

Oboe Pedagogy MUP 481/581 Fall 2011

Martin Schuring

Music E-443

Class meeting: Tuesday 3:40 – 5:30

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Office hours by appointment

Objective:

A comprehensive survey of oboe technique designed to supplement the more individualized information given in lessons.

Class Text:

Schuring, Martin. *Oboe Art and Method*. Oxford University Press, 2009.

Can be purchased from Amazon, Barnes and Noble, OUP, etc.

Required reading:

Goossens, Leon and Edwin Roxburgh. *Oboe*. MT360 .G66

Rothwell, Evelyn. *Oboe Technique*, 2nd ed. MT360 .R8 1962 (there is also a 3rd edition, but it is not in our library.)

Sprenkle, Robert and David Ledet. *The Art of Oboe Playing*. MT360 .S77x

All are available in the music library; I also have copies of these books.

Recommended reading:

Acht, R. J. M. van. *Dutch double reed instruments of the 17th and 18th centuries: collection Haags Gemeentemuseum* ML931 .A34x 1997 (beautiful illustrations of historical oboes)

Bate, Philip. *The Oboe: An Outline of its History, Development, and Construction*. 3rd ed. ML940 .B37 1975

Burgess, Geoffrey and Bruce Haynes. *The Oboe*. ML940 .B87 2004 (a comprehensive oboe history from antiquity to the present)

Haynes, Bruce. *The Eloquent Oboe: A History of the Hautboy, 1640-1760*. ML940 .H39 2001

Joppig, Gunther. *The Oboe and the Bassoon*. ML940 .J6613 1988 (a brief history with excellent color illustrations)

Ledet, David. *Oboe Reed Styles: Theory and Practice*. ML941 .L4 (dated but interesting survey of reeds from around the world)

Light, Jay. *Essays for Oboists*.

Light, Jay. *The Oboe Reed Book*.

Mayer, Robert. *Essentials of Oboe Playing* MT362 .M38x (beginning oboe teaching)

McGill, David. *Sound in Motion: A Performer's Guide to Greater Musical Expression*. MT170 .M34 2007

Sawicki, Carl. *The Oboe Revealed* ML 941 .S684x 1988 (oboe adjustment and repair)

Weber, David and Ferald Capps. *The Reed Maker's Manual*. ML941 .W42 1990

Van Cleve, Libby. *Oboe Unbound: Contemporary Techniques* MT360 .V35 2004

Veale, Peter. *The Techniques of Oboe Playing* MT360 .T42x 1998 (contemporary techniques)

“Oboe” articles in *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* and *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed.

Assignments:

Assignment 1 (individual) Due September 27—

The problem: Reed making is taught as an all-or-nothing skill. Beginning reed makers are overwhelmed because they are shown too many new skills in too short a time, they cannot master them quickly enough, and their production of reeds is woefully inconsistent.

The solution: You will design a series of preliminary exercises that prepare the student to eventually make reeds.

These do not have to involve reeds at all, but they have to be structured to prepare the necessary skills so the student has a better chance of success when they start making reeds in earnest.

Assignment 2 (class collaboration) Due October 25—

The problem: Published materials for the first few months of playing are not suited to today's young student. They either contain out-of-date music not familiar or not interesting to today's teenager (Gekeler, Rubank), or are not suitable for use in private instruction (most band methods).

The solution: The class will devise a curriculum that is based on recent musical idioms. The music could be classical or pop or anything else the young student might relate to; it can be adaptations of existing music or music of your own composition. The music must be arranged in a way that progressively introduces new oboe concepts and extends the range. Assume that the first three notes have been learned (G-A-B) and that basic concepts of breathing, embouchure, and hand position have been dealt with. You may also assume that the student can already read notes and rhythms. Make a series of six lessons to build on this foundation. Each lesson will include a short solo, a short duet, and supporting text and/or diagrams to properly introduce new concepts. The music examples should be approximately sixteen measures in length. The duet should be designed for the teacher to play the second part. The class may divide the work in any way you like, while taking care that the finished product looks like the work of one author.

Assignment 3 (individual) Due December 6—

The problem: While there are dozens of oboe etude books, many of them are composed in very traditional musical idioms with a great deal of duplication. At the same time, there are aspects of a modern technique that are under-served by the catalog of traditional etude materials. Some examples could include high register development, odd meters, atonality, sight reading, extended techniques, multiple tonguing, circular breathing, etc.

The solution: You will compose a method to address one of these techniques (or a technique chosen by yourself, not from the list above). Devise a series of four or five exercises—these can be composed etudes, or practice exercises/techniques, or a combination. They should be progressive—i.e. each unit more difficult, built on what came before—and as comprehensive as possible within the relatively small scale of the project.

Final Exam:

There will be a final exam based on class discussions and the required reading. The exam will be a take-home test. It will be distributed via e-mail on December 6, and must be returned via e-mail by 9 am on Monday, December 12.

Grading:

Final exam:	40%
Assignments:	20% each, total 60%

Schedule of classes:

For each class, please read the relevant chapter in “Oboe Art and Method” by Martin Schuring.

August 30

Course introduction
Reedmaking I: Cane gouging, shaping, tying.

September 6

Reedmaking II: Reed scraping and adjustment, English horn reeds. Selection and care of tools, supplies.

September 13

Tone Production I: Posture, breathing, support

September 20

Tone Production II: Embouchure, reed placement, dynamic control, vibrato, etc.

September 27—Assignment 1 due

Practicing
Technique: Facility, articulation, fingerings

October 4

Expression: principles and techniques of phrasing.

October 11

Instrument care, adjustment, and repair.

October 18

Instrument selection for various age groups.

Professional development: auditions, competitions, jobs, etc.

October 25—Assignment 2 due

Professional development, cont.

Performance-related issues: Stage deportment, performance anxiety, overuse injury, etc.

November 1

History of the oboe

November 8

History of oboe playing: Discussion of the various national/regional styles of oboe playing.

November 15

Other oboes (oboe d'amore, English horn): playing techniques, equipment.

November 22

Extended techniques.

November 29

Catch-up and review.

December 6—Assignment 3 due

Catch-up and review.

Final exam (take home; will be due December 12 by 9 am)