

The Impact of the  
British Oboist  
Léon Goossens



# The Impact of the British Oboist Léon Goossens:

*A Breath in Time*

By

Jonathan Tobutt

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## MUSIC SCORES REFERENCED

All published scores including extracts from works not shown in the body of the text (listed below) are available to view online or download free of charge from the IMSLP Petrucci Music Library website, see <https://www.imslp.org>.

Bax, Arnold, *Quintet for oboe and strings*.

Beethoven, Ludwig van, *Symphony No. 6 'Pastoral'*, Op.68.

Brahms, Johannes, *Violin Concerto in D major Op.77*.

Fiocco, Joseph-Hector, *Arioso* for oboe and piano (arrangement from *Pieces de clavecin*, Op.1)

Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus, *Quartet for oboe, violin, viola, and violoncello K.V.370*.

Pasculli, Antonio, *Le Api: Studio Caratteristico per oboe con accompagnamento di pianoforte*.

Ravel, Maurice, *Daphnis et Chloé*.

Strauss, Richard, *Concerto for oboe and small orchestra*

Vaughan Williams, Ralph, *Concerto for oboe and strings*

Warlock, Peter, *The Curlew for tenor solo, flute, english horn and string quartet*

The manuscript of John Barbirolli's unpublished arrangement of the Arnold Bax *Quintet for oboe and Strings* is part of the Evelyn Rothwell (Lady Barbirolli) Archive at the Royal Northern College of Music Library, Manchester.



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## INTRODUCTION

In 1977, I was taken to one of Léon Goossens' last solo performances and witnessed how he held a capacity audience spellbound by his playing and reminiscences. The concert, at which I volunteered to be the page turner for his accompanist John Simpson, was at Wells Cathedral in Somerset. Although I have little recollection of his sound, the memory of Léon's musicianship achieved with apparent ease has stayed with me. This book is in part inspired by that memory but is also a tribute to a great artist and his impact and influence on a generation of musicians.

Attitudes towards the oboe at the turn of the twentieth century were polarised and there was also a compositional vacuum. Chapter 1, *The oboe in context: the Wilderness Years* collates material across a wide sphere of sources to present a comprehensive account of the oboe's standing during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Great Britain. Its fall from a privileged solo status during the late eighteenth century to near obscurity during the nineteenth is seen through the prism of a sustained period of mechanisation and remodelling from the mid-1800s. Although the French oboe maker François Lorée's innovative design of 1881 stabilised the instrument, the volatility of development over a forty-year period, during which the oboe's appearance as well as its characteristic soundworld was significantly transformed, is reasoned to have influenced major composers of the latter half of the nineteenth century who largely ignored the instrument and any exploration of its potential as a solo vehicle. Yet these composers produced some of the most expressive solos for the instrument in their orchestral works. Whilst the impact of mechanisation offers a rational explanation for the oboe's apparent demise from the solo platform, this obscures the causative effects highlighted in orchestral treatises and the polarised viewpoints expressed in journal and academic studies that collectively assigned a restrictive and prescriptive role. This causal link is presented as a significant contributory factor in defining the oboe's temperament and ascribed function that endured until the mid-twentieth century when its renaissance as a solo instrument was re-established by the British oboist Léon Goossens.

As much of the published literature on Léon is selective in its scope, and contains several biographical inaccuracies, Chapter 2, *A Musical Life*

clarifies Léon's biography and discusses the influences that contributed to developing his performance style and his subsequent professional journey from orchestral player to international soloist as well as his impact on a generation of oboists and his performance legacy. Chapter 3, *Performance Practice* considers the fundamental features of his instrument and choice of reed style as well as a thorough analysis of his interpretative ideals and approach to programming. Finally Chapter 4, *Integrating performance concepts: Reconciling historical performance practices from a modern-day perspective* presents a case study of the *Quintet for oboe and strings* by Arnold Bax, written for and dedicated to Léon, which compares Léon's distinctive reading from the re-mastered release in 2002 of his 1927 recording, one that is so radically different in character to modern-day recordings; his evocation of Ireland, reflecting Bax's relationship with Celtic traditions, challenges the uniformity of an English pastoral style of playing by present-day oboists and how an evaluation may offer new insights in terms of the communication of the work's character.

# CHAPTER 1

## THE OBOE IN CONTEXT: THE WILDERNESS YEARS

*“The bitter–sweet oboe which is first heard marshalling the orchestra to tune, continues, as music proceeds, to assert its small but inexpressibly poignant voice.”*<sup>1</sup>

The modern–day oboe represents a culmination of development and innovation which began in France in the early seventeenth century with the introduction of the *Hautboy*. The production of the *Conservatoire* oboe over two hundred years later in effect concluded the instrument’s construct; ever since, beyond minor adjustments, “creative experimentation on the basic design of the oboe has all but ceased.”<sup>2</sup> The transformation from the unkeyed baroque instrument to the complicated mechanism of contemporary models has been achieved by the fortitude and inspiration of a few instrument makers and was not always an easy evolution. In fact by the early 1900s the oboe had sustained a period of mechanisation and streamlining that “affected not only the oboe’s appearance and technique, but its tonal character and ultimately its expressive potential.”<sup>3</sup> Although François Lorée had stabilised the oboe in 1881, the constant development of the instrument from the early 1800s may in part explain why the oboe’s earlier popularity as a solo instrument had largely been ignored by major composers of the latter half of the nineteenth century. Yet within these turbulent times for the oboe the foremost composers of the period, notwithstanding their relative neglect of solo repertoire, wrote, as oboist James Brown pointed out, “beautiful, sensitive and demanding solos for the [instrument] in their

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<sup>1</sup> Philip Bate, *The Oboe: An Outline of its History, Development and Construction*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (London: Ernest Benn Ltd, 1975), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Geoffrey Burgess and Bruce Haynes, *The Oboe* (London: Yale University Press, 2004), p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Burgess and Haynes, p. 125.

orchestral compositions.”<sup>4</sup> Oboe virtuosi during the nineteenth century were rare although there were a few celebrated soloists, for example Giovanni Daelli (1800–1860), Baldassare Centroni (1784–1860), Stanislas Verroust (1814–63) and notably Antonio Pasculli (1842–1924) who was compared to Paganini.<sup>5</sup> These virtuosi often composed and performed their own works which were designed to display their prodigious technical facility on the instrument. The showpieces of Pasculli in particular involved the need to use circular breathing; a technique whereby players can maintain a continuous stream of air without breaking to take a breath, achieved by relaxing the diaphragmic muscles which then enables air to be taken in through the nose whilst still playing. As the contemporary oboist Christopher Redgate has observed the “extreme technical demands”<sup>6</sup> of the Pasculli canon remains challenging repertoire for modern-day players. Pasculli’s *Le Api*, probably the best known of his works, is a representative example that can only be successfully navigated using circular breathing although most players take advantage of the cadence at the end of bar 84 to take a single regular breath.<sup>7</sup> According to the Italian oboist Sandro Caldini Pasculli wrote thirteen *Fantasias* or *Grand Concerti* based on themes of popular nineteenth-century operas of which nine are available today published by Musica Rara. The four remaining unpublished works include a Trio for violin, oboe, and piano on themes from Rossini’s *Guillaume Tell*.<sup>8</sup> Although there were no comparable virtuosi in Britain, the performances of Johann Griesbach (1769–1825) a German immigrant who established a successful career in London from c.1794, were favourably compared to those of Centroni and the French oboist August George–Gustav Vogt (1781–1870). Vogt established the French style of oboe playing. He taught at the Paris Conservatoire (1816–55) and was a prolific composer of oboe and cor anglais works most of which remain unpublished. Both oboists performed in London for the Philharmonic Society in 1824 and 1828

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<sup>4</sup> See *Introduction* in James Brown, ed., *Our Oboist Ancestors: A Guide to Who Was Who in the Nineteenth Century Oboe World* (Malmesbury: Abbey Printing Ltd., 2006), n.pag.

<sup>5</sup> Lucienne Rosset “Antonino Pasculli, the ‘Paganini of the Oboe’”, *The Double Reed*, 10. 3 (1987), pp. 44–5. Pasculli was purported to be the first Italian oboist to play a French model oboe made by Frederic Triébert.

<sup>6</sup> Christopher Redgate, “The Paganini of the oboe, Pasculli” *e.oboeclassics.com*, <[https://www.oboeclassics.com/Pasculli\\_booklet.pdf](https://www.oboeclassics.com/Pasculli_booklet.pdf)> [accessed 17 January 2023].

<sup>7</sup> Antonio Pasculli *Le Api: Studio Caratteristico per oboe con accompagnamento di pianoforte* (Milan: Ricordi, 1989). The work was first performed on 14 July 1874 at the Conservatorio di Musica in Milan and first published in 1905.

<sup>8</sup> Sandro Caldini, “Browsing Among Pasculli” *The Double Reed*, 17.3 (1994), p. 42.

respectively; Centroni's playing was described as "above and below Griesbach, but certainly will not be so highly esteemed as that player by English judges."<sup>9</sup> Oboe virtuosi made infrequent appearances as soloists in Britain and as they played their own material, which was neither published nor known to concert audiences, such events would have remained of novelty value. Burgess and Haynes suggest that the deaths and retirement of these oboists by the late 1880s (Pasculli for example retired in 1884 on medical advice) are key to the decline of the "itinerant oboe virtuoso."<sup>10</sup> Younger players such as Theodore Lalliet (1837–92) and Charles Fargues (1845–1925) from France continued to compose and perform their own material but were apparently considered to lack the "calibre of [...] the previous generation."<sup>11</sup>

The instrument was also not a popular choice for amateur musicians; it was noted as early as 1827 that the oboe was "little cultivated among amateurs."<sup>12</sup> One potential deterrent to taking up the oboe was its reputation for unpredictability; writing in 1874, A. Ernst suggested that "The study of the oboe is difficult; the instrument is full of traps for the student [. . .] it is sour and harsh, when the performer is inexperienced or lacks taste of a true artist."<sup>13</sup> These sentiments are still echoed today. A 2005 discussion of instrument choice by Atarah Ben-Tovim and Douglas Boyd in their book *The Right Instrument for your Child* noted that whilst "in the hands of an outstanding professional musician" the oboe "can sound exquisite", when played "by most children" the sound is "unpleasant and rasping"; there is even the suggestion that no teenager should play the instrument when unwell as "the inter-cranial pressure can spread the infection into the eyes and the brain causing complications and even disability."<sup>14</sup> A few journal

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<sup>9</sup> *The Quarterly Music Magazine and Review*, 6, 22 (April 1824), 237. See also "The Philharmonic Concert", *The Harmonicon* (24 March 1828), 90. "The Rise and Progress of the Hautboy", *The Quarterly Music Magazine and Review*, 9.36 (October 1827), 465. See "Public Music in London", *The Quarterly Music Magazine and Review*, 6.22 (April 1824), 233–7, Brown, pp.108–9. See also Bate, p.65–6 and Burgess and Haynes, p. 113.

<sup>10</sup> See Rosset, p. 44.

<sup>11</sup> Burgess and Haynes, p. 191.

<sup>12</sup> "The Rise and Progress of the Hautboy", p. 465.

<sup>13</sup> A. Ernst, "Hautbois", *Grand Dictionnaire universel du XIXe siècle*, 16 vols. (Paris : Pierre Larousse, 1874), ix.111: "L'étude du hautbois est difficile; l'instrument est plein de pièges pour l'élève [...] ils sont aigres et criards, quand l'exécutant est inexpérimenté ou qu'il manque du gout, qu'il fait vrais artistes."

<sup>14</sup> Atarah Ben-Tovim and Douglas Boyd, *The Right Instrument for your Child*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2005), pp. 45–6.

articles and accompanying correspondence during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century did attempt to address the neglect of the instrument by amateur musicians. Topics covered included an overview of the history of oboe as well as practical advice on purchasing an instrument, reeds, recommended repertoire and the importance of maintaining a daily practice regime.<sup>15</sup> Cautionary comments threatened to undermine this more positive reappraisal; discussing breath control for example, it was suggested that a beginner may experience a “feeling of suffocation and consequent distress.”<sup>16</sup>

By the 1890s the instrument had undergone the most progressive advances in its development and yet at the same time critical assessment by many respected musical figures had diminished the instrument’s potential universal appeal most notably in chamber and solo repertoires, but also emphasised a limited use in orchestral music. A lack of a “prominent solo existence” was the consequence of being “deemed too delicate for military music, too difficult for the amateur and too brash for the domestic salon.”<sup>17</sup> Although an article in the *Musical Opinion and Music Trade Review* in 1893 suggested that audiences enjoyed listening to a well-played oboe solo “with great attention and interest.”<sup>18</sup> This was a rare voice amidst a sea of critics. Percy Rowe, for example, thought concertos for the instrument were “not distinctly oboe music” and Ebenezer Prout regarded the “predominance of oboe tone” in Mozart’s canon of chamber works for winds as “wearisome.”<sup>19</sup> Thomas Dunhill’s perspective was polarised; he viewed pairing the oboe with the piano for any substantial composition as ineffective, yet he wrote two works for oboe and piano: *Three Short Pieces*, Op. 81 (c. 1941), from which the *Romance* is dedicated to the British oboist Léon Goossens, and *Friendship’s Garland* Op. 97 (c.1944); the former was a popular item in many Léon’s recital programmes. Dunhill also considered the instrument’s

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<sup>15</sup> See Amateur Oboist, “The oboe for amateurs”, *Musical Opinion and Music Trade Review*, 16 (1 July, 1892), 482–3; “Notes on the Oboe”, *Musical News*, 7 (1 December 1894), p. 462; “The Oboe”, *Musical News*, 18 (10 March, 1900), 231; Percy R. Rowe, “On Oboe Playing”, *Musical Opinion & Music Trade Review*, 28 (May, 1905), pp. 586–7.

<sup>16</sup> See Rowe, p. 586.

<sup>17</sup> Burgess and Haynes, p. 128. See also F. A. Gevaert, *A New treatise on Instrumentation*, trans. E.F.E. Suddard (Paris: Henry Lemoine & Co., 1906), p.146.

<sup>18</sup> Weygthe, “Oboe playing and oboe music”, *Musical Opinion and Music Trade Review*, 16 (July, 1893), 588–9.

<sup>19</sup> Thomas F. Dunhill, *Chamber Music: A Treatise for Students* (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1913), p. 255; Rowe, p. 587. Ebenezer Prout, *The Orchestra*, 2 vols. (London: Augener Ltd., 1879), ii. 276.



“real usefulness” lay in its “prominence as a melodic voice” when combined with “other wind instruments”, but ineffective in Beethoven’s *Trio for two oboes and cor anglais* Op.87 because of its limited tone-colour.<sup>20</sup> Given a predominantly negative perception of the oboe as a solo instrument, and in many cases also in chamber music, the Swiss oboist Heinz Holliger (b. 1939) observed perhaps unsurprisingly that “there was no tradition of oboe playing in the nineteenth century [and] the instrument nearly disappeared.”<sup>21</sup> Yet this comment could have applied to other instruments in the wind family, all of which suffered similar neglect during this period. Berlioz for example had viewed wind instrument solos of “little amusement”,<sup>22</sup> and in discussing the principles of instrumentation in chamber music, Dunhill leaves the reader in no doubt as to his disdain for wind instrumentalists, suggesting that “no wind player has quite the same control over tone-quality or intonation that is possessed by a string player.”<sup>23</sup> Perhaps most damning of all was the German critic Eduard Hanslick (1825–1904) who regarded woodwind instruments as “boring little pipes”<sup>24</sup> Little had changed by the turn of the twentieth century for the oboe. The orchestra was seen as the “true field of action” for the instrument where it was admired for its “expressive and melodic” qualities as well as “one of the most eloquent organs of dramatic instrumentation.”<sup>25</sup> According to Charles Stanford (1852–1924), the conductor Hans Richter (1888–1976) said that a fine orchestra relied upon the “excellence of the second bassoon, the drums, and the first oboe.”<sup>26</sup> Gevaert, whose *Treatise* Richard Strauss (1864–1949) recommended,<sup>27</sup> described how the oboe’s “expressive character of its timbre immediately engrosses the hearer’s attention.”<sup>28</sup> Although marginalised

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<sup>20</sup> See Dunhill, pp. 253, 255.

<sup>21</sup> Frederic Palmer, “A conversation with Heinz Holliger”, *The Double Reed*, 6.1 (1983), 49.

<sup>22</sup> Hector Berlioz, *La Critique Musicale 1823–1863 édité sous la direction de H. Robert Cohen et Yves Gérard*, 5 vols. (Paris: Buchet/Chastel, c1996–2003), iii. 556 : “Les solo d’instruments à vent passent pour assez peu divertissant de leur nature.”

<sup>23</sup> Dunhill, pp. 246–7.

<sup>24</sup> See Colin Lawson, *The Cambridge Companion to the Clarinet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 83.

<sup>25</sup> See Gevaert, pp.142, 145 and Prout, p. 115.

<sup>26</sup> Stanford, Charles V., *Interludes: Records and Reflections* (London John Murray, 1922), p.18.

<sup>27</sup> See Hector Berlioz and Richard Strauss, *Treatise on Instrumentation*, trans. Theodore Front (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1991), p. 1. Stanford, p. 69, thought Gevaert’s study as more practical [than Berlioz], but less imaginative and suggested that Forsyth’s *Treatise* was “by a long way the best”.

<sup>28</sup> Gevaert, p. 141.

in the solo repertoire, in its orchestral capacity the oboe was celebrated as “so distinct a solo instrument” and a “favourite instrument for solo passages.”<sup>29</sup> Prout mentioned the *Funeral March* and *Finale* from Beethoven’s *Eroica* Symphony as worthy examples, but above all he regarded the opening oboe solo to the air *For my soul thirsteth for God* from Mendelssohn’s *Forty–Second Psalm* as the best solo “ever written” for the instrument.<sup>30</sup> Similarly in referring to a short solo in Act Two from Wagner’s opera *Tannhäuser*, Strauss considered that “no other instrument could reveal the sweet secret of love’s innocence in such affecting tones.”<sup>31</sup> Opinions differed as to perceived good practice; for instance Frederick Corder (1852–1932) thought that Beethoven’s use of the instrument was “unkind to the oboe” suggesting that the “rustic theme in the scherzo [third movement, oboe 1, bars 91–98] of the *Pastoral* symphony uncomfortably high”<sup>32</sup>; Gevaert on the other hand, citing the same extract, thought the oboe “recalling the shepherd’s bagpipes evokes ideas of merriment.”<sup>33</sup> However, some orchestral treatises presented characteristics of the oboe in less than sympathetic terms. The music critic Edwin Evans (1874–1945), for example, thought the oboe’s timbre “peculiarly penetrating” and that “anything passing beyond bucolic cheerfulness would be unsuitable.”<sup>34</sup> Rimsky Korsakov (1844–1908) adopted a more pragmatic approach in characterising the oboe as one of the “nasal” and “melodic” instruments of the orchestra (the bassoon sharing the same categorisation) “artless and gay in the major, pathetic and sad in the minor” in the middle range, “wild” and “hard and dry” in the low and high registers respectively.<sup>35</sup> Gevaert’s assessment is the most exultant: “its characteristic feature is frankness; no instrument expresses what it is able to say in such a strikingly realistic fashion”; he also quoted André Grétry, who a century earlier had described the oboe as “a ray of hope to shine in the midst of distress.”<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Corder, p. 40 and Prout, p. 115.

<sup>30</sup> Prout, pp. 115, 117.

<sup>31</sup> Berlioz and Strauss, p.175.

<sup>32</sup> See Ludwig van Beethoven “Symphony No.6, ‘Pastoral’”, 3rd movement, in *Difficult Passages for Oboe and Cor Anglais*, ed. by Evelyn Rothwell, 3 vols. (London: Boosey and Hawkes Ltd., 1953), i. 7.

<sup>33</sup> Corder, p. 39, Gevaert, p. 141.

<sup>34</sup> Evans, ii. 43.

<sup>35</sup> Nicola Rimsky–Korsakov, *Principles of Orchestration*, ed. by Maximillian Steinberg and trans. by Edward Agate (London: The Russian Music Agency, 1912), pp.18–9.

<sup>36</sup> Gevaert, pp. 141, 144.

Clearly the oboe was seen in a more positive light in the orchestra particularly in its solo capacity in projecting a variety of emotions. Yet there remained an air of caution in exploiting its distinct characteristics. Few saw beyond a restrictive function of melodic pastoral characterisation for the instrument; English composer Cecil Forsyth (1870–1941) challenged this assumption, citing examples from Rossini amongst others, “[a] good Oboist can deliver a series of rapid light *staccatos* are among the most charming characteristics of the instrument.”<sup>37</sup> Berlioz presents a conundrum in his admiration of the oboe’s virtues of “artless grace, pure innocence, mellow joy, the pain of a tender soul,” whilst advocating that fast passage work produces “an ungraceful and almost ridiculous effect.”<sup>38</sup> Yet not only did he use the oboe to great lyrical effect (such as in the opening duologue between the oboe and cor anglais in the *Scène de Champs* from the *Symphonie fantastique*), but demonstrated the instrument’s capacity to sound elegant in brilliant passage work (as in the overture to *Benvenuto Cellini*). Evans, probably taking his lead from Berlioz, advised that “rapid passages, frivolous ornamental arpeggios and so forth, however practical mechanically, should be avoided.”<sup>39</sup> Conversely Richard Strauss celebrated not only the instrument’s capacity to “rattle, bleat, scream just as it can sing, lament nobly and innocently, or play and warble cheerfully”, but also its distinct quality for humour “with its thick and impudent low tones and its thin and bleating high notes, especially if these are exaggerated, is suitable for humorous effects and for caricature.”<sup>40</sup>

Despite its orchestral status, perceptions of the oboe as an effective solo or chamber instrument were primarily negative. However, discoveries of solo works by Bellini, Donizetti, Hummel, Kalliwoda, Krommer, Pasculli, Rossini and Wederkehr have contributed to a more positive reception.

### **National Schools of oboe playing: an overview**

By the turn of the twentieth century the national characteristics of oboe playing in European countries as well as Russia and America had been grounded in the instrument’s development both mechanically and stylistically from either France or Germany; the light and expressive French sound contrasted with the thicker and arguably less flexible tone quality of

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<sup>37</sup> Cecil Forsyth, *Orchestration* (London: Macmillian & Co. Ltd., 1914), p. 208.

<sup>38</sup> Hector Berlioz, *A Treatise on Modern Instrumentation and Orchestration* trans. Mary Cowden Clarke (London: Novello, Ewer and Co., 1882), p. 81.

<sup>39</sup> Evans, p. 43.

<sup>40</sup> Berlioz & Strauss, p. 176.

the German style. Until the late 1960s individual schools of playing remained highly distinctive and were influenced by one or more players in each country: the French school, light, brilliant and expressive; the German school, warm, dark and restrained; the British and Italian schools, similar to the French sound if a little darker in timbre; the Russian School, a robust bright and direct tone based on the German school; the American school, a dull-edged French sound established by the émigré Marcel Tabuteau (1887–1966). These descriptions are a generalisation to convey the overall variation and distinctive national qualities. Other countries such as Australia, the Netherlands, Scandinavia, Switzerland, and the South Americas have been influenced by one or more of the European schools; the Oboe Classics CD *The Oboe 1930–1953* offers historical performance examples featuring oboists that include Georges Gillet (French), Fritz Flemming (German), Bruno Labate, (Italian/American), Marcel Tabuteau and Lois Wann (American) and Léon Goossens (British). Any pre-1980s Russian recordings offer an excellent example of their style of oboe playing.<sup>41</sup>

The significance of the advances by the Triébert dynasty (1810–78) in France and their development of the prototype of the modern-day oboe not only overshadowed developments in Germany and Austria, but ultimately acquired an international standing with which few schools were able to compete. The narrow bore of oboes introduced by Frederic Triébert (1813–1878) in 1855 differed from the slightly larger bores of English, German and Viennese oboes, and, combined with a narrow reed, facilitated a more subtle tone quality; as Richard Strauss suggested, “the French instruments are of finer workmanship, their registers are more even, they respond more easily in the treble and allow a softer pp on low tones.”<sup>42</sup> By the late nineteenth century the German and Viennese instruments, which were based on earlier designs with a wider bell, were less mechanised than French oboes. The Viennese oboe has seen little change since the nineteenth century; for an example of the unique Viennese sound see *Musik für Oboe Alleine*.<sup>43</sup> However in Germany the oboist Fritz Flemming (1873–1947), who was principal oboist with the Berliner Staatskapelle (appointed 1898) had studied in Paris with Georges Gillet (1854–1920) and became the first known German oboist to play on a French instrument. Flemming is said to have popularised the *Conservatoire* instrument in Germany<sup>44</sup>; Burgess and

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<sup>41</sup> *The Oboe 1930–1953* (Oboe Classics, C2012, 2005).

<sup>42</sup> Berlioz and Strauss, p. 183.

<sup>43</sup> *Musik für Oboe Alleine*, Alfred Dutka (Precise Records, 91030, 1996).

<sup>44</sup> Brown, p. 36.

Haynes refer to Flemming as “first oboe in the Berlin Philharmonic”<sup>45</sup>, however this is not documented in the BPO archival records, “unfortunately [...] he wasn’t [a]member of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra.”<sup>46</sup> Since the 1970s there has been a gradual blurring of timbres between the European schools; even the unique and highly distinctive American sound has arguably softened. It is from this time that players started to explore the darker tone qualities of the German school; oboist Neil Black (1932–2016) suggested that the influence of Lothar Koch (1935–2003) was pivotal in the resurgence of interest in the Germanic timbre which became known as the “Berlin Philharmonic Sound” (Koch was principal oboe in the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra 1957–91). According to Black, Koch’s 1975 recording of Mozart’s *Quartet for oboe and strings K370*<sup>47</sup> was the “sound that rocked the world”, although Black found Koch’s performance style “a little inflexible” and best “suited to the orchestra.”<sup>48</sup> Yet towards the end of the twentieth century German oboists looked towards the French school; the oboist Albrecht Mayer (b.1965) epitomises this blend of the Franco–German style of playing.<sup>49</sup> Martin Gabriel (b.1956), principal oboe in the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra (appointed 1987), played on the traditional Viennese oboe, known for its distinctive “reedier and more pungent”<sup>50</sup> qualities, yet his sound is described more “European” than previous generations of Viennese oboists.<sup>51</sup> Sandro Caldini has also highlighted developments associated with international influences of the Italian oboe timbre.<sup>52</sup> These changes were supported by continuing developments in the mechanisation of the oboe; as Michael Britton from the oboe firm T. W. Howarth & Co. Ltd. London, acknowledges, “work on instrument design is a continuous process.”<sup>53</sup> The top joint bore walls for example were

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<sup>45</sup> See Burgess and Haynes, pp. 175–6.

<sup>46</sup> Personal comment by Katja Vobiller, archivist at the Berlin Philharmonic Foundation [1 June 2020].

<sup>47</sup> W. A. Mozart, *Oboe Quartet in F K370*, Lothar Koch (Oboe), Norbert Brainin (Violin), Peter Schidlöf (Viola), Martin Lovett (Cello) (Deutsche Grammophon, 437137, 1992). This CD is a re-release of the original 1975 recording.

<sup>48</sup> Neil Black, “Oboists of My Time”, *The Double Reed*, 33.1 (2010), 56.

<sup>49</sup> Mayer has been principal of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra since 1992. For an example of his playing see *Albrecht Mayer New Seasons: Handel for Oboe & Orchestra*, Albrecht Mayer/ Sinfonia Varsovia (Deutsche Grammophon, 002895681, 2006).

<sup>50</sup> Burgess & Haynes, p. 212.

<sup>51</sup> Black, p. 59.

<sup>52</sup> Andrea Ridilla, “An Indissoluble Marriage: Italian Oboe playing and the human voice”, *Double Reed News* 92 (Autumn 2010), 25–8 (p. 26).

<sup>53</sup> Michael Britton & William Ring, “Living traditions—Howarth Oboes”, *e.idrs.org*,

thickened during this period, which helped to soften the natural tonal characteristics of the oboe, ironing out the vibrant richer resonances of the lower register and the thin tones of the upper notes thus enabling players to produce an overall darker timbre. Manufacturers also began experimenting with different man-made materials as well as lightweight woods such as cocobolo.<sup>54</sup>

## The British School

A defined British School of oboe playing did not emerge until the mid-twentieth century; attributed to Léon Goossens' fluid style of playing grounded in the French tradition. Goossens' impact can be seen as the culmination and a stabilisation of a chequered history. Prior to this innovation, British music institutions had relied upon employing continental players to cover an apparent shortfall in talented British oboists. Consequently, styles of playing were subjected to variation; the émigré oboist Johann Griesbach, for example, was "unrivalled" for the "fine rich quality of his tone."<sup>55</sup> Five respected British oboists can be identified in the early nineteenth century: John Parke (1745–1829) and his younger brother William Thomas Parke (1762–1847),<sup>56</sup> Thomas Ling (1787–1851), Alfred Nicholson (1822–1870) and Henry (Gratton) Cooke (1808–89). As a student, Cooke was considered to be the successor to Griesbach, and was acknowledged to be "at the head of living English oboeists."<sup>57</sup> According to *Musical Opinion*, Mendelssohn wanted Cooke to "accompany him to Germany" to "write some special music for Mr Cooke's oboe", an invitation Cooke apparently declined owing to his "English proclivities."<sup>58</sup> Ling was also compared to Griesbach on the "sweetness and delicate precision" of his playing.<sup>59</sup> William Parke appears to have been a maverick in his capacity

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<<http://www.idrs.org>> [accessed 17 January 223]: see *International Double Reed Society*, 22.14 (1999).

<sup>54</sup> For a discussion of materials see Nora Post, "New Designs and materials in Oboe Manufacture", *The Double Reed*, 18.3 (1995), 31–5.

<sup>55</sup> See "Deaths", *Monthly Magazine or British Register*, 57 (March 1825), 184; "The Rise and Progress of the Hautboy", 461; and *The Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review*, 9 (October 1827), 461.

<sup>56</sup> Brown, p. 76, refers to the brothers as "the pre-eminent oboists of the time." See also Bate, pp.197–8.

<sup>57</sup> "Royal Academy of Music City Concerts", *The Harmonicon* (1830), 217.

<sup>58</sup> "Mr Henry M. A. G. Cooke", *Musical Opinion & Music Trade Review*, 13 (October 1889), 22.

<sup>59</sup> "The Philharmonic Concerts", *Harmonicon*, 7 (1829), 91–2.

for self-promotion, and even described his own playing in his autobiography as “remarkably sweet, his execution rapid and articulate, his shakes brilliant, his cantabiles and cadences varied and fanciful”; according to Burgess and Haynes, “numerous composers, including James Hook (1746–1827), William Shield (1748–1829) and Charles Incedon (1763–1826), wrote obligati for [William]Parke.”<sup>60</sup> Parke also claims to have written and dedicated an oboe concerto to George IV, Prince of Wales, which has not survived. Nevertheless, he was commended alongside Griesbach for his contribution in raising the profile of the oboe through “excellence and perfection.”<sup>61</sup> Nicholson, who studied with the French oboist Apollon Marie–Rose Barret (1804–1879) established a successful career and reputation; William Rowlett praised Nicholson for his “universally esteemed *facile princeps* amongst English oboe players.”<sup>62</sup> Nicholson was evidently a popular man; a benefit concert was given in his honour to raise funds following a sudden illness in 1868 which left him paralysed.<sup>63</sup>

Griesbach’s tenure in England had continued the weightier tones of the German timbre established a century earlier by Johann Christian Fischer (1733–1800) who settled in London in the late 1760s<sup>64</sup> though performances by German oboist Kaitch (dates and details unknown) at the beginning of the eighteenth century suggest an earlier appreciation.<sup>65</sup> An incident in 1848 at the Philharmonic Society paved the way for a change in the style of oboe playing in Britain: in a performance of Mendelssohn’s *Scottish* Symphony Gratton Cooke was berated in the press for an incorrect entry, for which Cooke, who was culpable, sought to publicly assign blame to the first flute player. Adverse public opinion resulted in Cooke’s resignation from the Society,<sup>66</sup> and the eventual employment of the French oboist Barret by 1853; Belgian musicologist and critic François–Joseph Fétis (1784–1871)

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<sup>60</sup> *A Biography and Historical Dictionary of Musicians*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2 vols. (London: Sainsbury & Co., 1827), ii. 264–5. Burgess and Haynes, pp.328–9.

<sup>61</sup> *The Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review*, p. 461.

<sup>62</sup> William Rowlett, “The Late Alfred Nicholson”, *The Musical World*, 48. 37 (October, 1870), p. 613.

<sup>63</sup> See Rowlett, 613. See also “Musical and Dramatic Gossip”, *The Athenaeum*, 2115 (May 1868), p. 669.

<sup>64</sup> Philip Bate, “Oboe” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments* ed. by Stanley Sadie, 3 vols. (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1984), ii.804.

<sup>65</sup> E. S., “Reeds and Reed Instruments”, *Musical News*, 7 (December 1894), 562–3.

<sup>66</sup> See “The First Oboe at the Philharmonic”, *The Musical World*, 23 (January, 1848), 65–6 and “Mr Gratton Cooke and the Philharmonic Society”, *The Musical World*, 25 (April, 1850), 215.

had recommended replacing the English principal oboe in the Philharmonic Society with a French player as early as 1829.<sup>67</sup> Barret had arrived in England in the late 1830s and quickly established a fine reputation. In 1847 he was invited to play principal oboe in the Italian Opera at Covent Garden and remained in the post until 1874. The British oboist Edward Davies (1856–1920) heard Barret play describing his sound as “rather large but more reedy than was popular at the time when the smoothness of [Georges] Gillet and [Désiré] Lalande was most admired.”<sup>68</sup> Barret’s influence particularly as a teacher and an instrument maker had a significant impact in establishing the French tradition of playing in Britain; Robert Philip credits Henri De Busscher (1880–1975) with introducing the French sound into Britain.<sup>69</sup> Barret wrote a compendium of studies, *The Complete Method for the Oboe* first published in 1850.<sup>70</sup> Barret developed his own model of oboe in association with the instrument maker Frédéric Triébert, the design of which included an extension to Bb below middle C, also the shortened fingering in the second octave was the forerunner of later British models. British oboes had lagged behind continental developments so perhaps a consequence of French influence was that Britain readily embraced French oboes.

Oboists of the French school continued to gain prominent orchestral and teaching positions in England into the early twentieth century. These players included Antoine–Joseph Lavigne (1816–86), who arrived in England from France in 1841 and had an illustrious career as an orchestral player and soloist. He was principal oboist in the Halle Orchestra for sixteen years (1865–81). Lavigne played on oboes developed in 1851 by the German manufacturer Theobald Boehm (1791–1881) in collaboration with Lavigne. They were notable for their streamline design and particularly the elimination of cross fingerings. Lavigne, whilst applauded as a soloist, apparently lacked sensitivity as an ensemble player; according to the *Musical Times*, a performance of Hummel’s *Septet in D minor* was unbalanced by

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<sup>67</sup> François–Joseph Fétis, *Curiosities Historique de la Musique* (Paris: Janet et Cotellet, 1830), n.p. In “Wednesday Evening Concerts”, *The Musical World*, 31.44 (October 1853), 683, Barret is noted in a general list of players for the Philharmonic Society.

<sup>68</sup> Bate, p. 204. See also “Concerts”, *The Musical World*, 1 (May 1836), 126.

<sup>69</sup> Robert Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style: Changing Tastes in Instrumental Performance, 1900–1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 119.

<sup>70</sup> The studies are available in the second edition (1862) as a free download from the website IMSLP.



Lavigne's tone.<sup>71</sup> His reportedly harsh tone may have perpetuated negative perceptions of the Boehm instrument. Antoine Dubrucq (1836–1888), originally from Brussels, succeeded Lavigne as principal oboe in the Halle Orchestra and taught at Trinity College of Music, London. According to Bate, “he was supreme and it is recorded that more than once eminent visiting singers interrupted rehearsals to come down to the footlights and applaud the oboist [. . .] his tone was described as ‘simply heavenly’.”<sup>72</sup> Dubucq's son Eugene became a highly regarded cor anglais player; he played in the early performances of Arnold Bax's *In Memoriam*.<sup>73</sup> Joseph Lievin Fonteyne (1875–1938) played cor anglais for the Queen's Hall Orchestra as well as the London Symphony and Royal Opera House orchestras.<sup>74</sup> H.G. Lebon (dates unknown), also originally from Brussels, played in various British orchestras from 1870; he was principal oboist during the first season of the Queen's Hall Orchestra (founded by the impresario Robert Newman (1858–1926) in 1895<sup>75</sup>) and although he was described as “a mere workman on the Oboe”, the British conductor Henry Wood considered him to be a “most refined French player.”<sup>76</sup> Wood as conductor of the Queen's Hall Orchestra was consistent in appointing oboists of the French School in preference to British players. Taking the French route may have been due in part to the unsuccessful tenure of the British oboist William Malsch (c.1855–1924) as first oboe during the second season of Wood's orchestra. Malsch was considered the pre-eminent oboist of his day, “a performer of supreme technical ability and great endurance”<sup>77</sup>, which is presumably why Wood appointed him in the first place. According to Bate, Malsch was “much loved both for his personal qualities of integrity and kindness and as a great teacher.”<sup>78</sup> However Wood admitted that “his [Malsch's] tone and general playing got on my nerves so much that I appointed [the French oboist] Désire Lalande

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<sup>71</sup> “Music in Birmingham”, *The Musical Times*, 24 (March 1883), 137–8 (p.137).

<sup>72</sup> Bate, p. 206.

<sup>73</sup> Lewis Foreman, *Bax: A Composer and his Times*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2007), p. 196.

<sup>74</sup> For an example of Fonteyne's playing see *The Oboe 1903–1953: Various artists* (Oboe Classics, C2012, 2005), CD1, tracks 5–6.

<sup>75</sup> See Leanne Langley, “Building an Orchestra, Creating an Audience: Robert Newman and the Queen's Hall Promenade Concerts 1895–1926”, in *The Proms A New History*, ed. by Jenny Doctor, David Wright and Nicholas Kenyon (London: Thames & Hudson, 2007), pp. 32–73.

<sup>76</sup> See Brown, p. 61, and Wood, p. 113.

<sup>77</sup> Bate, p. 205.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

to take his place”<sup>79</sup>; Philip credits De Busscher with replacing Malsch in 1904. By the same token Léon Goossens who studied with Malsch whilst recognising his musicianship, described his tone as unattractive: “it was like a comb and tissue paper with no vibrato.” Nevertheless Léon also acknowledged a debt of gratitude in Malsch’s teaching method, “I learnt a lot from him, really. We did a lot of exercises. They proved very useful to me.”<sup>80</sup> Léon’s elder brother Eugene Goossens thought that Malsch “ruined the tone–quality of the London Symphony Orchestra for years.”<sup>81</sup>

Désire Alfred Lalande (d.1904) arrived in England in 1886 from France to join the Halle Orchestra (where his father was principal bassoon) becoming first oboe in 1888 remaining in post until 1892. He then moved to the Scottish Symphony Orchestra as principal before accepting Wood’s offer to play first oboe in the Queen Hall Orchestra in 1897. According to James Brown “he influenced many English oboists with his French style of playing” and was the first French oboist to be asked to play at Bayreuth in 1896; Wood described him as “one of the finest oboists London ever had.”<sup>82</sup> Lalande’s early death in 1904 prompted Wood to seek a successor from the Paris Conservatoire.<sup>83</sup> Henri De Busscher was appointed, a post he held until 1915 before moving to America. Originally from Belgium De Busscher was the first oboist to perform the solo “Home Sweet Home” in Henry Wood’s *Fantasia on British Sea Songs*. He left London to play principal oboe with the New York Symphony Orchestra (1915–20) and later the Los Angeles Philharmonic (1920–48). He also was first oboe with Columbia Pictures Corporation (1948–56).<sup>84</sup> Wood’s account of De Busscher as “a truly superb player” was echoed by the cellist of the Queen’s Hall Orchestra Warwick Evans (1885–1974), who reportedly described De Busscher’s playing as “always perfect” with an “approach to phrasing” that “set a standard for the whole orchestra.”<sup>85</sup> Edward Buttar (1873–1943), a semi–professional oboist

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<sup>79</sup> Wood, p. 113. Robert Philip, p.119.

<sup>80</sup> In Nora Post, “Interview with Léon Goossens and Edwin Roxburgh August 1, 1982”, *e.norapost.com*, <http://www.norapost.com> [17 January 2023].: this article also in *The Double Reed*, 26.1 (1997), 31.

<sup>81</sup> Eugene Goossens, *Overture and Beginners: A Musical Autobiography* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1951), p. 56.

<sup>82</sup> Wood, p. 113; Brown, p 139.

<sup>83</sup> “Desire Lalande”, *Musical Standard*, 22.569 (November, 1904), 345. Wood, p. 158.

<sup>84</sup> See Donald Leake, “Lessons with De Busscher”, *The Double Reed*, 17.3 (Winter 1994), 80–1.

<sup>85</sup> See Wood, p. 158; Jeremy Dibble, *Hamilton Harty: Musical Polymath* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2013), pp. 78, 99, 100.

who claimed to have worked with De Busscher, agreed, describing him as a “heaven-sent musician” whose performances were “musically impeccable”<sup>86</sup>; this detailed, if a little opinionated, document provides an invaluable record of the number of players active on the musical scene circa 1890–1914. De Busscher was particularly influential on Léon Goossens, who noted, “when I heard De Busscher play I met up with something magical and his tone was mellow and beautifully disciplined.”<sup>87</sup> With the advent of the First World War, De Busscher represented the last generation of oboists to migrate from the continent. Nevertheless, the number of European players engaged prior to the 1914–18 conflict does raise the question of why so many non-native oboists continued to be employed in preference to British players. Buttar suggested that “oboe-playing was really at a very low ebb in this country from say, the time of Mendelssohn till the end of the century.”<sup>88</sup> Léon Goossens also remarked that the oboe at the turn of the twentieth century was “still mostly played with a crude and heavy tone.”<sup>89</sup> With the apparent shortage of British oboists, orchestras became major employers of players from Belgium and France. This was a transitional period for both oboists and the instrument, as the influence of the French style had gained momentum in the country since Barret’s arrival; Bate suggested that Lalande’s appointment as principal oboe in the Queen’s Hall Orchestra in 1897 “did much to foster a preference for the French school of oboe playing.”<sup>90</sup> The assimilation of the French school into the British style of oboe playing and woodwind playing in general was not without some reservations regarding volume; the oboist Charles Reynolds (1843–1916) noted a general trend towards a smaller tone quality on the instrument.<sup>91</sup> Reynolds had studied with Lavigne and became principal oboe in both the Liverpool Philharmonic<sup>92</sup> and Halle orchestras and worked with Royal Opera House Orchestra in London, he was also Léon Goossens’ first teacher.<sup>93</sup> De Busscher appeared to embody this tendency of a small sound

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<sup>86</sup> Edward Buttar, “An Historical Letter” in *Our Oboist Ancestors: A Guide to Who was Who in the Nineteenth Century Oboe World*, ed. by James Brown (Malmesbury: Abbey Printing Ltd., 2006), p. 136.

<sup>87</sup> Barry Wynne, *Music in the Wind: The story of LÉON GOOSSENS and his triumph over a shattering accident* (London: Souvenir Press, 1967), p. 64.

<sup>88</sup> Brown, p. 136

<sup>89</sup> Rosen, p. 36.

<sup>90</sup> Bate, p. 202.

<sup>91</sup> Carole Rosen, *The Goossens: A Musical Century* (London: Andre Deutsch Ltd., 1993), p. 34.

<sup>92</sup> The Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra was granted Royal status in 1958.

<sup>93</sup> Brown, *Our Oboist Ancestors*, pp. 85–6.

as described by Buttar: “without exception his was the smallest-toned oboe I ever heard.”<sup>94</sup> Moreover Wood, discussing a general point of performance style observed a loss of “bite” in the more “refined” timbres of the English and French oboists and bassoonists in comparison to German double-reed players, although he suggested that as a nation “we dislike” the “throaty” timbres of these German instruments.<sup>95</sup> Additionally, in an article on Beethoven’s symphonies, Wood suggested that whilst developments of woodwind instruments had enabled players to produce “better and purer quality” they not only “sound rather too much alike” but also lack “power and piquancy.”<sup>96</sup> Nevertheless by the late 1890s the influence of the French school was beginning to have an impact on British oboists; according to Brown, William Malsch changed from a German instrument to a “Lorée K30 (Barret system)” model oboe in 1895 “in deference to public taste at the time.”<sup>97</sup> Oboists were also emerging from British conservatoires having been taught in the French style by émigré players many of whom had long careers as second oboists, for example Edward Davies (1856–1920) and Henry Smith (1882–1937), suggesting that there were at least some prominent British players. Smith (born in Kidderminster) changed his name to Stanislaus whilst working with the Queen’s Hall Orchestra during the period 1904–08. He emigrated to the United States of America and played second oboe to Ferdinand Gillet (1882–1980) in the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Yet despite Brown’s emphasis that Davies worked with the “great British oboists of his time,”<sup>98</sup> the younger generation appeared to have been overshadowed by the dominance of continental players in principal positions. Furthermore a perception that the general tone production on the instrument at this time “was edgy and acid [and] not at all attractive” and that Léon Goossens “was the first [oboist] to make a beautiful sound”, was sustained into the 1920s and 30s.<sup>99</sup> Bassoonist Cecil James (1913–99)<sup>100</sup> reported that Léon Goossens’ pupils were in high demand as deputies and if unavailable orchestras “were faced with

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<sup>94</sup> Buttar, p. 136.

<sup>95</sup> Henry Wood, “Orchestral Colour” in *A Dictionary of Modern Music and Musicians*, ed. by A. Eaglefield-Hull (London: J. M. Dent, 1924), p. 364.

<sup>96</sup> “Concerning Beethoven’s Symphonies: ‘A talk with Sir Henry Wood’”, *The Musical Times*, 68. 1009 (March, 1927), 217.

<sup>97</sup> Brown, p. 66. Bate, p. 204.

<sup>98</sup> Brown, p. 138.

<sup>99</sup> “Léon Goossens”, *Mining the Archives*, BBC Radio 4, 6 June 1997; Rosen, p. 140.

<sup>100</sup> James had a success orchestral career as principal bassoonist in the London Symphony and Philharmonia Orchestras during the 1940s–60s.

somebody who made a noise like treading on an egg.”<sup>101</sup> Similarly the clarinettist Richard Temple Savage (1909–96) commented on poor standards of bassoon playing during the same period.<sup>102</sup> According to Helen Gaskell (1906–2002), who had studied with Léon, Angela Bull (dates unknown), the only other known woman professional oboist at that time, “was absolutely terrible.”<sup>103</sup> For the first Glyndebourne Festival in 1934, the conductor Fritz Busch (1890–1951) replaced the London Symphony Orchestra oboists with former Goossens pupils Evelyn Rothwell (1911–2008) and Natalie Caine (1909–2008). Both had auditioned for the posts following news from the violinist Adolph Busch (1871–1952), brother to Fritz with whom the British conductor John Barbirolli (1899–1970) had been working and who informed Rothwell. According to Rothwell, who signed a contract for five years, but left in 1938 to marry Barbirolli, Busch “did not like the sound of the LSO oboists” and although “efficient,” their tone was “reedy, acid and unattractive.”<sup>104</sup> This evaluation of the paucity of oboe playing is perhaps in part a response of a biased view from a younger generation of musicians as well as a reflection of Léon Goossens’ impact on performance practice. The flautist Richard Adeney (1920–2010), discussing Léon’s influence on a generation of wind players noted that “those few players, who resisted the Goossens’ influence, and who to my ears seemed a bit stiff and wooden at the time [during the late 1930s to 1950s], now sound on their old recordings beautifully stylish and twenty-first century.”<sup>105</sup> Furthermore, given James Brown’s comprehensive listing of over two hundred active British oboists during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, two women oboists are included in the list: Leila Marion Bull (b.1870) and Mathilde Rowlandson (dates unknown),<sup>106</sup> it is difficult to justify how music history relegated these oboists to a level of mediocrity. [George] Arthur Foreman (1883–1963)<sup>107</sup> for example, reportedly the first oboist to record Schumann’s *Three Romances* for oboe

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<sup>101</sup> Rosen, p. 140. James married the oboist Natalie Caine in 1938.

<sup>102</sup> Richard Temple Savage, *A Voice from the Pit: Reminiscences of an Orchestral Musician* (London: David & Charles, 1988), p. 28.

<sup>103</sup> Rosen, p. 139

<sup>104</sup> Clive Fairburn, “Lady Barbirolli: The BDRS pays Tribute”, *Double Reed*, 83 (Summer 2008), 35–54 (p. 39).

<sup>105</sup> Richard Adeney, “Léon Goossens: A centenary tribute—part 11”, *Double Reed*, 39 (Summer 1997), 9–13, (p.12).

<sup>106</sup> J. Brown, p. 119–120.

<sup>107</sup> Arthur was one of two sons of the oboist George Foreman (dates unknown), his brother, Harold George Foreman (1892–1962) was also an oboist. Arthur succeeded his father as oboe teacher at the Guildhall School in 1910.

and piano Op.94 in 1911, shapes *Nicht Schnell* beautifully, with little sense of any acid tone quality;<sup>108</sup> similarly, the oboe playing on the first recordings by the London Symphony Orchestra produced during 1913 and 1914, although without any trace of vibrato in keeping with the general performance practice of the day, is again clear and musically phrased.<sup>109</sup> A listing of oboists for the London Symphony Orchestra 1904–1940 (Table 1) highlights the contingent of British oboe players. Malsch, despite Wood’s dislike of his playing, was clearly a well-regarded player to be the first principal oboe in the orchestra; Edward Davies was described as a “true artist” and although his technical facility was “not unlimited” his tone was “flexible” and “very good”; and Walter Hinchliff (d. 1928) was considered “a very good player” if “on the cold side.”<sup>110</sup> Hinchliff had a distinguished career as a principal oboist in the Scottish Symphony Orchestra prior to his appointment to the London Symphony Orchestra. He also succeeded Charles Reynolds as principal in the Covent Garden Orchestra in 1916. In addition, he established the firm of *Louis Musical Instrument Company* in 1923, and though short lived (the company closed in 1940), Hinchliff developed the *Louis* oboe, an instrument favoured by many of Léon Goossens’ pupils.<sup>111</sup> The design of this oboe was an exact copy of a *Lorée* instrument which Hinchliff apparently reproduced “by chopping up a first rate *Lorée* oboe.”<sup>112</sup> James MacDonagh (1879–1933) was another distinguished orchestral musician. Although he played oboe, notably taking over as first oboe in the Queens Hall Orchestra when Léon Goossens left to fight in the 1914–18 war, as well as succeeding Malsch as professor at Trinity College of Music in 1924, his principal instrument was the cor anglais. He played the solo cor anglais part in the British premiere of Sibelius’ *The Swan of Tuonela* (31 August 1905); although not named in the review of this performance the instrument was reportedly “heard a great deal” and notably that the work was “impressive, but somewhat depressing.”<sup>113</sup> MacDonagh’s

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<sup>108</sup> *The Oboe 1903–1953*, Track 10. See Brown, p. 37 and Bate, p. 206.

<sup>109</sup> *Arthur Nikisch*, London Symphony Orchestra & Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra/Arthur Nikisch (Symposium, 1087/88, 1991). The orchestra was established in 1904 by many musicians from the Queens Hall Orchestra in protest of Henry Wood’s “refusal to allow them to send deputies to rehearsals and concerts.” The orchestra, the first in Britain to be self-governing was described as “defiantly different” and “pioneering”; see London, London Symphony Orchestra Archive. *e.lso.co.uk*, <<http://lso.co.uk/history>> [accessed 19 January 2023].

<sup>110</sup> Buttar, in Brown, pp. 137.

<sup>111</sup> Burgess and Haynes, p. 182.

<sup>112</sup> Buttar in Brown, p. 137.

<sup>113</sup> Brown, “James MacDonagh, oboist and cor anglais Player, 1879–1933: The Man and his Instruments”, *The Double Reed*, 30.1 (2007), 91–5 (p. 93). See “Queens Hall