

REVIEW

by **Prof Borislav Aleksandrov Yasenov, PhD**

Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts

“Prof. Asen Diamandiev” – Plovdiv

Regarding: dissertation work for awarding educational and scientific degree

Doctor in the field of higher education **8. Arts**

Professional field **8.3. Music and dance art**

Doctoral program **Music Studies and Music Art**

With order No RD-27-060 dated 19.07.2022 of the Rector of AMDFA “Prof Asen Diamandiev”, Plovdiv, I have been appointed a member of the scientific jury to supervise a procedure for the defense of a dissertation work titled *Formation and Building of Clarinet Embouchure*, for acquisition of the educational and scientific degree **Doctor** in Higher education field 8. Arts, Professional field 8.3. Music and Dance Art, doctoral program "Musicology and music art". The author of the dissertation is Eduard Magardich Sarafyan – individual-studies doctoral student at the Department of Classical, Pop and Jazz Performing Arts, with academic supervisor Prof Toni Shekerdzhieva-Novak from AMDFA “Prof Asen Diamandiev”.

The materials presented to me include the following documents:

- CV;
- dissertation work;
- abstract;
- list of scientific publications.

I know the candidate Eduard Sarafyan as a tolerant, ethical, responsive coworker with a successful professional career and an ambition to develop and improve competencies in the field of musical art, demonstrating responsibility and purposefulness in his practical-theoretical and scientific realization and development, a promoter of the clarinet art.

The educational qualification of the candidate is indisputable. In the period 1981-1984, Eduard Sarafyan studied piano in the classes of Prof Tsanka Andreeva and senior teacher Yulia Girginova in the Secondary Music School in the city of Plovdiv, currently National School of Music and Dance "Dobrin Petkov", and from 1984 to 1994, he studied clarinet in the class of Dimitar Boyanov. He continued his higher education at the National Music Academy "Prof Pancho Vladigerov" - Sofia, in the period 1994-1999, where he was a student in the clarinet class of Acad. Petko Radev.

He is doctoral student individual form of study at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts "Prof Asen Diamandiev" - Plovdiv.

In his professional development, Mr. Sarafyan has been awarded numerous prestigious awards. First prizes at Creative meeting for young performers - Targovishte (1987), competition for performance of Czech music - Varna (1993), Young musical talents - Sofia (1994), academic competition held at AMDFA - Plovdiv (1994), National Competition for Instrumentalists and Singers "Svetoslav Obretenov" - Provadia (1996), International Competition for French Music - Plovdiv (1998), as well as Second Prizes from: Academic Competition - Sofia held at the NMA "Pancho Vladigerov" (1995) and the International French Music Competition - Plovdiv (1997).

The doctoral student is extremely active in his teaching, artistic and scientific work, which logically leads to this in-depth dissertation work.

The pedagogical work of E. Sarafyan is connected with NSMD "Dobrin Petkov" - Plovdiv (1999-2002) and AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev" - Plovdiv (from 2002 until now), where he works as a clarinet teacher.

He has held many master classes in Plovdiv, Varna, Burgas, Ruse, Veliko Tarnovo, Pleven, as well as in the cities of Skopje and Ohrid in the Republic of North Macedonia.

Sarafyan has an active musical career. He performs solo and chamber concerts at home and abroad. He has been a soloist and participated in recordings, concert and opera tours with the orchestras of the Plovdiv Philharmonic and the Plovdiv State Opera.

He is a member of the jury of the contests: "Lilac Holidays", Lovech (2005), "Ohrid te sakam", Ohrid, Republic of North Macedonia (2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2022), "Polyhymnia", Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia (2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022), Borovets International Competition for Chamber Ensembles and Soloists (2020, 2021, 2022).

The scientific work of the candidate is extremely active. Sarafyan is the author of publications in the following editions of AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev" - Plovdiv:

- collection "Spring scientific readings" - 2012, 2014, 2015, 2019;
- Yearbook – 2012, 2013;
- collection of the International Scientific Conference "Science, Education and Innovation in the Field of Art" - 2017.

Three of the publications are related to the dissertation, namely:

- *Basic guidelines in the work of the tongue and throat when playing the clarinet*, Yearbook of AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev" - Plovdiv, 2013, p. 59;
- *The role of muscles in the work of the clarinet embouchure*, Spring scientific readings, AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev" - Plovdiv, 2014, p. 129;
- *Anatomical elements forming the clarinet embouchure*, Spring scientific readings, AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev" - Plovdiv, 2015, p. 39.

The relevance of the topic of the dissertation Formation and Building of Clarinet Embouchure is determined by the dynamics in the development of the contemporary music and the need to examine, analyze and renew the approaches in the teaching methodology for each musical instrument, in

particular the clarinet, as well as their practical application. In this case, the work examines a fundamental and important part of the setting requirements, which determines the quality of the sound production, respectively leading to a valuable interpretation of the sound, namely the position of the embouchure for clarinet – the instrument with which E. Sarafyan performs, teaches and purposefully, adequately and which naturally is the subject of his scientific studies and research.

The work studies, analyzes and systematizes a huge amount of information related to tracking and analyzing previous research and developments in this field, but the essence of the subject under consideration and its in-depth study is innovative and useful, both in theoretical and practical-applied terms. It describes the characteristic elements of the clarinet school.

The focus of the dissertation are issues related to the embouchure and it offers methodical guidelines for achieving a proper embouchure. The combination of conventional and innovative methods in the work on the embouchure setting will contribute to quality sound extraction, which will lead to an appropriate interpretation of the sound material, respectively precision in the interpretation, in the construction of the artistic image and formation and development of a performance-creative model among the adolescent clarinetists. All this will help enrich the theoretical-practical skills of clarinet players and expand the competences of music educators. The above determines the contribution nature of the dissertation.

The author aims to create a methodological work based on a comprehensive and detailed study, which will contribute to the expansion of knowledge and approaches in the construction of this very important part of the performance requirements in clarinet training, and also to provoke further scientific research and development in this direction.

The paper meets the requirements for writing a dissertation. E. Sarafyan systematizes a huge amount of content using the deductive method (from the general to the particular), i.e. from the historical prerequisites and characteristic features of the instrument, to the specifics and role of the embouchure position in sound extraction.

In the introduction to this in-depth and comprehensive study, the doctoral candidate presents the reasons that prompt him to focus on the topic of the dissertation work, namely:

- enriching the teaching experience and combining it with research work for practical improvement and application of innovative approaches in clarinet training;
- study of teaching methods and tools based on musical-psychological knowledge;
- research and application of adequate approaches in the process of clarinet training, in accordance with the dynamics of development, the worldview and the requirements generated by modern musical practice.

The object, subject, purpose, tasks and research tools are described.

The discussed problem is provoked by Sarafyan's personal pedagogical work, which determines the depth of the research. The formation and building of a correct embouchure is a process of utmost importance in achieving good quality in sound production, acoustic fidelity in the reproduction of

sound material, and an essential component of the performance system when playing wind instruments. The research is based on several foundational practices: daily pedagogical work, leading workshops and master classes, observing the teaching of other clarinet teachers; jurying at music competitions – taking into account the individual development of a number of young players, scientific activity – participation in scientific forums and conferences and interviews with colleagues – educators and performers.

The candidate uses both the theoretical method, as well as the empirical research method. The two are united in a complex approach, creating a prerequisite for the development of innovative methods and technical exercises, helping to improve the quality of clarinet training and improving the interpretation capabilities of performers. In the methodology used in the research, the doctoral candidate uses historical, theoretical-analytical, comparative and systematic method of study and analysis of the practical experience, interview, and the results achieved and the proposed ideas contribute to the field of clarinet teaching methodology, and some are also useful for wind instruments in general.

Of particular importance is the fact that the researched problem – the formation and building of the clarinet embouchure – has not been a subject of an in-depth study with appropriate specificity in the music-theoretical literature. There are no studies on the role of the embouchure in the practical mastery and use of the various musical means of expression, which shows the innovation and high value of this first-of-its-kind research.

In chapter one, *Origin and development of the clarinet*, the doctoral candidate uses the deductive approach, distinguishing the following semantic divisions in the exposition and the context of the main topic:

- a historical overview focusing on the essence and development of musical intonation, the birth of instrumental music and historical knowledge of woodwind instruments;
- discussion of the emergence and evolution of the clarinet, the presence of the instrument in musical practice over the centuries, as well as its types;
- description of the emergence and development of the clarinet art in Bulgaria.

In the second chapter, *Theory of the clarinet embouchure*", the author offers a theoretical overview, etymology and semantics of the term embouchure. He discusses the types of embouchure, the anatomic and physiological components related to its formation, the psychological aspects of sound production, and traces the relationship between the embouchure and the musical medium of expression in the performance process.

The third chapter *Main points in the clarinet teaching methodology* is notable with the historical review, the examination of the current state and perspectives in the clarinet methodology. It touches upon psychological-cognitive structures and processes in music performance, and presents transcribed and summarized results of semi-structured interviews, retrospective-diagnostic and prognostic analysis from master classes.

In the fourth chapter, *Didactic-methodical approaches in clarinet training*, the Bulgarian didactic literature is analyzed and classified, technical exercises by the author are proposed, as well as methodological guidelines for practical mastery of musical means of expression when working on artistic material.

Huge amount of information is collected, systematized and analyzed in this work, presented and developed in a total of 215 pages, of which 209 are actual text. The explanations are substantiated with appropriate musical examples - 51 in number and photographic material - 49 photos, which contribute to creating an even clearer idea of the object and subject under consideration. The 3 tables create clarity in the systematization of the researched problem. The bibliography includes 85 sources.

The abstract is prepared according to the requirements and gives a clear idea of the content, object, subject, purpose, tasks, and research tools and reflects the main results achieved in the dissertation.

The contributions of the work are expressed in a theoretical and practical-applied aspect, as follows:

Theoretical contributions:

- facts determining the relationship between the clarinet embouchure and the good musical intonation;
- etymology and semantics of the term embouchure;
- anatomic-physiological components related to clarinet sound production;
- the types of embouchure position;
- psychological approaches to clarinet sound production;
- psychological-cognitive processes in music performance;
- interrelationships between the musical means of expression and setting of sound production, in particular embouchure settings;
- overview of the clarinet technique in a historical, contemporary and prospective aspect;
- review and classification of clarinet didactic literature.

Practical contributions:

- training exercises without an instrument;
- technical exercises created by the author with a multifunctional character, aimed at building and forming appropriate clarinet embouchure;
- extracts from compositions aimed at the practical mastery of musical means of expression, at the formation of skills for reproducing the variety and richness of tone as a means of expression.

A strong impression is made by the clear narrative and the scientifically based analyzes in the dissertation. The language is academic and at the same time understandable and accessible. Each

examined problem is theoretically justified and comprehensively explained. The vocabulary is rich, abundant with professional terms revealing the subtext and essence of the work.

I am convinced that the dissertation thesis will be of interest not only to clarinet players, but it will also be useful in certain methodological directions for other musicians playing wind instruments. For this reason, I recommend that the paper be published in order to make it available to a wider readership. In this regard, I would like to make some suggestions, namely:

- the names of tones, strokes and other musical means of expression, to be written in accordance with the requirements for Latin notation accepted in our music-theoretical system, which will be in sync with the style of the author;
- all music-sheet examples must begin with a clef, and also be in total number, and not according to subsections;
- proofreading to eliminate accidentally made grammatical, punctuation and technical errors.

In conclusion, I will point out that Eduard Sarafyan's dissertation work *Titled Formation and Building of Clarinet Embouchure* impressed me with the depth of the discussed issues, the analyzes and the scientific-theoretical justification, written in a professional and at the same time understandable language, as well as with the good examples helping to understand the research even more clearly. It is apparent from what is presented in the work that Eduard Sarafyan is an erudite musician, with rich musical-theoretical training and concert practice. I believe that the theoretical development fully meets the requirements for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree **Doctor** stipulated by the Law for the development of the academic staff and the Regulations for its application. This gives me the reason to propose to the esteemed scientific jury to award Eduard Magurdich Sarafyan an educational and scientific degree Doctor, in professional field 8.3. Music and Dance Art, doctoral program Music Studies and Music Art.

13.08.2022

Prepared by:

(Prof Borislav Yassenov)