this picturesque scene in mind."

Osborne, Willson (1973). "Rhapsody for Clarinet (B-flat)" Solos for Unaccompanied Clarinet: An Annotated Bibliography of Published Works. Editor James E. Gillespie Jr. Information Coordinators, Inc.: Detroit. 49-50.

3. Sonata in E \flat Major for Clarinet and Piano Op. 167 by Camille Saint-Saens

Camille Saint-Saens composed three sonatas for wind instrument during the last year of his life. The clarinet sonata is one of these sonatas. It was dedicated to Auguste Perier, professor of clarinet at the Paris Conservatory. "The main features of the Clarinet Sonata are its unusually simple piano part...and the lyrical melodic lines of the clarinet. The first [movement] consists of a main section featuring an expansive theme which appear on either side of florid central section."

Inou, Satsuki (1992). "French Clarinet Art." Jacket Notes. Nippon Columbia Co., LTD: Japan.

"The sonata for clarinet...is the most luxuriantly sonorous of the three [woodwind sonatas], with the greatest harmonic fullness and figural elaboration in the keyboard parts. The first movement discourses gracefully upon a single melody that gradually acquires embellishments before reverting to its simple statement."

Wiser, John (1990). "Romance." Jacket Notes. BMG Classics: New York.

4. Sextet for Winds, Op. 71 by Ludwig van Beethoven

Beethoven wrote the sextet in the late 1700s, but it was not published until 1810.

Beethoven had the following to say about the sextet, "The sextet belongs to my earlier work and was moreover written in a single night-there is nothing more to be said but that it is the work of an author who has done at least a few better things-yet for many people these are best" (284).

"Despite Beethoven's words, [the sextet] is by no means lacking in art. He probably referred to the development of idea, the strictly logical motival working out upon which, in later years, his work was based. The art displayed in [this] work for wind instruments is, indeed, limited, but it is so perforce since the tone material admits neither of the expression of especially significant ideas nor of very penetrating analysis. The art with which the emotion to the spirit of his instruments, recognizes their tone-character and detains the most exquisite effects, actually by means of their technical deficiencies" (284).

"The 'adagio' is the gem of the work, perhaps of all music for wind instruments alone. A simple and graceful melody given out by the bassoon is repeated by the clarinets and passes through a series of changes, ever simple yet fresh and interesting, to a happy close. All six instruments unite joyously in the main section and die away one by one to the marching rhythm of the rondo-like [final movement] in which the principle role falls to the first clarinet" (287).

Bekker, Paul (1932). *Beethoven*. J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd.: London. 283-287.

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