

inference that he is cognizant of his own inferiority.

*John Minsker*

[Editor's Note: John Minsker served a distinguished tenure as English horn player of the Philadelphia Orchestra.]

Dear Mr. Stolper and Dr. Dawson:

Here's an idea for an article I'd love to see in *The Double Reed*: fitness for the double reed player. Like many of your readers, I suppose, I work out several days a week at a gym. I always wonder if there's anything I could or should be doing that would help me with my oboe playing, as opposed to general cardio-vascular fitness.

For example, I know that the AbMaster won't give me a good vibrato, but will it help? Or am I doing anything to my abdominal muscles that will actually make it harder to develop good vibrato?

I'm not even sure who knows the answer to these questions. Perhaps an oboe professor should collaborate with a physiologist! Thanks in advance, and thanks for starting that new medical column.

*Best, Alan Hyde*

Dear Ron,

I hope you will allow me to reply to Steve Hanna's letter dated June 25, 1997, which is found in *The Double Reed*, Vol. 20/2 (1997), page 54. His letter is in response to my article "Playing those 'Missing' Notes in Baroque and Classic Concerti" in *The Double Reed*, 20/1 (1997), pages 85-90. Mr. Hanna's criticism of my article on the soloist performing during the tutti passages of Baroque and Classical concerti may be summarized as follows: 1) printed editions and critical editions are not as reliable as the composer's manuscripts, 2) composer's manuscripts (particularly Vivaldi's autographs) often pose dilemmas for the performer, and 3) ultimately we should perform what sounds best, relying on "taste and judgement, not dogma."

The issue of what forms the basis for the best performing edition of a work is more complex than finding the autograph of the work and reprinting it. Even composers such as J. S. Bach and W. A. Mozart, who are renowned for carefully penned manuscripts, have left behind works with errors and omissions. With some composers the first or second printed edition of the work is more reliable than the autograph, often because the composer reviewed the edition before publication. Some composers revised their works many times, leaving behind a number of autographs of the same composition. Thus, a variety of sources must be carefully consid-

ered to produce a worthy critical edition of the work.

Mr. Hanna's abrupt dismissal of all critical editions (especially those of Vivaldi's works) does a disservice to the scholarship and careful research that has crafted each edition. The problems that Mr. Hanna has with manuscripts of Vivaldi's works - see his third paragraph - are examples of the issues that careful scholarship seeks to answer. Scholars study the entire body of composer's works and learn of the performance practice, copying practice, and printing practice of the time. Only after a careful weighing of the alternatives can a conscientious edition of a composition be brought forth. I for one do not consider myself competent to overturn the work of distinguished scholars who have labored for decades in their fields of study. This does not mean that they are above critique, but those who wish to differ with their position should at least match their expertise in the field. I submit that Mr. Hanna's possession of merely two copies of Vivaldi's manuscripts does not give him firm ground to make such sweeping judgements against eminent musicologists.

Mr. Hanna's ultimate question, "what sounds best," cuts to the heart of the matter. I certainly admit that a poll of today's performers will find my position in the distinct minority (perhaps a minority of one). No doubt most performers will think it sounds best to continue a performance practice that has been in existence for decades, if not for a full century. I maintain, however, that the written documents of the Baroque and Classical periods indicate that composers wished performers to play during most tutti sections. Presumably this sounded best to them. This conclusion that one should perform the written solo part in the tutti passages is not one that I have come to easily, but the evidence is so overwhelming that I am convinced of its validity. I encourage others to closely examine critical editions, manuscripts, the performance practice of the Baroque and Classical periods, and writings about music from those times. Perhaps then you will also desire to perform all of the notes the composers wrote for your instrument.

*Terry B. Ewell, Morgantown, West Virginia*

Dear Ron

I was interested in the articles by Arthur L. Gudwin and Nicola A. Adams on making bassoon reeds. Amateur players like myself don't fuss that much with reeds, but I did attend one reed making lesson with my erstwhile friend Morris Newman. He took me to observe his instruction from Roberto Sensale who was then the retired contra bassoonist of the New York Philharmonic. (This was sometime in the 1950's.)

Sensale was a great "knife man". The way he made