

OPINION

by Prof Milena Shushulova-Pavlova, PhD, New Bulgarian University
on the dissertation work of **Eduard Magardich Sarafyan**,
doctoral student at Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts "Prof. Asen Diamandiev", Plovdiv
Academic supervisor: Prof Toni Shekerdzhieva-Novak, PhD

Topic: **Formation and Building of Clarinet Embouchure**
for awarding educational and scientific degree Doctor
in Professional field 8.3. Music and dance art;

Biographical data

Eduard Sarafyan is born in Plovdiv. He studied at the music school in Plovdiv: piano with Prof Tsanka Andreeva and Yulia Girginova, clarinet in the class of Dimitar Boyanov. After that, he studied clarinet in the class of Prof Petko Radev at the National Music Academy "Prof Pancho Vladigerov" - Sofia. After graduating, he was a clarinet teacher at National School of Music and Dance "Dobrin Petkov" - Plovdiv, and since 2002 he teaches at AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev" - Plovdiv. Soloist and chamber performer in the country and abroad. He has participated in sound recordings, concert and opera tours with Plovdiv Philharmonic and State Opera Plovdiv. Held master classes in Plovdiv, Varna, Burgas, Ruse, Veliko Tarnovo, Pleven and Skopje and Ohrid (Republic of North Macedonia). Member of competition jury. He has won a number of awards from competitions. Actively published in the period 2012-2019. Doctoral student individual form of study at AMDFA.

Content of the dissertation

The dissertation was discussed and proposed for public defense at a meeting of the Department of Classical and Pop and Jazz Performing Arts at AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev", held on 07.07.2022. It contains a total of 215 pages, which include: introduction, four chapters, conclusion, and contributions: in theoretical and in practical-applied aspect and list of used literature with 85 sources, together with 3 tables; 49 photos; 51 sheet music examples.

The work presents the personal pedagogical practice of the doctoral candidate. The formation and building of the clarinet embouchure is responsible for the quality of sound production, the degree of acoustic fidelity in reproduction, and is one of the key elements of the setting system when playing wind instruments. For years, the author has been looking for his scientific evidence to find the right path as a teacher, a head of workshops and master classes (in the work of other clarinet educators), as a member of juries and above all as a researcher - in scientific forums and conferences, in specially organized interviews with colleagues - educators and performers. The constituent parts of the dissertation work are two: theoretical (historical data, psychological aspects and the theory of the problem) and practical (description of forms and ways of carrying out this activity).

Precisely formulated objectives and tasks of the dissertation

The objective of the dissertation is the study of anatomic and physiological components and their role in the formation of the embouchure, the psychological aspects of sound production, the complex importance of the embouchure in the practical mastery of the various means of musical expression, the interaction between the formation of the clarinet embouchure and the auditory-intonation education of students and enriching their musical experience. As a result of his scientific research, the author offers a system of exercises, methodological instructions for their performance and their use in a specific artistic material.

The set tasks related to historical searches, definition of musical terms and phenomena, contributions of the Bulgarian clarinet school, anatomic-physiological components and performance skills are in support of the scientific thesis of the dissertation and the derivation of a pedagogical work system that supports correct and beautiful sound production for the benefit of educators and performers. The doctoral candidate goes even further: connection between the music performance and the associated forms of mental activity. Through analysis and selection of the existing Bulgarian didactic literature, the author makes an attempt to organize a system of technical exercises/ constructive examples to optimize the proper sound production. A more distant goal of the doctoral candidate is to prepare and issue a didactic manual, using the selected and presented in the dissertation models from different eras by genre and style, including the methodological prescriptions described in the work for mastering a rational embouchure position, which is an important condition and prerequisite for the realization of the young performer.

Significance of the researched problem in scientific and scientific-applied terms

In the history of Bulgarian musical culture, the Bulgarian clarinet school has existed for almost a century. During this time, it has adopted its own approach to the existing musical tradition and drew a clear path of its development. Musical perception, musical auditory representations, musical thinking and musical memory are sought after impact on the musical means of expression in sound production, as they are considered in a psychological aspect, optimizing the musician's growth process. The author emphasizes the term *auditory attention*, with which he wants to highlight the specialized mental process in music-educational practices. The methodology used includes two analytical tools of research: interviewed experts and face-to-face contact with students through master classes and lectures. After transcribing the interviews and performing an analysis of the collected notes and photographic material (from master classes), the author of the dissertation makes generalizations with comments based on the information received from the specialists, which deepen the understanding of the phenomenon and help the process of solving it.

Degree of knowledge of the problem and correspondence of the used literature

The research methodology covers the combination of several approaches to work in relation to the set goal and its confirmation - historical, theoretical-analytical, comparative, systematic, method of study and analysis of practical experience, theoretical-logical, interview, etc. The presented extensive historical overview showed the initial technical data related to the construction of the clarinet and its improvement. For a better understanding of the meaning of the changes, the presence of the clarinet in live musical practice was traced. The presented **author's technical exercises** and excerpts from the musical literature, accompanied by methodical comments, advice and recommended forms of work are the result of in-depth theoretical knowledge, psychological-pedagogical skills and years of personal pedagogical practice of the doctoral student. The effective system has been tested in practice.

Correctness in citation

Eduard Sarafyan is accurate and correct in his quotations. He uses as a basis the bibliography, on which he built and proved his thesis.

Contributions of the dissertation

1. In a **theoretical aspect**, the author presents facts, determining the inseparable dependence between the clarinet embouchure and the quality of musical intonation. He clarifies the terminology and offers a definition of the term "embouchure", supplemented by anatomic-physiological components related to clarinet sound production. The types of embouchure positions, respectively the types of embouchure are presented. The research is supplemented by psychological aspects of clarinet sound production, based on cognitive processes in musical performance. An overview of the clarinet methodology in historical, contemporary and prospective aspects is made, emphasizing the interrelationship and mutual influence between the musical means of expression and the technique of sound extraction - the embouchure setting.
2. In a **practical-applied aspect**, the dissertation presents didactic literature on clarinet and makes an attempt to classify it by presenting preparatory exercises without an instrument, author's technical exercises with a multifunctional character, aimed at building and forming a proper clarinet embouchure, as well as excerpts from artistic examples, aimed at the practical mastery of the musical means of expression, at the formation of skills for reproducing the variety and richness of the tone as a means of expression.

Assessment of the compliance of the abstract with the main points and contributions of the dissertation work

The abstract corresponds to the dissertation and correctly conveys the nature of the doctoral work.

Personal qualities of the author (if the reviewer knows him)

I have no personal impressions of the candidate.

Publications on the topic of the dissertation

The doctoral student has enough publications on the topic:

1. Sarafyan, E. *Basic guidelines in the work of the tongue and throat when playing the clarinet*, Yearbook of AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev", 2013;
2. Sarafyan, E. *The role of muscles in the work of the clarinet embouchure*, Spring scientific readings, AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev", 2014;
3. Sarafyan, E. *Anatomical elements forming the clarinet embouchure*, Spring scientific readings, AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev", 2015;

Opinions, recommendations and comments

I have no specific recommendations. I think the idea of publishing (electronic or on paper) a manual based on the dissertation is great.

In conclusion of this Opinion I will end with the following assessment:

The work of the doctoral student corresponds to the scientometric indicators for acquiring the educational and scientific degree "Doctor", according to the Law on the development of the academic staff of Republic of Bulgaria. The dissertation of **Eduard Magardich Sarafyan**, doctoral student at AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev" - Plovdiv, with academic supervisor: Prof Toni Shekerdzhieva-Novak, titled: **FORMATION AND BUILDING OF CLARINET EMBOUCHURE**, together with his contributions with scientific and applied qualities, I consider it sufficient to give my convincing positive assessment and to propose to the esteemed scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in professional field 8.3 Music and Dance, to **Eduard Magardich Sarafyan**, according to the requirements of the Law for development of the academic staff in Republic Bulgaria.

26.07.2022, Sofia

Prof Milena Shushulova-Pavlova, PhD