

**Robert Marcellus**, one of America's greatest and most influential clarinetists and teachers, died on 31 March, 1996. He was principal clarinetist of the Cleveland orchestra, under George Szell, from 1953 - 1973. During his tenure in Cleveland, he was Clarinet Department Head at the Cleveland Institute. After his retirement from the orchestra, he was Professor of Clarinet at Northwestern University from 1974 - 1994. His week-long master classes, held each summer (1974 - 87) were one of the highlights of his teaching career.

## Teaching Syllabus

H. Klose Complete Method	Mozart Concerto, K622
Rose 40 Etudes, Part I	Debussy Rhapsodie
Rose 40 Etudes, Part II	Copland Concerto
Rose 32 Etudes	Brahms Quintet, Op. 115
Baermann Complete Method, Part III	Mozart Quintet, K581
Rose-Rode 20 Grandes Studies	Beethoven Op. 16 for Winds and Piano
Cavallini 30 Caprices (Ricordi Ed.)	Mozart Quintet for Piano and Winds, K452
Baermann Complete Method, Part IV	Beethoven Trio for Cello, Clar. & Piano, Op.11
Baermann Complete Method, Part V	Brahms Trio for Cello, Clar. & Piano, Op.114
JeanJean 16 Modern Etudes	Mozart Trio for Clar. Piano & Viola, K498
Polatschek Advanced Studies	Schubert "Shepherd on the Rock" for Clar., Voice & Piano
Stark Arpeggio Studies	Schumann Fantasy Pieces, Op.72
International Music Edition Orchestral Excerpts, Vols. 1-8	Stravinsky 3 Pieces for Clarinet Solo
Bonade The Clarinetist's Compendium	Brahms Sonatas, Op.120, No. 1 & 2
Weber Concertino	Bernstein Sonata for Clar. & Piano

The following interview with Robert Marcellus is taken from a series of interviews conducted by James Gholson with a number of prominent American clarinetists and teachers. They were each asked to respond to the same set of questions regarding teaching and performance. Australian Clarinet and Saxophone is pleased to publish a shortened version of one of those interviews.

## Interview with Robert Marcellus

**James Gholson:** *Do you encourage students to keep journals?*

**Robert Marcellus:** I don't do it as a conscious part of a program. On occasion, I've said, "Make sure when you leave here to write down just a couple of things that have been important today." I have not encouraged it. But I once read the notes that my friend John Krell of the Philadelphia Orchestra kept – copious notes after all his lessons with William Kincaid – and he ultimately put them in the form of a notebook and called it *Kincadiana*. It made some of the most interesting reading that I can recall. I think it's a good idea.

*I have a teaching syllabus. Do you have any additional ideas on that?*

I would amend this syllabus to include *Bonade Orchestral Excerpts* and *International Music Edition Orchestral Excerpts*. Also, there is a book of the French orchestral repertoire, a book of opera repertoire, and the Strauss orchestral excerpts – any orchestral excerpts, whether they're compiled in a volume or not, just

anything. And you know you can get the complete parts from Kalmus. You can get a folder with the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth symphonies of Tchaikovsky, and a couple of the overtures and the piano concertos thrown in, and they are all the complete parts. I recommend, if he can afford them, that the student buy the complete parts of the thirty or forty works that are showing up on auditions.

I would add that there are some wonderful technical studies that I have never used myself. I never studied them; that's why I don't use them. But the Uhl studies, I understand, are good for technical development, and there are other such books: the Jettel, *The Accomplished Clarinetist*, for instance. Many of those things I don't happen to use, but that doesn't mean they wouldn't be good technique to go through. You've noticed that I've left out some of the studies of Perier and people like that. That doesn't mean that they're not very, very fine studies to use. So this list is just sort of what I studied, and I know the material from having

gone through it myself. That's why I feel comfortable with it. And as far as the repertoire is concerned, I don't know, there may be notable omissions. Occasionally, I use the Hindemith Sonata, but it's not a terribly strong piece.

And I find in a so-called four or five-year curriculum here at Northwestern University, or at a conservatory when I was in Cleveland, I restrict myself essentially to these pieces. And that's plenty to cover for a curriculum.

*What exercises have you personally developed that would be useful to the developing clarinetist?*

Well, there it is: Klose's Book I. Practical exercises – those eight-note one-measure exercises for developing finger technique and finger action. Practical exercises – sixteenth-note measures. I find it invaluable to practice those at M.M. > = 60, playing two notes to a beat, and then four notes to a beat, a sort of daily or metronome exercise.

*What part do you feel transposition plays in the development of the young clarinetist?*

It's more important than would be reflected in my studio. I picked up transposition sort of on the job. I guess I have a pretty good ear. No, I think mostly for the C clarinet business, we should have it, and occasionally I will assign a Rose study to be played on C clarinet. Again, that may be an omission in my teaching, but it has not been a militant part of my curriculum at all – a deliberate part. It should be, though.

*Do you encourage the memorization of opera and orchestral excerpts?*

By all means. It's striking to me when I say – well, we're trying a mouthpiece or an embouchure principle and I say, "Let's take that solo at the end of the first movement of the Pastorale." And all of a sudden, the student starts thumbing through the books on the stand and looking in the table of contents to find this excerpt. That shows that the student hasn't really practiced the excerpt or studied it. It shows me many times about a 60% approach to the profession, which means that that sort of student is generally doomed, anyway.

*How do you teach attacks?*

Well, a wonderful principle, as Bonade phrased it, is that the attack is the withdrawal of the tongue from the reed. That has to do with the whole world of articulation: *t's* and *d's* and *tah's* and *dah's* and *do's* and *to's* and *thuh's* and all kinds of things. Attacks are simply talking on the reed. But most people slam the reed too hard because their tongues are floating all around their mouths as an inert sort of a blob without any poise or control. You can see that at the master classes this week: a "guh" kind of "tuh" where they're throwing an uncontrollable muscle on the reed, rather than a nicely poised one. Generally speaking, articulations, if the student has them at all, are proper position of the tongue. But attacks are strictly phonetics on the reed.

*What recordings do you feel are prime listening in the development of the clarinetist?*

Unfortunately, these recordings are no longer available, but it's interesting to me to trace the lineage of a beautiful clarinet sound: a young Robert McGinnis of the Philadelphia Orchestra, principal position in the mid 30's; my teacher Bonade before him; Ralph McLane, who came later into the Philadelphia

Orchestra. As far as listening to recordings, I think that it behooves all students to listen to the recordings of the standard orchestral repertoire, as long as it's been conducted by an extremely good conductor. Good at what they do: a fine Brahms conductor, or a fine Mozart conductor. There are such things as tempi and style, so that they know where orchestral excerpts are and how they fit into the music tempo-wise, stylewise, that sort of thing. I wish we had more of the older recordings to listen to as far as clarinet sound is concerned. I think about clarinet sound today, the way I feel about orchestral performances today, and there are a lot of very fine performances, but not really great, great performances. I am inclined to feel that way about clarinet sound today. It seems to me to be coming a little bit off the wall and not as beautiful as it used to be. I think there are a lot of fine clarinet players, and a lot of fine clarinet tones, but I don't think there is anything to compare with a Bonade or a young McGinnis or McLane. That kind of beauty just doesn't seem to exist.

*Just out of curiosity, what are your thoughts on Louis Cahuzac?*

Oh, I remember so well his recording of the Hindemith, and although he was a very elderly gentleman when he recorded that, the interesting thing to me is that the basic timbre of his sound was very much akin to what I call the classical tradition of the French clarinet of the current day. The clarinet of the first war. It's an extremely vibrant sound, very luminous, not small – having a lovely round hue to it, but with a kind of intense center to it, without being buzzy as such, but very luminous and vibrant. It's an interesting sound.

*What volumes do you see as necessary to the library of a clarinet player in terms of reed-making books, that sort of thing?*

I don't think any acoustical books are necessary to the clarinet player. One should read the section on reed adjustment in the Bonade Compendium or Kal Opperman's book on how to hand-make reeds. We have a couple of independent study research papers done by graduate students concerning the Reed Du-All machine. Some of the papers are really wonderful reading, employing the technique of how to make reeds and that sort of thing. And I'm sure there are some books that I don't know about.

*How often do you play duets with your students?*

That's something I don't do. I must say that is primarily because my teaching is limited to some quite gifted and quite accomplished, proficient players. I encourage them, however, to play with each other any of these transcriptions or nice duets for two clarinets. But I think it's terribly important in the development of the high school age or the junior high school age, particularly at that age. I think it's very important not only to play for the student to make him hear what it should really sound like, for otherwise he would never know, but also to play an equal voice with him so he realizes, "Gee, I've got to play as loud as he plays." At least they can start getting a foundation of the reality of playing the instrument, rather than something they think it ought to be.

*How do you teach staccato?*

Pretty much as laid in this compendium. [ed. Daniel Bonade's *A Clarinet Player's Compendium*] There are a lot of very simple truths in there. And the thing I like about the short staccato is that one must learn this to have a complete alphabet at one's beck-and-call to interpret music. The short staccato is sometimes abused and therefore maligned by people who hear that and then say, "I wouldn't play like that for anything in the world." The lovely thing is to make the best comparison of sound with your nicest straight slurred tone and to make sure your sound is exactly the same, however brief of duration, as your best unstaccato or unslurred sound. Staccato is just one of the hundred varieties of articulations on the clarinet. I definitely do teach the prepared fingers, stopping the reed with the tongue and moving ahead to the next note ahead of time. And also stopping the slur in mixed articulations with the tongue and moving the fingers ahead. Even though it has to be practiced slowly at first and sounds a bit unmusical, the short stop of a slur in scherzando music is a very desirable musical aspect. (Sings Rossini's *La Gazza Laddra* to demonstrate).

*Do you have any long tone exercises that you use with your students?*

I don't as such. Again, I'm talking about very proficient students. But I can well remember the very first thing I ever did for my teacher Mr. Handlon in Minneapolis, who was such a serious

teacher, was simply to play a low “E” with the metronome on 60 and hold it for ten beats, then without moving anything, especially the wind, to push the register key to sustain middle “B” for another eight beats or so, and diminuendo, then low “F” and that sort of thing. I certainly applaud that at a certain time in the development of the clarinetist.

*Do you employ rhythms in your teaching?*

I hope so! It would be pretty monotonous without it. I don't know how to take that question!

*Do you change rhythms of scales, use alternate rhythms, etc.?*

No, but you must remember, Jim, that I'm dealing with very accomplished students to begin with. It's interesting, because I notice in dotted rhythms how inconsistent they are in a lot of these students, unknowingly, in repetitions. They aren't able to hold the same exact incisiveness rhythmically (sings dotted passage). I'm a little like my dear colleague Mr. Brody: “One either plays in rhythm or one doesn't.” There's no such thing as playing pretty well in rhythm. It has to be perfect all the time. Then we look for the reasons why it isn't perfect. Then I might assign something to correct it.

*What literature for other media have you found valuable in your teaching, for instance the Bach cello suites?*

Those I recommend and Corroyez did a wonderful group of transcriptions; they are not available now. It was a French printing, not Durand or one of the big publishers, a beautiful edition on a *capella* violin works and cello suites registered beautifully for the clarinet. Those are out of print, incidentally, and I would like to see those reprinted. I guess H. Voxman did some Bach things. Also Giamperi. I recommend those particularly for professionals in the summer when they have no instrumental ensembles, or no orchestra, so they're left with their electric fan and a bucket of ice water and a chair and a music stand and their clarinet to practice all summer. Those are good then because they are self-sufficient and you don't need an orchestra or accompanist. Also, it gives us a pretty good chance to emulate the finer aspects of a good stringed bow technique – to emulate the sound of down bows or off-the-string or lifts which is so compatible to and synonymous with that style. Years ago, I had students come in and study

the Casals interpretation of one of the Bach suites, trying to get that student to play it exactly as Casals would have played it. It was just to test the ear, but unconsciously it gave an eye-opening to some of the phrasing. Not that one would have to agree or would necessarily want to agree with everything that Casals did, but it was a nice exposure to that kind of music-making. The Bach studies are fine and they occupy a proper place. They're a little like the JeanJean studies musically in that the JeanJean studies require nobody else in the room playing with you, but just a *capella*. That's what's nice about them.

*What misconceptions do you feel exist in the teaching of the clarinet?*

Mostly horrible sound!

*Yes, you talked about a wide, open throat.*

Well, that's death to a beautiful sound. Misconceptions taught are open throat, anchor-tonguing, or worse sometimes – chin or lip or hand vibrato as we see it practiced occasionally. It's a misconception that it's easy to play in an orchestra. But it's easier to play in a good orchestra than a bad orchestra. Oh yes, another misconception is that double lip gives a fuller sound. Quite the contrary. It gives a smaller sound.

*Do you have some set procedures on reed adjustment? How would you like to see that improved as far as teaching is concerned?*

I think in a sense I do. Of course, there's no point in doing anything if you don't have good cane. There's only one reason for handmaking reeds, besides the obvious economical advantage, and that would be if you could get better cane than is available. And, of course, you can construct the reed according to a certain architecture, including the heel, which I think is important. The Vandoren and Lurie reeds, to my way of thinking, are just too thin in the bark area and consequently lack structural stability. It might have nothing to do with playing strength or the vibrating part of the reed, but if you get a good thick heel like the Morre's, it's been proven time and time again that it will produce a much steadier reed and greater longevity. But the trick in adjusting reeds, really, is balancing the reed. That's where a lot of the art comes in. And it's not that hard, really, to balance a reed one side to another. That means a lot in the evenness, the speed of vibration of a reed.

*How do you teach support?*

The old business about, as Selmer said, breathing into your stomach – not literally, but figuratively. When I take a breath, it's very deep and the abdominal stomach wall expands. It feels pectorally like I'm inflating an inner tube or a balloon and the bottom part keeps inflated as one plays. It's a good feeling; it's a good, healthy, deep torso kind of feeling about playing. It's not rigorous at all – quite the contrary – but it's a very deep sustaining kind of support. It just automatically sustains. I think we saw that this morning in the class with the gentleman that played the Copland. I kept wondering why he wasn't projecting. He was just whispering; as soon as he began supporting, the tone came out – it was amplified better. Really, that's the old Kincaid approach about pushing out and down. I suppose that's what they meant, although I never studied with either one of them, and that's the only way to go.

*How do you teach embouchure?*

My teacher said take what is natural and develop it, in the natural formation of the mouth, lip, teeth and jaws. I see some pretty funny embouchures coming in here. Of course, I didn't study with Henri Selmer and I don't know anybody that did, but he had a wonderful way of verbalizing a few things, like “The lips around the mouthpiece must always have the same pressure and must never vary;” and “The lips should be like a rubber band around the mouthpiece,” in a way. That says a great deal. My teacher said the more lower lip one can take inside one's embouchure and consequently the farther down on the reed the lip can be placed with comfort, the more beautiful the sound. It's simple to equate that, because the more lip you take in, the more vibrating reed surface you have inside the mouth and the farther down you are to the middle of the reed. This way you can play all day without bending the reed. The mouth structures, bite structures, and teeth structures are all so different – we all have to find it – but basically it should be a compatible thing, so that one can just collect it and put it around the mouthpiece. A lot of people blow into their cheeks and that sort of thing, or they don't have a good lower lip relationship to their lower jaw, or they don't take enough mouthpiece into their mouth on the top, etc. It's one of those more difficult aspects of teaching

and that's why a lot of teachers stay away from it. They don't know what an embouchure is and they don't know what is correct. A lot of them play with incorrect embouchures themselves, so how can they teach it? But it's a little exhausting for both student and teacher sometimes if it's a problem, and it takes patience to correct it; and it's a little bit stressful all the way around.

*Do you do some specific things with your upper lip?*

Oh yes. Just like the lower chin, pointing the lower chin and all that. But the upper lip is definitely slightly tucked under itself, and I insert different varying degrees of pressure with the top lip onto the mouthpiece to control the leverage of the lower jaw.

*Do you think of the top lip as being against the teeth or against the mouthpiece?*

Simultaneously. It's two things at once. It's against the teeth and against the mouthpiece, so it's tucked very neatly. That's what gives you the musculature of the top lip. Otherwise, it's too placid and doesn't have the strength.

*And you think of a triangle?*

Oh, very definitely, just put the dimple in the chin and blow through the straw and you've got it. A good embouchure is basically a very simple thing, although we talk about it in detail to correct certain false embouchures. But it's really quite simple in the last analysis.

*You use a patch on the top of your mouthpiece.*

Yes, but it's a very thin one, extremely thin.

*Do you want to add anything on chromatic fingerings? Please mark the following scales to illustrate the fingerings you use in each chromatic scale.*

It's an important thing, and just as a personal confession, I don't think I am exhaustive in my follow-through on that. That should be taught at the first stage, so that for instance, when you play a middle "B" on the third line in treble clef, it should basically be fingered with the left little finger. But along with it (although you don't need it), the right little finger should go down on the "C" key. It's that sort of prudence. And the side low "D#" or "Eb" key, that is the primary fingering for that. The little fork key to produce the same note on top that

you play with your ring finger of your left hand, is strictly a chromatic fingering. And the two side trill keys are not chromatic "F#" like a lot of people play. The chromatic of "F#" is just the index finger in the left hand. The Stark Arpeggio Studies are where I catch up on that. If a student somewhere in his development on his way here to study with me has not been taught the proper fingerings, then we do go back to chapter and verse, and very carefully, I go back and mark all the appropriate left little finger, right little finger, fork 1, fork 2, side Bb, chromatic Bb, fork Bb throughout the first several of the Stark Arpeggios, just to make sure he does the correct fingerings. Because a lot of people use wrong fingerings that can hamper technique.

*In what order do you evaluate fundamentals in solving problems with regard to semi-professionals?*

Well, of course, the wind, the embouchure, and, so closely aligned with that, the shape of the oral cavity. Hand position, steadiness of the wind, the jaws, the lips, the oral cavity, the clarinet in the embouchure, the clarinet in the hands, and the axis of the palms of the hands themselves, the knuckles being as quiet as possible off of which the fingers operate. Those are some of the basic things, but then, of course, I spend as much time on the basics of music, on musical interpretations, simple phrase lines and their expression, as I do on the instrumental thing. I believe firmly, as I said at the class, that if you know the musical path, it has to solve the instrumental problem. You cannot let yourself play incorrectly or roughly, or ugly or unsmoothly, or unbrilliantly. The basics become more important, not less important, as one distills throughout the years. That's true of any great musician and I've talked with some incredible world-class musicians who all agree and uphold the simple basic truths that become the most meaningful and most mature form of knowledge. That's why they are so important at the outset. Terribly important.

*What is the reasoning clarinetist and do you avail yourself and your students of a mental accounting of all mechanical activity?*

If I understand your question correctly – do I paraphrase it properly when I say you've got to think every second of the

time? Absolutely. Mr. Szell used to have a wonderful piece of advice for fledgling conductors. He said, "You've got to think with your heart and feel with your brain." And that's a perfect combination. This whole business when you see a certain conductor, a former conductor of the New York Philharmonic, for instance, getting up in the one part of the Bach B minor Mass, the crucifixus, actually assuming the pose of the crucifix, and he's hanging on the cross and doing bumps and grinds with his pelvis at the same time. That's not how you should interpret music. The interpreter, whether it's a clarinetist or a conductor, has one obligation to illuminate the score to the listener. To illuminate the composer to the listener: what the composer wrote to the listener. And that takes a lot of thought processes. And a lot of students have the wrong idea. They want to go into music because it's a wonderful, wonderful, beautiful thing, and a personal thing to all of us. No question. But one must think constantly: number one to avoid disaster, but number two, it's a wonderful combination of three things. It's based on a marvellous instrumental craft to begin with. You've got to know your instrument and be proficient. You've got to have aspiration of the heart, there's no question about that, that's what makes music good. But you also have to think every second.

*How do you teach legato fingerings?*

In a variety of ways. First of all, the traditional way that so many of the fine clarinet players in this country who studied with Bonade started, like Rose 40 Studies #1: at a very slow tempo, raising the fingers very slowly and putting them down softly without making clicking noises – getting instantaneous coverage of the open holes simultaneously with all fingers and doing it more or less to get a vocal interval, not a glissando, as opposed to a mechanical interval. (There are other ways of looking at legato.) I'm a great believer that the hands should be completely in accord with the musical situation, so if a passage calls very obviously for a very sustained legato, like the second movement of Brahms' Third Symphony. I believe in playing with the fingers into the clarinet, so to speak, holding the clarinet very steadily and then with somewhat strong fingers – playing legato through the phrase without making any key noise, without

making any abrupt changes, but with great sustaining and blend. A passage like the Ravel Septet, in the chalumeau register for the A Clarinet – that’s one of the most beautifully, naturally contoured legato phrases I can think of. And if you have your “musical ears” screwed on correctly, you cannot play that any other way than legato. That’s the sort of thing where if you keep the wind spinning appropriately without impediment, it’s almost like not making any key noises when you change your fingers. Sometimes that calls for a certain amount of inherent strength in the curve of the finger. Sometimes it takes a lot of strength to play legato with strong fingers and good control. Sometimes, depending on the intervals or the musical situation, it takes very little inherent strength in the fingers. It depends on the intensity of the music, actually.

*What angle is used when raising the fingers up?*

If you take the proper curve of the fingers, it’s just like you tell the little kids to hold a tennis ball in the palm of their hands. That is the proper curve for the hands. Now the hand just simply opens up. I would say that it never really goes all the way to a full, straight extension of the fingers, but almost. If we were reading on a compass and the hand is pointing due west at a 270° angle, I would say you get up to about 340° or something like that. Instead of an arbitrary “how much do you raise the fingers?” It depends solely on the elevation of the music. The phrase would go from the “B” to the “D” and the index finger in the left hand would arch with the phrase. So the hands must be completely in accord with the music.

*What is the role of the upper lip in your embouchure?*

Plenty! Tucked under itself slightly and pressing down on the mouthpiece again depending on the intensity or the amount of lower jaw control I want to use. I use that as a lever. I arch the soft palette in the back of the mouth and also as a lever by which I control the hang or placement of the lower jaw. It’s like Selmer said – using all the lips in your embouchure.

*And you feel that the top lip helps in your downward slurs?*

Oh, downwards slurs, upward slurs. I use it all the time.

*When do you practice and how often?*

I’m not supposed to any more. My doctor has told me not to practice. But when I was with the Cleveland Orchestra, the only thing I would practice really would be unusually difficult clarinet passages – possibly the Ginastera Variciones Concertantes comes to mind, or a certain fleeting passage in the Roussel Bacchus and Ariane, or the Villa-Lobos Choros #10, things like that I would practice. But I did most of my playing with a superb orchestra every day and you don’t really require practice because your reflexes and concentration and brainpower is honed so sharply every second while you’re playing. And that’s the best thing. And then I got there about an hour or fifty minutes, maybe, before rehearsal or a concert and did a lot of woodshedding then on the repertoire I was going to play, whether it was the technical combinations or just the placement of solos in the Pastoral Symphony of Beethoven. So that’s the kind of practice I would do. At one time in my life, the only time I really did practice as a student, I practiced five hours a day – for two weeks. And at the end of the first week I played the first eight etudes from the JeanJean for Bonade, Sixteen Etudes Moderne, and at the end of the second week, the final eight of the sixteen. So I covered the sixteen etudes in two lessons, which was quite extraordinary, but it shows what can be done with a really concentrated effort. I was practicing about four or five hours a day.

*What did your warm-up or practice consist of?*

I had no warm-up – the warm-up was getting the reed straightened out and unwrinkled so to speak, just getting the reed set for the morning, but there was no warm-up as such. That’s not necessary if you come to terms with an embouchure that you just turn on like a light switch every morning – one that doesn’t bend the reed or get all irregular, but just turn on. The warm-up consisted mostly practicing a few passages for the day’s events or selecting the proper reed.

*So what does that mean for students in terms of a warm-up?*

I would really recommend that if a student is to show up for the practice studio at 9:00, that he show up one hour earlier and practice Baermann III scales, thirds, interrupted chords of the 7th, etc. Stark Arpeggio Studies or Jettel or

Polatschek. The Baermann’s a wonderful routine and it takes a lot of patience. For people who don’t have that kind of time and that kind of intensity of effort, the Klose works just as well. It’s not quite as good because it doesn’t cover the range, as you know, but it’s very condensed and very synopsised. Just doing that for 1/2 hour or an hour a day for four months, many, many problems just take care of themselves.

*How do you employ the metronome in your teaching and practice?*

When I was a student, I employed it fairly often at outset of the Klose practical exercises: two notes to a beat with the metronome at 60, and then four notes to a beat without interruption. Then I would use it as a criterion for evenness of scales on in my development when I was practicing as a student. Then, when I was cranking up to return to the National Symphony, I started practicing again after three years in the Air Force and I remember going through the advanced studies of Victor Polatschek and setting a reasonable, but challenging metronome tempo for every one of those etudes and playing them straight through with the metronome without interruption, and not going on to work on a new study until I had played once through without one hitch of either rhythm or wrong note, and that took some doing. But I learned a great deal from that. It’s discipline, organization – that’s what the metronome’s results are in practicing.

*What alternate fingerings do you employ for the altissimo register?*

Well, I use that so-called double fork fingering for the high “G” in the piano subito measure in the middle of the Beethoven Eighth Symphony, Third Movement. But, by and large, I use the first, or what I like to call the legitimate, playing fingering for all of the altissimo notes. On the double high “Bb,” of course, I like to use the fork fingering, which also includes the low “F” fingering for the left hand, that sort of thing, to try and get a good sound out. And if I’m playing a solo with a high “Ab” above the staff, I use the high “D”, but instead of the “Eb” key in the right hand, I use the low “F#” key, which makes a bell tone out of it. Occasionally, the solo of the middle section of Don Quixote by Strauss that goes up to the high “F” that sort of soars over the whole orchestra, I

use the covered “F” for that. But outside of that, quite legitimate. Once in a while the high “E” in Don Juan in the lyric solo, I will depress the low “E” key with my left little finger, but as in the legitimate, or playing a fingering, I will keep the right little finger on the “Eb” key. I do that once in a while. But as far as technical fingerings are concerned, with technical passages, I don’t use any of the open “D’s” or anything like that. Absolutely legitimate fingerings. That’s the best.

*What importance do you assign to throat posture and vowel sounds to achieve your concept of sound?*

Okay, very simple. Alexander Selmer said think “e” while playing, particularly in the high register. That has been misunderstood on occasion by zealous students. Sometimes a good, hard “eh” mouthpiece, it’s very simple, you keep the “eh” and close the mouth with an “ooh” and you get “eh,” plus “ooh,” like a German umlaut. Never opening the throat at all, as such, just keep a natural sort of position. Opening the throat too wide slows the wind.

*To what extent do you employ styles of vibrato?*

None whatsoever, except in *Rhapsody in Blue*. Or the *Second Rhapsody* of Gershwin or the *I Got Rhythm Variations*, another piece by Gershwin with a little jazz clarinet solo. There was one piece written by Lothar Kline called *Musique a Go Go* for symphony orchestra that has a little jazz clarinet lick in it, as I recall. I use vibrato in jazz, but I can’t imagine using it in a symphony orchestra, in any orchestra whatsoever. I just want to say one thing, so you can get me on tape! The only reason an oboist uses vibrato is because you cannot stand the sound of the instrument without it.

*How do you come the closest to achieving the “state of the art?”*

Okay, like I said at the class the other day, I firmly believe it takes three things: aspiration of the heart, great instrumental skill, and brainpower. That’s one way of looking at it. How do I reach the state of the art? As Bonade once said, one has to have – he used the poetic expression, “a divine fire” – to want to play. Of course, it’s predicated to talent, basic sense of rhythm, pitch, tone. But you also have to have a burning desire – you wouldn’t want to live without it! That, plus experience and opportunity.

Opportunity is a great variable. There are a lot of wonderful musicians who haven’t surfaced because of lack of opportunity. Being in the right place at the right time. Proper training is important. All of the ingredients that go into reaching the “state of the art”, is that what you meant? Opportunity, and parenthetically involved in that sometimes is a great deal of luck. Being in the right place at the right time. It’s almost like an accident of birth. If you think you are bad off, or wonder why it couldn’t have been better for you – you could always have been born in some hole in Southeast Asia. It’s almost like that sort of thing as far as the opportunity and circumstances being conducive to the development of the talent to reach the “state of the art”. Then of course, once it starts, once I got my position, the exposure for a month to Bruno Walter and all the symphonies of Mozart and Brahms and that sort of thing, then it’s like the kindling of fire. Then it’s got to get better. Seems a little unjust that there is opportunity involved in it. Absolutely.

*What tools do you recommend for reed making and adjustment?*

A Herder knife from Herder Cutlery in Philadelphia, a hard Arkansas oil stone, one of those little pocket jobs, emery board, a Cordier reed clipper, and I use both 220 #320 wet or dry Tri-M-Ite sandpaper.

*What kind of clarinet do you use?*

Buffet.

*Why do you use that particular kind of reed knife?*

Well, it’s the nicest feeling reed knife in the entire world. Just try it!

*What is your process for reed adjustment?*

Well, I had awfully good cane the years I was playing Morre reeds in the Cleveland Orchestra. For breaking in, did you say?

*No, with preparing it for performance or breaking in.*

Well, actually – selection and adjustment. I used to open a box of a dozen Morre reeds – 2 or 2 1/2 – and select two or three “live” ones. I understand, somebody told me years ago, that that was pretty much the way Stanley Drucker used to take the Vandorens out, picked one out of the box and threw the others away. That’s kind of what I did. Sure, I adjusted them and I took a little care in breaking them in. But the Morre cane at the time I was playing was so good that you didn’t have to worry about

abusing it too much. You just played them until they soaked up, which was very rare – that’s why I liked the cane so much – then, maybe you’d stop playing them.

*What about Dutch rush?*

I used to use it when I was a student and in my early days in Washington, in the Washington National Symphony. But I have come to respect the reed knife. It’s a little more accurate and I can use a very nice brushing stroke with a good edge and a blending stroke, just as much as the Dutch rush. I never use it.

*How has the art of clarinet teaching and performance changed since you were a student?*

Plenty. In some ways better, in some ways worse. That would be an entirely separate paper. As I said in class last night, the time in which I grew up as a student, and that I started playing professionally, and in a sense, even my last days in the Cleveland Orchestra, things were not quite as frantic, the pace of living was not quite as fast. Certain things have improved in this country all the way around over the time I grew up. There’s no question about that. But certain complexities have been introduced that make the pace much faster. The artistic policies of the country’s orchestras are being dictated by record companies and record royalties, and cartel managements that contrive a whole international monopoly of artists in London, England. That kind of thing. The time for individual reflection, and the 36-week season is over. It’s just what bus to be on to catch the right plane to go to the right concert; how many concerts you can jam into one week in a symphony orchestra for revenue, as opposed to the five rehearsals a week we had in the Cleveland Orchestra for every pair of weekly concerts. Five rehearsals a week. And that gives one a lot of time for reflection, and individuality, and very sober musical thought, very probing musical thought. No it’s largely question of just getting the notes and trying to play with some kind of flourish or pizzazz. That’s about it – rather than the unique artistry of some of the clarinetists that you heard last night at the retrospective, my predecessors.

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