The Interpretation of Orchestral Ballet Excerpts for Clarinet

by

Mara Plotkin

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

Faculty of Music
University of Toronto

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Faculty of Music Graduate Department
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Abstract

This research examines the current performance practice of ballet excerpts for clarinet from five ballets: Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky’s Swan Lake, The Sleeping Beauty, The Nutcracker, and Sergei Prokofiev’s Romeo and Juliet, and Cinderella. Research has been published on the performance practice of symphonic orchestra and opera repertoire for clarinet, however, there is a paucity of research that examines the current performance practice techniques of orchestral ballet clarinet excerpts.

The methodology of this research consisted of identifying major orchestral ballet clarinet excerpts in the canon and interviewing five experienced principal clarinetists in North American ballet orchestras. The interviewees were Max Christie from National Ballet of Canada Orchestra, Steve Hartman from New York City Ballet Orchestra, Jon Manasse from American Ballet Theatre Orchestra, Sheryl Renk from San Francisco Ballet Orchestra, and William Wrzesien from Boston Ballet Orchestra. They discussed clarinet solos from the selected ballet excerpts regarding phrasing, technique, dynamics, fingerings, pitch, tempo, and ensemble playing in a ballet orchestra.

An analysis of the interpretation of musical excerpts by the interviewees reveals some common themes. They addressed phrasing, dynamics, intonation, fingerings, and instrument choice (A or
B-flat clarinet). Phrasing was the most prominent musical feature discussed, although there was variation in their opinions about phrasing. Some clarinetists had specific suggestions for the phrasing of each individual passage; others generally preferred a long or short phrase. All interviewees commented on fingerings for notes in the altissimo register, particularly for technically difficult passages that reached into the altissimo registers in the Prokofiev ballets. They also indicated that intonation is influenced by the dynamic played, the register of the clarinet, and the orchestration. Many of the interviewees suggest that certain passages work better for the fingers or timbre if transposed to the A clarinet or vice-versa.
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I would like to thank the following people for their help and guidance to make this dissertation come to fruition:

My gratitude to the principal ballet clarinetists interviewed for this research: Max Christie, Steve Hartmann, Jon Manasse, Sheryl Renk, and William Wrzesien. Each clarinetist shared tremendous insight into the performance of ballet excerpts for clarinet while taking time out of their busy performance and teaching schedules to contribute their expertise to this project.

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Chapter 1
Introduction and Background Information

As an orchestral clarinetist, I am interested in understanding how the musical score informs professional ballet orchestral clarinetists’ performances. My research documents a significant performance tradition by examining the current performance practice of major ballet excerpts for clarinet. My research seeks to define and illustrate several ways of practicing and performing major orchestral ballet excerpts for clarinet. The repertoire examined in this study is a collection of the most standard in the orchestral ballet canon and contains major clarinet solos. This research focuses on five ballets from the Russian Imperial and Soviet ballet eras: Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky’s *Swan Lake*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *The Nutcracker*, and Sergei Prokofiev’s *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Cinderella*.

The clarinet excerpts from these works which this research examines have appeared prominently in the programs and audition lists in the top five ballet companies in North America: New York City Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, Boston Ballet, and National Ballet of Canada. These companies are considered the top five based on the budget charts from the American Federation of Musicians International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians and Organization of Canadian Symphony Musicians 2013-2014. Ballets from Imperial and Soviet Russia predominated on these lists and five in particular were chosen for the purpose of this study. These ballets are some of the most commonly performed in North America. They are performed by ballet companies around the world and are considered staples of traditional ballet repertoire.

Gunlogson (2006) and Schoen (2004) examine current performance practice techniques of orchestral excerpts for clarinet. There have also been several clarinet excerpt books published on the performance practice of symphonic orchestra and opera repertoire written by and about professional clarinetists such as Ben Armato, Daniel Bonade, Michael Drapkin, Peter Hadcock, and Stanley Hasty. Although a small selection of ballet clarinet excerpts is provided in these

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1 Rankings are based on the budget charts from the American Federation of Musicians International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians and Organization of Canadian Symphony Musicians 2013-2014 wage charts and the 2012 Dance USA National Company Roster.
excerpt guide books, no research has examined the current performance practice techniques of orchestral ballet clarinet excerpts, nor has any ballet clarinet excerpt book ever been published.

There is a relative paucity of sources when it comes to the current performance practice of major orchestral ballet excerpts for clarinet. There is, however, published scholarship on the ballets themselves (Morrison, 2009; Press, 2006; Smith, 2000; Wiley, 1985). These books focus on two composers and their ballets: Tchaikovsky from the Imperial Russian Ballet era and Prokofiev from the Soviet Ballet era. These sources provide a historical context to the conception of the ballets and the music written for them. They do not, however, examine in depth performance practices of the music from these ballets including specific approaches to clarinet performance.

As a trained orchestral clarinetist, having studied at multiple conservatories and music schools, and as an amateur ballet dancer, I have developed an interest in the current performance practice of clarinet solos in the standard orchestral ballet repertoire. This study illuminates the current performance practice techniques of principal clarinetists in major North American ballet orchestras.

Methodology

The methodology of this research consisted of first identifying the major orchestral ballet clarinet excerpts in the canon and then interviewing experienced clarinetists about the performance practice of those excerpts. The previously cited excerpts were determined by surveying the repertoire of the top five ballet companies in North America. This was followed by interviews with principal clarinetists of those orchestras.

The research methodology compares clarinet audition lists and season programs from the top five ballet companies in North America and identifies the common repertoire. Recent research shows that musicians who have permanent jobs in major symphony orchestras are acutely aware of the significance of performance practices necessary for success in North American orchestras (Bellison, 2010 and King, 1994). However, there has been minimal scholarship documenting precisely what those current performance practices are, particularly in ballet orchestral repertoire. I interviewed the principal clarinetists in those top five North American ballet orchestras regarding their current performance practice techniques of the selected ballet clarinet excerpts.
The clarinetists with whom I conducted interviews have a vast knowledge and many years of experience playing clarinet in ballet orchestras. These clarinetists are: Jon Manasse, American Ballet Orchestra; Steve Hartman, New York City Ballet; Sheryl Renk, San Francisco Ballet; Max Christie, National Ballet of Canada; and William Wrzesien, Boston Ballet. All the clarinetists are in orchestras who are members of ICSOM (International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians) and OCSM (Organization of Canadian Symphony Musicians), which have annual budgets ranging from $30.4 to 67.0 million. The clarinetists agreed to two to three hour in person interviews and were told which ballets would be focused on. Because not all the respondents were able to give the same amount of time to the interview, not everyone spoke about every excerpt on the list.

The clarinetists gave advice on performance practice techniques of orchestral ballet clarinet repertoire. In order to understand the qualitative nuances that a ballet orchestral clarinetist experiences, I asked the professional clarinetists in interviews to discuss the solos in the five ballets regarding phrasing, technique, dynamics, fingerings, pitch, tempo, and ensemble playing in a ballet orchestra. Four out of five interviews were audio recorded and the fifth one was recorded by hand. The audio recordings and notes have been transcribed (see appendices D - H) and an analysis of the data appears in the following chapters. Each clarinetist received a copy of the transcription and had the opportunity to edit his or her interview. After compiling all of the interview transcripts, there were several major excerpts that received the most comments. For various reasons some interviewees had more to say about particular excerpts over others or simply declined to comment on particular excerpts they found less important than others. When all responses were synthesized, the majority of the interviewees’ responses were focused on 75 excerpts. Therefore, about 25 solos were removed from the initial list.

Steven Hartman grew up in St. Louis, Missouri where he studied clarinet with Earl Bates, Charles Hoffer and Les Scott. He later studied with Bernard Portnoy and Augustin Duquès at Juilliard. Hartman studied with Kalman Opperman for nearly 40 years until Mr. Opperman’s death in 2010. Hartman has been a member of the New York City Ballet orchestra since 1987 and principal clarinetist since 2009.

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2 Rankings based on the budget charts from the American Federation of Musicians International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians and Organization of Canadian Symphony Musicians 2013-2014 wage charts and the 2012 Dance USA National Company Roster.
Jon Manasse has been principal clarinet with the American Ballet Theatre Orchestra since 1988. He has performed with many of the world’s best ensembles and has recorded numerous albums. Manasse studied clarinet with David Weber at Juilliard and has been on faculty at Juilliard since 2007 and Eastman School of Music since 1995.

Sheryl Renk studied clarinet with Donald Carroll at San Francisco State University and then studied clarinet with Rosario Mazzeo at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Renk began her professional career playing Acting Second Clarinet with the San Francisco Symphony for four years. From 1996 – 2006 Renk was principal clarinet of the San Francisco Ballet orchestra. In 2006 Renk became principal clarinet of the San Diego Symphony Orchestra.

William Wrzesien was principal clarinet of the Boston Ballet Orchestra from 1971 – 2010. He was also principal clarinet of the Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra from 1969 – 2000 and performed, toured, and recorded with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Boston Pops Orchestra. Wrzesien studied clarinet with Rosario Mazzeo at the New England Conservatory and taught clarinet and coached chamber music there from 1966 – 2007.

Max Christie is recognized as one of Canada’s most active and capable performers of contemporary music and has toured internationally and recorded numerous albums. Christie has been principal clarinet of the National Ballet of Canada Orchestra since 1988. Christie played principal clarinet with the Esprit Orchestra in Toronto and is a member of the new music collective Continuum. Christie received a bachelor’s degree from the University of Western Ontario where he studied with Robert Riseling. He later studied with Joaquin Valdepeñas in Toronto and received a master’s degree at Yale University where he studied with Keith Wilson. Christie is on faculty at the University of Toronto.

**Further Rationale for This Project**

The esteemed violinist and music pedagogue Joseph Gingold once said, “The impression an artist makes upon his listeners somehow cannot be expressed to others. Books and articles can only attempt to describe it – they are unable to recreate it.” ³ One such artist is French oboist Marcel Tabuteau, principal oboist of the Philadelphia Orchestra who had a far-reaching influence over the orchestra's sense of phrasing and sound and furthermore has had great influence over

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woodwind instrumentalists as well as other musicians of all instruments to this day. He evolved a number system as a way to impart in an extremely precise manner his ideas of rhythm, dynamic range, and the shaping of musical phrases. It was particularly helpful for students who came from backgrounds less steeped in musical culture. However, imparting this number system to describe the minute details in a musical line to his students at the Curtis Institute did not preclude his colourful way of teaching. Despite Tabuteau's old school ways of teaching with scare tactics, many musicians benefitted from his teaching.\textsuperscript{4} To this day, the style of Marcel Tabuteau is in the fabric of woodwind playing in many orchestras in North America. It is an important feature of the pedagogical tradition of many teachers.

Someone who has experience in a specific field, is a connoisseur, or an expert (Eisner, 1992). According to Elliot Eisner, these professional clarinetists would be considered connoisseurs. Eisner defines the meaning of connoisseurship as “the ability to make fine-grained discriminations among complex and subtle qualities...”\textsuperscript{5} Eisner explains that having a memory, or antecedent knowledge of something allows the connoisseur to differentiate qualities in his or her area of expertise.

Eisner illustrates his point with wine connoisseurs. They tend to know the process of how a wine is made, the history of the wine barrels, and have an experienced palette. Although Eisner acknowledges that the topic of wine is a tangent, it displays that the art of being a connoisseur is having the ability to experience qualitative nuances and to make judgements about the virtue of the qualities experienced.\textsuperscript{6} A professional clarinetist who plays in a ballet orchestra has experienced numerous performances of many ballets over the years. He or she understands aspects that are part of the music in each performance and have a wealth of knowledge about those details. Therefore, the principal clarinetists of major ballet orchestras in North America are connoisseurs and have contributed qualitative data to inform my research.

Eisner posits that antecedent knowledge influences the language that we use when talking about something. “We learn a language that is categorical, and categories frame our perception in

\textsuperscript{4} Storch, Laila, \textit{Marcel Tabuteau: How Do You Expect to Play the Oboe If You Can’t Peel a Mushroom?} (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 216.


\textsuperscript{6} Eisner, \textit{Enlightened}, 65.
particular ways. These categories, moreover are value laden. We learn to look for those qualities that are labeled, but especially for ones that have particular value to us.”

Musicians, composers, and dancers are not exempt from this. For example, the quality and character that a ballet dancer presents on stage affects the tempo and dynamics an orchestral musician will execute. Over the centuries, musicians and composers have composed melodies, rhythms, dynamics, and tempi to create this character in the musical score. There is a great deal to learn about interpreting the score by hearing performers discuss their craft in their own terms.

Nonken (2004) justifies the need for documenting the thoughts of performing musicians. In quoting Stravinsky, who said, “I am the vessel through which Le Sacre (du Printemps) passed!” Nonken writes:

“Since the premiere of Le Sacre du Printemps in 1913, hundreds could have made Stravinsky’s same claim and been justified: namely, the orchestral musicians who created musical sonorities from his knotty score. In Le Sacre's legendary journey into the aesthetic mass consciousness of the twentieth-century, it passed through countless other vessels. Their names are so routinely omitted from liner notes and concert programs that we often forget they existed, at one time, as independent creative entities.”

Nonken says that performing artists rarely participate in the written discourse of music academia because that domain is dominated by composers, theorists, and musicologists.

“The performer's success ultimately is tied not to writing articles and frequenting the scholarly forum but to playing well and engaging audiences...As a result, the performer's voice becomes the voice of the instrument. The instrument speaks eloquently, but the actual voice of the player behind it falls silent...Perhaps the greatest players share a talent for losing themselves in their instruments, so that the listener becomes aware of only the music itself, not the technician who negotiates the basic realization of the notated symbol. While great performances can show us many things, however, there are many things that they cannot tell us. They cannot tell us, explicitly, how performers see their creative processes, the processes of composers and listeners, and their historical role as vessels in the transmission of the...repertoire. Owing to the silence of players on issues like these, many aspects of...music performance remain mysterious.”

7 Eisner, Enlightened, 66.


9 Nonken, 1.
The professional orchestral ballet clarinetists who participated in this study explain how they negotiate the basic realization of the notated symbol in five major ballets from the standard ballet repertoire.

**Literature Review**

Much has been written about orchestral performance practice from the perspective of several prominent professional clarinetists in the form of annotated excerpt books and in research. The excerpt books help the clarinetist learn how to better perform specific excerpts in auditions and in performance. The research examines the oral traditions of clarinet performance practice. In addition to clarinet, there are orchestra audition preparation sources written about piccolo and trumpet, which prove useful because they shed light on issues related to orchestral performance.


One of the most comprehensive excerpts books, “The Working Clarinetist,” is annotated by Peter Hadcock. Hadcock's excerpt book for B-flat clarinet is divided into four parts: 1) orchestral excerpts 2) fingerings, information about reeds, mouthpieces, intonation, and clarinet repair 3) a written out master class on the Mozart and Nielsen Clarinet concerti 4) annotated collection of fingerings. There are many very helpful footnoted comments throughout this excerpt book although the text is minimal. There are very few excerpts from major ballet repertoire in this book, particularly none from the Tchaikovsky ballets.

Clarinetists need to be well versed in the auxiliary instruments such as E-flat and bass clarinet. The following excerpt book is extremely beneficial to the aspiring orchestral bass clarinetist. Between 1979 and 2006 Michael Drapkin transcribed his own thoughts on performance practice for bass clarinet orchestral excerpts in his “Symphonic Repertoire for the Bass Clarinet,” Volumes One – Three. Drapkin established three criteria for selecting the works in this collection: 1) The excerpts are part of the standard orchestral repertoire 2) More obscure works
chosen are included because of their noteworthy solos for the bass clarinet. 3) Several works were included due to their frequent appearance on audition lists for symphony orchestras. In the preface, Drapkin addresses the issues of bass clef versus treble clef and the complications that can arise for bass clarinetists in that domain. Most of the excerpts are from the symphonic orchestral canon with several excerpts from opera and very few from the ballet repertoire.

In the Forward in Volume Two, Drapkin describes his selection process for the remaining excerpts included. He appointed an advisory board of bass clarinetists from major symphony orchestras in the U.S. who contributed and assisted Drapkin in choosing the most appropriate excerpts. Drapkin also mentions that he was unable to include excerpts from Prokofiev's *Cinderella*, *Romeo and Juliet Suite* No. 3, and Stravinsky's *The Fairy's Kiss* (Drapkin, 2004). Drapkin explains to the reader to not just rely on excerpt books but to always obtain the complete part and the score. These three volumes are excellent examples of continuing an oral tradition.

Gunlogson (2006), Schoen (2004), and Craig (1993) discuss the oral traditions of orchestral clarinetists and provide an interpretive understanding of orchestral clarinet audition repertoire and musical style and its application. Other objectives in the above research include a discussion of orchestral clarinetist's approach to pedagogy and performance. There are several dissertations that focus on standard orchestral clarinet excerpts. Schoen (2004), Craig (1993), and Limoli (1977) discuss performance practice of orchestral excerpts. Their works include discographies and extensive bibliographies.

Schoen (2004) focuses on clarinet orchestral issues, comparing the performance practice of orchestral excerpts in the context of auditions with the context of performances. Schoen points out that individual musicians and the orchestra have their respective idiosyncrasies and that a musician has to alter his or her playing in the ensemble context. Schoen argues that a musician might need to sacrifice his or her individuality in conforming to an ensemble interpretation. Schoen compiled a list of the most frequent clarinet audition excerpts. He also interviewed clarinetists of major American orchestras who represent a wide variety of training and professional experience.

Schoen gives background information on the historical protocol of auditions when the process and excerpts were not explicitly stated in the pre audition contract. However, he does not give a specific date of when this was standard practice. Schoen discusses an audition situation that was
more likely to occur 40 to 50 years ago. It was more common for a conductor to ask the auditioning musician to play the excerpt in a slightly different way than they just played it to see if he or she can play in the aesthetic of the conductor's preference. Schoen explains that there is a much more specific protocol today, in which the orchestra excerpts are often listed in the contract so the auditioning musician knows exactly what to prepare. He explains that there is little interaction between the auditioning instrumentalist and the audition committee and argues that this increases the disparity between the way a musician will play certain repertoire in an audition versus the way they will play it in a concert.

In the first chapter, Schoen examines a selection of clarinet excerpts from orchestral scores as well as quotes from the interviewed professional clarinetists. In the second chapter, Schoen discusses general topics related to auditions and orchestral performances such as the audition committee, sheet music, equipment, and recordings. Schoen concludes that to be successful in an audition, one must ultimately convey the essence of the music. Each of the professional clarinetists he interviewed had a slightly different opinion of what that essence was. This is a unique and invaluable piece of literature furthering an understanding of the clarinet audition repertoire and process. This research importantly contributes to the field of orchestral clarinet pedagogy.

After an extensive interviewing process with orchestral clarinetist Larry Combs, Karen Craig wrote the dissertation entitled *Interpretation of the Clarinet Symphonic Audition Repertoire* (1993). This paper provides an interpretive understanding of orchestral clarinet audition repertoire and musical style and its application from the perspective of Larry Combs, the participant in her study. The paper includes a discussion of Larry Combs' approach to orchestral clarinet excerpt preparation and performance. The paper includes an analysis of Combs' approach to orchestral clarinet excerpt preparation, pedagogy and performance. The primary focus of the middle chapter is the many standard orchestra excerpts for clarinet. Also included are reviews of Combs as soloist with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, other ensembles, and a discography.

Limoli (1977) presents a collection of important clarinet passages from operas written by Rossini, Bellini, and Donizetti. He assesses the importance of these passages for the clarinet by relating them to solos from operas of Mozart and Verdi. This paper is the first to document
performance practice issues of opera excerpts for clarinet. Limoli defines and explains *bel canto* style, especially as the term applies to the clarinetist. He notes similarities and differences in the opera orchestra clarinet parts of the three composers and analyzes representative solos from their operas. This study also includes a list of non-operatic compositions using the clarinet by the three composers.

Fletcher (2008) compiles a list of ten orchestral excerpts for the piccolo. She devotes one chapter for an analysis of each of the ten excerpts organized in the chronological order of their composition. She supplies historical background of the compositions from which the excerpts are derived suggesting this background knowledge is significant when interpreting orchestral excerpts. Subsequent chapters contain historical background, stylistic analysis, and suggestions from professional piccoloists regarding performance practices of the ten piccolo excerpts.

Virtuoso bassoonist Arthur Weisberg's *The Art of Wind Playing* (1975) is a quintessential book about what is possible to play on a wind instrument. There are sections on technique, dynamics and intonation, both single and double tonguing, vibrato, and breathing. Weisberg examines the evolution of style in the Classical, Romantic, and Contemporary periods. The second part of the book focuses on interpretation, which Weisberg divides into categories such as time and speed, time signature, the role of attack and release in emphasizing notes, vibrato, and legato. He employs an excerpt from the second movement in Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 4 to illustrate his analysis.

Cannon (1989) explores audition preparation. He emphasizes the importance of recordings, score study, and an analysis of the role of the trumpet in the orchestra. Cannon provides an annotated excerpt book for trumpet that includes commentary, historical information, and performance techniques for a more in depth understanding of the excerpts. Cannon also includes trumpet audition surveys from the International Trumpet Guild Journal and the American League of Symphony Orchestra newsletters.

Performance Practice Issues in Opera Orchestra Excerpts

Preparing opera excerpts is sometimes secondary in the mind-set of aspiring orchestral musicians. It is, however, important to have an understanding of the opera repertoire. This section provides illuminating research guidelines from different families of instrumentalists for preparing opera orchestral excerpts.

Cimino (2004) conducted a close investigation of five Verdi operas and their programmatic handling of woodwind instruments. The author explains that woodwind instruments are capable of conveying a myriad of characters and also includes a list of characters and emotions in a chart. Cimino includes quotes from Stanley Sadie's book *Verdi and His Operas*. Cimino provides a synopsis for each opera that he discusses. Each ensuing chapter is dedicated to one Verdi opera.

Johnson (2007) takes on an historical perspective in order to further examine the repertoire of Luigi Bassi, principal and solo clarinetist in the La Scala Opera orchestra as well as composer, steeped in the traditions of grand opera. Johnson's dissertation focuses on Bassi’s clarinet music and provides biographical and performance history of Bassi who lived in Milan. Johnson identifies Bassi's source material and explains how he manipulated it for the clarinet solo pieces. The author provides a brief synopsis of each opera that Bassi's clarinet variations are based upon.

Johnson’s dissertation serves as a performance guide for clarinetists who wish to perform Luigi Bassi's clarinet music. The first chapter introduces the growing trend in virtuosity of clarinetists during the nineteenth-century, particularly at the beginning of the century where woodwind virtuosos were gaining momentum. Ensuing chapters contain information about clarinet works based on operas, organized by composer. The author conducted research in Milan and contains an annotated bibliography and a discography of Bassi's other works.

Schaffer (1999) seeks to identify a representative list of trumpet excerpts from the opera repertoire most often asked for in orchestra auditions. The reasons for choosing the particular excerpts that are discussed in his dissertation are as follows: the likelihood of an excerpt appearing on an audition list (Schaffer refers to an audition list from the Chicago Lyric Opera), most widely programmed operas, the importance of excerpts relating to the story of the opera, the instrument's role in highlighting an event in the opera, and texturally exposed excerpts. The author argues that this provides a context for the excerpt and explains how the trumpet excerpt
fits in a long opera. Schaffer analyzes the way selected opera trumpet excerpts relate to the story of the opera in addition to giving performance guidelines for each excerpt. In addition, the author suggests certain practice techniques given by other professional opera orchestra trumpet players. He includes an extensive discography with a survey of operas performed by leading opera companies that represent the origin of nationality of the composer. In this dissertation, each chapter is respectively dedicated to one opera excerpt.

Although a number of books have been published on the performance practice of clarinet orchestral excerpts, there is a paucity of books written about the performance practice of orchestral ballet clarinet excerpts.

**Documenting the Performance Tradition**

In paying homage to a great clarinet pedagogue, Masiello (2009) offers a rationale for making a twenty-first century version of Leon Russianoff’s *Clarinet Method* (1982). Masiello examines the lineage of many American clarinetists and the prominent influence Russianoff’s teaching has had on clarinetists. The research documents the rich pedagogical oral tradition of Russianoff. Transcriptions of interviews with members of Russianoff’s family are also included.

In a detailed biography, Gunlogson (2006) extensively analyses clarinetist Stanley Hasty's legacy as a performer and pedagogue. Hasty was principal clarinet in several major orchestras in the United States and taught at numerous conservatories and schools of music in the U.S. Gunlogson describes in comprehensive detail different aspects of Hasty's teaching. Gunlogson provides transcribed interviews with Hasty's former students who are also prominent clarinetists including Daniel Bonade, Simeon Bellison, Robert Marcellus, and Leon Russianoff.

Pisano (2005) provides a pedagogical analysis of twentieth-century chamber music excerpts for clarinet. Chapter One consists of a review of research as well as excerpt and etude books. The purpose of the paper is to document a compilation of prominent clarinet excerpts from this period. Pisano argues that many students do not study these important excerpts unless they have to perform the piece for school. The study aims to support students in their practice of these chamber works.

Galbraith (2011) traces the distinct national school of American oboe playing developed by Marcel Tabuteau. The paper focuses on the pedagogy and performance of Tabuteau and three of
his students who have molded the different styles of oboe playing in America. Galbraith conducted interviews of three Tabuteau students and documented the variations in their tone production, reed making techniques, and phrasing. Appendices include a chart tracing Tabuteau's tree of students as well as reed specifications by each school of Tabuteau's descendents. Another source on Tabuteau, written by Stevens (1999), transcribes interviews of several of Tabuteau's students who are now prominent oboists.

While many of the works examined in this literature review focus on performance practice of orchestral excerpts, there is a conspicuous absence of research conducted on the performance practice of orchestral clarinet excerpts from the ballet repertoire. The methodology of interviewing an expert or several experts about their performance practice of the canon is similar to what is used in this research study.
Chapter 2
Swan Lake

Just as it is important to understand performance practice techniques and oral traditions in the realm of performance, educating oneself on the background information of the composer and repertoire is extremely helpful to make an informed interpretation of a work. There is never a question in most scholars' minds about the fact that Tchaikovsky is a master composer in many genres. His three ballets are greatly respected and firmly entrenched in the international ballet repertoire.\textsuperscript{10} The music of Tchaikovsky is celebrated for its irresistible melodies, rhythmic pulse, and well-suited nature for dance and movement. Tchaikovsky was a prolific composer and wrote some of the most performed ballets of all time, \textit{Swan Lake}, \textit{The Sleeping Beauty}, and \textit{The Nutcracker}. All three ballets contain substantial clarinet solos.

Background of \textit{Swan Lake}

The following historians and authors have completed tremendous scholarship on historical sources on ballets produced in Imperial Russia and Soviet Russian eras. Ballet critic and historian, Cyril Beaumont discusses the origins and conception of \textit{Swan Lake}, Opus 20 and claims \textit{Swan Lake} is one of the most popular ballets in the canon.\textsuperscript{11} He discusses the difficulty of establishing an exact date as to when the story of \textit{Swan Lake} was written. We know, however, that Tchaikovsky was asked to compose for this ballet in June 1875.\textsuperscript{12} Although Tchaikovsky was an accomplished symphonic composer, he genuinely wanted to compose music for the ballet genre. In a letter to Rimsky-Korsakov, Tchaikovsky wrote, “The directorate of the Opera has commissioned me to write the music for the ballet \textit{Le Lac des Cygnes}. I accepted the work, partly because I need the money and partly because I have long cherished a desire to try my hand at this type of music.”\textsuperscript{13}


\textsuperscript{13} Beaumont, \textit{Ballet}, 13.
*Swan Lake* did not receive favourable reviews after its premiere in Moscow in 1877. This was not so much due to the musical score as to a poor performance and physical production. The score was cut and changes later made by other composers. Reasons for the failure were said to be due to the choreographer and not the musical composition. Beaumont discusses how the great success of Tchaikovsky's *Sleeping Beauty* and *The Nutcracker* in the 1890's led to a revival of *Swan Lake*.

While Tchaikovsky and Begichev, Intendent of the Moscow Imperial Theatres, were on holiday, they were inspired to create the theme of *Swan Lake* while viewing the banks of the Rhine. The setting of *Swan Lake* takes place in Germany. The original book of *Swan Lake* by Johann Karl August Musäus describes the Young Prince Siegfried as the male protagonist. His mother insists on hosting a party where he must choose his future wife from the maidens who are in attendance. Act II takes place at a lake where a young girl named Odette has been put under a spell by her stepmother. She must endure living as a swan by day and a girl by night. The prince soon falls in love with her (during the *pas d'action*). Odette does not believe his love is genuine but falls in love with him anyway. Odette fears a misfortune will befall upon them and also knows that Prince Siegfried must choose a wife at the ball the following evening. The melody of the love theme in *Swan Lake* in Act II is marked *andante non troppo* in the score. Beaumont, like Wagner, uses *Leitmotiv* to depict the atmosphere of different scenes throughout the ballet as well as the emotions expressed by characters in *Swan Lake*.

Act III takes place at the ball where Siegfried dances with Odile who greatly resembles Odette. Siegfried asks Odile to be his wife but the hoot of an owl is heard and Rothbart turns into the demon and Odile laughs. General confusion ensues in this scene. Act IV takes place by the lake in the evening. Siegfried rushes to Odette and they die in each other's arms in the turbulent waters of the lake. The clouds clear and a flock of white swans appear on the calm lake. There have been various endings in different productions all over the world.

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Beaumont discusses the myth of *Swan Lake* and how dancer and choreographer Marius Petipa adapted *Swan Lake* for the choreography of the ballet. Like Adam's *Giselle*, the supreme interest of this ballet is on the ballerina.\(^\text{18}\) Beaumont describes in a simplified manner the choreographic script of *Swan Lake* one act at a time. Beaumont's description of the ballet includes the French terms for the choreographed movements of the ballet dancers in relation to what is happening in the story and other action occurring on stage. The reader must keep in mind that each production will have variations in choreography and staging.

*Swan Lake* was premiered in 1877 at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow. The original choreography was that of Vaclav Reisinger's.\(^\text{19}\) Beaumont says that *Swan Lake* “is still performed with unfailing success, although its structure, both musical and choreographic, has undergone many changes.”\(^\text{20}\) Throughout Beaumont's book are collections of original illustrations and original diagrams from Russia which were obtained with the help from the British Council and many other organizations and resources from numerous countries across Western Europe and Russia.

Another tremendously detailed book about Tchaikovsky's ballets was written by Roland John Wiley, “*Tchaikovsky's Ballets: Swan Lake, Sleeping Beauty, Nutcracker.*” He includes a list of illustrations, with an introduction that discusses traditions between the composer and the ballet master, and the ballet audience. Wiley states that his analysis of the three celebrated Tchaikovsky ballets are merely conjectural. However he emphasizes the importance of consulting the rehearsal scores or répétiteurs and choreographic notations that were marked over the last 100 years by ballet masters and music directors. Wiley suggests that all three Tchaikovsky ballets had undergone numerous changes within the first few years after their premiere. He poses that even though Russians “vouch for the ironclad continuity of their tradition…circumstances argue to the contrary.”\(^\text{21}\) Several of Tchaikovsky's rehearsal scores contain conflicting notes and have contributed to the metamorphosis of the performances of *Swan Lake* over the course of the first few years of production. Tchaikovsky did not deny that these contradictions in the rehearsal scores existed. The first producers of *Swan Lake* made their own interpretation of the various


\(^{19}\) Beaumont, *Ballet*, 144.


parts of Tchaikovsky's score. The premiere of Swan Lake in Moscow in 1877 was not as successful as the revival of Swan Lake in 1895 in St. Petersburg. The revival of the ballet is strongly associated with dancer and choreographer Marius Petipa. One of the major factors contributing to the success of Tchaikovsky's ballets was the huge support and interest from the director of the Mariinsky Theatre where there was a strongly established ballet school, knowledgeable audiences, and discriminating critics.\textsuperscript{22}

Wiley posits that the choreographer, or ballet master, takes precedence over the composer in the world of ballet.\textsuperscript{23} (The terms “ballet master,” “balletomane,” and “choreographer” were used frequently in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century and those terms can be used interchangeably.) Although Tchaikovsky was eager to compose music for ballet he experienced frustration when composing for this art form and this frustration is summed up well here: “They tell me that during the production of a new ballet, ballet masters treat the music very unceremoniously and demand many changes and alterations. To write under these circumstances is impossible.”\textsuperscript{24} One difficulty in a relationship between a choreographer and composer is due to the unpredictable nature of the choreographer's work and the difficulty in documenting the choreography on paper. Depending on the choreographer and the ballet dancers' capabilities and body type, there can be much reshaping of the ballet as well as the music. Many ballet masters require changes immediately during a rehearsal.\textsuperscript{25} Wiley says, “...music makes its strongest impact when solo dance is the least commanding, and vice versa. The climactic moments of pure music and pure dance almost never coincide, a fact which should give pause to the analyst who seeks to judge ballet music only for its sounds.”\textsuperscript{26} To understand current performance practice of clarinet solos and excerpts from ballet, I will investigate in the forthcoming chapters how aware, if at all, the clarinetist is of the action occurring on stage.

Many musicians, dancers, and scholars have remarked on defining qualities of great ballet music. The quality that people most often cite is melody, which can be regarded as one of Tchaikovsky's strongest compositional attributes. British composer Constant Lambert declared there is a

\textsuperscript{22} Wiley, Tchaikovsky's, xiii.
\textsuperscript{23} Wiley, Tchaikovsky's, 1.
\textsuperscript{24} Wiley, Tchaikovsky's, 1.
\textsuperscript{25} Wiley, Tchaikovsky's, 3.
\textsuperscript{26} Wiley, Tchaikovsky's, 6.
“...superiority of Sleeping Beauty over Swan Lake because of the quality of its melody.”

Ballet music is structured by the libretto and is responsive to the narrative and to the emotional states of the characters on stage. In Russia and the Soviet Union, melody was a primary factor in creating a connection between music and story line. In Tchaikovsky's ballets, melodies are grouped in likenesses of intonation through contour of line, rhythm, key, and expressive quality. An example of Tchaikovsky's use of melody is the opening oboe melody in Act I of Swan Lake, which promotes unity throughout the ballet.

A dancer and choreographer typically work with ease if the music contains regular meter and a symmetrical number of phrases. Due to the dancers' stamina, thirty-two or forty-eight measure solo variations are almost necessary. A composer's skill in orchestration is required to invent great and captivating ballet music. Wiley says, “Solo obligatos, and mimed scenes were to be made suitably characterful by including descriptive elements appropriate to the action.” Wiley praises Tchaikovsky's use of orchestration and ranks him as a ballet specialist “...in clarity and brightness of timbre...The very first bars of the ballet reflects this heritage in the choice of distinctive primary sonorities – the oboe, then the clarinet, then the cello.”

**Analysis of Clarinet Excerpts in Swan Lake**

The following ten passages from Swan Lake consist of solo excerpts, clarinet soli passages, and solo passages that are integrated with solos with other wind instruments. Former principal clarinetist of the Boston Ballet orchestra, William Wrzesien says, “This wonderful repertoire filled with gorgeous clarinet solos invites elegant playing with subtle phrasing, colourful shading, etc.” Wrzesien suggests listening to clarinetist Harold Wright in the Boston Symphony recordings of the complete Swan Lake and Romeo & Juliet ballets for those characteristics of playing. Wrzesien continues, “However, we must also recognize that ballet orchestras are down

27 Wiley, Tchaikovsky's, 6.
28 Wiley, Tchaikovsky's, 64.
29 Wiley, Tchaikovsky's, 64.
30 Wiley, Tchaikovsky's, 7.
31 Wiley, Tchaikovsky's, 7.
32 Wiley, Tchaikovsky's, 70.
33 All comments by William Wrzesien, principal clarinetist of the Boston Ballet Orchestra, are from an audio recorded interview conducted by the author, 8 January 2014, Appendix H
in a pit in a theatre and not onstage in an acoustically friendly concert hall, requiring our stylistic approach in performance to generally be more on the 'assertive' side.” Like Wiley says, the first oboe, clarinet, and cello section in *Swan Lake* have incredibly distinctive sonorities. Once the clarinet completes the four-measure solo answering the oboe, the ascending pizzicato-like articulations in the clarinet and bassoon parts anchor the descending line in the main theme that the cellos play. Max Christie remarks generally about *Swan Lake*, “To me, the crucial thing in a lot of this ballet is the direction and contour of phrase; it's really huge in this particular ballet.”

**Figure 1, Swan Lake, Introduction, Moderato assai, ms. 5 – 8, Clarinet in A**

![Figure 1, Swan Lake, Introduction, Moderato assai, ms. 5 – 8, Clarinet in A](image)

The first clarinet solo to appear in *Swan Lake* occurs in the fifth measure of the ballet, following the opening oboe melody. The interviewed clarinetists discuss several ways of playing this four-measure phrase. Jon Manasse generally states that the principal clarinetist must, “...have conviction however you decide to play it.”

Max Christie says,

“The clarinet solo is an answer to the oboe line... [which] inevitably concludes downward in measure eight. Even though the oboe solo descends quite a bit, there is so much a sense of rise and ascent in the oboe theme that I think the contour of the oboe theme is what moves me to play the clarinet solo in a way that emphasizes the descent. The descent of the line in the second measure is important and the interval of the half note written C to B-flat is really crucial in this solo.”

William Wrzesien also discusses the possibilities of making the phrase end or continue between the written C to B-flat half notes. He says, “You have a choice whether you want to make a four-bar phrase or perhaps a sub phrase at the end of the second bar of the clarinet solo.” Wrzesien sings the phrase with a little lift before the third measure. “Or you can play through the written

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34 All comments by Max Christie, principal clarinetist of the National Ballet of Canada Orchestra, are from an audio recorded interview conducted by the author, 27 November 2013, Appendix D.

35 All comments by Jon Manasse, principal clarinetist of the American Ballet Theatre Orchestra, are from an interview transcribed by the author, 30 January 2014, Appendix F.
C-natural to the B-flat.” Wrzesien sings the phrase with no lift. “I prefer a little dip at the end of the second measure of the solo and then continue on in the next measure and close off the solo.”

**Figure 2, Swan Lake, Act I No. 4 Pas de trois, Var II, Andante sostenuto, 2 ms. after Fig. 31-3 before end, Clarinet in B-flat**

![Musical notation](image)

The solo in Figure 2 poses some issues with phrasing, tone colour, and pitch. The clarinetist must be aware of what the oboe and bassoon are playing in addition to passing the end of the phrase to the cello section. Christie says this section, “…is very static music in a way and at the same time very beautiful music on its own. The real pith of this is the oboe solo and followed by the bassoon and oboe duet.” The oboe and clarinet are one measure apart from each other in the canon that occurs. Christie remarks about the first part of the solo,

“What I think about here is pitch. It's really great to not be playing on a cold instrument. I would prefer to be playing the notes that are written for B-flat clarinet for colour...but not as much as I would prefer to play the last four measures of this solo on A clarinet. It's interesting that in playing an answering phrase one question arises for me: do you phrase the phrase that you have or do you support the oboe's phrase that you are answering? I think in this canonic passage you have to support the oboe. So when you enter...support the second measure of the oboe phrase and similarly support the oboe's fourth measure, which is the third measure of your phrase. I would put a crescendo in the rest...so that the clarinet enters at the height of the hairpin for the oboe at the beginning of the second measure. So do begin the clarinet melody with a full sound, don't grow into the sound there. Then the oboe will play with another crescendo in the third measure...which I think is beautifully written because of the octave Ds written for the clarinet in that measure.
Make sure the diminuendo is only towards the end of the fourth measure. Delaying the diminuendo is phrasing 101. Make sure that you don't hurry the two sixteenths at the end of the fourth measure and that you pass it to the oboe's next entrance.”

Figure 2 is written in the original key for the B-flat clarinet.

Manasse says to take your time in the last five measures of the solo. He suggests sneaking in with the G-sharp trill and take time to connect with the conductor. Christie notes that playing a trill on a G-sharp does not allow for a beautiful colour and suggests transposing this part of the solo up a semitone on A clarinet: “Playing this on A clarinet also means that you are not playing on a cold B-flat clarinet.” He also notes that the pitch will be better, “since you are playing in octaves with the bassoon, it makes your life easier because you will not be flat to the bassoon. This trill takes up a huge part of my psyche but it's really not worth worrying about.” See Figure 3 below for this passage transposed for A clarinet.

Figure 3, Swan Lake, Act I No. 4 Pas de trois, Var II, Andante sostenuto, 2 ms. after Fig. 31-3 before end, Clarinet in A

Christie also notes that he used to play the entire solo on B-flat clarinet and used his right hand to trill the A key. He says, “But that of course makes it a little difficult in making sure your fingers are just right. The flute just ends this beautiful trill from F-sharp to G and we have to try and play our trill in the throat register. I find that very unfortunate but Tchaikovsky didn't care!” Wrzesien agrees with Christie that the trill is somewhat clumsy because of the feeling of sitting on the G-sharp key with the left index finger and having to jiggle the tip of it on the A key. Wrzesien remarks, “In addition, the same finger is needed for the F-sharp that follows. Be sure to stop the trill neatly before playing the grace notes. I put a lot of inflection on the B-natural on the first of the 16ths.”
About the ending of the solo Christie remarks, “The important thing is the motion through into the cello line in the last measure of the solo. I try to sound like a cello. Once you are in the last two bars of the solo, phrase forward with intent but resist feeling rushed through this. Keep the sound full because the cello section enters immediately after you. It’s a very calm and static ending.” Manasse says to not diminuendo too much at the end, “so that the melodic line can be passed off to the celli.” Wrzesien sings four measures before the end of the excerpt, showing the phrasing in his voice. “I drop my tongue for a smooth interval between the throat A and the low C.” Wrzesien sings the last two measures of the solo. “The solo line transfers over to the cellos so I put a slur mark from my final 8th-note across the bar line as a reminder not to close off the phrase.”

Figure 4, Swan Lake, Act I No. 5 Pas de deux, Var. III, Tempo di Valse, 11 ms. after Fig. 50 & 33 ms. after Fig. 51, Principal and 2nd Clarinet in B-flat

This solo presents itself with an opportunity to develop ensemble amongst the clarinet section. Wrzesien remarks on this soli, “This is a very lovely little duet for two clarinets.” Christie describes this as, “…so much fun! Our conductor indicated to us that there is a comic element to this.” Wrzesien discusses further, “The issue would be to shape it with your colleague to make it
truly *espressivo*.” Wrzesien prefers to minimize the accent on the written high C by highlighting the written A in the third bar, followed by the half note written B. The reason for this he says is, “Tchaikovsky has the accent over the written high C in the second measure. With the jump up from fourth line D to the high C, plus with the C tongued...” the high C might pop out too much.

Christie likes to play this phrase differently. He says, “The fun of it comes with the accent on the second beat in the second measure. So, it's almost like a burlesque.” After the first few measures Christie says, “I like to make the quarter notes pop in the fourth measure of the soli so that the articulation is apparent and follow that by a sustain in the fifth measure. Generally in this number the articulation is very slurry and swoopy.” A third interpretation was given by Sheryl Renk who played the first phrase in the interview and suggested that it is played as one long phrase rather than shorter and choppier phrases.

**Figure 5, Swan Lake, Act I No. 7 Sujet, Poco meno mosso, Clarinet in A**

Steve Hartman, Max Christie, and William Wrzesien all note that this number begins after an uproarious applause from the audience from the previous dance number. Hartman notes that, “Sometimes you start this number before the applause stops.” Christie also mentions that, “The other issue with this is that the previous number has such great bravura on stage and the audience is going nuts. If the conductor wants this heard, he'll wait for the applause to subside.” Wrzesien recommends playing the beginning out, “Because the piece starts off after applause, you'll probably need to play louder than the printed *piano*.”

Christie describes this solo as linking material to the proceeding dance number. He discusses one National Ballet Orchestra rehearsal during which guest conductor Martin West of the San Francisco Ballet discussed this section of the ballet:

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36 All comments by Steve Hartman, principal clarinetist of the New York City Ballet Orchestra, are from an interview conducted by the author, 21 October 2013, audio recording, Appendix E.
“The best description of this solo...was given to me by Martin West, the conductor of the San Francisco Ballet. He said that this solo is as if a narrator were to say, 'so that's how things had been and how things were.' It's a very small narrative link and you should not over-think this one and make it incredibly sophisticated or too eloquent. That kind of idea freed me up when playing this melody.”

There are decisions on note length to be made and Christie notes that, “Tchaikovsky didn't write instructions for how short or long to play the notes in this melody. It gives the clarinetist and oboist an opportunity to decide the length. As far as little narrative fillers go, it is odd that Tchaikovsky chose to compose a syncopated melody in the first measure followed by a very long note. So, everything is an up-beat and there is no real weight to it. In a narrative the up beat would be, 'and then...' which would leave you to not think too much about what is going on in this particular section.” Wrzesien discusses phrasing this solo says he plays measures three and four softer than measures one and two. He says, “I like to “hairpin” bar 6 and highlight the D on beat three.”

Christie discusses the challenges of pitch and suggests not to over-think it. He says, “Sometimes you might have to mitigate slightly between the pitch of the oboe and bassoon in measure 11. Watch out for pitch in the measure with articulated 16th-notes.” Renk plays the solo in the interview and notes that it is very cute. Renk emphasizes knowing what occurs in the score and throughout the instrumentation, particularly in the final measure of the solo. Knowing that this last figure is played in sequence by the oboe, clarinet, and then bassoon should aid the clarinetist in foreseeing any necessary pitch accommodations. Christie says this sequence, “…has the potential to become a salad of pitch but in our wind section pitch is not so much an issue and I appreciate that.” Wrzesien says, “Hearing the 16th-note figures descending down through the orchestra is one of my favourite moments.”
Hartman, Christie, and Wrzesien all play this solo on A clarinet. Hartman reasons that, “...there is no time to switch. It goes nicely on the A clarinet in that part where you answer the oboe.” Hartman discusses the importance of listening to colleagues in the orchestra and being receptive to playing the phrase according to their phrase.

“The oboe has this phrase and then you answer it. If the oboe decides to play the solo as a long, legato phrase, you can't play your phrase in a choppy way. So whatever he or she does, you have to play off of each other. Even though it's orchestra ballet, it's still chamber music. So that's the kind of example where you would listen to the character the oboe player puts into their solo. And, also know that people don't play their solos the same way every time. So you do something that answers it.”

Like Hartman, Christie also plays and transposes this solo on A clarinet and remarks,

“...you have to remind yourself that a written E-sharp is now F-sharp on the A clarinet. Basically, if I just remind myself about that one C-double sharp being a D-sharp on the A clarinet then it's not so hard. In general, just thinking of it in a different key is helpful. It is a very recognizable melody. I think the beauty of the line is in the elongation of the notes and not the slur groupings of two.”

With a similar idea to Christie, Manasse discussed the phrasing of this solo, recommending to not be aggressive with the articulation of the accents. He said that the accents are “expressive accents.”

Christie warns that emphasizing the groupings of two in this solo will make the solo become very banal, causing the long line to be lost. Christie remarks, “I notice that the oboist in our ensemble plays the phrase with legato four measures before the clarinet solo begins. And
whether that has influenced me or if that was my influence on him, I don't know. However, I do believe playing the second quarter note long at the end of the slur is crucial.” Christie discusses a psychological factor in the final measure of the clarinet solo, preceding a *più mosso* section occurring on the second beat of the final measure. Christie sings the beginning of the *più mosso* section with energy and conviction to make a point. He says,

“It's easy to just hammer the downbeat of the *più mosso* measure because you know what is coming on the second beat. However, it is very important to not do that and maintain the character of the clarinet solo throughout. Let the audience be more surprised by the suddenness of the *fortissimo* of the second beat. It's totally up to the clarinetist to not buy into the big downbeat, which the conductor must give. It's cringe-worthy out of context to slam into the downbeat but it's also worth trying to terrify the audience with the sudden change. The music changes instantly from plaintive to furious.”

**Figure 7, Swan Lake, Act II No. 12 Scène, Moderato assai quasi andante, 5 ms. after Fig. 16, Clarinet in B-flat and A**

This solo comes later in the number and is originally in B-flat. However, Christie, Hartman, and Wrzesien play this solo on A clarinet. Hartman says that the trills on the A clarinet have been a little more successful on A clarinet than on B-flat clarinet. The beginning of this passage is a wind chorale. Christie says, “...make sure to adhere to the *pianissimo* dynamic. Coax the second clarinetist to play their line out enough to match the wind section.”
Christie explains that the trill on the third beat in the third measure is an exact precursor to the trill figures in the following waltz. He says, “Comparing this to everything else, it [the turn] should be the most prevalent. That's the motif that should really come out and be a solo. Everything else is *accompagnando.*” In the articulated passage three measures before the end Manasse recommends to “pretend to be a flautist here.” Wrzesien notes that when playing this passage on A clarinet, it ends up being in E minor. He says, “Everything lies so perfectly in E minor including the arpeggio at the end.”

Christie remarks, “Another great benefit to playing this number on the A clarinet is that you can play the waltz on a warm instrument. The waltz is for A clarinet and you're certainly not going to transpose that. It's great not to have to make a sudden instrument change at the end of that solo.”

**Figure 8, Swan Lake, Act III No. 17 Scène, Allegro, 22 ms. after Fig. 13, Principal and 2nd Clarinet in B-flat**

This clarinet soli is followed by a trumpet fanfare. It presents several phrasing options before the final resolution. Christie says,

“It has been remarkably easy in NBOC (National Ballet of Canada) to just place the 32nd-note to dotted quarter note figures in the first three measures without overthinking it. Just let yourself imitate the previous version of this figure, which is played by muted trumpets and the horns. Bring your attention to the sound of the horns as they play the same rhythmic figure you are about to play.”

Manasse says that, “regardless of how the conductor is phrasing, I show this phrase with my body and the way I use my air in the slur. In this way, I show how I want to resolve the phrase.” With a slightly different opinion, Hartman says, “...it depends on how it is conducted.” Using body movement will also help the second clarinetist to play exactly with the principal clarinetist.

Renk discusses what a good second clarinet player should do in this soli. “I think a very important thing in any ensemble is the second clarinet player really keying into the first clarinet.
player. In the *ritenuto* section, take time there to express."\(^{37}\) Renk sings the solo to convey the phrasing. “Keep the tension during the *ritenuto* section and then take the tension away in the three 8th-note pick ups to the final measure.”

Wrzesien discusses the clarinet duet, “When you get to the ritenuto bar, I like a big D on the second bar of the 2/4...” Wrzesien sings, emphasizing the D “...and then a big appoggiatura on the last measure.” Wrzesien says that the conductor will normally give the two final notes on cue. “I would save any kind of extra special expression until the D in the last measure. That's a nice place if you have a good second clarinet player who really clicks in to you.”

Christie anticipates what the conductor will want to do in the ritenuto and notes that there is a certain required pacing once the ritenuto occurs. Christie says that the conductor gives him and the second clarinetist room to play it how they want to.

“There has been surprisingly minimal verbal direction from the conductor on this. It's one of those things where the conductor will let you play how you think it goes. It's also one of those phrases that can become very cliché. So it shouldn't be a parody of itself and you don't want to cringe after you've heard yourself just play it. One mustn't worry too much about it.”

Christie also discusses preparing for the proceeding waltz and to make sure the pitch of the clarinet is low enough to match the strings. Roland John Wiley says, “Indeed, the interaction of dance and symphony is nowhere more happily illustrated than in the waltzes of the ballet.”\(^{38}\) He also suggests that the coherence of *Swan Lake* is created by the use of carefully chosen tonalities and themes.

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\(^{37}\) All comments by Sheryl Renk, principal clarinetist of the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra, are from an interview conducted by the author, 20 December 2013, hand written recording, Appendix G.

\(^{38}\) Wiley, *Tchaikovsky’s*, 79.
Although a short solo, it is a beautifully rhapsodic solo that is passed on to the flute. Renk says that even though she is an advocate of transposing certain passages to make them easier, she does not do it in this solo. Renk says,

“It's not hard enough to warrant that kind of trouble. In something like the third movement of Schostakovich 5, you would want to do that solo on B-flat instead of A. In the second movement of Brahms Symphony No. 1 you want to do that solo on B-flat instead of A. But for this, I wouldn't bother.”

On the other hand Hartman, Christie, and Wrzesien do transpose this solo on A clarinet. Christie says switching back to B-flat clarinet for the following number is not intrusive or difficult because there is plenty of time. Hartman says, “Yeah, definitely on the A clarinet.” He suggests taking a full breath before the solo. “I usually make this half note like a forte piano because you're all alone and it's like an announcement.”

Christie adds words of advice for making sure the embouchure is not too fatigued before playing this solo:

“The thing that I learned over time was to not blow my face off before the poco meno mosso. Use the pitches that you play in the four measures preceding the poco meno mosso to set your mind and your face for the requirements of the line coming up. The sextuplets here are certainly not the easiest to find the centre of pitch. This is especially the case if you play this on B-flat clarinet. If you play it on A, the passage is basically a decorated C major. Knowing which are the chromatic notes is important but it is easy to lose the overall shape of the line if you have blown your face off in the preceding section. Save your face for the poco meno mosso. It is important to sound at least as good as the flute.”

Christie suggests having a written out transposed part on the music stand and adds, “The beginning of this number can easily be transposed up until the solo. I try not to take too much
liberty in the solo and simply play straightforward with the sextuplets. It gives the flute something to work with because it's really their job to take more liberty than the clarinet in this one.”

Figure 10, Swan Lake, Act III No. 23 Mazurka, Grazioso, Fig. 61 – 16 ms. after Fig. 61 Principal and 2nd Clarinet in A

This Mazurka is a lively number towards the end of the ballet and is a great study in endurance. The interviewed clarinetists have varying opinions on the phrasing of this clarinet soli. Renk says, “It's a tension thing. You're keeping the tension until you get to here...” Renk motions to the end of the fourth measure of the clarinet soli, “...and then you are restarting. You also want to let down in volume here [the end of the first written half note] so you have somewhere to go.” Renk sings the phrasing and shows the release of the dynamic in the downbeat of the third measure and then continues to build the phrase until diminishing the dynamic in the fourth measure. Renk then plays the solo. Hartman also demonstrated this duet by playing it in a brisk tempo. Manasse says to play this clarinet soli duet by “preserving the 3/4 feeling. Avoid making the half note [the second beat of the second measure] feel like a downbeat. There is also a hemiola feel.”

Unlike Manasse, Christie says, “Mazurka's and Polacca's have this wonderful contrarian approach to meter. That's what's really neat about it. You can't just emphasize the downbeat of each measure.” Christie sings it as an example and leads with his voice to the second beat in the second and fourth measures. Christie hears smaller phrases but his phrasing approach in this solo is similar to Renk's in that they both hear the phrase through to the fourth measure. Christie says,
“The strength in the dance comes from opposing the strong part of the bar with the melody. This piece should stand out as a strong dance and not just a silly melody with clarinets playing in thirds.”

The option to transpose this number never occurred to the author while playing it in the orchestra nor was it discussed by the interviewees until Mr. Wrzesien’s interview. He says, “The Mazurka is written for A clarinet and starts off comfortably in B-flat Major. However, the second section in E-flat Major featuring the clarinet duet I find rather clumsy.” Wrzesien reasons that if it is decided upon to transpose the entire Mazurka on B-flat clarinet, the key of D Major will be a lot easier. “Whatever the decision, both clarinetists should be playing the same pitched instrument. Plan the duet so that the second set of four bars is less in volume than the first four bars.” Wrzesien cautions to save energy during the first section of the Mazurka in order to have relatively fresh chops for the duet in the clarinet soli section.

**Figure 11, Swan Lake, Act IV No. 27 Danses des petits cygnes, Moderato, Fig. 5, Clarinet in B-flat**

In this beautiful dance number, the clarinet leads the melody throughout the first theme as well as when it returns. Due to the repetitive nature of this and depending on what tempo the conductor takes, the clarinetist must make a decision about phrasing and dynamics. The interviewed clarinetists have different views on how to phrase this and all of them agree that this is one of the most beautiful musical moments in the ballet. Hartman demonstrated by playing the melody at quarter note equal to approximately 88-92. He played it in two measure phrase-lets. “And if it's slower than that you can really add hairpins over two measure phrases.” Hartman demonstrated again at a slower tempo, the quarter note equal to approximately 76. Hartman says that without dynamics, the melodic line becomes flat. Ultimately, he says, the tempo depends on the conductor and the dancers.
Renk prefers to play this melody in four measure phrases: “This is a chorale with the woodwinds. It's kind of like Brahms' Third Symphony slow movement with the clarinet leading. The first clarinet should be leading and has the melody. This is one big, long phrase and I think it's better to carry the phrase over four measures and not over two measures.” Renk says to imagine that the beginning of the third measure does not have a rest in order to lengthen the phrase. “And then you do it again [measures 5 – 8]. If you diminuendo here [end of measure 2] you're chopping it into two phrases rather than one big, long phrase.” Renk plays measures 9 – 12. “The phrases all need to carry through.”

Christie emphasizes the simplicity and beauty of the melody by pointing out that it is like a folk song. He does not want to over-think and certainly not over-play the phrasing of the melody. “I just love playing this melody, which is just gorgeous. It's very folky and so beautifully constructed. It's nice to set the tone with the section by leading the most, and your colleagues will listen to you. I don't like to throw people any curve balls in terms of dynamics.” Christie might side more with Renk in terms of phrasing when he states that he finds it, “…trite to play echo effects in this number. I think of this as a song. The second time you state the melody, it can be more inward. It's a great gift because it's such a beautiful thing. When the theme is in written E-flat major it certainly requires a more full tone.”

Wrzesien acknowledges the repetitiveness of this movement and suggests creating a, “…strategy to make it interesting.” He suggests two options that are similar to Hartman and Renk's way of phrasing. Wrzesien suggests playing the first two measures *mezzo piano* or a little louder and the next two measures slightly less than *mezzo piano*. Another option is to play the first four measures slightly more than *mezzo piano* and the next four measures slightly less than *mezzo piano*. Agreeing with Christie, he suggests playing the E-flat major theme clearly louder than any previous dynamic. Wrzesien says to, “Play this entire passage *molto sostenuto*.”

The passages in *Swan Lake* evoke the backdrop of the mood of this ballet. After discussing ten passages from *Swan Lake* certain themes arise. These themes are phrasing, orchestration, playing soli duets with the second clarinetist, making decisions to play a certain passage on B-flat or A clarinet, and playing a melody with great leadership and direction above a chorale-like melody.
Chapter 3 The Sleeping Beauty

Background of *The Sleeping Beauty*

Having already composed music for *Swan Lake*, Tchaikovsky's musical and thematic complexities in this ballet show a more musically mature composer's work. Roland John Wiley discusses thematic unity, rhythm and sonority, colour, dramatic detail, and the relationship between the music to the action on stage. In addition to the inclusion of musical analysis and historical overview, Wiley puts the ballet into a social context in his book. He describes the popularity of ballet in late nineteenth century Russia where the audience was primarily comprised of “the upper class,” students, and children.

The aforementioned audience greatly took to Tchaikovsky and Marius Petipa's *Sleeping Beauty*, Opus 66. The plot initially might seem simple and could be reduced to a simple anecdote: a princess pricks her finger and falls asleep. After one hundred years a prince arrives, kisses and awakens her, and they get married. Although overly simplified the plot demands high musical development and dancing. Although *Sleeping Beauty* was generally a greater success than *Swan Lake*, *Sleeping Beauty* nevertheless received its share of poor reviews, albeit less than *Swan Lake*.

In “A Century of Russian Ballet: Documents and Eyewitness Accounts: 1810-1910” Wiley presents several reviews written after the premiere of *Sleeping Beauty*. One of the reviews was written by composer German Laroche, one of Tchaikovsky's friends and colleagues. His review is an artfully written account of his impressions of the premiere of *Sleeping Beauty* and why it is acceptable to have a ballet based on a seemingly childlike fairytale:

> “Criticize children's stories as you will, you will not refute the facts that in the continuity of generations they have managed to take deep root in our imagination, that since childhood we have got used to them and loved them, that they contain some of the most profound ideas which stir humankind, nor finally the fact that under the influence of comparative mythology and its advances, supposed 'children's' tales, in contemporary eyes, have more and more become *tales for adults*, ever more revealing of their cosmogonic significance.”

This quote remains true to this day by virtue of *The Sleeping Beauty* ballet continuing to be beloved by many audiences and ballet companies alike throughout the world.

Upon discovering the numerous and wonderful clarinet solos in the music of *The Sleeping Beauty*, I conceived of the idea for this paper. The many clarinet solos did not only strike me as noteworthy but most of the clarinetists that were interviewed for this project noted how prominent and challenging the clarinet part is. Steve Hartman correlates the clarinet part in the ballet to a concerto while Max Christie notes the sheer length of the work. William Wrzesien says some of his favourite solos are in this ballet andrecalls recording it with the Boston Ballet. He also says and suggests writing on the top of each page of your clarinet part what clarinet you are supposed to be playing. This is particularly helpful in a ballet like *Sleeping Beauty* where there is a lot of switching back and forth between B-flat and A clarinet. Wrzesien says,

“This technique helps during rehearsals when the conductor wants to spot-check a half dozen or so places before a run through. This way, when a conductor says, 'Can we start at Act Three, big number six, letter D?' I immediately know which clarinet I need. If the music is written for B-flat clarinet and requires a change to A clarinet somewhere down the page, I will write Bb/A. If I happen to be transposing I'll write A (Bb), meaning that although the music is written for B-flat clarinet, I'll remember to transpose a half tone up on my A clarinet.”

Whatever system a clarinetist decides upon, Wrzesien has established this way for himself. Wrzesien also adds, “As a general rule I never hesitate to transpose on the opposite clarinet when it's clear a half tone difference either way will facilitate technical passages, improve intonation, eliminate awkward intervals and trills, etc.” He also says, “Knowing what's happening on stage is crucial in planning the characterizations of your solos.”
Analysis of Clarinet Excerpts in *The Sleeping Beauty*

The following fifteen passages from *Sleeping Beauty* are generally more virtuosic than the solos found in *Swan Lake*. There are far more technically challenging clarinet solos and passages that are also much longer. There are many challenging tutti passages and many solos that are integrated with other wind instruments as well as one solo with the concert master. The interviewees discuss many issues regarding phrasing, dynamics, suggested fingerings, the decision to play a passage on B-flat or A clarinet, incorporating a Langenus clarinet study to assist in cultivating an accomplished realization of a clarinet soli passage in Act II, and the role of the conductor. The following solo is an example addressing technical and musical issues that frequently occur in this ballet.

**Figure 12, The Sleeping Beauty, Prologue No. 3 Pas de six, Andante, ms. 10 – 26, Clarinet in B-flat**

One of the most virtuosic solos for the principal clarinet appears in the Prologue. All interviewed clarinetists identify this solo as one of the major clarinet solos in *Sleeping Beauty*. As Sheryl Renk says, “this beautiful and lush solo requires the clarinetist to be able to play both lyrically and in an agitated manner.” Wrzesien says, “This is certainly a gorgeous solo. It's pretty much what Tchaikovsky says: *molto cantabile.*” Jon Manasse says that there is so much to play in this...
ballet in general that, “...you really have to pace yourself so you are fresh for the solos.” He also suggests anticipating what will serve you the best at any given time throughout the performance. For instance, the B-flat clarinet is needed for the first time in this solo. Since the first two numbers of Sleeping Beauty are on A clarinet, Manasse suggests silently warming up the B-flat clarinet during the rests at the beginning of this dance number.

Renk demonstrated the entire solo in the interview and suggested to make sure to carry the phrase as if the quarter- and 8th-note rests in the first two lines did not exist. “Take the hairpins with a grain of salt. These are more phrasing markings than actual hairpins,” Renk advises. When Renk played the first three measures of the solo she extended the two-measure phrase-let to a four measure phrase by matching the first few notes in the third measure of the solo to the dynamic and tone with the preceding two notes in the second measure. Renk says if you don't do this, “...it sounds like you are dying away at the end of measure two and then it will sound like you are starting a new phrase too loudly in measure three. You don't want to do that. You always want to continue the phrase.” Renk says that it is all right if the tempo becomes a little bit agitated in the triplets in measure 14. She gradually brings the tempo back down in measure 15. Renk adds a small tenuto over the written high B at the peak of the arpeggio in measure 16.

Hartman discusses the fourth measure of the solo, “I very much point out that it's a triplet when I play the last beat of measure 13. I don't want it to sound like a 16th-note.” Hartman demonstrates and plays the final 8th-note triplet of measure 13 as long as he can within the appropriate tempo. He plays the triplet figure in a similar fashion in the second and fourth beats of measure 14.

Christie says about the first eight measures of the solo, “It is a two-bar and a two-bar phrase followed by a four bar answer which is broken up by the rests.” He recommends to not play the phrase as four groups of two measures. Christie says that within this simple melody the first point of relaxation occurs once the written A-flat is played and says, “So, you can't lean on that note too much.” Like Renk, Christie does not over play the hairpins to the fullest expression. He says, “The cantabile marking is very helpful. The hairpins indicate simple phrasing but they can also make the phrase a little too swoopy. Bear in mind the structure of the solo.” He is referring to what he considers the solo to be: a two-measure, plus two-measure, plus four-measure phrase. Like Renk's suggestion to connect the phrase between the second and third measure of the solo, Christie makes a similar suggestion for several measures later, “Don't release too much before
the fourth group of two measures by continuing the phrase between the sixth and seventh measures.”

Wrzesien, like Christie finds the first written A-flat worthy of inflection. Wrzesien says, “I replace the accent at bar 11 with a tenuto indication. Because the A-flat in this bar is not in the C Major tonality, I like to highlight it. The same goes for the embellishments Tchaikovsky adds to the...solo (F-sharp and C-sharp in bar 12, D-sharp in bar 13).” Wrzesien sings the third and fourth measures with noticeable emphasis on those notes. Like Renk and Christie, Wrzesien does not take every hairpin literally, “Tchaikovsky's dynamic instructions work well in the first half of bar 16, but I don't feel the need to make much of the printed diminuendo because the clarinet does it for me as the line descends. Besides, there is still one more bar of solo before the oboe takes over.” In other words, when the clarinet is played in a lower register, the volume naturally diminishes as well. Therefore the clarinetist does not have to work hard to produce this dynamic.

In measure 18 the oboe plays the melody and Manasse says, “Acknowledge when the oboe plays the pick-up to figure 18 even though it is your solo.” In this measure, Renk suggests to play “…like a cello would. Pretend like you are bowing away with a beautiful cello sound.” Christie says about this section, “…it's a really lovely thing to play a good rich chalumeau register soli. Although, bare in mind that you don't want to be flat.” Hartman suggests playing mezzo piano in order to not over power the oboe melody. This suggestion also remedies the tendency of being flat in that section. Both Hartman and Christie say to play out at measure 22 when the clarinet is without question the soloist again. On the other hand, Wrzesien acknowledges that while the clarinet part in measures 18 through 21 is a counterpoint to the oboe melody, “with it being the lowest part of our register, to play with a healthy mezzo forte with no concern about covering the main melody.”

In measure 22 the clarinet is now all by itself. Renk says, “Again, have the agitato feeling here in measure 22 like you had in the previous triplet section.” Christie suggests really playing out on the printed low E in measure 22. He says,

“The beginning of this line should be very much heard through the texture. I think it's important to think of your articulation as getting more intense as you ascend. Don't think too much about dots as about weight. You don't have to use incredible amounts of volume for the crescendo but if you make sure that those last two groups of 16th-notes with articulations are a little bit heavier and placed, it means that you have said
something about the crescendo and paced it well without it all happening only on the sextuplet figure just before the high E, which you really don't want to do.”

Wrzesien places a tenuto mark on each triplet in measure 22. He notes, “There's a printed *forte* in measure 23 of your part that I think may be a little bit too soon for me. Starting the ascending passage too loudly while adding a crescendo might make for an unpleasant sounding high E.” Manasse suggest to, “find a high E fingering you love that you can hold out until the conductor gives you a cue.” Regarding the high E Wrzesien says, “...you might want to try the fingering illustrated below. This fingering produces a high E that is quite loud, so you'll likely have to temper it. You could also tame it by adding the F/C key with your right little finger.”

**Figure 13, Clarinet Fingering Chart, high E**

Hartman says to be open to different conductors' tempi, “In measure 24 you never know what the conductor is going to ask for in terms of the speed of that measure. Sometimes they just meet you at the bottom and let you play what is comfortable for you and sometimes they rush you or they drag you. That's what it is and that's the nature of the job.” Christie says, “Most conductors will let you play the descending arpeggio naturally to measure 25.” Christie adds a point about printed decrescendos,

“...bundle those notes in three groups of four units, which puts the E-natural as a pivot note for all three octaves.”

In the descending arpeggio after the high E Wrzesien suggests to, “...
Renk says about this solo in general, “It's always a matter of continuing a phrase and here and there doing something just a little different, a little agitato here, a beautiful lush sound there. Just try to incorporate as much stuff as you can into these big solos.”

Figure 14. The Sleeping Beauty, Prologue No. 3 Pas de six, Var. I, Candide, Allegro moderato, ms. 1 – 20, Clarinet in B-flat

This solo presents a long legato line of arpeggios for the clarinetist to artfully nuance. Here Manasse says, “...it is helpful to circular breathe. Observe the crescendo in the fourth measure just before the oboe begins to play in the fifth measure.” Another way of playing this phrase is to begin the first four measures louder and play less when the oboe plays in measure five. Hartman says, “It starts mezzo forte, you are all by yourself, and the dancers need to hear something. In the fifth measure you need to get out of the oboe player's way by playing softer.” Wrzesien has similar advice by suggesting to play the first four measures up dynamically and then backing off when the oboe enters.”
Christie discusses pacing and endurance throughout the ballet and says, “It's a really good idea to enlist the second clarinet player to play some of these but I don't do that. It's a good idea to breathe when the oboe player is covering you; that would mean at the end of measure 11. Then continue breathing in disguised ways contrary to the oboe part.” Wrzesien also agrees on breathing at the end of measure 11. Christie says to avoid breathing in the middle of measure 12 where the oboe's phrase ends. He says a better place to breathe is just before the oboe ends his or her phrase in measures 11.

“If I get a breath at the end of measure 11 I am pretty much okay. But I would do the same thing again and breathe four bars after that and not five bars after that; so that is, again, before the oboe takes a breath before their pick up...The two things are: be in tune and be helpful to the oboe. In other words, give them some volume to play off of but don't be intrusive and certainly don't breathe when they do.”

Christie recommends disguising the breaths in this number as much as possible. “Our temptation is to breathe as if we are the main phrase. It's important to play across the bar as if we were playing the pick-up and just support them [the oboe] through that pick-up.”

**Figure 15, The Sleeping Beauty, Prologue No. 4, Finale, Andantino, ms. 1 – 8, Clarinet in A**

This is another major clarinet solo in *The Sleeping Beauty* ballet following a number that ends with bravura and a highly technical sequence of dance steps on stage. Jon Manasse gives a general word of caution about certain dance numbers ending with applause from the audience. He suggests adjusting dynamics in order to be heard. So in this case during the performance the clarinetist will need to bring out the beginning of the solo much more than if there was no applause. Hartman also acknowledges that this number often starts while applause continues from the previous dance number. Like Manasse, he recommends starting with a much stronger dynamic than the written piano. Christie also notes, “Just before the Finale begins there's
applause totally obscuring the beginning of the clarinet solo.” On the topic of applause before this clarinet solo Wrzesien says, “I'm always annoyed at the start of No. 4 because...the previous dance has an exciting finish and the audience is still clapping when the conductor begins this piece.”

Christie says about this entire number, “The Finale is an awesome piece of orchestral writing! It's a really terrific thing...” and about this number, “This solo is very amabile and very easy going.” He compares this solo to the clarinet solo in Swan Lake Act I No. 7 Sujet. While Christie very much likes both solos, he prefers this one in The Sleeping Beauty. Generally, Renk prefers a longer line of phrasing and recommends only making a small diminuendo in the second measure, “…as a phrasing mark so that you can come in nice and loudly at the fourth beat of the second measure and make a big difference. You don't need to diminuendo too much if you're coming in loudly on that fourth beat. If you diminuendo there, it's going to sound like you're not continuing the phrase.” Renk plays the first four measures of the solo with a very subtle diminuendo on the third quarter note in the second measure in order to create a longer phrase. She highlights the accent and the più forte on the following beat. Feeling the solo by the half notes as opposed to each quarter note also supports continuity in the phrasing. Christie discusses a mixture of feeling the half note and the quarter note and he says, “It starts out as a two feeling in the first two measures and into a quarter note feeling on the fourth beat of the second measure. It's a perfectly crafted eight-bar phrase.”

Renk demonstrated this solo in the interview and made sure to play the quintuplets evenly. She says, “I never play fives any other way unless they are marked as such or the conductor asks me to do that. I go by if it's written that way then you play it that way.” She remarks that this groups of five is similar to her interpretation in Swan Lake, Act III, No. 20 Russian Dance. About this same figure Hartman recollects the Russian Dance in Swan Lake and says, “I usually play a square quintuplet on beat three unlike the quintuplet figure in the Russian Dance in Swan Lake.” Hartman says to make a clear contrast in the rhythm in beats one and three. In measure seven Manasse says to, “...bring out the difference between the grace notes in the first beat and the quintuplet figure in the third beat.” Like Manasse, Hartman and Wrzesien have similar advice for measure seven. Wrzesien suggests being very clear by showing the similar and yet distinctly different rhythmic structures in measure seven on beat one and three. Wrzesien concludes that this number is, “…such a pretty solo that invites so much expressive playing...” Christie says,
“I love the turn in measure seven when we set up the new key because it's as if, 'everybody is having a good time at the party and then suddenly somebody shows up at the door' which is what happens in the plot. That turn in the key is such a terrific musical moment. It's really fun to have that. With a willing conductor and just a little bit of time, you can do what you want with it. I see that turn as being sort of second thought.”

This solo exemplifies how much the principal clarinetist must pay attention to detail and have an understanding of the action on stage.

**Figure 16, The Sleeping Beauty, Act I No. 5 Scène, Allegro vivo, ms. 159 – 176, Clarinet in A**

This tutti section is an example of the fiercely technically challenging passages throughout this ballet. Renk says, “I'm really big on writing things into the part; not making them messy but writing in your L's, your R's, and your accidentals. All of those things just make it easier for the eye to catch. That's what I would do in order to make it easier.” The second measure is where

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40 In all cases in this research where “L” and “R” is referred to, L stands for left little finger and R stands for right little finger.
writing in a reminder of where to place the pinky fingers is most helpful in training for this passage to be fluid and effortless. After Renk demonstrated the first four measures of the passage she suggested marking in any necessary notes in the part in order to make it as simple as possible when playing it.

Christie says, “There's always a mental star in my part following the Allegro Vivo in this movement. You just have to review this because there are double sharps and changes in the pattern each time. It's really just one of those things you have to look at each time just to make sure.” Along the same lines, Wrzesien says that this passage is fast and note-y, containing numerous accidentals.

**Figure 17, The Sleeping Beauty, Act I No. 7 Scène, Andante, ms. 3 – 11, Clarinet in B-flat**

This passage follows a woodwind chorale in the first two measures. In measures four through seven in the repetitive 16th-note triplet figure Manasse says “...listen to the oboe and play on the back side of the beat.” On the other hand, Christie recommends playing on the front side of the beat at the beginning of the triplet figures. He says the difficult part about playing this rhythm, on the one hand, is getting in all of the notes without sounding like you are dragging. On the other hand, it must not sound rushed. “The 16th-note rest is deceptively tiny and the notes themselves are deceptively slow in comparison. You almost have to think of the rest when you are playing the last note in the group of six. Any sort of impulsing on the rest means that you're late and then it's going to have to rush and you end up putting accents in the wrong places.” Wrzesien agrees with Christie and says to make sure to play the sextuplets immediately after the
rest so as not to get behind. Wrzesien says, “Kind of glide over the rest as best as you can. From a clarinet technical standpoint, I wouldn’t stop my air flow.” Wrzesien sang the 16th-note triplet figures in a fluid way. Christie played an example and said, “…when you get to the downbeat of measure eight you want it to be right in time because that is actually where you take the melody.”

Figure 18, The Sleeping Beauty, Act I No. 8 b) Dances of the Maids of Honour and Pages, Allegro moderato, ms. 94 – 130, Clarinet in B-flat

Hartman recommends taking time before the first rehearsal to practice this excerpt, particularly measure 119 and 120. In these measures Wrzesien says to play with brilliant articulation. Renk says this passage is a matter of blending in with the woodwinds and not over-powering the section. Christie says that this passage can be great if you have a good woodwind section. He cautions that although slurring two and tonguing two 16th-notes makes these passages easier to play, make sure the 16th-notes are not rushed in the slurred groups of two 16th-notes. Christie adds,
“Again, it's another one of these things where you're going to be tired. Your face has to be in shape for your articulation and this is another one of the excerpts I played when I first entered the company. I learned it really well and the process got myself a better articulation for it... It depends on the company of course. What it is, is changing from the slur-two-tongue-two at the beginning to where you should do all articulation at the end. The last one…”

Christie plays measure 125 – 128, “...is where you're gonna lose it because that's where you're going back and forth across the break.” He encourages practicing enough studies and exercises to where the break does not inhibit the sound. Christie says, “Thinking of a woodpecker or something that is incredibly strong and accurate means that you will not bite and you will not cloud the air...” Like many passages in *Sleeping Beauty*, this excerpt must be practice repeatedly and consistently.

**Figure 19, The Sleeping Beauty, Act I No. 9 Finale, Allegro vivo, ms. 95-114, Clarinet in B-flat**
This passage is another very technically challenging tutti section that will certainly not be in an excerpt book. Wrzesien says to look over and sort out the fingering sequence in measure 97. Renk notes that this passage requires a lot of practice before the first rehearsal and recommends writing into the part such as which pinky to use and any added slur markings you decide in your practice session. This passage is incredibly fast and adding slurs in the articulated 16th-notes can be considered. Christie says, “You've gotta be able to double tongue this or just stay out of the way.” If double tonguing is not accessible, make sure to not play it too loudly. He says,

“It's like wicked witch music for sure...I guess he [Tchaikovsky] had the notion that clarinets could tongue as fast as flutes and for as long durations. It reminds me that he does this all the time and you've just got to bring your game. It's hard! I don't sweat the character of the articulation here because it's all so fast anyway. If you're going to play it fortissimo and all slurred...”

he demonstrates by playing measure 102 – 104, “...all you're providing is a slight blurring to everybody else's articulation.” Christie says that this way of playing is not recommended and will make the texture sound too blurred. Wrzesien says, “On the one hand, all of this area is covered up in the texture, and yet on the other hand, you're a first clarinet player and you'd like to get everything.” To make it more feasible to play cleanly, Wrzesien add, “Your best choice for survival would be to replace the 16th-notes with an 8th-note here and there throughout this frantic section.”
This is similar to the previous passage in that it requires a very fast articulation. The beginning of this is more exposed than the previous tutti excerpt. Hartman strongly acknowledges the need for clarinetists to practice these fast passages before the first rehearsal. It may need to be practiced.
throughout the run of the ballet as well. Both Manasse and Wrzesien say that this is fun to play and both have slightly different suggestions if alterations need to be made to the part in order to play it cleanly. Manasse suggests adding some slurs over the first two groupings of 16th-notes. However, he says that it is better to articulate all notes in order to continue the fluidity of the pulse. Wrzesien says, “If you can't play exactly what's printed, I always prefer discretely substituting two 16th-notes with an 8th-note here and there rather than playing all the notes with added slurs.”

Christie remarks that the tempo really depends on the conductor. Colin Maillard is usually not a technical dance number and is performed by members of the corps. He says, “Certain conductors just love to blow through it. For the scales up, again there's an articulation question. Start with a lot of sound and make your presence known down here because nobody else can in the winds. The idea of establishing for everybody a clear beat...” Christie plays measure 1 – 2 “...you might have to switch to double tongue on this.” In other words, begin this number with a full sound. Christie says measure seven and eight, “...is a really nice arpeggio and left hand study... It's another one where you put a star and say, 'I just gotta learn this.' This is why the first act is just fearsome. It's scary because you cannot get a break.”

“Style wise...” Christie plays measure 23 – 31, “...I think it's really important to keep a very leggiero quality but the dotted eighths have a certain weight, not length.” Christie sings the dotted 8th-note sixteenth figure. “This is to also just give your face a break. Coming into that melody is really tricky timing-wise. It's down through the break.” Christie suggests making sure that your clarinet is in top shape and that the keys are not clanky.
I found my first success in ballet music during a rehearsal while playing this dance number. I spent much time in preparation with a tuner as well as with circular breathing exercises. It is crucial for both clarinetists to spend a substantial amount of time checking the intonation in this
passage in their practice room before playing in rehearsal. The reason for this is because the clarinets are in octaves throughout the entire dance number. For the best results, intonation awareness must not only be at a high level in this excerpt but must be incorporated into everyday practice so that good intonation becomes second nature. The tendency is for certain notes to go sharp due to the F-sharps and C-sharps as well as the frequency of written B's which usually have a tendency to be sharp.

In this clarinet soli passage Jon Manasse suggests utilizing circular breathing if available to the clarinetist. He says that another option is to leave out one 16\textsuperscript{th}-note and quickly breathe at the end of a phrase. For example, it is possible to leave out the written B-natural in measure 12. Manasse says, “No matter what you end up deciding upon, it is important to always shape the phrase.” Renk also recommends taking a breathe by leaving out the written B-natural at the end of measure but to also plan to breathe in a different spot than the second clarinetist. She says, “In something like this that is marked \textit{Allegro}, there is no time to breathe in between...Just make sure you're not breathing at the same time. Just woodshed it and you'll be fine.” When Wrzesien plays this passage he takes a deep, slow breath in the first four measures of rest in order to play the first 16 measures in one breath. After this section he says to quickly leave out one 16\textsuperscript{th}-note to catch a breath and, “Once again, we need to do some editing because of the continuous 16\textsuperscript{th}-notes.”

Christie says that it is possible for a combination of circular breathing and regular breathing to be done by either the principal or second clarinetist. He remarks, “As other things have taught me how to articulate, this has taught me how to save the breath and to be very relaxed at the end of a breath so that you're not squeezed shut in order to get a breath in. You should breathe musically...” Christie highly recommends learning how to circular breath and at the very least making sure the breath does not interrupt the lines until other instruments join, such as when the bassoons join at the end of measure 20. At this point the clarinets are not as prominent. However, it is important to be ready for the return of the initial clarinet soli passage in measure 31. Christie demonstrates measures 19 – 24 and suggests leaving out one 16\textsuperscript{th}-note to take a breath somewhere in measure 24. Christie demonstrates at a slower tempo by taking a quick breath before the last two 16\textsuperscript{th}-notes in measure 24 and says the breath must be, “...something where it's on a weak beat and something where it's going to just fly under the radar.” Wrzesien says it is
less noticeable to replace two 16th-notes with an eighth rest to catch a quick breath in measure 21 once the oboe and English horn enter.

Christie demonstrates measures 28 to the downbeat of measure 31 and says, “...you hope that the conductor will just sort of slacken the pulse just across the bar, right at the end of measure 30 before the return of the A melody in measure 31. It's just really, really hard. Sometimes I take a breath and leave out a note before the downbeat of measure 31 but they [the conductors] don't always want to let you have that.”

**Figure 22, The Sleeping Beauty, Act II No. 15 Pas d'action: Coda, Presto, ms. 5 – 9, Principal and 2nd Clarinet in B-flat**

In the Coda of Act II No. 15, *Pas d'action*, Manasse questions why Tchaikovsky didn't give all of the 16th-notes to one clarinetist. During the interview, Hartman also acknowledged the possibility of playing both parts by one person even though this is not what Tchaikovsky wrote. Hartman, Renk, and Wrzesien all have similar approaches to this phrase and suggest making a long crescendo between measures one and three and to play the diminuendo as marked. Wrzesien notes that both clarinetists need to play with clear articulations.

Christie says, “This is a very cool little woodwind concerto grosso here. It's about a trusty second clarinet player. Everybody [in the orchestra] is playing 16th-notes. You and your second player must not disturb [the integrity of the tempo and texture]. It's sort of easier for the first clarinet to not disturb [the pulse].” Christie demonstrates measures five through seven. “Learning how to not distort the rhythm means that you are going to be better at articulating. It's just a really funky but well written thing. It always reminds me of Mendelssohn, especially the ending.”

Christie notes that this passage is very similar to the Gustav Langenus articulation study that consists of a 16th-note and two 32nd-note rhythmic pattern, repeated throughout the etude. One of his clarinet teachers, Bob Riseling, recommended his students play this rhythmic pattern in opposites similar to the excerpt from the Coda.
Figure 23, G. Langenus Staccato Study, Allegretto, ms. 1 - 4

Studies for acquiring a light Staccato

Allegretto $\frac{\text{n}}{\text{4}} = 144$
This beautiful solo for violin has a large accompaniment part played by the clarinet. Christie says that this number is a pleasure to play if the violinist is a really lovely and great musician. He says, “It's again, a classic thing where the solo takes a descant or an embellishing role [during the clarinet solo] and it's still the most important thing. So you have to play a solo that is low on ego but still musically apt and pretty to listen to. Hopefully you form a good partnership with the solo
violinist.” Hartman demonstrated the solo in his interview and says, “I play it on the A clarinet, by the way. Our print is for Bb clarinet but in the New York City Ballet’s version of this, in the Nutcracker and Sleeping Beauty, it is in between two numbers that are for A clarinet and at some point I realized that it sounds better on A clarinet.”

Renk has often commented on how she prefers hearing and playing longer phrases and this excerpt is no exception. She says, “I'm not big on ups and downs. Of course you have to have a little of those inflections to make it sound musical but I am more big on the long horizontal line.” Renk demonstrated this solo in the interview.

Christie says that it is really easy to be sharp at the beginning of this entr'acte because it starts on a throat A and he demonstrated the first three measures. In the sixth measure, the written B-natural can also be too sharp and Christie suggests a fingering to remedy this issue. He says, “The register-key substitution on the long B is a trick. It involves using the right hand thumb to open the third side key, the one we use for throat register side B-flat. You need your knees to hold the horn, of course, while the thumb is so occupied.” This fingering will enable the written B to be low enough to played comfortably as a major third.

**Figure 25, Clarinet Fingering Chart, Long B**

Christie demonstrates the and explains that the violinist needs time at the end of the solo. Hartman notes that this solo has been placed in the middle of the first half of Balanchine's production of the Nutcracker at New York City Ballet. He also notes that the American Ballet Theatre does not use this number in their Nutcracker.
As the title of this dance number indicates, it is a character dance and certainly requires a lot of character from the orchestra musicians, particularly the reed instrumentalists. The humour of this number comes from the meowing cat sounds in the oboes followed by sudden chords in the string and trumpet sections. Christie likens the character of the clarinet in measure 30 to that of a Tomcat. He says, “The bassoon is playing down low. It's that kind of a thing you hear out in the alley. If you just play straight notes, fine. You won't be fired. I think in this day and age a little bit of fun is helpful. I would almost smear them [the notes in measures 30 – 31]...”

Beginning in the pickup to measure 36 is an exposed clarinet unison solo, which presents some challenges playing over the first register break on the clarinet. Hartman says that because the notes are not written out in measures 37, 38, and 41 of the original part, it is a little bit difficult to read. The original part contains repeat signs instead of the fully written out notes to be played. The above excerpt has included all notes.

To address playing over the register break in measures 35 to 42 Renk says, “The only way to play this kind of thing is to keep that air constantly flowing...That way, it sounds smooth over those breaks.” Renk sings the last two measures and in doing so shows that the crescendo is very important. Christie says to be careful not to squeak in this section, as it is easy to when having to cross over the break a lot. Christie says, “The exoticism of this probably depicts some kind of Siamese cat. The sexy and sinuous character in the writing is awesome so you really want to risk the squeak.”
In a similar light the other clarinetists have spoken about this passage. Wrzesien says, “Here we strive for a good legato between the first and second registers.” He suggests gradually increasing the dynamic through the triplet figure in measure 38, so that the culmination of the phrase leads to the downbeat of measure 39 and highlights the written B-natural.
Figure 27, The Sleeping Beauty, Act III No. 25 Pas de quatre: The Bluebird, Adagio, Clarinet in A

Act III No. 25 Pas de quatre: The Bluebird, ms.4 - end

Flute

Clar. in A
This is one of the major clarinet solos in *The Sleeping Beauty* and is on many ballet orchestra auditions. The original part is for A clarinet but Manasse transposes this variation on B-flat clarinet for various reasons that will be discussed shortly. Because the melody repeats itself many times in the clarinet and flute part Manasse says to make sure to play the phrase differently each time it reappears.

Hartman also plays this solo on Bb clarinet. He explains that because the flute plays the motif before the clarinet at the beginning, the flute should play *forte* and the clarinet should observe the *mezzo forte* since the clarinet answers the flute. Hartman says that the dynamics should not be equal. “Now,” Hartman says, “in measure 18 the flute answers you.” He says to play forte here. He also says to play with a little hesitation in measure 18 and demonstrates how he takes time on the fourth beat of measure 18 before he places the downbeat of measure 19. He makes sure to hold the first note in measure 19 a full 8\text{-}th-note. He does the same in measure six on the third beat. “You are with the flutes in the final measure.” Hartman has some remarks about the first and second half of this number: “There's a difference between when you are answering the flute and when you are the leader. Note the *mezzo forte* at the beginning and the *forte* starting in measure 18.” Christie has a similar approach to the interplay between the flute and clarinet. He says,

> “There are two different characters here obviously. In the first one you're the answering bird in the distance. In the second one you lead it and you have to play with a lot more *sostenuto* and *espressivo*. In the first one you should be the secondary voice to the flute and not try to upstage them. But in the second one the flute better not upstage you. Hopefully the conductor will afford you some time on the up beat to measure 19.”

Renk plays this solo as written on A clarinet. In regards to the flute, she says the tricky part is to “...be sure you match their pitch and their style.” Renk played the solo in the interview and said, “Don't do this every single time but one idea is to give a little tenuto on the first grouping of six on the way down. So it's not just strictly in tempo. Every once in a while do that for a little added musicality.” Towards the end of the number, Renk says, “Settle it back just a little bit. Usually a conductor will do that for you or help you with that. It's a cute little interlude. Yes, for sure this would be on any ballet audition.”
Christie also transposes this solo on B-flat clarinet and says that when playing the original part for A clarinet,

“It is easy to feel so mortified about sagging the tone and pitch on the written throat B-flat at the end of the descending arpeggio. It could sound like a dying quail and not the bluebird...It sounds so great on the flute and if they are at all sharp, as you might be as well coming in to answer, it's so much better I think to go to the A-natural which is not as
flat of a note and dead as the passage on A clarinet, ending on a written B-flat. To me, playing a B-flat on the A clarinet is just a nightmare for that kind of thing.”

Christie makes a mental note to himself to check the cross fingering one-and-one before he plays this solo. He says, “It is a good little habit to have in mind, that if you are going to play it on A, make sure your instrument is in line.”

Christie discusses transposing if a written out copy is not provided,

“It's always tricky when you are going to transpose this. Just remind yourself that A-flat major is G major and the next one is B-flat major. When you see the descending arpeggio three measures before the end and then you see all of those sharps in the next arpeggio it will take you by surprise. So it's really crucial to think in terms of key but go over that bar in your head every time you are about to play it. Go over the final measure as well because that is really slapstick if you don't remind yourself how it goes. It's very cute and quaint. It shouldn't be a big deal.”

The following is the transposition for B-flat clarinet.
The proceeding short solo requires agility and fluidity in the fingers. These interjections alternate with the flute and oboe. Hartman says the 16th-notes need to be as even as possible. Renk says, “In this kind of thing you want to shape it a little bit. I don't mean make a huge crescendo to that B but just little shapes to make it a little bit interesting.” Something to also listen to is the ascending bass line in the bassoon part. It is important to know the score here.
Christie says,

“This one gives me more fits than almost anything. It's really one of those tricky things where you're passing 16th-notes back and forth. There's almost a distortion that you have to create to be correct and that is to make sure you are early and not rushing. Again, it's this common refrain. If you stretch the length of the first group of 16th-notes early and late on both sides, then you're not going to compress it. Compressing it is what we tend to do.”

Christie demonstrates compressing the 16th-notes as well as playing them as he recommends.

“So it's a subtle difference but I think you have to make sure your instrument speaks ahead of where you expect it to. You are filling that gap where clarinetists always seem to leave with our entries. It's a rhythmic thing.” Wrzesien like the other clarinetists agrees that, “There's a lot of linkage between the clarinet and the first violins. Tight rhythm, staying on top of the beat, and really listening carefully is essential so the back-and-forth interplay is right on the button.” Christie adds, “By this time, you know you're almost out of the woods in this ballet.”

This is the final solo in the ballet after many difficult passages and it must be playful and light to match the accompanying double reed instrumentalists. This variation has an impulse on the off
beats, lending itself to a humorous character. Manasse says, “you have to have some sort of dynamic contour for these repetitive measures.” Hartman says to play this out a little more because the first dynamic is really a solo _piano_. He says, “Over the years I have come to play this solo in a lighter manner. It's not overly shaped; just a little bit. It's pretty straight just because of the character of the music that comes before it.”

Christie says,

“There's a certain Three Stooges quality to this. It's the last solo that you have in the ballet. You play this group of phrases that are all the same. All that's required is a certain kind of delicacy or refinement...There's really not a lot to do. Just serve the dance here because that's all you are. This solo looks at you and it says, 'you are going to do this four times and feel silly each time.' And you are! But you're only dignity lies in the fact the you are going to do it four times and it's going to be absolutely perfect each time. Think about if you had to execute the same dance move _en pointe_ four times. Whatever they [the dancers] are doing, you just want to serve that. It is an articulation study in itself. Try not to sound like a pecky clarinet player.”

Wrzesien says to make something of this phrase. He presents some options, “You could do two measures up in volume, two measures down in volume. You could also do four measures up in volume, four measures down. I do like playing softly on the last set of two bars with gentle wedges over the final three 8th-notes to indicate the end of the passage.” In the final solo Christie says to, “...flow towards the written F. You can't begin it with nothing.” Wrzesien says to make sure to articulate the written F at the end of the sextuplet and to highlight the _fortissimo_. He adds, “While you're on your F, you might consider shading the edge of the bottom hole with your left ring finger to control your pitch as you diminuendo.”

While there are many more clarinet solos and challenging tutti passages in _The Sleeping Beauty_ the interviewed clarinetists did not always have time to comment on every single solo. There is certainly an element of endurance that comes into play in _Sleeping Beauty_. Not only are the exposed solo passages exceptionally demanding and long but the tutti passages require precision, endurance, and crisp articulation.
Chapter 4 The Nutcracker

Background of *The Nutcracker*

Following the successes of the premieres of Tchaikovsky's opera *Queen of Spades* and *Eugene Onegin* in 1890, Tchaikovsky received a commission to write two one-act works: the opera *Iolanta* and the ballet *The Nutcracker*.\(^{41}\) Although the reception of the 1892 premiere of *The Nutcracker* was a failure, *The Nutcracker* has become one of the world’s most performed ballets of all time.\(^{42}\) For example, the New York City Ballet has 47 performances of *The Nutcracker* each year.\(^{43}\) Many famous choreographers have choreographed their rendition of *Nutcracker* with great success such as George Balanchine and Rudolph Nureyev. The original three choreographers' version (Marius Petipa, Lev Ivanov, and Enrico Cecchetti) has become a staple in ballet companies' programming worldwide.

Historian and author Roland John Wiley discusses a rift that developed between Tchaikovsky and Ivan Vsevolozhsky, Director of the Imperial Theatres in St. Petersburg in the beginning stages of the composition of *The Nutcracker*, Opus 71. One reason for tension was caused through disagreements on the libretto. Tchaikovsky was not initially inspired by the story of *The Nutcracker*.\(^{44}\) Choreographer Marius Petipa chose adapted material from E.T.A. Hoffmann's story *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King*. The adaptation Petipa chose was written by Alexandre Dumas, entitled *The Tale of the Nutcracker*. The beginning of the ballet contains many action filled pantomime sections, followed by the second act with mostly dance numbers choreographed by Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov. These dance numbers in Act II are not related to the story but are part of Clara's dream world. Wiley states, “The emphasis on mime in the first act gives way to *divertissement* in the second, thus making them seem more disconnected dramatically. That a ballet of this length should contain only one classical *pas* for the ballerinas,

\(^{41}\) [Ballet Theater Repertory Archive](http://www.abt.org/education/archive/index.html), accessed 12 September 2014.


\(^{43}\) [New York City Ballet repertory archive](http://www.nycballet.com/Explore/The-Repertory.aspx) accessed on 12 September 2014.

and this near the end of the second act, was not lost on the critics."\(^{45}\) Another cause for rift between Tchaikovsky and the Director of the Imperial Theatres was due to Tchaikovsky's request for pay increases. Tchaikovsky claimed that one of the choreographers, Cecchetti, received more money than he and did for far less work.\(^{46}\)

Wiley posits an explanation for the reason of the lack of continuity in *The Nutcracker*. The first performance of *The Nutcracker* was paired in the same concert as Tchaikovsky's opera *Iolanthe*, Opus 69. The opera contained a serious love drama about a blind maiden’s sight restored by the man with whom she fell in love.\(^{47}\) This followed by the light-natured *Nutcracker* may have acted as emotional relief for the audience and any lacking in the libretto may have been overlooked.

Wiley discusses a musical example in Act I, which takes the listener into the world of Clara's perception by increasingly using low winds and brass.\(^{48}\) The clock strikes nine o'clock at measure 41 at the beginning of the scene, starting with a clarinet and bassoon canon, greatly contrasting to the elegant music surrounding this canon.\(^{49}\) This scene from Act I is a quintessential example of pantomime ballet.

Sheryl Renk says that *The Nutcracker* contains, “...a solo on every single page of the ballet and that's what makes it so hard. It's a great piece and it's a popular work.” Max Christie says about the ballet, “The Nutcracker is the hardest short ballet ever. It is such a challenge and fulfilling too. Every time you show up and play it you've gotta try your very best! This is probably Tchaikovsky's most perfect ballet. It's such a gem.”


\(^{49}\) Wiley, *Tchaikovsky’s*, 223.
Analysis of Clarinet Excerpts in The Nutcracker

Clarinet solo passages from the Nutcracker may be the most well-known to clarinetists who may be less familiar with passages from ballet orchestra repertoire. While the clarinet solos in the Overture and Waltz of the Flowers are included in the second volume of Robert McGinnis’ symphonic orchestra excerpt book, the following twelve solos and passages are worthy of study and require immense virtuosity, fast and accurate fingers and articulation, and a great deal of stamina.

Figure 32, The Nutcracker Overture Miniature, Allegro giusto, partial score

This is one of the major clarinet solos in ballet repertoire and appears in excerpt books. Each interviewed clarinetist has played this hundreds of times over the years. Jon Manasse says, “Practice the solo so that it is not scary. Phrase it and above all, listen to the violas.” Christie adds that the tempo might be slightly different each performance and this will affect the 16th-note viola passage that occurs before the entrance of the flute. Steve Hartman says, “Sometimes it takes a little while for the tempo to be established, especially with a guest conductor. I try to establish steadiness when I come in with my solo by slightly stressing the first sixteenth of every bar. I usually make a diminuendo at the end of the phrase.” Renk also has similar advice when
she recommends playing a slight tenuto on the first of the 16th-notes in each grouping. This helps to keep the solo from rushing. Renk says, “It's got to be steady. The flute plays it and you've got to come in and play it just as steady. Make the last two 16th-note groupings be a little bit bouncy. Add a little bit of an accent to those slurs and a little bit of style to it.” Renk suggests playing the long B with the right pinky. After playing this solo so many times over the years Renk finds it is easier that way. Renk says she learned this solo so well and had a near 100% success rate with this solo. This is something every aspiring orchestra clarinetist must do for auditions.

Christie says this solo is easier if the allegro giusto is conducted in a faster tempo. He says,

“The challenge here, of course, is that you are playing through the throat register, the articulation, and you are the most important line. A little known fact is that the second violins are listening closely to you to place their line well. When you are playing your solo you want to clue into the second violins. It's easy to think you are playing it right but you most likely need to be ready to adjust something.”

Wrzesien says being mentally prepared and alert for this solo is very important especially since this is at the very beginning of the ballet. He says, “This is especially true during a Nutcracker run filled with doubleheaders and consecutive days of performances. Although we're looking at a batch of 16th-notes at our first entrance, remember that shaping a technical solo always makes it easier to play.”
This solo invites the clarinetist to be incredibly virtuosic and is a good trill finger ing study. It also lends itself to being played expressively overboard and therefore a balance must be found in phrasing. However, Hartman says the way *rubato* is used in the pick up to the reiteration of each phrase really depends on the conductor's preference. Having played the Nutcracker approximately one thousand times over the years, Hartman prefers to stretch the pick up 16th-notes only in the final iteration after Figure C. “So, if I have a choice in the matter to take time and place it, I usually save it for the last time.” The first time Hartman plays the melody, he plays it louder than the marked *piano* and plays it in a steady tempo with very little rubato, making clear the immediate new tempo at the start of this section. Hartman demonstrates this solo and shows a clear difference between the 8th-notes with and without staccato marks that occur on the fourth beats of the first three measures. Hartman discusses the final solo:

“When you begin the reiteration of this solo after Figure C, sometimes you take a little time or a lot of time. Take the most time on the last time. If you take time at the reiteration of this solo then you must keep the tempo going in the final time. Some conductors might want to play around with it every single time.”

Stylistically, Renk also agrees that taking time before each new phrase every time would be monotonous. She says, “Every now and then the conductor will let you take time in the two or
three 16th pick up notes. When it comes back again is when you can take time.” Wrzesien says, “This is a lovely solo which is made even better by the clarinetist using a wide dynamic range.” In the fourth complete measure as well as in the companion section in the reiteration, after Figure C, Wrzesien says, “I like to show a clear separation between the two E's on beat three.”

Manasse says that the septuplets are written out trills and when played exactly as written it will come out nicely. Renk also plays the septuplets evenly and exactly. She says, “I don't believe in trills here and I think you should play sevens. This is alternating with the bassoon back and forth so they should also be playing sevens.” Renk discusses the third complete measure, “I use the side keys for the C in the quintuplet B-flat to C figure. Sometimes conductors will speed up on that [two measures before C and the following a tempo] so you have to be ready for that.”

Christie elaborates on the septuplets,

“The fingering I use in the second complete measure of this solo on the written Cs of the septuplet is right-left-right-right. Be able to play the third measure at a quick tempo because the cello section may tend to rush their 8th-notes. The conductor may want to push the tempo forward as well. I play the written Cs of the third beat of the third measure with the fingering right-left-right. Usually conductors will give you room to take to have a little moment in the reiteration of this solo before tempo I. Once again, try to not throw many curve balls in the phrase so you can build trust among your colleagues in the orchestra. I don't like playing the 16th-note pick-ups too slowly because, to me, it is too saccharine. I will play with the time just a hair proportionally to the tempo in order for the pulse to continue more or less unaltered. Think of it as a question mark pause. Try to minimize your left brain. Think about how you would walk across the room, turn around, and come back again. That is sort of what you are doing. In this case I think it is more gesture than text-based. It's not how you would say something so much as how you would do something. The motion of this entrance is still so crucial. The very first time you have this is just a two 16th-note pick-up. So in this one, with an additional 16th-note, you should not play around with it too much. You also have to think about the middle of the second reiteration because sometimes the conductor wants more expression than you can give realistically without it going over the top.”

Wrzesien agrees that when conductors ask for a lot of ritardando eight measures after letter C, it is awkward to lead the pick-up notes into the next measure. He forewarns that this is always a possibility.
Hartman explains one of the difficulties in this passage is due to sheer fatigue after playing so much already. Endurance in this number is an issue that Christie addresses as well. He says,

“Articulation is not just technique but it is also endurance. And here you've got to have some energy left. So it's really important to observe the piano just before Figure F and to not force your sound. For me, tongue position is everything on this. I am playing with just the lightest and smallest motion of my tongue near the front of my mouth and certainly not loudly. Playing loud there would be a killer. You can let your colleagues play loud, but take it easy on the fortissimo. I found that that's really the hardest thing especially the last four measures moving quickly across the altissimo register break. Form your embouchure and direct your air as if you were playing in the altissimo range or else it won't speak well. Articulation in the altissimo range has to be very light.”

Renk had success in her audition for the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra as well as numerous performances by playing this excerpt fast and steady. She says that many clarinetists play it too
slowly, especially in auditions. She says, “When I came out of my audition for the San Francisco Ballet the personnel manager at the time said, 'Wow! You played that so fast!' but I was playing it really at the tempo it is supposed to be...It's vivace. It goes pretty quickly.” Renk sings the pulse of the 8th-notes. “You've got to keep it at that tempo all the way until the meno. It's just a matter of keeping the tempo ultra steady and perfect the entire way through. So that's something you would play with the metronome.” Renk recommends beginning this passage with the metronome, then turning it off and playing it. Once reaching the end, turn on the metronome and check to see if the same speed is maintained. Renks says, “That perfect tempo and perfect speed is something that is impressive in auditions. It's got to stay because you are playing duples here while the other woodwinds are continuing to play triplets.” Christie has a similar idea about the tempo, “When you change to 8th-notes from triplet 8th-notes you want to make sure you are not in the way of the triplet players. As long as you stay in tempo and don't drag you will help your colleagues who are playing triplets.” Wrzesien also discusses the challenges of the fast tempo, crossing back and forth between registers and the amount of work for the left hand. Wrzesien sings the solo and emphasizes the crescendo leading to the downbeat of the fifth measure showing the arc of the phrase. “Again, if I think of this passage from a musical standpoint rather than a technical or staccato standpoint, it becomes much less problematic.”

Christie says,

“This is a tricky passage for the clarinets and the bassoons with varying degree of facility of articulation. I would imagine that in every pit, even the most seasoned veterans of the Nutcracker, will be practicing this passage slowly before every show to some degree. This passage is worthy of being on an audition because it is a good articulation and rhythmic study.”
At figure E both Manasse and Christie play continuous 16th-notes instead of what is printed. Even though it is not printed in the original part, the rhythm in the third and fourth lines of Figure 35 match the rhythm that the flutes have. The first two lines of Figure 35 is what is originally notated in the clarinet part. Christie says, “It took so long to get my double tonguing to work well in this particular passage...I use that articulation when I am double tonguing. It is more difficult to double tongue and play it with the 8th-note as written. I am pretty sure nobody cares that I play the extra 16th-note; it is just for me. I try not to play too loud and I take a breath during the long G.”

Christie says the most difficult part in this passage is playing the repetition of the phrase plus the three 16th-note pick-ups. He ignores the forte and begins the three 16th-note pick-ups with one of the syllable sequences: 'ka-ta-ka' or 'ta-ta-ka' or 'ah-ta-ka' in order to begin the downbeat of the reiteration of the 16th-note pattern on the syllable 'ta.' Christie says, “The important thing is to play it lightly so if I screw up, I get out of the way dynamically. The flutes can effortlessly play this line...It is much more difficult for the clarinet than the flutes.”

Hartman says that regardless if you play continuous 16th-notes or as printed, all notes must be articulated and no slurs added. Wrzesien plays this passage as written and thanks Tchaikovsky
for including the two 8th-notes in this passage instead of continuous 16th-notes. Wrzesien adds, “That enables me to replace the two 16ths on the third beat of the second bar with an 8th-note of my own without feeling guilty.” The 8th-note that Wrzesien plays on the third beat of the second measure is a B-flat and he leaves out the second 16th-note, which is a C. Like Christie, he emphasizes that the clarinet should be in the background and that it is more of a moment for the flutes and piccolo to be in the foreground.

Figure 36, The Nutcracker Act I No. 4, Scene, Allegro molto vivace, 8 ms. after Fig C – Fig. D, Principal and 2nd Clarinet in A

This solo must have precision and character. Manasse says, “Make sure the bassoon is not too loud so you can make a shape in the phrase.” Hartman demonstrates this passage and makes the accents on the half notes very clear. He shows the gradualness of the crescendo in the last four measures. Hartman demonstrates that the reiteration of this theme with the second clarinet in unison is stated at a louder dynamic than the first time, which is marked piano. Renk also demonstrates the entire solo and says, “The only thing I used to do sometimes was tongue this note [the written low B-natural on beat three, three measures before the end] rather than slur it because if you don't make it, it could come out as a squawk or something. I give it a little articulation. I made it my little personal tradition.”
Unlike Renk, Christie plays all of the slurs as written. He discusses the slurs in the beginning of this passage, “Tchaikovsky gives us great opportunities to squeak because slurring down from a throat note to a low note is asking for us to miss. I love him [Tchaikovsky]! It's a trust game with yourself but I do believe it is so worth it because the phrase would be dead if you didn't play the accent on the low note on the second beat.” He says that the accents played by the principal clarinetist on beat two and the accents played the second clarinetist on beat three are very important. Christie says to pay careful attention to the staccato marking on the downbeat and the non-staccato on the downbeat of the second measure. He says it is easy to miss that detail. Playing the exact ink and the exact slurs and markings precisely makes this piece that much more fun. Christie says, “I like to bring out the crescendo in the fifth measure. It's key to make this passage sound lively and exciting.” In the interview, Wrzesien emphasizes the hemiola and sings the solo by showing a larger 3/2 in the fifth and sixth measures. He also advises to, “Be on the late side with your 16th-note so that the figure doesn't gravitate into triplets.”

**Figure 37, The Nutcracker Act I No. 6, Scene, Moderato con moto, 2 ms after Fig C – 4 ms before Fig E, Clarinet in A**

This solo occurs as Clara awakens to find an enormous Christmas tree and life-size mice scampering around the room. Manasse says, “take expressive time at the beginning of the solo.”
Christie describes the music in the first section of this excerpt, “This is like modern music. I think it's brilliant because it's just a little filigree answer to what the flute just played.” Christie says that the most important thing is not to rush the 16th-note sextuplets or the group of nine 16th-notes so each note is clearly heard. Christie says, “The flute's previous material captures everybody's ear with the flourish and as you begin to play, you become part of that line. Play it earlier than you think so you don't need to rush it. The group of nine 16th-notes is like a measured trill which is not too fast.” Christie says three and four measures before the Allegro giusto is difficult in terms of pitch. He says, “Probably the hardest thing in terms of ensemble is feeling good about the intonation of the descending E major triad.”

Renk discusses the groups of nine in the first line of this excerpt, “This I do play as a trill. Because this is a group of nine, you don't have time to figure out a group of nine so I just play that like a trill. I just move my fingers as fast as I can.”

Renk says,

“At the Allegro giusto I like to use the one-and-one fingering on the grace note E-flats as well as the third measure of the solo. I find it easier. I definitely don't use that fingering in the first two measures because you'll hear the pitch difference. I find that is the easiest way to do it. I use the second side key for the trill from throat A-flat to B-flat.”

Wrzesien suggests a fingering in order for the high F to speak cleanly:

**Figure 38, Clarinet Fingering Chart, High F**

![Figure 38, Clarinet Fingering Chart, High F](image)

Wrzesien says, “It's very dependable. I wouldn't trust either my regular high F fingering or my long F fingering, especially coming off a 16th-note rest.”

Hartman discusses the Allegro giusto section,

“For me this is one of the hardest licks for some reason. It's important to decide before hand on which fingering you will use for the grace note D-sharps. It might be the smartest to use the one-and-one fingering for D-sharp, but I don't. I play it with my left
ring finger because I like the idea of switching from the left hand D-sharp to the right hand E-flat. I could probably do it either way at this point.”

Wrzesien has committed to playing the one-and-one fingering for the E-flats despite knowing that the sound gets slightly sacrificed. In the fifth measure of the Allegro giusto, he uses the second from the top side key for the A-flat to B-flat trill. He says, “Pitch-wise, it's passable.”

At the Allegro giusto section Manasse suggests making sure the bassoon and bass clarinet are not too loud. He suggests playing a soft dynamic at the beginning of the third measure of the solo because there is room to crescendo over this measure and the following one. Christie has a similar approach and says,

“I take the piano with a grain of salt in the allegro giusto section because the concert hall is very large and the affect of playing this too quietly will sound muted. However, as you begin to play the triplets, you want to give yourself a lot of room to crescendo. That is very important. I begin with a potent piano and then I bring the dynamic down and play a big crescendo to the mezzo forte in the fifth measure where the second clarinet joins you. At this point the music is about the growing anticipation of what is about to happen on stage, which is the magic. This passage is a great left hand, register, and articulation study. This excerpt is one that I play slowly during the first couple of weeks of the run of Nutcracker because it is so tricky.”

Renk says,

“At the Allegro giusto I like to use the one-and-one fingering on the grace note D-sharps as well as the third measure of the solo. I find it easier. I definitely don't use that fingering in the first two measures because you'll hear the pitch difference. I find that is the easiest way to do it. I use the second side key for the trill from throat A-flat to B-flat.”

Renk plays the solo at the Allegro giusto section starting softly and building the dynamic until the end of the solo. Unlike Manasse and Christie, she does not drop in dynamic in the third measure.
This is the first clarinet solo in the second act and takes place in the kingdom of the Sugar Plum Fairy in a dreamy setting. Hartman says that this solo does not go anywhere harmonically. However, he suggests shaping the phrase by terracing the dynamics in each of the three motives at the beginning of the solo. He suggests playing *mezzo forte* at the first entrance, *forte* in the second entrance, and *fortissimo* in the third entrance. Hartman recommends playing the first measure in stricter rhythm and tempo. In the third measure, he says to stretch the B-flat on the top of the descending scale on the third beat. He says to really exaggerate the third time, showing the most direction and character there. The high B-flat in this measure can be held the longest.
Renk also thinks that there can be a slight tenuto on the fourth beat if the conductor allows time for that. Renk says, “It's a kind of dramatic penetrating moment at Figure A.”

In the following section, two measures before Figure B the second clarinet plays a B-flat seven arpeggio followed by the principal clarinet playing the same figure. The principal and second clarinet alternate motives for four measures. Hartman says, “It's the lack of a third in the B-flat dominant seventh chord that makes these arpeggios tricky [one measure before Figure B and at Figure B]...The next B-flat major arpeggio that happens three times is easier.”

Renk has often experienced conductors take the tempo way too fast, in her opinion. She explains that the conductors have usually observed the con moto far more than the Andante. Renk said, “One of our conductors took it at around 100 to the quarter note. Does it really need to go that fast?...This is much better if it's done properly in the Andante fashion.” In the interview Renk played the first five measures of the solo and suggested playing all of it fairly loud and full, “because you have to penetrate through a lot of noise that's going on around you.”

Christie says, “It's really not an easy solo to pull off,” and Wrzesien does not hesitate to transpose this solo on B-flat clarinet. He says, “You're now in D major. The ending is simply swirling through A7 and D major arpeggios.” The following is the transposed version, down a semi-tone for B-flat clarinet.
Figure 40, The Nutcracker Act II No. 11, Scene, Andante con moto, Fig A to 2 ms. after Fig. B, Principal and 2\textsuperscript{nd} Clarinet in B-flat

A
Act II No. 11, Scene, Fig A to 2 ms after Fig B
Clar. in A

B
This dance number has a Spanish flair and a wonderful swing to it. This solo is accompanied by castanets and is preceded by a lively trumpet solo. Because the previous number was for the A clarinet and the B-flat clarinet may be cold from not being played, Manasse recommends pushing in the barrel of the B-flat clarinet before playing this solo. Sheryl says, “I think it helps if when you rip up to that high C, if you maybe ever so slightly (not to make it dramatic) come away from it so you actually have a way to crescendo.” Renk plays the solo. “Rather than hold and sustain it at one dynamic, I come away from it slightly so I have somewhere to go after.”

Christie says,

“It's important not to be whiny on the high C. So play a *fortissimo* on the ascending run to a *mezzo forte* on the C followed by a *crescendo*. It is crucial that the ascending run be heard. It's just the natural outcome of releasing a little bit of the sound after the scale. The C is going to easily sound out and you really are just accompanying, which is important to know.”

Wrzesien says that he begins the solo *forte* instead of *mezzo forte*. He plays a *forte piano* on the high C and plays a crescendo into the *ff* where the descending C major arpeggio is. In this measure, Wrzesien says to release the tie precisely.

Wrzesien says to be absolutely ready for the *Più mosso* section, be it a faster tempo or simply knowing that the clarinet has the leading melodic line there. Renk says, “Just play it very loudly and very evenly because it's your solo and you have to really come out there.” With a different
view, Christie asks, “...is there really a *più mosso* at Figure F? The answer is: it depends on the staging of course.”

**Figure 42, The Nutcracker Act II No. 12, Divertissement b) Arabian Dance, Commodo, ms. 5 – 13, Clarinet in B-flat**

This exotic and sinuous dance number allows the clarinetist to play with nuance and subtlety. Hartman says the tempo taken in the New York City Ballet is fairly slow. He says to observe the accents on the first two written Gs. In the third measure, Hartman plays the 8th-note G as a sustained accent compared with the first two Gs. He says, “Make sure not to taper the sound of the 8th-note G.” To provide the clarinetist with another idea about the Gs, Renk says, “I don't think of it so much as accents, as much as little musical phrases.” Renk played the first eight measures and says, “Put a little bit of a lift and a slight space between the end of each one of the written Es and the beginning of the accented Gs. For musical purposes, place a slight tenuto on the first written F in the third and seventh bars.” Renk sings the figure giving more weight to the first written F so it is not rushed. “Try to make it musical but yet it's kind of a subtle thing. It's all about what's happening on stage with the Arabian outfits. You're setting a mood here.”

In regards to setting a mood Christie says, “It's a good place not to overthink it. You don't really need to add much. The clarinet is sort of the lead voice but the English horn and second clarinet are important. Keep your sound from ballooning. The group of five is a measured trill. It's more important to play out so that you are heard.” Wrzesien also advises, “The quintuplet is not as fast as it looks on the page. Oddly enough, thinking two plus three somehow accomplishes my goal of playing an even quintuplet.”
The clarinet solo in *Waltz of the Flowers* is one of the few that has made it into the standard orchestral excerpt books for clarinet. While this solo is beautiful and expressive, the interviewed clarinetists all agree that it must be played tastefully and not over the top. In general, Manasse says to shape the solo and get a sense of the pitch orientation by listening to the horns and the harp for good intonation. The horns play the introduction with the winds and this is a great place to begin listening for the pitch orientation. Christie says, “The intro of this piece is gorgeous and reminds me a lot of the chorale opening to the big *Pas de deux* from *Swan Lake*. In this number the chorale opening is gorgeous and I love how our wind section plays and phrases this together. The clarinet solo is a gem.”

About the beginning of the solo Christie says, “I try not to over-think this solo. You are playing a very sweet melody in a register where you are forced to confront the clarinet's weaknesses for pitch. I think vocally which is my best strategy.” Christie says to resist the temptation to elongate downbeats. The one place that can afford to have only a slightly lengthier downbeat is the downbeat four measures before Figure A on the written C-sharp 8th-note.

Wrzesien says,

“We need to start this solo off louder than we would like because the entrance begins after four horns play the preceding eight bars and we're down in the first register. Still, it's important to show the crescendo that is indicated. This is easier to accomplish in the next entrance because the solo ends up in the upper end of our second register. In the first solo
I continue the dynamic increase into the A-natural half note which I treat more like a tenuto than an accent.”

Hartman says he plays at a fairly strong dynamic through the solo and makes the diminuendo only one measure before Figure A, as written. Renk plays the solo and says,

“This has to be musical and phrased but at the same time has to be rather steady because you've got all that other textural and off beat stuff going on. So you can't play around with it all too much and I think when other clarinet players do that, it gets a little messy sounding. I think it has to be nice and musical but within a good rhythmical framework...I personally like it better when it's done like that.”

Hartman says, “In the second entrance [eight measures after Figure A], I save a little forte for the last measure [two measures before the end].” Similarly to that idea Renk says, “I always like to put maybe just a little tenuto on that last one [written C on the downbeat of two measures before the end] to say...” Renk sings the last complete measure with the following words at one word per quarter note: “‘this is done now' or 'now I am done.'

Christie says, “Five measures before the end Tchaikovsky writes in a particular way that advances the melodic rhythm in order to increase the melodic interest.” Christies say that it is important to observe the crescendo and to pace it gradually. He says, “I think the real forte happens one measure after it is marked.” Wrzesien says, “Be cautious not to get tangled up at the end of the second solo when you're mentally vulnerable after your third day of doubleheader performances!”

Renk says that a good reason to not ham up the solo too much is because the solo does return several measures later in Figure B, now with the 2nd clarinet in unison. If the solo is played wildly over the top, the second clarinetist might not know how to go about playing it at Figure B. Renk says, “So if you have another clarinetist playing in unison with you, you want them to know what you are doing and how you are going to phrase it. I believe in musicality but not going crazy with that.” Christie also mentions this section with the second clarinet in unison. He says it is important to note the fortissimo towards the end of the melody where there was initially only a forte (after Figure A). Christie says, “In this case the composer is indicating that the dynamic of the forte has to leave room for a fortissimo in the second iteration.” This is another good reason not to be overly expressive in the initial solo before and after Figure A. The second
time needs to be more and will be louder and more impassioned due to the addition of another clarinet.

Figure 44, The Nutcracker Act II No. 14, Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy, Andante non troppo, Fig. A, Principal and 2nd Clarinet in A

The music of *Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy*, danced by the principal female dancer, must have delicate angularity. The interjections made by the two clarinetists and the bass clarinet give a great contrast to the staccato-like sounds played by the celeste. Manasse says, “be playful with the descending 16th-note figures, especially eight measures after figure B” and Renk says,

“I think you shouldn't do too much. I don't really believe in hamming it up. You can make it a little bit musical and slightly elongate the first note but otherwise it's fairly straight. I would say there is a musical leading to the downbeat but not a true crescendo. Once you articulate the dotted quarter note with an accent, come away from it because that is what will make the next note not sound accented. It's almost like a little bell tone and then come away.”
Like Renk, Christie cautions against elongating the beginning of the 32nd-notes because it can be too extreme. Wrzesien suggests beginning each motive by flowing the air through the clarinet before the entrance to achieve an elegant beginning to the 32nd-notes. He says it, “...insures that you'll be right on time with no bump.”

Themes that arise from the discussion of solo passages from *The Nutcracker* are articulation, dynamics, fingering issues, the decision to play certain passages on B-flat or A clarinet, and issues of physical and psychological endurance and stamina. The top five ballet companies in North America will perform *The Nutcracker* anywhere between 23 to 47 times per season. Wrzesien touched upon the issue of the psychology and technique required to get through the numerous performances of *The Nutcracker* that are often scheduled during the months of November, December, and January.
Chapter 5 Romeo and Juliet

Background of *Romeo and Juliet*

Prokofiev swiftly composed *Romeo and Juliet* in 1935 and it premiered the following year at the Bolshoi Theatre. In “The People's Artist: Prokofiev's Soviet Years” (2009), Simon Morrison says, “The rhythmic writing occasioned general critique for its terseness, the harmonic and melodic writing for its anti-Romantic rationalism.” In the 1930s Prokofiev composed a happy ending version of *Romeo and Juliet*. Morrison says, “It irritated Soviet Shakespeare purists, who pressured him into reworking it.” Morrison discusses the music of *Romeo and Juliet*, “The metric shifts in the score correspond to Shakespeare's shifts between blank verse, rhymed couplets, and sonnet forms. The elaborate interweaving of themes captures the subtleties of the couple's emotional and psychological states.” Alex Ross describes the music in Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*, “Prokofiev's extended tonal language achieves maximum sophistication: the lovely opening melody of the work is interspersed with just enough passing semitone clashes and lowered or raised pitches that it acquires a grainy, acidic finish, avoiding sentimentality or kitsch.” Author for the New Yorker magazine Alex Ross describes Prokofiev's music as containing, “farce, parody, irresponsible merrymaking, mock grandeur.”

Following the premiere of the ballet, Prokofiev reworked the numbering of the ballet finalizing it in 1940. One example of the reworking of numbers is the title of the number that originally was the “Dance of the Two Captains.” This number was relocated from the end of the third act (No. 49) to the beginning of the second act (No. 25) and renamed “Dance with Mandolins.” Dance with Mandolins contains the only excerpt for E-flat clarinet in the entire ballet where the E-flat clarinet and the principal clarinet alternate 16th-note arpeggios.

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54 Ross, *The Rest is Noise* (New York: Picador, 2007), 263.
55 Alex Ross, *Rest*, 260.
Romeo and Juliet has been considerably revised since its premiere in 1936. Prokofiev received a request to add additional bravura variations in the ballroom and balcony scenes for the 1940 Leningrad production.\textsuperscript{57} Although Prokofiev had long left the ballet behind and was composing for other projects, he drafted new variations (No. 14 and 20), numbers such as \textit{Morning Dance} (No. 4), and made changes to several other numbers. Tensions arose between Prokofiev and the choreographer, Leonid Lavrosky. Lavrosky continued to request changes and Prokofiev refused based on his “disregard of the precepts of grand classical ballet in favour of a Diaghilev-inspired conception of the genre as one in which music and dance are free to set their own narrative agendas, to step out, as it were, from each other's shadows.”\textsuperscript{58} Prokofiev expressed actions and emotions in a musically unconventional style in \textit{Romeo and Juliet}. This contrasts greatly to the Tchaikovsky ballets. Some critics considered parts of the \textit{Romeo and Juliet} score dry and with little colour.\textsuperscript{59}

An example of contention between Lavrosky and Tchaikovsky was that Lavrosky wanted the playful 1936 version of \textit{Dance of the Moors} to be darker.\textsuperscript{60} Morrison says,

“Prokofiev, in contrast, sought to depict the triumph of the spirit in the Act I scenes of carefree abandon and guileless resistance to familial constraints. Uplifting Apollonian passion is embodied in the melodies of the ballroom, balcony, and morning episodes; the power of fate govern the phobic ostinato patterns. The clash between the capricious, neoclassical “Mercutio” and hotheaded, “Scythian” Tybalt establishes the parameters of the tragic ending.”\textsuperscript{61}

Dancer Galina Ulanova, assigned to the role of Juliet, “found Prokofiev's rhythmic sequences inscrutable and pestered him to recompose them. Later, she ascribed the trouble to her training.”\textsuperscript{62} A quote from Ulanova:

“To tell the truth we were not accustomed to such music, in fact we were a little afraid of it. It seemed to us that in rehearsing the Adagio from Act I, for example, we were following some melodic pattern of our own, something nearer to our own conception of

\textsuperscript{57} Morrison, People’s, 106.
\textsuperscript{58} Morrison, People’s, 107.
\textsuperscript{59} Morrison, People’s, 108.
\textsuperscript{60} Morrisson, People’s, 108.
\textsuperscript{61} Morrisson, People’s, 108.
\textsuperscript{62} Morrison, People’s, 108.
how the love of *Romeo and Juliet* should be expressed than that contained in Prokofiev's “strange” music. For I must confess that we did not hear that love in his music then.”

Prokofiev traveled between Moscow and Leningrad during the rehearsals for the Leningrad production of *Romeo and Juliet*. He dutifully changed and tweaked certain rhythmic sequences, cadences, and instrumentation. Morrison says, “…the First and Second Suites from *Romeo and Juliet*, which dated from 1936, provide a better sense of Prokofiev's intended orchestration of the ballet than the actual score – even though they were assembled for nontheatrical concert performance.” Morrison mentions the highly opinionated librettist, Sergey Radlov, who attended rehearsals for the Leningrad production and how he did not agree with the revisions of the ballet. Despite this and the black out conditions during the Finnish-Russian War under which this *Romeo and Juliet* production was premiered, it was a great success. Even Stalin approved the performance in Moscow.

The characters in *Romeo and Juliet* are described through the music. Prokofiev writes seven musical themes that describe Juliet. Romeo, The Nurse, Mercutio, and Tybalt all have musical themes that depict each character. All clarinetists who were interviewed for this project have a great admiration and reverence for the music of Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*. Sheryl Renk says this ballet is one of her favourites and William Wrzesien recalls fond memories of performing *Romeo and Juliet*. Max Christie respects this ballet as an incredible technical challenge and says, “Nothing shreds my confidence like this ballet for a good variety of reasons: one of them being how often he [Prokofiev] takes a simple melody...by adding octave transpositions into it.” The following clarinet solo from the Introduction is just one example of how Prokofiev transposes a melody throughout registers.

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66 Morrison, *People’s*, 110.
67 Morrison, *People’s*, 110.
68 Morrison, *People’s*, 110.
Analysis of Clarinet Excerpts in *Romeo and Juliet*

There are over fifteen solos passages from *Romeo and Juliet* that are discussed by the interviewees. Most of the passages are clarinet solos and some of the passages are clarinet duet solis that are in harmony or in unison. Several clarinet solos that join other solo instruments are discussed as well as a few tutti passages. Although these solo passages are generally shorter than those from Tchaikovsky’s ballets, it should not be assumed that because the duration is shorter, these excerpts are easier to prepare and perform. The following solo is an example of the higher range and larger intervallic leaps required by Prokofiev.

**Figure 45, Romeo and Juliet Act I No. 1 Introduction, Andante assai, 6 ms. after Fig. 2 – Fig. 3, Clarinet in B-flat**

![Figure 45](image)

Jon Manasse says to note that the clarinet solo occurs in the first seven measures of this excerpt and to be aware that the flute joins the melody in unison in the second half of the eighth measure. He says to make sure to blend and balance the unison melodic line with the flute. Steve Hartman demonstrated this solo making sure to begin the phrase in a *dolce* manner with a discernible articulation on the first note. He took one breath in the entire solo, after the tied written E-sharp. Wrzesien discusses the difficulty of entering on a high written C-sharp at the beginning of this solo. He begins blowing air through the mouthpiece during the measure of rest before the actual start of the C-sharp. He calls this a “pre-flow” of the air. Wrzesien does not breathe in the eighth measure of the solo.

Similar to Hartman and Wrzesien's phrasing, Renk also played this solo in the interview and says, “It's a matter of the long line. Rather than chopping anything up, you have to always think horizontally. That's the way I try to play it anyway. I play more with the thought of using lots and lots of air. So if you've got the air behind the note, it's going to come out.” Christie
demonstrated the first four measures of the solo and says that the notes have to flow and not fall back or behind.

Christie demonstrated the large intervallic leaps in this solo without playing it in rhythm. He said, “What I just did was what I do in order to hear the line of the pitch.” He says to avoid making adjustments with the embouchure and inner cavity of the mouth for any of the notes. He says, “In terms of phrasing, this is really very simple in a way. In terms of function in the piece, this is the first introduction to this theme, which is a very key theme. It's important to not over phrase or to do anything too bizarre. It's all forward. That means that you can't actually get louder and louder. The only resting points are these loaded long notes.”

Considering fingerings for the altissimo notes in this passage, Renk says she uses the high F-sharp left middle finger with the fork key. This will assist in an easy transition to the D-sharp in three measures before the end. Wrzesien also uses these fingerings for both the high written E and F-sharp. Wrzesien suggests practicing this section with the flautist and to pay attention for intonation prior to each performance.

Christie demonstrates the final eight measures of this passage and discusses the altissimo range, “There's something that happens in the timbre in the orchestra that's going to fight me on the high [written] E. The flute comes in and you're suddenly in octaves with the flute and I believe there's an interference because I've never had more trouble with that note than I have in this piece.” Instead of panicking, Christie suggests to play the high E with a very full sound. He says, “You could say that it's the inevitability, the ineluctable horrible fate. But it's so beautifully set. There's no going back with this.”

**Figure 46, Romeo and Juliet Act I No. 2 Romeo, Andante, 2 ms. after Fig. 6 – Fig. 7, Clarinet in B-flat**
The music that precedes the clarinet solo is staccato. The clarinet enters with a contrasting legato line, depicting Romeo. Manasse says he looks forward to playing the interval of the F-sharp on the top staff line to the high E-sharp in the second measure. About the same interval, Hartman says, “You really want to reach up to that E-sharp. It doesn't always come out but you don't want to be afraid of it. You want to phrase it and sing up to it if you can.” Hartman demonstrated with a very smooth connection between the F-sharp and E-sharp in the second measure of the solo. Hartman plays the entire solo in one breath. Renk says that this solo is similar to the solo in the Introduction because again, “It's all about the air and keeping the phrase going...”

This solo contains the thematic material depicting Romeo and Christie says, “I find it much less frightening than the previous solo. For the interval F-sharp to E-sharp, I try not to think of syllables so much as what the tongue position would be for those syllables. It's important not to muscularize the E-sharp and gag it. It's really a 'hoo' sound to a 'hih' sound and that's really more about the front of the tongue.” Christie suggests to practice singing the pitches regardless if the voice only allows the solo to be sung in one octave. He emphasizes knowing the melodic connection well, which will help to nail the octave transpositions.

For the high written E-sharp Wrzesien uses the regular high F fingering and adds the throat G-sharp key as a vent.

**Figure 47, Clarinet Fingering Chart, High E-sharp**

![Figure 47](image)

Wrzesien says, “Always check your bridge key adjustment before each performance as there are two nice opportunities for a one-and-one fingering choice in this solo.” These opportunities occur on the written A-sharps in the third and fourth measures.
This clarinet solo depicts the innocence and youthfulness of Juliet. Other than *Dance of the Knights*, this melody is one of the most famous musical themes in this ballet. The listener will perceive simplicity in this solo and yet Prokofiev writes many details into the part that the clarinetist must pay close attention to. Christie discusses generally about this dance number, “You get to play Romeo as the innocent guy and now you get to play Juliet as the innocent girl. It's lovely! The awkward thing is pitch, the lovely thing is *con eleganza.*” In certain productions of the ballet, Juliet is dancing with youthful vigour, playing a choreographed game of hide-and-seek with the Nurse.

Manasse says to shape this solo and, “Observe the 8th-note rest because that is part of the music too. The music is simple. Follow the contour of the phrase and observe the tenutos.” Like Manasse, Hartman also agrees that the rests are a very important part of the phrase. Hartman says, “The *a tempo* is sometimes on the downbeat of three measures before the end instead of on the third beat.” He also says that the exact placement of the *a tempo* will depend on the dancers and the conductor. Hartman says, “You always have to have one eye on the conductor no matter how much it's really your solo. Even, I would go as far as to say, like the Mozartiana cadenza. Usually the conductor will just leave you alone but if they need to speed up they'll speed up at the end.”

Like Manasse and Hartman, Christie acknowledges that the 8th-note rests in the first measure must be played musically. He demonstrated the first four measures of this solo in the interview and said, “The rests are there and they have to be played like musical rests.” Christie sings the phraselets of each half measure with attention to where the 8th-note rests occur. “Prokofiev was
an incredibly cold fish but he could do this with the flick of a pen. He could make these wonderful characterizations. You gotta think about the 8th-note and the 8th-note rest are equivalent but that means really you have to not clip the 8th-note at the end. You have to make sure it leads...” Christie plays a demonstration of the first measure, “...with an 'H' ending. And obviously this is the hardest one.” Christie plays the second half of the third measure to the second half of the fourth measure. “Let it be. It's not a big deal. Just don't be flat on that F.” Christie plays the fourth measure and suggests that venting a right side key on the written F may help keep the pitch of that note high enough in pitch if there is a tendency for it to go flat. He says, “It really depends on your instrument and your ear.” Christie plays the fifth measure into the downbeat of the sixth measure. “And that should have that kind of simple ritardando, nothing huge. He's [Prokofiev] marked the *a tempo* over the end of the bar which is really strange.” Instead of taking the *a tempo* literally, Christie suggests to think of the *a tempo* as starting just after the high B-flat in the sixth measure. Christie said if he were to play it literally with an *a tempo* starting on the third beat, he could not sell that type of phrasing. Instead he places the *a tempo* on the second beat on the written F, slightly to the left of where it is printed. Christie says, “He's [Prokofiev's] given you a *poco ritardando* over the 8th-notes then a *tenuto* over the B-flat. So it's hard to imagine it being...” Christie sings the sixth measure quite slowly for the first two quarter notes and sings the *a tempo* very literally on the third quarter note. “None of that really plays the phrase. I think of the *tenuto* on the [high] C as a pick-up and the B-flat on the downbeat and then I try not to think too much beyond that.”

Renk demonstrated the solo in the interview and said to take a really good breath on the 8th-note rest four measures after Figure 53. She does not take a breath after the downbeat of the fifth measure of the solo. Renk plays the rests shorter than Manasse, Hartman and Christie. She says, “Again, it's all about keeping the phrase. With all of these little rests, it's easy to chop this up. However, you don't want to do that. You want to play this almost as though the 8th-notes on the second and fourth beats were quarters. It's not though.” Renk plays the first three measures of the solo. “Play it so that there is no rest involved, just so that there's a little gap of air.” Like Renk, Wrzesien agrees that the 8th-note rests need to be shorter in order to avoid sounding clipped. He says, “I treat the last of the three 8th-notes in these figures as a quarter note followed by a 'Stravinsky comma.'”
Wrzesien suggests fingerings for both written B-flats in the fourth measure. He presses the A key with the second from the top key to produce the throat B-flat. Wrzesien uses the left hand sliver key for the high B-flat. Wrzesien uses this same fingering sequence for the final two notes of the solo.

**Figure 49, Clarinet Fingering Chart, Throat B-flat**

![Clarinet Fingering Chart, Throat B-flat]

Wrzesien says that he plays the *a tempo* as close to the downbeat of the seventh measure as possible. He says, “Whatever time I've lost in the *poco ritard* I try to regain in the third and fourth beats in the sixth bar of the solo so that my *a tempo* is actually in the beginning of bar seven.”

In No. 32, *Mercutio Meets Tybalt*, this same clarinet solo theme depicting Juliet returns. However, this time it starts a perfect fourth lower on a written C. Christie remarks about this return of the theme,

“There's something about this that is very poignant. It's like a sketch on top of a much more serious drawing. I think in terms of how you phrase it, it's really much more linear. It's very different than when you're phrasing Juliet's theme the first time. Here, it's very plaintive. It has a very sad quality. Play it with a lift at the end of the first two measures.”

Like the original theme in No. 10, Wrzesien plays the last of the three 8th-notes as a quarter note followed by a 'Stravinsky comma.'
Prokofiev transfers this melody throughout the orchestra. The trumpet plays it, followed by the clarinet and tenor saxophone, and later in the ballet the tenor saxophone plays it alone. Christie says, “It seems very Hollywood so I don't want to schmultz it up any more.” Manasse suggests asking the tenor saxophonist to make sure to blend with the clarinet and to not overplay. He says, “The saxophone should not be the prominent voice. Make sure to fully observe the hairpins and dynamics three measures after Figure 64.”

Even though there is a small diminuendo and crescendo in the third measure, Christie does not over-exaggerate these details. Christie plays the pick-up to measure three and says, “...it's just a decoration in the middle of the bar. It's a subtle thing...” In a similar vein Renk played the solo in the interview and said to keep the phrase going without any interruptions.

In addition to playing this as a long, legato phrase, Wrzesien says to make sure that the dotted eighth and 16th-note rhythm does not evolve into a triplet figure. If the clarinet does not have a left pinky E-flat key then the right hand pinky has to move quickly from the C-sharp key to the D-sharp key two bars after Figure 65. Another alternative is for the left pinky to slide from the G-sharp to the C-sharp. Wrzesien suggests this fingering for high G-sharp:
This solo is just before the end of Dance No. 11. Hartman discusses how to make the grace notes sound as written and not as 32nd-notes. He says, “It's hard to make the grace notes sound like grace notes as opposed to 32nd-notes. I try to place them as much as I can...” so that they sound separately from the two 16th-notes. In terms of the grace notes and the articulated phrase in general Renk says, “It's all a matter of air to get those to come out the way you want them.”

Christie says this is one of the most fun passages to play. Christie plays the fifth measure of Figure 70 and says, “...play it out. Definitely play the relationship between the grace note and the main note as pretty important.” Christie demonstrates the last two measures of the solo with a full sound and acknowledging each accent and staccato marking. “The character is there, so just play it. Lots of weight in the touch.” Wrzesien, like the others, says to, “Play very short 8th-notes and observe the accent marks. Don't let your sound die out in the low register at the end.”

At the end of the solo, Manasse says to make sure to listen to the violas at Figure 70 because the violas are in unison with the clarinet in the final three measures of this passage. He says, “You have to know how your part fits in or else it won't sound as good.”
This solo depicts the humour and agility occurring on stage. In order to sound clean and not rushed in this short solo Manasse says, “Play as slowly as possible in between the beats.” He also says, “Don't be afraid of the high notes...” and “Observe the accent on the throat A.” All of these small details make this very technical and fun solo come to life. There is a carefree-ness in this solo and should depict the playfulness of the dancers on stage.

Hartman encourages that, “You want to make it sound like you are playing music and not just an excerpt or an etude.” Hartman hums the melody that the trumpet plays at Figure 73. “Let the volume of the high E naturally decay once you have established it.” Christie discusses the characters on stage and says, “It seems as if what's happening here is the guys are hanging out together and being macho. He [Prokofiev] does this type of thing all the time where people [instrumentalists] reinforce the melody notes but they don't play through the melody. He is creating resonance with the sustained notes in the melody.”

Renk plays the solo and suggests making a big crescendo. She says, “I like this one. This is one of my favourites. It's great music.” Christie also says that it is his favourite thing to play because of the permission he has to play out the written high E. He says, “It's one of those octave things that I don't mind.” To make the characterizations come to life Christie says, “Concentrate on the difference of the long and short for the character. Lean towards the lower note fearlessly. You want to sing through the quarter notes with tenutos on them to the slurred into 8th-notes with lots and lots of impulse. I love how he wrote this. It works really well.”

Wrzesien sings this passage with a lot of character and energy, especially on the faster notes. He addresses the written high E and says, “Sometimes the traditional E is not that easy to make speak. You see the end of a crescendo and you might have nightmares about a squeak and that's
something we don't want to do.” For this note, Wrzesien suggests using all three left fingers and the left G-sharp side key. He says,

“It [the high E] might bust out on you because it's much louder than the traditional fingering, so you'd have to voice it in accordance with what kind of resistance your clarinet is giving you...It's sure to come out that way but it might be out of colour. And yet on the other hand, it's good to know that it's always going to speak for you.”

Figure 54, Clarinet Fingering Chart, High E

Wrzesien adds, “…with the high E being on the high side you sure don't have to reach at all for it [with the above fingering]. Just blow it really low. Whereas with the traditional E you might have to voice it a little bit. I think that's maybe the hardest place in the piece for me.”

Figure 55, Romeo and Juliet, Act I No. 14 Juliet's Variation, Moderato (quasi Allegretto), 2 ms. before Fig. 92 – 6 ms after Fig. 92, Clarinet in B-flat

This is another solo that depicts the unbound youthfulness of Juliet. Hartman says that this is tricky to read on the page because Prokofiev composed this with sharps instead of the equivalent enharmonic with flats. For example the B-sharps, E-sharps, and G-sharps could have been written enharmonically instead. Hartman says, “It doesn't need to be written that way.” Wrzesien agrees and recommends writing the names of the chords above the arpeggios. He says, “The second arpeggio certainly doesn't look like an F-minor chord the way it's spelled, but that's all it
is.” Wrzesien suggests using the left hand first finger only for the C-sharp grace note, three measures after Figure 92.

Christie says, “I don't overthink this one. I think it's just important to be heard.” He says that in the end this solo, particularly at the beginning, is just a decoration. Christie encourages avoiding the tendency to over-address the first note of the sextuplets so that they are even and in time. He also says that due to the orchestration, the lower notes will not be heard if a full volume is not played at the bottom of the register of the clarinet before and after Figure 92. Christie plays only the intervals of the second measure of Figure 92, ignoring rhythm for the time being. He makes sure not to be sharp on the written F-sharp. Christie plays two to four measures after Figure 92. Other than that he says, “Keeping it simple and making sure that you're playing the simplicity of the phrase is important. It's very straightforward.”

**Figure 56, Romeo and Juliet Act I No. 15 Mercutio, Allegro giocoso, 2 ms. after Fig. 100 – 4 ms. after Fig. 101, Clarinet in B-flat**

Christie says about this passage, “Doesn't everybody find this hard? I do.” Hartman has the same sentiments and says, “So this one is a bit tricky.” Christie says, “So this is where I think that really blocky, heavy fingering is really helpful so that you're really not playing too light in the fingers. Go for it, do not be afraid!” Christie says you must play as a principal player and leader and really establish the energy and technique for the second clarinet player. He advises to work with the second player and says, “Suggest a unity of purpose. Be respectful of your second player but ask them to be very observant of this rhythmically so it doesn't get rushed. It really needs a little imaginary box around it with bright lights. It needs to be slightly magnified and
illuminated because if it gets too rushed, the articulated 8th-notes will sound sloppy and cluttered.”

Wrzesien says to observe the measures that contain 16th-notes and remarks that, “They look similar but make sure not to confuse the one eighth and two 16th-note figure...” For example, the first measure with 16th-notes has a pattern of F-D-F and the next measure with 16th-notes has a pattern of D-F-D. Both Wrzesien and Manasse say to play this passage with energy and emphasize the accents. This melody returns in No. 33 and Manasse says the same principles should be applied there.

**Figure 57, Romeo and Juliet Act I No. 16 Madrigal, Andante, Fig. 111 – end, Clarinet in B-flat with partial score**
This excerpt contains the principal clarinet part and certain important melodic parts from score. The eight-measure phrase begins with two 8th-note pickups into Figure 111 played by the oboe. The clarinet answers in the middle of the measure with a four-8th-note motive that is taken over by the oboe and passed on to the English horn. The following eight-measure phrase consists of a variety of instruments interspersed throughout the texture of the melody.

Hartman says “Again, here is a passage where you are picking up the melodic line from someone and handing it over. Really try to make the most of the dynamics here.” He suggests starting softer in the fourth measure of Figure 111 and to swell through the *mezzo forte expressivo* marking. Hartman says, “Stress that F as long as possible without losing too much time.” Christie demonstrates the fourth and fifth measures after Figure 111 and says, “That is part of the melody. It's just one of those things where you've gotta play at the volume of the strings. You are the only one with that.” Wrzesien advises playing this four 8th-note grouping quite strong because it is a solo. Christie discusses the difficulty of playing the interval between the written F to the written A-flat in the fifth measure after Figure 111. He suggests taking on a vocal approach to playing this descending major sixth interval and to really sustain the sound into the A-flat. Even though the A-flat is only an 8th-note, holding this note the full duration of the 8th-note is important.

Christie identifies the, “...lovely octave displacement three measures before Figure 113. You don't have to worry too much about the A and F-sharp. Let those notes be and concentrate on playing that D in tune. It's tough.” Wrzesien says to “Drop your tongue for a nice slur down to the low D, one measure before Figure 113.”
In this peaceful and beautiful solo duet Manasse suggests paying attention to the dynamics at the beginning of each line. The first iteration is marked *piano* compared with the companion section six measures before the end of the number where the dynamics are marked *mezzo piano*. Manasse says, “Play around with the different dynamics.”

Christie says that this passage is very similar to No. 16 Madrigal but transposed up a major second and how number No. 23 is played can be applied to No. 16. The second clarinet has the 8th-note impulse underneath the simpler lines of the principal clarinet. Christie recommends establishing a good rapport with the second player in order to ask them not to hurry into the chromatic resolution into the sustained major third of the chord. He says, “Just ask them to take the foot off of the gas.”

Hartman says, “This is a chorale sort of sequence. Just play a nice soft A at the end of the last chord. You don't need to play it *espressivo*. This is a chapel-like scene.” Wrzesien says, “Work toward a nice blend and good intonation in both cadences.” Wrzesien discusses intonation in No. 16 and his point also applies to this number. He says to be careful of the intonation in the final two measures where the second clarinet has a written C-sharp because it might tend to be sharp.
Prokofiev has a creative sound pallet when he adds mandolins, muted trumpet, and an E-flat clarinet to the instrumentation, giving this dance number an ornate Italian sound. The music and choreography are both humorous and playful. The fun of both clarinet parts comes from the alternation of play between the principal and second clarinet. Prokofiev originally composed the score with the principal clarinetist on B-flat clarinet and the second clarinetist on E-flat clarinet. There are options to play on different clarinets depending on what transposition and sound the clarinet section and conductor prefer.

Renk performs the principal clarinet part on B-flat clarinet. In the interview Renk played the first six measures and explained that due to the dovetailing of the principal and second clarinet part, she listens and reacts less than she relies on the conductor for this passage. She says, “I like to actually play with what I think the beat is or what I see the conductor giving me. I don't like to advocate not listening but in this kind of stuff if you wait to hear something you are going to be late. It's got to sound very dovetaily-ish with the 16th-notes continuously running.”

Contributing to the discussion on creating a fluid dovetail effect Christie says, “You wanna just spread the notes out. I like to come in early and hang on late. I don't think it's really good if it's...” as an example of what not to do Christie sings the rhythm, clipping the end of the motif.

“I think it should really flow. You've basically gotta think that you are playing sound the whole time through the rests while the second clarinetist is playing. It will sound like the last note you are playing is the impulse beat but you should come in strong and indicate
that first note as the impulse beat. You hang on long so there's this kind of overlap and constancy of sound. I think that works better.”

Christie says, “It's not particularly hard on the B-flat clarinet. The A clarinet version lies better when you go to the long F-sharp; it's fantastic.” Christie performs this on B-flat clarinet and in the interview said he is open to playing it on A clarinet in future productions.

Even though Wrzesien usually plays passages on the clarinet that employs the music in the easiest key, he says that he prefers to play this section on B-flat clarinet rather than A clarinet. He said the second clarinetist in the Boston Ballet orchestra plays D clarinet. Wrzesien says,

“I've always wondered why Prokofiev wrote this section for two completely different instruments. Did he want beat one to have a different tone quality than beat two? Should the clarinetists try to blend even though one is playing a soprano clarinet and the other is playing a piccolo clarinet? Should both clarinetists be playing the passage on the same pitched instruments?”

These questions are all worthy of further research. It has allowed for a variety of combinations of clarinets and transpositions to be employed by various clarinet sections in North American ballet orchestras.

**Figure 60, Romeo and Juliet Act II No. 25 Dance With Mandolins, Vivace, Fig. 196 – Fig. 197, Clarinet in A**

Jon Manasse plays Dance of the Mandolins on A clarinet as notated above.
In the entire ballet this dance number is one of two dance numbers that the principal clarinetists would play their A clarinet if they chose to do so, except for a long low E in Act III No. 50. Hartman says that playing this number on D clarinet for the principal and second clarinet is ideal because it modifies the key to G major instead of B major for the B-flat clarinet and F-sharp major for the E-flat clarinet. Hartman says,

“Do you want to know what we do? The associate principal clarinetist and I both have D clarinets so when we did a new production of this we played it on our D clarinets...The only reason it's not for one player is because you run out of breath...so we asked the music director if we could both play this on the small clarinet. Since at the time this was a new production and we were reading through the part to make sure there weren't any
mistakes, there was a copyist on staff. So, we said that we would like both parts to be written out for D clarinet. When you are playing this on D clarinet the final note is a high G, not F-sharp. This makes sense and puts it in a good key. There are not many people that can match the tone of an E-flat clarinet to an A clarinet.”

Again, Wrzesien's question about whether Prokofiev wanted the two clarinets to sound blended or not is worth researching. Hartman says that the principal and second clarinetists should both play on D clarinets and that this is the sound that Prokofiev intended. He says, “Our choice to play this passage on D clarinets was purely for artistic reasons. D clarinets are the answer.” Christie agrees, “I think the idea of playing this on two D clarinets is an awesome idea. It's just sort of impractical. Who owns D clarinets? Very few people.” This is a well-known fact among clarinetists.

Figure 62, Romeo and Juliet Act II No. 25 Dance With Mandolins, Vivace, Fig. 196 – Fig. 197, Clarinet in E-flat

Above is the E-flat part as Prokofiev intended for the second clarinetist to play.

Figure 63, Romeo and Juliet Act II No. 26 The Nurse, Adagio scherzoso, 6 ms. after Fig. 201, Clarinet in B-flat

Adagio scherzoso

\[\text{\textit{p}}\]
The solo in Figure 63 is another playful clarinet solo that retains jocularity as long as the clarinetist pays utmost attention to the details in the part. Hartman warns that the tempo might vary on this excerpt. Wrzesien suggests using the right hand third hole fingering for the D-sharp and the left hand middle finger plus the right hand sliver key for the final F-sharp (Figure 64). Manasse also uses the same fingering for the high F-sharp. He says to end this solo lightly.

**Figure 64, Clarinet Fingering Chart, High D-sharp**

![Figure 64, Clarinet Fingering Chart, High D-sharp](image)

**Figure 65, Clarinet Fingering Chart, Two fingerings for high F-sharp**

![Figure 65, Clarinet Fingering Chart, Two fingerings for high F-sharp](image)
At this point in the ballet, many of the themes in Figure 66, No. 39 are reiterations of what has already been played before. Wrzesien says, “...Figure 289 is probably the most passionate moment in the entire ballet.” Playing passionate music requires the clarinetist to make a great deal of shaping in the phrase and to bring out every detail that Prokofiev has written into the part. Some of those details for Manasse are making sure to accent the low D-sharp after Figure 289. He also suggests stretching the high notes in the third measure of Figure 290. Hartman says, “Usually I play this pretty intensely and a healthy mezzo forte two measures after Figure 289.” Renk demonstrated this solo in the interview and says, “It's all about air for me. That's all that I really think when I'm playing: am I using everything efficiently and correctly? And mostly everything falls into place, usually!” Wrzesien says, “I absolutely do not drop down to a mezzo forte as printed. I intensify toward the quarter note high D and I keep my volume up through the next two measures.” Wrzesien plays louder than the mezzo piano indication at Figure 290.
This is another short theme that has been repeated throughout the ballet and throughout the instrumentation in the orchestra. Manasse says, “If you have a particularly good second clarinetist who blends and is in tune, then the unison figure will be fine at the pick-up into three measures before Figure 313.” Christie says, “This is tricky. What I do, and it drives some of my colleagues crazy, is I throw the air outside my face so I am making sure the air is moving. It's a little Louis Armstrong trick, I think; how he used to play with openings on either side of his embouchure.” Christie demonstrates this passage.

“Squeaking almost never happens when I do that. Anyway, the idea is that it propels the sound without making it too loud and without me feeling too gagged up. I want that F to just work. If I seal [my embouchure] too much, I'm not getting that effect. So I purposely leak there. I'm certain that in terms of what the audience hears, it's discernible. I use that to spin the sound with as much propulsion as I can here.”

Wrzesien suggests what he says is a foolproof fingering for the written high F:

**Figure 68, Clarinet Fingering Chart, High F**
This is very similar to the motive in No. 44 only it is in a different key. For the written high D-sharp Christie does not use the thumb in order to make the interval flow from the [lower] D-sharp. He uses the standard fingering for C-sharp:

Wrzesien suggests a similar fingering for the written D-sharp but with the addition of the thumb:
Christie says, “I love this one! Suddenly we are verging on the Middle East with the tambourine off beats. It's such a quirky phrase. You're finishing the phrase of the violas and then you start your own.” Hartman says, “Our version does not slur the 8th-notes four measures before Figure 340. I think this way is correct.” Wrzesien would agree with Hartman because he also thinks the first complete measures should not have a slur over the eighth notes and should be written out as it is three measures before Figure 341. On the other hand, Christie says it is fun to play these similar phrases differently. He demonstrates and says to not play it in a heavy manner. He plays the two similar phrases, showing the difference in slur markings over the written high C-sharps and says, “...but in the second phrase there are no slurs as well as an accent on the C-sharp on the downbeat. Just observe it...The first phrase almost looks like someone altered it. So there's a question mark about the articulation but one I would not raise unless it were brought up from on high [from the conductor].” Christie says he plays this phrase observing the different slur markings because his intention is to make it an interesting phrase. Manasse says to play the accents expressively.

The fingering Manasse recommends for the written high F-sharp before Figure 342 is a standard A fingering with the addition of the two top right side keys.
Manasse recommends the A-sharp on the downbeat of Figure 342 to be played with the thumb, register key, left index finger, and the right middle finger (Figure 74). This fingering for A-sharp makes it easier to get to from the written F-sharp as well as to approach the proceeding written F-sharp than using the one-and-one fingering or the standard A fingering with the right lower side key. Unlike Manasse, Christie uses the long F-sharp fingering. However, like Manasse, he uses the one-and-two fingering for the A-sharp.

Wrzesien says that there are a few choices for fingerings at the end of this excerpt. He suggests two fingerings for the written high F-sharp and adds that it is a matter of knowing the specific voicing tendencies of your clarinet. Wrzesien prefers to use the side A-sharp to the one-and-two fingering.

Christie says the final written F-sharps at Figure 342 at the end of the solo need to be heard and therefore played out more than the decrescendo suggests. In terms of the decrescendo at Figure
342, Christie says Prokofiev has written the wrong marking for a clarinetist because those final notes would not be heard enough if the decrescendo were taken too literally. Christie grants that musically it is correct to have a diminuendo there for the general orchestral dynamic. Christie demonstrated the whole phrase in the interview.

**Figure 76, Romeo and Juliet Act IV: Epilogue No. 52 Death of Juliet, Adagio, 4 ms. before Fig. 363 – 7 ms after Fig. 363, Principal and 2nd Clarinet in B-flat**

This final passage before Figure 363 is in unison with the second clarinet. Wrzesien says to make this solo as ethereal as possible and Hartman acknowledges the slowness of the tempo. Wrzesien suggests beginning the solo a little bit louder than the piano indication to have enough room to make the diminuendo before Figure 363. Wrzesien says, “Take special care for flawless crossings on the B-C-sharp-B triplet.”

Christie so poetically says, “This is the final utterance.” In the National Ballet orchestra's second clarinet part, there was an indication written in pencil to tacet so that only the principal clarinet would play these first four measures but Christie says both clarinetists should definitely play in unison here. He says, “It's a trust game with your second clarinet player. They have to trust you and you have to play consistently. The untrusting second clarinet player tends to think 'I better not be late. It can't be longer than that.' What really belongs here is a kind of a lingering stretch. It has to not be in any hurry and yet it is marked a tempo.” Christie plays the first two measures of the clarinet soli. “Have the feeling of a very placed quarter note. You don't want anyone to accuse you of being too self-indulgent. But I don't think there is anyone on the planet who doesn't really want this to linger. It's the light going out.”
Discussion of the solo and tutti passages from *Romeo and Juliet* contain themes regarding suggested fingerings in the altissimo range, making a smooth connection of large intervallic leaps, pitch, decisions about playing a passage on B-flat, A, or in one case E-flat, or D clarinet, and navigating Prokofiev’s specific markings in the score that affect dynamics and tempo. Generally speaking, the clarinet solos in the music of Prokofiev’s ballets require a much larger spectrum of intervallic range, dynamic, and tempo from the clarinetist.
Chapter 6 Cinderella

Background of Cinderella

Stephen Press most aptly and correctly said, “The theatrical work that best demonstrates Prokofiev's humorous and grotesque vein is...Cinderella.” After the premiere of Romeo in 1940, the Kirov Ballet Company approached Prokofiev to compose the music to the ballet Cinderella. When Prokofiev received the text of the story from the dramatist, Nikolay Volkhov, Prokofiev understood this libretto required a traditional compositional style. He remarked:

“Balletomanes grumble that my Romeo and Juliet lacks dances. This is because they are used only to considering gallops, polkas, waltzes, mazurkas, and variations as dances. I am not against traditional ballet forms. Don't you think that I know how to compose them? I can. I just don't want to. It's easy to compose in an old fashioned way. But one has to move forward. In Chaikovsky's ballets they don't always dance; sometimes they just walk about the stage. Why don't you complain about that? In my ballets, incidentally, everything has to be danced. It has to be and can be. It's a pity that there isn't a scenario that would allow me to illustrate how to compose waltzes, polkas, variations, and so on in a contemporary way. Your scenario doesn't allow this: it only requires imitating Chaikovsky!”

As much as Prokofiev did not like that he was being swayed to imitate Tchaikovsky's ballet music, Morrison remarks, “Prokofiev readily composed in the number format, but sought to retain the unusual – for the time and place – rhythms and chromatic detours that defined his syntax. Both with and against his wishes, Cinderella became – in thick Soviet guise – the fourth Chaikovsky ballet.”

As in the composition of Romeo and Juliet, there were many foibles between composer and dramatist during the composition of Cinderella. Volkhov created a traditional story, detailing the stage and costumes and Prokofiev wanted the choreography to drive the action forward, be more concise and have less pantomime. Cinderella was finally premiered at the Bolshoi theatre in 1945.

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70 Morrison, People’s, 259.

71 Morrison, People’s, 259.

72 Morriosn, People’s, 261.
Both clarinet parts and bass clarinet parts in *Cinderella* demand a high level of technique and attention to detail. The technique required of the musicians and dancers in this truly magical and spellbinding ballet does not exclude any member of the orchestra. William Wrzesien acknowledges that, for him, *Cinderella* is even more challenging to play than *Romeo and Juliet*. Steve Hartman describes the music of *Cinderella* as being very different from *Romeo and Juliet*. Like Wrzesien, Max Christie points out that the technical challenges of this ballet are not just contained in the solos but throughout many of the tutti passages. In reference to the technically demanding tutti sections throughout *Cinderella*, Christie advocates that one must not sit back and let the people who have worked hard learning this to do all the work. Everyone must pull their own weight.

Christie says this ballet is so fairy tale-like and gorgeous and, “There's a great back and forth between humour and pathos.” Unlike the Walt Disney version, the original *Cinderella* contains dark subject matter. In most ballet productions of *Cinderella*, the role of the sisters is usually very humorous and Christie says choreographer James Kudelka's production of *Cinderella* has exceptionally humorous roles for the sisters to play.

**Analysis of Clarinet Excerpts in *Cinderella***

The passages from *Cinderella* discussed by the interviewees are the most technically demanding out of all five ballets discussed in this research. There are many performance choices discussed in relation to altissimo fingerings and transposition to A or B-flat clarinet. In a sense, the demands on the clarinetist require the most acrobatic-like playing compared to the other ballets discussed in this research. The following solo depicts the significant technical skills a ballet orchestra principal clarinetist must demonstrate to perform this repertoire to a high standard of excellence.
All interviewed clarinetists agree that the solo in this number is one of the most difficult clarinet solos in Cinderella, if not in the entire canon of ballet repertoire. Sheryl Renk laughs from the experience of playing this and remarks that it certainly is a brisk solo. She says, depending on the conductor, it might be quite brisk. Hartman emphasizes how important it is to be well prepared for the arpeggio in this number. 2013 was the first season the New York City Ballet performed Cinderella and Hartman says that it takes quite a while to get the pattern of the arpeggiated figure into the muscle memory of the fingers. During preparations for performance, Hartman says to “absolutely” memorize this solo and practice it in many different tempi. He says, “It’s a wonderful clarinet part. The fact that it changes keys within the passage three measures before Figure 9 doesn't help make it easier. The written F-sharps and E-sharps alternate in the order that you see them on the page. This is not your typical arpeggio especially since it doesn't go to the top note, either.”

Jon Manasse plays this solo on the original transposition for B-flat clarinet. He describes this passage as “fun” and he makes sure that he plays with a very stable pulse. He says, “Hopefully you will have it crystallized where you are anchoring within the passage. Almost think of holding the first note.” When he discusses anchoring, he does not mean for the notes to be accented in a pedantic manner. “The anchor is mostly happening in your mind,” Manasse explains.
Manasse uses a one-and-two fingering for the A-sharp on the second 16th-note of the second and third beats in the first measure of the *poco più mosso*. This fingering keeps the 16th-note passage steady.

**Figure 78, Clarinet Fingering Chart, A-sharp**

Manasse says he has had a high success rate using cross fingerings in certain passages and he also noted that while this particular fingering currently works well for him, he has changed certain fingerings over the years. He says that the bottom line is to make this passage easy. “It's an enormous discipline what we do when practicing. In the practice room, I am not afraid to make mistakes and to know what doesn't work. This passage is less than one second and it requires hours of practice.” He says that he is certainly open to another way of playing it. He anchors the note on the first and third beat of the first two measures of the passage and on each quarter note in the third measure. He recommends that the high F-sharp in the third measure be played expressively.

Christie says that the Introduction of the ballet is an opportunity to play legato and make sure the instrument is warmed up so that you are, “right on the instrument so that Figure 8 doesn't jump out at you.” Christie plays the solo at Figure 6 on B-flat clarinet and quickly switches clarinets at Figure 7.
Christie recognizes the difficulty of playing this part on B-flat clarinet and plays this section of the solo on A clarinet. This decision might be optimal for most people since the patterns on the A clarinet are based on a combination of G major and B minor. Christie plays the three introductory motifs after Figure 8 with an over blown throat G to produce the high D. Because it is so fast, Christie knows that the timbre is not a priority. Christie demonstrates the 16th-note arpeggios three measures before Figure 9 and says that playing this part on A clarinet is much more comforting than playing it a semitone lower on B-flat clarinet. Christie plays the arpeggios again on B-flat clarinet to show the elevated level of difficulty to execute this passage. “It's all about avoiding the side C-sharp fingering. There's also the question of switching from the fork fingering for the A-sharp to the high C-sharp side key fingering.” Christie says the James Kudelka production of Cinderella does not involve a lot of action on stage at the time of this particular solo. He says, “You're basically gonna be unleashed, hopefully by the conductor who does not insist on conducting you through it. That's the last thing you're going to need and you certainly don't want to look up.” Christie plays the 16th-note passage at tempo. “The phrasing of it is to emphasize those lovely transferred strong beats.” Christie sings the rhythm and contour of two measures before Figure 9. “You don't need to make too much of that but it is important to articulate groupings of four after that big swooping arpeggiation. For me,” Christie says, “it's all about fluidity in the fingering.” To allow the high notes to speak with as much ease as possible, Christie uses simple and standard fingerings for the high G to the F-sharp. He says, “At this point you're not being judged on pitch so much. You don't want to be grossly flat but you want to be able to just pick it out.” Another reason that Christie prefers playing this on the A clarinet is because it gives the phrase a weightier sound.
Like Christie, Wrzesien plays the first solo before Figure 7 on B-flat clarinet and switches to A for the solo after Figure 8. Wrzesien says that he warms up in the orchestra pit on his A clarinet so that it is warmed up before this big solo. Wrzesien wrote out the transposition for himself and also re-barred the rhythm so that the two measures before Figure 9 become two measures of 3/4 and one measure of 2/4. He says it is very visually helpful. Like Christie, Wrzesien also over blows the high D. For the high F-sharp, Wrzesien uses the throat B-flat fingering plus the top right side keys.

**Figure 80, Clarinet Fingering Chart, High F-sharp**

![Fingering Chart](image)

Wrzesien says, “This enables me to avoid entering the third register. Obviously the tone quality of these two notes with these fingerings is dreadful, but the speed required in this passage is such a blur that the faultiness is hardly noticeable.”

**Figure 81, Cinderella Act I No. 2 The Veil Dance, L’istesso tempo, 3 ms. after Fig. 10 – 7 ms. after Fig. 10, Clarinet in B-flat**

![Musical Excerpt](image)

The above excerpt is the original version in B-flat.
Christie says that this tutti passage is more challenging than the previous solo and because there is no time to switch back to the B-flat clarinet he plays it on the A clarinet and reads the part up one semi-tone. He says, “The fingering is not so bad: it's just about going to a high G-sharp instead of a high G.” Whatever clarinet you decide to play this passage on, Wrzesien says it is crucial to be in tune with the flute on the downbeat of the fourth measure of Figure 10.

This theme at Figure 15 reoccurs throughout the ballet in different keys and tempi. Christie says, “There's a great deal of fun in this. It's as if after composing Romeo he [Prokofiev] allowed himself to compose a ballet that would be fun! It has a lot of humour in the writing.” Christie demonstrated the first four measures of Figure 15. “So many of these flourishes in there are just brilliant and everybody's playing them. Not unlike Mercutio or the March [in Romeo and Juliet].” Christie says the National Ballet of Canada performs James Kudelka's production and at
this point in the music there is a cut in the score. Christie says, “It's a shame that some of those things are cut...Kudelka cares a lot about music. So when he cuts stuff, there's probably a good reason. I'm sure there's a certain part of him that says, 'I wish I could use this but it doesn't fit my story telling.'”

For an excerpt like this, Manasse says to always be aware of what other instruments are playing. He says to ask yourself, “Am I leading, following, reacting, or something else? Know what hat to wear.” Wrzesien advises to throw the four 32nd-notes into the accented written high C.

**Figure 84, Cinderella Act I No. 7 The Dancing Lesson, Allegretto, 4 ms. after Fig. 58 – 2 ms. before Fig. 59, Clarinet in B-flat**

Throughout this dance number there is a lot of slapstick humour. Cinderella's stepsisters are receiving a dance lesson and are not very accomplished in the lesson. There is an added element of humour when watching the highly skilled professional ballerinas acting the part of klutzy amateurs. Out of the entire ballet, these sections receive the most audible reaction from the audience. Manasse says that even though many of these solos have a very technical aspect to them, “there must always be shape to them.” He adds, “I do pay attention to what is happening on stage and sometimes I will ask the conductor what the dancers are doing on stage.” Wrzesien says to note that on almost every beat, A-sharps appear in these arpeggios.

Christie says, “The first thing you really have to do is smoothly play the easiest thing in the book: diminished sevenths on C-sharp. A: it's not so tough! and B: you sound great because the bassoon is struggling. I really enjoy living in the upper register in this piece. There's a lot of it.” Christie says the octave displacements in the melodies throughout this ballet are not as rampant or as difficult as *Romeo and Juliet.*
Christie says, “The first appearance of the waltz theme comes up in this number which is so beautifully introduced. It develops out of that comic theme that is in the previous number.” In this comic theme at Figure 69 Wrzesien plays louder than the printed piano in the score in order to have space to taper off at the end of the phrase. Wrzesien uses the side key throat B-flat fingering three measures after Figure 69 to show the printed accent on the written A-sharp.

Christie discusses the atmosphere and character in this number, “Ah yes! He [Prokofiev] does this a lot. There's a kind of dream-like character to a lot of this. There's a lot of internal Cinderella story telling, like what's in her heart.” Christie says the theme at Figure 69, which was played previously by the violin section, is very delicate but in the same character as when this melody was stated before. Christie notes the accent in the third measure on the second quarter note. The clarinet plays a cadential-like ending in this phrase. Christie demonstrates two measures before Figure 70 and says the downbeat of Figure 70 has, “this dream-like waltz character coming in.” Christie discusses what happens in the following measures of rest. He says to be aware of the bass clarinet in the measure with a poco ritardando before Figure 71.

At Figure 71 a new waltz theme is played by the clarinet and Christie asks, “Is it a 3/4 or is it a 3/2? He [Prokofiev] does this a lot...It's just such a beautiful thing. And again, it's easier than Romeo in a sense that it's not interrupting a line with a lot of jumps so much as it is covering a great deal of range.” Christie plays the main notes starting on the third beat of Figure 71: written
B-natural, C-natural, C-sharp, C-natural, and B-natural, confining them all to the upper octave. He sustains the notes for four counts each with the exception of the final C-natural. “That's all that's going on in terms of the thematic motion of notes. But this occurs through the octave. It's just a really lovely part.” The magic of the part is noted by Wrzesien who says, “I think...71 is probably the most enchanting moment in the entire ballet. I shape a four bar phrase here with a big tenuto mark on the downbeat C three bars after...71.” Manasse shapes this in a similar way because he recognizes the larger hemiola at Figure 71.

**Figure 86, Cinderella Act I No. 13 The Summer Fairy, Andantino sognando, Clarinet in B-flat**

This solo begins with a dream-like decorative passage followed by long sustained tones in the chalumeau register. Manasse says to think of these flourishes in the locrian mode. He takes a little bit of time at Figure 90 by slightly holding out the written high F-sharp. Manasse says, “It has to sound non-technical. It looks panicky on paper. Anchor a bit on the G-sharp in the second measure of Figure 90. This solo ends on a low G-sharp, making this solo firmly rooted in the locrian mode.” Manasse anchors on the second and third beats of the second measure after Figure 90 whereas Christie anchors on the third and fourth beats of the same measure. Manasse says, “Sub-divide 8th-notes and listen to the bassoon before-hand to get a very clear pulse.” Manasse demonstrates by practicing quietly and methodically on the clarinet, just barely creating a real sound on the clarinet, almost as if whispering. Then he plays it through with a beautiful
and refined tone. He anchors on many of the G-sharps in this passage. Both Manasse and Christie suggest bringing out the groupings of the quintuplets and sextuplets.

Christie says, “This is really lovely. You want it to be more generous in terms of time.” Christie demonstrates Figure 90 and says, “You're not accompanied at all here. It's all about just extending a very long harp-like cadenza through this five of five feeling.” Unlike Manasse, Christie approaches the tonality from the standpoint of G being tonicized. Christie says, “I would always recommend and do this: playing note by note through the line of it with a virtual slow motion approach. I think about where I want to move and where I want the weight to be.” Christie plays this passage adding weight to certain notes. Like Manasse, he adds a bit of length to the top of the arpeggio on the written high F-sharp and a slightly lengthier lean on the downbeat of the measure after Figure 90 on the written G-sharp. Christie plays with a slight tenuto on the third and fourth beats, “…that's where I would make a little bit more of a lean. I think it's a really lovely middle-of-the-bar play out to the downbeat of the slow bar. It's very important to not finish on the fermata.” Christie plays the measure of the fermata and sustains through the written low G-sharp, leading the sound into the proceeding written low G. “The [concert] F-natural at the bottom is, of course, a leading tone. The conductor might want a lift between the low [written] G-sharp and G-natural. I think you want to play this solo more like a harp.”

The character at the end of Summer Fairy is a contrast to the first busy arpeggios. Christie says, “It is a big solo. A lot of Prokofiev solos emerge out of the texture and you're never sure, 'is it me yet?' and I think it has to be you from the very beginning.” The reason for this is because the clarinet takes over the concert F from the flute in the middle of the phrase.

The final note of this number is led by the clarinet and Christie discusses letting the final written D emerge,

“…whenever the resistance is correct from the A...The last gesture is really about just sustaining that A (the fifth of the chord) into the resistance that the D (the tonic) presents so that the D can just emerge. It's sort of sleight of hand, really. It's musical magician-ship because everybody wants a good connection but it's about making sure that everybody hears the A and that the D emerges from that colour. Then the audience or your colleagues will think, 'Oh! How did he or she do that?'”
In terms of pitch, Christie says the F-sharp (the third of the chord) should be played on the low side. Christie says, “Don't be too low on the A, and the D will be fine. It's really easy to play sharp on the second F-sharp and then drop [pitch] for the A.” Manasse adds that each 8th-note can have weight in the final measure. He says,

“Do observe the *molto ritardando*. Take time to imagine that last high D. I go through a series of trial and errors when I am practicing, without having a sense of judgement or a sense of doubt. I test to see what works well. Then, once I get it, I will practice that consistently. I will also try it in the pit with different reeds.”

It was extremely helpful to witness Manasse employ this method of practicing. It gives the clarinetist permission to experience what is the most successful and what is not successful. This creates a clearer idea of what will be effective in the pit and will lead to consistency.

**Figure 87, Cinderella Act I No. 13 The Summer Fairy, Andantino sognando, Clarinet in A**

Wrzesien transposes this solo on A clarinet. He says, “For me it's a lot more clumsy swirling up and down these runs on B-flat clarinet and noticeably smoother on A clarinet.” One of the difficulties of deciding to transpose this solo on A is having to ascend to a written high G instead of an F-sharp on, what Wrzesien says is, the crucial fourth beat of Figure 90. Wrzesien's solution is to use the left hand first finger for the high G and remain on the right hand sliver key from the previous E-flat (Figure 88).
Figure 88, Clarinet Fingering Chart, High G

Figure 89, Cinderella Act I No. 16 The Winter Fairy, Allegro moderato, Fig. 102 – Fig. 104, Clarinet in B-flat

Commenting on the initial pick up into the downbeat Wrzesien says, “Hopefully the conductor will be clear in his preparation for your solo entrance.” Christie discusses the 32nd-note pick up to the downbeat and says, “This is just so sweet. This reminds me of playing the first thing in Salome. Everybody’s going to have a different opinion of how fast to play those 32nd-notes. Is it right in time or do you stretch it out so you hear that lovely tone of the scale? In this case, you want the trust of your conductor so that they know to place the downbeat with you and that it is in agreement. I don't think there is a real necessity for,” Christie sings the 32nd-notes exactly in tempo with no rubato whatsoever. “It just sounds so tiresome.” Christie then plays it in the way he sang it. “But you could do that. I don't see the need for it. I think you want to be a little lazy on the way up.”

Manasse says to play with direction at Figure 102. He says, “Prokofiev really, really makes sure you know the clarinet well. You have to have control over the instrument.” Christie says, “When you have something this potentially banal you have to really just not think about being musically
ingenious...” He says to think like a dancer in terms of having the discipline and strength to sustain, “...a posture and a poise and doing it with utter commitment to form.” Christie suggests highlighting the motion of written F, D, and B-flat on the third and fourth beats in the second complete measure and the downbeat of the third complete measure. Christie sings the phrase and shows the direction of the phrase culminating in dynamic and expression in the third beat in the second complete measure. “It's such a simple melody. Turn off your ego and just let it be for the dancers.”

**Figure 90, Cinderella Act II No. 30 Grand Waltz, Allegretto, Fig. 218 – Fig. 223, Clarinet in B-flat**

This solo needs to flow ahead despite the many obstacles of having to play throughout many registers. Christie says, “This is surely one of the most fun waltzes to play. In the theme you have to be quite prominent with that piano marking.” Manasse says, “The tenuto shows the lilt. There's more of a lilt in the shorter slurred groups than the longer ones.” In other words, the longer the slur is, the less of a lilt. Manasse stretches the three pick-up 8th-notes into Figure 222 but not the first time at Figure 218. Hartman says to make a considerable legato between the written Gs in the pick up to three measures before the end. Christie encourages the second clarinetist to play out in order to support the principal clarinetist's phrase and sound.
A nearly identical phrase reappears in Act III No. 45 *Cinderella Awakes*, however this time it gets interrupted after 12 measures unlike the symmetrical 16-measure phrase in the *Grand Waltz* in No. 30. Christie says this reiteration depicts fantasy and memory. He also discusses the ease of taking a breath in the reprise of this phrase because it should sound a bit wispier in the second time. He says, “This is like an indication of a memory or a dream so you have to play like it's going away.”

**Figure 91, Cinderella Act II No. 30 Grand Waltz, A tempo, 6 ms. before Fig. 227 – Fig. 228, Clarinet in B-flat**

A challenge of this Waltz is that there are two very exposed solos throughout the entire number. Hartman says there is a psychological difficulty when there are flats notated in a key with sharps. He says to make sure to not let the written B-flats in the third and fourth measures of Figure 227 throw you off, particularly in the fourth measure where there is no courtesy sharp notated in front of the throat G-sharp. Hartman says to make sure to play the accelerando in the third measure of Figure 227.

Christie says about this solo in general, “There's a dream-like quality to this. I think there should be a lot of freedom at 227 and 228. I could be wrong because, of course, it's choreographed.” He says,

“Balance is always the issue here. It's still a very busy orchestration until right before Figure 227. I'm very much concerned with pitch in this one, of course, and also the connection from the high F-sharp to the descending line. Prokofiev has told you what you need to know: it's a hemiola proceeding out of a held note. So much of this is like that earlier example of a 3/2 waltz superimposed over a 3/4 waltz [Act I No. 9 Cinderella Dreams of the Ball].”
Christie says that he really enjoys playing the nearly chromatic descending passage before Figure 227 in the context of the orchestra but would not in an audition setting. Christie's reason for this because the reliance on the texture of the orchestra for support adds a bit of a cushion especially on such a high note as a written high F-sharp.

Christie further explains the phrasing at Figure 227: “I listen very much to that rising line in the cellos just like I would like them to listen to my line. It is a kind of a duo more than a solo and I think there is this lovely interplay between the two lines. It's [the first F-sharp of the solo] sustained and then moves forward with a little bit of momentum.” Christie demonstrates and gradually increases the volume through the first F-sharp and continues to play until the descending line, two measures after Figure 227. “At that point there is no hurry until the third measure of 227. It's really important not to feel scared and hurried at the high F-sharp. I hate any break in there [between the B and high F-sharp at figure 227]. I think it's totally unnecessary.” On the descent Christie emphasizes four groupings of 8th-notes followed by a grouping of six, following through to the bottom of the register. At this point, Christie says to regain a 3/4 feel at the bottom of this phrase, after completing the 8th-notes. He says a fluid tempo is a really useful approach to this solo. Christie takes a breath three measures and one quarter note before Figure 228, in between the written F-sharps. He says to play with a lot of sound because the second clarinetist is joining in on the written F-sharp after listening to the solo. Christie says, “Ask them to be late rather than try to nail the downbeat. I think it's really important for them to play into the sound that you're giving them and there's plenty of room for that.” Upon examining the National Ballet's second clarinet part, someone had even penciled in a reminder to sneak in on the sustained F-sharp at Figure 228. Christie adds,

“...You've just done this big accelerando and there's nothing marked that says it has to stay in time, although this depends on the conductor. This is where you sell it to your colleagues and they then would be your allies where anyone can hear that it's a sensible thing to do. So give yourself some time for a breath because you've just sold it in measures five, six, and seven after Figure 227.”

Wrezen suggests two fingerings for the written high F-sharp at Figure 227:
Wrzesien says to hope for a clear downbeat in order to begin the solo in the right tempo and Manasse says to shape this solo and that it “...has to be playful.” Christie also says that there is, “...a degree of silliness to this line. It reminds me of Juliet a little bit: there's the innocent quality and the flighty quality of the 3/4. There is, no doubt, room for some virtuosic dancing in all of this. What you are requested to do is to be really poised.” Christie discusses the options of how to phrase this simple melody that simultaneously has a duple and triple feel. He says, “It's almost asking for:” Christie plays with accents on all second beats. “...but that doesn't seem very graceful to me at all.” So, instead Christie suggests playing the first three quarter notes as pick ups. He says, “It's curious because it is a 2/4. I think what that does is make sure it is a little bit staid and held. Not each downbeat is as important as the other. I think there is a weaker downbeat and a stronger downbeat as if it was in 4/4. The figure could have been written as 2-3-4-1 instead of in 2/4 with beat three...a stronger impulse than either two or four.”

In order to execute the final descending written C-sharp to the low A, Wrzesien suggests dropping the tongue to avoid getting the upper partial. Manasse reminds to observe the accent on the low A at Figure 239.
All interviewed clarinetists agree that this clarinet solo is a gorgeous and lovely melody. Manasse says, “Of course this is the most beautiful thing because it's the love duet.” At the end of the second measure, Manasse says to bring out the interval of written A to D. This is a clear resolution from scale degree five to scale degree one. Manasse says, “the A can be held and played as a slight tenuto.” Christie says, “The duo with the second clarinet is very gratifying to play.” Because it is in a slow 9/8 meter Christie suggests listening to the larger juxtaposed triple meter. Christie sings the second measure of Figure 260 and phrases towards the written D on the second beat. This is also the resolution that Manasse says to bring out. Christie says to not play the written G with any pulse or accent on the second half of the first beat of the second measure. Manasse also suggests showing the resolution between the A and the D in the third and fourth measures. However, in those measures the resolution is not as direct and in the second time the resolution occurs there are slight variations in the descent from the A to the D.

Christie says, “You just have to imagine the weight of these beats rather than try to play with accents because it's so slow.” Christie demonstrated the fourth measure and only played the written F-sharp, E, and D on the first, second, and third beats. “Nothing could be simpler. With the decoration on top of it, it's still the same shape. The pick up into the fourth measure is so marvelous. You are really not required to do anything unusual here.” There are certain conductors that might prefer a slight stretching of the two 16th pick up notes into the fourth
measure. Never the less,” Christie says, “Just finish to the D without making too big a deal of it. It's really about just enjoying the simplicity of it.”

Wrzesien says to play this solo in a delicate and tranquil manner both times this clarinet duet occurs. He also says to avoid tripletizing the dotted 16th-note to 32nd-note figure in the fourth measure in this pas de deux as well as the companion passage in Act III No. 48. In the interview Wrzesien sang this rhythm very squarely and precisely. It is important to know the rhythm of the cello section at the end of this passage. Most likely, time will be taken there and it will be necessary to wait for the end of the fourth measure. Finally, Manasse cautions to not be sharp on the final written D.

Figure 95, Cinderella Act III No. 48 The Prince Finds Cinderella, Adagio passionato, 2 ms. before Fig. 370, Clarinet in B-flat

This beautiful soli returns in Act III almost identically to when it occurs in the Pas de deux in No. 36. One of the main differences in the second iteration of this is the fact that the conductor will most likely want the last two 8th-notes in the third measure in the second clarinet part to be stretched more than in No. 36. The other visible difference in the score is the fact that the end of this solo does not resolve to a written D; it stays suspended as if it were hovering in the air.

Christie conveys the importance of matching the voice and sound of the cello section. This can be applied to both times this melody occurs. He says to avoid leading the colour, “...because it is very chromatic and you don't need a lot of people clamouring for attention.”

Like the previous Pas de deux in No. 36 Christie says, “You absolutely just want to be relaxed on this. I don't know exactly what the demands are on the stage but it just shouldn't have a feeling of hurry. And yet what happens often is at the rit. at the end of this...” Christie plays the final measure of the clarinet soli, taking a lot of time on the last written E. He says,
“...is not an exaggeration of what happens, at least in our orchestra. The cellos are busy with 32nd-notes and 16th-notes, which has to happen in those two 8th-notes. It takes over the importance of the finish out and gets in the way of the simplicity of the end of the clarinet soli, which doesn't resolve here. There should be that feeling of surprise in that cadence rather than the feeling that the cadence happens in the wrong harmony. It's a suspension of harmony.”

Manasse also notes that the soli ending on a C-sharp, does not resolve to a D as it did in Act II No. 36.

**Figure 96, Cinderella Act III No. 44 Third Gallop of the Prince, Allegro marcato, 4 ms. after Fig. 318 – 5 ms. before Fig. 319, Clarinet in B-flat**

The energetic Third Gallop commences as if one were roused out of a dream. There is a continuous trochaic rhythm pulsing at a fast pace throughout this number in various sections of the orchestra. This short clarinet solo is set up by resolute trochaic rhythm in the low brass section. The violin section takes over the melody after the clarinet solo. Christie says this “...is really terrific Prokofiev writing. This one is so cool. It's so great to play that interval [written G to high F] which is so surprising and a lovely invitation to go a little bit nuts.” Christie plays this passage and uses the right sliver key for the written high F.

Wrzesien presents another fingering option for the written high F (Figure 97). He says, “Your right hand has to move into its normal position quickly for the E-flat that follows, but it's worth the trouble for a truly forte high F.”

**Figure 97, Clarinet Fingering Chart, High F**
This solo must be played with a lot of energy. Christie says, “There's no secret to what you have to do. The arpeggios are measured and are not going to be heard unless you really nail them. It is crucial and it is easy to screw it up.” During a run of Cinderella with the National Ballet of Canada in June 2014, I was playing second clarinet next to Christie and he suggested to use the left index finger and right middle finger for the A-sharp and proceed with the left index finger down and the lowest right side key for the C-sharp in the ascending 16th-note passage (Figures 99 and 100).

After trying it a few times in the pit, Christie decided to play the A-sharp with the standard fingering for the duration of the 11 performances of Cinderella that season. No matter what
fingering is decided upon for the A-sharp and C-sharp, Christie always played the high F-sharp with the same fingering (Figure 101).

**Figure 101, Clarinet Fingering Chart, High F-sharp**

![image](image1.png)

Wrzesien uses the left index finger for the C-sharp and the following for high F-sharp:

**Figure 102, Clarinet Fingering Chart, High C-sharp**

![image](image2.png)

**Figure 103, Clarinet Fingering Chart, High F-sharp**

![image](image3.png)

**Figure 104, Cinderella Act III No. 45 Cinderella Awakes, Andante dolce, 8 ms. after Fig. 326, Clarinet in B-flat**

![image](image4.png)
Christie says, “Cinderella Awakes is beautiful because there is so much of that dreamy quality that I talked about earlier [in Act I No. 9]. However, now she is reliving it instead of imagining it! It's so bittersweet. That darkness of the opening comes back here and that darkness is where she lives. It's nice to be able to play the whole theme.” Manasse suggests to really sub divide this ascending scale in order to be comfortable with the placement of the 32nd-notes. Christie says, “In the B-flat minor scale it is crucial to make a good connection between the written D-flat and the E-flat.” Christie discusses possible fingering options in this passage. Using the side key for the high D-flat could make the connection in the large descent easier. However, the right hand has the potential to slow in releasing the side keys. In the end, Christie ends up using the regular high D-flat/C-sharp fingering. He says psychologically, “...it is easier to descend when you don't cross the register. It's really just easier to descend when your fingers are in place. I don't really want to take time with it. I like the way the E-flat emerges out of the scale if you don't take time. Don't rush it though. Overall I like the scale to be a little luxurious. It's just a little dramatic moment on stage.” Wrzesien prefers to transpose this up one semi-tone on A clarinet and once the part is transposed he says, “The [written] C-sharp gives me a nice leading tone into the final high D” (Figure 105).

**Figure 105, Cinderella Act III No. 45 Cinderella Awakes, Andante dolce, 8 ms. after Fig. 326, Clarinet in A**
The challenge this solo presents is being able to sustain the written G-sharp soloistically and executing the succeeding arpeggio cleanly and in tune. Christie says, “It's a solo right from the beginning of the note. It's not a creep in...Other stuff is going on but you don't have to come in like you don't belong.” Wrzesien endorses a different idea by beginning the G-sharp softly as indicated while increasing the intensity as the 8th-notes approach. He says this arpeggio should be played significantly louder. Playing this at a louder dynamic encourages smooth intervals between the three registers. A different solution for good intonation that Christie proposes for the arpeggio is almost Schenkerian in nature. He outlines the arpeggio over the course of three measures by playing the written upper octave G-sharp, A, C-sharp, skips the high E, plays the A, skips the C-sharp, and proceeds to the next measure, only plays the written E and C-sharp, and finally plays the dotted half note written A. He thinks about giving those notes a little more emphasis than the others. Christie says, “When this is played at tempo like this, it isn't noticeable. So, I'm really letting the second note be. I'm not trying to chase the line around.”
Christie discusses the short two-measure solo at the beginning and says, “...[Prokofiev] really does his best to destroy any sense of centre of your pitch. This is so pretty.” Christie demonstrates this solo and says to not be flat on the written low D. He says, “It's really important to play the pick up with a lot of espressivo.”

The slightly faster tempo of the solo at the Assai più mosso at Figure 375 occurs directly on the downbeat of the measure. Christie says, “...there’s a character change and a sudden change in movement up there [on stage] and you really have to get out of the beat-by-beat feel and straight into really feeling the bar; almost feeling it in one. The fingering I use for the high D-sharp is open thumb and register key; the Brahms E-flat, my teacher used to call it.” Christie says the D-sharp is too flat if he keeps his thumb down. He says, “That fingering also speaks beautifully so roll the thumb open.” Christie uses the following fingering two measures after Figure 376:

**Figure 108, Clarinet Fingering Chart, High D-sharp**

Christie says the grace note and high D-sharp in the fourth measure of Figure 375 can intrude and then disappear. He says these notes can be elongated a little bit but may come off as sounding like “a smarmy clarinet thing.” He says to get out of the way at the end of that measure by playing the decrescendo and to pass the line to the violin section in following measure.

Like Christie, Wrzesien uses the same high D-sharp fingering four measures after Figure 375 but with the addition of the thumb.

**Figure 109, Clarinet Fingering Chart, High D-sharp**
Manasse uses his right third finger or a backless fingering for the high D-sharp two measures after Figure 376.

**Figure 110, Clarinet Fingering Chart, Two Fingerings for high D-sharp**

The rigorous technical demands of *Cinderella* are highlighted in this chapter by each interviewee. From the suggested altissimo fingerings to the dynamic contrast and shading in the clarinet duet soli passages, the aim of this chapter is to improve the success rate of the performance of this ballet and to gain knowledge in order to execute these passages with remarkable technique and distinguished musicality.
Chapter 7 Conclusion

The objective of this project was to gain knowledge on how to perform and practice orchestral ballet clarinet excerpts. This research conveys the importance of orchestral ballet repertoire for clarinetists and may potentially encourage other instrumentalists to conduct research on the performance practice techniques of ballet orchestral repertoire in relation to their respective instrument. This study is unique in that it examines how to play a great breadth of orchestral ballet repertoire from the perspective of five principal clarinetists in the top five ballet orchestras in North America. There is a great deal to learn from hearing performers discuss their craft in their own words and own voice. Each of the musicians interviewed for this study brings an individual viewpoint to their work, exhibiting different ways of approaching music making. In this diversity, however, there are many commonalities.

Significant Emergent Themes

An analysis of the interpretation of musical excerpts by the orchestral ballet principal clarinetists who participated in this study reveals some common themes. They addressed aspects of notation and performance: phrasing, dynamics, intonation, fingerings, and instrument choice (A or B-flat clarinet), and the complex tripartite performance relationship interconnecting orchestra conductor, orchestra performer, and dancers. Throughout some of the repertoire, the opinions of the clarinetists vary a great deal; for other solos and passages they have similar views and interpretations.

Phrasing was the most prominent musical feature discussed by the clarinetists, although there was variation in their opinions about phrasing. Some clarinetists had specific suggestions for the phrasing of each individual passage; others generally preferred a long or short type of phrase.

The insights on intonation indicate that this aspect of performance is influenced by the dynamic being played, the register of the clarinet, and the orchestration. All interviewees were highly aware of how the clarinet part fit in with the rest of the orchestral texture.

All interviewees commented on fingerings for notes in the altissimo register. This was particularly evident when talking about the technically difficult passages that reached into the altissimo registers in the two Prokofiev ballets. Passages from these ballets also prompted
insights about cross and alternate fingerings for difficult passages in the clarion register. The participants further commented on fingerings for throat notes to overcome the tone in the clarion register.

Even though a passage may have been written for the B-flat clarinet, many of the clarinetists suggested certain passages fit better for the fingers if transposed to the A clarinet or vice-versa. Making sure the passage lay smoothly with the fingers was the first reason to choose to play on the other clarinet not originally notated by the composer. A second reason to switch to the other clarinet was for timbre.

Unlike the symphonic orchestral or opera orchestral clarinetist, the clarinetists interviewed in this study are experts on the canon of ballet repertoire in their careers as principal clarinetists. Each musician brings a critical viewpoint and highly skilled expertise to their job. This study presents their examination and analysis of solo excerpts and passages from orchestral ballet.

**Future Research**

There is a great deal of further research to be conducted concerning ballet repertoire for clarinet. A further field of study is to interview clarinetists in the top five ballet orchestras regarding other ballets that contain major clarinet solos, such as Sergei Prokofiev's *Prodigal Son*, Léo Delibes’s *Coppelia*, and Adolphe Adam's *Giselle*. Adapting this study to an international level and interviewing principal clarinetists in ballet orchestras in Europe is also worthy of further study.

An issue that was not addressed in this research is the issue of preparing and practicing the discussed solos and passages for ballet orchestra auditions. Future research could incorporate the suggested phrasing, fingerings, dynamics, and instrument transpositions of this research to aid the clarinetist in preparing a ballet orchestra audition. This future study could potentially influence clarinet pedagogy to include clarinet solos and passages from ballet repertoire into the standard teaching methods of symphonic orchestra repertoire for audition preparation.

An additional possible topic for future research would be to explore in depth the elements that distinguish performance in a ballet orchestra from that of performance in symphonic orchestra and opera orchestra. Further investigation into the tripartite performance relationship between conductor, orchestra performer, and dancer could potentially yield some
new insights. In addition, further study of endurance requirements for orchestral ballet musicians compared to those of opera or symphonic orchestras may compliment this research.

An intriguing future study would be a discussion of the psychology of performing multiple performances of one ballet over a period of one or two months over the course of many years. Interviewees in my study briefly mentioned aspects of this concept in the interviews. Another topic which relates to the psychology of performing multiple shows which could be of future research interest would be to examine the performance job environment in ballet companies and issues which may arise such as the need for endurance training and injury prevention.

While the clarinetists who participated in this study often had a similar perception of an excerpt, they focused on different technical and musical elements to achieve the desired musical result. When each clarinetist demonstrated a musical passage, there were unique differences in the way the music sounded. The clarinetists suggested a variety of approaches to playing certain passages. This allows creativity of interpretation to be explored further. The way the musicians describe how they hear the music is not as effortless and specific as the way they play the clarinet. The results from the interviews suggest that the individuality of the musicians largely influenced their musical decisions. A future study including audio recordings of interviewees demonstrating solo passages could be of significant value.

Insights offered by the clarinetists who participated in this study indicate that the same notation can invite a variety of interpretations and techniques by which to achieve that interpretation in performance. Phrasing, dynamics, a desired intonation, various fingerings, and choice of instrument all figure prominently in the process of interpreting ballet repertoire for the clarinet. Great musicians and artists strive to communicate through their instrument or voice, whether through a single note, a phrase, or a whole movement. Delivering a polished, musical expression is ultimately what moves an audience.
Bibliography


Appendices
Appendix A: Informed Consent Form for the Research of Mara Plotkin

Informed Consent Form for the Research of Mara Plotkin

You are invited to participate in my study of the Performance Practice of Orchestral Ballet Clarinet Excerpts, and the oral traditions and authentic performance practices of this music. Performance practice plays an important role in the study of music, and an informed performance is a goal towards which musicians are constantly striving. My research into the performance practice of clarinet ballet excerpts will not only provide insight into aspects of interpretation most related to the composers wishes but will also document the performance practice tradition of ballet repertoire by professional clarinetists in ballet orchestras across North America. The Methodology of this research is reliant on the interview process with professional clarinetists in ballet orchestras. If you are willing to participate, I will travel to your city to conduct one interview session (approximately 2 hours).

Participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to refuse participation, to decline to answer any questions, and to withdraw from the study for a period of one month after completing the interview. (From that point on any withdrawal of information will not be possible, as it will compromise my research and writing.) Further information about your rights can be found at the Office of Research Ethics (ethics.review@utoronto.ca, 416-946-3273).
There are no foreseen direct risks involved with this project. Benefits for participation in this study is to help make the performance practice of ballet repertoire by professional clarinetists available to society. By the shared knowledge gained through your personal experiences, this information will be accessible to future generations of clarinetists.

Confidentiality will not be a part of this study, as the authority of the information and oral traditions lies in the affiliation to your name. During the research only myself and my committee will have access to the information. You will be supplied with a copy of the notes I take from our meeting prior to submission of the dissertation. After the research is complete I will retain the information gathered for further reference but it will not be used again without further consent from you during your lifetime. This information has the potential of archival value and as such will be kept indefinitely unless you direct otherwise.

If you agree to the above terms and information, please sign the form below.

_________________________________  ________________________
Signature of Interviewee           Date
Appendix B: Recruitment Email for Professional Clarinetists

Appendix B

E-mail Recruitment for Clarinetists

Dear ___________
I am a graduate student at the University of Toronto. My doctoral research concerns performance practice of orchestra ballet clarinet excerpts. I am specifically interested in the performance practice of the major orchestral ballet clarinet excerpts that are requested in ballet orchestra auditions and programmed in your ballet company’s season. As you hold a job in one of the top four ballet orchestras in North America, your explanation of this subject is significant. I am especially interested in the information behind the following works:________________________
I will be traveling to your city this fall, 2013 and I am hoping that you will consider meeting me for approximately a two-hour interview.

Thank you,

Mara Plotkin
Appendix C: Interview Questions

Interview Questions:

1. What is your current job title?

2. Please describe briefly your musical background, education, and teachers you have studied with.

3. Are there any main differences between performing excerpts in a ballet orchestra versus in a symphony orchestra?

4. Describe the style of the ballet orchestra that you play in.

5. Did the orchestra arrive at that style to serve dance or did you collectively arrive at that style because of other reasons? i.e. Dancers' needs, choreographic requirements, conductor's style.

6. What performance practice suggestions do you have in regards to the following ballet excerpts? (articulation, dynamics, style, etc.)
   1. Swan Lake
   2. Sleeping Beauty
   3. Nutcracker
   4. Prodigal Son
   5. Romeo and Juliet
   6. Cinderella

7. Do you have any additional thoughts that might not have been addressed?
Appendix D: Interview Transcriptions of Max Christie, Principal Clarinetist of National Ballet of Canada Orchestra

Max Christie, November 27th, 2013

Swan Lake

General comments on Swan Lake

“To me, the crucial thing in a lot of this ballet is the direction and contour of phrase; it's really huge in this particular ballet.”

Introduction – ms. 5-8

“The clarinet solo is all about descent, I do believe. There are many falling motifs throughout the ballet, which is old as the hills in music. The clarinet solo is an answer to the oboe line, which is a little bit higher and brighter and it all inevitably concludes downward in measure eight. This is the answer to the oboe solo. Even though the oboe solo descends quite a bit, there is so much a sense of rise and ascent in the oboe theme that I think the contour of the oboe theme is what moves me to play the clarinet solo in a way that emphasizes the descent. The descent of the line in the second measure is important and the interval of the half note written C to B-flat is really crucial in this solo. This is very classical and it's about making the long phrase. Even though it seems like a two-bar phrase, it is a single four bar phrase. That is why I like to take time with it.”

Act I No. 4 Pas de trois, Var. I, 9 ms. after Fig. 28

“I played this a long time ago because this number is omitted from the Kudelka production of Swan Lake that National Ballet performs. As I remember it, the final four 8th-notes were dictated so it was probably very much orientated to what was happening on stage. The 8th-notes are certainly not in tempo. Just a typical phrase at the end of a ballet number.”

Act I No. 4 Pas de trois, Var. II, 2 ms. after Fig. 39-3 before end of number.

“For me, this is all about the trill on the g-sharp at the end of the solo. It's such a nasty trill even if some of the other notes are better. I like to transpose this up on A clarinet. Playing this on A clarinet also means that you are not playing on a cold b-flat clarinet. I think another key thing is that since you are playing in octaves with the bassoon, it makes your life easier because you will not be flat to the bassoon. This trill takes up a huge part of my psyche but it's really not worth worrying about. The important thing is the motion through into the cello line in the last measure of the solo. I try to sound like a cello. Once you are in the last two bars of the solo, phrase forward with intent but resist feeling rushed through this. Keep the sound full because the cello section enters immediately after you. It's a very calm and static ending.

“Basically in the long phrase the idea is not to over phrase anything at all. This is very static music in a way and at the same time very beautiful music on its own. The real pith of this is the oboe solo and followed by the bassoon and oboe duet. You have to answer the oboe at figure 39 with a canonic thing. What I think about here is pitch. It's really great to not be playing on a cold instrument. I would prefer to be playing the notes that are written for b-flat clarinet for colour at two measures after figure 39 but not as much as I would prefer to play the last four measures of this solo on A clarinet. It's interesting that in playing an answering phrase one question arises for me: do you phrase the phrase that you have or do you support the oboe's phrase that you are answering? and I think in this canonic passage you have to support the oboe. So when you enter in the second measure of figure 39, support the second measure of the oboe phrase and similarly support the oboe's fourth measure which is the third measure of your phrase (four measures after figure 39). I would put a crescendo in the rest at figure 39 so that the clarinet enters at the height of the hairpin for the oboe at the beginning of the second measure. So do begin the clarinet melody with a full sound, don't grow into the sound there. Then the oboe will play with another crescendo in the third measure of figure 39.
which I think is beautifully written because of the octave Ds written for the clarinet in that measure. Make sure the diminuendo is only towards the end of the fourth measure of figure 39. Delaying the diminuendo is phrasing 101. Make sure that you don't hurry the two sixteenths at the end of the fourth measure and that you pass it to the oboe's next entrance. This is a beautiful movement.

“I used to play this on b-flat clarinet and I use my right hand to trill the A key. But that of course makes it a little difficult in making sure your fingers are just right. The flute just ends this beautiful trill from f-sharp to g and we have to try and play our trill in the throat register. I find that very unfortunate but Tchaikovsky didn't care!”

Act I No. 4 Pas de trois, Var. III, Fig. 32

“This is 'real' dance music because it is very light.”

Act I No. 5 Var. I, 11 ms. after Fig. 50 to Fig. 51. Should be entitled No. 4, Pas de trois, Var. IV, Fig. 7. 2nd ending for four ms.

“Ah yes, so much fun! Our conductor indicated to us that there is a comic element to this. I have to say that the Kudelka version is extremely dark, the first half. I hadn't realized just how dark. So, I question what exactly is going in the commedia-like first act. Is this some sort of a party scene that precedes the brutality? I don't look too deeply into this solo. It's cutesy as far as what you have to play in this number. I like to make the quarter notes pop in the fourth measure of the soli so that the articulation is apparent and follow that by a sustain in the fifth measure. Generally in this number the articulation is very slurry and swoopy. The fun of it comes with the accent on the second beat in the second measure. So, it's almost like a burlesque.”

No. 22, should be labeled as Act I No. 5 Pas de deux, Tempo di Valse

“There are people that have a strong opinion about where to place the second beat in a waltz. This comes from the Viennese tradition of anticipating the second beat. With this variation, we have to remember that it is a Russian waltz and not Viennese. This waltz is so dark and lovely. It's just so important to play the mezzo forte and make the presence of the clarinet colour be heard. It's important that the 8th-note is not a hiccup. We should imagine the sound of what a string player would produce on the downbeats in order to fill out the sound of the 8th-note. Think about a bow that is able to give length and substance to a note. We have to do that as wind players. That phrase should start strong and sung through, then followed by an accent on the next half note.”

Act I No. 5 Pas de deux, Var. II, Fig. 45, ms. 9 – 4 ms. before Fig. 46

“This number came into our version when we got Kudelka's production. The violin breaks out into this amazing solo. I find there are a few difficulties in here. The clarinet motives are sort of details. You are an accompanist. You need to have connection with the violinist. When we first started playing this the concertmaster finally approached me and told me to not play so loud in some of the motives. But in some of them you really have to. You really have to support and I really enjoy playing this piece when there is a lot of interaction and information coming my way from the violin soloist. The dicey thing is not to try to out-rubato or out-express the violinist. You're really just like the male dancer, the lifter, or a part of the scenery, no big deal. Directionally, the two motives do something different. The first motive that the clarinet has moves back and the second one moves forward for the harmonic change. It is such a small detail.”

Act I No. 5 Var. III, 2nd ending

“This motive is a little interruption in a very ponderous male 6/8 dance number. I used to think that this had to be very light but it's actually best to play it with a lot of weight. So I don't think of the pick-up sixteenth notes as light at all. The accent on the downbeat must be sung through. It's easy to sound cliché and say if something is feminine or masculine but we are talking about ballet here after all. So, I think the accent shouldn't be a stinger; it should be a sustain. Of course this motive passes through different instruments like a hocket. It's best not to influence anyone to sting the accent. So the clarinetist should really set the tone. It's kind of cool that you play this rhythmic motif first
and apply it to the new section in this dance. So it's an important thing that the clarinetist sets the table for everybody; making it really melodic and not too bouncy or light. It must be full of energy.”

Act I No. 7 Sujet, ms 1 - 11

“The best description of this solo (which is linking material to the next dance number) was given to me by Martin West, the conductor of the San Francisco Ballet. He said that this solo is as if a narrator were to say, ‘so that's how things had been and how things were.’ It's a very small narrative link and you should not over-think this one and make it incredibly sophisticated or too eloquent. That kind of idea freed me up when playing this melody. The melody is simple and serves a banal purpose so don't make too much of it. Tchaikovsky didn't write instructions for how short or long to play the notes in this melody. It gives the clarinetist and oboist an opportunity to decide the length. As far as little narrative fillers go, it is odd that Tchaikovsky chose to compose a syncopated melody in the first measure followed by a very long note. So, everything is an upbeat and there is no real weight to it. In a narrative the up beat would be, 'and then...’ which would leave you to not think too much about what is going on in this particular section. The other issue with this is that the previous number has such great bravura on stage and the audience is going nuts. If the conductor wants this heard, he'll wait for the applause to subside. Pitch is tough on this if you think too much about it. Sometimes you might have to mitigate slightly between the pitch of the oboe and bassoon in measure 11. Watch out for pitch in the measure with articulated 16th-notes. This figure is played in sequence by the oboe, clarinet, and then bassoon. It has the potential to become a salad of pitch but in our wind section pitch is not so much an issue and I appreciate that.”

Act II, No. 12 Scène 5 Fig. 52 in cl part but fig. 14 in score

“Ah yes, this can be terrifying! Recently I have chosen to play this whole number on A clarinet. I like various things about doing that such as playing a c-sharp two measures before figure 49. Somehow the c-sharp sounds just a little bit more determined when it's paired with the oboes. Also the sequence at figure 50 is in c major on the A clarinet. Similarly, figure 51 is in f major but you have to remember that you're in f major. Then you get to the off beats preceding figure 52 and you have to make sure you are still transposing up only a semitone. It is easy to miss one of the transpositions. Then you get to the solo at five measures after figure 52 and suddenly there are all sharps and you have to remind yourself that a written e-sharp is now f-sharp on the A clarinet. Basically, if I just remind myself about that one and c-double sharp is a d-sharp on the A clarinet then it's not so hard. In general, just thinking of it in a different key is helpful. It is a very recognizable melody. I think the beauty of the line is in the elongation of the notes and not the slur groupings of two. I could see how one would say that the groupings of two are very crucial. But if you divide the phrase up too much it just becomes very banal and the long line is lost. I notice that the oboist in our ensemble plays the phrase with legato four measures before the clarinet solo begins. And whether that has influenced me or if that was my influence on him, I don't know. However, I do believe playing the second quarter note long at the end of the slur is crucial.”

“There's an interesting psychological change that happens in the più mosso section which should occur on the second beat.” Christie sings the beginning of the più mosso section with energy and conviction to make a point. “It's easy to just hammer the downbeat of the più mosso measure because you know what is coming on the second beat. However, it is very important to not do that and maintain the character of the clarinet solo throughout. Let the audience be more surprised by the suddenness of the fortissimo of the second beat. It's totally up to the clarinetist to not buy into the big downbeat which the conductor must give. It's cringe-worthy out of context to slam into the downbeat but it's also worth trying to terrify the audience with the sudden change. The music changes instantly from plaintive to furious.”

“At the beginning of the chorale, make sure to adhere to the pianissimo dynamic. Coax the second clarinetist to play their line out enough to match the wind section. If you take a look at the turn figure seven and eight measures after figure 54, it is an exact precursor to the trill figures in the following waltz. Comparing this to everything else, it should be the most prevalent. That's the motif that should really come out and be a solo. Everything else is accompagnando.”

“I think it is much better to play the chorale at figure 54 on A clarinet. Whether Tchaikovsky would care about this I don't know. But, if I was talking to him I would probably be able to convince him that the whole number works really well on the A clarinet. There's no particular reason for it not to be. If you look at the last descending arpeggio,
it is much simpler on the A clarinet than as notated for the B-flat clarinet. Another great benefit to playing this number on the A clarinet is that you can play the waltz on a warm instrument. The waltz is for A clarinet and you're certainly not going to transpose that. It's great not to have to make a sudden instrument change at the end of that solo."

Act II No. 13 Var. II, ms 19-22

“Think about projecting enough sound in measures 19 and 20 because of the weak range it is in on the clarinet. The best way to be heard is to make sure you don't make the 16th-notes sound pecky and not make them too staccato. The direction of these 16th-notes is important too.” Christie sings the melody as he interjects his singing with the clarinet solo. “Keep the phrase simple. My articulation has improved from playing ballet repertoire for so many years. It's a daily workout for your tongue when you are playing ballet repertoire. This excerpt is an example of being able to articulate so that it doesn't sound intrusive, pecky, or clarinet-y. Being able to make this a part of the phrase, I think, is part of mastering articulation. If you approach this excerpt with a clarinet mind set you are going to be afraid of the fourth bar. If you had to dictate what the articulation marking would be like, you would draw tenuto lines that are short tenuto lines. The last measure should sound easy. There is no need to choke in the register. It's a lovely little detail moment that you could feel good about or you could feel wretched about.”

Act III No. 17 Scène ms 22 to figure 14.

“This is an answer to the trumpet fanfare. I don't have any worries about this passage. It has been remarkably easy in NBOC to just place the 32nd-note to dotted quarter note figures in the first three measures without over thinking it. Just let yourself imitate the previous version of this figure, which is played by muted trumpets and the horns. Bring your attention to the sound of the horns as they play the same rhythmic figure you are about to play. A question that comes to mind is: what will the conductor want in the ritenuto section? It is similar to that narrative connector passage in No. 7. There is a certain required pacing once the ritenuto occurs. Our version seems to have become quicker over the years. There has been surprisingly minimal verbal direction from the conductor on this. It's one of those things where the conductor will let you play how you think it goes. It's also one of those phrases that can become very cliché. So it shouldn't be a parody of itself and you don't want to cringe after you've heard yourself just play it. One mustn't worry too much about it.”

“Playing the waltz theme is probably one of the more difficult pitch problems for the clarinet. It's easy to be sharp in the beginning of the waltz melody which is really dreadful against the sound of the strings.”

III No. 19 Pas de six Var. I, Fig 35

“I play the entire number on A clarinet and then switch to B-flat for the next number without being intrusive. You have lots of time to switch instruments. The thing that I learned over time was to not blow my face off before the poco meno mosso. Use the pitches that you play in the four measures preceding the poco meno mosso to set your mind and your face for the requirements of the line coming up. The sextuplets here are certainly not the easiest to find the centre of pitch. This is especially the case if you play this on B-flat clarinet. If you play it on A, the passage is basically a decorated C major. Knowing which are the chromatic notes is important but it is easy to lose the overall shape of the line if you have blown your face off in the preceding section. Save your face for the poco meno mosso. It is important to sound at least as good as the flute. So I would say to play this solo on A clarinet. Write it out because it's too confusing if you transpose it on the spot. The beginning of this number can easily be transposed up until the solo. I try not to take too much liberty in the solo and simply play straightforward with the sextuplets. It gives the flute something to work with because it's really their job to take more liberty than the clarinet in this one.”

Act II No. 19 Pas de six, Var. IV

“This is a sexy answer to the oboe solo. This used to be associated with the Black Swan in a different version. It has that character of darkly seductive. That still informs how I think of it. I hesitate to use any adjective like sexy but it's definitely got that sinuous, seductive vamp quality. You have to play the shape and not over-emphasize the contour or else your sound will be buried. The dynamic is piano with an advisory.”
Act III No. 23 Mazurka, Figure 61

“Mazurka’s and Polacca’s have this wonderful contrarian approach to meter. That's what's really neat about it. You can’t just emphasize the downbeat of each measure.” Christie sings it as an example and leads with his voice to the second beat in the second and fourth measures. “The strength in the dance comes from opposing the strong part of the bar with the melody. This piece should stand out as a strong dance and not just a silly melody with clarinets playing in thirds.”

Act III No. 24 Scène 5-13 ms. After fig. 63

“Our conductor made a good point in that this solo shouldn't be too skippy. This is a very difficult phrase to not be bouncy on and it is important to play the line but I do think it is necessary to divide the phrase in a certain way. So the first half of the phrase is really three beats [from the first note to the written A, inclusive]. The second half of the phrase is that descending line from the written e-flat to the downbeat of the fifth measure [from the written c to the throat g]. It's an uneven phrase but I think that it's important to think in terms of projecting through the throat register through the most crucial part of the phrase, which happens twice. The problem with the way the solo is written is that you have to push the sound through the weakest register of the clarinet at the most crucial moment. I don't have a solution to this other than to not play too loudly at the beginning of the solo and play really linearly through the third and fourth bars. If you have an opportunity, you could ask the strings to play their dynamic [piano] which would help to make the clarinet be heard. The conductor will hopefully ask them to play softer. To make the gesture convincing you have to make sure you aren't pushing the sound but move the phrase along despite the throat b-flat. I wouldn't consider playing this on the A clarinet. This solo presents technical clarinet problems and I always strive to improve the way I play it.”

No. 24, Act IV No. 26 Entra'cte 8-10 ms before the end ms. 3-5 after figure 4

“This is the introduction to the next movement. Before you begin this solo, pull out the barrel so you are not sharp, particularly on the e-flat on the third beat. This is a place to really think vocally. This solo is also about descent which is a theme throughout the entire ballet. You better have a reed on that works. There's no time to adjust unless you want to risk it or unless you really must.”

No. 25, Act IV No. 27 Danses des petits cygnes Fig. 5 or fig. 69 – 70 in cl part

“I just love playing this melody, which is just gorgeous. It's very folky and so beautifully constructed. It's nice to set the tone with the section by leading the most, and your colleagues will listen to you. I don't like to throw people any curve balls in terms of dynamics. I find it is trite to play echo effects in this number. I think of this as a song. The second time you state the melody, it can be more inward. It's a great gift because it's such a beautiful thing. When the theme is in written E-flat major it certainly requires a more full tone. Where as the first theme in written E-minor is more subdued and withdrawn. There is really much less to think about once you realize that it is just like a folk song. Do not over play it and just play what's there.”

No. 26, Act IV No. 28 Scène, fig. 68

“It is absolutely wrong to try to put all the expression on the triplet. There is again, the theme of descent here. It is a really beautiful motif and is somehow linked to the main theme.”

No. 26, Act IV No. 28 Scène maybe fig. 73 and 74

“This is actually a place where I don't care about being flat. It would be great to play this with four clarinets. The power of the sound should be big. Encourage the second clarinetist to play with a big sound too. I cut loose in this because the music here is quite powerful. Accent the half notes and come back to a lesser dynamic.”
Sleeping Beauty

“I love Nutcracker and Swan Lake and I sometimes find Sleeping Beauty hard to swallow because it seems like a huge amount of filler! And it is in the grande ballet tradition and Tchaikovsky had to fill time and space on stage.”

Prologue No. 2 Dancing Scene: Entrance of the Fairies, ms. 126 – 141

“There's nothing very mysterious about this but to phrase towards the second beat of the second measure. Make sure you don't stretch the 8th-note rest on the downbeats. Always have the pulse of the three quarter notes in your head. It should be very simple and precise.”

Prologue No. 2 Dancing Scene: Entrance of the Fairies, ms. 163 – 182

“The hardest thing with this is ensemble. The orchestra has a half note followed by a quarter note in measure 163 and 175. This rhythm can be ambiguous and is a tough set up before you play quarter notes. Hopefully the conductor will give a clear impulse towards measure 164 despite the viola's nebulous rhythm there.”

Prologue No. 3 Pas de six, ms. 10 – 26

“It's a simple melody but everything comes to rest on the throat A-flat in the second measure of the solo. So, you can't lean on that note too much. The cantabile marking is very helpful. The hair pins indicate simple phrasing but they can also make the phrase a little too swoopy. Bear in mind the structure of the solo. It is a two bar and a two bar phrase followed by a four bar answer which is broken up by the rests. Play it so that it's not phrased up and down for four groups of two. Don't release too much before the fourth group of two measures by continuing the phrase between the sixth and seventh measures. When the oboe enters at measure 18, it's a really lovely thing to play a good rich chalumeau register soli. Although, bare in mind that you don't want to be flat. The crescendo leading up to the climax of the phrase before measure 26 is very straightforward but you have to play really big on the second note in measure 22. The beginning of this line should be very much heard through the texture. I think it's important to think of your articulation as getting more intense as you ascend. Don't think too much about dots as about weight. You don't have to use incredible amounts of volume for the crescendo but if you make sure that those last two groups of 16th-notes with articulations are a little bit heavier and placed, it means that you have said something about the crescendo and paced it well without it all happening only on the sextuplet figure just before the high E, which you really don't want to do. Most conductors will let you play the descending arpeggio naturally to measure 25. The decrescendo in measure 25 is a classic example of if you play the decrescendo where it's marked, you are pretty much going to bury the resolution of the written G. I would definitely keep the decrescendo where Tchaikovsky put it in measure 25 but it's mostly back loaded. The graphics of it is mostly a psychological problem. When we see a decrescendo we let our sound die away too quickly. You just need to release the tension through the decrescendo but keep the volume and play to the final written G.”

Prologue No. 3 Pas de six, Var. I, Candide, ms. 1 – 20

“Once you start with the Pas de six you have to get through the accompaniment to the oboe solo in variation I. It's a really good idea to enlist the second clarinet player to play some of these but I don't do that. It's a good idea to breathe when the oboe player is covering you; that would mean at the end of measure 11. Then continue breathing in disguised ways contrary to the oboe part. The oboe breathes in the middle of measure 12 where their phrase ends. And so you want to make sure you are not breathing immediately after that. I think it's better to breathe as they are ending their phrase. If I get a breath at the end of measure 11 I am pretty much okay. But I would do the same thing again and breathe four bars after that and not five bars after that; so that is, again, before the oboe takes a breath before their pick up. The two things are: be in tune and be helpful to the oboe. In other words, give them some volume to play off of but don't be intrusive and certainly don't breathe when they do. It's contrary to what you might think your phrase is but I think it is better to not breathe right after the oboe does and right before is probably better. That would be a sort of disguised breath. Our temptation is to breathe as if we are the main phrase. It's important to play across the bar as if we were playing the pick-up and just support them through that pick-up.”

Prologue No. 3 Pas de six, Var. II, Coulante: The Fairy of Blooming Wheat, ms. 1 - 18
"I find the Prologue the most scary sequence in ballet. You have to get through it and there are so many demanding things that will tire you out and you really have to think all the way through. You’ve just gotta survive some of this stuff and you’ll be okay. But the variation of all the Fairies is quite demanding. I played variation II after I first got the job with National Ballet and the main thing that I learned is that you have to have the endurance in your articulation to get through it. It's not unlike the Barber of Seville. By the end, your tongue can betray and just kill you.

“I have learned to think of this as a good tonguing exercise because that's what it became when I played it as an audition. To really remember good basic articulation technique: don't move your jaw around at all. It's much easier to do it a little under volume. Remember that everyone else is playing here. I don't want to move my face off of the instrument for the breath at all. I am pretty much just set. Playing this too short is just an invitation to the whole wind section to peck at it and then you don't get any kind of unity of sound. More 'tah' than 'tut.'"

Prologue No. 3 Pas de six, Var. V, Violente, ms. 10 – 41

“This is tricky. It's one of those things like the waltz in Swan Lake where you come in off the beat and you are descending through the registers. The violins play the same thing before you play it. I've learned over the years to just fly this one in under the radar and not be too obtrusive. The other thing I think is not from the 16ths but to the 8th-note. So go towards a longish second beat and it always phrases forward. It's note that tricky. It's cutesy!”

Prologue No. 4, Finale, ms. 1 – 8

“Just before the Finale begins there's applause totally obscuring the beginning of the clarinet solo. The Finale is an awesome piece of orchestral writing! It's a really terrific thing. I much prefer this intro to Swan Lake Act I No. 7 Sujet. But they're both okay. This solo is very amabile and very easy going. And then the triplets are in the second phrase. I love the turn in measure seven when we set up the new key because it's as if, 'everybody is having a good time at the party and then suddenly somebody shows up at the door' which is what happens in the plot. That turn in the key is such a terrific musical moment. It's really fun to have that. With a willing conductor and just a little bit of time, you can do what you want with it. I see that turn as being sort of second thought. Everybody has their own take on it but where you see più forte in the second bar I think you accomplish that with the articulation and the spreading of the quarter note. It's a very smooth first two bars and then it's plunk by plunk. It starts out as a two feeling in the first two measures into a quarter note feeling on the fourth beat of the second measure. It's a perfectly crafted eight bar phrase.”

Prologue No. 4, Finale ms. 37-48 & ms. 67- 75

“This calls to mind the fourth act of Swan Lake where Tchaikovsky uses the clarinets in unison down low as a really dramatic character. It has a really dark and menacing quality, which Tchaikovsky must have really liked. I think four clarinets on this thing would be awesomer yet. And this is not a clarinet geek speaking. The vital thing is not to be short on the quarter notes so that there's a gutty menace to it. The eight notes can be quite distinct. You don't need to make them short. You can really bite the 8th-note pick-up to the triplet at measure 41. There's no disguising the intensity of this.”

Act I No. 5 Scène ms. 125-126

“This is a nice little duet with your best friend in the whole orchestra which is the bassoonist.”

Act I No. 5 Scène ms. 159 – 176

“There's always a mental star in my part following the Allegro Vivo in this movement. You just have to review this because there are double sharps and changes in the pattern each time. It's really just one of those things you have to look at each time just to make sure.”

Act I No. 7 Scène ms. 3 – 11
“A nice little woodwind chorale to open. The hard thing about this rhythm is just to spread it without sounding like you're dragging, and just to get it all in without sounding like you're rushing, and that's just it. The 16th-note rest is deceptively tiny and the notes themselves are deceptively slow in comparison. You almost have to think of the rest when you are playing the last note in the group of six. Any sort of impulsive on the rest means that you're late and then it's going to have to rush and you end up putting accents in the wrong places. It's really not an important thing. It's just important to get the hell through it.” plays example. “You don't want to be all over the map at the beat so when you get to the downbeat of measure eight you want it to be right in time because that is actually where you take the melody.”

Act I No. 8 b) Dances of the Maids of Honour and Pages, ms. 94 – 130

“Demoiselles is a great thing if you have a good woodwind section. If there's a peg leg in there it's not so great. But mostly, it's really nicely written. At least for the clarinets, thank goodness. You want to remind yourself that slurring two and tonguing two makes things easier but not if you rush the first two if you're slurring two and rushing. Again, it's another one of these things where you're going to be tired. Your face has to be in shape for your articulation and this is another one of the excerpts I played when I first entered the company. I learned it really well and the process got myself a better articulation for it. It's machine gunning but it's not as fast as all that. It depends on the company of course. What it is, is changing from the slur-two-tongue-two at the beginning to where you should do all articulation at the end. The last one.” Christie plays measure 125 – 128, “...is where you're gonna lose it because that's where you're going down and forth across the break. The idea is that the break does not present an inhibiting factor to the sound. That way you're going to stay all right. Thinking of a woodpecker or something that is incredibly strong and accurate means that you will not bite and you will not cloud the air and stuff like that. It also helps to have your instrument in really good shape because those long keys have to work for you.”

Act I No. 9 Finale, ms. 95-114, Bb cl

“You've gotta be able to double tongue this or just stay out of the way. It's like wicked witch music for sure. There's really nothing you can do if you can't articulate fast. You've just gotta stay out of the way and not play loud. I guess he [Tchaikovsky] had the notion that clarinets could tongue as fast as flutes and for as long durations. It reminds me that he does this all the time and you've just got to bring your game. It's hard! I don't sweat the character of the articulation here because it's all so fast anyway. If you're going to play it fortissimo and all slurred...” plays measure 102 – 104, “...all you're providing is a slight blurring to everybody else's articulation. So, two bad reasons to do this: one would be that you want the conductor to tell you you're not articulating and the other is that you want people to hear Tchaikovsky slightly blurred. So I say put up or shut up. That's the problem with that thing. It's really hard.”

Act II No. 11 Blind Man's Buff

“It really depends on the conductor I think because it seems to me that this is a filler thing. It's probably a kind of a grand company thing. I don't know exactly what would be going on [on stage]. Certain conductors just love to blow through it. For the scales up, again there's an articulation question. Start with a lot of sound and make your presence known down here because nobody else can in the winds. The idea of establishing for everybody a clear beat...” Christie plays measure 1 – 2 “...you might have to switch to double tongue on this.”

“This is a really nice arpeggio and left hand study at measure seven. It's another one where you put a star and say, 'I just gotta learn this.' This is why the first act is just fearsome. It's scary because you cannot get a break.

“Style wise...” Christie plays measure 23 – 31, “...I think it's really important to keep a very leggiero quality but the dotted eighths have a certain weight, not length.” Christie sings the dotted 8th-note sixteenth figure. “This is to also just give your face a break. Coming into that melody is really tricky timingwise. It's down through the break. Again, get your keys [of your clarinet] looked at. And then we get to the end. I would say it's just about the nastiest thing he [Tchaikovsky] could do to you. This whole play out is not made for clarinet, it's really not. This [measure 45 to the end] is a double tongue passage for sure but it's guaranteed to be hard even on double tongue.” Christie demonstrates double tonguing in this passage. In reference to measure 49, “That part's not so bad. It works really well on double tongue but not this:” Christie plays measure 48 into 49. “So I think it's important to leave a few notes out and stay out of the way. At the end, always very nasty.” Christie demonstrates measures 53 – 54. “Then I can't
do it.” Christie demonstrates measure 55 to the end. “It's a damn good thing other people are playing there. It just gets me so frantic thinking about it. You just gotta thank your stars there are other people playing there.”

“The second act is also incredibly scary.”

Act II No. 12 e) Dance of the Marchionesses

“When God if the second clarinetist can circular breathe! Everybody [musicians] knows this one if they know ballet and they go, 'what the hell do you do with this?' As other things have taught me how to articulate, this has taught me how to save the breath and to be very relaxed at the end of a breath so that you're not squeezed shut in order to get a breath in. The important thing is to breathe often enough so that you don't kill yourself, you know, for sound and for squeezing your lungs shut. You should breathe musically in a way that sort of works, which doesn't exist. So I highly recommend that one learn circular breathing. I'm not sure if my whole approach to sound even admits to the possibility of circular breathing because it's all about one sound column into the gut. It's certainly how I play when I'm playing the way I want to. To interrupt that so you can circular breathe...I'm not sure. In any case, my breathing is to get all the way into the area where everybody is playing. The bassoonists come in and it really just takes some of the pressure off. It seems that certain conductors think that the melody is in the pizzicato and I don't get that. I try to get through the first 16 bars.” Christie demonstrates measures 19 – 24. “So something in that answering thing is a good place to leave out [a note] because people don't care that much. That's where I would do it. Somewhere in measure 24.” Christie demonstrates under tempo by taking a quick breath before the last two 16th-note in measure 24. “...something where it's on a weak beat and something where it's going to just fly under the radar. Then...” Christie demonstrates measures 28 to the downbeat of measure 31, “...you hope that the conductor will just sort of slacken the pulse just across the bar, right at the end of measure 30 before the return of the A melody in measure 31. It's just really, really hard. Sometimes I take a breath and leave out a note before the downbeat of measure 31 but they [the conductors] don't always want to let you have that because it's not important that you're dying. Forming a good relationship with the conductor is probably your best bet in order to get that breath.”

Act II No. 15 Pas d'action: Coda, ms. 5 - 9

“This is a very cool little woodwind concerto grosso here. It's about a trusty second clarinet player. Everybody is playing 16th-notes. You and your second player must not disturb. It's sort of easier for the first clarinet to not disturb [the pulse].” Christie demonstrates measures 5 – 7. “My teacher, Bob Riseling would make us do that rhythmic pattern in opposites.” Christie makes reference to a Gustav Langenus articulation study that consists of an 8th-note-two-16th-note rhythmic pattern repeated throughout the etude. “Learning how to not distort the rhythm means that you are going to be better at articulating. It's just a really funky but well written thing. It always reminds me of Mendelssohn, especially the ending.”

Act II No. 18 Entr'acte, ms. 1 – 22

“If you've played with a violinist that is really lovely and a great musician then this is a pleasure. You will not be brow beaten about how to play your version of the solo. It's again, a classic thing where the solo takes a descant or an embellishing role [during the clarinet solo] and it's still the most important thing. So you have to play a solo that is low on ego but still musically apt and pretty to listen to. Hopefully you form a good partnership with the solo violinist.

“It's really easy to be sharp at the beginning of this entr'acte. You start on the sounding G.” Christie demonstrates the first three measures. “That I find the easiest to be sharp on. And then there's the [written] B-natural/sounding-A in the sixth bar. It's not a bad idea to play that with the third side key as a register key. The register-key substitution on the long B is a trick. It involves using the right hand thumb to open the third side key, the one we use for throat register side B-flat. You need your knees to hold the horn, of course, while the thumb is so occupied. If it's too high, it's awful. Something to think about.”

Christie demonstrates the solo in measure 18. “You really have to remind yourself to really stretch the triplet quarter in measure 20.” Christie demonstrates. “There's a whole lot going on in the violin part and they need time.”
Act II No. 19 Symphonic Entr’acte: Sleep: Discussion of four measures before 80 in the recording Max Christie 3 at 45’.

Act II No. 19 Symphonic Entr’acte: Sleep, ms. 100 – 103

“Don't be late and don't rush. It's easy to be late and easy to be afraid of it.”

“You start Act III without having to work to hard. But you're probably already very tired because this has been a blow already.”

Act III No. 23 Pas de quatre: Var. IV The Diamond Fairy, ms. 1 – 12 inclusive

“The name of this and the triangle tells you everything. Everything should be hard and clear edged so that there's nothing pretty about it except the sparkle. It's all glittery and sparkly. Just don't try to be pretty. Really sparkly and bright. Again, it's a rhythmic study.”

Act III No. 24 Pas de caractère: Puss-in-Boots and the White Cat, ms. 30 – 43

“There's so much going on in terms of weird sounds. The oboes are asked to meow like cats from the quarter to the quarter and it's awesome when they do. Then when you play at measure 30 you're a tom cat. What else could you possibly be? The bassoon is playing down low. It's that kind of a thing you hear out in the alley. If you just play straight notes, fine. You won't be fired. I think in this day and age a little bit of fun is helpful. I would almost smear them [the notes in measures 30 – 31] a little because everything is just so crazy.”

“And here's a great place to squeak [the 16th-notes beginning at measure 36]. I mean, don't do it, but is it ever easy! The exoticism of this probably depicts some kind of siamese cat. The sexy and sinuous character in the writing is awesome so you really want to risk the squeak. It sort of plays itself but you must not be afraid of the possibility to squeak there.”

Act III No. 25 Pas de quatre: The Bluebird

“The great and much revered Stanley McCartney would say, 'Ah, I love that Bluebird solo!' It is easy to feel so mortified about sagging the tone and pitch on the written throat b-flat at the end of the descending arpeggio. It could sound like a dying quail and not the bluebird. That is the reason why I play this down a semi-tone on the B-flat clarinet. It sounds so great on the flute and if they are at all sharp, as you might be as well coming in to answer, it's so much better I think to go to the a-natural which is not as flat of a note and dead as the passage on A clarinet, ending on a written b-flat. To me, playing a b-flat on the A clarinet is just a nightmare for that kind of thing. Since I play this solo on the B-flat clarinet, I make a note to myself to check the cross fingering one-and-one. It is a good little habit to have in mind, that if you are going to play it on A, make sure your instrument is in line. It's always tricky when you are going to transpose this. Just remind yourself that A-flat major is G major and the next one is B-flat major. When you see the descending arpeggio three measures before the end and then you see all of those sharps in the next arpeggio it will take you by surprise. So it's really crucial to think in terms of key but go over that bar in your head every time you are about to play it. Go over the final measure as well because that is really slap stick if you don't remind yourself how it goes. It's very cute and quaint. It shouldn't be a big deal.

“There are two different characters here obviously. In the first one you're the answering bird in the distance. In the second one you lead it and you have to play with a lot more sostenido and espressivo. In the first one you should be the secondary voice to the flute and not try to upstage them. But in the second one the flute better not upstage you. Hopefully the conductor will afford you some time on the up beat to measure 19.”

Act III No. 25 Pas de quatre: The Bluebird and Princess Florine, ms. 10 – 18

“This one is a cutesy thing for the flutes. When you come in you're the opposite character of the flutes. It's really important to think giocoso and not to try to be precious with it so much as to really be the bumpkin and to delineate
the difference between very refined flutes and this very, almost plodding-like character of the clarinet. This departs at measure 18 where you have to play the light character.” Christie plays an example of two different ways to play this excerpt. One is lighter and the other one had more weight, volume, and a slightly harsher articulation. “I don't know if you would get away with playing the second version in an audition. I think if you were playing an audition for a very open minded and experienced group they might actually enjoy hearing that kind of the character put in.

I think it's the sort of thing, if you are playing the second version in orchestra nobody notices so much that you are doing it that way as much as they would notice if you didn't and that would be kind of boring. I put a fair amount of goofiness into that.”

Act III No. 25 Pas de quatre: Coda, ms. 14 – 37

“This one gives me more fits than almost anything. It's really one of those tricky things where you're passing 16th-notes back and forth. There's almost a distortion that you have to create to be correct and that is to make sure you are early and not rushing. Again, it's this common refrain. If you stretch the length of the first group of 16th-notes early and late on both sides, then you're not going to compress it. Compressing it is what we tend to do.” Christie demonstrates compressing the 16th-notes as well as playing them as he recommends. “So it's a subtle difference but I think you have to make sure your instrument speaks ahead of where you expect it to. You are filling that gap where clarinetists always seem to leave with our entries. It's a rhythmic thing. By this time, you know you're almost out of the woods in this ballet.”

Act III No. 28 Pas de deux: Variation II: Aurora, ms. 15 - 29

“There's a certain Three Stooges quality to this. It's the last solo that you have in the ballet. You play this group of phrases that are all the same. All that's required is a certain kind of delicacy or refinement in your sense of what to do with this and what not to do. There's really not a lot to do. Just serve the dance here because that's all you are. This solo looks at you and it says, 'you are going to do this four times and feel silly each time.' And you are! But you're only dignity lies in the fact the you are going to do it four times and it's going to be absolutely perfect each time. Think about if you had to execute the same dance move en pointe four times. Whatever they [the dancers] are doing, you just want to serve that. It is an articulation study in itself. Try not to sound like a pecky clarinet player. In measure 25 flow towards the written F. You can't begin it with nothing.”

The Nutcracker

General comments: “The Nutcracker is the hardest short ballet ever. It is such a challenge and fulfilling too. Every time you show up and play it you've gotta try your very best! This is probably Tchaikovsky's most perfect ballet. It's such a gem.”

Overture Miniature - 4 – 8 ms after Fig. A

“The viola section 16th-notes may be a different tempi each show. The allegro giusto is easier to play when it's conducted on the faster side. The challenge here, of course, is that you are playing through the throat register, the articulation, and you are the most important line. A little known fact is that the second violins are listening closely to you to place their line well. When you are playing your solo you want to clue into the second violins. It's easy to think you are playing it right but you most likely need to be ready to adjust something. It's nice to have such a difficult solo completed early in the ballet so you don't have to worry about it.”

Act I No. 1, Scene - 9 ms. after Fig. B , poco più sostenuto

“The fingering I use in the second complete measure of this solo on the written Cs of the septuplet is right-left-right-right. Be able to play the third measure at a quick tempo because the cello section may tend to rush their 8th-notes. The conductor may want to push the tempo forward as well. I play the written Cs of the third beat of the third measure with the fingering right-left-right. Usually conductors will give you room to take to have a little moment in the reiteration of this solo before tempo I. Once again, try to not throw many curve balls in the phrase so you can build trust among your colleagues in the orchestra. I don't like playing the 16th-note pick-ups too slowly because, to
me, it is too saccharine. I will play with the time just a hair proportionally to the tempo in order for the pulse to continue more or less unaltered. Think of it as a question mark pause. Try to minimize your left brain. Think about how you would walk across the room, turn around, and come back again. That is sort of what you are doing. In this case I think it is more gesture than text-based. It’s not how you would say something so much as how you would do something. The motion of this entrance is still so crucial. The very first time you have this is just a two 16th-note pick-up. So in this one, with an additional 16th-note, you should not play around with it too much. You also have to think about the middle of the second reiteration because sometimes the conductor wants more expression than you can give realistically without it going over the top.”

Act I No. 1, Scene – Figure D, più moderato

“This is tough for the second clarinetist. It’s really tricky for them two, three, and four measures before the Allegro. I’ve never needed to use my right index finger in the first complete measure. In the second measure I use the fingering right-left-right. These aren't really crucial details. This is really tricky but the clarinet parts are like tinsel on a christmas tree and you can't over think it. The un poco accelerando should be really clean but there are so many agendas going on at this point that you just want to get to the downbeat of the Allegro vivace without any blood. The triplets before the Allegro vivace can get very fast and it is difficult to anticipate what the tempo will be in the next passage.”

Act I No. 1, Scene – 9 Allegro Vivace – Meno 8 ms. before Fig. G

“This is a tricky passage for the clarinets and the bassoons with varying degree of facility of articulation. I would imagine that in every pit, even the most seasoned veterans of the Nutcracker will be practicing this passage slowly before every show to some degree. This passage is worthy of being on an audition because it is a good articulation and rhythmic study. When you change to 8th-notes from triplet 8th-notes you want to make sure you are not in the way of the triplet players. As long as you stay in tempo and don't drag you will help your colleagues who are playing triplets. Articulation is not just technique but it is also endurance. And here you've got to have some energy left. So it's really important to observe the piano just before figure F and to not force your sound. For me, tongue position is everything on this. I am playing with just the lightest and smallest motion of my tongue near the front of my mouth and certainly not loudly. Playing loud there would be a killer. You can let your colleagues play loud but take it easy on the fortissimo. I found that that's really the hardest thing especially the last four measures moving quickly across the altissimo register break. Form your embouchure and direct your air as if you were playing in the altissimo range or else it won't speak well. Articulation in the altissimo range has to be very light.”

Act I No. 2, March, Fig E - Fig F

“It took so long to get my double tonguing to work well in this particular passage. At section E I add a 16th-note where there are 8th-notes so that I am playing what the flutes have. I use that articulation when I am double-tonguing. It is more difficult to double tongue and play it with the 8th-note as written. I am pretty sure nobody cares that I play the extra 16th-note; it is just for me. I try not to play too loud and I take a breath during the long g. The trickiest thing is the repetition of the phrase with the three 16th-note pick-ups. I ignore the forte and I begin the three 16th pickup notes with one of the syllable sequences of 'ka-ta-ka' or 'ta-ta-ka' or 'ah-ta-ka' in order to begin the downbeat of the reiteration of the 16th-note pattern on the syllable 'ta.' The important thing is to play it lightly so if I screw up I get out of the way dynamically. The flutes can effortlessly play this line and it is best if the clarinet plays this line as audible only with a certain magnification. It is much more difficult for the clarinet than the flutes.”

Act I No. 4, Scene – 7 ms after Fig C to Fig D

“Tchaikovsky gives us great opportunities to squeak because slurring down from a throat note to a low note is asking for us to miss. I love him! It's a trust game with yourself but I do believe it is so worth it because the phrase would be dead if you didn't play the accent on the low note on the second beat. The important thing are the accents on beats two and three, played by the first and second clarinetist. That passage is just an invitation to squeak. If you look carefully there is a staccato marking on the downbeat and non-staccato on the downbeat of the second measure. It's easy to miss that detail but playing the exact ink makes it that much more fun. It's the sort of thing that if you
play the slurs and markings precisely, it makes this piece that much more fun. I like to bring out the crescendo in the fifth measure. It's key to make this passage sound lively and exciting.

“This ballet is so tiring and you can't breath at figure E because your part is really important. At figure F come to an agreement with the bassoonist how you are going to play the phrases.”

Act I No. 4, Scene – 9 ms after Fig G (Presto) for 8 measures

“Make sure you listen to the violins. Pitch is tricky on this one because the second clarinetist is playing in d minor slightly lower than the principal clarinet so you don't want to be sharp on your A to their F and you don't want to be flat on your F to their D. Most importantly you don't want to be sharp on the last written A to their low F.”

Act I No. 6, Scene, 5 ms before Fig B – Fig B

“It is up to the conductor to determine how much he or she wants the *ritenuto molto* to be. This phrase follows the english horn's melody and the clarinet's passage should be much slower. This is very much about sleep. It's like a lullaby because of the steadiness of the meter but after the child falls asleep the music has to slow down. It's such a beautiful melody. There is so much in this number that is so perfect. There is a lot in this whole ballet that is so crafty. What's coming up is astonishing!”

Act I No. 6, Scene, 2 ms after Fig C – 4 ms before Fig E

“This is like modern music. I think it's brilliant because it's just a little filigree answer to what the flute just played. The most important thing is not to rush the 16th-note sextuplets or the group of nine 16th-notes and to really make them be heard. The flute's previous material captures everybody's ear with the flourish and as you begin to play, you become part of that line. Play it earlier than you think so you don't need to rush it. The group of nine 16th-notes is like a measured trill, which is not too fast. The measure before figure D is very tricky in terms of pitch. Probably the hardest thing in terms of ensemble is feeling good about the intonation of the descending E major triad. I take the *piano* with a grain of salt in the *allegro giusto* section because the concert hall is very large and the affect of playing this too quietly will sound muted. However, as you begin to play the triplets, you want to give yourself a lot of room to crescendo. That is very important. I begin with a potent *piano* and then I bring the dynamic down and play a big crescendo to the *mezzo forte* in the fifth measure where the second clarinet joins you. At this point the music is about the growing anticipation of what is about to happen on stage, which is the magic. This passage is a great left hand, register, and articulation study. This excerpt is one that I play slowly during the first couple of weeks of the run of Nutcracker because it is so tricky.”

Act I No. 6, Scene, 8-10 ms inclusive after Fig F

“This is all brilliantly composed. I always make sure that I have a little grease from my nose on my right pinky in order to slide laterally from the E-flat to the C in the 16th-note passage before the *moderato assai*.”

Act I No. 7, Battle Scene, 9 ms after Fig D – 14 ms after Fig D

“I think the most important thing is to play the articulations and emphasize the groupings of the four 16th-notes. Just to be absolutely unbending in the sense of the tempo, really play a clear articulation for all of the grouped notes. Pace the dynamics so that you leave *piano* only for the last motif.”

Act II No. 11, Scene, Fig A to 2 ms after Fig B

“It's really not an easy solo to pull off. It is one of those places where the second clarinetist gets to play a solo.”

Act II No. 11, Scene, pick up to 12 ms before Fig E – downbeat of Fig E
“Endurance is an issue here. I think the rest after the 8th-note is very important in four and six measures before figure E. The contrast of the half notes in one and two measures before figure E is intentional that it becomes more sustained.”

Act II No. 12, Divertissement a) Le Chocolat: Spanish Dance, fig 1 – 4 ms after Fig 1 & Fig 5 to end

“There's nothing really that can go wrong. It's important to not be whiny on the high C. So play a fortissimo on the ascending run to a mezzo forte on the C followed by a crescendo. It is crucial that the ascending run be heard. It's just the natural outcome of releasing a little bit of the sound after the scale. The C is going to easily sound out and you really are just accompanying, which is important to know.”

“The question at figure F is: is there really a più mosso at figure F? The answer is: it depends on the staging of course. It's one of those tricky places where things are only slightly different in each grouping.”

Act II No. 12, Divertissement b) Arabian Dance, ms 5 - 13

“It's a good place not to over think it. You don't really need to add much. The clarinet is sort of the lead voice but the english horn and second clarinet are important. Keep your sound from ballooning. The group of five is a measured trill. It's more important to play out so that you are heard. I don't do too much with the crescendo at the end because I don't want my sound to balloon.”

Act II No. 13, Waltz of the Flowers, 9 ms before Fig A – Fig B

“The intro of this piece is gorgeous and reminds me a lot of the chorale opening to the big Pas de deux from Swan Lake. In this number the chorale opening is gorgeous and I love how our wind section plays and phrases this together. The clarinet solo is a gem. I try not to over-think this solo. You are playing a very sweet melody in a register where you are forced to confront the clarinet's weaknesses for pitch. I think vocally which is my best strategy. The temptation to elongate downbeats has to be tempered. Just a little bit is enough especially in the sixth measure of the solo. Five measures before the end Tchaikovsky writes in a particular way that advances the melodic rhythm in order to increase the melodic interest. It's important to observe the crescendo where you pace it. I think the real forte happens one measure after it is marked. This entire solo is repeated with the second clarinet in unison and it is important to note the fortissimo in the place where there was initially only a forte. In this case the composer is indicating that the dynamic of the forte has to leave room for a fortissimo in the second iteration.”

Act II No. 14, Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy, pick-up to Fig A – downbeat of 4 ms after Fig A and 4 ms after Fig B to Presto

“The tendency to elongate the beginning of the 32nd-notes can be too extreme.”

Romeo and Juliet

“Nothing shreds my confidence like this ballet for a good variety of reasons. One of them being how often he [Prokofiev] takes a simple melody and by adding octave transpositions into it, he just makes you think, ‘I can't play in tune, I have no pitch, where is my centre of pitch?' That's sort of a basic theme to a lot of these solos. It's all on B-flat clarinet so you can pull out and hope not to be too sharp.”

Act I No. 1 Introduction, 6ms after Fig. 2 – 1 quarter note before Fig. 3

“You've got two solos in the first number that scare the crap out of you because they go all over the map octave-wise.” Christie demonstrates the intervalic leaps in this solo out of rhythm. “What I just did was what I do in order to hear the line of the pitch. You just want to hear where you're going and not make weird adjustments for one note or another. In terms of phrasing, this is really very simple in a way. In terms of function in the piece, this is the first introduction to this theme, which is a very key theme. It's important to not over phrase or to do anything too bizarre. It's all forward. That means that you can't actually get louder and louder. The only resting points are these loaded
long notes.” Christie demonstrates the first four measures of the solo. “But they have to flow. You can't really fall back.” Christie demonstrates the following eight measures. “There's something that happens in the timbre in the orchestra that's going to fight me on the high E. The flute comes in and you're suddenly in octaves with the flute and I believe there's an interference because I've never had more trouble with that note than I have in this piece. It's just really, really hard. So I think the only answer in terms of my panic with this is to be able to play up there with a real full sound. You could say that it's the inevitability, the ineluctable horrible fate. But it's so beautifully set. There's no going back with this.”

Act I No. 2 Romeo, 2 ms after Fig. 6 – Fig. 7

“Now you get to be Romeo. This is so cool. I find it much less frightening than the previous solo. For the interval F-sharp to E-sharp, I try not to think of syllables so much as what the tongue position would be for those syllables. It's important not to muscularize the E-sharp and gag it. It's really a 'hoo' sound to a 'hiih' sound and that's really more about the front of the tongue. I think you do need to be able to sing these pitches to help yourself. Even if it's the wrong octave, know the melodic connection. That's why these octave transpositions are so tough. This is the Romeo character here.”

Act I No. 10 Juliet as a Young Girl, Fig. 53 – Fig 54

“You get to play Romeo as the innocent guy and now you get to play Juliet as the innocent girl. It's lovely! The awkward thing is pitch, the lovely thing is con eleganza. It's a really lovely little theme. Juliet is running about and blustering about and she's thinking.” Christie demonstrates the first four measures of this solo. “The rests are there and they have to be played like musical rests.” Christie sings the phrase-lets of each half measure with attention to where the 8th-note rests occur. “Prokofiev was an incredibly cold fish but he could do this with the flick of a pen. He could make these wonderful characterizations. You gotta think about the 8th-note and the 8th-note rest are equivalent but that means really you have to not clip the 8th-note at the end. You have to make sure it leads...” Christie plays a demonstration of the first measure, “...with an 'H' ending. And obviously this is the hardest one.” Christie plays the second half of the third measure to the second half of the fourth measure. “Let it be. It's not a big deal. Just don't be flat on that F.” Christie plays the fourth measure. “Even a side key on the F is not a bad idea. It really depends on your instrument and your ear. If you're better at playing the F not flat, good for you.” Christie plays the fifth measure into the downbeat of the sixth measure. “And that should have that kind of simple ritardando, nothing huge. He's [Prokofiev's] marked the a tempo over the end of the bar, which is really strange. It's not easy to do. Think of the a tempo as starting from just following the B-flat. It's not like everything else but often the bar is divided into two. But I can't sell that type of phrasing in measure six. I'd put the a tempo sort of through the F, slightly to the left of where it is printed. He's [Prokofiev's] given you a poco ritardando over the 8th-notes then a tenuto over the B-flat. So it's hard to imagine it being...” Christie sings the sixth measure quite slowly for the first two quarter notes and sings the a tempo very literally on the third quarter note. “None of that really plays the phrase. I think of the tenuto on the C as a pick-up and the B-flat on the downbeat and then I try not to think too much beyond that.”

Act I No. 11 Arrival of the Guests (Minuet), pickup to Fig 64 – 7 ms after Fig 65 & 4 ms before Fig 70 – 4 ms before end

“Now you take the trumpet melody. It seems very Hollywood so I don't want to schmultz it up anymore. The trick being not to drop your jaw for the G-sharp too much. I like how he [Prokofiev] uses the elements of the phrase in different parts of the phrase.” Christie plays measures 2 – 4. “You have to phrase the phrase properly and not just repeat what you did on the previous element as if the dotted eighth-sixteenth is just the same wherever it is. On the pick-up...” Christie plays the pick-up to measure three, “…it's just a decoration in the middle of the bar. It's a subtle thing I guess.”

Act I No. 11 Arrival of the Guests (Minuet), 4 ms before Fig 70 – 4 ms before end

“One of the most fun things to play especially here.” Christie plays the fifth measure of figure 70, “So play it out. Definitely play the relationship between the grace note and the main note as pretty important.” Christie demonstrates
the last two measures of the solo with a full sound and acknowledging each accent and staccato marking. “The character is there, so just play it. Lots of weight in the touch.”

Act I No. 12 March, 2-4 ms after Fig 73

“It seems as if what's happening here is the guys are hanging out together and being macho. He [Prokofiev] does this type of thing all the time where people reinforce the melody notes but they don't play through the melody. He is creating resonance with the sustained notes in the melody.”

“My favourite thing in the world because you just play out that high E. It's one of those octave things that I don't mind. Concentrate on the difference of the long and short for the character. Lean towards the lower note fearlessly. You want to sing through the quarter notes with tenutos on them to the slurred into 8th-notes with lots and lots of impulse. I love how he wrote this. It works really well.”

Act I No. 14 Juliet's Variation, 2 ms before Fig 92 – 6 ms after Fig 92

“I don't over-think this one. I think it's just important to be heard. The tendency to over address the first note of the sextuplets and not leave room for the rest of the notes, can leave you hanging on too much at the beginning, I think you need room to grow in volume. In the end, this is just a decoration. Orchestration-wise, you're going to be lost if you don't sustain to the bottom.” Christie plays the intervals of the second measure of figure 92 out of tempo. “I dread being sharp on that F-sharp. So I might blow down.” Christie plays 2 – 4 measures after figure 92. “Keeping it simple and making sure that you're playing the simplicity of the phrase is important. It's very straightforward.”

Act I No. 15 Mercutio, 2 ms after Fig 98 – 4 ms before Fig 99 & 2 ms after Fig 100 – 4 ms after Fig 101

“Doesn't everybody find this hard? I do. So this is where I think that really blocky, heavy fingering is really helpful, so that you're really not playing too light in the fingers. Go for it. Do not be afraid! It's one of those things where you or your second player might be missing it occasionally. It's hard to tell. I think it's important to be the first player when you're the first player and make sure you're establishing it. Suggest a unity of purpose. Be respectful of your second player but ask them to be very observant of this rhythmically so it doesn't get rushed. It really needs a little imaginary box around it with bright lights. It needs to be slightly magnified and illuminated because if it gets too rushed, the articulated 8th-notes will sound sloppy and cluttered.”

Act I No. 16 Madrigal, 5 ms before Fig 110 – Fig 110

“This comes back several times. This is the secondary line of course. You have to give in but at certain points you want to be able to stretch it just to luxuriate, not really to get slow. Make sure that each one of those notes gets a certain amount of magnification. Volume's really important and it's important to come back from that *forte*. It's not indicated but you have to come back to a lesser dynamic than the *mezzo forte* that is indicated at the beginning but still be quite present on that descending chromatic line [9 – 12 measures after figure 109]. Then you get the melody and you're second player is the 8th-note impulse underneath. You want to establish a good rapport with your second player so you can ask them not to hurry into the second bar before 110. Just ask them to take the foot off of the gas.”

Act I No. 16 Madrigal, 4 ms after Fig 111 – end

Christie plays 4 – 5 measures after figure 111. “That is part of the melody. It's just one of those thing where you've gotta play at the volume of the strings. You are the only with that. The difficulty of course is playing from the written F to the written A-flat. It's good to have a vocal approach to it. It is really important to sustain the sound into that A-flat and that is dangerous and difficult.” Christie plays an example where the written A-flat loses good quality of timbre. “Holding the pitch is key and that's probably your best approach anyway. There is a lovely octave displacement three measures before figure 113. You don't have to worry too much about the A and F-sharp. Let those notes be and concentrate on playing that D in tune. It's tough.”

Act I No. 20 Romeo's Variation, 4 ms before Fig 140 – Fig 140
"This is so awkwardly pitched. The first hairpin after the espressivo is important but it's not as important as the second hairpin." Christie demonstrates. "Don't underplay the G otherwise there's nothing there. It's just too thickly written; it doesn't come out very well. If you want to think of this as a solo, you better play it with that kind of intent to be heard. The conductor is thinking about how to set up the new tempo so I don't even worry about it."

Act I No. 21 Love Dance, 4.5 measures before Fig 146 - 150

“One of the hardest things about this [ballet]. It shouldn't be a big deal. You're the fluttering background. The only important thing is counting and playing in the right place. It's a lot easier to be the main beat than to be the off beat but neither should be very difficult. You want your second player to be the kind of person who hits the ground running at 146 when they come in because it can really throw you when you suddenly have to take over the off beats.”

Act II No. 22 Folk Dance, 4 ms after Fig 154 – 4 ms before Fig 155

“My thing about 6/8 that I learned from Joaquin [Valdepeñas] is really important here.” Christie sings the phrase with an emphasis on the downbeats and a slightly lesser emphasis on the fourth 8th-note of each measure. “A good feeling of two just helps you with the phrasing. That's all you really need to think about. It's very tarantella-esque.” There is a continued discussion about the phrase at figure 156 and the scales at 160.

Act II No. 23 Romeo and Mercutio, 5 ms before Fig 171 – Fig 171 & 6 ms before end – end

“It's very similar to the one before, just up a tone. There's a passage in the third act of Cinderella where memories flow back and it's brilliant! It's pure use of dramatic music. Memories don't flow back here as much as characters come and go.”

Act II No. 25 Dance With Mandolins, Fig. 196 – Fig 197

“It's not particularly hard on the B-flat clarinet. The A clarinet version lies better when you go to the long F-sharp; it's fantastic. The next time we do this I want to play this on the A clarinet. I don't really have trouble with this but I think the idea of playing this on two D clarinets is an awesome idea. It's just sort of impractical. Who owns D clarinets? very few people. You wanna just spread the notes out. I like to come in early and hang on late. I don't think it's really good if it's...” As an example of what not to do Christie sings the rhythm, clipping the end of the motif. “I think it should really flow. You've basically gotta think that you are playing sound the whole time through the rests while the second clarinetist is playing. It will sound like the last note you are playing is the impulse beat but you should come in strong and indicate that first note as the impulse beat. You hang on long so there's this kind of overlap and constancy of sound. I think that works better.”

Act II No. 32 Tybalt Meets Mercutio, Fig 253 – 4 ms after Fig 53

“There's something about this that is very poignant. It's like a sketch on top of a much more serious drawing. I think in terms of how you phrase it, it's really much more linear. It's very different than when you're phrasing Juliet's theme the first time. Here, it's very plaintive. It has a very sad quality. Play it with a lift at the end of the first two measures.”

Act III No. 39 Farewell Before Departing, Fig 288 – 4 ms after Fig 290 & 4 ms after Fig 291 – 3 ms before Fig 292 & 4 ms before fig 294 – 295

“Before 294 is an interesting one for pitch. It's one of those breathtaking corners in Prokofiev where we ask, 'How did he get here [harmonically]?'” Christie plays two measures before figure 294. “The oboe comes in on the original note of the melody so you want to make sure you are not sharp on that E-sharp. It is the major third of the chord.”

Act III No. 41 Juliet Refuses to Marry Paris, 3 ms. Before Fig 304 – Fig 304
“I don't play this with a dot on the first note. It starts with the bass clarinet, then the second clarinet, and then the first clarinet. It should be very straightforward.” Christie demonstrates. “The saxophone follows.”

Act III No. 43

“This reminds me of the midnight scene in Cinderella. You're so unimportant here. It's about the turbulence.”

Act III No. 44 At Friar Lawrence's, pick up to 3 ms before Fig 313

“This is tricky. What I do, and it drives some of my colleagues crazy, is I throw the air outside my face so I am making sure the air is moving. It's a little Louis Armstrong trick, I think; how he used to play with openings on either side of his embouchure.” Christie demonstrates this passage. “Squeaking almost never happens when I do that. Anyway, the idea is that it propels the sound without making it too loud and without me feeling too gagged up. I want that F to just work. If I seal [my embouchure] too much, I'm not getting that effect. So I purposely leak there. I'm certain that in terms of what the audience hears, it's discernible. I use that to spin the sound with as much propulsion as I can here.”

Act III No. 44 At Friar Lawrence's, 2 ms before Fig 314 – Fig 314

“This is really a beautiful section. Two before 314, on that [concert] C-sharp, you are emerging from the colour so you don't make that an entry that's really important. I find this tricky for pitch too because the key keeps switching. The [concert] C-sharp is key. I believe that is tied.” Further discussion on pitch issues in figures 316 – 318.

“Pitching the chord four measures before 318 is probably the hardest thing in terms of pitch in the whole ballet.” Further discussion of figure 319 on length of the articulated quarter notes. “It has to have a halting character.” Further discussion of figure 320.

Act III No. 45 Interlude, 3 and 4 ms before the end

“It's [the first written G-sharp] a tricky pitch, it being the fifth of the chord. It would be bad if it was flat. Just a little stretch before the F-sharp [three measures before the end].”

Act III No. 47 Juliet Alone, pick up to 5 ms before Fig 332

“For high D-sharp, I don't use the thumb so that it flows from the [lower] D-sharp. I use an ordinary C-sharp fingering [for the following note].”

Act III No. 49 Dance of the Girl with Lilies, 4 ms before Fig 340 – 2 ms after Gig 342

“I love this one! Suddenly we are verging on the middleeast with the tambourine offbeats. It's such a quirky phrase. You're finishing the phrase of the violas and then you start your own.” Christie demonstrates. “I think that's a very crucial slur-lift thing in the character here. You don't want it to be heavy. It may be an editorial marking...” Christie plays the two similar phrases and shows the difference in slur markings over the written high C-sharps, “...but in the second phrase there are no slurs as well as an accent on the C-sharp on the downbeat. Just observe it. It's fun to do them differently. The first phrase almost looks like someone altered it. So there's a question mark about the articulation but one I would not raise unless it were brought up from on high. Essentially, I want to do this the way I want to do it and stay true to some intention of being interesting. And here...” Christie plays just the second beat to the downbeat where the high C-sharps occur “...it's different. So why not do it two slightly different ways? Nobody in the audience knows. By the tenth show everybody in the pit knows what you're doing. It's just a really great little clarinet phrase so you gotta enjoy it.”

“Again, this [the phrase surrounding figure 342] really more or less explains itself. He [Prokofiev] has written the wrong thing except musically it's right to do a diminuendo [at figure 342].” Christie demonstrates the descending arpeggio at figure 342. “But we need, of course, to be heard on those F-sharps.” Christie plays the whole phrase. “I
use the long F-sharp and I use one-and-two for the A-sharp. I don't mind being a little bit peculiar in this. At this point, it's about being sick or sad. Things are not good. This is such a strange little thing to play.”

Short discussion of No. 51

Act IV: Epilogue No. 52 Death of Juliet, 4 ms before Fig 363 – 7 ms after Fig 363

“This is the final utterance. Yes, definitely two clarinets in unison on this one. It's a trust game with your second clarinet player. They have to trust you and you have to play consistently. The untrusting second clarinet player tends to think 'I better not be late. It can't be longer than that.' What really belongs here is a kind of a lingering stretch. It has to not be in any hurry and yet it is marked a tempo.” Christie plays the first two measures of the clarinet soli.

“Have the feeling of a very placed quarter note. You don't want anyone to accuse you of being too self-indulgent. But I don't think there is anyone on the planet who doesn't really want this to linger. It's the light going out.”

Cinderella

“There's a great back and forth between humour and pathos. In the original Cinderella there's some real dark stuff in there. That's why it's terrific to play it because it's not a Disney version. There is a lot of humour in Kudelka's telling of the sisters.”

“Everybody is playing the same notes in many of the tutti passages. Don't be the one not.” Referencing all of the tutti section playing throughout Cinderella, Christie says, “It's an easy ballet for people to sit back and let the people who have worked hard do it.”

“The first time I had do this was for Kirov and it was the full version. It's so fairy tale-like and gorgeous.”

Act I No. 2 The Veil Dance, 9 ms after Fig 6 – Fig 9, 3 ms after Fig 10 – 6 ms after Fig 10, pick up to 2 ms before Fig 13 – 2 ms before Fig 14 for Bb cl

“The Introduction gives you a lot of legato playing which gives you a chance to make sure you're right on the instrument so that figure eight doesn't jump out at you. I play it on B-flat clarinet until figure seven and quickly switch clarinets there. The solo at the ninth measure of figure six sits really fine on B-flat clarinet. The arpeggiation is really dicey on the B-flat clarinet in the big lone solo at figure eight. Why not play it on the A clarinet? It's a combination of G major and B minor. It just sits so nicely on A clarinet. In the three introductory gestures [five and six measures after figure eight].” Christie plays the three motifs with an over blown throat G for the high D. “I play just an open high D where the timbre doesn't matter as much.” Christie plays the 16th-note arpeggios three measures before figure nine. “This would all be a semi-tone lower on the A clarinet. It works really, really well and you want that comfort level.” Christie plays the arpeggios again on B-flat clarinet to show the elevated level of difficulty to execute this passage. “It's all about avoiding the side C-sharp fingering. There's also the question of switching from the fork fingering for the A-sharp to the high C-sharp side key fingering. Gosh, it's just such a good idea to play this on the A clarinet. The great thing about this is that there's really nothing going on on stage, at least in our staging. You're basically gonna be unleashed hopefully by the conductor who does not insist on conducting you through it. That's the last thing you're going to need and you certainly don't want to look up.” Christie plays the 16th-note passage at tempo. “The phrasing of it is to emphasize those lovely transferred strong beats.” Christie sings the rhythm and contour of two measures before figure nine. “You don't need to make too much of that but it is important to articulate groupings of four after that big swooping arpeggiation. For me, it's all about fluidity in the fingering. I don't make anything fancy happen for the high G to the F-sharp. I just go to a simple fingering that will let the high F-sharp speak on the arpeggio down. At this point you're not being judged on pitch so much. You don't want to be grossly flat but you want to be able to just pick it out. It sits better on the A clarinet too because there's a certain weight to it.”

“Now, the challenge here is what to do with the following passage. This is way dicier actually. I stay on the A clarinet, reading up a semi-tone until after figure 10 where in my part I have written in the accidentals I require because it's just too hard to think this through on the spot. The fingering is not so bad: it's just about going to a high G-sharp instead of a high G. The next time this appears you will be playing the same fingerings before figure 13 that
you just played on the A clarinet. This can be good although it can kind of throw you because our ear helps us find
notes.”

Act I No. 2 The Veil Dance, pick up to Fig 15 – 6 ms after Fig 16 for Bb cl

“This is a theme that continues to come back at figure 15. It's pretty straightforward writing. There's a great deal of
fun in this. It's as if after composing Romeo he [Prokofiev] allowed himself to compose a ballet that would be fun! It
has a lot of humour in the writing.” Christie plays the first four measures of figure 15. “So many of these flourishes
in there are just brilliant and everybody's playing them. Not unlike Mercutio or the March [in Romeo and Juliet].
Our version cuts at figure 16 to big number three. It's a shame that some of those things are cut. And this is a
Kudelka ballet, and you know Kudelka cares a lot about music. So when he cuts stuff, there's probably a good
reason. I'm sure there's a certain part of him that says, 'I wish I could use this but it doesn't fit my story telling.' It's
too bad because it [figure 16 to the end of the number] looks like fun.”

Act I No. 7 The Dancing Lesson, 4 ms after Fig 58 – 2 ms before Fig 59 for Bb cl

“The first thing you really have to do is smoothly play the easiest thing in the book: diminished sevenths on C-sharp.
A: it's not so tough! and B: you sound great because the bassoon is struggling. Then that lovely theme that he
introduced at figure 59 has got to have a certain degree of goofiness to it. It's mischievous. I really enjoy living in
the upper register in this piece. There's a lot of it. It's not nearly as hard as Romeo in terms of displacement of the
registers.”

Act I No. 9 Cinderella Dreams of the Ball, Fig 69 – 7 ms before Fig 72 for Bb cl

“Ah yes! He [Prokofiev] does this a lot. There's a kind of dream-like character to a lot of this. There's a lot of
internal Cinderella story telling, like what's in her heart. The first appearance of the waltz theme comes up in this
number which is so beautifully introduced. It develops out of that comic theme that is in the previous number. At
figure 69 this theme comes back and it's very delicate with the same character: the accent in the third bar on the
weak beat. You get to play this little play-out of it.” Christie plays two measures before figure 70. “And again, in the
next downbeat where you have that at the end is this dream-like waltz character coming in. The accompaniment
persists for 13 bars with a poco ritardando and then the bass clarinet plays one measure before figure 71. And then
this waltz occurs [at figure 71]. Is it a 3/4 or is it a 3/2? He [Prokofiev] does this a lot.” Christie plays at figure 71.
“It's just such a beautiful thing. And again, it's easier than Romeo in a sense that it's not interrupting a line with a lot
of jumps so much as it is covering a great deal of range.” Christie plays the main notes B-natural, C-natural, C-
sharp, C-natural, and B-natural, confining them all to the upper octave. He sustains the notes for four counts each
with the exception of the final C-natural. “That's all that's going on in terms of the thematic motion of notes. But this
occurs through the octave. It's just a really lovely part.”

Further discussion of Prokofiev's Masquerade and Classical Symphony.

Act I No. 13 The Summer Fairy

“This is really lovely. You want it to be more generous in terms of time.” Christie plays at figure 90. “You're not
accompanied at all here. It's all about just extending a very long harp-like cadenza through this five of five feeling.
It's all been in C major and now it's tonicizing G. I would always recommend and do this: playing note by note
through the line of it with a virtual slow motion approach. I think about where I want to move and where I want the
weight to be.” Christie plays this passage adding weight to certain notes “a little tiny bit at the top of the arpeggio
and then a little bit more at the downbeat of the bar after figure 90.” Christie sings an example of where he places
the weight in the phrase. “Really show the groupings. And if I could take time,” Christie plays with a slight tenuto
on beats three and four, “...that's where I would make a little bit more of a lean. I think it's a really lovely middle-of-
the-bar play out to the downbeat of the slow bar. It's very important to not finish on the fermata.” Christie plays the
measure of the fermata and sustains through the written G-sharp, leading the sound into the proceeding note.
“The [concert] F-natural at the bottom is, of course, a leading tone. The conductor might want a lift between the low
[written] G-sharp and G-natural. I think you want to play this solo more like a harp.”
“At the end of Summer Fairy, it's completely different from what you've just done. It is a big solo. A lot of Prokofiev solos emerge out of the texture and you're never sure, 'is it me yet?' and I think it has to be you from the very beginning. You're taking over a note from the flute; a low F for them. It's not a tune that starts on that. It's the middle of the tune. When you get to the sounding D-sharp at the beginning of the next bar, that's it really. The cascade of notes off of your [concert] D-sharp is, again Prokofiev, where you just sustain one melodic note in the penultimate measure.”

“Let the D come out whenever the resistance is correct from the A [in the final measure]. I think it's how I approach voicing: the lower end is harder to blow, even the throat register, and the higher notes whistle out with much less resistance. The last gesture is really about just sustaining that A (the fifth) into the resistance that the D (the tonic) presents so that the D can just emerge. It's sort of sleight of hand, really. It's musical magician-ship because everybody wants a good connection but it's about making sure that everybody hears the A and that the D emerges from that colour. Then the audience or your colleagues will think, 'oh! How did he or she do that?' Pitch is pretty important. Keep that higher F-sharp low. Don't be too low on the A and the D will be fine. It's really easy to play sharp on the second F-sharp and then drop [pitch] for the A.”

Discussion of Act I No. 14 Crickets and Butterflies and further discussion of Act I No. 15 Autumn Fairy.

Act I No. 16 The Winter Fairy, Fig 102 – Fig 104

“This is just so sweet. This reminds me of playing the first thing in Salome. Everybody's going to have a different opinion of how fast to play those 32nd-notes. Is it right in time or do you stretch it out so you hear that lovely tone of the scale? In this case, you want the trust of your conductor so that they know to place the downbeat with you and that it is in agreement. I don't think there is a real necessity for:” Christie sings the 32nd-notes exactly in tempo with no rubato whatsoever. “It just sounds so tiresome.” Christie then plays it in the way he sang it. “But you could do that. I don't see the need for it. I think you want to be a little lazy on the way up.”

“When you have something this potentially banal you have to really just not think about being musically ingenious but you must think like a dancer. This is about sustaining a posture and a poise and doing it with utter commitment to form. In the last one of the four groupings is where you show the change. Show the motion of the F, D, and B-flat.” The groupings are two beats and Christie is referring to the third and fourth beats in the second complete measure and the downbeat of the third complete measure. Christie sings the phrase and shows the direction of the phrase culminating in dynamic and expression in the third beat in the second complete measure. “It's such a simple melody. Turn off your ego and just let it be for the dancers.”

Discussion of Act I No. 19 Cinderella's Departure for the Ball “I play up the sneering, snarling quality of it. I don't think it's a pretty waltz at all. It's exciting but I think there should be that aspect of something sinister. It's so modern.”

Discussion of Act II No. 26 Mazurka and Entrance of the Prince

“Ballet is founded on the principal of masculinity and femininity. There is so much of it. This is a really good study.”

Act II No. 30 Grand Waltz, Fig 218 – Fig 223 & 6 ms before Fig 227 – Fig 228, in Bb

“This is surely one of the most fun waltzes to play. In the theme you have to be quite prominent with that piano marking.” Further discussion of section 224 to 227.

“Balance is always the issue here. It's still a very busy orchestration until right before figure 227. I'm very much concerned with pitch in this one, of course, and also the connection from the high F-sharp to the descending line. Prokofiev has told you what you need to know: it's a hemiola proceeding out of a held note. So much of this is like that earlier example of a 3/2 waltz superimposed over a 3/4 waltz [Act I No. 9 Cinderella Dreams of the Ball]. Even two measures before figure 227 could be interpreted as one large 3/2 measure. I hear the F-sharp [one measure before figure 227] as an important impulse beat but it could be a larger 3/2 meter. I really love playing this [figure
in the orchestra but not when I am 'it' in the room. I would hate to play this in an audition because you really rely on the texture around you to give you a little bit of cushion."

Christie further explains the phrasing at figure 227: “I listen very much to that rising line in the cellos just like I would like them to listen to my line. It is a kind of a duo more than a solo and I think there is this lovely interplay between the two lines. It’s [the first F-sharp of the solo] sustained and then moves forward with a little bit of momentum.” Christie gradually increases the volume through the first F-sharp and continues to play until the descending line two measures after figure 227. “At that point there is no hurry until the third measure of 227. It's really important not to feel scared and hurried at the high F-sharp. I hate any break in there [between the B and high F-sharp at figure 227]. I think it's totally unnecessary. You have the knowledge that you are going to get that break [a chance to breathe] at the end of the descending line. So, I do not breathe after the long B [two measures before figure 227]. Once I begin the descent, it's the groupings of four and then the grouping of six into the bottom that's important to emphasize. That's where the breath is [pick up to three measures before figure 228]. Give your second clarinet player a lot of sound because they're coming in on that F-sharp after sitting and listening to you. Ask them to be late rather than try to nail the downbeat. I think it's really important for them to play into the sound that you're giving them and there's plenty of room for that. You've just done this big accelerando and there's nothing marked that says it has to stay in time, although this depends on the conductor. This is where you sell it to your colleagues and they then would be your allies where anyone can hear that it's a sensible thing to do. So give yourself some time for a breath because you've just sold it in measures five, six, and seven after figure 227. So it's about taking the 3/4 back from the accelerando. Just being fluid with the tempo is a really useful approach to this. Otherwise you are going to need the breath before [pick up to three measures before figure 227]. There's a dream-like quality to this. I think there should be a lot of freedom at 227 and 228. I could be wrong because, of course, it's choreographed.”

Act II No. 32 Cinderella's Variation, Fig 237 – 239, for Bb cl

“You almost have to wonder about Prokofiev's sense of humour because there's a degree of silliness to this line. It reminds me of Juliet a little bit: there's the innocent quality and the flighty quality of the 3/4. There is, no doubt, room for some virtuosic dancing in all of this. What you are requested to do is to be really poised. The difficulty is phrasing to the second complete bar each time so that it's a pick up to the downbeat twice. It's almost asking for:” Christie plays with accents on all second beats. “...but that doesn't seem very graceful to me at all. So, play the first three notes as pick ups. It's curious because it is a 2/4. I think what that does is make sure it is a little bit staid and held. Not each downbeat is as important as the other. I think there is a weaker downbeat and a stronger downbeat as if it was in 4/4. The figure could have been written as 2-3-4-1 instead of in 2/4 with beat 3 sort of a stronger impulse than either 2 or 4.”

Discussion of Act II No. 33 Prince's Variation

Act II No. 35 Duet of the Sisters With The Oranges, Fig 255 – Fig 256, Bb cl

“This is, again, more humour and more dicey.” Discussion of figure 243. “In the solo at the meno mosso, you're just a decoration of the line but you are the line, in a sense, when you play the downbeat of the third bar [of figure 255]. So the phrase goes towards that [written G-sharp].” Further discussion of the end of this number.

Act II No. 36 Pas de Deux: The Prince and Cinderella, Fig 260 – 4 ms after Fig 260 inclusive & last 5 ms of number, for Bbl cl

“This is a gorgeous duet and this comes back time and again. There's a cello line that you have to wait and wait for. The duo with the second clarinet is very gratifying to play. Remember that it is a very long 3.” Christie sings the second measure of figure 260 and phrases towards the big second beat. He says to not put any pulse or accent on the written G in that measure. “You just have to imagine the weight of these beats rather than try to play with accents because it's so slow.” Christie plays the fourth measure of figure 260 only highlighting the written F-sharp, E, and D. “Nothing could be simpler. With the decoration on top of it it's still the same shape. The pick up into the fourth measure is so marvelous. You are really not required to do anything unusual here. Just finish to the D without making too big a deal of it. It's really about just enjoying the simplicity of it.”
Discussion of Act II No. 27 Waltz - Coda and Act II No. 38 Midnight

Act III No. 44 Third Gallop of the Prince, 4 ms after Fig 318 – 5 ms before Fig 319 inclusive

“It's really terrific Prokofiev writing. This one is so cool. It's so great to play that interval [written G to high F] which is so surprising and a lovely invitation to go a little bit nuts.” Christie plays this passage and uses the right sliver key for the high written F.

Act III No. 44 Third Gallop of the Prince, Fig 320 – 2 ms before Fig 322 inclusive

“There's no secret to what you have to do. The arpeggios are measured and are not going to be heard unless you really nail them.” It is crucial and it is easy to screw it up.”

Act III No. 45 Cinderella Awakes, 8 ms after Fig 326 – downbeat of next ms, Bb cl

“Cinderella Awakes is beautiful because there is so much of that dreamy quality that I talked about earlier [in Act I No. 9]. However, now she is reliving it instead of imagining it! It's so bittersweet. That darkness of the opening comes back here and that darkness is where she lives. It's nice to be able to play the whole theme.” Discussion of two measures before figure 326. “In the B-flat minor scale it is crucial to make a good connection between the written D-flat and the E-flat.” Christie discusses possible fingering options in this passage. “If you use the side key for the high D-flat it could make the connection easier. But what if you are slow and lazy getting off the side keys? So I like...” Christie plays using the regular D-flat/C-sharp fingering. “I think it is a psychological truth but not an actual truth that it is easier to descend when you don't cross the register. It's really just easier to descend when your fingers are in place. I don't really want to take time with it. I like the way the E-flat emerges out of the scale if you don't take time. Don't rush it though. Overall I like the scale to be a little luxurious. It's just a little dramatic moment on stage.”

Act III No. 45 Cinderella Awakes, pick ups to Fig 333 – Fig 334, Bb cl

“This is a sleepy time waltz. It's as if what Cinderella is experiencing isn't really happening. It depicts fantasy and memory. You don't need to breathe because you should be thinking about how this is wispy. There's not a huge amount of weight in there.” Christie plays the solo. “Certainly, even an echo is probably too conscious but it's like a fade. So, when he [Prokofiev] marks piano under the pick up notes to three measures before figure 334, he hasn't mark anything else. This is like an indication of a memory or a dream so you have to play like it's going away.” Christie whispers the rhythm.

Act III No. 46 The Morning After the Ball, Fig 338 – 5 ms before Fig 339 inclusive, Bb cl

“This is a nice tune and this [written G-sharp tied dotted half note] is an extremely elongated melodic note. It's a solo right from the beginning of the note. It's not a creep in. It's a kind of long question mark. Other stuff is going on but you don't have to come in like you don't belong. This is nice only in prospect. The arpeggio can be very out of tune. It's so dicey. My solution is a lot of every other [note].” Christie outlines the arpeggio by playing the written G-sharp, A, C-sharp, he skips the high E, plays the A, skips the C-sharp, and proceeds to the next measure, only plays the written E and C-sharp, and finally plays the dotted half note written A. He thinks about giving those notes a little more emphasis than the others. “When this is played at tempo like this, it isn't noticeable. So, I'm really letting the second note be. I'm not trying to chase the line around.”

General discussion on the ending of Cinderella: “The problem with Cinderella musically is that it takes forever to end. There's all this kind of, '...and then it was even more beautiful, and then everyone was even happier.' It seems to me like it's over stated. As lovely as it is to play the Amoroso, by this time you've said, 'Aren't they already living happily ever after?' I don't know what's left to resolve but obviously there is something. Pitch is everything. It [the orchestration] is so thick.”

Act III No. 48 The Prince Finds Cinderella, 4 ms after Fig 369 – Fig 370
Christie discusses the beginning of the number. “It's important to play in the voice of the cello and not try to be leading the colour so much as imagining that you're that beautiful resonating cello instrument. Because it is very chromatic and you don't need a lot of people clamouring for attention.”

Christie sings the music at figure 369 up to the entrance of the clarinet soli. “You absolutely just want to be relaxed on this. I don't know exactly what the demands are on the stage but it just shouldn't have a feeling of hurry. And yet what happens often is at the rit. at the end of this...” Christie plays the final measure of the clarinet soli, taking a lot of time on the last written E, “…is not an exaggeration of what happens, at least in our orchestra. The cellos are busy with 32nd-notes and 16th-notes, which has to happen in those two 8th-notes. It takes over the importance of the finish out and gets in the way of the simplicity of the end of the clarinet soli, which doesn't resolve here. There should be that feeling of surprise in that cadence rather than the feeling that the cadence happens in the wrong harmony. It's a suspension of harmony.”

Act III No. 49 Slow Waltz, 3 ms before Fig 374 – 2 ms after Fig 376 inclusive, Bb cl

“The difficulty comes up in the preceding G major descending arpeggio where he [Prokofiev] really does his best to destroy any sense of centre of your pitch. This is so pretty.” Christie plays the two measure solo. “You don't want to go too flat on the D. It's really important to play the pick up with a lot of espressivo. At the Assai più mosso there's a character change and a sudden change in movement up there [on stage] and you really have to get out of the beat by beat feel and straight into really feeling the bar; almost feeling it in one. The fingering I use for the high D-sharp is open thumb and register key; the Brahms E-flat, my teacher used to call it. I don't keep the thumb down because I think it's a bit of a flat fingering. That fingering also speaks beautifully so roll the thumb open. You have to do it again from a B at 376. That's a line that intrudes and then disappears. You can do a little bit of that smarmy clarinet thing and play a long downbeat [on the written high D] which you can do to a degree but really get to it and then get off of it because the phrase keeps going. It's really about the next bar.” Further discussion of the trill before figure 378 and the passage at figure 379. “Show the flute where your 32nd-notes are. Don't be an artist here. Be a crafts person.”
Appendix E: Interview Transcriptions of Steve Hartman, Principal Clarinetist of New York City Ballet Orchestra

Steve Hartman, October 21st, 2013

General Comments

Steve Hartman studied with Earl Bates, Charles Hoffer and Les Scott in St. Louis, then Bernard Portnoy and Augustin Duquès at Juilliard. He studied privately with Kalmen Opperman for nearly 40 years, until Mr. Opperman’s death in 2010. Hartman refers to Augustin Duquès as ‘Gus.’ “Walter Damrosch brought Mr. Duquès to New York in 1923 to play principal clarinet in the New York Symphony. This orchestra merged with the New York Philharmonic and became what is officially known as the Philharmonic-Symphony of New York. Gus lost out on the merger deal. Whoever was principal clarinet of the Philharmonic at the time, it may have been Bellison, became principal of the merged orchestra. It was the roaring 20s, at the beginning of movie production when talkies and musicals were not yet around. So they had live orchestras for every performance of every movie. He [Duquès] played in movies and Broadway shows and when Radio City Music Hall opened he became the original clarinetist there. That was in about 1932 or 1933. His first wife had been killed in a car accident in the 1920s. He then later married one of the original Rockettes but they didn't have any children. I think he only had one son. His grandson, Ric Duquès, and his wife donated a Business School building to George Washington University. When the NBC Symphony was formed in 1937 Gus was asked to be principal clarinet. We had a birthday party for him at his apartment in 1972. It was his last birthday, which was his 73rd birthday. He played us a recording of the NBC Symphony before Toscanini conducted there. It was Artur Rodzinski conducting Tchaikovsky's 4th Symphony. It was interesting to hear players you've never even heard of. Gus left the NBC Symphony in 1949 and so all recordings prior to that date had Gus on them. He was a double lip Frenchman, very closed mouthpiece, light reed. He was trained in France and he could solfege faster than any of us could play. He could play even faster than he could solfege, at least certainly in his prime. He was a wonderful man and a wonderful musician and coach. One more thing: when he was in school while rehearsing the Debussy Rhapsody for Clarinet, the composer walked in. “There are only ever two tempi in ballet: too fast and too slow.”

“The thing about tempo in dance, even if you have the right metronome marking exactly and you practice it the same way every time, the dancers may need to dance faster or slower on any given day. That's why it is difficult to have a definitive recording of ballet music. Because, you know how it is, your body is different every day. Some days you can tongue really fast and some days you can't. You know? And it's the same thing with dancers. These dancers have tremendous technique but 132 might feel too slow one day and too fast the next. You don't know how it's gonna be! And sometimes there're great things that happen because of the collaboration between the pit and the stage or members of the orchestra and sometimes it's just not happening for whatever reason. It's the vibe and cycles of energy from the musicians that day. And you can feel it when it's good and you can feel it when it's not. Not that anything is necessarily different. So that's the kind of thing that I just wanted to say about playing ballet music. You really are the singers in this situation. The conductor's job, of course, is very important in terms of being able to put the music under the dancers' feet so to speak. But we have no idea what they are doing up there. When I was playing on stage (a pas de deux called A Place for Us) with them I couldn't pay attention to what they were doing except for a couple of cues, and that was kind of cool, just to have to hold this one fermata and crescendo until her foot hit right at that point. And yeah, it’s a little bit different [each show] but hopefully the conductor is following that step; it's their job. But then if the tempo is a little faster or a little slower, they [the dancers] find inspiration from the different feeling coming from the music.”

“Playing ballet differs from playing symphonic and opera repertoire. With opera, you are accompanying and playing with the sound of the singers. We can't see the dancers. With the way the ballet orchestra pit is set up now, even the violins in our orchestra can't see the dancers' feet. In opera you play with singers. You can't really play with a dancer without seeing them. You have to depend on the conductor to hopefully put you in the right place for what the dancers' need. Sometimes they don't need anything from you and sometimes they do. So, when I have solos I feel a certain amount of freedom but I am always watching the conductor. I know when the conductor is waiting for me
and I know when I am watching him or her. That's something I think you just pick up from experience. Obviously with certain solos you practice them a lot, you get nervous about them and everything like that. So you're much more self conscious until you get a little more comfortable. Luckily most of the repertoire that we do, we do enough over the years that eventually you can get comfortable with almost any repertoire.”

“Prodigal Son is a great piece and we are practically the only company in North America other than ABT that performs it.”

“Tempos vary from conductor to conductor and from production to production.”

Swan Lake

“Our [NYCB's Swan Lake] is a two act version.”

Act I No. 7 Sujet

“Sometimes you start this number before the applause stops [at the end of No. 6].”

(No. 11) Act II, No. 12

“We do this one transposed for the A clarinet because there is no time to switch. It goes nicely on the A clarinet in that part where you answer the oboe.” “This [5 measures after figure 52] is a good example: in opera, obviously the singers are the singers. In ballet, we are the singers. The oboe has this phrase and then you answer it. If the oboe decides to play the solo at figure 52 as a long, legato phrase, you can't play your phrase in a choppy way. So whatever he or she does, you have to play off of each other. Even though it's orchestra ballet, it's still chamber music. So that's the kind of example where you would listen to the character the oboe player puts into their solo. And, also know that people don't play their solos the same way every time. So you do something that answers it.”

“This [No. 11] is really better on the A clarinet. And these trills work ok on the A clarinet, maybe a little better on the B-flat clarinet but for this little duet [between the oboe and clarinet at figure 52], it's nicer notes on the A clarinet.”

(No. 12 Var I) Act II No. 13 Var. I

In reference to the solo figure at measure 16-18 that gets passed throughout the woodwind section, Steve Hartman says, “It's not so bad for the clarinet but the bassoon's lick is the hardest.”

Act II No. 13 Var. II

“There's a tradition of really playing with rubato in measures 19-22.”

(No. 15) Act III No. 17 Scène

“It's a duet with the second clarinet.” Hartman demonstrates how he would play it and followed it up with, “...it depends on how it is conducted.”

Act III, No. 19 Pas de Six, Var. I

Hartman demonstrates the solo at a tempo of the quarter equal to 104. He followed up by remarking “I like to give a firm accent on the downbeats like the way I just did. It gives it some character. Then the flute takes over and it is a challenging part to play.”

Act III No. 20a Russian Dance, 9 measures after figure C
“This is obviously written as a strict quintuplet but I don't think they did strict quintuplets in Tchaikovsky's time anyway. So whatever the violinist does, you do. So, one of our violinists goes: (plays an example of 11 measures after C in two different ways). So whatever they do, you do. There's no correct because if you played it as written on the page it would sound as an even quintuplet. It bears no relationship, most likely, to whatever your concertmaster is doing. So that's the rule on that one: Listen!

The oboe has the same solo that the clarinet has four measures before marked piano and solo cantabile.”

No. 19 Act III No. 21 Spanish Dance

“We play this on A clarinet and wipe out all those sharps! It's better at the key change too. You don't have to worry about whether you have a left hand E-flat key. So, I recommend that number to be played on A clarinet; for those of us who don't have left hand E-flat keys.”

Act III No. 22 Neapolitan Dance

“The trumpet does a stylistic thing here.” Hartman sings the melody of the trumpet solo with rubato, starting slowly and then singing faster towards the end of the phrase. “So we have to do a little accelerando towards the end of our phrase” (in the 10th measure of that section).

Act III No. 23 Mazurka

“This is another clarinet duet. We did this on the fast side. A long time ago when I played this with another ballet company with ABT or the first time I ever played it, I was playing 2nd with the Bolshoi when they were on tour in North America.” Hartman demonstrates.

Act IV No. 26 Entr'acte

Hartman demonstrates. “The clarinet has this solo after the flute has the same solo two measures before.”

Act IV No. 27 Danses des petits cygnes

“The clarinet has the lead in this whole number. The last time I played this the conductor disagreed with the two measure phrasing I was using. But, here's how I like to play it.” Hartman demonstrated at the quarter note equal to approximately 88-92. “And if it's slower than that you can really add hairpins over two measure phrases.” Hartman demonstrated again at a slower tempo at the quarter note equal to approximately 76. “I like to play it like that. I don't like it just flat without dynamics. The tempo depends on the conductor and the dancers. I love this melody.”

No. 29, should be Act III No. 19 Pas de six Var. I, Fig 35

“Yeah, definitely on the A clarinet. And just transpose the whole thing. It's easy because it's slow. Take a nice breath before the half note at the beginning of the solo. I usually make this half note like a forte piano because you're all alone and it's like an announcement.”

Sleeping Beauty

“My first really good job was in 1975. I played 2nd clarinet to a guy that played everything very strongly. So that's where I first got the idea that Sleeping Beauty was a clarinet concerto.”

Prologue No. 3 Pas de six, ms. 10 – 26

“I very much point out that it's a triplet when I play the last beat of measure 13. I don't want it to sound like a 16th-note.” Hartman demonstrates and plays the final 8th-note triplet of measure 13 as long as he can within the time. He does it in a similar fashion in the second and fourth beats of measure 14. “Now, the oboe has the melody at measure
18 so the clarinet’s dynamic is mezzo piano. At measure 22 it is a clarinet solo. In measure 24 you never know what the conductor is going to ask for in terms of the speed of that measure. Sometimes they just meet you at the bottom and let you play what is comfortable for you and sometimes they rush you or they drag you. That's what it is and that's the nature of the job.”

Prologue No. 3 Pas de six, ms 72 – end

“Try to play it as precisely as you can. Don't treat it like a turn or a mordent.”

Prologue No. 3 Pas de six, Var. I, Candide, ms. 1 – 20

“This is your duet with the oboe. Start a little stronger and then get softer when the oboe comes in. It starts mezzo forte, you are all by yoursefl, and the dancers need to hear something. In the fifth measure you need to get out of the oboe player's way by playing softer.”

Prologue No. 3 Pas de six, Var. II, Coulante: The Fairy of Blooming Wheat, ms. 1 – 18

“This is in octaves with the 2nd clarinet. It depends on the tempo, of course, but play it really short and strong all the way through.”

Prologue No. 4, Finale, ms. 1 – 8

“This often starts while the applause is going on. So, if the applause continues into the beginning of the Finale, I would recommend starting loud instead of piano. In measure seven I really make clear the difference of the rhythm in the first and third beats so there's a real contrast in the rhythm. I usually play a square quintuplet on beat three unlike the quintuplet figure in the Russian Dance in Swan Lake.”

Act I No. 5 Scène ms. 125-126

“It's with the bassoon.”

Act I No. 8 b) Dances of the Maids of Honour and Pages, ms. 94 – 130

“This is a spot that needs to be practiced. Measure 119 is just a little tricky.”

Act I No. 9 Finale, ms. 95-114 & Act II No. 11 Blind Man's Buff

Hartman acknowledges the need for clarinetists to practice these fast passages.

Act II No. 15 Pas d'action: Coda, ms. 5 – 9

Hartman demonstrates the principal clarinet part. “Make a nice diminuendo in measure 8 and 9. And if you play it together it sounds like this:” Hartman demonstrates the composite rhythm that the 1st and 2nd clarinet parts create.

Act II No. 15 Pas d'action: Coda, ms. 87 – 90

“In these measures, the flute, oboe, clarinet and bassoon play articulated 16ths. If somebody can't tongue it that fast then everybody has to slur the first two 16th-notes on the second beat of their solo.”

Act II No. 18 Entr'acte, ms. 1 – 22

“We play this five minute violin solo in the middle of the first half of the Balanchine Nutcracker at NYCB. American Ballet does not use this number in their Nutcracker.”
“The beginning is the accompaniment to the violin solo and then the violin is doing some other stuff while the clarinet has this:” Hartman demonstrates. “I play it on the A clarinet, by the way. Our print is for Bb clarinet but in the NYCB's version of this in the Nutcracker and Sleeping Beauty it is in between two numbers that are for A clarinet and at some point I realized that it sounds better on A clarinet.”

Act II No. 19 Symphonic Entr'acte: Sleep, ms. 96 – 102

Hartman demonstrated this solo.

Act III No. 23 Pas de quatre: Var. II The Silver Fairy, ms. 24 – 32

Hartman demonstrated this solo. “The flute has a similar solo at the beginning of this number.”

Act III No. 24 Pas de caractère: Puss-in-Boots and the White Cat, ms. 30 - 43

“This is unison with the 2nd clarinet. The notes not being written out in measure 37, 38, and 41 is a little bit of a pain but it's not the worst thing in the world. Sometimes these repeat signs are okay but when you really have to concentrate on the notes it's not so easy.”

Act III No. 25 Pas de quatre: The Bluebird

“I play this on Bb clarinet. The flute has this solo the first time. The flute has forte and you are answering him or her. Your dynamics are not equal. Now, in measure 18 the flute answers you. So this time it is forte. There's a little hesitation into it usually.” Hartman demonstrates how he takes time on the fourth beat of measure 18 before he places the downbeat of measure 19. He makes sure to hold the first note in measure 19 a full 8th-note. He does the same in measure six on the third beat. “You are with the flutes in the final measure.” Hartman has some remarks about the first and second half of this number: “There's a difference between when you are answering the flute and when you are the leader. Note the mezzo forte at the beginning and the forte starting in measure 18.”

Act III No. 25 Pas de quatre: The Bluebird and Princess Florine, ms. 10 - 18

“In context you feel the style of it.” Hartman sings the rhythms of the flute parts during the clarinet solo. “Somehow the 16th-notes become more of a playful thing when you listen to the flutes.”

Act III No. 25 Pas de quatre: Coda, ms. 14 – 37

“You want your 16th-notes to be as even as possible.”

Act III No. 28 Pas de deux: Variation II: Aurora, ms. 15 - 29

“Measure 15 is a solo piano. Over the years I have come to play this solo in a lighter manner. It's not overly shaped; just a little bit. It's pretty straight just because of the character of the music that comes before it.”

The Nutcracker

Overture Miniature - 4 – 8 ms after Fig. A

“Sometimes it takes a little while for the tempo to be established, especially with a guest conductor. I try to establish steadiness when I come in with my solo by slightly stressing the first sixteenth of every bar. I usually make a diminuendo at the end of the phrase.”

Act I No. 1, Scene - 9. ms after Fig. B – Fig. C
“Now sometimes we take a lot of time and sometimes we don’t take much time at all. It depends on the conductor. Also, after playing this a thousand times it’s a little too much to take so much time every single time. So, if I have a choice in the matter to take time and place it, I usually save it for the last time. So, the first time is very straight because it’s a new tempo anyway.” Hartman demonstrates this solo and shows a clear difference between the 8th-notes with and without staccato marks. “When you begin the reiteration of this solo after figure C, sometimes you take a little time or a lot of time. Take the most time on the last time [pick up into four measures before the end of the solo]. If you take time at the reiteration of this solo [which is the penultimate time] then you must keep the tempo going in the final time. Some conductors might want to play around with it every single time.”

Act I No. 1, Scene Allegro Vivace – Meno 8 ms. before Fig. G

“It’s never easy because by the time you get here you are kind of tired.”

Act I No. 2, March, Fig. E – Fig. F

“It depends on the tempo but it should be playable so that all notes are articulated.”

Act I No. 3, Children's Gallop and Dance of the Parents - two 16th pickup notes to Fig A – 4 ms before Fig B

“This one I always play on the A and the associate clarinetist plays it on B-flat clarinet. Some intervals do not speak as easily as others in this passage. It is necessary to practice this passage before Nutcracker season.”

Act I No. 4, Scene – 7 ms after Fig C to Fig D

Hartman demonstrates this passage and makes the accents on the half notes very clear. He shows the gradualness of the crescendo four measures before figure D. Hartman demonstrates that the reiteration of this theme with the second clarinet in unison is at a louder dynamic than the first time it is stated. Hartman plays a brisk molto più presto and ever so slightly places the final written D in fortissimo.

Act I No. 6, Scene, 2 ms after Fig C – 4 ms before Fig E

“For me this is one of the hardest licks for some reason. It's important to decide beforehand on which fingering you will use for the grace notes D-sharps. It might be the smartest to use the one-and-one fingering for d-sharp, but I don't. I play it with my left ring finger because I like the idea of switching from the left hand D-sharp to the right hand E-flat. I could probably do it either way at this point.”

Act I No. 6, Scene, 8-10 ms inclusive after Fig F

“This is always a tricky lick, kind of similar to the one from Daphnis and Chloe. It is easier if your clarinet has a left hand E-flat key. Otherwise, you have to slide your right pinky from the E-flat key to the c key on the fourth beat.”

Act I No. 9, Dance of the Snowflakes, 12 - 9 ms before Fig J

“This is one of the toughest licks in the whole piece, for me. It's also completely covered by the entire ensemble.”

Act II No. 11, Scene, Fig A to 2 ms after Fig B

“Harmonically it doesn't really go anywhere. But you can adjust the dynamics to make a shape out of the three motives. For example, you can play a mezzo forte at your entrance at figure A. In the second entrance play forte and the third entrance fortissimo. The first time play the rhythm in tempo. The second time, stretch on the b-flat on the top of the descending scale. On the third time really exaggerate it so that you show direction and character.”

“Two measures before figure B the second clarinet plays your lick two beats before you.” The principal and second clarinet alternate motives for four measures. “It's the lack of a third in the B-flat dominant seventh chord that makes
these arpeggios tricky [one measure before figure B and at figure B]. It's easier on the B-flat clarinet and on the D clarinet but I don't do that. The next B-flat major arpeggio that happens three times is easier.”

Act II No. 12, Divertissement b) Arabian Dance, ms 5 - 13

“Our tempo is fairly slow. In your third measure make the 8th-note G more of a sustained accent and the first to Gs more like accents. Make sure not to taper the sound of the 8th-note G. The same goes for 14 measures after figure D. Don't decrescendo on the 8th-note low G. Play the final measure with the softest dynamic.”

Act II No. 13, Waltz of the Flowers, 9 ms before Fig A – Fig A

“... I like to stay pretty loud and make the diminuendo only one measure before figure A. In the second entrance, I save a little forte for the last measure [two measures before figure B].”

**Romeo and Juliet**

Act I No. 1 Introduction, 6ms after Fig. 2 – 1 quarter note before Fig. 3

Hartman demonstrated this solo making sure to begin the phrase in a *dolce* manner with a discernible articulation on the first note. He only took one breath in the entire solo, which occurred after the quarter note five measures before figure 3.

Act I No. 2 Romeo, 2 ms after Fig. 6 – Fig. 7

“You really want to reach up to that E-sharp. It doesn't always come out but you don't want to be afraid of it. You want to phrase it and sing up to it if you can. Believe me, it doesn't always come out.” Hartman demonstrated with a very smooth connection between the F-sharp and high E-sharp in the second measure of the solo. Hartman plays the entire solo in one breath.

Act I No. 9 Preparing for the Ball, pick up to final 2 ms.

“It's a little quicker tempo here than the previous section.”

Act I No. 10 Juliet as a Young Girl, Fig. 53 – Fig 54

“... Some people might play the second and fourth beats long through the rests. However, I think the rests are a very important part of the phrase. The *a tempo* is sometimes on the downbeat of three measures before Figure 54 instead of on the third beat. With different dancers and different conductors it's always going to be different. You always have to have one eye on the conductor no matter how much it's really your solo. Even, I would go as far as to say, like the Mozartiana cadenza. Usually the conductor will just leave you alone but if they need to speed up they'll speed up at the end.”

Act I No. 11 Arrival of the Guests (Minuet), 4 ms before Fig 70 – 4 ms before end

“It's hard to make the grace notes sound like grace notes as opposed to 32nd-notes. I try to place them as much as I can so that they sound separately from the two 16th-notes.”

Act I No. 12 March, 2-4 ms after Fig 73

“You want to make it sound like you are playing music and not just an excerpt or an etude.” Hartman hums the melody that the trumpet plays at figure 73. “Let the volume of the high E naturally decay once you have established it.”
Act I No. 14 Juliet's Variation, 2 ms before Fig 92 – 6 ms after Fig 92

“This one is tricky. If the G-sharps were written as A-flats it would be much easier to read. It doesn't need to be written that way.”

Act I No. 15 Mercutio, 2 ms after Fig 98 – 4 ms before Fig 99 & 2 ms after Fig 100 – 4 ms after Fig 101

“So this one is a bit tricky.”

Act I No. 16 Madrigal, 4 ms after Fig 111 – end

“Again, here is a passage where you are picking up the melodic line from someone and handing it over. Really try to make the most of the dynamics here. Start a little bit softer and make a big swell. Stress that F as long as possible without losing too much time.”

Act II No. 23 Romeo and Mercutio

“This is a chorale sort of sequence. Just play a nice soft A at the end of the last chord. You don't need to play it espressivo. This is a chapel-like scene.”

Act II No. 25 Dance With Mandolins, Fig. 196 – Fig 197

“The principal clarinetist can play the solo on the A or B-flat clarinet. This would be the only number that the principal clarinetist would play their A clarinet except for a long low E in Act III No. 50. This would put it in a decent key for the A clarinet. Otherwise the principal clarinetist can play this number on the B-flat clarinet even though it's in the key of B major. The reason that it is in F-sharp major for the the E-flat clarinet is because it is supposed to be for the D clarinet! Do you want to know what we do? The associate principal clarinetist and I both have D clarinets so when we did a new production of this we played it on our D clarinets. First of all, it should be the same instrument going up and down. The only reason it's not for one player is because you run out of breath. Second of all, it should be on the D clarinet and so we asked the music director if we could both play this on the small clarinet. Since at the time this was a new production and we were reading through the part to make sure there weren't any mistakes, there was a copyist on staff. So, we said that we would like both parts to be written out for D clarinet. When you are playing this on D clarinet the final note is a high G, not F-sharp. This makes sense and puts it in a good key. There are not many people that can match the tone of an E-flat clarinet to an A clarinet. So the sound of having both clarinetists playing D clarinets is the sound that Prokofiev intended. Our choice to play this passage on D clarinets was purely for artistic reasons. D clarinets are the answer.”

Act II No. 26 The Nurse, 6 ms after Fig 201

“The tempo might vary on this excerpt.”

Act III No. 39 Farewell Before Departing, Fig 288 – 4 ms after Fig 290

“Usually I play this pretty intensely and a healthy mezzo forte two measure after figure 289.”

Act III No. 40 The Nurse, pick-ups to Fig 298 – Fig 299

“Our version is slurred in the two pick-up notes to three measures before figure 299.”

Act I No. 13 and Act III No. 46 (additional excerpt not originally intended for dissertation)

“And here we have this controversial hairpin marking again. I would crescendo all the way to the third beat in the third measure of this. But that's just my opinion. I have played it this way since the first time I played this ballet.”
Act III No. 49 Dance of the Girl with Lilies, 4 ms before Fig 340 – 2 ms after Fig 342

“Our version does not slur the 8th-notes four measures before figure 340. I think this way is correct.”

Act IV: Epilogue No. 52 Death of Juliet, 4 ms before Fig 363 – 7 ms after Fig 363

“This is really slow.”

Cinderella

General comments on Cinderella: “Cinderella is very different music than Romeo & Juliet.”

Act I No. 2 The Veil Dance, 9 ms after Fig 6 – Fig 9

“I’d like to say that it’s important to be well-prepared for the arpeggio in No. 2 because it takes quite a while to get the pattern into one’s fingers. It should absolutely be memorized and practiced at all tempos. It’s a wonderful clarinet part. The fact that it changes keys within the passage three measures before Figure 9 doesn’t help make it easier. The written F-sharps and E-sharps alternate in the order that you see them on the page. This is not your typical arpeggio especially since it doesn't go to the top note either. It's a little odd.”

Act II No. 30 Grand Waltz, Fig 218 – Fig 223

“Make a great legato between the written Gs in the pick up to three measures before figure 223.”

Act II No. 30 Grand Waltz, 6 ms before Fig 227 – Fig 228

“This is an example of where there are notated flats in a sharp key and it makes it more difficult psychologically to see flats instead of all sharps. There is an accelerando in the third measure of figure 227. Make sure to not let the B-flat in the third measure of figure 227 mess you up for the fourth 8th-note because it is a G-sharp. Also, make note of the throat G-sharp in the fourth measure of figure 227.”
Appendix F: Interview Transcriptions of Jon Manasse, Principal Clarinetist of American Theatre Ballet Orchestra

Jon Manasse, January 30th 2014

Swan Lake

“In the first solo of the Introduction, have conviction however you decide to play it.”

Manasse plays Act I No. 4 Pas de trois, Variation II on A clarinet instead of B-flat clarinet. “Sneak in with the trill, eight measures before the end of the number. They will wait for you. Connect with the conductor here. In the fourth to last measure, don't diminuendo too much at the end so that the melodic line can be passed off to the celli.”

Act I No. 4, Pas de trois, Variation III, ms. 1 – 11

“The solo in Variation III is pretty slow and yet it somehow has to have a lilt.”

Manasse says that the accents in the solo in Act II, No. 12 Scène 5, five measures after figure 52 are “expressive accents.” In the articulated passage four measures before the end, Manasse recommends to “pretend to be a flautist here.”

In Act II No. 13 Variation II, Manasse says that he plays a slight rubato in the fourth measure of the sixteenth note solo passage.

In Act III No. 17, Scène during the clarinet soli, Manasse says that, “regardless of how the conductor is phrasing, I show this phrase with my body and the way I use my air in the slur. In this way, I show how I want to resolve the phrase.”

Act III No. 23, Mazurka Manasse says to play this clarinet soli duet by “preserving the 3/4 feeling. Avoid making the half note [the second beat of the second measure] feel like a downbeat. There is also a hemiola feel.”

Sleeping Beauty

“Be mindful at the end and the beginning of certain dance numbers when the audience applauds. Adjust dynamics in order to be heard.”

Prologue No. 3, Pas de six

“There is so much to play and you really have to pace yourself so you are fresh for the solos. Anticipate your needs such as the temperature of the B-flat or A clarinet preceding an upcoming solo. An example of this is in No. 3, Pas de six where the B-flat clarinet needs to be warmed up before the big solo. Acknowledge when the oboe plays the pick-up to figure 18 even though it is your solo.” Two measures before figure 26, Manasse suggest to, “find a high E fingering you love that you can hold out until the conductor gives you a cue.”

“In Variation I of No. 3, Pas de six it is helpful to circular breathe. Observe the crescendo in the fourth measure just before the oboe begins to play in the fifth measure.”

In measure seven of No. 4, Finale, Manasse says to, “...bring out the difference between the grace notes in the first beat and the quintuplet figure in the third beat.”

“In measures 4 - 7 in Act I No. 7, Scène, listen to the oboe and play on the back side of the beat.”
Manasse says that Act II No. 11, Colm Maillard is fun to play. Manasse suggests adding some slurs over the first two groupings of 16th-notes. However, he says that it is better to articulate in order to continue the fluidity of the pulse.

Manasse suggests utilizing circular breathing if available to the clarinetist in Act II No. 12, Dans des Marquises. He says that another option is to leave out one 16th-note and quickly breathe at the end of a phrase. For example, it is possible to leave out the written B-natural three measures after figure 10. “No matter what you end up deciding upon, it is important to always shape the phrase.”

In the Coda of Act II No. 15, Pas d'action, Manasse questions why Tchaikovsky didn't give all of the 16th-notes to one clarinetist.

Manasse plays the Bluebird variation in No. 25, Pas de Quatre on B-flat clarinet. “Make sure to play the phrase differently each time you have it.”

In Arora's variation in Act III No. 28, Pas de deux: Variation II, Manasse says, “you have to have some sort of dynamic contour for these repetitive measures."

The Nutcracker

“Practice the solo four measures after A in the Overture so that it is not scary. Phrase it and above all listen to the violas.”

“In Act I Scene I in the second measure of the Poco più sostenuto the septuplets are written out trills. Play them exactly as written and it will come out nicely.”

At figure E of the March Manasse plays continuous 16th-notes.

“Make sure the bassoon is not too loud in Act I No. 4 in the Allegro molto vivace so you can make a shape in the phrase.”

In Act I No. 6 Manasse says to “take expressive time at the beginning of the solo [after Figure C]. Two measures after figure D make sure the bassoon and bass clarinet are not too loud. Bring down your dynamic on the third measure of the solo.”

“In the Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy be playful with the descending 16th-note figures, especially eight measures after figure B.”

“Push in the barrel of your B-flat clarinet before you play the solo in the first Divertissement Le Chocolat because it will be cold.”

“You can circular breathe in the tied E's in the second Divertissement Arabian Dance depending on how it is phrased.”

“Shape the solo in Waltz of the Flowers. Have a sense of the pitch orientation of the horns and the harp for good intonation.”

Romeo and Juliet

In Act I No. 1, Figure 2. Manasse says that the first 7.5 measures is a solo and to make sure to blend and share the unison melodic line with the flute 4.5 measures before Figure 3.

In Act I No. 2, Romeo, Manasse says that he looks forward to playing the interval of the F-sharp on the top ledger line to the high E-sharp.
In Act I No. 10, Manasse says to shape the famous clarinet solo at Figure 53. “Observe the 8th-note rest because that is part of the music too. The music is simple. Follow the contour of the phrase and observe the tenutos.” At Figure 55 Manasse says to listen to the cello the entire time. “Take time on the second and third beats, five measures before figure 56.”

Act I No. 11 Figure 64 - “As the principal clarinetist, ask the tenor saxophonist to blend with you. The saxophone should not be the prominent voice. Make sure to fully observe the hairpins and dynamics three measures after figure 64. In the solo at Figure 70, make sure to listen to the violas. You have to know how your part fits in or else it won't sound as good.”

“In Act I No. 12, The March Figure 73, play as slowly as possible in between the beats.” This is in order to sound clean and not to rush. “Don't be afraid of the high notes. Observe the accent on the throat A, four measures after figure 73.”

“In Act I No. 15 Figure 98, make sure to really play the accents.”

“In Act II No. 22 Figure 154, don't be afraid to play out on the high E.”

“In Act II No. 23 before Figure 171, note that the dynamics are marked p and compare that with the companion section six measures before the end of the number where the dynamics are marked mp. Play around with the different dynamics.”

Jon Manasse plays Dance of the Mandolins on A clarinet.

“In Act II No. 26 use the left middle finger for the high F-sharp plus the right ring key. End this solo lightly.”

As in No. 15, the same principal applies in No. 33 at Figure 260. “Make sure to play the accents.”

“In No. 39 make sure to shape the solo and accent the low D-sharp. Stretch the high notes in the third measure of Figure 290.”

“Stretch the three 8th-note pick-ups into Figure 298 in Act III No. 40. Those three notes are the end of the phrase, so take your time.”

Act III, No. 44 At Friar Lawrence's

“If you have a particularly good second clarinetist who blends and is in tune, then the unison figure will be fine at the pick-up into three measures before Figure 313.”

In regards to the solo three and four measures before No. 46, Manasse says to “delay that resolution.” In other words, take time on the G-sharp and E-sharp before getting to the F-sharp three measures before the end.

“In Act III No. 49 during the solo passages, play the accents expressively.” Manasse recommends the high F-sharp before Figure 342 to be played like an A with the two right top side keys.

The following A-sharp on the downbeat of 342 is played with the thumb, register key, left index finger, and the right middle finger. The fingering for A-sharp is easier to approach from the high F-sharp than a one-and-one fingering.

Cinderella

Manasse plays the big clarinet solo in Act I No. 2, Figure 6 on the B-flat clarinet. He describes this passage as “fun” and that he makes sure that he is very grounded in pulse. “Hopefully you will have it crystallized where you are anchoring within the passage. Almost think of holding the first note.” Manasse uses a one-and-two fingering for the A-sharp on the second 16th-note of the second and third beats in the first measure of the poco più mosso. This
fingerings keeps the 16th-note passage steady. Manasse says he has had a high success rate using cross fingerings in certain passages. He also noted that while this particular fingering currently works well for him, he has changed certain fingerings over the years. He says that the bottom line is that he wants this passage to be easy. “It's an enormous discipline what we do when practicing. In the practice room, I am not afraid to make mistakes and to know what doesn't work. This passage is less than one second and it requires hours of practice.” He says that he is certainly open to another way of playing it. He anchors the note on the first and third beat of the first two measures of the passage and on each quarter note in the third measure. When he discusses anchoring, he does not mean for the notes to be accented in a pedantic manner. “The anchor is mostly happening in your mind,” Manasse explains. He recommends that the high F-sharp in the third measure be played expressively.

Manasse uses a one-and-one fingering for the E-flat in Act I No. 3, Figure 24. “I am always aware of what instruments are playing. Am I leading, following, reacting, or something else? Know what hat to wear.”

Act I No. 7 Figure 58 - “Many of these solos seem technical but there is always shape to them.” Further discussion. “I do pay attention to what is happening on stage and sometimes I will ask the conductor what the dancers are doing on stage.”

“This is a long hemiola in Act I No. 9 Figure 71.”

Act I No. 13 “At figure 90, you can take time on this. It is in locrian mode. Hold the high F-sharp just a little bit. It has to sound non-technical. It looks panicky on paper. Anchor a bit on the G-sharp in the second measure of Figure 90. This solo ends on a low G-sharp, making this solo firmly rooted in the locrian mode. Anchor on the second and third beats of the second measure after Figure 90. Sub-divide 8th-notes and listen to the bassoon before-hand to get a very clear pulse.” Manasse demonstrates by practicing quietly and methodically on the clarinet, just barely creating a real sound on the clarinet, almost as if whispering. Then he plays it through with a beautiful and refined tone. He anchors on many of the G-sharps in this passage. “Show the groupings of the sextuplets and the quintuplets. In the last measure, each 8th-note can have weight. Do observe the molto ritardando. Take time to imagine that last high D. I go through a series of trial and errors when I am practicing, without having a sense of judgement or a sense of doubt. I test to see what works well. Then, once I get it, I will practice that consistently. I will also try it in the pit with different reeds.”

“Act I No. 16 Figure 102 needs direction. Prokofiev really, really makes sure you know the clarinet well. You have to have control over the instrument.”

In Act II No. 30 Grand Waltz Manasse says, “The tenuto shows the lilt. There's more of a lilt in the shorter slurred groups than the longer ones.” Manasse stretches the three 8th-note pick-ups into figure 222 but not at figure 218.

In Act II No. 32 Manasse says, “You have to shape it. Observe the accent at figure 239. It has to be playful.”

In Act II No. 36 Manasse says, “Of course this is the most beautiful thing because it's the love duet. Bring out the interval of A to D in the final thirty-second note of the first beat of two measures after 260 to the second beat.” Manasse says, “the A can be held and played as a slight tenuto. The written A and D are scale degrees five and one. Bring this interval out in the third and fourth measures of 260 as well. He (Prokofiev) plays with you in measures three and four.” There is a variation descending from the A to the D. “Don't be sharp on the final D.” In the companion section in Act III No. 48, the solo ends on a C-sharp and does not resolve to a D as in Act II No. 36.

Manasse says to really sub-divide in Act II No. 45 in order to be comfortable with the placement of the 32nd-notes.

Manasse uses his right third finger or a backless fingering in Act III No. 49 for the high D-sharp.
Appendix G: Interview Transcriptions of Sheryl Renk, Principal Clarinetist of San Francisco Ballet Orchestra

Sheryl Renk, December 20th 2013

General Comments

“I graduated from San Francisco State University and then I went to the San Francisco Conservatory. I studied with Donald Carroll, who at the time was the bass clarinetist with the San Francisco Symphony.

I then studied with Rosario Mazzeo. He was a very famous mentor-like clarinetist who was just absolutely fantastic. He's written many books. One particular book his wife just sent actually mentions my husband and I. At the end of the book he mentioned some of the students he had. It was an honour. He was great and I thank my lucky stars every day that I studied with him. He was awesome.

“I started out my professional career playing acting second clarinet with the San Francisco Symphony a long time ago. From there it took off. I was first call sub [in the San Francisco Symphony] for many years. I also was the acting second clarinetist three more times. So, for a total of four full years I played acting second clarinet. Then I won a job for principal clarinet in the San Francisco ballet in 1991. Unfortunately in 1996 there was a bankruptcy. 1996 was the year of the San Francisco ballet principal clarinet audition. I was lucky enough to win that, which was a relief because San Diego Symphony was down for two years. In 1998 the San Diego Symphony returned and I went back. However, in our contract we were allowed to come and go as we pleased in San Diego for a while because they couldn't make everyone stay there after they had recently not offered work for two years. So I was able to do the ballet and San Diego Symphony together because the ballet season is only six months long. So that was really fortunate. It was in 2006 when both the San Diego Symphony and San Francisco Ballet said, 'ok. You're going to have to decide what you're going to do' because I was only playing half a season with the San Diego Symphony and I was sometimes missing work with the ballet. They were both putting pressure on me to decide and that's when the San Diego Symphony became very stable. We were given that very large endowment by Erwin Jacobs, who was the owner and CEO of Qualcomm. Qualcomm is a big electronics company. They are wonderful patrons of the arts and I call them the angels in San Diego. They laid a foundation for the San Diego Symphony to be extremely stable. So I decided to stay with the San Diego Symphony. In 2006 I resigned from the Ballet after basically 10 years.”

From a discussion about the first solo in Cinderella:

“Sometimes conductors take these things to according to the dancer's needs. Believe me, the orchestra is secondary. It's whatever they want on stage and it doesn't matter if it's right or wrong [according to the instructions in the musical score]. This often happened while playing works outside of the standard ballet repertoire with the San Francisco Ballet. If it was a Beethoven Symphony or a Ravel [set to choreography for the San Francisco Ballet] that you would typically perform in a symphonic orchestra, they [conductors] would want things their way. Even if it was twice as fast or twice as slow, however they want it to be. So sometimes that was a bit odd. But whatever they want they get because the dancers are the stars. That's just the way it is. So if they want something super duper fast or slow that's what they get. You get used to that when you play in a ballet orchestra.”

Swan Lake

Introduction – ms. 5-8

“It seems to play itself.”

No. 4, Pas de trois, Var. IV, Fig. 7, 2nd ending
“Especially with little interjections like this, the main thing is to not accent the first note. You just want it to be part of the phrase. You don't want to accent the beginning of the solo halfway through the measure. You want it to be there and be part of the whole thing. Be part of the texture; mix in. Most of this is like that, I would say.”

Act I No. 5 Var. I, 11 ms. after Fig. 50 to Fig. 51

Renk played the first phrase. “Play it as one long phrase rather than these little choppy things. I think that sort of holds true for anything you play.”

No. 5 Var IV should be Act II No. 19 Pas de six, Var. IV

“Keep the phrase going. The main thing to know when you are doing these things in symphonic repertoire is to know what's going on around you, particularly if you're playing orchestral excerpts and auditions. I always tell my students to know what's going on before you start an excerpt. Is the flute playing before you and then you enter? Or are the strings playing with you in your excerpt? Is the bassoon playing? What's going on? know who you are mixing in with or know if it is just you and the plucking strings, for example. For every symphonic piece I play, I know all of that.”

Discussion of Clark Fobes 2m and CWF clarinet mouthpieces.

Act I No. 7 Sujet, 1st 11 measures

Renk plays the solo. “It's really cute. There are very specific ways of how you need to phrase this and how you need to approach them. Know what's happening around you with all the other players.”

No. 12 should be Act II No. 13 Var. I, ms 16-18

“A lot of these excerpts are snippets in the grand scheme of things. As great as this ballet music is, you're never the focal point. You're the back up to the dancers. Of course to have live music with the dancers is an immense difference from having a tape. That's horrible when people do that because it's just not the same.”

No. 15 should be Act III No. 17 Scène ms 22 to figure 14

“I think a very important thing in any ensemble is the second clarinet player really keying into the first clarinet player. In the ritenuto section, take time there to express.” Renk sings the solo to convey the phrasing. “Keep the tension during the ritenuto section and then take the tension away in the three eighth-note pick ups to the final measure.”

No. 29, should be Act III No. 19 Pas de six Var. I, Fig 35 or in clarinet part fig. 80, 11 ms. after fig. 79 to 4 ms. after fig 80

“I'm big on transposing things to make them easy but I don't do it there. It's just a snippet. I don't know if I would go to the trouble to do that on a different clarinet. Even though it would be easier I would just keep that on B-flat clarinet. It's not hard enough to warrant that kind of trouble. In something like the third movement of Schostakovich 5, you would want to do that solo on B-flat instead of A. In the second movement of Brahms Symphony No. 1 you want to do that solo on B-flat instead of A. But for this, I wouldn't bother.”

Act III No. 20a Russian Dance

“Depending on how the concert master plays the quintuplets, you should absolutely mimic the way they play it when it's your turn to play the solo. I would tend to want to play this quintuplet as a straight five simply because that's what's there and that's what I remember. If the violinist does it a certain way it's really good to imitate that if you're playing the same thing. It's good to do what they just did.” Renk plays the solo. “Yeah, I would want to play it [the
quintuplet] even. That would be my instinct. But if the violinist didn't do it that way, it would be a good thing to do what they did otherwise it would sound like the clarinetist didn't listen to the concert master.”

Act III No. 23 Mazurka

“It's a tension thing. You're keeping the tension until you get to here...” Renk motions to the end of the fourth measure of the clarinet soli, “...and then you are restarting. You also want to let down in volume here [the end of the first written half note] so you have somewhere to go.” Renk sings the phrasing and shows the release of the dynamic in the downbeat of the third measure and then continues to build the phrase until diminishing the dynamic in the fourth measure. Renk then plays the solo.

No. 25, Act IV No. 27 Danses des petits cygnes Fig. 5 or fig. 69 – 70

“This is a chorale with the woodwinds. It's kind of like Brahms' Third Symphony slow movement with the clarinet leading. The first clarinet should be leading and has the melody. This is one big, long phrase and I think it's better to carry the phrase over four measures and not over two measures.” Renk sings and at the beginning of the third measure she says to imagine as if the rests weren't there in order to lengthen the phrase. “And then you do it again [measures 5 – 8]. If you diminuendo here [end of measure 2] you’re chopping it into two phrases rather than one big, long phrase.” Renk plays measures 9 – 12. “The phrases all need to carry through.”

Sleeping Beauty

Prologue No. 3 Pas de six, ms. 10 – 26 Add ms 72 – end

Renk plays the entire solo. “That's a big one. It's all about continuing the phrase as much as you can. Just make sure you always carry things as though the rests don't exist. Take the hairpins with a grain of salt. These are more phrasing markings than actual hairpins. You want to continue the phrase. It's one little phrase followed by another little phrase. I try to play it that way.” Renk plays the first three measures of the solo. “I try to match the first few notes in the third measure of the solo to the volume and the tone of the last two notes in the second measure of the solo. Otherwise it sounds like you are dying away at the end of measure two and then it will sound like you are starting a new phrase too loudly in measure three. You don't want to do that. You always want to continue the phrase. Here, you start to get a little agitated in the triplet bars [fifth measure of the solo] and then bring it down to tempo in this measure [sixth measure of the solo]. I do a little tenuto there [seventh measure of the solo on the high written B]. Here, in measure 18, just sing like a cello would. Pretend like you are bowing away with a beautiful cello sound. Again, have the agitato feeling here in measure 22 like you had in the previous triplet section. Then you get to the high note, then you bring it back down, and then you end the phrase at the end of measure 25. It's always a matter of continuing a phrase and here and there doing something just a little different: a little agitato here, a beautiful lush sound there. Just try to incorporate as much stuff as you can into these big solos.”

Prologue No. 4, Finale, ms. 1 – 8

“That's kind of a similar thing we were talking about before in terms of groups of fives [Swan Lake, Act III, No. 20 Russian Dance].” Renk plays the solo. “Continue the phrases and play these [quintuplets] even. I never play fives any other way unless they are marked as such or the conductor asks me to do that. I go by if it's written that way then you play it that way.”

“I would diminuendo only just a little bit at the second measure as a phrasing mark so that you can come in nice and loudly at the fourth beat of the second measure and make a big difference. You don't need to diminuendo too much if you're coming in loudly on that fourth beat. If you diminuendo there it's going to sound like you're not continuing the phrase.” Renk plays the first four measures of the solo with a very subtle diminuendo on the third quarter note in the second measure. She highlights the accent and the più forte on the following beat. “It's always about continuing the phrase. Here [fourth beat of the second measure] it's sort of a subito più forte.”

Act I No. 5 Scène ms. 159 – 176
“Now this is something that may be better on A clarinet. I'm really big on writing things into the part; not making them messy but writing in your L's, your R's, and your accidentals. All of those things just make it easier for the eye to catch. That's what I would do in order to make it easier.” Renk plays the first four measures of the passage. “So just mark stuff in and it will be simple. Sometimes sliding your pinky is necessary. I don't think it is necessary in this passage. I don't like sliding up; sliding down is fine. Sliding from a D-sharp to a C-sharp occasionally to get through passages can be good. Sliding up is not so good.”

Act I No. 8 b) Dances of the Maids of Honour and Pages, ms. 94 – 130

“In this kind of thing it's just a matter of just blending nicely with the woodwinds and not to over-power them because that's easy to do on clarinet.”

Act I No. 9 Finale, ms. 95-114

“It's just a matter of writing stuff into your part here and working it out in your practice.”

Act II No. 12 e) Dance of the Marchionesses

“You and the second clarinet can sometimes breathe in different spots. Maybe one of you can breathe and leave out a 16th-note at the end of measure 12 and the other player can breathe and leave out a 16th-note at a later time. In something like this that is marked Allegro, there is no time to breathe in between. There's not going to be time for that. Just make sure you're not breathing at the same time. Just woodshed it and you'll be fine.”

Act II No. 15 Pas d'action: Coda

“I would not do small hair pins on each beat in the first few measures. I would pretty much crescendo all the way to the complete third measure and diminuendo from there. If I were to write in new dynamics, I would add a crescendo marking from the beginning that continues all the way to the mezzo forte. This is pretty much what the ink says. I wouldn't change it. I play a steady crescendo up, otherwise it's too choppy.”

Act II No. 18 Entr'acte

“I am repeating myself but always carry phrases all the way through. I'm not big on ups and downs. Of course you have to have a little of those inflections to make it sound musical but I am more big on the long horizontal line.” Renk plays the solo. “So here [third measure of the solo] I kept it going this way. I didn't diminuendo on the third quarter note; always horizontal.”

Act II No. 19 Symphonic Entr'acte: Sleep, ms. 97 – 103

“This solo is like a little echo of the big theme.” Renk plays the first three measures. “Now, there's really no crescendo in the part. It's going to sound louder just simply because of the register. I don't think you need to add any hair pins of any kind. You want this more of an echo.” Renk sings the first three measures. “If you play that, normally it's going to sound louder just because you are going upwards. I wouldn't make a crescendo there really. You want a whole different feel and a different colour at the Allegro section.”

Act III No. 24 Pas de caractère: Puss-in-Boots and the White Cat, ms. 30 – 43

“The only way to play this kind of thing is to keep that air constantly flowing because with clarinet it's all about continuously blowing the air through the instrument. That way, it sounds smooth over those breaks.” Renk sings the last two measures and shows that the crescendo is very important. “Just always keep that air flowing. Yeah, this is exposed.”

Act III No. 25 Pas de quatre: The Bluebird
“This is tricky because you have to play with the flute and be sure you match their pitch and their style as well as doing your own thing.” Renk plays the solo. “Don't do this every single time but one idea is to give a little tenuto on the first grouping of six on the way down. So it's not just strictly in tempo. Every once in a while do that for a little added musicality. You're playing off the flute back and forth. Listen to what they are doing and try to imitate what they are doing, much like the violin in the Russian Dance in Swan Lake in those groups of fives. Listen to the flute player and do what they say. Really listen for the pitch because it can be a little bit tricky. This is pretty much the same over and over again. And then it just winds down. Settle it back just a little bit. Usually a conductor will do that for you or help you with that. It's a cute little interlude. Yes, for sure this would be on any ballet audition.”

Act III No. 25 Pas de quatre: Coda, ms. 14 – 37

“These interjections are alternating with the strings. In this kind of thing you want to shape it a little bit. I don't mean make a huge crescendo to that B but just little shapes to make it a little bit interesting.”

The Nutcracker

Overture Miniature - 4 – 8 ms after Fig. A

“In the Nutcracker there's pretty much a solo on every single page of the ballet and that's what makes it so hard. It's a great piece and it's a popular work. The very first thing you play is difficult. One thing I do on this is use the right long B. I find it easier if I do it that way. Not that that's any epiphany but it's just something that always helps me because I've played this a million times. It's one of those things that I learned so well, and that's what you have to do for auditions. The most important thing with this solo is not rush it and to make ever so slight tenutos on those notes [the first note in each slur grouping]. It's got to be steady. The flute plays it and you've got to come in and play it just as steady. Make the last two 16th-note groupings be a little bit bouncy. Add a little bit of an accent to those slurs and a little bit of style to it.”

Act I No. 1, Scene - 9 ms. after Fig. B – Fig. C poco più sostenuto, 8 ms. after Fig. C – Tempo I

“I do try to play these as actual sevens. I know some people will actually play trills. I don't believe in trills here and I think you should play sevens. This is alternating with the bassoon back and forth so they should also be playing sevens. It's also a stylistic thing. If the conductor allows, you can take time [in the pick up to the beginning of the phrase] but not every time because that would be monotonous. Every now and then the conductor will let you take time in the two or three 16th pick up notes. When it comes back again is when you can take time. I use the side key on the B-flat in the quintuplet B-flat to C figure and the two side keys for the C in the quintuplet B-flat to C figure. Sometimes conductors will speed up on that [two measures before C and the following a tempo] so you have to be ready for that.”

Act I No. 1, Scene – Allegro Vivace – Meno 8 ms. before Fig. G

“You just have to play it fast and steady. When I came out of my audition for the San Francisco Ballet the personnel manager at the time said, 'Wow! You played that so fast!' but I was playing it really at the tempo it is supposed to be. I think other clarinetists who auditioned were just slowing it down for some reason either to make it easy or perhaps they didn't know the tempo it was supposed to be. It's vivace. It goes pretty quickly.” Renk sings the pulse of the 8th-notes. “You've got to keep it at that tempo all the way until the meno. It's just a matter of keeping the tempo ultra steady and perfect the entire way through. So that's something you would play with the metronome. Maybe start with the metronome, turn it off, play it, and at the end check the metronome to see if you're at the same speed. That perfect tempo and perfect speed is something that is impressive in auditions. It's got to stay because you are playing duples here while the other woodwinds are continuing to play triplets.”

Act I No. 3, Children's Gallop and Dance of the Parents - two 16th pickup to Fig A – 4 ms before Fig B

“I asked a conductor once what was going on on stage during the Andante. Does it have to be that fast? because at some point it becomes unplayable. When the conductor said that the dancers were just milling around I wondered why it had to be so fast.”
Act I No. 4, Scene – 7 ms after Fig C to Fig D

Renk plays the entire solo. “The only thing I used to do sometimes was tongue this note [three measures before figure D] rather than slur it because if you don't make it, it could come out as a squawk or something. I give it a little articulation. I made it my little personal tradition.”

Act I No. 4, Scene – 9 ms after Fig G (Presto) for 8 measures

“That's with two clarinets all by themselves in thirds. It's usually done in 1 for the first eight measures.”

Act I No. 6, Scene, 2 ms after Fig C – 4 ms before Fig E

“This I do play as a trill. Because this is a group of nine, you don't have time to figure out a group of nine so I just play that like a trill. I just move my fingers as fast as I can. At the Allegro giusto I like to use the one-and-one fingering on the grace note E-flats as well as the third measure of the solo. I find it easier. I definitely don't use that fingering in the first two measures because you'll hear the pitch difference. I find that is the easiest way to do it. I use the second side key for the trill from throat A-flat to B-flat.” Renk plays the solo at the Allegro giusto section. “So you start soft and you build and build.”

Act I No. 7, Battle Scene, 9 ms after Fig D – 14 ms after Fig D

“You have to really play as loud as you can and play the gradual diminuendo just like it says because it's very exposed and very dramatic there. The bottom kind of drops out.” Renk plays the passage. “That has to be about as loud as you can play at the beginning of the passage. Diminuendo ever so slightly in the second group of triplets.”

Act II No. 11, Scene, Fig A to 2 ms after Fig B

“This is another one of those things where it says Andante con moto and conductors often take it way too fast. One of our conductors took it at around 100 to the quarter note. Does it really need to go that fast? It says Andante and there is nothing going on on stage, no dancing, just milling around. This is much better if it's done properly in the Andante fashion.” Renk plays the first five measures of the solo. “So, you want to play this all pretty loud and full because you have to penetrate through a lot of noise that's going on around you. And then you are alternating with the second clarinet here.” Renk plays the last three measures of the solo. “It's very dramatic.” Renk plays the first measure again. “There's a very slight musical tenuto on the fourth beat if the conductor gives you time. It's a kind of dramatic penetrating moment at A, I would say.”

Act II No. 11, Scene, pick up to 12 ms before Fig E – downbeat of Fig E

“It's very woodwindy.”

Act II No. 12, Divertissement a) Le Chocolat: Spanish Dance, fig 1 – 4 ms after Fig 1

“I think it helps if when you rip up to that high C, if you maybe ever so slightly (not to make it dramatic) come away from it so you actually have a way to crescendo.” Renk plays the solo. “Rather than hold and sustain it at one dynamic, I come away from it slightly so I have somewhere to go after.”

Act II No. 12, Divertissement a) Le Chocolat: Spanish Dance, Fig 5 - end

“Just play it very loudly and very evenly because it's your solo and you have to really come out there.”

Act II No. 12, Divertissement b) Arabian Dance, ms 5 - 13

“I don't think of it so much as accents, as much as little musical phrases.” Renk plays the first eight measures. “Put a little bit of a lift and a slight space between the end of each one of the written Es and the beginning of the accented
Gs. For musical purposes, place a slight tenuto on the first written F in the third and seventh bars.” Renk sings the figure giving more weight to the first written F so it is not rushed. “Try to make it musical but yet it's kind of a subtle thing. It's all about what's happening on stage with the Arabian outfits. You're setting a mood here.”

Act II No. 12, Divertissement c) Chinese Dance, ms 19 - end

“Just play this nice and steady. Get a really big breath and if you can't make it then you have to leave out one or two 16th-notes, maybe towards the end when it starts getting louder. I have one very specifically marked where I breathe so I don't run out of air and breathe in a poor place. I specifically breathe in a certain spot. I get a good breath here and I don't breathe until over here, four measures before the end after the first 16th-note when some other instruments are coming in and covering you up a bit. So I either leave out just the second 16th-note or both the second and third 16th-notes in that measure. It depends on how I'm feeling at the time. I like to plan breaths. I don't like to be caught short in anything, especially a big exposed solo. I like to know when I am going to breathe.”

Act II No. 13, Waltz of the Flowers, 9 ms before Fig A – Fig A

Renk plays the solo. “This has to be musical and phrased but at the same time has to be rather steady because you've got all that other textural and off beat stuff going on. So you can't play around with it all too much and I think when other clarinet players do that it gets a little messy sounding. I think it has to be nice and musical but within a good rhythmical framework. I think it works better. I personally like it better when it's done like that. I always like to put maybe just a little tenuto on that last one [written C on the downbeat of two measures before the end] to say...” Renk sings that measure with the words: “‘this is done now’ or ‘now I am done.’ That kind of a thing. The next one is with the second clarinet. That's another reason why you can't ham it up too much because you have to play it pretty much the same way both times. So if you have another clarinetist playing in unison with you, you want them to know what you are doing and how you are going to phrase it. I believe in musicality but not going crazy with that.”

Act II No. 14, Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy, pick-up to Fig A – downbeat of 4 ms after Fig A and 4 ms after Fig B to Presto

“I think you shouldn't do too much. I don't really believe in hamming it up. You can make it a little bit musical and slightly elongate the first note but otherwise it's fairly straight. I would say there is a musical leading to the downbeat but not a true crescendo. Once you articulate the dotted quarter note with an accent, come away from it because that is what will make the next note not sound accented. It's almost like a little bell tone and then come away.”

Romeo and Juliet

“This is great. I love this one. This is one of my favourites.”

Act I No. 1 Introduction, 6ms after Fig. 2 – 1 quarter note before Fig. 3

Renk plays the solo. “It's a matter of the long line. Rather than chopping anything up, you have to always think horizontally. That's the way I try to play it anyway. Some players like this but for me using a half-hole fingering is risky. Sometimes if you don't do a half-hole fingering just right, the note's not going to come out. It will come out flat or do something weird on you. I play more with the thought of using lots and lots of air. So if you've got the air behind the note, it's going to come out. You don't need to do anything funny with the fingers. When I am really ready to play this piece I would use the high F-sharp left middle finger with the fork key because then it makes it easy just to get down to the D-sharp in three measures before 3.”

Act I No. 2 Romeo, 2 ms after Fig. 6 – Fig. 7

“It's all about the air and keeping the phrase going pretty much like that first one.”

Act I No. 10 Juliet as a Young Girl, Fig. 53 – Fig 54
Renk plays the solo. “I just get a really good breath on the 8th-note rest four measures after 53. You don't need to breathe after the downbeat of the fifth measure of the solo. Again, it's all about keeping the phrase. With all of these little rests, it's easy to chop this up. However, you don't want to do that. You want to play this almost as though the 8th-notes on the second and fourth beats were quarters. It's not though.” Renk plays the first three measures of the solo. “Play it so that there is no rest involved, just so that there's a little gap of air.”

Act I No. 11 Arrival of the Guests (Minuet), pickup to Fig 64 – 7 ms after Fig 65 & 4 ms before Fig 70 – 4 ms before end

Renk plays the solo. “Keep the phrase going just like the other ones.”

Act I No. 11 Arrival of the Guests (Minuet), 4 ms before Fig 70 – 4 ms before end

“It's all a matter of air to get those to come out the way you want them.”

Act I No. 12 March, 2–4 ms after Fig 73

Renk plays the solo. “Just make a nice big crescendo. I like this one. This is one of my favourites. It's great music.”

Act II No. 25 Dance With Mandolins, Fig. 196 – Fig 197

“I'm sure I played this on B-flat and I don't remember transposing this on A clarinet.” Renk plays the first six measures. “You are alternating 16ths with the second clarinet. In this kind of dovetailing I don't like to listen too much. I like to actually play with what I think the beat is or what I see the conductor giving me. I don't like to advocate not listening but in this kind of stuff if you wait to hear something you are going to be late. It's got to sound very dovetaily-ish with the 16th-notes continuously running.”

Act III No. 39 Farewell Before Departing, Fig 288 – 4 ms after Fig 290 & 4 ms after Fig 291 – 3 ms before Fig 292 & 4 ms before fig 294 – 295

Renk plays the solo. “It's all about air for me. That's all that I really think when I'm playing: am I using everything efficiently and correctly? And mostly everything falls into place, usually!”

Cinderella

Act I No. 2 The Veil Dance, 9 ms after Fig 6 – Fig 9

“It's a little tricky!” Renk says laughing. “It's pretty brisk and sometimes conductors do take these things faster.”
Appendix H: Interview Transcriptions of William Wrzesien, Principal Clarinetist of Boston Ballet Orchestra

William Wrzesien – January 8, 2014

General Comments

“One thing I do in my parts is to write on the top of each page what clarinet I'm supposed to be playing on. This is especially helpful at the beginnings of rehearsals when the conductor wants to spot-check a half dozen or so places before a run through. This way, when a conductor says, ‘Can we start at Act Three, big number six, letter D?’ I immediately know which clarinet I need. If the music is written for B-flat clarinet and requires a change to A clarinet somewhere down the page, I will write Bb/A. If I happen to be transposing I'll write A (Bb), meaning that although the music is written for B-flat clarinet, I'll remember to transpose a half tone up on my A clarinet.”

“As a general rule I never hesitate to transpose on the opposite clarinet when it's clear a half tone difference either way will facilitate technical passages, improve intonation, eliminate awkward intervals and trills, etc.”

“Knowing what's happening on stage is crucial in planning the characterizations of your solos.”

“This wonderful repertoire filled with gorgeous clarinet solos invites elegant playing with subtle phrasing, colorful shading, etc. (Listen to Harold Wright's playing on the Boston Symphony recordings of the complete Swan Lake and Romeo & Juliet ballets.) However, we must also recognize that ballet orchestras are down in a pit in a theater and not onstage in an acoustically friendly concert hall, requiring our stylistic approach in performance to generally be more on the 'assertive' side.”

“Most orchestral clarinetists only get to play suites from this wonderful repertoire by these great composers. I will always be grateful for the opportunity to have played all these complete ballets multiple times in my career.”

Swan Lake

Introduction – ms. 5-8

“The first clarinet solo happens after the oboe plays their solo in the first four measures. You have a choice whether you want to make a four bar phrase or perhaps a sub phrase at the end of the second bar of the clarinet solo.” Wrzesien sings the phrase with a little lift before the third measure. “Or you can play through the written C-natural to the B-flat.” Wrzesien sings the phrase with no lift. “I prefer a little dip at the end of the second measure of the solo and then continue on in the next measure and close off the solo.”

Act I No. 4 Pas de trois, Var. II, 2 ms. after Fig. 39-3 before end

“The second bar of 39 is a counterpoint to the oboe solo. The trill is somewhat clumsy because you're sitting on the G-sharp key with your left index finger and jiggling the tip of it on the A key. In addition, the same finger is needed for the F-sharp that follows! Be sure to stop the trill neatly before playing the grace notes. I put a lot of inflection on the B-natural on the first of the 16th. ‘” Wrzesien sings four measures before the end of the excerpt, showing the phrasing in his voice. “I drop my tongue for a smooth interval between the throat A and the low C.” Wrzesien sings the last two measures of the solo. “The solo line transfers over to the cellos so I put a slur mark from my final 8th-note across the bar line as a reminder not to close off the phrase.”

Act I No. 4 Pas de trois, Var. III, Fig. 32 exactly what is on the page

“You get a nice two measure lead-in from the strings with their boom-chik, boom-chik, boom-chik, boom-chik. The style of this solo should be rather perky.”
Act I No. 4 Pas de trois, Var. IV, Fig. 7, 2nd ending for four ms.

“I think tenuto rather than an accent on the downbeat after the 16th-note pickups. I wait a tiny bit before playing the pickups to allow the sound of the fortissimo cadence to clear, as well as boosting my dynamic up to a mezzo forte.”

Act I No. 5 Var. I, 11 ms. after Fig. 50 to Fig. 51

“This is a very lovely little duet for two clarinets. The issue would be to shape it with your colleague to make it truly espressivo. Tchaikovsky has the accent over the written high C in the second measure. With the jump up from fourth line D to the high C, plus with the C tongued, I’d rather minimize the accent and highlight the A in the third bar, and then the half note B in the seventh bar.”

Act I No. 5 Pas de deux, Var. II, Fig. 45, ms. 9 – 4 ms. before Fig. 46

“This is very slow. The last F-sharp is kind of interesting harmonically so I lead up to it.” Wrzesien sings the phrase, taking a little bit of time before he reaches the written F-sharp.

Act I No. 7 Sujet, 1st 11 measures

“Because the piece starts off after applause, you'll probably need to play louder than the printed piano. I like to play bars three and four softer than bars one and two. I like to “hairpin” bar 6 and highlight the D on beat three.” Wrzesien sings measures five and six. “Hearing the 16th-note figures descending down through the orchestra is one of my favourite moments.”

No. 11 should be Act II, No. 12 Scène 5 Fig. 52

“I transpose this entire scene on A clarinet. It ends up being in E minor. Everything lies so perfectly in E minor including the arpeggio at the end.”

No. 12 should be Act II No. 13 Var. I, ms 16-18

“These little trill units can sound awfully messy as they are tossed through the woodwind section. The best solution would be for everyone to consider beat two as an eighth and two 16ths. We trill on beat one, stop the trill on beat two (but continue the sound so there is no gap), and play the grace notes as two 16ths.”

No. 12 var II, should be Act II No. 13 Var. II, ms 19-22

“I like to incorporate a touch of rubato in these figures within the violin melody. My direction is always toward the second beat except in the fourth bar, where I like to highlight the high C. I prefer to ignore the staccato marks on the 8th-notes.”

No. 15 should be Act III No. 17 Scène ms 22 to figure 14

“Another clarinet duet. When you get to the ritenuto bar, I like a big D on the second bar of the 2/4...” Wrzesien sings, emphasizing the D “...and then a big appoggiatura on the last measure. I guess most conductors give you the two notes on cue, at least that's the way we do it. I would save any kind of extra special expression until the D in the last measure. That's a nice place if you have a good second clarinet player who really clicks in to you.”

No. 29, should be Act III No. 19 Pas de six Var. I, Fig 30 - 31

“I tell you, this Pas de six is deceptive.” Further Discussion of the list of clarinet ballet excerpts that were decided upon for the audition when Wrzesien retired. “It's certainly something that I suggested should be on the audition list.” Wrzesien quotes a note he sent to the Music Director regarding this solo: “The clarinet starts a 2/4 solo that
looks simple but it is a good test for steady tempo, evenness during the 16th-note passages, and good legato between the first and second registers.”

“This is one time where I don't mind at all if the strings play loudly under my solo because the rhythm they provide helps me immensely. Execute the accents more with the diaphragm than with the tongue and shape the solo dynamically as the music moves up and down the staff.” Wrzesien sings measures 6 – 9.

No. 29, should be Act III No. 19 Pas de six Var. I, fig. 80, 11 ms. after fig. 79 to 4 ms. after fig 80

“I would transpose this to A clarinet for sure, no question. I would stay away from 80 being played as printed.”

Act III No. 23 Mazurka

“The Mazurka is written for A clarinet and starts off comfortably in B-flat Major. However, the second section in E-flat Major featuring the clarinet duet I find rather clumsy. I suspect most clarinetists choose to transpose the entire Mazurka on B-flat clarinet, enabling them to play the duet in the more user-friendly key of D Major. Whatever the decision, both clarinetists should be playing the same pitched instrument. Plan the duet so that the second set of four bars is less in volume than the first four bars. Save your energy during the very loud first section of the Mazurka so that you're reasonably fresh for the duets in the second section.”

Act III No. 24 Scène, Allegro vivo, 5-13 ms. after Fig. 63, Clarinet in B-flat

“I shape this solo so that the E-flats in the third and seventh bars are emphasized. I phrase off a bit moving toward the fifth bar but jump out from the third eighth to conform to the very beginning of the solo.”

Figure X Swan Lake, Act IV No. 26 Entr'acte, Allegro non troppo, 8 – 10 ms. before end, Clarinet in B-flat

“Our job here is to match the flute solo prior to our entrance. Also, we should end our phrase knowing that the bassoon follows us with the same phrase.”

No. 25, Act IV No. 27 Danses des petits cygnes Fig. 5 or fig. 69 – 70

“This is a beautiful moment of music. It's very repetitive so you're looking for some dynamic strategy to make it interesting. One plan would be to play the first two bars mp+ and the next two bars mp-, continuing on in that manner. Another option would be to play the first four bars mp+ and the next four bars mp-. Bar nine should be clearly louder than any previous dynamic. Play this entire passage molto sostenuto.”

No. 26, Act IV No. 28 Scène maybe fig. 73 and 74

“I use chromatic fingerings all the way through, even the left hand sliver key which may clarinetists don't like ot use for whatever reason.”

Sleeping Beauty

“Some of my all-time favourite solos occur during this piece. The Boston Ballet recorded most of this ballet.”

Prologue No. 2 Dancing Scene: Entrance of the Fairies, ms. 126 – 141

“The accent on beat two is rather unusual so I like to go for it with a crescendo leading up to it [second beat of the second measure]. At bar 130, play very lightly on the 8th-note pickups [on the 'and' of beat one], aiming toward beat two.”

Prologue No. 2 Dancing Scene: Entrance of the Fairies, ms. 163 – 182
“At bar 163, shape the phrase. Often times conductors slow up around bars 169-170 for some reason, which makes it difficult for the clarinets to stay together. Maybe it's the diminuendo or maybe it's something on stage. Just be cautious around that area. Anyway, it's back to tempo at bar 171.”

Prologue No. 3 Pas de six, ms. 10 – 26

“This is certainly a gorgeous solo. It's pretty much what Tchaikovsky says: molto cantabile. I replace the accent at bar 11 with a tenuto indication. Because the A-flat in this bar is not in the C Major tonality, I like to highlight it. The same goes for the embellishments Tchaikovsky adds to the basic solo (F-sharp and C-sharp in bar 12, D-sharp in bar 13).” Wrzesien sings the third and fourth measures with noticeable emphasis on those notes. “Tchaikovsky's dynamic instructions work well in the first half of bar 16, but I don't feel the need to make much of the printed diminuendo because the clarinet does it for me as the line descends. Besides, there is still one more bar of solo before the oboe takes over. Measures 18 – 21 are counterpoint to our colleagues in the row in front of us. With it being the lowest part of our register, play with a healthy mf with no concern about covering the main melody. Measure 22 is once again our solo. I like to place tenuto marks on each triplet. There's a printed forte in measure 23 of your part that I think may be a little bit too soon for me. Starting the ascending passage too loudly while adding a crescendo might make for an unpleasant sounding high E. In the arpeggio after the high E, I like to bundle those notes in three groups of four units, which puts the E-natural as a pivot note for all three octaves. Regarding the high E, you might want to try the fingering illustrated below. This fingering produces a high E that is quite loud, so you'll likely have to temper it. You could also tame it by adding the F/C key with your right little finger. This fingering seems to work quite well, at least on my clarinet.

Prologue No. 3 Pas de six, ms. 72 – end

“This is with the piccolo. For the first triplet in bar 79, we simply lift the index finger off our A-flat fingering. For the second triplet, we would of course use the sliver key for the F-sharps.”

Prologue No. 3 Pas de six, Var. I, Candide

“The clarinet is pretty much alone at the very beginning so you'd want to play that up dynamically and then back off when the oboe comes in at bar 5. It's continuous 8th-notes for us so you'd have to catch a breath somewhere. Breathing at the end of bar 11 is probably as good a place as any.”

Prologue No. 3 Pas de six, Var. II, Coulante: The Fairy of Blooming Wheat, ms. 1 - 18

“You don't need to play with a quacky staccato, but certainly not legato. If you hairpin bars 26/27 and 28/29, this puts you in a good position dynamically for a four bar crescendo beginning at measure 30. Hopefully your other woodwind colleagues can be convinced to do the same.”

Prologue No. 3 Pas de six, Var. V, Violente, ms. 10 – 41

“Listen carefully and play off of the pickups and downbeat in the violins. Send all your 16th-notes into your eight notes throughout this passage.”

Prologue No. 4, Finale, ms. 1 – 8

“I'm always annoyed at the start of No. 4 because at least in our production, the previous dance has an exciting finish and the audience is still clapping when the conductor begins this piece. Also annoying in our production is a tempo that I feel is way too fast. It's such a pretty solo that invites so much expressive playing if it were played Andantino as indicated. Be very clear showing the similar but different rhythm structures in measure 7.”

Further discussion of the section starting at 17.

Prologue No. 4, Finale, ms. 37-48 & ms. 67-75
“This is snarly music to be played in a gruff manner. There are too many accents printed in measures 41 – 43. I just do the ones on beats 2 and 4. Also, in any kind of ascending line like in measure 44, pull back a bit dynamically to crescendo into the fff.”

Act I No. 5 Scène ms. 125-126

Further discussion about the possibility of transposing the solo to B-flat clarinet.

Act I No. 5 Scène ms. 159 – 176

“It's fast and note-y with lots of accidentals.”

Act I No. 6 Valse, ms 139 – 177

“As in the previous waltz, many conductors tend to just slow down the tempo prior to the big tun at measure 145. Once again, this could make it difficult for the two clarinets as they begin their exchange of 8th-note groups. Be warned.”

Act I No. 7 Scène ms. 3 – 11

“Be sure to come in immediately after the rest during the sextuplets or you'll get behind real easily. Kind of glide over the rest as best as you can. From a clarinet technical standpoint, I wouldn't stop my air flow.” Wrzesien sings the 16th-note triplet figures in a fluid way. “Good luck trying to be heard at 10 – the low register of the clarinet was not the wisest choice in orchestration by Tchaikovsky. How about a trombone instead?”

Act I No. 8 b) Dances of the Maids of Honour and Pages, ms. 94 – 130

“Here, it's pretty much tutti with no reason for concern. Just play with brilliant articulation at 119.”

Act I No. 9 Finale, ms. 95-114

“Good luck with the fingering sequence three measures before 100. On the one hand, all of this area is covered up in the texture, and yet on the other hand, you're a first clarinet player and you'd like to get everything. Your best choice for survival would be to replace the 16th-notes with an 8th-note here and there throughout this frantic section.”

Act II No. 11 Blind Man's Buff

“If you have good tonguing it's kind of fun to play. If you can't play exactly what's printed, I always prefer discretely substituting two 16th-notes with an 8th-note here and there rather than playing all the notes with added slurs.”

Act II No. 12 e) Dance of the Marchionesses

“Once again we need to do some editing because of the continuous 16th-notes. I use the four measure introduction to take a deep slow breath because I prefer to play at least the first 16 bars of the duet in one breath. Once the oboe and English horn enter at bar 21, replacing two 16ths with an eighth rest here and there to catch a quick breath will be less noticeable.”

Act II No. 15 Pas d'action: Coda

“The two clarinets should match with nice clear tonguing. Follow the dynamic structure exactly as printed.”

Act II No. 19 Symphonic Entr'acte: Sleep, ms. 97 – 103

“I raise the dynamic up one step for each of the two entrances. To avoid a late-speaking high D in bar 101, I 'pre-flow' my air and lightly bump the reed at the correct moment.”
Act III No. 23 Pas de quatre: Var. IV The Diamond Fairy, ms. 1 – 12 inclusive

“It's pretty much flutes, clarinet, and upper strings in this section.”

Act III No. 24 Pas de caractère: Puss-in-Boots and the White Cat, ms. 30 – 43

“Here we strive for a good legato between the first and second registers. In measure 38 we dynamically increase each unit culminating with the downbeat in bar 39 and highlighting the B-natural.”

Act III No. 25 Pas de quatre: The Bluebird

“Transpose No. 25 on B-flat clarinet – it's a no brainer. Raise your bell up and try to get away with as much sostenuto as you can with the pick-ups to bar 19. This one is really fun to play, especially in D major!”

Act III No. 25 Pas de quatre: The Bluebird and Princess Florine, ms. 10 – 18

“I'm generally not fond of real short notes on the clarinet, but our staccato marking work really well while accompanying the flute chirps.”

Act III No. 25 Pas de quatre: Coda, ms. 14 – 37

“There's a lot of linkage between the clarinet and the first violins. Tight rhythm, staying on top of the beat, and really listening carefully is essential so the back-and-forth interplay is right on the button.”

Act III No. 28 Pas de deux: Variation II: Aurora, ms. 15 – 29

“This figure is stated four consecutive times and you'd like to do something with it. You could do two measures up in volume, two measures down in volume. You could also do four measures up in volume, four measures down. I do like playing softly on the last set of two bars with gentle wedges over the final three 8th-notes to indicate the end of the passage. Don't forget to articulate the F at the end of the sextuplet to highlight the sff indication. While you're on your F, you might consider shading the edge of the bottom hole with your left ring finger to control your pitch as you diminuendo.”

The Nutcracker

“The Boston Ballet recorded most of The Nutcracker.”

Overture Miniature - 4 – 8 ms after Fig. A

“When your first notes of the evening are a solo, this means you must be mentally prepared and alert. This is especially true during a Nutcracker run filled with doubleheaders and consecutive days of performances. Although we're looking at a batch of 16th-notes at our first entrance, remember that shaping a technical solo always makes it easier to play.”

Act I No. 1, Scene, 9. ms. after Fig. B – Fig. C poco più sostenuto & 8 ms. after Fig. C – Tempo I

“This is a lovely solo which is made even better by the clarinetist using a wide dynamic range. I like to show a clear separation between the two E's on beat 3 in the fourth bar of the solo (and 16 bars later also). Some conductors want a ritard 8 bars after letter C which makes it awkward to lead the pick-up notes into the next bar. Be warned.”

Act I No. 1, Scene, Allegro Vivace – Meno 8 ms. before Fig. G

“Clarinets and bassoons here. The challenge is the fast tempo and the back and forth between the first and second registers. Lots of work for the left hand.” Wrzesien sings the solo and emphasizes the crescendo leading to the downbeat of the fifth measure showing the arc of the phrase. “Again, if I think of this passage from a musical standpoint rather than a technical or staccato standpoint, it becomes much less problematic.”
Act I No. 2, March

“How accommodating of Tchaikovsky to include two 8th-notes in this passage for us instead of continuous 16ths. That enables me to replace the two 16ths on the third beat of the second bar with an 8th-note of my own without feeling guilty. I think it's wise to think of this passage as a flute/piccolo moment with the clarinet in the background.”

Act I No. 4, Scene – 7 ms after Fig C to Fig D

“I kind of like the hemiola here.” Wrzesien sings the solo and shows a larger 3/2 in the fifth and sixth measures. “Be on the late side with your 16th-note so that the figure doesn't gravitate into triplets.”

Act I No. 6, Scene, 2 ms after Fig C – 4 ms before Fig E

“To ensure my high F speaks for me cleanly, I do the fingering illustrated below.”

“It's very dependable. I wouldn't trust either my regular high F fingering or my long F fingering, especially coming off a 16th-notes rest.”

“The Allegro giusto is a scramble. In the third measure I use the one-and-one fingering for the E-flats that I know sounds horrible in the first register. However, I feel it's crucial for me to keep my fingers above the holes and rings at the traditional tempo. I use the second from the top side key for the A-flat to B-flat trill. Pitch-wise, it's passable.”

Act I No. 6, Scene, 8-10 ms inclusive after Fig F

“I edit this by playing an 8th-note and two 16th-notes on the fourth beat which helps immensely. I plead guilty!”

Act I No. 7, Battle Scene, 9 ms after Fig D – 14 ms after Fig D

“Match the dynamic changes with the bassoons.”

Act II No. 11, Scene, Fig A to 2 ms after Fig B

“For me there's no hesitation: transpose it a half step down on your B-flat clarinet. You're now in D major. The ending is simply swirling through A7 and D major arpeggios.”

Act II No. 12, Divertissement a) Le Chocolat: Spanish Dance, fig 1 – 4 ms after Fig 1 & Fig 5 to end

“I begin my entrance at bar 13 forte, I fp the high C, and crescendo into the ff. Get off of the tie precisely at bar 16. And be ready for the Più mosso near the end.”
Act II No. 12, Divertissement b) Arabian Dance, ms 5 - 13

“The quintuplet is not as fast as it looks on the page. Oddly enough, thinking two plus three somehow accomplishes my goal of playing an even quintuplet.”

Act II No. 12, Divertissement c) Chinese Dance, ms 19 to end

“I prefer to play this in one breath. We have plenty of time to tank up fully and play it straight through. It's one less thing to worry about.”

Act II No. 13, Waltz of the Flowers, 9 ms before Fig A – Fig B

“We need to start this solo off louder than we would like because the entrance begins after four horns play the preceding eight bars and we're down in the first register. Still, it's important to show the crescendo that is indicated. This is easier to accomplish in the next entrance because the solo ends up in the upper end of our second register. In the first solo I continue the dynamic increase into the A-natural half note which I treat more like a tenuto than an accent. Be cautious not to get tangled up at the end of the second solo when you're mentally vulnerable after your third day of doubleheader performances!”

Act II No. 14, Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy, pick-up to Fig A – downbeat of 4 ms after Fig A and 4 ms after Fig B to Presto

“For an elegant beginning to the 32nd-notes, I pre-flow my air just prior to my entrance. This insures that you'll be right on time with no bump.”

Romeo and Juliet

“The Boston Ballet recorded Romeo and Juliet at Jordan Hall at the New England Conservatory, where the acoustics there are very favourable.”

Act I No. 1 Introduction, 6ms after Fig. 2 – 1 quarter note before Fig. 3

“Entering on a high C-sharp is not an ideal starting note, so I pre-flow my air the bar before the actual entrance. For the upper notes I use my normal E fingering. Then I use the left hand middle finger F-sharp, adding to it the right hand sliver key. It’s wise to check this area for intonation with the flutist prior to each performance. I do not breathe in the eighth bar of the solo.”

Act I No. 2 Romeo, 2 ms after Fig. 6 – Fig. 7

“I use my primary high F fingering for the E-sharp but I add the throat G-sharp key which vents it a bit. Always check your bridge key adjustment before each performance, as there are two nice opportunities for a one-and-one fingering choice in this solo. I don't recall playing this passage on A clarinet although this tonality certainly is more user friendly. If you choose this option, try this fingering for your high F-sharp.”

Act I No. 9 Preparing for the Ball, pick up to final 2 ms.

“No particular problem here – just be careful of the unusual mix of accidentals.”

Act I No. 10 Juliet as a Young Girl, Fig. 53 – Fig 54

“To avoid sounding clipped, I treat the last of the three 8th-notes in these figures as a quarter note followed by a 'Stravinsky comma.' In the fourth bar I use the side B-flat fingering along with the left hand sliver key for the octave
B-flat. Whatever time I've lost in the *poco ritard* I try to regain in the third and fourth beats in the sixth bar of the solo so that my *a tempo* is actually in the beginning of bar seven. In the final bar of the solo, once again, it's the side B-flat fingering followed by the left hand sliver key for the octave B-flat.”

Act I No. 10 Juliet as a Young Girl, 4 ms before Fig 55

“Playing this passage on A clarinet would make it smoother, but I don't think it's worth the trouble to change clarinets.”

Act I No. 10 Juliet as a Young Girl, 6 ms after Fig. 55 – Fig. 56

“This lovely duet for two clarinets poses no problems. Be sure the thirds are in tune in the final bar. Also, I phrase off a bit after the third beat in bar four and treat the final quarter note as a pick-up to bar five. Listen carefully for the cello's 8th-note pick-up at the end of the ninth bar.”

Act I No. 11 Arrival of the Guests (Minuet), pickup to Fig 64 – 7 ms after Fig 65

“Despite the legato required for the beginning of this passage, be sure not to let the dotted eighth and 16th-note figures evolve into triplets. Our right hand little finger has to hop quickly from the C-sharp key on to the D-sharp key two bars after Big 65. For a good G-sharp fingering…”

Act I No. 11 Arrival of the Guests (Minuet), 4 ms before Fig 70 – 4 ms before the end

“Play very short 8th-notes and observe the accent marks. Don't let your sound die out in the low register at the end.”

Act I No. 12 March, 2-4 ms after Fig 73

“Really throw the graces notes.” Wrzesien sings the passage before figure 72 with a lot of character and energy, especially on the faster notes. Further discussion about using the second from top side key for the high D in certain circumstances in the phrase. “The solo after figure 73 is hard because of the high E. You might have options depending on your clarinet. You could also use all three left fingers plus the G-sharp left side key. It might bust out on you because it's much louder than the traditional fingering, so you'd have to voice it in accordance with what kind of resistance your clarinet is giving you.”

“It's sure to come out that way but it might be out of colour. And yet on the other hand, it's good to know that it's always going to speak for you. Sometimes the traditional E is not that easy to make speak. You see the end of a crescendo and you might have nightmares about a squeak and that's something we don't want to do. Yeah, that's another thing: with the high E being on the high side you sure don't have to reach at all for it [with the alternate fingering]. Just blow it really low. Whereas with the traditional E you might have to voice it a little bit. I think that's maybe the hardest place in the piece for me.”

Act I No. 13 Dance of the Knights, Andante, 5 – 8 ms. After Fig. 87, Clarinet in B-flat

“I crescendo quite a bit in bar 3, perhaps up to *mf*. Make the trill sound sinister.”

Act I No. 14 Juliet's Variation, 2 ms before Fig 92 – 6 ms after Fig 92

“Writing the names of the chords above the arpeggios is helpful. The second arpeggio certainly doesn't look like an F-minor chord the way it's spelled, but that's all it is. In the third bar after Big 93 the C-sharp grace note is played with the left hand first finger only.”

Act I No. 15 Mercutio, 2 ms after Fig 98 – 4 ms before Fig 99 & 2 ms after Fig 100 – 4 ms after Fig 101
“They look similar but make sure not to confuse the one eighth and two 16th-note figure at the downbeat of the second and sixth complete measures. Play with energy; highlight the accents.”

Act I No. 16 Madrigal, 5 ms before Fig 110 – Fig 110

“Be careful of the intonation in the final two bars. The B-natural in the second clarinet will tend to be a bit sharp.”

Act I No. 16 Madrigal, Andante, 4 ms. after Fig. 111 – end

“Play the four 8th-note groupings quite strong. It's your solo. Drop your tongue for a nice slur down to the low D, one measure before big 113.”

Act I No. 20 Romeo's Variation, 4 ms before Fig 140 – Fig 140

“Not too much diminuendo in the second bar; save it for the third bar.”

Act I No. 21 Love Dance, Andante, 5 ms. before Fig. 146 – Fig. 146

“Very quiet and tender at the end.”

Act II No. 22 Folk Dance, Allegro giocoso, 4 ms. after Fig. 154 – 4 ms. before Fig. 155

“Aim for smooth crossings between the second and third registers.”

Act II No. 23 Romeo and Mercutio, 5 ms before Fig 171 – Fig 171 & 6 ms before end – end

“Work toward a nice blend and good intonation in both cadences.”

Act II No. 25 Dance With Mandolins, Fig. 196 – Fig 197

“I usually don't hesitate to play passages on the opposite clarinet if it puts me in a better key. However, for whatever reason, I prefer to play this section on B-flat clarinet rather than A clarinet. My second clarinetist plays his part on my D clarinet. I've always wondered why Prokofiev wrote this section for two completely different instruments. Did he want beat one to have a different tone quality than beat two? Should the clarinetists try to blend even though one is playing a soprano clarinet and the other is playing a piccolo clarinet? Should both clarinetists be playing the passage on the same pitched instruments? I imagine clarinetists in ballet orchestras have a variety of ways in approaching this issues.”

Act II No. 26 The Nurse, Adagio scherzoso, 6 ms. after Fig. 201

“Right hand third hole fingering for the D-sharp; left hand middle finger plus the right hand sliver key for the final F-sharp.”

Act II No. 32 Tybalt Meets Mercutio, Tempo I, Fig. 253 – 4 ms. after Fig. 253

“As before, I treat the last of the three 8th-notes as a quarter note followed by a 'Stravinsky comma'.”

Act III No. 39 Farewell Before Departing, Fig 288 – 4 ms after Fig 290

“I feel big 289 is probably the most passionate moment in the entire ballet. I absolutely do not drop down to a mf as printed, I intensify toward the quarter note high D, and I keep my volume up through the next two measures. At big 290, once again, I play well above the mp indication.”
Act III No. 39 Farewell Before Departing, 4 ms after Fig 291 – 3 ms before Fig 292 & 4 ms before fig 294 – 295

“Play it very, very espressivo.” Further discussion of playing the beamed notes measured three and four measures before 293.

Act III No. 40 The Nurse, pick-ups to Fig 298 – Fig 299

“Slurring from C-sharp to the D-sharp at the pick up to three measures before 299 makes sense.”

Act III No. 41 Juliet Refuses to Marry Paris, 3 ms. Before Fig 304 – Fig 304

“Good intonation is needed for the close harmonies Prokofiev writes.”

Discussion of how, “…scary No. 43 looks but once you get used to the structure of it, it's no big.”

Act III No. 44 At Friar Lawrence's, pick up to 3 ms before Fig 313

“Full proof fingering for the high F:”

Act III No. 45 Interlude, 6 ms after Fig 322 – 4 ms before Fig 323

“You just have to watch out for the high C-sharp to make sure you are on the same page with the other clarinetist.”

Act III No. 45 Interlude, 3 and 4 ms before the end

“In order to do a diminuendo start off with enough sound.”

Act III No. 47 Juliet Alone, pick up to 5 ms before Fig 332

“Right hand third hole fingering for the D-sharp.”

Act III No. 49 Dance of the Girl with Lilies, 4 ms before Fig 340 – 2 ms after Fig 342

“The slur indication in the first bar is wrong. It should be the same as three before big 341. We have a few choices for fingerings at the end of this excerpt – none of them really good. Mine are listed below. The F-sharp will be sharp but controllable. The side A-sharp is certainly preferable to 1/2. Again, it's a matter of knowing your clarinet and voicing it properly.”

Act IV: Epilogue No. 52 Death of Juliet, 4 ms before Fig 363 – 7 ms after Fig 363

“Try to make this solo as ethereal as possible. I start the solo above the piano indication to give myself enough volume for the diminuendo. Take special care for flawless crossings on the B-C-sharp-B triplet.”

Cinderella

“This is much more challenging to play than Romeo, for me anyway.”

Act I No. 2 The Veil Dance, 3 ms. before Fig. 7 – Fig. 9, 3 ms after Fig 10 – 6 ms after Fig 10

“I find no particular problem 3 bars before big number 7. For the next section, I wrote out a part for A clarinet. My strategy is to warm up in the pit on my A, begin the ballet on B-flat as written, and change over to A clarinet at big number 7. I have re-barred the rhythm so the two measures before big number 9 become two 3/4 bars and one 2/4 bar. This is a big help for me visually. In the first two bars I use harmonic fingerings for the high D and F-sharp:
totally open for the high D and the throat B-flat fingering plus the top side-keys for the F-sharp. This enables me to avoid entering the third register. Obviously the tone quality of these two notes with these fingerings is dreadful, but the speed required in this passage is such a blur that the faultiness is hardly noticeable.”

“It is crucial that the accented concert F (E-sharp in the score) downbeat fourth bar of big 10 be in tune with the flute.”

Act I No. 2 The Veil Dance, pick up to Fig 15 – 6 ms after Fig 16 for Bb cl

“Just throw the four 32nd-notes into the next beat.”

Act I No. 7 The Dancing Lesson, 4 ms after Fig 58 – 2 ms before Fig 59 for Bb cl

“Helpful information: A-sharps appear on the majority of downbeats in these arpeggios.”

Act I No. 9 Cinderella Dreams of the Ball, Fig 69 – 7 ms before Fig 72 for Bb cl

“At big 69 I play louder than the printed piano suggests because I like to taper off the end of the phrase. Side key throat B-flat three bars after big 69 is perfect to show the printed accent [same suggested fingering in Romeo Act I No. 10].”

“I think big 71 is probably the most enchanting moment in the entire ballet. I shape a four bar phrase here with a big tenuto mark on the downbeat C three bars after big 71.”

Act I No. 13 The Summer Fairy

“This is another place where I transpose on A clarinet. For me it's a lot more clumsy swirling up and down these runs on B-flat clarinet and noticeably smoother on A clarinet. The price I pay is ending up on a high G instead of an F-sharp on that crucial fourth beat at big 90. My solution is to finger the G with only the first finger of the left hand and remain on the right hand sliver key from the previous E-flat. I have also restructured the rhythmic groupings to make it more user friendly visually. With proper placing, I always end up exactly with the conductor's downbeat 5 bars before the end of the piece.”

Act I No. 16 The Winter Fairy, Fig 102 – Fig 104

“Hopefully the conductor will be clear in his preparation for your solo entrance.”

Act II No. 30 Grand Waltz, Fig 218 – Fig 223, in Bb

“The same comments as in Act I No. 9, but this time it's piano dolce as opposed to mezzo piano dolce.”

Act II No. 30 Grand Waltz, 6 ms before Fig 227 – Fig 228, in Bb

“I offer two fingerings for the high F-sharp:”

Act II No. 32 Cinderella's Variation, Fig 237 – 239, for Bb cl

“Again we hope for a clear prep beat to begin our solo. Drop your tongue to avoid getting the upper partial on the slurred jump from second register C-sharp down to the low A.”

Act II No. 36 Pas de Deux: The Prince and Cinderella, Fig 260 – 4 ms after Fig 260 inclusive & last 5 ms of number
“This is another lovely moment, this time for two clarinets. Avoid playing triplets four bars after big 260.” Wrzesien sings the figure in question very squarely and precisely.

Act III No. 44 Third Gallop of the Prince, 4 ms after Fig 318 – 5 ms before Fig 319 inclusive & Fig 320 – 2 ms before Fig 322 inclusive, Bb cl

“I like all three fingers in the left hand, the D-flat/A-flat key plus the second from the top side key for my high F. Your right hand has to move into its normal position quickly for the E-flat that follows, but it's worth the trouble for a truly forte high F.”

“My preferred fingering for two bars after big 321 is first finger only for the C-sharp; for the F-sharp, I choose thumb, register key, the first and second fingers of the left hand, and the top side key.”

Act III No. 45 Cinderella Awakes, 8 ms after Fig 326 – downbeat of next ms, Bb cl

“I prefer to transpose this a half step up on my A clarinet. The C-sharp gives me a nice leading tone into the final high D.”

Act III No. 45 Cinderella Awakes, pick ups to Fig 333 – Fig 334, Bb cl

“This same waltz melody has appeared earlier in Act II, No. 30 Grand Waltz.”

Act III No. 46 The Morning After the Ball, Fig 338 – 5 ms before Fig 339 inclusive, Bb cl

“Begin the G-sharp softly as indicated but increase the intensity as you approach the 8th-notes, which should be played significantly louder. Smooth intervals between the three register crossings are vital.”

Act III No. 48 The Prince Finds Cinderella, 4 ms after Fig 369 – Fig 370

“Again, delicate and tranquil; precise rhythm one bar before big 370.”

Act III No. 49 Slow Waltz, 3 ms before Fig 374 – 2 ms after Fig 376 inclusive, Bb cl

“Use the right hand third hole fingering for the high D-sharp four after big 375.”