

# The Pedagogy of Robert Marcellus

Presented by Karen Andreas Bronson, D.M.A.

## Background of Robert Marcellus (1928-1996)

- Training: studied with Earl Handlon (Minneapolis Symphony) and Daniel Bonade
- Orchestral Experience: National Symphony Orchestra, principal clarinetist with Cleveland Orchestra under George Szell (1953-1973); soloist with Cleveland Orchestra and Casals Festival
- Orchestral Conductor: Northwestern University, Canton Symphony, guest conductor with several orchestras
- Educator: Cleveland Institute of Music (1959-1974); Blossom Festival (1959-1974); Northwestern University (1977-1990)

## Major Pedagogical Influencers

- Daniel Bonade, George Szell, Pabol Casals; also Marcel Tabuteau, William Kincaid, Alexandre Selmer

## Précis of Study (Summary of Study)

### 1. Tone Production

- a. Wind (most important aspect of clarinet playing); abdomen should stay out and down when blowing; air speed must remain fast, with a pointed wind direction; upper lip should have a downward pressure
- b. Embouchure
  - i. Lips-like a rubber band around the mouthpiece, think of a triangle with the 3 points being the corners and the point of the chin (corners go in; chin goes down), points should feel as one entity
  - ii. Tongue-should be is the talking part of the mouth, use the vowel "EH" as a common tongue placement, and "EE" in the altissimo register
  - iii. Jaw-use light jaw pressure
- c. Articulation
  - i. Tonguing should be played like "speech on the reed"
  - ii. Stopped-staccato was students' first introduction to tonguing

### 2. Fingers and Hand Position

- a. Fingers should stay in a gentle, relaxed, curved position to maintain independent finger dexterity
- b. keep a common curve to the hands because there was a lot of architectural strength in curved fingers; play with "quiet knuckles"
- 3. Phrasing Analysis (4 types of phrases)
  - a. Appoggiatura Phrase
  - b. Melodic Phrase
  - c. Rhythmic Phrase
  - d. Harmonic Phrase

## Syllabus of Study

- 1. Finger Technique
  - a. Baermann Method for Clarinet, Op. 63, 3rd Division
  - b. Jettel The Accomplished Clarinetist
  - c. Klose Method for Clarinet
  - d. Polatschek Advanced Studies
  - e. Stark Arpeggio Studies
- 2. Legato and Phrasing
  - a. Rose 40 Studies (slow or moderate tempos)
  - b. Rose 32 Etudes (slow or moderate tempos)
- 3. Articulation
  - a. Bonade The Clarinetist's Compendium
  - b. Rose 40 Studies
  - c. Rose 32 Etudes
  - d. Stark Staccato Studies
- 4. Repertoire
  - a. Solos
    - i. Weber Concertino
    - ii. Mozart Concerto
    - iii. Debussy Premiere Rhapsodie
    - iv. Weber Concertos
    - v. Hindemith Sonata
    - vi. Poulenc Sonata
    - vii. Copland Concerto
    - viii. Solo de Concours pieces
    - ix. Other solos: Bassi Rigoletto Fantasia, Brahms Sonatas, Schumann Fantasy-Pieces, Berg Four Pieces, Stamitz Concerto No. 3, Stravinsky Three Pieces, Weber Grand Duo Concertante
  - b. Chamber
    - i. Bartok Contrasts

- ii. Beethoven Trio
- iii. Schubert "Shepherd on the Rock"
- iv. Mozart Quintet
- c. Orchestral Excerpts
  - i. Beethoven, Brahms, Mendelssohn, Prokofiev, Rachmaninoff, Ravel, Shostakovich, Stravinsky, and others

#### Sequence of Study

1. Klosé Method for Clarinet
2. Baermann Method for Clarinet, Op. 63, Third Division
3. Rose 40 Studies, Books 1-2
4. Rose 32 Études
5. Rose 20 Grand Études
6. Cavallini 30 Caprices (Ricordi edition)
7. Baermann Method for Clarinet, Op. 63, Fourth and Fifth Divisions
8. Jeanjean 18 Studies
9. Jeanjean 16 Modern Studies

#### Other books that can be supplemented (not sequenced)

1. Périer 22 *Études Modernes* (22 Modern Études)
2. Jettel The Accomplished Clarinetist, Books 1-2; Preliminary Studies Books 1-3
3. Stark Arpeggio Studies; Staccato Studies
4. Polatschek Advanced Studies
5. Uhl 48 Studies, Books 1-2

For more information about this lecture, contact [bronsonclarinet@gmail.com](mailto:bronsonclarinet@gmail.com).