

COPLAND'S CLARINET CONCERTO:  
A PERFORMANCE PERSPECTIVE

by

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## **Abstract**

Aaron Copland's Clarinet Concerto was written for jazz clarinetist Benny Goodman. The work's incorporation of popular elements, particularly jazz, has led to the perception that it is a "lightweight" representative of Copland's output. However, the concerto shares many characteristics with French neoclassical works of the 1920's and 30's, and demonstrates a highly skilled construction that belies this label. The neoclassical aspect of the concerto raises important questions as to whether the jazz elements in the piece are really central to its expressive essence, or whether they merely reflect a choice of materials common to Copland and to other neoclassical composers.

This dissertation is directed to the potential performer who wishes to have a better knowledge of the concerto's performance issues. It discusses the influence of neoclassicism on Copland's compositional style, gives the historical background to the Clarinet Concerto's composition, and outlines its general stylistic characteristics. The concerto's structure is examined in detail, and then applied to the work's performance issues, as the document investigates the performance practice of the piece through the study of recordings.

The purpose of this dissertation is not to burden performers with a detailed set of instructions to be followed in performing the concerto. Rather, it aims to equip them with the techniques necessary to developing an individual, personal interpretation, based on a thorough understanding of the piece.

## **Table of Contents**

<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>PREFACE</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1: AARON COPLAND, AN INTRODUCTION: NEOCLASSICISM, JAZZ, AND THE CLARINET CONCERTO</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CHAPTER 2: STRUCTURE OF THE CONCERTO</b>	<b>16</b>
First Movement:	16
Cadenza:	25
Second Movement:	29
<b>CHAPTER 3: MUSICAL ELEMENTS OF THE CONCERTO: UNITY AND CONTRAST</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>CHAPTER 4: PERFORMANCE PRACTICE</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>97</b>

## List of Figures

TABLE 1: FORMAL OUTLINE OF CLARINET CONCERTO, FIRST MOVEMENT	25
TABLE 2: FORMAL OUTLINE OF CLARINET CONCERTO, SECOND MOVEMENT	48
EXAMPLE 2. 1 (MM. 1-19)	18.
EXAMPLE 2. 2 (MM. 20-28)	20
EXAMPLE 2. 3 VIOLIN 1 (MM. 37-43)	20
EXAMPLE 2. 4 CLARINET (MM. 44-50)	20
EXAMPLE 2. 5 (MM. 51-55)	21
EXAMPLE 2. 6 (MM. 61-72)	23
EXAMPLE 2. 7 (M. 115-C. 16)	27
EXAMPLE 2. 8 (C. 35-44)	27
EXAMPLE 2. 9 (C. 26-28)	27
EXAMPLE 2. 10 (C. 60-71)	28
EXAMPLE 2. 11 (C. 72-M. 120)	28
EXAMPLE 2. 12 (MM. 120-124)	30
EXAMPLE 2. 13 (MM. 125-129)	31
EXAMPLE 2. 14 (MM. 146-151)	32
EXAMPLE 2. 15 (MM. 158-161)	32
EXAMPLE 2. 16 (MM. 176-183)	34
EXAMPLE 2. 17 (MM. 213-217)	35
EXAMPLE 2. 18 (MM. 269-273)	37
EXAMPLE 2. 19 (MM. 286-288)	37
EXAMPLE 2. 20 (MM. 296-305)	38
EXAMPLE 2. 21 (MM. 307-310)	39
EXAMPLE 2. 22 (MM. 317-322)	40
EXAMPLE 2. 23 (MM. 323-327)	40
EXAMPLE 2. 24 (MM. 379-388)	43
EXAMPLE 2. 25 (MM. 445-449)	45
EXAMPLE 2. 26 (MM. 501-506)	47
EXAMPLE 3. 1 (MM. 4-9)	51
EXAMPLE 3. 2 (MM. 146-151)	51
EXAMPLE 3. 3 (MM. 441-443)	52
EXAMPLE 3. 4 (MM. 269-272)	52
EXAMPLE 3. 5 CLARINET (MM. 24-28)	53
EXAMPLE 3. 6 (MM. 61-65)	53
EXAMPLE 3. 7 CLARINET, A (MM. 150-151), B (MM. 179-181), C (MM. 213-215), D (MM. 296-298), E (MM. 308-310)	54
EXAMPLE 3. 8 (MM. 286-288)	55
EXAMPLE 3. 9 (MM. 112-C. 6)	56
EXAMPLE 3. 10 (MM. 294-296)	56
EXAMPLE 3. 11 A (M. 61), B (M. 63), C (M. 72)	58
EXAMPLE 3. 12 (MM. 297-301)	58
EXAMPLE 3. 13 CLARINET, A (MM. 11-12), B (MM. 43-44)	59
EXAMPLE 3. 14 CLARINET, (MM. 369-372)	59
EXAMPLE 3. 15 (MM. 195-200)	60
EXAMPLE 3. 16 A (MM. 51-55), B (MM. 294-296)	61
EXAMPLE 3. 17 (MM. 339-344)	63
EXAMPLE 3. 18 A (MM. 297-301), B (MM. 317-320), C (MM. 356-359), D (MM. 373-375)	64
EXAMPLE 3. 19 (MM. 461-466)	66
EXAMPLE 3. 20 CLARINET (MM. 4-19)	71
EXAMPLE 3. 21 CLARINET (MM. 46-50)	71
EXAMPLE 3. 22 (C. 34-37)	72
EXAMPLE 3. 23 CLARINET (MM. 213-217)	73
EXAMPLE 3. 24 A VIOLIN 1 (MM. 125-129), B CLARINET (MM. 188-190)	73

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## Preface

Aaron Copland's *Concerto for Clarinet and String Orchestra, with Harp and Piano* holds a prominent place in the twentieth-century clarinet repertoire. Written in the late 1940's for Benny Goodman, the "King of Swing," the work's incorporation of popular elements, particularly jazz, has led to the perception that it is a "lightweight" representative of Copland's output. However, the concerto shares many characteristics with French neoclassical works of the 1920's and 30's, and demonstrates a highly skilled construction that belies this label. The neoclassical aspect of the concerto raises important questions as to whether the jazz elements in the piece are really central to its expressive essence, or whether they merely reflect a choice of materials common to Copland and to other neoclassical composers.

This dissertation is directed to the potential performer who wishes to have a better knowledge of the concerto's performance issues. Each chapter explores the work from different perspectives. Chapter One discusses the influence of neoclassicism on Copland's compositional style and his incorporation of jazz into his works as a result of that influence. It then gives historical background to the Clarinet Concerto's composition and outlines its general stylistic characteristics. Chapters Two and Three examine the structure of the work, beginning with an in-depth linear analysis and

continuing with a detailed review of the individual musical elements most relevant to performance.

Chapter 4 deals with the practical application of the analysis, the performance of the concerto. It investigates a variety of interpretations through the study of recordings. As there are so many recordings of this work, the review focuses on types of approaches to the piece using representative examples, rather than including a "blow-by-blow" account of each performer's interpretation. It pays particular attention to the recording that Goodman and Copland made together in 1963 with the Columbia Strings, examining its adherence to the instructions in the score and the reasons for its success as an interpretation.

The purpose of this dissertation is not to burden performers with a detailed set of instructions to be followed in performing the concerto. Rather, it aims to equip them with the techniques necessary to developing an individual, personal interpretation, based on a thorough understanding of the piece.



## **Chapter 1: Aaron Copland, an Introduction: Neoclassicism, Jazz, and the Clarinet Concerto**

Aaron Copland's (1900-1990) compositional style was greatly influenced by his time as a student in Paris in the 1920's. Copland became the first of many American composers to study with Nadia Boulanger, one of the most renowned composition teachers of the twentieth century. Her teaching emphasized clarity, balance, and proportion, with a sense of forward motion and inevitability, or what she referred to as "la grande ligne" in music. These characteristics reflect some of the composing techniques of Igor Stravinsky, whose works at the time, such as his *Octet* of 1923, were written with a neoclassical approach.

Neoclassicism was adopted by many European and American composers in the 1920's and 30's as part of a general reaction against nineteenth-century stylistic models of romanticism and French impressionism. In a chapter from Robert Morgan's *Modern Times*, Stephen Hinton illustrates how the term "neoclassicism" is misleading because, in fact, the style it describes embodies a more all-inclusive technique than this label implies. Instead of being a means to borrow models from the Classical period exclusively, neoclassicism enabled composers to incorporate any pre-existing materials into their works, ranging from eighteenth- and nineteenth-

century archetypes, to lighter forms from contemporary culture such as popular music and jazz.<sup>1</sup> According to Hinton, “what remains salient is the use of a compositional model, irrespective of its historical provenance or its aesthetic quality.”<sup>2</sup> Typical characteristics of neoclassical compositions included clarity, transparent textures, formal balance, and expressive restraint.

At the time, jazz was very à la mode in Paris, performed in bars and nightclubs. European composers were incorporating jazz materials into their compositions, such as Darius Milhaud’s masterpiece *La Création du Monde*. Copland said that hearing jazz in a foreign country made him realize that the idiom had great potential for making an American sounding concert music.<sup>3</sup> He had seen how European music reflected the environment in which it was written, prompting his desire to do the same thing back home in the United States.<sup>4</sup>

With this idea in mind, Copland had a period when he explicitly incorporated jazz into his works. The search for an indigenous musical language was very important to many American composers in the 1920’s, and jazz was one idiom they explored as a means of achieving this goal.

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen Hinton, “Germany, 1918-1945,” in *Modern Times: From World War I to the Present*, ed. Robert P. Morgan (London: MacMillan Press, 1993), 94-95.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Aaron Copland and Vivian Perlis, *Copland: 1900 Through 1942* (New York: St. Martin’s / Marek, 1984), 90. Copland said that hearing jazz while on a visit to Vienna during his student days sparked his interest in the idiom.

<sup>4</sup> Aaron Copland, *Music and Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1952; reprint, 1970), 99.

Copland's important works in this vein were two symphonic pieces: *Music for the Theatre* and his *Piano Concerto*. A review of the latter commented that the originality of the piece lay in "the truly alchemic manner in which Copland has transmuted the dross of jazz into a fantastic and scintillant symphonic style."<sup>5</sup> Composed in 1926, the *Piano Concerto* marked the end of Copland's explicit use of jazz. He had found the idiom too restrictive in expression, being limited to what he described as the "blues" and "snappy number," but felt that the real influence of jazz on art music would be in its rhythmic nature, which could be used independently from its original context.<sup>6</sup>

Critics have typically divided Copland's output into two distinct styles: the "popular" and the "difficult."<sup>7</sup> Copland was disturbed by this division, responding:

Others have used my own compositions to prove that I make a sharp distinction between those written in a "severe" and those in a "simple" style. The inference is sometimes drawn that I have consciously abandoned my earlier dissonant manner in order to popularize my style - and this notion is applauded enthusiastically; while those of a different persuasion are convinced that only my so-called "severe" style is really serious.

In my own mind there never was so sharp a dichotomy between the various works I have written. Different purposes produce different kinds of work, that is all.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Edward Burlingame Hill, "Copland's Jazz Concerto in Boston," *Modern Music* 14.4 (1927): 37. This derogatory comment demonstrates the lack of respect jazz was given in America at the time.

<sup>6</sup> Aaron Copland, *The New Music: 1900-1960* (Rev. ed., London: Macdonald, 1968): 159.

<sup>7</sup> Typical "popular" works include Copland's ballets, such as *Rodeo* or *Appalachian Spring*, his film scores, and even some of his orchestral works such as *Lincoln Portrait*. "Difficult" works are usually those that were not composed for any particular extra-musical purpose and are therefore more abstract, including his *Piano Variations*, *Short Symphony*, or *Piano Fantasy*. Critics have used a variety of terms to differentiate these two categories: "simple", "easy", or "popular", versus "difficult", "severe", or "non-easy".

<sup>8</sup> Copland, *Music and Imagination*, 108.

Copland never wanted to limit himself to one type of musical language,<sup>9</sup> and composing for a variety of functions provided him with the opportunity to experiment with different idioms. His more popular works, such as *Appalachian Spring* or *Billy the Kid*, offered him the opportunity to explore a new kind of “homespun idiom,” or what he also called “musical naturalness.”<sup>10</sup> Copland admitted that he did compose in different idioms to suit the functional needs of the piece, to reach a broader audience, and to explore new musical means for expression. However, he did not feel that his work should be differentiated according to its intrinsic complexity: “Music that is born complex is not inherently better or worse than music that is born simple.”<sup>11</sup>

In his article “Copland’s Style,” Lawrence Starr argues that the usual means for defining a composer’s “style” has severe limitations, and that this is particularly true in Copland’s case.<sup>12</sup> His choice of materials was enormously varied: “In any case, I never gave much thought to including or excluding *any* kind of influence from my work.”<sup>13</sup> A more accurate description of Copland’s style is found in the characteristic compositional procedures he used to manipulate and transform these eclectic musical

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<sup>9</sup> Aaron Copland and Vivian Perlis, *Copland: Since 1943* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1989), 353.

<sup>10</sup> Copland and Perlis, *Copland: 1900 Through 1942*, 251.

<sup>11</sup> Copland, *Music and Imagination*, 108.

<sup>12</sup> Lawrence Starr, “Copland’s Style,” *Perspectives of New Music* 19 (1980-81): 71.

<sup>13</sup> Copland and Perlis, *Copland: 1900 Through 1942*, 152.

elements, procedures that unite both his “easy” and “difficult” pieces into one distinct composing idiom.<sup>14</sup>

Copland’s musical ideas have been described as “pennies shrewdly invested, not pearls advantageously set.”<sup>15</sup> Copland used materials that were often banal in substance, like cowboy tunes or jazz clichés, because they provided the necessary raw materials; he chose “pennies” rather than “pearls” because they could be manipulated more easily<sup>16</sup> and used as a means of creating a unified musical structure.

When incorporating indigenous elements into his music, Copland was able to distill their expressive essence. In fact, Copland’s methods of abstraction often made his music sound more “American” than the original tunes.<sup>17</sup> Starr describes the process as follows: “He subjects his musical subject matter to operations not previously associated with it in order to create unusual and intense effects of musical perspective; the result is a commentary of one musical period, type, and idiom upon another or, as Eric Salzman would say, ‘art about art’.”<sup>18</sup> It is Copland’s abstraction of musical materials and their presentation in a new context that is an important characteristic of his neoclassicism.

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<sup>14</sup> Starr, 86.

<sup>15</sup> Theodore Chandler, “Aaron Copland,” in *American Composers on American Music: A Symposium*, ed. Henry Crowell (Stanford University Press, 1933; reprint, New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1962), 49. Chandler does not attribute the person who originally coined the phrase.

<sup>16</sup> Hugo Cole, “Popular Elements in Copland’s Music,” *Tempo* 95 (1970-71): 9-10.

<sup>17</sup> Arthur Berger, “The Music of Aaron Copland,” *Musical Quarterly* 31 (1945): 441-42.

<sup>18</sup> Starr, 81. In this paragraph, Starr points out the similarity between Copland’s technique and Stravinsky’s in the latter’s incorporation of both Russian folk music and Western art music materials into his compositions.

The *Concerto for Clarinet and String Orchestra, with Harp and Piano* marked a return to Copland's use of jazz in his compositions. It was written twenty years later than his earlier jazz-influenced works when, as a mature composer, he no longer felt the need to rely so explicitly on jazz to provide an "American" voice to his music. Rather, external references such as jazz are more subtle; though more than merely incidental, they are synthesized into a highly unified, well-constructed whole that bears the mark less of the original materials than of Copland himself.

Copland's Clarinet Concerto was commissioned in 1947 by Benny Goodman (1909-1986), a well-known jazz clarinetist who became an active participant in the classical sphere of clarinet playing later in his career. His interest in the classical idiom began in the late 1930's, when he had the opportunity to perform standard clarinet repertoire with such distinguished orchestras and chamber ensembles as the New York Philharmonic and the Budapest String Quartet. Sensing the need for more formal training to meet the technical and musical demands of the new repertoire, Goodman studied with renowned classical clarinet teachers, including Simeon Bellison and Reginald Kell.<sup>19</sup>

In addition to performing established clarinet works, Goodman was involved in expanding the instrument's repertoire. He had already

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<sup>19</sup> John Snaveley provides an overview of Goodman's classical career developments in the second chapter of his informative dissertation, "Benny Goodman's Commissioning of New Works and Their Significance for Twentieth-Century Clarinetists" (D.M.A. diss., University of Arizona, 1991), 16-26.

commissioned works from Bartok, Milhaud, and Hindemith prior to the Copland concerto.<sup>20</sup> Another jazz clarinetist, Woody Herman, had requested a piece for clarinet and band from the composer a few months earlier, but Copland ultimately chose Goodman's commission instead.<sup>21</sup> Copland claimed that he never would have thought to compose a clarinet concerto if it had not been for Goodman's suggestion,<sup>22</sup> a statement that contradicts the fact that some of the material for this concerto appears in sketches from as early as 1945.<sup>23</sup> A long-time admirer of the clarinetist, Copland felt that writing the work with Goodman in mind would give him a new perspective to his composing,<sup>24</sup> something he was always seeking.

The composer listened to Goodman's Sextet recordings before leaving for a trip to Latin America in the summer of 1947,<sup>25</sup> where he began work on the concerto. He took a break from the piece to write the film score to *The Red Pony*, an interruption Copland rationalized since he was having trouble finding a theme for the second movement.<sup>26</sup> Once the film was finished, Copland resumed composing the concerto, completing it in October 1948.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> For more information on these and other commissions, see Snively, 26-93.

<sup>21</sup> Copland and Perlis, *Copland: Since 1943*, 76-77. Woody Herman commissioned a piece from Copland in August 1946. See Robert Adelson, "'Too Difficult for Benny Goodman': The Original Version of the Copland *Clarinet Concerto*," *The Clarinet* 23.1 (1995): 42.

<sup>22</sup> Copland and Perlis, *Copland: Since 1943*, 93.

<sup>23</sup> Adelson states that some of this material may have been for the Herman commission which was abandoned. But if the May 1945 date he mentions is correct, and if these early sketches were notated for clarinet, (Adelson is not clear about this), Copland was contemplating a clarinet concerto of some sort before he was commissioned by either Herman or Goodman. See Adelson, 42.

<sup>24</sup> Copland and Perlis, *Copland: Since 1943*, 93.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

<sup>27</sup> Shortly after the work was composed, conductor Serge Koussevitsky asked Copland to arrange the first movement for full orchestra. Copland initially accepted the proposal, but later changed his mind: "I am

Goodman found the concerto very difficult technically owing to its concentration in the upper register of the clarinet, and he had Copland alter sections of the cadenza and the coda of the second movement.<sup>28</sup> He did not venture to perform the piece until two years later on November 6, 1950, one month after his two-year period of exclusive performing rights had expired. In fact, another clarinetist, Ralph McLane, was supposed to premiere the concerto with the Philadelphia orchestra under Eugene Ormandy, when Goodman made the surprise announcement that he would perform it on the radio with Fritz Reiner and the NBC Symphony, barely three weeks before McLane's scheduled concert.<sup>29</sup>

The concerto was not well-received initially; critics considered it "lightweight".<sup>30</sup> One review claimed: "The concerto is music of masterly economy and maturity of style, but it is second-rate Copland. Despite its manifold beauties of texture it is thematically nondescript and rhythmically lifeless... (the rondo) lacks the 'bounce' of Copland's more successful works in jazz style."<sup>31</sup> In his review of McLane's concert premiere, Persichetti thought

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convinced that it takes away from the integrity of the concerto as I originally conceived it, and I am basically unwilling to do that - at least until the work has had a chance through several seasons to make its own way as a complete concerto." See *Ibid.*, 95-96. Copland also wrote a piano version which, though originally intended only for rehearsals, has often been used for performances. Unlike Koussevitsky's suggestion, this alternative performing medium for the piece did gain the composer's approval. See *Ibid.*, 97.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 92-93 For a detailed description of all the changes to the concerto that were made for Benny Goodman, see Adelson.

<sup>29</sup> James Collis, "Copland's Clarinet Concerto," *The Clarinet* 1 (1950): 24.

<sup>30</sup> Copland and Perlis, *Copland: Since 1943*, 96.

<sup>31</sup> "McLane is Soloist in Copland Concerto," Rev. of Concert, Ralph McLane, clarinet, Philadelphia Orchestra, Cond. Eugene Ormandy, Carnegie Hall, New York, 28 Nov. 1950, *Musical America* 70 (15 Dec. 1950): 27.



that the clarinetist lacked support in his “swinging” of the second movement because the jazz appeared to make Ormandy uncomfortable.<sup>32</sup> Copland concurred with this opinion when he saw the later performance in New York, saying that he felt the conductor had little understanding for the jazz idiom.<sup>33</sup>

Although its reception was lukewarm, the Clarinet Concerto became one of Copland’s most programmed works, eagerly taken by clarinetists into their repertoire. Gaining belated recognition from the two recordings made by Goodman with Copland conducting the Columbia Strings,<sup>34</sup> it proved to be the most popular concerto of the Goodman commissions.<sup>35</sup> Another contributing factor to the work’s later acceptance was its adoption by Jerome Robbins for his 1951 ballet *The Pied Piper*, during which the clarinetist is featured on stage.<sup>36</sup> Today the piece is frequently performed all over the world and numerous recordings are now available.<sup>37</sup>

The Clarinet Concerto is a seventeen-minute work, consisting of two contrasting movements connected by an extensive cadenza. The two-movement form is reminiscent of Copland’s earlier Piano Concerto, although the use of a cadenza to link the movements is a unique feature of the Clarinet

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<sup>32</sup> Vincent Persichetti, Rev. of Clarinet Concerto, by Aaron Copland, Ralph McLane, Philadelphia Orchestra, Cond. Eugene Ormandy, *Musical Quarterly* 37 (1951): 262.

<sup>33</sup> Copland and Perlis, *Copland: Since 1943*, 155. Copland missed McLane’s first performance in Philadelphia due to inclement weather, making it impossible for him to travel there from New York.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 96. Goodman and Copland recorded the piece in 1950 shortly after the premiere, and later in 1963. See bibliography

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 94-95. (Bartok’s *Contrasts*, also a very popular Goodman commission, is a chamber piece.)

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 97; Julia Smith, *Aaron Copland: His Work and Contribution to American Music* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1955), 198.

<sup>37</sup> Chapter 4 examines representative examples of these recordings.

Concerto. There are other important differences between the two works. The Piano Concerto uses a full orchestra, whereas the Clarinet Concerto employs a simpler, neoclassical texture of clarinet and strings, with the addition of piano and harp. The Piano Concerto contains blatant jazz references, including characteristic timbres, “blues” harmonies, and melodic formulas. Its two movements accurately reflect the two expressive characters of jazz categorized by Copland as the “blues” and “snappy number.” On the other hand, jazz elements in the Clarinet Concerto are more subtle and integrated into the work’s formal structure. Although the second movement has more obvious influences of jazz, and could be thought of as a “snappy number,” the first movement has no readily attributable jazz elements, and thus the piece presents a dichotomy of styles. Copland may have chosen this deliberate juxtaposition of classical and jazz music, a “kind of rapprochement between Europe and the Americas,”<sup>38</sup> to match the unique position of Goodman, a jazz and classical musician.

Since Copland wrote the concerto for Goodman, the question arises whether or not his choice of musical subject matter was influenced by the clarinetist’s performances in the jazz idiom. According to Goodman, he did not choose Copland as a composer because he had written jazz-influenced compositions,<sup>39</sup> nor did he make specific instructions as to the work’s

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<sup>38</sup> Anthony Burton, Notes, *Aaron Copland: El Salon Mexico, Clarinet Concerto, Connotations, Music for the Theatre*, New York Philharmonic, Cond. Leonard Bernstein, Deutsche Grammophon, 1991.

<sup>39</sup> Copland and Perlis, *Copland: Since 1943*, 94.

content.<sup>40</sup> Copland did not discuss the style of the concerto with Goodman, and his comments regarding the clarinetist's role in his compositional process are contradictory. According to longtime acquaintance Phillip Ramey, Copland said: "The decision to use jazz materials was mine, inspired, of course, by Goodman's playing. Although I didn't mention this to him, I was certain that he would approve,"<sup>41</sup> adding the disclaimer: "Contrary to certain commentators, the jazz elements in the Clarinet Concerto have nothing to do with the 'hot jazz' improvisation for which Benny Goodman and his sextet were noted."<sup>42</sup> One interpretation of these comments is that while Goodman instilled the idea to use jazz in the concerto, he was not directly responsible for Copland's choice of its respective musical elements. Always guided by a composition's functional purpose, it is both logical and practical that Copland should choose jazz elements, whatever their source, for a work commissioned by a jazz clarinetist.<sup>43</sup>

The concerto's structure exhibits the influence of neoclassicism in this integration of external elements and in its compositional procedures. These include the use of formal models, and the absolute clarity of the work's

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<sup>40</sup> His other commissions had also produced jazz influenced works such as Milhaud's Clarinet Concerto. See Snively, 41-55.

<sup>41</sup> Phillip Ramey, Notes, *The Copland Collection, Orchestral and Ballet Works 1936-1948*, Cond. Aaron Copland, Sony Classical, 1990.

<sup>42</sup> Phillip Ramey, Notes, *Copland, Corigliano Clarinet Concertos, Bernstein Prelude, Fugue and Riffs*, Richard Stoltzman, London Symphony Orchestra, Cond. Lawrence Leighton Smith, RCA Victor, 1988. See also Charles Del Rosso, "A Study of Selected Solo Clarinet Literature of Four American Composers as a Basis for Performance and Teaching" (Ed.D diss., Columbia University, 1969), 19. In an interview with Del Rosso, Copland confirms that the jazz in the concerto was not influenced by Goodman's playing.

<sup>43</sup> See Larry Maxey, "The Copland Clarinet Concerto," *The Clarinet* 12.4 (1985): 32. Julia Smith believed that Copland would have undoubtedly been affected by Goodman's playing, claiming that the piece had a different aesthetic than if it had been written for a symphony player. See Smith, 252.

construction, from its motivic makeup and melodic outline, transparent textures, and incisive rhythms to its clearly delineated, sectional structure. It also exhibits the influence of Boulanger in her emphasis on “la grande ligne,” a crucial facet of the piece.

Copland describes the formal outline of the first movement as a “languid song form.”<sup>44</sup> Its 3/4 meter, unusual for Copland,<sup>45</sup> gives this movement the quality of a slow waltz. The main theme of the clarinet is accompanied by an ostinato that provides an important unifying device in its harmonic and rhythmic construction.<sup>46</sup> The movement has a contrasting middle section, with changing meters and a chordal hymn-like structure reminiscent of the composer’s *Appalachian Spring* or the film music for *Our Town*.<sup>47</sup> The opening section returns, restating the theme in its most intense expression and providing the movement’s climax before coming to a close.

The cadenza that follows is not improvised, but carefully notated.<sup>48</sup> Its purpose is not only to display the virtuosity of the soloist, but also to introduce themes to be developed in the second movement. This is an unusual feature of a cadenza, which normally summarizes previously

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<sup>44</sup> Copland and Perlis, *Copland: Since 1943*, 93.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> This ostinato bears a striking resemblance to the accompaniment figure in Satie’s *Gymnopédies*. See Rev. of *Concerto for Clarinet and String Orchestra, with Harp and Piano*, by Aaron Copland, *Music and Letters* 33 (October 1952), 366. (N.A.)

<sup>47</sup> Smith, 251.

<sup>48</sup> Copland describes the cadenza as follows: “The cadenza is written fairly closely to the way I wanted it, but it is free within reason - after all, it and the movement that follows are in the jazz idiom. It is not ad lib as in cadenzas of many traditional concertos; I always felt that there was enough room for interpretation even when everything was written out.” See Copland and Perlis, *Copland: Since 1943*, 93.

presented material.<sup>49</sup> It also serves to connect the two movements, acting as a bridge between the two contrasting moods and styles of the work. For the first time in the piece, the listener can hear the influence of jazz in the syncopated rhythms and accents, arpeggiated melodic material, and the extreme range of the clarinet. Understandably, the cadenza has been compared to an improvised jazz solo.<sup>50</sup>

A neoclassical characteristic of the concerto is its use of the older formal model of a rondo in the second movement. Yet, in characteristic fashion, Copland adopts the model to suit his own needs. In a conventional rondo, the same theme returns after each episode, generally following an ABACA pattern. In this adaptation of the form, however, more than one theme returns. This structure has been criticized for a lack of formal growth: Vincent Persichetti compared the form of the movement to a newsreel, "misspliced with retakes," where the many themes are presented one after another.<sup>51</sup> However, the movement is tightly constructed, consisting of two main sections connected by transitions, followed by a lengthy coda. Its two-part construction further demonstrates the movement's deviation from the rondo paradigm. Copland has described the most important feature of a rondo as its "creation of an uninterrupted sense of flow."<sup>52</sup> It is this flow that keeps the multitudinous themes together, an important feature of the work.

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<sup>49</sup> Maxey, 30.

<sup>50</sup> Vance Shelby Jennings, "Selected Twentieth-Century Clarinet Solo Literature: A Study in Interpretation and Performance" (D.M.E. diss., University of Oklahoma, 1972), 44.

<sup>51</sup> Persichetti, 262.

<sup>52</sup> Aaron Copland, *What to Listen for in Music* (Rev. ed., New York: McGraw-Hill, 1957), 137-138.

Copland offers the following description of the movement's stylistic content: "Some of the second movement material represents an unconscious fusion of elements obviously related to North and South American popular music: Charleston rhythms, boogie woogie, and Brazilian folk tunes... I did not have a large battery or percussion to achieve jazzy effects, so I used slapping basses and whacking harp sounds to simulate them."<sup>53</sup> This movement is incredibly diverse in character, ranging from humorous sections to very dissonant, severe passages. Jazz elements that were first introduced in the cadenza are further developed, constituting an important stylistic feature of the movement. As is the case with other "popular" works of Copland, these jazz elements are mistakenly taken for the entire content of the work, ignoring the subtlety of their manipulation.<sup>54</sup> While the materials themselves are not that important, consisting of "hackneyed jazz and Latin American idioms, simple triads and larger tertian structures, and occasional 'tongue-in-cheek' banalities," what is interesting about the concerto is how Copland manages to integrate jazz elements into his own style.<sup>55</sup> He transforms thematic material through manipulation of its melodic and rhythmic components and through variation of instrumentation, texture, and interpretive indications. Copland achieves a sense of unity and yet still

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<sup>53</sup> Copland and Perlis, *Copland: Since 1943*, 93.

<sup>54</sup> Arthur Berger, Rev. of Recording, Concerto for Clarinet, by Aaron Copland, Benny Goodman, Columbia String Orchestra, Cond. Aaron Copland, Quartet for Piano and Strings, by Aaron Copland, New York Quartet, Aaron Copland, *Musical Quarterly* 38 (1952), 657.

<sup>55</sup> Gerald Fleisher, "Concerto for Clarinet and String Orchestra by Aaron Copland: a Stylistic Analysis" (M.A. diss., University of Rochester, 1961), iii.

provides contrast in the concerto by subjecting a limited set of musical elements to constant transformation. While the listener observes a similarity of material throughout the work, its continual metamorphosis sustains interest and supplies the concerto with a wide variety of characters and moods.

When performing or listening to Copland's Clarinet Concerto, one instinctively perceives a highly unified, cohesive work, despite its diversity. The following chapters investigate how Copland successfully integrates a multiplicity of influences into a formal structure. As this dissertation is intended primarily for clarinetists who wish to perform the piece, the implications of the formal analysis are related to performance issues surrounding the work.

## Chapter 2: Structure of the Concerto

The following analysis of the concerto provides a detailed examination of its formal construction, intended as a means for the performer to gain insight into the work. Unlike other studies of the piece that consult the piano reduction exclusively, this investigation refers to the original orchestral score.<sup>1</sup> It pays particular attention to the means whereby Copland manipulates thematic material and delineates sections of the piece, and attempts to demonstrate that, despite its sectional nature, the concerto contains larger-scale divisions that encompass them. Although the chapter is designed to be read with a copy of the score, some representative examples are given. Charts also follow the discussion of both movements to summarize their structure.

### ***First Movement:***

The first movement is in ABA form. It opens very softly in C major with an ostinato that outlines tenths. Presented in the basses and harp alone, the ostinato later integrates other instruments, such as the cellos and violas in the third and fifth measures respectively. It initially consists of a

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<sup>1</sup> Nearly all studies refer exclusively to the piano reduction when analysing the concerto. This is a misleading practice, for then the importance of the work's orchestration cannot be evaluated. To accommodate the pianist's ten fingers, Copland made necessary changes to the piano reduction, modifying or entirely omitting important passages. Although it may be easier to analyse from the piano score, it is also far less accurate.



rocking motion between C and D chords (implied by the tenth interval), and later gains more independence, incorporating leaps and stepwise motion and venturing into other key areas,<sup>2</sup> yet always retaining the same rhythmic and intervallic construction. The ostinato contains its own arc-shaped line whose profile is independent of the melody; it rises to its climax on a B $\flat$  in m. 15, and falls to C, coinciding with the end of the clarinet theme. An important unifying device in the movement, the ostinato continues throughout Section A. (See Example 2.1.)<sup>3</sup>

The clarinet enters in the fourth measure with the main theme, which continues until m. 19. Copland develops this theme by using his trademark "accretion" technique,<sup>4</sup> in which he begins with a small motive and gradually adds elements to it. Its initial cell of two notes, E and D, is expanded upon with additional notes and changes of register, creating a wide-ranging theme. This change in register is also a typical method in which Copland constructs melodies and subsequently alters their repetitions. By revolving around the pitch D, the theme centres on the dorian mode over the implied C major tonality from the accompaniment. Its notes add harmonic tones to the bass ostinato of sevenths, ninths, and elevenths. This unresolved harmony gives the music a quality of tension and expectancy.

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<sup>2</sup> Charles Del Rosso describes how the bass "borrows" chromatic notes from the parallel minor in mm. 11, 12, 15, and 16. See Del Rosso, 24.

<sup>3</sup> N.B. The clarinet's notes are transposed, sounding a tone lower than written. Any reference to them is to their actual sounding pitch rather than the written notation.

<sup>4</sup> Fleisher, 17.

[illegible]

**Example 2. 1 (mm. 1-19)**

Thematic material overlaps when the first violins, having joined the clarinet on the last three notes of the theme's exposition, continue with their melodic line, which in fact is a varied repetition of the theme.<sup>5</sup> This repetition marks the middle section of A; an excerpt of it is given in Example 2.2. The second violins and violas present countermelodic material of rising and falling seconds deriving from the theme, creating a fuller texture than heard previously, while the opening ostinato is repeated in the other voices. The clarinet entry interrupts the theme in m. 24, with a contrasting melody containing a long stepwise descent from a B $\flat$  in m. 26 to a low G in m. 35. This theme introduces new rhythmic interest with its figure of three eighth notes; the second violin and viola lines also reflect the increased rhythmic activity. The second violins present the melody in conjunction with the clarinet, though each line alternates independently between a half note / quarter note rhythm and a dotted rhythmic figure in each bar. Two key centres are implied in this section: while the original ostinato continues, the melodic material shifts to a B $\flat$  tonal centre. Beginning in m. 30, a transitional passage serves to return the original C tonality in m. 35; a *ritard* in the last two measures provides a link into the next section. (See Example 2.2.)

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<sup>5</sup> Maxey states that the theme repeats from m. 19, ignoring the overlap of material. See Maxey, 29. However, the first two notes of the theme are clearly present in the first violin line in m. 18, with an interpolated G on the third beat.

Example 2. 2 (mm. 20-28)

The third section of A begins in m. 35 with a return to the opening theme in a modified form. Throughout the restatement, the orchestration is much fuller, containing an imitative first violin line. (See Example 2.3.) The theme's alteration in mm. 47-51 to include a sequential rising-sixth figure changes its character; it gives an added sense of tension and forward motion, which leads into the B section of this movement. (See Example 2.4.)

Example 2. 3 violin 1 (mm. 37-43)

Example 2. 4 clarinet (mm. 44-50)

Many contrasting devices delineate Section B: the tonal centre shifts to  $E\flat$ , the tempo accelerates slightly, and the dynamic level intensifies to the

first *forte* of the piece. The texture is now more homophonic, consisting of parallel ninth and thirteenth chords, although rhythmic motion is given by an eighth-note upbeat figure that progresses up the strings. (This rhythm and the fourth and fifth intervals in the orchestral lines derive from the second theme in Section A.<sup>6</sup> See Example 2.2.) Finally, the meter changes from the constant 3/4 pulse of section A to shifting meters. The one unifying feature is the continuation of the ostinato with stepwise motion in the bass. (See Example 2.5.)

Example 2. 5 (mm. 51-55)

The first ten measures of Section B contain transitional material,<sup>7</sup> introducing motives and rhythmic patterns that figure prominently later on

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Jennings calls this material Theme 2, and mm. 61-76 a transition. See Jennings, 16. I think mm. 61-76 embody stable, contrasting thematic material, whereas mm. 51-60 are transitional measures. Calling the clarinet line Theme 2 does not make structural sense, and reflects an analysis that has examined the clarinet part rather than the work as a whole.

in the section. The clarinet line begins with the first two notes of the first theme an octave higher,<sup>8</sup> (the first, anacrusic note is in m. 50), and after a series of wide leaps of sixths and sevenths, finally diminuendos and rests on the supertonic, the same scale degree on which the first theme ended. The bass motion is again arc-shaped, moving in a step-wise motion from E $\flat$  and returning to C in m. 59, with a corresponding shift in tonality.

The remainder of Section B continues to develop ideas that contrast with Section A.<sup>9</sup> The regular phrase construction, extreme diatonicism, open chord structure, and homophonic texture are similar to other works by Copland of the same period, such as *Appalachian Spring*. Example 2.6 provides the opening measures of this material, which consist of three different phrases. The first phrase (Phrase A) begins quietly in m. 61, comprising a rising second followed in the next bar by a falling sixth motive which originated from the transition in m. 54. These two ideas combine and form a longer phrase (Phrase B) in the next two measures, ending with a cadence figure on F in m. 65. The clarinet then repeats Phrase B an octave lower in mm. 65-67, where the first interval changes to a descending sixth and the rhythmic division alters. Throughout, the texture is homophonic, containing parallel triads,<sup>10</sup> a contrast to the ceaseless ostinato that occurred

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<sup>8</sup> Jennings comments on a similarity of this passage to the first theme, with the exception of octave changes. See Ibid. However, he must have ignored the change of key. If this is taken into account, the notes bear no resemblance to the opening theme, with the exception of the first two notes.

<sup>9</sup> Del Rosso also calls the first five measures a transition. See Del Rosso, 27. As already stated, this section seems to me to be a contrasting section, not a transitional one.

<sup>10</sup> Del Rosso describes the modal effect of the parallel chords. See Ibid.

in the work up to this point. The meter shifts between common time and 5/4, both found in the transition. (See Example 2.6.)

The musical score for Example 2.6 (mm. 61-72) is presented in two systems. The first system covers measures 61 through 65, and the second system covers measures 66 through 72. The key signature is G major (one sharp). The meter shifts from common time (C) to 5/4 at measure 67. The instrumentation includes Solo Clarinet (Bb), Harp, Violins I and II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass. The score is marked with various dynamics including *mp*, *mf*, and *f*. Performance instructions such as *div.* (divisi), *unis.* (unison), and *Tutti* are present. Measure numbers 65 and 70 are highlighted in boxes. The score concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Example 2. 6 (mm. 61-72)

Phrase C begins in m. 67 with the now-familiar stepwise rising chords, but moves into new material containing metrical shifts between 3/4 and 4/4 time. Imitation between the clarinet and first violins over a suspended D major chord provides variety to the homophonic chordal texture, and the dynamic level also increases. The falling octaves in the clarinet line derive from the harp motive in m. 57. Section B culminates in mm. 74-75, when the

orchestra restates Phrase A broadly and *fortissimo*, cadencing on E $\flat$ . Phrase B continues in the clarinet, transposed a tone lower. Instead of continuing Section B material with a repetition of Phrase C, the clarinet expands its descending-octave motive from Phrase C to tenths derived from the opening ostinato, marking a return to Section A.

Section A begins in m. 77 with a restatement of the theme in its modified form from mm. 36-51, in the viola line, indicated *molto espressivo*. Unlike in previous versions, in this recapitulation the theme does not remain in one voice, but proceeds up the string section, until the clarinet takes over the theme in earnest in m. 91. The other voices present contrapuntal material; the first violin line from mm. 38-47 is found initially in the clarinet line in mm. 81-91 (and the second violins in mm. 82-86) and later in the first violins from mm. 91-94. The harp line in this section alters to outline the chords in the eighth-note pattern from the second theme of Section A.

At m. 96, the clarinet restates the theme yet again in E $\flat$ , combined this time with the harmony from mm. 51-55 of Section B.<sup>11</sup> This statement is the most expressive form of the theme, indicated not only by *molto espressivo*, but by a slight increase in tempo. The second violins join the harp in the eighth-note motive, while the cellos and basses persist with the ostinato.

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<sup>11</sup> Maxey describes the remainder of the movement, mm. 95-115, as a coda. See Maxey, 29-30. Del Rosso also calls it a codetta. See Del Rosso, 28. Because of the dramatic change in mood at m. 101, and the greater alteration of thematic material, I think that the coda, (if there is one), begins here. It is also at this point that the movement loses momentum. As a listener, one feels that the movement is coming to a close, something that is not apparent in m. 95.



(The basses state the ostinato in its original form from m. 1.) The underlying tension and forward motion resulting from the combination of all these elements is suddenly replaced by repose: following a ritard in m. 100, the clarinet line ascends to a high  $E\flat$  with a subito *piano* and a return to the original tempo. The clarinet proceeds with material from the second theme of Section A taking over the eighth-note motive of the orchestra, returning to C tonality in m. 105. The movement loses momentum with the clarinet outlining a C ninth chord motive in three different octaves, and comes to a standstill sustaining this chord, while the harp continues with a modified version of the clarinet motive.

**Table 1: Formal Outline of Clarinet Concerto, First Movement**

Measure Numbers	Section	Theme	Key	Meter / Tempo
mm. 1- 19	A	1	C	3/4, 69
mm. 18-35	A	2	$C/B\flat$	3/4, 69
mm. 35-51	A	1	C	3/4, 69
mm. 51-60	B	transition	$E\flat$	changing meters, 76
mm. 61-76	B	Phrase a, b and c	shifting	shifting 5/4, 3/4, 4/4, 76
mm. 77-95	A	1	C	3/4, 69
mm. 95-101	A	1	$E\flat$	3/4, 76
mm. 101-115	A	2	$D\flat$ , C	3/4, 69

### **Cadenza:**

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the cadenza serves to connect the two movements and to introduce themes from the second movement.

While the orchestra still sustains the ninth chord from the first movement, the clarinet emerges out of this texture with the opening motive from the first theme. As a further example of Copland's "accretion" technique, the clarinet expands on this motive by presenting three short phrases separated by fermatas, each outlining the notes of the chord still sustained by the strings, and finally resting on the tonic. (See Example 2.7.) The clarinet, now without the support of the orchestra, continues to outline arpeggios, making an *accelerando* into a new tempo - twice as fast - at c. 12.<sup>12</sup> The character of the music has changed dramatically as the material, no longer from the first movement, now foreshadows the next. The remainder of the cadenza includes many stylistic features of the second movement: the clarinet's high range, syncopated rhythms, short articulations, and actual thematic material. The arpeggiated figures beginning in c. 9 form the basis for Theme C in the second movement. They appear later in the cadenza in c. 36-61, a lively, extended section featuring a succession of arpeggios with syncopated rhythms and accents that outline the agogic line. (See Example 2.8.) There is a new sense of continuity in this section of the cadenza as the material is divided into four-bar phrases. Material from the beginning of the cadenza, c. 9-17, is repeated in c. 53-61.

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<sup>12</sup> The measures of the cadenza are unnumbered. Numbers have been added beginning with the measure after m. 115.

**115** *CADENZA (freely)*

Solo Cl. (Bb)

Harp (ossia)

I. VI. VIe. Vc. Cb.

*pp sempre*

*pp sempre*

*pp sempre*

*pp sempre*

*pp sempre*

*short*

*short*

*morendo*

*morendo*

*somewhat faster*

*accel.*

*Twice as fast (lively)*

Example 2. 7 (m. 115-c. 16)

Solo Cl. (Bb)

*a tempo (lively)*

*f (as before)*

*mf*

*f*

Example 2. 8 (c. 35-44)

Another theme of the second movement introduced in the cadenza is Theme B. (See Example 2.9.) Based on a rising  $D\flat$  scale figure, it is one of several themes in the concerto credited with having a Latin American origin. In an interview with Charles Del Rosso, Goodman identified this theme as the Brazilian tune Copland incorporated into the work.<sup>13</sup>

**Theme B**

Solo Cl. (Bb)

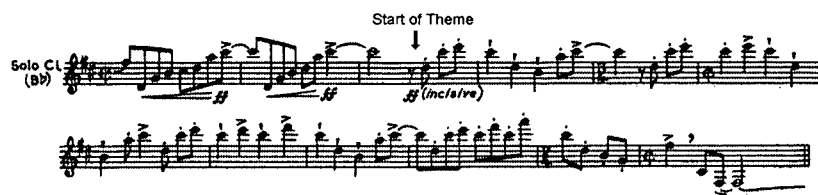
*mp*

*somewhat slower*

Example 2. 9 (c. 26-28)

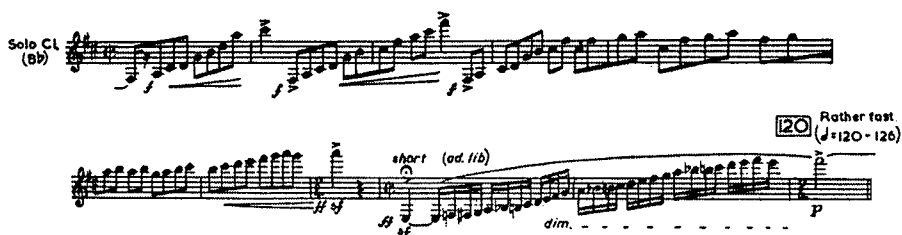
<sup>13</sup> Del Rosso, 30.

Example 2.10 contains material from the cadenza, featured later in the coda of the second movement. This section highlights the clarinet's upper range, containing new staccato articulations with offbeat accents.



Example 2. 10 (c. 60-71)

The climax of the cadenza consists of rising arpeggiated figures originating from c. 16-18 (and actually from the end of the first movement - see mm. 105-110), followed by a three-octave chromatic flourish. The enormous contrast in range from the A in c. 79 to the low E in the next measure would have been even more dramatic in Copland's original version, which extended to a high C#, the very summit of the clarinet's range.<sup>14</sup> (See Example 2.11.)



Example 2. 11 (c. 72-m. 120)

<sup>14</sup> See Adelson, 43-44. This was one of the changes Copland made to the piece to accommodate Goodman.

### **Second Movement:**

The form of the second movement is a free rondo, consisting of two main sections and a coda, each connected by lengthy transitional passages. The major parts of the movement are further divided into many sections featuring contrasting thematic materials. The first main section introduces Themes A, B, and C of the rondo, and also contains transition X which links this section to the next. In the second main section, Themes D and E are introduced, while the coda reiterates materials A and B. These are all seamlessly connected, maintaining the “sense of flow” that Copland believed to be a fundamental aspect of the rondo form.<sup>15</sup>

The movement opens with an orchestral introduction. It begins *pianissimo* with an ostinato, a B $\flat$  ninth chord with an A $\flat$  appoggiatura, in the upper strings, harp, and for the first time in the concerto, the piano, with the indication *delicate, wraith-like*. This ostinato’s rhythmic pulse, constant eighth notes whose strong and weak beats alternate among the instruments, features almost continuously in the first section of the concerto, contributing to its sense of forward motion. (See Example 2.12.)

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<sup>15</sup> See Chapter 1, 13.

120 Rather fast. (♩ = 120-126)

Solo CL (B♭) *p*

Piano *pp stacc (delicate-wraith like)* *s/m.*

Harp *pp secco* *s/m.*

120 Rather fast. (♩ = 120-126)

VI.II *Solo* *pp col legno*

Vle. *pp col legno*

Example 2. 12 (mm. 120-124)

The first violins introduce melodic material in  $G\flat$  from m. 125, then engage in a dialogue with the violas starting in m. 131. The piano has its own motive in parallel thirds, a teasing premonition of the first theme of this movement. (See Example 2.13.) In m. 135, the construction of the material changes: the original ostinato of the introduction disappears, the dynamic level increases, and the texture now accents the downbeat of each measure with the harp chords. The melodic motives develop further and now appear in two different key centres: D and G. They are altered by rhythmic displacement and tossed back and forth throughout the orchestra. The introduction ends with a combination of C and  $G\flat$  major scales in contrary motion and a crescendo into the next section.

Example 2.13 (mm. 125-129)

The meter change from 2/4 into cut time delineates this section, although the basic beat remains unchanged.<sup>16</sup> The clarinet makes its first entry of the movement in m. 150 with Theme A in  $D\flat$ , *forte* and staccatissimo. The theme derives from the four-bar orchestral introduction immediately preceding it, with displaced intervals and rhythms. (See Example 2.14.) The accompanying ostinato in the strings revolves around  $D\flat$  and comprises diatonic tenths, similar to the ostinato of the first movement. At m. 152, the orchestra repeats its original statement from m. 146 in another altered form. The theme re-enters in m. 154 in the piano and first violins, and is continued by the clarinet. The clarinet extends the theme into an eight-bar phrase by incorporating the melodic material from the orchestral introduction (m. 125), now in  $D\flat$ . (See Example 2.15.) The rhythm alters from sixteenth into eighth notes, but their execution is actually

<sup>16</sup> Jennings erroneously describes this section as being in the key of C. He also makes a dubious comparison of the "theme" in the introduction to c. 33-35 in the cadenza. See Jennings, 16.

at the same speed. The violin / piano arpeggiated material beginning in m. 156 foreshadows Theme C; it is a transposition of c. 37 in the cadenza. In m. 163, the theme is repeated and amplified in a modified version with shifting rhythms underneath an ascending bass line, leading with a corresponding crescendo into m. 176.

Example 2. 14 (mm. 146-151)

Example 2. 15 (mm. 158-161)



A contrasting section begins in m. 176 with a key change to E major and a new tempo indication, although the speed of the basic beat remains the same. The meter is 3/4, but the rhythmic organization gives a feeling of compound meter against this division. This is accomplished by grouping the viola's eighth notes into groups of three against the first violin's regular groupings. (See Example 2.16.) At m. 179, the clarinet and piano present Theme B, the possible "Latin American" theme from the cadenza. The theme alters rhythmically in m. 180 to a hemiola figure, further emphasizing the impression of compound meter.<sup>17</sup> It divides into two-bar antecedent and consequent phrases that exploit the different clarinet registers. By nature of its brevity, Theme B acts as an interjection between the more-developed A and C themes.<sup>18</sup> Themes B and C are elided by a "chromatic cadence."<sup>19</sup> Following a transposition of Theme B's final phrase a semitone lower in mm. 185-186, the D# seventh chord in the second measure and continuing with the clarinet's Eb in m. 187 is resolved chromatically to a D, also in the clarinet.

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<sup>17</sup> Del Rosso thinks the clarinet / piano rhythm in m. 180 and m. 184 is simply a hemiola over 3/4 time. See Del Rosso, 35. However, the rhythmic construction of this section does resemble compound meter, especially when examining the string lines. This involves a performance decision regarding whether to accentuate the figure's "cross relation" with the prevailing meter, or whether to play the rhythm as though it reflected a compound meter.

<sup>18</sup> Jennings does not even describe this section as thematic, simply labelling it as a transition. See Jennings, 17.

<sup>19</sup> Del Rosso, 35.

Example 2. 16 (mm. 176-183)

Theme C begins with an arpeggiated figure<sup>20</sup> in the clarinet with a return to D major and to cut time. After the clarinet and orchestra exchange motives in an imitative texture, Theme C develops into a more extended line in m. 195, first presented in the cellos in F major, and then followed by the first violins in m. 199. The second statement of the theme, beginning in m. 201, proceeds sequentially in E major. The distribution of the parts is altered: the violins take over earlier (see m. 201) and the second violins also join in. In addition to this thematic material, the second violins and cellos introduce a descending chromatic bass line alternately in keys D and C, providing a clash of tonal centre against the melody.

<sup>20</sup> This motive was originally seen in m. 156 in the first violin line, which derived from the cadenza.

At m. 205, the original key and imitative texture from the beginning of Theme C return. Theme C appears in m. 213 in a guise similar to material from the cadenza, containing an arpeggiated figure interrupted by an ascending scale motive that provides rhythmic and melodic interest. This melody is supported by the original ostinato that opened the movement, transposed down a fourth, marking a return to the beginning of the movement. (See Example 2.17.)

215

Solo Cl.  
(Bb)

Harp.

Piano

215

I.  
Vi.  
II.

Solo  
Vie.  
le  
altre

Vc.  
Cb.

*pp secco*

*P stacc. - delicate*

*p*  
*col legno*

*pp*  
*col legno*

*pp*

*pp*

Example 2. 17 (mm. 213-217)

The remainder of the first section of the movement contains modified repetitions of previously presented material. Theme A is presented in turn by the piano in A major (m. 223), the first violins in  $G^b$  (m. 228), and the

clarinet in its original key of  $D\flat$  (m. 239). This final statement of the theme disintegrates into a descending whole-step sequence of tetrachords. Out of this sequence, the clarinet returns to Theme C, repeating the passage from mm. 213-222 with the opening ostinato, transposing and extending the melody with rhythmic displacement.

Beginning in m. 269, the character of the music changes drastically with a transition between the primary and secondary segments of the movement. The pulse accelerates to 132 instead of 120, adding to the feeling of agitation implicit in the accented melodic material. The cellos and violas begin with a marcato figure<sup>21</sup> (Motive X) that outlines a  $5/8$  pattern - stressed by accents - over the prevailing  $3/4$  and  $2/4$  meters. (See Example 2.18.) The texture thickens in m. 274, with the entrance of the clarinet and first violins on repeated  $D\flat$ 's that further underline the  $5/8$  pattern and the addition of the second violins and basses three bars later. In m. 283, a compound rhythm in the clarinet line creates a cross rhythm with the orchestra's dominant  $5/8$  pattern.<sup>22</sup> Contrasting material begins in m. 286: dissonant parallel ninth chords (with altered chord tones) are played in a "Charleston rhythm"<sup>23</sup> (divided 3+5) over  $4/4$  time, and the clarinet emphasizes this pattern with its anacrusic figure. (See Example 2.19.) After a few measures

<sup>21</sup> Jennings makes another spurious comparison of this figure to the cadenza in c. 17-18. See Jennings, 17.

<sup>22</sup> This rhythm is reminiscent of the hemiola of Theme B.

<sup>23</sup> This rhythm, the division of a  $4/4$  bar's eighth notes into 3+5, is described by Copland in his article "Jazz Structure and Influence," *Modern Music* 4.2 (January 1927): 10-12. See also Mátyás Seiber "Rhythmic Freedom in Jazz? A Study of Jazz Rhythms," *Music Review* 6 (1945): 39, 162-163.

of manipulating this pattern with syncopations and delayed beats, Copland introduces a series of cluster chords<sup>24</sup> beginning in m. 294 to propel the music forward into the next section.

Trifle faster (♩ = 122)

[270]

Solo Cl. (Bb)

I. VI. II.

Vla. *not detached*

Vc. Div. *detached*

Cb.

Example 2. 18 (mm. 269-273)

Solo Cl. (Bb) *ff marc.*

Piano *ff forceful*

I. VI. II.

Vla. *ff marc.*

Vc. Div. *ff marc.*

Cb. *ff marc.*

Example 2. 19 (mm. 286-288)

<sup>24</sup> Bruce Bullock, "Aaron Copland's Concerto for Clarinet: a Lecture Recital, Together with Three Recitals of Music by Mozart, Rossini, Schumann, Brahms, and Contemporary European and North American Composers" (D.M.A. diss., North Texas State University, 1971), 21-22.

The second large section in the movement begins in m. 297. It offers a change of character from the preceding material and contains more explicit references to jazz than the first half of the movement. The clarinet opens with Theme D, the first of two themes in this section. It is marked “with humour, relaxed” and is accompanied by a rising “slap bass” accompaniment in F major, an obvious jazz reference.<sup>25</sup> The rhythm of this theme begins on the beat, then alters in m. 300 to include anticipatory syncopation, with a corresponding modulation to the rhythm in the accompaniment. Changing a melodic phrase from a regular to a syncopated rhythmic pattern is a common jazz device.<sup>26</sup> (See Example 2.20.)

Example 2. 20 (mm. 296-305)

After further exploration of these elements with shifts in tonal centres,<sup>27</sup> the last phrase accelerates into a cadential figure in C major in

<sup>25</sup> Jennings says this theme derives from the cadenza in c. 69-70. See Jennings, 17. This is part of the material that is found later in the coda of the movement. The material in these measures, and throughout this section of the cadenza, does indeed contain the rising and falling major third figure found in the second through fourth notes of Theme D. However, that is where the resemblance ends.

<sup>26</sup> Winthrop Sargeant, *Jazz: Hot and Hybrid* (3rd ed., New York: Da Capo Press, 1975), 55.

<sup>27</sup> Del Rosso, 40.

m. 308, which is in fact the beginning of the next and last theme, Theme E (see Example 2.21). Like Theme B, Themes D and E have also been credited with being the Brazilian themes that Copland apparently incorporated into the secondary material of this movement.<sup>28</sup> Following a continuation of Theme E in the first violins, the clarinet has a second, more extended statement beginning in m. 312, under which the violins have a countermelody that originated in m. 309. A two-bar C major ostinato, begun in the cellos and answered by the basses, accompanies the melody. Theme D is repeated in m. 318 in the original key, with an altered accompaniment of piano and harp. A new, dotted syncopated figure follows in m. 319, outlining an F major seventh chord. This dotted figure, shown in Example 2.22, is an adaptation of a typical jazz device known as an “umpateedle” rhythm.<sup>29</sup>

Example 2. 21 (mm. 307-310)

<sup>28</sup> Both Bullock and Smith identify Theme E as the Latin theme. See Bullock, 22, and Smith, 251-252. However, Maxey identifies the Brazilian theme as being Theme D. See Maxey, 31. In his autobiography, Copland said that the second movement incorporated Brazilian folk tunes (plural!), so presumably more than one theme in the second movement has Latin origins. See Copland and Perlis, *Copland: Since 1943*, 93.

<sup>29</sup> This term was invented by Don Knowlton. In jazz, the rhythm serves to exaggerate the normal pulse, making any surrounding syncopated figures more striking. See Sargeant, 72. However, Copland creates a syncopation within the figure by using ties, upsetting the “umpateedle’s” normally regular beat.

(♩ = 132)

Solo Cl. (Bb)

Piano

Harp

Cb.

320

*mp secco*

*mp secco, pres de la table*

*(arco)*

*ff*

Example 2.22 (mm. 317-322)

Just as it had acted as an interruption in the first part of the movement, Theme B, with a modified introduction, suddenly enters in m. 323 in G $\flat$ , disrupting the flow of this section.<sup>30</sup> It begins in a much altered state, containing alternating meters, modified rhythms, and isolated motives of the theme in the first violins and the cellos (compare Example 2.22 with Example 2.16). A complete statement of Theme B appears with the piano in m. 327, transposed a third lower to E $\flat$ , and then with the clarinet in m. 331, ending on a C $\flat$  to begin the next section.

(♩ = 132)

I.

VI.

Vle.

Vc.

325

*pizz.*

*f forcelful*

*pizz.*

*f forcelful*

*pizz.*

*f forcelful*

*pizz.*

*f forcelful*

*arco v.*

*f*

*div. arco*

*mf*

*pizz.*

*mf*

*mf*

Example 2.23 (mm. 323-327)

<sup>30</sup> Jennings again calls this section a transition. See Jennings, 18.



The familiar arpeggiated figure that began Theme C in m. 187 appears in m. 335, starting on C $\flat$  instead of D. Rather than continuing with Theme C, the clarinet presents a portion of Theme E beginning in m. 336, along with its appropriate tempo change to 144 from 132. The cello answers with material from m. 323, a semitone higher. The next several measures contain a playful exchange of motives from Theme E and Theme C among various instruments, combining material from early in the movement with the latest theme. Copland creates contrast in the antiphonal texture, varied dynamics, and the rhythmic displacement of thematic material.<sup>31</sup>

The remainder of the movement's second section repeats earlier passages. The second statement of Theme D returns from mm. 316-322 in E $\flat$  in the upper strings, with a new two-part texture. The accompaniment also differs, containing a rising B $\flat$  scale figure which becomes rhythmically displaced in mm. 353-355.<sup>32</sup> Instead of continuing with Theme B as before, Copland injects a large-scale restatement of material from mm. 297-323 beginning in m. 355 with a "crude,"<sup>33</sup> accented version of Theme D in E $\flat$  in the cellos. The accompaniment changes to a syncopated figure in the bass and piano. The melody is also remodelled in m. 361 to continue a rising figure, and the theme is cut short. In complete contrast to the crude version of the theme, the clarinet enters "suavely" in m. 363 in A major with modified

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<sup>31</sup> Maxey describes this section as a transition. See Maxey, 31.

<sup>32</sup> Del Rosso, 42.

<sup>33</sup> Copland writes the indication "crude" in the score.

material from Theme E (mm. 309-310). The cellos and violins answer with a statement from m. 312, while the clarinet presents a reshaped version of the countermelody. The clarinet has the final statement of Theme D from mm. 316 in A major, with yet another varied accompaniment in the piano, harp, and cello.

A second, more extended transition begins in m. 379,<sup>34</sup> consisting of a repetition of elements from the first transition (Motive X) and the introduction of new elements (Motive Y). The A major tonal centre from the previous section continues in the upper strings, clashing with an ostinato in the basses which descends chromatically from G to C#. The cellos, second violins, and basses contain the 5/8 rhythmic pattern over alternating 3/4 and 2/4 meter; however, the first violins and violas have a 3/4 pattern, providing polymeter to this section. These violin and viola lines are independent of each other, creating even more rhythmic complexity. At m. 385, the cello starts the ostinato on C instead of G. Now the first violins' motive also changes to a 5/8 pattern<sup>35</sup> with shifting tonal centres, while the second violins and viola alternate between the ostinato and a punctuation figure. (See Example 2.24.)

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<sup>34</sup> Jennings describes this second transition as a development section which continues until m. 465 in the coda. See Jennings, 18. His analysis ignores the importance of the beginning of the coda in m. 441.

<sup>35</sup> This pattern is emphasized by the beaming of the rhythm across the bar lines.

Example 2. 24 (mm. 379-388)

At m. 391, Motive X material originating from the first transition at m. 269 is transposed a fourth lower. This section is very dissonant, containing parallel chords built in thirds in close voicing and a thicker texture than before with the divisi parts. The tension continues to build as Motive Y material is repeats in m. 402, at an increased *fff* dynamic level, with the bass and cellos now descending chromatically in block chords. The upper strings present a different figure with syncopated parallel chords. The divided strings provide a very thick texture to the section, while the closely voiced ninth and thirteenth chords, containing dissonances in the clashing semitones, supply a strong rhythmic impact.

The climax to all the previous buildup occurs in m. 416, where the first transition of the movement is repeated a semitone higher in block chords. The material is altered in m. 426, as the clarinet launches into a descending A major scale figure over a rising chromatic bass. The "Charleston" rhythm section from the first transition reappears in m. 430 in the original key of D $\flat$ . The clarinet repeats sixteenths on the anacrusic figure,<sup>36</sup> giving more intensity to the line. The transition ends with a continuation of the "Charleston" rhythm and an incisive clarinet figure at the top of its range.

M. 441 marks the beginning of the Coda with a return to C major, the opening tonality of the concerto. It contains a summary of thematic material from the second movement. Continuing the tempo from the previous transition, it presents a chromatic "boogie woogie" ostinato<sup>37</sup> in the cello and piano, joined by the basses in m. 453. The piano, answered by the clarinet, reintroduces thematic motives from mm. 213-214.<sup>38</sup> Meanwhile, the upper strings gradually present Theme A (see Example 2.25). A fugato passage begins in m. 463 between the first and second violins and the clarinet over a diatonic "walking" bass line. A transitional passage in m. 474 containing a

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<sup>36</sup> In the piano reduction, the clarinet line has sixteenth notes only on the first two eighth notes of the pattern, followed by an eighth note at the end of the bar. This pattern is continued in m. 432, whereas the orchestral score changes the pattern to three eighth notes in this bar. Performers have traditionally played the piano score version.

<sup>37</sup> Del Rosso traces the chromatic ostinato to m. 195, Theme C material. See Del Rosso, 45-46.

<sup>38</sup> Copland drastically altered the coda from the original in this section. The clarinet was originally scored to play almost continuously in its upper register with material that was later assigned to the piano. See Adelson, 43-44.

return of the chromatic ostinato in the piano and lower strings and repeated arpeggios in the clarinet propels the music into its final section.

The musical score for Example 2.25 (mm. 445-449) is presented in a system of staves. The top staff is for the Solo Clarinet (Bb), and the bottom staff is for the Piano. The piano part includes a chromatic ostinato in the left hand and repeated arpeggios in the right hand. The clarinet part features repeated arpeggios. The score is in 4/4 time and includes dynamic markings such as *mf*, *sim*, and *sf*. The system is labeled with the measure numbers 445 and 449.

Example 2.25 (mm. 445-449)

At m. 481, the piece begins to lose momentum<sup>39</sup> as the tempo is reduced to  $\text{♩} = 120$ , the opening tempo of the movement. The melodic material, originating from the end of the cadenza (c. 62), is transposed up a third and displays new articulations. The orchestra punctuates with descending minor third figures derived from the clarinet motive. At m. 486, the clarinet has a mini-cadenza,<sup>40</sup> elaborating on this minor third figure. The tempo slows further at m. 490, where the clarinet presents the anacrusic figures that accompanied the “Charleston” rhythm section in an extended range. This is combined with augmented material from Theme B in the

<sup>39</sup> Both Jennings and Del Rosso describe this as the coda. See Jennings, 18; Del Rosso, 47.

<sup>40</sup> This section is similar to a jazz “break”: a bridge passage tacked on the end of a melodic phrase, two to four measures long, usually improvised, marking a “temporary lapse from the rigors of strict structure”. See Sargeant, 238.

orchestra. The cluster chords<sup>41</sup> at m. 501 refer to the chords at the end of the first transition. The final gesture of the piece is reminiscent of the end of the cadenza, as the clarinet outlines an E major seventh chord with tremendous changes of register,<sup>42</sup> moving with a dramatic “jazz smear”<sup>43</sup> or glissando to the closing tonic over a chromatic sweep in the orchestra. (See Example 2.26.)

This analysis demonstrates that Copland’s clarinet concerto is a unified, tightly constructed work that, contrary to earlier perceptions of the piece, displays a highly skilled level of composition. It is not a concerto aimed at empty virtuosic display, but a complex work that manages to integrate many diverse materials into a highly satisfying whole. These elements are not just thrown together without formal growth. The form is more than that of a “newsreel;”<sup>44</sup> although the work is highly sectional, the sections connect seamlessly, either through elisions or overlapping of material. Having given a linear sequence of events in the concerto’s structure, the dissertation will next examine how Copland achieves the sense of unity, yet still provides variety through the interrelationship of all the musical elements of the work.

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<sup>41</sup> Bullock, 26.

<sup>42</sup> Again, Copland lowered the notes at the end of the piece for Goodman. The notes in mm. 503-505 were originally A# and C#, at the very top of the clarinet’s range. See Adelson, 44-45.

<sup>43</sup> Copland and Perlis, *Copland: Since 1943*, 93.

<sup>44</sup> See Chapter 1, 13.

Rit. . . . . Broaden .

Solo Cl.  
(B♭)

Piano

Harp

VI. I.  
Div.

VI. II.

Vle.

Vc.

Cb.

[505] Rit. (ad lib.)

[505] Rit.

unis.

Example 2. 26 (mm. 501-506)

**Table 2: Formal Outline of Clarinet Concerto, Second Movement**

Measure Numbers	Section	Theme	Key	Meter / Tempo
mm. 121-146	1	A (intro.)	G $\flat$ , bitonal	2/4, 120-126
mm. 146-176	1	A	D $\flat$	2/2, 120-126
mm. 176-187	1	B	E	3/4, 120-126
mm. 187-213	1	C	D, bitonal	2/2, 120-126
mm. 213-222	1	C (with intro. ostinato)	F	2/2, 120-126
mm. 223-251	1	A	A, G $\flat$ , D $\flat$ , bitonal sections	2/2, 120-126
mm. 251-268	1	C (with intro. ostinato)	G $\flat$	2/2, 120-126
mm. 269-296	transition	X	D $\flat$	5/8 pattern, 132
mm. 296-322	2	D, E	F, C	4/4, 132, 144
mm. 323-335	2	B	G $\flat$ , E $\flat$	changing
mm. 335-349	2	B and E	changing	changing, 144
mm. 349-378	2 (repeat of mm. 297-323 from m. 355)	D and E	E $\flat$ , A	4/4, 144, 132
mm. 379-440	transition	X, Y	changing	5/8 pattern, 132
mm. 441-481	Coda	A, C	C	2/2, 132
mm. 481-507	Coda	B, also material from cadenza and transition	changing, ends in C	changing, tempo slows down



## Chapter 3: Musical Elements of the Concerto:

### Unity And Contrast

To gain an additional understanding of the concerto's structure, this chapter addresses the issues of unity and contrast through an examination of the work's musical elements. Owing to its importance in the work's construction and expressive character, rhythm is explored in the most detail. Further, following the topics of melody, harmony, instrumentation, and texture, the discussion focuses on the score indications that are related to performance, including tempos, articulations, dynamics, and their structural relevance. The following aims to inform the performer of the important characteristics of the piece, hoping to produce a more enlightened performance.

The jazz influence is most obvious in the rhythmic elements of the concerto. Jazz rhythms had always been a part of Copland's musical language. Even after his "jazz" period of the 1920's, he continued to use its "rhythmic bite" and energy, giving his music a special affinity with dance.<sup>1</sup> In his study of jazz influences in classical music, David Baskerville states that the "fundamental characteristic of unrelenting, unchanging pulse of jazz ...was missed, intentionally or otherwise, by most classic composers

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<sup>1</sup> H. Wiley Hitchcock, "Aaron Copland and American Music," *Perspectives of New Music* 19 (1980-81): 31.

influenced by jazz.”<sup>2</sup> Although Copland alters the relative speed of the basic pulse, he captures the rhythmic spirit of jazz in the concerto’s continual forward motion and energy, a quality of many of his works. The propulsion of the rhythms is one of the concerto’s most striking elements. Copland achieves the rhythmic essence of jazz in two ways, in the rhythmic foundations of the work, largely found in the accompanying ostinatos, and in the jazz-derived rhythms in the melodic material that interact with this accompaniment.

In addition to their role as a harmonic framework, the ostinatos in the concerto supply a rhythmic base. The ostinato of the first movement contains the root of the chord on the downbeat, followed by the third (written as a tenth) on the second beat. This accentuation of the second beat of each bar creates an unusual syncopation to a typical waltz pattern, instilling a “jazzy” rhythmic feel from the very beginning of the piece. The ostinato in the first section of the second movement is similarly constructed, although it consists of two chords per bar to accommodate the metrical change from triple to duple time. Both ostinatos contribute to the work’s sense of linear motion. (See Examples 4.1. and 4.2.) Another important ostinato is the “boogie woogie” version found in the coda, which, though not syncopated, is jazz-derived in its incessant quarter-note pulse, giving the section an urgent, rhythmic drive. (See Example 3.3.)

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<sup>2</sup> David Ross Baskerville, “Jazz Influence on Art Music to Mid-Century” (Ph.D. diss., University of California, 1965), 57.

Because these ostinatos contain an unchanging rhythmic pattern with a steady metrical division (triple time in the first movement and duple in the second), the transition sections, with their changing meters, inject a powerful antidote to the established pattern, disrupting the established rhythmic flow. Copland had a preference for divisions of five in these passages, such as the 5/4 meters of Section B of the first movement, and the 5/8 patterns - outlined by accents over 3/4 meter - in the transitions of the second movement. (See Example 3.4.)

Example 3. 1 (mm. 4-9)

Example 3. 2 (mm. 146-151)

(← ♩ →) Same Tempo

Solo Cl. (Bb)

Piano

Harp

I. Vln.

II. Vln.

Vcl.

Cb.

Example 3. 3 (mm. 441-443)

Trifle faster (♩ = 132)  
(← ♩ →) **270**

Vln.

Vcl.

Cb.

Example 3. 4 (mm. 269-272)

Whereas the accompaniment of the concerto focuses on strong beats, the thematic materials are anacrusic in nature, also contributing to the forward motion and supplying a unifying device throughout the concerto. For example, the first theme of the first movement begins with a one-beat anacrusis into the next bar. (See Example 3.1.) This anacrusic figure is also featured in the contrasting clarinet theme in m. 24. (See Example 3.5.) An important rhythmic aspect of the movement is the means whereby the ostinato, which has rhythmic motion on the first and second beats of the bar,

interacts with the themes that move on the third beat. Thus, the music flows continually on every beat of the bar, giving an unremitting pulse and sense of linear direction. In Section B, the melodic material is similarly constructed, although some of the agogic figures lead to the second half of the bar rather than to the downbeat. In this section, the music has the first opportunity to pause as the constant quarter-note pulse is replaced by sustained notes. (See Example 3.6.)



Example 3.5 clarinet (mm. 24-28)

Example 3.6 (mm. 61-65)


The themes of the second movement also contain an important anacrusic figure, this time as a three-note upbeat figure, a unifying element of the second movement. This construction bears the influence of jazz, as its melodic motives frequently begin on the sixth eighth note of a 4/4 bar.<sup>3</sup> The

<sup>3</sup> Sargeant, 95.

eighth-note figure originates from the second theme of the first movement, (Example 3.5) where it is used later in m. 85 to give added rhythmic interest to the return of Section A. In the second movement, all themes contain this three-note pattern.<sup>4</sup> (See Example 3.7.)

The image displays five musical staves, labeled a through e, representing different sections of a clarinet solo. Each staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb).  
 - Staff a: Measures 150-151. It features a series of eighth notes with a 'f staccatissimo' dynamic marking. A box labeled '150' is above the first measure.  
 - Staff b: Measures 179-181. It shows a more complex rhythmic pattern with slurs and a 'mp' dynamic marking. A box labeled '180' is above the first measure.  
 - Staff c: Measures 213-215. It contains a continuous eighth-note figure. A box labeled '215' is above the first measure.  
 - Staff d: Measures 296-298. It features a rhythmic pattern with a 'f' dynamic marking and the instruction 'with humor, relaxed mp'. A tempo marking 'Same tempo (♩ = 132)' is present.  
 - Staff e: Measures 308-310. It shows a rhythmic pattern with a 'poco accel.' marking and a box labeled '310'.

Example 3. 7 clarinet, a (mm. 150-151), b (mm. 179-181), c (mm. 213-215), d (mm. 296-298), e (mm. 308-310)

The anacrusic figure is but one element of an important feature of the second movement's rhythmic construction: the division of the eighth notes of a 4/4 bar into irregular groupings, generally 3+2+3 or 3+5, an adaptation of jazz and Latin American rhythmic devices.<sup>5</sup> Copland stresses the importance of this rhythmic construction in jazz in his article "Jazz Structure and Influence," where he describes the rhythm  as a "molecule of jazz."<sup>6</sup> This irregular division contributes to a fundamental aspect of the piece: its syncopated rhythms. Numerous examples include the material of Themes C,

<sup>4</sup> Theme B contains sixteenth notes on the first two beats, and Theme D has the notes rhythmically displaced so that the second eighth note falls on the downbeat, but the basic pattern remains.

<sup>5</sup> Fleisher, 65-66.

<sup>6</sup> Copland, "Jazz Structure and Influence," 11. See also Seiber, 35.

and E (see examples above) and the “Charleston” rhythm section of the transitions. (See Example 3.8.)

The musical score for Example 3.8 (mm. 286-288) is arranged in a system of seven staves. The staves are labeled on the left as follows: Solo Cl. (Bb), Piano, L. VI., II., VIe., Vc., and Cb. The Solo Cl. (Bb) staff features a melodic line with dynamic markings of *ff marc.*, *sf*, and *f*. The Piano staff provides harmonic support with chords and arpeggios, marked *ff forceful*. The string staves (L. VI., II., VIe., Vc., and Cb.) play a rhythmic pattern, with dynamic markings including *ff marc.*, *sf*, *f*, and *p*. The VIe. staff includes the instruction *div. marc.* and the Vc. staff includes *unis.*. The Cb. staff is marked *f marc.* and *sf*. The overall texture is dense and rhythmic, characteristic of Copland's style.

Example 3. 8 (mm. 286-288)

Copland achieves rhythmic variety through various manipulations. He employs typical rhythmic devices, such as augmentation; one example occurs at the end of the first movement and the opening of the cadenza. (See Example 3.9.) An example of diminution at the end of the first transition also contains a jazz characteristic: creating a polyrhythmic cycle of three eighth notes against the prevailing meter,<sup>7</sup> adding tension to the line. (See Example 3.10.)

<sup>7</sup> See Sargeant, 58-59, and Seiber, 40.

Solo Cl. rit. pp 114 114 A 114 B 115

Harp (assid) p rit. Original Augmented

== CADENZA (freely)

Solo Cl. (Bb) short Original Augmented

Example 3. 9 (mm. 112-c. 6)

Solo Cl. (Bb) 295

Piano ff ff

Harp ff ff

div. in 8 295

unis. fff

Cycles of Three

Example 3. 10 (mm. 294-296)

The materials are developed by continually varying their relative metrical placement. An example of this occurs immediately in the first theme of the piece, where the placement of the first cell E-D (mm. 4-5) changes from the third beat of m. 4 to the second beat of m. 6, and also extends the rhythmic value of D from four beats to two. A steady rhythmic pattern is not established until mm. 8-9, where the clarinet moves in a lilting



rhythm introduced by the ostinato at the beginning of the piece. (See Example 3.1.)

Section B of the first movement contains many examples of rhythmic displacement, such as the manipulation of the first two chords of each phrase. The first statement begins on the second beat of a 4/4 bar in m. 61, two bars later, the chords start on the third beat in 5/4 time, and in m. 73, on the first beat of a 3/4 bar. (See Example 3.11.) Another type of rhythmic manipulation occurs with Theme D in the second movement, where Copland uses a typical jazz technique of altering melodic material from a regular pattern to a syncopated one.<sup>8</sup> (A further jazz characteristic is the syncopation's anticipatory nature.<sup>9</sup>) The theme begins with a motive that stresses the main beats of the bar, changing to a syncopated pattern in m. 300,<sup>10</sup> with an accompanying syncopated figure in the basses and cellos. (See Example 3.12.)

The concerto's pitch elements make a significant contribution to its unity. In his study of the work's stylistic characteristics, Gerald Fleisher describes how Copland limits his choice of pitch materials almost exclusively to the major seventh chord, providing the melody with a large number of third, fourth, and fifth intervals.<sup>11</sup> He employs this chord in its incomplete

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<sup>8</sup> Sargeant, 55.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 57. Anticipated syncopations are far more common in jazz than delayed ones, which are considered "corny." See also Seiber, 38.

<sup>10</sup> Note that this syncopation divides the eighth notes into the familiar 2+3+2 pattern, mirrored in the accompaniment.

<sup>11</sup> Fleisher, 10. This dissertation provides a detailed examination of the linear, harmonic, and rhythmic elements of the concerto.

form, omitting either the third or the fifth, and the vast majority of linear elements in the concerto derive from a relationship between the two forms of this chord.<sup>12</sup> This explains the consistency in the intervallic construction of the themes, particularly in the second movement.

The first system of the musical score is divided into three parts: a, b, and c. Part a shows the Solo Clarinet (Bb) and Harp. Part b shows the Solo Clarinet (Bb) and Harp. Part c shows the Solo Clarinet (Bb) and Harp. The score includes staves for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass. The music is in 3/4 time and features various musical notations such as dynamics (mp, mf, f), articulation (div, half), and performance instructions (Tutti, div).

**Example 3. 11 a (m. 61), b (m. 63), c (m. 72)**

Same tempo (♩ = 132) 300

Solo Cl. (B♭) *with humor, relaxed* *mp*

Vc. *1 Stund: a lop bass style* *Half pizz.* *pizz. (secco)* *mp*

Cb. *f secco* *mp*

### Example 3. 12 (mm. 297-301)

Although Copland's melodies contain limited pitch materials, he varies his themes by incorporating an important characteristic of twentieth-century melodic writing: registral displacement.<sup>13</sup> This technique is responsible for the work's unusual concentration in the highest echelons of the instruments'

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 13. Fleisher examines this aspect of the piece in great detail in pp. 10-23.

<sup>13</sup> Smith, 295-298. For a detailed description of Copland's use of this technique in the concerto, see Fleisher, 6-10.

respective ranges. For example, Copland develops the first theme of the piece by presenting the same pitches in different registers, creating a wide-ranging theme that exploits the clarinet's upper range. He alters a subsequent statement of the theme, by reversing the registers of the two D's in mm. 43-44, compared with mm. 11-12.<sup>14</sup> (See Example 3.13.) Another example of the free use of register is found in the second movement at m. 371, (See Example 3.14), where changing octaves create interest in the sequential clarinet line.



Example 3. 13 clarinet, a (mm. 11-12), b (mm. 43-44)



Example 3. 14 clarinet, (mm. 369-372)

Copland employs harmony as a means to achieve diversity of colour in the work. Although his harmonic language is tonal, it generally does not contain traditional chordal progressions. Instead, he moves his chords freely like objects, often connecting them through stepwise motion or parallelism.<sup>15</sup> Ostinatos, an important rhythmic device, also serve to link a series of chords together.

<sup>14</sup> This technique is applied in conjunction with further manipulation of the melody in the order of pitches presented.

<sup>15</sup> Fleisher, 57.

The concerto's harmonic characteristics often serve to clarify its formal design. For example, Copland incorporates polytonality as a means of differentiating the musical lines from one another.<sup>16</sup> (See Example 3.15, comparing the key centre of the ostinato with that of the melody.) Key changes define the different sections in the piece; for example, Sections A and B of the first movement are delineated by the keys of C and E $\flat$  respectively. The second movement continually moves to a new key at important structural points, accentuating its sectional nature. The key relationship between these modulations is often either stepwise or a third interval.<sup>17</sup>

The musical score for Example 3.15 (mm. 195-200) shows a clear polytonal texture. The Solo Clarinet (Bb) and Piano parts are in E-flat major, while the Violin I, Violin II, and Violoncello/Double Bass parts are in C major. The score includes various performance markings such as 'pizz.', 'pizz. (forceful)', 'vigoroso', 'arco', and 'f'.

Example 3.15 (mm. 195-200)

Basing his chords on the accumulation of thirds, Copland varies their construction through the number of chosen chord tones and their voicing. With the same essential construction, he creates harmonies that produce a completely different aural effect. For instance, Section B of the second

<sup>16</sup> Hugo Cole, "Aaron Copland I," *Tempo* 76 (1966): 2.

<sup>17</sup> Fleisher, 61.



Copland demonstrates tremendous imagination in his orchestration of the concerto, using the instruments at his disposal to vary constantly the musical content's timbre. The orchestra is not subordinate to the clarinet soloist, but is integral in the exchange of motivic material. The antiphonal nature of the work inevitably draws a comparison to the riff "call and response" formulas of jazz used by Goodman's ensembles.<sup>18</sup> The orchestra often introduces themes, such as Section B of the first movement and the opening of the second movement, the latter bearing some resemblance to a tutti exposition. The transitions of the second movement also begin without the clarinet. The upper strings in particular have plenty of opportunities to develop thematic material, and even the cellos play Theme D in m. 366. Although normally relegated to the role of percussion, the piano presents themes in the second movement, such as a statement of Theme A in mm. 223-228. A good example of thematic interplay is found in mm. 338-350, where motives from Themes E and B are exchanged like a conversation amongst the instruments. (See Example 3.17.)

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<sup>18</sup> See Gunther Schuller, *The Swing Era, The Development of Jazz 1930-45*, Vol. 2, *The History of Jazz* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 19.

340

Solo Cl. (Bb)

I. VI.

II. VI.

Vc.

Cb.

unis. v n

p

arco of the frog

pizz.

pizz.

div.

arco

p

f

n

v

Example 3. 17 (mm. 339-344)

The variation of the concerto's accompaniment figures further exemplifies Copland's carefully considered instrumentation. The following examples demonstrate some of the different permutations of the accompaniment for Theme D: it begins in the basses in m. 296, joined by the cellos in m. 301. The statement of Theme D in the upper strings, followed by the "umpateedle" rhythm, is accompanied this time by the harp and piano in m. 352, but now transmuted to a rising pattern. The second full statement of the theme in m. 355 has the accompaniment in the cellos and piano, now altered to a percussive rhythmic pattern. It is followed by the cello, harp, and piano version in m. 374, transformed to a chordal pattern. (See Example 3.18.)

**a** Same tempo ( $\text{♩} = 132$ ) 300

Solo Cl. (Bb) *with humor, relaxed* *mp* *pizz. (secco)*

Vc. *I stand: stop bass style* *Half: pizz.* *mp*

Cb. *f secco* *mp*

**b** 320

Solo Cl. (Bb) *p*

Piano *mp secco* *p*

Harp *mp secco, près de la table* *p*

Cb. *p*

**c**

Piano *f marc. secco*

Vc. *crude, emphatic*

Cb. *arco crude, emphatic* *f marc.*

**d** ( $\text{♩} = 132$ )

Solo Cl. (Bb)

Piano *P secco*

Harp *P (près de la table)*

Vc. *arco*

Example 3. 18 a (mm. 297-301), b (mm. 317-320), c (mm. 356-359), d (mm. 373-375)

Texture plays an important role in the concerto in its definition of structural points and in its presentation of melodic ideas in varied settings. The most important textural characteristic in the piece is Copland's



application of his "accretion" technique, using texture to reflect growth both in small sections and in the large-scale development of a movement as a whole.

An example of Copland's additive technique with texture can be found at the very beginning of the concerto, which is given in Example 2.1. The first movement emanates from the ostinato given in the harp and pizzicato bass, followed by the entrance of the theme four measures later. Instruments are then added to fill out the texture. In m. 5, the bass drops out and the cellos and violas alternate the ostinato. In m. 9, to reflect the motivic change in the theme, there is no harp after the first measure, the cellos are in octaves with the basses, and the violas have the tenths of the ostinato. Starting in m. 11, the second violins double the clarinet notes that sustain over the bar line, intensifying the sense of movement which now is on each beat of the bar in the accompaniment. At m. 15, there is a change again as the viola sustains over the bar, mimicking the clarinet. The first violins enter in m. 18 with the clarinet. The harp joins in again with the ostinato a bar later as the theme is repeated. This example demonstrates how Copland gradually adds instruments to flesh out the texture and delineate the important structural points in the melodic line.

In conjunction with this technique, Copland's use of contrapuntal textures reflects climactic points in the work. In the first movement, each successive statement of the main theme results in a denser texture. The

second complete statement has an imitative first violin line, and this counterpoint is further developed in the return of the A section. Copland develops each theme in the second movement in a similar fashion. Theme A progresses with the addition of more instruments and motives to the texture. This theme culminates in the fugato of the coda, where the theme is exchanged amongst the instruments in an imitative stretto. (See Example 3.19.)

Example 3. 19 (mm. 461-466)

Tempo indications in the score contribute to unify movements, delineate sections, and add to the character of themes and sections of the piece. Copland is very meticulous about metronome markings throughout the concerto. In the first movement, the two different tempos ( $\text{♩} = 69$  and  $76$ )

are each associated with the two contrasting sections, where Section B has a somewhat faster tempo to the surrounding A sections.<sup>19</sup> The only time this tempo designation alters is in m. 95, when the main theme of the movement pairs with the harmonic material of Section B. The faster tempo underlines the novelty of this varied repeat and contributes to its added expressiveness. Other brief tempo changes in the first movement alter the theme's character, such as the instruction to move forward before m. 45, followed by a ritard. Another indication is the *Broader* marking before m. 75, coinciding with the most expressive statement of that phrase and the greatest dynamic level. Ritards connect major sections such as before the return of Section A in m. 76 and the contrasting thematic material m. 101.

In the cadenza, Copland avoids metronome markings, instructing the performer at its opening to play "freely." Tempo indications such as "twice as fast"<sup>20</sup> or "slower" reflect changes of material. The freedom of tempos leaves the performer with the important choice of whether to use the cadenza as an opportunity to present thematic material in a similar tempo to its context within the next movement, or to use contrasting speeds.

A steady tempo (♩=120-126) in the first half of the second movement links its three component themes; although meter changes occur, such as the

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<sup>19</sup> Although the difference between the two tempos is small, it does indicate that Copland wanted Section B to have more forward motion than the A sections.

<sup>20</sup> The indication "twice as fast" in c. 12 is problematic: what is it twice as fast as? To avoid playing this section too slowly, it should be twice as fast as the "somewhat faster" material immediately preceding it (c. 9), rather than the opening of the cadenza, which is often played at a similar tempo to the preceding movement. (♩=69)

change from duple to triple meter for Theme B in m. 176, the basic beat remains constant. Transitional sections emphasize the forward motion and tension inherent in these passages with a faster tempo (♩=132). In the second half of the concerto beginning with Theme D, two tempos (♩=132 and ♩=144) alternate back and forth, accentuating the thematic contrast of Themes D and E.<sup>21</sup> This characteristic of changing tempos is one means that distinguishes this section from the first half of the movement, where the tempo remains constant. In the coda, changing tempos gradually decrease the momentum, bringing the piece to a close.

Dynamic markings closely mirror the concerto's structure. They delineate sections, provide thematic contrast, and reflect large-scale organic growth in movements. In the first movement, dynamics emphasize the development of the material in conjunction with the orchestration and texture. The concerto opens with a *piano* indication, increasing to *mezzo-forte* in m. 24 with the clarinet entry, and returning to *piano* for the restatement of the theme. At this repetition Copland adds dynamics, corresponding with the motivic changes to the theme and its more expressive nature. The first *forte* in the movement underlines the arrival of an important new section (Section B). This dynamic growth is also seen in Section B of the movement, rising from a *pianissimo* in m. 63 to a *fortissimo* statement in m. 74. After the

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<sup>21</sup> There is one place in the score where it appears that Copland neglected to mark a change of tempo. This is in m. 349, where Theme D returns in the upper strings. The indication to play at ♩=144 in m. 366 confirms that the previous material should be performed at the slower tempo.

movement's climax with the final statement of the theme in mm. 95-100, the dynamic level decreases, fading away to nothing, which is how the piece started. The second movement contains many examples of this growth. The introduction begins *pianissimo* and grows to *forte* in m. 146. Theme C also starts quietly, increasing to a *forte* in m. 195 where the strings state the theme in a new character with a corresponding change of articulation.

In the second movement, certain dynamics have a unifying feature, in that they are always associated with a particular feature of the piece. For example, the opening ostinato of the second movement is always presented with a *piano* dynamic (and also with the same texture). Conversely, dynamics also provide contrast by reflecting different characters of themes. Theme A, for instance, has indications ranging from *mezzo-piano* to *fortissimo*. Varied instrumentation and texture further delineate these changes. In Theme D, all of the various permutations of its character - from a "relaxed" nature to "crudely"<sup>22</sup> - are further expressed with dynamic change.

Dynamics indicate important structural divisions in the second movement, such as the sudden switch to *forte* at m. 323 when Theme B returns. They are used for contrast in mm. 335-349, where motivic fragments are exchanged. The concerto noticeably lacks crescendos and

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<sup>22</sup> These instructions are written into the score.

decrescendos.<sup>23</sup> When present, they serve to connect sections, such as the crescendo into m. 176 with Theme B and the decrescendo into Theme C.

Copland explores a wide range of articulations in the concerto: while the first movement is mainly legato, the cadenza and second movement contain a variety of staccatos and accents to present a much livelier, “upbeat” character reflected in the syncopated rhythmic material. He uses articulation to manipulate melodic materials and elucidate their rhythmic and motivic content. Accents highlight rhythmic groupings and even create syncopated patterns.

In keeping with the melodic nature of the first movement, the articulation consists mainly of slurred legato notes. These slurs indicate important subdivisions within the phrases, seen in the first theme. (See Example 3.20.) It is interesting to note that these articulations also work in tandem with the rhythmic construction of the melody, in keeping with the anacrusic nature of the line.

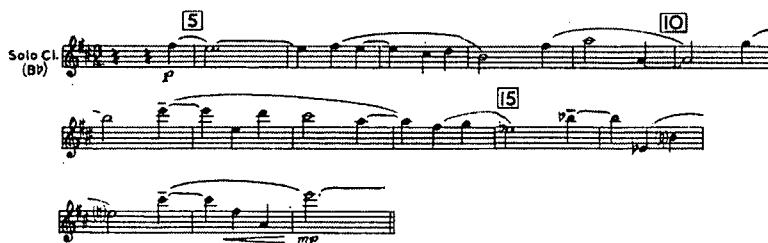
The only other articulations in the first movement are tenuto marks, which accentuate important notes in the phrase. In the first theme, tenuto indications in mm. 12, 15, and 17 highlight the ascending line and accentuate the fact that the ascending intervals are increasing from a fourth to a sixth. When the melody repeats, the tenutos are not reproduced in exactly the same manner: In the second statement of the theme, only the first ascending

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<sup>23</sup> Presumably the performer would add small changes in dynamic levels. Jennings gives a detailed list of suggestions on how to add them in the concerto. See Jennings, 23-33.

interval is accented. Copland chose to change the other tenuto marks to slurs, perhaps because by then the pattern of rising sixths is established. (See Example 3.21.) Tenuto marks in Section B stress the important rising second figure. (See Example 3.11.)

In his article "Editions and Misprints: Copland Concerto for Clarinet," Charles Stier points out differences in tenuto marks between the orchestral score and the piano reduction.<sup>24</sup> (In the reduction, there are extra tenuto markings that are not present in the orchestral score.) Whereas Stier implies throughout his article that any variations to the orchestral score are *wrong*, presumably these markings came from Copland himself. Rather than dismiss these differences, and others between the two scores, they should be regarded as an alternative performance possibility.



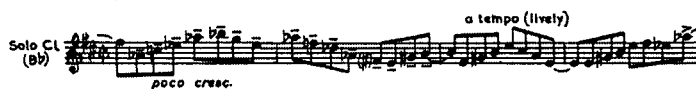
Example 3. 20 clarinet (mm. 4-19)



Example 3. 21 clarinet (mm. 46-50)

<sup>24</sup> Charles Stier, "Editions and Misprints: Copland Concerto for Clarinet," *The Clarinet* 19.3 (1992): 52-53.

Copland employs a variety of articulations in the cadenza and second movement, unlike the first movement which is mostly legato. In the clarinet line, the most common of these occurs when no articulation marks are provided, specifying that the clarinetist should articulate each note separately. These passages of continuous articulated notes do not reflect standard classical clarinet writing,<sup>25</sup> and perhaps derive from jazz practice.<sup>26</sup> Copland strongly indicates how he wants the notes executed by writing tenuto marks at the beginning of the melodic pattern in c. 9 and later when this same material returns in c. 34.<sup>27</sup> (See Example 3.22.)



Example 3.22 (c. 34-37)

Varied articulations serve to achieve thematic contrast. In the second movement, Theme A is indicated with staccatissimo, Theme B is slurred, and Theme D is all tongued. They also transform a theme: For example, Theme C begins legato, but is then contrasted for the repeat of the theme in the strings in m. 195 with staccato marks. Changing articulations are even used to delineate the different components of a theme. For example, in m. 213,

<sup>25</sup> Maxey, 32. Passages with no articulation markings are common in works of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, where performers had the discretion to add markings. Examples include works by Weber and Mozart's Clarinet Concerto.

<sup>26</sup> This articulation is used as a means to keep all the notes rhythmically equal. See Gunther Schuller, *Early Jazz, Its Roots and Musical Development*, Vol. 1, *The History of Jazz* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 8.

<sup>27</sup> Copland also uses tenuto marks with Theme C material in mm. 231.

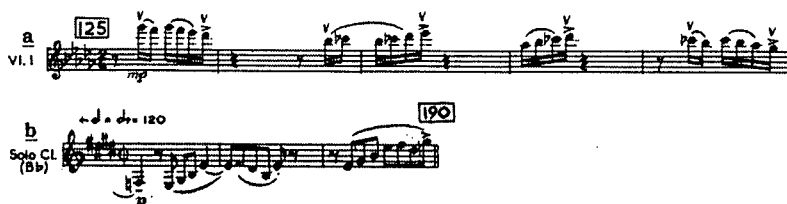


Theme C consists of an arpeggiated figure, indicated with tenuto indications, and a scale figure, articulated *staccatissimo* with accents.



Example 3.23 clarinet (mm. 213-217)

Copland writes accents to highlight rhythmic groupings. In the transition sections, *sforzandos* accentuate the rhythmic 5/8 groupings and the “Charleston” rhythm, and also the change to 6/8 grouping in m. 414. In c. 36-62, the most continuous section of the cadenza, accents emphasize the syncopation of the line. Accents can also create syncopations: For example, when motivic material is presented during the introduction of the second movement, the last sixteenth note of each grouping has an accent, resulting in a syncopation that is not present in the rhythm. A similar effect can be found with a motive in Theme C. These accents are especially important to bring out in performance, as their absence would alter the rhythmic structure of the line. (See Example 3.24.)



Example 3.24 a violin I (mm. 125-129), b clarinet (mm. 188-190)

This analysis shows that Copland manipulated the concerto’s musical components to create a piece that is unified in structure, yet is filled with enough contrast to develop its ideas and vary its expressive content. The end

result is a composition that is highly satisfying both for its musical logic and coherence, and also for its variety of musical events that communicate a range of expressive characters. It is always desirable for the performer to have a thorough understanding of the role musical elements play in the formal organization of a piece he or she is to perform. In the case of this concerto, this knowledge validates the importance of Copland's interpretive markings. It is clear that Copland's dynamic, articulation, and tempo indications are well integrated into the music, serving to elucidate and contribute to its structure. The performer needs to treat these markings with the same care and consideration that Copland used when writing them.

## Chapter 4: Performance Practice

Despite an unenthusiastic initial reception, Copland's Clarinet Concerto has been eagerly adopted by clarinetists as an accessible and musically interesting twentieth-century work. The investigation of structural devices in this work demonstrated its taut construction and variety of character, created through imaginative manipulation and integration of musical materials. Like many contemporary works, the indications to the performer are very specific regarding tempo, articulation, and dynamics. These meticulous markings are not added as an afterthought, but are integral to the workings of the piece. The question arises as to whether the work needs to be "interpreted," or whether a faithful rendition of these markings is sufficient in performance. To explore this issue, it is instructive to examine Copland's ideas on performance.

Copland recognized the limitations of the written score, and realized that many important nuances of performance are impossible to notate.<sup>1</sup> He thought that music needed to be interpreted, and in fact welcomed different versions of his works, believing that from the finest interpreters even composers can learn about the character of their work, and accept departures from the score.<sup>2</sup> Copland wanted performers to "use their musical intelligence before the printed page," striking a balance between adhering too

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<sup>1</sup> Copland, *Music and Imagination*, 49-50.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

strictly to the notation and straying too far from the clear intentions of the composer.<sup>3</sup> Although any work can be seen in different perspectives, each has an essence that needs to be revealed. In the composer's words, "each reading must in itself be convincing, musically and psychologically - it must be within the limits of one of the possible ways of interpreting a work. It must have stylistic truth, which is to say it must be read within the frame of reference that is true for the composer's period and individual personality."<sup>4</sup>

An attempt to demonstrate the "stylistic truth" of Copland's Clarinet Concerto in performance involves a decision regarding the nature of the piece and how best to reveal it in an interpretation. A fundamental performance issue concerns whether to accentuate the jazz features especially present in the second movement, emphasizing its "American" origins, or instead to reinforce its stylistic connection to the detached, neoclassical aesthetics of the 1920's and 30's. Copland said that, as a general rule, jazz clarinetists gave a more successful rendition of the second movement, whereas clarinetists with a classical background were more comfortable performing the first movement.<sup>5</sup> This statement indicates the presence of two distinct sets of performing requirements in the work.

This chapter examines the diverse performance practice of the concerto as demonstrated through different artists' recordings. Of particular

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<sup>3</sup> Copland, *What to Listen for in Music*, 269.

<sup>4</sup> Copland, *Music and Imagination*, 49.

<sup>5</sup> Del Rosso, 52.

importance are the recordings made by Goodman with Copland conducting. An investigation of certain features of these performances shows that they successfully capture many important elements of the piece. After a summary of the salient details of these interpretations, representative examples are taken from the wide variety of recordings now available, featuring clarinetists from both North America and Europe. Focusing on each clarinetist's interpretation - rather than that of the orchestra - these recordings are compared to the important aspects of the Goodman / Copland recordings.

Goodman's reputation as a jazz clarinetist was unparalleled: "He was the undisputed clarinet king during the Swing Era, and as a result of his popularity every American knew what the clarinet was and many clarinetists wanted to imitate him."<sup>6</sup> He was fortunate to have had formal instruction on the instrument from an early age, probably receiving the best training of any jazz musician of his generation.<sup>7</sup> However, his highly skilled playing was foreign to the jazz of the era, and was criticized for being mechanical and lacking in inspiration.<sup>8</sup>

Goodman's excellent technical foundation enabled him to explore the clarinet's classical repertoire. In addition to live concerts, he made

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<sup>6</sup> John Kuehn, "Clarinet Jazz: The Rise and Fall (and Rise Again) of the Jazz Clarinet," *The Clarinet* 15.4 (1989): 30.

<sup>7</sup> James Lincoln Collier, *Benny Goodman and the Swing Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 17.

<sup>8</sup> John Kuehn, "Benny and Artie: a Stylistic Comparison," *The Clarinet* 16.4 (1989): 19. Schuller thinks this evaluation of his playing was an exaggeration. See Schuller, *The Swing Era*, 11.

approximately twenty recordings of classical works.<sup>9</sup> Like the comments on his jazz playing, his classical performance reviews were often poor. He was criticized for a lack of conviction and personality in his playing, for a lack of understanding of the classical idiom, and even for his clarinet tone.<sup>10</sup>

This reputation is unjustified, especially when examining his recordings of Copland's Clarinet Concerto. In these interpretations, Goodman seems to capture the essence of the piece.<sup>11</sup> Of the two recordings that Goodman and Copland made together, one in 1950 and the other in 1963, they both preferred the latter version.<sup>12</sup> Owing to their obvious preference for this recording - and a similarity of approach in both recordings - the following study of their interpretation concentrates on this version.<sup>13</sup>

In light of Copland's ideas on performing, it is interesting to note that the score is not followed exactly in this recording. This is especially true in the choice of tempos. Goodman performs the first movement more slowly than indicated, with a pliable rather than metronomic tempo. The transition sections in the second movement are faster than written, giving them an

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<sup>9</sup> Collier, 341. These include recordings of Mozart's Concerto, Debussy's *Première Rhapsodie*, and Bartok's *Contrasts*.

<sup>10</sup> See Ibid., 341-43. Collier cites several reviews expressing these views on Goodman's playing. Snively also quotes from a 1940 *New York Times* review that criticizes Goodman's tone. See Snively, 21.

<sup>11</sup> Goodman's recordings do contain some minor technical errors. It should be kept in mind, however, that he did not have the advantage of modern recording technology, that enables the manufacture of near-perfect performances.

<sup>12</sup> Copland and Perlis, *Copland: Since 1943*, 94, 96. The first recording was one of Copland's first efforts as a conductor, and he was worried that he had taken the first movement too slowly.

<sup>13</sup> The main difference between them lies in the slower tempo of this first recording, an aspect of this rendition that disappointed Copland. One other striking difference in the earlier recording is the omission of the optional harp motive at the end of the first movement (mm. 114-115), making this section sound curiously empty.

extra sense of urgency. When Theme B returns in m. 323, it is played at a faster tempo, emphasizing the contrasting and transitional nature of the material. Copland well recognized the difficulties the composer has in indicating tempos in the score: "Composers rarely can be depended upon to know the correct tempi at which their music should proceed - they lack a dispassionate heartbeat."<sup>14</sup> However, he continued by stating that a composer also knows when they are not right: "He may be unable to set the right speed but he certainly can recognize the wrong one."<sup>15</sup> It is not certain whether Copland or Goodman chose the tempos for this recording, but since Copland is conducting, one can venture to say that he at least approved of the choices. Some of these tempos have influenced other performers' interpretations.

One key reason for the success of the 1963 recording lies in Copland's conducting, which is striking for its rhythmic energy and precision, a common feature of his conducting.<sup>16</sup> His ability to get a sense of involvement from the orchestra makes the work sound more like a chamber piece than a concerto. The strings play with an assured, full sound, and Copland brings out important orchestral lines; for example, the bass ostinatos especially can be heard as a unifying feature. Copland is adept at effecting dynamic contrast, such as the subito changes from *fortissimo* to

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<sup>14</sup> Copland, *Copland on Music*, 136.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Vivian Perlis wrote: "Above all, Copland's performances possessed rhythmic energy." Copland and Perlis, *Copland: Since 1943*, 372.

*piano* over the "Charleston" rhythm in mm. 286-291 and mm. 431-435. The most outstanding quality of his conducting is that, although the interpretation is quite expressive, there is a sense of "la grande ligne" to the piece that is never lost. This is clearly evident in the first movement: despite some flexibility, the downbeats have a feeling of inevitability, leading to a real sense of culmination by the end of the movement.

Goodman's jazz-influenced clarinet articulation is well-suited to the piece. As part of the "democratization of rhythmic values"<sup>17</sup> in jazz, where weak beats are not underplayed as in classical music, but often accented, jazz musicians typically articulate every note, maintaining the full sonority. Even fast passages are tongued, although the legato execution often gives the overall effect that they are slurred.<sup>18</sup> Goodman's use of this relaxed, legato jazz articulation aids in giving the performance the sense of line present in Copland's conducting; with this style of articulation, notes can move along quite quickly without sounding "rushed." This gives a certain lightness to Goodman's playing that is missing in many interpretations, particularly in the cadenza and second movement. Aside from this type of articulation, Goodman does nothing to play in an obvious jazz "style." He does not "swing" the music, a manner of playing where the eighth notes are executed as a triplet figure.<sup>19</sup> However, in the earlier 1950 recording with Copland, he does

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<sup>17</sup> Schuller, *Early Jazz*, 8.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Baskerville, 63.



“swing” Theme D - the melody that is played over a slap bass accompaniment - and this “swinging” is even more prominent in the recording of the premiere with Fritz Reiner.<sup>20</sup> In apparent contradiction, Goodman executes a shorter, more “classical” technique of articulation for the cadenza in these earlier recordings. These differences in interpretation significantly affect the listener’s impression of the expressive character of the relevant sections. Goodman’s revisions of his performance reflect his evolving concept of the piece over time.

In the 1963 recording, Goodman did not flaunt the concerto’s jazz aspects, perhaps because, as a jazz musician, he wanted to prove that he could also play classical repertoire equally well, and he was in fact deliberately distancing himself from any references to jazz. Whatever the reason, it is this aspect of the performance that captures precisely the neoclassical aesthetic of the concerto, in which jazz elements are present but largely sublimated. Although it does not contain blatant jazz references, this interpretation retains the “spirit” of jazz through its rhythmic drive and propulsion,<sup>21</sup> shown in the preceding analysis to be an important structural

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<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately, the basses are far behind him on this recording!

<sup>21</sup> Gunther Schuller identifies one crucial aspect in which jazz differs from classical music as the continuity and forward propulsion with which the notes are linked together in jazz. In classical music, a performer generally plays the notes exactly in time vertically without paying attention to their horizontal role. This is not the case in jazz, where “‘swing’ is a force in music that maintains the perfect equilibrium between the horizontal and vertical relationships of musical sounds.” See Schuller, *Early Jazz*, 7. I believe that the Copland / Goodman recordings contain the rhythmic spirit of jazz in this aspect of interpretation, in which the music is constantly moving in a linear direction. This forward direction is noticeably absent in most other interpretations which, it should be noted, were made by classical musicians.

feature of the piece. If this "spirit" can be considered the work's "stylistic truth," then this performance is highly successful in its evocation.

Richard Stoltzman, a well-known American soloist who performs a wide variety of repertoire, offers a very different performance in his 1988 recording with the London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Lawrence Leighton Smith. Stoltzman is representative of clarinetists who, unlike Goodman, treat the concerto as a "jazz piece," choosing to accentuate the jazz elements of the piece by adopting a jazz style of playing. Unlike Goodman, Stoltzman adds many nuances of inflection in the sound by making changes in his throat, creating his version of "hot" intonation.<sup>22</sup> For example, he employs this technique to emphasize the humour of Theme D,<sup>23</sup> and where the clarinet is directed to play "suavely" at m. 363. He also "swings" eighth notes, such as at m. 214 and also for Theme D. Stoltzman's interpretation contains a very deliberate tonguing style compared to Goodman's "lazy" articulation. This kind of articulation further accentuates individual notes rather than providing a sense of direction to the phrase. A heaviness of attack is also present in the orchestra.

Stoltzman's interpretation differs in another important aspect: if Goodman's performances can be said to emphasize the concerto's unity with

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<sup>22</sup> Hugues Panassié, *Hot Jazz: The Guide to Swing Music*, Translated by Lyle and Eleanor Dowling (Westport, CT: Negro Universities Press, 1936; reprint 1970), 46-48. Panassié defines "hot" intonation as the means whereby a jazz performer attacks, sustains, and ends any given note. Especially important is how the note is attacked and sustained, usually with pronounced vibrato.

<sup>23</sup> Stoltzman demonstrates this in an interview in the video *Copland Clarinet Concerto*, Vol. 5, *Dudley Moore Introduces Concerto!* Perf. Richard Stoltzman, London Symphony Orchestra, Cond. Michael Tilson Thomas, Channel 4, Videocassette, RCA Victor Red Seal, 1993.

their focus on the long lines of the piece, Stoltzman's recording highlights its contrasting elements. His version of the first movement is very expressive in approach, with plenty of rubato, and lingering on moments (within a significantly slower tempo than Goodman's). For example, in the opening theme of the piece, Stoltzman accentuates all of the different little motives from which it is constructed. Although the playing is exquisite, it sometimes involves sacrificing the idea of "la grande ligne" in the music; the sense of the theme as a whole is lost. Similarly, in the cadenza, Stoltzman exploits the potential for contrast, making big dynamic changes, adding significant changes of tempo, and altering his interpretation of written articulation markings, again emphasizing contrast but with a similar lack of continuity. For the listener, this attention to detail can be distracting, and one loses sight of the piece in its entirety.

James Campbell, a Canadian clarinetist, seems to follow Goodman's approach in terms of tempos and general style in his 1991 recording with Franz-Paul Decker and the National Arts Centre Orchestra. Campbell uses a "lazy" jazz articulation similar to Goodman's in the cadenza and second movement. Like Stoltzman, he also combines this with "swinging" a good portion of the articulated eighth notes. Unlike Stoltzman's use of jazz to bring out the expressive detail in every note, Campbell's adoption of the idiom's style of articulation and rhythmic flexibility are unifying devices, serving to maintain a sense of forward motion in the piece. This is

particularly noticeable in the cadenza, the “jazziest” version of all the recordings, which, because of its legato articulation and steady rhythmic “swing”, most successfully maintains a sense of unity in this section.

One problem with Campbell’s performance is its lack of dynamic contrast, especially in the first movement where he could have exploited the louder dynamics. The tempo contrast for the B section of the first movement and at m. 95 gives an important sense of flow to these sections. The second movement is very slow and “laid back” in approach, with a feeling of rhythmic solidity and forward progression. Occasionally this slow tempo gets “bogged down” in the orchestra sections, such as at m. 230. This seems to be due more to the somewhat heavy style of playing rather than to the tempo itself. A very fast coda provides an exciting antidote to an otherwise very casual performance, supplying an exciting, “hot” finish.

Other recordings by North American clarinetists such as David Shifrin choose to ignore the jazz connotations of the piece. His 1988 version with the New York Chamber Symphony, conducted by Gerard Schwarz, is original in its use of significantly faster tempos than the norm, giving the work a breathless feeling. Everything is very fast and directional. The first movement has a different character from the Goodman recording, as it does not linger on any moments. Therefore, the sense of contrast is lessened at m. 95 because all of the material thus far has been brisk. With everything played so quickly, the transition sections, so clearly delineated by faster

tempos in the Goodman recording, lose some impact. This recording is energetic, but because the rhythms are played perfunctorily, it lacks "bite." The entire performance is most notable for its superb clarinet technique, but the interpretation somehow seems bland.

Gary Gray's version with Harry Newstone and the Royal Philharmonic, recorded in 1986, is an example of a performance that stresses "correctness" of interpretation of the score, as well as a certain deference to Goodman's recording. Like Shifrin, he also avoids much reference to jazz, although he plays Theme D in a "lazy" style, with "swung" eighth notes.<sup>24</sup> Unlike Shifrin, Gray adheres closely to Goodman's tempos. In the cadenza and second movement, the deliberate nature of the rhythmic interpretation precludes any feeling of forward motion. Gray plays C naturals instead of the notated C flats in mm. 413 and 415,<sup>25</sup> which Goodman also does in his recordings, demonstrating how closely Gray followed this interpretation. This recording is disappointing in its lack of individuality.

The recordings made by the British clarinetists are considered as a group, owing to the similarity of approach. They are most satisfying for their renditions of the first movement. All three clarinetists have a warm, expressive sound with vibrato that is well suited to this part of the concerto,

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<sup>24</sup> Typically, this is where most clarinetists will choose to add a bit of jazz feeling to their interpretation.

<sup>25</sup> In his article on misprints, Charles Stier states that these notes are C naturals in the orchestral score. See Stier, 53. I have failed to find any score, either the miniature score by Boosey and Hawkes or the full score that notates these as C naturals. Obviously, there is some controversy over these notes, but it seems to have derived from the performance practice, originating with Goodman's performances, rather than any discrepancy in the score.

and they are not afraid to add nuances in their playing. Their tempos are close to those in the Goodman recording. In the second movement, the performances are marred by a heaviness in articulation, both in the clarinet and orchestral parts, which dampens the propulsion of the piece. The deliberate style of articulation often makes the notes sound “rushed” and disconnected. For example, in the fast articulated sections of the cadenza, Hilton is unable to sustain the fast pace she establishes at the beginning. In De Peyer’s 1977 recording with Bernard Jacob and the London Mozart Players, the orchestra seems uncomfortable with the rhythms and “rushed” in places. Sometimes these recordings lack a sense of contrast. For example, in Hilton’s 1987 recording with the Scottish National Orchestra, conducted by Matthias Bamert, the orchestra is far too aggressive in m. 349 for the “lightly” indication, lacking the necessary contrast with the “marcato” theme in m. 355. George MacDonald<sup>26</sup> is the most successful of the British artists in keeping a more relaxed tempo in the second movement and a light character to themes, helped by the performance of the orchestra in rhythmic solidity. His performance, however, is spoiled by an abundance of “cracks”<sup>27</sup> in the sound, particularly in the altissimo range.

In general, the British clarinetists avoid jazz references in their interpretations, although all performers make a change of style for Theme D,

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<sup>26</sup> George MacDonald is Canadian, but was trained in Britain and maintains his career there.

<sup>27</sup> This is a common technical problem in clarinet playing, where the performer briefly reaches a higher partial than intended, resulting in a “crack” or “squeak.” This is caused by problems with the reed or embouchure.

either with articulation, "swung" notes, or both. MacDonald's 1986 recording with the Northern Sinfonia and Stuart Bedford provides the strongest sense of jazz. MacDonald plays with a "lazy" tongue in the cadenza and "swings" eighth notes with Theme E rather than Theme D, a refreshing change of interpretation.

In his 1989 recording with Urs Schneider and the Bayerischen Rundfunk Symphony Orchestra, Eduard Brunner gives an interpretation that contains by far the fastest tempo for the opening of the first movement, which gets even faster for Section B. However, at m. 77 the tempo is much slower for the return of A, losing a sense of return in the music. The Swiss clarinetist also begins the second movement at a very fast tempo, but again it loses impetus, caused partly by the orchestra's heavy articulations. The inconsistency of tempos leads to a lack of cohesion in the interpretation. A further disruption in the music's flow is found in Brunner's addition of dynamic changes to both phrases and individual notes. When he does play the dynamic indications that are written, they are greatly overstated, such as the large crescendo into m. 44. Accents are over-emphasized, becoming an end in themselves rather than an integral part of the phrase. The orchestra also exaggerates accents, such as the cello theme in m. 355.

There is no attempt in Brunner's performance to create any jazz effects, although he is to be credited with the most impressive glissando at the end of the piece. Like Stoltzman's interpretation, the recording is

certainly effective in its exploitation of contrast, but in doing so, it seems to step outside the boundary of what is stylistically acceptable for this work.

Paul Meyer, a French clarinetist, gives the listener a refreshingly different interpretation of the concerto in the 1993 recording with the English Chamber Orchestra, conducted by David Zinman. While making no effort to exploit the jazz content of the work, he accentuates its neoclassical elements, elucidated in the accompanying recording notes: "The 'wraith-like'<sup>28</sup> quality of the music is present in the ambiguous, standoffish atmosphere transmitted by the music of the second section - in spite of the extremely lively rhythms resulting from the incorporation of jazz and Latin elements."<sup>29</sup> Meyer gives the work a sense of humour with some "tongue-in cheek" playing, especially in the second section of the movement, a place where he also emphasizes contrast between the two themes with marked tempo changes. An important aspect of Meyer's interpretation is his maintenance of a sense of line, particularly in the first movement and cadenza. Within that line, he also employs very effective nuances, such as at m. 19, where he adds a subito piano.

As performances made by the composer and its original interpreter, the Copland / Goodman recordings are an important contribution to the performance history of the concerto. While not trying to assert the later

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<sup>28</sup> "Delicate, wraith-like" is an indication that Copland wrote in the score in m. 121, the beginning of the second movement.

<sup>29</sup> Ito Ōya, Notes, Translated by Robin Thompson, *Mozart - Busoni - Copland Clarinet Concertos*, Paul Meyer, English Chamber Orchestra, Cond. David Zinman, Rec. 1992, Denon, 1993.



Goodman / Copland recording as the “definitive” version of the piece to be adhered to slavishly,<sup>30</sup> performers can learn a great deal from their interpretations. The most important aspect of the recordings lies in their sense of rhythmic propulsion, proven to be an important feature. Other performances such as those of Meyer and Campbell also capture this significant element. What is most detrimental to the work is the loss of the sense of direction through an overuse of expressive details, as seen in the Stoltzman and Brunner recordings. While the incorporation of a jazz style of playing in articulation, rhythm, and inflection is a valid performance option, it is most effective when used to reflect the sense of unity present in the work rather than to provide only contrast.

For a clarinetist preparing to perform this concerto, it is enlightening to see the rich variety of performances exhibited in the many recordings, remembering that Copland encouraged diversity in the interpretation of his works. Listening to recordings provides the performer with many ideas for adding specific nuances, including techniques to achieve a jazz style if desired. These details are important in giving a performance character and contrast. If they are made in light of the rhythmic spirit and overall line of

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<sup>30</sup> Lawrence Starr believes this recording has produced a view that it contains the “established character” of the piece. He feels this discourages flexibility of performance. See Lawrence Starr, “Copland on Compact Disc, II: Music for Orchestra,” *American Music* 10 (1992): 503-504.

the work - its "stylistic truth" - the concerto will continue to enjoy many more successful interpretations that capture the essence of the piece.

## Chapter 5: Conclusion

The goal of this dissertation was to give the performer some insight into making informed performance decisions. Despite the multitude of information presented, questions inevitably remain unanswered.

The performer needs to create a viable performance, using his or her “musical intelligence” to interpret the concerto. Copland admitted that the score cannot indicate every aspect that is needed to bring a work to life - the score is only a blueprint. The concerto poses an interesting problem regarding which score should be followed, the orchestral version or the piano reduction. The piano arrangement does contain some minor discrepancies, especially in its articulations and added dynamic markings. Soloists invariably play from the accompanying clarinet part in the piano score. Its divergence from the orchestral score<sup>1</sup> is often in the form of additional interpretive information<sup>2</sup> for the clarinetist that is not necessary for the conductor, who would, of course, refer to the orchestral score. A further option for the performer is to reconstruct a version reinstating Copland’s original intentions before he made technical adjustments for Goodman.<sup>3</sup> The ultimate question persists: where is the piece? Is it in one score or in all of them? Or does it exist any score at all?

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<sup>1</sup> See Stier for a list of all the differences between the two scores.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, the added tenuto marks in the first movement, and the extra dynamics and written instructions in the opening of the cadenza.

<sup>3</sup> See Adelson.

In his article "The History of Remembered Innovation...", José Bowen explores the issue of whether a musical score is a sample, a summary, or a sketch.<sup>4</sup> In the twentieth century, scores are usually quite specific, leading musicians to the unhealthy tendency to revere the written text. However, this ignores an important point: a score is not musical a work, but a translation, a "spatial representation" of a temporal creation.<sup>5</sup> Bowen reiterates Roman Ingarden's concept that a performance, a musical work, and a score are not the same bodies.<sup>6</sup>

What is the relationship of a performance of a work to the work itself? Using jazz improvisation as an extreme example, Bowen demonstrates that all pieces of music are "social constructions" which change through the act of performance.<sup>7</sup> However, an individual actualization is the only gateway to the musical work. Using a further comparison with speech, Bowen says: "As with the abstract conventions of language, ideal musical works may exist somewhere, but our only access to these ideals is through this set of concrete temporal events."<sup>8</sup>

Performers and their audiences derive their concept of the work from a composite of specific performances. (Bowen even considers reading a score a personal expression.<sup>9</sup>) Each consists of the musician's attempt to convey both

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<sup>4</sup> José A. Bowen, "The History of Remembered Innovation: Tradition and Its Role in the Relationship between Musical Works and Their Performances," *Journal of Musicology* 11 (1993): 140.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 141.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 143.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 142.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 144.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

a personal interpretation and a specific musical creation.<sup>10</sup> Performances differ from one another in the nuances of interpretation, made possible by the “open spaces” in the score that “allow for different realizations.”<sup>11</sup>

Individual interpretations eventually beget performing traditions, creating the acceptable confines for any particular piece.<sup>12</sup> This was shown in the influence of Goodman’s recordings on current renditions of the concerto. Bowen describes tradition as “the history of remembered innovation”<sup>13</sup> which “has the effect of establishing essential characteristics, but every performance is an opportunity to reinterpret tradition’s version of what is essential.”<sup>14</sup> “The performer must mediate between the identity of the work as conveyed by the force of tradition and the individual’s desire to explore new territory.”<sup>15</sup> In the case of this concerto, innovation was seen in the recordings that incorporated jazz techniques (Stoltzman or Campbell), or established different tempos (Shifrin).<sup>16</sup>

The Early Music movement of recent decades has placed a new emphasis on historically informed performances. Though not wishing to enter the debate of whether it is possible, or even desirable, to recreate a lost performance tradition, this desire implicitly includes the wish to recreate the composer’s intentions. In the Clarinet Concerto, as in most twentieth-century

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 148. This is another concept borrowed from Roman Ingarden.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 163-66.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 164.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 167.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 168.

<sup>16</sup> See Starr, “Copland on Compact Disc,” 503-504.

music, Copland has been as specific as possible regarding instrumentation and interpretive markings. As opposed to recreating music from a previous century in which the performance tradition is now far removed from our own, the work is still relatively fresh.

In his article "The Composer's Intentions: An Examination of their Relevance for Performance," Randall Dipert divides the composer's intentions into various levels: low-level, corresponding to indications such as the instrumentation; middle-level, referring to the type of sound desired (pitch, attack, vibrato, etc.); and high-level, reflecting the effects the composer wishes to produce on the listener.<sup>17</sup> For the first two categories of intentions, the performer is given fairly detailed indications in the concerto. Of primary importance, however, are the high-level intentions, which, if ignored, "follow the letter and not the spirit of his [the composer's] intentions."<sup>18</sup> Unfortunately, most performance practice information refers to the low- and middle-level intentions. The problem of ascertaining a composer's high-level intentions is exacerbated by the fact that composers themselves are often unable to articulate them clearly.<sup>19</sup>

Despite the difficulty, and perhaps impossibility, in determining a composer's intentions, scholars continue to seek their discovery through diligent research. However, the inevitable subjectivity of music performance

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<sup>17</sup> Randall R. Dipert, "The Composer's Intentions: An Examination of their Relevance for Performance," *Musical Quarterly* 66 (1980): 206-208.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 208.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 209.

must continue to be acknowledged. Robert Donington addresses the issue of whether music exists only in our means to recreate it on an individual basis and in the present time.<sup>20</sup> Although reasserting the validity of academic investigation into the area of performance practice, he concludes:

As for what is not conveyed by any notation not confined to any convention, but comes straight from the mind and heart of the performing musician, I have no doubt whatsoever that this is crucially conditioned by our own state, by our own environment, by our own expectations and our own mental and emotional glosses, whatever they may be.... What we get depends on what we find, and in part on what we bring to what we find.<sup>21</sup>

Performers need to accept their own presence in the work, which is unavoidable (and hopefully desirable). Even in contemporary performances, an attempt at an "objective" performance is self-defeating: "The suspension of personality in a modernist performance immediately stamps the performance as such, and is therefore paradoxically tantamount to an assertion of personality."<sup>22</sup>

In the urge to create an "informed" performance - inspired by the authenticity movement and the objectivity of our age - it is important that musicians not feel too inhibited to contribute anything of themselves to their interpretations. Knowledge should be used as a means to an end, that of creating a more convincing performance. One of the most challenging tasks of the performer is to blend knowledge and intuition, the objective and the

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<sup>20</sup> Robert Donington, "The Present Position of Authenticity," *Performance Practice Review* 2 (1989): 119.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

<sup>22</sup> Richard Taruskin, "On Letting the Music Speak for Itself: Some Reflections on Musicology and Performance," *The Journal of Musicology* 1 (1982): 347. Taruskin is referring to contemporary performances of early music, but the analogy is still valid.

subjective, which is what makes music a living art. It is the continual re-creation of Copland's Clarinet Concerto and other works through performance that will keep them viable long beyond the life of their creator. The composer's voice will survive both in the strength of his originality and in the force of his personality displayed in these creations. It is the responsibility of performing artists to continue to combine the composer's voice with their own.



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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Recital Hall  
Sunday, April 14, 1996  
8:00 p.m.

**DOCTORAL THESIS RECITAL\***

**LISA GARTRELL YEO, Clarinet**

**with**

**Sylvie Beaudoin, Piano**

**An Evening of Twentieth-Century Clarinet Music**

Suite for Emma (1985)

John Dankworth  
(b. 1927)

Valse  
Pavane  
Ballade  
Scherzo

Sonata, Op. 128 (1944)

Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco  
(1895-1968)

Andante con moto  
Scherzo  
Lullaby  
Rondo alla Napolitana

- INTERMISSION -

Vier Stücke, Op. 5 (1913)

Alban Berg  
(1885-1935)

Moonflowers, Baby! (1986)

Meyer Kupferman  
(b. 1926)

Tema con Variazioni (1974)

Jean Françaix  
(b. 1912)

\* In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Musical Arts degree with a major in Clarinet.

Reception to follow in the faculty lounge.

### Programme Notes

English composer John Dankworth began his career as a jazz musician, playing the clarinet in Freddy Mirfield's Garbage Men band. He studied at the Royal Academy of Music from 1944-46, and as an alto saxophonist became an important figure in Britain's modern jazz movement. Dankworth formed the Johnny Dankworth Seven in 1950, and his first jazz orchestra in 1953. Cleo Laine sang with his orchestra, and she and Dankworth later married in 1960. The couple have toured extensively together. In addition to his many jazz compositions, Dankworth has written numerous film scores and classical works, including a piano concerto, a string quartet, an opera-ballet, and an oratorio. *Suite for Emma* was composed for Emma Johnson, who was selected as the BBC 1984 Young Musician of the Year. It was premiered by Johnson and Edward Moore in April 1985.

Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco was born in Florence in 1895. Following his training at the Cherubini Institute, he enjoyed a successful career as a freelance composer and pianist in that city. The political situation in Europe forced him to leave Italy in 1939 for the USA, where he established himself in Beverly Hills as an active film composer in the 1940's and 1950's. A prolific composer in other genres, Castelnuovo wrote operas, ballets, choral, orchestral, and chamber music. He is best known for his guitar pieces, many of which were written for Andres Segovia. Castelnuovo's interest in the clarinet began in his youth when he participated in a performance of the two clarinet sonatas by Johannes Brahms. His own Clarinet Sonata, composed in 1944, contains similar stylistic features to these works, particularly in the first movement.

Austrian composer Alban Berg was a pupil of Arnold Schoenberg, establishing with Anton Webern what is known today as the Second Viennese School of composition. His *Four Pieces for Clarinet and Piano*, Op. 5, composed in 1913, was written prior to the development of Schoenberg's twelve-tone technique, which both Berg and Webern later adopted in their works. Although considered atonal, Op. 5 nonetheless contains numerous tonal references that belie this label. Berg created a highly condensed work that has been compared to a miniature sonata, containing a first movement sonata-allegro complete with the requisite recapitulation, an adagio second movement, a scherzo, and a rondo finale. The work is striking in the use of clarinet effects - flutter tongue and echo tones - that, although used more frequently today, would have been highly unusual at the time. Another interesting aspect of the work is its references to other pieces: The first movement opens with a paraphrase of a theme from Richard Strauss' tone poem *Till Eulenspiegel*, and the chords at the beginning of the second movement derive from Schoenberg's Op. 19, no. 2.

American virtuoso clarinetist / composer Meyer Kupferman writes highly eclectic music, having experimented with serial procedures, neoclassicism, jazz, and electronic music. From 1951 he has been a faculty member of Sarah Lawrence College. A self-taught composer, Kupferman has written numerous works for the clarinet. *Moonflowers, Baby!* - composed in 1986 and dedicated to Richard Stoltzman - was intended as a tribute to the playing of the late jazz clarinetist Benny Goodman. Kupferman describes a moonflower as: "a flower that blooms in the moonlight. Sensitive, subtle, beautiful, refined." The work belongs to his "Cycle of Infinities," a series of over thirty chamber works composed from 1961 using the same twelve-tone row. The influence of jazz is clearly present throughout, particularly in the slow "blues" sections. In this highly virtuosic work, the soloist is required to perform effects such as jazz smears and glisses, flutter tongue, and "timbral" trills.

Jean Françaix attended the Paris Conservatoire, where he was awarded the Premier Prix for piano, and later studied composition with Nadia Boulanger. His compositional style is rooted in the French neoclassical tradition of the 1930's. A prolific composer in many diverse genres, Françaix wrote numerous solo and chamber works that feature the clarinet, including a concerto written for Benny Goodman and a woodwind quintet. *Theme and Variations* was composed in 1974 for the Paris Conservatoire's clarinet competition and dedicated to his grandson Olivier. A three note motive, representing the vocalization of the name O-li-vier, forms the basis of the melodic material in the theme and its six variations. Although lighthearted and even "cheeky" in places, the work is technically very demanding for the soloist, demonstrating its origins as a virtuosic competition piece.

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