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Forgotten Gems: Solo Clarinet Music of Carl Baermann

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Dr. Chris Gibson

Carl Baermann (1810-1885) grew up wishing to follow in the footsteps of his father, renowned clarinet virtuoso Heinrich Baermann. He was more successful, however, as a pedagogue: his Op. 63 & 64 Complete Celebrated Method for Clarinet remains to this day a standard advanced method. What is generally not well known, however, is that Carl Baermann was a prolific composer of performance pieces for the clarinet. His music encompasses a wide variety of forms including, most notably, concerti, diverse multi-movement pieces such as fantasias and divertimenti, short character pieces, and arrangements of Schubert Lieder. And although there is evidence that his pieces were popular with virtuosi in his time, only a small handful of these works are currently performed. A large majority of his repertoire is out of print or even still in manuscript.

I am currently conducting a research project in which I am locating and obtaining as much of Carl Baermann's music as possible, then analyzing and evaluating each piece in order to determine its usefulness in current performance, especially for intermediate and advanced university clarinet majors. Although my research is not yet finished, I have already uncovered several compositions that I believe will make excellent additions to the repertoire of performers and students alike.

This presentation will be in the form of a lecture-recital, in which I will discuss and perform segments from three compositions: Opus 8 Variations Brillantes, Opus 47 Divertimento "Ein Traum" and Opus 15 Fantaisie.