

PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES TO  
SIX MAJOR ORCHESTRAL EXCERPTS FOR BASSOON

by

RUTH SHELLY UNGER

(Under the Direction of Dwight C. Manning)

ABSTRACT

There is no single source that simultaneously shines the spotlight on the playing and teaching of several of North America's finest orchestral bassoonists. Little has been written about the pedagogical approaches of the current generation of bassoonists who hold principal positions in the major American symphony orchestras. While many fine, even exceptional bassoonists teach bassoon with considerable success, the number of distinguished players who hold principal positions in major North American orchestras and also teach at a college, university or conservatory is limited. These players have a unique vantage point because they perform the pieces from which orchestral audition excerpts are taken season after season, in the great halls, with some of the finest conductors. This orchestral repertoire is the everyday fare of these individuals and the mastery of a relatively small collection of excerpts is an inescapable part of preparation for and success in the orchestral audition experience.

This study focuses on the pedagogical approaches employed by preeminent player/teachers using six of the standard principal bassoon excerpts to provide a window to discover, view and examine these approaches. For this reason, the study touches on a broad range of related subjects, including but not limited to: interpretation, technique, tone, vibrato,

articulation, intonation, rhythm, breath support, practice strategies, audition preparation and audition techniques as well as reeds and reed-making.

This study provides a written resource on this topic that includes the voices of three superlative bassoon players whose pedagogical approaches have not been previously disclosed. The study offers readers insight into the interpretation of selected excerpts, expanding the overall information on “how to approach and master” these passages by giving an unprecedented forum to this group of elite player/teachers. The organizational format is divided into five chapters. The first chapter provides an introduction, including an overview of the study as well as biographical information about the three premiere player/teachers. Chapters two through four, with one chapter devoted to each of the player/teachers, present information from the Orchestral Excerpt Questionnaires, coaching sessions and the interview. The final chapter provides a summary and suggestions for further study.

**INDEX WORDS:** Bassoon, orchestral excerpts for bassoon, woodwind pedagogy, Clouser, LeClair, Svoboda

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this to my mom, who understood the import of self-discovery and who in the last months of her life was willing to forego our time together so that I could explore what it means to be a professor at a major university. My deepest respect and gratitude goes to my faithful family, friends, colleagues and students whose encouragement and patience helped make this dream a reality.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

There is no single source that simultaneously shines the spotlight on the playing and teaching of several of North America's finest orchestral bassoonists. Historically many of these premiere orchestral players such as Simon Kovar, Sol Schoenbach, Leonard Sharrow, George Goslee and Bernard H. Garfield, to name but a few, have been the ones who have, by their teaching, shared their knowledge and expertise with the next generation of players. Precious little has been written about the pedagogical approaches of the current generation of those occupying principal bassoon positions in the major American symphony orchestras. While many fine, even exceptional bassoonists teach bassoon with considerable success, the distinguished players who hold principal positions in major symphonies and also teach at a college, university or conservatory have a unique vantage point because they perform the pieces from which orchestral audition excerpts are taken season after season, in the great halls, with the best music directors and an unparalleled echelon of guest conductors. This orchestral repertoire is the everyday fare of these individuals and the mastery of a relatively small collection of excerpts is an inescapable part of preparation for and success in the orchestral audition experience.

#### Statement of Purpose

This study focuses on the pedagogical approaches employed by preeminent player/teachers using six of the standard principal bassoon excerpts to provide a window to discover, view and examine these approaches. For this reason, the study touches on a broad

range of related subjects, including but not limited to: interpretation, tone, vibrato, technique, articulation, intonation, rhythm, breath support, practice strategies, audition preparation and audition techniques as well as reeds and reed-making. To be considered for the study, the bassoonist had to hold a principal bassoon position in a major North American symphony orchestra and also be actively engaged in teaching the next generation of players at a college, university or conservatory.

The researcher was as interested in uncovering the ways in which distinguished players approached solving a student's technical concerns as in how they assisted their students in developing interpretive skills. What were the words used to convey ideas about these excerpts? Did the teacher ever demonstrate by playing the excerpt for the student? What was the teacher's history with the pieces? Did the teacher suggest certain practice exercises? What was the origin of these practice exercises? Were any created by the teacher? Or, were they passed along from the teacher's teacher or some other source?

This study provides a written resource on this topic that includes the voices of three superlative bassoon players whose pedagogical approaches have not been previously disclosed. The study offers readers insight into the interpretation of selected excerpts, expanding the overall information on "how to approach and master" these passages by giving an unprecedented forum to this group of elite player/teachers. The study also makes it possible for the reader to compare and contrast ideas among these outstanding player/teachers. Taken as a whole, this study might also serve to broaden, confirm, amplify or alter the direction of the reader's own teaching.

### Delimitations

A case can be made for a bassoonist knowing and being familiar with the major etude collections of Weissenborn, Milde, Oubradous, Jancourt, Piard and others. Private instructors as well as those teaching at the college level also typically require the aspiring bassoonist to become familiar with a wide range of solo literature from across the various style periods. The bassoonist is encouraged to add significant pieces from the chamber music literature to his/her repertoire as well. The overall value of these musical endeavors in learning to play the bassoon and becoming a well-rounded, competent musician is generally accepted.

When it comes to a steady playing career besides the military bands, the primary avenue is the symphony orchestra. This is not to overlook or lessen the value of those playing in pit orchestras, those recording jingles, those playing in smaller regional orchestras and freelancing, those who combine playing and teaching, or even those hallowed few who are earning a living playing in established chamber music ensembles. The gateway to the symphony orchestra is the audition experience, which includes specified audition excerpts and solo literature.

Six of the most commonly required orchestral audition selections for principal bassoon were included in the study. These excerpts are taken from: Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro* Overture, Ravel's *Bolero*, Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, Beethoven's Symphony No. 4 in B-flat Major, Op. 60, Rimsky-Korsakov's *Schéhérazade* and the second movement of Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 4 in F minor. That these excerpts are among the most frequently required principal audition excerpts is borne out by their inclusion under the same or similar headers in separate studies by Richard C. Ramey<sup>1</sup> and Susan Nigro.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Ramey, "A Survey of Bassoon Audition Repertoire of Major North American Orchestras," *NACWPI Journal*, 43, no. 1 (Fall 1994): 18-21.

<sup>2</sup> Susan Nigro, "Bassoon Audition Excerpts," *To the World's Bassoonists*, 5, no. 3 (1975-76).



As previously mentioned, only those who currently hold a principal bassoon position in a major symphony orchestra in North America and who simultaneously teach bassoon at a college, university or conservatory were considered for this study.

### Methodology

Three bassoonists were identified and solicited for this study. As part of the research design, two alternates were also identified should any of the player/teachers withdraw from the study for any reason.

The study incorporates three equally important elements: the excerpt coaching session(s), the interview, and the orchestral excerpt questionnaire. Each was used as a tool to gather useful information from the player/teachers. The first tool for acquiring knowledge about pedagogical approaches to the selected excerpts was the observation phase during which the researcher watched and recorded one or more coaching sessions with a player/teacher, covering his/her approach to each of the six major orchestral excerpts with a player participant. The design of the study offered two options. The player/teacher could coach the excerpts in a one-on-one setting, or combine the coaching sessions into a single master class. Herein, the researcher consciously attempted to avoid placing parameters or imposing any arbitrary structure on the content of the lesson/coaching because to do so might have led the player/teacher to coach the excerpts in a manner less genuine than is characteristic.

The second tool for gaining knowledge about the teacher's pedagogical approaches to the selected excerpts was the interview. It covered a range of topics, including questions about pedagogy, interpretation, auditions, articulation, breath support, vibrato, pitch/intonation, tone, rhythm, tempo, technique, warm-ups and sight-reading. Representative questions in the

Pedagogy section include: How do you teach or coach this excerpt? Do you have a standard way of leading a student through this excerpt, or is your approach primarily tailored to the student? Do you teach by metaphor? If you have a four-year syllabus, where do you include this excerpt? If you have a four-year syllabus, do you follow that syllabus or deviate from it based on the particular student? Do all your students go through certain etudes and excerpts in a predetermined fashion? Do you ever play for your students? If yes, please explain how often and under what conditions. How do you structure your students' lessons? Do you make specific practice suggestions? How often do you have studio class? Are excerpts covered in this? Do you have your students play mock auditions? A more comprehensive set of representative questions organized by topic is contained in the Interview Protocol (see Appendix B).

Since it was impossible to know all the directions a conversation might take during the interview process, additional questions could be asked. The interview provided general as well as detailed information about how the player/teacher approaches teaching.

The third tool in the study was the Orchestral Excerpt Questionnaire (see Appendix C) that asked the player/teacher for written responses to questions about his/her personal experience, the origin and evolution of the player/teacher's musical interpretation, his/her pedagogical approach and more with regard to the particular excerpt. Each player/teacher completed one questionnaire per orchestral excerpt included in the study. Responses to the Orchestral Excerpt Questionnaire could add depth as well as reinforce and supplement the information gathered during the interview and coaching sessions.

The actual time commitment for each of the player/teachers was as follows: Two or more hours during which the researcher observed and recorded the player/teacher covering the six excerpts across one or two days; and one or more hours for the interview. The time necessary to

complete the Orchestral Excerpt Questionnaires was one to two hours. The player/teacher was able to review and, working together with the researcher, edit portions of the document that reflect his/her contributions. Player participants, all of whom were more than 18 years old, contributed the time needed for their particular coaching session. The varying length of chapters two through four reflects the quantitative not qualitative contribution of the player/teachers and their students.

Some parameters of the study were designed with flexibility as to how they would be carried out. However, the research proceeded with greater uniformity than had been anticipated. In each case, written responses to the orchestral excerpt questionnaires were completed without the presence of the researcher, and they were received via mail after the interview and coaching sessions were conducted. All the player/teachers decided to use students who were currently part of their private studio. Moreover, two or more students participated by playing one or more of the required excerpts. All player/teachers chose a one-on-one coaching format, rather than a master class, with only the player/teacher, student participant(s) and researcher present. The researcher was also able to conduct live interviews with all three player/teachers.

Each of the participants completed a permission form prior to conducting the research. The researcher also obtained permission to have the name of the player/teacher used in publications and/or presentations; to keep audio and video-recordings indefinitely for research and educational purposes; and to make such available for meetings and professional conferences as well as the classroom for future use with students. A copy of the Human Subjects Form, the Orchestral Excerpt Questionnaire and the Interview Protocol are included as appendices.

The persons who agreed to be part of this research were John Clouser, principal bassoon in the Cleveland Orchestra, who teaches at the Cleveland Institute of Music (CIM); Judith

LeClair, principal bassoon with the New York Philharmonic, who teaches at The Juilliard School; and Richard A. Svoboda, principal bassoon in the Boston Symphony Orchestra, who teaches at the New England Conservatory of Music (NEC).

### Biographical Information

John Clouser is principal bassoon of The Cleveland Orchestra, a position he has held since 1997. He appeared as soloist with the Orchestra in 1999, playing Mozart's *Concerto for Bassoon and Orchestra, K. 191* at the Blossom Festival and again in 2002, performing Haydn's *Sinfonia Concertante* in B-flat Major. Before his appointment to The Cleveland Orchestra, he served as associate principal bassoon of Orchestre Symphonique de Montreal from 1994 to 1997. Prior to this he was principal bassoonist of the Memphis Symphony Orchestra for six seasons and a member of the faculty woodwind quintet at Memphis State University. He was appointed to the Cleveland Institute of Music faculty in 1997. His principal teachers were Bernard H. Garfield, John Shamlan and Matthew Ruggiero. Clouser completed studies at Temple University, Trenton State College and Gordon College. He has performed at the Peninsula Music Festival and festivals in Colorado and Tanglewood and served on the faculties of McGill University and Rhodes College in Memphis, Tenn.

Judith LeClair won the principal bassoon position with the New York Philharmonic in 1981. Since then, she has given more than fifty solo appearances with the Orchestra. She is a graduate of the Eastman School of Music, where she studied with K. David Van Hoesen. LeClair made her professional debut with the Philadelphia Orchestra at age 15, playing Mozart's *Sinfonia Concertante* with colleagues from the Settlement Music School in Philadelphia, where she studied with Shirley Curtiss. Before joining the New York Philharmonic, she was principal

bassoonist of the San Diego Symphony and San Diego Opera orchestras. An avid chamber musician, she has performed with André Previn, Andre Watts, and the Guarneri Quartet and has participated in the Music from Angel Fire, Aspen, and Bridgehampton Festivals. LeClair serves on the faculty of The Juilliard School. She has given solo recitals at the Eastman School of Music, Oberlin College and Michigan and Ohio Universities and has conducted master classes throughout the country. In April 1995, LeClair premiered *The Five Sacred Trees*, a concerto composed by John Williams and commissioned by the New York Philharmonic as part of its 150th Anniversary Celebration. A year later, LeClair recorded this work for Sony Classical with Mr. Williams conducting the London Symphony Orchestra. She has recorded solo CDs with Cala Records and Albany Records.

Richard A. Svoboda has been principal bassoonist of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and a member of the Boston Symphony Chamber Players since 1989. During his tenure with the BSO he has been a soloist in performances of John William's *The Five Sacred Trees*, the Weber bassoon concerto and Haydn's *Sinfonie Concertante*. In 1996 he appeared as guest artist with the Boston Classical Orchestra, performing the Mozart bassoon concerto. Currently serving on the faculties of the New England Conservatory of Music and the Tanglewood Music Center, Svoboda has also taught at the Symphony School of America (Wisc.), the Grand Teton Orchestral Seminar and the Popkin-Glickman Bassoon Camp, and he has given master classes in the United States, Japan and Brazil. Prior to joining the BSO, Svoboda was principal bassoonist with the Jacksonville Symphony for ten seasons and studied with William Winstead, George Berry and Gary Echols. He received a bachelor's degree in music education with high distinction from the University of Nebraska. In addition to recording with the BSO, he can be heard on

Boston Records performing the Mozart quintet for piano and winds with Peter Serkin, as well as on the soundtracks to *Schindler's List* and *Saving Private Ryan*.

### Organization

The first chapter provides an introduction, including an overview of the study as well as biographical information about the three premiere player/teachers. Chapters two through four, with one chapter devoted to each of the player/teachers, present information from the questionnaires, coaching sessions and the interview. Every effort has been made to omit redundancy between the information contained in the coaching and interview sections. However, the synopses, inserted above the live coaching section for each excerpt, summarize the most important points in the Orchestral Excerpt Questionnaires and give the reader opportunity for comparison. The researcher has preserved the personal nature of the player/teacher's conversations, retaining the colloquialisms and informal language when needed to convey the individual's unique means of communication. The final chapter provides a summary and suggestions for further study.

Throughout the study octave designations are shown based on the range of the bassoon. For example, the lowest F on the bassoon is notated F<sup>1</sup> and the opening high C in *The Rite of Spring* is C<sup>4</sup>. To establish uniformity, rehearsal numbers and letters will be identified as Squares. For example, four measures before Letter C becomes four measures before Square C. Similarly, sixteen measures after Rehearsal 2 becomes sixteen measures after Square 2.

### Related Literature

In 1994 David McGill, while principal bassoonist with The Cleveland Orchestra, made a recording that features well-known bassoon excerpts from 26 works for orchestra.<sup>3</sup> In addition to playing, McGill, who has since become the principal bassoonist of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, provides the listener with spoken commentary that includes some interpretive ideas as well as practice strategies. This CD is a significant resource for players. However, it is limited to only one artist's voice; it has only an aural component and the single CD length does not permit an in depth examination of any of the excerpts. It is notable that all six of the standard excerpts selected for inclusion in this study are recorded on McGill's CD. In 1998 Summit Records released a second volume of *Orchestral Excerpts for Bassoon* that includes a secondary group of important bassoon excerpts. This CD features Christopher Millard, principal bassoonist with the Vancouver Symphony, and follows the same format as the first CD.<sup>4</sup>

Almost a decade later, Christopher Weait, professor emeritus of bassoon at Ohio State University and former principal bassoonist with the Toronto Symphony, published *Bassoon Strategies for the Next Level*.<sup>5</sup> In it he addresses multiple facets of playing, including musicianship, practicing, strategies for practice, breath and tone, dynamics, tuning, articulation, rhythmic accuracy, fingerings, vibrato and overall technique. Perhaps of the greatest relevance to this study are the practice exercises and strategies given for mastering the fast passage in Beethoven Symphony No. 4, the opening of *The Rite of Spring*, the cadenzas in *Schéhérazade* and the passage work in Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro Overture*. Also of particular value to this study, legendary bassoonist Bernard H. Garfield and Kathleen White offer technical and interpretive insight about key passages in Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 4, No. 5 and No. 6 with

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<sup>3</sup> David McGill, *Orchestral Excerpts for Bassoon*, Vol. 1, Summit Records DCD 162, 1994.

<sup>4</sup> Christopher Millard, *Orchestral Excerpts for Bassoon*, Vol. 2, Summit Records DCD 220, 1998.

<sup>5</sup> Christopher Weait, *Bassoon Strategies for the Next Level*, Worthington, OH; privately printed, 2003.

complete first and second bassoon parts in their book *The Bassoon Player's Orchestral Repertoire*.<sup>6</sup>

In addition two other resources for working out some of the difficult passages in the orchestral literature are worth mentioning. Both contain musical compositions based on the orchestral literature. The first is by Frank Heintz, who created a series of etudes to assist the player in developing the technique necessary to play such passages as the running eighth-notes in Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro Overture*.<sup>7</sup> This volume is no longer in print and difficult to find. A second is by Karl Öhlberger, whose approach is different than Heintz's in that his volume contains accompanied pieces based on the excerpts.<sup>8</sup>

Since its inception, the International Double Reed Society's (IDRS) journal *The Double Reed* continues to provide a platform for the publication of focused articles on topics related to the art of bassoon playing. Some of the major articles that specifically relate to this study are: "Musical Musings: Tonguing Techniques,"<sup>9</sup> "Auditions: Past, Present, and Thoughts About the Future,"<sup>10</sup> "Bassoon Basics for the Flicking Bassoonist!,"<sup>11</sup> "*Bolero* Unraveled: Dissonance as a Factor in Interpretation of Phrasing"<sup>12</sup> and "Dispelling the Myths: The Opening Bassoon Solo to *The Rite of Spring*."<sup>13</sup> Similarly, the *NACWPI Journal*, a publication of the National Association

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<sup>6</sup> Bernard Garfield and Kathleen White. *The Bassoon Player's Orchestral Repertoire*. Hackensack, NJ: Jerona, 1982.

<sup>7</sup> Frank Heintz, *Orchestral Etudes for Bassoon. Book One. Elaborations on difficult passages from the standard repertory*. Kentfield, CA: Raymond Ojeda, n.d. Out of print. Difficult to obtain.

<sup>8</sup> Karl Öhlberger, *Studien über Orchesterstellen für Fagott und Klavier*, 2 Hefen. Wien: Musik Verlag, Hilaria, 1991.

<sup>9</sup> Terry B. Ewell, "Musical Musings: Tonguing Techniques," *The Double Reed* 26, no. 2 (2003): 107. This article gives tonguing and syllable patterns for mastering the excerpts in Beethoven's Symphony No. 4.

<sup>10</sup> Norman Herzberg, "Auditions: Past, Present, and Thoughts About the Future," *The Double Reed* 17, no. 2 (July 1989): 67-74.

<sup>11</sup> Robert S. Williams, "Bassoon Basics for the Flicking Bassoonist!," *The Double Reed* 18, no. 2 (Fall 1995): 41-47. Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro Overture* is one of the excerpts he covers in the article.

<sup>12</sup> Dale Clark, "*Bolero* Unraveled: Dissonance as a Factor in Interpretation of Phrasing," *The Double Reed* 22, no. 1 (March 1999): 85-87.

<sup>13</sup> James A. Grymes, "Dispelling the Myths: The Opening Bassoon Solo to *The Rite of Spring*," *The Double Reed* 26, no. 2 (July 1998): 117-119.



of College Wind and Percussion Instructors, an organization that predates the IDRS, also continues a 58-year-old tradition of publishing reviews of new recordings and newly published pieces as well as some focused articles relevant to the professional bassoonist.

## CHAPTER II

### JOHN CLOUSER

#### Coaching Arrangement

For this study John Clouser coached two of his female students, both of whom were beginning to take professional auditions. Each played three excerpts. One played the excerpts by Beethoven, Rimsky-Korsakov and Tchaikovsky; and the other, those by Mozart, Ravel and Stravinsky.

#### Beethoven Symphony No. 4 in B-flat Major, mvt. 4

#### Synopsis of Clouser's Written Responses to the Orchestral Excerpt Questionnaire

- In an audition, the player must demonstrate a command of the articulation. The excerpt is also a “finger passage,” an element that is often overlooked by players. Finally, in order to capture the *dolce* character as indicated in the part, the grace note must be elegant.
- In the context of live performance, there is so much leading up to the solo that the player is likely to feel increasing stress.
- He offers numerous practice suggestions to his students. One important exercise involves elongating the D<sup>4</sup> grace note in order to counteract the tendency to rush.
- The tempo can vary greatly from one performance to another. Depending on the conductor, the quarter note ranges from 136 to 152 and beyond. He finds that it is more difficult for him to play it slower.

## Live Coaching

The student played the excerpt from Beethoven Symphony No. 4. Clouser said, “The thing you would probably hear from the committee is, ‘Thank you, could you go a little faster?’ The committee would most likely give you another shot at it. They know it is difficult.

“I can hear that you are single tonguing this. Have we talked about double tonguing?” She nodded, indicating that they had previously discussed it. “Well,” he exclaimed, “we are going to talk about it again. The double tongue is necessary even when you have a really fast single tongue.”

His approach to preparing this excerpt is to slow all the elements. “Often I hear students play the grace note and sixteenth that follows really fast—faster than the tempo they are in and emphasized so that they ‘really’ get them. They reason that the quick-snap rendering of the grace note is ensconcing it in the passage. At this point, I am quite sure that what this is doing is just the opposite. One is better off elongating the grace note and making it gracious rather than extra angular and percussive. The brain will prorrate this and at a faster tempo this becomes an almost non-existent period of time. I’ve had students say, ‘But Mr. Clouser that is too long.’ And, of course it is. But, at the fast tempo, it has a natural way of crushing down. Besides, with double tonguing it is especially easy to recover from the grace note.”

When slowing down the solo passage shown below, Clouser recommended using the articulation syllables as shown in Example 1. (To view the complete excerpt, see Appendix A.)

Example 1: Beethoven Symphony No. 4 in B-flat Major, mvt. 4, beginning 9 measures before Square E.

*p dolce*

tuh kah tuh kah    tuh kah tuh kah tuh kah tuh kah    tia kah    tuh kah tuh kah tuh kah    tuh kah tuh kah    taw

He emphasized that the overall goal is to develop a varied articulation palette. “This is challenging. You have to be prepared for the bell curve on the excerpt; the tempo can be everywhere from moderate to very fast...you must have options. The challenge of this is not only the sheer velocity, but the *dolce* nature of it. Make the grace note a lyrical feature. Also, you need to expect to perform the excerpt at [quarter note equals] 160.”

Clouser said that the issue with double tonguing is the weak stroke. “The ‘kah’ must be fast, focused and efficient. You must think about the airstream. It is a relatively narrow, focused airstream. If you think about it, often the ‘kah’ is lazy and uncontrolled. It stands to reason that this is a muscular function. After all, the tongue is a muscle. You should practice playing etudes all on the ‘kah’ sound, avoiding the ‘qwa,’ uncontrolled, unfocused airstream. You want the ‘kah’ to be indistinguishable from the ‘tah.’”

To develop this muscle he suggested devoting five minutes of warm-up time before a practice session to double tonguing. Then later in the day, spend another five minutes before a rehearsal focusing on it. He added, “You just keep at it.” He said that in day-to-day practice sessions a student should not practice “beyond the point where it is efficient,” adding that to do so reinforces the ‘qwa’ sound, which is antithetical to the desired outcome. “‘Kah’ is relatively far forward in the soft palette. I prefer it over the ‘guh’ because it is crisper. The distance between the ‘tah’ and the ‘kah’ must be minimized. Practice double tonguing for short periods; and do it often. Eventually you will have the endurance. You will be able to double tongue scales. Eventually it will start to sound really credible. You just need to chip away at it. I think six months or so down the road you will find it is not an issue. I have seen people who have a relatively low gift [with regard to single tonguing] become competent with their double tonguing.

“The Beethoven excerpt is an articulation challenge, and you will never get an orchestra job if you cannot play it.” While the student began the excerpt at approximately 138 to the quarter note, the tempo was unsteady and it slowed. Clouser remarked, “It feels a bit too slow. You don’t want anyone on the audition committee to have the impression that you have a weak tongue. If anything, you want for the audition committee to feel that your rendering of this excerpt is fast.”

Clouser clarified his expectations with regard to this excerpt, saying that he asks his students to prepare the Beethoven, Ravel Piano Concerto and Marriage of Figaro excerpts at 144 to the quarter note. In auditions students need to play it “slower than they are prepared to play it. In fact, I have never been on an audition committee nor sitting on the stage playing for a committee where anyone asked to have these excerpts played faster. I warn students not to ‘come in blazing.’ Playing these excerpts controlled and beautiful will render them ‘fast with alacrity.’”

He addressed double tonguing in the low register, which is required in the final five measures of the movement. (See Appendix A.) He pointed out that the low F<sup>1</sup> naturally occurs on the ‘tah’ syllable. “If your double tongue is strong enough, using it in the low register is not an issue. If you get down low and your double tongue doesn’t work, it is possible to briefly switch to a single tongue.” He addressed the quality of the last three notes of the movement, singing the length he preferred and saying that these notes need to be full and not like Stravinsky *staccatos*. This attention to style and detail, he said, would impress an audition committee. While coaching this excerpt, he stressed the need for developing flexibility that will allow the player to execute the passage at a wide variety of tempos while adhering to the printed articulations and maintaining the musical style of the excerpt.

As it turned out, his student was required to play this in an audition that was just days away, which prompted these final words: “If you must play this in an audition before your double tongue is really solid, play it confidently, with great verve, in your comfort zone, as if it were brighter. Do not push it and let it be sloppy.”

### Mozart *Marriage of Figaro* Overture

#### Synopsis of Clouser’s Written Responses to the Orchestral Excerpt Questionnaire

- Through this excerpt the player must confirm the ability to combine “seamless technical command over the register break along with dynamic control in the extreme soft within the classical style.”
- This excerpt is more difficult to play in an audition because it is much harder to convey the correct atmosphere without the strings playing in unison with the bassoon. He wrote, “The warts and imperfections, otherwise hidden by the strings, are exposed.”
- It is of utmost importance to direct the unfolding of this passage, treating it as a series of arrivals rather than departures.
- In order to play this piece well, the reed must be highly sensitive and not only be able to make subtle attacks but also to mask the differences in resistance over the break.
- Acceptable tempos for this overture vary widely. Also “the emergent, lighthearted solos must be played louder than they are marked.”

#### Live Coaching

The student played the first three measures before Clouser interrupted, saying that it sounded as if she were searching for the tempo in the first beat. She began a few more times, until both seemed satisfied with the speed and steadiness of the pulse. She played through the

downbeat of m. 24, and immediately replayed this same segment a second time before he commented again.

Clouser focused on the first 24 measures, knowing everything that pertained to these measures would also transfer to the similar passage in mm. 139 to 171. He led her through a series of preparatory exercises that he designed, showing her how to practice these and later incorporate them into the musical fabric of the excerpt.

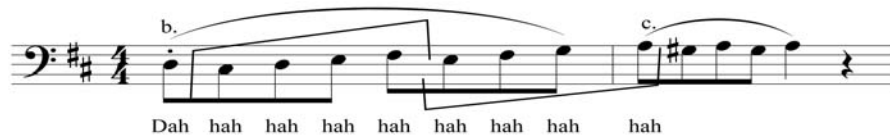
Clouser described this excerpt as a series of arrivals and departures in which the first group of five notes in m. 1 and the last group of five in m. 3 (similarly, mm. 18, 139 and 156) are gestures “that go away.” He continued, “The flaw is that bassoonists often place a slight *tenuto* on the first eighth note of each five-note group. It cannot sound as if there is a *tenuto* on the very first D. That is not what you want. It is at cross-purposes with what the strings will do. Usually they crush the first two notes.”

He recommended becoming “really comfortable” with the five-note motives in mm. 1 and 3. He sang the first grouping and the final one in the third measure, applying the syllables as shown in Example 2a, several times very slowly and then progressively faster and faster until he achieved performance tempo. “I always think them in my mind before I play the piece.” He had her oscillate between the two, playing one then the other, saying, “That is the shape of it. That is musically correct. Evenness is the key. Then speed it up.” Clouser likened mm. 1 and 3 to bookends that frame a middle section, measure 2, where the middle section is a bridge that connects the two bookends as shown in Example 2a.

Example 2a: Mozart *Marriage of Figaro* Overture excerpt, mm. 1-3. Exercise 1.



Example 2b: Mozart *Marriage of Figaro* Overture excerpt, mm. 2-3. Exercise 2.



He explained that it is best to think of the bridge as two groups of four notes—C-sharp<sup>2</sup> D<sup>2</sup> E<sup>2</sup> F-sharp<sup>2</sup> and E<sup>2</sup> F-sharp<sup>2</sup> G<sup>2</sup> A<sup>2</sup>—where each group represents an arrival. Isolating the thirteen notes in mm. 2-3, he said, “Play the D<sup>2</sup> separately. Then play the C-sharp<sup>2</sup> D<sup>2</sup> E<sup>2</sup> F-sharp<sup>2</sup> and E<sup>2</sup> F-sharp<sup>2</sup> G<sup>2</sup> A<sup>2</sup>” as shown in Example 2b. He had his student play the four-note groups repeatedly, beginning well under tempo and then gradually taking it faster. He was uncompromising, scrutinizing each group. He rewarded her each time she played a grouping without any hint of unevenness by saying, “I’ll buy that.”

According to Clouser, the next step in the process is to add in the D<sup>2</sup>, removing articulation and the delay between the D and the C-sharp<sup>2</sup>. “Do it on the breath. ‘Dah hah hah hah hah.’ This reduces the time factor of the articulation.” (See example 2b.) He sang it faster and faster still. Then he had her incorporate the ascending four-note figure, adding it to the first D<sup>2</sup> in m. 2, first slowly and then faster and faster. “Now it is a matter of gestation time and practice. I would take it deliberately, plodding through it until it takes on an intuitive nature without even thinking about it. I would play these groupings in ‘slow mo’ because this cuts corners in terms of practice time. Of course, I am reducing what is a lot of bump and grind woodshedding to a few seconds of explanation.

“In the process of doing these two exercises one reduces and eventually eradicates the change in direction. I think change of direction is a real challenge in music anyway. For some reason it is really hard.” To illustrate the relative ease of thinking about m. 2 as a series of arrivals rather than two changes of direction, he sang the contrasting versions back to back. Then



he reinforced the concept by singing contrasting versions of a longer, unrelated sequential passage that incorporated multiple changes of direction. “If you trick the brain into thinking that you are going towards something, it makes it more palpable in a physical sense. Somehow, in a physical way, it is understood. It makes it easier. When you think of it this way, it is always more even from the outset.

“Don’t do it scatty (i.e. applying dotted-eighth, sixteenth rhythms). Practicing this with uneven rhythm will only reinforce the tendency of the fingers to jump and not be smooth. Changing the emphasis of the beat, for instance playing it in triplets, may be of some help. However, what works best and is most efficient for me is to think about it as a series of arrivals.

“Even and deliberate. As it speeds up, the player has to reduce the time between the first note ( $D^2$ ) and the notes leading to the arrival. Do it ‘slow mo’ and begin factoring in velocity. Your goal is to create a buffer zone between your intellectual understanding and your neurological command of it until what is fast seems like slow motion to you. Eventually, it all just seems as if it is happening at a rather languid pace.

“Recognize that there is no difference between the musical concept and its audible execution. Some people are hardwired at a very talented level. Sure, some people have faster fingers and get around it better. However, the primary reason that some things come more easily to some people is that they understand things more quickly. This (he wiggled his fingers) follows this (pointing to his brain). The important thing is to think about it correctly.”

Ravel *Bolero*

Synopsis of Clouser's Written Responses to the Orchestral Excerpt Questionnaire

- This excerpt requires a fluid command of the high register and it pinpoints rhythmic precision. It also asks the bassoonist to convey a multifaceted expressive palette.
- He recommends making the sixteenth note the fundamental rhythmic unit.
- He advocates creating “loop” exercises over the highest and most complicated sections.
- He chooses a reed that is “relatively covered and warm-sounding. Of course, “it must be strong in the high register.”
- In his words, “This solo is more difficult to play in the orchestra than in an audition. Live performance demands greater control of dynamics, especially in playing softly. The player must gage the dynamic of the bassoon solo in relationship to the clarinet and flute solos that precede it. It feels naked.”

Live Coaching

The student played the entire excerpt. Clouser paused a moment and said, “Before I comment on anything specific about how you played it, I want to say something about the whole excerpt. Contrary to what a lot of people do, the only way to play this excerpt is to remove reliance on the snare drum.” He said that relying on the snare drum’s rhythmic pattern, which he had done years earlier, doesn’t help the player because in reality it only subdivides the beat into eighth notes. Instead the player must think in sixteenth-note subdivisions, focusing on an inner pulse to keep the quarter note steady, making certain that the sixteenth notes never alter the quarter-note pulse. “Thinking of the sixteenth note yields a better outcome than thinking about the snare drum or the broader pulse. It is a great way to start.

“You began this a bit slow and I noticed that it [the tempo] crept up a little as you went along. I find that this solo is always a bit faster than what is in the comfort zone—even when it is on the slow side. So you want to set your tempo very clearly before you begin.”

He said that the first phrase should not be energized, as the student first played it. Rather, this intensity should be reserved for the second phrase. While the printed dynamic is *mezzo forte*, Clouser advised taking into account one’s colleagues in the clarinet and flute section, whose ability to play supremely softly and still make a beautiful, credible and convincing musical line necessitates that the bassoonist play a dynamic lesser than the marking. “I think a proration of the bassoon solo is needed here. If you crash the gate, beginning the solo over and above the sub-tone of the clarinet, it sounds inappropriate. It sounds bombastic.

“Rather, start light in a covered manner, floating over the high C while still following the line. The accent emerges from the texture because the music is not all that intense. Within this you need to reach for the C and make it sound a little special.”

He said that the player should not make any *crescendo* prior to the first accent. Any increase in the volume should occur between the G<sup>3</sup> and the B-flat<sup>4</sup> in the second measure of the solo. Also, in the final beat of the second measure, the sixteenth notes should not be compacted as this would ‘crush’ the third B-flat<sup>4</sup>. The student repeated the first phrase in whole or in part many times, trying to weave these ideas into the musical fabric. Several times, Clouser commented that there was a middle ground between expressing an idea and exaggerating it. He succinctly summarized with the words, “The ultimate goal is to play a melody that really lives.

“The second phrase is where the music really ‘ramps up’ the intensity. It is the first saucy statement in the piece. You have to make sure that the tempo doesn’t get slower. The triplets are hard to do—a three against four. There are two places in this excerpt [mm. 7 to 8 after Square 2

and mm. 11 to 13 after Square 2] where you have to move through rhythmic changes: duple, triple and then fours. Both of these are traps.”

Clouser stated that in an attempt to be expressive many players elongate the eighth notes immediately preceding the triplet causing the overall tempo of the excerpt to slow. “In this excerpt, it is worth spending a lot of time on keeping the quarter-note pulse absolutely steady while making sure that you reveal the sauciness and the expressiveness of the music as you want it, without changing the tempo. There is no slack in the snare part and if it slows, all the conductor will end up doing is barking and giving you a hard time. As far as executing it with an unsteady pulse in an audition, the committee writes: ‘Rhythm?’ and sets your application to the side. Focus on this aspect.”

With regard to treatment of the notes with *staccato* dots and *tenuto* marks he sang, “Tah, tah, tah,” demonstrating the length and separation as well as the quality of the sound in the pickups to the fifth bar of the solo. “I would be very careful that they do not come out sounding hammered like accents. Save that for the triplet in the sixth measure that leads to the first of two accented D-flat<sup>4</sup>s. This note is a little more resistant, so you want a little more vibrato to show the sauciness. Then, with the third D-flat<sup>4</sup> at the beginning of the seventh measure, the player has to make the note speak clearly without accenting it.” As the student attempted to incorporate these ideas into the phrase, Clouser asked her for less freedom across the triplet. He also asked the player to avoid pushing forward as the line descends through the accented G<sup>3</sup> to the E<sup>3</sup>. Here, Clouser sang the sixteenth-note subdivisions, highlighting the necessity to keep the exact note length of the E<sup>3</sup> and to preserve the rhythmic integrity of the measure before proceeding to the third phrase.

“Also your E<sup>3</sup> is a little on the low side, which means that you really need to support there. I believe this warrants a word about how to treat pitch in this excerpt. There are pitch pitfalls in this excerpt with notes that have definite pitch tendencies on the bassoon. Obviously, you want to solve this as much as is possible. But if you have a note that is a little on the high side, don’t follow it by playing the next note on the low side. You want to temper it a bit. What you need to do in an audition is to prorate the pitch.”

The mood shifts abruptly with the advent of the third phrase wherein the intensity of the second phrase has disintegrated into “something more akin to an *Alborado del grazioso* style—a plaintive, a sort of romantic notion of crooning—gentle but pressing with vibrato,” said Clouser. From the outset he focuses on the ascending line eight measures before Square 3, which goes from D<sup>3</sup> to E<sup>3</sup>, momentarily turns back to D<sup>3</sup> and then ascends through E<sup>3</sup> to F<sup>3</sup>. In the second measure of the third phrase, the music changes from duple divisions into triplets and then into sixteenths. This is the second rhythmic “trap” that he mentioned earlier. He implored his student not to stylize the triplet, encouraging her to keep it pure. “The separation between triplet notes that have dots and *tenuto* marks on them needs to be done on the breath and not accented. I would err on the side of caution—not trying to be too expressive—so that the audition committee really hears this as a triplet. It still needs to be very melodic. The triplet cannot be too separated from what precedes and follows it. Hanging onto this idea makes the music come alive.

“The accent that upsets the apple cart comes in the third measure of the third phrase. You can ‘wind’ the accent, but make sure it is in the right place without giving it away during the three sixteenth notes that precede it.” Furthermore, he asked her to spin the accented note and partially resolve it by dissipating the energy and vibrato before going on.

In this final phrase, he noted that the student was “winding” notes that had a value greater than a sixteenth note. “Don’t show your ties with the breath. I think in the opening phrase you are also showing the ties just a bit. You can think it, but don’t show it with your breath.” He said that it is particularly tempting to show the ties with the breath when thinking the sixteenth-note subdivision; however, to do so is undesirable.

Clouser recommended playing the final phrase, which begins on the accented F<sup>2</sup> four measures before Square 3, simply—“not too insipid or saccharin. Begin simple and more on the dark side. It should still have vibrato that moves the line forward. The audience should be left with the overall impression that the music is gentle and singing as it comes to a close.”

He also emphasized that one should pay attention to rhythmic accuracy and play the tied notes exactly as indicated, allowing the intensity to dissipate as the third phrase descends through the E-flat<sup>2</sup> and D-flat<sup>2</sup> ultimately coming to rest on the C<sup>2</sup>. This C<sup>2</sup>—the final note of the solo—should be held for five sixteenths, which he demonstrated by singing the sixteenth-note subdivision. He described the quality, length and release of the final C<sup>2</sup> as “kissing beat two.”

### Rimsky-Korsakov *Schéhérazade*

#### Synopsis of Clouser’s Written Responses to the Orchestral Excerpt Questionnaire

- “This excerpt is included on the audition list because it requires a widely varied and ‘capricious’ expressive palette. It must have character, not caricature. There are pitch challenges and the cadenzas are an extraordinary technical challenge.”
- There are no significant differences between playing this in an audition and playing it in the orchestra. It is easier to gain inspiration from the context of the piece in the orchestra than in an audition where the individual must provide it from within.

- However, to play this well in an audition, “the player must be able to imagine the orchestral context and play within this framework.”
- The slow movement is mostly conceptual. To increase the fluidity of the cadenzas, he has students play exercises built on the actual passages.
- He does nothing special with his reed for this excerpt.

### Live Coaching

After the student played through the excerpt, Clouser commented that she was “on to something” in her attempt to show different characters. Then he led her through a step-by-step interpretation, discussing the various options and the rationale for his interpretive decisions.

“The beginning phrase needs to reflect a certain ignorance of what is to come. This is accomplished by playing the grace note melodically to lead the listener in. The first statement needs to be innocent and simple. The sound needs to be velvety, covered, with less vibrato.” The player replayed the phrase, moving closer to what Clouser had in mind. He continued: “While there are three groups of two sixteenths followed by an eighth note, these must be linked together to reflect a single, overarching line.” The player made several attempts until he felt she had captured the soundscape, line, dynamic and articulation suitable for the beginning.

The B<sup>3</sup> in m. 5 (counting from where the meter changes to 3/8) must finish the first phrase and then somewhere within it become agitated and energized preparing the second phrase. As the B<sup>3</sup> makes this transformation, “the player needs to give a clear internal downbeat from which to spring and propel the music forward.

Example 3: Rimsky-Korsakov *Schéhérazade* excerpt, phrases 1 and 2



“This second phrase should reflect a pizzazz and flippancy that strongly contrasts the character of the opening,” he said. His student accomplished this, playing the accents and *staccato* marks in a percussive, pointed, more aggressive manner with a louder dynamic. He also advocated playing the E<sup>3</sup> D<sup>3</sup> and C-sharp<sup>3</sup> in m. 4 without pressing forward and taking a “hair” more time with the B<sup>3</sup> to use it as a “springboard” for the shift in character. He added that playing this phrase with some *rubato* instead of just rolling forward would undoubtedly amplify the “sauciness,” making the phrase sound a bit more unpredictable. He had her replay the second phrase a number of times until she achieved the strident, frenetic and agitated quality he wanted. Clouser observed that mm. 1 through 5 were perhaps still too energized and m. 6 too reserved. He said that she could achieve maximal contrast by lessening the intensity in mm. 1 through 5 and increasing it even more in m. 6. To achieve the necessary contrast “you must sound as if you lost your mind. Even become schizoid [here].”

At the end of the second phrase, Clouser agreed with his student’s decision to step back slightly from that breathless intensity using the final sixteenth notes in m. 9 to once again set up the pivotal role of the B<sup>3</sup>. “Here,” he stated emphatically, “that energized B<sup>3</sup>, which is at once angry and filled with angst, gives way to indecision as it ascends through the C-sharp<sup>3</sup> and D<sup>3</sup> to the E<sup>3</sup>.” He said that in m. 5 the B<sup>3</sup> becomes *agitato* and in m. 10 the B<sup>3</sup> “melts down and transitions to something that is a special moment.”



In sharp contrast to the frenzy of the preceding phrase, the third phrase becomes plaintive: “It is as if the character were asking for deliverance,” explained Clouser. “Here the accents are not pointed as in the second phrase, but rather a *détaché*—a *portamento*—if you will.” He sang the first notes of the passage using the syllables, “Pum, pum, pee,” which demonstrated the note shape, direction and degree of separation he had in mind, and simultaneously indicated the musical gesture with his hand as well.

He noted that there is an important interpretive decision to make about this next section, beginning with the pickups to m. 12. “I have played it with conductors who wanted two loud statements and then two soft statements, and that’s okay. But I think it is just as legitimate and more capricious to play loud/soft, loud/soft. To make m. 16 a restatement that begins softly doesn’t make much sense to me, especially because of the accent and *crescendo*, which seem to need to be more ‘out’ to be compelling.” Both interpretations are shown in Example 4. He explained that the dynamic shifts between loud and soft must be *subito*, “changed on a dime” and not telegraphed, giving any hint of the shift in dynamic that is to come. She played it again and he re-emphasized the need for an immediate shift in the dynamic. He also pointed out that

Example 4: Rimsky-Korsakov *Schéhérazade* excerpt, mm. 10-19

OR

the eighth-note pulse should remain relatively constant throughout an entire phrase without “haphazardly speeding up and slowing down” [as she had done] across the four sixteenth notes in m. 12, “which is unnecessary and makes the music seem too fractured.”

Clouser said that the effectiveness of the two loud/soft statements hinges on the dramatic shift, pitting loud and intense against quiet and lyric while the tempo stays basically the same. He asked the student not to think of the shift between the loud and soft as a change in tempo, but merely “as taking a bit more time.” She played it again several times with him wanting the loud phrases to be fuller with more air and the soft sections to be as quiet as possible to maximize the contrast.

He explained that if the tempo fluctuated too much in the two loud/soft phrases, then the drama of the last phrase—where one needs to take the time—is ruined. “The last statement should be fuller, with a bit more vibrato, more expansive, stretched.” At his request, she began near the end of the first phrase. She played fuller, stretching the first group of triplet sixteenth notes, but then played the second group in the measure before Square A quickly. Instead, Clouser urged her to stretch these sixteenth notes as she brought the excerpt to a close. She worked this out, playing it several times. “You must communicate that it is winding down, becoming plaintive and lyrical. It must be apparent that this is altogether different from what we have heard before.”

The strategy throughout the coaching was to have the player grasp one phrase at a time, having her replay the new section from an earlier point in the excerpt in order to reinforce the learning process by repetition with each new phrase building on the past. Each time the player returned to an earlier place in the music, Clouser pressed the student to recapture the full emotional content from wherever she began playing. Having covered the whole excerpt, he

asked the student to play through the excerpt without stopping as she had in the beginning. He exclaimed, “I have given you a lot of elements to think about and you have put it together nicely.”

Turning to the cadenzas, he had her play all three. Then, after sharing his thoughts on their interpretation, he had her play all or a portion of a cadenza one or more times. When it seemed that she grasped the concept and either a) knew what steps were necessary to implement it, or b) could immediately integrate the idea into the musical fabric, Clouser moved to a different aspect of the interpretation. He focused on the following: the three cadenzas taken as a whole; the first two cadenzas; the specific challenges in the second cadenza; and lastly, the final cadenza. Without taking into account any musical intuition on the part of the player, he covered various aspects of performing the cadenzas, underscoring the need to move beyond technical considerations to an interpretation that conveys the drama of the music.

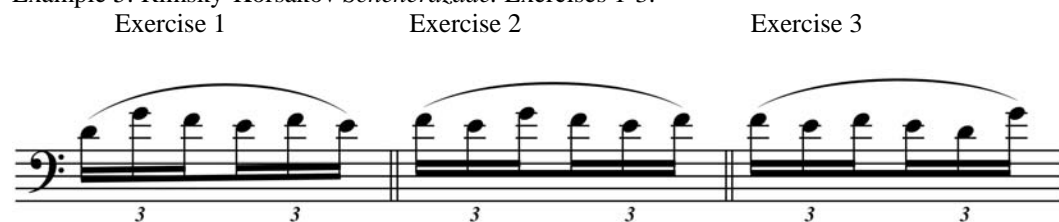
Many people play the opening notes of each cadenza successively firmer and broader with each fermata longer, said Clouser. He rejects this louder, longer interpretation based on his belief that doing so creates neither a greater tension nor a greater anticipation of what is to come. “I do play the last one fuller and a little louder. The last one of the three is spun more—with the faster parts faster and more intense, taking a bit longer to make the *decrescendo* on the fermata.” Despite the fact that the first two notes, which are pickups to the fermata on the half-note F<sup>3</sup>, are written as a quarter-note triplet across two beats wherein the first third of the triplet is silent, Clouser explained that audience and conductors alike are accustomed to hearing the first three pitches of each cadenza as “‘Bahm, bum, bee’ without observing the three-against-two cross rhythm.” He put in plain words that conductors did not react well to his experiments with a literal

execution of the notated rhythm. “Consequently, you should go with the expectation and not something ‘fancy.’”

With the first two cadenzas, Clouser guided the player through various combinations of volume, note length and speed until she could achieve a convincing sense of direction through the first three notes of each. He was emphatic in asking that the player write in her music how many times to play each group of notes, pointing out that both end alike—with strength and not phrased down (i.e. softer or less intense). “It stays intense the whole way—not becoming pretty, or sentimental or schmaltzy.”

The second cadenza presents challenges with regard to response and connection between the  $D^3$  and  $G^3$ . Clouser said to resist the inclination to play it again and again. Instead isolate the interval and switch how one thinks of and practices groups of notes. He suggested several practice exercises as shown in Example 5. He also encouraged the student to make up her

Example 5: Rimsky-Korsakov *Schéhérazade*. Exercises 1-3.



own practice exercises—ones that were more challenging than the excerpt. He likened it to “‘shuffling a deck.’ This mixes it up, sending a different message to the fingers, altering where you think the goals are.”

To summarize, Clouser said that he plays the first three notes of the final cadenza a bit more insistently, paying special attention to the  $E^3$  and lingering a bit longer on the fermata. After the fermata, he noted the remainder of the cadenza consists of two identical 12-note patterns before going into the conclusion as shown in Example 6.

Example 6: Rimsky-Korsakov *Schéhérazade* cadenzas, Square L to Square M

Recit. Moderato assai

lento Solo

*f* *p* *cresc.* *poco rit.* *tempo*

*lunga* *accel.* *cresc.* *poco rit.* *tempo*

*lunga* *accel.* *cresc.* *Conclusion* *rit. molto* *tempo*

The player needs to see the final cadenza as being the same as the second cadenza, but with the addition of six notes—two groups of sixteenth-note triplets,  $E^3-D^3-E^3-D^3-E^3-F^3$  as shown in Example 6. Another issue is deciding whether or not to shift into a trill fingering for the  $E^3-D^3-E^3$  triplet as Clouser does. To make this a viable solution within the *accelerando*, the player must make the switch as imperceptible as possible. In order to achieve this, Clouser had the player alternate between the normal and the trill fingerings while concentrating on matching pitch and color. He advised the player to reserve the *agitato* for the six-note pattern that begins on  $G^3$  and is repeated three times as indicated in the portion marked Conclusion. “The last  $G^3$  pattern has to have a lot of drama, especially near its end, where it is marked *rit. Molto*; it is not fast.”

He likened the final cadenza to “getting a large truck up to speed and then hitting the brake all of the sudden and having it chatter to a stop.” He recommended leaning on the final  $D^3$  with great intensity and vibrato and then concluding very deliberately by making the sixteenth note to the downbeat articulate, clear and clean. “You want to get the eye of the conductor and

make sure you are on the same page. You will give the downbeat and it will still be fractious, and then the whole orchestra will come in. But, at least, you will give the conductor a fighting chance of knowing where the downbeat is going to be. It may be that it is a joint effort between you and the conductor. The point of it is that you want the ensemble to be as good as it can be. You will want to have eye contact there.

“Try the last cadenza one last time, just for shape, making the opening F<sup>3</sup> the loudest note. Now work on finger efficiency. Also, it cannot stay sort of *mezzo*. It must grow dynamically to the end. I have the sense that you are preoccupied with just getting the passage without thinking about the drama of the *crescendo*. While both are important, I think I would almost choose the *crescendo* over the speed. Obviously, you cannot have one without the other.

“Once you finish the cadenzas don’t get lost in contemplating how they went. Remember, you have a solo only a few bars later. You must count and think. You must remain engaged; otherwise you are going to have a really big secondary error as you realize that you are supposed to be playing and there is nothing there.”

As he finished coaching the opening section and the cadenzas, Clouser had helped the student discover the “widely varied and capricious” expressive palette, which he also mentioned in the orchestral excerpt questionnaire. He had also affirmed the need to play in a manner that clearly communicates the drama of the music.

### Stravinsky *The Rite of Spring*

#### Synopsis of Clouser’s Written Responses to the Orchestral Excerpt Questionnaire

- This excerpt is included on audition lists because it requires a command of the high register and a correct sense of expression. He answered, “It can be neither too warm nor

too juicy. Rather, it must exude a primal and elemental quality—a sense of the cosmos taking shape.”

- There are no substantial differences between how one plays this in an audition as opposed to the orchestra. He wrote, “In live performance, there is of course interaction between the other voices. I specifically train my students to use their imagination to fill that void in absentia.”
- Clouser makes specific practice suggestions to ensure that proper rhythmic relationships occur between the eighth note, triplet, sixteenth note and quintuplet divisions of the beat. He also urges students to “deconstruct” and reconstruct the various musical elements, particularly in the second phrase.
- This solo requires a reed that favors the high register. He suggested using a reed that is a slight bit longer and one scrape short of being “finished.”
- In rethinking his experiences playing this in the orchestra, he commented, “Any solo that begins a piece ‘cold’ is intimidating—perhaps more than is justified.”

### Live Coaching

Clouser began by having the student play the entire excerpt. He asked, “What do you think of this reed?”

“Not good at all,” she replied.

To which he responded, “Reed notwithstanding, let’s get closer to the sound. It should not sound like a saxophone. It sounds like you are underplaying the excerpt. After the opening note, as you develop the idea, it actually sounds like you are getting weaker and weaker when it should be fleshing out. You are taking too much time. There should be freedom here, but you are slowing down. There is too much flexibility and too much liberty after the second fermata. The

subdivision of the beat needs to be more predictable and referential.” In the second measure after Square 1, he indicated that the phrase should end “like you have just thrown a ball up in the air.” He said that the C<sup>4</sup> following the G-flat<sup>3</sup> should be shorter, as in “dah it,” particularly because of the *accelerando*.

Here, he changed his coaching strategy altogether. Instead of having the student replay any portion of the excerpt, as he had with the other excerpts, he dissected the excerpt from a theoretical viewpoint and did not ask her to play until he finished revealing his analysis of the structure and how the musical components relate to one another.

Clouser is convinced that the worst thing to do is repeatedly play the entire excerpt without practicing its constituent parts separately. He said that the player must understand that the structure emanates from a single motive. “The motive is consistent; it does not change musically in its interpretation or its musical content. It morphs through different rhythmic permutations; but again, it does not change its musical content or the way that it is phrased. I think it is safe to reduce the motive to its elements and think about them, unfettered by grace notes, which tend to complicate things and perhaps obfuscate the music if you are not careful.

“The tune is C B A. This is the skeleton. The rest connects the dots.” Clouser’s structural analysis of the opening is shown in Example 7. To strengthen his analysis that C<sup>4</sup> moves forward intensifying to the B<sup>4</sup>, and then lessens intensity as it descends to A<sup>3</sup>, he sang two other versions. In the first, he accentuated the B<sup>4</sup> with C<sup>4</sup> and A<sup>3</sup> noticeably softer. In the second, he made the A<sup>3</sup> the most prominent pitch and concluded by asking her if either of these interpretations sounded plausible. She indicated that neither was compelling. Again, he reiterated that C<sup>4</sup> intensifying to the B<sup>3</sup> and phrasing down to the A<sup>3</sup> is, in fact, “the framework from which the idea is developed by the addition of grace notes and rhythmic permutations.”



He explained that playing the first note [C<sup>4</sup>] with a “beautiful, warm, romantic tone with lots of vibrato”—as he sometimes hears in auditions—doesn’t work. “It is too human. This needs to sound inhuman, primal and evolutionary. He begins the initial C<sup>4</sup> with a soft and clear attack. This stems from his belief that a clean attack mirrors the imagery of the beginning of the cosmos, which has a definite moment in time. “I think it is fine to begin with a breath attack; I just don’t prefer it. You don’t want to give the impression of sneaking in. You don’t want the entrance to obscure the shape of the C. The C needs to have a shape. It starts at a point in time.” He shapes the C<sup>4</sup> by holding it for “two longish beats. That is the way I’ll define the fermata. The next four-note group is in keeping with this *lento rubato*.”

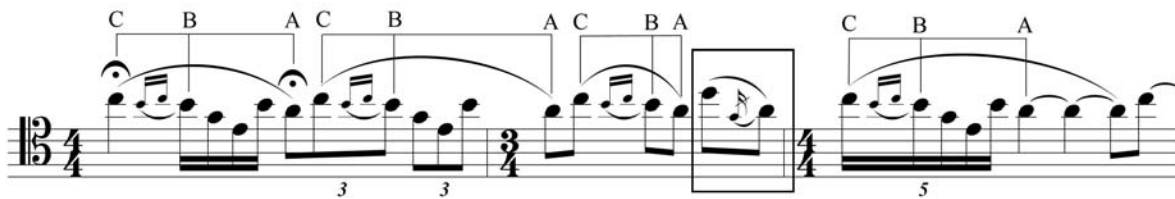
He referenced *Schéhérazade* and Shostakovich’s Symphony No. 9, which are also marked in ways that suggest great freedom. “*The Rite of Spring* is supposed to sound this way, but that is not the way to think of it. Stravinsky bothers to write rhythm; therefore, it is not an ‘anything goes.’ There is a referential rhythm. The idea is to make it sound free and have an element of freedom within. This turns out to be anything but free because you have to plan it out beforehand. The player needs to know how to execute the technique...how to make the rhythm referentially coherent as well as how to choose the right tempo and keep it steady. For example, ‘How long are you going to sit on the A<sup>3</sup> where it is tied and the English horn comes in?’ Like the opening C<sup>4</sup>, I hold the fermata two long beats [in the measure before Square 3].

“The opening C<sup>4</sup> begins in a very distant manner, a piano or pianissimo, depending on the hall. Intensify to the B and then phrase down, losing intensity to the A. Here, I give myself beat three from which to play the broken triplet. There is no emphasis on the triplet that begins on the G (the final beat of the first measure). Remember the outline is C B A, which is why you don’t want this triplet to stick out. You must continue phrasing down from the C to the B, and then to

the A.” He recommended placing a *tenuto* on the first sixteenth note B<sup>4</sup> and a lesser one on the second sixteenth-note B<sup>4</sup> in the first measure. “The grace notes always belong to the note afterward and they have direction toward this. Wherever it occurs, it goes through the two grace notes to the B<sup>4</sup>.” For each of the B<sup>4</sup>-C<sup>4</sup> grace notes throughout the excerpt, he illustrated by singing, ‘Buh dah Yah,’ emphasizing that without exception the grace notes lead to the B<sup>4</sup>.

He explained that to make a *crescendo* from the A<sup>3</sup> into the D<sup>4</sup> in the second measure is errant because the player is using the *crescendo* to cover for the insecurity of attacking the high D. “Elsewhere, it might make perfect sense to prepare the high note from the lower note, but in this phrase it does not make sense structurally. The phrase is C B A and [the three-note motive] D<sup>4</sup>G<sup>3</sup>A<sup>3</sup> is parenthetical. It is the only statement that is not like the others. It needs to sound as if it is interrupting this tune.” (A box, highlighting this three-note motive is shown in Example 7.)

Example 7: Stravinsky *The Rite of Spring*, mm. 1-3. Structural Analysis.



“Rhythmically it goes from four, through three, to two and then ultimately five divisions of the quarter note. The D<sup>4</sup>G<sup>3</sup>A<sup>3</sup> needs to be relatively straightforward. The high D<sup>4</sup> should be up again phrasing down to the A<sup>3</sup>. It should take very little time before coming back to the tune.” He explained that the quintuplet is part of the C B A tune. “I don’t think of it as being more technical or faster. I just think of it as a shortened C, thereby extending it into five divisions rather than playing in a faster flurry. Again, it phrases down. It loses its steam. This is the most natural of the phrases to appear in the piece thus far. From the outset of the excerpt, you must make it possible for the listener to discern that four sounds different from three, two, and five. I

breathe after the tied A in the third measure. Then it goes on at Square 1 with much greater direction. Before, it was in some sort of suspended animation. Usually Square 1 is the place where the conductor takes control. I play the pickup without including it in my counting. I begin subdividing on the first quarter-note beat—‘one tee tah two’—of the 2/4 bar, and continue the eighth-note triplet subdivision through the first beat of the 3/4 measure, being especially careful to start the *accelerando* exactly where it is marked. Some people smuggle in the *accelerando* during the first measure of Square 1 and that is not what is written.” He sang, making the *accelerando* in the measure before it is indicated, and then demonstrated the correct rhythm.

“You need to keep the tempo referentially consistent whether you are thinking an eighth-note, triplet or even the broader quarter-note unit.” He showed the steadiness of his beat, simultaneously singing the excerpt and clapping the pulse from Square 1 through the second measure of Square 1. “Just make sure that you don’t ‘go off to the races’ at Square 1. We are trying to give Stravinsky his due and credibility by making the *accelerando* where he marked it. As I said earlier, I subdivide in beat one. Believe it or not, the first time I ever played this excerpt was in the Cleveland Orchestra with [Christoph von] Dohnányi conducting. We got to that bar and he conducted in that subdivision, remembering that the second beat of the 3/4 bar is a two against three.”

He turned from the theoretical to the pragmatic steps involved in executing and interpreting the excerpt. He suggested an exercise that uses only the notes shown in Example 8.

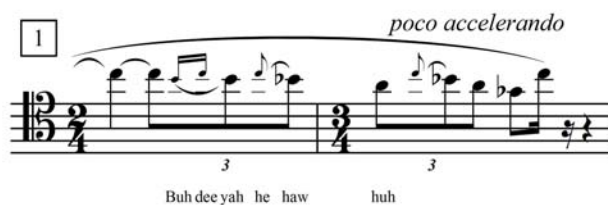
This is a reduction that emphasizes the first note of each division in the triplet.

Example 8: Stravinsky *The Rite of Spring*      Example 9: Stravinsky *The Rite of Spring*  
Exercise 1      Exercise 2



“Get comfortable with playing this stripped down version in tempo. Then decide what the *accelerando* should sound like—connect with it intellectually, physically, and spiritually.” He stressed that the player needed to be so convinced by the interpretation of the *accelerando* that it could be repeated reliably. “Then you can start to work on the technique of it, working with the ‘gingerbread’ of it, so to speak. The grace notes and rhythms are not as hard as one might fear them to be.” Clouser suggested a second exercise created by removing the embellishments from m. 3. “This is one problem to solve. Measure 3 is the fourth time the B-C grace notes appear, and assuming that one has made this element reliable in the preceding bars, it is just the same. You should break what remains down into its elements. The sixteenth-note triplet within the triplet and the grace note C B-flat<sup>4</sup> [shown in Examples 9 and 10] are a little different.” He sang m. 4 from the B<sup>4</sup>-C<sup>4</sup> grace notes to the first note of the ¾ bar, omitting the second and third parts of the sixteenth-note triplet as shown in Example 10.

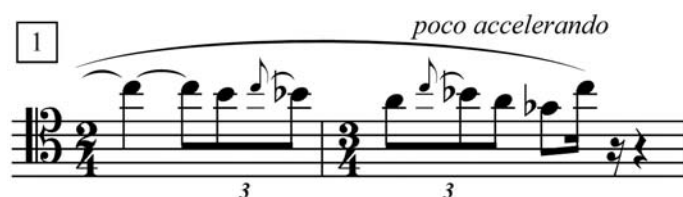
Example 10: Stravinsky *The Rite of Spring*. Exercise 3



Playing the same passage minus the familiar B-C grace notes and with a single B<sup>4</sup> replacing the sixteenth-note triplet was another variation he suggested as well as demonstrated by singing as shown in Example 11. He said that this would help the player become facile with the C<sup>4</sup> grace note going to the B-flat<sup>4</sup> in mm. 3 and 4. He encouraged the player to practice every variation of this passage that she could devise. When put back into context, he assured her that all the elements would fit together “like pieces in a puzzle.” He insisted that the fourth measure

ceases to be intimidating as the player becomes more facile with the grace notes and other elements. Also, if a player resists making an *accelerando* at Square 1, “the unbridled sense of rhythmic abandonment” is replaced by a predictable, steady pulse.

Example 11: Stravinsky *The Rite of Spring*. Exercise 4



“All you have to add is one more grace note,” he said, referring to the C<sup>4</sup> that precedes B-flat<sup>4</sup> going to A<sup>3</sup>, “which spills into and is repeated in the first quarter-note beat of m. 5. These belong to the same musical gesture. Musically speaking, they are like spitting or sticking out your tongue. It should be saucy with the blue note [B-flat<sup>4</sup>] emphasized. Now I am thinking not only about the elements and rhythms, but also about how it spins out musically. Don’t cheat the first A<sup>3</sup> in the ¾ bar. Most often, I hear people not being able to prorate the triplet through the *accelerando*. What is written on the page makes sense with what has come before. There are three eighth notes in the triplet, and they must be prorated in the *accelerando*. Students make a big mistake when they don’t play the eighth note within the triplet in a predictable way. The music ends up becoming erratic and sounds sloppy. If you live with it, gain control of its elements, hang it on its subdivisions and put the *accelerando* in the right place, you should become comfortable that this portion is ‘in tow.’”

The goal is to simulate the orchestral experience in one’s mind during an audition, said Clouser. He explained how the bassoon line fits into the ensemble in this opening passage (refer to the first page of the score shown in Appendix A). He asked his student to listen to—or in the case of an audition, hear in her mind—the other instruments. He also told her what to expect

from the conductor and how to navigate the remainder of the excerpt. After the second eighth note in measure five, he said that the bassoonist must listen to the clarinets, letting them sit on the last note, which has a fermata. He said that the conductor would look at the bassoonist, inviting her to enter on the  $C^4$  (four measures before Square 2) and then go on in tempo. Clouser suggested that the student play with a hint of *rubato*, but without projecting too much rhythmic liberty. This leads to the long  $A^3$  where the bassoonist must listen to the English horn. “On the fermata, give the English horn player a chance to taper the note before going on. The bassoon solo resumes *a tempo*, but it is still expressive.” When the  $D^4G^3A^3$  gesture reappears, he said that it is played as before. Similarly, the two quintuplets are handled identically. The second time the  $A^3$  continues into the *piu mosso*, and in an audition the bassoonist typically plays through the third measure of Square 3.

The student attempted to apply all that Clouser had explained. She played through the second  $A^3$  of the second measure. “Keep the grace notes the same. Record yourself. You have a concept in mind. The question then becomes: ‘Am I actually communicating it?’ You listen and say to yourself, ‘Gee, I am not.’ Here, you can be your own best critic, asking, ‘What must I do to make sure that the listener hears what I have in mind and not just what I feel I am doing?’”

She began the excerpt again. He suggested adding a little vibrato close to the end of the opening  $C^4$ . “I think that is what audition committees are used to hearing. Although I think that what you are playing is probably closer to the elemental sound that Stravinsky actually wanted. I treat the fermata on the  $A^3$  similarly to the beginning  $C^4$ —even though they are over different valued notes. Disappear more on the A, clearly phrasing. Then take a really deep breath to prepare for the second phrase.”

The student played the second phrase, which begins on the upbeat to Square 1. He said that she showed a good command of it, but he requested that she play *saucier* in the two places where the grace-note C<sup>4</sup> descends through B-flat<sup>4</sup> to A<sup>3</sup>. He also asked that there be “more sense of coming unglued through the *accelerando*. Let it finish up with a sort of tossed up feeling.” She repeated the second phrase. He exhorted her to develop the C<sup>4</sup>, beginning it softer and adding forward motion. He recommended that she play more *accelerando* because “audition committees are used to hearing a bit more *accelerando* in the  $\frac{3}{4}$  bar.

In addition, he asked the student to make the C<sup>4</sup> and B-flat<sup>4</sup> grace-note figures in mm. 3 and 4 equally crisp because as she played it, the first was “blurring a little from the triplet. Try freezing just that moment.” She isolated that musical fragment, replaying it until it met his satisfaction, emphasizing each note with the breath and not articulating the C and B-flat with the tongue. “Now plug that into the broader line with those B-flat blue notes sounding alike.” She played it with the grace-notes alike, but lost the triplet. “What this says to me is that you don’t have command over all the elements yet, but that you have the right ideas. Now it is a matter of woodshedding and living with it, letting it gestate a little bit, working with the elements individually for better command of them and how they relate to one another. You are only a little practice away from having it. That kind of attention to the music, how you think about leading it and solving the problems is how to go a long way in a short amount of time. It will be beautifully smooth and related and you will be really facile with what you can do with it. You will get to the audition and you won’t think, ‘What if I can’t do this?’ Instead, you will be thinking of the music—of the spice and the sauce of it—rather than being caught up in counting it and thinking of the *accelerando*. You won’t even have to think about the notes. From this point, I would turn you loose to solve the issues.”

He said that the reprise, which begins on the high C<sup>4</sup> at the end of the third beat of m. 6, is very similar to the opening. “Sing it. It is sort of a sentimental look back at that opening. I play it a little bit more freely than the second phrase because it is referential to the beginning, which is marked *ad lib*. This creates more of an impact than playing it strictly without any hint of *rubato*.”

He tied his final comments about the excerpt to his initial question about the reed she had chosen. “The first thing you need is a good reed. I make the same reed that I normally do; however, I leave it one scrape short of finished. I look for a reed that will give me a reliable and not percussive attack on the high C. The other thing it needs to do is to play a high D to G on a slur. That reed will have *The Rite of Spring* in it.”

#### Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 4, mvt. 2

#### Synopsis of Clouser’s Written Responses to the Orchestral Excerpt Questionnaire

- This excerpt is included in the audition repertoire because it shows the player’s ability to create a moment of great beauty that is very specific to an emotion. It is easy to miss the “right” emotion, which results in the excerpt falling flat and becoming a caricature.
- For the most part, the playing of this excerpt at an audition should mirror the live performance. However, in live performance the presence of the string harmony, especially in the second phrase allows, even demands, a full voice that is soft sounding. It requires an intensity that is gentle.
- A successful interpretation of this excerpt requires the player to have an appropriate concept of it and to understand its emotive content. There are specific technical traps for which he offers various suggestions to the player.
- A reed that produces a warm and covered sound is best for this excerpt.



- It is easier to play it within the surrounding harmonic content provided by the orchestra than to play it alone in an audition.

### Live Coaching

After the student played the excerpt, Clouser commended her for her breath control because she did not let the breathing challenges between the first two notes of m. 282 interrupt the musical line. However, he stated that his first impression was that her tempo was too fast. “Much like a Greek chorus the initial statement in the oboe is matter of fact—almost light hearted and coming after an emotional ‘cooling off’ period. In the middle, the strings begin setting up what is to come. The melody morphs through various incarnations. In the context of the entire movement, the player must show the emotional content of the bassoon’s final statement, which tells the listener that it doesn’t end so well.”

To better understand the underlying emotional content, Clouser compared the bassoon’s first phrase to an unwanted, yet intrusive memory of a painful event. He added that memory can portray an exaggerated emotional state that differs from present experience. By the second phrase, the music moves the listener from a memory to a state of reliving the painful experience and in so doing it takes on an even more tragic character, ultimately conveying a sense of defeat. To achieve this, he said, “The player must establish placidity at the outset, saving the angst for a bit later.” Clouser went on to explain that the excerpt must begin softly—a simple *dolce*—showing that it begins on an upbeat rather than a downbeat. “The first three notes must not be schmaltzy; otherwise, they would sound as if they are a caricature of the real thing.” He told the student to give herself a clear internal downbeat from which to play the three pick-up notes. Beginning softly and simply in the first phrase gives a player room to evolve as the phrase goes along. To this end, he had the student replay the first four notes multiple times until they

“floated, without intensity or pressing forward.” He recommended opening without vibrato, subtly phrasing down (i.e. decreasing intensity) from the  $F^3$  to the  $C^3$  at the beginning of m. 276. From there, the player should continue to subtly shape the phrase with dynamics in accordance with the rise and fall of the musical line. All the while, Clouser walked around the room, listening and gesturing. He told the player that she was emphasizing some notes and making them dominant when they really should be subordinate. If the player does this, he said, the music becomes stilted. The first phrase ends with the  $A^2$  downbeat of m. 282 and the player must quickly get rid of old air and take in ample air to sustain the phrase to its conclusion on the downbeat eighth note at m. 290.

“The second phrase, beginning with pick-up notes to m. 283, should be about a metronome click slower, with more air, vibrato and ‘more stuff in the sound’; this captures the *expressivo* and shows the pathos of the passage in its full development,” he stated. In order to solidify her playing of the two phrases, he asked that she move back to the opening phrase. He had her repeat the  $F^3$ s in m. 275, focusing on the spacing and intensity of the notes. He continued gesticulating showing the connection between the  $F^3$  and the  $C^3$ , as well as the connections from  $C^3$  to  $A^2$  and from  $C^3$  to  $F^2$  in subsequent measures. As the student began the second phrase, Clouser said, “Now you must feel it: experience the full emotional content, taking it to the next level, creating the rush of pathos with more air, playing the accented note with vibrato and without coming away after the repeated pitches. The last one in the sequence, beginning in m. 287, is problematic. The idea is to trick the listener with the repeated notes that lead into the hairpin *crescendo* and *decrescendo* (in mm. 288-289), following the line all the while and showing less commitment to the pathos than before instead of continuing the sequence as anticipated. Any coming back from the tempo must be a subtle thing. As it ends, the player must

think about the general pitch as well as the pitch tendencies of the individual notes based on how they fit into the scale from F descending to B-flat.

“In my experience, the fourth and fifth bars from the end of the movement must be relatively in tempo, matching the clarinet’s tempo in the previous phrase. The bassoon’s initial B-flat must be kept on the low side so the final F is in tune with it. This passage should not begin too softly. You need to have room for a *diminuendo*.” At this point he gave his special fingering for the F<sup>2</sup>, in which the E-flat and low D keys are added to the whisper key. “One must compensate for the change of fingerings [used] for the two final F<sup>2</sup>s. The special fingering allows the tone quality to become false. Compensate for this and match the color between the dullness of the C [in m. 300] and the brightness of the F [in mms. 301 through 305]. You must prorate the *decrecendo* across these final measures by supporting it and taking it to nothing. My experience is that some conductors want the F to continue though the fermata on beat two of the final measure. Others want it to end as printed. Your obligation is not to hold that note forever; however, audition committees have been very impressed by this because a lot of players come in and choke on that final passage. Otherwise it should be played ‘matter of fact.’”

### Interview

#### General Pedagogy

According to Clouser, his greatest responsibility as a teacher is giving students the tools to become self sufficient in their musical problem-solving. A major aspect of this is to teach students how to practice. “If I just sit and listen to them play things, it is almost useless. I am not doing my job if I am not teaching them how to practice.”

Clouser said that he does not have students “tackle the important excerpts from the outset.” When a student comes in as a freshman, he puts the student through a certain amount of fundamental technical practice. “I want them to play their scales, arpeggios, fundamental intervals, chromatic scales, and the Milde scale and arpeggio book. I put them through ‘Bassoon Fundamentals 101’ until I am satisfied that they are doing these correctly and that they are practicing correctly.”

The reason he “bypasses challenging students with excerpts that they have no hope of playing” is because he doesn’t want them “practicing incorrectly. Thinking correctly about solving technical problems so that solutions are coming to them...is essential. I want them to have a correct approach about how to think about technique. When I am sure that they are doing that well, I begin to challenge them with other things.

“I don’t want them throwing themselves ‘willy-nilly’ at excerpts that they don’t know how to begin to approach without solution-building techniques in place. That would be destructive. Consider this: if a student is not practicing something correctly, the student is practicing it wrongly. If the student is not achieving success with a given passage, the student is ensuring that he/she is going to play it wrong. The student is literally practicing failure. I do not want to send a student home to practice failure on *Figaro*.

“I am going to make sure that I have their mind at a receptive point. I don’t mean willingly receptive, which of course they are from the start or why would they be here? I mean they must be receptive to the point that they understand what I am talking about. So when I say ‘You need to do this with it’ I am sure that they are going to go do that rather than have no real idea what I am talking about, and...just take their best shot doing the wrong thing for a whole week. This would ensure that they are even further away from their success than before.”

Clouser does not use a four-year course of study that requires his students go through a prescribed list of etudes and excerpts in a predetermined fashion. The course of study is tailored to the person. However, in a broad sense, he does the same kinds of things with all his students. “The pace at which they go through material and the exact things that I will give them are based on their strengths and weaknesses.”

For example, Clouser had a student who had already worked through the Milde scale and arpeggio book to his satisfaction and had begun work on advanced etudes during the second semester of his freshman year. “I have other students who have taken two years to get to that point. I am not going to say, ‘We do this for a semester, and then we do that.’ We do it until it is right. If a student cannot get that, we stay there until the student does. I do not just drop it and move on to the next thing.”

Clouser’s strategy for teaching excerpts is twofold. He has a standard way of leading a student through an excerpt, and he addresses execution problems that require individual attention. “Problems that arise in any given excerpt are similar from student to student,” he said, adding that he has observed that these problems, which he once believed were only his, seem to be everyone’s. Consequently, ideas and exercises that have worked for him often “work across the board.” He introduces practice strategies and exercises to assist students in achieving maximum efficiency in the least possible time and also to solve issues specific to the individual player. Clouser believes that learning these excerpts entails preparing them in a manner that promotes a student’s chance for success in orchestral auditions. To achieve this, students must “embrace and develop an auditory context, honing their ability to imagine the context from which the excerpt arises while in a vacuum.”

Clouser does most of his teaching by talking. He seldom plays for his students while in the studio. “In one sense, I do play for my students weekly on the stage in Severance Hall. Most of my students come to the concerts every week. However, there are some instances when describing it cannot replace playing for them. When I a student cannot get an idea, I will pick up their instrument and play it on theirs, or I’ll play it on mine...when we do reed lessons, I will play some things for them.”

He believes in structuring lessons. Usually a student comes into the studio and begins playing scales that were assigned in a certain kind of pattern. “I use five-note exercises. I’ll tell them I want it this way, this way and this way. I’ll dictate the tempo. I’ll dictate articulations this way, this way and this way. I’ll poke around and prod them for evenness and I’ll challenge them to improve it this way, this way or that way. We’ll move from a five-note exercise to a scale. Usually it is pre-assigned. They’ll play the scale the way I want it. They will alter tempos the way I ask them to. They will change articulations the way I want them to. Then I will usually have them do an arpeggio or an arpeggio study, or both. In almost every lesson they will play an arpeggio and a scale study out of the Milde book. Often there will be something with attack exercises, and long tones, including crescendos and decrescendos, making diminuendos as well as using different kinds of vibrato. I often use the Kovar book for that. I will spend whole lessons even a semester on that stuff. Usually in the first semester and certainly in the second of their freshman year, I will have them prepare and perform a solo piece. Often I will use the Hindemith Sonata or the Telemann Sonata in F minor. The challenges are stylistic and related to control. These aspects are along the lines of what students are developing.”

Clouser said that the only piece of solo repertoire his freshman student would perform this year as the culmination of their work together was the Hindemith Sonata. “The rest of the

semester, he will work on the Telemann. So this year, he will do Hindemith and Telemann. He will have worked through the entire Milde book to my satisfaction, which is saying a lot. All the while, he will be doing exercises that I have written or ones that have been passed along to me.”

Clouser said that studio class is held every two weeks. However, when there is a big bassoon part in an orchestral piece at CIM, students have the opportunity to audition for it. “Also, to get out of CIM they have to play an excerpt exam for the wind faculty, which is like a mock audition and they are criticized as if it were a real audition. As it is setup right now, CIM does not hold mock auditions as part of wind class.”

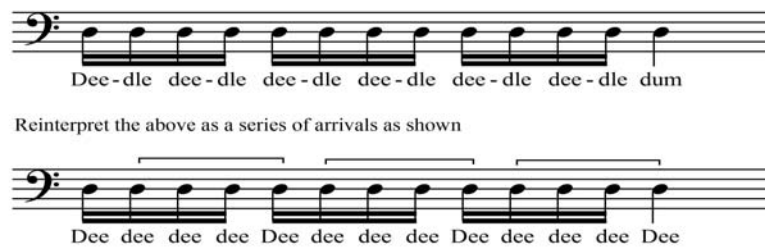
### Philosophy about Technique

Clouser takes a holistic approach to developing technique. He believes that people mistakenly think of technique in terms of how fast a person can move their fingers and their tongue. “It is also a brain function. How fast does your brain recognize what needs to happen and send that signal to your fingers? How efficiently does it do it? If you sit in front of a piece of music and play it in your mind, you should be acutely aware of when you have made a mistake. That is because your brain didn’t compute sending an efficient signal to your fingers. Shouldn’t that tell you something? It wasn’t your fingers that were the problem there. It was your brain.”

He asserts that the key to technique rests with developing the mind-muscle link on a neurological level. He said that technique rests on the efficacy of the brain to make a clear determination on “how to take the symbols on the page, compute them and send kinetic signals to the extremities of the body, so that the muscles receive the correct neurological impulses to actually do what they need to do to bring the symbols to life. That connect, or lack of connect, is the issue.”

Clouser recommends thinking about finger technique on the bassoon as a series of arrivals rather than departures.” He used syllables to show notes grouped in four sixteenth notes per quarter beat as departures. Then he explained how he wanted the student to think about, to hear and play the groups as a series of arrivals. (The two contrasting approaches are shown in Example 12.)

Example 12: Departures vs. Arrivals



“I want to hear a student play, ‘This goes to here, this goes to here, and then to here.’ That may sound simple, but I think there is a world of difference between the two in terms of how it sounds and how it trains your brain to look. If you can train your brain to see patterns efficiently, you can get it to the point where you can sit and read music, even the first time, and take the best routes to solve the technical problem. As your cognitive function gets better and better at recognizing patterns, it will seem like you have an eternity to assess this even though it is only milliseconds.

“Solutions are technical handholds. I think you are wise if you think about it the way a mountain climber thinks about plotting a route up a cliff face. It’s a series of achievable subsets, looking to a broader whole. If you spend all your time trying to make your fingers faster and you don’t address the cognitive functional issue, you are really wasting a lot of time.” To achieve maximal improvement, he said that a student must address the cognitive functional issue as well as work to increase the velocity of the tongue and/or the fingers.



“Problem solving is everything. In some ways, it is the most important talent. I have had students with lesser natural ability go further than students with greater ability—real tortoise and hare situations—because their problem-solving ability was greater. Every student comes to the edge of the precipice with their natural ability and looks across the void to success. Somehow they have to get across that gulf. The gulf is bigger or smaller depending on their natural ability. But, the gulf is always going to be there. If there’s a gulf – and there is going to be a gulf – and you cannot figure out how to build a bridge across it, it doesn’t matter how far you went before you got to the gulf. You still aren’t going to get across it. If the gulf is bigger and you encountered it sooner, but you can build a bridge, you are going to get there.” Even having attained this, he added, “However, the natural ability, good ear, good pulse and natural rhythmic gift—all of it is ultimately worthless unless the person understands the music and wants to communicate something.”

According to Clouser, differing approaches to sound are related to how the reed interfaces with the instrument. “I like to use a very free reed and a free setup that requires less aggression and more subtlety of control. The sound should be able to be floated rather than driven all the time.” He explained that with his setup, dynamics are produced by expanding the sound rather than driving it. “When freed from the physicality of basic sound production, there is a need to be really in control of the nuance and of how to use vibrato. I know people who play well against a lot of resistance and produce nuance too. I respect and like their end result. I just can’t play that way. For me, there is too much lost in the shuffle if I have to be physically engaged all the time for basic production of sound. I’m much more interested in producing the sound easily so that more of my attention can be given to what I do with it.”

Clouser is convinced that bassoonists are the ones who hear and consider tone most while the majority of musicians do not even notice a difference between player's tones. Clouser said that sound is a concept in someone's ear and head. "They are going to sound the way they want to sound because of what their brain is telling them, and what their physiology determines is natural to them. People like different sounds, they appeal to them in different ways. We may not agree on what the most beautiful sound is. If a student likes a brighter sound, or a darker sound, I do not have any personal issue at all. However, I do care whether the student has a sound that is somewhere in the bell curve.

"I like to hear a sound that is covered, in that it's not edgy, but that it has a very warm and complete overtone series that I would describe as a sort of covered baritone sound. It has a lot of fluff and forgiveness between the notes, malleability, blend-ability with other instruments, flexibility, and above all a vocal quality. The most important thing in sound is not its tonal element, but its vocal quality. When people say a sound is beautiful, I think the majority of people who find that sound beautiful are responding to its vocal usage, not its tone per se. You can have a pretty tone, and if it's not used well, it won't strike people as a great tone. People rarely say, 'That's a great sound,' predicated solely on tone. They say that predicated on what you did with it."

Irrespective of concept of sound and differing setups, Clouser said that "one of the biggest mistakes that students make when taking auditions is that they think that they need a big, dark sound. They don't realize that if they have a complete sound that is generous and has breadth to it they are going to be fine in most halls because they don't have to cut through a morass of competing sound. What I think people err most on in auditions is not having control of the soft range. It's not sounding loud enough that is the problem, but not sounding soft enough."

Clouser requires all of his students to play exercises that develop breath control because “these train the player to make attacks, and subtle attacks in particular; have a control of their dynamic range; and use vibrato in varying ways as well.” Clouser only discusses breath support, per se, if he hears something that “calls into question how a student produces a basic sound.”

While Clouser does not have a comprehensive theory of the way vibrato works, nor a “system” for using it, his philosophy is that “the music determines what the vibrato needs to be. It is part of expressing what is on the page. When you are telling a story in a solo and you are taking the music from point A to point B, the vibrato has meaning in terms of its relevance to intensity and the traverse of the music.”

“I think that not using vibrato at all and using vibrato all the time are identical in terms of what they do for expression. If you play any note on a Hammond organ [sings various notes with vibrato], it is always the same. I fail to hear how that is expressive. It becomes a predictable element identified with the sound. It may as well not be there. [Sings various notes without vibrato] is the same as [sings various notes with constant vibrato]. I don’t hear that one is more expressive than the other. I hear them as different kinds of sounds. One is wobbly and one is not.”

Clouser said that he never spent a lot of time consciously working on vibrato as a young player. “My father was a fine singer and my idea of vibrato just came from listening to people sing.” However in teaching Clouser has encountered students who have difficulty with vibrato. He makes certain that all his students know that a mouth or jaw vibrato is untenable [as well as unemployable] in America. He suggests that they concentrate on using their air to produce the peak, allowing the resultant trough to come as a reaction. He also recommends that students practice “playing fours, fives and sixes to the beat with a metronome until they connect with

whatever apparatus is necessary to produce a reliable vibrato that “does not stray from the core of the pitch” or become “too dramatic.”

Using *Schéhérazade* as his example, he sang the excerpt twice with contrasting vibratos, demonstrating that the amplitude of the vibrato makes a markedly different musical statement. “I want students to think about what kind of vibrato is appropriate in what setting and whether it needs to be [at all].” He said that vibrato should not move the center of pitch. It should not be substituted for in-tune playing nor used as a means to help students “escape phrases that need to be concluded in other ways. Often, concluding a phrase with vibrato is antithetical. I don’t understand why you would play a stress note and then try to resolve it to a note with vibrato. Vibrato usually adds intensity to a note, rather than melting it away.”

Factors other than vibrato contribute to shades of intensity, said Clouser. “A player needs to have malleability to be able to say the things that are musically appropriate. If you simply try to regard the dynamic as the whole story, the stated ‘p’ or ‘pp’ at the beginning, you know you’re going to be woefully inadequate in what you have to say.” He cited the slow movement solo from Tchaikovsky’s Symphony No. 4 as his example. “I am blowing a lot of air through the bassoon. It is not soft at all. It is quite full, but it’s a *dolce* sound. It does have intensity, a lot of intensity. But the kind of intensity it has is one of pathetic resignation or defeat.” He contrasted this with the intensity of the solo sections in *Schéhérazade* and Shostakovich Symphony No. 9, which “expresses itself through pizzazz and anger. The high D<sup>4</sup> to C-sharp<sup>4</sup> in Shostakovich 9 is dripping with a cry of desperation.”

Similarly, there are degrees of loud. “There is a full, loud sound at the opening of the Mozart Concerto. I would not call that intense; I would call it grand. I think that students need to understand these nuances to be really successful, and simply not try to paint by numbers or play

by numbers. When it comes to reading the dynamics, they have to comprehensively understand the music.

“The biggest issue to success with intonation is talent: the innate ability of the person to hear pitch well. If somebody has an inadequate ear, in my experience, you can tweak their intonation in that moment, but [it] will not last. Pitch is such a real time and dynamic, fluctuating issue; there is nothing you can do that will supplant the person’s ear. You can tell them their G is sharp. You can tell them their E is flat. You can tell them that they need to do this with their reed or that with their bocal. You can tell them that they have a tendency in this excerpt to do this, this, that and the other. You can even get them to the point where they do not do it in that lesson and it’s good; it is right. But it will not last if they don’t have an ear. They will play it wrong that night, using the same setup.

“The bassoon is an imperfect instrument. Acoustically, it is way too short a bore to accomplish what you’re trying to do.” He cited mechanical limitations of the key work as well as reed and bocal variables, which also influence intonation. All instruments have pitches with problematic tendencies. Over a period of time it is possible to begin to hear pitch relative to your instrument. “It’s very easy to start to hear a flat C as correct, and a sharp F-sharp as correct. You have to take great precaution and great care not to be beguiled by what your instrument is telling you as being correct.” He said that he has experienced “feeling very right about [a] note and then, looking at the tuner and saying, ‘Why does this sound right to me and the tuner is telling me it is ten cents sharp?’ Playing it where the tuner tells me it is right sounds flat to me.” However, he noted that playing the note with other people confirms that playing the note where it seems flat is, in fact, the right pitch.

“I realize I hear it sharp, and think, ‘I’ve got to get it down.’ There is a very significant instrumental issue here. You have got to set your system up so that it maximizes your efficiency, so that you can play in tune. There is no reason to play an instrument with a thirty cents sharp F-sharp, and say, ‘Well that’s just sharp. I can get it down to ten cents sharp. Isn’t that good enough?’ No, it’s not. It is supposed to be at 440, if you’re playing at 440. Violinists don’t care if your note is thirty cents sharp and you are getting twenty cents of that down. It is still sharp. Plus, you are extremely limited by trying to get your thirty cents sharp F-sharp down twenty of those thirty cents, and what it takes to do that in a solo that you are supposed to be playing soft and delicate, is way too much effort to be able to do something cogent and wonderful with the excerpt itself. This is not acceptable to me. You have to set yourself up with a system that is within comfortable shooting range of success all the way up and down the scale.” He said that what you do with the bocal, reed and instrument, or some combination of the three “must plug the gap between where it is and where it needs to be. You have to set yourself up with a system that allows you a reasonable chance of success within a comfort zone.

“You determine, ‘What is a reasonable degree of effort?’ You’re always going to have to make an effort to do that. The question becomes, ‘Is that too much effort to expect?’” He said that students have difficulty in making this determination, which is where he steps in and says, “No, you’re working too hard for this. Let us visit it here instead of here. No, this should be visited in the reed; this needs to be visited in the bocal; no, this is the instrument’s fault.

“I get them within the range of what I think is acceptable—where I could play the instrument—and say, ‘This is in a good range for achievement.’ I can’t expect achievement from a student who is playing on something that I can’t play.” He explained that the best use of a

student's lesson might be to "take them in, revamp their system and send them out. They didn't play a note, but they are going to play better tonight than they did when they came in.

"My students don't play scales primarily for fingers. I believe that scales are systemic pitch paradigms. They are keys and the student needs to master the key, including pitch and voice leading. I don't care how fast they play, or how many notes they are playing. It is worthless if it's out of tune. Even if the student is wildly adept, I make them go note to note and tune it along the way. I have spent whole lessons with students tuning one scale, making sure that they understand that if it isn't in tune, I don't want to hear it. They come in [vocally runs up and down a scale really fast]. If it is out of tune, it is not a good scale. 'Go home and tune it.' If they fuss over that, they hear their major seconds clearly.

"When I play scales, I'm constantly evaluating pitch. 'Is it in tune? Is it in tune? Is it in tune?' Even this is always on a sliding scale because this reed is not like the last reed. The weather has changed. You have to tune constantly to reinforce your sense of where that pitch is, where the scale is. What you do most of all in an orchestra on the bassoon is not [he demonstrated by vocally ripping through a passage]. It is tuning. And control. Playing a *mezzo* role and then playing an emergent solo role, or a supportive role. Blending, tuning, blending, tuning, blending, tuning. 'Oh, by the way, here's a solo.' Blending, tuning, blending, tuning, blending, tuning, blending, tuning. You have to do that. You have to be in command of the instrument. You are not in command of the instrument if you just play notes."

Clouser wants his students to become their own "best critic" early on. "I have to make them a little paranoid about thinking about pitch, and whether they are in tune with themselves. I'm interested in their relative pitch, because if they develop that well, they can shift their paradigm and they will have their relative sensibility. I don't care if it's 442, 448, or 439. As

long as they have relative pitch, they will be able to carry that with them to whatever pitch level they play.”

With regard to steadiness of pulse and rhythmic precision Clouser commented, “Like pitch there’s a certain degree of innate gift there.” To hone that talent Clouser insists on practice with a metronome. He is vigilant in calling attention to “rhythmic indiscretions.” He requires that students develop their auditory context, imagining to the fullest extent possible the context of the passage they are about to play. Auditory context gives the player a correct tempo beforehand so that the player doesn’t “take two beats to settle on the tempo. You cannot start *Figaro* and then arrive at the tempo in the second bar. You do not start *Schéhérazade* and realize it is a little slow and speed it up.” Clouser extends the concept of auditory context to the rudiments of their training in scales. “When they sit and play a scale, I want both feet on the floor. I want them to sit up, take a breath, know the tempo, and have the rhythm and first interval in their mind before they start.”

Clouser said articulation is tied to sensitivity, flexibility and an awareness of musical styles. Articulation needs to be “appropriate to the emotional content of the music.” With each of the six excerpts in this study he gave several examples of how to approach articulation. In the bassoon solo in the second movement of Tchaikovsky’s Symphony No. 4, he said that the first note must have a gentle attack that is appropriate to the dynamic level and projects a kind of covered distant feeling. The player also has to decide how to interpret the notes with dots over them. “Most often students are way too aggressive with those notes. They posit too much of the emotional statement—the *sturm*, and drama and pathos of that phrase—in those repeated notes instead of in the upper interval that precedes those notes.”



One of Clouser's criticisms of students as well as professional players is an inability to play within a style that befits the composer. The double tonguing in the final movement of Beethoven's Symphony No. 4 "can't sound just technical; it has to be musical. First of all, it has to be phrased. If the grace note is generous and sweet, that will go a long way to making sure it doesn't sound just technical. If the sound is fluffy, and if the person has a basically warm sound, this helps a lot too."

Clouser expects all his students to learn to double tongue regardless of how fast the student's single tongue is. "A student may say, 'Why do I need to double tongue?' I played a new work that required extended tonguing in the 170 range (i.e. four sixteenth notes per quarter beat). You can say, 'Well, that's just ridiculous. Who can play that?' However, if you could double tongue, you could do it. Double tonguing puts another implement in your arsenal. There really needs to be a large buffer zone between where you double tongue and where you single tongue. You should be able to double tongue slowly. If you can single tongue to 126 and your double tongue starts at 132, you will find a lot of music that goes right in between there. I like to be able to choose. If you can play the last movement of Jupiter Symphony single or double tongued, you're doing pretty well because tempos in that [piece] could be anywhere from moderately to incredibly fast."

Clouser talks to his students about the extremes that he has experienced in terms of actual performances. "That's one thing I can do as a player...Somebody who doesn't do this for a living cannot get much experience with the range of tempos. I can say, '[Christoph von] Dohnányi did it this way. Dutoit did it this way. When I played for Previn, it was like this. And Andrew Davis did this kind of thing. Here's your bell curve. If I were you, I'd choose a tempo about right

here.” For any orchestral excerpt on an audition, he wants to ensure students choose a tempo within the bell curve—one that will offend the fewest people on the audition committee.

Clouser said that he had never understood the term warm-up. Instead, he thinks of it as practice that will yield musical growth. “I play my scales in complete sentences. I play them in fragments too. I play them every which way but loose. There are exercises that I favor such as those Kovar used. I personally think that if a student can play their scales, major and minor; their arpeggios, major and minor; thirds; chromatics; the first couple pages of the Kovar book; if they can make attacks and hairpins and *diminuendos* with good control in all registers and play the Milde scale and arpeggio book—not get through it, but really own it—and the Mozart Concerto—then they are probably going to be a player who could succeed at almost anything. I try to be reductionist about it. The rub is: ‘What does it mean to play your major and minor scales? What does it mean to play your arpeggios? What does it mean to play the Milde book?’ By playing them, I mean owning them, to be exemplary, to put every note in its place, in tune with a beautiful sound and be musical with all these things. What it will take to own those things will be a comprehensive approach to problem solving. Just do those things. If you can do those things, what it takes to get there will be what it takes to be successful in anything. You will be able to extrapolate from that, or extend it into almost any other solution building that you will need to play other things. If you can do these things, it will presuppose what will enable you to play anything else...including the Tansman, the Jolivet and Vivaldi’s Concerto No. 8. Let’s be simpler about it rather than more complicated.”

#### Evolution of the Interpretation of Excerpts

Prior to coming to the Cleveland Orchestra, Clouser had performed all of the pieces from which the excerpts in this study are drawn except for *The Rite of Spring*. According to him, it

was this piece on a Columbia House recording entitled “Stravinsky Conducts Stravinsky” with bassoonist Loren Glickman that impressed him so much that he chose to play the bassoon. Clouser first worked on this excerpt with Bernard H. Garfield while at Temple University. Finally, when he performed *The Rite of Spring* he became comfortable with it, because it was included on the orchestra’s European tour. “In fact in the span of approximately two months, I played the piece 22 times.”

For many orchestral works, including Tchaikovsky’s Symphony No. 4, the Haddonfield Symphony in New Jersey was his training ground while he was a student in Philadelphia. Clouser’s first performance of the piece was memorable because in the first movement he ended “the big solo that ends with a long, held C<sup>3</sup>” one measure before what is indicated in the part. The clarinet player didn’t notice and made the next entrance one measure early. “It was a cascade of errors where everyone came in wrong for pages. It almost destroyed the performance. The learning experience was to count and not just listen.”

With regard to Tchaikovsky’s Symphony No. 4, Clouser said, “Living with the piece develops your idea about what is being communicated by the composer and how that particular moment for the bassoon fits into the developing idea. Early on, especially the first time, I am sure that I was trying to meet the challenges of the execution of it. Although, even then, I remember being moved by the music and trying to say something pertinent.”

As he teaches an excerpt, he keeps in mind what he thinks it is going to communicate to an audition committee as well as what it communicates on the stage. If he believes there are slight differences between the two, he explains what students might have to do in an audition as opposed to what they could do in a performance. With the Tchaikovsky’s Fourth Symphony,

however, “there is nothing that I coach differently for auditions than what is said in a performance.”

Bernard H. Garfield coached him on *Schéhérazade*, which he played for a first time while in the Memphis Symphony. Subsequently, he has played it multiple times with the Cleveland Orchestra. Clouser said, “Over time, more has changed in how I play other moments in the piece than how I play the solo itself.”

Clouser also played *Bolero* for the first time while in Memphis. *Bolero* is one excerpt that is “a little different in performance than in an audition. In auditions, I play it not more aggressively but more intense, a little fuller and with a little more flair from the start. In performance, I found that I was overplaying it and that it needed to be more understated than in an audition. I try to teach my students that what may be fine in an audition might be too confident for an actual concert, depending on the hall. It is highly dependent on the space in which it’s played.” The same applies to the *Marriage of Figaro Overture*. “How loud the orchestra plays is relative to the space.” he said.

According to Clouser, *Figaro* is also more difficult in an audition because “the committee will be particularly interested in hearing your dynamic range. They are going to want to hear the *pianissimo* and the *fortissimo* too. I tell my students that the reed they are going to want for auditions is one that will do *Figaro*.”

Clouser recalled playing Beethoven Symphony No. 4 in a reading session at The New School in Philadelphia and that John Shamlan (one of the bassoon teachers there) had first introduced him to the piece. Although he didn’t play it while in Montreal, he has played it multiple times since joining the Cleveland Orchestra.

## Auditions

“Auditory context—the ability to surround yourself in your imagination with the music from which you are making this emergent statement while in a vacuum—cannot be left till the end, as if you are retrofitting it for an audition,” said Clouser. “Auditory context needs to become part of the excerpt practice so that every time you play the Beethoven excerpt, and every time you play *Schéhérazade* or the slow movement of Tchaikovsky Fourth you have cues that put you in the frame of mind for the piece.” Cues about the tempo, interactive elements and other things like that are embedded in a developed auditory context, said Clouser.

“The ultimate upshot is that if you do all these things well, you bring something special to an audition stage. You bring some kind of life that doesn’t sound like a vacuum anymore. It doesn’t sound like an instrument playing a tune, or a bassoon playing. It sounds like a voice that is just absent its partners. I think that an audition committee clearly hears that difference. I know I do when I am on a stage as an audition committee member listening to somebody playing an audition. I can tell when someone’s doing it and when they’re not. It doesn’t really matter if someone can play the instrument well but cannot bring to the table the vocal meaning that is different from excerpt to excerpt. Don a different hat—one for *Schéhérazade*, one for Beethoven Fourth, one for *The Rite of Spring*—to say those things that are appropriate musically within that vacuum. That is a very hard thing to do.

“I hold students feet to the fire on it. If I don’t think they have done that, I challenge them to go back. I want to hear that mental preparation. I want to make sure as best I can that when they go to the practice room they are doing that for themselves. I don’t mean every eighth time they play the excerpt. I mean every time they play the excerpt. When they are woodshedding

Beethoven Fourth, they should hear that viola lead-in every time so that they have something to play off.

“For the mind to focus and do the things it needs to do and to apprehend tempo and interpretive elements, the person auditioning had better have something to rely on other than a ‘shot in the dark.’ This is the way to do that. You go into this mantra of surrounding yourself with the music and it gives you all kinds of pertinent information. Not only that, it calms you down when you focus on those things. You are focusing on the correct things instead of that fact that someone is looking at you critically. This makes auditory context one of the most important things. Students also need a technical competency and a familiarity with the excerpts so they are beginning to produce consistent execution from a bassoonistic or instrumental point of view.”

Clouser insists that nothing can replace auditory context. It helps keep the player on track. It can be accomplished in an instant. “Maybe early on as you are sort of groping for what it is that gets you in the frame of the excerpt and you might have to search for that. Eventually, you just know what puts you in *Schéhérazade* mind and what puts you in *Bolero* mind.

“In my imagination, I can go instantaneously right to the edge of the stage with the clarinet solo finishing and the snare drum. I am in the mood for *Bolero*. I know where the tempo is and I also know where my entrance needs sound—in terms of its dynamic content and its intensity level. I wouldn’t necessarily do this every time I practiced the excerpt, but a couple of times a day along the practice road in preparation for an audition I would sort of wipe the slate clean, bring up the white light, shut the house down with a ‘shush’ in my mind, put the audition committee staring down my throat and play it for them. So, I would stare the elephant in the eye repeatedly in practice. If you have a vivid imagination, you can do that.”

He said that *Marriage of Figaro* is a classic example of an excerpt that requires turning on the heat by imagining the on-stage experience. “It is a much easier excerpt to play in your house, or even in a performance than it is in an audition. For me, *Marriage of Figaro* is one of the really hard ones to do. I think it is perennially difficult. It is something that can go awry if you are not careful. You must go to an audition in total command of *Figaro*. Otherwise, you are not going to get a job. It is the most often asked for excerpt. It is on most every audition. It is usually the first excerpt you see.

“I consider it to be, if there is such a thing, an ‘elimination’ excerpt. It is an excerpt usually asked not to see what you can do, but rather what you can’t. If you can’t play that, you are not going on and it is easy to eliminate you. If you can play *Figaro*, a committee like ours here says, ‘Okay. You can play,’ in terms of finger technique. Certain excerpts played well give the committee the confidence that the bassoonist is a competent instrumentalist. I think here in Cleveland we are not really listening for mistakes, but we are listening to what they are about musically. And, if they happen to make too many mistakes, then we say, ‘There are too many mistakes for that person.’ We are not listening to auditions as we were when I sat on some committees that were bean-counting mistakes. There are a lot of committees that are bean counting, and in playing *Figaro* you do not want to give anyone reason to cut you.

“I know what it is like in an audition to have the room be so quiet that you could hear a pin drop. Even the clicking of a key sounds really loud in the hall...that’s different than just a radio playing in the background, or having someone over there talking and you’re just grinding out (he sings the opening of the *Bolero* excerpt), woodshedding. Playing it for yourself is not the same thing as when everyone is watching you. ‘The moment’ made a huge impression on me when I first started out. So I could draw on that early intimidation factor of, ‘Oh holy smoke, this

is really something. It is so much harder to do this in a situation of comfort deprivation.' You could go back and nail it now, but somehow that huge amount of intimidation factor eats up all the buffer zone you have between yourself and failure.

"The important thing to be able to do in preparing yourself for an audition is to build the buffer zone between yourself and failure. You have to make sure that your execution level is so much beyond failure that even deprived of your poise, your peace of mind and your comfort zone, you'll cross that line. You need to have a reasonable chance of still executing it even though you are going to execute it at 75 percent of your ability. Seventy-five percent of your ability to play in a relaxed setting still needs to be good enough to compete with other people's 75 percent.

"You have to assume that everyone is under the same duress. Everyone does better in their bedroom than they do on stage in an audition. Everyone is deprived of their comfort zone. I think you have to prepare with that in mind. I think you can hear when people don't do that. They are caught flat-footed with how much more difficult it is to play well under these circumstances." Audition preparation calls for much more than playing in a relaxed state where the individual "knows they can nail it. It calls for imagining the duress of an audition, in essence turning up the heat on oneself. This helps a player ferret out the problems in a more crystalline way. 'Oh, this is really still wrong.' Or, 'that little thing that I blew by there that felt slightly wrong in repose feels huge on the day of an audition.' Nothing can feel slightly wrong when played in repose. It has to feel that it is just 'no problem.'"

"Before I would go to an audition I needed to nail *Figaro* ten times out of ten and twenty times out of twenty. Beethoven No. 4 the same thing. If I am doing that, I am going to nail it that day. If I am nailing it eight times out of ten, I am going to miss it [in the audition]. That is the



assumption that I worked under. I tried to make every excerpt as reliable as that. However, that being said, I don't think I ever went to an audition where I really felt that in command. There was no excerpt that I couldn't miss. I was never so happy with my playing that I thought it was an 'I can't miss' situation.

"I think if anyone goes to an audition thinking they can't miss, they are probably a fool. There is always something that can go wrong. I think the thing that I was always upset about is that you can never get it to a point where you can't miss. You have to take a certain amount of risk in life. Otherwise, you may as well stay at home and curl up in a ball. So I would just go to auditions unhappy that I didn't have the excerpts at 100 percent. If I had it in the 90th percentile in terms of where I thought it should be: I often found it very competitive."

According to Clouser concentration is the key to audition preparedness. "I would practice for as long as I could actually focus on it [the music] always assessing what was wrong. I would work till a few days before an audition and then just put the horn away and not touch it till the audition.

At the end of any audition, according to Clouser, it is not unusual for an audition committee to have heard many players who can execute the excerpts technically with all the right notes, rhythms, printed articulations and so forth. "The way to distinguish one's self is to convey the orchestral context of the excerpt by showing sensitivity to musical nuance, saying what is musically appropriate. This is the real crux of how to succeed."

### Conclusions

The following ideas were of particular significance in Clouser's coaching and interview:

Clouser's objective is to prepare his students for success in orchestral auditions. He wants his students to know how to solve musical problems and teach themselves.

He teaches every excerpt somewhat differently. For example, with *The Rite of Spring*, his interpretation was undergirded by his analysis of the form over which he drew an interpretive picture. With the second movement of Tchaikovsky's Symphony No.4 his interpretation was based on a metaphor, and with the opening of *Schéhérazade* he focused on how to create and shift between opposing characters.

All students ultimately face a gulf between what they can do and what is required of them. In order to be successful, each player must build a bridge that will take them across that gulf. Establishing a high level of technical competency frees the player from being forced to make interpretive decisions based on technical constraints.

Intellectual solutions lead to technical solutions because the nature of technique is holistic. Acknowledging and training the mind-muscle link to be accurate, efficient and reflexively fast is as important as practicing to make the fingers or tongue faster.

Efficient practice is essential. Correct practice is never a mindless repetition of notes. Correct practice includes creating and conveying the auditory context for each excerpt every time it is played.

Developing an auditory context is imperative to fully knowing the piece of music and understanding the bassoon's role in it at any given moment. A developed auditory context instantly gives the player the musical information necessary to perform an excerpt well. Auditory context impacts interpretive decisions. An auditory context is not something that should be

retrofitted onto an excerpt. Creating an auditory context should lead a listener to believe that the musician is playing the piece in such a manner that the only element missing is the other players. Conveying a convincing auditory context to an orchestra audition committee sets the player apart from others who do this less well or not at all.

A reductionist approach downplays the “required list” of excerpts and pieces one must play, concentrating on the music must be played. He said that what one acquires in the process of gaining ownership of the required list is a comprehensive approach to problem solving. “Thus, what it takes to truly play these things will be what it takes to be successful in playing anything.”

## CHAPTER III

### JUDITH LECLAIR

#### Coaching Arrangement

Two of LeClair's students, a male undergraduate and a female graduate student, participated in the study. LeClair coached each excerpt twice. She covered all the excerpts with the undergraduate student before repeating the process with her graduate student, who was already playing professionally. LeClair's coaching concentrated on refining the execution and interpretation of the excerpts.

#### Beethoven Symphony No. 4, mvt. 4

#### Synopsis of LeClair's Written Responses to the Orchestral Excerpt Questionnaire

- This excerpt is on the audition list because it shows a player's ability to double tongue.
- This excerpt is nerve-racking in the orchestra. Her suggestion when practicing and performing the excerpt is to think about playing it one beat at a time rather than thinking about playing it from the beginning to the end.
- She says that a harder reed articulates better.

#### Live Coaching

Player # 1 began by playing from the grace-note figure seven measures before Square E. The syllables that the student used for those five notes (the grace note and four sixteenth notes on beat 1) prompted a dialogue with LeClair. He said that he could not use the syllables that she did because his tongue got tied. LeClair said that it was "great" that he could do what he was doing,

adding that she could not double tongue it from the second quarter beat of eight measures before Square E using the syllables shown in Example 13 as he had.

Example 13: Beethoven Symphony No. 4 in B-flat Major, mvt. 4, mm. 9-6 before Square E



“A lot of people do it the way you are doing it. People do this different ways, depending on their physiology. There is not one ‘right way’. You just have to have the correct end result,” said LeClair. Her student expressed a concern that he was short-changing the grace note at seven measures before Square E. She was encouraging, “That is coming along.

“Let us do nine measures before Square E one more time. Just think of it as one beat at a time.” He played the excerpt twice, once at a slower pace and the second time at tempo. After he played it again, she was in agreement with his earlier assessment that the grace note, as he played it, was not long enough.

“When I practice I like to do it in context because that is how one has to play it. When the chips are down, you have to be able to count the part and come in. The strings are getting crazy, it’s getting more and more exciting...and then you must play.” Instead of singing where the solo begins, she sang from a few measures before the solo, which begins nine measures before Square E. “I like to do this excerpt with that kind of frame of mind.

“You might want to get the whole part.” He reached for the printed part, which splits the solo before Square E across two open pages. LeClair suggested that he not look at the part at all until the second page. “Just the motion of moving your hand slightly can knock off a double tongue.” He played the six measures before the solo entrance at nine measures before Square E. She in turn sang the first few notes of the solo and then said, “I find that four of the most

important notes in this passage are the four notes before the grace note.” She articulated the syllables that she uses for the solo from its inception—“Ti-ca-ti-ca, ti-ca-ti-ca—those get mumbled and jumbled in all the rest of the sound. Let’s try it one more time.” Once again, he started playing from sixteen measures before Square E. This time LeClair counted the rests out loud, and had him repeat from 16 measures before Square E through the downbeat three measures before Square E. “Now take just those first two beats—“ti-ca-ti-ca, ti-ca-ti-ca.” She recommended playing the excerpt then going away and doing something else entirely—even something unrelated to music. “Then say to yourself, ‘Okay, I am going to go back to this and play it perfectly.’ The more times you do it out of context, jumping in and playing it, the more ready you will be when asked to do it in an audition. All right? Usually you sit and you practice it five or six times and maybe by the eighth time it is perfect. Just be hard on yourself. Make sure that as you do it different times during the day it is ‘right’ the first time.”

He moved to the next solo portion of the excerpt 23 measures after Square G. He played the section once very slowly and a second time at tempo. To accomplish these measures, LeClair urged him “to put as much air through the horn as he could.” She asked him to repeat the passage for better clarity from the F<sup>3</sup> to E-flat<sup>3</sup>. He retook those two notes several times and then played mm. 23 to 26 after Square G twice. He played with more sound to which she exclaimed, “Excellent!

“Now, in some auditions you may have to play the very first one [16 measures before Square A.] I don’t know if you have ever looked at this [passage]. Why don’t you try it?” He played and she said, “You need to have that prepared for many auditions. But again, play *forte* and think one beat at a time. You may panic if you get to the first solo and ask yourself, ‘How

am I going to make it to the end?’ So this is the only excerpt that I really like to concentrate on each beat—one beat at a time.”

LeClair asked the student to play the very last solo, which begins six measures before the end of the movement. “I have never played this,” he confessed.

“Just keep on blowing...keep on blowing the air,” she said as he played and continued, “Good. That takes care of that one.” She commented on the fact that he had a good double tongue and asked him when he learned it.

He replied, “This summer.”

“Maybe, you are just a natural. The girl coming in later was not such a natural. It took her years to get it, but then she got it and it is great! For some it just comes easily.”

While LeClair consistently referred to the double-tonguing with the “ti-ca-ti-ca” syllables throughout the coaching session, she said that she actually likes to use “Dug-a-dug-a. Dug-a-dug-a-dug-a-dug-a-dut because it eases up the mouth.”

Player #2 began with the passage nine measures before Square G very fast and very clean. LeClair, satisfied with this asked the student to play the opening passage, i.e. mm. 15 through 25. The student’s only issue with it was going from the  $D^2$  to the  $C^3$  in m. 23. LeClair asked her to blow more air through the bassoon and play it one more time. “You know what it is? Sometimes you lose the end of the double tonguing because there’s just not quite enough air,” said LeClair. She sang m. 24 twice—“Dig-a-dig-a dum-dum dum,” representing the articulations of mm. 24 and 25. The player lost the sixteenth-note  $F^2$  in m. 24. She repeated the first quarter beat of m. 24 several times. It improved, but neither of them seemed to know why it had not been clean the first several times the player tried it.

The student went on to play the solo that begins 23 measures after Square G. LeClair made no criticism. Without discussion or pause, they went to the last portion of the excerpt that begins six measures from the end of the movement. Her G<sup>3</sup>, the first note of the descending scale, seemed to be a problem—one that LeClair attributed to the half-hole she was using.

Mozart, *Marriage of Figaro* Overture

Synopsis of LeClair's Written Responses to the Orchestral Excerpt Questionnaire

- This excerpt is on the audition list because it shows a player's technique, rhythmic accuracy and ability to articulate.
- This is easier in the orchestra because other people play with the bassoon.
- She suggests using a metronome when preparing this excerpt.

Live coaching

Player #1 played mm. 139 through 171, which is similar to mm. 1 through 24. "Good tonguing," said LeClair, adding that she wanted the student to play it a little slower because "it was a bit frantic. I think it is a lot better slower and steadier." She stopped him several times, showing him where his double tonguing slowed a bit. He also played the lyrical solos after Square E. She requested that he play in a more soloistic fashion with a fuller sound.

Player #2 also played mm. 139 through 171. LeClair's student said that for years she had had problems with this excerpt. "It was an issue of keeping the beat and tempo steady. I had trouble keeping the double tonguing going. When I first learned it, I walked around with the reed all day going 'Tuh-cah-tuh-cah,' making the sound on the reed. I felt so bad for my family."

LeClair said that many of her students claim that they cannot double tongue. "All I say is, 'Do it like this: Dug-a-dug-a. Dug-a-dug-a-dug-a-dug-a-dut.'"



“Not, tuh-cah-tuh-cah,” said the player—the syllables this particular student learned and still uses.

LeClair reiterated, “Dug-a-dug-a-dug-a-dug-a-dut. Say it and then do it on your reed. My son can do it. If you can just do dug-a-dug-a-dug-a-dug-a-dut, then do it on your reed. If you can do it on your reed, put it on your instrument. However, my students think this is a horrible thing. The students get scared.”

The student played mm. 139 through 171 again. LeClair suggested that she be more “playful with it.” LeClair sang part of it and had her replay it once again, to which she said, “Great!”

### Ravel *Bolero*

#### Synopsis of LeClair’s Written Responses to the Orchestral Excerpt Questionnaire

- This excerpt appears on the list because it demonstrates the player’s rhythm and musical expression.
- In the orchestra, the player must match the sound of the flute and the clarinet at the beginning.
- The player must always think the sixteenth notes.
- She uses a reed that plays better in the high register.
- Once a person captures the “aura” and sense of the opening, the excerpt becomes easier.

#### Live Coaching

Player #1 started the first phrase of the excerpt from the high B-flat<sup>4</sup> to the E<sup>3</sup> in m. 4 (counting measures from where the solo begins). LeClair said that she suggests that students play the B-flat<sup>4</sup> without the resonance key [low e-flat key], but use it for the C<sup>4</sup> and A<sup>3</sup>, which

improves the intonation, but makes navigating through the sixteenth notes in the third beat of the first measure “a bit more awkward.” The student continued playing from the pickups to m. 5 through m. 8 (the second phrase). She acknowledged her approval of the way he played it.

“I did that for about a day after my lesson on it,” he said.

LeClair returned to her thoughts about the second phrase, saying “...what helps the second phrase is to make sure you are supporting all the way through the last D-flat<sup>4</sup>.” She reviewed what notes she plays using the resonance key. “I use it only for high A<sup>3</sup> and high C<sup>4</sup>, A-flat<sup>3</sup>, G<sup>3</sup> and F-sharp<sup>3</sup>.” The student played again from the beginning...“that’s good. Make sure you are ready for your very first note.” He mentioned that sometimes the response of this first note is delayed, which throws off his counting. LeClair mentioned the option of playing the first note with just the A key instead of the A and C-sharp keys. He tried this several times, but when she asked if he thought this was any better, he indicated that it was not. LeClair said that sometimes she starts the B-flat<sup>4</sup> without the first finger in her right hand and immediately closes that first tone hole after the note speaks. As he played she sang to preserve the rhythmic integrity of the held note in mm. 3 and 4. He played the excerpt again. She commented about the pitch on the E-flat<sup>2</sup>, discussing whether to use a long fingering that required the first finger and the B-flat key in the right hand, or the second finger and the B-flat key.

Player #2 played the excerpt until LeClair stopped her, saying that she was showing the beat in the ties. At the beginning of the second phrase LeClair said, “I like my students to play the first D-flats for line, no accents—nothing.” (She sang it.). Then she explained that the accents, starting from the second beat of m. 6, should “contrast with the smooth and effortless beginning.” LeClair had the student replay that portion. Then she asked her to play the entire excerpt. LeClair pointed out that it rushed a bit through the sixteenth notes. In the second phrase,

the student had some difficulty getting all the repeated high D-flat<sup>4</sup>s to speak. Here LeClair encouraged her not to be frustrated, but to try it again. Also at two measures before Square 3, LeClair mentioned that the student needed to focus on the accuracy of the articulation. She began playing from the beginning of the third phrase—eight measures before Square 3. LeClair stopped her twice for not playing an even triplet seven measures before Square 3. The student replayed it until it was correct. LeClair also asked her to listen to the pitch of the held B-flat<sup>3</sup> tied from the sixth to the fifth measure before Square 3, saying that the B-flat<sup>3</sup> was slightly low and that the vibrato did not begin soon enough. LeClair asked her to articulate more clearly in the third phrase. The student played the entire excerpt one last time. At the very end, LeClair said, “It sounds good. Let’s move on to the next excerpt.”

### Rimsky-Korsakov *Schéhérazade*

#### Synopsis of LeClair’s Written Responses to the Orchestral Excerpt Questionnaire

- This excerpt demonstrates a player’s musical expression.
- There are no differences between playing this in an audition and in the orchestra.
- It is helpful to listen to the underlying rhythm. She also cautions against using too much vibrato.
- When playing this piece in the orchestra, the cadenzas can be somewhat slower and more expansive than LeClair anticipates.

#### Live Coaching

Player #1 performed all three cadenzas in *Schéhérazade*, playing from the second measure of Square L through Square M. LeClair played the last three notes through the C-sharp<sup>3</sup> on the piano, questioning the student’s intonation. He played the last three notes with the piano.

“I am listening for your intonation between D, E and F—the first three notes at the opening. You are a little high. (She played these entrance notes on the piano while he played the same notes on the bassoon.) She amended her comment, saying, “It actually sounds as if your E<sup>3</sup> was a bit low compared to the F<sup>3</sup>.” She stressed the importance of starting the D<sup>3</sup> in tune, asking if he heard the difference between when it was or was not right. “If you are biting it up a little bit too much, it doesn’t ring.” He tried just the F<sup>3</sup>. [LeClair helped the student correct his faulty intonation on D<sup>3</sup> multiple times during the coaching session.] Several times she had him match the pitch of the piano with them playing it together. In addition, she asked the student to start this first cadenza a little faster. Once again, she had him replay the first cadenza.

LeClair shifted her focus to the conclusion of the first cadenza. After the student finished, she followed his playing of the last four notes, and then the last six notes of the passage on the piano, revealing her interpretation of the dynamic, weight and length of the notes. He repeated these until his pitch and timing of the resolution met her satisfaction. This time, when he replayed the cadenza she directed her attention to the length of the E<sup>3</sup> (five notes before the end) in relation to the G<sup>3</sup>, (seven notes before the end). Simultaneously singing and playing the piano, she emphasized the slow, even timing of the three notes before the bar line, asking her student to replay from after the fermata. He indicated that he was not sure what she wanted. She explained that she was listening for the slow, even timing of the last three notes before the bar line. They went back and forth. She played piano. He played bassoon. She played. He played. They moved to the final four notes of the first cadenza and then the last ten notes. “These need to be a little longer [because] you need to show the orchestra [the new tempo].”

The first time the student played the second cadenza she said that she liked everything except the last four notes. She asked him to be more decisive, more purposeful, making more of

the accent coming from the *poco rit.* into the *a tempo*. He immediately did what she asked. She mentioned that she was particularly pleased with his use of the half-hole on the G<sup>3</sup> as it provided a clean response between the D<sup>3</sup> and G<sup>3</sup>, which is often a resistant interval leap.

LeClair seemed puzzled that the second cadenza was as she said, “Terrific!” from the outset because the student had problems with the first cadenza, which is easier. Then he played the third cadenza flawlessly. “Yeah. Great. Excellent!” She asked the student to go back to the first cadenza one last time because “that seems to be the one that is giving you the problems.” He played that first cadenza again almost completely to her satisfaction. Her only comment was to watch the pitch on the final D<sup>3</sup>, which she played on the piano a number of times until the pitches matched.

“How about [playing] the big solo?” The student played the solo at the beginning of the second movement. After letting him catch his breath, LeClair played the B<sup>3</sup> and F-sharp<sup>3</sup> simultaneously on the piano, which is reminiscent of the perfect fifth that is sustained in the cello and bass parts at the opening of the bassoon solo. She said that he should make the D<sup>3</sup>, E<sup>3</sup> and F-sharp<sup>3</sup> his anchors throughout this solo. They discussed the ramifications of using the forked F-sharp<sup>3</sup> vs. the one that uses 1, 2 and the B-flat key in the right hand. According to LeClair, the forked one is “too bright and too sharp. I would rather support the other one [that tends to be on the low side] more.”

LeClair liked her student’s character shifts, but asked him to exaggerate them. She was particularly interested in how he set up the tempo crossing from m. 5 into m. 6 (counting measures from the beginning of the solo). She sang the measure, showing the character change.

“When you think about the beginning notes, it starts a little slow. Think of a ball rolling down hill.” LeClair played the support tones on the piano, holding them with the sustain pedal

while she counted beats by clapping her hands on the sustained note in the tenth measure of the solo. She said that the only hint of slowing should be in the last three notes of m. 9 into m. 10. She also reminded him to breathe after the first eighth note in m. 13. He played m. 11 through the downbeat of m. 15 loudly and played m. 15 through the downbeat of m. 19 as an echo.

She said that she wanted the last phrase, beginning with the sixteenth notes in m. 19, to be “big,” telling the student that he can stretch the last G in the measure before Square A. She said that the key to producing a great tone and vibrato was to get the sound going and to “really use support. It is such a hard thing to teach.”

LeClair explained that she has bassoonists who come for one-time lessons and she says that she thinks to herself, “You have got to get the sound started from here (holding her hands on her rib cage). You have got to keep the air and you have to use it.” Turning her attention back to her student she remarked, “It is hard to get the student to do this until they really feel it.”

He interjected, “If you are not comfortable with this, it takes awhile to get used to it.”

“Yes,” LeClair said, “because it hurts. You are using these muscles that you have never used before. When you use them, it is like doing sit-ups. You don’t have to do the work with your mouth. She noted that his throat was open; he wasn’t biting, and that “the air takes care of everything. It is torture teaching this [concept of breath support] to players who adjust every single note with their mouths...I think the key thing is just putting air through the instrument. In auditions these days, they don’t want to hear people with puny, little sounds. They want to hear the air going. It is just, ‘Next. Next. Next...’ (imitating what a bassoonist might hear from an audition committee) unless you can do that.”

Player #2 went through the whole excerpt. LeClair asked only that the student hold the final D<sup>3</sup> a little longer. “I think the second half is really great. Still you could blow more air

through it...It needs a lot more weight [beginning with the accented pickups to m. 12] instead of rushing.” Her student played it again. This time LeClair asked for the echo, which begins with the four sixteenth-note pickups to m. 16, to be much, much softer. LeClair wanted more dynamic contrast throughout. She played it one more time. “So it’s just dynamics, dynamics, dynamics,” remarked LeClair.

LeClair told her student that she played the cadenzas, particularly the second one, too fast. The student also had some difficulty executing the  $D^3$  to  $G^3$  ascending interval in the second cadenza. LeClair insisted that if she slowed it down the  $G^3$ s would not crack. If the  $G^3$ s still cracked, LeClair suggested widening the half-hole a bit. She played it again very fast. “You need more half-hole, and slow it down. It sounds frantic when it is [too fast]...it has to be a gradual *accelerando*. If it is really clean, it will sound faster anyway.” In the third cadenza, LeClair asked her to play the opening three notes with more separation. LeClair ended by asking that the third cadenza be played with a greater bravura.

### Stravinsky *The Rite of Spring*

#### Synopsis of LeClair’s Written Responses to the Orchestral Excerpt Questionnaire

- This excerpt shows whether a player has an overall concept of the passage, the “aura” *per se*, as well as the underlying rhythm and the note-to-note intonation in the high register.
- In an actual performance as opposed to an audition, the player may have more freedom to create an atmosphere.
- She recommends a high level of breath support and concentration. In practice, she suggests slowing down the fast jumble of notes to make it clearer. It is important to accurately perform the quintuplet, the triplet and the duple divisions of the beat.

- She plays on a reed that responds easily in the high register.
- Her experiences in the orchestra have led her to believe that the solo can get too slow.

She recommends consciously keeping the support and tempo up.

### Live coaching

Player #1 played the entire excerpt. LeClair asked him if he used the “trick” where you use the second finger and B-flat key in the right hand instead of the standard first and F keys for the  $G^3$  to  $A^3$  in m. 2. “Do you know the trick? You just have to blow harder and it rarely ever cracks.” They discussed modifying the fingering for the  $D^4$  in this passage to use the high D key with half-hole plus fingers 2 and 3 down in the left hand and the low G and F keys in the right hand, which makes it easier to shift from the  $D^4$  to the “trick”  $G^3$  fingering. The student tried the fingerings she recommended for the three-note motive  $D^4G^3A^3$  in mms. 2 and 8. These seemed to work well for him. Agreeing with LeClair he said that he would make this change because “it is more reliable when making the downward slur from  $D^4$  to  $G^3$ .”

The student also played from Square 12 for four measures. This portion of the piece basically presents the opening solo one half-step lower. She stopped him several times, playing the part on the piano to show him where to take a bit more time and cautioning him not to “run with it.”

Player #2 played the excerpt, but missed the high  $B^4$ s before the held  $A^3$  at one measure before Square 2 and again at Square 3. According to LeClair, the overriding issue with missed notes in the high register is not playing with adequate support. This is also the issue with the three-note motive  $D^4G^3A^3$ , which appears twice in the excerpt. LeClair exhorted her student to put more air through the instrument. LeClair also mentioned that she [wrongfully] rushed at Square 3. The player began at Square 3 and played through the third measure after Square 3.



They returned to the opening measures of the excerpt. LeClair asked her to think more about setting the mood of it and cleaning up the quintuplet. She retook the phrase, beginning from the grace note in m. 2, and LeClair said, “Oh, that is much better.”

### Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 4 in F minor, mvt. 2

#### Synopsis of LeClair’s Written Responses to the Orchestral Excerpt Questionnaire

- This excerpt is included on audition lists because it shows a player’s ability to create a musical line and phrase as well as spin the sound.

#### Live Coaching

Player #1 played from the beginning of the solo, starting in m. 275. LeClair began her comments with, “Great! Now I want to work on the dynamics. You are getting the vibrato. The work we did with just blowing through the instrument is a hundred percent better now.” She added that there was work to be done to increase the intensity in the excerpt.

“I noticed that it is usually in the weak beats that I let the vibrato down,” he said.

“That’s right. That is what it is. Try to go [she sings the beginning of the excerpt] down to the A<sup>3</sup>. Go to the downbeat of m. 275. [She sang the opening of the excerpt another time.] You want to go to that downbeat, okay? And, maybe take a little more time with the bigger interval (the ascending perfect fifth) in m. 275. Just do it a couple of times.” He played the excerpt again. LeClair asked the student to play the first note of the excerpt quieter and to use the air speed and rate of releasing it to carry the sub-phrase that starts in m. 278. Rhetorically, she asked, ‘Isn’t that better?’ Now it does not get so note-y. You are just starting to support [the line]. Let’s do it one more time.”

Each time he played it, she had him incorporate some new idea into the excerpt. The constant repetitions, almost always starting from the beginning of the excerpt, seemed to solidify his interpretation. She taught him to caress the first note and shape the musical line from the eighth-note pickup to m. 284 through the downbeat of 288 (refer to Appendix A) and to increase his breath support throughout. As she continued, LeClair drew the musical line from the player, showing him how to subtly shape the line by pushing and pulling—pressing to the front of the beat and then falling to the back—without changing the tempo. By encouraging him to ‘blow through the bassoon,’ she showed him how to increase and diminish the intensity with small variances in building up and releasing the airstream. She paid special attention to how he finished the first phrase moving from m. 281 into m. 282. She sang m. 281 several times, demonstrating the intonation and amount of time that could be taken at this juncture, inviting him to play in the same manner. After he did, she pointed out that the B-flat<sup>3</sup> was a little low while the F<sup>2</sup> was sharp and gave him additional opportunities to address the faulty intonation.

LeClair moved on to the second phrase, “Start building up [she sang the three eighth notes pickups to m. 283] and feel yourself push out going up to the high F<sup>3</sup>, okay?” Again, she had him start from the beginning of the excerpt... “If you feel yourself running out of air there [she sang m. 287], you can sneak a little breath after the first D-flat<sup>3</sup>... Let’s try the second half again.” She explained that she was “sort of having him terrace it” so that in m. 283 [which she sang] he would be at a *forte* at the repeated F<sup>3</sup>s, come down to a *mezzo forte* on the E-flat<sup>3</sup>s, and then move to a *piano* on the D-flat<sup>3</sup>s. “Could you make more of a point of that? Go to the third F<sup>3</sup>, and the third E-flat<sup>3</sup>, okay?” He played the excerpt again, focusing on the dynamics as she had asked. She indicated that she was satisfied with the dynamics, but the phrase seemed “a little

pushed.” She also urged him to hold up his [breath] support as he came down the scale [she sang m. 284] “because that is where it is a little bit under pitch.”

She played m. 289 on the piano while he played it, saying, “If that C<sup>3</sup> is a little bit low, then you are in trouble. The C<sup>3</sup> must be right on. It is okay is if the B-flat<sup>3</sup> is a little low.” Her other criticism was that he was not carrying the musical line, but rather segmenting the music by subphrases—as if a new phrase began on the F<sup>3</sup>s, E-flat<sup>3</sup>s and D-flat<sup>3</sup>s. “It is not flowing as well as it could. Never stop the air. Never stop that. One of my colleagues calls it ‘being a statue on a moving train.’ You always have to have the air...always, always moving. Some people call it *crescendo*-ing through the note. I like to think of it as intensity. You have to keep the intensity going...It’s a spinning sound, all right?” He played it from m. 282 one more time. “There you go! That was it! Did you hear that? Did you feel that? We have to make sure that it wasn’t by chance. The pitch was so much better that time. Maybe it was the word ‘spinning.’ I don’t know...that was great...and you didn’t make so many phrases out of it. Let’s do it one more time.” She spoke in short phrases, transitioning seamlessly between singing and speaking.

He interjected, “I am tired.”

“You are tired. You should be. That was good. You should feel tired at the end of it as if you cannot do anything else, as if you cannot possibly play any more. I want you to think of supporting everything as much as you can. Let’s do it one more time.”

“The second half?” he queried.

“Do the whole thing,” she said adding reminders as he played as one might if someone were giving directions to another person while en route to the destination. His execution of the excerpt fell short in the CB-flatF<sup>3</sup> motive in m. 283. She said that the breath had not adequately supported the musical line, which created pitch issues as well. He played m. 283 a few times and

began playing from the beginning one last time. “Yeah...that’s it. Breathe here (in m. 287). Take a quick one. You cannot take any time with it. But, if you know you are not going to make it...that was great. Everything was working for you. I think when you get in shape, you will be able to do the whole thing without taking the breath [between the D-flat<sup>3</sup>s in m. 287]. That was wonderful. I thought your spinning the sound was great...Did you hear that? It was beautiful. The whole line was working great. Okay. How about the ending”?

He played the last solo starting at m. 300, holding out the last note for some time. She remarked, “You have gone about four beats too long.” She sang the ending solo. “Try to play it with less vibrato or none at all.” He played the ending without vibrato. She interjected, “What are you using there (making reference to the fingering for open F<sup>2</sup>—the last note of the passage)?”

“Nothing. I could use the second finger of the left hand or the G key,” he said. He played the last four notes of the solo using different fingerings for the open F<sup>2</sup>.

LeClair said, “A lot of the time using nothing works best for me, too. But the thing I use most is the second finger.” He attempted the last four notes partially covering the D tone hole on the open F<sup>2</sup>s. “Hold it right there. Don’t move it. You might actually have too much of your finger on the bottom half of the D key. You have to be careful not to use it as a crutch. I actually just have the flesh of my finger barely touching the metal [of the tone-hole tube]. Otherwise, it is a little too flat.” He tried shading the F in isolation and then played the last four notes, shading with his left second finger. As he arrived on the last note, she exclaimed, “Do not move it. Just keep it. Don’t roll it back, just keep it right there. Otherwise, it can get...[she sang the F<sup>2</sup> fading flat]. “Try to keep it—just touch it right...about right there,” she said, placing her hand on his wing joint and showing him exactly where to place his second finger.

Not yet satisfied that they had covered all that was necessary in the last five measures, she cautioned against playing D-flat<sup>2</sup>, the first note of the phrase, too high. She had him match his pitch with the piano. Then she had him play the solo while she held a B-flat minor triad. He inquired about using the pancake key to lower the pitch of the D-flat<sup>2</sup>. She said, “If you are playing in the middle of the summer where it is really hot and humid and the temperature is up, you might need to do that. But, if it is freezing cold and the pitch still is not right, it is just the reed [that is the problem]. It is the temperature and the reed that make the difference.”

Player #2 played the entire excerpt from mm. 274 through 290. While LeClair said that ‘it was really nice,’ she also asked her to play it from the beginning paying special attention to making the quality of each of the Cs identical. LeClair stopped her after the first five notes, saying that the C<sup>3</sup> was too low. She played the excerpt through m. 282. “Keep the air spinning. Perhaps it is a bit too slow. Just do it from the last three notes of m. 278. [LeClair sang these notes as well.] She played it from the beginning through m. 277 while LeClair said, “That’s it. That’s it.” She asked her to refrain from exaggerating the first three eighth notes in m. 277. LeClair remarked that she felt that the right was a little low (flat) and that the reed might be part of her tonguing and response issues. “She played the last portion of the excerpt from mm. 286 through 290 and LeClair complimented her.

### Interview

#### General Pedagogy

LeClair said that for every excerpt she combines a standard approach with one that is tailored to the student’s needs. Most often, she teaches by leading the student through the excerpt phrase by phrase, correcting the problems, and then having the student repeat the phrase or

phrases to reinforce the technique and/or interpretation. Occasionally she uses metaphor to help the student understand a piece or excerpt. While LeClair does not often demonstrate by playing bassoon while teaching, she does demonstrate by singing, and, to a lesser degree, by playing phrases and isolated pitches on the piano, with students matching pitch or some other musical element. While students can—and usually do—hear her play weekly with the New York Philharmonic, she only occasionally plays for them in lessons and master classes.

LeClair said that while she has developed a syllabus and course of study, she might deviate from these in favor of tailoring her teaching to the individual student. She assigns etudes from the Milde Concert Studies, particularly the slow ones. She also expects students to learn one big excerpt per week. In addition, students work on a variety of solo pieces. To build technique she advocates spending a lot of time on varied rhythms.

#### Philosophy about Technique

“I expect students to do technical work on their own: etudes, scales and long tones. I do not want to hear that stuff every week. I want to work on sound production, support, vibrato and musical interpretation. I don’t want to hear the technical stuff. I’m different that way. I think that they should be doing that on their own.”

LeClair stresses breath support more than any other element in her teaching. “You have to be like a barrel. You fill up, harden the muscles and then push out. Do not ever cave in. Always have tight muscles—hard like a washboard—and push out all the time. The higher you go in the bassoon register, the more you have to push out.” LeClair added that if a student were having a difficult time “getting a handle on breath support,” she would work on slow, long tones, playing with the student. “I would have them go note by note. I would also have them do long-

tone exercises.” She said that blowing through the bassoon is necessary to connect the notes and bring out the musical line.

LeClair emphasized the importance of developing many types of articulation while coaching the six excerpts. In the interview, however, she chose to rearticulate the importance developing the double tongue. She recommends using the syllables “Dug-a,” asking students to practice it little by little, not initially concentrating on speed. She does not consider having them change pitches until they can do the double tonguing “really well on a single pitch. I do not teach them on hard notes. I just make them play on easier notes until they become more confident.”

In regard to teaching sound, LeClair says the following: “I know they all have their own sound. I want them to have their sound. But if it is too bright or too dark, I try to get them to move toward a more open tone with a lot of highs and lows in it. It has to have colors. They just have to learn to blow, constantly—blow and get air through the instrument. That is more about a concept than sound. Until they start doing supporting well, I cannot really talk about the sound.

“Vibrato has to be done. It is like a support. It has got to be done from here,” she said, holding her rib cage. “I think of it more as coloring a note. I want the sound to spin and the vibrato to support it. I do not want any lip. I work on vibrato a lot with my students.” She said that she does not think of the vibrato as being constant in the sound. “I ask them to be constantly thinking about support and intensity. I just think vibrato comes naturally.”

Concerning pitch, LeClair said, “I try to teach my students to hear the core of the note, where the note rings on the instrument. And, it depends on the instrument. If they have a good Heckel, they can find the core of the sound. I try to just have them hear where the note rings...and encourage them to give extra support to the tenor register of the bassoon.”

LeClair said that rhythm is key. She spoke about rhythm often during the coaching session. However, she does not use a systematic approach to assist her students in solving rhythmic problems.

She said that she no longer has a warm-up routine. She does, however, ask her students to do a long-tone exercise where they set a metronome at 60 [per quarter note] and increase the length of the note daily.

#### Evolution of the Interpretation of Excerpts

LeClair commented that she studied these excerpts with Van Hoesen while at Eastman School of Music. She did not elaborate on her experiences with the various excerpts before winning the principal bassoon position in the New York Philharmonic Orchestra.

#### Auditions

LeClair did not say much about auditions except that she recommends that her students do not talk with other bassoonists while at an audition. She tells them to remain by themselves until after the audition. She advises students to finger through the music and work to ingrain the appropriate tempos for each excerpt. She said that the biggest mistakes students make comes from not thinking. Players learn to convey the orchestral context of an excerpt primarily through listening to other players and performing chamber music themselves, said LeClair.

#### Conclusions

The element that LeClair spoke of most was breath support and that everything from tone to musical line depended on pouring a lot of air into the bassoon. Breath support impacts the ability to make and carry a musical line. Without ample breath support students will miss notes



and also be unable to double tongue. Every other facet of playing relates to adequate breath support, she said.

LeClair was the only player/teacher that compared and contrasted interpretations because she coached two players on all six of the excerpts included in the study. She showed that it was, in fact, possible for someone who had to work many years to play the excerpts to have as favorable a musical outcome as someone for who it came very easily.

Since two players went through every excerpt it was easier to understand the basic concepts and interpretation that interested her. It was also worth noting that even with something as technical as the cadenzas in *Shéhérazade*, it was, in fact, possible to play them too fast.

Many times she said that what the student played was good or even, beautiful, but LeClair always wanted something more, constantly pressing the student to attain a higher level of musical excellence. Her strategy on all the excerpts was to establish each phrase, put it in the context of the excerpt and have the player repeat it multiple times to solidify the technique and interpretation.

## CHAPTER IV

RICHARD A. SVOBODA

### Coaching Arrangement

Svoboda asked his students to bring one or more of the six excerpts included in the study to their lesson. Four students of his students participated in the study. He coached one male and three female students on the excerpts across two consecutive days. Some had covered one or more of the excerpts during their time as his student; others had not.

### Beethoven Symphony No. 4 in B-Flat Major, mvt. 4

#### Synopsis of Svoboda's Written Responses to the Orchestral Excerpt Questionnaire

- In the audition setting this excerpt tells the committee about the candidate's technical mastery, mental focus, tonguing and sense of musical style.
- One might choose to play this excerpt softer in an audition than in the orchestra, although Svoboda indicated that he would probably choose to play it the same in both situations.
- Svoboda has no standard practice suggestions for this excerpt that are applicable to all players. He makes specific suggestions based on the particular problems facing the student at that time.
- Nothing special is done to the reed for this excerpt.
- Performance tempos seem to be trending upwards with the modern concern for adhering to Beethoven's metronome markings. The quarter note = 160, as indicated in the score, is now fairly common.

### Live Coaching

Svoboda used the famous, twenty-six note solo in the finale of Beethoven Symphony No. 4 to demonstrate his approach to double tonguing. As a means of warming up he had the student play the *tutti* passage that is similar to the solo, starting from the slurred eighth notes in m. 15. The student finished and he proceeded with, “Let me hear your double tongue on any random note.” She picked B-flat<sup>3</sup>.

It was helpful to see him work with this student on the Beethoven because the student had not yet developed a refined double tongue. One of the issues with the student’s double tongue was an obvious pitch change between the two syllables of the double tongue where the second syllable, “kut” was appreciably higher in pitch than the “tuk.” Initially, Svoboda had her just do the “tuk” on F<sup>2</sup>. The student indicated it was difficult to do this slowly because when the excerpt is played to speed, there is no real space between the notes. Svoboda explained that the reason for breaking it down and going through this exercise is to determine what the tongue and air are doing in each of the syllables.

Svoboda said, “In my personal experience of learning double-tonguing, breaking it down and doing it slowly was extremely helpful. In teaching it, I have also found it helpful. This will show you, in a microscopic way, what the tongue is doing. While it is true that in slow motion the note is not tongue stopped, when the passage is fast you are doing this motion. What you need to do is make the ‘tuk’ and ‘kut’ identical. When they sound exactly alike, then you have found where the tongue position needs to be. The reason I asked you to isolate this is because it sounded uneven and a really good double tongue should not be recognizable as a double tongue. The tongue motion needs to be refined so that the pitch never changes. Think of the tongue as

being level as it goes back and forth.” Svoboda also cautioned against pushing the air with the tongue, indicating that the tongue should be used as a valve.

In addition, he had the student isolate the “kut” syllable on F<sup>2</sup>, explaining that unlike the “tuk,” it is a motion that is unfamiliar to players. The key, he indicated, “is to keep blowing and let the tongue act only as a valve that stops the air. Obviously, matching pitch between syllables is important. The clarity of the “K” of “kut” is very important.” While he could not say how much effort or practice it would take until the double tongue sounded good on a single pitch, he indicated that when this was possible, it was time to apply the double tongue to the music itself.

He restated the importance of refining the tongue strokes so that the pitch never changes, “The tongue needs to become this flat thing without rising up.” While a mediocre double tongue might be adequate for the Beethoven excerpt, he said that it would not serve the student well in *The Marriage of Figaro* where elegant Mozartean double tonguing on a single note without any pitch variance is essential. To achieve this refined articulation, he stressed that mastery of the beginning double-tonguing exercises that concentrate on a single pitch was critical.

Throughout this whole process the student’s pitch variance between the two syllables lessened appreciably. Finally, he had her combine the two motions on repeated F<sup>2</sup>s at which point he commented that he thought this was “remarkably better,” which it was from the listener’s perspective.

From there, they returned to the famous solo, beginning 24 measures after Square D. Since it says *dolce*, Svoboda recommended being as *leggiero* as possible with the tonguing. Selecting fingerings that work for one’s bassoon was also part of the discussion. Svoboda suggested holding the high C key down slightly for the first three notes and all the A<sup>2</sup>s, B-flat<sup>3</sup>s and C<sup>3</sup>s, using it as an all-purpose flick without moving to the whisper key at all. He also

recommended that the player maintain this thumb position for all of the flick notes with the exception of D<sup>3</sup>, which would be adversely affected by flicking. When descending from the high G<sup>3</sup>, he said not to flick until the C<sup>3</sup>. He introduced the idea of choreographing the exact motion for the left thumb, writing it in the music and practicing the motions slowly. He said that this is always his approach to working on a new part. “Pretty soon, it just becomes second nature.”

In the second passage, beginning 23 measures after Square G, he noted that despite the double tongue the student played the notes excessively *tenuto*. “The character of the double-tongued notes must always match the style of the music being performed. One of the obvious advantages of double tonguing is the clarity of articulation, which can be achieved without fatiguing the tongue,” said Svoboda, who emphasized that having a reliable double-tongue is not optional, but essential.

For the final passage, beginning six measures from the end of the movement, Svoboda suggested a practice exercise using multiple B-flat<sup>2</sup>s and F<sup>1</sup>s as shown in Examples 14a and 14b.

Example 14a: Beethoven Symphony No. 4, in B-flat Major, mvt. 4, excerpt



Example 14b: Suggested practice exercise



This helps to minimize the crassness of the double tongue in the low register. She asked if he changed his embouchure at all for the double tongue and he indicated that he didn't make any conscious change. He encouraged the player to spend a great deal of time on double tonguing and not to be shy about bringing this or other common audition excerpts into his studio. He

stated, “It helps to have input on this piece even though its nature is just to have to woodshed it until it works.”

### Mozart *The Marriage of Figaro* Overture

#### Synopsis of Svoboda’s Written Responses to the Orchestral Excerpt Questionnaire

- Svoboda prefaced all his comments about this excerpt with the statement, “Everything in Mozart should be elegant.”
- This excerpt demonstrates the player’s ability to play under pressure. It also shows one’s ability keep a steady pulse, play very softly across the register break and tongue well. It demands good technical facility.
- One’s ears play a huge role in playing this in an orchestra. One needs to be exactly with the strings.
- He chooses a reed that will play the *pianissimo* dynamic with comfort.

#### Live Coaching

In this instance, Svoboda had the student play through the excerpt twice before commenting. Then he asked for the dynamic to be much softer. He also asked to hear the first five notes to establish a softer dynamic. Perhaps stating the obvious, Svoboda commented that the first *pianissimo* line, which crosses the register break between E<sup>2</sup> and F-sharp<sup>2</sup>, must be one dynamic throughout. “You are getting louder going over the break. Can you support well and go over the break without getting louder? How are you approaching playing soft? Have we talked about the embouchure for playing quietly?” He reached for his bassoon, wet a reed, demonstrated a normal embouchure and then moved into the soft embouchure, which he produced by focusing the muscles of the face inward around the reed to mute the sound. Svoboda

described the soft embouchure as one that “puts more skin on the bottom blade and allows a person to blow about the same amount [of air].” He indicated that the place where that really becomes crucial is on the F-sharp<sup>2</sup>.

“Is it a rolling motion?” asked the player.

Svoboda answered, “I think it is an individual thing. Some people actually displace their embouchure. I don’t do that. I just focus in, pushing more skin padding onto the reed without biting or putting pressure. It is just cushioning the reed. The problem with me for teaching this is that I cannot really see what you are doing. Basically, we have a freely vibrating reed and then come in from all sides to dampen the reed. Ideally, you can play the note loudly and add the embouchure to achieve a diminuendo on a single note when the music calls for such. I am switching between two different embouchures. In a single note, you need for the change from one to the other to be imperceptible. You also need the soft embouchure for passages where just a little sound is required. Here, you need it for going into the F-sharp<sup>2</sup>.

“Why don’t we experiment with the embouchure to see if we are headed in the right direction for going over the break?” He listened contemplatively as the student made various attempts at producing a softer sound using this new embouchure and after some time, commented, “You sound like you have a direction to go with this. In *The Marriage of Figaro*, it’s vital so everything speaks and you can go over the break without getting louder. I use the soft embouchure all the time in the orchestra when fading out in soft passages.”

The student asked whether the printed articulation should be strictly observed, and Svoboda remarked that some members of an audition committee would probably expect the player to do so. Although Svoboda said that for a long time he played it entirely slurred as the

student did, in his opinion it was wisest to rearticulate as notated. His only caveat was to try to make the places where re-articulation is indicated as subtle as possible.

“Since you are just experimenting with the soft embouchure, let’s hear how you practiced it.” The student played and he interjected, “Are you thinking of the musical line?”

“It goes up and then comes back down again,” said the player. To which Svoboda responded, “Mostly, I’d agree with that. There are no specific notes to bring out. Just don’t think of it as it is barred so that it is very linear. I would try to work in the soft embouchure.”

Next he addressed the repeated notes, which were too severe for Mozart. Svoboda suggested, “Make them full, but [use] a rounder approach. You’re single tonguing that, right? There is a definite sense of striking the reed. Can you change the approach to taking the tongue and removing it from the reed in a more *leggiero* fashion?” The player tried it. Svoboda said, “I would go in that direction. Are you tonguing right on the tip? The other sounds machine gunny. It’s better at the tip. You need something that sounds less punched.”

Having isolated and worked out portions of the excerpt, Svoboda asked the student to put these in context and play the excerpt again. Before you ever play, he admonished, set your tempo. She replayed it. He added that holding down the flick key will make A<sup>2</sup> sharp, which must be accommodated to correct the intonation. The whisper key lock remains engaged until Square A.

“You are playing around with the tongue to make it less harsh. Obviously, the tongue cannot move around much. Pick a place and do it,” said Svoboda, asking the player to repeat the passage. He commented, “There is something a little percussive in the tonguing. Instead of tonguing at the tip, try moving a little further back and see what happens. Try playing loudly by opening up, not by pressing so much air. Don’t let it change. Pay attention. You don’t want it to



sound like a machine gun. For a lot of players the repeated notes sound like a machine gun when they use the double tongue. Usually with a single tongue it is not such an issue. I think it has to do with the air pressure. You want something full but round—a nice Mozartean *forte* without any sharp attacks. [The player attempted the repeated note again.] “The first notes are very nice. Then it changes.” [The player made another attempt at the repeated notes.] This time Svoboda liked the outcome and exclaimed, “That’s the answer: Finesse what is coming out of the horn.”

As they concluded work on the excerpt, Svoboda complimented the student on her playing, but also expressed concern about becoming truly competitive with this excerpt. Again, he returned to the quality of the slurred passages in the excerpt. “I think you sound great. However, I am thinking of a really competitive audition and you don’t want to have anything for a committee to complain about. You want nice phrasing and a tempo that doesn’t fluctuate. Ideally, you want a *sotto voce* for the slurred notes where you are barely audible.”

### Ravel *Bolero*

#### Synopsis of Svoboda’s Written Responses to the Orchestral Excerpt Questionnaire

- The excerpt demonstrates a player’s ability to play beautifully and freely within a steady tempo framework. It also showcases a player’s intonation and ability to play in the high register.
- It is scarier, but a bit easier, to play in the orchestra because the accompaniment is there. He encourages students to hear the orchestra in their head.
- Svoboda’s suggestions are solely based on the needs of the student.
- He selects the reed that articulates the high D-flat<sup>4</sup> the best from those in his reed box.

## Live Coaching

Svoboda had the student play through the entire *Bolero* excerpt before commenting. This encouraged the student to feel at ease and allowed him to play an interpretation of the excerpt without rethinking or changing course at the last minute in response to something suggested by the master teacher.

The student complained about having to exhale in one place and inhale in another due to a feeling that he was hyperventilating. Svoboda made two suggestions that he thought were contributing to the breathing issues: don't take such a big breath at the beginning and play the excerpt a bit faster. While Svoboda indicated that there is a range of tempos, "somewhere around 69 to the quarter beat is appropriate for this excerpt. It is easier to play this excerpt accurately and musically if it is at the 'right' tempo." With this in mind and a metronome set at 69, the student replayed the excerpt. Svoboda had no quibble with the player's *mezzo piano* feel in the excerpt.

In the first phrase (as shown in Example 15 along with the other phrases), Svoboda suggested thinking one musical line through the long  $G^3$  all the way to the  $E^3$ . The player had previously been making a slight decay on the  $G^3$ , which made it difficult to come through the sixteenth notes after the tie and descend to the  $E^3$ . Svoboda also recommended being more obvious about where the music is tongued.

Svoboda's first comment about the second phrase, he addressed the need for lots of accent on the  $G^3$ . From there, he backtracked to a discussion of the ascent to the  $D\text{-flat}^4$  and the repeated  $D\text{-flat}^4$ s. He pointed out that the three eighth notes in seven after Square 2 are, in one sense, like restarting the ascent from the  $B\text{-flat}^4$  to the first  $D\text{-flat}^4$  in the sixth measure after Square 2. They are also similar to the three repeated notes in the second phrase of the solo in the



player wanted confirmation that vibrato accents were the best choice for this excerpt, to which Svoboda agreed that while there are many types of accents, vibrato accents seem to be the best solution for this excerpt. Svoboda asked the player to do even more with the accents, but to avoid too much “front loading” of the accent. He began, “A little bit of tongue and a lot of [transitioning to singing] ‘euhm.’” Svoboda finished singing the amount and character of the vibrato he had in mind. Otherwise, he left it alone because the player’s dynamic, line and rhythm were convincing.

### Rimsky-Korsakov *Schéhérazade*

#### Synopsis of Svoboda’s Written Responses to the Orchestral Excerpt Questionnaire

- This excerpt demonstrates the player’s ability to create an interpretation and to make something come alive. It gives the audition committee the opportunity to assess if and how the player uses vibrato to aid music-making and to evaluate the player’s intonation.
- Svoboda makes specific practice suggestions but only ones having to do with phrase organization.
- Some conductors like to conduct this solo, others not. Some suggest specific dynamic schemes as well.

#### Live Coaching

Consistent with his teaching style, Svoboda listened to the student play the excerpt from beginning to end. He immediately requested that the student replay it at a faster tempo and with more exaggeration of character. Svoboda interjected, “The composer says, ‘*dolce espressivo, capriccioso, quasi recitando.*’ That’s a lot of different things. I apply whatever seems appropriate. *Quasi recitando* means there’s a lot of freedom. The whole piece is played with

varying degrees of *espressivo*. I start it thinking *dolce*. It's in 3/8 time basically in duplets. You seem to be over emphasizing the *hemiola*. Play the duplets more within context of 3/8 time. They are all going to the third measure and then going away."

The player confessed confusion about the relative emphasis of the opening grace-notes. Svoboda clarified that the grace-notes are not strong, adding, "Since it is easy to miss the first one, try thinking of it as a thirty-second note just to get you started. Svoboda said this has been helpful to numerous students. Also, try to free up the pulse a bit. The secret is in how you play the eighth notes. The first eighth-note grouping has to go forward to the downbeat—the next one not so much. Now lift after each duplet to get the same inflection."

Moving into the second phrase, Svoboda sang from the grace note in the sixth measure of the solo, capturing the striking character shift between the first two phrases and the almost *leggiero* quality of the staccato notes between the accents. Later, he sang the lessening of intensity that occurs across the four slurred sixteenth notes that lead from m. 9 into the B<sup>3</sup>.

These sixteenth notes are a transitional motive that facilitates morphing between the more angular, percussive character and the *dolce espressivo* character introduced at the outset. See Example 16 (Capital letters indicating emphasis added by the author).

Example 16: Rimsky-Korsakov *Schéhérazade*, mm. 1-11, phrase structure and syllables by Richard A. Svoboda

**Andantino** Phrase 1 Phrase 2

*dolce espressivo*

Solo

*capriccioso, quasi recitando*

Dee Yup bup Bee

bup bup Bee dee yah dah dee Bum      Yah dah dee dah dum

“The second character seems more *capriccioso*, right?” The player agreed, nodding. Svoboda continued, “You can put accents where you see them in mm. 6, 7, and 8, playing them in a Russian style sort of like a cymbal crash. Try to make them all the same. The accents are not heavy. Come away from the accent once you play it. *Schéhérazade* is a miniature character study in *dolce*, *capriccioso*. Start at the beginning and replay to the downbeat of m. 10. Move the tempo ahead to show where the line is going,” directed Svoboda, adding. “It could use more of a sense that you are totally free even though you obviously are not.”

This accomplished, they moved into the second section of the excerpt with the pickups to m. 12. Here, Svoboda cautioned, “Don’t anticipate the new phrase. I like to take a lot of time three measures before Square A. It takes away from it if you slow too much in mm. 15 and 16. It should sound as if you are making it up as you are going along. It should sound totally free. I interpret that accent as a lengthening of the A<sup>3</sup>. The last part has to sound not direct and not straight. Go to the first G<sup>3</sup> without an accent so that you save something for the A<sup>3</sup>. The other thing that I normally do is to go to beat three fairly quickly and hold the D<sup>3</sup>. The biggest thing that you can do to improve an excerpt like this is to free it up and make it sound more natural. Unless you are careful, it can just go along unremarkably. You must stress the melodic line.”

They transitioned seamlessly into the cadenza passage. Here, Svoboda listened to the student play the three cadenzas before suggesting that they address them one at a time. He added that it is important to be able to adjust the tempo at will. In the first, Svoboda sang his interpretation of the first three notes, ascending from D<sup>3</sup> “Bum, Bum, Bum’...Delay the F<sup>3</sup> slightly by a hair. It shows personality or humanity...it highlights it. Do each successive one [the opening ascent from D<sup>3</sup> to F<sup>3</sup>] a little more dramatically than the previous one. I think the secret

is making the crescendo from *piano*.” In answer to the student’s questions, he remarked that it is more important for the final D<sup>3</sup> to finish nicely than for its length to be precise.

In the second cadenza passage, Svoboda recommended accenting the F<sup>3</sup>. Instead of consciously making a diminuendo after sounding the F<sup>3</sup>, he asked the player to follow the natural decay of the note that occurs immediately after an accent.

With regard to the difficult alternation between D<sup>3</sup> to E<sup>3</sup> in the third passage, Svoboda asked, “Are you doing the full fingering? You don’t need to worry too much about pacing yourself. Make sure that you are weaving a musical line horizontally not just playing the notes. You have to create a sense of *accelerando* even from the beginning.” Rather than attaining the maximum personal speed in any of the cadenzas, Svoboda recommended that the player hold something in reserve so that there is a constant sense of pushing forward.

### Stravinsky *The Rite of Spring*

#### Synopsis of Svoboda’s Written Responses to the Orchestral Excerpt Questionnaire

- This excerpt shows the player’s facility and intonation in the high register as well as the player’s capacity to craft an interpretation.
- This excerpt is somehow more daunting in performance, especially the first note. The students will discover this for themselves.
- The specific practice suggestions he makes are to play the excerpt without the grace notes for accuracy of rhythm. He also advocates using the metronome to help with rhythmic accuracy.
- He does not do something special with the scrape of the reed. He selects a reed that favors the high register.

- Conductors tend not to conduct the opening. Therefore, it takes a read through to discover a conductor's tempo and other style preferences.

### Live Coaching

Again, the student played through the opening without interruption. “Everything in this excerpt must be melodic and very in tune,” said Svoboda. “Always check the high  $C^4$  before you start. Concentrate on pitch, listen and practice keeping the indicator on the tuner motionless and fixed in relationship to  $A = 440$ . Practice octave Cs from  $C^3$  to  $C^4$ . You know the tuning on that interval, which makes it more dependable than playing the  $C^4$  in isolation. Then practice the  $C^4$  by itself.” In addition, he suggested shading the opening  $C^4$  by partially covering the second tone hole on the wing joint. The player must, however, make certain that the pitch stays the same when removing the second finger to discontinue the shading. The student raised the question of using a high-note vocal for the excerpt, to which Svoboda responded that he felt that there was no need for such with this excerpt.

Svoboda launched a discussion of compatible fingerings—ones that produce consistent intonation, especially between adjacent notes. One option for  $B^4$  that Svoboda suggested uses the pancake key along with the B-flat key to achieve good intonation and color on the  $B^4$ . He also discussed numerous options for fingering  $D^4$ . One of the most common is to depress the high D key, half hole the second finger, close the third tone hole and add the E-flat resonator in the left hand and use the B-flat, G and F keys in the right hand. In order to be competent with special fingerings Svoboda urged her to practice scales with the altered fingerings.

She had practiced the excerpt with a metronome, but was playing the excerpt slower than the metronome marking [quarter note = 50] indicated on the score. Svoboda told her that this tempo was too slow. “While some conductors want it faster, being able to play it with a



metronome at the tempo indicated in the score is a good starting point,” he said, adding, “Maintaining a basic pulse throughout is important because the other instrumental parts must align properly with the bassoon solo.”

It is desirable, said Svoboda, for the music to flow and have line. He said that for the most part one plays it straight with the first note lasting about two beats. In the second measure Svoboda said that he moves the phrase ahead by pushing toward the D<sup>4</sup> in beat 3. Measures 4 and 5 can be tricky primarily because of the sixteenth-note triplet within the triplet on beat two of m. 4. He advocates practicing mm. 4 and 5 without the grace notes in order to solidify the basic rhythm. Once this is achieved the grace notes may be added. He stressed that all the grace notes must be carefully placed throughout the excerpt. There is a rhythmic relationship between the grace notes and the sixteenth-note passages. “The inflection of the various groupings is important. For example, the groups of five in mm. 3 and 9 must be inflected differently than the groups of four. There is only a slight *accelerando* in m. 5.”

Svoboda pointed out that the second phrase, which begins with the pickup to m. 7, consists of three sub-phrases, each beginning on C<sup>4</sup> where the second sub-phrase is identical to m. 2. At Square 3 musical material from measures 3 and 4 is metrically shifted. When the opening passage is restated a half-step lower at Square 12, Svoboda suggested simultaneously using the high C and high D keys for the D-flat<sup>4</sup>.

#### Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 4, in F minor mvt. 2

#### Synopsis of Svoboda’s Written Responses to the Orchestral Excerpt Questionnaire

- In the audition setting this excerpt is used to ascertain the candidate’s musicianship, ability to carry a phrase, demonstrate control and good intonation.

- There are no differences in approach to this excerpt between the audition and live orchestral performance.
- There are no specific practice suggestions that are made across the board with regard to mastery of the excerpt. Suggestions are made specific to the individual player learning the excerpt.
- Nothing specific is done to a reed to play this excerpt.
- The length of the final note varies. Some conductors expect the end of the final note to be in time. Others are happy for it to last quite a while.

### Live Coaching

The student played through the entire excerpt. Instead of starting at the beginning, Svoboda focused on the last five measures of the movement. He asked if the player could fade like a clarinet and if he practiced fading in this manner. He also asked if there was a sense of equal control throughout the *diminuendo* on the final note; the player indicated that there was not. Svoboda's objective was to elevate the student's proficiency to a level where confidence in his ability to execute the *diminuendo* with complete control overshadowed any sense of doubt. To this end, Svoboda advocated practicing just the F<sup>2</sup> softly to gain control of the note throughout the *decrecendo*. "You want to become really comfortable and in control the whole way," he said.

Following several unsuccessful repetitions of the final phrase, Svoboda and the student discussed whether this problem might be attributed to the reed. Rather than looking at the reed that was currently being played, Svoboda suggested that at a later date, they should spend some time with a partially finished reed that showed some promise from the outset and go through the

trimming process together. Then Svoboda could show the student how to shave the reed in a manner similar to his own.

Svoboda also recommended beginning this final phrase with sufficient volume from which to make a substantial *diminuendo*. He vetoed adding the pancake key to the open F for the *diminuendo* because of the obvious color shift in the note and also because it made the note too soft at the onset. “In order to do a *morendo* one has to have some volume to come from. Progressively moving the second finger across the second tone hole on the wing joint, from open until it is mostly covered, will account for plenty of *morendo*.”

Svoboda outlined the structure of the excerpt, saying that the first portion divides into two 8-bar phrases, beginning with the eighth-note pickups in m. 274 to the downbeat of m. 282 and with the three eighth-note pickups to mm. 283 through 290. The last part of the excerpt, mm. 300-304, follows nine measures of rest and brings the movement to a close.

In the first phrase, Svoboda recommended playing at a soloistic *piano* volume. He suggested that first note be played very softly with a slight *tenuto* and then gradually move the eighth-note pickups into tempo. This first phrase winds down to end as it began without ever becoming very loud. The student artfully handled the timing and decay of the final note in the first phrase without becoming too slow or taking too much time to breathe, making it unnecessary for Svoboda to address these important interpretive issues. However, they discussed the potential of different interpretations for taking the phrase to the downbeat of m. 281. The challenge of taking the phrase to the top on the fourth eighth of m. 279 becomes finding a means to convey the arrival in m. 281, said Svoboda.

According to Svoboda the second phrase, which is marked *espressivo*, must “sing” more than the first. Here, overall pacing, direction and length of line become critical in order for the

phrasing neither to sound fragmented nor contrived. The player asked: “What makes *espressivo*? Is it vibrato, volume, accent, rhythmic *rubato*, air speed?” Svoboda replied that it is some combination of all those things. To help the player achieve the *espressivo* Svoboda had in mind, he repeatedly sang the syllables “yum, bum, bee,” indicating the fullness, length, quality, intensity and direction of each of the three repeated notes. Svoboda augmented his explanation of the three syllables by describing the first note of the three repeated pitches as leaning forward, the second one as *really* leaning forward and the third note as an arrival—“the singing one.” He suggested rushing a bit through the “yum, bum,” followed by a slight *tenuto* on the “bee” syllable on the downbeat and then coming away. He also mentioned that the *staccato* marking should not be taken too seriously. Throughout, he indicated vibrato speed by singing and gesturing with his hand.

Svoboda had the student play the second, *espressivo* phrase numerous times. With each repetition, the music became more convincing. In response to a question from the player, Svoboda addressed the relative weight of each of the three sub-phrases that contain the three repeated pitches, beginning in m. 283. Two interpretations surfaced. These could be described as: “most, less, least” and “some, more, least.” The latter interpretation includes a *subito* shift to a *piano* dynamic in m. 288 downbeat. Or, one could just do a diminuendo through m. 289 to the end. The player also asked about the length of the last eighth note. Svoboda indicated that it should be played full value or slightly longer than full value. Svoboda also said that the tempo could relax slightly.

Throughout, Svoboda asked the player questions about the interpretive choices he was making, saying that there was not only one satisfying or convincing manner in which to interpret this excerpt. Svoboda also spoke about this aspect of his pedagogical approach during the

interview portion of the research. He cited tone and vibrato as well as interpretation as concepts that had to fit within certain parameters. Using the analogy of a box, he said, that each of these had to fit within the box. He described letting his students know when they were outside the box with respect to these or other elements of their playing. Svoboda considers this one of his foremost responsibilities as teacher and coach. His role, as he views it, is not one telling a student how to interpret a particular passage, but of actively directing or guiding the student in discovering his or her own individual approach.

### Interview

#### General Pedagogy

Each of the excerpts included in this study is covered during the freshman year at the New England Conservatory. Svoboda has developed a detailed four-year curriculum that serves as a template from which he seldom deviates. (See Appendix E.) He assigns the solo literature a grade based on its level of difficulty. “With the excerpts we just dive right in.”

While there are standard points that he makes about each excerpt, he fosters an openness that invites cognition. “I am not usually adamant about any particular interpretation,” said Svoboda. Within the studio, this pedagogical approach asserts itself in two recognizable ways. First, Svoboda has the player perform an excerpt in its entirety before making comments, which if made beforehand could superpose or influence the student’s interpretive choices. Second, he encourages, even solicits, dialogue about interpretation. In the interview as well as the studio, Svoboda spoke of constantly making a conscious effort to respond to the challenges facing each player.

With regard to essential performance elements, Svoboda cited the need to simultaneously convey pulse and freedom with *Schéhérazade*. In *The Rite of Spring*, grouping notes, solving intonation problems, creating line and interpretation are important. Svoboda is a strong proponent of finding compatible fingerings – ones that match pitch, sound and color – for each person’s set up and working them into the technique. In *The Rite of Spring*, where high-notes are prominent, Svoboda indicated that compatible fingerings are an integral part of mastering the excerpt. “*Bolero* can come out sounding like an exercise if notes are not grouped properly. Also, fingerings, rhythm and particularly intonation come into play. There is always the question of how to make it sound as it should. This requires balancing the need for pulse with sounding free and musical,” he said. “With the Tchaikovsky I must first gain a clear understanding of what the student needs to do. Some students have problems with intonation in this excerpt. Line and phrasing requires work on the part of all the students.

“I know that some teachers develop or use specific practice passages to help build technique for certain orchestral excerpts. As a student I personally didn’t find this very helpful,” he said. “If I have some mind trick for how to group particular notes that might make it easier to perform a particular passage, I pass that along. I advocate isolating smaller segments of the music, working these out and adding more of the music before and after the isolated passage until the passage has been successfully placed into context.”

Svoboda teaches by a combination of explanation, metaphor and demonstration. “I play if I think it would be helpful for whatever reason, particularly if words aren’t working,” he said. Noting a change from his earlier teaching, he observed that the frequency with which he communicates an idea by playing for a student has increased over the years.

“The ideal lesson contains an etude, excerpt, sonata or concerto and work on reeds,” he said. “That’s a lot to fit in an hour. Reality often dictates that more emphasis be placed on one or another of the elements, especially as a student prepares excerpts for an audition or a solo recital.”

The three bassoon studios at NEC come together for studio class, which meets for six or seven two-hour sessions per semester. The classes usually begin with a recital segment and then move into a master class format. At the beginning of the school year, students play an audition the outcome of which determines placement in the various ensembles for the year.

Svoboda teaches a semester-long bassoon repertoire class every other year. “Typically, all the bassoonists sign up. It covers the pieces that are considered the most important for bassoon based on their frequency on bassoon audition lists. Gregg Henegar [Boston Symphony Orchestra contra player] also comes in and does a couple of classes on contrabassoon. The course concludes with a mock audition,” he said.

Svoboda also leads a class that assembles a complete orchestral wind section that plays significant works from the standard orchestral literature. This simulation places the individual parts into context, allowing the players to experience the interplay among the wind instruments. This exercise can prove invaluable in auditions where the player has not performed the work with an orchestra, but is nonetheless expected to convey the context of the excerpt to an audition committee, explained Svoboda.

### Philosophy about Technique

Technique embraces many elements, including, tone, intonation, tempo, rhythm, articulation and, in a fundamental way, breath support. Tonguing, slurring, accent and emphasis as well as length and shape of notes fall under the domain of articulation. In this interview,

however, Svoboda focused on rapid articulation via double tonguing, which is of particular interest to those preparing to play the overture to the opera *“The Marriage of Figaro”* and the fourth movement of Beethoven’s Symphony No. 4.

“When I won my first job, I didn’t double tongue...I think double tonguing is really important. Although, I have a couple of students in my studio who have a really, really fast single tongue, even they need to double tongue. For instance with the Beethoven, it is becoming more and more common for conductors to want the quarter note at 160. It’s pretty rare for anyone to have that kind of a single tongue.”

His approach to double tonguing is to have students practice in slow motion with tongue-stopped syllables so that the student can pay attention to what is happening inside the mouth. It is important to make the resultant tongue-stopped “tuk” and “kut” sound identical so that players get a sense of a valve zipping back and forth, said Svoboda, who advocates practicing the double tonguing first with a single pitch and with small groups of 3, 5 and 9 notes, expanding the range from open F down and up. “If a student is having problems with the double tongue after working on it for awhile and trying to get it, I will often times suggest other ways of making it work. For instance, I actually do quadruple tonguing, or whatever that might be called, where I do one double tonguing group per every four notes.”

Ideally, Svoboda explained, there should be some overlap of the double tongue into the single tonguing range. How much will vary with the player because everybody’s tongue is different. “What I tell my students is that you need to have a solution for every tempo so that there aren’t any awkward areas.”

Svoboda deals with concept of tone on an individual basis. He views his role as one that directs them. There is a great deal of latitude here, which allows for individual variation and



personal expression. “Having your own sound isn’t such a great thing if it locks you out of the market you are trying to enter. The tone must fall inside ‘the box’ within the parameters of what is considered to be acceptable within the world of orchestral playing.”

Nothing replaces listening, adjusting and working with a tuner, he said. If there are still intonation problems on particular notes, he inquires about the student’s tongue position and the vowel shape inside of the mouth while playing. In general, “e” and “oo” vowels produce a higher pitch. If the pitch is too high, he suggests changing to a more open vowel such as “ah” or “oh,” which is likely to lower the pitch.

One of the ways that Svoboda offers help with vibrato is having students listen to the overall shape of the tone with the vibrato – how it pushes and comes back. Many students need help to develop a ‘floor’ so that the pitch doesn’t sag. “Vibrato is a very complicated technical issue with many variables. Rather than break it down, it is better to get a nice vibrato sound in one’s ear and then just endeavor to copy it.”

To help with rhythmic precision and also steadiness of beat, Svoboda recommends that students regularly practice with a metronome. He doesn’t address breath support often because most of the players he encounters in teaching at NEC are far enough along in their playing that there is seldom a need to comment about it.

With regard to warming up, he doesn’t confine his own warm up to some prescribed routine nor does he expect such from his students. Recently, however, he developed a set of warm up scales that he feels is useful for his students.

#### Evolution of the Interpretation of Excerpts

“Chances are that I don’t even remember studying these important excerpts, let alone my teacher’s approach to them. I was naïve when I first went through them. Yes, I had studied each

of these excerpts formally before playing them in the orchestra and I had performed all these major works before coming to the BSO,” recalled Svoboda.

“In playing a work multiple times, I am sure that my understanding of it has changed. I understand better how it fits in with other instruments. Also, I have played it with a lot of different conductors. It comes out a lot of different ways depending on who is conducting. This applies to most pieces, but *The Rite of Spring* perhaps more than anything else. Some will want a more aggressive approach...others, almost calm. Every time you play something in an orchestra your perception of it changes. In pieces that you haven’t played a lot, you are constantly discovering things. There is always something new to learn about a piece by doing it again...now it is *reality* [italics added for emphasis], not hypothetical nor theoretical.”

### Auditions

Svoboda discusses auditions in the initial session of the bassoon repertoire class that is offered every other year. “Here I cover a lot of the extraneous issues, including diet, caffeine, sleep and other things that affect the focus necessary to take auditions. We talk about the things that can derail one’s focus and I share anecdotes from live auditions,” he said. Other concerns related to the audition process are addressed in studio class and elsewhere.

In lessons, Svoboda concentrates on optimal preparation. “I try to help them play the excerpt to their fullest ability, making it as good as they possibly can. My ultimate goal would be to get all my students to be able to play something to where it sounds fabulous. I am listening for pitch, intonation, tone, interpretation, rhythm—all those elements—in the studio as well as in an audition in the same way that I am listening when I am playing the pieces in the orchestra,” he said, adding that one barometer of an individual’s musical growth is hearing how the student

assimilates and demonstrates what has been covered in lessons during live performance.

Svoboda attends all of his student's recitals.

The student needs to understand how each excerpt fits in the orchestra. "This is integral," he said, adding, "I talk about context all of the time. If the bassoon is paired with the second horn at a certain place in the music, the bassoonist needs to know and convey this by the manner in which they play."

"I take the approach that by the time they leave NEC, they should know the acceptable range of tempos for an excerpt." He says to the student: "You want to present yourself in the best possible way. There are a lot of things that go into that. You have to pick a tempo that is standard and acceptable for a particular excerpt, but also shows you in the best possible light. Choose your best tempo. You also need to practice the excerpt at other tempos. For instance, you need to have a solution for playing an excerpt if asked to play it at a tempo that falls outside your range of single tonguing. 'What are you going to do then?' You should have already practiced it to know what your solution is. If you don't, you are going to flunk that test. There are so many ways of thinking about things. Adrenaline is flowing in an audition. Sit down with a metronome in the audition warm up room, and find what the real tempos are under the audition pressure. It might seem that the *Marriage of Figaro* overture is going in slow motion."

He has this advice for students: During warm up prior to the audition, separate excerpts you actually must play and from those you don't need to play as part of the warm up. "It might be a long day if the student is successful in advancing to a second or third round. This will call for some stamina.

"A lot of what goes into being competitive is having genuine confidence. Everyone is going to have insecurities. A lot of people who appear to have confidence probably don't. The

surest way to have real confidence is to be able to play the excerpts well. In order to be competitive you have to be good. I am not just teaching students who are going to go off and win jobs. I am teaching a collection of students. It's not cut and dry, but my basic job is to take them from point A to point B. Hopefully they will be better equipped for whatever they do in life. It's hard to win a job. Students have to be very committed. There's a whole range of things that go into it. The biggest thing for success is that you have to be really good. And, you have to be committed over the long haul."

Students seldom win orchestral positions immediately following graduation, explained Svoboda. "When you take an audition, you need to ask yourself: 'How did it go? What can I do to improve it?' Moreover, you have to have a thick skin. A little bit of luck doesn't hurt either. If they don't happen to ask the excerpt that you can't quite play yet, that's a little bit of luck and that's good. Or, if you go into an audition and they don't have any one player already in mind that's also good."

### Conclusions

The following are of particular significance in Svoboda's teaching:

He is a strong advocate of learning a variety of fingerings such that the player can choose compatible fingerings – ones that match in pitch tendency as well as color and also work well with the player's instrument and overall set up – especially in the high register. To increase familiarity in using these fingerings, he suggests incorporating them into scale practice.

Svoboda stresses practicing excerpts at a variety of acceptable tempos. He recommends having worked out a solution for accomplishing the printed articulations across this range of tempos prior to the audition experience.

Svoboda refers to a soft embouchure, which allows a player to produce the extremely soft dynamics in the overture to *The Marriage of Figaro* as well as fade to nothing at the end of the second movement of Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 4. He distinguishes this soft embouchure from playing softly with his regular embouchure. He guides students in finding and developing the soft embouchure, wanting them ultimately to be able to transition seamlessly from one to the other even in a single note and apply it whenever it is helpful to playing ensemble as well as solo literature.

Far from insisting on a particular musical interpretation of an excerpt, Svoboda fosters a degree of flexibility with regard to its outcome. This freedom of interpretation emanates from an ongoing dialogue between student and teacher.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study facilitated an understanding of the substance and character of three player/teachers' pedagogical approaches to six major orchestral excerpts for bassoon. The live coaching sessions were, in essence, the practical application of their pedagogy and its related components in response to the technical and interpretive challenges of each excerpt. Three distinct styles of teaching emerged as a result of the interview, coaching sessions and the Orchestral Excerpts Questionnaire. The findings of the study lay the groundwork for meaningful comparisons among the various player/teachers' pedagogical approaches.

During the coaching sessions player/teachers demonstrated the ability to analyze the minutia of technical and interpretive execution. They shared common ground with regard to identifying the technical and interpretive challenges of each excerpt. They conveyed musical ideas by singing and/or playing for their students. In addition, player/teachers used repetition of the excerpt in whole or in part; analogy; practice exercises; theoretical analysis; discussion about interpretation; or some combination of these to help their students acquire the skills necessary to play each excerpt.

All of the player/teachers communicated the importance of developing one's musicianship and technical proficiency. They also agreed that learning to double tongue is essential—not optional. Svoboda experimented with the notion of discovering compatible fingerings (ones that complement the color and pitch tendencies of an instrument and its player);

however, all contributed options for fingering certain passages, helping students find the best solutions for their instrument, reed and vocal combination.

When a player/teacher repeatedly sang an excerpt in whole or part, the player/teacher often used the same syllables. This consistent use of syllables by the individual player/teacher seems to indicate, perhaps even at a subconscious level, a conviction regarding relative stress of notes, the initiation and conclusion of a phrase, articulation and musical gesture as well as the internal vowel shapes needed throughout.

Each player/teacher possessed experiential knowledge of the standard orchestral literature enhanced by an exposure to multiple interpretations of the same work playing under different renowned conductors, which leads to an understanding of the range of acceptable tempos. In addition to winning their current orchestral position, these player/teachers have also served on audition committees—an experience that equips them to make suggestions about how to play these excerpts under duress and to share insights about how the committee may listen and respond to a candidate. The player/teachers' experience gives them a sense of what fits “inside the box,” an analogy Svoboda made with regard to tone, vibrato, tempo, interpretation and other parameters. Taken as a whole, these factors might also increase player/teachers' ability to guide their students in developing and conveying an “auditory context,” a term introduced by Clouser and a concept addressed by each player/teacher, which is necessary for success in orchestral auditions.

All held similar expectations of their students with regard to technical and interpretive command of each excerpt. Although the teaching style and methods used to assist students in solving technical concerns and developing interpretive skills differed widely, all achieved

comparable results with students who had, or were well on their way to having, command of the excerpts.

Suggestions for further research include the following: 1) using a different group of player/teachers; 2) using other excerpts; 3) examining the pedagogical approaches of second bassoonists and contrabassoon players, who hold positions in major orchestras and teach at a university, college or conservatory; and 4) examining similar pedagogical approaches for other instruments.



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## APPENDIX A

## ORCHESTRAL EXCERPTS USED IN THIS STUDY

Beethoven Symphony No. 4 in B-flat Major, mvt. 4, mm.15-25 and 11 measures before Square E to Square E

*Allegro ma non troppo.  $\text{♩} = 80$ .*

15 *p* *cresc.*

21 *ff*

*Allegro ma non troppo.  $\text{♩} = 80$ .*

*p dolce* *p* E

*f*

Beethoven Symphony No. 4 in B-flat Major, mvt. 4 (excerpt concluded)

**Allegro ma non troppo.**  $\text{♩} = 80$ .  
23 mm. after G

*ff*

*ff* *sf*  $\text{>}$  *p*

**Allegro ma non troppo.**  $\text{♩} = 80$   
12 mm. after H (6 mm. before the end)

*ff*



Mozart *Marriage of Figaro* Overture, mm. 1-40**Presto**

5 *pp*

10 *a 2*

16 *ff*

20 *p*

23

28

34 *ff*

*f p f p f p f*

The musical score is written in bass clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a common time signature (C). It consists of eight staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a common time signature. The second staff starts at measure 5 with a piano (*pp*) dynamic. The third staff starts at measure 10 with a second ending bracket labeled *a 2*. The fourth staff starts at measure 16 with a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic. The fifth staff starts at measure 20 with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The sixth staff starts at measure 23. The seventh staff starts at measure 28. The eighth staff starts at measure 34 with a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic and features a series of alternating *f* and *p* dynamics.

Public Domain

Mozart, *Marriage of Figaro Overture*, mm. 98-123

**Presto**

This musical score is for the Presto section of the Marriage of Figaro Overture, measures 98-123. It is written for a single melodic line in bass clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a common time signature (C). The tempo is marked 'Presto'. The score consists of six staves. Measure 98 begins with a triplet of eighth notes. Measures 104 and 107 include dynamic markings: 'p' (piano) at the start of measure 104 and 'f' (forte) at the end of measure 119. The music features various melodic motifs, including eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together, and rests. The final measure (123) ends with a whole note rest.

98 3

104 *p*

107

111

115

119 *f*

Mozart, *Marriage of Figaro Overture*, mm. 139-171

**Presto**

This musical score is for the Presto section of the Marriage of Figaro Overture, measures 139-171. It is written for a single staff in bass clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a common time signature (C). The tempo is marked 'Presto'. The score consists of ten staves of music. Measure numbers 139, 142, 144, 147, 151, 155, 158, 161, 163, and 167 are indicated at the beginning of their respective staves. Dynamic markings include *pp* (pianissimo) at measure 142, *ff* (fortissimo) at measure 151, *p* (piano) at measure 158, and *f* (forte) at measure 167. The music features various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. Some measures contain slurs or ties.

139

142 *pp*

144

147

151 *ff*

155

158 *p*

161

163

167 *f*

Public Domain.

Mozart *Marriage of Figaro* Overture, mm. 214-236

**Presto**

214

*p*

219

8

231

The musical score is written for a single instrument, likely a violin or flute, in the key of D major (indicated by two sharps) and 3/4 time. The tempo is marked 'Presto'. The score is divided into three systems. The first system, measures 214-218, begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. It features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, some beamed together. The second system, measures 219-230, includes a measure with a fermata and a measure with a repeat sign. The third system, measures 231-236, continues the melodic development with various note values and rests.

Ravel *Bolero*

Tempo di Bolero  
moderato assai

**2**

Solo

*mp*

3

3

**3**

The musical score consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a box containing the number '2'. The second staff has the word 'Solo' written above it. The third staff has the dynamic marking 'mp' below it. The fourth staff contains a triplet of eighth notes, indicated by a '3' below the staff. The fifth staff also contains a triplet of eighth notes, indicated by a '3' below the staff, and ends with a box containing the number '3'. The music is written in a single melodic line with various ornaments and a triplet.

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Rimsky-Korsakov *Schéhérazade*

**Andantino**

**Lento. Recit.** **3** *dolce espressivo*

*capriccioso, quasi recitando*

**a tempo** **A** *rit. assai*

**Recit. Moderato assai**

*lento Solo* **3** *lunga* *accel.* *f* *p* *cresc.* *poco rit.* *tempo*

*lunga* *accel.* *f* *lento* *p* *cresc.* *poco rit.* *tempo*

*lunga* *accel.* *f* *lento* *p* *cresc.* *rit. molto*

Stravinsky *The Rite of Spring*, opening

**Lento** ♩ = 50 **tempo rubato**  
Bsn. I Solo *ad lib.*

3 3 3

3 5 3

5 3 3

8 5

10 3 5

*a tempo*

*poco accerando*

*a tempo*

*p*

**Più mosso** ♩ = 66

14 3 3 3

*poco più f*

First published in 1913, now in Public Domain.



Stravinsky *The Rite of Spring*, opening full score

**Lento** ♩ = 50 **tempo rubato**  
Bsn. I Solo *ad lib.*

*colla parte*

Horn 2 *mp*

1 *poco accel.*

4 Clarinets *p* *mp*

*a tempo*

7

The musical score is written for a full orchestra. The first system (measures 1-4) features a Bassoon I solo with a tempo of Lento (♩ = 50) and a rubato tempo. The second system (measures 5-8) shows the Horn 2 and Clarinets. The third system (measures 9-12) shows the full ensemble. The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, quintuplets, and dynamic markings (p, mp). The tempo changes from Lento to a tempo.

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Stravinsky *The Rite of Spring*, opening full score continued

10 2 3 *a tempo*

*p* 5

10 E. Hn. *p*

3 3 6 3

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for measures 10 through 13. The top staff is for a woodwind instrument, likely a Flute, with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It features a melodic line with a half note, a quarter note, and a half note, followed by a triplet of eighth notes. The bottom staff is for the English Horn (E. Hn.), with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. It features a melodic line with a half note, a quarter note, and a half note, followed by a triplet of eighth notes. The tempo marking 'a tempo' is placed above the top staff. The dynamic marking 'p' (piano) is placed below the top staff. The measure numbers 10, 11, 12, and 13 are indicated at the beginning of each staff.

**Più mosso** ♩ = 66 [Bassoons accompanying E. H.]

14 Bsn. I *poco più f* 3 3

14 Bsn. II *mf* 3 3 3

14 Bsn. III *mf* 3 3 3

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for measures 14 through 17, specifically for the Bassoons (Bsn.) accompanying the English Horn (E. H.). The top staff is for Bsn. I, with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. It features a melodic line with a half note, a quarter note, and a half note, followed by a triplet of eighth notes. The middle staff is for Bsn. II, with a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp. It features a melodic line with a half note, a quarter note, and a half note, followed by a triplet of eighth notes. The bottom staff is for Bsn. III, with a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp. It features a melodic line with a half note, a quarter note, and a half note, followed by a triplet of eighth notes. The tempo marking 'Più mosso' is placed above the top staff. The dynamic marking 'poco più f' (poco più forte) is placed below the top staff. The dynamic marking 'mf' (mezzo-forte) is placed below the middle and bottom staves. The measure numbers 14, 15, 16, and 17 are indicated at the beginning of each staff.

First published in 1913, now in Public Domain.

## Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 4 in F minor, mvt. 2, mm. 274 to 304

274 *Solo*  
*pp*

280  
*espress.*

288 **9** *Solo*  
*pp* *morendo*

## APPENDIX B

### INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Topics and questions contained herein are representative of the themes that will be covered during the interview process. Some questions will be asked multiple times as they relate to each individual excerpt.

#### Pedagogy

1. How do you teach or coach this excerpt? Do you have a standard way of leading a student through it? Or is your approach primarily tailored to the student?
2. Do you teach by metaphor?
3. If you have a four-year syllabus, where do you include this excerpt?
4. If you have a four-year syllabus, do you follow that syllabus or deviate from it based on the particular student?
5. Do all your students go through certain etudes and excerpts in a predetermined fashion?
6. Do you ever play for your students? If yes, please explain how often and under what conditions.
7. How do you structure your students' lessons?
8. Do you make specific practice suggestions?
9. How often do you have studio class? Are excerpts covered in this? Do you have your students play mock auditions?

#### Evolution of interpretation

10. When did you first learn this excerpt?
11. How did your teacher(s) approach this excerpt?
12. Had you played this excerpt in any orchestra before studying the excerpt with a teacher?
13. When you won your current position had you played the entire piece within the orchestra?
14. Has playing the piece multiple times changed your approach and understanding of the excerpt? If yes, please explain.
15. Are you consciously listening for the same things when teaching/coaching this excerpt in the studio as when you are sitting behind a screen as a member of an audition committee?

#### Auditions

16. How do you help your students prepare for auditions?
17. Do you make specific suggestions to help students pick appropriate tempos for each excerpt under the stress of the audition experience? If yes, please explain.
18. Is there anything special you do to equip your students to have a competitive edge?

19. Discuss how you address a player's ability to convey that they understand the orchestral context within the audition.

### Articulation

20. What aspects of articulation do you cover with this excerpt? Is your approach part of a pre-determined system?
21. Do you require all your students to learn to double tongue?
22. Do you accept any students who do not already double tongue?
23. How do you teach double-tonguing?
24. What specific things do you recommend to improve double tonguing speed, flexibility and quality?
25. How much of an overlap do students need between their single and double tongue?

### Breath Support

26. How do you approach breath support?
27. Do you have students do specific exercises to build breath support?

### Vibrato

28. What is your approach/philosophy to vibrato?
29. Do you cover this approach/philosophy with each of your students regardless of your assessment of the student's use of vibrato?

### Pitch/Intonation

30. How do you address pitch/intonation issues?
31. Do you hear your students play in the ensemble/orchestral setting in addition to private lessons?

### Tone

32. Please speak to the issue of bassoon tone.
33. How, if at all, do you address developing one's tone? Is this something you cover with all students?
34. Do you encourage students to listen to many different players live and recorded to help them decide for themselves what they want as their sound signature?

### Rhythm

Discuss what if anything you do with students to help them improve

35. Steadiness of pulse
36. Rhythmic precision

### Tempo

In the orchestra, the conductor shapes the tempo. In an audition experience, the auditionee must pick the tempo. Do you address this? If so, how?

### Technique

- 37. What do you require of your students to assist them in building their overall technical facility?
- 38. Are there etudes or exercises that everyone in the studio is required to master?
- 39. Please address any other aspects of technical development that you feel are noteworthy.

### Warm Up Routine

- 40. Do you have a personal warm up routine?
- 41. If yes, what is included in that warm up?
- 42. Do you make suggestions for your students about what to include in their warm up or do you leave it up to them?

### Sight-reading

- 43. Discuss what if anything you do with students to help them improve their sight-reading.

### Other

Please comment on any other aspect of these excerpts that you feel deserves additional attention.

APPENDIX C

ORCHESTRAL EXCERPTS QUESTIONNAIRE

Excerpt: \_\_\_\_\_

1. This excerpt is included on the audition list for many principal bassoon positions. In the audition setting, what does listening to this excerpt tell you about the player?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Are there differences between playing this in an audition versus live orchestral performance? If yes, please describe the differences. If yes, do you address both situations with your students?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Do you make specific practice suggestions for your students with regard to this excerpt? If yes, do you recommend a specific “exercise” to facilitate mastery of the excerpt? If yes, is it an exercise that you developed/composed?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Do you do anything special with your reed specific to this excerpt? If yes, please describe.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. Please comment on your experiences playing this piece in the orchestra.

Using a scale of 1 to 10 (in which 10 is the most important and 1 the least important), please rate the following parameters in terms of their significance to the excerpt listed above. Parameters may be assigned the same number if you feel they are equal. Please comment on all the parameters. Any other comments related to the study or to the performance of this excerpt are welcome. Comments may be inserted beside the parameter or entered in the section labeled: Other. If more space is needed, feel free to attach additional pages.

Pitch/Intonation \_\_\_\_\_

Tone \_\_\_\_\_

Vibrato \_\_\_\_\_

Rhythm \_\_\_\_\_

Tempo \_\_\_\_\_

Technique \_\_\_\_\_

Articulation \_\_\_\_\_

Dynamics \_\_\_\_\_

Interpretation \_\_\_\_\_

Ability of player to convey context of excerpt within the orchestra \_\_\_\_\_

Other (please specify)



## APPENDIX D

## HUMAN SUBJECTS CONSENT FORM

## UGA Human Subject Guidelines

## CONSENT FORM Group A

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to take part in a research study entitled PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES TO SIX MAJOR ORCHESTRAL EXCERPTS FOR BASSOON, which is being conducted by Ruth Shelly Unger in the Hugh Hodgson School of Music at the University of Georgia. Ms. Unger may be reached through the School of Music at 706-542-3737. Her cell number is 770-861-6062. Her faculty advisor is Dr. William Davis, who may be reached at 706-542-3737. My participation is voluntary; I can stop taking part at any time without giving reason and without penalty. I can ask to have information related to me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

1. The purpose of this study is to provide a body of information on the pedagogical approaches to six of the most commonly required orchestral audition selections for bassoon, including excerpts from: Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro Overture*, Ravel's *Bolero*, Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, Beethoven's Symphony No. 4 in B-flat Major, Op. 60, Rimsky-Korsakov's *Schéhérazade* and Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 4 in F minor. I understand that my participation in this research project will give the author as well as the bassoon community at large insight into my pedagogical approach to and interpretation of these excerpts. The study is also likely to touch on a range of related subjects including but not limited to: tone, vibrato, technique, articulation, intonation, rhythm, tempo, breath support and practice strategies as well as my philosophy of teaching, audition preparation and audition techniques.
2. It is the goal of the researcher to acquaint others with my expertise in these areas, which will benefit the bassoon community at large. I understand that I will not receive monetary compensation for participation in this study.
3. The researcher will interview me by asking me a series of questions about my approach to these excerpts and will observe one or more coaching sessions covering each of the excerpts listed above. I will also be asked to fill out six questionnaires (one per excerpt) that will provide the researcher additional information about the excerpts, my background and overall approach to teaching. A total of four bassoonists (Group A), who hold principal bassoon positions in major symphony orchestras in North America and who also teach bassoon, preparing the next generation of premiere players, have been identified and solicited for this study. A second group of subjects (Group B), aspiring

bassoonists 18 and over, will participate as players in the coaching session(s). In the event of an unforeseen absence of a player participant, the researcher may also serve as a surrogate player/participant for one or more of the coaching sessions. If the coaching sessions are conducted in a master class format, then there would also be a third group of subjects (Group C), who would give verbal consent to participate as observers. It is anticipated that the interview and coaching portions of the research will take between 4 and 5 hours. This may be accomplished in one or more sessions conducted in a single day or split across several days. The estimated time for completing the questionnaires is one to two hours. In addition, the researcher has informed me that I may review and, working together with the researcher, edit portions of the document that reflect my contributions. The interview and coaching session(s) will be recorded on mini-disk and video or DVD.

4. No discomfort or stresses are expected.
5. No deception will be involved in this research.
6. My identity and the results of this participation will be made public. My name may be used in publications or presentations subject to my permission below.

I consent to the use of my name.

Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_  
[Please Initial]

I also understand that audio and video recordings will be kept indefinitely by the researcher for research and educational purposes. There is a possibility that audio and video recordings with my voice and/or image could be used in either teaching or conference presentations. This is subject to my permission below.

Audio and video-recordings with my image and voice may be played at meetings and/or professional conferences.

Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_  
[Please Initial]

Audio and video-recordings with my image and voice may be played in classrooms to students.

Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_  
[Please Initial]

7. The researcher will answer any further questions about this research, now or during the course of the project, and can be reached by telephone at 770-861-6062 (cell), 770-966-1590 (home/fax) or email at [rsunger@mindspring.com](mailto:rsunger@mindspring.com)\*

8. I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

\*The researcher's email address changed to [rsunger@emory.edu](mailto:rsunger@emory.edu) during the course of this study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Researcher  
Phone 770-861-6062  
Email: [rsunger@mindspring.com](mailto:rsunger@mindspring.com)\*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.**

*Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 612 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address [IRB@uga.edu](mailto:IRB@uga.edu)*

The researcher's email address changed to [rsunger@emory.edu](mailto:rsunger@emory.edu) during the course of this study.

## UGA Human Subjects Guidelines

## CONSENT FORM Group B

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to take part in a research study entitled PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES TO SIX MAJOR ORCHESTRAL EXCERPTS FOR BASSOON, which is being conducted by Ruth Shelly Unger in the Hugh Hodgson School of Music at the University of Georgia. Ms. Unger may be reached through the School of Music at 706-542-3737. Her cell number is 770-861-6062. Her faculty advisor is Dr. William Davis, who may be reached at 706-542-3737. My participation is voluntary; I can stop taking part at any time without giving reason and without penalty. I can ask to have information related to me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

1. The purpose of this study is to provide a body of information on the pedagogical approaches to six of the most commonly required orchestral audition selections for bassoon, including excerpts from: Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro Overture*, Ravel's *Bolero*, Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, Beethoven's Symphony No. 4 in B-flat Major, Op. 60, Rimsky-Korsakov's *Schéhérazade* and Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 4 in F minor. This study is also likely to touch on a range of related subjects including but not limited to: tone, vibrato, technique, articulation, intonation, rhythm, tempo, breath support and practice strategies as well as audition preparation and audition techniques.
2. I may benefit from the teaching/coaching session(s) with a major symphony orchestra player, but I understand that I will not receive monetary compensation for participation in this study.
3. A total of four bassoonists (Group A), who hold principal bassoon positions in major symphony orchestras in North America and who also teach bassoon, will work with a number of player/participants (Group B). The researcher will observe me (a Group B subject) as a player/participant in one or more coaching sessions with a member of Group A covering the excerpts listed above. I understand that my participation in this research project will give the author insight into the player/teacher's pedagogical approach to and interpretation of these excerpts. The coaching sessions will take from one to three hours total, which may or may not be divided among several player/participants. This may be accomplished in one or more sessions conducted in a single day or split across several days. The coaching session(s) will be recorded on mini-disk and video or DVD.
4. No discomfort or stresses are expected.
5. No risks are expected.
6. No deception will be involved in this research.

7. The results of this participation will be made public. However, for the purposes of this study I will not be identified by name.

I also understand that audio and video-recordings will be kept indefinitely by the researcher for research and educational purposes. There is a possibility that audio and video-recordings with my voice and/or image could be used in either teaching or conference presentations. This is subject to my permission below.

Audio and video-recordings with my image and voice may be played at meetings and/ or professional conferences.

Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_  
[Please Initial]

Audio and video-recordings with my image and voice may be played in classrooms to students.

Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_  
[Please Initial]

8. The researcher will answer any further questions about this research, now or during the course of the project, and can be reached by telephone at 770-861-6062 (cell), 770-966-1590 (home/fax) or email at [rsunger@mindspring.com](mailto:rsunger@mindspring.com)\*
9. I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

_____ Name of Researcher Phone 770-861-6062 Email: <a href="mailto:rsunger@mindspring.com">rsunger@mindspring.com</a> *	_____ Signature of Researcher	_____ Date
_____ Name of Participant	_____ Signature of Participant	_____ Date

Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.

*Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 612 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address [IRB@uga.edu](mailto:IRB@uga.edu)*

\*The researcher's email address changed to [rsunger@emory.edu](mailto:rsunger@emory.edu) during the course of this study.

## UGA Human Subjects Guidelines

## VERBAL CONSENT SCRIPT Group C

I am Ruth Shelly Unger from the Hugh Hodgson School of Music of the University of Georgia. I am conducting research entitled *Pedagogical Approaches to Six Major Orchestral Excerpts for Bassoon* to find out more about the teaching and interpretation of selected pre-eminent North American player/teachers. Your role in this research is that of an audience participant in this master class. I will be observing and making audio as well as DVD-recordings of this master class as part of my research.

The purpose of my research is to understand more about the pedagogical approaches and interpretation of these excerpts by the selected bassoonists, each of whom holds a principal bassoon position in a major symphony in North America and also teaches at a college, university or conservatory, preparing the next generation of premiere bassoon players.

Do you have any questions?

Let me assure you that any information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. In final research products I will disguise your identity by utilizing a fake name (or by presenting only aggregate data). Your participation in providing me with any information on pedagogical approaches to these excerpts is completely voluntary. Do you agree to participate?

[If yes, continue]

[If not, I thank you and must ask you to quietly leave the master class at this time.]

Provide researcher's contact information at the end of the interaction.

Ruth Shelly Unger, researcher  
770-861-6062

Dr. William D. Davis, advisor  
University of Georgia Hugh Hodgson School of Music  
706-542-3737

## APPENDIX E

## COURSE OF STUDY FOR STUDENTS OF RICHARD A. SVOBODA

## Freshman year

Solo repertoire:

Elgar Romance (Novello)

Hindemith Sonate (Schott)

Kozeluh Concerto (International)

Merci Sonate # 2 (Southern)

Mozart Concerto K.191 (Guetter Ed.; Bärenreiter Ed.)

Halsey Stevens Three Pieces (Peters)

Vivaldi Concerto in a minor, FVIII #2 (Ricordi)

Alternate solo repertoire:

Corrette Sonate in d minor, Op. 20, #2 (Masters Music)

Glière Humoresque and Impromptu, Op. 35, #8 & #9 (International)

Jacob Partita for Solo Bassoon (Oxford University Press)

Phillips Concert Piece (Carl Fischer)

Pierné Solo de Concert (Masters Music)

Villa-Lobos *Ciranda das Sete Notas* (Southern)

Etude books:

Milde 25 Studies in Scales and Chords, Op. 24 (International)

Ozi 42 Caprices (International)

Orchestral excerpts: (All excerpts are bassoon I.)

Beethoven Symphony #4

Beethoven Violin Concerto

Mozart Marriage of Figaro Overture

Ravel Bolero

Ravel Piano Concerto in G

Rimsky-Korsakov Schéhérazade

Stravinsky Firebird Suite

Stravinsky Rite of Spring

Tchaikovsky Symphony #4

Tchaikovsky Symphony #6

Sophomore year

Solo repertoire:

Etler Sonata (Associated)

Fasch Sonata (McGinnis & Marx)

Gordon Jacob Concerto (Galliard)

Mozart Sonata for bassoon and cello (Breitkopf)

Osborne Rhapsody for solo bassoon (Peters)



Vivaldi Concerto in e minor, FVIII #6 (Schirmer, Schoenbach Ed.)

Weber Concerto in F Major, Op. 75 (Universal)

Alternate solo repertoire:

Malcolm Arnold Fantasy for solo bassoon (Faber)

Boismortier Suite, Opus 40 (Southern)

Devienne Sonata in g minor, Opus 24 #5 (Musica Rara)

Dubois Neuf Pièces Brèves

Milde Polonaise (Musica Rara)

Ozi Troisième Sonate (Ouvrières)

Vivaldi Concerto in C Major, FVIII #17 (Schirmer, Schoenbach Ed.)

Etude books:

Bianchi Twelve Etudes (Schirmer)

Milde Concert Studies, Opus 26, Volume 1 (International)

Orchestral excerpts: (All parts are bassoon I except as noted.)

Bartok Concerto for Orchestra (bassoon I & II)

Beethoven Symphony #6

Berlioz Symphonie Fantastique (bassoon I & II)

Brahms Symphony #3

Mozart Symphony #41, “Jupiter”

Ravel Alborada del Gracioso

Ravel Rhapsodie Espagnole (bassoon I & II)

Shostakovitch Symphony #9

Strauss Til Eulenspiegel

Tchaikovsky Symphony #5

#### Junior year

##### Solo repertoire:

Hummel Grand Concerto (Musica Rara)

Persichetti Parable for solo bassoon (Elkan-Vogel)

Saint-Saëns Sonate, Opus 168 (Durand)

Tansman Sonatine (Max Eschig)

Telemann Sonata in f minor (Amadeus)

Vivaldi Concerto in a minor, FVIII #7 (Schirmer, Schoenbach Ed.)

Weber Hungarian Fantasy, Opus 35 (Cundy-Bettoney)

##### Alternant solo répertoire:

Dutilleux Sarabande et Cortège (Leduc)

Farago Phantasy, Opus 40a for solo bassoon (Raymond A. Ojeda)

Françaix Divertissement for bassoon & string quintet (Schott)

Nussio Variations on an Arietta by Pergolesi (Universal)

Previn Sonata (Schirmer)

Tansman Suite (Max Eschig)

Telemann 12 Fantasies for solo flute (Bärenreiter)

Vivaldi Concerto in C Major, FVIII #13 (Schirmer, Schoenbach Ed.)

Etude books:

Orefici Twenty Melodic Studies (International)

Piard Sixteen Characteristic Studies (International)

Orchestral excerpts: (All parts are bassoon I except as noted.)

Brahms Piano Concerto #1 (bassoon II)

Brahms Violin Concerto (bassoon II)

Mozart Symphony #35 “Haffner”

Prokofiev Peter and the Wolf

Strauss Don Quixote

Strauss Ein Heldenleben

Stravinsky Petrouchka

Stravinsky Pulcinella

Tchaikovsky Symphony #6 (bassoon II)

Wagner Tannhäuser Overture (bassoon II)

## Senior Year

Solo repertoire:

The primary focus during the senior year is the selection and preparation of recital material. This may entail a further study of the aforementioned solo repertoire, as well as those pieces listed below and any additional solo and chamber repertoire.

J.S. Bach Partita for solo flute (Bärenreiter; bn. tr—Universal)

J.S. Bach Six Suites for Violoncello Solo (Bärenreiter)

Boismortier 9 Petites Sonates et Chaconne for two bns. (Schott)

Boismortier Sonatas Opus 26 & 50 (Musica Rara; Schott)

Corrette “Le Phénix” for four bsns. & continuo (Carus-Verlag)

Devienne Quartet in C, Opus 73 #1 (Musica Rara)

Dubois Sonatine for two bassoons (Leduc)

Françaix Concerto (Schott)

Gordon Jacob Suite for bassoon and string quartet (Musica Rara)

Jolivet Concerto (Heugel)

Poulenc Trio for piano, oboe & bassoon (Wilhelm Hansen)

Previn Trio for piano, oboe, & bassoon (Schirmer)

Telemann Quartet in d minor for bn., 2 fls., & cont. (Breitkopf)

Villa-Lobos Bachianas Brasileiras #6 for fl. & bn. (Associated)

Vivaldi Concerto “La Notte,” Opus 45 #8 (International)

John Williams Concerto “The Five Sacred Trees” (Hal Leonard)

Etude books:

Dubois Douze Études (Leduc)

Milde Concert Studies, Opus 26, Volume II (International)

Orchestral excerpts:

Review the aforementioned excerpts, especially those from the freshman and sophomore years.

Graduate studies

Étude books:

Bitsch Vingt Études (Leduc)

Giampieri 16 Daily Studies for the Perfection (Ricordi)

Milde Concert Studies, Opus 26 (International)

Orefici Bravoura Studies (International)