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WEBER

QUINTET

for Clarinet, 2 Violins, Viola and Violoncello
B^b major/B-Dur/Si^b majeur
Op. 34



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CARL MARIA VON WEBER

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Edited by/Herausgegeben von
Gerhard Allroggen und Joachim Veit



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CONTENTS

Preface	III
Vorwort	VII
I. Allegro	1
II. Fantasia. Adagio ma non troppo	18
III. Menuetto Capriccio. Presto – Trio	22
IV. Rondo. Allegro giojoso	30

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PREFACE

In Munich in the summer months of 1811 Weber composed the two clarinet concertos for Heinrich Baermann that the King had commissioned, and on 7 August Baermann gave the second public performance of the Concerto No. 1 in F minor at a concert in Nymphenburg. These tasks completed, Weber set out for an extended journey through Switzerland on 9 August. It was during this trip that he had the first ideas for a clarinet quintet. On 24 September 1811, writing in Jegenstorf near Berne, where he was spending several days at the castle of Count Franz Anton d'Olry, he noted in his diary: 'Evening, alone with Mme B; earlier, began composing the quintet for Baer'. The word quintet here is a correction of quartet – possibly the instrumentation was not clear at the outset. Weber's contacts (mentioned in the diary and in letters) with the singer Beyermann during these days filled with singing and music-making not only seem to have inspired him to compose the song 'Künstlers Liebesforderung' (JV Anh. 38) and 'Scena ed Aria d'Atalia' (JV 121) but also gave rise to a first phase of work on the new piece. The diary records:

25 Sept.: Morning, comp. the minuet for the quintet.

26 Sept.: Morning, worked on the 1st Allo. of the quintet.

27 Sept.: Morning, completed sketching the 1st Allo.

And the survey for the month of September reports: 'Sketched Allo. and minuet for clarinet.' There are no further references to work on the quintet during 1811. Although there was therefore nothing on paper other

than sketches, on 9 October 1811 Weber wrote to his namesake Gottfried Weber that he had composed industriously at Jegenstorf and that the new music included 'a clarinet quintet that is not bad'.

Work on the piece was not resumed until Weber's stay in Berlin in March 1812, during his concert tour with Baermann. In the meantime Weber had composed the *Silvana Variations* for his and Baermann's joint appearances. The two musicians gave a number of performances of that work in Berlin, including one on 12 March at a musical evening at the house of the music-lover and composer Prince Anton Heinrich Radziwill. Ten days later Weber noted in his diary: 'Then home; worked, completed and wrote out the Adagio in quintet form'. The reason why parts were written out becomes clear from the next diary entry, for 23 March: 'Morning, quartet at Radzivil's. Did the quintet Ad. Sang several glorious songs with the Prince'. The Adagio was accordingly the first movement of the quintet to be completely finished; unfortunately, both the parts that Weber himself wrote out and the accompanying autograph inscription of the movement are lost. The date of composition, 22 March 1812, however, is confirmed by the addendum in the complete autograph of the work.

Oddly, Weber had already offered the work to the Bonn publisher Nikolaus Simrock some weeks before this, on 25 February 1812, describing it as 'complete' and ready for the printer – a piece of sharp practice admittedly not unheard of with proposals to publishers. For the

IV

time being, however, work on the composition went into abeyance, and it is not until 27 January 1813 – a day on which Weber wrote to Baermann – that we find the diary entry, '[...] worked on the quintet for Baermann', followed on 29 January by the bald word '[...] quintet'. Presumably Weber's forthcoming journey to Vienna, where, as the newly appointed director of music in Prague, he was planning to recruit personnel for the Stände-Theater, had prompted the lively correspondence with Baermann and the resumption of work on the quintet. Several references to the piece crop up in the diary during March 1813:

14 March: Worked on quintet. Constant interruptions.

17 March: Morning, worked on quintet.

19 March: Morning, worked on quintet. [...] Home, worked on quintet.

20 March: Completed Allo. of the quintet.

In his subsequent survey of the month of March Weber records, among the works composed: 'The first Allo. of the clarinet quintet in B flat major'.

Weber arrived in Vienna on 29 March 1813 and on the selfsame day sought out his friend Baermann, whose companion Helene Harlas had engagements for guest roles in Vienna. Numerous visits to Baermann are listed in the diary up to the time of Weber's departure. The entry for 13 April records: 'Baermann's birthday. At Clement's rehearsal; earlier, presented Baermann with the quintet, except for the rondo'. Weber reported on the event to his Prague friend Johann Gaensbacher on 16 April: 'The 13th, Baermann's birthday; at which our thoughts were often of you. Beer [i.e. Meyerbeer] and I gave him surprises, each with his own quintet, and we dined at Schoenbrunn.' The diary notes that

on the same day, 16 April, Weber paid the 'copying costs of the quintet', amounting to 4 gulden – it is not clear whether these charges related to the copy given to Baermann or whether Weber presented his friend with an autograph score. It is equally possible that the copying expenses were for the production of parts of the work, since on 3 May – a day before Weber's departure – both of the quintets mentioned (Weber's and Meyerbeer's) were 'tried out', as the diary puts it, in the apartment of Louis Spohr, who was also staying in Vienna at this time.

Baermann, then, had been given the incomplete work, although the diary shows that Weber had decided by this stage that a final Rondo would follow. Baermann had to wait a long time for it, however. On 22 November 1814 – that is, after a year and a half had passed – Weber told his Berlin publisher Adolph Martin Schlesinger, who had meanwhile agreed to accept the work, that he would send it 'at once'. This he did, on 28 November 1814 – but again without the fourth movement, which he promised to deliver later: on the last page of the submitted manuscript he noted, 'Rondo: to follow'. It was not, in fact, until a fresh visit to Munich in the summer of 1815 that Weber resumed work on the quintet. According to the diary he finished the Rondo on 25 August 1815, at the house of his host Baermann, for whom he was simultaneously working on the *Grand Duo concertant*. (The autograph gives the previous day as the date of completion.) The Clarinet Quintet was finally ready, almost four years after work on it had begun. At a private gathering on the following day, 26 August, the complete work was performed for the first time.

Immediately after his return to Prague Weber had a copy of the Rondo prepared,

for which he paid a fee (according to the diary) of 1 gulden on 15 September 1815. He wrote to Schlesinger the following day, presumably telling him about the final movement, which he may then have sent off on 18 November. Almost exactly nine months later the printed edition of the parts was published by Schlesinger, and on 14 August 1816 Weber sent Baermann a personal copy.

This did not, however, mark the end of Weber's work on the piece. As early as the autumn of 1816 the Leipzig publisher Friedrich Hofmeister brought out an edition of the work as a piano sonata, in an arrangement by Carl Friedrich Ebers. In December of the same year Weber spoke out against this unauthorized arrangement in a 'Warning to the music-loving public' published in the Leipzig *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* and the *Zeitung für die elegante Welt*. Ebers was charged with producing a 'publication which mutilate[d] the original work and often destroy[ed] its meaning' and which – leaving aside mere engraver's errors – altered melodic forms in over forty places and even omitted bars altogether'. Ebers's response was an equally public one, pointing out errors in

Schlesinger's original edition. His reply concluded:

The music-loving public, however, has the right to urge Herr Schlesinger to purge his editions of engraver's errors, when not even one work is free of them, on pain of hearing it call out to him, 'Ne sutor ultra crepidam.'

After this counter-attack Schlesinger felt obliged to bring out a corrected edition of the work. Weber wrote to his publisher in a letter of 10 July 1817: 'Meanwhile I am enclosing the corrections of the quintet, in which there were significant mistakes'. The printing revised by Weber was then published as a corrected original edition with alterations, with the erroneous original publisher's number on the title page ('189') now corrected to '183'. With this, Weber's role in the publication and dissemination of the work was over. The later publication history of the work had more significant influence on its interpretation than did Schlesinger's first printed editions, produced with the composer's participation.

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