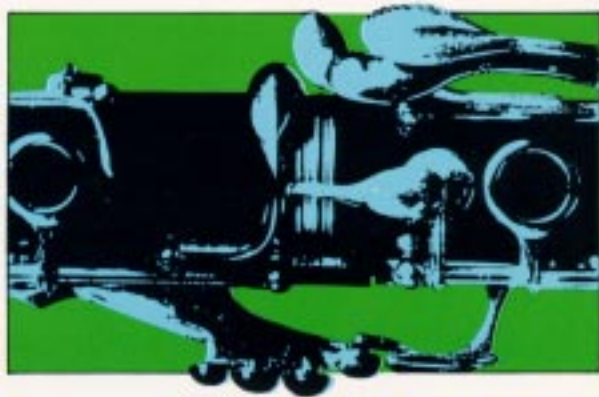


THE CLARINET

Excellence and Artistry

ROSARIO MAZZEO



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FORWARD

A most heart-warming part of my life has been the continual stream of letters received in warm response to THE CLARINET MASTER CLASS series in the Selmer BANDWAGON. Over the years these have run literally into the thousands, and have made me realize how earnest and devoted to the study of the clarinet were these widespread players and teachers. The publication of the articles spanned more than a decade, the subject order was random, and it was chosen to some extent in response to the letters and requests. Therefore more attention was given in some directions than others, and no attempt was made to cover all aspects of clarinet playing. I had especial pleasure in learning how many non-clarinetist teachers found the material helpful in their teaching.

When considering the sequence for this volume I felt that a more coherent subject order was indicated, and have so proceeded in this new setting. Occasionally the same subject material will be found in more than one chapter. I have allowed this to stand, since the statements in their original context were necessary to reinforce, or complete, the immediately surrounding text.

Now, no attempt is being made to expand this into a more complete statement, or full-scale method. My more than half-century involvement with the clarinet has allowed my attention to focus particularly on areas which were of greater interest to me. And it is to these that I now address myself. Emphasis is

mostly towards basic concepts for each of the controls necessary in successful playing. These are the foundation stones. Since the subjects included here are of a rather diverse nature, but all needing attention at every level of playing, I hope that they will be read by players of every category, and by woodwind teachers with pupils at any stage.

THE CLARINET MASTER CLASS number 11, which reported a meeting of the International Clarinet Society,* has been omitted. However, I urge every serious clarinetist to become a member and thus to be acquainted with its publication *The Clarinet*. In a few short years it has become a very important reference source.

The articles concerning reeds, ligatures and literature have been wholly re-written. The discussion of reeds has been extended to cover the subject in general, rather than confined to an isolated type. The proliferation of ligatures in this past decade or two clearly indicated the need for an up-dated statement. Much is happening, and more should happen with the development of reeds and ligatures. As to literature, the many new conveniences and efficiencies of the publishing field have made available an absolutely incredible array of material. Whereas in my

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youth one could hope to collect (with reasonable expectation), *everything* of one type (e.g., concert pieces for clarinet alone) it is now manifestly impossible. No one can have that many tentacles extended for information. Catalogues show an infinite array of instrumental groupings. Chamber music is found with all manner of tonal coloring. Gone are the restraints of writing only for conventional groups, such as string quartets or woodwind quintets. You will understand the problems of cataloguers when you have to cope with groups of which one member is listed as “silence,” another with “dog” (real!), yet another with a tuning fork (played by the clarinetist, if you please), or with such esoterics as the early Joseph Beer’s *Quintet* for clarinet, horn, and three viole-d’amour (a lush combination!), or the recent William Hibbard’s *Bass Trombone, Bass Clarinet, and Harp* for-(you guessed it) bass trombone, bass clarinet, and harp. More power to the composers. No one’s muse should have to hedge.

My own credo for teaching is a simple one. If you cannot explain in words understandable to your listener *exactly* what is to be done, the chances are that you do not really know *exactly* how to make him bring it about. True, your pupil’s musical instinct, and possibly very apt motor controls, may allow a certain degree of imitation, but he could do it even better if he clearly understood each and every aspect of the controls. And for the pupil who has not this “natural” grasp the explanation

and illustration are more than ever necessary.

And this brings me to another general credo-less is best. You cannot set more than one brick at a time into your wall-building. Every bit of study should offer a path to some one fundamental *attainable* benefit. Constant repetition, unless properly focused, can allow the continuation of some faults which may be part of your involuntary contribution. Each repetition of such fault serves only to build-in that particular fault. Obviously, playing from one end of an etude to the other is meaningless unless you have *continual* focus. But this focus need not be the same each time you play! True, each etude probably has one general main purpose. However that does not stop you from studying it from any number of viewpoints, each contributing towards full mastery.

Increasingly the professional music world is being peopled by members of both sexes, therefore in order to avoid the constant repetition of “ladies and gentlemen” I will use the generic term to include both.

Because the illustrations and examples involve only the soprano member of the family, I have used the octave identification most in use by clarinet players.

