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by

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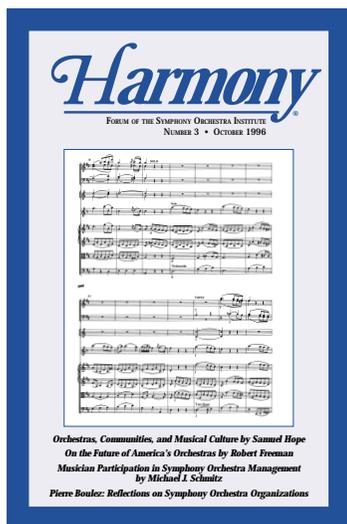
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About the Cover . . .



The musical excerpt on our cover comes from one of our most beloved and familiar pieces of music. We selected this score because it signaled the arrival of something new, unexpected, and important in orchestral music. Mozart's *Clarinet Concerto*—our example shows one of the most sumptuous passages from the slow movement—marked the clarinet's coming of age. During the last decade of Mozart's life this new, still-developing instrument took its place as a standard member of the orchestra and with this concerto, Mozart provided the clarinet's official calling card: a full-fledged display piece written by the greatest composer of the day.

Clarinets were not new in Mozart's time. The word clarinet—derived from *clarino*, a kind of trumpet—first appears in 1710, in an order for a pair of instruments to be made by Jacob Denner, the son of the man who is thought to have invented the instrument at the turn of the century. (In fact he improved and transformed the chalumeau, a now-obsolete single-reed woodwind that ultimately gave its name to the clarinet's lowest register.)

Mozart heard clarinets as early as 1764 in London and began to write for them sparingly shortly thereafter, primarily in opera, where the use of exotic instruments (like the trombone, which too would eventually join the symphony orchestra) was justified by the demands of the drama. When he traveled to the important orchestral center of Mannheim in 1778, he wrote home to his father, "Alas, if only we also had clarinets." Eventually Mozart would include clarinets in three of his symphonies and, following his lead, Haydn used them in five of his. By Beethoven's time clarinets were accepted as regular members of the orchestra; he calls for them in all nine symphonies. With Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*, written just three years after Beethoven's death, the E-flat clarinet made a spectacular "debut" appearance in the orchestra. Today there are more varieties of clarinets called for in orchestral music than any other instrument.

Over time, both great performers and adventuresome composers have helped change the complexion of instrumental music. Mozart was lucky to encounter Anton Stadler, whose extraordinary clarinet playing inspired him not only to write a famous quintet and this concerto, but to demand virtuosity and fluency over the instrument's entire range. Two hundred years later, Pierre Boulez's *Dialogue de l'ombre double*, in which the clarinet plays with its own shadow, recorded on tape, continues to stretch the instrument's technical capabilities.

Musicians in Mozart's time, and in the decades that immediately followed, recognized that the orchestra was in constant transformation—first bassoons and clarinets joined the ranks, then Beethoven secured a place for the trombone and the piccolo, the common number of horns jumped from two to four, the ophicleide was introduced (soon to be replaced by the bass tuba), and slowly percussion instruments were added. The orchestra is, of course, still in transformation. We have accepted as “given” over the years many changes in instrumentation and readers are encouraged think of the *Clarinet Concerto* as an allegorical reference to change. When you next hear the *Clarinet Concerto*, let it remind you of the changes in orchestra organizations which are steadily taking place. Stay tuned.

Phillip Huscher is the program annotator for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.