

THE PROTEAN OBOIST: AN EDUCATIONAL APPROACH TO LEARNING OBOE  
REPERTOIRE FROM 1960-2015

by

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## Introduction

The purpose of the document is to highlight the importance of educational approaches to oboe music written between 1960-2015. Berio's *Sequenza VII* (1969) for solo oboe, Xenakis's *Dmaathen* for oboe and percussion (1976), Isang Yun's *Oboe Concerto* (1990), Heinz Holliger's *Oboe Sonata* (1969) and Scott McAllister's *Grunge Concerto* for oboe (2014) are chosen as examples of oboe repertoire within this time period. Each piece will demonstrate various technical elements of oboe playing and will be paired with complementary works as ways of building technique and familiarizing the new music idiom.

In the last half-century, oboe repertoire has grown in size and become technically ever more demanding. Composers continue their exploration with tonality and construction in writing that challenge the physical limitations of the oboe. Deciphering the technical challenges this music presents while developing an educational approach can be difficult, but becomes rather crucial in current oboe pedagogy trends.

Oboe pedagogy typically tends to focus on producing a quality tone, centered pitch, strong technique, and beautiful phrasing. Building repertoire based on the natural tendencies of the oboe is a logical educational approach. However, while most oboe repertoire will showcase the natural expressivity of the oboe, new music that explores contemporary techniques demands virtuosic playing. This creates a gap between learning standard oboe repertoire and oboe music produced in the last half century.

Resources for learning and building contemporary techniques in oboe playing have grown in recent decades and are useful tools if introduced as new fundamental oboe skills to students. When students are introduced to contemporary techniques, learning



more accessible repertoire with specific techniques will help them utilize the techniques in context. Familiarizing students with the language of new music can help them approach new music with greater ease, thus preparing students with the appropriate skills when taking on a new composition.

A list of supplementary repertoire that complements similar and less technical challenges should serve as an aid to progressively build towards learning the five selected pieces of music. This will help students attain reasonable goals and inspire motivation in learning new oboe repertoire.

## **Framework and Design**

The five music examples are chosen based on my own passion for oboe music. At this point in my oboe studies, I have had slim opportunities to fully explore and immerse in oboe repertoire from the 1960's to our present time. So far, my decisions of choosing new repertoire have been purely strategic to the needs of my studies. I have created this project in hope to fill my lack in knowledge and understanding of oboe music written in the last 50 years. I will be using these five musical examples to demonstrate my own learning and how the progressive building approach might be helpful for other learners like me.

The framework and design of the progressive building approach are based on my own learning tendencies and literature reviews on music psychology. I consulted articles on music learning and practice strategies in higher music education as well as oboe pedagogy resources. While empirical research was based on learning and practicing strategies among young musicians, most research talks about how motivation, method,

time, behavior, social influences and environment will largely impact students' learning outcome.<sup>1</sup> Among these influences, goal orientation and self-efficacy were discussed as important factors that contribute to a developing self-regulated musician.<sup>2</sup> In the discussion of "Self-Efficacy and Music Performance," the authors talk about how self-efficacy evidently enhances one's learning process, but it is not a cure for all student problems. In this quote below the authors describe improvement in student learning as not a singular event, but a multidimensional one.<sup>3</sup>

There is no single panacea for correcting all student problems. There is no secret ingredient that can make massive improvement for all students. But, as any good teacher intuitively understands, improving student's abilities often rests not on making massive improvements as a result of finding a single ingredient, but on small, gradual improvements across a range of areas. The results of this study suggest that meaningful improvements can be achieved by improving young instrumentalists' self-efficacy judgments.<sup>4</sup>

This particular research seems like common sense, and other research by Hallam et al<sup>5</sup>, Miksza<sup>6</sup>, Santos and Gerling<sup>7</sup> all reinforce this idea of successful learning coming from

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Miksza, "The Effect of Self-Regulation Instruction On the Performance Achievement, Musical Self-Efficacy, and Practicing of Advanced Wind Players," *Psychology of Music* 43, no. 2 (2015): 219-43.

<sup>2</sup> Gary E. McPherson and John McCormick, "Self-Efficacy and Music Performance," *Psychology of Music* 34, no. 3 (2006): 322-36.

<sup>3</sup> Gary E. McPherson and John McCormick, "Self-Efficacy and Music Performance," 332.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Susan Hallam et al., "The Development of Practicing Strategies in Young People," *Psychology of Music* 40, no. 5 (2012): 652-80.

<sup>6</sup> Peter Miksza, "The Effect of Self-Regulation Instruction On the Performance Achievement, Musical Self-Efficacy, and Practicing of Advanced Wind Players," *Psychology of Music* 43, no. 2 (2015): 219-43.

<sup>7</sup> Regina Antunes Teixeira dos Santos and Cristina Capparelli Gerling, "Ways of knowing and types of knowledge: How do students approach a new piece of music?" *International Journal of Music Education* 30, no. 3 (2012): 195-210.

the student's own ability in self-regulation and evaluation for performance achievement. A crucial element pointed out in these articles is that as students mature in their abilities for achievement, the social norm of being "perfect" increases too. This reaching for the stars attitude sometimes becomes a major psychological block in absorbing new materials. Other blocks may include the inability to change a certain learning pattern, becoming accustomed to feeling certain emotions or having of a false sense of fulfillment. I for one feel anxious when I first approach new repertoire; I know my anxiety comes from the lack of not knowing the background of the music, factual information on the composer, style and performance practice and everything that relates to the new repertoire. I want to know the reasons why and how this music exists. Practicing the music becomes a less priority on first sight.

Thus, I purposefully designed the progressive building approach for this project based on advocating my own self-efficacy when approaching new repertoire. Since I feel like I have a vague understanding of oboe repertoire from the last 50 years, I assembled five lists of complementary repertoire that I feel are relevant and accessible to creating learning strategies for each of the five music examples. This complementary repertoire includes mostly pieces I have played or performed prior to this project; some are new pieces that I have yet to learn. Each set of the complementary pieces serves as a building block towards learning the designated music examples. The complementary repertoire is also designed as a programming resource.

## **1. Heinz Holliger, *Sonata for Oboe solo (1956)***

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An oboe virtuoso, a prolific composer and versatile conductor, Heinz Holliger stands out in the super specialized 20<sup>th</sup> century music scene without much introduction. A Swiss native, Holliger was born in Langenthal in 1939. He studied music from a young age and took formal music lessons in oboe and composition from Emile Cassagnaud and Sándor Veress at the Conservatoire of Bern. From a recent interview with the Prix Swiss in 2015, Holliger introduced himself as “of a rare species that has tremendous passion for music” and “ a musician, composer, conductor, oboist, pianist and pedagogue.”<sup>8</sup> He described that his multiple identities make him rather exotic in the current music industry, but his musical identities are no different than what musicians were during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>9</sup>

Holliger is, no doubt, one of the great oboe virtuosos of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>10</sup> He led an international career as a concert oboist after winning the first prize at the Concours de Genève in 1959, and the International Music Competition of the ARD, Munich, in 1961. He has given worldwide performances and many contemporary composers have written and dedicated more than ninety pieces of music to him. Holliger noted that Elliott Carter’s *Concerto for oboe*, Luciano’s *Sequenza VII* and Klaus Huber’s work for oboe and harpsichord *Noctes intelligent lucis* were among his favorites.<sup>11</sup> Because of this output of oboe compositions for Holliger, the amount of 20<sup>th</sup> century oboe repertoire

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<sup>8</sup> Holliger Heinz, Interview by Prix Suisse, *Heinz Holliger in Interview-Swiss Music Prize 2015*. Prix Suisse, (August 26, 2015). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3fqGyvho-Bs>.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Geoffrey Burgess, and Bruce Haynes, "Diversifying streams since World War II: from the avant-garde to Postmodernism" in *The Oboe*, by Geoffrey Burgess and Bruce Haynes, (New Have and London: Yale University Press, 2004), 277-279.

<sup>11</sup> Bernard Delcambre, Andre Lardot, Pierre Boulez, Guy Laroche, and Phillip Albera, "Heinz Holliger," *The Double Reed* 24, no. 1 (2002): 11-17.

increased tremendously and appropriately reflected the stylistic approach of compositional trends, technique and the virtuosity of the performer. This is a significant contribution to the world of oboe music for Holliger.

Holliger studied composition under Sándor Veress from 1956 to 1960 and Pierre Boulez from 1961 to 1963 at the City of Basel Music Academy. His compositional style and aesthetic come from the influences of his teachers; with Veress, composition was about the “sense of the line, polyphony, periodicity and the musical declamation, as well as form.”<sup>12</sup> He states in his Prix Suisse interview that the lessons with Veress were strict, and that he obtained a type of “clean” aesthetic. Later, when he discovered the Swiss mythologies and legends, these untapped resources became his new voice and inspiration for writing music.

Holliger has been asked many times during interviews as to why he has not put out more oboe repertoire. His most frequent answer is that he is a musician, and that he sees no point in writing something to which he already knows all the secrets.<sup>13</sup> He would rather leave it for other composers to discover the oboe in their music. In comparison to his works for other instruments, his compositions for oboe are rare, which makes his oboe writing even more fascinating.

The *Sonata for Oboe solo* (1956-57) was written by a young Holliger in memory of his teacher, Emile Cassagnaud. The piece premiered in the Fall of 1958 at the International Music Competition in Munich.<sup>14</sup> This solo sonata is the most accessible of

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>14</sup> Mathew Ward, “An Annotated Bibliography of Music Composed by Heinz Holliger for Oboe, Oboe d'Amore, or English Horn” (DMA Diss., West Virginia University, 2010).

all the compositions for oboe, English horn and oboe d'amore by Holliger. The rhythmic notation is metered. There is no use of extended techniques, and it occasionally demonstrates symmetrical and asymmetrical meters based on the quarter and eighth notes. This sonata is intriguing in the sense that it is written by a young virtuoso demonstrating his superior understanding of the oboe through a piece of masterful composition. For me as a performer, this sonata gives me insight to Holliger's musical language and an opportunity to experience his oboe virtuosity through learning this sonata.

Some of the main challenges in learning this sonata are agile finger technique, especially in the finale, and fine articulation in the fast compound metered pattern. Although the music does not call for any extended techniques, the music itself requires players to be prepared with solid fundamental techniques before approaching the substantial musical content of the piece. The use of good breath, smooth fingers, control of embouchure and endurance are essential before approaching this piece.

The form of this sonata references the Baroque with four movements in serial style. The *Präludium* introduces an idea and the musical material evolves slowly but surely until it reaches the climatic point in the *altissimo* range of the oboe, as seen in Example 1-1 and 1-2. This particular transition is difficult and demands that the player first obtain familiarity in this range of the instrument. For players like me who are still discovering and building their confidence in the *altissimo* range, keep in mind that the *altissimo* range involves sensitivity to the embouchure and coordination from the face muscles to the fingers, and keeping calm when the highest notes don't come out. I found that isolating the breaks between the notes involved and figuring out the feelings of the mechanics on the oboe and the facial muscles helped me to improve my success rate.

**Example 1-1.** Measures 22-23 of *Präludium*.



**Example 1-2.** Measures 114-118 of *Finale*.



The *Capriccio* has typical characteristics of a fugue, with imitative counterpoint; and the subjects of the fugue are developed throughout. There are many quick and dramatic tempo changes and musical pauses in this movement and articulated motives immediately introduced in subjects of the fugue, seen in Examples 1-3 and 1-4, giving the music a lively character. One would suggest learning this movement first in order to get a taste of the composer's style. For players, the treatment of the various subject matter in the movement should be made with careful eyes, especially with the articulation markings of the first subject; and the various momentum or mixed tempo markings the composer asks for in the second subject matter and variations as seen in Example 1-5.

**Example 1-3.** Measures 1-4 and 10-13 of *Capriccio*.



**Example 1-4.** Measures 10-13 of the *Capriccio*.

The musical notation for Example 1-4 consists of two staves. The first staff begins at measure 10 with a dynamic marking of *mf* and a tempo marking of *(calmo, liberamente)*. The melody is characterized by a series of eighth notes with a long-short rhythmic pattern. The second staff begins at measure 12 with a dynamic marking of *f* and a tempo marking of *(a tempo)*. The melody continues with similar rhythmic patterns, including some slurs and accents.

**Example 1-5.** Measures 27-28 of *Capriccio*.

The musical notation for Example 1-5 consists of a single staff starting at measure 27. The tempo markings alternate between *(più mosso)* and *(a tempo)*. The dynamic marking *f* is used throughout. The melody features a long-short rhythmic pattern that transitions into eighth note patterns. There are slurs and accents used to guide the performer through the phrasing.

Following the *Capriccio* is the third movement, *Aria*. This movement is slow in tempo and carries a solemn quality. The long-short rhythmic notation in the first measure of the music produces a sensation of dragging, instead of the typical light emphasis on the first beats in a triple meter tempo. For players, keeping the line moving forward and building the musical phrase in this movement can be a challenge. Since the rests within the phrases are not full phrase breaks (measures 2 and 4, Example 1-6), students will need to treat the long-short motives with an intention of fluidity. This is especially true when the long-short motives move into eighth note patterns, and when developing the line into the third register of the oboe in measures 25 to 28 (Example 1-7).



**Example 1-6.** Measures 1-8 of *Aria*.



**Example 1-7.** Measures 25-28 of *Aria*.



The extreme fast tempo and fast fingerings of the *Finale* will be a thrill for players looking for an adrenaline rush (Example 1-8). The beginning of this movement resembles a fast etude by Ferling judging from the fast moving passages in the first eight measures. The dotted rhythm in the following section contrasts the introduction marking a simple binary form for the *Finale*. Section A is comprised largely of fast moving passages in compound meter (8/8 marking) and switches briefly into duple meter in dotted sixteenth rhythms in section B (measures 22-26). Switching between two contrasting meters and maintaining true precision of the tempo is tricky. The contrast in meter changes can be seen in Example 1-8 and Example 1-9 where the opening fast triplet passages switch into dotted sixteenth patterns in duple meter sometimes marking section changes in the music. I find the duality of meter changes in the *Finale* to be dramatic- this gives the music a sense of equilibrium between push and pull.

Example 1-8. Measures 1-9 of *Finale*.

**IV Finale**

**Presto, molto ritmico** (ca. 66)  
( $\frac{3+3+2}{8}$ ,  $\frac{3+2+3}{8}$ ,  $\frac{3+2+3}{8}$ )

*f*

*p*

Example 1-9. Measures 27-33 of *Finale*.

ca. 66

*mf leggero*

For me, accessibility of this sonata is twofold. In addition to being a famous virtuoso, Holliger writes music for the oboe that makes sense on the instrument technically, which is important for student players when first approaching music from the 1950's. The serial writing in the *Sonata* introduces the use of atonal harmony and the compositional theory demonstrates the musical style of the 1950's. Learning the *Sonata* can be the first step for building awareness and confidence in music aesthetics and style of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as these elements are important for oboe students to absorb and progressively build towards the musical languages of the later half of 20<sup>th</sup> century music.

## Complementary Pieces

Pieces suggested to complement or to be learned prior the *Sonata* are based on the formal procedures, technical demands, and endurance similarities of the *Sonata*, as seen in Table 1. However, the style of the music for these complementary pieces should be approached with appropriate performance practice that reflects the period of their time. The *Vivaldi Oboe Sonata, RV 53* is a standard Baroque sonata and bears similar musical challenges such as expressivity, technicality, and endurance, but in the style of Vivaldi – late Baroque performance practice. Another standard oboe sonata that could be complementary to the Holliger *Sonata* is the *Handel Oboe Sonata in G Minor*. This is often one of the first Baroque oboe sonata for students to learn, a foundational piece through which students begin building their skills and knowledge base for learning other sonatas.

The rudimentary knowledge students first acquire when learning a Handel sonata becomes prior knowledge when students take on other sonatas from different periods and styles. The same principle applies to the suggestion of J. S. Bach's *Partita in A minor, BWV 1030*, a treble solo that challenges the players in similar ways as the Holliger *Sonata*: endurance, expressivity, and technique. Water Piston's *Suite for Oboe and Piano* would be another introductory piece in learning atonal music. This piece is also reflects the formal style of early 17<sup>th</sup> century Baroque dance suites.

<b>Heinz Holliger <i>Sonata for Oboe solo</i> (1956)</b>
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<b>Technical Learning Goals</b>		Physical endurance of embouchure and breath. Smooth register changes in the <i>altissimo</i> range, harmonics, control of fast and articulated passages.		
<b>Stylistic Learning Goals</b>		Expressive linear phrases, expressive articulations, energetic tempo and emotions.		
<b>Complementary Works</b>				
	<b>Technical similarities</b>	<b>Technical differences</b>	<b>Stylistic similarities</b>	<b>Stylistic differences</b>
Vivaldi <i>Oboe Sonata, RV 53</i>	Clear articulated triplet passages in Mvt 2. Smooth fingerings and physical endurance in Mvt 3.	No use of the <i>altissimo</i> range.	Expressive and passionate.	Tonal harmony; the musical phrasing is melodic with call and response.
C.P. E. Bach, <i>Sonata in A minor, Wq. 132</i>	Long expressive musical phrasing with pauses, high-low interval jumps.	Arpeggiated materials.	Expressive, abstract, haunting, pitch center still needs to be maintained.	The progression of the tonal center.
Handel <i>Oboe Sonata in G minor. Op. 1, No. 6</i>	Standard four movement sonata. Phrasing with long lines and pauses, controlled articulated 16 <sup>th</sup> note passages in 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> mvt.	Motivic structure based on harmonic materials.	Bright and extroverted.	Three distinctive characters.
Walter Piston <i>Suite for Oboe and Piano</i>	Atonal musical passages.	Easier rhythmic language.	Similar style of formal procedure that follows the abstract expression of each movement.	None

**Table 1.** Complementary Pieces to Holliger's *Sonata*

## 2. Scott McAllister, *Grunge Concerto* (2014)

The *Grunge Concerto* is a recently composed piece by Scott McAllister. This concerto was premiered at the International Double Reed Society conference in New York, August 2014.<sup>15</sup> Like McAllister's other solo concertos, this particular work was a collaboration between him and the artist, and written for oboist Nancy King. Prior to the oboe concerto, McAllister had been successful with a few other solo concertos for the clarinet, most notably, the *X— Concerto* for solo clarinet and orchestra written for renowned clarinetist Charles Neidich.<sup>16</sup>

McAllister is a native Floridian and is currently Professor of Composition at Baylor University. He grew up with music in his household and began composition lessons around age fifteen. McAllister holds degrees from Florida State University and received a Doctor of Philosophy degree in composition from Rice University in 1969. McAllister is also an exceptional clarinetist.<sup>17</sup> During his interview with Amanda McCandless in 2007, he described his compositional style as an evolution from the “academic” to the “new”, where his academic style was put on hold to explore his own personal relationship with the music he associates with from his background and roots. He speaks with McCandless:

After I composed *X---* 10 years ago, I began to move away from a more “academic” style. I started to ask hard questions about myself, to find out who I

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<sup>15</sup> “Schedule of Events,” Gala Concerts - International Double Reed Society 2014, NYU Steinhardt, accessed April 9, 2016, [http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/idrs2014/events/gala\\_concert](http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/idrs2014/events/gala_concert).

<sup>16</sup> Scott McAllister, “X— Concerto,” <http://www.lydmusic.com/>, accessed April 9, 2016, [http://www.lydmusic.com/Lydmusic/X\\_CONCERTO.html](http://www.lydmusic.com/Lydmusic/X_CONCERTO.html).

<sup>17</sup> Troi L. Patterson, “A Performance Analysis of Stylistic Features of Scott McAllister's Selected Works for Solo Clarinet: Four Preludes on Playthings of the Wind, Black Dog: Rhapsody for Clarinet (and Piano), and BlingBling” (Electronic Theses, Treatises and Dissertations: Florida State University, 2008), 1-4.

was as a composer and what I wanted to say. I wanted to find my roots, express who I am and my experiences. I wanted to tap into my “folk” music. My experiences are wide with classical repertoire, country, grunge, hard rock, world music... you name it.<sup>18</sup>

In his new style of writing, he combines his love for minimalist and maximalist music together, creating a style he calls “middlemalism.” Here, “middlemalism” refers to his inspiration of various types of mainstream musical genres, such as folk, grunge, pop, rock and world music. The *X- Concerto* is his first composition with the influence of his new “middlemalism” style, blending classical elements and grunge rock characteristics from bands like Alice in Chains, and Nirvana.<sup>19</sup> In his concertos, McAllister showcases the artist’s virtuosity with technical brilliance and maps out the musical gestures according to the artist’s stage presence. McAllister also tailors musical elements into his composition for the performer’s interest.<sup>20</sup>

The *Grunge Concerto* shares similar traits as a grunge rock band – the lead oboist riffing away with dazzling passages, while the ensemble resembles the back up singer, the keyboard, and the needed rhythmic section. The *Grunge Concerto* replicates the deeply rooted images we have from rock bands such as Alice In Chains, Nirvana, and Radiohead to name a few. Like the *X- Concerto*, the *Grunge Concerto* was produced through the collaboration of an oboe virtuoso and master composer. There are extreme virtuosic passages in the *Grunge Concerto* that require an impeccable skill set from the

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<sup>18</sup> Amanda McCandless, “An Interview with Scott McAllister,” *The Clarinet* 55, no. 1 (December 2007): 62-63.

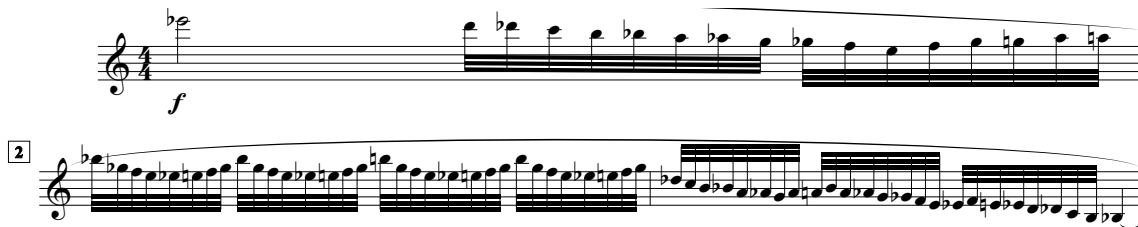
<sup>19</sup> Troi L. Patterson, “A Performance Analysis of Stylistic Features of Scott McAllister's Slected Works for Solo Clarinet,” 6.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

player. There are also conceptual and performance practices that are relevant to contemporary oboe repertoire of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The *Grunge Concerto* follows a conventional three-movement construction without clear movement breaks. Each movement of the concerto is provided with a tempo marking describing the mood or feel of each of the sections. The first movement begins with the oboe soaring through a long held Eb<sub>6</sub> and sweeping into massive chromatic and arpeggiated harmonic materials as seen in Example 2-1. This opening line references a guitar hero with a cadenza tempo marking. It is not unusual of a virtuosic oboe opening, where the opening line either ascends or descends with fast melismatic passages. This is a gesture that should be familiar to most advanced oboe players as it gives them an entry point for learning this piece of music.

**Example 2-1.** Measures 1-3 of *Grunge Concerto*.



The constant chromatic materials are almost nonstop in a free flow motion combined with the occasional interruption of microtonal trilling as seen in Example 2-2. This use of microtonal trills resembles guitar distortion; the long ascending chromatic gestures are virtuosic nonetheless. As we can see in Example 2-2, the microtonal trills are labeled as resonance trills in the score. This is a situation where there is no unification for the names or notation for this kind of sound produced on the oboe. Microtonal trills are

also referred to as unison trills, timbre trills, micro-interval trills or color trills.<sup>21</sup> All of these names describe a change in tone color and a slight change in pitch when trilling a single note. Sometimes these trills are indicated with one or two wavy lines with suggested fingerings in the score. In Example 2-2, the name resonance trill is used; this can be confusing at first because this name is not often seen in oboe literature. Both Libby van Cleve and Peter Veal’s published works on oboe extended techniques provide detailed fingering charts as references to microtonal trills on the oboe. Veal’s book is particularly extensive in terms of the references to the whole range of trills on the oboe, including trills for raised and lowered pitches.<sup>22</sup>

**Example 2-2.** Measures 13-31 of *Grunge Concerto*.

The second movement is marked *stoned, baked...high in the sky* as its tempo. This movement is divided into two contrasting sections, and both could be described as expressions of being “under the influence.” Section A is relaxed; the lullaby-like accompaniment holds the solo dearly and creates a warm and floating environment contrasting with section B’s lively and naïve playfulness. The long instrumental

<sup>21</sup> Libby Van Cleve, *Oboe Unbound* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 56-60.

<sup>22</sup> Peter Veal and Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf, *The Techniques of Oboe Playing* (Basel: Bärenreiter-Verlag, 1994), 39.



introduction in section A perfectly sets up the oboe solo to float on top of the instrumental and harmonic texture. There are two long phrases that weave together the dream-like mood and environment for this portion of the concerto. The second phrase of the solo line gradually ascends to the highest point of the concerto (the third octave G<sub>6</sub>), and it is sustained for a total of seven measures. This is an extremely long held phrase that is challenging for the oboe. I found that I did not have the physical stamina to maintain such a long held breath and I needed a strategy such as circular breathing or breaking the line during chord changes.

The second phrase from measure 116 is built from a simple ascending scale and extends for nineteen measures in length. Circular breathing can be a useful strategy in order to sustain the phrase without a break in line, as seen in Example 2-3. Nineteen measures of non-stop playing are challenging, hence breathing strategies should be implemented here whether the player can circular breathe or not. For players, we are challenged with the use of air, endurance for the embouchure and physical stamina. If one has not mastered circular breathing, our priority here should focus on pitch, tone color and stamina reflecting musical expressions of what is “baked and high in the sky”.

**Example 2-3.** Measures 112-135 of *Grunge Concerto*.

The image displays two staves of musical notation in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The first staff, labeled with measure 112, shows a melodic line starting on a whole note C4, followed by quarter notes D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F#5, G5, A5, B5, C6, and D6. The second staff, labeled with measure 124, continues the melodic line with quarter notes E5, F#5, G5, A5, B5, C6, D6, E6, F#6, G6, A6, B6, C7, D7, E7, F#7, G7, A7, B7, and C8. A dynamic marking of *mf* is placed below the second staff, with a hairpin indicating a crescendo leading to the *mf* and a decrescendo following it.

Section B brings about fast moving thirty-second note passages and most of the note groupings are mixed in with triplet notations giving the music a feeling of speed like a roller coaster. This is a passage where fluent finger technique is displayed and players will be riffing away the entire range of their instrument. Example 2-4 shows the mixed-in triplet notation in measure 153 and the downward rolling pattern similar to the opening of *Le Tombeau de Couperin* in the oboe solo in terms of technicality and structure. The character of section B is light and bursting with forward motion in repeated descending scale patterns and large intervallic leaps as seen in Example 2-5. If one has *Le Tombeau* well learned, this passage in section B should come easily.

**Example 2-4.** Measures 153-154 of *Grunge Concerto*.



**Example 2-5.** Measures 157-159 of *Grunge Concerto*.



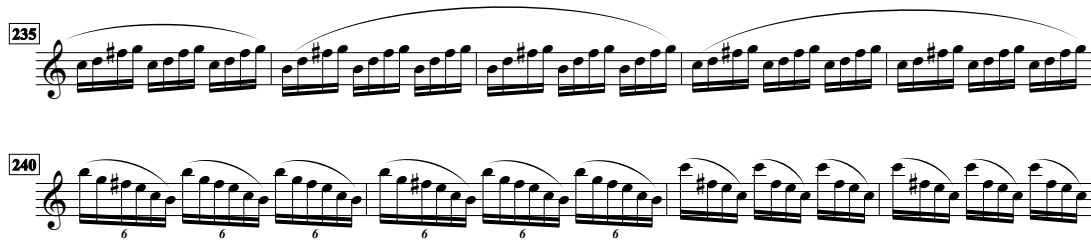
The third movement of the concerto continues the energetic motion from the second movement. The elevated dynamic and speed that is fused with mixed meter replicates a rock-and-roll concert's climax where the lights and amplification are magnified, and the lead guitarist sweeping away with his sweat glimmering from the

stage lights. The tempo is marked *Headbanging*, a descriptive indication of what the music will portray. The solo oboe continues to be the moving line with elaborate ascending mixed meter notations as seen in Example 2-6. The use of alternate fingering in the second register on C<sup>#</sup><sub>6</sub> creates sounds of manipulation imitating the amplified soundboard of a guitar. One could prioritize the many motivic materials from the third movement as learning strategies, since much of the third movement is organized around repeated motivic materials in large portions; by doing so we learn the music materials in a more efficient way. Example 2-7 shows three different repeated gestures from the many motivic ideas used in the movement. Both repeated ascending and descending sixteenth-note enharmonic scales appear to be the head-banging motions, while the sextuplets give the head-bang a slight flare. If Example 2-7 suggests a head-banging manner, Example 2-8 will suggest some sort of trance, where the sextuplet enharmonic sequence is repeated for sixteen measures until it returns to the opening motivic gesture to conclude the concerto.

**Example 2-6.** Measures 184-192 of *Grunge Concerto*.

♩ = 144-152 *Headbanging*

**Example 2-7.** Measures 235-247 of *Grunge Concerto*.



**Example 2-8.** Measures 261-262 of *Grunge Concerto*.



The *Grunge Concerto* is a piece that is composed with musical synthetics closely related to rock-and-roll and grunge band music from the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The rock and roll reference is easily recognizable even if one has little comprehension of it. The more mainstream sound (middlemism) and pop culture infusion makes this concerto an exciting new addition to the oboe repertoire, and an accessible new piece to learn. This is a concerto that presents a great amount of 21<sup>st</sup> century oboe virtuosity and style that would be worthwhile for players venturing into oboe concertos composed within the last decade.

### **Complementary Pieces**

The pieces suggested to complement and to enhance the learning goals from the *Grunge Concerto* are based on a similar use of motivic materials, equal technical demands, portrayal of similar musical expression and identity, and cultural referencing as seen in Table 2. These four pieces show musical qualities one can extract and apply to

finessing stylistic approaches or improving various technical details found in the *Grunge Concerto*.

The *Gran Concerto* on the themes from Verdi's opera *I Vespri Siciliani* by Pasculli is a piece of extravagant oboe music where the player demonstrates expressivity and dazzles the audience with luscious non-stop melismatic chromatic scales and arpeggios. The oboe sings, plays around with the theme, and sometimes plays enormous stretches of sixteenth notes without breaks for close to four minutes on end. This is a concerto where players can practice circular breathing with non-stop trills and sixteenth-note passages and orient their finger technique for later application to the fast passages in the *Grunge Concerto*. The stage presence of an operatic singer is no less virtuosic than a lead guitarist on stage; therefore developing one's oboe persona may come with learning this piece.

Eugène Bozza's *Fantaisie Pastorale* is a petite sized improvisation in two contrasting movements. This piece complements the improvisational and cadenza-like characters of the *Grunge Concerto*, and can be used as an introductory work for similar pieces with an improvisatory style of writing. Similarly, the purpose of the Silvestrini *Six Etudes* is also to prepare for an improvisatory style of playing. Even though these pieces are improvisatory in style, the writing is mostly in time and tempo without any extended techniques or free notation. Being able to read this style of writing quickly will be an advantage to reading other similar compositions. The challenge is playing these strict tempos and notation effortlessly as if the pieces are indeed an improvisation.

David Mullikin's *Oboe Concerto* is a colorful work that engages the oboist's expression on a level more abstract than that of the intensity one may find in the *Grunge*

*Concerto*. Mullikin’s concerto incorporates a similar use of rhythmic motives to the *Grunge Concerto*, but in a less extreme manner. The overall tempo marking is slightly slower making it easier for players to master the technical passages. Both concertos share the same grandiose manner and moments of edge, with similar repeated sixteenth-note grouping. Overall, the entry point for Mullikin’s *Oboe Concerto* is friendlier than the *Grunge Concerto* based on its use of similar motives and technique.

<b>Grunge Concerto (2014)</b>				
<b>Technical Learning Goals</b>		Alternate fingerings, harmonics, timbre/microtonal trills, circular breathing, flutter tongue.		
<b>Stylistic Learning Goals</b>		<b>Virtuosity with easy, energetic, free.</b>		
<b>Complementary Works</b>				
	<b>Technical similarities</b>	<b>Technical differences</b>	<b>Stylistic similarities</b>	<b>Stylistic differences</b>
Antonio Pasculli, <i>Gran Concerto</i>	Virtuosic technical arpeggios, tessitura, long melodic phrasing.	No use of alternate fingerings or extended techniques.	Contemporary operatic references of the composer’s time. Referencing pop culture.	None.
Gilles Silvestrini, <i>Six Etudes</i>	Same technical demands.	No use of extended techniques. For solo oboe. Use of two-voiced textures throughout.	Expressive with character. Every etude is referenced with imagery we can hear in sound.	None.
Eugène Bozza, <i>Fantaisie Pastorale</i>	Similar arpeggiated passages.	Much less technical demand than the concerto; a simple binary form with melodic and coquettish contrasts.	Similar cadenza-like passages. A fantasy that transcribes the conscious and the unconscious, with similar ambience to the second movement.	None.
David Mullikin, <i>Oboe Concerto</i>	Less technically demanding finger technique in terms of speed.	No use of extended technique. Lots of mixed meter within movements.	Similar grandiose and virtuosic passages, vivid light and enigmatic characterization.	Colorful and happy expressions; not as serious as the intensity the McAllister presents.

**Table 2.** Complementary Pieces to Scott McAllister’s *Grunge Concerto*

### 3. Isang Yun, *Oboe Concerto* (1990)

The Yun *Oboe Concerto* was composed for the Serge Koussevitzky Music Foundation and premiered by Heinz Holliger on September 16, 1991. Dennis Russell Davies and the Orchester de Beethovenhalle Bonn performed at the premiere during the Berlin Festwochen.<sup>23</sup> This concerto presents a doubling situation for the performer and an opportunity for an advanced player's investment in time on learning the intricacy of the oboe d'amore. While the English horn is considered to be a must-learn auxiliary instrument in the oboe family, the oboe d'amore's large appearance in Bach's cantatas and oratorios and some contemporary scores deserves equal attention. Learning the oboe d'amore should be given the same amount of consideration as the English horn. As a student I did not encounter the oboe d'amore until I was in my graduate studies; regardless of the oboe d'amore's own intricacies, I find this instrument to be less intimidating in terms of the physical stress I experience from playing the oboe and English horn.

The oboe d'amore is used extensively in modern compositions despite its seemingly rare appearances. It is less common when the oboe d'amore is scored into a solo concerto, making the Isang Yun *Oboe Concerto* a rarity in the oboe repertoire. This concerto would be recommended to students who want a challenge on doubling on the oboe d'amore along with a high technical demand. The doubling beginning in measure 65 marks the second movement of the concerto as seen in Example 3-1. The reason for this recommendation comes from the stylistic writing of the composition and the large amount of pitch bending technique the music requires. Example 3-2 demonstrates a

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<sup>23</sup> Sarah Fraker, "The Oboe Works of Isang Yun" (DMA diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2009).

moment where the solo oboe bends pitches as part of the musical phrase and motion as one example. Frequent pitch bending occurs in both oboe and the oboe d'amore (Example 3-1), demanding a player with experienced embouchure technique. Pitch bending also occurs in difficult ranges of both instruments adding additional challenges to learning and honing this concerto.

**Example 3-1.** Measures 65-70 of *Concerto*.

65 Oboe d'amore (in A)

68

**Example 3-2.** Measures 5-12 of *Concerto*.

5

9

This concerto will also improve students' knowledge of how their instrument works at its natural state. They will have to learn how the oboe and the oboe d'amore behave in



terms of their natural pitch tendencies in order for them to set goals and strategize their work with pitch bending. For example, a student's pitch in relation to the oboe embouchure and fingering may interfere with learning a new set of pitch tendencies on the oboe d'amore. Even though the fingerings are the same on both instruments, the oboe d'amore is pitched a minor third lower in the key of A.

A major challenge with doubling on another oboe family instrument is to not play the doubling instrument exactly like the oboe. Playing the auxiliary instrument as if it is the major instrument is a common habit of students new to doubling. One main reason is that the fingerings are the same on each of the auxiliaries, which is easily transferable from the oboe and may cause students to think that the instruments are the same. Quite often a student might apply the same physical oboe techniques to play the auxiliary, such as the use of air pressure or the flexibility of the embouchure. This can be a cumbersome challenge since the same pitches on the oboe and the oboe d'amore will have different pitch tendencies and fingerings. With this concerto, students can further develop their skills in doubling, as it is an essential skill set for oboists.

The Yun *Concerto* presents physical and mental challenges to players and an array of complex musical expressions. Yun is a composer well known for his *Haupton*<sup>24</sup> style (main tone)- a treatment of musical tones as living entities- and blending this technique with twelve-tone procedures. His music carries great intensity and richness in color, painting this concerto with sophisticated eastern philosophical ideology.<sup>25</sup> Born in Korea in 1917, he was the son of poet Yun Ki-Hyon. Isang Yun began his musical training as a

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<sup>24</sup> H. Kunz, "Yun, Isang," *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, (Oxford University Press), accessed April 2, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/30747>.

<sup>25</sup> Ju-Hee Kim, "Multicultural Influences in the Music of Isang Yun as Represented in his Concerto for Flute and Small Orchestra"(DMA diss., Tuscaloosa, Alabama: The University of Alabama, 2009).

teenager, attended the Osaka Conservatory and studied music with Ikenouchi in Tokyo. He spent most of his adult life making a modest living as a composer after attending the Paris Conservatory (1956-7) and the West Berlin Musikhochschule (1957-59). Yun had been working and living in Europe for almost ten years prior to his abduction and accusation for treason during Park Chun-Hee's regime. He was imprisoned as a communist and was released and granted amnesty in 1970, later residing in Germany and never returning to Korea.<sup>26</sup> This life altering experience strongly influenced Isang Yun's composition style afterwards, and the Korean identity intensified even more so in his music.

The structure of the *Concerto* follows a conventional three-movement form without clear breaks or movement titles. The soloist's melodic structures in this concerto carry the *Haupton* (yang) character throughout, with constant long soaring lines, while the orchestra accompanies the solo line with slightly more delicate decorations of colors and effects resembling the extensions of the *Haupton* (yin). In Taoist philosophy, the Yin and Yang characters of the *Concerto* could be described as the femininity and the masculinity of the music itself. The character of this music describes the duality of yin-yang as contrary to each other, but at the same time, interrelated. They are often lyrical phrases decorated with ornaments, where the linearity is the character of the yang and the ornaments as yin.

In Example 3-3, the opening phrase of the solo oboe is ascending in motion; although the overall gesture is subdued but beginning in measure 5, the G# begins carrying a forward motion with upward pitch bends toward the end of the phrase. The growing

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<sup>26</sup> Sarah Fraker, "The Oboe Works of Isang Yun" (DMA diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2009), 4.

motion where one gesture leads to another from the solo line resembles a kind of energy, a source of origin. This is the *Haupton* introduced by the solo oboe. The various motions and gestures of the *Haupton* are carried throughout the concerto.

**Example 3-3.** Measures 1-12 of *Concerto*.

Example 3-3 shows the opening phrase- a long twelve bars. It looks simple at first glance, but the pitch bending and use of harmonics are often new concepts and techniques to many players. The use of pitch bends puts emphasis on the gesture in the music; in this case the ascending pitch bending creates a sense of forward motion in the opening phrase. Pitch bending can be achieved with the manipulation of the embouchure and the reed. However, it is more difficult to bend pitch upwards on the oboe than downwards. Libby van Cleve suggests in her book that bending pitches a semitone higher can be achieved with a combination of tightening the embouchure, putting more reed in the mouth, and sliding off keys when possible.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Libby van Cleve, *Oboe Unbound* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 24.

The third movement cadenza, seen in Example 3-4, demonstrates a complex use of pitch bending, with quarter-tone motion upwards and downwards, compound rhythmic groupings and flutter tongue. The use of these techniques is fused into the motives that appear throughout the *Concerto*. These motives are part of the identity and language of the solo line. Students can identify and organize each of the motivic gestures in the score for learning purposes and better understanding of the intricate details of the musical writing.

**Example 3-4.** *Cadenza*, measure 162.

The complex philosophical details in Yun’s *Concerto for Oboe* can surely increase one’s building of meaningful interpretation and performance practice. In this case, it is Isang Yun’s influence of Eastern philosophy on 1950’s western art music.

### Complementary Pieces

The main learning goals for this concerto are to build endurance in the phrasing without losing the delicate details of pitch bending, the use of harmonics, and technically

demanding fast rhythmic passages. The complementary pieces, seen in Table 2, are chosen based on similar technical difficulty, stylistic approach to expression in phrasing, and similar rhythmic and notational patterns that will help build efficiency and confidence prior to learning the Yun *Concerto*. The third movement of the Martinů *Oboe Concerto* bears similar rhythmic patterns in the introduction, the triplet and sixteenth note passages with trills resembling much of the trilled triplet-sixteenth note passages in the Yun *Concerto*. The Martinů *Oboe Concerto* demands less technical prowess overall, but many of the notated passages can be useful in building familiarity with reading similar passages in the Yun *Concerto*.

Corigliano's *Concerto for Oboe* is another example of substantial oboe repertoire of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; its modest amount yet expressive use of extended techniques makes this piece of music approachable and can be used as an introductory concerto with 20<sup>th</sup> century performance practices. Each of the movements explores certain aspects of the oboe. The ethereal aria of this concerto complements and contrasts the strong and determined lyricism of the Yun *Concerto* solo lines.

Both the *Inner Song* by Elliot Carter and the *Concerto* by Ellen Taffe Zwilich treat phrasing, exploration of color and building of long phrasing in the music. These can become learning blocks to Yun's *Concerto*. The Zwilich concerto's cadenza is another example where motivic elements are explored; it demonstrates equivalent difficulty in rhythmic patterns and challenges for the player's technicality and expressivity. Although there is no use of extended techniques in the Zwilich *Concerto*, the constant ascending linear phrasing in the oboe does share similarities in character.

<b>Isang Yun, <i>Concerto for Oboe</i> (1990)</b>				
<b>Technical Learning Goals</b>		Harmonics, pitch bending, doubling, flutter tonguing.		
<b>Stylistic Learning Goals</b>		Strong yet sensitive manners (Yang with Yin), penetrating sound, expressive timbre, song like.		
<b>Complementary Works</b>				
	<b>Technical similarities</b>	<b>Technical differences</b>	<b>Stylistic similarities</b>	<b>Stylistic differences</b>
John Corigliano, <i>Concerto for Oboe</i> .	Uses of harmonics and multiphonics for effects.	More accessible in technicality overall.	Lyrical 2 <sup>nd</sup> mvt. Aria. Contrasts the more dominant lyricism in Yun's concerto.	Portrays different ideas and characters in each movement.
Elliot Carter, <i>Inner Song for Oboe</i> .	Long phrasing in the higher register.	No use of extended techniques.	Explores the oboe's color palette.	Different use of timbre and color, thus an introspective mood.
Buslav Martinů, <i>Oboe Concerto</i> .	Trilled arpeggios, complex rhythmic grouping.	Less technical demand in counting and rhythmic complexity.	Bright and extroverted.	Three distinctive characters.
Ellen Taaffe Zwilich, <i>Concerto for Oboe</i> .	Difficult cadenza, long phrasings.	No use of extended techniques.	No distinct movements. The expressions are bright energetic.	Although energetic, the character is more calm and gentle.

**Table 3.** Complementary pieces to Yun's *Concerto for Oboe*.

#### 4. Iannis Xenakis, *Dmaathen* for Oboe and Percussion (1976)

*Dmaathen* for oboe and percussion is a chamber work composed by Iannis Xenakis. He wrote this piece for the American duo Nora Post and Jan Williams in 1976.<sup>28</sup> The title *Dmaathen* is Greek and is the Doric version (passive past tense) of the verb *to subdue, crush or defeat*.<sup>29</sup> Even with a title that has a slight reference from Greek mythology, *Dmaathen* is abstract at large and bears no characterization of any Greek mythology. One could argue that the title merely suggests the composer's intention and inspiration in composing the piece. Xenakis talks about his composition process and inspiration with Olivier Revault D'Allonnes in his thesis defense in 1976:

... in the artistic realm there is revelation. In philosophy, in knowledge, it's the same thing. Yes, revelation is absolutely indispensable. It's one of man's crutches. He has two crutches: revelation and inference. And in the artistic realm, both are valid.... How does one choose from a great wealth of possibilities? Well, there are many ways going about it. I can imagine-I don't need a machine for that-I can imagine and intellectually make a choice.<sup>30</sup>

Xenakis is known for his abstract and conceptual style of writing. His mathematical method of composing does not easily place his music within the classical standards of lyricism or harmony. In the preface to *Musiques Formelles*, Xenakis explains that the sounds and music are rather the new medium or communication for the

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<sup>28</sup> James Harley, *Xenakis: His Life in Music* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004): 104.

<sup>29</sup> Nikos Ioakeim, "The archaic Xenakis," 4 2014, <http://ioakeimbox.com/2014/04/the-archaic-xenakis/> (accessed March 8, 2016).

<sup>30</sup> Iannis Xenakis, *ARTS/SCIENCES: ALLOYS*, Aesthetics in Music No. 2, Translated by Sharon Kanach, (New York, N.Y: Pendragon Press, 1985): 33.

“laws of thought” and “structured creations of thought”<sup>31</sup> – meaning that the sonority or the “music” are aural expressions of the composer’s philosophical thought process through mathematical equations. This style of music does not include the conventional aesthetics we normally would perceive.

For this purpose the qualification “beautiful” or “ugly” makes no sense for sound, nor for the music that derives from it; the quantity of intelligence carried by the sounds must be the true criterion of the validity of a particular music.<sup>32</sup>

In Xenakis’s music the question of style becomes the question of concept. Musicians are performing music that is abstract without function. The abstraction coming from the formalization of concepts requires musicians to perform, interpret, music or approach music from both the artistic and scientific angle. In his thesis defense, Xenakis proposed a new kind of musician that can perceive this “condensation-toward-abstraction” trend of music-making, an “artist-conceptor.”

...it seems that a new type of musician is necessary, an “artist-conceptor” of new abstract and free forms, tending toward complexities, and then toward generalizations on several levels of sound organizations.<sup>33</sup>

What Xenakis is promoting in his thesis is what was needed and lacking in musicians of his time. However, the notion of an “artist-conceptor” should sound familiar to us that have collaborated with composers or performed a piece of music built on concepts. Musicians have come a long way since then, and for those of us that are new to the idea of an “artist-conceptor,” learning music by Xenakis and other similar styles of

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<sup>31</sup> Iannis Xenakis, *Formalized Music: Thought and Mathematics in Composition*, (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1971): ix.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Iannis Xenakis, *ARTS/SCIENCES: ALLOYS* (New York, N.Y: Pendragon Press, 1985): 3.



music will give you insight to build your own set of “artist-conceptor” skills. *Dmaathen* was composed at a time where abstraction and conceptualization of sound and music was the trend. In this piece, players will immerse in the Xenakian “sonic universe” firsthand with challenging distortion of sounds, mix and matching tone colors with percussion instruments, constructing one’s own shape and size of this sonic universe upon one’s own interpretation of the music.

There seems to be a central framework that can be heard in *Dmaathen*. The mode-like melody intermittently exchanges from sustained multiphonic passages to the occasional burst of fast melodic material along with the percussion’s sporadic playing throughout. The independence of both parts gives this piece a sense of separateness. This gives the feeling that there is structured space within the sonority of the music. This is the sound of the “otherness.” There seems to be no conventional structure to the composition, and at times the music almost sounds meditative with flow in a free from structure. Virtuosity comes from the oboist’s abilities in execution in performing the music with the percussionist. The player’s ability to execute the passages smoothly and musically within the framework of the music will be showcased. The piece is ten minutes in length without any long pauses for either player; high concentration and collaboration between the two parts will be another requirement.

The collaborative effort of both the percussionist and the oboist will initiate the learning process, where each instrumentalist will treat the other’s parts as their own. For oboists that have not played with a percussionist, this is an appropriate piece to be acquainted with. Other than familiarity with the extensive percussion instruments used, the accessibility of oboe fingering charts for the multiphonics makes it an ideal introduction to extended techniques on the oboe. While this piece provides a fair use of

multiphonics and exploration of timbre, the theoretical concept and historical placement marks this piece within the distinctive performance practice of the later half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The main characteristics of this piece are the use of sustained multiphonic passages, alternate fingerings, and glissandi, teeth-on-reed and flutter tongue. Xenakis references Bartolozzi<sup>34</sup> in the score, specifying which fingerings are used for the effects. Bartolozzi refers to each key of the oboe with a number; the fingering chart provided by the score is an example of this system, as seen in Example 4-1. The Bartolozzi system is rather arbitrary in its application of numbers for keys- it is not commonly used. For the oboist first learning multiphonics, a better reference guide to the fingerings might be that of Peter Veal,<sup>35</sup> where the multiphonic references are used with the key names, as seen in Example 4-2. Here, we see a multiphonic for the pitch C using key names instead of numbers to indicate the fingerings. This saves a great deal of time by not having to learn a new system of references like those of Bartolozzi.

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<sup>34</sup> Bruno Bartolozzi, *New Sounds for Woodwind, second edition*, Oxford University Press, 1982.

<sup>35</sup> Peter Veal, Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf, Wolfgang Motz, and Thomas Hummel, *The Techniques of Oboe Playing/Die Spieltechnik der Oboe/La technique du hautbois*, Kassel: Bärenreiter-Verlag, 1994.

**Example 4-1.** Fingering system by Bruno Bartolozzi.

Les nombres des "multiphoniques" correspondent aux clés suivant le diagramme ci-contre →

The numbers of the multiphonics, correspond to the keys, according to this diagram →

1	—	1	—	First oct. key
2	—	2	—	second " "
3	—	3	—	third " "
4	—	4	—	B key "
5	—	5	—	trill key "
6	—	6	—	" "
7	—	7	—	A " "
8	—	8	—	trill " "
9	—	9	—	G " "
10	—	10	—	G# " "
11	—	11	—	Eb " "
12	—	12	—	B " "
13	—	13	—	Bb " "
14	—	14	—	" "
15	—	15	—	F " "
16	—	16	—	F# " "
17	—	17	—	" "
18	—	18	—	E " "
19	—	19	—	F " "
20	—	20	—	D " "
21	—	21	—	C " "
22	—	22	—	C# " "
23	—	23	—	Eb " "

○ = open key, clé ouverte  
● = closed key, clé fermée  
◐ = 1/2 closed, or cover the key on the outer rim and leave the hole in the middle of it open. 1/2 trou ou en appuyant sur le bord du plateau.

1/4	2/4	3/4	de ton
†	#	##	

**Example 4-2.** Fingering chart reference by Peter Veal.

1. Oktavklappe/1<sup>st</sup> octave key/spatule 1<sup>e</sup> octave
2. Oktavklappe/2<sup>nd</sup> octave key/spatule 2<sup>e</sup> octave
3. Oktavklappe/3<sup>rd</sup> octave key/spatule 3<sup>e</sup> octave

- H-Grifflochklappe/B tonehole key/plateau de do
- A-Grifflochklappe/A tonehole key/plateau de si
- G-Grifflochklappe/G tonehole key/plateau de la
- Fis-Grifflochklappe/F-sharp tonehole key/plateau de sol
- E-Grifflochklappe/E tonehole key/plateau fa fourche
- D-Grifflochklappe/D tonehole key/plateau de mi

F, Eb, C#	Zusatzklappen/Additional keys/Spatules
-D, -C#	Trillerklappen/Trill keys/Spatules cadence
P	pointe de do
R	pointe res <sup>ce</sup> fa fourche
X	pointe de fa #
cg	clé gillet

- offen/open/ouvert
- ◐ halb/half/fermé à moitié
- ◑ drei Viertel geschlossen/three quarters closed/fermé aux 3/4
- geschlossen/closed/fermé

Before students begin to learn the piece, it is advised that they re-reference the multiphonic finger charts provided in the music. However, as every instrument is different, the fingering charts provided by the score may or may not work, thus finding other resources may be necessary in learning multiphonics. The main construct of the oboe solo in *Dmaathen* is the alternation between sustained passages built from extended

techniques and brief contours of fast articulated passages. The first appearance of multiphonics happens in measure eight, as seen in Example 4-3. This multiphonic is introduced after the primal call of the beginning phrase settles, following microtonal trills<sup>36</sup> on the note F.

**Example 4-3.** Measures 6-10 of *Dmaathen*.



Some challenges may arise for the player when facing glissandi on the multiphonic while trilling (Example 4-4) and with the teeth on the reed (Example 4-5). These are likely challenging for all players, especially with the extremely high ranges used in the oboe in both examples. Example 4-4 requires the player to add the glissandi while the trill continues at the same time. This D<sub>6</sub> to E<sub>6</sub> glissandi will sound distorted; adding the Eb key on the right hand means the player’s pinky will need some getting used to, and will most likely feel awkward at first.

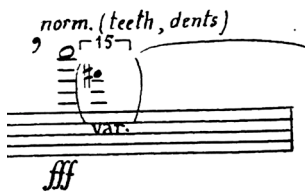
**Example 4-4.** Measures 48-52 of *Dmaathen*.



<sup>36</sup> Libby Van Cleve, *Oboe Unbound* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 56.

There are several occasions of playing with the teeth on the reed, though Example 4-5 shows the most extreme of all cases. Notating a C<sub>6</sub> on the oboe is considered very rare, since most scores seldom ascend past G<sub>6</sub>. The acoustical nature of the oboe tends to be thin and quiet in nature, therefore the triple *forte* should be taken as a suggestion. This moment could be seen as the climax of the music for the oboe, but acoustically this gesture does not do the music any justice. Libby Van Cleve's upper-register fingering chart in her book *Oboe Unbound* is a fine resource for anyone beginning to explore the oboe's highest range.<sup>37</sup>

**Example 4-5.** Measure 114 of *Dmaathen*.



Another challenging aspect of learning this work by Xenakis is reading the rhythmic notation when the solo line splits into two staves. This happens towards the end of the music during a passage of fast rhythmic material where there are high and low intervallic jumps within a short time, as seen in Example 4-6. The fingerings alternate between the upper third register and the lower register; the occasional glissandi and teeth playing add another level of intensity to this split staff passage. The complexity of rhythmic notation in measure 126 is not rare in this music- the manipulation of compound rhythmic groupings within the fast passages are frequent in the score.

<sup>37</sup> Libby Van Cleve, *Oboe Unbound* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 27-28.

**Example 4-6.** Measures 123-26 of *Dmaathen*.



Overall, learning the oboe part of *Dmaathen* consists of deciphering the two motivic characters of the music, the various sustained passages decorated with extended techniques and the articulated mixed rhythmic fast passages throughout. This can be a helpful if not challenging introductory piece prior to learning other conceptual works of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### Complementary Pieces

In the complementary pieces below, seen in Table 3, four pieces are chosen based on the techniques used in *Dmaathen*. Heinz Holliger's *Studie über Mehrklänge* is a chordal study consisting of extended treatments to the multiphonic chords and timbral studies to monophonic notes. The study explores the colors and dynamics of mainly the lower register of the oboe in addition to the ingenious manner of notation. The specific fingering instructions for each note will require the player to figure out how their instrument behaves in the process. The range of this study is mostly low in register except towards the end where the music floats in the third register and briefly encounters F<sub>6</sub>, the highest point in the music. In *Four Pieces* by Ernst Krenek, similar trills are used with glissandi in the score, and this can aid with similar variations of trills found in *Dmaathen*.

Dorati's *Duo Concertante* is a virtuosic piece in a similar chamber setting with the piano, and though tonal, this can be a contrasting piece to *Dmaathen* in a recital setting. If an oboe player has never played with a percussionist before, *Le Tombeau de Mireille* may be a good exercise for both players.

<b>Dmaathen for Oboe and Percussion Soloists (1976)</b>				
<b>Technical Learning Goals</b>		Multiphonics, timbre trills, teeth on reeds, squealing tones.		
<b>Stylistic Learning Goals</b>		Conceptual and inspirational, articulation contrasts.		
<b>Complimentary Works</b>				
	<b>Technical similarities</b>	<b>Technical differences</b>	<b>Stylistic similarities</b>	<b>Stylistic differences</b>
Henri Tomasi's <i>Le Tombeau de Mireille</i>	None; this piece is lyrical but has the oriental flair that is not traditionally western sounding.	Both percussion and oboe carry simpler parts, a introductory piece for both instruments.	None, the folk-like nature brings about an unpolished tone color that sounds pastoral but not abstract	Melodic, lyrical, sonorous uses of modes; a piece that captures the pastoral- and folk-like nature of the oboe.
Heinz Holliger's <i>Studie über Mehrklänge</i>	Multiphonics, timbre changes, trills. Squealing tones, harder perhaps.	None for the oboe part.	Abstract	This is a multiphonic study for solo oboe only.
Ernst Krenek, <i>Four Pieces</i>	Use of glissandi, double-trill, double-harmonic, flutter tongue, micro-tonal trills, harmonics.	No use of multiphonics.	None.	Each of the four pieces employs different extended techniques for color, sound, and gesture.
Antal Doráti, <i>Duo Concertante for Oboe and Piano</i>	Difficult rhythms and counting on the piano, fast passages in high register.	No use of extended technique; use of non western scales.	Chamber setting with two solo parts, peasant-like tone color.	Introspective mood mixed with virtuosic presence.

**Table 4.** Complimentary pieces to *Dmaathen* by Iannis Xenakis.

## 5. Luciano Berio, *Sequenza VII per Oboe Solo* (1969)

“...virtuosity often arises out of a conflict, a tension between the musical idea and the instrument, between concept and musical substance” --- Luciano Berio

This quote perfectly describes the essence of *Sequenza VII for oboe solo*. Luciano Berio's *Sequenzas* are a series of compositions for solo instruments, a project he worked on for some forty-six years between the first in 1958 (for flute) and the last in 2004 (for double bass). From his interview with the Italian musicologist and critic Rossana Dalmonte in the 1980's, Berio talks about virtuosity as the external inspiration on composing the *Sequenzas* (as above); they are always written for an interpreter that can perform at an extremely high level of technical and intellectual virtuosity.<sup>38</sup> *Sequenza VII* is dedicated to Heinz Holliger.

*Sequenza VII* is a piece that signifies the avant-garde style of the 1960's, when pushing performers' technique beyond what seemed possible was an “aesthetic imperative.”<sup>39</sup> Composers were intentionally breaking the boundaries of sound and music by employing these techniques to the limit, fulfilling their own musical concepts and philosophy. In *Sequenza VII*, the oboe's full spectrum of sound, timbre, and expressivity is explored through extended techniques such as multiphonics, double and microtonal trills, overblowing, alternate fingering, as well as the oboist's intellect. Most of these techniques are not commonly used in much of the oboe repertoire in prior periods, and a

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<sup>38</sup> Rossana Dalmonte, "Interviews with Rossana Dalmonte," in *Luciano Berio: Two Interviews*, ed. Marion Boyars, translated by David Osmond-Smith (New York and London: Marion Boyars Publishers, 1985), 90-91.

<sup>39</sup> Geoffrey Burgess and Bruce Haynes, "Diversifying streams since World War II: from the avant-garde to Postmodernism." in *The Oboe*, by Geoffrey Burgess and Bruce Haynes (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), 268.



piece that is almost exclusively composed of extended techniques was not the norm due to the oboe's strong association with the conservative musical tradition at the time.<sup>40</sup>

The pointed display of the tension between musical ideas and extremity of the instrument is perhaps one key concept in understanding Berio's *Sequenzas*. The use of extended techniques in the oboe clearly expresses Berio's insistence "that a musical instrument is in itself a piece of musical language."<sup>41</sup> For interested players, *Sequenza VII* can be a piece of music to help enable learning musical language of extended techniques for the oboe. The *Sequenza* is challenging on various levels. First, the deconstruction of form and temporal framework makes it difficult for players to grasp at first glance. Second, the reading of non-standard notation indicating the techniques used are not an easy read, and third, the execution of the techniques within the music itself makes this piece even more perplexing to the already complicated looking score. In addition to the complex score, this piece was composed with a Rigoutat oboe in mind, which adds further complications to fingering and minor mechanical differences among other oboe brands. Van Cleve explains the undercutting of the B key tone hole in Rigoutat's oboe design makes the B key always half open. This design makes the Rigoutat oboes easier to produce double harmonics than other brands and types of oboe.<sup>42</sup>

Perhaps this piece may seem daunting at first; however, there are many resources available such as performance guides to help with learning this piece. There are now

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Rossana Dalmonte, *Luciano Berio: Two Interviews*, 91.

<sup>42</sup> Libby Van Cleve, *Oboe Unbound* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 39.

YouTube videos<sup>43</sup> on *Sequenza VII* focusing on the temporal flow and articles written by oboists who have published about this piece. If the *Sequenza* is a student's first piece of oboe repertoire with extended techniques, players should prioritize the challenges from the music and organize learning goals based on these priorities. The extra large pages of music with unusual notation often baffle students when picking up the *Sequenza* for the first time- myself included. For most of us learning the *Sequenza*, developing a good learning strategy will be most beneficial in learning this piece.

The *Sequenza*'s score consists of thirteen lines of thirteen measures, where the measures are in real time duration in a sequenced pattern. This pattern repeats thirteen times, as seen in Figure 1 and Example 5-1. Already in the first line of music, players are faced with temporal notation or "free rhythmic notation,"<sup>44</sup> alternate fingerings, and a strictly timed temporal sequence with no traditional meter or tempo marking. This is a large amount of new information for anyone first learning this music, not to mention the entire page of explanations for the extended techniques in the performance notes. We can see that in the 2000 edition by Jacqueline Leclair (Example 5-2), time signatures and standard notation are used to aid with the rhythmic accuracy and temporal flow of the piece.

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<sup>43</sup> Mykyta Sierov, "Luciano Berio Sequenza VII (Practice Video)," (video), accessed April 7, 2016, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mVEROmkdGLo&list=PLAfW2vbt05tGHEqzIiePoZ8\\_VKTIrhvr&index=42](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mVEROmkdGLo&list=PLAfW2vbt05tGHEqzIiePoZ8_VKTIrhvr&index=42).

<sup>44</sup> Jacqueline Leclair, "Luciano Berio, Sequenza VIIa (1969/2000) Analysis," *The Double Reed* (International Double Reed Society) 33, no. 2 (2012): 97-103.

**Figure 1.** Temporal pattern of *Sequenza VII*.

3", 2.7", 2", 2", 2", 2", 1.8", 1.5", 1.3", 1", 1", 1"

**Example 5-1.** Measures 1-13 of the *Sequenza VII*.

**Example 5-2.** Measures 1-3 of *Sequenza VII* by Berio, ed. Leclair (2000).

There are three sections to the *Sequenza*. Prioritizing learning goals from within each section will alleviate the anxiety that comes with learning an entire piece of music with unusual notation for the first time. The first section begins from Line 1 to the fermata in Line 8, measure 1. This section contains the most spatial notation, giving this section a rather improvisatory feel and less strict rhythm in comparison with the third section. Unusual extended techniques such as the double harmonic happen in the last three measures of the fourth line, as seen in Example 5-3, flutter tongue and overblowing with flutter tonguing in the middle section of the fifth line in Example 5-4 are introduced in this section. These extended techniques are rather difficult at first and the gestures happen one after another within the temporal time frame. Students will need time to isolate these techniques first before inserting them back to the music.

**Example 5-3.** Measures 50-52 of *Sequenza VII*.



**Example 5-4.** Measures 58-62 of *Sequenza VII*.



The highest note of the piece, a third octave G<sub>6</sub>, is introduced in the second section in the fifth measure of line 9, as seen in Example 5-5. This is a peaceful moment in the music. In this section, the rhythmic material presents itself in an arch form, where the G<sub>6</sub> is introduced in the center of the middle of the section making this high G<sub>6</sub> the center of the piece. As I was deciphering and putting together my learning objectives for the Berio, I found Jacqueline Leclair's *Sequenza VIIa Analysis* to be very useful, especially the section about how the pitches are organized. There are 6 primary pitches that dominate the tonality of the piece and subsequent 14 secondary and 9 tertiary pitches that are introduced through out the entire work. I highly suggest reading Leclair's analysis for the full pitch information and performance guidelines.<sup>45</sup>

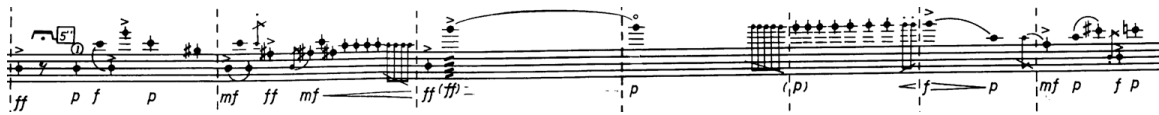
**Example 5-5.** Measures 106-111 of *Sequenza VII*.



<sup>45</sup> Jacqueline Leclair, "Luciano Berio, *Sequenza VIIa* (1969/2000) Analysis," 97-103.

The third section begins with a short temporal moment before the music goes into strict rhythmic notation for the rest of piece (measure 121 to the end). It contains twenty-four fermatas, and a climax where the third octave G<sub>6</sub> dominates for four measures as seen in Example 5-6 (Line 10, measures 6-9).

**Example 5-6.** Measures 121-127 of *Sequenza VII*.

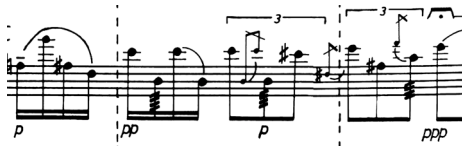


The overall rhythmic characteristic of the third section might be ideal to learn first. The strict notations and complex rhythmic groupings in this section are most likely not foreign to advanced players. These notated clusters are difficult, since some of the notes will be manipulated with flutter tongue or alternate fingerings or harmonics. I found that I was more aware of the two different types of notations once I figured out the notated pitches first. Example 5-7 shows oscillating triplets with grace notes and flutter tongue. Example 5-8 shows overblown quintuplet, triplet and septuplet rhythmic clusters going up to a fluttered E<sub>6</sub>. Some useful resources for learning about these techniques can be found in Jacqueline Leclair’s book *Oboe Secrets*<sup>46</sup>; she gives detailed descriptions on three types of flutter tonguing and other extended techniques. Both Leclair and Van Cleve suggest a palatal “r” for oboe flutter tongue, where the rolling “r” happens in the vibration of the uvula; both have described the fluttering action like pronouncing the

<sup>46</sup> Jacqueline Leclair, *Oboe Secrets: 75 Performance strategies for the advanced oboist and English Horn Player* (Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2013), 133-135.

French “r.”<sup>47</sup> I found no video instructions on the oboe flutter tongue at the time of this research but many of the flute flutter tongue videos explaining how to gargle were helpful nonetheless.

**Example 5-7.** Measures 159-161 of *Sequenza VII*.



**Example 5-8.** Measures 144-145 of *Sequenza VII*.



## Complementary Pieces

A player’s resourcefulness, technicality and self-efficiency will be greatly improved by learning *Sequenza VII* apart from the obvious improvement on extended technique and knowledge of the musical concepts involved in the piece. The complementary pieces, seen in Table 4, are chosen based on the need to build prior knowledge and familiarity of the style of music before learning *Sequenza VII* with similar literature and techniques. The *Study to Sequenza VII* by Berio introduces similar musical materials used in *Sequenza VII* such as the timbral exploration on the note B. The *Study* is different from the *Sequenza* in notation and tempo marking. There is no free notation in

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<sup>47</sup> Libby Van Cleve, *Oboe Unbound* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 68.

the *Study* and it features strict temporal sequences. There is a tempo marking for quarter notes equals 62 ( $\text{♩}=62$ ) and no time signature, although the total note values of each measure add up to 3/4 time. I found this piece to be useful in terms of practicing and reading the notated version of the musical materials found similar in the *Sequenza* and *Chemin IV*.

*Chemin IV* for oboe and eleven strings by Berio is based on the *Sequenza VII*<sup>48</sup>; the oboe part shares identical thematic material and can be learned either before or after *Sequenza VII*. The *Capriccio for oboe and 11 strings* by Penderecki is another piece that utilizes many of the extended techniques used in *Sequenza VII*. It shares similar chamber settings as *Chemin IV* showcasing the oboe's virtuosity with many of the extended techniques used expressively. Learning the *Capriccio* complements the musical language found in the *Sequenza VII*, and adds to the oboe literature that employs extended techniques as performance practices.

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<sup>48</sup> Luciano Berio, *Remembering the Future* (London: Harvard University Press, 2006), 42-43.

<b>Sequenza VII for Oboe Solo (1969)</b>				
<b>Technical Learning Goals</b>		Alternate fingerings, harmonics, multiphonics, timbre/microtonal trills, double trills, overblowing, circular breathing		
<b>Stylistic Learning Goals</b>		Virtuosity of intellect: tension between musical ideas and the instrument.		
<b>Complementary Works</b>				
	<b>Technical similarities</b>	<b>Technical differences</b>	<b>Stylistic similarities</b>	<b>Stylistic differences</b>
Luciano Berio, <i>Study to Sequenza VII.</i>	Introductory piece to the various concepts and all extended techniques used in <i>Sequenza VII.</i>	None	Similar exploration on the single note and harmonic variations and progressions of the twelve-tone row.	None
Heinz Holliger, <i>Studie über Mehrklänge.</i>	Same technical demands. Great demands of flexibility in the embouchure.	Non-standard notation. Players will need to interpret the notation system in order to read the music.	Abstract, exploration of tone colors.	Exploration of the limitations of the oboe by the performer.
Luciano Berio, <i>Chemin IV zu Sequenza VII.</i>	Uses the same extended techniques.	Shorter in duration.	Uses the same materials from the <i>Sequenza</i> in the oboe part.	None for the oboe part. The note B also goes through constant variation of timbre and dynamic changes in the string part.
Krzysztof Penderecki, <i>Capriccio per oboe e 11 archi</i>	Double trills, harmonics, alternate fingerings.	Flutter tongue; flutter tongue with glissando, glissando, and tremolo.	Similar exploration of the oboe's limitations.	Chamber setting with 11 strings. Both oboe and the strings use a variety of extended techniques.

**Table 5.** Complementary pieces to *Sequenza VII* by Berio.



## **Conclusion**

The progressive building approach taught me a few things at the end of my project. I feel less intimidated when I am presented with completely new repertoire. When applying the progressive building approach to my project, I continuously build, reinforce and strengthen prior knowledge I own so that I am comfortable when acquiring new materials and skill sets. I repeated my method five times with the music examples and expanded my knowledge base on the performance practices, style, compositional concept, and extended techniques of oboe repertoire from 1960 to 2015. This progress enables me to define my own oboe playing goals more clearly, and that my goals are an extension of the factual knowledge I learned from music of this time period. The progressive building approach is not a strict formula; it is based on my own self-reflection as a player and I hope others may adopt this method with their own intentions in mind. In the end, I know that practice does not make perfect- it makes progress.

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