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## **Marcel Tabuteau: A Glance into the New Pedagogical Ideas that Changed the American Woodwind School**

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# Marcel Tabuteau: A Glance into the New Pedagogical Ideas that Changed the American Woodwind School

## Abstract

Marcel Tabuteau was one of the most influential American musicians, changing how American wind players approached their instruments and how they taught especially. His legacy as a teacher and as a performer has been passed down through generations of students and has been disseminated all over the United States and the world at large. To say that his teachings endured because they were good is quite an understatement, however, to analyze how his original teaching and ideas have evolved and grown with modern music and musicianship is what this paper aims to do. It also aims to analyze how his teachings were adopted slowly by other wind players and slowly made their way into the studios of string and brass players as well.

## Annotated Bibliography

- 1)Galbraith, Amy M. "The American School of Oboe Playing: Robert Bloom, John de Lancie, John Mack, and the Influence of Marcel Tabuteau." PhD diss., West Virginia University, 2011. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

This is another dissertation evaluating the dissemination of Tabuteau's teaching through his students and how the current American oboe sound owes most of what it is to Marcel Tabuteau. Ms. Galbraith earned her DMA in oboe performance from WVU in 2011. This dissertation seeks to find the subtle differences between some of Tabuteau's most well known students and to detail those differences despite Tabuteau's creation of the "American" sound. Her interaction with the other sources chosen for this paper is quite significant and she uses just about every single source chosen for this paper. She engages them well and uses them to good effect, detailing important excerpts from each source.

- 2)Hefner, Donald L. "The Tradition of the Paris Conservatory School of Oboe Playing with Special Attention to the Influence of Marcel Tabuteau." PhD Diss., Catholic University of America, 1984.

This dissertation more or less speaks for itself, it is a look at the traditions of the Paris Conservatory and how Mr. Tabuteau brought some of those traditions to North America and the Curtis Conservatory. He is very clear and detailed on how things were in France at the time, and how lacking things were in the United States, and how, after Mr. Tabuteau arrived, American orchestras began performing at higher levels and began really coming into their own as a part of the Western Art Music tradition. He is very particular to detail Mr. Tabuteau's influence on and through his students in addition to all the principal wind players of the Philadelphia Orchestra of the time and how their teaching and meticulousness spread across America and infused itself in the wind playing tradition. I don't believe this dissertation references any of the other articles I have chosen because of how early it was written, however, it is invaluable as a look into the life before Mr. Tabuteau arrived in America and began changing things for the better.

- 3)Loewy, Andrea Kapell. "Musical Concepts of Marcel Tabuteau." *National Association of College Wind and Percussion Instructors* 37, no. 2 (Autumn 1988): 13-6.

<https://marceltabuteau.com/articles/articles-in-other-periodicals/tabuteau-musical-concepts/>

This article was published in the NACWPI Journal and details how Tabuteau taught musical expression. Arguably one of the most difficult things to teach, Ms. Loewy is concise and clear in her detailing of Tabuteau's methods and shows in the simplest terms how musical expression can be improved through simple, intentional thought on what the performer wishes to say through their instrument. The article is short and makes no reference to any other article or dissertation, however, it is very helpful in growing as a musician. Ms. Loewy is a flutist and flute professor emerita, earning degrees from Eastman and teaching at University of Louisiana.

4) Marcel Tabuteau First-Hand. Edited by Peter Bloom, Michael Finkelman, Elizabeth Starr Masoudnia, Marc Mostovoy, John Symer, and Marilyn Zupnik, Ann Campbell webmaster. <https://marceltabuteau.com>

This website is an invaluable resource on aspects of every part of Tabuteau's life, from personal letters to handwritten teaching methods to student accounts of his performance and even recordings of the Philadelphia Orchestra, this website has so many resources. Several people who have written influential works on Tabuteau have been interviewed or work currently with the people who run the website. All of them are in some way related to Tabuteau through music. This website will be helpful for verifying old handwritten pedagogical exercises and even gaining a peek into what the world and Curtis was like at the time.

5) McGill, David. *Sound in Motion: A Performer's Guide to Greater Musical Expression*. Bloomington, IA: Indiana University Press, 2007.

This book was written by another Curtis graduate who is very analytical and methodical in his approach to musical expression and understanding the deeper areas of music. McGill's teachers were some of Tabuteau's latest students and therefore he is a "grandstudent" of Tabuteau. He writes in great depth but not too extensively about his teacher's takeaways from Tabuteau's teaching methods, and about Tabuteau's pedagogic approach to oboe and to musical expression of phrasing. He also writes about his interpretations of Tabuteau and his methodology from the perspective of a bassoonist and how his teachings translated to a different instrument. This book, also being recently published, has not interacted very much with any other sources, and while cited less than Ms. Storch's book, is still an important insight into Tabuteau's life and teaching.

6) Rose, Rebecka E. "The Development and Continued Evolution of the American Style of Oboe Playing." MA thesis, Liberty University, 2017.

This dissertation is an interesting contrast between the relatively young and new American school of oboe and the much older and more experienced schools of oboe performance in Germany, Italy, and France. It also details very specifically Mr. Tabuteau's influence and creation of the American school but goes a step further by including a look at his most well-known students and their influence on the American school. This is a masters thesis, however

from an initial reading, it looks to be well done and the research seems to be well founded. Ms. Rose references several of the sources used here and uses them very well, especially both books by McGill and Storch. It is somewhat comical how little writing there actually is on Marcel Tabuteau and how few living sources are left to talk about his life and influence.

7)Stevens, Melissa. “Marcel Tabuteau: Pedagogical Concepts and Practices for Teaching Musical Expressiveness: An Oral History” PhD diss., Ohio State University, 1999. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

This dissertation is very interesting in that it is just a collection of interviews that Ms. Stevens conducted with several of Mr. Tabuteau’s greatest students and some of his students' students. The interviews are all conducted around questions about Tabuteau or pedagogical methods of Tabuteau and their continued use at the Curtis School. Interestingly enough, this dissertation cites only one or two articles that were found in compiling this list likely due to the almost decade prior to both books that are so very well compiled. However, Ms. Stevens engages each source well and is able to concisely and clearly derive their points into her argument and list of questions for each of Tabuteau’s students.

8)Storch, Laila. *Marcel Tabuteau How do You Expect to Play the Oboe if You Can’t Peel a Mushroom?*. Bloomington, IA: Indiana University Press, 2008.

This book is written by one of Tabuteau’s later students but one who spent significant time around him and around the Curtis Institute. Ms. Storch’s uniquely special view allows for her to detail his teaching style and approach to different students, but also shed light on some parts of his personal life, like time spent with the woodwind quintet of the Philadelphia Orchestra, and students he met with outside of the oboe studio or even the conservatory. Unfortunately, this book is more or less the “bible” of Marcel Tabuteau and his approach to teaching... this book and its author is referenced by just about every article out there on Marcel Tabuteau, but Ms. Storch was quite old and sadly passed not too long after the initial publishing of this book so she was unable to really respond to new works.

9)Tabuteau, Marcel, oboist. *Marcel Tabuteau’s Lessons*. Recorded 1965. Boston Records 1996, 1 CD.

This CD was recorded in the last year of Tabuteau’s life and was just a peek into the way that he conducted his lessons with any student. The small sections he chose to record to the vinyl could be assumed to be the most fundamental and important teachings he wished to pass on to students past his time at the conservatory and perhaps past his time in life. This resource is invaluable in detailing exactly what his approach to shaping young oboist's minds was and how this changed the American School of Oboe and Woodwind at large from when he first began teaching at the Curtis Institute.

10)Thompson, Shannon Lannigan. “A History and Analysis of the Philadelphia School of Clarinet Playing” DMA diss., University of Texas at Austin, 1998. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

This dissertation is a wealth of information on an instrument that is not the oboe. Unfortunately, Ms. Thompson does not reference any of these other sources, however, she does conduct interviews with students of Daniel Bonade (a contemporary and friend of Tabuteau), and also makes reference to and writes a significant portion on Tabuteau himself and his teaching style. This dissertation takes a wider look at the Philadelphia Orchestra style of playing and the dissemination of the Curtis Institute pedagogy of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. This will be valuable to this paper because of the change in perspective from most of these other sources from solely oboe and Tabuteau, to Tabuteau’s friends and colleagues and how they adopted his teaching methods and used them in their own teaching.

11)Wetherbee, Sarah Maude. “Marcel Tabuteau’s Influence on String Playing at the Curtis Institute of Music: A Philosophy of Twentieth-Century Performance Practice” DMA diss., Johns Hopkins University, Peabody Institute, 2002. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

This dissertation is another look adjacent to the oboe and the oboe department at Curtis, but while still giving Tabuteau and his students their due, it also looks at the orchestral department and what Curtis was like during this time in the world. From the string perspective of this dissertation, Ms. Wetherbee is very good at showing the musical and pedagogical ideas that translated well to the strings from the winds and even details some ideas that weren’t so easy to translate. She references some of the sources of Ms. Thompson’s dissertation but very few of the oboe centered sources.

12)Prokop-Seaton, Noel. “Audition Agendum: Analyzing the Development, Procedure, and Repertoire of Orchestral Oboe Auditions.” DMA diss., Florida State University, 2023. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

This dissertation is a bit of a deviation from the other sources used for this paper in that it is more focused on the change in auditioning for orchestras on oboe instead of the introduction and development of Tabuteau’s pedagogy. Ms. Prokop-Seaton has just finished her degree at FSU and has studied with some of the best oboists on the east coast. This dissertation is a look into Mr. John Ferillo’s thoughts and ideas about how to take a more successful audition. Mr. Ferillo is a student of John DeLancie who was a student of Tabuteau. This will be an interesting look into the performance area of Tabuteau’s teaching as opposed to the pedagogical value only.