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The American Bassoon School: 1900–1950

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ABSTRACT

The development of the American bassoon school was the result of three, not two influences, as has been previously purported.¹ These influences were American conductors’ aesthetic ideas; European musicians from different musical schools emigrating to the United States and playing in its orchestras, and teaching in the most important music schools in the country; and the assimilation of students who would subsequently become the first generation of American-trained bassoonists.

The methodology for this study includes primary and secondary sources, the comparison and contrast of sound spectrum and sound wave analysis of recordings made by the conductors and players from this time period, and the examination of scores that some of these bassoonists edited.

The elements compared in this study are the preferences for a type of instrument and its tone color, a controlled vibrato, and the use of detailed phrasing, which will be studied through articulations and dynamics. This comparison shows connections among the different elements and influences on the American bassoon school. This study aims to present an historical and stylistic overview of the American bassoon school and to argue for three influences.

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Introduction

In France and Germany during nineteenth century, the bassoon underwent improvements, which led to two distinctive instruments, the French bassoon and the German bassoon.¹ By the turn of the twentieth century, the creation of these distinct instruments had created two schools of playing, the French/Buffet system and the German/Heckel system. The French bassoon has a wider range and ease in the higher register, which demands less air pressure. It is recognized for its smooth technical facility, which allows for achievement of virtuosic displays and lyrical playing. Its timbre is described as being “reedy” and “dry.” These qualities attracted composers to write prominent bassoon solos, such as the opening of Stravinsky’s *Le sacre du printemps*. At the Paris Conservatory, such composers as Eugène Bourdeau and Gabriel Pierne penned virtuosic pieces for the Paris Concours. The German bassoon’s intonation is more reliable than the French bassoon; however, its high register is less stable.² Its timbre is described as having “roundness” and “mellowness” of tone.³ Composers writing for the German bassoon employed it mainly as harmonic support, such as Brahms in his symphonies. Nonetheless, German composers Julius Weissenborn and Ludwig Milde wrote some of the most important method and etude books, which are still in use.


The French and German schools found their way to the United States through the European musicians who emigrated in the early twentieth century. The most important orchestras in the United States were filled with European émigrés. For example, the bassoon section at the New York Philharmonic Orchestra was formed by Ukraine-born Benjamin Kohon as principal bassoon and the Latvian-born Simon Kovar as second, both playing German bassoons. Playing French bassoons at the New York Symphony Orchestra were the French Auguste Mesnard and Louis Letellier. At the Boston Symphony Orchestra were the Algerian Abdon Laus and the French Raymond Allard playing French bassoon. Other bassoonists were American but they had been trained in European conservatories, such as Walter Guetter, principal at the Philadelphia Orchestra, who played the German bassoon and had been studied in Berlin.

There were American cities that were dominated by one bassoon school, either by bassoonists playing in the orchestra(s) or teaching at conservatories. In Boston bassoonists played the French bassoon, in Philadelphia they played German bassoon, and in New York they played both. At the New York Philharmonic, Kohon and Kovar played on German bassoons. According to Sol Schoenbach, principal bassoonist with the Philadelphia Orchestra (1937–1957), “[Damrosch] dominated the entire school system in New York.” Schoenbach studied first with Kohon and later with Kovar, who became the most influential bassoon teacher of the first half of the century. He recalled, “I started on the German system and was the only young bassoon student in New York

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at that time who was learning the Heckel system. Conductors preferred players to come from or be of certain schools and nationalities. The ideal orchestra of Walter Damrosch, conductor of the New York Symphony Orchestra, had string players from Russia and Poland, brass players from Germany, and woodwind players from France. He filled the orchestra with French wind players, who also taught at the Institute of Musical Art (later known as the Juilliard School of Music).

The Paris Conservatory’s reputation as a first-level music school during the turn of the twentieth century followed those musicians who graduated from it. Among them were some of the woodwind players who emigrated to the United States, such as Tabuteau and Barrère. For example, Tabuteau was personally invited by Damrosch to play with the New York Symphony. He would later play principal under Toscanini at the Metropolitan Orchestra and under Stokowski with the Philadelphia Orchestra. Teaching at the Curtis Institute of Music, Tabuteau would become a major influence in American musical life. Also invited by Damrosch were bassoonists Auguste Mesnard, the first French bassoonist playing at an orchestra in New York, and Louis Letellier, who played in his orchestra and taught at the Institute of Musical Art.

In the early twentieth century, there was a preference shift regarding French and German bassoons. The preference to the German bassoon over the French began earlier in the United States than in Europe, with the first generation of American bassoonists holding principal positions with German bassoons as early as 1937 and the

6 Ibid., 44.


last bassoonist playing principal on a French bassoon retiring in 1953. In France the switch is still underway.

Most scholarship on this topic has been devoted to biographies, teaching methods, and particular approaches to elements of music by the musicians (conductors, players, and pedagogues). These studies have also recounted the influence of different European styles coming together in the United States and resulting in the American woodwind style. All writings on the musicians studied in this document present extensive biographical information. Those published in the mid twentieth century also consider the music, such as those by Antek on Toscanini, Chasins and Robinson on Stokowski, and Dickson and Louriè on Koussevitzky.

Recent writings on Toscanini such as Mortiner’s and Civetta’s, focus on Toscanini’s approach to tempo, rhythm, balance, clarity of sound, phrasing, and dynamics. These authors use analysis and mainly recollections of musicians playing for him to support their studies. Stokowski and Koussevitzky are less studied from this perspective. While Daniel reveals that Stokowski’s characteristic sound, his “Philadelphia sound,” was achieved by the use of the “free bowing” technique in the strings, Botstein presents some of Koussevitzky’s characteristics, acknowledging Koussevitzky’s lack of perfect pitch and vague ictus, and points out his “understanding of nineteenth- and twentieth-century repertoire,” and “the sound, precision and flexibility of the Boston Symphony” during his tenure.\footnote{James B. Kopp, “Bassoon,” \textit{Oxford Music Online}, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/A2256071 (accessed June 13, 2014).

Writings on teaching techniques such as Krell’s on William Kincaid, Dietz’s on Schoenbach and Bassett’s on Kovar, and Fair’s on the American flute school, present fine biographical, historical, and stylistic information on those studied. For example, Schoenbach told Dietz: “George Barrère, and Marcel Tabuteau, [the] French bassoonists Auguste Mesnard and Louis Letellier: this fine group of wind players became part of the faculty of [Damrosch’s] Institute of Musical Art…. At the time all young high school age bassoon students studied the French bassoon.”

Tabuteau is widely studied through the writings by Storch, McGill, and Herbine, and Rapier’s recording. The writers’ description of his methodical approach to phrasing and expression is a way of furthering his teaching and prolonging his art. David McGill has claimed, “The rationalized system of musical phrasing characteristic to the American woodwind style, can be traced back to … Marcel Tabuteau [whose] message was universal.” Laila Storch, a former Tabuteau oboe student and his biographer, writes, “He passed on the best elements of the French woodwind tradition, at the same time establishing such new standards of finesse in orchestral blending, variety of tone color and nuance of phrasing [which influenced] the players of all other wind instruments.” Through his biographical recollections, Tabuteau’s praise of Toscanini’s musical art and his biased recognition of Stokowski’s reveal the influence that these conductors had on him.

12 McGill, Sound in Motion, 2.
13 Laila Storch, Tabuteau: How Do You Expect to Play the Oboe if You Can’t Peel a Mushroom? (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press 2008), ix.
All these writers acknowledge that all these musicians were performing together for a long period and at the peak of their careers and that there was a mixing of styles during the first half of the twentieth century, but they do not address who might have contributed what elements to the mixture.

This document is divided into four chapters. Chapter 1 addresses historical and biographical background. It establishes a detailed panorama of early twentieth century musical life in the United States. Chapter 2 focuses on establishing the different characteristics of the French and German bassoon schools, in order to trace them in the resulting American bassoon school. Chapter 3 is a sound spectrum study on vibrato playing from the late 1920s thru the early 1950s. It focuses on the use of vibrato, its different profiles, applications, and the changes that vibrato playing had over this period. The study is a comparison and contrast on the use of vibrato in similar orchestral excerpts made by the conductors, orchestras, and players addressed in this study. Chapter 4 is a two-section comparison of the phrasing approaches applied in orchestral excerpts. First, it focuses on the phrasing preferences in orchestral music made by the conductors studied in this document. This information serves as reference background for the following section. In the second section, the reference background is used to compare the editorial approaches made by the first generation of bassoon players, who became editors and pedagogues, on three major works in the bassoon repertoire, thus making a connection between the conductors and players.
Chapter 1

Orchestras, Conductors, and Players Come Together in the United States

The American bassoon school is the combination of three important events in the musical life of the United States in the early twentieth century. The first two events were the immigration of European musicians/players from different musical traditions who, through their playing and teaching, disseminated their traditions, and the assimilation of these traditions by the first generation of American bassoonists. The third event was the emigration of European conductors, who held conducting tenures in the most important U. S. orchestras, and who transmitted their views on music to the players and created particular performance characteristics, which would transcend the European traditions and develop a national performance style. In order to explain the development of the American school of bassoon playing, this chapter presents historical and biographical information about the orchestras and the musicians (conductors and players). Its purpose is to establish background and to examine the environment in which the bassoonists developed professionally, and how their playing was influenced by teachers, colleagues, and orchestras, and most importantly by the conductors for whom they played.

The U. S. orchestras studied in this document were founded from the mid-nineteenth century through the first half of the twentieth century. They are considered the most influential orchestras in the country. They set standards followed by other orchestras, such as their approaches to funding, organization, programming, promotion,
and the selection of conductors and players, as well as performing style. They
demonstrate how orchestras developed and became standardized from their founding up
to the mid-twentieth century.

It is the aim of this chapter to present the musical concepts prevalent during the
first half of the twentieth century. These concepts include quality of tone color, vibrato
speed and profile, and phrasing. Included in phrasing are perspectives and applications
regarding articulations, balance, and dynamics. How all these elements unfolded, were
conceptualized, and were learned and transmitted to the next generation, then re-played,
and reacted to, is of major importance to this study. However, presenting the different
conductors’ perspectives that influenced the players (and ultimately characterized their
orchestras) forms a crucial element of the development.

**Orchestras**

*New York Philharmonic Orchestra*

The New York Philharmonic Orchestra, the oldest orchestra in the United
States, was founded in 1842 by local musicians led by American Ureli Corelli Hill as a
cooperative organization of musicians. In 1909 the orchestra began switching to patron
funding when wealthy New Yorkers became its sponsors. In 1913 the orchestra
received an endowment from Joseph Pulitzer and became a “membership corporation.”

The New York Philharmonic was a leader in the musical life of the country.
Using the newest recording technologies at the time, the orchestra made music
accessible to a broad audience. In 1917 the orchestra made its first commercial
recording for Columbia Records, in 1922 it made the first radio broadcast by a major
orchestra, and in 1930 it began making weekly radio broadcasts over the CBS radio network, which were transmitted nation-wide.¹

Conductors working with the orchestra from its foundation to the mid 1950s include Theodore Thomas, Antonin Dvorak, Gustav Mahler, Otto Klemperer, Richard Strauss, Willem Mengelberg, Wilhelm Furtwängler, Arturo Toscanini, Igor Stravinsky, Aaron Copland, Bruno Walter, and Dimitri Mitropoulos. Starting with Theodore Eisfeld in 1852 and up to the beginning of the twentieth century, German music dominated the orchestra’s repertoire, reflecting the conductors’ backgrounds and preferences and their perspectives in sound, orchestration, and orchestral discipline.²

The Ukrainian Benjamin Kohon and the Latvian Simon Kovar were the bassoonists during the first half of the twentieth century at the New York Philharmonic. Kovar, who played second chair, became one of the most influential pedagogues in the country.

*New York Symphony Orchestra*

The New York Symphony Orchestra was founded by Leopold Damrosch as the New York Symphony Society in 1878. The orchestra was part of Damrosch’s Oratorio Society of New York. After Damrosch’s death in 1885, his son Walter became conductor of the Society. The orchestra’s financing came from patrons such as Andrew Carnegie, who served as president of the board of directors of the Oratorio Society of

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The orchestra traveled extensively, making classical music accessible throughout the United States. The purposes of Damrosch’s orchestra tours were making “the cultural sophistication of Europe [accessible to a broader audience and] making the New York Symphony the best-known orchestra in the country.”  

The orchestra is credited as being the first American orchestra to make an European tour in 1920. According to Kohon, during Mahler’s tenure at the New York Philharmonic, “The New York Symphony Orchestra was better than the New York Philharmonic Orchestra.”

The repertoire at the New York Symphony Orchestra followed that of the Paris orchestras, which programmed a mixture of French and German works. Programs included works by composers such as Gluck, Mozart, Beethoven, Wagner, Brahms, Mahler, and Schoenberg, as well as Berlioz, Bizet, Massenet, Ravel, Saint-Saëns, Debussy, and Poulenc.

Walter Damrosch’s ideal orchestra had the string players from Russia and Poland, brass players from Germany, and woodwind players from France. Damrosch wanted to form an ensemble as good as or better than the Boston Symphony Orchestra,

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6 Toff, *Monarch of the Flute*, 90.

considered at the time as the best orchestra in the United States, which hired musicians from Europe. Damrosch’s desire to hire from Europe faced an obstacle because of union regulations, but in 1905 he was able to justify the hiring of five French musicians to play in the New York Symphony Orchestra, because of the lack of highly qualified musicians in the United States. Following his aesthetic ideas, Damrosch hired the flutist George Barrère, the oboist Marcel Tabuteau, the trumpet player Adolphe Dubois, the clarinetist Léon Leroy, and the bassoonist Auguste Mesnard. All but Dubois had graduated from the Paris Conservatory, and all but Tabuteau already had orchestral experience. Damrosch announced that the addition of these musicians “further strengthened” the orchestra, which at the time had the “best players of New York.” He introduced Mesnard as “the first French bassoonist to join a New York orchestra.”

The arrival of these musicians in New York represented a change in the dominant performing aesthetic, from German school-trained to French school-trained musicians. According to Musical Courier in 1905, “New York has had some notable exponents of the German school of woodwind players in the past, but it seems to be generally accepted now that the French school is superior.”

In 1905 Frank Damrosch, Walter’s older brother, founded the Institute of Musical Art, later known as the Juilliard School of Music. Frank was also supervisor

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8 Toff, Monarch of the Flute, 89.

9 Musical Courier 51 (October, 1905): 20, quoted in ibid., 90.

of music for the New York public schools and conductor of the Oratorio Society of New York.\textsuperscript{11} According to \textit{Musical Courier}:

\begin{quote}
It has been the custom of students of music to go to Europe…. It seems to be Mr. Damrosch’s purpose to import a number of renowned instructors and thus obviate the necessity for students to go abroad…. If Mr. Damrosch’s experiment is successful, music study will be made much less expensive and more practicable.\textsuperscript{12}
\end{quote}

Before opening the Institute, Damrosch visited conservatories in Paris, Berlin, Vienna, and London to study their pedagogic and administrative systems.\textsuperscript{13} It was Damrosch’s policie to hire the most qualified musicians and pedagogues available. Among the musicians invited by Frank Damrosch to join the Institute of Musical Art was the Kneisel Quartet. This quartet was considered at the time as the foremost string quartet in the United States; its first violinist, Franz Kneisel, was concertmaster at the Boston Symphony Orchestra for twenty years and would become one of the most influential violin pedagogues of the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{14}

The musicians’ contracts included playing with the orchestra and teaching at the Institute.\textsuperscript{15} The tours made the orchestra and classical music accessible, and allowed the musicians to recruit students for the Institute.\textsuperscript{16} In this sense the orchestra, the Institute, and the tours were part of a system that had as main goals the promotion of

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\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{11} Toff, \textit{Monarch of the Flute}, 91.
\item \textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 92.
\item \textsuperscript{13} Andrea Olmstead, \textit{Juilliard: A History} (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 17.
\item \textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 25.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Toff, \textit{Monarch of the Flute}, 91.
\item \textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 93.
\end{itemize}
classical music all over the country, and the recruitment and training of new generations of American musicians. According to Sol Schoenbach, principal bassoon at the Philadelphia Orchestra from 1937 to 1957, “[In the early 1930s] at Juilliard they maintained teachers for both systems [Simon Kovar was the teacher of German bassoon], and the French bassoonist, [Louis] Letellier, [principal at the New York Symphony at that time] was the teacher for the French bassoon and had a class of students that included Leonard Sharrow, [American bassoonist, principal at the NBC Orchestra from 1947 to 1951.]”¹⁷

The arrival of George Barrère in the United States in 1905 represents an example of the preference shift from the German woodwind style to the French. According to a reviewer, “[Mr. Barrère] added to a natural beauty of tone a most musicianly style of phrasing.”¹⁸ While in the United States, Barrère introduced a different way of playing, a different quality of tone color, and a different instrument, the silver flute. Through Barrère’s influence, the silver flute supplanted the wooden one used until then by the German school.

Damrosch encouraged the players at the New York Symphony to play with the orchestra as soloists. These actions further strengthened the connection among the audience, the orchestra, the players, and the school. Barrère and Louis Letellier played as soloists frequently; the latter is credited as having played the American premiere of

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¹⁸ Musical America 9, (November 1908): 29, quoted in Toff, Monarch of the Flute, 100.
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s Bassoon Concerto, K. 191 on his French bassoon, with
the New York Symphony in 1920.¹⁹

On March 30, 1928, the New York Philharmonic and the New York
Symphony Orchestra merged for economic reasons. This merger “stopped the
competition between the two orchestras for audience members [in New York], thus
allowing [the patrons] to expand the concert season.”²⁰ The combined orchestra was
named The Philharmonic-Symphony Society of New York, Inc.²¹ It is unclear what
criteria were used during the selection process to choose players for the new orchestra.
The merger resulted in the combination of the German tradition of the New York
Philharmonic Orchestra with the multicultural tradition of the New York Symphony
Orchestra. The musician playing together in the new orchestra found more financially
stable jobs and a longer season. The orchestra rosters found in the New York
Philharmonic archives, which includes the archives of the New York Symphony and the
New York Philharmonic-Symphony Society orchestras, do not show French musicians,
such as Barrère and Letellier, playing at the New York Symphony prior to the merger.
Kohon and Kovar seem never to have shared their positions with other bassoonists after
the merger. Leonard Sharrow recalled that when the merger happened, Letellier became
staff at NBC. Barrère on the other hand, was considered for a shared principal position

The Ohio State University, 2007), 19.
²¹ New York Philharmonic Orchestra, //nyphil.org/history/philfacts/Musical%20Milestones
(accessed December 20, 2014).
with the new orchestra, but was unwilling and declined the invitation.\textsuperscript{22} According to Nancy Toff, “It is not clear from the records whether Barrère was officially offered the opportunity to share the principal chair with John Amans [principal at New York Philharmonic], but it is well known that he refused to play second flute or even co-principal to anyone.”\textsuperscript{23}

Despite the inconvenience of the merger, both musicians who played with the new orchestra and those who did not, such as Kovar, Letellier, and Barrère, continued to teach at the Institute of Musical Art. Barrère had a successful career as soloist and chamber musician and in later years he became the Head of the Institute’s Woodwind Department.

\textit{Boston Symphony Orchestra}

The banker Henry Lee Higginson founded and endowed the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1881, and remained a leading figure until his death in 1918. The orchestra soon acquired prestige from the playing of its fine musicians who had emigrated from Europe. Its quality became a reference for other orchestras in the United States. Higginson considered unions an obstacle to “the highest standards” that he envisioned the orchestra should achieve, and the orchestra remained without a union organization


\textsuperscript{23} Toff, Monarch of the Flute, 50.
until 1943, when because of economic reasons, its trustees allowed the orchestra members to join the American Federation of Musicians.24

From its founding to 1918, the orchestra was led by conductors with German training. These include Wilhelm Gericke, Arthur Nikish, Emil Paur, Karl Muck, and Max Fiedler. The orchestra’s French tradition expanded from 1918 to 1962, a period that includes the tenures of French conductors Herni Rabaud, Pierre Monteux, the Russian Serge Koussevitzky, who although not French, continued the French tradition, and Charles Munch.25 Their tenures were characterized by the programming of a broad international repertoire and “the employment of many French-trained musicians.”26

During his tenure Monteux changed “personnel, repertory, and performance style…, he introduced works by Debussy and Milhaud…[and] new music by American, French, English, Spanish, and Polish composers.”27 According to William Kincaid, principal flute at the Philadelphia Orchestra from 1920 to 1960, Monteux was “a warm, yet precise conductor, [with] the Gallic flair.”28 He used qualities from the French conducting style, such as a light touch, textural clarity, and transparent sound.29 After


five years with Monteux, the orchestra had acquired a high level of training and discipline. The pinnacle of that effort was Monteux’s 1924 programming of the American premiere of Stravinsky’s *Rite of Spring* at Boston and New York with The Boston Symphony. His conducting style included meticulous readings of the score and keeping the then-traditional position of the violin sections on either side of the podium, approaches he shared with Toscanini.

Koussevitzky took over the orchestra in 1924, and during his twenty-five-year tenure, the orchestra developed an identity based on a “fine sense of assembling…that resulted in one of the most refined ensembles in the country.” The working conditions at the time allowed Koussevitzky to implement a rigorous discipline. The players’ contract included a competitive income with an exclusivity clause that obligated the musicians to play exclusively with the orchestra. Although the income made the orchestra highly attractive, the orchestra’s non-union policy made the musicians highly vulnerable to dismissal.

During his tenure Koussevitzky premiered works by contemporary composers such as Samuel Barber, Béla Bartók, Aaron Copland, and Walter Piston among others. He and his successor Munch introduced more French music to the orchestra’s


Koussevitzky was also a champion in promoting advanced musical training. In 1940, “he created the Tanglewood Music Center, [which would become among] the most prestigious summer music-training institutes in America.” According to James H. North, Koussevitzky’s advocacy of American music is of paramount importance. His commissioning of new works by American composers resulted in a “substantial increase” of American repertoire.

Algerian Abdon Laus played at the orchestra from 1918 to 1945. Principal bassoon from 1918 to 1936, he was then moved to third bassoon by Koussevitzky. Ten of his eighteen years as principal, Laus played with a second bassoon who played a German bassoon. Laus taught at the New England Conservatory. Austrian Ernst Panenka played second at the Boston Symphony Orchestra from 1930 to 1975. He also taught the German bassoon at the New England Conservatory. Raymond Allard played at the orchestra from 1922 to 1953, and held the principal chair for seventeen years starting in 1936.

The Boston Symphony is considered the orchestra that favored the French tradition in the United States for the longest time. Starting in 1918 and through the middle of the century, this tradition permeated Boston through the background of its conductors, the nationality of its repertoire, and the schooling of its players. However, in the bassoon section, although there was a strong French presence, it was not absolute. Instead, the players from the French and German schools played together, and the


36 North, Boston Symphony Orchestra, 79.
tenure in the first, second, and third chairs changed frequently. This change and mixing required the French and Germans to collaborate in order to match their timbre and all other elements of style. The Boston Symphony is therefore a good example of the mixing of the styles of the two schools.

Table 1, Bassoon roster by nationalities at the Boston Symphony Orchestra (1901–1954). 37

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>1st</th>
<th>2nd</th>
<th>3rd/Cb</th>
<th>Conductor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901–1904</td>
<td>Fr</td>
<td>Gr</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Wilhelm Gerike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904–1905</td>
<td>Fr</td>
<td>Gr</td>
<td>GR</td>
<td>Wilhelm Gerike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905–1908</td>
<td>Gr</td>
<td>Fr</td>
<td>Gr</td>
<td>Wilhelm Gerike-Karl Muck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908–1916</td>
<td>Gr</td>
<td>Gr</td>
<td>Gr</td>
<td>Max Fiedler-Karl Muck</td>
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<tr>
<td>1916–1918</td>
<td>Gr</td>
<td>Gr</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Karl Muck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918–1922</td>
<td>Fr</td>
<td>Gr</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Henri Rabaud/Pierre Monteux</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922–1930</td>
<td>Fr</td>
<td>Fr</td>
<td>(Gr)</td>
<td>Pierre Monteux/Serge Koussevitzky</td>
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<tr>
<td>1930–1936</td>
<td>Fr</td>
<td>Fr</td>
<td>Fr</td>
<td>Serge Koussevitzky</td>
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<tr>
<td>1936–1945</td>
<td>Fr</td>
<td>Gr</td>
<td>Fr</td>
<td>Serge Koussevitzky</td>
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<tr>
<td>1945–1954</td>
<td>Fr</td>
<td>Gr</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Serge Koussevitzky/Charles Munch</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Philadelphia Orchestra

The Musical Fund Society of Philadelphia, founded in 1820, organized concerts throughout the nineteenth century. In 1900 the German conductor Fritz Scheel established the Philadelphia Orchestra. Scheel, a former assistant to Hans von Bülow,
recruited players of German background. 

Conductors of the Philadelphia Orchestra include Karl Pohlig from 1907 to 1912, Leopold Stokowski from 1912 to 1941, and Eugene Ormandy from 1936 as Associate Conductor and upon Stokowski’s resignation, as Music Director until 1980.

During Stokowski’s long tenure, the orchestra developed a performing style that influenced other orchestras in the United States. The most recognizable and appreciated style characteristic was its sound quality, known as “The Philadelphia Sound.” According to David McGill, principal bassoon at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Philadelphia Orchestra’s sound resulted from Stokowski’s work combining the use of free-bowing in the strings with “outstanding woodwind phrasing, [and] the precision of the brass and their proper balance.” In addition, Stokowski made other innovations, such as moving all the violins to the left side and placing the cellos on the front-right side, that were taken up by other American orchestras. “This along with his emphasis on color, increased dynamic range, and the use of ‘free bowing’ and doubling for continuous playing in the winds, helped him create the ‘Philadelphia sound.’”

Commenting on his experience adjusting to the orchestra’s influence, Schoenbach remembered that during his first years at the orchestra he was not doing things the same way as the others. After some years he molded his playing, his sound,


39 David McGill, Sound in Motion, 244.

and his phrasing to that of the orchestra. He acknowledged, “Everyone reacts to their environment.”\(^{41}\)

Under Stokowski the orchestra programmed and premiered international contemporary music, such as Schoenberg’s *Wozzeck* and *Pierrot Lunaire*, as well as works by Bartok, Shostakovich, Sibelius, and Varèse; the orchestra performed the American premieres of Mahler’s Eighth Symphony in 1916 and Stravinsky’s *The Rite of Spring* in 1927.\(^ {42}\)

The working conditions at the Philadelphia Orchestra during Stokowski’s tenure included part-time work with fragile job security, and peremptory dismissal was common. Because the income was not a living wage, musicians supplemented their income through teaching or doing other, non-music related jobs. During Ormandy’s tenure, musicians negotiated better working conditions, such as more job security, but continued with limited benefits.\(^ {43}\)

The orchestra had an outstanding discipline and some of the most qualified players of the time. Originally based for the most part on foreign players graduated from the Leipzig Conservatory, the orchestra passed though transitional periods with some players who had a background at the Paris Conservatory, such as Tabuteau and Bonade. Later, the orchestra became largely based on musicians trained at the Curtis Institute.\(^ {44}\)

\(^{41}\) Dietz, “A Conversation with Sol Schoenbach,” 44.


\(^{44}\) Ibid., 175.
Philadelphia’s most influential players also taught at Curtis, and this collaboration spread the orchestra’s concepts of sound, musicianship, and technique established during Stokowski’s tenure. Among these players were the French player Marcel Tabuteau; former English horn at Damrosch’s orchestra, Mason Jones; clarinetist Daniel Bonade; and the American William Kincaid, a former student of Berrère.

The orchestral tradition in the Philadelphia Orchestra continued despite the retirement of some of its most influential players. In the 1950s and 1960s several students from Curtis took over the positions that their teachers had previously held. Examples of these successions include the oboist Tabuteau and his student John De Lancie, the horn player Anton Horner and his student Mason Jones, the flutist William Kincaid and his student Robert F. Cole, and the clarinetist Daniel Bonade and his students Robert E. McGinnis and Anthony M. Gigliotti. In the bassoons, after Schoenbach’s retirement, another Kovar student, Bernard Garfield, held the principal position.

The bassoon section was formed from 1922 to 1937 with Guetter as principal, John Fisnar as second, and Ferdinand Del Negro as Assistant Principal and contrabassoon. After Guetter’s death Schoenbach took over the principal chair. Del Negro, Assistant Principal bassoon and contrabassoon from 1922 to 1964, considered that Bonade, Kincaid, Guetter, Tabuteau, Horn, Saul Caston, and Stokowski, created a style that “has shaped American wind playing up to the present day.” Del Negro

45 John Ardoin ed. The Philadelphia Orchestra, 81.
considered that Tabuteau’s playing style influenced all the other players, “even Kincaid.”  

NBC Symphony Orchestra

The National Broadcasting Company, NBC, formed the NBC Symphony Orchestra and sponsored its concerts, conducted by Arturo Toscanini, from 1937 to 1954. The orchestra was the first to be sponsored by a network station, and the benefits for players included a fifty-two week, full-time job. The musicians’ duties included weekly concerts and rehearsals of traditional orchestra repertoire and the playing of incidental music for other programs at the network station.  

The auditions, held by Artur Rodziński upon invitation, were open to players on the NBC staff and principal chairs from other orchestras in the United States. The major achievement of the NBC Symphony Orchestra was the substantial increment of new listeners for classical music. This was mainly because of NBC’s weekly live broadcasts and Toscanini’s popularity and reputation. The NBC Symphony Orchestra reflected Toscanini’s repertoire preferences by programming mostly German music.

In April 1941 Toscanini temporarily separated from the orchestra, excusing his resignation on grounds of fatigue. Stokowski, no longer at Philadelphia, was invited to be the music director with a contract from 1941 to 1944. Toscanini’s fatigue soon


48 Ibid., 11.
passed and he made guest conducting appearances and recordings with the Philadelphia Orchestra and returned to the NBC Orchestra in the summer of 1942. Upon Toscanini’s return, he and Stokowski shared the directorship for two more seasons. During these years the NBC Orchestra had in Stokowski and Toscanini two of the most contrasting conductors in the country regarding technique, aesthetics, and repertoire. In one program the orchestra would have to play standard repertoire according to Toscanini’s exact conducting requirements, and soon after play the more international and contemporary repertoire favored by Stokowski, having to adjust to Stokowski’s orchestral layout and techniques, which he had applied previously at the Philadelphia Orchestra. Among those innovations during Stokowski’s tenure included, the 1941 installation of a new shell in Studio 8H to create more resonance and the programming in 1944 of Arnold Schoenberg’s Piano Concerto. Toscanini disliked the addition because it modified the acoustics and affected the sound he strove for with the orchestra and he complained about all the other orchestral techniques Stokowski implemented, considering them “bad for the orchestra.” Stokowski’s contract was not renewed after 1944.49 According to Meyer, “the story of their rivalry illustrates two important and conflicting philosophies about the role of a radio orchestra in American culture.”50 The NBC Orchestra’s conductorship period shared by Stokowski and Toscanini undeniably represents a time of aesthetic enrichment in American orchestral history.


Principal bassoon players during the seventeen years of the NBC Symphony Orchestra include William Polisi, Benjamin Kohon, Leonard Sharrow, and Elias Carmen.

Conductors

According to John Canarina, the differences among the different conducting styles are as follows: “The French style generally involves a lightness of touch and clarity of textures, with a resultant transparency of sound…. The Italians also produce this lightness and clarity, but generally with a bit more warmth, while the Germans tend to favor a heavier, less detailed sonority.”51 This section will account for the similarities, contrasts, and idiosyncracies of the conductors working with the orchestras listed above. My purpose is to establish the most accurate account of their conducting approaches with respect to tone color, vibrato, and phrasing, focusing on the way they transmitted their approaches to the orchestras and the players through obligation, admiration, or rejection.

Arturo Toscanini (Italy 1867 – United States 1957)

Toscanini studied, cello at the Music Conservatory in Parma. He was conductor at La Scala from 1898 to 1908, the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra from 1908 to 1915, La Scala again from 1921 to 1929, the New York Philharmonic Orchestra from 1926 to 1936, and the NBC Symphony Orchestra from 1937 to 1954.

51 Canarina, Pierre Monteux, 56.
Toscanini originally shared his post at the New York Philharmonic with Mengelberg, but by 1930, he had become the orchestra’s main conductor. Toscanini’s reputation brought the orchestra an increase in financial security. During his tenure, the orchestra mostly played repertoire heavily focused on Germanic composers, with which he was familiar.\(^{52}\)

According to Frank H. Mortimer, Toscanini’s conducting trademarks were “cohesion, transparency, freedom from mannerisms, tempos that pressed forward, modulate pulse.”\(^{53}\) It is the purpose of the following section to clearly understand these characteristics.

Toscanini conducted exact readings of the score, because he considered it to be the medium used by the composer to express himself.\(^{54}\) According to William Kincaid: “Toscanini gave meticulous care to what the composer had written. His interpretations were clear-cut—etchings in black and white.”\(^{55}\)

Toscanini’s influence in music is well known in areas of music making such as rhythm, tempos, and phrasing, and not so much in his concepts of sound. However, for some players he did influence the sound concept. Violinist Josef Gingold recalled of Toscanini, “With one chord he suddenly changed [my] entire outlook on music.”\(^{56}\) Toscanini would ask his players to play a “note in its fullest value in melodic phrases.”

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53 Mortimer, Arturo Toscanini, 243.

54 Krell, Kincaidiana, 96.

55 Ibid., 96.

He would say ‘‘Sostenere,’ ‘No, no-tenere! Long note! Hold the notes! Non solfeggiato! Sing!’’ By holding and playing the notes ‘‘full blown’’ and connecting them to each other by giving each note its fullest value, Toscanini achieved ‘‘sustained expressiveness’’ in melodic phrases.\textsuperscript{57} Sol Schoenbach recollected Toscanini’s direction to a wind player, ‘‘Cantare! Cantare!’’ when he wanted the player to ‘‘sing’’ and play louder,\textsuperscript{58} whereas in other sections, where melodic phrases did not dictate the flow of the music, Toscanini preferred chords played with short staccato, allowing for the following section to sound detached. In this sense the dry acoustic in studio 8H helped Toscanini achieve his goal.\textsuperscript{59}

Toscanini’s sound concept embraced not only texture but also timbre. Sol Schoenbach recalled that when Toscanini went back to La Scala to rebuild it in 1946, ‘‘he bought four Heckel bassoons for the section there!’’ Schoenbach ‘‘received a letter from the Italian bassoonist, Mucceti of La Scala, asking [him] for fingerings for the German bassoon.’’\textsuperscript{60} It was the tradition in Italy to play French bassoons. Despite his early training, by the time of his appointment at La Scala, Toscanini had been conducting orchestras with German backgrounds, such as the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic Orchestra.

An example of Toscanini’s conservatism with repertoire and his strictness about performing the music as it was notated by the composer occurred when he guest

\textsuperscript{57} Samuel Antek, \textit{This Was Toscanini} (New York: The Vanguard Press, 1963), 53.


\textsuperscript{60} Dietz, ‘‘A Conversation with Sol Schoenbach,’’ 44.
conducted Tchaikovsky’s Sixth Symphony with the Philadelphia Orchestra. Toscanini asked the principal bassoon to play the passage in mm. 159 and 60 in the first movement as it is notated. Originally written for the bassoon after a passage scored for the clarinet with five piano markings, the passage for the bassoon requires the playing of four notes with six piano markings in the instrument’s low register. The continuous diminuendo between the clarinet and the bassoon is usually unsuccessful due to the characteristics of both instruments, making the bassoon passage sound louder. It is the reason why many conductors ask the bass clarinet to play this passage instead of the bassoon. Schoenbach recalled;

[Toscanini] absolutely refused to have those last four notes played by the bass clarinet. He said ‘It’s in the bassoon part; and you must play it,’ And I—tell—you: to play that! I think it’s marked with six p’s; and with Toscanini it became twenty-six p’s; and it became the biggest feat in the world: I filled my bassoon with absorbent cotton and handkerchiefs and socks!61

However, Toscanini’s strict adherence to the score was flexible with reference to the type of instruments. He preferred the sound of the German bassoon over the French bassoon even in works originally written for the latter instrument. Toscanini’s imposition of his preference for the sound of the German bassoon in the bassoon section at La Scala reflected the preference shift from the French to the German bassoon that occurred early in the United States and later spread to other countries.

While conductors such as Koussevitzky and primarily Stokowski experimented with different orchestral seating layouts in their search for new orchestral sounds and balances, Toscanini and Monteux preferred the then-traditional layout with the violin

61 Haggin, Arturo Toscanini, 125.
sections on either side of the conductor’s podium. Toscanini considered that with this arrangement the violin sections strengthened and equally balanced each other, comparing them to a “pair of shoulders” for the conductor.62

Toscanini considered vibrato a vital part of music making. When Toscanini conducted the New York Philharmonic, the British critic, Julian Herbahe, noted, “[Toscanini] insists on pianissimos always being ‘warm’ — that is, played with vibrato.”63 He required his players to use vibrato in specific situations and in a specific fashion to create a particular effect depending on the musical context. Toscanini asked the strings “to play the slightest tremor of the left hand at each beat of the bar, to obtain that lovely imperceptible current of the stream which must never become lifeless and mechanical.”64 During his tenure at the NBC Orchestra, Toscanini even specified: “[Critics] think that because the violins vibrate all the time they make a beautiful tone! No! A fast vibrato makes a beautiful tone, not a slow one, our NBC violins make quick vibrato. That [makes] a beautiful tone.”65

Sol Schoenbach described how during Toscanini’s guest conducting visit to the Philadelphia Orchestra, Toscanini asked him to play the opening solo in Tchaikovsky’s Sixth Symphony “segmented,” while Stokowski had asked him to play it “in one

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64 Bernard Shore, Sixteen Symphonies (London: Longmans, Green, 1950), 61.

breath.” Schoenbach commented that when Toscanini had something in his mind, he would repeat “the passage over and over until he got it as he wanted”:66

I’ll never forget the Tchaikovsky Sixth …. It starts with a bassoon passage; and because of Stokowski’s and Ormandy’s training, it was my custom to play this opening passage in one breath—which took a lot of doing. At the first rehearsal with Toscanini I presented him with my great accomplishment—and he didn’t like it! He didn’t say anything at the time; but I could see that he wasn’t really in accord…. in his dressing room he asked me why I played the passage all in one breath; and I told him this was what I had been trained to do. He said no, he preferred that it be segmented; and he proceeded to sing in that voice of his: “I-ee love you; I-ee love you—,” …I played it his way.67

Schoenbach as well as David Walker, principal bass at the NBC Symphony Orchestra, agreed in their recollection that Toscanini was obsessed with rhythmic accuracy.68 Schoenbach explained that Toscanini’s beat focused on beat one, contrasting with that of the Philadelphia Orchestra which focused on “the preparation for beat ‘one.’” The contrasting emphasis on different sections of the meter gave the music a different nuance.69 Toscanini achieved forward motion and “continuous sweep” by using a “circular beat.”70 The circular beat helped him surpass the restraints of the meter and “delineate the musical flow” above it. Walker gave the most detailed account of how Toscanini’s rhythmic exactness made him aware of the relationship between the pulse and rhythm in ways he had never heard before. Walter recalled, “The exact execution Toscanini insisted on from each woodwind at the beginning of Ravel’s

66 Haggin, Arturo Toscanini, 121–22.
67 Ibid., 124–25.
68 Ibid., 124.
69 Haggin, Arturo Toscanini, 122.
70 Samuel Antek, This Was Toscanini (New York: The Vanguard Press, 1963), 53.
Daphnes and Chloë Suite achieved something different from the impressionistic effect of the passage played without this exactness.”  

Performance clarity was of paramount importance for Toscanini; he would ask, “clear not muddy.”  

With an exact and close reading of the score and perfect intonation, Toscanini made the players aware of differences between different dynamic levels, between the crescendos and decrescendos, and between articulations and accents. This approach made it imperative for the musicians to play better and be keenly aware of how the exact reading of these elements helped to clarify and emphasize musical form, giving to their performances a perspective that had not been achieved previously. Musicians could understand the different results Toscanini was getting with this approach compared to that of other conductors. Toscanini achieved clarity through his close reading of the score, rhythmic exactness, clean technique, short chordal attacks, and sustained notes to their full value for melodic inflections.

Toscanini’s famous outbursts intimidated the players at the NBC Orchestra. According to Schoenbach, “I remember the fear that my teacher exhibited, shared by all the other men in the orchestra.”  

In later years, as principal bassoon at the Philadelphia Orchestra, Schoenbach experienced personally how Toscanini got the musicians to play as he wanted. This experience left Schoenbach with a mixed impression. According to Schoenbach, Toscanini was in control of all matters, and he made musicians feel they

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72 Ibid., 124.


74 Ibid., 126.
were inferior and needed to be taught, “beaten into shape” on how to play at a “professional level.” Toscanini’s outbursts when he could not get the musicians to play as he wanted, said Schoenbach, would start “at his feet and rise from there; and by the time it reached his mouth it was like a volcano erupting.”\(^{75}\) According to Walker, “You played beyond the limit of your ability—out of fear of his acknowledge and fear of his anger, but also out of fear of not fulfilling yourself.” When playing for Toscanini, Walker said, musicians took the scores home with them to practice and arrived early at rehearsals to do the same. Practice enabled passages previously taken slower, to be later “played brilliantly in the right tempo.”\(^{76}\) It was out of fear that musicians practiced before rehearsals; what is considered basic orchestra discipline now was outstanding and innovative then. Toscanini, contrary to the protocols applied in other orchestras, worked with whatever technical level and musicianship the orchestra had, and did not freely dismiss players as other conductors did.\(^{77}\)

Schoenbach recalled: “Toscanini was interested in the lines, all he saw was this melody moving. He wouldn’t permit one note to get in the way of another. His drive, his intensity while conducting was unique.” He concluded, “When you started the piece you were going to the end.”\(^{78}\)

The NBC Orchestra was set apart from other orchestras by its primary function as the orchestra of a national broadcasting company. The orchestra’s main venue was a

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\(^{75}\) Ibid., 129.

\(^{76}\) Ibid., 21.

\(^{77}\) Haggin, Arturo Toscanini, 122–23.

\(^{78}\) Ibid., 125.
radio station, not a concert hall. The orchestra rehearsed and played in studio 8H in Rockefeller Center. Studio 8H, built in 1933 as a radio studio, featured sound absorption; this characteristic created an acoustical dryness, which is required for speaking but does not provide the sound reflection required for music. In 1937, after the studio became the official home of the new NBC Orchestra, engineers experimented for years with microphone placement to compensate for and improve the studio’s acoustics. Eventually they concluded that the best place for the microphone was “just above and behind the podium,” that is, in Toscanini’s conducting position. In 1941 a shell was installed to reinforce the sound, and microphone placement remained critical to the overall acoustics. After 1950 the orchestra shifted from Studio 8H to Carnegie Hall.

According to Toscanini’s son, Walter, his father “liked the unresounding acoustics of Studio 8H in which the purity of orchestral tone was not marred by hall reverberations and echoes.” The studio’s acoustics, far from limiting Toscanini’s aesthetic criteria, might have helped achieve his ideal clean texture. Because his conducting position was considered by the recording engineers as the best place for the microphones, Toscanini’s acoustical perspective, what he heard from the orchestra, and the sound the orchestra produced may have been in accord.

During his tenures with American orchestras, Toscanini programmed concerts and recordings that relied heavily on the standard European repertoire. He was


80 Ibid., 33–35.

criticized for privileging old, “museum” repertoire written by foreign composers⁸² and not programming contemporary “American music.”⁸³ This happened at a time when Stokowski and Koussevitzky were leading other major orchestras in the country and actively supporting young American composers with commissions and performances of their works.

*Serge Koussevitzky (Russia 1874– United States 1951)*

Koussevitzky graduated from the Musico-Dramatic Institute of the Moscow Philharmonic Society as a bass player soloist. He conducted the State Philharmonic Orchestra of Petrograd from 1917 to 1920. While in Paris, he organized the Concerts Koussevitzky from 1921 to 1929, and in the United States he conducted the Boston Symphony Orchestra from 1924 to 1949.

According to José Antonio Bowen and David Mermelstein, “The Koussevitzky years from 1924 to 1949 represent the orchestra’s golden age, a time when technical standards reached a peak and the repertory performed was of a scope unmatched in the annals of American music-making.”⁸⁴

For Koussevitzky, sound quality was paramount over all other aspects of music.⁸⁵ He preferred a “brilliant and beautiful” sound. He tuned at A444 and would allow intonation to go even sharper. This gave the orchestra its distinct bright sound

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⁸³ Ibid., 43.


⁸⁵ North, *Boston Symphony Orchestra*, 77.
compared to other orchestras, such as Stokowski and the Philadelphia’s “opulent and thick sound.” ⁸⁶

According to Arthur Lourié, Koussevitzky preferred to use voice leading to draw out the orchestra’s full sonority rather than use the melody-accompaniment perspective. His background as a bass player could have influenced Koussevitzky’s preference for a more string supported sonority and slow tempos. His tempos were flexible depending on context, but often they depended on the accompaniment or the harmonic figuration. ⁸⁷

According to Harold L. Meek, horn player at the Boston Symphony, “Koussevitzky used to tell us that mezzoforte was the most ‘uninteresting dynamic kee [sic] exist.’” ⁸⁸ Koussevitzky focused on sound at all times; he requested the musicians to play “dolce, with good tone, with good intonation, and with alive!” He made players aware of a difference between noise and sound, describing the latter as “a dolce who have a beautiful round tone.” ⁸⁹

Koussevitzky’s use of vibrato was of paramount importance since he considered vibrato a way to give the sound life; he would compare the playing of a string player without vibrato to playing with “died fingers.” ⁹⁰ Bernard Shore recalls that while rehearsing Beethoven’s *Eroica* Symphony, Koussevitzky indicated that

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⁹⁰ Ibid., 49.
“pianissimo must always have substance and arrive to the audience! Vibrato! Always vibrato in pianissimo!”

Koussevitzky had a dominant personality and during his rehearsals controlled every aspect of music making. He would approach the rehearsal of all works in extreme detail, leaving nothing to chance. Koussevitzky’s control was as if he “dominated every second of every breath and every bow.” He rehearsed all works “as though for the first time,” and demanded everything be played with the “the best effort and playing.”

Discipline in the orchestra during rehearsals was such that he controlled the musicians’ psychology, he could even “break them down.” Speaking or questioning during rehearsals was not possible. Musicians playing at the Boston Symphony Orchestra considered that “almost every rehearsal was a nightmare, every concert a thrilling experience.” However, the musicians praised Koussevitzky’s reliability at concerts, because he conducted “exactly as he rehearsed.” His conducting style focused on the phrasing of the music and not on the tempo markings.

Koussevitzky’s level of control over everything in the orchestra also included guest composers. He would make them edit their works at rehearsals. That was the case with Aaron Copland, who was willing to change elements of his composition upon

91 Bernard Shore, The Orchestra Speaks (London,: Longmans, Green, 1938), 107.
92 Meek, Horn and Conductor, 24.
93 Ibid., 21.
94 Ibid., 24.
95 Lourié, Sergei Koussevitzky, 230.
Koussevitzky’s advice. However, others, like Bartók at the premier of the *Concerto for Orchestra*, rejected similar requests and changed nothing.\(^96\)

According to Dickson, although Koussevitzky considered every concert important, when he toured he made distinctions among the cities he visited with the orchestra, keeping New York and Philadelphia at the top of his priorities because of their musical tradition. Koussevitzky would say, “Gentlemen, it is good perhaps for Toledo or Cincinnati, but not for New York or Philadelphia.” Dickson recalled, “He would drive us with demonic fury in preparation for concerts in these cities.”\(^97\)

*Leopold Stokowski (England 1882–1977)*

Stokowski studied organ at the Royal College of Music in London. He conducted the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra from 1909 to 1912, the Philadelphia Orchestra from 1912 to 1941, the NBC Symphony Orchestra from 1941 to 1944, the Houston Symphony Orchestra from 1955 to 1961, and the Symphony of the Air from 1954 to 1963. He was a guest conductor with the New York Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra on several occasions. He founded the All-American Youth Orchestra in 1940 and conducted it until 1941, the New York City Symphony from 1944 to 1945, the Hollywood Bowl Symphony Orchestra from 1945 to 1946, and the American Symphony Orchestra from 1962 to 1972.

According to Oliver Daniel, when Stokowski took the Philadelphia Orchestra in 1912 it was “well trained and contained many fine players. But it was hardly equal to

\(^{96}\) Meek, *Horn and Conductor*, 25.

\(^{97}\) Dickson, *Gentlemen, More Dolce*, 52.
the one he had built in Cincinnati.” Stokowski recalled his first impression of the Philadelphia Orchestra after his appointment and his approach to working with the musicians:

I found a rather good orchestra, but not a very good one, also very old-fashioned in its attitude toward technical things…gradually we began to develop [the musicians’] playing according to what I regarded as more modern ideas of technique and of orchestral culture… I didn’t wish to change any of the players, or as few as possible….When one constantly changes players, there is so much disturbance that a great orchestra cannot be built that way.

Stokowski saw the orchestra as the conductor’s instrument. With this perspective, he considered it to be the conductor’s responsibility to find in the player the qualities that fit and fulfilled the characteristics he wanted for the orchestra. Stokowski further elaborated on this perspective:

A conductor must form his own instrument [the orchestra]. He must know how to choose each player, recognizing in him his degree of mastery of the instrument—his flexibility in fitting his part to all the other parts of the orchestra—the beauty and variety of his tone—his understanding of the principles of phrasing—his general musical culture—intelligence—emotional qualities—imagination.

Over time, Stokowski realized that some players did not have the qualities and skills that he wanted. He began hiring new players, some of whom would become very influential in the orchestra. Among them were the Spanish bassist Anton Torello in 1914, the French oboist Marcel Tabuteau in 1915, the Dutch cellist Hans Kidler and the French clarinetist Daniel Bonade in 1917, the American trumpet player Saul Caston in

98 Daniel, Stokowski, 290.
99 Ibid., 290.
100 Daniel, Stokowski, 291.
1918, and the American flutist William Kindcaid in 1920.\textsuperscript{101} There is discrepancy about what Stokowski did while trying to improve the artistic level of the orchestra. According to the writer John Ardoin and the orchestra’s personnel manager, Arthur Judson, Stokowski fired over thirty musicians in one year.\textsuperscript{102} However, according to Oliver Daniel, “The Philadelphia records do not indicate a mass firing.”\textsuperscript{103}

Stokowski considered that “a conductor should...understand every instrument in the orchestra,...particularly the string instruments...[He added] I studied wind instruments, wood…and brass instruments and played them myself…to understand the difficulties which every player has.”\textsuperscript{104} On order to have a better insight into the instruments’ qualities and possibilities, Stokowski spent his summers playing and familiarizing himself with the instruments in the orchestra.

Stokowski openly spoke about his “more modern” orchestral aesthetic ideas and techniques. “I am completely opposed to standardization, regimentation, uniform bowing, uniform fingering and breathing, and all other conventions which tend to make and orchestra sound mechanical,” he declared.\textsuperscript{105} Among his new approaches to orchestral playing were the use of free bowing and free breathing. The free bowing technique for the strings resulted in players not bowing at the same time and direction as is the tradition, but as they felt like, which created a permanent subtle and seamless

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{101} Ibid., 291.
  \item \textsuperscript{102} Ardoin, \textit{The Philadelphia Orchestra}, 42.
  \item \textsuperscript{103} Daniel, \textit{Stokowski}, 291
  \item \textsuperscript{104} \url{http://www.stokowski.org/sitebuilderfiles/Stokowski_on_Conducting_1969_2.mp3} (accessed March 4, 2015)
  \item \textsuperscript{105} Daniel, \textit{Stokowski}, 291.
\end{itemize}
sound. The free breathing approach for the wind and brass players, not a technique in itself, consisted of hiring extra players. Doubling up the sections allowed the alternation of breaths, which avoided the subtle accents created by the interruption of the sound after a breath. Free breathing achieved the same seamless sound effect as free bowing.\textsuperscript{106} In his search for new sounds Stokowski experimented with changes to traditional orchestral performance practice, such as various seating layouts that were unique to Philadelphia. These experiments included positioning all the violins on the left side of the conductor’s podium and the cellos on the front-right side; although this concept was not original with Stokowski, he is the one credited with making it popular in the United States, and it became standard by the late 1960s. Other experiments included positioning the strings at the back of the stage and the winds, brass and percussion at the front. All these changes contrasted with the then traditional position of the violins on either side of the conductor’s podium.\textsuperscript{107} Convinced of his philosophy, Stokowski would say:

In working with the Philadelphia Orchestra, my dream was, and we partly achieved that dream, to express to the utmost the spirit, the inner spirit, of every kind of music…. In order to do all that with the Philadelphia Orchestra, I begged the players to notice all those differences and I said to them “Each one of you must be a poet as well as a great player of your instrument, and through your poetic feeling, you can express every kind of music.” “Do not permit yourselves to become, as is the tendency in the world today, standardized, so that you all think and feel the same way….Put all those differences, all that richness of different coloring of personalities into music.” They finally did that and the orchestra became so flexible and so extraordinary!\textsuperscript{108}

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\textsuperscript{108} Daniel, \textit{Stokowski}, 293.
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Stokowski imposed orchestral discipline and authority through intimidation. He would address the players by instrument and not by name, and he had to be called Mr. Stokowski. This approach created a distance, which inspired respect and maintained hierarchy.\textsuperscript{109} Schoenbach recalled that “when [he] first came to the orchestra the men used to sit on the edge of their chairs and go absolutely white when [Stokowski] came on the stage.”\textsuperscript{110}

In addition to discipline, Stokowski imposed his artistic leadership on the musicians. He inspired conflicting feelings, such as a sense of extreme pride in their job, the desire to positively respond to his requests, severe orchestral discipline, and a sense of job vulnerability, which, combined together, gave him control over the players’ artistic capabilities. John Minsker, oboist with the Philadelphia Orchestra from 1936 to 1959, recalled: “When you played a concert with Stokowski, any concert you played with him, you were so proud of yourself, because you realized you had done something great….There was always that feeling when we played for him.”\textsuperscript{111}

According to Robinson, Stokowski’s personality was self-contained and persistent. However, musicians had to tolerate his criticism in public. And he would not give up until the musicians played exactly as he had it in his mind.\textsuperscript{112} Minsker recalled how Stokowski once asked the whole cello section to play the cello solo of Stravinsky’s

\textsuperscript{110} Haggin, \textit{Arturo Toscanini}, 127.
\textsuperscript{112} Robinson, “\textit{Stokowski},” 21.
The Firebird, after the principal had been unable to play it. Minsker commented, “You just sat there and prayed for each man to get through it”^{113} In order to play for Stokowski, musicians needed musical flexibility and strong technical skills. If a player was asked to practice a passage Stokowski’s way, and when asked later was unable to play it to Stokowski’s satisfaction, “he was dismissed.”^{114}

Stokowski had a flexible approach to his reading of the score, and he asked the same from the players in the orchestra. If he considered that changing, modifying, or adding or subtracting would help him achieve his musical concepts, he would do it and request the players to follow him. Stokowski’s requirement for flexibility included several areas, such as sitting in other areas rather than the traditional lay out, the use of non-traditional orchestral techniques, the disposition to repeat a passage several times until he heard what he had in mind, changing the original orchestration, or even the use of reeds that produced a specific timbre. All these demands required the players to upgrade their performance level, becoming technically and musically stronger, more flexible and creative.

According to Schoenbach, while playing a Tchaikovsky symphony he would ask the bassoons to play passages originally written for other instruments. “We were supposed to play even though we didn’t have anything in front of us….. He [Stokowski] couldn’t stand anybody who was so rigid and would say, ‘I’m sorry, I don’t have those notes there,’ or ‘I don’t have that on my instrument,’ or ‘It can’t be done.’”^{115}

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114 Storch, Marcel Tabuteau, 127.

115 Ardoin, The Philadelphia Orchestra, 43.
Stokowski would make the musicians play a solo “dozens of times until he was satisfied with the result.”\footnote{116}{McGill, \textit{Sound in Motion}, 322.} If necessary he would insist that a bassoonist try a dozen reeds in order to create the exact feeling of ‘drab and desolate’ that he wanted in the \textit{Boris Godunov} synthesis.\footnote{117}{Storch, \textit{Marcel Tabuteau}, 124.}

Marcel Tabuteau regarded Stokowski highly for most of his tenure. Despite the later alienation in their relationship, Tabuteau commented on having “made every effort to fulfill his exigent demands.”\footnote{118}{Ibid.} According to Alfred Genovese, a former Tabuteau student, Tabuteau appreciated that “[he] could play the same piece twelve times, and twelve different times change a little for the phrasing here and there, and Stokowski always recognized the change. With others, it would just go by them.”\footnote{119}{Ibid., 133.} Tabuteau’s opinions on Stokowski expand expressions such as considered him “an artist.”\footnote{120}{Ibid., 134.}

Tabuteau once commented that the combination of Toscanini’s and Stokowski’s “elements” would create the greatest conductor of all time. In his retirement and having played for conductors such as Mahler and Toscanini, Tabuteau commented on Stokowski that “no conductor ever rose to the realms of the angels as [did] Leopold Stokowski.”\footnote{121}{Ibid., 125.}

Minsker said: “I don’t know that the orchestra ever liked him in a certain sense.” “He was very, very strict and imposed severe discipline. Everybody had their
parts memorized. When he stopped the orchestra,…you could hear a pin drop. Every man stopped immediately.” Minsker recalled, “That orchestra was disciplined like no other ever was.” Stokowski’s conducting unpredictability required the musicians to remain in maximum concentration during rehearsals and concerts. Minsker recalled, “With Stokowski every rehearsal and concert was different.” At rehearsals musicians were ready to play where Stokowski requested without hesitation, even when he asked them to play outside the rehearsal time and venue. On one occasion, when he was guest conducting in Houston in the early 1950s, Stokowski asked Minsker “to come to his apartment to play for him. This was a standard Stokowski practice. ‘When he came to Houston in the early 1950s to conduct El Amor Brujo, I had to go to his hotel and play all the solos for him.’” Robert Gomberg, a violinist with Stokowski, considered that “Stokowski’s eye contact with his musicians” was the tool he used to communicate with the players. Stokowski himself, in a 1969 Boston Public Radio interview, acknowledged what he thought was “his form of communication” with the orchestra’s musicians, saying, “I feel the music a certain way and I look at the players and ask of them…by looking at them a certain kind of phrasing, a certain kind of feeling and they give it.”

123 Storch, Marcel Tabuteau, 125.
124 Ibid., 127.
125 Smith, The Mystery of Leopold Stokowski, 21.
The sound Stokowski achieved with the Philadelphia Orchestra was so distinctive that Paul Robinson claimed it was due to “[the] slow moving chords perfectly balanced and sustained effortlessly over a powerful bass,” comparing it to the sound quality produced by an organ. According to Minsker, “with Stokowski everything was just enlarged and the sound of the orchestra and the way the players — everybody — Guetter, the bassoon, Tabuteau, and Kincaid— they’d get a tone and they’d go — and go and go and travel with it.”

“During the 1930s and 1940s the principal wind players in the orchestra, played in a style as directed by Stokowski—colorful, expressive, and imaginatively musical.” One of Tabuteau’s most influential colleagues at Philadelphia was principal flutist William Kincaid. According to Donald Peck, principal flute at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and a Kincaid student from 1949 to 1951, “[Kincaid and Tabuteau] were in the Philadelphia Orchestra when it was an incredible ensemble, and the whole wind section sounded like just one instrument. They all had that same essence, that is, that same oneness of the music. That was a big eye-opener for us at Curtis.”

Kincaid and Tabuteau, both trained in the French school, had similar approaches to phrasing. The line was primary, above all other considerations. Using the concept of motion to create music, they often chose the same note in a musical passage to peak the musical

128 Storch, Marcel Tabuteau, 126.
line. Inflections were important for both, such as upbeat questioning followed by downbeat affirmation. They believed that music has lift and resolution, motion and rest.”

According to Kincaid, “Stokowski’s interpretations are uniquely his.”

“[Stokowski] wants results that have never been heard of or asked for before,” said Kincaid, and “the way Stokowski developed the orchestral sound….If there had been no Stokowski, there would have been no orchestral sound as we know it today….Stokowski invented the Philadelphia Orchestra.”

Some authors relate Stokowski’s concept of sound to his background as an organist and the flexibility that organists obtain by using different registrations. Musicians playing for him identified some technical approaches he consistently applied, such as the orchestra’s intonation below A440, specifically his demand for an accurate intonation as well as a big tone and a wide dynamic range. Stokowski also made flexible use of specific timbre characteristics of instruments to create an effect not originally written in the score. Minsker recalled:

Stokowski was very fussy about tuning. That was one of the remarkable things about him. He was very smart in that you had to start with a low, dark sound. The quality of sound he got from the orchestra was so completely different from any other orchestra in existence…. If there was any little friction in intonation he would stop the orchestra and tune. Never once in all the time I was there, did Stokowski tell anyone to go higher. It was always down, and we tuned to A438.

132 Krell, Kincaidiana, 95.
133 Ibid., 96.
134 Ibid., 95–96.
135 Storch, Marcel Tabuteau, 126.
Intonation was so important for Stokowski that when he conducted the New York City Symphony Orchestra in 1944, among the characteristics the orchestra should have were “a really fine orchestra with longer string section. A good woodwind section with good intonation.” Minsker added, “Tabuteau was always working for a big sound— to get more and more and more tone. In those days Stokowski wanted a tremendous lot of tone… Stokowski wanted a tremendous range—the most pianissimo pianissimo, and the most fortissimo fortissimo.” “In the end of the prelude to Tristan where there is a low A-flat he would say ‘less, less.’ He would have me play several times and missed [the level of pianissimo he had in mind]. He wanted still less, and “no matter what he asked for you did it.”

According to Sol Schoenbach, “[Stokowski] was engrossed in colors—he’d even ask you to change your reed, because he thought your instrument was too bright for the gray he wanted.” On the other hand if there was a harmony note very low and very soft, he would ask the bassoon or the English horn to play it. Stokowski considered that “free bowing” would give music “a warmer, more intense, [sound and a] more continuous melodic flow.”

Stokowski understood music as having several dimensions and considered it the conductor’s task to balance all the different elements in it:

136 Smith, The Mystery of Leopold Stokowski, 185–86.
137 Storch, Marcel Tabuteau, 127.
138 Ibid., 127.
139 Haggin, Arturo Toscanini, 125.
One must watch every instrument, every player ...[all players have different backgrounds] the ways of approach to music are different, ...while conducting one must concentrate on the music... and the bringing together of all the different instruments and different groups of instruments in their right proportions...so they sound balanced... so you achieve clarity of sound, so the listeners can understand what is important... what instrument sound out more prominently that the others and what are in the background...like in a picture.... In music there are many plains... and some are very prominent and some are less prominent, some still less prominent and some are very soft in the background. If those plains are not in the proper proportion then the music does not sound clear and the listener naturally cannot understand.\textsuperscript{141}

Stokowski in his performances and recordings tried to emphasize textures and passages in the score as a result of what he considered problems of orchestration, scoring, and balance were not always prominent. He would do this by asking other instruments besides those originally scored to play and to modify the dynamic range. When Stokowski recorded he would use technology to correct such passages.\textsuperscript{142}

Stokowski’s flexible approach also applied to phrasing, according to Horowitz, Stokowski takes the Andante of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony at a slower tempo without dragging. “Stokowski’s long phrases (contradicting Beethoven’s own phrase markings) strive for continuity, he elongates notes values and violates rest to bind a phrase with its neighbor.”\textsuperscript{143} Stokowski’s conducting style with the orchestra remained the same over time. Minsker recalled that in 1960, when several of the most influential players had already retired, Stokowski returned to the Philadelphia orchestra and while rehearsing the three mysterious repeated chords at the end of the Introductión y Escena in El Amor Brujo: “He

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\item \textsuperscript{141} www.stokowski.org (accessed March 4, 2015).
\item \textsuperscript{142} Ashby, \textit{Absolute Music}, 47–48.
\end{itemize}
didn’t say a word, but he changed the sound of that orchestra within ten minutes…. Everything was precise…. There was no question about where the beat was…. And the sound! …It was something you can’t explain.”

The most accepted thesis on the development of the American woodwind playing school has been that it was the result of the combination of the different playing schools and backgrounds among the musicians playing at different orchestras in the first half of the twentieth century. While the principal focus of this thesis has been the orchestral players who were also pedagogues, the role of the conductors and the application of their particular aesthetics to the orchestras they conducted have been included here. While the aim of the previous section was to emphasize the conductors’ contribution, the following section will focus on how the players perceived their playing and environment, and transmitted their perceptions to their students.

Players

Benjamin Kohon (Ukraine 1890–United States 1984)

Kohon played principal bassoon at the New York Philharmonic from 1908 to 1912, at the Philadelphia Orchestra from 1912 to 1915, and at the National Symphony Orchestra from the end of World War I to the orchestra’s merger with the New York Philharmonic in 1921. The first year after the merger of the orchestras, there were two principals for each section. In 1922 Kohon became the official principal bassoon, where he

144 Storch, Marcel Tabuteau, 128.

remained until his retirement in 1942.\(^\text{146}\) After his departure from the New York Philharmonic, Kohon played principal with the NBC Orchestra until his retirement in 1947. Kohon preferred teaching only one student at a time, and he required his students to have a piano background.\(^\text{147}\) According to Schoenbach, who had Kohon as his first bassoon teacher, Kohon was very strict and required his students to prepare three pages by memory from the Otto Langey book and a piece on the piano. Schoenbach did not last long with Kohon.\(^\text{148}\) Kohon considered among the bassoon’s qualities its “fullness of tone in the lower register and ...[its] fine lyric qualities in its upper register.” Among his pedagogic philosophies, Kohon encouraged his students to play with “a fine tone.” He valued “quality in the tone more than volume.” He suggested that sustained notes “should be produced at times evenly, and at times with a little vibrato” He considered “a little vibrato...not amiss, but it should not be exaggerated and should be produced by the throat.”\(^\text{149}\)

At the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, Kohon played for Mahler, Toscanini, and Willem Mengelberg. While at the NBC Orchestra he played again for Toscanini.

**Simon Kovar (Latvia 1890– United States 1970)**

Kovar studied violin at the St. Petersburg Conservatory with Leopold Auer. Kovar switched to bassoon to avoid the draft during the Russian Revolution and studied with


\(^{147}\) Ibid., 24.

\(^{148}\) Dietz, “A Conversation with Sol Schoenbach,” 44.

Ernest Kotte, who taught the German bassoon. Kovar immigrated to the United States in 1922. In 1923 Kohon recommended to Mengelberg that he hire Kovar as second bassoon with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. At Mengelberg’s recommendation, Kohon worked with Kovar on repertoire on a weekly basis. Kovar remained in the orchestra as second bassoon until his retirement in 1949. At the New York Philharmonic Kovar, played for conductors such as John Barbirolli, Toscanini, Mengelberg, and Artur Rodiński.

At the beginning of Kovar’s teaching career, Kohon passed on the students who did not meet his expectations to Kovar. Sol Schoenbach was Kovar’s first student in the United States. Kovar taught German bassoon at Juilliard for twenty-eight years and also taught at the Curtis Institute of Music from 1939 to 1942, and at The Manhattan School of Music from 1936 to 1952. In 1948 Kovar began editing bassoon music for pedagogic purposes. His editions made European bassoon etudes and repertoire accessible in the United States, where they are still available and in use.

In his article “Simplifying the Bassoon,” Kovar encouraged students not to forget the importance of a beautiful sound when trying to incorporate vibrato. At his lessons, Marvin Roth recalled, Kovar would advise his students: “Never mind the vibrato! I want to

151 Ibid., 11.
152 Ibid., 24.
153 Ibid.
154 Ibid., 11.
155 Ibid., 50.
hear a good clean attack, and a big, full, dark sound.”\footnote{Bassett, “The Bassoon Pedagogy and Publications of Simon Kovar,” 30.} According to Amy Bassett, Kovar emulated his violin teacher Auer with his ideas about phrasing and vibrato. Bernard Garfield recalled that Kovar’s pedagogical interest was in encouraging his students to play with “an attractive sound, with an even flow from note to note, [the reading of] accurate rhythms, and [the use] of expression to suit the phrase.” Garfield considered that Kovar’s playing approach must have pleased Toscanini.\footnote{Ibid., 113.} Schoenbach recalled that Kohon turned him over to Kovar when the latter had just arrived in the United States. Schoenbach considered Kovar a “dedicated and devoted teacher [who gave him] enormous lessons.”

While his background as a violinist would have given him a strong sense of phrasing and vibrato, Kovar’s emphasis on playing without vibrato seems to have been influenced by his position as second bassoon at the orchestra and the function of the bassoon as the harmonic support in the woodwind section.

\textit{Walter Guetter (United States 1895–1937)}

Guetter studied with his uncle Adolf Guetter in Berlin at the Klindworth-Scharwenka Conservatory of Music. Adolf Guetter was a student of the famous German bassoon pedagogue Julius Weissenborn at the Leipzig Conservatory and played at Leipzig and Berlin, and at the Boston Symphony Orchestra from 1891 to 1894.

Walter Guetter was principal at Philadelphia from 1922 to 1937 and teacher of the German bassoon at the Curtis Institute of Music for a few years starting in 1924. Among his students were Frank Ruggieri, second bassoon at the New York Philharmonic from
1940 to 1972, and William Polisi, principal at the New York Philharmonic from 1944 to 1956. Ruggieri recalled that Guetter’s pedagogy focused on striving for perfection in areas such as the production of “a wonderful singing tone in all the registers of the bassoon,” exactness in intonation, the accurate reading of dynamics, rhythm, and articulation, and above all, phrasing.  

Guetter was considered a great player and during his fifteen years with the Philadelphia Orchestra, his fine playing was recognized as a major contribution to the orchestra’s reputation. According to Leonard Sharrow, “Guetter had a big, rich, full sound.” Guetter was not only a great bassoon player, but for his performance of Mozart’s Bassoon Concerto, K. 191 with the Philadelphia Orchestra, he played his own edition of the concerto and cadenzas. Guetter’s edition became the most widely studied in the United States for most of the twentieth century.

**Auguste Mesnard (France 1875–United States 1974)**

Mesnard got his Premiere Prix from the Paris Conservatory in 1897. While in France, he regularly played at the Lamoureux Orchestra as second bassoon under Felix Weingartner, Hans Richter, Gustav Mahler, and Richard Strauss. In 1905 Walter Damrosch hired Mesnard as principal bassoon of the New York Symphony Orchestra.

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In 1912 Mesnard declined an invitation from Stokowski to play principal with the Philadelphia Orchestra. After the 1928 merger, Mesnard did not go to the New York Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra, but instead went on to play at the Capitol Theater Orchestra, retiring from the Works Progress Administration Orchestra, in 1945.\textsuperscript{163} Mesnard’s reeds had a dark sound achieved by their roundness at the throat and their heaviness throughout. It is not known if this characteristic was due to the fact that he “nearly always had a second bassoonist who played German bassoon.”\textsuperscript{164}

\textit{Louis Letellier (France. No Dates available)}

Letellier was well rooted in the tradition of the Paris Conservatory.\textsuperscript{165} His father, Leon Lettelier, was a prominent bassoonist in France. He and the French oboist Georges Gillet were invited to play at the Société de musique de chambre pour instruments à vent by its founder, the French flutist Paul Taffanel. Letellier’s stay in the United States was intermittent; he was principal bassoon at the New York Symphony Orchestra, he is credited with giving the American premiere of Mozart’s Bassoon Concerto, K. 191, with the New York Symphony Orchestra conducted by Walter Damrosch on February 15, 1920.\textsuperscript{166} Letellier’s student in France, Fernand Oubradous,

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{164} Ibid.,
\end{itemize}
principal at the Paris Opera who is credited with bringing the French bassoon school “into the present,” recalled Letellier being back in France in 1923, as bassoon at The Paris Opera and as teacher at the Paris Conservatory. Letellier was considered by Oubradous “a remarkable bassoonist with a sound that filled the opera house, but musically less refined that his predecessor [at the conservatory].” By the early 1930s Letellier was back in the United States teaching French bassoon at The Juilliard School, with Leonard Sharrow as one of his students.

_Abdon Laus (Algeria 1888– United States 1945)_

Laus played at the Boston Symphony Orchestra from 1918 to 1945 and played principal bassoon from 1918 to 1936. That year Koussevitzky moved him to third bassoon and placed Raymond Allard as principal. Laus taught at New England Conservatory. His student Ann De Guichard played with the orchestra for two years after Laus’s death in 1945. According to Jane Taylor, bassoon from the Dorian Wind Quintet, she was “a very French bassoon player.”

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Raymond Allard (France 1898–1977)

Raymond Allard graduated from the Paris Conservatory. He played at the Boston Symphony Orchestra as section member from 1922 to 1936 and later as principal from 1936 to 1954. He was teacher of the French bassoon at the New England Conservatory. Allard is considered the last principal bassoonist playing French bassoon in an American orchestra. While he played principal using a French bassoon, his second bassoon at the Boston Symphony was the Austrian bassoonist Ernst Panenka who played a German bassoon. Panenka played at the orchestra from 1930 to 1975. Allard’s playing as principal shows a progressive modification of tone color. In recordings, Allard’s playing has a “robust” sound with a tamed vibrato.

Marcel Tabuteau (France 1887–1966)

Tabuteau studied oboe at the Paris Conservatory with Georges Guillet. After he won the Premiere Prix and graduated in 1905, Walter Damrosch personally invited him to join the New York Symphony as second oboe and English horn. Tabuteau would later play principal at the Metropolitan Opera from 1908 to 1914 under Mahler and Toscanini, and Principal at the Philadelphia Orchestra from 1915 to 1954 under Stokowski and Ormandy. He taught at the Curtis Institute of Music from 1924 to 1953. He is considered the “father” of the American Oboe School. Through his classes at Curtis, Tabuteau influenced a wide array of students, including wind and string players.

“[Tabuteau] entered the [Metropolitan] orchestra in the fall of 1908, at the beginning of one of its most brilliant and artistically productive periods. During his stay at the orchestra from 1908 to 1914, he played for conductors such as Mahler and
Toscanini as well as singers like Enrico Caruso and Marcella Sembrich. The Metropolitan Opera Orchestra at the time was filled with an international roster of musicians coming from some of the most important musical centers in Europe, including Russia, France, and Germany.\footnote{169} Tabuteau worked with Mahler in the crucial early years of his professional career, when Mahler was in his professional prime, but he left no comment on his experience working with Mahler.

Tabuteau openly and repeatedly expressed his admiration for Toscanini. On the occasion of the 1944 Fund Raising Concert for the Philadelphia Orchestra, which Toscanini guest-conducted, Tabuteau commented after the concert ended, “Now I can die!” According to Schoenbach, “That program was absolutely the end as far as every detail was concerned.”\footnote{170}

Tabuteau’s relationship with Stokowski, on the other hand, would prove inspirational at the beginning and alienated towards the end of their twenty-six-year collaboration at the Philadelphia Orchestra, although their artistry would be of major importance for the American performing style. According to conductor Fritz Reiner, in the 1920s and early 1930s Tabuteau considered Stokowski “the greatest [conductor] in the world.”\footnote{171} However, by the mid 1930s, Tabuteau started distancing from Stokowski, and expressed to Laila Storch, his biographer, “how hard he had to work to satisfy ‘that mad

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\begin{itemize}
\item 169 Storch, Marcel Tabuteau, 70.
\item 170 Higgin, Arturo Toscanini, 130–31.
\item 171 Storch, Marcel Tabuteau, 130.
\end{itemize}
man.””\textsuperscript{172} Despite all these mixed feelings, in the 1940s Tabuteau kept in his studio pictures of Toscanini and Stokowski hanging on the wall next to each other.\textsuperscript{173}

According to Tabuteau’s pedagogic perspective “every man in the orchestra has been painstakingly trained from his school years to respond to the maestro’s wishes.”\textsuperscript{174} It is not known if Tabuteau’s desire to perform to Stokowski’s requirements resulted from his school training or if it was a sincere reaction to his admiration to Stokowski. It is possible that for the first twenty years of their collaboration it was a combination of both. At the end of his life, Tabuteau would say “I have to admit that in my half century of experience with conductors, he was the most gifted of all.”\textsuperscript{175}

Mason Jones recalled: “[Tabuteau] was always interested in the pitch. He was pretty hard with the concertmaster about the ‘A’ and also [about] how the pianos were tuned.”\textsuperscript{176} According to violinist Irwin Eisenberg, during Ormandy’s tenure, Tabuteau would confront the violin section’s tendency towards sharpness by tuning “purposely” low, and did the same when the woodwinds would play sharp. Eisenberg pointed out that Tabuteau would have never done this with Stokowski.\textsuperscript{177}

Tabuteau became a major influence because of his outstanding artistry, his dominant personality, and his long tenue at the orchestra and at Curtis. He was flexible enough to mix and synthesize characteristics from the French school he came from and the

\textsuperscript{172} Ibid., 128.

\textsuperscript{173} Ibid., 229.


\textsuperscript{175} Storch, \textit{Marcel Tabuteau}, 135.

\textsuperscript{176} Ibid., 439.

\textsuperscript{177} Ibid., 440.
German school he played at and which dominated at the time. At Philadelphia he was able to successfully develop professionally.

Professor Frederick Jacobi, composer and former coach at the Metropolitan Opera, talked to John Mack, principal oboe at the Cleveland Orchestra from 1965 to 2001, about his memories of Tabuteau while he played as principal at the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. “When your teacher arrived in this country,” said Jacobi, “he sounded like every other French oboe player, but not for long… not for long!” According to De Lancie, great technique and “beautiful style” were characteristic of several of Gillet’s students who immigrated to the United States and those he listened to in France, but Tabuteau’s sound was “special.”

Schoenbach considered that because of the Germanic tradition prevailing at the Philadelphia Orchestra, Tabuteau had to react to the distinct sound quality of the “louder” German bassoons by darkening his sound to blend better. “[Tabuteau] didn’t have the narrowness of sound that was common to the French oboe players of the time.”

Tabuteau is credited with creating the American oboe reed scraping, which gives more power to the sound and better fits the larger American halls. The American scraping is longer with more vibration and sound opposed to the short scraping of the French oboe school.

Schoenbach considered Tabuteau “the greatest influence in [his] life.” Schoenbach recalled, “The French have a certain logic, and he brought this logic to music in a way that had always escaped me….His musical ideas were presented with so much conviction that

179 Dietz, “A Conversation with Sol Schoenbach,” 44.
one could never consider that it could be any other way. I modeled my approach on his.”

Schoenbach recalled:

With Stokowski [Tabuteau] felt he had the right person with whom to really make music and that he was able to reach Stokowski and give him a lot of his ideas, Stokowski was the kind of man who would take everything he could from you, and then he would disown you because he didn’t want everybody to know where he got it…He didn’t want people to know that Tabuteau had such influence over him. You know, we would have a Monday-morning rehearsal and Stokowski would go out in the audience and listen to what Tabuteau did, and then when he came back and we would go into it again, he would always say, I want this and that, so he was obviously getting ideas.” “I would say that the orchestra was shaped by Tabuteau.”

Schoenbach’s admiration for Tabuteau and his opinion of Stokowski reflect the relationship between Tabuteau and Stokowski at the end of the latter’s tenure at Philadelphia. When Schoenbach entered the orchestra in 1937, he was a very talented young bassoonist with little professional experience, while Tabuteau was already a mature man and a musician in his prime, with over thirty years of professional experience and over twenty years playing principal for Stokowski at Philadelphia. Stokowski’s position at the orchestra was coming to a close after almost thirty years of directorship, and he resigned in 1941.

Two generations later, the perspective of musicians from the Philadelphia Orchestra on the Tabuteau-Stokowski controversy would remain inconclusive. John Krell, piccolist at the Philadelphia Orchestra from 1952 to 1981 and former student of Kincaid

180 Ibid., 45.

and Tabuteau, recalled, “It was hard to know whether Stokowski influenced Tabuteau or Tabuteau influenced Stokowski more.” 182

Tabuteau mentioned the abilities he believed an orchestral musician should have, such as being able to adjust his playing to the requirements of the piece and to the other players. “The flawless ensemble which seems almost a matter of course” is the result of school training focused on being able to “respond to the maestro’s wishes.” Tabuteau continues:

Formerly, when a conductor wanted a woodwind player, he took a trip to Europe. Today, the men occupying first chairs in most of our great orchestras have grown up in our own schools. We have transplanted the traditions of European orchestral training. After twenty years at the Curtis Institute of Music as head of the oboe department and of the woodwind ensemble class, I can take pride in the number of fine American orchestral musicians from these classes who have been able to step into key positions with no loss of quality in performance or style. 183

According to John Mack, when he was studying with Tabuteau from the mid 1940s to the early 1950s, Tabuteau advised him, “don’t play the way you feel, play the way you think.” “Tabuteau taught the woodwind and string class at Curtis during Peck’s and Mack’s time there,. There he taught phrasing by having the class chant 4123, 4123. His pattern was based on the downbeat-upbeat distribution.” 184 (4, upbeat, 1, downbeat, 2, upbeat, 3 upbeat, comma, delay in the resolution to create anticipation). Kindcaid also advised Mack to “play like [he was] reading the newspaper out loud to others.”


Georges Barrère (France, 1876–United States, 1944)

Barrère was a noted soloist, conductor, and teacher at the Art Institute of Music/The Juilliard School for thirty nine years. Barrère studied with Paul Taffanel starting in 1893. This is widely thought to be a turning point in Barrère’s life, as Taffanel became a very close mentor and supporter. After he obtained the first prize in 1895, Barrère stayed an additional year to continue lessons with Taffanel. He immigrated to the Unites States in 1905, invited by Damrosch as principal flute at the New York Symphony Orchestra. He repeatedly played as soloist with the orchestra. Barrère founded the Barrère Ensemble, a chamber group that performed widely around the country. Barrère was William Kincaid’s teacher.

Sol Schoenbach (United States 1915–1999)

Schoenbach was the first student of Kovar on German bassoon. He was principal at the Philadelphia Orchestra from 1937 to 1957, teacher of the German bassoon at the Curtis Institute of Music from 1946 to 1977, and Executive director of the Settlement School of Music from 1959 to 1981. An active chamber musician, he was a founding member of the Philadelphia Wind Quintet.

Schoenbach recalled that during his formative years he went to the New York Philharmonic’s Saturday concerts on a regular basis. His teachers, Kohon and Kovar, would later discuss the music with him. 185 Schoenbach considered that this gave him a strong background in German repertoire and the German performing school.

185 Haggin, Arturo Toscanini, 122.
Schoenbach acknowledged how, starting from his early years at the Philadelphia Orchestra to his mature years, his playing had developed; his vibrato had “completely tamed down, the basic tone … changed.” These changes, according to him, happened due to the influence of Tabuteau’s and the orchestra’s playing style.  

McGill considered Schoenbach’s recording of the opening solo of Stravinsky’s _Rite of Spring_ in the 1939 sound track of Walt Disney’s movie _Fantasia_, “an outstanding example of control and limpid phrasing.” McGill also considered that Schoenbach’s playing in his maturity could be characterized by “the educated thought [that] went into his playing as well as for his clarity of musical nuance.” Among his playing qualities are, according to McGill, his “purity of tone, his control of the line, his dynamic contrast, his clarity of note grouping, his singing vibrato, and his great breath control.”  


*Leonard Sharrow (United States 1915–2004)*

Sharrow originally studied French bassoon for three and a half years with Louis Letellier. He later switched to German bassoon and became a student of Kovar. During his study with Letellier, Sharrow unofficially took reed lessons and received musical advice

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from Kovar. He recalled that he would play his French bassoon with German reeds anywhere but in his lessons with Letellier. After he switched, he bought a German bassoon under Kovar’s supervision. Kovar’s recommendation was decisive in Sharrow’s early job appointment at the National Symphony Orchestra.

Sharrow played second bassoon at the NBC Orchestra from 1937 to 1941 and principal from 1947 to 1951. He also played principal at the Chicago and Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestras. Sharrow was teacher of the German bassoon at Indiana University from 1964 to 1977.

According to Schoenbach, “When Sharrow graduated from Juilliard...[we] pawned his French bassoon. We got him a Heckel and showed him the fingerings. Sharrow went off right away to the National Symphony....And incorporated many of the fingerings and approaches that he had learned on the French bassoon.” Known for his “superb vibrato,” Sharrow recalled that neither Letellier nor Kovar taught him vibrato. It was not until he played principal at the National Symphony that his colleagues at the orchestra, the principal flute Harold Bennett and the principal oboe Harold Gomberg taught him how to make vibrato. Both Bennett and Gomberg graduated from the Curtis Institute, studying with Kincaid and Tabuteau respectively. Sharrow’s vibrato was well rooted in the French tradition. In his interview with William Kaplan, Sharrow acknowledged no influence from his studies with Letellier, but he does mention a major influence from Kovar. It is

189 Dietz, “A Conversation with Sol Schoenbach,” 44.
191 Ibid., 102–3.
Schoenbach who recognized the influence that his lessons with Letellier had on Sharrow’s playing.

Sharrow, like his teacher Kovar and colleague Schoenbach, edited an important amount of bassoon music, mostly repertoire pieces, such as Anton Weber’s Bassoon Concerto op. 75 and Mozart’s Bassoon Concerto K. 191 with the cadenzas written by Toscanini. He played and recorded the Mozart’s concerto in 1947 with the NBC Orchestra, with Toscanini conducting.

American musicians praised qualities in Sharrow’s playing which became important in the establishment of the American bassoon school. According to Nancy Goeres, principal bassoon at the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, “[Sharrow had a] beautiful tone, dark, and warm.” Gordon Skinner, emeritus principal bassoon at the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, singled out the “unique expressive quality of his tone and… superb vibrato.”

**William Kincaid (United States 1895–1967)**

Kincaid was a student of Georges Barrère at the Institute of Musical Art. From 1914 to 1918 he played second flute to Barrère at the New York Symphony Orchestra with Walter Damrosch. In 1921 he was invited by Stokowski to join the Philadelphia Orchestra as principal. During his almost forty years in the orchestra, Kincaid was a frequent soloist. In 1924 he joined the Curtis Institute, remaining as faculty member for forty years.


193 Ibid., 91.
Kincaid assimilated in a very comprehensive way the French school, since he not only took lessons with Barrère, but also played next to him in the French woodwind section of the New York Symphony Orchestra. His tone quality, vibrato, and phrasing emulated that of the school he came from. When Kincaid joined the Philadelphia orchestra, he as well as Tabuteau reacted to the orchestra’s German background.

**Conclusion**

The conductors studied in this document found in the prevailing organizational conditions within the orchestras they conducted as well as the backgrounds of the players they worked with, the perfect combination that allowed them to implement their artistic criteria and establish a high level of performance. As a result, their influence contributed to the development of the American performing style, of which the style of the bassoon school is an clear example.

Of the five orchestras studied, three, the New York Symphony Orchestra, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and the Philadelphia Orchestra, were founded and sponsored by wealthy Americans interested in emulating the cultural life of Europe. While the New York Philharmonic Orchestra was founded by musicians as a cooperative organization, the NBC Symphony Orchestra was solely sponsored by a broadcasting company. Based on these different forms of sponsorship, the Boston and Philadelphia orchestras were the most financially stable. Orchestras such as the New York Philharmonic and the New York Symphony merged to concentrate funding and be able to enhance and extend the concert season. The merger also improved working conditions for the players. The NBC Orchestra, which had the best working conditions at the time, such as a competitive full-time and year-
round job, only survived for the seventeen years that Toscanini conducted; when he retired the National Broadcasting Company disbanded the orchestra. Being patron-funded allowed the other four orchestras to have enough resources to hire renowned conductors. That is the case in the appointments of Toscanini with the New York Philharmonic. This funding also allowed the programming of more demanding programs, such as the American premiere of Mahler’s Eight Symphony by Stokowski with the Philadelphia Orchestra in 1916.

The more stable working conditions allowed orchestras such as the Boston Symphony and the Philadelphia Orchestra to have sections within the orchestra that had no or minimal mobility for a long period. This resulted in the integration, cohesion, and establishment of a particular performing discipline and style. That was the case in Philadelphia’s woodwind section, which, during the 1922 to 1937 seasons, included Kincaid, Tabuteau, and Guetter as principals and after Guetter’s death in 1937, Schoenbach; these players remained together until Tabuteau’s retirement in 1954. This was also the case with the woodwind section at the Boston Symphony Orchestra formed by principal flutists Maquarre and Laurent from 1898 to 1952, oboists Longy and Gillet from 1898 to 1946, and bassoonists Laus and Allard from 1918 to 1954. This cohesion was further strengthened by the long tenures of the conductors, such as Stokowski’s twenty-nine years (1912–1941) with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Koussevitzky’s twenty-five years (1924–1949) with the Boston Symphony, and Toscanini’s nearly seventeen years (1937–1954) with the NBC Orchestra. In contrast, the relatively short tenures of some of the woodwind players at the NBC Orchestra did not give that orchestra the advantage of developing a characteristic sound.
All the orchestras studied in this document promoted themselves primarily via touring and broadcasting. Their mobility and access to diverse audiences allowed the players working in these orchestras to be known and sought after as teachers. Most players were also teachers and taught at the major music schools of the time, such as the Institute of Musical Arts/The Juilliard School, the Curtis Institute of Music, and the New England Conservatory. Sponsor support for American orchestras was of paramount importance because it enabled musicians to set the criteria for the selection of a conductor, the length and profile of the season, programming, and the working conditions of the players.

The original idea was to make America’s musical life as refined and educated as that in Europe. The importation of every aspect of music making that made Europe the center of western musical art became the main goal. While the immigration of European musicians achieved part of this goal, the halls built for these orchestras were not anything close in size and audience capacity to those in Europe. American 2,500 plus-seat halls, such as Philadelphia’s Academy of Music and Boston’s Symphony Hall, demanded new acoustics, dynamic settings, and capabilities from the musicians not required in European venues. The capability to fulfill these new demands became an important aspect of the conductor’s aesthetics and was reflected in the changes musicians made in several areas of their playing, such as a wider dynamic range, a different sense of timbre quality and sound, and in the case of double reed instruments, the development of a new scraping technique, which gave the oboe more sound projection, and a preference for the German bassoon due to its timbre and sound projection.

The immigration of musicians, conductors, and players from Europe created a new concept in tone color, volume, vibrato, and phrasing. The necessity of performing in larger
halls than those in Europe as well as the mixing of playing schools such as the German and the French in the woodwinds required all players to adjust to the established style in each particular orchestra. An example is Marcel Tabuteau, who, after being trained at the Paris Conservatory, adjusted his sound and created a new way of reed scraping to better blend with the existing style of the orchestra where he played. Another example is Raymond Allard, who, despite playing at an orchestra with a French background, modified his sound, probably because of the influence of his second chair who played a German bassoon and because he played in a large hall, Boston’s Symphony Hall. In addition, musicians with a German background, such as Sol Schoenbach and Leonard Sharrow, incorporated into their playing novel ideas on phrasing and vibrato taken from the French school.

At the beginning most of these orchestras programmed music from German and Austrian composers, making them specialists of the performing style required for this particular repertoire. However, orchestras like the New York Symphony and the Boston Symphony starting with Ribaut, programmed a broader international repertoire, introducing their audiences to a more complete view of Europe’s music. These orchestras also hired musicians who were trained in France and played French-style instruments, such as the silver flute, the Buffet Clarinet, and the French bassoon. All but the French bassoon would become the standard instrument in American orchestras.

The ideas of tone color, phrasing, and vibrato mixed to certain extent, but in some characteristics one school predominated over the other. This is the case of the preference for one instrument over another, such as the preference for the German bassoon’s tone color over that of the French bassoon, and the phrasing and vibrato concepts as well as the virtuosic technique inherited from the Paris Conservatory.
Through the Boston Symphony and the New York Symphony Orchestra, the United States was able to hire European musicians who would become a major influence. This was due to the type of organization that these orchestras had. The Boston Symphony was a non-union organization, which gave it freedom of employment criteria. The New York Symphony had to observe union regulations, but Damrosch’s interest in pairing and surpassing the Boston Symphony’s performance level, which he considered had been because of the hiring of its European musicians and their high performance level, induced him to negotiate with the union to override union regulations.¹⁹⁴

Toscanini’s close reading of the score made musicians aware of every musical element written in it, which was a novelty in the orchestral performance practice of the time. Using a flexible approach to orchestral performance, he enabled traditional repertoire to be played at a high performance level, bringing out textures and nuances previously overlooked because of the lack of detailed score reading and the lower technical level of the players. His demand for the exact playing of rhythms, phrasing, dynamics, and intonation resulted in the training of a new generation of musicians who embraced a meticulous playing approach. He also preferred a warmer sound, using vibrato at specific places, in specific dynamics, and at a particular speed. His focus on beat one and use of a circular beat were important to the pulse and character of his phrasing. Finally, his preference for the German bassoon over the French instrument was a clear example of the shift that gradually occurred during the twentieth century, which made the German bassoon the preferred instrument in American orchestras. Toscanini’s orchestral discipline, characterized by the respect musicians had for his artistry combined with authoritarian

intimidation, made musicians always keep themselves at their best playing level, although, according to Schoenbach, Toscanini did not use dismissal as a means of intimidation like other conductors did. His close attention to the score, with his strict emphasis on the accurate playing of all musical elements, such as rhythm, gave a new perspective on the standard repertoire that he preferred.

Stokowski’s focus on sound quality, his search for exact intonation in a low range of A338, and a dark sound amplified by free bowing created the Philadelphia Orchestra’s characteristic velvet sound. His conducting style, with his focus on the musical line, his phrasing starting on the anacrusis to beat one, and his changing of orchestration to enhance and reinforce the different layers of musical texture, all created his particular phrasing and sound. Highly disciplined, Stokowski relied on firing as an active and subliminal source to get the best playing from the musicians. The programming of new and nontraditional repertoire opened to audiences a window to other musical traditions and performance perspectives.

The importation of French wind players and their collaboration with other members of the orchestra from German backgrounds, made the Boston Symphony an interesting place where, although the French school dominated, the German sound and traditions still permeated. Koussevitzky emphasized the creation of a warm sound with the use of the vibrato, particularly when playing piano, and he preferred a bright sound achieved through the timbre of the French school players and the sharp A444 intonation. He, like Stokowski, used intimidation and firing to impose authority, although he had a very paternal approach with the orchestra’s musicians. Koussevitzky programmed new repertoire, particularly French music.
The conductors’ preferences of intonation range contributed to their orchestras’ particularities. Stokowski’s opulent, thick sound tuned at A438 was achieved by remaining perfectly in tune within this range, never sharper. On the other hand, Koussevitzky’s preference for an intonation at A444 and sharper produced a sound considered brilliant and beautiful. Stokowski’s and Toscanini’s insistence on perfect intonation at all times contrasted with the approach of Koussevitzky, who demanded perfect intonation, but allowed a tendency to sharpness.

The conducting styles and attitudes of the conductors made the musicians playing at the different orchestras extremely aware of their technical and expressive possibilities. The sense of pride that most of the musicians had for the finesse and high quality of the performances, and which they applied to their playing, resulted in a novel artistry and a level of technical proficiency not heard before in the United States and showed the conductors’ artistic command.

Toscanini, Koussevitzky, and Stokowski, because of their long tenures, conducting aesthetics, and personalities were able to contribute to the molding of the particular elements that characterized American orchestral performance practice. The bassoonists playing for them molded their playing to integrate better into their orchestras’ performing style. By the mid twentieth century, the first generation of American bassoonists were professionally active and representing the earliest example of bassoon playing in the United States.
According to the French bassoonist Maurice Allard, a strong advocate of the French bassoon and considered one of the finest bassoonists of the second half of the twentieth century, “Habits are habits, and we have all been immunized by the sound of our own instrument, by the sounds of our teachers, by the sounds that we hear regularly, daily.”\textsuperscript{1} Schoenbach simplifies these concepts by alleging that when playing “one gets used to certain conceptions.” This is the way Allard and Schoenbach described the establishment of a set of concepts that through repetition and reinforcement became the accepted norm. The different schools in the United States during the first half of the twentieth century had specific and contrasting performing characteristics which differentiated their traditions from one another. Musicians imported from Europe, and conductors and players, who came primarily from France, Germany, and Russia, brought their musical traditions with them. The two dominant bassoon schools at the time, French and German, interacted and converged with each other in the musical life of the United States during the early decades of the twentieth century. The integration of the schools resulted in the American bassoon school.

According to William Winstead, principal bassoonist at the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, the French bassoon school was characterized by its bright, nasal timbre, and narrow sound, by its detailed phrasing and virtuoso technique, and by its fast vibrato and

wide dynamic range. The German bassoon school was characterized by its very dark
timbre, a slow or absent vibrato, a loud dynamic range, and its fast, though not virtuosic,
technique. The American bassoon school, as it is known today, is characterized by its dark
and round tone with different shades, controlled vibrato, medium-range volume, detailed
phrasing, and a detailed technique.\(^2\) In addition to the previous characteristics, the French
bassoon school promoted the bassoon as a virtuoso and solo instrument, while the
German bassoon school focused on the function of the bassoon advocated the orchestral
tradition.

In order to establish stylistic backgrounds, it is necessary to answer questions such
as how musicians from the schools defined their own tradition and defined the other school,
how musicians and pedagogues established their teaching perspectives and playing
characteristics, and what words did teachers use to describe the characteristics they
reinforced in their teaching. How did they teach tone quality, vibrato, and phrasing?

**French School**

Describing what made a student from the Paris Conservatory so highly qualified,
flutist Georges Barrère claimed:

> In the Paris Conservatoire which I take as a model, not because I was a graduate
> from this National Institution; but because its reputation of providing the World
> with first class wood wind players, the flute, oboe, clarinet, and bassoon classes
> are on an average basis of ten students each….The examinations are based on the
> same standard of work [as for the strings]: Execution of a Concerto in public and
> also first sight reading. The obscure bassoonist is expected to show the same

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acknowledge and demonstrate the same command of his instrument than [sic] the violinist performing Vieuxtemps, Bruch or Saint-Saëns’ concertos.³

In order to understand the characteristics of the French School of woodwinds that contributed to the American wind school, one must focus on two of its most representative and influential teachers, the flutist Paul Taffanel and the oboist Georges Gillet, both colleagues at the Paris Conservatory, and how they passed on to their students at the Conservatory their perspectives on elements such as vibrato, tone quality, and phrasing.

Timbre

The timbre of the French flute and oboe was considered bright and flexible. Taffanel’s pedagogy focused a great deal on the production of tone. Taffanel’s timbre was considered the prime example of the “ideal flute sound.” For him timbre was, among all the aspects of playing, the most important, and all the others were subservient to it.⁴ Taffanel’s “ideal sound” as well as Gillet’s timbre, described as “exquisite, delicate and clear, yet powerful,” do not account for specific timbre characteristics that were considered French in the United States. Fernand Gillet described similar qualities in his uncle’s tone: “My uncle had the most beautiful tone, which has never even been successfully imitated. He was a great player—technically as well as the quality of tone.”⁵ Tabuteau considered his teacher


Gillet a reference for his playing, but he modified his sound to fit better with that of Philadelphia’s German tradition. Sol Schoenbach claimed:

The Italians, the French, and the older generation of bassoonist all played on the French bassoon. In the Philadelphia orchestra, which had a very Germanic background, there was no discussion about it. Even a man like Tabuteau had changed his oboe playing to fit more with the louder sounding German bassoons. He didn’t have the narrowness of sound that was common to the French oboe players of that time.  

The closest to a pure French sound for the flute and oboe in the United States can be found in the early recordings of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, where the flute section was led from 1898 to 1952 by French flutists André Maquarre and Georges Laurent, and the oboe section from 1898 to 1946 by Georges Longy and Fernand Gillet.  

De Lancie considered that “all the French oboe students of Gillet had nothing special about their sound, but he considered Tabuteau’s sound to be “very special.”” According to Maurice Allard and Pascal Gallois, ideas of individuality with the use of different colors to create characters and diversity are paramount in the French school, not a standardization tone color.

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In the bassoon section, there was a strong alternation and co-playing between French and German instruments. The timbre of the French bassoon was the determining factor in the preference shift between the two instruments. The description of this quality at different times during the twentieth century helps explain the reasons behind the preference for the German bassoon. *Musical Courier*, when introducing French bassoonist Auguste Mesnard as the new principal of the New York Symphony in 1905, also introduced the French bassoon, noting that “the French bassoon is more wood and resonant, and according to Mr. Damrosch, amalgamates better with the other instruments of the woodwind choir.”\(^9\) Damrosch’s woodwinds at the New York Symphony Orchestra were formed by French-trained musicians.

Sharrow acknowledged five French bassoon players in the United States at the time: Mesnard, Lettelier, Laus, Allard, and [Gaston] Duhamel. Duhamel was principal bassoon at the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra from 1900 to 1922, an orchestra with strong German background. His tenure as principal includes Stokowski’s tenure in Cincinnati. Duhamel also held the principal bassoon chair in the Cleveland from 1929 to 1930. He taught at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music from 1903 to 1922 and at Eastman School of Music from 1922 to 1926.\(^{10}\) Leonard Sharrow commented on his impression of the sound of the French bassoon: “Over the years, I have heard a number of French bassoon players, and if you can accept the fact that it is going to be a somewhat different timbre

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9 Toff, *Monarch of the Flute*, 89.
because of the structure of the instrument, in the hands of a good player it can sound absolutely beautiful really. They had very good schooling.”

In a 1976 interview, Allard, describing the tone quality he sought in his French bassoon, talked about how the timbre of the French bassoon was considered in the last quarter of the century. Allard, a very international French bassoonist, explained: “The sound that I aim for is full and centered, more full and centered that that of the majority of French bassoonists of years past; and darker; yet not without color. It is noble, robust, warm, big, open, supple. The fault that I cannot tolerate is a sound like a ‘sheet of metal’—the nest of bits, and bees!” Allard was reacting to the quality of sound that was becoming the main trend. The words “darker,” “robust,” “big,” and even “warm,” are adjectives that were used to describe the sound of players of the German bassoon in the first half of the twentieth century.

Allard also pointed out that “many composers wrote with the timbre of the French bassoon in their ear.” He recalled that not only composers from the Paris School but also composers from other schools wrote works that included the French bassoon. Among those works are Ravel’s *Bolero*, and Stravinsky’s Russian ballets, such as *The Rite of Spring*. Being immunized and getting used to certain conceptions is part of what happened in the process of the development of the American bassoon school. A piece conceived with the sound of the French bassoon in the composer’s mind, when played with a German bassoon,


13 Ibid., 37.
would result in different shades, timbres and tone colors than those originally conceived. Conductors favored the sound of the German bassoon even when they conducted works not written originally for that instrument. This is particularly true of Toscanini, whose strict readings of the score did not include the French bassoon. Similarly, Koussevitzky at the Boston Symphony moved Abdon Laus, a player with a very strong French bassoon sound, to the third chair and gave the first chair to Raymond Allard, who although French-trained, had modified his sound to one with a darker and louder quality.

Vibrato

Fernand Gillet credited the French flutists as being the first to use vibrato and Georges Gillet as being the first to use it on the oboe: “The flute players started a little bit earlier and were the first ones to use it among the woodwind players. The oboe was a little later.” 14 Taffanel was the teacher not only of Barrère, but also of Georges Laurent and Marcel Moyse, and all three were graduates of the Paris Conservatory who became influential pedagogues in the United States in the first half of the twentieth century. Taffanel in his Complete Flute Method encouraged playing without vibrato:

There should be no vibrato or any form of quaver, an artifice used by inferior instrumentalists and musicians. It is with the tone that the player conveys the music to the listener. Vibrato distorts the natural character of the instrument and spoils the interpretation, fatiguing quickly the sensitive ear. It is a serious error and shows unpardonable lack of taste to use these vulgar methods to interpret the great composers. 15

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15 Toff, Monarch of the Flute, 111.
Marcel Moyse recalled that in early twentieth-century France there was a strong rejection of vibrato, mainly from what he called “the traditionalists”; vibrato at that time, he said, “was worse than cholera.” Criticism of those flutists who played with vibrato was merciless. However, according to Taffanel’s students Louis Fleury and Adolphe Hennebains, Taffanel did play with vibrato. Fleury, one of Taffanel’s successful students in France, recalled that in his lessons Taffanel encouraged his students to “search for tone, and the use for this purpose, of a light, almost imperceptible vibrato.” He was against a “mechanical” vibrato, and if it was used he preferred a more natural and subtle one. Robert Philipp in his book concludes that the existing recordings of several of Taffanel’s students, such as Barrère and Moyse, show that they included vibrato in their playing. Each one played with their own personal vibrato. Brett explains that Barrère’s playing was characterized by the “incessant shaking superimposed on the tone —a frenetic unchanging wobble” characteristic of other French flutists at the time. Doriot Anthony Dywer, a former Barrère and Kincaid student and principal flutist at the Boston Symphony, specifically from 1952 to 1990, remembered Barrère’s very fast vibrato. Phillip added that Barrère’s vibrato was very fast, continuous and shallow, while Moyse, who arrived into the United States thirty years later, played a medium-fast, flexible, and shallow vibrato.


17 Ibid.

18 Toff, Monarch of the Flute, 111.


Barrère’s fast vibrato was passed on to his student William Kincaid.\textsuperscript{21} Barrère in the 1940s regretted that flutists at the time were playing with vibrato, while he had spent the last fifty years of his teaching career encouraging his students not to use it.\textsuperscript{22} From the earliest recordings to those of the early 1950s there was a continuous vibrato deceleration in wind players’ playing in the United States. In later years, bassoonist Maurice Allard described a more flexible vibrato, “It is the art of vibrato—be it discreet, supple, tight, fast, slow, wide or intense; as well as the absence of [it].”\textsuperscript{23}

The French oboe school led by Georges Gillet reflects characteristics similar to those of the French flute school, namely, a light and bright timbre, vibrato without a standard profile, and a focus on phrasing. Gillet’s recordings from the very early years of the twentieth century show his limited use of vibrato. However, vibrato was a regular feature of his students who played in the United States, such as Georges Longy, his nephew Fernand Gillet, and Tabuteau. Longy, and after him Fernand Gillet, served as principals at the Boston Symphony Orchestra. On one hand, Longy played with a vibrato similar to Gillet’s, and Fernand Gillet played a shallow and fast vibrato. Tabuteau, on the other hand, played with a continuous and fast vibrato.\textsuperscript{24} Fernand Gillet recalled how during his years at the Paris Conservatory, vibrato was prohibited for wind instruments. Despite the prohibition, Georges Gillet used vibrato, and Ferdinand and other Gillet students imitated their teacher and used it as an expressive device produced by the throat.

\textsuperscript{21} Phillip, “Early Recording and Musical Style,” 111–12.

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 111.


\textsuperscript{24} Phillip, “Early Recording and Musical Style,” 120–21.
Despite the prohibition of vibrato at the Paris Conservatory and contradicting themselves as Taffanel did it in his own publication, players such as Taffanel and Georges Gillet used vibrato at their discretion in their practical playing. By the 1930s vibrato was well established in the United States and France.

Sharrow was highly respected for his “superb” vibrato. However, he was not trained in this skill by any of his bassoon teachers; neither Lettelier nor Kovar taught him how to do it. It was not until he got his job at the National Symphony that his oboe and flute colleagues at the orchestra, who had been trained by Barrère and Tabuteau respectively, introduced him to vibrato. Acquiring this skill from such players, flute and oboe players and their predominant soloist position at the orchestra, and coming from teachers trained in the French tradition puts Sharrow as a direct inheritor of the French vibrato school. Sharrow’s vibrato was moderately fast.

Phrasing

According to Doriot Dwyer, Barrère’s playing was very “interesting,” and his phrasing and tone color may have been superior to that of Kincaid or Laurent. John De Lancie recalled that other Georges Guillet students who came to the United States, in addition to Tabuteau, were Longy, who played in Boston from 1898 to 1925, Guillet’s nephew, Ferdinand Guillet, who also played in Boston from 1925 to 1946, and Alfred Barthel, who played in Chicago from 1903 to 1929. De Lancie had the opportunity to listen to Gillet’s former students in France, and recognized in some of them “phenomenal

technique” and “something very beautiful about the style.” Schoenbach acknowledged being highly influenced by Tabuteau’s musical ideas:

Tabuteau contended that music has certain inevitability, one needed to understand and utilize a logical system of execution which took into account the placement and ordering of the notes and their relationship to each other. This idea of relationships of notes to other notes, was a novel idea for me. For example, a line of music has a relationship within itself based on pitch differences, rhythmic differences, and harmonic relationship between the rhythm and meter. I noticed that when he played, there was a special kind of flow to the music. He was able to transcend the bar line.26

German School

The bassoonists who had a German background who played in the United States were Kohon and Kovar at the New York Philharmonic, Guetter at the Philadelphia Orchestra, and Panenka at the Boston Symphony. Musicians from different musical traditions and epochs, when describing the characteristics of the German school, offered similar opinions and chose similar words to describe them, demonstrating how standardized this school was.

Timbre

According to Phillip, “German method books encouraged a ‘thick tone.’” The German flute school used a wooden flute that had a full, thick, and powerful sound, and the German oboe school, although its sound was described as nasal and penetrating, was

characterized by its “broad and powerful tone.”

The German bassoon school in the first half of the twentieth century had a sound that was rich, dark, and full, which made it adequate for its function as harmonic support. Describing the woodwind sound in the early twentieth century, British oboist Leon Goossens observed, “The fashionable woodwind sound…was more wooden, vibrato was rarely, if ever used, and certainly not as a fundamental aspect of tone production.”

In the United States, Leonard Sharrow recalled that he had heard recordings made by German orchestras in the late 1920s and 1930s that he considered had “very good playing—good sound, good phrasing, technically very fine—no vibrato, straight sound, but other that that, fine.” Sharrow recalled further that, in the early 1970s, bassoonists at German orchestras were still playing without vibrato, while international solo bassoonists with German schooling, such as the Viennese Milan Turkovic and the German Klaus Thunemann, had already incorporated vibrato into their solo playing.

According to the French Pascal Gallois, the German bassoon has a “dark” sound because of the maple wood it is made of, which gives more resonance. In early recordings of the Berlin Philharmonic from the 1910s, with Arthur Nikisch conducting, the tone quality of the flutes, oboes, and bassoons still reflected a dark, full, and powerful sound. In recordings from the late 1930s, with Wilhelm Furtwängler conducting, the sound of the winds remained full, round, rich, and dark, but included some traces of vibrato.

28 Ibid., 120.
30 Pascal Gallois, interview by author, Guanajuato, October 22, 2014.
Vibrato

In the German school as well as in those schools with German background, such as Austria, vibrato was not preferred. When Richard Strauss described the French oboe tone as being flexible but “tremulant,” he was contrasting it with the German school, with its solid sound and lack of vibrato. In early recordings of the Berlin Philharmonic, from the 1910s with Arthur Nikisch conducting, the flutes, oboes, and bassoons play the lyrical and sustained-note passages without vibrato, and the same is true in recordings from the late 1930s with Wilhelm Furtwängler. However, in recordings of Furtwängler from the early 1950s, the flute and oboe use vibrato in lyrical passages, but minimally in a very shallow way, while the bassoon does not use it at all.

Of those bassoonists trained in European music schools who played in the United States, Kohon and Kovar remained close to their background. However, Guetter, who was trained by his uncle in Berlin, contradicted his training by playing with a fast and continuous vibrato, as heard on his recordings with the Philadelphia Orchestra. Guetter’s vibrato might have been influenced by the playing of his colleagues at the Philadelphia Orchestra, such as the French Tabuteau and the French-trained Kincaid.

Contemporary pedagogues of the German tradition still consider the use of vibrato with reservations. According to the Austrian bassoonist and pedagogue Eleanor Froelich, “The Austrian school does not employ vibrato and professional orchestras in Vienna do not favor it.” However, solos like The Rite of Spring require it. It has to be used selectively.31 According to Henry Welsh, describing the vibrato used by the Vienna Philharmonic: “We

have adopted the French and Italian system, with a vibrato. It is extremely difficult properly to control the reed when playing with even the slightest of vibratos. It is this circumstance that impairs the purity of tone and intonation in the higher registers.”

**Phrasing**

All the phrasing accounts found by the author were post-1950s. In the Austrian tradition, Froelich stated, “Every aspect of bassoon playing was approached through musicality [musical expression].” Unlike the German and American schools, phrasing in Austria is emphasized by the use of a wide variety of articulation techniques that reflect Austria’s strong orchestral tradition. At the edge of each of these articulation possibilities are “an extremely short staccato to ‘one that is almost like glue.’”

**American School**

The first generation of the American bassoon school includes Sol Schoenbach, as an example of a German school-trained bassoonist and later French-influenced, and Leonard Sharrow, as that of a hybrid who was originally French-trained but switched to the German bassoon.

According to John De Lancie, principal oboe at the Philadelphia Orchestra, and a member of the faculty and director of the Curtis Institute of Music: “The Curtis Institute was responsible for the change that took place. Stokowski brought all of the Philadelphia

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men into the Institute to teach and began to turn out players of really extraordinary quality.”

The 1925–1926 Curtis Institute of Music catalog advertised:

Courses in Orchestral Instruments. There is in the United States a serious lack of players of woodwind, brass, and percussion instrument qualified to hold positions in the many symphony orchestras...[in] the country. [The Curtis Institute of Music] offers artists who hold in the Philadelphia Orchestra the posts of solo players.... Each is a master of great reputation.

The Curtis Institute of Music catalog of the same academic year also claimed: “Dr. Leopold Stokowski, the salient figure among the great conductors of today, personally trains and drills the student orchestra.... The students ... receive the training which has made the Philadelphia Orchestra the foremost in the world.” The catalog continues with information on Marcel Tabuteau, who concentrated on the technique of orchestral playing and taught “classes in which ‘phrasing, rhythm, delicate points of shading, and dynamic variety are worked out on the different orchestral instruments.”

The advertising from the Curtis Institute echoed the criteria used twenty years earlier by Damrosch when he founded the Art Institute of Music and when the lack of qualified American musicians was still evident. However, by the 1940s and 1950s, musical life in the United States produced its first generation of highly qualified American musicians graduating from music schools such as the Art Institute and Curtis, who took over the chairs in major orchestras. Damrosch and Stokowski were at the head of the

34 Demetra Baferos Fair, “Flutists’ Family Tree: In Search of the American Flute School” (DMA thesis, The Ohio State University, 2003), 55.

35 Laila Storch, Tabuteau: How Do You Expect to Play the Oboe if You Can’t Peel a Mushroom? (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press 2008), 178.

36 Ibid., 180.
programs and invited the players from their orchestras to teach, expanding their perspective on performing style and setting at the schools criteria similar to those imposed at the orchestras.

**Timbre**

American musicians described how they perceived the different aspects of music-making in their own tradition. According to Stephen Maxym, Principal at the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra from 1949 to 1976, who studied with Simon Kovar, “The tone must have resonance, core (body), quality, intensity and color,” and “The building of a tone should start with finding the resonant position for every note in the instrument.”37 Ernest Liegl, flutist at the Chicago Symphony, considered Kincaid’s tone as his “favorite flute sound.” Barrère recalled to Liegl that Kincaid in his lessons talked “incessantly” about a “clear tone, free of breathiness.” Doriot remembered how she loved Kincaid’s sound and its “bounce.”38

**Vibrato**

According to Sharrow: “Vibrato is a variation in intensity; you push and retreat, push and retreat, like sforzandos done with the breath…. It is not …a variation on pitch, [however, by pushing and retracting the pitch sags] a little bit…. The vibrato goes a little

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bit below and back into the intensity on the pitch itself,” but “never above. [If you vibrate above you] loose the center of the pitch—which is bad.” According to Maxym, “Vibrato consists of pitch variation, intensity variety, dynamic variation, and to a lesser degree color variation.”

Sharrow recalled that in the 1940s vibrato “was not as prevalent then as it is now.” Bassoonists playing with vibrato in the late 1930s were Guetter, Kohon, and Allard. Sharrow himself credited Harold Gomberg and Harold Bennett with teaching him the basics on developing vibrato. He considered vibrato and its flexible use “a reflection of [a musician’s] own musicianship.” He played with “a vibrato that could be varied…as the phrase demanded.” William Kaplan in later years described Sharrow’s vibrato as being “fast, intense,” which marks a change in the perspective and usage of the vibrato over time in the United States. Brett described how by the 1930s or 1940s Kincaid “worked seriously to solve the problem of this fast, persistent vibrato.” Was a fast vibrato at the time already considered “a problem?” It is clear that there is a change in speed and profile in the vibrato played by Tabuteau, Kincaid, and Guetter in the early recordings of the Philadelphia Orchestra, different from those of the next generation, which became slower and shallower. According to Kim Walker, former bassoon teacher at Indiana University and

42 Ibid.
43 Baferos, “Flutists’ Family Tree,” 27.
international performer, “The current American training on the vibrato encourages a very regular one which rarely differed depending upon repertoire.”

Phrasing

The influence of the French school on phrasing was of paramount importance in the different playing styles in the United States. French players, such as Tabuteau at Curtis and Barrère at the Art Institute, expanded these concepts through their studio and wind classes. Their students continued this tradition when they became pedagogues. Kincaid in his lessons emphasized the importance of harmony and how it “influenced interpretation and the mood of a work.”

According to Doriot, “[Kincaid’s playing] style involved more listening and fitting into the context. She felt he did this partly out of respect for his colleagues in the Philadelphia orchestra,” and added, “I did hear Kincaid doing a lot more listening than most flutists…. [the Philadelphia wind section] all admired each other so that’s what they would do.”

Schoenbach recognized in Tabuteau his main musical influence and acknowledged that after years of playing at Philadelphia, he molded his phrasing and sound to emulate those of Tabuteau and the orchestra.

European conductors and players trained the new generation not only with their playing at the orchestras and their teaching of concepts related to the technical aspect of music making, but also by exemplifying the pertinent orchestral discipline and rehearsal-


45 Kean, “First Flute,” 27.

46 Ibid., 28.
performance preparation. Violinist Irvin Rosen joined the Philadelphia Orchestra in 1945 and stayed for forty years. Rosen, who sat near Tabuteau and Kincaid, described the impressive way in which they matched their playing. “Whenever we played La Mer,” he said, “they were both out there maybe half an hour or more before the concert.” Over the years “there were these two great artists going over this passage time and time again. It sounded absolutely fabulous…On that first note,… it wasn’t like either a flute or an oboe. It seemed to be some sort of extra-terrestrial instrument.”47 Lester recalled how Tabuteau prepared for the difficult passage in the third movement of Tchaikovsky’s Fourth Symphony: “Each and every time [Tabuteau] had to play that solo, he would go out on the stage ahead of time and practice it.”48

**Conclusion**

The European musicians who came to the United States brought their different performing traditions with them. The elements that make music-making, such as timbre, vibrato and phrasing profile, reflect the diversity that converged in the American orchestras and music schools. The preference for a specific characteristic or an element of a particular school, or the search for an improved version that combined contrasting elements, contributed to the development of an American musical identity.

According to Andy Hamilton: “Timbre is the quality or tone colour of a musical note which distinguishes different types of musical instrument. Timbre comprises these

47 Storch, *Marcel Tabuteau*, 446.

48 Ibid., 449.
qualities of a musical sound which relate it most directly to its source. Timbre qualities include resonance, harshness, mellowness, nasality, reverberance, shrillness, and stridency.\textsuperscript{49}

The preference for a darker sound is also present and reinforced in the teaching of the sound a bassoon reed should produce. There is a clear tendency favoring darker sound and a search for instructions that would “darken the sound of the bassoon reed.” The tendency to reduce brightness exemplified the encouragement and reinforcement of a specific sound quality sought in the bassoon. Musicians’ discussions about bassoon playing show them rejecting the terminology and characteristics that described the sound qualities of the French bassoon.\textsuperscript{50} According to Schoenbach: “It was inevitable that the German system would eventually replace the French bassoon due to its carrying power….The German bassoon recorded better than the French bassoon on the equipment they had in those days. Engineers would complain that they couldn’t pick up the French bassoon clearly on their microphones.”\textsuperscript{51} He simplified by concluding that “this happened…because people preferred the German sound.”\textsuperscript{52}

Schoenbach considered Tabuteau’s playing an important part on his playing style, but Stokowski’s conducting abilities and aesthetics did not have the same impact. It is important to remember that when Schoenbach got the principal bassoon chair at

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\textsuperscript{51} Dietz, “A Conversation with Sol Schoenbach,” 44.

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.
\end{flushright}
Philadelphia, he was a twenty-two-year-old, talented young man with little professional experience, and Stokowski was in the final years of his tenure. Stokowski would only stay four more seasons and was experiencing the wearing out of his authority which conductors suffer at the end of long tenures. Tabuteau already had thirty-two years of experience as a professional oboist, having played previously for conductors such as Mahler and Toscanini. By the time Stokowski left the orchestra in 1941, he had accumulated twenty-nine years as conductor with the Philadelphia Orchestra, while Tabuteau was a fifty four-year-old man who was at his professional and artistic peak. It is undeniable that Schoenbach was highly influenced by Tabuteau, but Tabuteau, who considered Stokowski an outstanding conductor, represented a mixture of styles because of his performing background at the New York Symphony Orchestra with Damrosch, the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra with Mahler and Toscanini, and the Philadelphia Orchestra with Stokowski and briefly again with Toscanini, as well as his schooling at the Paris Conservatory. Schoenbach indirectly learned through Tabuteau the synthesis of the German and French schools that occurred from the 1900s to the 1930s, as well as the orchestral aesthetics of the conductors for which Tabuteau had played. Schoenbach late in his performing career would be an example of the further synthesis of all these elements. His playing would set standards for the American bassoon school, which the subsequent generations would follow.

While the words used to describe the quality of the French tone are nasal, narrow, and bright, the words related to what was considered a good tone color included words such as round, full, mellow, and dark, often used to described the tone quality of the German school. These adjectives were used among others by Simon Kovar to explain to his students what he considered a beautiful and attractive sound such as full, big, dark, with no vibrato.
The descriptions of Sharrow’s sound included terms such as “singing sound,” “expressive quality of tone,” “superb vibrato,” and specifically “beautiful tone, dark, and warm.” Other accounts describe the “the expressive quality of his tone and his superb vibrato.” Sharrow’s description of Guetter’s sound included adjectives such as “big, rich, [and] full.” Benjamin Kohon used the term “fine tone,” to describe sound quality; however, he gave no specification on what timbre characteristic it should have. He would put quality of tone over volume. He, as principal bassoonist would encourage a little vibrato, without exaggerating, that is, he preferred a selective use of vibrato. He specified that sustained notes could be sometimes played evenly and others with little vibrato. All accounts cited above are primarily from players who have strong background in the German school and whose playing influenced future generations of American-trained bassoonists.

The vibrato, detailed technique, and phrasing was a contribution from the French school, and even players like Guetter, with his pure German training, was influenced by it. The first generation bassoon players of the American school used the “carrying power” and mellowness of the sound of the German bassoon added to the French school’s flexibility but controlled vibrato and detailed phrasing and technique.
Chapter 3

Sound Spectrum Study of Vibrato

The different oral and written descriptions given in the previous chapter applied to elements such as vibrato, timbre, and phrasing that determined the characteristics inherent to each of the performing schools in the United States during the first half of the twentieth century. With this background, the purpose of this chapter is first, to compare and contrast the vibrato profiles of several of the bassoon players who came from different training schools and played in orchestras with distinct performing styles and second, to make an objective study of the different types of vibrato played by these players using sound spectrum analysis. By contrasting the different vibrato approaches in the recordings, I aim to demonstrate the characteristics of French, German, and American vibrato, and show how bassoonists in the United States approached vibrato and how vibrato changed its profile during this period.

Criteria for Study of the Sound Spectra Analysis

a) The characteristics of the vibrato’s profile, uneven versus controlled, its pitch establishment and the number of its oscillations. The analysis of the oscillations includes the contrast of deepness versus shallowness, wideness versus narrowness, active versus spare, and regular versus uneven relationships.

b) The excerpts selected have the following characteristics:

   i) exposed bassoon orchestra excerpts and solos with no or little background accompaniment,
ii) lyrical excerpts with long notes, and

iii) the same or similar compositions.

For comparative charts on hertz-pitch and sound spectrum color equivalence, see Appendix, Tables 2 and 3.

Table 1. List of bassoonists, conductors, and works used for vibrato’s and staccato’s sound spectrum analysis. Paired works are in the same color. Single works are no color.
There are two phases of a vibrato period, the note establishment and its oscillations. During the establishment of the note the color of the energy remains within the note being played, and when the oscillations occur the energy not only substantially increases but also expands in both directions to the nearest lower and higher notes. In the example above each oscillation presents its beginning and end in purple and dark red (black and light black) colors within the note. When the player establishes the note in preparation for vibrato, it has a red color (grey) with some orange shades (grey medium light). As the vibrato progresses the energy accumulates and as the color changes from yellow (light grey) to bright yellow (white) at its peak, the accumulation of energy expands to the nearest notes. In example A, the image shows yellow (light grey) and red (grey) instead of purple (light black) shades in notes such as A below and G-sharp above it. See right column with white arrow in sound spectrum image of Example A.
Zoom in on a Single Vibrato Oscillation

In Example B the sound spectrum shows the different sections of a single vibrato oscillation. The image shows the beginning and ending of the oscillation in dark red and red shades (dark grey and grey for black and white printing) framing the peak of the oscillation in increasing and decreasing shades of orange, yellow, and bright yellow (medium light grey, light grey, and white). The increment in energy during the peak of the oscillation expands into the neighboring notes. This is readable in the different lighter shades present above and below the line of the main note.
Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, Fifth Symphony, Op. 64, 1888

Example 1. Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, Fifth Symphony, Op. 64, second movement, mm. 29–30, bassoon part.

Comparison of recordings made by the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Leopold Stokowski with the solo played by Walter Guetter in 1934 and the Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Serge Koussevitzky with the solo played by Raymond Allard in 1944.

Guetter playing Tchaikovsky’s Fifth Symphony, Op. 64, second movement, mm. 29–30 with the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Stokowski in 1934.

Figure 1.1.1, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, Fifth Symphony Op. 64, second movement, m. 29.3. First note in excerpt, F-sharp 3. Circle A in Example 1. Guetter, Philadelphia Orchestra, and Stokowski, 1934.

Guetter plays the vibrato with a long note establishment followed by three uneven oscillations. The first two oscillations have a narrow and deep profile while the
third has a wide and shallow profile. Guetter connects this note to the following one with an increment of energy.


For this figure, Guetter plays a shorter note establishment followed by eight narrow and deep oscillations. While the rhythmic value is smaller, a quarter-note, instead of a dotted quarter-note, Guetter plays this note with active and relatively even oscillations. However, the vibrato applied to both consecutive notes on this excerpt does not sound organic or contextual.

For this note, Guetter plays a ten-oscillation vibrato with minimum note establishment. The oscillations have an even and narrow profile. Guetter plays the whole excerpt in Example 1 as a continuous accumulation of energy through the vibrato.


Figure 1.2.1, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, Fifth Symphony, Op. 64, second movement, m. 29.3. Third beat, F-sharp 3 Circle A in Example 1. Allard, Boston Symphony Orchestra, and Koussevitzky, 1944.
Allard plays the F-sharp with a very shallow and wide vibrato presenting just one oscillation, which results in an increase of energy on the note.


On this quarter note, Allard plays a note establishment that lasts almost half of its value, followed by threes shallow oscillations. The oscillations have an even frequency with just an increase of energy on the note, changing from red to orange (grey to grey medium light).

Figure 1.2.3, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, Fifth Symphony, Op. 64, second movement, m. 30.1. First beat Solo, D 3. Circle C in Example 1. Allard, Boston Symphony Orchestra, and Koussevitzky, 1944.
Allard in this example establishes the note with no delineated oscillations. He just makes an increase of energy on the note. In the whole excerpt in Example 1, Allard uses a controlled vibrato with overall shallowness and evenness that is only briefly disrupted by the three oscillations on the A-sharp 2.

Igor Stravinsky, *The Rite of Spring*, 1913

Example 2. Igor Stravinsky, *The Rite of Spring*, mm. 1–7, opening bassoon solo.

Comparison of recordings made by the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Stokowski with the solo played by Sol Schoenbach in 1940 and the Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Pierre Monteux with the solo played by Raymond Allard in 1951.
Schoenbach establishes the note with a long tenuto followed by five uneven oscillations. These oscillations are irregular in length and energy, the third being the longest and with the most energy of all. In this example Schoenbach reduces energy in the last oscillation before moving to the next note.

In this figure there is a pitch establishment followed by three uneven oscillations. The first oscillation presents a wide and deep profile followed by two gradually narrower
oscillations. Schoenbach again increases the energy at three-quarters into the rhythmic value of the note, then decreases while connecting the note into the following one.


The image presents a shallow vibrato with a note establishment followed by four uneven oscillations, the first and third being narrower while the second and fourth are wider. The most energy is achieved and sustained in the second oscillation, again three-quarters into the rhythmic value of the note. In all the last three oscillations, there is a narrow energy expansion to the nearest notes.

Schoenbach applies vibrato as a means of progressive expression. He plays the opening C5 with a long note establishment followed by uneven oscillations. For the following long value note, the A4, he vibrates more with a minimum of note establishment. This increment of expression gets him to the second statement C5 with more and wider oscillations and a short note establishment.
Allard in the opening solo plays the first C5 with three shallow oscillations as note establishment. As a connecting device, there is an increase of energy at the end of the last oscillation in preparation for the following note. The note changes from red to orange (grey to grey medium light).

The image in this example shows three shallow oscillations as note establishment with expansion of energy. Allard presents in this example a controlled vibrato with very shallow and regular sized oscillations. The gradual accumulation of
energy in each oscillation includes a larger section of yellow and orange (light grey, grey medium light); however, the expansion of energy does not go beyond the played note, but remains within the note being played.

Figure 2.2.3, Igor Stravinsky, *The Rite of Spring*, m. 1.3. Opening solo, third beat A4 in circle B in Example 2. Allard, Boston Symphony Orchestra, and Monteux, 1951.

The note establishment is followed by three shallow oscillations with very subtle energy increase.

Figure 2.2.4, Igor Stravinsky, *The Rite of Spring*, mm. 6.3–7.1. Opening solo, C5 in circle C in Example 2. Second statement of opening theme. Allard, Boston Symphony Orchestra, and Monteux, 1951.
For the second statement of the solo in C5, Allard adds more vibrato to the note than in the opening statement in m. 1. The vibrato presents a long note establishment followed by five shallow oscillations. The first four oscillations have a narrow profile at a regular rate while the fifth oscillation releases the note with a wide vibrato with less energy.

Modest Mussorgsky/Maurice Ravel, *Pictures at an Exhibition*: Il Vecchio Castello, 1874/1922.

Example 3, Modest Mussorgsky/Maurice Ravel, *Pictures at an Exhibition*: Il Vecchio Castello, D-sharp3, 1.2–2.1 and B2, m. 5.1, bassoon part.

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Comparison of recordings made by the Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Koussevitzky with the solo played by Abdon Laus in 1930 and the NBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Arturo Toscanini with the solo played by Elias Carmen in 1953.
A minimum length of note establishment is followed by five oscillations, which are split into two groups with contrasting profiles. One group has two oscillations with a small and narrow profile and the second has three oscillations with a wider and deeper profile. Laus decreases the energy at the end of the last oscillation.

Laus plays this note by establishing the note followed by four narrow, uneven, and deep oscillations with an energy increase at the end.
Carmen plays an uneven, active, narrow, and shallow vibrato. The note establishment and the releasing of the note frame five uneven and narrow oscillations. The whole period (note establishment and oscillations) is a gradual increment of energy.
In the figure above, Carmen plays a note establishment that sounds like a big oscillation with energy accumulation. This note establishment is followed by three active, uneven, narrow, and deep oscillations. The second oscillation, which is three-quarters into the note, is the energy peak in the note, followed by a sharp decrease in the third and last oscillation.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. Sixth Symphony, Op. 74, 1893

Example 4, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, Sixth Symphony, Op. 74, mm. 1–3, bassoon part.

Comparison of recordings made by the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Toscanini with the solo played by Schoenbach in 1942 and the NBC Symphony Orchestra conducted also by Toscanini with the solo played by Sharrow in 1953.
Schoenbach plays the first section of the first phrase in the solo (section A in Example 5, mm. 1.3–2.3 and Figure 5.1.1) with a very active and narrow vibrato. The oscillations, despite their shortness, are relatively even in length. In this first section, there is a constant increase in the number of oscillations, first 2, then 3, 8, and 19. For the second section of the phrase (section B in Example 5, mm. 2.4–3.3 and Figure 5.1.1), Schoenbach no longer plays with a continuous increase in the number of oscillations, playing 6, 3, 10, and 16. The oscillations are very active but they have an uneven profile and the vibrato stops at the end of the section. Schoenbach in this excerpt integrates dynamics as part of the accumulation of energy of the vibrato and its oscillations (see line above vibrato line).
Figure 4.2.1, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, Sixth Symphony, Op.74, first movement, mm. 1–3. Sharrow, NBC Symphony Orchestra, and Toscanini, 1947.

Sharrow plays the first section of the first phrase in the solo (section A in Example 5, mm. 1.3–2.3 and Figure 5.1.1) with a very shallow vibrato. For the second section of the phrase (section B in Example 5, mm. 2.4–3.3 and Figure 5.1.1), he plays a more active, narrower, and relatively even vibrato that creates contrasts between the two sections of the phrase. This contrast adds energy and expression at a formal level.

Conclusion

Sound spectrum analysis shows how several early twentieth-century bassoon players applied vibrato. The contrast of their vibrato playing is summarized in the following data. During the early to mid twentieth century, the French vibrato imported by the French players such as Barrère and Tabuteau became a new technique for expression in American orchestras. French trained or influenced players present vibrato ranging from very active with a deep and narrow profile, as shown by players such as the Algerian and French trained Laus, early Allard, German trained but French influenced Guetter, French and German trained Sharrow, and German trained but French influenced Schoenbach, to the
vibrato of French trained Allard, which evolved into a slow, wide, and shallow one. Active vibrato would have up to eight oscillations, whereas a controlled vibrato would have a few shallow oscillations or just an increase of energy. The analysis showed that during the vibrato’s oscillations, in the case of active, narrow, and deep oscillations, the vibrato inflection to the upper note reflected in the sound spectrum figure as energy expansion, occurring in both directions and at times surpassing neighboring notes.

Sharrow and Allard are good examples of the change in vibrato. Both played for conductors who actively pursued the use of vibrato as an element of expression within the phrase and the color of the note: “warming the sound” was their goal. Sharrow was invited by Toscanini to play principal at the NBC Symphony Orchestra, where he played with a semi-active, even, and flexible vibrato that he used as a tool of expression and form delineation. Similarly Allard, by the end of his tenure with the Boston Symphony, despite being a French trained player of pure breed, played the most controlled, slowest, widest, shallowest vibrato of all the players studied. During the consolidation of American wind performing practice, vibrato began as active and uneven oscillations played during long-valued notes and became over time a slower and controlled playing element used to delineation form.
Chapter 3 Appendix

Table 2, Pitch-frequency equivalence chart. Bassoon range.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A-Sharp 1</th>
<th>C2</th>
<th>C3</th>
<th>C4</th>
<th>C5</th>
<th>C6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A♭, B♭</td>
<td>58.27592.07</td>
<td>C♭</td>
<td>65.41527.47</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>130.81263.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>61.74558.84</td>
<td>C♯</td>
<td>69.30497.87</td>
<td>C♯</td>
<td>138.59248.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D♭</td>
<td>79.4269.92</td>
<td>D♭</td>
<td>146.83234.96</td>
<td>D♭</td>
<td>293.66117.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D♯</td>
<td>82.41418.69</td>
<td>E♭</td>
<td>155.56221.77</td>
<td>E♭</td>
<td>311.13110.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>87.11095.16</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>164.81205.33</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>329.63104.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F♯/G♭</td>
<td>92.50372.98</td>
<td>G♭</td>
<td>185.00186.49</td>
<td>G♭</td>
<td>369.9993.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G♭</td>
<td>98.00187.84</td>
<td>A♭</td>
<td>103.83322.29</td>
<td>A♭</td>
<td>207.65165.14</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>108.00315.94</td>
<td>B♭</td>
<td>116.54296.03</td>
<td>B♭</td>
<td>233.08148.02</td>
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<tr>
<td>B♭</td>
<td>125.47279.42</td>
<td>B♭</td>
<td>246.94139.71</td>
<td>B♭</td>
<td>493.8869.85</td>
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</table>

Table 3, Sound spectrum figure. Comparative chart between original color and black and white printing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Energy Level</th>
<th>Color</th>
<th>Black and White shades</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No energy</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum energy</td>
<td>Purple</td>
<td>Light black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium energy</td>
<td>Dark red</td>
<td>Dark grey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Grey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>Medium light grey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum energy</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Light grey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bright yellow</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 4
Comparison and Contrast of Phrasing from Orchestral Scores to the Bassoon Repertoire

Orchestras’ and conductors’ preferences for certain performance practices characterize a particular tradition. A musician who spends years playing according to an orchestra’s or conductor’s tradition can, as a result of the repetition of certain performance practice techniques, develop a conscious or unconscious empathy with those practices, which reflects in his own playing.

The use of similar approaches for phrasing profile, and the fashion in which the various types of articulations such as slur, staccato, and portamento among others appear, emphasize a particular preference for musical character, texture, and phrasing. The use of these elements can be distinct to the orchestras and the conductors for whom these musicians played. Some of the most prominent bassoonists, such as the Americans Walter Guetter, Sol Schoenbach, and Leonard Sharrow, edited important works in the bassoon repertoire. Their editions on the bassoon concertos by W. A. Mozart, Carl Maria von Weber, and Antonio Vivaldi, three major works in the bassoon repertoire, reflect their personal performing styles. Their approaches also resemble those performance practice traditions identified with the orchestras and the conductors for whom they played.

The focus of this chapter is the comparison and contrast of their different editing approaches as well as the identification of the particularities that connect them to the performing traditions to which they belonged.
Those particularities encouraged by the conductors appear during the performing of orchestral music. In the examples below two contrasting performances of Tchaikovsky’s Fifth Symphony, by Stokowski, the Philadelphia Orchestra, and Guetter versus one by Koussevitzky, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and Allard, reveal that Stokowski’s interpretation adds *forte* in m. 57 and then a sudden *piano* in m. 58, and continues with a *crescendo* from mm. 58 to 60. In mm. 60–64, Stokowski changes the articulation layout, giving more emphasis to the upper notes and making the legato more fluid, modifying the phrasing. These examples reflect Stokowski’s interest in editing orchestral music for his own performances.

Koussevitzky’s interpretation, on the other hand, does not change any of the dynamics and makes minor articulation editing in mm. 63–64, to emphasize the ending of the phrase. Koussevitzky’s approach is closer to the printed score, reflecting his characteristic preference (compare Examples A and B).

Koussevitzky and Toscanini were known for their preference for adhering to the printed score. However, in their performance of Mussorgsky/ Ravel, *Pictures at an Exhibition*: Il Vecchio Castello, mm. 1–8, they take different approaches. Laus at Boston plays the solo keeping almost the same dynamic. He plays a discrete *crescendo* marking in m. 5 and a very soft and long *portamento* in mm. 2.2, 3.2, 4.2, and 6.2. Carmen at the NBC Symphony Orchestra, on the other hand, plays the same solo with a clear crescendo and diminuendo in m. 5 and a medium-length *portamento* with clear breaks in between mm. 2.2, 3.2, 4.2, and 6.2, making the passage clear and clean (compare Examples C and D).


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In Example D, Carmen plays the solo as written, the D-sharp3 in mm. 2.1.3 to 2.2, with a light *tenuto* and continues this approach on the eighth notes of mm. 3.2, 4.2, and 6.2. In m. 5 Carmen plays clear dynamic inflections as written.


Figure 1, Paul Dukas, *The Sorcerer’s Apprentice*, mm. 655–69, bassoon part. Bassoon section with Kohon and Kovar, Toscanini, and the New York Philharmonic, 1929.
Toscanini’s preference for short, energetic, articulation can be seen in the Figure 1 which uses a short and dry *staccato* in the bassoon section supported by the full-length sound of the strings. This gives the excerpt a sense of lightness, even speed, and energy.

Stokowski, Koussevitzky, and Toscanini in Examples A–E, and Figure 1, apply through the players’ performances their articulation and dynamic preferences, which are also reflected in the editing of players such as Guetter, Sharrow, and Schoenbach.

**W. A. Mozart, Bassoon Concerto in B-flat, K. 191, 1774.**

*Walter Guetter’s Edition, 1934*

Guetter prepared this edition for a performance of the concerto with the Philadelphia Orchestra. Guetter favors a more legato approach, mainly achieved by the elongation of phrases. He takes different approaches such as slurring into cadence points, extensive use of slurs to emphasize phrasing, and the use of *portamento* to soften attacks. Throughout the first movement, the conclusion of thematic material is resolved by slurring the preparation and resolution of cadences. In all cadence resolutions, including those with trills, Guetter slurs the trill to the cadence’s resolution note. For example, in m. 38 in the first movement, Guetter arrives at the phrase’s middle point by slurring the trill of the suspension on E-flat4 to its resolution on D4 (see Example 1). In mm. 70–71, the full G3 trill resolves to the dominant F Major by a slur (see Example 2). Guetter approaches trills and their resolution in similar fashion throughout the concerto.
Example 1, W. A. Mozart, Bassoon Concerto, K. 191, first movement, m. 38, bassoon part. Walter Guetter’s Edition.

Example 2, W. A. Mozart, Bassoon Concerto, K. 191, first movement, mm. 70–71, bassoon part. Walter Guetter’s Edition.

Guetter makes an exception to this approach in the third movement in m. 106, where he keeps the resolution of the trill on the dominant by articulating the octave below. He also slurs cadences that resolve without trills, for example in the second movement in m. 10 and mm. 29–30, where the cadences resolve to the tonic F Major (see Example 3).


In order to soften the attacks at the beginning of the phrases, Guetter uses *portamento*. That is the case in the opening bassoon solo in the first movement, the quarter note in mm. 35–37 and 45, as well as in mm. 59–61 (see Example 4). Other use of *portamento* attack by Guetter occurs in the resolutions of the cadences in mm. 84 and
87 in the first movement. He resolves that passage by contrasting slurred and *staccato* sixteenth notes with the ending of the phrase with *portamento* on a quarter note.


Guetter uses articulations to emphasize the contrasting character of each movement in the concerto. In the first movement, Guetter balances the phrases by articulating with *staccatos* next to slurs, giving a sense of forward motion, technical flair, and lyricism. In the second movement in mm. 43–44, Guetter overemphasizes the sense of legato by adding to the already required slurs a *portamento* attack on each of the slurred groups (see Example 5). In the third movement, Guetter uses *staccato* and short slurs to contrast sections, in order to further emphasize the movement’s virtuosic and energetic character (see Example 6).


Another important trait in Guetter’s editing is the use of slurs to elongate phrases. In order vary the concerto, Guetter selects phrases that he presents with contrasting articulations. In the first movement in mm. 80–95, he softens by slurring mm. 80–83 and slurring in two sixteenth-note groups in mm. 89–93, creating a sense of overall elongation at the ending section of the phrase (see Example 7.a). To further emphasize the lyrical characteristics of the second movement, Guetter creates softer, longer phrases by slurring larger sections within the phrases. In the opening phrase in mm. 7–10, he slurs every motive separated by a rest, and in m. 9 in beats 3–4, he slurs all thirty-seconds, resolving the phrase by slurring through the cadence. Guetter reshapes the overall articulation structure from the critical edition (see Example 7.b). He takes the same approach in mm. 23–26, where he further elongates by slurring every group of two or more notes, articulating only the beginning of every new slur.
Another characteristic of Guetter’s editing is taking the ending of a phrase and emphasizing it, either by slurring or marking *staccato* into the downbeat of a measure to emphasize the arrival at a cadence or harmonic point. In the first movement in mm. 132–34, he alternates between slurs and *staccato* and emphasizes the arrival of cadence points by articulating *staccato* in all three notes, which include the last two sixteenth notes previous to the arrival to the first sixteenth note of the following beat (see Example 8). In the second movement in mm. 16–17, Guetter follows the same criteria; he again alternates between slurs and *staccato* articulations. In this case, he uses slurring as the way of creating direction towards the important harmonic point, by
slurring all four sixteenth-notes in beat four with the first sixteenth-note of the following beat. He repeats the same formula in the similar passages in mm. 38 and 42, and again in the third movement in m. 120.


Guetter played principal bassoon with the Philadelphia Orchestra under Stokowski from 1922 until his death in 1937. He belongs to the generation who was responsible for establishing the characteristics of the orchestra’s tradition and its consolidation as a first level orchestra in the United States. He achieved his professional maturity while playing with the Philadelphia Orchestra and its principal flutist Kincaid and principal oboist Tabuteau, among others. Guetter’s choices on phrasing profile and use of articulations resemble those applied in the Philadelphia Orchestra by Stokowski, who favored elongated phrases and full sonority, which he achieved by free bowing.

Leonard Sharrow, Recording of Mozart’s Bassoon Concerto K. 191, with the NBC Symphony Orchestra and Arturo Toscanini, 1947

In his recording Sharrow uses different articulations, such as slurs, accents, and staccatos. He emphasizes performing an articulated version. The articulation of cadence resolution is applied to cadences whether preceded by a trill or not. That is the case in the first movement in mm. 41–42, where Sharrow slurs the seventh degree in m. 41 and articulates the arrival to the tonic in B-flat3 (see Example 9). He retains this profile in most
of his cadence resolutions; for example in mm. 57–58, he imitates the previous profile by slurring the dominant’s seventh degree and articulating into the dominant. In mm. 65–66, Sharrow resolves the trill on the dominant’s second degree by articulating it. He does the same in other cadence points in the movement. He is consistent with this approach in the second movement, where he repeats the same profile in mm. 41 and 47–48, and in the third movement in mm. 27–28, 95–96, and in 137–38.

Example 9, W. A. Mozart, Bassoon Concerto, K. 191, first movement, mm. 41–42, bassoon part. Leonard Sharrow’s Recording.

There are a few exceptions where Sharrow arrives at the cadence by a slur, such as in the first movement in mm. 88–89 and in the second movement in m. 20 (see Example 10).

Example 10, W. A. Mozart, Bassoon Concerto, K. 191, first movement, mm. 88–89, bassoon part. Leonard Sharrow’s Recording.

Sharrow uses varied articulations such as portamento, accent, and staccato for the contrasting of materials. In the opening phrase in the first movement in mm. 35–40, Sharrow plays the first quarter note in m. 35 with a portamento followed by an accent on the white note. He slurs the fifteenth interval in m. 37 and slurs the sixteenth notes in m. 38 in two groups of two. He uses articulation contrast within the same phrase, in the first movement in mm. 59–81. He begins by establishing regular articulation then follows with slurred sixteenth notes and staccato on the eighths. In mm. 61–62, he
creates a very legato section displaced by an eighth note. In the following section, he follows a similar profile to Guetter’s edition, using different articulations to create diversity (see Example 11).

Example 11, W. A. Mozart, Bassoon Concerto, K. 191, first movement, mm. 35–42, bassoon part. Leonard Sharrow’s Recording.

In mm. 91–93 in the first movement is a clear example of Sharrow’s preference for articulated passages, where he articulates *staccato* on the sixteenth note on the fourth beat (see Example 12).

Example 12, W. A. Mozart, Bassoon Concerto, K. 191, first movement, mm. 89–94, bassoon part. Leonard Sharrow’s Recording.

The segmentation of phrases in small sections helps Sharrow achieve the character of shortness and articulation present in his recording. In the first movement in mm. 132–37, Sharrow, instead of keeping the phrase slurred throughout, creates a two-section phrase where the first two resolutions are slurred and the remaining two are resolved using *staccato* (see Example 13).
Example 13, W. A. Mozart, Bassoon Concerto, K. 191, first movement, mm. 132–37, bassoon part. Leonard Sharrow’s Recording.

Sharrow’s edition uses short and articulated phrasing. He does use slurs but as a contrasting resource and as a way to delineate smaller sections, and not necessarily as a resource to impart a lyrical character to the piece. His preference for articulating the resolutions of cadence points and the segmented phrasing profile resemble Toscanini’s own preferences.

Guetter’s edition and Sharrow’s recording of Mozart’s Bassoon Concerto were made as part of preparing their performances with their respective orchestras. Guetter published an edition of his performance, while Sharrow recorded his. As previously recounted, Guetter’s edition became the standard edition studied by the subsequent generations of bassoonists in the United States.

*Antonio Vivaldi, Bassoon Concerto in E minor, F.VIII, 6. ca. 1720–1724*

Sharrow’s and Schoenbach’s interest in editing a large amount of bassoon repertoire resembles their teacher Simon Kovar’s own interest in editing bassoon repertoire for pedagogical purposes. Both Schoenbach and Sharrow edited several bassoon repertoire and method books. Among these are several of Vivaldi’s bassoon concertos, the Concerto in E Minor being the single Concerto edited by both.
Leonard Sharrow’s Edition of Vivaldi, Bassoon Concerto in E Minor, F.VIII, 6, 1966

Sharrow’s edition favors an articulated version where his use of slurs is for the most part applied for the contrasting of smaller sections. In the first movement’s, in the opening theme in mm. 13–14, Sharrow alternates paired slurs and articulations in the thirty-seconds notes. This articulation combination makes the passage sound faster and more virtuosic (see Example 14).


Sharrow keeps cadence points that have no trill articulated. In Example 14 in m. 14 on beats 2–3, he articulates the V-I cadence. He does the same in the same movement in m. 53, in the second movement in m. 20, as well as in the third movement in mm. 126–28 (see Example 15a–c).


a)
When the cadences appear preceded by trills, Sharrow resolves them by slurring the trill into the resolution. That is the case in the first movement in mm. 38 and 60–61, and in the third movement in mm. 121–22 (see Example 17).


Sharrow phrases the second movement by emphasizing the downbeat and by articulating the first thirty-second note and slurring the remaining three, or phrasing groups of six sixteenth notes, slurring the first two and articulating the remaining four (see Example 17).

This edition considerably modifies the articulation presented in the critical edition. Schoenbach presents a preference for slurred passages, *portamento* articulation, contrasting slurred *staccato* articulation within a passage, and elongation of a phrase by keeping a similar articulation into the following measure or beat. He also resolves cadences by slurring into them.

He prefers long slurred sections such as those in the first movement in mm. 13–14. Where the opening theme is originally presented in articulated sixteenth notes, Schoenbach includes slurs in groups of four sixteenth notes, and concludes the passage with a *portamento* on the tonic in E. In the following section in mm.15–16, he reinforces and creates an articulation connection by marking *portamento* in both motives on beat 3 in both measures. (see Example 18).


In the second movement, as a way to further emphasize the contrast of character with the outer movements, Schoenbach uses slurs and *portamento* attacks to give this movement a more legato character. In mm. 15–20, he slurs the triplets in groups of three, followed by all slurred eighth notes. In mm. 19–20, he goes even further by connecting the sixteenth-note section in m. 16 to the cadenza using slurs and a *portamento* on F-sharp major (see Example 19).
In the third movement, Schoenbach continues his preference for a more legato attack but keeps the energetic character of the movement. In order to emphasize both aspects, Schoenbach accents the dotted quarter notes and asks for accented slurs from mm. 25 to 34, while in mm. 35–39, he slurs the thirty-seconds notes to the quarter note (see Example 20). The trill in m. 46 resolves slurred to the thirty-second downbeat of the following measure. In m. 62, Schoenbach slurs the thirty-seconds notes into the sixteenth note as an anacrusis to the sixteenth notes (see Example 20).

Carl Maria von Weber, Bassoon Concerto in F major, Op. 75. 1811


Sharrow’s phrasing shows a preference for articulating in small sections. He favors smaller slurred sections in phrases such as those in the first movement in mm. 171–75, where he divides the five-measure phrase into seven articulated sections. He does the same in the opening phrase of the second movement in mm. 5–17 and 52–58, where he phrases all but mm. 7–8 with one measure-long slurs. In the third movement he continues phrasing by separating it in small groups such as in mm. 175–76 (see Example 21). Sharrow also articulates most of the cadence points in all three movements, for example in the first movement in mm. 47–48, 225, and 228, in the second movement in mm. 16–17, and in the third movement in the opening theme in mm. 1–4. In the last case, Sharrow slurs the beginning of the phrase and resolves the first presentation of the cadence in the tonic with clear staccato articulation in m. 4 (see Example 22). Adding to the overall articulated phrasing, he also articulates most of the resolutions of trills into cadences, as in the second movement in mm. 39–40, and in the third movement he resolves the trill in mm. 23–24 by articulating its resolution (see Example 23). There is a preference for overemphasizing passages by articulating with staccato, such as those in the first movement in mm. 51–62. On rare occasions Sharrow slurs trills into cadences, as in the first movement in mm. 61–62 and 81–82 (see Example 24).


In his edition of Weber’s Bassoon Concerto, Sharrow uses several traits that give coherence to the character of the overall piece. Sharrow presents two general traits, one of which is the concept of lightness, or shortness, and the other is the contrast between a legato section and an articulated one, as in the first movement in mm. 88–118 and 147–170. However, he keeps shortness in the legato sections by slurring the phrases in small sections.

*Sol Schoenbach’s Edition of Weber’s Bassoon Concerto, Op. 75, 1949*

In the first movement Schoenbach uses several of the techniques that are also present in the remaining two movements and that show his preference for a legato edition. He achieves this by using softened phrases through the use of *portamento* in originally articulated sections, as in mm. 46–47 and 57 (see Example 25). He also slurs
phrases through several measures like those in mm. 73–77 (see Example 26). 

Schoenbach slurs originally articulated motives like those in the same movement in the opening theme in mm. 42.3–4 and 43.3–4 (see Example 27). He also trills slurs into cadence points, as in mm. 47–48, 60–62, and 81–82 (see Example 28). Another trait is his preference for elongating slurring into the following measure, as in mm. 94–96 (see Example 29).


The contrasting sections, with the alternation of slurs and *staccato* that emphasize the downbeat on one, followed by slurred elongation into a downbeat section, as in mm. 97–103 and 147–54, emphasize the forward motion of the pick up into the downbeat.

In the second movement, Schoenbach again includes long lyric phrases by slurring several measures in antecedent and consequent phrases like those in mm. 5–17. He slurs phrase endings with the downbeat of the next measure, as in mm. 22–24, 55–56, and 47–49, and connects trills by slurring them into the downbeat, as in mm. 39–40.

Despite movement’s energetic and virtuosic character, Schoenbach prefers a more legato version. He continues resolving trills by slurring into the downbeat as in mm. 23–24 and 15–16, and slurring phrases into the downbeat as in mm. 2–4 and 65–66, and retains his preference for slurring long phrases, as in mm. 160–66 and 225–36. He adds virtuosic passages by contrasting sections with *staccato* or a combination of slur and *staccato*, or by slurring in groups of two, or by slurring everything, as in mm. 244–50 and 261–297 (see Example 30).

Schoenbach and Sharrow have contrasting perspectives on dynamics in their editions. Schoenbach in his editions of Vivaldi’s and Weber’s bassoon concertos uses a wide range of dynamics and dynamic indications. While he asks for great dynamic contrasts, he also asks for the most delicate dynamic nuances and is very specific regarding where and how to use them. Sharrow on the other hand, in his editions of the same works, presents few dynamic indications and few changes and those present are spread over wide sections. This contrast is visible with the parallel comparison of the same passages in Schoenbach’s and Sharrow’s editions of the concertos by Vivaldi and Weber. Schoenbach’s edition Vivaldi’s Bassoon Concerto shows in the first movement in mm. 28–32 the use of a dynamic range encompassing piano and pianissimo with hairpins in between. Sharrow’s edition in the same passage has no dynamic markings (see Example 31.a–b). Similar approaches are visible in the second movement in mm. 11–20 and in the third movement in mm. 62–86. In the second movement, Schoenbach’s dynamics range from forte through piano with indications of crescendo,
diminuendo, and hairpins. Sharrow’s edition has few dynamics in piano and a couple of hairpins. In the third movement Schoenbach uses a wider dynamic range with block contrasting dynamics like subito forte right after a piano passage. In the same passage, Sharrow uses more dynamics than in most passages in his edition; the range goes from mezzo piano to piano via crescendo markings (see Examples 32.a–b and 33a–b).

Example 31, Antonio Vivaldi, Bassoon Concerto in E minor, F.VIII, 6.

a) Schoenbach’s use of dynamics. First movement, mm. 28–32, bassoon part.

b) Sharrow’s use of dynamics. First movement, mm. 28–32, bassoon part.
Example 32, Antonio Vivaldi, Bassoon Concerto in E minor, F.VIII, 6, second movement, mm. 11–20.

a) Schoenbach’s use of dynamics. Second movement, mm. 11–20, bassoon part.

b) Sharrow’s use of dynamics. Second movement, mm. 11–20.
Example 33, Antonio Vivaldi, Bassoon Concerto in E minor, F.VIII, 6, third movement, mm. 62–80.

a) Schoenbach’s use of dynamics. Third movement, mm. 62–80, bassoon part.

b) Sharrow’s use of dynamics. Third movement, mm. 62–80, bassoon part.

The contrasting criteria regarding dynamics also occur in Schoenbach’s and Sharrow’s editions of Weber’s Bassoon Concerto. Schoenbach’s edition, in the first
movement in mm. 41–62, has a dynamic range encompassing piano through fortissimo. In this passage he asks for gradual and specific dynamic changes from piano to mezzo piano to mezzo forte to forte to fortissimo; these changes are achieved by the use of crescendo markings. Sharrow uses a minimum amount of dynamics ranging from forte to fortissimo (see Example 34.a–b). In the second movement in mm. 5–28 and in the third movement in mm. 71–90, the editions show a preference for more detailed dynamic markings and a wider dynamic range from Schoenbach and fewer dynamics in wider sections with a narrower dynamic range from Sharrow (see Examples 35.a–b and 36.a–b).

Example 34, Carl Maria von Weber, Bassoon Concerto Op. 75. First movement, mm. 41–62.

a) Schoenbach’s dynamic markings. First movement, mm. 41–62, bassoon part.
b) Sharrow’s dynamic markings. First movement, mm. 41–62, bassoon part.


a) Schoenbach’s dynamic markings. Second movement, mm. 5–28, bassoon part.
b) Sharrow’s dynamic markings. Second movement, mm. 5–28, bassoon part.

Example 36, Carl Maria von Weber, Bassoon Concerto Op. 75. Third movement, mm. 71–90.

a) Schoenbach’s dynamic markings. Third movement, mm. 71–90.
b) Sharrow’s dynamic markings. Third movement, mm. 71–90.

There are clear and contrasting dynamic preferences that are consistent in Schoenbach’s and Sharrow’s Vivaldi and Weber editions. On one hand, while Schoenbach prefers detailed markings, he also looks for very delicate dynamic nuances as well as wide dynamic contrast. He prefers very specific dynamic textures and colors in those passages. On the other hand, Sharrow prefers an approach closer to the critical edition with few or no dynamic markings and a narrow dynamic range. The way Schoenbach and Sharrow use dynamic markings in their editions resembles the traditions applied by the orchestras for which they played. Schoenbach’s approach focuses on a controlled but wide palette of colors and timbres through the vast use of dynamics, like a Stokowski/Philadelphia Orchestra approach. Sharrow’s interpretation focuses on a close reading of Vivaldi’s and Weber’s notations, with fewer dynamic markings spread over large sections and narrow dynamic range, similar to a Toscanini/NBC Symphony Orchestra approach.
Conclusion

Both Schoenbach and Sharrow make use of similar phrasing and dynamic resources such as slurs, *staccato, portamento*, and *tenuto* articulation accents to shape a phrase profile, and dynamic resources including a range from *pianissimo* to *fortissimo*. They create contrasting sections with motives or phrases alternating articulations and dynamics. It is Sharrow’s overall characteristic to articulate the phrases more and present short chordal units. It is also his style to articulate most of the resolutions to a cadence, by separating regular articulation or by articulating the resolution to the cadence when preceded by a trill. His phrasing moves always from the downbeat. His dynamic resources are spare and close to the original notation. Toscanini’s preference for a more articulated approach to phrasing and chordal playing, as well as a close reading of the composer’s original notation, resembles that presented by Sharrow.

Guetter and Schoenbach, seem to prefer a softened articulation approach for a phrasing profile. Their extensive use of slurs emphasizes legato themes and those sections characterized by a virtuosic, active approach; they prefer the alternation of slurred and articulated sections or, within a passage, the alternation of slurred and *staccato* motives. They also prefer the resolution of cadences by slurring the preparation into the resolution, as well as by slurring the trills into the cadence. Another characteristic is the extension of motives and phrases into the downbeat of the following measure or phrase.

Stokowski’s “Philadelphia Sound” was based on the idea of endless sound. The editing of scores favoring the elongation of phrase and a wide palette of dynamics, the use of “free bowing” in the strings, the continuous sound in the winds, and the
phrasing into the downbeat were some of the resources used by Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra.

Neither Schoenbach nor Sharrow seem to have acknowledged an influence on their phrasing and dynamic approach from the conductors for whom they played. Schoenbach did, however, recognize Tabuteau and the Philadelphia Orchestra as the source of his style of playing. Sharrow reflected a certain pride in having played with Toscanini, but does not comment that either the NBC Symphony Orchestra or Toscanini had an influence on his playing style.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The American Bassoon School is an example of a well-documented cultural phenomenon that happened at the turn of the twentieth century in the United States. This phenomenon is the multicultural mixing of ideas, aesthetics, and traditions that converged and developed into one performing practice that became characteristic of the United States. Most accounts of the development of the American bassoon school performing practice have dealt with the contributions made by immigrants. Here the development has been established in an all-inclusive perspective.

The contributions made by immigrant players/pedagogues such as Marcel Tabuteau, George Barrère, and Simon Kovar have been widely documented. Until now, the immigrant conductors, important contributors to this phenomenon, have been missing from the story.

It has been my focus to study and trace in more detail the elements that characterized the French, German, and American performing practices and to highlight the contributions and influences made by immigrant conductors to the development of the American Bassoon School in order to have a wide and comprehensive view of this process. In the case of the conductors, the goal has been to bring to the attention of the reader the influence they had through their positions of leadership, which allowed them to shape musical elements such as phrasing, vibrato profile, and timbre into the performing traditions of their orchestras.

Conductors’ preferences for certain orchestral performance practices were implemented in the orchestras they conducted. They contributed to the delineation of
those practices that ended up being considered as the characteristics of the American Bassoon School.

In the case of Toscanini, his conducting style included a preference for *secco* and short chordal sonorities as well as close readings of the composer’s ideas for rhythms, dynamics, and articulations, which translated into clarity of sound. His conducting was characterized by the use of fast pulses with the beating emphasis on the beat. This gave Toscanini’s music a sense of great energy, as in his 1929 recording of *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* by Paul Dukas. He encouraged an orchestral sound with an overall balance of all sections; in fact, balance was of paramount importance for Toscanini. It is one of the reasons why he kept the violin section in the traditional way, with violin sections on either side of the conductor, a balanced approach that resulted in the orchestra having a lightness of sound. His concept of sound transformed throughout his career; while Toscanini’s Italian training had a strong influence from the French tradition and the use of French bassoon was customary, when he returned to work in Italy in the 1940s, he made the bassoon section in La Scala switch from the French to the German bassoon. He programmed a traditional repertoire with a preference for German and Austrian composers, keeping conservative audiences pleased but adding to the performance of this repertoire a more precise and energetic concept. His preferred sound included playing throughout the full value of the note with full sound and playing a fast vibrato to warm the sound.

Toscanini’s preferences translated into the actual playing of the instrumentalists in the orchestras he conducted in the United States. In the case of vibrato, Leonard Sharrow as principal bassoonist used an active but regular and
controlled vibrato, which had a flexible quality. This flexibility created not only a warm sound, expressiveness and direction, but also created contrast at a formal level. In his phrasing, Toscanini made the players pursue a meticulous precision the conductor’s indications, as it is shown in the Mussorgsky/ Ravel, Pictures at an Exhibition: Il Vecchio Castello example.

Sharrow was an active and committed pedagogue who not only taught but also edited etudes and repertoire. A close analysis of his editing approach shows close resemblances with Toscanini’s preferences. Sharrow stayed close to the original notation, but when editing, he had a preference for phrases that included short articulations, such as staccato, and minimum changes of dynamics from the manuscript.

Stokowski on the other hand preferred a full and heavy sound based on a flat intonation and supported by thick brass and low wind sections that resembled German orchestras. However, he preferred high winds with background in the French school with its fine solfege, virtuosity, and vibrato training. He applied his concept of “continuous sound,” in which he prolonged the quality of the sound by applying “free bowing” and using extra wind players to avoid the accents and sound breaks that interfere with the fluidity of the sound when changing bows and breathing. In order to keep the sound, Stokowski compromised composers’ notations, by elongating rhythmic values and phrases. He edited scores at every level to “enhance” performance. His repertoire preference spanned traditional Austrian, German, French, and Italian music as well as contemporary music. His more avant-garde vision of orchestral performing practice gave him the freedom to move the orchestra’s lay-out and experiment with its diverse acoustic possibilities.
Although there are no written accounts of Stokowski’s opinion of vibrato, his wind players used it extensively. Walter Guetter played an active and uneven vibrato in notes with long value. In contrast Schoenbach, used an uneven vibrato that outlined the phrases. Like Sharrow, Schoenbach was an active pedagogue and editor. In his editions he preferred long slurred phrases or mixed phrases with slurs and articulations, as well as long articulations such as *portamento*. He also added a wide dynamic spectrum with more detailed use of dynamic markings, making his editions rich in dynamic and articulation nuances, so that his editions resemble Stokowski’s preference for a wide textual range.

Koussevitzky’s conducting favored a brilliant sound, which he called “‘dolce’ with a round tone.” His sound was based on a sharp intonation on A-444 and sharper, with the strings as main base and texture, and the winds having a strong French background. This French background included the use of vibrato and French style instruments. His preferences also included detailed rehearsing of the works, his prioritization of the phrase over all other musical elements, the use of slower tempos than those established by the composer, and the use of vibrato to warm the sound.

Although not an avid editor of traditional repertoire, he did encourage contemporary composers, and mainly those who had commissions from the Boston Symphony, to revise their compositions. Koussevitzky’s major contribution to the American music culture is the large amount of repertoire that he and the orchestra commissioned from contemporary American and international composers.

Koussevitzky’s work with the Boston Symphony Orchestra condensed the sound mixture between the French and German bassoon schools. While he kept a
French-trained musician playing a French bassoon as principal, he complemented the section with a bassoonist trained in the Austrian traditions and playing a German bassoon. This mixed bassoon section further modified its tone quality when Koussevitzky, in the mid 1930s, moved the purely French-trained Laus, who had kept his distinct French sound and very active and uneven vibrato, in favor of Allard, who over the years had Germanized his sound and favored a darker sound with a controlled and even vibrato. Although the bassoonists playing in the Boston Symphony kept active careers as pedagogues, none of them actively published editions of bassoon repertoire. Their main contribution was the absolute blending within their section of two bassoon traditions of sound, to create a new tradition.

Toscanini’s strict adherence to the score is a forerunner to a historically informed performing practice, which strove, first, to play compositions as close as possible to the composer’s intentions, and second, to seek a pristine, clean execution of the work. This approach contributed to the overall development of the American bassoon school improving technique at every level and used vibrato as performing resource to add expression.

Stokowski’s main contributions to the American bassoon school are first, the blending of the French phrasing and vibrato concept with the German bassoon timbre, and second, his active involvement at the Curtis Institute of Music.

The focus of this document has been to illustrate that the combination of the conductors’ aesthetics, the different bassoonist immigrating to the United States and the synthesis made by players and pedagogues were three great influences in the development of American Bassoon School. This document has familiarized readers
with the differences in bassoon playing in the United States in the early twentieth
century and the contribution of the French and German bassoon schools to the
development of the early American Bassoon School, including the first generation of
American bassoonists and pedagogues. Focusing on the differences in tone color,
vibrato speed and profile, and phrasing approach through dynamics and articulations,
the document’s intention is to show the characteristics of the French and the German
schools, as well as the aesthetic characteristics of the conductors, and to trace the mix
and synthesis of these characteristics in the playing of the first generation of American
bassoonists.
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DISCOGRAPHY


