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## Lives and Influence of the Four Notable Clarinetists

The creation of the clarinet was and will continue to be a long and complex process. Even with the development of the clarinet being as complex as it is within its brief period of existence there are many notable clarinetists who stand out throughout history. Four notable clarinetists throughout history are Anton Stadler, Heinrich Bärmann, Richard Mühlfeld, and Benjamin Goodman.

Anton Stadler, a clarinet and basset clarinet player, is so well known for his playing inspired Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart to write his popular compositions. Stadler was born near Vienna in 1753 but moved to Vienna at the age of three. Anton and his younger brother Johann quickly moved into the court orchestras in Vienna as early as 1773. It is not known exactly when Mozart and Stadler first met. Mozart moved to Vienna in March 1781 and began to compose basset horn music, which may have been inspired by Stadler, as early as 1783. Around 1784, Stadler took the basset clarinet to Berlin but people weren't as captivated by the instrument as the citizens of Vienna. The nicest comment an audience member was as follows: "Never should I have thought that a clarinet could be so capable of imitating a human voice as closely as it was imitated by thee. Verily, thy instrument has so soft and lovely a tone that nobody who has a heart can resist it." In 1798, the "Clarinet Concerto in A K.622" was written by Mozart for his dear friend, Anton Stadler. Without an extremely capable clarinet player one can hardly imagine the love of a composer like Mozart for the clarinet: At that time it was a crude, very imperfect instrument. Eventually, Stadler was invited by a Hungarian count, Georg Festetics, to help organize a school of music in Keszthely near the Plattensee and exploited some of his performance techniques and how to behave as a professional. After his four year tour, he returned back to Vienna where he passed away by emaciation in June of 1812, because, much like Mozart, Stadler died a poor man due to his gambling and drinking addiction.

Next was Heinrich Bärmann was born 1784 Potsdam, Germany. His musical career started as an oboist at the Potsdam School of Military Music and became a bandmaster in the Prussian Life Guards at the age of 14. Before serving in the Prussian army, he started to study clarinet under Joseph Beer. In his time in the army, he was captured by the French and escaped to Munich to King Ludwig's court, later to Vienna and London as a court musician. Much like Mozart writing concertos for Stadler, Carl Maria Von Weber wrote for Bärmann. After such success in performing Weber's works, he and the composer toured Prague through Germany in 1811 and 1812. He traveled all over Europe on concert tours, popularizing Weber's works throughout Europe. The success was so overwhelming for him that Weber wrote to a friend: "The whole orchestra went crazy and demands concertos from me. There are even writing to the King and the board of musical directors...". Later, the clarinetist played to great acclaim in Italy, France, Russia, and England, including a six-month stint in London in 1819. Aside from being a clarinetist he was also a successful composer, writing such works as an "Adagio for Clarinet and Strings in D-flat" which was long misattributed to Richard Wagner. He shared many of his concerts with the Munich singer Helene Harlas which he eventually had four children, one of which was a successful clarinetist, composer, and teacher Karl Bärmann. He retained that court position until his retirement in 1834 and then passed away in Munich, Germany at age 63 in 1847.

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Richard Mühlfeld was born in Salzingen, Germany on February 28, 1856 started as violinist in the court orchestra in Meiningen under his father's direction until he taught himself to play the clarinet. He played both the violin and clarinet in the orchestra at Salzingen under his father's direction until he became a violinist at the Meiningen Orchestra in 1873. He only began playing clarinet in the orchestra when he was asked to substitute for their clarinetist at the time. Mühlfeld became the solo clarinetist for the 32rd Regiment from 1876-1879 at the same time. He was only appointed to principal clarinet of the Meiningen orchestra in 1879 when the preceding principal resigned due to poor health. Mühlfeld was especially fond of Weber's works and even had introduced the orchestra to Weber's clarinet "Concertino" by playing it at concert to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Weber's birth. His true importance lies in his friendship with Johannes Brahms, who called him -due to his sweet tone- "miss clarinet". Brahms had already stopped composing in 1890 at 57 years old, but that was not indefinite. After hearing Mühlfeld's beautiful rendition of Weber's works, he was so moved by the craftsmanship of how he played the clarinet that Brahms decided to leave retirement and start composing clarinet pieces for him. Some new compositions written by Brahms included "Clarinet Trio, Op.114" and "Clarinet Quintet, Op. 115". In addition to the Meiningen orchestra, Mühlfeld began conducting a male voice choir in 1887. This conducting experience prepared him to take on the role of music director of the Meiningen orchestra when the conductor passed away in 1890. He was also made music director of the Meiningen court theater in 1890. Mühlfeld deliberately chose to play an instrument that was a downgrade from more current models (which made switching from registers smoothly more difficult) that were readily available in order to preserve his own artistic vision which turned into one of the most important aspects of his playing that set him apart from other clarinetists at the time and throughout history. Following Brahms' death in 1897, Mühlfeld set out to Vienna to make sure that Brahms' compositions continued to be played until his own death in 1907. After his passing, his family remained in possession of the Mühlfeld-Brahms manuscripts until they were sold at an auction, since then being lost.

Finally there was Benjamin Goodman was born in 1909 in Chicago, Illinois and is one of the most notable American jazz clarinetist in history. Goodman was only 10 years old when he started clarinet but by 16 years old he was already starting to be recognized as a "comer" as far as the west coast which inevitably lead to him being asked to join Ben Pollack's band. After recording with the band in Chicago and New York, he left the group in 1929 to become a freelance musician in New York. By 1934 he had gotten a group together to form a band which quickly got a job as a big band on NBC after forming. At the age of 28, Goodman's band was on primetime radio which some consider to be the pinnacle of his career considering how big the radio show was at the time. In 1938, the Benny Goodman band was booked at Carnegie Hall which wasn't only a debut for Goodman, but for jazz itself in Carnegie Hall which made the concert so substantial in history. After winning so many polls as best jazz clarinetist over the years, Goodman was finally inducted into the Down Beat Jazz Hall of Fame in 1957. Goodman then made his "classical" debut in Carnegie Hall more newsworthy a years later when he returned to launch his career as a soloist with major symphony orchestras and chamber groups in the early 1970's. Despite his worsening health, Goodman played until his death which was caused by a heart attack in New York City in 1986 at the age of 77. Benny Goodman's efforts and strides in jazz music in America truly did make him the "King of Swing", which was a nickname given to him before his death by Gene Krupa.

Throughout the history of the clarinet, even in its developing phases, there have been notable virtuosic musicians. These musicians helped shape what is now considered standard repertoire for clarinetists all over the world today. Anton Stadler with Mozart, Heinrich Bärmann with

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Weber, Richard Mühlfeld with Brahms, and Benjamin Goodman with Fletcher Henderson, clarinetist and composers have gone hand and hand for centuries

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