A Background, Analysis, and Performance Guide for Eugene Goossens's Concerto in One Movement for Oboe and Orchestra

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A BACKGROUND, ANALYSIS, AND PERFORMANCE GUIDE
FOR EUGENE GOOSSENS’S
CONCERTO IN ONE MOVEMENT FOR OBOE AND ORCHESTRA

A Written Document

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
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in

The School of Music

by
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ABSTRACT

Sir Eugene Goossens (1893-1962) was a leading English composer and conductor of the early twentieth century. Though his music is relatively unknown today, at the height of his popularity as a composer in the 1920s and 30s, Goossens’ music was considered equal to that of British contemporaries Ralph Vaughan Williams, Benjamin Britten, Malcolm Arnold, Arnold Bax, and Gordon Jacob. A public scandal towards the end of his career resulted in his works falling into relative obscurity, with the exception of his oboe concerto. Despite the concerto’s popularity within the oboe community, few in-depth studies of the work exist.

This monograph presents a formal examination of Eugene Goossens’s *Oboe Concerto in One Movement* (1929). Chapter One explores the life and musical journey of Eugene, as well as his brother Léon, a well-known oboist for whom the concerto was written. It also delves into the history of the concerto, including its premiere and significance of the piece within the oboe repertory. In Chapter Two, the concerto is examined through an analysis of the formal structure, unifying elements, and salient aspects of the piece. Chapter Three provides a guide for performing or teaching the piece, focusing on interpretation, technical challenges, and ensemble considerations.
INTRODUCTION

Sir Eugene Goossens (1893-1962) was a leading English composer and conductor of the early twentieth century. Known primarily as a conductor, Goossens had a prolific career, conducting the British premiere of The Rite of Spring as well as serving as musical director of the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, and Sydney Symphony Orchestra in Australia.¹ He was also a skilled composer, completing nearly seventy works including chamber pieces, orchestral works, and two full-length operas.² Though his music is relatively unknown today, at the height of his popularity as a composer in the 1920s and 30s, Goossens’s music was considered equal to that of British contemporaries Ralph Vaughan Williams, Benjamin Britten, Malcolm Arnold, Arnold Bax, and Gordon Jacob.³

Originally written in 1929 for his brother Léon’s American debut, Goossens’s Concerto in One Movement for oboe and orchestra continues to be a standard concerto in the oboe repertoire. An extremely accomplished performer, Léon developed an international solo career and helped elevate the oboe’s position as a solo instrument in twentieth-century England.⁴ The concerto was written to showcase his virtuosic technique and lyrical musicality⁵, and it effortlessly combines the two.

² Rosen, “Goossens.”
⁴ Geoffrey Burgess and Bruce D. Hayes, The Oboe, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2004), 209.
⁵ Burgess, The Oboe, 209.
While there are books and articles written about the Goossens brothers’ lives and careers, there has been very little discussion of Eugene’s compositional style, and relatively no scholarship or analysis of the oboe concerto dedicated to Léon. Only one formal analysis of the concerto exists, which is located as part of a larger dissertation: *Analysis of the Oboe Concertos dedicated to Leon Goossens composed by Malcolm Arnold, Eugene Goossens, and Ralph Vaughan Williams* by Alice Saunders Biggar. Biggar’s analysis seems to focus mostly on the Impressionist influences that can be found in the concerto, and she compares various sections to Debussy’s piano preludes, *La Cathedrale engloutie* and *Voiles.*

This document is organized into three chapters. Beginning with a section devoted to the background of Goossens’s oboe concerto, I introduce the composer, his rise in fame as a conductor, and subsequent resignation following an arrest and public scandal. This section also includes a brief overview of Léon Goossens’s life and importance as a solo oboist of the twentieth century. The chapter ends with a look into the history of the concerto: its premiere, place in the oboe repertory, and available commercial recordings.

The second chapter provides an analysis of the piece, focusing on the overall form and salient aspects of the work. It explores the formal structure, thematic continuity between sections, and motivic development. Special collections, especially Goossens’s use of the whole tone collection, are examined. This chapter also addresses Goossens’s recurring use of polyrhythm and importance of meter in this piece, as well as a hallmark of his compositional style.

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Chapter Three includes a guide for performing or teaching the concerto, exploring various aspects of interpretation (timbre and character changes, articulation, vibrato, tempo, etc.) as well as technical challenges the performer may experience and exercises to aid in performance. Accompaniment and ensemble considerations are also examined, focusing on difficulties in the accompaniment and various techniques to help with collaboration. With this thorough examination, this document serves as a tool to aid the performer of Eugene Goossens’s *Oboe Concerto in One Movement* and sheds new light on the stylistic influences heretofore unexamined.
CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND

EUGENE GOOSSENS, CONDUCTOR AND COMPOSER

Born in London, England on May 26, 1893, Eugene Aynsley Goossens III grew up with an extremely musical family. The son of Eugene Goossens II, conductor of the Carl Rosa Opera Company and contralto Annie Cook, Eugene began playing the violin and piano at a young age. His siblings were also musical, as his brother Adolphe played horn, Léon oboe, and sisters Sidonie and Marie both played harp. Sunday evenings were reserved for musical soirées, and each child was expected to perform for parental criticism.

Eugene was trained at the Conservatory in Bruges, Belgium, from the age of eight and later continued his studies in Liverpool, England at the College of Music. Interested in conducting from an early age, Eugene would often accompany his father to opera rehearsals, learning through observation. In 1907, at age thirteen, Eugene won a scholarship to study at the Royal College of Music in London, where he studied primarily violin and piano. Later in his studies, he began taking composition classes from Sir Charles Villiers Stanford, whose pupils included Ralph Vaughan Williams, Arthur Bliss, Arthur Benjamin, and Gustav Holst. Goossens wrote his first piece, *Variations for Orchestra on a Chinese Theme*, in 1912 and conducted its performance by the college orchestra at the RCM. At age nineteen, this performance served as his dual conducting

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7 The Carl Rosa Opera Company was based in Liverpool, England.
and compositional debut, for which he received favorable reviews.\textsuperscript{10} According to a review in the \textit{London Times}, he “not only knows what to do with the orchestra when he is writing for it, but is well able to get it done when it is written. He took command with complete assurance, and yet without ostentation, and his clear beat and simple indications to the players secured an admirable performance.”\textsuperscript{11} From there, his career as a conductor flourished.

Rejected for enlistment in World War I due to a congenital heart defect, Eugene continued to play violin in the Queen’s Hall Orchestra in London as well as compose in his spare time. A by-product of the war, concerts promoting the works of contemporary British composers became popular in a series called “War Emergency Concerts.”\textsuperscript{12} Many of these concerts featured Goossens’s works with him conducting. This led to work as a professional conductor, when Thomas Beecham, who was in the audience of the War Emergency Concerts, asked Eugene to substitute for his upcoming opera performances.\textsuperscript{13}

At twenty-two years old, Eugene became Thomas Beecham’s protégé and assistant conductor of the Beecham Opera Company.

Due to his busy schedule assisting Beecham, Eugene was finding it increasingly difficult to devote equal time to composing and conducting. He developed a solution:

> When I was conducting a thirty-week operatic season, I found that if I was to write the music for which my conscience insisted it was essential I should write, I must of necessity so school my mind that I could use what free hours came my way each day. Instead of leaving the opera house after rehearsals with the idea that I was tired and needed relaxation from everything musical, the minute I

\textsuperscript{10} Rosen, \textit{The Goossens}, 32.
\textsuperscript{12} Rosen, \textit{The Goossens}, 51.
closed the door behind me I began plotting music in my head. I went home and forced myself to write.\textsuperscript{14}

Throughout his career, despite a hectic conducting schedule, Eugene continued to compose new works, completing nearly seventy published works over the course of his life.\textsuperscript{15}

After the bankruptcy of Thomas Beecham’s Opera Company in 1920, Eugene decided that the only way to launch himself as a notable conductor of contemporary works was to develop his own orchestra. The orchestra consisted of 105 handpicked musicians, including his siblings, Marie, Sidonie, and Léon.\textsuperscript{16} His first concert performance, held at the Queen’s Hall on June 7, 1921, proved to be a turning point in his career. The performance featured English works, as well as Maurice Ravel’s \textit{La Valse}, but most notably, ended with the London premiere of Igor Stravinsky’s \textit{Le Sacre du Printemps} as a concert piece rather than ballet accompaniment.\textsuperscript{17} With Stravinsky and Sergei Diaghilev in attendance, the performance received rave reviews, citing Goossens as “one of the coolest musical brains in England” with Stravinsky himself acknowledging it to be “the finest performance” of his \textit{Sacre du Printemps} he had ever heard.\textsuperscript{18}

Eugene’s successful performances in 1922, including his remarkable performance of \textit{Le Sacre du Printemps} the previous year, marked him as a leader of Britain’s musical avant-garde. This led to an invitation to conduct the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra in an all-British program in December of 1922, making Goossens the first Englishman to

\textsuperscript{15} Rosen, \textit{The Goossens}, 443-449.
\textsuperscript{16} Adolphe, Eugene’s younger brother, was killed in action during World War I in 1916.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 66.
\textsuperscript{18} Goossens, \textit{Overture and Beginners}, 162.
conduct the orchestra since the war. Soon after, Eugene received an invitation that changed the course of his career: to conduct George Eastman’s new orchestra in Rochester, New York, in the United States.

Beginning in 1923, Goossens was appointed by George Eastman to conduct the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, a new orchestra built as a part of the brand-new school, the Eastman School of Music. Eastman, the founder of the Eastman Kodak Company, endowed the new school and orchestra to encourage the appreciation of music through the popularity of motion pictures. By 1925, Eugene’s status in Rochester had changed: George Eastman appointed him to sole music director of the symphony, which gave him the security of a permanent post as well as regular conducting classes at the School of Music. He also became the musical director of the new Opera Department. This new appointment in Rochester gave Eugene the ability to meet famous conductors in the United States such as Arthur Toscanini and Serge Koussevitzky, and guest conduct the major orchestras: the Boston Symphony, the New York Philharmonic, and the Hollywood Bowl. After experiencing great success, establishing Rochester as “one of the most important musical centers of America,” Eugene left the orchestra in 1931, when he moved to Cincinnati to serve as music director of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra.

In 1929, Eugene was called to guest conduct the Cincinnati Symphony when its conductor, Fritz Reiner, filled in for Toscanini at the New York Philharmonic. His

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19 Rosen, The Goossens, 93.
20 Goossens, Overture and Beginners, 231.
21 Eugene Goossens, Overture and Beginners, 231.
22 Ibid., 239.
success laid the groundwork for his acceptance of a two-year contract in 1931 to succeed Reiner’s position as Chief Conductor of the symphony.\textsuperscript{24} Chairman of the board, Herbert French, was quoted in \textit{The New York Times} as saying, “We are most fortunate in securing Mr. Goossens’s services for the future and are looking forward with confidence to the further development of the orchestra.”\textsuperscript{25} With this appointment, Goossens had become one of the premier conductors in the United States and England at the age of thirty-seven.

As the fifth-oldest symphony in the United States, the Cincinnati Orchestra ranked among the top six orchestras of the U.S. in 1930, along with Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, New York, and Philadelphia.\textsuperscript{26} During the first third of the twentieth century, the orchestra, under the direction of a distinguished lineup of conductors including Stokowski, Ysaïe and Fritz Reiner, achieved many notable musical landmarks. This included the first orchestra to be broadcast to a national radio audience (1921), the third orchestra to record (1927), and the world premiere performance of Mahler’s \textit{Symphony No. 3}.\textsuperscript{27} Goossens’s tenure added to the orchestra’s achievements by increasing public concert attendance so that the orchestra could return to its original hall, and commissioning and premiering Aaron Copland’s \textit{Fanfare for the Common Man} in 1942.\textsuperscript{28}

After fifteen years in Cincinnati, Eugene was considering moving on to another conducting appointment when the Australian Broadcasting Commission offered a three-month tour in 1946. The offer came at an ideal time, as Goossens had just married his

\textsuperscript{24} Rosen, \textit{The Goossens}, 111.  
\textsuperscript{26} Rosen, \textit{The Goossens}, 142.  
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid.
third wife; perhaps the new conducting post in a country halfway across the world presented excitement and a new beginning with his new bride. After falling in love with the country on his tour, Eugene returned to Cincinnati to give his resignation and announce his plan to return to Australia to develop an orchestra, engage the public, and create a national musical tradition and identity. He then returned to Australia in 1947 to start his work establishing the Sydney Symphony Orchestra as a premiere ensemble that could rival the world’s best orchestras.

It was in Sydney that Goossens would reach both the summit of his career and suffer the lowest disgrace. The Sydney Symphony Orchestra had been recently organized, and in 1947 Goossens was invited to become its first music director. Goossens had big plans and was enthusiastic about the future. Although his ideas began small (the introduction of outdoor performances, increased publicity, the recruitment of talented musicians from overseas, and completing major recordings), they culminated with his revolutionary idea and ensuing proposal for the construction of the Sydney Opera House. He conceived of an opera house overlooking the harbor “which would be the cultural center for the second city of the British Empire.”

His efforts and decade-long fight to establish the Sydney Opera House were finally rewarded when he was knighted in 1955 for his music service in Australia, and today, the Sydney Opera House remains one of the most famous architectural landmarks in the world.

Despite being at the height of popularity in the mid-1950s, a 1956 scandal with artist Rosaleen Norton severely affected Goossens and destroyed his Australian career. According to his family, Eugene had always been interested in the occult, with his

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30 Ibid., 346.
bedside reading consisting of books on witchcraft and necromancy.\textsuperscript{31} Due to the conventional, repressive, almost Victorian society of Sydney in the 1950s, followers or practitioners of the field were forced to meet in secret. Eugene quickly became friends with Rosaleen Norton, a well-known practitioner of the occult, and began leading a double life: one of respectability in his high-society social circles, and the secret life of pagan rituals and sexual orgies with Norton and her lover, Gavin Greenlees.\textsuperscript{32} On March 9, 1956, upon his arrival from London, Goossens was stopped at the Sydney airport and customs officials searched his luggage. After discovering 1,166 pornographic photographs and literature about the occult hidden in his luggage, officials charged and fined Goossens for “unlawfully possessing prohibited imports, to wit indecent works and articles.”\textsuperscript{33} Forced to resign from his conducting posts, Goossens returned to England amid public disgrace. His chronically ill health and a congenital heart defect contributed to a long period of illness following the scandal. Though he appeared as a guest conductor at various orchestras in England and took composition commissions to supplement his income, Eugene did not achieve the level of success he enjoyed prior to the scandal, and he died on June 13, 1969 with very little money or fame.

LÉON GOOSSENS, OBOE

Born in Liverpool, England on June 12, 1897, Léon Goossens, the younger brother of conductor/composer Eugene Goossens, is credited with transforming the oboe from an instrument with a harsh, vociferous tone to one of refinement and beauty. By

\textsuperscript{31} Rosen, \textit{The Goossens}, 339.
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., 340.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., 353.
combining virtuosic skill with his delicacy of phrasing and richness of sound, he put the oboe on the map as a twentieth-century solo instrument.\(^{34}\)

He began his studies at age ten with Charles Reynolds, principal oboist of Manchester’s Halle Orchestra, before attending the Royal College of Music in London from 1911-1914. Quickly recognized as the most gifted oboe player to attend the Royal College of Music, Léon soon became frustrated with the lack of solo pieces available for the oboe as well as its popular regard as a loud, crude instrument.\(^{35}\) Though his teacher, William Malsch, helped develop Léon’s technique, the tone he admired most and strived to emulate was that of Henri du Busscher in the Queen’s Hall Orchestra.\(^{36}\)

After graduating from the Royal College of Music at age seventeen, Léon filled his idol’s recently vacated chair, serving as principal oboe of the Queen’s Hall Orchestra.\(^{37}\) Though his tenure was interrupted by his service in the First World War, he returned to the orchestra and in 1924 transferred to the Covent Garden under Thomas Beecham. At the invitation of Beecham, Léon became the principal oboist of the London Philharmonic Orchestra in 1932.\(^{38}\)

Meanwhile, throughout the 1920s and 30s, he was expanding his experience and repertoire as a solo recitalist and chamber musician. He founded the Philharmonic Trio, though his tenure was interrupted by his service in the First World War, he returned to the orchestra and in 1924 transferred to the Covent Garden under Thomas Beecham. At the invitation of Beecham, Léon became the principal oboist of the London Philharmonic Orchestra in 1932.\(^{38}\)

\(^{34}\) Geoffrey Burgess and Bruce D. Haynes, *The Oboe.* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 196.


\(^{36}\) Ibid., 36.


which consisted of Albert Fransella, a famous flutist, Francesco Ticciati, composer and pianist, and himself.\textsuperscript{39} Changing the format of a typical chamber ensemble, the group performed recitals of solo works with the trio as the background. This exposure allowed Léon’s unique sound and individual voice to be recognized by other musicians and composers. By the end of his career, he had inspired over a hundred compositions, including works written by nearly all of the major English composers.\textsuperscript{40}

Not only did Goossens inspire the composition of many works for oboe, but he actively commissioned new works as well. The most famous oboe concerto dedicated to Goossens is that by Ralph Vaughan Williams, written in 1944. Working as a team, Vaughan Williams took Goossens’s thoughts and opinions into consideration; upon receiving a draft, Léon suggested some minor changes in the oboe part, and the composer acquiesced. He wrote in correspondence to Léon:

Dear Goossens:
I hear from the B.B.C. that they have asked you to play my new concerto at the Proms. I need hardly say I am pleased at the prospect, if you are also pleased - but you had better see it before you make up your mind! I hope to send you the oboe part and a pianoforte reduction of the score in about a fortnight. Of course, I shall welcome suggestions from you as to making the part more "oboistic."

Gordon Jacob also composed multiple pieces for Léon. Though his \textit{Concerto No. 1 for Oboe and Strings} was originally commissioned by and dedicated to English oboist Evelyn Rothwell, Goossens convinced Jacob to re-dedicate the work to him.\textsuperscript{42} According to interviews, Jacob has claimed that when Goossens discovered the dedication, he was

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{39} Rosen, \textit{The Goossens}, 125.  
\textsuperscript{40} “Leon Goossens in Memoriam,” \textit{The Double Reed} 12 (Spring 1988): 15.  
\textsuperscript{42} Wilson, “Léon Goossens, Oboist.”}
incensed and criticized, "Here am I, the leading oboist in the world, and you are going to write for one of my pupils!"\textsuperscript{43}

Due to the vast amount of commissions and dedications, Léon is credited with elevating the oboe as a solo instrument of the twentieth century. His innovative style of playing brought about many changes in oboe performance that still are prevalent today. Léon’s previously unparalleled technique changed the public’s view of what was possible for the oboe to perform. Many of the most technically challenging solo pieces written in the twentieth century were dedicated to Léon: the Vaughan Williams Concerto, Britten’s Phantasy Quartet, Eugene Goossens’s Oboe Concerto, a sonata by Arnold Cooke, a quintet by Arnold Bax, and more. These new works written for Léon and his pupils did much to strengthen the prominence and esteem of the oboe in England during the early to mid twentieth century.

Perhaps the most important way that Léon transformed the oboe is through his concept of tone. His obituary claims that Goossens’s “development of the oboe’s tone and expressive power worked its effect not only on the woodwind players around him but also on composers seeking to use orchestral sound in new and expanded ways.”\textsuperscript{44}

Previously a loud, brash, harsh instrument considered a necessary aspect of the orchestra, Goossens elevated the oboe into a refined, beautiful instrument with a sweet, singing, and expressive tone. Evelyn Rothwell, prominent 20th century English oboist and pupil of Goossens, says that her teacher created “a new style of playing and a new tone” that was


“warm, singing and vibrant, far from the dead, reedy and rather ugly sound which was generally accepted before his time.”

According to well-regarded oboe historian Geoffrey Burgess, one of the principal elements in this new style of playing was the introduction of the breath vibrato as an essential ingredient in tone production. On woodwind instruments, vibrato was first used in combination with basic tone production around the turn of the twentieth century. Though the first wind players to integrate vibrato and tone were French musicians at the Paris Conservatoire, vibrato was not truly integrated in oboe playing until Leon Goossens. Towards the end of his career, Leon described the reaction to his introduction of vibrato in 1915:

The fashionable woodwind sound in the early days of this century was more wooden. Vibrato was rarely, if ever used, and certainly not as a fundamental aspect of tone production. Those first days at the Queen’s Hall Orchestra represented for me a period of isolation from the prevalent style of sound reproduction. I suffered a great deal of abuse and jibing from other players at this time for persisting with my own concept of a beautiful oboe sound incorporating vibrato as an essential aspect of its singing quality.

Today, the integration of vibrato as an essential aspect of the oboist’s tone is a well-held opinion worldwide, crossing multiple styles of playing from American to British, European, and more. While some performers and schools of oboe instruction play with more vibrato than others, all oboists recognize vibrato as an essential tool for tone production and timbre change, and Goossens’s international success and recognition aided in that shift in pedagogy.

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45 Burgess, *The Oboe*, 197.
46 Burgess, *The Oboe*, 262.
In addition to his characteristic tone and use of vibrato, Leon’s lasting reputation in the oboe community is also due to the substantial amount of recordings he released or performed via radio. Until the middle of the twentieth century, Goossens produced the only commercial recordings in the world featuring an oboe. He recorded much of the standard oboe repertory, including Mozart’s *Oboe Quartet*, Eugene’s *Oboe Concerto*, Britten’s *Phantasy Quartet*, and in 1947, he was the first oboist to record the oboe concerto by Richard Strauss.

Today, Léon’s innovative style of playing shows all the hallmarks of contemporary British oboe playing: crisp articulation, “present” vibrato, and a clear, bright tone. His legacy lives on through his innovative tone and expressive playing, multitude of commercial recordings, and his pupils. He was an influential force in the rise of the oboe in twentieth-century England, and his championing of a large number of works for oboe helped establish the main solo repertoire still performed today.

**CONCERTO HISTORY**

In 1927, Eugene began sketching an oboe concerto for Léon, whose international solo reputation was growing, to perform for his American debut. In his autobiography, he describes the projected work as “a short but transcendentally difficult work...there was literally nothing in the range of technical complexities [Leon] couldn’t cope with.”

Unfortunately, when Léon arrived in New York in 1928 for his debut recital at the Guild Theatre, the concerto was not finished to Eugene’s liking. Though Eugene accompanied

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49 Ibid., 201.
his brother on piano at the recital, the concerto’s debut was postponed until the following year.

In February 1929, the brothers gave a series of concerts in New York, culminating with a recital on February 25 in Boston at Jordan Hall consisting of entirely Eugene’s works. At this performance, Eugene’s *Concerto in One Movement* was premiered. Because the orchestration was not yet complete, Eugene accompanied Leon, playing the piano reduction.\(^{51}\) The following day, the *Boston Herald* reported, “Mr. Goossens, with his brother’s art in mind, wrote robuster [sic] melodies for the oboe than those usually allotted that gentle pastoral pipe, melodies befitting bagpipes or the melodies in vogue in Handel’s time.”\(^{52}\) The *Boston Globe* added: “Mr. Goossens’ [sic] concerto for his brother indulges in no far-fetched virtuosities; by concision it avoids tedium; the songful section has intrinsical [sic] musical quality...Mr. Léon Goossens...played it in a smooth, rounded moist and transparent tone, outflowing with technical skill.”\(^{53}\) Eugene himself described the concerto as “a tremendous display piece” and recounts how Léon “negotiated [the cadenza] brilliantly.”\(^{54}\) Since its premiere in 1929, the concerto has remained as one of the main concertos in the oboe canon.

Though mostly unknown outside of the oboe community, Goossens’s *Concerto in One Movement* serves as an integral part of the oboe repertory. It appears regularly as a competition piece, occurring on the repertoire lists of the most famous international competitions: Geneva International Music Competition, International Oboe Competition

\(^{51}\) The piano reduction, written and performed by Eugene, is published by Alphonse-Leduc and used today by many oboists.

\(^{52}\) Rosen, *The Goossens*, 130

\(^{53}\) Ibid., 130,

\(^{54}\) Goossens, *Overture and Beginners*, 262-3.
of Japan in Tokyo, ARD International Music Competition in Munich, and the International Double Reed Society’s Gillet/Fox Competition. Its use as a competition piece comes from the combination of lyrical melodies with flashy technique, and that it exposes all facets of a performer’s skills. Due to its extended range (low B-flat up to high G), virtuosic cadenza and unusual fingering combinations required, the technical demands put upon the performer are extraordinary in this concerto. Eugene himself was aware of the technical difficulties:

Léon…complained that the cadenza was not showy enough. I therefore added some coruscations, which he negotiated brilliantly, but which seem to have placed the work permanently out of the range of all but two or three great oboe virtuosi. It is nowadays used chiefly as a morceau de concours by conservatories, and perhaps deserves its fate, though I lavished much thought on its construction and ideas.\(^{55}\)

The virtuosic display needed to navigate this concerto is significant, which makes it ideal for a competition piece at conservatories as well as international music festivals.

Despite its notoriety and use in competitions, the concerto is not widely recorded or performed by professional oboists. There are five commercial recordings that exist: one by Eugene’s brother Léon, for whom the concerto was written; Wayne Rapier, longtime oboist of the Boston Symphony Orchestra; American soloist Nancy Ambrose King; British oboist Emily Pailthorpe; and Joel Marangella, principal oboe of West Australia Symphony Orchestra. Despite being such a widely recorded soloist, Léon did not record Eugene’s concerto for several years. In a letter to his parents, Eugene wrote:

I do wish Lee would do something about having my oboe concerto recorded. I am only fearful that one day it may be too late to do so. There is much demand over here for his records and in particular that one. Doesn’t HMV\(^{56}\) realise what

\(^{55}\) Goossens, *Overture and Beginners*, 263-3.

\(^{56}\) HMV, or “His Master’s Voice” was the trademark and unofficial name of a large British record label, the Gramophone Company.
an enormous record public Léon has over here and how he’s looked up to as the God of all the young oboe players of this generation? Don’t they realise that my concerto is the one virtuoso work which is looked upon as Lee’s proper vehicle for display, and that everybody is astonished that no record exists of it?!!

It is a possibility that the piece is not widely recorded due to its technical demands, or perhaps because it is viewed as merely a competition piece instead of a legitimate work. Despite the reasons, the concerto has never reached the same notoriety and prestige as the concertos by Strauss, Mozart, or Vaughan Williams.

Another aspect that makes this concerto unique is its orchestration and extensive use of percussion. Unlike many concertos of the early twentieth century, Goossens did not write for string orchestra or even chamber orchestra, as Richard Strauss did; instead, he wrote for a reduced orchestra in which many different timbres of winds and percussion were utilized. Rather than using the typical pairs of woodwinds, Goossens writes for an unusual assortment: two flutes, one doubling piccolo, no oboes, two clarinets, one on B-flat and one doubling A clarinet and bass clarinet, and only one bassoon. Instead of four horns, he writes for only two, and only one trumpet is used. Low brass, such as trombone and tuba, are omitted. This assortment and use of auxiliary instruments helps Goossens achieve the maximum colors available from the orchestra.

He also writes for a variety of percussion instruments, which is unusual for a concerto of the period. The score calls for both pitched and non-pitched percussion: glockenspiel, bass drum, snare drum, cymbals, gong (tam-tam), harp, celeste, and xylophone. Despite the use of all of these instruments, timpani are not utilized, which is a significant break from tradition. Goossens takes the innovative orchestration a step further.

57 Rosen, The Goossens, 241
further, pairing the instruments in creative ways to maximize tone color. For example, the concerto begins with only upper woodwinds (flute, piccolo, and clarinet) and pitched percussion (xylophone and celeste), giving the opening theme a brilliant, ringing timbre (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Use of pitched percussion and high winds, mm. 1-6

In addition, only unpitched percussion – bass drum and gong, accompany the entire cadenza (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Cadenza, accompanied by bass drum and gong, m. 242
Léon discusses the unique orchestration of his brother’s concerto:

Using a full orchestra... the work contains some very delicate writing for percussion. In fact, the whole of the cadenza is accompanied by the sustained sound of a tam-tam with marvellous [sic] effect. The oboe is always audible above the rich textures. Today, the piece stands as a rewarding and effective work for the medium.\(^{59}\)

This creative use of percussion to accompany the cadenza is extremely rare as a compositional tool, and is not found in other concertos of this time.\(^{60}\)

Eugene and Léon’s good relationship and camaraderie brought about a revolutionary work for solo oboe that helped change the status of the oboe in the twentieth century. Their atypical musical upbringing and enormous talents as a composer and oboist combined to make Eugene’s *Concerto in One Movement* a staple in the oboe repertory, with its previously unheard lyricism combined with technical virtuosity and unique orchestral colors. Though Eugene’s scandal and fall from public grace resulted in many of his compositions also falling out of favor, his oboe concerto has stood the test of time.

\(^{59}\) Goossens, *Oboe*, 159.
\(^{60}\) One notable exception is the cadenza to Nielson’s *Concerto for Clarinet* (1928), in which the cadenza is accompanied by snare drum.
CHAPTER 2: ANALYSIS

FORMAL STRUCTURE

Goossens’s *Concerto in One Movement* is unusual as a concerto for several reasons. First, it exists entirely as a single-movement work, whereas most concerti, from

the Baroque era to the twentieth century, employ multiple movements.\(^{61}\) In addition, it does not emulate the fast-slow-fast pattern that is typical of Classical and Romantic concerti. The piece stays primarily in one tempo for the first two-thirds, and then is slightly slower for the last third of the work. Although it ends with a brisk tempo, this is the first and only departure from the rather moderate tempo of the rest of the piece. With a typical concerto, one would expect the form to be a modified ritornello form.\(^{62}\) In Goossens’s concerto, however, the soloist and orchestra are more integrated. Rather than existing as large sections in which one of the groups is featured, the two weave back and forth.

Goossens’s *Concerto in One Movement* also lacks a traditional key or tonal center; because of this, we must look at the thematic content to determine the formal structure of the concerto. Though it does not fit cleanly into any predetermined form, the concerto appears to be a loose 5-part rondo: ABACA. Unlike the very regular forms of the Classical era, Goossens’s writing does not adhere to the traditional rondo, as is seen in Figure 3.

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\(^{62}\) Ritornello was adapted from the Baroque concerto. It is characterized by alternating “big” and “small” sections, or full orchestra and soloist.
First, the A sections are not balanced in length. The most stereotypical rondos, such as *rondo alla turk*, the last movement of Mozart’s Piano Sonata in A Major (K. 331), have balanced phrasing in which each return of the A section lasts exactly 8 measures. While this is obviously a Classical idiom, Goossens, a twentieth-century composer, would have not been tied to these traditions and free to divert from the norm.

The most obvious way Goossens’s rondo differs is in its absence of functional tonality, and therefore its lack of traditional cadences marking the various sections. Because of its lack of perfect authentic cadences (PACs) or an obvious shift from tonic to dominant, we can rule out sonata rondo form. However, Goossens identifies his cadences
through other conventions. Often, his cadences are marked by a loss or gain in energy. While most of his cadences, especially at the end of the sections, tend to lose energy in dynamics and texture, occasionally they do the opposite, gaining energy, increasing in dynamics and texture. While there are traditional V-I chordal cadences on occasion, most of the cadences in this concerto are elisions without strong harmonic structure, and therefore difficult to hear exactly where they occur. This results in an extremely fluid, free-sounding form.

Despite the differences in comparing the oboe concerto to a stereotypical rondo, there are many aspects in which it exhibits traditional characteristics. First, each large-scale return of the A theme (mm. 11-20, 23-35, 91-99, 159-169) occurs in the original key area. With the exception of the final return, which occurs a fifth higher than the opening, every time the A theme returns, it is in the original key area. While this may not be a traditional “tonic,” this is a strong characteristic of the rondo form.

In addition, there is considerable thematic continuity among the sections. Despite Theme A returning frequently as is typical of a rondo, it is also interwoven into the contrasting sections. For example, in the transitional material at letter L, Theme A is used to propel the music forward, this time in mixed meter (see Figure 4).

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63 Though each A section is in G# dorian, instances in which the A theme or motive are intertwined into the contrasting sections are not necessarily in the same key area.
64 As the only time Goossens writes asymmetrical meter in this work, the 7/8 bar stands out. This is a compositional tool Goossens employs in multiple other works as well. Often, his pieces are written in compound time, but one measure is written in an asymmetrical meter: 7/8 or 5/8. This occurs in his Phantasy Quartet (Op. 12), Piano Quintet (Op. 23), Violin Sonata No. 1 (Op. 21), and String Quartet No. 2 (Op. 59).
Here, Goossens uses the asymmetrical meter, ascending chromatic line, crescendo, and stringendo to increase the energy and propel the music into the climax of the B section. Even though the section still contains contrasting material, the use of Theme A provides continuity between the sections of the concerto. The motive also appears in another contrasting section, the C section. In m. 227, six measures before letter V, the familiar opening motive recurs as a rhythmic diminution before returning to the contrasting material at letter V (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Theme A in the contrasting C section, mm. 193-199

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For the purpose of clarity, some musical examples will be taken from the piano transcription rather than the full orchestral score. This score for oboe and piano was transcribed by Eugene Goossens and performed by the composer and his brother in the concerto’s premiere performance.
By using motives and themes from the A section throughout the entire work, Goossens unifies the sections into one cohesive work.

As previously mentioned, due to the lack of traditional cadences, transitions between the sections must be established in other ways. Goossens achieves this primarily through a gain or loss in energy and texture. Most of the transitions to a new theme are characterized by a loss in energy, texture, and often, dynamic. For example, the B section ends with a diminuendo and the theme dying away before being somewhat interrupted by the return of the A theme, as can be seen in Figure 6.

![Figure 6: Transition between B and A section, mm. 156-161](image)

Sometimes, though, Goossens characterizes his transitions between sections with a gain in energy and dynamic; however, the texture thins, leaving only the solo oboe to bridge the two sections. This happens between the first A section and the B section, shown in Figure 7.
Often, these transitions use motives from Theme A to give the contrasting sections cohesion and foreshadow the imminent return of A. This occurs in both contrasting sections, but can be heard very clearly at the end of the C section as it transitions into the cadenza (see Figure 8).

Because of the smooth transitions between sections and Goossens’s use of motive to tie these sections together, the form of the piece feels quite fluid. Though it is in a loose rondo form, the sections are not clearly divided, making the form of the piece feel fluid and somewhat free from formal constraints.
SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

One way Goossens achieves tonal ambiguity is through his use of the whole-tone collection. Because the whole-tone scale is made up entirely of equal intervals, there are no leading tones or perfect intervals to provide reference of the tonic. Goossens uses both whole-tone collections, WT\textsubscript{C} and WT\textsubscript{C#}\textsuperscript{66}, and these collections appear throughout the entire work (see Figures 9-11).

![Figure 9: WT\textsubscript{C} collection, mm. 17-20](image)

![Figure 10: WT\textsubscript{C} collection, mm. 121-123](image)

![Figure 11: WT\textsubscript{C} collection, mm. 91-96](image)

The only significant section in which the whole-tone collection cannot be found is the C section, mm. 177-242. In addition, though at first glance the majority of whole-tone collections seem to appear in the B section, there are no more occurrences in this section as any other in the piece. In this section, he often writes whole-tone collections that are disrupted by one or two chromatic passing notes, as seen in Figure 12.

\textsuperscript{66}WT\textsubscript{C} is the collection that begins on C: C, D, E, F#, G#, A#. WT\textsubscript{C#} is comprised of the remaining notes: C#, D#, F, G, A, B.
Though this sounds very similar to the other whole-tone areas, it cannot be considered a true whole-tone collection because of the half steps. Therefore, Goossens does not use the special collections as a thematic element or to differentiate thematic sections.

Though both WT_C and WT_C# occur, Goossens overwhelmingly favors WT_C. Of all the instances of WT_C in the piece, only one example of WT_C# was found (see Figure 13).

In this instance, WT_C and WT_C# are placed immediately one after the other, giving the effect of a modulation or change in key area, as can be seen in Figure 14.

For the remainder of the concerto, Goossens writes only WT_C. Therefore, his choice of collection has little to do with the form and was probably not intended as a way to differentiate between sections or distinguish transitions. Instead, it should be seen as a unifying aspect that occurs in thematic material throughout the entire work.
MOTIVIC DEVELOPMENT

Goossens creates most of his new thematic ideas from the genesis of the opening four-note motive in the percussion and high winds (see Figure 15). This motive, which consists of a descending 4\textsuperscript{th}, ascending minor 7\textsuperscript{th}, and ascending perfect 4\textsuperscript{th}, later morphs into Theme A, as is seen in Figure 16.

![Figure 15: Opening motive, mm. 1-2](image)

This theme returns at letter D, but here it has been altered melodically in addition to the changing accompaniment. The opening motive remains, however this time, it is transposed up a half-step (see Figure 17).

![Figure 16: Theme A, mm. 11-13](image)

It continues to pervade the section, transposed each time it appears (see Figures 18 and 19).
This motive is also found in the contrasting sections, although with less frequency. It occurs in the transitional music at letter L in the B section, as well as at the end of the C section as it transitions into the cadenza (see Figure 20).

After the cadenza, the figure returns again in the last iteration of the A section. This time, the motive is twice as slow, in simple time, and transposed down a fourth from the original motive (see Figure 21).

Goossens’s recurring use of this four-note motive throughout all sections of the piece gives this concerto cohesion and is one of the most salient aspects of the work.
RHYTHM AND METER

Rhythm is another salient aspect of Goossens’s oboe concerto, and it acts as a unifying figure throughout the work. Goossens often uses polyrhythm and polymeter as a compositional tool, especially the juxtaposition of compound and simple meter. This occurs several times throughout his oboe concerto, in mm. 106, 110-114, 118, and 195-197. The majority of these occur in the middle section of the piece reminiscent of Stravinsky. In mm. 111-112 (Figure 22a), the oboe solo is in 6/8 while the orchestral accompaniment is in 2/4, creating a triple vs. duple meter.

![Figure 22a: Polymeter in mm. 111-112](image)

This juxtaposition also occurs at letter C, where the right hand of the piano is in 6/8 compound time, but the left hand implies 3/4 simple meter, creating a hemiola. By

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This compositional idiom, simultaneously writing compound rhythms and simple rhythms, is found in many of Goossens’s other works, including *Phantasy Quartet (Op. 12)*, *Piano Quintet (Op. 23)*, *Violin Sonata No. 1 (Op. 21)*, and *String Quartet No. 2 (Op. 59).*
the third measure of C, however, the hemiola corrects itself and both hands are in 6/8 (see Figures 23a and 23b).

Figure 23a: Hemiola, mm. 39-41

Figure 23b: Rhythmic reduction, hemiola, mm. 39-41

Sometimes, although the written meters are not different, Goossens creates a polyrhythm feel by writing a triple pattern against a duple pattern, as can be seen in mm. 195-199 (Figures 24a and 24b).
Here, although the oboe is playing triplets, the cellos are playing a syncopated duple pattern of an eighth note followed by a quarter notes played on the offbeat, creating a sense of 2:3. In the piano reduction, Goossens keeps the syncopated feeling; however, he re-orchestrates the duple cello line into oscillating eighth notes in the left hand, creating a very clear 2:3 pattern, as is seen in Figures 25a and 25b.
Though this effect is used throughout the piece and in all sections of the work, the majority of instances occur in the B section. In this section, the rhythm, accents, and use of polyrhythm become a thematic element that differentiates it from the other sections. While the polyrhythm is used in other sections, these moments are fleeting, whereas almost the entire B section includes a metric discrepancy between the soloist and the orchestra, constantly moving between compound and simple meter.

Meter, in general, is used by Goossens to differentiate between the sections of the rondo. The A section is always in 6/8 compound meter, every time it returns, except for when it returns after the cadenza. At that moment, it is written in 4/4 and acts like a coda, providing closure to the piece. The B section is characterized by the ambiguity of meter, as the solo oboe is written in 6/8 and the orchestra is in 2/4. Each part jumps back and forth between the two, creating an uncertainty of the meter. The C section far contrasts
any previous material, as it is written in 3/4 and is very clearly in simple meter. Thus, Goossens uses meter to distinguish the various sections of the piece and help clarify the form.

CONCLUSION

Eugene Goossens’s *Concerto in One Movement* employs traditional as well as innovative elements. Rather unusual as a one-movement concerto, this piece has remarkable cohesion and unity. As a five-part rondo, its form is rather traditional, but its lack of traditional tonality or cadences makes identifying the sections difficult. Goossens distinguishes between the various sections using thematic continuity, transitions, motivic cohesion, and frequent rhythmic and metric changes. While his thematic continuity and motivic development help unify the work, his use of meter, rhythm, and the whole tone collections aid in differentiating between sections.

Though some critics and musicologists argue that Goossens has no personal compositional style, several compositional techniques that are present in this work are also present in his others: juxtaposition between compound and simple meter, use of asymmetrical meter to highlight important moments, use of whole tone collections, and an adherence to traditional form. Therefore, Goossens is able to create a style that is uniquely his own through these compositional idioms and pastiche of styles.

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CHAPTER 3: PERFORMANCE GUIDE

In this chapter, I offer performance suggestions and guidelines based on the formal analysis discussed in the previous section as well as my personal practice of this concerto. These approaches pertain mostly to one’s interpretation of the piece (tempo, articulation, timbre changes, etc.), in addition to the technical difficulties one may encounter and exercises to aid in overcoming these difficulties.

TIMBRE AND CHARACTER CHANGES

A successful performance of this concerto requires a variety of timbre and character changes. Because the concerto consists of many drastic character changes that are easily audible to the audience, the performer should take care to emphasize these sections as they happen. The following section will walk the performer through the concerto, identifying significant passages or segments that require character or timbre changes, as well as suggestions for achieving those changes in color.

The piece begins with a motive in the high winds and percussion, which is then immediately followed by the same motive in the solo oboe. This time in the solo oboe, the theme evokes images of rolling hills and pastoral countryside; therefore, it should be played in an unhurried, leisurely tempo with long, uninterrupted phrasing. In addition, to bring out the pastoral quality of this section, more emphasis should be given on the triple meter: accenting beats one and four, with the internal beats giving direction toward the downbeats. This will result in a lilting character that is appropriate for the music.

The main motive reappears multiple times in the first third of the concerto; however, it is always presented in a different character. For example, at letter D, the
motive is exactly the same as the opening winds and percussion, except it has been transposed up one half-step (see Figure 26).

![Recurring motive, m. 1 and m. 56](image)

Figure 26: Recurring motive, m. 1 and m. 56

At letter D, though the motive is the same, the accompaniment is quite different, requiring a vastly different timbre from the oboist. The strings are playing oscillating 16\(^{th}\) notes, and the dynamic is rather quiet. The oboe solo, rather than lilting as before, now must be a soaring, placid melody, performed with fluidity and ease. This same motive returns yet again six measures before letter F, but this time, it is accented and *fortissimo*. Though the motive begins in an accented and aggressive character, the music quickly loses momentum, becoming more expressive and mysterious in character.

This is a vast contrast to the middle section that occurs at letter H. With the use of dynamics and accent to aid in portraying the timbre change, this section implores a heavy, forceful, and deliberate character. This color change can be achieved through a louder dynamic, more accent and front to the articulation, and most importantly, a wide, fast, and audible vibrato that is very intense. The aggressive character continues, reaching a *fortissimo* F6 in m. 151, until the timbre changes suddenly at letter N. This is a return of the opening pastoral theme, which acts as a bridge to the next section, an interlude from letter O to W.
This section is a sudden character change not yet explored in the piece. For the first time, the music is in 4/4 meter and has a warm, gentle tone quality. Though previous sections were reminiscent of rolling hills or soaring landscape, this section has a singing quality not yet heard in the concerto. It introduces two new motives. First, the orchestra, and later oboe, plays the new theme, which features tenuto articulations and a syncopated rhythm (see Figure 27).

![Figure 27: New motive, mm. 214-215](image)

This section also introduces another new motive: descending triplets (see Figure 28).

![Figure 28: Descending triplet motive, mm. 195-196](image)

These two motives help make up the last third of the piece, providing a drastic character change to the previous material. This leads immediately into the extended cadenza occurring at letter W.

The cadenza, while easy to write off as purely a technical exercise, requires many different characters and timbres from the performer. In addition to the large amount of runs and coruscations, the cadenza combines all the previously heard motives. It starts in an aggressive character, featuring the main motive from the middle B section. Then, the character suddenly shifts to tranquillo with the main theme from the opening of the piece.

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69 Merriam-Webster’s dictionary defines coruscations as “flashes of brilliance or wit” or “sparkle.” This word is used by Eugene himself to describe the runs in the cadenza.
concerto, reminiscent of the music at letter A. After gaining energy in the runs, Goossens again changes character suddenly, this time writing the word *lento* and bringing back a motive from the interlude section at letter R. This is followed by a rapid set of nine- and ten-note runs, giving the music energy to reach its climax, a high G at the end of the cadenza. This leads into the coda, which includes a return of the opening motive, except this time it is twice as slow and the character is triumphant and majestic. This character continues until the end of the piece, finishing victoriously in a flourish (see Figure 29).

![Figure 29: Flourished ending, mm. 263-265](image)

Rather than always happening in large sections, some color changes are necessary in the middle of a phrase, when the music suddenly shifts unexpectedly. This happens often, such as in mm. 34-35 (see Figure 30).

![Figure 30: Sudden color change, mm. 33-36](image)
On the downbeat of measure 35, the accompaniment suddenly changes, demanding a color change from the soloist. In performance, the oboist should crescendo to the B5, playing a subito *dolce* timbre on the downbeat in order to reflect the new music.

**TECHNICAL CHALLENGES**

As one of the most virtuosic pieces in the oboe repertoire, Goossens’s *Concerto in One Movement* hosts significant technical challenges for the oboist. While the final extended cadenza is the most obvious source of technical difficulty, many other sections include challenging aspects, including the opening cadenza on the first page, the section between rehearsal D and E, and the whole-tone scales in the section reminiscent of Stravinsky.

First, the opening cadenza, measures 20-23, offers a unique set of difficulties even though it looks relatively harmless (Figure 31).

![Figure 31: Opening cadenza, mm. 20-23](image)

Because the line is not strictly ascending but rather oscillates between ascending and descending intervals, these measures can be tricky to play cleanly. In addition, there is a mixture of steps and leaps, which can be difficult for an inexperienced oboist, as most musicians practice either steps (scales) or leaps (arpeggios) and not a mixture. Grouping the cadenza into smaller, more manageable sections so the brain can make sense of the patterns will aid one’s practice (see Figure 32).
In addition, the F6 is quite high in the oboe range, and having to play a high note so early in the piece can produce some challenges. Because it follows an F major scale, my recommendation is to practice the F major scale two octaves at various tempos until the performer is comfortable with the fingerings.

Rehearsal letters D to E (mm. 54 to 70) are also technically challenging, with multiple issues to conquer. First, due to the character change in accompaniment, this section is more soaring and less lilting. This requires the high notes to be played with control and ease at a fairly quiet dynamic, which is rather difficult to achieve on the oboe. Though the high note fingerings themselves are a challenge, the real test in this section is to play the notes with control and with good intonation. This requires a well-balanced, finished reed and familiarity with high notes. For this reason, a younger student will struggle with being able to achieve the correct character of this section. Also, the fingerings themselves are quite problematic from mm. 59-61. Due to the prevalence of C-sharps, the switching to and from the half-hole fingering occurs frequently (see Figure 33).

Figure 33: Grouped notes in opening cadenza, mm. 20-23

70 “Soaring” refers to the new character change; here the oboe plays in a much higher range, requires quieter dynamics, includes larger intervals, and the harmonic motion in the accompaniment is much slower.
Practicing moving from B to C-sharp with a clean half-hole is essential for this section, and will help the performer avoid a blip on these notes that occurs when the half-hole is not coordinated with the other fingers. I recommend starting slowly, and eventually speeding up the pattern until it can be performed at tempo cleanly.

The B section, starting at rehearsal letter H, is possibly the most technically demanding section of the piece, after the cadenza. The challenge here lies in Goossens’s extensive use of whole-tone scales (see Figure 34).

![Figure 34: Whole-tone scales, mm. 120-123](image)

In most Western tonal music, technical passages are made up of familiar patterns that include major and minor scales and arpeggios, and dominant and diminished seventh chords; therefore, most oboists practice these patterns regularly. Whole-tone scales, while prevalent in modern twentieth-century piano and orchestral music, are not found in the majority of oboe works, and therefore not practiced as frequently. This, combined with the speed\textsuperscript{71} at which they occur at letter H, makes this section extra challenging. The oboist should practice this section slowly and in small 4-note groupings. Once each eight-note run is perfected, care should be taken to link them together, creating a smooth, fluid line.

The main technical challenges of this piece lie in the extended cadenza. As it takes up nearly an entire page of music, its length can be daunting to a less-experienced oboist. The cadenza insists upon extreme virtuosity and speed in its runs, due mostly to

\textsuperscript{71} Though the tempo is not particularly fast (quarter = 80), the whole-tone scales appear as 32\textsuperscript{nd} notes, and therefore must be performed quickly.
Léon’s complaint that the cadenza was not flashy enough and Eugene’s subsequent added “coruscations.” These successive runs of nine or ten notes must be played cleanly and evenly. Two exercises have aided in my practice of these technical runs: 1) grouping the notes in different ways, and 2) analyzing the underlying implied chord progression.

Note grouping, in particular, is a beneficial practice aid for the technical runs in the cadenza. The most obvious solution would be to group the notes in a particular run evenly: for example, a nine-note run into three 3-note groupings (see Figure 35).

![Figure 35: Grouped runs in cadenza](image)

However, while this sometimes is the best option, it is not always the best option for how the notes lie on the oboe. Sometimes, a grouping of 4-2-3 results in a smoother, more even scale. In the ten-note runs, there is no obvious choice for how to group the notes. This must be decided by the performer and experimented with in multiple ways until the best option is found.

In addition, it is helpful for the performer to do a rough harmonic analysis of the runs in order to compare them to the basic technique the oboist has already learned. For example, many of the runs consist of half-diminished seventh chords, major-minor seventh chords, major arpeggios, and fully diminished seventh chords (see Figure 36).

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Once the performer recognizes these patterns and practices them separately from the piece, the technique becomes much more manageable.

To aid in achieving a smooth line, which sounds more flawless and technically proficient, practice connecting the final note of each run to the beginning of the next run. When practicing, hold out the last note, slowly linking it to the next run. Practicing a smooth connection slowly will have the effect of connecting the runs without the separation of the leap in range (low to high), and without the disruption of the tongue when starting the new run.

**HIGH NOTES**

The prevalence of high notes and extended range in this concerto also contribute to its difficulty. First, the range is extreme: it requires the performer to play low B-flat (Bb3), the lowest note in the oboe range; as well as high G (G6). While G6 is not the highest note the oboe can physically play, it is some of the highest in the oboe repertoire, especially for the early twentieth century. Very few orchestral pieces require a range of G6 or higher, and many of the notable pieces are by French composers.\(^7^3\) Some solo

\(^7^3\) Such pieces include Maurice Ravel’s *Le Tombeau de Couperin* and *Ma Mère L’Oye.*
works for oboe include this high range, but they are limited in number.\footnote{Such works include Johann Wenzel Kalliwoda’s \textit{Morceau de Salon} and \textit{Concertino}.} This extended range demands a flexible reed that has the ability to play low as well as extremely high, as well as knowledge of the high note fingerings. An amateur or young student oboist would not typically have the ability to play this high range. Therefore, this piece is not recommended for amateurs or young students; college-age students, professionals, or perhaps extremely advanced high school oboists will be able to tackle the virtuosity of the range.

Often, the performer must make decisions about which fingering will serve best. While a majority of the high notes can be played with their traditional or most normal fingerings, some situations require alternate fingerings. For example, in m. 57 (4 after D), the oboist must play the E6 with the right hand, as it is immediately followed by a D-sharp. In addition, alternate fingerings for E6 and F6 are necessary several times throughout the work, in order to aid in facility.\footnote{See Appendix 1 for a fingering chart.} A quintessential example of this is at rehearsal letter M, m. 151 (see Figure 37).

![Figure 37: Alternate F6 fingering, mm. 151](image)

The alternate F, sometimes referred to as “short,” is a necessary fingering in this situation due to its preceding notes as well as following notes. The two notes preceding the high F are C-sharp and G-sharp; the G-sharp must be played with the left hand due to its following the C-sharp. This leaves the two options for the F6: right-hand F or “short” F. Because the following note is a chromatic scale, either would suffice, although I found an
alternate F here to be easier here than the right-hand fingering as well as louder. Due to its fortissimo dynamic, the recommended fingering here would be “short” F. However, because the short alternate fingering requires a third octave key, if the performer does not own an oboe with a third octave, the right-hand fingering should be used.⁷⁶

The unusual amount of high E’s in the cadenza could present a problem to the less experienced oboist. While I play each of these E’s with the traditional fingering, some cases could be made for using alternate fingerings, especially if the student has difficulty slurring up to the high note. Using a short alternate fingering eliminates the need for moving to the half-hole, and therefore should be easier to slur to the high E.

**TEMPO AND METER CHANGES**

Due to the main theme’s similarities to English pastoral melodies, it must be performed in a lilting, moderate tempo. Though the metronome marking Eugene Goossens indicated is moderato at mm=88, this is quite vivacious for a successful pastoral character. Therefore, a general interpretation for many oboists is to take a slightly slower tempo. Of the five available commercial recordings, none of the oboists perform at 88. The fastest tempo, roughly 80-84, is played by British oboist Emily Pailthorpe. However, the slowest tempo, and arguably the most important interpretation, is by Léon Goossens, for whom the concerto was written. Léon plays the opening theme quite leisurely, around 70 beats per minute. This gives the music a lilting feeling of the 6/8 time signature as well as a feeling of repose one associates with the

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⁷⁶ Older and student models of oboes do not come equipped with a third octave key. As a newer invention typically only included on conservatory or professional models, the third octave key aids in playing high notes from F#6 and above. If the instrument does not come equipped with this key, the normal right-hand fingering must be used.
In addition, *rubato* is marked in specific places, urging the performer to play with a free feeling. This contrasts greatly to the section at letter H, which is reminiscent of Stravinsky. Unlike the pastoral theme in the opening of the concerto, this section must be played strictly in rhythm, though it is marked to be the same tempo as the opening.\(^7^8\)

The concerto switches meter multiple times throughout the piece, often oscillating between compound and simple meter. When comparing the large sections, the opening theme is very clearly in compound meter, marked in 6/8. The middle section, reminiscent of Stravinsky, is very clearly to be performed in simple duple meter, as it is marked in 2/4, and the accents help verify the simple feel. There are some excerpts, however, in which it is not initially clear whether the rhythm should be performed with a compound- or simple-meter feel. One such place is at rehearsal letter L, or m. 143 (see Figure 38).

![Figure 38: Duple vs. triple meter, m. 143-150](image)

\(^7^7\) Many composers believe the correct tempo gives the performer the means to the correct interpretation. Stravinsky is quoted as saying, “Tempo is the principal item. A piece of mine can survive almost anything but wrong or uncertain tempo . . . I think that any musical composition must necessarily possess its unique tempo (pulsation): the variety of tempi comes from performers, who often are not very familiar with the composition.” *Conversations with Igor Stravinsky*, ed. Robert Craft (New York: Doubleday, 1959), pp. 135,133.

\(^7^8\) Most performers play this section in the same tempo as the opening. Some, especially those with the faster tempi (Emily Pailthorpe and Nancy Ambrose King) perform it at a slightly slower tempo.
Though Goossens wrote this section in 6/8, which implies compound meter, the note groupings are organized as one would a 3/4 meter, therefore giving this section a simple feel. Despite the groupings returning to their traditional groups of three in measure 146, the accents placed on beats four and five indicate that the feeling is still simple. It is not until measure 148, two bars later, that the musical inflection matches its meter. When performing this section, the oboist must make a decision about how he will inflect the meter. For example, as seen in Figure 39, in measure 146, even though the bars indicate a 6/8 inflection, the accompaniment implies simple meter, so I would suggest performing these bars (mm. 146-147) as a 3/4 meter.

![Figure 39: Duple vs. triple meter, mm. 146-148](image)

**ARTICULATION AND VIBRATO**

A wide variety of articulation must be employed by the oboist in order to achieve the most successful performance of this concerto. These various articulations include heavy accents, light staccato, tenuto, marcato accents, and unaccented legato. The rhythmic ostinato in the middle section requires a heavy accent in both the solo and accompanying strings (see Figure 40).
The performer should consider this accent as it refers to the weight of the note rather than a pointed articulation or attack by using more air and less tongue to create the force of the accent. This accented weight gives the music an intensity and deliberateness that contrasts the opening pastoral theme.

Though much of the concerto is slurred and lyrical or accented as in the previous section, Goossens also writes a section of light staccato articulations, found from rehearsal letter L to M (Figure 41).
This buoyant staccato – not accented or clipped – is a hallmark of English style. The oboist must have a clear attack to these notes, with a very quick, narrow vibrato aiding in the lightness and buoyancy.

Goossens uses the tenuto articulation very sparingly, suggesting that he wanted a specific sound not used in any other sections of the piece. His only inclusion of the tenuto occurs in mm. 212-216, four bars preceding rehearsal letter U (see Figure 42).

![Figure 42: Tenuto accents, mm. 212-215](image)

This articulation implies weight and full-length duration of the notes, yet still with some separation. The theme here is the same as the violins have in the preceding section; however, where before it was slurred, he now writes the same notes separately with a tenuto marking. He also writes in the piano score, *marcato la melodia*, which can be loosely translated to “the melody well-marked.”

This is a note to the performer, indicating he should bring out the notes of the melodic line.

One hallmark of Goossens’s concerto is its long, lyrical phrases and tranquil melodies. These sections require no accent and as legato an articulation as possible, achieving the effect of an unobtrusive, re-articulation. Though Goossens writes slurs over much of the lyrical line, care should be taken to not accent the re-articulated line, as can be seen in m. 59 on the B (see Figure 43).

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As with using a variety of articulation, vibrato also plays an extremely important role in the successful performance of this concerto. Arguably, vibrato affects timbre and character changes on oboe more than any other technique. Because of the limited dynamic range of the instrument, one must have a large variety of articulations and vibrato speeds to create interest and develop colors. Léon himself writes, “The soul of the sound can justifiably be said to rest in this quality…it is the most natural thing in the world to do, and our constant analogy with singing is the best example to follow.”\textsuperscript{80} He describes four speeds of vibrato: slow, medium, fast, and a combination of slow and fast, in which the speed of the vibrato varies from note-to-note. All four of these varieties are necessary to perform this concerto adequately.

The section from P to V is gentle, warm, and nuanced, and the oboist must vary his vibrato so that it is less forceful than before and more supple. This can be achieved by producing a wider, slower vibrato. The middle section calls for vibrato to increase the music’s intensity, but the vibrato must be fast and wide. This gives the timbre the intensity needed to successfully contrast the opening. To achieve the buoyant staccato at letter L, the vibrato must be very quick and narrow. This gives the articulation a lightness but lacks the intensity of the vibrato of the B section. Finally, the opening pastoral theme calls for a combination of slow and fast vibrato. Because it emulates the

\textsuperscript{80} Léon Goossens, \textit{Oboe}, 87-88.
rolling hills and valleys of the landscape, the vibrato too is varied. Here, vibrato has more an effect on direction and phrasing than intensity and timbre.

ALTERNATE FINGERINGS

While there are many reasons the Goossens concerto is considered to be technically challenging, its requirement of using alternate fingerings is an important one. When learning this oboe concerto, it is crucial that the performer be comfortable with alternate fingerings (such as left-hand E-flat or right-hand A-flat), as they are often required throughout the entire piece. For this reason, pedagogically, a teacher should avoid assigning this concerto until the student is adept at using a variety of alternate fingerings, unless it is to be used as an exercise to aid in the application of this skill.

The most-required alternate fingering of the piece is left-hand D#/Eb. This appears consistently, beginning in the opening theme and continuing throughout the work. We can see this in particular in the phrase four bars before C (see Figure 44).

![Figure 44: Left-hand D-sharp, mm. 35-38](image)

Left-hand D# is required not once but four times during the course of the phrase. As one student oboist commented, “Using left-hand Eb isn't usually this tricky! But when we switch back and forth between Db and C#, my fingers turn into pretzels.”\(^{81}\) Sometimes, too, the performer is forced to switch from right-hand to left-hand fingerings mid-note. While this is a skill necessary in several other contemporary works, it is not one that comes naturally and takes significant practice in order to avoid an audible switch. This

\(^{81}\) Interview with Lacy Robbins, an undergraduate oboe student at Tennessee Technological University, February 7, 2016.
skill is necessary in mm. 81-83, three and four bars after F. Because the F5 in m. 81 must be played with the left-hand fingering, this forces a right-hand Eb in the following bar. However, the following note is C#, which must be played with the right hand (see Figure 45).

Figure 45: Right-hand/Left-hand switch on E-flat, mm. 81-83

This forces a mid-note switch on the E-flat from the right-hand fingering to the left.

Another technical decision that must be made in this piece is which of the three F fingerings to use. When regular F is not possible, the oboist is required to use an alternate fingering: left-hand F or forked F. Often, these fingerings are interchangeable; however, the difference in tone quality is fairly noticeable. In the main opening theme and its many returns, Goossens wrote several E-sharps (F) followed by D-sharps. Because of this, the oboist cannot use regular F; forked F or left F is necessary. While the easier fingering choice would be to use forked F, the performer must take into consideration the tempo and melodic line. One could make a case for either fingering: the tempo is fast enough and the duration of the note short enough that probably forked F would be an adequate fingering. However, one could also argue that the figure is so melodic and slow enough that the audience will hear a difference between fingerings, and left-hand F is necessary. This is a matter of personal choice and preference that may ultimately depend upon the individual’s oboe or reed style. While I personally use forked

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82 See Appendix 1 for fingering chart.
F, if the performer feels comfortable with left-hand F or has an oboe in which their forked F is particularly problematic, left F may be preferable.

Another alternate fingering that must be considered by the performer is the use of right-hand A-flat. This is only required a few times over the course of the work, but it is a necessary fingering to know. Two of these places occur in the cadenza, where Goossens requires the oboist to slur from G-sharp to low D-sharp, followed immediately by a C-sharp. These particular notes in succession demand the performer play the G-sharp with the right hand in order to avoid an awkward finger slide. Despite the lento tempo, the speed required due to its 16th-note rhythm makes sliding impossible (see Figure 46).

![Figure 46: Alternate fingerings needed in cadenza](image)

Earlier in the piece, the oboist must decide in a similar situation whether to play right-hand G-sharp or slide the pinky finger. The last beat of three bars before C, m. 36, shows a D-sharp followed by a G-sharp. While the cleanest slur would be to play the G-sharp with the right hand, the tempo is slow enough that the oboist can slide his pinky with no break. In this situation, the oboist must decide between an awkward slide or an awkward alternate fingering he may rarely use in performance.

In any situation, an oboist performing this concerto must be aware of the options of alternate fingerings in order to make the most informed decision and create the most technically facile performance possible. This paper offers suggestions based on merely
personal experience, therefore the performer is encouraged to try a myriad of possibilities before coming to his/her own conclusions.

**ACCOMPANIMENT AND ENSEMBLE CHALLENGES**

Though much has been said about the difficulty of the oboe part, the accompaniment offers its own challenges to the performers. The piano reduction is especially difficult and must be performed by a professional. The part requires many skills: reading complex chords, using crossed hands, ability to read polychords, and above all, a familiarity with French Impressionist music. Because of this, most professional or collaborative pianists will have little difficulty with the reduction, but it is not suitable for a student or amateur to attempt.

The pianist must have an ability to read complex and extended chords easily. As mentioned in the previous chapter, due to its French influence, many of the chords are made of a thick texture and are extended to include 9ths, 11ths, and 13ths. In addition, often Goossens writes polychords, in which each hand is in a different tonality (see Figure 47).

![Figure 47: Polychords, m. 147-149](image)

In Figure 37, Goossens writes C# minor in the right hand over B-flat major in the left hand. Goossens also employs moments in which the crossing of the hands is necessary to play the melody. This occurs when the right hand is playing the bass melody, and the pianist’s left hand must cross over to play the higher harmonies (see Figure 48).
While this is also a typical skill for a pianist, it is a skill that must be learned and practiced.

When performing with full orchestra, three main concerns make this piece difficult: its high demand for and importance of the percussion section, the extensive rubato, and use of polyrhythm. Because Goossens’s use of percussion in this concerto is quite innovative, it is an essential aspect of the piece. The score calls for an array of pitched and unpitched percussion: glockenspiel, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, gong, harp, celeste, and xylophone.

Two other aspects may cause ensemble difficulties: the rubato and polyrhythm sections. The main melody at the beginning of the piece is traditionally performed with a push and pull instead of strictly in tempo. This rubato can cause the accompaniment to misalign with the soloist, especially because the rhythm is somewhat tricky (see Figure 49).
Ensemble is also a concern when the orchestra has a different rhythm or meter than the soloist. Though this occurs frequently, the most obvious example is in measure 195, when the oboe is playing triplets against the cello’s duple off-beats (Figure 50).

To achieve a successful performance, the 2:3 composite polyrhythm needs to be clear, which requires the cellos to be very steady in their duple rhythm and the oboist to play perfect triplets above.
In both the orchestra and piano accompaniment, one section is particularly difficult to put together: letter L to M. This is due to several reasons, including the \textit{molto stringendo}, the rhythm of the accompaniment, and the ambiguous meter. First, it is difficult to time the \textit{stringendo} correctly, as the music speeds up considerably in a very short amount of time. This normally would not be so difficult, except the rhythm of the accompaniment is challenging to place even with a steady tempo. The addition of a sudden acceleration only adds to the level of difficulty (see Figure 51).

![Figure 51: Ensemble difficulties, mm. 144-146](image)

The main difficulty lies in the inherent ambiguity of the meter. Although both the oboe and accompaniment are written in 6/8 time, the accompaniment implies a 3/4 time signature. However, the oboe solo is clearly written in 6/8. To ease ensemble issues, it is best for the oboist to think of these measures in 3/4 instead of 6/8, so that the off-beat accompaniment lies correctly with the solo line.
Eugene Goossens’s *Concerto in One Movement* is a challenging piece for oboists of any skill level. In addition to the purely technical considerations, an enhanced understanding of the style and timbre colors will facilitate a successful performance. It is my hope that this performance guide offers some insight into the learning processes required, as well as gives some aid to any oboist attempting this concerto for the first time, or an oboist who would like to study the piece in greater depth.
CONCLUSION

Though the *Concerto in One Movement for Oboe and Orchestra* (1929) by Eugene Goossens is a fairly standard concerto in the oboe repertory, it is unfortunate that Eugene’s past fame as a conductor and composer is now slipping into relative obscurity. As a conductor who championed new music and helped establish classical music in Australia, Goossens was poised to be remembered as one of Britain’s great musicians, but is now a forgotten name whose career has been overshadowed by his more successful younger brother and scandal that ruined his reputation.

Characterized by the juxtaposition between compound and simple meter, use of asymmetrical meter to highlight important moments, use of whole tone collections, and an adherence to traditional form, Goossens’s oboe concerto is an innovative blend of the myriad of compositional techniques employed at this time, while serving as a virtuosic work for solo oboe. Arguably one of the first twentieth-century concertos in which the oboe is treated with such lyricism and virtuosity, Eugene’s concerto, along with Léon’s performance ability, helped pave the way for other solo oboe repertoire to follow.

Though this concerto will probably never rise to the popularity of other twentieth-century concertos, such as Strauss or Vaughan Williams, its virtuosity and lyricism will place it in the competition canon for some time. It is my hope that the analysis of this piece and performance suggestions I supply will serve as a tool to aid the oboist who is first beginning his/her study of the concerto or revisiting the piece previously performed. I also hope that this study will help promote the importance of this work, as well as entice an interest in the other compositions of Eugene Goossens.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX A: FINGERING CHART

THREE FORMS OF F:

- Regular F
- Left-hand F
- Forked F

ALTERNATE FINGERINGS:

- Left-hand D#/Eb
- Right-hand Ab
APPENDIX B: MUSICAL DEFINITIONS

con fantasia – freely, with imagination

con grazia – with grace, prettily

con moto – somewhat lively, not too slowly

dolce – sweet, smooth, gentle

espressivo – with expression, with feeling

L’istesso – at the same tempo

marcato – marked, accented, stressed

marcato la melodia – the melody well-marked

moderato – a moderate tempo, neither fast nor slow

rubato – taking a portion of the value from one note and giving it to another note (usually) within the same measure, without altering the duration of the measure as a whole

stretto – accelerated, faster; a concluding section in a faster tempo

stringendo – pressing on, hurrying, speeding up

Tempo di comenciamente – in the same tempo as the beginning

tranquillo – quiet, peaceful, soft
VITA

Oboist Grace Woodworth is an active performer, teacher, and chamber musician. As a freelancer, she has enjoyed performing across the country, appearing with the Austin Symphony, Baton Rouge Symphony, Louisiana Sinfonietta, Rapides Symphony, Genessee Symphony, and Temple Symphony Orchestras, and can currently be seen performing throughout the Nashville, TN area. In addition to maintaining a private studio in Nashville, Grace is on faculty at Belmont University where she teaches oboe, reedmaking, and plays in the faculty woodwind quintet.

Grace has had the privilege to attend summer music festivals throughout the United States and Canada, including the National Repertory Orchestra in Breckenridge, CO, the Kennedy Center’s Summer Music Institute, Brevard Music Festival, Pierre Monteux Festival for Conductors and Instrumentalists, Marrowstone Music Festival, and Hot Springs Music Festival. She has performed in numerous master classes, working with the Berlin Philharmonic Wind Quintet, Alex Klein, Robert Atherholt, Erin Hannigan, Carolyn Hove, Marion Kuszyk, and the Imani Winds.

Originally from Cookeville Tennessee, Grace received her Bachelor of Music degree in oboe performance from the University of Texas at Austin in 2011, studying with Rebecca Henderson. While at UT, she was awarded “Outstanding Senior Recital” for her BM degree recital, which is chosen by faculty vote. Grace continued her studies at the Eastman School of Music, receiving a Master of Music with renowned oboe pedagogue Richard Killmer. She is currently pursuing her doctorate at Louisiana State University, studying with Johanna Cox.