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Book and Music Reviews: December 2020

Originally published in *The Clarinet* 48/1 (December 2020).

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will perform the most over our career. *The Nutcracker* and Tchaikovsky's two other ballets *Swan Lake* and *Sleeping Beauty* are the subject of this well-conceived guide by Mara Plotkin, a clarinetist with a fondness for the ballet pit as well as dance itself. Plotkin's 2015 doctoral thesis at the University of Toronto addresses clarinet performance practice in the Tchaikovsky ballets and Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* and *Cinderella* – which will be the focus of Volume Two in this series. She interviewed five ballet orchestra principal clarinetists about the clarinet solos in this repertoire and documented their musical and technical approaches. For this 70-page book, with extensive commentary and performance suggestions addressing phrasing, technique, what to expect from different conductors and fellow musicians, and solo passages on B-flat versus A clarinet, Plotkin was supported by experienced New York City Ballet principal clarinetist Steven Hartman.

Plotkin is an excellent virtual coach. Her writing has an encouraging tone and recounts her own experiences as a ballet orchestra clarinetist. Helpfully, about three-fourths of the book is devoted to the less familiar *Swan Lake* and *Sleeping Beauty*. Musical excerpts are shown, with the first and second clarinet parts if appropriate, and then in prose Plotkin gives performance guidance, sometimes framed with the dramatic story being portrayed on stage. Many of the musical excerpts run a full page in length and make a good document of Tchaikovsky's style elements including melodic charm, passages requiring agility and a fondness for chromatic inflection and sequence. Tchaikovsky's music and Plotkin's insights are a double bill that will entertain, elucidate and inspire you for many grand nights.

– Gregory Barrett

Rubén Rendueles. *Clarinete: Respuestas fáciles a preguntas difíciles (Clarinet: Easy Answers to Difficult Questions)*. Círculo Rojo Editorial, 2019. \$20.00

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 English


When a clarinetist wants to know what is going on inside their instrument and their body while playing, they encounter obvious limitations because everything is hidden. Getting to understand what happens is not an

easy task. It is often resolved through a perceptual and intuitive approach that is not easy to put into words. And words – especially in this case where we don't have immediate images – are like cement, they coalesce everything.

Questions that we have asked ourselves on occasion such as why the reed vibrates, why it is so difficult to play in tune, what is the best material to use to build a clarinet, how sensitive is the human ear to perceive differences of bore materials or why the registers of the clarinet exist, are treated objectively. Other questions that affect our ability to play the clarinet, such as whether the clarinetist can control the pressure of the air column, or if we can influence the production of a more or less bright sound are explained so that the clarinetist finally understands what is in their control.

Rubén Rendueles scientifically argues numerous acoustic and physiological phenomena of the clarinet and the musician, obtaining interesting conclusions about what may be under the control (or not) of both performers and instrument makers. Although science – as the author says in his prologue – reaches objective explanations, the definitive measurement will always be subjective and different from one individual to another, according to the sensory perception of each. However, science brings us closer to the truth, and although sometimes we do not reach it, it does allow us to at least discard what is false.



English

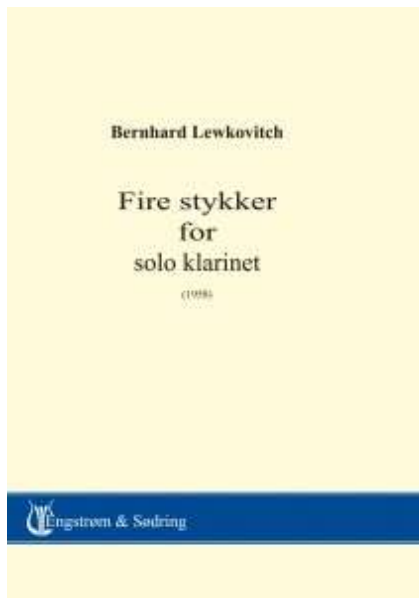
The book includes chapters on the origin and evolution of the keys and different joints of the clarinet, and on the broad clarinet family, as well as a glossary of concepts, a Spanish-English technical dictionary and an extensive bibliography.

Rendueles (born Gijón, Asturias [Spain], 1979) has had a career as a performer and researcher. Since finishing his degree at the Conservatorio Superior de Música de La Coruña (2006), he has been researching the peculiarities of the clarinet in order to provide answers to both professionals and amateurs.

This Spanish language book *Clarinete: Respuestas fáciles a preguntas difíciles* gives us an opportunity to continue training as performers and teachers.

– Carlos J. Casadó

MUSIC



Bernhard Lewkovitch. *Fire stykker for solo klarinet* (1958). Edited by Engstrøm & Sødrings Musikforlag, 2019. DKK 244.00 Selling agent: Nils Winter:

nilswinter@steeplechase.dk

I was notified by the publishing supervisor of Engstrøm & Sødring in Copenhagen that they had edited a piece for solo clarinet that was never premiered. The piece was composed in 1958 and was somehow forgotten until now.