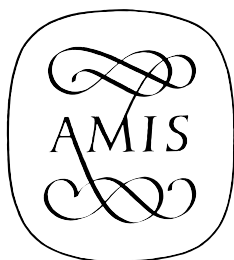


*Journal of the  
American Musical  
Instrument Society*

VOLUME XXXVI • 2010



Copyright by the [American Musical Instrument Society](#).  
Content may be used in accordance with the principles of fair  
use under [Section 107 of the United States Copyright Act](#).  
Content may not be reproduced for commercial purposes.

## Franz Strobach: Basset Horns and New Biographical Information

ROBERT ŠEBESTA AND ERIC HOEPRICH

The remarkable instrument maker Franz Strobach is survived by dozens of beautiful and expertly crafted clarinets and basset horns (fig. 1). The basset horns have attracted the attention of organologists, musicologists, and clarinetists, not only for their unusual bent design incorporating a smooth globular bell, but also for their remarkable level of craftsmanship and the superior quality of the materials used in construction. Until recently, instruments stamped “Strobach” and “Carlsbaad” [*sic*] have provided us with our only information about this maker: his name and the place where he worked—the Bohemian spa Carlsbad, or *Karlovy Vary*. Fortunately, new information has now come to light.

All of Strobach’s stamped instruments share the same origin. Although Beethoven visited the city, as did Goethe and other artists of note in this period, Carlsbad was certainly no Vienna when it came to musical culture. Strobach’s residence there might partially explain why he has remained practically unknown.<sup>1</sup> He appears to have been an anomaly, as no further trace of eighteenth-century musical-instrument production in the city has been found.

Information discovered recently in the State District Archive of Plzeň has revealed two important biographical facts about Strobach: his Christian name, Franz, and the date and place of his birth, ca. 1769 in Lidice (Liditz).<sup>2</sup> According to the Carlsbad marriage register, Franz Strobach, a non-resident, married Johanna Mattoni, a Carlsbad native, on September 23, 1794.<sup>3</sup> Where the couple lived between 1794 and 1800 is unclear, but they seem to have moved to Carlsbad by about 1800. In February 1801, Strobach and two Carlsbad musicians, Johann and Franz Ruppert, requested permission to perform concerts there. In the same

1. Irena Brechličuková, Kristýna Bobáková, and Vladimír Mañas report new dates relevant to Strobach in “Franz Strobach – karlovarský výrobce dřevěných dechových nástrojů” (Franz Strobach: Carlsbad manufacturer of woodwind instruments), *Historický sborník Karlovarská* 10 (2004): 97–114, at 100.

2. *Ibid.*, 101. Biographical details derive from this article.

3. Rímskokatolícká fara v Karlových Varech, Státní oblastní archiv Plzeň, Zbírka matrik, vol. 8, fol. 41.



FIGURE 1. Franz Strobach, basset horns. Prague, Národní muzeum, České muzeum hudby, Inv. Nrs. 81 E, 225 E, 191 E, 132 E. Photos by Robert Šebesta.

year, Strobach applied for the right of domicile in the city, presumably having completed the requisite year's residence. He described himself as “an instrument maker, and former musician at the Prague National Theater,”<sup>4</sup> and he intended to establish a musical-instrument workshop. His name first appeared in official city records in 1806, when he and his wife bought a house called “Drei Schmetterling” for 2,000 gold florins (*florenus Rheni*).<sup>5</sup>

The civil register of the Carlsbad Roman Catholic parochial office records Strobach's death on May 30, 1812, at age forty-three.<sup>6</sup> The inventory of his workshop taken at this time included the following instruments:<sup>7</sup>

- four basset horns – 20 gold florins in total
- four clarinets – 16 gold florins in total
- two flutes – 3 gold florins in total
- two bassoons – 6 gold florins in total
- one dozen *Stadtflöten* – 12 gold florins in total

4. Státní okresní archiv Karlovy Vary, AM K., spisy regulovaného magistrátu, sign I, kart. 17, inv. n. 4.

5. Státní okresní archiv Karlovy Vary, AM K., Orderbook VII.

6. He was survived by four children: a son, Andreas, and three daughters, Amalia, Magdalena, and Katarina (Státní okresní archiv Karlovy Vary, AM K, book no. 272 [Inheritance records]).

7. Brechličuková, Bobáková, and Maňas, “Franz Strobach,” 103.

It is not possible to determine how many of these instruments were actually made by Strobach.

Since Strobach died in 1812, the dating of instruments as post-1812, currently found in many sources, must now be considered incorrect. Occasionally, following the death of an instrument maker, the workshop continued under the same name. But judging from the paucity of surviving Strobach instruments and their consistently fine workmanship, we believe that the workshop closed on Franz's death. The new information above also reveals that Strobach was initially a professional musician, and only later devoted himself to making musical instruments.<sup>8</sup> Given a birthdate of 1769, we can assume that he began making instruments around 1789, when he was about twenty years of age. Considering the complexity of the craft and adding the time necessary for training and acquiring a workshop and clientele, we estimate that Strobach established his business sometime in the 1790s. While all of Strobach's instruments are stamped "Carlsbaad," it is possible that he began making instruments while employed in Prague. He must have acquired the necessary skills somewhere, and there were many woodwind-instrument makers in that city in the late eighteenth century; it is not unlikely that concrete information linking Strobach with one of them may be revealed at a future date.<sup>9</sup>

Strobach's employment at Prague's National Theater would have dated from ca. 1790. Given that Anton Stadler (1753–1812) performed in W. A. Mozart's *La Clemenza di Tito*, produced at the theater in September 1791 to celebrate the coronation of Emperor Leopold II as king of Bohemia, a meeting between these two musicians may have taken place. Such a meeting would most certainly have been influential for the young Strobach. At the opera's last performance, on September 30, the audience responded with tumultuous applause to Stadler's (B-flat) basset clarinet obbligato in Sextus's aria "Parto, Parto, ma tu, ben mio" (no. 9) and his basset horn obbligato in Vitellia's rondo "Non più di fiori, vaghe

8. One notes that this is not unusual. Jacob Denner (1681–1735), among the earliest clarinet makers, was a noted *Stadthfeifer*; Raymund Griesbacher (1751/52–1818) was a player turned maker; and Oscar Oehler (1858–1936), who perfected the modern German clarinet, was a member of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra before setting up his workshop in 1887.

9. Clarinet/basset horn makers in Prague ca. 1790 included Doleisch, Keyha (the name has sometimes been read as Reyha), Czermak, and Fridrich.

catene" (no. 23).<sup>10</sup> For the première of the Clarinet Concerto, K.622, in Prague on October 16, 1791, Strobach may also have been in attendance, which would only have increased his fascination with such instruments.<sup>11</sup>

From illustrations in programs for Stadler's concerts at Riga in 1794, we see that Strobach's instruments resemble those played by Stadler, which again points to the probability of their meeting in Prague; the Riga illustration shows a basset clarinet with a globular bell, not unlike Strobach's surviving basset horns (fig. 2).<sup>12</sup> Stadler suggested in Riga and elsewhere that he himself was the creator of this instrument, and in the Riga programs he also stated that his basset horn had the same design as his basset clarinet.<sup>13</sup> No evidence confirming Stadler's activities as an instrument maker has survived, and we must assume that, if anything, he provided only the concept behind these instruments.

Stadler's instruments were certainly built by the superb instrument maker Theodor Lotz (1746–1792), who was apparently from Pressburg (Bratislava) and had established himself in Vienna as a maker by 1784.<sup>14</sup> By the 1780s, Lotz was supplying clarinets to Vienna's royal and imperial court, where Stadler was employed. Lotz is identified as the maker of a new "Bass-Klarinet," or basset clarinet, introduced by Stadler in a concert on February 20, 1788:<sup>15</sup>

10. Mozart's letter to Constanze (October 7–8, 1791) refers to a letter from Stadler, in which the latter recounted his triumphs in Prague; see *Mozart: Briefe und Aufzeichnungen*, ed. Wilhelm A. Bauer, Otto Erich Deutsch, and Joseph Heinz Eibl, revised edition, ed. Ulrich Konrad (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2005), 4:157.

11. Archival material relating to this performance has disappeared, although fortunately Rudolf Procházka's account of the missing documents has survived; see *Mozart in Prag* (Prague: H. Domenicus [T. Gruss], 1892). Prague is some 110 km (70 miles) from Carlsbad; if Strobach had already moved, a journey to Prague would not have been out of the question.

12. Pamela L. Poulin, "Anton Stadler's Basset Clarinet: Recent Discoveries in Riga," this *JOURNAL* 22 (1996): 110–27.

13. *Ibid.*, 123–26. Stadler's instrument is described by Friedrich Bertuch in *Journal des Luxus und der Moden*, 1801, 543–44.

14. Using information provided by the present authors, Melanie Pidlocke and Heinz Unfricht recently tracked down the date of Theodor Lotz's baptism, February 21, 1746, in the Archiv der Gemeinde Kirchheimbolkanden, Kirchheim, providing a correction for the year "1747/48" given in William Waterhouse, *The New Langwill Index: A Dictionary of Musical Wind-Instrument Makers and Inventors* (London: Tony Bingham, 1993), 243.

15. The name "Bass-Klarinet" has today become "basset clarinet" to differentiate a clarinet with an extended low range from an actual bass clarinet, which in fact existed in Stadler's day, but was uncommon. Interestingly, the term "Baßettklarinet" had already been applied to Anton Stadler's instrument in 1796, in Johann Ferdinand von Schönfeld,

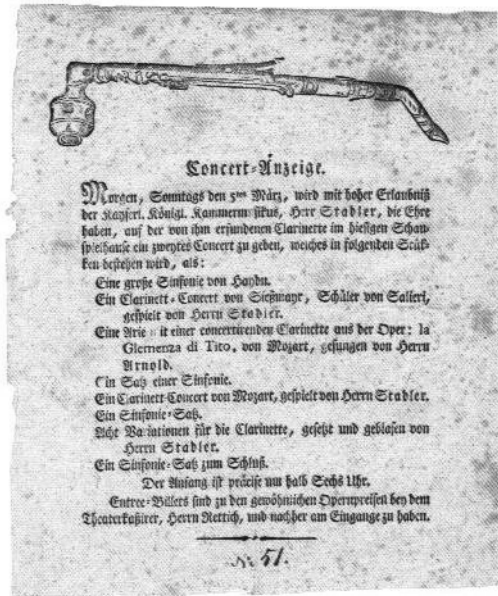


FIGURE 2. Program from Stadler's Riga concert of March 5, 1794, showing his basset clarinet. With kind permission of the Latvian Academic Library.

Herr Stadler the elder, in the service of his majesty the Emperor . . . will play a concerto on the Bass-Klarinet [*sic*] [and] . . . a variation on the Bass-Klarinet, an instrument of new invention and manufacture by the imperial royal court instrument-maker Theodor Loz [*sic*]; this instrument has two more tones than the normal clarinet.<sup>16</sup>

An inventory of Lotz's estate (dated June 28, 1792) listed Stadler as still owing for "2 neue erfundene Basklarinet [*sic*]" (two basset clarinets of a new design)—presumably his basset clarinet and basset horn, both with globular bells.<sup>17</sup> Circumstances suggest that upon hearing Stadler

*Jahrbuch der Tonkunst von Wien und Prag* (Vienna, 1796; repr., Munich: Emil Katzwichler, 1976, ed. Otto Biba), 58, though it is probable that Schönfeld meant to refer to a basset horn.

16. Concert announcement, February 20, 1788, National Hoftheater Vienna (Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde); facsimile in Colin Lawson, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Clarinet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 148.

17. Inventory of the Lotz estate, Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv, Herrschaft Konradswörth, *Abhandlungen*, 15 (June 28, 1792). Given that Stadler played Mozart's works for basset clarinet in both Bb and A, it is also possible that Lotz refers to two basset clarinets, and that Stadler received and paid for his basset horn at an earlier date.

perform in Prague, the young, impressionable Strobach felt compelled to construct similar instruments; without question, Strobach maintained a lifelong interest in basset horns with a globular bell.

If Strobach indeed learned to make woodwind instruments in Prague, it may have been from Franz Doleisch (1749–1806), as their instruments have several characteristic features in common. According to Bohumír Jan Dlabacz, Doleisch was making the best oboes, flutes, clarinets, and bassoons in Prague in the late 1780s.<sup>18</sup> Similarities between Doleisch's instruments and Strobach's include:

- 1) the "reversed" position of the *f/c*" key and *ab/eb*" key
- 2) the unusually narrow bore of their basset horns, with a diameter of ca. 14.0 mm
- 3) the ornate wooden rings on the left-hand joint (fig. 3)
- 4) the curved shape of some of their basset horn barrels
- 5) an angled socket in the right-hand joint instead of a separate knee

Of the thirteen extant Doleisch basset horns, the earliest is dated 1791, from the period during which Strobach might have worked with him.<sup>19</sup>

While Doleisch dated nearly every instrument he made, Strobach unfortunately did not, which makes the evolution of his instruments difficult to trace.<sup>20</sup> Several instruments stamped with Strobach's name resemble Doleisch's in design and style and may be among the younger maker's earliest; these include the five-key clarinet in Prague (1499 E) and his only basset horn with a "box" (Lübeck, St. Annen-Museum).<sup>21</sup> The clarinet in Prague is Strobach's only dated instrument, but its date may not be authentic, given the inconsistent script and relatively late year, 1808.<sup>22</sup> The stamp on this clarinet identifies Carlsbad as its city of origin, and since we know that Strobach purchased a house there in 1806, we can be certain he was living there in 1808.

18. Bohumír Jan Dlabacz, *Allgemeines historisches Künstlerlexikon für Böhmen* (Prague, 1815), vol. 1, col. 333: "Doleysy, ein berühmter Kunstdrechsler, machte im. J. 1787 die besten Hautbois, Flauten, Klarinetten und Fagotts in Prag, und hatte überhaupt seines gleichen wenige."

19. The earliest dated Doleisch instrument is a bassoon of 1773; his latest is a basset horn dated 1803.

20. Doleisch's earliest single-reed instrument is the basset horn dated 1791, which does not rule out the possibility that he made clarinets and basset horns earlier; his latest basset horn is dated 1803 and includes the note *Eb*.

21. We are indebted to Thomas Grass for kindly providing detailed information on this instrument.

22. Other Strobach clarinets, with up to ten keys, can be found in Vienna, Bratislava, Vysoké Mýto, Padua, and Brno.

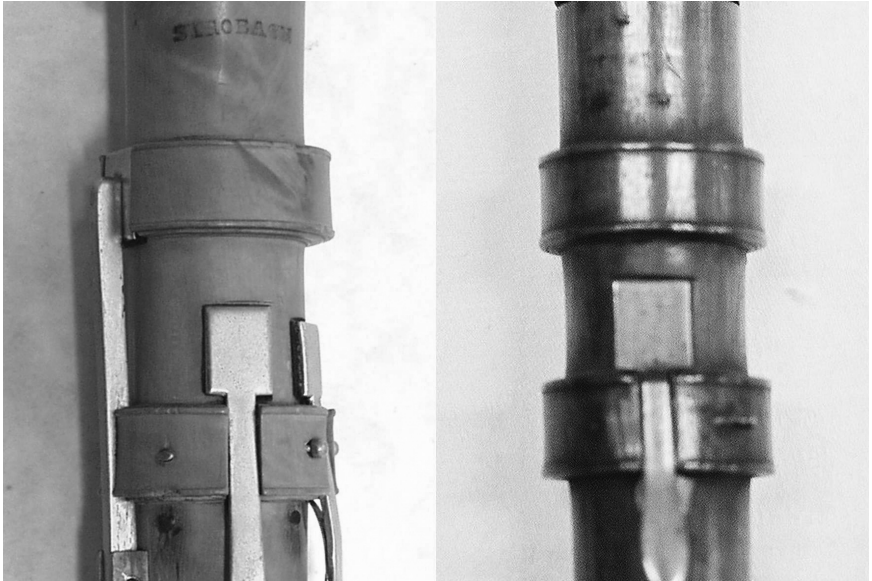


FIGURE 3. Detailed comparison of Strobach and Doleisch wooden rings.

A careful examination of Strobach's stamps yields several interesting variations that may aid in dating his instruments in the future. All stamps include the name Strobach and the city "Carlsbaad," written straight across or in a slight arc, together with several stars. The inconsistent feature of Strobach's stamps is the two types of stars, which differ in size, shape, and quantity. The large star has eight points and is symmetrical, and the small one is created by a cross with four points, each splitting in two at the end. The smaller stars occur almost exclusively on basset horns, possibly serving to differentiate sections of particular instruments, as these were often ordered in pairs or in sets of three. This is confirmed by the appearance of one, two or three stars on all sections of a particular instrument, whether stamped with the maker's name or not. In Vienna, Theodor Lotz and Raymund Griesbacher also numbered their basset horns (as "1", "2", "3"), presumably to prevent mixing up the sections of particular instruments when they were being constructed as a pair or trio.<sup>23</sup> The large stars on Strobach's instruments occur on either

23. The business log of Franz Schölnast, for instance, confirms that basset horns were ordered in sets (Bratislava, Múzeum mesta Bratislavy); in any case, they were used singly



individual instruments, or on a pair, placed above and below the name. Strobach's basset horns can thus be divided into three groups:

- 1) instruments stamped "Strobach" and "Carlsbaad" (fig. 4)
- 2) instruments stamped "Strobach" and "Carlsbaad", with one large star (fig. 5)
- 3) instruments stamped "Strobach" and "Carlsbaad", with two large stars (fig. 6)

Strobach's use of more than eight keys, ivory trim (usually) instead of horn, and wood of superior quality suggests that his clients were well-to-do. A spa town such as Carlsbad would have had an affluent, international clientele—customers from diverse backgrounds with time on their hands to enjoy fine music played on strikingly beautiful musical instruments such as these. Although the basset horn does not possess an extensive repertoire, it nonetheless had great appeal, due to its large compass, splendid multi-colored timbre, and rich articulation possibilities, especially when played by experts. Strobach himself was no doubt a reasonably good player, and therefore an excellent salesman; a good concert would have provided the best possible advertisement for his instruments.<sup>24</sup> Given the relative popularity of the basset horn trio formation and the extensive Bohemian repertoire for it, the authors suggest that Strobach and the Rupperts formed such an ensemble in 1801.

By far the most common basset horn design around 1800 incorporated a so-called "box" at the instrument's lower end, a block of wood through which the bore passes three times before emerging into a brass bell. This construction is employed on all of the surviving basset horns of the great Viennese makers Lotz and Griesbacher, as well as on those from the Dresden workshops of Grenser and Grundmann, albeit in different shapes. Several makers tried out different methods of construction early on, possibly already beginning with Theodor Lotz, whose "Bass Klarinet" of 1788 was of a "new design."<sup>25</sup> Friedrich Hammig, another

---

only very rarely. A unique trio of basset horns by Theodor Lotz at castle Krásna Hôrka (Múzeum Betliar), Slovakia, is numbered 1–3.

24. Similarly, Theodor Lotz was by all reports also a fine player, as well as a superior instrument maker.

25. As noted above, on February 20, 1788, Anton Stadler performed in Vienna on a "Bass Klarinet" made by Theodor Lotz. See also Eric Hoeprich, *The Clarinet* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 108–19. Interestingly, Phillip Lotz, father of Theodor, was employed as a building inspector at the Nassau-Weilburg court (at Kirchheim, where Theodor Lotz was baptized in 1746), where *clarinettes d'amour* are known to have been played. These



FIGURE 4. Strobach stamp variant 1.



FIGURE 5. Strobach stamp variant 2.



FIGURE 6. Strobach stamp variant 3.

instrument maker working in Vienna at the same time, may have been the first to eliminate the box. He advertised a new type of basset horn in 1792, and was active prior to this date. A surviving eight-key basset horn in F has a globular bell mounted at 90° in a U-configuration, pointing out to the right side (St. Petersburg, Muzei Muzikalnīch Instrumentov: see fig. 13).<sup>26</sup> The discovery of Stadler's programs from Riga has given

---

instruments often feature a globular bell, and information about them may have inspired Theodor Lotz to experiment with this design. See Albert Rice, *From the Clarinet d'Amour to the Contra Bass: A History of Large Size Clarinets, 1740–1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 98–99.

26. Hammig's surviving basset horn (fig. 13) also has the *f/c*" and *ab/eb*" right-hand, fourth-finger keys reversed. His son Friedrich Hammig Jr. perfected the model, with a chromatic basset extension to low *B♭* and a globular bell. Extant instruments can be found in Graz, Turin, and Antwerp.

the design with a globular bell considerable significance.<sup>27</sup> And, in fact, a relatively large number of examples survive, some anonymous, and some by nineteenth-century makers such as Friedrich Hammig Jr., Johan Georg Braun, Franz Schölnast, Johannes Pfaff, Johann Benjamin Eisenbrandt, Wenzel Horák, and Ignazio Miraz.<sup>28</sup> An eight-key basset horn by Friedrich Jäger (Prague, 364 E), also of Carlsbad, is so similar to Strobach's as to strongly suggest that he trained in Strobach's workshop. One of the few surviving bits of correspondence from Anton Stadler mentions this player's interest in "a new type of clarinette d'amour" by the instrument maker J. B. Tietzel of Bremen, whose instruments he evidently had seen and admired.<sup>29</sup> Typically, "clarinettes d'amour" featured a globular bell.<sup>30</sup>

Some fourteen basset horns by Strobach have survived. His typical model was made in boxwood with ivory rings and fitted with eight to ten keys; an extant pair in Brno show Strobach at his best (fig. 7). Playing a basset horn by Strobach is a remarkable experience. As with most basset horns, the sound can be described as dark, but it is also strong and full, with uniformity, resonance, and the perfect sort of resistance; the cross-fingerings speak clearly and well in tune at a pitch of  $a' = \text{ca. } 435 \text{ Hz}$ .

If Strobach indeed built basset horns with a box, following the example of Doleisch and others, and only later came to construct a straight model with a globular bell, it is likely that his only basset horn with a box (Lübeck, St. Annen-Museum) was produced in his earliest, formative period. The instruments attributed to Strobach in Munich (Deutsches Museum Inv. Nr. 50897) and Vienna (Technisches Museum, Inv. Nr. 252) may be his earliest to incorporate a globular bell. They display all the features of Strobach's instruments, but do not completely conform to his later style; they may have been prototypes, which might also explain the absence of a stamp. The instruments most advanced in design are the fully chromatic basset horns in Nuremberg (MIR 471) and Prague (Inv. Nr. 81 E). Both feature pairs of open and closed basset keys for the right thumb (fig. 8) The configuration of the four basset keys

27. See Poulin, "Anton Stadler's Basset Clarinet."

28. There are also several anonymous basset horns with a globular bell.

29. Letter to theater director Daniel Schütte in Bremen, May 2, 1795; see Waterhouse, *New Langwill Index*, 400.

30. See Rice, *From the Clarinet d'Amour to the Contra Bass*, 11.



FIGURE 7. Pair of Strobach ten-key basset horns. Brno, Moravské zemské muzeum, Inv. Nrs. 195 E and 196 E. Photo by Robert Šebesta.

demonstrates Strobach's ingenuity and skill.<sup>31</sup> Few instrument makers had produced fully chromatic basset horns by 1812.

Surviving basset instruments with a globular bell, including Strobach's basset horns, offer a variety of positions for the bell. A position on the front side of the instrument pointing toward the audience is acoustically logical, but from a historical point of view this is actually quite unlikely. The evidence suggests that the bell usually instead pointed toward the player, documented, for example, by the engraving of Stadler's instrument in concert programs from Riga (1794), and on basset horns by

31. Strobach may, of course, have reproduced the key design on Stadler's instruments, made by Lotz.

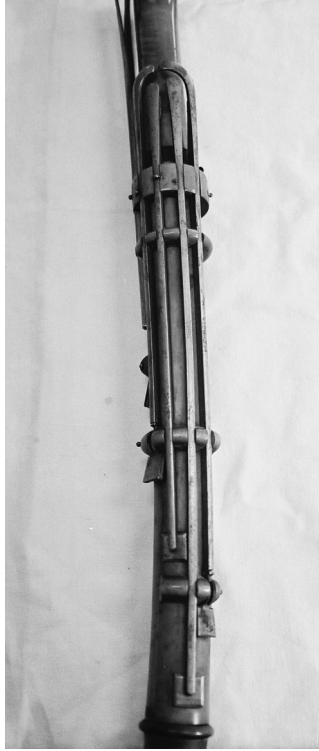


FIGURE 8. Detail of chromatic, basset-key touchpieces. Prague, Národní muzeum, České muzeum hudby, Inv. Nr. 81 E.

Hammig Jr., Greve, and Braun where the bell *must* point toward the player, due to the design of their basset keys. Instruments played in this position produce a darker and slightly more veiled sound. Strobach's basset horns allow for virtually any bell position, but projecting in toward the player is probably the correct one. Interestingly, a late report from Heinrich Welcker in the *Musikalische Tonwerkzeuge* (Frankfurt, 1855) noted: "The Viennese court musician Stadler (c.1790) lengthened the instrument and bent it sideways somewhat at the bell, in the same way as the flute of Midas," which brings to mind the St. Petersburg instrument by Hammig.<sup>32</sup>

32. This account is one of several to suggest that Stadler made his own instrument; see Hoeprich, *The Clarinet*, 115–16.

Basset horns by Strobach in Vienna (SAM 329) and in Prague (Inv. Nr. 465 E) vary from the norm—both are constructed in the form of a walking stick (fig. 9).<sup>33</sup> While the Vienna instrument can be considered successful in this, the Prague instrument is a hybrid of a walking stick and the traditional bent shape. The Vienna instrument features Strobach's highly original integral mouthpiece-barrel joint, made narrow at its upper end to create a space for a mouthpiece cover. This unique mouthpiece-barrel design was used by Strobach on other instruments as well (Edinburgh, 969; Prague, Inv. Nrs. 225 E, 81 E, and 191 E) (fig. 10), although the rest of his instruments employ the two-piece construction common to clarinets and basset horns.

As noted above, an unusual and anachronistic feature of Strobach's basset horns is the reversed position of the right-hand, fourth-finger keys for *f/c*" and *ab/eb*"<sup>34</sup> (fig. 11). Strobach presumably adopted the configuration from Franz Doleisch or other makers who employed it. Since most basset horn players were also clarinetists, this key placement would have caused considerable difficulties, something that Strobach presumably did not realize.<sup>35</sup> Perhaps for this reason, on the Strobach basset horn in Nuremberg (MIR 471), the keys were switched to the normal configuration at a later date. Or might we consider the possibility that his clarinetists were more versatile than those of today?

Another unusual characteristic of Strobach's key configuration is the "wrap-around" *c#/g#*" key for the left-hand fourth finger, mounted on the underside of the instrument, leaving the touchpiece as well as the tone hole in the usual position (fig. 12). In comparison to Continental instruments, the *b/f#*" key, for the right-hand second finger, also has an unusual location, placed between the first two tone holes on the right-hand joint as on some English clarinets.

An instrument pitched in A can be found in the Museum für Hamburgische Geschichte (Inv. Nr. 1912/1562). This instrument, obviously

33. Most musical instruments in the form of a walking stick were constructed during the first decades of the nineteenth century, and most were flutes. Strobach's are apparently the only extant basset horns in this shape.

34. Basset horns dating from the late eighteenth century, from the earliest curved models to those of makers such as Augustin Grenser and Jakob Friedrich Grundmann, also have these keys reversed, in keeping with oboes of the same period.

35. Due to the smaller proportions of the clarinet, the *f/c*" tone hole did not require a key, only a tone hole for the right little finger, which also determined the position of the *ab/eb*" key, whereas basset horns in G or F allowed for two different configurations of the two keys.



FIGURE 9. Walking-stick basset horn. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, SAM 329.

much shorter than Strobach's basset horns in F, is provided with a tone hole for the right-hand fourth finger instead of the key. The diatonic extension to low C calls to mind the hybrid of a clarinet and basset horn invented by Theodor Lotz for Anton Stadler in 1788, and serves to support the hypothesis that Strobach and Stadler met in Prague in 1791.<sup>36</sup> Although some basset horns pitched higher than the usual F have survived, these were usually in G (for example, no. 18 below). Indeed, Strobach also made a basset horn in G (no. 14 below, Prague, Inv. Nr. 225 E).<sup>37</sup>

36. Concert announcement for Vienna's National Hoftheater, February 20, 1788. See n. 16 above.

37. It is worth recalling that Mozart's original sketch for the concerto was for a "Corno di Baſetto in g" (K.621b): autograph in the Rychenberg-Stiftung, Winterthur.



FIGURE 10. Strobach's integral mouthpiece-barrel joint. Prague, Národní muzeum, České muzeum hudby, Inv. Nr. 191 E.

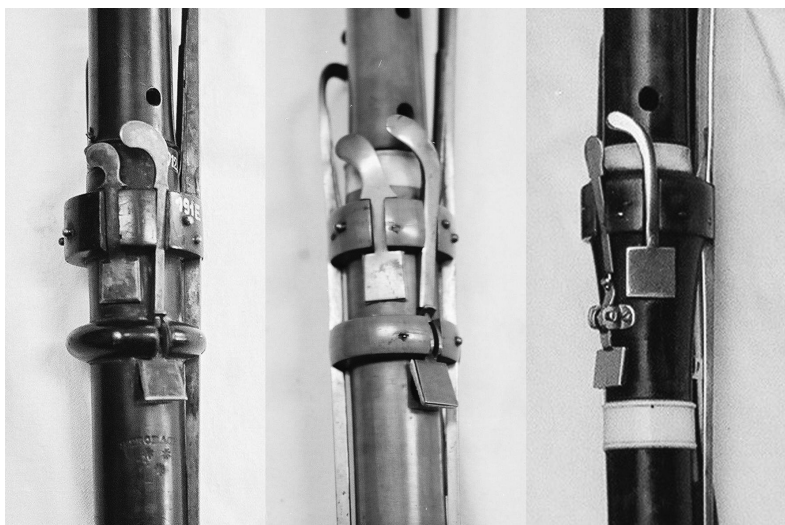


FIGURE 11. Detail of Strobach and Lotz configuration of  $f/c''$  and  $ab/eb''$  keys.



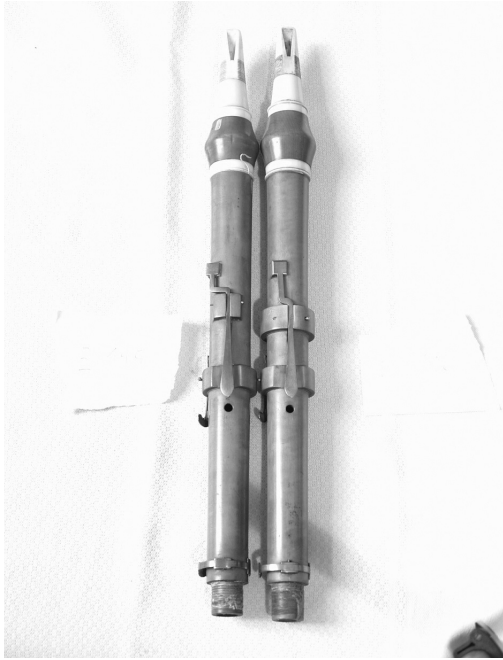


FIGURE 12. Detail of  $c\#'/g\#''$  key with “wrap-around” touchpiece.

### *Summary*

All of the stamped instruments by Franz Strobach share the same origin—the Bohemian spa town of Carlsbad. On the basis of new biographical data, Strobach’s instrument-making activities may be narrowed to the period 1800–1812, during which he appears mainly to have built basset horns; as many as eighteen basset instruments survive, but only three clarinets. The extant basset horns appear to be influenced by the instruments by Theodor Lotz, Friedrich Hammig (fig. 13), and Franz Doleisch. They are also in themselves rich in innovation.

Strobach may have first built basset horns with a “box,” then later turned to a straight model with a globular bell. He clearly focused his attention on the new design, possibly at the instigation of Anton Stadler, whom he may have met in Prague. Strobach’s invention of an integral mouthpiece-barrel section can be found on many of his basset horns. The latest basset horns are almost certainly the instruments in Nuremberg (MIR 471) and Prague (Inv. Nr. 81 E). The most striking examples

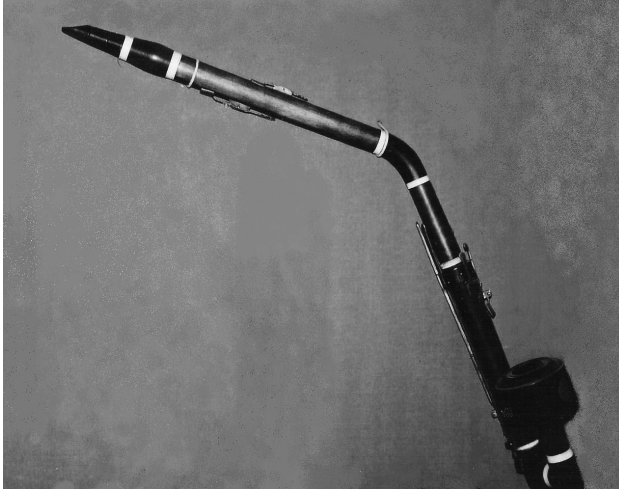


FIGURE 13. Friedrich Hammig basset horn. St. Petersburg, Muzei Muzikalnich Instrumentov.

are a pair preserved at Brno (Inv. Nrs. 195 E and 196 E); the basset horn in Prague (Inv. Nr. 465 E) and Hamburg basset clarinet (Inv. Nr. 1912/1562) are also exceptionally beautiful.

## APPENDIX A

### Checklist of Strobach basset horns<sup>38</sup>

1. Basset horn in F – 8 brass keys (mouthpiece missing)  
Lübeck, St. Annen-Museum (Inv. Nr. 1934/277). With box, diatonic basset register; maple, stained dark brown; ivory rings; curved barrel, integral knee
2. Basset horn in F – 8 brass keys; (complete) length 106.7 cm (with mouthpiece)  
Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Collection of Historic Musical Instruments (Inv. Nr. 969). Bore, 13.8 mm; dark-stained boxwood body; horn rings; integral mouthpiece-barrel and knee (at 145°); globular bell mounted at ca. 105°

38. See also Rice, *From the Clarinet d'Amour to the Contra Bass*, 406.

3. Basset horn in F – 8 brass keys; length 98 cm (without mouthpiece)  
Prague, Národní muzeum, České muzeum hudby (Inv. Nr. 132 E).  
Bore, 13.2 mm; diatonic basset register; boxwood body; horn rings;  
curved barrel, integral knee (at 140–145°); globular bell mounted at  
ca. 105°
4. Basset horn in F – 8 brass keys; (complete) length 107 cm (with  
mouthpiece)  
Prague, Národní muzeum, České muzeum hudby (Inv. Nr. 191 E).  
Bore, 13.6 mm; diatonic basset register; dark-stained boxwood body;  
horn rings; integral mouthpiece-barrel and knee (at 145°); globular  
bell mounted at ca. 105°
5. Basset horn in F – 8 brass keys; length 98.5 cm (without mouthpiece)  
Munich, Deutsches Museum (Inv. Nr. 63(6)78). Bore, 14.0 mm; dia-  
tonic basset register; dark-stained boxwood body; horn rings; curved  
barrel; integral knee (at 145°); globular bell mounted at ca. 105°
6. Basset horn in F – 8 brass keys; (complete) length 104 cm, walking-  
stick model  
Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Sammlung alter Musikinstru-  
mente (SAM 329). Diatonic basset register; dark-stained maple (?)  
body; ivory rings; integral mouthpiece-barrel and integral knee
7. Basset horn in F – 9 brass keys; (complete) length 104 cm (with  
mouthpiece)  
Meiningen, Meininger Museen, Sammlung historischer Musikinstru-  
mente (Nr. 59). Diatonic basset register; boxwood body; horn rings;  
integral knee (at 145°); curved barrel; additional (later?) *c#'/g#'* key;  
globular bell mounted at ca. 105° (connector elbow damaged)
8. Basset horn in F – 10 brass keys; (complete) length 106 cm (with  
mouthpiece)  
Prague, Národní muzeum, České muzeum hudby (Inv. Nr. 81 E).  
Bore, 14.0 mm; chromatic basset register; boxwood body; horn  
rings; integral mouthpiece-barrel and integral knee (at 145°); globu-  
lar bell mounted at ca. 105°
9. Basset horn in F – 10 brass keys; (complete) length 101–104 cm  
(with mouthpiece)  
Prague, Národní muzeum, České muzeum hudby (Inv. Nr. 465 E).  
Bore, 13.7 mm, straight form (with curved barrel only); diatonic bas-  
set register; boxwood body; ivory rings; original ebony mouthpiece;  
integral knee (at ca. 145°); additional keys: *g#'*, *b/f#'*. The length of  
the instrument is variable, as the instrument ends in a “foot joint”

with a straight bore, featuring a telescoping device, similar to the telescoping foot joints of flutes at the time.

10. Basset horn in F – originally 10 brass keys (incomplete: left-hand section only)  
Berlin, Musikinstrumenten-Museum SIMPK (Kat. Nr. 2915). Integral mouthpiece-barrel (ivory); boxwood
11. Basset horn in F – 11 brass keys; (complete) length 106 cm (with mouthpiece)  
Brno, Moravské zemské muzeum (Inv. Nr. 195 E). Bore, 14.0 mm; diatonic basset register; boxwood body; ivory mouthpiece and rings; straight barrel; integral knee (at ca. 145°); additional keys:  $g\sharp'$ ,  $c\sharp'/g\sharp''$ ,  $b/f\sharp''$ ; globular bell mounted at ca. 105°
12. Basset horn in F – 11 brass keys; (complete) length 105 cm (with mouthpiece)  
Brno, Moravské zemské muzeum (Inv. Nr. 196 E). Bore, 14.0 mm; diatonic basset register; boxwood body; ivory mouthpiece and rings; straight barrel; integral knee (at 145°); additional keys:  $g\sharp'$ ,  $c\sharp'/g\sharp''$ ,  $b/f\sharp''$ ; globular bell mounted at ca. 105°
13. Basset horn in F – 16 brass keys; (complete) length 108 cm (with mouthpiece)  
Nuremberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum (MIR 471). Chromatic basset register; boxwood body; horn rings; integral knee (at 145°); straight barrel; additional keys:  $g\sharp'$ ,  $f'/c'''$ ,  $eb'/bb''$ ,  $c\sharp'/g\sharp''$ ,  $bb'/f''$ ,  $b/f\sharp''$ ; globular bell mounted at ca. 105°; right-hand, fourth-finger keys for  $f/c''$  and  $ab'/eb''$  were switched at later date
14. Basset horn in G – 11 brass keys; (complete) length 96 cm (with mouthpiece)  
Prague, Národní muzeum, České muzeum hudby (Inv. Nr. 225 E). Bore, 14.8 mm; diatonic basset register; dark-stained boxwood body; horn rings; integral mouthpiece-barrel and integral knee (at 145°); additional keys:  $g\sharp'$ ,  $c\sharp'/g\sharp''$ ,  $b/f\sharp''$ ; globular bell mounted at ca. 105°
15. Basset clarinet in A – 10 brass keys; (complete)  
Hamburg, Museum für Hamburgische Geschichte (Inv. Nr. 1912/1562). Diatonic basset register; boxwood body; ivory rings; straight barrel; integral knee (ca. 145°); additional keys:  $a'/b'$  trill,  $g\sharp'$ ,  $eb'/bb''$ ,  $c\sharp'/g\sharp''$ ,  $b/f\sharp''$ , without key for  $f/c''$ ; globular bell mounted at ca. 105°

**Possible Strobach Basset Horns (unstamped)**

16. Basset horn in F – 9 brass keys; (complete) length 108.5 cm;  $a' = 435$  Hz  
Munich, Bayerisches Nationalmuseum (Inv. Nr. 22/95). Diatonic basset register; boxwood, black horn rings; long, curved barrel (similar to Doleisch models); integral knee on right-hand section (at ca. 140–145°); globular bell mounted at ca. 105°<sup>39</sup>
17. Basset horn in F – 8 brass keys; (complete)  
Vienna, Technisches Museum (Inv. Nr. 252). Dark-stained boxwood body; curved barrel; integral knee; globular bell
18. Basset horn in G – 8 brass keys; (complete) length 97.5 cm  
Munich, Deutsches Museum (Inv. Nr. 50897). Boxwood body; horn rings; curved barrel; integral knee; globular bell mounted at ca. 90°

39. This instrument can be seen in Thomas Grass and Dietrich Demus, *Das Bassethorn: Seine Entwicklung und seine Musik* (Nordstedt: Books on Demand GmbH, 2004), 62.