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Developing interpretation: Analysis of an oboist's process on playing the exposition of Mozart's Oboe Concerto 1st movement

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ABSTRACT

Key words: interpretation, technique, way of practice, Mozart oboe concerto
This thesis explores the process of practicing and interpreting the first movement—particularly the exposition—of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Oboe Concerto in C major*, K. 314, a cornerstone work in the oboist repertoire. Recognized as a standard in auditions and performance practice, the concerto demands both technical mastery and stylistic sensitivity. The central research questions addressed are: *What performance ideals, both historical and pedagogical, can inform a modern interpretation of this work?* and *how can the technical challenges of the piece be effectively addressed in the practice process?* The study adopts an artistic research methodology rooted in reflective practice. Insights were gathered through lessons with two professional oboe teachers, analysis of scholarly literature on Classical performance practice, and a sustained process of documentation via a practice journal and audio recordings. A pilot study focusing on the first 40 bars of the exposition identified key technical and musical issues, which then informed the strategies used in the main study covering the remainder of the exposition. The results highlight several effective practice techniques, such as rhythmic variation exercises for sixteenth-note passages, targeted use of the metronome and tuner for pitch control and stability, and methods for refining articulation and dynamic phrasing. Teacher feedback played a crucial role in shaping the interpretation, especially regarding articulation nuances, expressive dynamics, and historically informed stylistic choices. The process led to a deeper understanding of Classical phrasing, ornamentation, and the interpretive role of the performer in balancing personal expression with stylistic fidelity.

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1. Introduction

The present independent project turns to questions about practicing and interpreting an iconic piece for oboists, the *Oboe Concerto in C major, K. 314* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. This piece holds a central position in the professional life of every oboist. It is a standard audition requirement for professional orchestras, music academies, and youth ensembles, and is frequently performed in both solo and pedagogical contexts. Whether as a student, a professional performer, or a teacher, every oboist is expected to have this concerto "in their hands"—familiar, ready, and refined.

Because of its significance and the level of mastery it demands, I chose this piece as the focus of my project. My aim has been to study the concerto not only from a technical perspective but also through a process of reflective practice, guided by the input of my teachers and my own evolving interpretation. This project documents my work on the first movement of the concerto, particularly focusing on the exposition. It includes practice strategies, stylistic considerations, and personal insights that emerged throughout my work, and reflects the ongoing journey of developing a deeper musical understanding of a cornerstone piece in the oboist's repertoire.

1.1 Background

On this chapter it will be discussed the nature and progression of the instrument, in order for the reader to understand better the demands of the concerto and have a clearer picture on how the oboe was made and functioned during Mozart's era. Moreover, it is provided some information about the composer and the time he composed the piece, to whom he dedicated it, and when it was discovered. Also, the most commonly used editions are referred.

1.1.1 The instrument: the oboe

The oboe instrument first appeared in France in the 17th century and then it became spread in the whole Europe. In the 18th century the bore of the instrument was narrowed and the holes for the fingers were made smaller to create a brighter, and a more flexible sound. Around 1760 the design of the instrument began to standardize and the definitive classical oboe became ubiquitous in orchestras across Europe. The oboe continued to be played in consorts and military bands, but this gave way to the wind octet, for which sublime music was written by

Beethoven and Mozart. As the repertoire grew more complex and demanding, a “speaker key” was added to aid with the upper register and upward slurs. Harmonic fingerings and trill keys were often in use as well. Beethoven’s last symphony began to push the limits of the instrument, and the famous Czech virtuoso Joseph Selner began to find technical solutions to these issues. “Using keys rather than cross fingerings to produce accidentals gave a crisper more specific tuning to these notes” (Burges, 108).

1.1.2 The composer: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born in 1756 and died in Vienna in 1791 at the age of 35. He began to play and study music at the age of three and started playing concerts on tour with his sister accompanying by his father at the age of six. He spent most of the years of his life being on tours and performing in various cities such as Munich, Paris, London, Milan, Vienna and many more. During these trips he interacted with many other artists from whom he gained a lot of inspiration. The arrangements of his early piano concertos form other composers’ works such as K. 37, 39, 40 show some of that influence. When he was 21 years old, he composed the oboe concerto while he was employed as a court musician by the ruler of Salzburg, Prince-Archbishop Hieronymus Colloredo. At the age of 25 he moved to Vienna, an important cultural city that influenced him, he began an important friendship with Haydn and then he also married Constanza Weber, a German soprano. During the next nine years of his life he composed a great number of works including concerti, operas, symphonies, chamber and church music.

1.1.3 The piece: Oboe Concerto in C major

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's Oboe Concerto in C major, K. 314 (271k), was composed in the spring or summer of 1777, for the oboist Giuseppe Ferlendis (1755–1802) from Bergamo. The piece was well-received; Mozart's friend and fellow oboist Friedrich Ramm performed it multiple times in Mannheim, where Mozart had relocated in search of better opportunities. In 1778, Mozart re-worked it as a concerto for flute in D major, K. 314/285d, for the Dutch flutist Ferdinand Dejean. However, Dejean was dissatisfied upon discovering that the work was based on an existing piece and paid only half of the agreed fee. During the 1800s and early 1900s, the oboe concerto was believed to have been lost, whereas the flute concerto in D remained well-known. In 1920, Bernhard Paumgartner rediscovered the oboe concerto when he came across a handwritten set of parts in the archives of the Salzburg Mozarteum. He noticed the resemblance between it and the flute concerto in D. There are two basic editions that are mostly

used in our time: the London: Boosey & Hawkes, 16427 edition and the Barenreiter Urtext edition.

1.2 Purpose and questions

The purpose of this study is to analyze and discuss the process of developing an interpretation of the exposition of the 1st movement of the Oboe Concerto in C major by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791). The exploration will focus on the questions:

> Which performance ideals (historically, culturally, and pedagogically informed expectations and aesthetic values) can be identified and how can they be integrated in the performance?
>
> How could approaches of the hard passages and the technical difficulties of the piece be designed and carried through in the performance?

1.3 Theoretical approach

In the nature of this project, the term "interpretation" is used frequently. As referred to the dictionary *The Oxford Companion to Music* (2011), the term interpretation is defined as the process of musical performance involves a performer translating a composed piece of music from notation into sound. Due to the inherent ambiguity in musical notation, the dictionary also refers that performers must make decisions about dynamics, tempo, phrasing, and larger aspects like formal structure and musical climaxes. These choices reflect the performer's understanding of the piece, shaped by their musical knowledge and personality, resulting in a unique interpretation. While each performance is one-of-a-kind and cannot be exactly replicated, interpretations can be repeated. Musical works often allow for multiple, equally valid interpretations, even those that are significantly different according to the *The New Oxford companion to music* (2011).

In addition, referring to *The Oxford Dictionary of* Music (2013) the act of performance involves the performer's judgment and personality. Similar to how a playwright cannot precisely dictate how actors should speak their lines, a composer cannot indicate exactly how their music should be sung or played. The performer's interpretation plays a crucial role in bringing the work to life *(Oxford University Press, 2013*).

With these definitions it is concluded that interpretation is the highest form of purpose for a performer, an act of responsibility, knowledge of aesthetical norms and subjectivity in an absolute balance.

Furthermore, in this thesis it is often used the word “concerto”. Concerto comes from the Latin term Concertare, “to debate, dispute” or the term Consertare, “to consort together or form an ensemble” (*New Oxford Companion to Music, 1983*). This applied to the works of vocalists that were accompanied by a group of contrasting vocalists or an ensemble of instrumentalists that they would accompany a soloist line.

1.4 Previous artistic research

In this chapter will be presented some researches that offers knowledge about Mozart concerti interpretation and some historical information about the era, the style and furthermore some musicological elements with which we will understand better the nature of Mozart composing. This previous research was found from artistic and scholarly journals, books and digital libraries through my university’s data base using key words such as “Mozart’s composing style”, “Mozart’s concerti interpretation” and “classical concerti forms and norms”.

To begin with, the research of Hsu (1994) offers a comprehensive examination of Mozart's D minor piano concerto, including its background, structural analysis, and interpretative insights. To effectively perform this piece and capture Mozart's clarity of style, the performer must incorporate personal sensibility and intuition. The woodwinds play a crucial role in adding tonal color, effectively forming a three-part ensemble alongside the strings and piano, creating a "symphonies concertantes" effect. The concerto features dramatic contrasts throughout its movements, showcasing an equal relationship between the piano and orchestra that reflects Mozart's evolution from writing entertainment music to composing pieces with deeper introspection. Ultimately, Mozart's piano concertos have set a "perfect" model for the genre, influencing the style and structure of late 18th-century piano concertos and their subsequent development (Hsu, 1994). To sum up, Mozart’s ability to blend structural clarity with expressive nuance—especially through the dynamic relationship between piano, strings, and woodwinds—demonstrates a pivotal shift in concerto writing. Mozart not only elevated the genre beyond entertainment but also laid the foundation for future composers by creating a model of artistic sophistication and collaborative dialogue between soloist and orchestra.

At the article of An (2024) and in chapter 2 of an exploration of Mozart's piano concertos, the early period from 1767 to 1779 serves as a critical context for understanding his development within the classical concerto genre. By December 1773, when Mozart composed his first original concerto, he had assimilated various aesthetic influences from his extensive experience in opera and aria composition. This background allowed him to infuse his concertos with distinct characters and dramatic expression, employing innovative rhythmic language and orchestral textures. Also, the article underlines the Mozart's ability to blend virtuosity with emotional depth, drawing from rhetorical principles of vocal music to shape his instrumental works. His concertos often exhibit a coherent structure, characterized by a rich thematic complexity that sets them apart from those of his contemporaries like Beethoven, Haydn, and Viotti.

Also, in this text, the author discusses the evolution of Mozart's concertos, highlighting his early transcriptions of existing works before he began composing original concertos. This transition occurred notably following Mozart's exposure to popular music styles and the growing demand for keyboard concertos.

It is described several of Mozart’s key works from this era, detailing their distinctive features and compositional techniques. The concertos demonstrate how he crafted engaging dialogues between the soloist and orchestra, refined structural integrity, and evolved his harmonic language. Each concerto reflects a balance of influence with originality, moving from simple forms to increasingly complex orchestrations that incorporate innovations in texture and style indicative of his maturation as a composer.

Overall, the chapter illustrates Mozart’s transformative impact on the concerto form, showcasing his capacity to elevate the genre to new heights by infusing it with elaborate emotional expression, virtuosic demands, and intricate formal development (An, 2024).

In the research of Batt (1988) the aesthetic judgment of a musical work heavily relies on how successfully it achieves closure. A piece is considered good if it concludes in a satisfying manner, while abrupt or inconclusive endings are deemed poor. Effective closure is characterized by a complete structure, logical progression of initial themes, and a clear signal that nothing more needs to be heard at the end. The listener is usually prepared for the end as the piece approaches it.

Closure processes can vary between different musical styles and may involve different structural elements such as melody, harmony, or rhythm. For example, classical works may rely on specific formal sections for closure, while shorter pieces, like Chopin's Preludes, may integrate closure within the overall structure. Liszt's use of tempo and mood as closure elements demonstrates a divergence from earlier practices.

A crucial criterion for assessing closure is the level at which it operates: higher levels of closure generally yield a stronger sense of completeness. The author emphasizes the necessity of style-specific investigations into closure processes, as different composers and genres exhibit distinct closural characteristics.

The analysis of Mozart's sonata-form closing sections reveals similarities in closure techniques across movements. Most works include a distinct closing section that is essential for achieving closure. The study categorizes several channels of structure—melody, harmony, rhythm, texture, and orchestration—that contribute to the sense of closure. Important factors include the use of groupings in melody, lack of structural motion in harmony, and distinct rhythmic patterns that signal closure. (Batt 1988)

Another research (Erickson, 2018) analyses that Mozart's *Oboe Concerto in C Major, K. 314* is a work that blends the innovative elements of the Mannheim style with Mozart's unique compositional voice. Originally written for the oboist Giuseppe Ferlendis, the concerto later found a prominent place in Mannheim through its association with Friedrich Ramm. The first movement of the concerto is a striking example of Mannheim dynamics, featuring dramatic shifts between *forte* and *piano*, sudden pauses, and dynamic contrasts that enhance the emotional intensity of the music. Key structural moments, such as the crescendo in measure 95, are crafted with care to build intensity and lead to significant climaxes, a technique that was characteristic of Mannheim orchestration.

The movement also showcases Mozart's use of Mannheim-style orchestration, particularly in his treatment of wind instruments. While winds were traditionally used in a supportive role in orchestral music, Mozart gives the oboe a more prominent voice, alternating between moments of melodic prominence and passages where it recedes, allowing the orchestra to take over. This balance demonstrates Mozart's ability to honor the traditional practices while pushing the boundaries of orchestration, elevating the wind section's role in the concerto.

Through dynamic shifts, thematic development, and innovative orchestration, the concerto demonstrates Mozart's mastery of both the Mannheim style and his own evolving compositional voice. The piece is a perfect example of how Mozart integrated contemporary influences with his own innovations to create a work that was both of its time and forward-thinking in its approach to the concerto genre (Erickson, 2018).

In conclusion, the research on Mozart's piano and orchestral concertos highlights his transformative contributions to the concerto genre, demonstrating a blend of innovation, emotional depth, and structural sophistication. Scholars such as Hsu (1994) and An (2024) underscore Mozart's ability to infuse his concertos with distinct character, dramatic expression, and a dynamic relationship between soloist and orchestra, drawing from his opera experience and evolving musical influences. The ongoing evolution of his work, from early transcriptions to original compositions, shows his mastery of thematic complexity, virtuosic demands, and orchestral texture. Additionally, research by Batt (1988) and Erickson (2018) reveals how closure and orchestration play essential roles in his compositional approach, particularly through the use of contrasting dynamics, harmonic progression, and innovative treatment of wind instruments. Ultimately, Mozart's concertos stand as exemplary models of classical composition, balancing style, innovation, and emotional resonance, and continuing to influence the concerto form long after his time.

2 Method and materials

For the present project, I have employed an artistic research method, including performative experiments. More specifically, the process has been documented through feedback, comments, tips, and ideas from my teachers, as well as insights drawn from personal reading on the performance practices of the Classical period and the compositional norms of the time. These references were based on relevant literature and prior research. All of these elements were integrated into the process of developing my interpretation and technical execution of the Mozart Oboe Concerto.

In addition to the input from my teachers- mentioned as teacher 1 and teacher 2- and literature, I kept a personal logbook and practice journal, where I recorded my progress, daily routines, reflections, and challenges. I also made frequent use of audio recordings to track my

development over time. Also, for a more structured, updated and formal English language on the text, I followed some inputs and indications from Al.

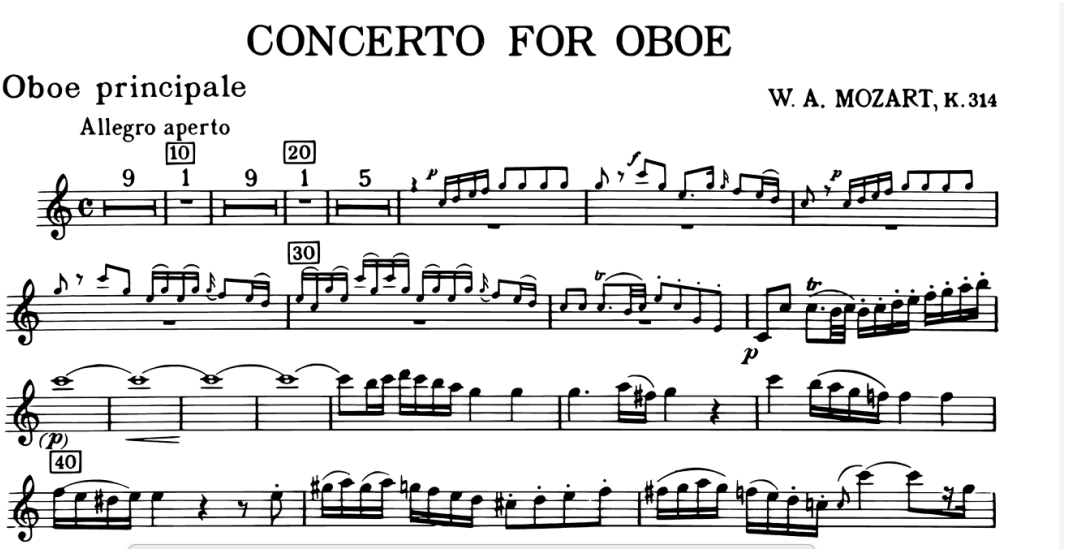
The research process included a pilot study, which served as a preparatory phase and laid the groundwork for the main study. In the pilot study, I focused on a smaller selection of the concerto—specifically, the opening section of the exposition up to bar 40. This allowed me to identify core challenges related to technical control, articulation, and phrasing. These observations and questions then became the starting point for the main study, where I continued exploring the rest of the exposition using the same reflective and structured approach.

Regarding the musical edition, there are two commonly used versions of Mozart's Oboe Concerto. For this project, I chose to work primarily with the *London: Boosey & Hawkes, 16427* editions, which was also the preferred choice of teacher 1. This edition is widely used among professional oboists and provides clear editorial markings that align closely with historically informed performance practices. Its clarity and consistency made it a practical and pedagogically effective choice for the purpose of this study.

3 Artistic processes

This chapter contains description, analysis and conclusions from the pilot study and the main study respectively. I will explain and showcase the challenges of the very first part of the first movement of the concerto, the method I used to practice it and the ways I used to overcome all the difficulties in interpreting it. Last but not least, I refer to all the different articulations, dynamics, expression and musical ideas I used in order to progress and advance in the interpretation of the piece.

3.1 The pilot study – Analysis



Music example 1. The music selection for the pilot study

My pilot study was a process in which I have made some preliminary notes, logbook and audio recordings on the beginning exposition of the first movement and more specifically from beginning of the exposition until bar 40 (music example 1). After some lessons with teacher 1, I was able to trace my progress, new ways of practice and a further advance in terms of interpretation and musical style. This piece is one of the most demanding pieces of our repertoire. Its vibrant and sublime nature, the carefully given details on the phrasing, the small and large dynamics make the piece very demanding and also demanded to be performed by oboists for every orchestra audition. While I am still working on the piece I will expose and examine some ways of practice and some information I gained through my experience with it and with all the guidance of my previous teachers.

Right from the beginning of the exposition the first few notes give to the first impression for the player. Thus, this part should be studied and worked carefully working separately on every little detail. To make the start of the trill very clear I had to practice it very slow first without the trill with metronome so the rhythm gets very stable (audio1). After doing that many times, I moved with adding the trill again in a very slow tempo and with doing a nice staccato in the sixteenths. Right after, on the high C I practiced it a lot with a tuner on my stand. It is very important to hold your pitch stable while you are doing a big crescendo and then a big

diminuendo consecutively, so the tuner was for me a way to practice hearing my pitch and checking it whenever it would change (audio 2).

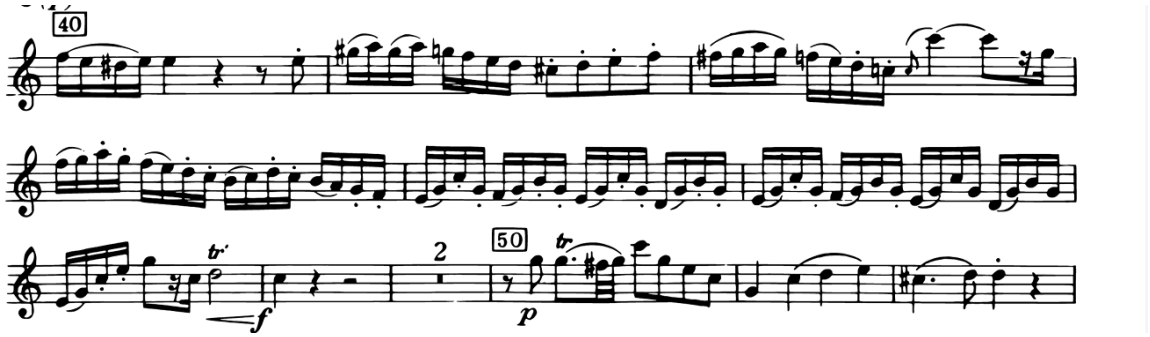
I should mention here that I was working with this piece with two different teachers both mentioned as teacher 1 and 2 respectively. Both these teachers gave me various tips and guidance on how to interpret the piece and so that made my knowledge and ideas for the playing more enriching. Teacher 1 persisted a bit more in some parts of my articulation and suggested me for example to play the quarters in a more vivace-allegro tongue style holding a tiny small breath after the note, like a ringing bell. This is the way I tried to play quarter notes G and F on the bar 37 and 39. Also told me to make a small diminuendo in the quarte notes before the quarter pause since with have a small "comma" on the phrase. In this part the way I have played the exposition had already changed and it made me progress fast. The playing became more with ease and with a better texture adding a more sense and direction to the interpretation.

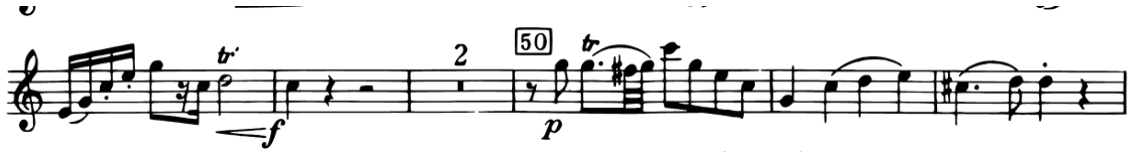
3.1.1 Conclusion of the pilot study

During the process of my pilot study, I already started to experience that a lot of the uncertainties I was dealing with in the technical and interpretation aspects got improved and while I was continuing working like this with repeat every day, they were solved. Thus, during my main study process, I need to continue processing and working with the same way the next part of the concerto and solve all the problems in the playing that has to do with technical virtuosity-flexibility on the fingers – stability on the tempo, and interpretation and style – dynamics and articulation.

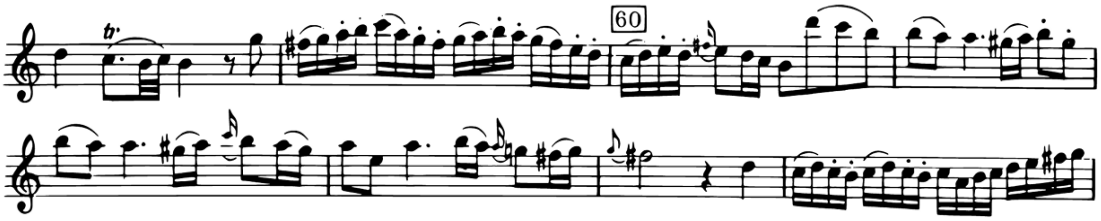
3.2 The main study

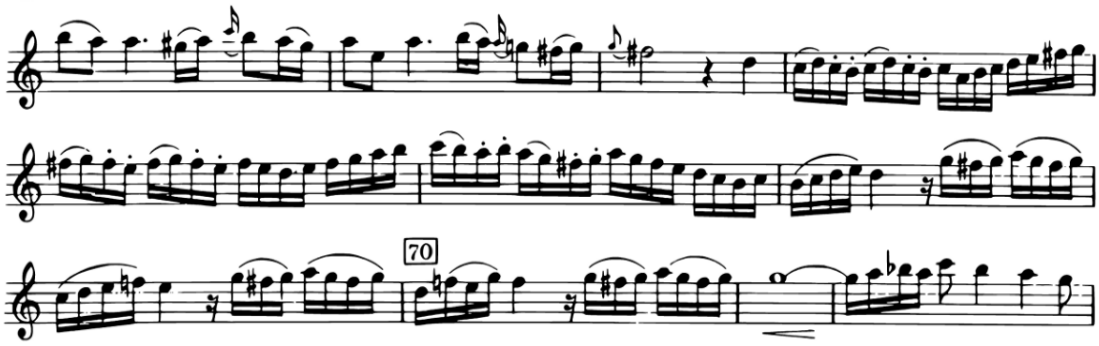
During my progress with the piece, I have continued to keep tracks on my notes and on my teachers' advice for the rest of the movement as well. More specifically, for the sixteens that follow on bars 43-46 the articulation should be extremely clear. I used to play the staccato notes more intense, but my teacher 1 asked me to play them with a longer staccato. These bars are quite hard and tricky since the speed can make some notes or articulation to sound a bit blurry. Thus, during the process on working on these passages I played them very slow and with

different ways of rhythm. First, I played every two notes of the sixteens slow and the next two fast, and then I did the first two fast and the next two slow. Then, I played the first of every four notes slow and the next three fast. After that I played the second note slow and the rest fast and I did that consecutively with all the rest notes. After practicing this many times my playing on these bars was clear and the tempo didn't drag. Just to make this passage even more secure I keep on repeating this way of practice for many days in these bars (audio 3).

Music example 2. Sixteen notes on bars 43-46

On bar 50 it is very important and necessary for the player to play the trill very fast but clear without slowing down on the next downbeat for the next bar. I was starting the note of the trill from the upper one (A) and practiced the trill the same way I did for bar 32 as well. That means that I started the practice of it on a really slow tempo and then fasten in up progressively till reaching the final tempo. Exactly on the next eighth notes after the trill my both of my teachers have suggested me to play them a bit more articulated and with a diminuendo falling piano on the the bar 51 on the G note.

Music example 3. The trill on bar 50

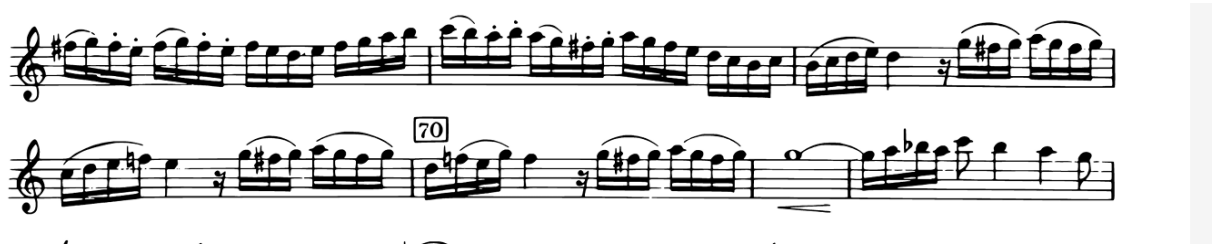
On bar 52 since Mozart is giving us a dissonant chord with C sharp note, I play this note a bit more underlined – with an internal mezzo forte. The same motive follows on the next three bars giving a more articulated D sharp on bar 55. For all the three bars of 50, 53 and 55 I had to be

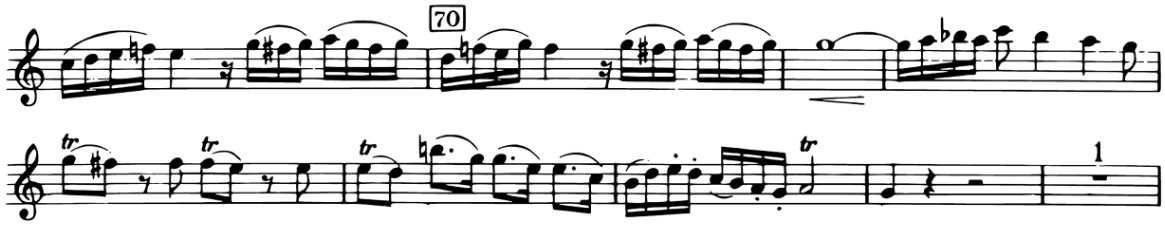
precisely careful to play the 32nd notes as exactly they should be played on an allegro tempo and not slower than that. Sometimes my teacher 1 marked to me that I was playing them almost like sixteens and for that I subdivide it the bars and practiced them with a metronome (audio 4). On bar 57 I played the eighth notes there with a legato line according to both of my teachers just so the listen can feel a slight difference on the same repeated pattern and get a preparation on what is coming next : another idea. That new idea is not exactly new, as it again has a similar pattern of the bars we already have heard before and consist of sixteens that one should be playing with two legato and two staccato notes (bar 58-59). According to the articulation of the edition and the nature of the musical text on bar 60 between the eight notes of B and D should be a small gap like a coma (,). That high D should be bright on the color and emphasized.

Music example 4. The articulation on bars 59 and 60

Right on the closing of this phrase and on bar 64 the F sharp should be played soft and prepare for the next passage sixteen notes. This next passage is technically demanding for the player since it combines many fast notes with legati, staccati and separate notes.

Music example 5. The technically demanding sixteens

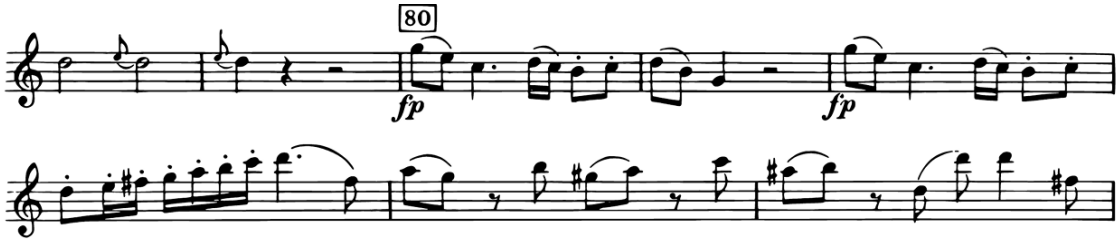
While I was learning this, it definitely required a lot of time to play this clearly and evenly with each note. To accomplish that I started playing each bar very slow. Also, every first of the four sixteen I played it a bit longer and the other three a bit shorter. Then I played the second of the

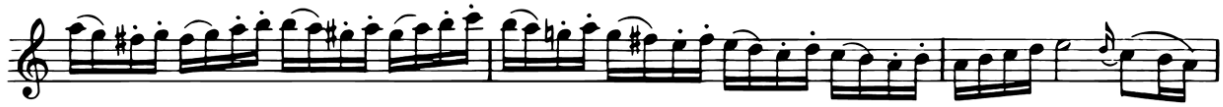
four longer, then the third and then the fourth. You can hear on the audio that follows this practice as an example for the bars 65 and 66 (audio 5). After this exercise I separate each four sixteen notes by playing the two first faster and the two next slow and the opposite (audio 6). By doing this exercise on these fast passages every day for a long period of time with consistency, you make sure that your fingers won't slip and each note will be even and smooth with precision on the rhythm and the clarity of the sound. This method at the same time helps the tongue to get more and more familiar with the required articulation and get faster and faster every time. This motif of practice had a really big result for me and I kept on doing it to all the other similar passages of fast sixteen notes where they were in the following parts of the rest of the piece. Examples will be reported later. Apart from that, it should me mentioned that on bar 67 according to teacher's 2 advice, I could play the last four sixteens with a legato line just to prepare the listener about the closing of this motif and the beginning of the next one.

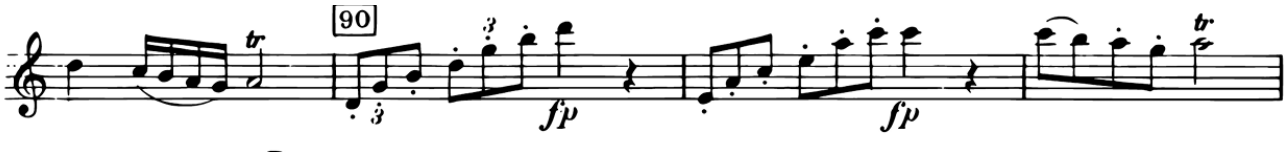
Referring to the dynamics in bars 65- 67 of the sixteen notes a small crescendo after each bar is helping to showcase the phrase's progression util the bat 68 where a constant diminuendo is happening of the second beat of the bar on the D quarter note that gives us the closing of that continuousness of the sixteen notes and prepares us for a new idea. That new idea that comes again with another new motive of sixteen notes starts with piano and after each bar progresses until until we get a mezzo forte on bar 70 that will immediately close and fall back in a piano mode in bar 71 with a long G note.

Music example 6. Another motive idea of sixteen notes that is evolving with a cressendo on bars 68-70

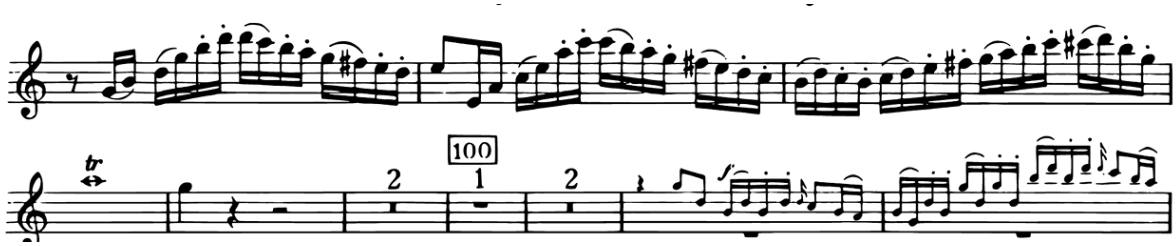
As it is already marked on the musical text (music example 6), on bar 71 the G note should be played with a crescendo in order to lead us to the next bar where the playing should be bright and glorious. To showcase that more, really small gaps- like little breaths could happen among the quarter notes in order to underline more the syncopation on bar 72. Even though the two forst beats of this bar should be bright and glorious, a small dinimuendo shoud start right on the third beat and a warm piano should be present in the first of the three trills that come after.

Music example 7. The trills of bars 73-74

More specifically, I play the first trill on the bar 73 with a piano dynamic and the second trill that follows right after with a mezzo piano. The third and last one that comes on the next bar, I play it with a mezzo forte tone and on the second beat the high B is forte and bright – peak that will then – on the next descendign notes will start to fade out, preparing us for the ending of the phrase that comes on bar 76. That last not on bar 76 should be played smooth and striclty as a quarter note- not longer than that. After my teacher's 1 remarks, I started playing the separate eights notes (not the legato ones) in bars 72,73, and 74 with a slight staccato marking, so they are don't get heavy or make the tempo slow down (audio 7). Also, for all the trill on the phrasing my fingers should be completely close to the keys so they can be smooth and elegant and not agrressive. Again really slow tempo in practising them really helped, while also looking in the mirror of my practice room and checking my fingers to stay really close to the bore and keys of the instrument. That tecnique helped a lot to play the trills in an elegant way.

On bar 78, I do a small ritenuto especially in the third and fourth beat before I return back in tempo again for the bar 79. On bar 81 I play the quarter note with a small staccato articulation and a piano tone before the next forte- piano comes in bar 82. My teacher 1 suggested me to play the high D that exists in bar 83 with a bright colour and vibrato and then fall back again in piano in the next eighth note (F). He also underlined to me that all the eighth notes on bar 83 should be very clear articulated. After this bar, a small crescendo should happen progressively for the next bars 84-85. Each separate eighth note on these bars should be played like it has a small staccato sign and not with too long duration.

Music example 8. The eighth notes

For the next bars (86-88) with the sixteen notes, I followed the same approach and practice I did for the bars 65-66. With this way and after repeating this practice for a period of time I was able to play this passage with clarity and in smooth way. Moreover, after becoming quite familiar with the passage and to avoid a mechanical playing, I added a crescendo for each bar progressively so to shape a better phrasing in the interpretation.

Music example 9. The sixteenth notes

For the bar 90, teacher 1 suggested me to play the triple notes in a separate way but not too staccato, but for 91 bar to play them a bit more articulated and staccato so it gives a bit more surprise and interest to the listener doing also a small crescendo to both of the two bars.

Music example 10. Triple notes

Right before the ending of the exposition we have some more sixteen notes that lead us to the end of it. A progressing crescendo covers all the bars till the last two bars of 96 and 97 which they should be playing forte as the top climax of the phrase. The articulation of those bars should be followed very strictly according to the edition's indication by two notes legato and two notes staccato. To play with ease technically this passage I practiced the same approach I did with the bars 65 and 66.

Music example 11. The last sixteenth notes of the exposition

3.2.1 Conclusion of the main study

In the main study phase, I was able to deepen both my technical control and interpretative understanding of this highly demanding concerto. By continuing the systematic and detailed practice methods developed during the pilot study—such as slow, segmented practice with rhythmic variation, the use of a metronome and tuner, and a heightened focus on articulation and dynamic shaping—I noticed significant improvement in fluency, precision, and expressive range. Each section of the movement revealed different challenges, whether in terms of articulation, phrasing, tempo control, or stylistic nuance, but by addressing each of these gradually and consistently, the overall performance of the exposition has become more confident and musically convincing (video 8).

My work was continually enriched by the input of both of my teachers, each offering unique perspectives and valuable suggestions. Their combined guidance enabled me to refine subtle details such as the length and character of a staccato note, the balance of dynamics within a phrase, or the expressive use of vibrato and color in high register notes. These small yet significant refinements made a noticeable difference in how the piece communicates its character and mood.

Additionally, the daily reflection through audio recordings and practice journals allowed me to track progress and identify recurring tendencies in my playing. This awareness helped reinforce productive habits and adjust areas that needed further attention.

While I am still in the process of fully mastering the entire concerto, especially the technically demanding sixteenth-note passages and expressive phrasing towards the end of the exposition, this main study has given me the tools and confidence to continue approaching the piece with focus and creativity. Most importantly, it has helped me develop a more mature and personal interpretation—one that is informed by technical discipline, stylistic awareness, and an evolving musical sensibility.

In the following stages of my work, I aim to apply the same detailed approach to the development and recapitulation sections of the concerto. By continuing this methodical and reflective process, I hope to bring the entire movement to the same level of technical refinement and expressive depth as the exposition.

4 Discussion

This chapter presents the core findings of my artistic research on the first movement of Mozart's *Oboe Concerto in C major, K. 314*, focusing particularly on the exposition. Drawing from both the pilot and main phases of the study, the discussion highlights how a methodical, reflective, and historically informed approach to practice can significantly enhance both technical fluency and musical interpretation. The integration of previous scholarly research, input from two pedagogues, and continuous self-assessment formed the foundation of my interpretative process. What follows is a detailed account of how these elements were applied in practice—through targeted exercises, stylistic decision-making, and a progressive understanding of Mozart's compositional style—offering a comprehensive view of the interpretative and technical challenges involved in preparing this essential piece of the oboe repertoire.

4.1 Discussion of results

The findings from both the pilot and main phases of this study reveal the significant benefits of a structured, reflective, and technically disciplined approach to learning this demanding concerto. Moreover, the previous research provides essential historical, stylistic, and structural insights into Mozart's concerti, which directly informed the interpretative choices made during the pilot study. Understanding Mozart's use of dramatic contrasts, wind prominence, and closure techniques (Hsu, Batt, Erickson) helped shape the articulation, phrasing, and expressive decisions in bars 1–40 of the Oboe Concerto. The pilot study's detailed practice methods reflect an application of scholarly findings on Mozart's evolving orchestration and rhetorical expressivity (An, 2024). From the early stages of the pilot study, it became clear that detailed and intentional work on small sections of the score—particularly the opening measures—laid a critical foundation for the more advanced technical and interpretative challenges encountered later in the movement. The use of slow, segmented practice, guided by both metronome and tuner, proved essential in achieving rhythmic precision, pitch stability, and clarity in articulation, particularly in the initial bars where the musical material immediately establishes the tone and character of the piece.

Throughout the study, one of the most important factors in my progress was the pedagogical input provided by my two teachers, each offering unique approaches and technical insights. Teacher 1 focused particularly on articulation, rhythmic vitality, and the expressive use of

breath and tongue to bring forward the natural phrasing in Mozart's writing. Suggestions such as shaping quarter notes like ringing bells, introducing subtle diminuendos before rests, and refining the staccato to maintain energy without abruptness helped me to reinterpret and elevate sections that had previously felt unclear or static. Teacher 2 emphasized tone color, balance, and the larger musical architecture, which helped me to maintain stylistic consistency and expressiveness across extended passages. The interplay between these two perspectives significantly broadened my understanding of the piece and allowed for a more holistic approach to interpretation.

The most technically demanding sections—such as the sixteenth-note passages scattered throughout the exposition—presented challenges not only of speed and coordination but of maintaining musical clarity and stylistic elegance. Applying rhythmic variation exercises (such as alternating note groupings and isolating individual notes within groups of four) was especially effective. These methods helped to solidify finger independence and control, while also training my articulation to be light, even, and precise. Repeating these strategies daily over a sustained period proved essential, and the improvement in fluency, evenness, and rhythmic integrity became increasingly noticeable.

Equally important to the development of my performance was the act of self-reflection. Regularly recording my practice sessions and listening back allowed me to identify recurring tendencies, such as rushing through transitions or over-accenting certain notes, and to make deliberate adjustments. Keeping a practice log book and annotating my score helped reinforce improvements and kept me aware of long-term patterns. These forms of self-assessment proved invaluable in making my practice more goal-oriented and efficient.

Another significant element of this study was the growing sensitivity to dynamics and phrasing, especially in the shaping of longer lines and the execution of expressive gestures such as trills and dynamic swells. In many cases, I found that musical interpretation and technical control developed hand-in-hand. For example, carefully controlling the pitch during crescendos and diminuendos on sustained notes not only demanded technical awareness but also enhanced the expressive impact of those phrases. Similarly, the refinement of trill execution—achieved by monitoring finger movement and practicing slowly with close attention to evenness—helped bring elegance and finesse to moments of high expressive importance.

Overall, the results of this study underscore that technical refinement and interpretative maturity are deeply interconnected. By combining clear and methodical practice strategies with ongoing mentorship and reflective learning, I was able to transform areas of weakness into opportunities for musical growth. While the concerto is still in progress, the experience of working through the exposition in such depth has given me a reliable framework to apply to the remaining sections. Moving forward, the intention is to continue applying these principles to the development and recapitulation, with the aim of achieving a coherent, technically secure, and stylistically informed performance of the entire first movement.

In summary, this study has reinforced the value of patient, disciplined work supported by a clear structure, regular feedback, and continuous self-evaluation. It has also helped me develop a more personal and expressive voice in my playing—one that reflects both my technical development and evolving artistic sensibility. The combination of interpretative insight, technical control, and self-awareness cultivated through this process will not only benefit my performance of this concerto but will also serve as a foundation for future repertoire and artistic growth.

4.2 Final discussion- Conclusion

This study has offered a comprehensive exploration of the technical and interpretative challenges posed by a major work in the oboe repertoire, approached through a structured and reflective practice process. Beginning with the pilot study, and continuing through the more extensive main phase, each step of the journey highlighted the deep interaction between disciplined technical work, stylistic awareness, and artistic expression. By focusing on the exposition of the concerto, I was able to isolate and address specific musical and technical issues, building a foundation that supports both fluency and expressivity.

The pilot study served as a crucial starting point for identifying core areas of difficulty—such as rhythmic control, intonation during dynamic changes, and clarity of articulation—and experimenting with effective solutions. Early practice methods, including slow tempo work with metronome, use of tuner, and rhythmic re-grouping, proved essential and were consistently refined throughout the main study. This careful and repetitive process resulted in measurable improvements in accuracy, articulation clarity, and musical confidence.

The main study expanded upon this foundation by applying the same focused approach to a broader section of the movement. As the complexity of the music increased, so too did the demands place on my technique and interpretative insight. Here, the guidance of two different teachers became an invaluable resource, offering contrasting but complementary perspectives. Their feedback helped deepen my understanding of stylistic conventions, particularly in relation to articulation choices, dynamic pacing, and the expressive use of vibrato and tone color. Through this collaborative learning process, my interpretation of the piece became not only more informed but also more personal.

One of the most important outcomes of the study has been the cultivation of self-awareness and independence in the practice room. The regular use of audio recordings, practice journals, and visual tools such as mirrors allowed me to monitor my progress objectively and identify recurring patterns in my playing. This reflective component encouraged continuous self-correction and contributed to a more efficient and intentional learning process.

Moreover, the process reinforced a crucial artistic principle: that technical mastery is not an end in itself, but a vehicle for musical expression. The clarity and precision achieved through focused practice created the conditions in which deeper interpretative decisions could emerge organically. The gradual internalization of phrasing, nuance, and stylistic detail allowed me to develop a more cohesive and compelling musical narrative.

While this study concentrated primarily on the exposition, its outcomes have set a clear pathway for approaching the development and recapitulation sections. The same methodologies—slow and segmented practice, detailed attention to articulation and dynamics, ongoing teacher feedback, and self-reflection—will be applied to these remaining sections. The aim is to bring the entire movement to the same level of refinement and expressive depth, ultimately leading to a performance that is both technically secure and musically communicative.

In conclusion, this process has not only advanced my technical and musical skills but has also shaped the way I approach learning repertoire more broadly. It has emphasized the value of patience, repetition, and critical listening in achieving long-term improvement. Most importantly, it has fostered a deeper connection to the music itself—allowing me to move beyond mechanical execution and towards a more mature, expressive, and personal performance. The strategies and insights gained throughout this project will continue to inform my future work as both a performer and a developing artist.

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Audios and Videos:

Audio 1 (Practicing the start of the trill very slowly without the trill, with metronome for rhythm stabilization)

Audio 2 (Practicing the high C with a tuner to control pitch during crescendo and diminuendo)

Audio 3 (Practicing bars 43–46 with varied rhythmic groupings to improve articulation and tempo stability)

Audio 4 (Practicing bars 50–55 with focus on trills, articulation, and correct tempo of 32nd notes using metronome)

Audio 5 (Practicing bars 65–66: slow tempo with emphasis on one sixteenth note at a time to improve evenness)

Audio 6 (Practicing bars 65–66: alternating fast and slow groupings of two sixteenth notes for articulation clarity)

Audio 7 (Practicing trills and staccato eighth notes in bars 72–74 with hand positioning awareness)

Video Recording

Video 8 (Performance at the end of the main study phase demonstrating overall improvement in technique and interpretation of the exposition)