

Reviews

BOOKS

Fred Ormand. *Fundamentals of Fine Clarinet Playing.* Fred Ormand, 2017. www.fred-ormand.com. 117 pp. \$40.00



Fred Ormand's publication is an exciting addition to the pedagogical literature for clarinet. This compendium is appropriate for advanced students and professionals. Ormand utilizes his diverse training

and insights from a lifetime of teaching and performing to present the player with specific solutions to important challenges all clarinetists face. This is not intended to be a comprehensive method but rather an outline of the requisite skills necessary for attaining true artistry as a clarinetist. Ormand distills his insight, wisdom and experience into a compact and indispensable manual for the instrument.

In the foreword, David Shifrin identifies Ormand as "among the first to promote a truly international style of clarinet playing." Ormand makes a case for this "international style." He draws on influences from Alberto Luconi to Keith Stein and from Bernard Walton to Robert Marcellus, and instills in his teaching the best aspects of these schools.

This book is organized into nine chapters, and throughout Ormand has inserted useful and informative anecdotes from renowned players and teachers. Included are recommended passages from standard clarinet pedagogical materials. Additionally, the book's design, size and

high-quality paper make it easy to use on a music stand.

The first third of the book delivers thorough instruction about the most important physical aspects of playing, beginning the narrative by addressing the foundation of Ormand's teaching: breathing. The passages are illustrated with photographs of the author demonstrating excellent posture. He moves through a primer on proper embouchure, making a case for a double-lip embouchure. The third chapter provides a concise and clear demonstration of proper hand and finger technique.

Skill with varied, fast and clean articulation separates a good player from a great player. In Chapter 4, Ormand describes and illustrates, in the most clear and concise manner, how to develop a highly effective articulation. He does so by using a combination of narrative and musical examples, incorporating his own techniques and invaluable examples from his teachers. He recommends specific etudes for practice. There is an excellent tutorial on multiple articulations. For this chapter alone, the book deserves a place in every clarinetist's library.

Chapter 5 is devoted to the shaping of the phrase, the incorporation of a beautiful legato and a facile articulation. Chapter 6 compiles those skills necessary to become a "complete clarinetist," fluent in the pedagogical literature as well as in contemporary techniques.

Chapter 7 is advice and a master class on the preparation and performance of select important orchestral excerpts. Given the track record of Ormand's students, any aspiring orchestral clarinetist would be wise to keep this book close at hand. The solutions offered are insightful and effective.

Perhaps most useful are the exercises that make Ormand such a master teacher of the instrument. Do not miss Section 2 of the appendix; it holds a hallmark of Ormand's teaching, the Five-Note Scale Exercise.

The most satisfying aspect of this book is that its organization is so practical and useful. One could return repeatedly to certain chapters and incorporate the material into a daily practice regimen and audition preparation. Ormand communicates effectively in this book what he taught so successfully in the studio.

— Thomas Gilmore Masse