

REVIEW

of dissertation work

FORMATION AND BUILDING OF CLARINET EMOUCHURE

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Reviewer: Prof Sava Dimitrov, PhD

The author of the dissertation, Eduard Magardich Sarafyan, studied at National School of Music and Dance "Dobrin Petkov", Plovdiv, and the National Music Academy "Prof Pancho Vladigerov" in the class of Prof Petko Radev. After his graduation he works as clarinet teacher at NSMD "Dobrin Petkov", and from 2002 - until today he teaches clarinet at Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts "Asen Diamandiev", Plovdiv. He has taught master classes and has been a member of the jury in Bulgaria and North Macedonia. He has been a soloist and participated in recordings, concert and opera tours with the orchestras of the Plovdiv Philharmonic and the Plovdiv State Opera. He has an active chamber and solo concert activity in the country and abroad. He is a laureate of many awards from competitions in the country. He is individual-study doctoral student at the AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev".

The proposed dissertation consists of an introduction and four chapters, which are significantly different in their content and can be discussed completely independently, because they are both theoretical and practical. On the other hand, by bringing them together in one place, they offer a complete picture of the preparation process of the performing musician and the attention that should be given to his development during his training in terms of compositional styles and compositional techniques, as well as later in his work as a professional musician.

In the introduction, it is especially emphasized that the work based on the candidate's personal pedagogical practice is connected with the pursuit of enriching the teaching experience, the study of teaching technologies and the use of a mechanism for mastering the sound, as the most important duty of every performer. All this is achieved primarily through the selected teaching material, which leads to high efficiency in training, and the choice of individual approaches and the necessary methodological guidelines. The included ideas, formulations and solutions are considered as another step in the scientific knowledge in the field of wind instrument training methodology.

The first chapter of the dissertation, *Origin and development of the clarinet*, traces the connections and interactions between the emergence of the instrumental music and the emergence of professional wind instruments. It examines in detail the appearance and development of the clarinet as instrument and its presence in live musical practice, which is imperative, as it has a decisive role and is at the same time one of the conditions for a good understanding of the changes that have led to the state of modern instrumental practice. That is why the work examines in detail the different types of clarinets, as well as the methods of sound extraction with them, depending on the design of the

instrument and determining the methodological guidelines and performance techniques, relevant for modern performing practice, in which the formation of high-quality musical intonation is a mandatory condition for the successful development of the future clarinet players. Here, I want to emphasize that the collected abundant material in the dissertation work, in which the author very clearly follows his set goals, demonstrates his deep knowledge of the existing literature. I think that this is also one of the merits of the work - that in addition to the personal assessment of the candidate in relation to the various problems under consideration, it includes many assessments, which, taken as a whole, can serve as a good basis of the teaching process.

In order to make the exposition complete, the author presents here the birth and the development of the clarinet art in Bulgaria.

The second chapter of the dissertation, entitled *Theory of Clarinet Embouchure*, begins with the etymology of the term "embouchure" and a large set of definitions of "embouchure" published in dictionaries, encyclopedias, theoretical and methodological works. The aim is to show that the subject of research in the dissertation is the formation and the building of the different types of embouchure, respectively the different types of embouchure in clarinet training as a result of musical psychology. The task here is to discuss the various interrelationships and correlations between musical means of expression and embouchure setting in order to support a methodical system for building skills for a comprehensive perception of the elements of musical speech in a musical piece. This chapter also presents different types of embouchure, and explains and illustrates the various performance practices associated with it, which facilitates the teacher and explains the problems related to clarinet sound creation. In this chapter the author demonstrates very good knowledge of the existing literature to facilitate the teaching process, paying particular attention to the main purpose of the clarinet embouchure. The insights here are also related to the exercises offered by the author at the end of the work for development and maintenance of the muscles, as a prerequisite for forming a proper embouchure. It emphasizes the importance of good coordination between the individual components – lips, tongue, etc., as a mandatory condition for achieving high-quality performance, and in connection with sound extraction, it also pays attention to the psychological aspects, which are important and indivisible components optimizing the process of sound extraction. In this chapter, great attention is paid to the use of musical expressive means such as timbre, metrorhythm, dynamics, intonation, stroke, phrasing in the performance process for the construction of the musical image based on the reached level of formation and development of the clarinet embouchure.

For me, the third chapter *Main points in the clarinet teaching methodology* is particularly important, because it presents the teaching methodology, characteristic of the Bulgarian clarinet school, and in it the doctoral candidate sets the objective of supplementing and enriching the knowledge related to the performance processes, learning and teaching the clarinet, taking into account all that has been achieved, but his attention is primarily directed to the work of building the clarinet embouchure. To this end he also collects 28 interviews of specialists about their experience of

how the clarinet embouchure is specifically formed. In this chapter, the word is also given to the trainees – students in elementary, junior high and high schools of specialized music education within the framework of master classes, defined by the candidate as a very useful training practice in the process of musical-instrumental growth. The effect of this complementary approach to the analysis is that it offers a deeper understanding of the studied phenomenon and supports the process of solving the case – building the most rational type of clarinet embouchure possible. The author's ambition here is based on his personal pedagogical experience to present ways of solving professional problems in the sound production. The most valuable thing is that throughout the text he gives his view on all topics based on his personal experience as a performer and teacher.

The fourth chapter, entitled *Didactic-methodical approaches in clarinet teaching* is comprehensive, starting with the review of the Bulgarian didactic and literary literature on clarinet, and then moving on to the already mentioned various technical exercises prepared by the author and used in his pedagogical practice for tone formation and more specifically for the formation and building of embouchure. Special attention is paid to the practical mastering of musical expressive means on original scores of compositions and especially to the forms of working with them (again based on his teaching practice) in the formation and construction of the clarinet embouchure, with details from works by Carl Maria von Weber, W. A. Mozart, J. Brahms, Claude Debussy, M. Glinka, A. Copland, J. France, L. Pipkov, accompanied by methodical notes and recommended forms of work.

The conclusion to the dissertation work gives a successful summary of the research activity carried out and the used methodology, in order to reach, according to the author, the building of the most rational type of clarinet embouchure possible in clarinet training, covering and observing the specific changes during its implementation.

E. Sarafyan has published three independent papers on the subject of his dissertation work in the editions of AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev".

Traditionally, when examining dissertation works, great attention is paid to the candidate's contributions. I think that in this particular case, as the main contribution of the dissertation, it should be pointed out first of all that E. Sarafyan has collected in one place and described many facts, as well as alternative techniques, supplemented with many specific personal ideas for mastering the modern clarinet technique at solving the technical and artistic problems through alternative approaches related to the growth of the clarinet player and the care of his development. Thus, the tasks for the teacher working with the musician, for the practical mastery of the various means of musical expression, as well as for the formation of musical-auditory concepts, are clearly outlined.

E. Sarafyan's abstract is well prepared and presents in satisfactory and comprehensive way all parts of his dissertation work.

I must especially point out the fact that in its entirety the work, dedicated to the chosen topic, emphasizes above all the role of the teacher for the development in the young clarinetist, along with musicality and tone, the technical skills, by following every step in order to avoid any unwanted

influence in this development. On the other hand, the specific research done by the author can serve as a good model for other studies in the same direction, in order to follow the condition of the musicians over a longer period of time.

I propose that Eduard Magardich Sarafyan be awarded the educational and scientific degree **Doctor** on the basis of his presented dissertation work *Formation and Building of Clarinet Embouchure*.

Sofia, 20 Aug 2022

Prof Sava Dimitrov, PhD