

A Bassoon Lite, Please...

Dead Sesame Rolls

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A recent study published by Duke University reveals that “bassoon playing is just too difficult.” The study, sponsored by the Benevolent Association of World’s Oboists, reports on both the bassoon playing of humiliation-enhanced humans and tone-deaf injected rats. After twenty years of conductor interviews, laboratory experimentation, complex computer simulation, and countless bassoon-bore boredoms, the old saying, “Practice makes perfect,” is no longer operable, viable, accurate or deemed correctly translated from the original Greek.

“We now believe that God of Bassoon mistranslated the original from the Dead Sesame Rolls found in an ancient mountainside Miss-O-Potamia concert hall,” Professor Maximum Blowkowski, Chairman of the Audio-Psychology Department of Duke explained. “The Duke research team found substantial errors to corroborate field studies that the bassoon defies perfection. ‘Practice makes perfect’ correctly translated actually states, ‘Patrice loves Perspone.’”

Professor Blowkowski elaborated on the findings by the Duke team of scientists. “Our conclusions shows a definite negative correlation between practice and perfection with even the most determined of rats. In addition -- and as a side bar to these determinations -- we believe the aforementioned Patrice very likely was a woman who snubbed God of Bassoon for a bassoonist named, Perspone.”

When asked how generations of bassoonists spurred on by the hope that practice makes perfect would be affected by the Duke study, Blowkowski shrugged. “The conclusions are incontrovertible,” he said. “Fishing is a better way to spend one’s time. We placed half of the world’s famous bassoonists in a controlled performing environment. To simulate a scientific atmosphere we placed test tubes around the room -- some filled with genuine speckled brown trout, others filled with mere perfection. A panel consisting of the other half of the world’s greatest bassoonists listened in from an adjacent room. The listening group of bassoonists unanimously preferred the speckled trout over the playing of their colleagues. Typical was the observation that the performing bassoonists played, “Okay, but not as perfect as when I play.”

Blowkowski explained the processing of expert observations through several complicated computer analyses. The result was astonishingly close to a natural occurrence first discovered by Galileo in the thirteenth century. Galileo initially referred to this phe-

nomenon by its inspiration, ‘Consequence of The Ten O’clock Ultimatum.’ Galileo subsequently published this phenomenon among his several other important findings as ‘The Gravity of Bassoon Playing.’ To arrive at what has become the bedrock of modern scientific law Galileo climbed to the top of the Leaning Tower Of Pisa and simultaneously dropped two bassoonists (Galileo claimed to his dying day he never meant to hurt them both, but one of them simply refused to stop practicing after ten PM).

“The bassoonist practicing every night past ten o’clock in the pursuit of perfection falls at the same rate of speed as one who could care less,” he wrote in his journals. “Thus one concludes that pursuit of perfection on the bassoon falls short of its ideal goal.”

A major disadvantage of playing well, of course, is that the better one plays the more other bassoonists claim to play even better. Thus a bassoonist performing at a level of perfection is a scientific impossibility because there are always an endless number of bassoonists who claim to play better -- and better than perfection is allowed only to orchestral conductors.

To approach the speed of perfection (delusion X lessons divided by square root of C Major) one must accept the likelihood of divorce, practice-room hives, loneliness and an empty liquor cabinet. Bassoon perfection is theoretically possible if one manages to continue practicing beyond death.

“Death is a major inconvenience to bassoon perfection,” says professor Blowkowski. “We at Duke found, oddly enough, that bassoonists who die simply do not keep up the rigorous practice schedule necessary to achieve perfection. We’re really not sure at this point in our interpretation of the data, and I hate to extrapolate until all the evidence is carefully correlated, but I suspect it’s a question of the bassoonist losing interest sometime after breathing ceases.”

Further complicating the issue of perfection is subjectivity. For example, Brian Futz, a bassoonist in Rymeda Elementary School band took bassoon lessons in the sixth grade. His parents looked forward to Brian’s continuing interest in the bassoon at the junior high school level, but were surprised to learn from their precocious son that he had no wish to continue taking bassoon lessons after elementary school.

“Why should I play the bassoon another year?” he asked, after announcing a switch to the clarinet. “Last year I got an “A” playing the bassoon. That’s as perfect as it gets. The only way left to go on the bassoon is