

New findings concerning clarinets from the Denner workshop in Nuremberg

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This paper will discuss surviving instruments from the Denner workshop.

The first part will examine the Jacob Denner clarinet that is preserved in the Museum of Musical instruments in Berlin. Only three clarinets of Jacob Denner have survived in European collections. They are thought to be the earliest clarinets and served as models for numerous copies. The Berlin Denner clarinet does NOT possess an original mouthpiece as comparisons of photographs from the Snoeck collection (taken in the 19th century) and from newspaper articles (taken in 1934) as well as measurements and descriptions of Curt Sachs will show. The mouthpiece that is now mounted on the Berlin Denner clarinet originally came with the Oberlender clarinet acquired from the Snoeck-collection in the late 19th century. It was probably confused after world war II.

Another specimen this paper will restudy is the clarinet in Berkeley that is thought to be made by Johann Christoph Denner. A closer look into checklists, letters and catalogues of the Department of Music at the University of California will show that parts of clarinets had been interchanged accidentally and that the footjoint does not belong to the Denner instrument. Furthermore this paper will draw the conclusion that the preserved main joint is more likely from the workshop of Johann David Denner (1704–1764) than from Johann Christoph Denner. The basis for this conclusion is firstly the arrangement of double toneholes which supports playing in tune in both registers, the chalumeau and the overblown, a playing technique which was evidently not common during Johann Christoph Denner's lifetime. Secondly a comparison of the Berkeley clarinet and the Denner instruments (MI 196 and 197) that were in the possession of the collection of musical instruments in the Germanisches Nationalmuseum in Nuremberg before world war II reinforces this hypothesis. These instruments had been bought by the church St. Michael (Fürth) in 1754 and show some conformities with Denner clarinet in question.

Sources:

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