

THE OBOE REED

Investigations and comparisons of the oboe reed for the development of
the pedagogy of the oboe

A dissertation submitted as part of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Music
University of Tasmania

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December, 1993

DECLARATION

No part of the following dissertation has been accepted for the award of any higher degree or graduation diploma, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person except where reference is made in the text.

Joseph Ortuso

December, 1993

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank my supervisor John Menadue, Lecturer at the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music, Professor Simone de Haan, Head of the Tasmanian conservatorium of Music, Don Kay, Lecturer at the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music, Amanda Wojtowicz, Senior Lecturer at the of Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music and Russel Smith, Peter Clarcken and Joannes Roose, Senior Lecturers at the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music. I would also like to thank the staff of the University of Tasmania Music Library and the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music.

To my wife Suzanne and son Anthony, my deepest appreciation for the support and encouragement you have given me.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this dissertation is to put forward ideas and improved techniques of contemporary oboe reed making. The reed is an integral part of oboe playing and should not be regarded as a secondary consideration: Quality and stability of the tone, intonation, resistance and many more attributes largely depend on the constriction and finish of the reed. Ledet states in his book Oboe reed styles: 'From the stand point of both the teacher and the student, reed making is one of the most important aspects in the pedagogy of the oboe'.¹

One of the most frustrating aspects of oboe playing is the need for fresh reeds. It is imperative, therefore, that the student develop the necessary understanding and technical skills of reed making early in the learning process, thus allowing other areas of development to proceed unobstructed. For the young oboist insufficient material is available to explain and demonstrate the art of reed making in a straightforward and easily understood fashion. It is for this reason that I have carried out investigations and comparisons in the following areas which represent fundamental principles in the development of the pedagogy of the Oboe.

1) CANE

The basic structure and composition of *Arundo Donax* is analysed.

2) SHAPERS

- a) Two steel shapers of different dimensions (wide and narrow) are constructed.

¹ Sprenkle, R. and Ledet, D. The art of oboe playing Evanston Illinois), Summy-Birchard, 1961, p.41

b) The two shapers are used to make two different reeds and their tonal and intonation quality analysed.

3) SHAPING, PROFILING AND FINAL ADJUSTMENT OF THE REED

Improved techniques are put forward with graphically illustrated examples.