

It's Hard to Make an Oboe Sound

Working-Class

for Oboe and Narrator



Written for Jack Mouradian
Dedicated to Jay Capperault

By
Aidan Teplitzky

Familiarity is a dangerous thing.

Instrumentation

Oboe

Narrator

Duration

12 minutes 30 seconds

Dedication

Dedicated to Jay Capperault.

Score in C

Narrator Text

Now

Isn't that lovely!

Such a...

A clear sound!

Such control

So...

So...

Expressive!

So clean!

Such exquisite articulation!

So...

So...

So...

Middle-class.

Narrator Text (cont.)

Hello.

My name is Aidan Teplitzky.

And I wrote the piece you are currently listening to.

And I thought it'd be nice for me to actually talk to you about it rather than hide behind a very boring programme note.

So, the title came about from me talking to my mate Jay about how to write classical music that sounds working class.

And he made the point about how hard it is to make an oboe sound working class and it got me thinking...

Why is it hard to make an oboe sound working-class?

So this a piece about that.

Now, we all know instruments are not inherently working-, middle- or upper class.

But when we think about certain instruments, many of them tend to stick into particular categories due to the way they sound and the main style of music they play.

Or, how they speak.

So going into why the oboe is particularly hard to make working class...

I don't really know why Jay said it in particular,

But in going along with this way of speaking idea, let's consider class as being about familiarity.

What you are used to seeing and hearing and your comfort with certain things because of the different kinds of capital you have.

Narrator Text (cont.)

Because if you have more money you tend to have more job security and free time, and, seeing as classical music tends to be quite long and take its time to get to the point,

It makes sense that it is more familiar with people who have more free time.

That isn't to say classical music isn't enjoyed by the working-classes, but that it is more familiar with upper- and middle-class culture because of its history of presence within these cultures due to them being a bit more... leisurely.

So let's go through the instrument families and pick apart their class based on the idea of familiarity in comparison to classical music.

Brass is pretty classless because you get the whole brass band tradition stemming from old mining communities, and you get trumpets and trombones in jazz music.

Strings are mostly classless seeing as you get violins, violas, and cellos in traditional music, the double bass being in Jaws, guitars in rock and pop, and harps being in cartoons to represent romantic stuff.

Percussion you get a lot of this in primary schools and once you've seen and heard one drum you get the gist whether that's in pop, rock, or dance music.

As for keyboards, you get accordions with traditional music again, piano is in basically everything, and organs are in churches so they can be quite familiar.

So we are left with woodwind. Flutes are in traditional music, clarinets in klezmer and jazz, and saxophones in pop and jazz.

And now we are left with oboes and bassoons.

Now the main reason in choosing between an oboe and a bassoon is that bassoons sound fun and oboes sound... not as fun.

That isn't to say an oboe isn't fun, but bassoons just sound more fun and jovial.

And that's probably because the oboe has the extra responsibility of tuning the orchestra, which makes it feel a little strict.

Narrator Text (cont.)

What you are used to seeing and hearing and your comfort with certain things because of the different kinds of capital you have.

So we have the oboe.

Now the oboe itself has moments of familiarity for people.

My favourite is "I've got you babe" by Sonny and Cher.

So all the music you've been listening to has been based around this, so let's focus the music to just being about the oboe part in "I've got you babe" from now on.

Now, I've managed to address some of the style question in how to make the oboe working-class, but I could do more.

So let's move on to accent.

Now an Oboe sounds pretty posh.

This sounding posh is both in how it speaks and the way in which it speaks.

So let's focus first on the sound of the Oboe.

The main way the Oboe sounds posh is because the articulation, the way in which the notes are played, is very prominent.

Giving it a quality similar to received pronunciation.

For those of you that don't know, received pronunciation is a way of speaking that is most commonly found in theatre and on the news.

Where they have very crisp consonants and lilting vowels.

So, we can start making the oboe sound less posh by having it speak without these crisp consonants and lilting vowels.

Now, there is no such thing as a working-class accent, because working-classness is not limited to a single accent.

But there are a number of accents that are more familiar with working-classness.

Narrator Text (cont.)

A couple include Scouse, Liverpudlian, Brummie, Mancunian, and Cockney.

So let's see what the oboe can come up with to emulate these accents.

Let's start with Scouse.

So we have some growls on certain notes.

What about Brummie and Liverpudlian?

So we have some chromatic bends to make it more sing-song.

Mancunian is also sing-song, so what could we do for that?

Okay, so we have accents on the vowels, so in this case for the note A.

And Cockney, we have kind of already covered by having the crisp tonguing be replaced by glottal stops, not pronouncing Ts in the middle of words basically.

Of course this is a stereotype but it does sound a bit more working-class now.

Turning to the ways of speaking in different places, I can't get all the regional varieties of different words because an Oboe can't say words.

So we could try copying some abbreviations, such as “car on the road” to “car on't road” and “Ain't” meaning “is not”, by removing all the extra notes that aren't needed for the harmonic line.

Another element is qualifying what you are going to say because you feel you are talking to somebody who gets where you are coming from and don't need to give the whole background of what you are talking about.

This being done by saying “you know” before making your point.

So what could we do for that?

So I've managed to make an oboe sound working-class...

But have I really?

Narrator Text (cont.)

Because, would you know that the oboe is sounding working-class if I hadn't talked you through the process of making it working-class?

Would I need to further emphasise the working-class stereotype by having the performer in a tracksuit, or a flat cap, or wearing golden jewellery, or all three?

Do I need the performer themselves to be working-class to truly make the oboe become working class because of who is playing it?

And, if I didn't talk to you about what I was doing, would you just think the Oboe is sounding a bit shit?

Because, even though we know that an Oboe isn't classed at all, an Oboe doesn't sound working-class.

But that doesn't change the fact that some instruments are more familiar with particular social classes in the same way as certain accents and ways of speaking.

But what this familiarity does is limit the possibility of thinking that certain instruments and accents can be in different contexts.

For example, many working-class actors with working-class accents end up only doing working-class roles, such as cleaners and criminals.

And this is even if they can speak in received pronunciation, both for a role and in presenting themselves at an audition.

So it's hard to make an Oboe sound working-class because you are dealing with familiarity.

And it's hard to make an Oboe sound working-class because any attempt to make it working-class will make it feel unfamiliar to what is an oboe.

So maybe the idea is not to actively make an Oboe sound working-class but simply to make you think about why it is hard to make an oboe sound working-class.

And to question familiarity a bit more.

Isn't it lovely...

Narrator Text (cont.)

Such a clear sound...

So expressive...

So clean...

So...

It's Hard to Make an Oboe Sound Working-Class

for Oboe and Narrator

Overtly Classical,

Aidan Teplitzky

$\text{♩} = 72$

Oboe

Narrator

Measures 1-4: Oboe part in 4/4, 3/4, 4/4, 3/4. Dynamics: *p*, *mf*, *f*, *p*. Narrator part is a whole rest in each measure.

Ob.

Narr.

Measures 5-8: Oboe part starts with a trill in 3/4, then 4/4, 4/4, and 3/4. Dynamics: *fp*, *mf*, *p*, *mf*, *p*. Narrator part has lyrics: "Sincere Now" and "Isn't that lovely!".

Ob.

Narr.

Measures 9-11: Oboe part in 4/4, 4/4, and 4/4. Dynamics: *f*. Narrator part has lyrics: "Such a..." and "A clear sound!".

Ob.

Narr.

Measures 12-15: Oboe part in 4/4, 4/4, 4/4, and 4/4. Dynamics: *ff*, *p*. Narrator part has lyrics: "Such" and "control".

Ob.

Narr.

Measures 16-20: Oboe part starts with a trill in 4/4, then 3/4, 4/4, 4/4, and 4/4. Dynamics: *fp*, *fp*, *fp*, *mf*. Narrator part has lyrics: "So...", "So...", "expressive!", and "So clean!".

22 $\text{♩} = 80$

Ob. *ff*

Narr. Such

25

Ob. *p* *mf* *mp* *f* *mf*

Narr. Exquisite articulation!

29 *ff*

Narr. So... *Noises to suggest struggling to find the right word.*

32 *rit.* B A tempo

Ob. *p*

Narr. So...

36 *mf* *f* *p* *fp*

Narr. *Noises to suggest struggling to find the right word.* So...

40 *rit.* *p* Middle-class.

Narr. *Noises to suggest struggling to find the right word.*

45 **C** $\text{♩} = 110$

Ob. *mf* *p*

Narr. $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

Hello

My name is Aidan Teplitzky.

And I wrote the piece you are currently listening to.

49

Ob. *mf* *(p)*

Narr. $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$

And I thought it'd be nice for me to actually talk to you about it rather than hide behind some very boring programme note.

52

Ob. *mf* *p* *mf*

Narr. $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$

So, the title came about from me talking to my mate Jay about how to write classical music that sounds working class

56

Ob. *(pp)*

Narr. $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

and he made the point about how hard it is to make an oboe sound working class.

And it got me thinking...

Cue - "sound working class"

Why is it hard to make an oboe sound working-class?

61 **D**

Ob. *(mf)* *(p)* *mf*

Narr. $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$

So this is a piece about that.

Now, we all know instruments are not inherently working-, middle- or upper class.

67

Ob. *(p)* *mf*

Narr. $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$

But when we think about certain instruments, many of them tend to stick into particular categories due

to the way they sound and the main style of music they play

Or, how they speak

Cue - "how they speak"

So going into why the oboe is particularly hard to make working class...

73

Ob.

Narr.

I don't really know why Jay said it in particular,

But in going along with this way of speaking idea, let's consider class as being about familiarity.

78

Ob.

Narr.

What you are used to seeing and hearing and your comfort with certain things because of the different kinds of capital you have

81

Ob.

Narr.

Because if you have more money you tend to have more job security and free time, and, seeing as classical music tends to be quite long and take its time to get to the point,

84

Ob.

Narr.

It makes sense that it is more familiar with people who have more free time.

88

Ob.

Narr.

That isn't to say classical music isn't enjoyed by the working-classes, but that it is more familiar with upper- and middle-class culture because of its history of presence within these cultures due to them being a bit more... leisurely.

What some people might call high culture.

91

Ob.

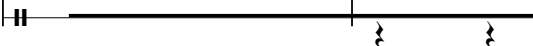
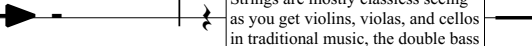
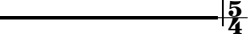
Narr.

So let's go through the instrument families and pick apart their class based on the idea of familiarity in comparison to classical music.

Brass is pretty classless because you get the whole brass band tradition stemming from old mining communities, and you get trumpets and trombones in jazz music

96

Ob. *fp* *mf* *f* *p* *f*

Narr.    $\frac{5}{4}$

Strings are mostly classless seeing as you get violins, violas, and cellos in traditional music, the double bass

100

Ob. *mp* *f* *mp* *f*

Narr. $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{7}{8}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

being in Jaws, guitars in rock and pop, and harps being in cartoons to represent romantic stuff.

104

Ob. *fp* *f* *ff*

Narr. $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$

Percussion you get a lot of this in primary schools and once you've seen and heard one drum you get the gist whether that's in pop, rock, or dance music

107

Ob. *mf* *ff* *mf* *ff*

Narr. $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

110

Ob.

Narr. $\frac{4}{4}$

As for keyboards, you get accordions with traditional music again, piano is in basically everything, and organs are in churches so they can be quite familiar.

114

G

Ob.

Narr. $\frac{4}{4}$

So we are left with woodwind. Flutes are in traditional music, clarinets in klezmer and jazz, and saxophones in pop and jazz.

117

Ob.

Narr.

And now we are left with oboes and bassoons.

120

Ob.

Narr.

Now the main reason in choosing between an oboe and a bassoon is that bassoons sound fun and oboes sound... not as fun.

123

Ob.

Narr.

125

Ob.

Narr.

That isn't to say an oboe isn't fun, but bassoons just sound more fun and jovial.

128

Ob.

Narr.

And that's probably because the oboe has the extra responsibility of tuning the orchestra, which makes it feel a little strict.

131

Ob.

Narr.

So we have the oboe.

134

Ob.

Narr.

Now the oboe itself has moments of familiarity for people.

My favourite is "I've got you babe" by Sonny and Cher.

137

Ob.

Narr.

So all the music you've been listening to has been based around this, so let's focus the music to just being about the oboe part in "I've got you babe" from now on.

140

Ob.

Narr.

I

Waltzy

♩. = 73

144

Ob.

Narr.

mf

148

Ob.

Narr.

Now, I've managed to address some of the style question in how to make the oboe working-class, but I could do more.

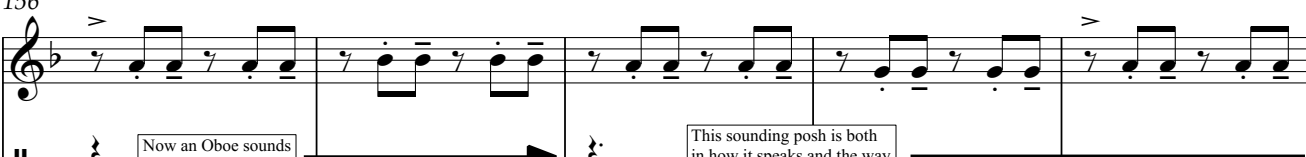
151

Ob.

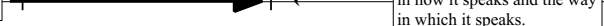
Narr.

So let's move on to accent


156


Ob. 

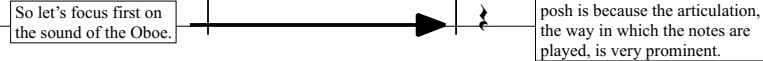
Narr.  Now an Oboe sounds pretty posh.

 This sounding posh is both in how it speaks and the way in which it speaks.

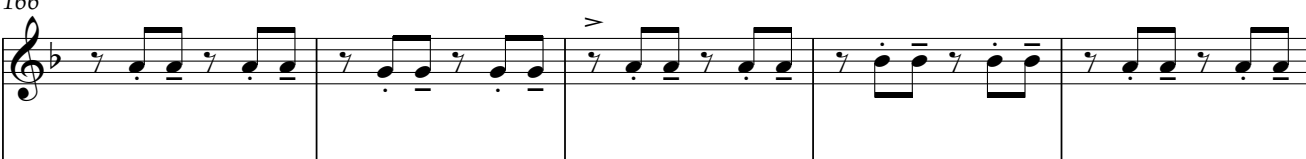
161


Ob. 

Narr.  So let's focus first on the sound of the Oboe.


 The main way the Oboe sounds posh is because the articulation, the way in which the notes are played, is very prominent.


166

Ob. 


Narr.  Giving it a quality similar to received pronunciation.

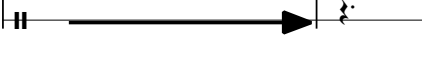
171

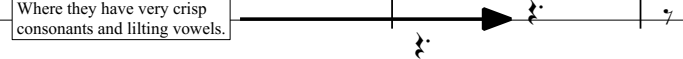
Ob. 

Narr.  For those of you that don't know, received pronunciation is a way of speaking that is most commonly found in theatre and on the news.


176

Ob. 

Narr.  Where they have very crisp consonants and lilting vowels.

 So, we can start making the oboe sound less posh by having it speak without these crisp consonants and lilting vowels.

181

Ob. 

Narr.  Cue - "lilting vowels" J

No tonguing - use
glottal stops to articulate.
Slowing down will happen
but try to keep tempo

186

Ob.

Narr.

Now, there is no such thing as
a working-class accent, because
working-classness is not limited
to a single accent.

191

Ob.

Narr.

But there are a number of
accents that are more familiar
with working-classness

A couple include Scouse,
Liverpudlian, Brummie,
Mancunian, and Cockney.

197

Ob.

Narr.

So let's see what the oboe
can come up with to emulate
these accents.

202

Ob.

Narr.

Let's start with Scouse.

So we have some
growls on certain
notes.

207

Ob.

Narr.

What about Brummie and
Liverpudlian?

So we have some chromatic
bends to make it more
sing-song.

Mancunian is also sing-song
so what could we do for that?

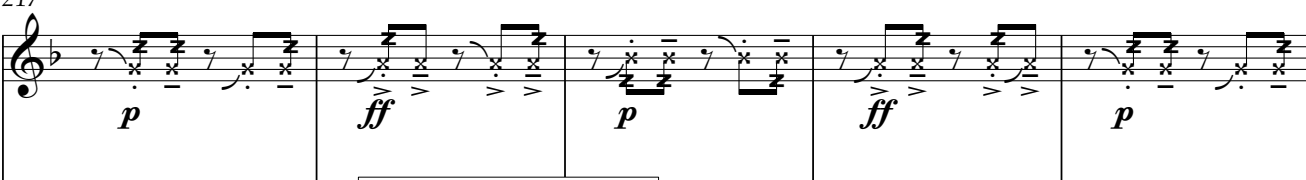
212


Ob.

Narr.

Okay, so we have accents on the
vowels, so in this case for the note
A.


217


Ob. 

Narr. 

And Cockney, we have kind of already covered by having the crisp tonguing be replaced by glottal stops, not pronouncing Ts in the middle of words basically.

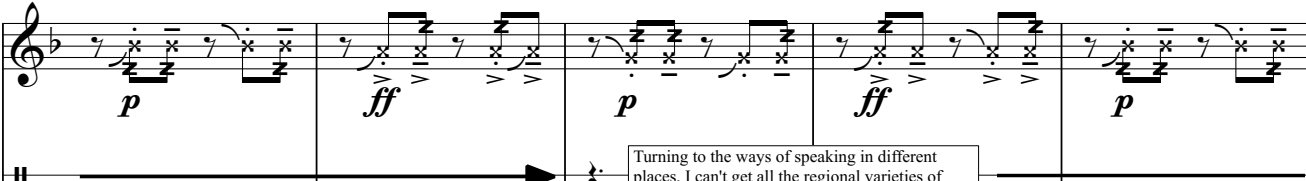
222


Ob. 

Narr. 

Of course this is a stereotype but it does sound a bit more working-class now.


227


Ob. 

Narr. 

Turning to the ways of speaking in different places, I can't get all the regional varieties of different words because an Oboe can't say words.


232


Ob. 

Narr. 

So we could try copying some abbreviations, such as "car on the road" to "car on't road" and "Ain't" meaning "is not",

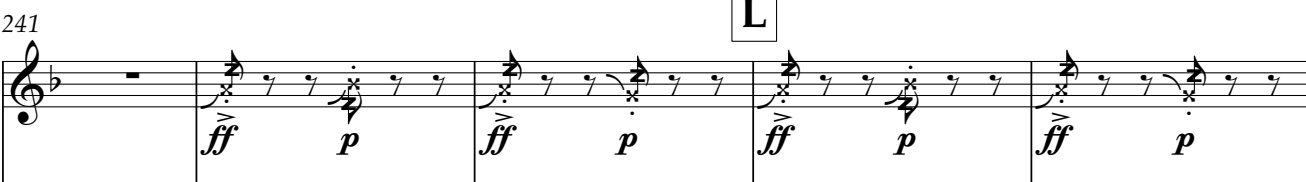
236


Ob. 

Narr. 

by removing all the extra notes that aren't needed for the harmonic line.

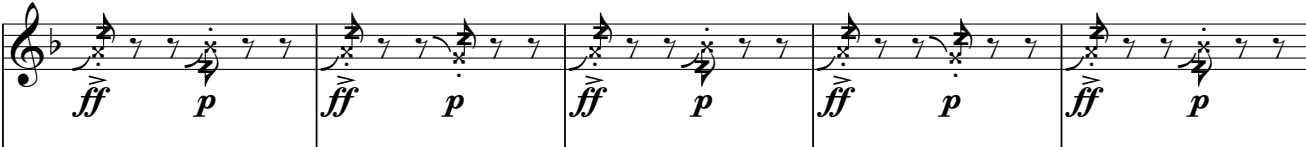
241



Ob. 

Narr. 


Another element is qualifying what you are going to say because you feel you are talking to somebody who gets where you are coming from and don't


246

Ob. 


Narr.  need to give the whole background of what you are talking about.  This being done by saying "you know" before making your point


251

Ob. 

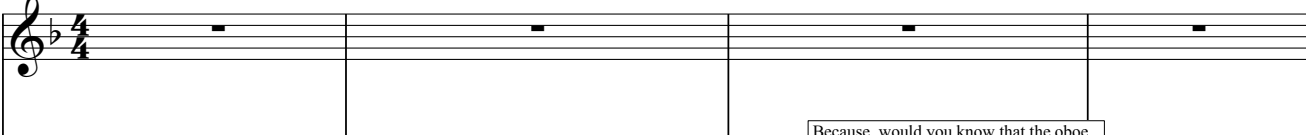
Narr.  So what could we do for that?


256

Ob. 

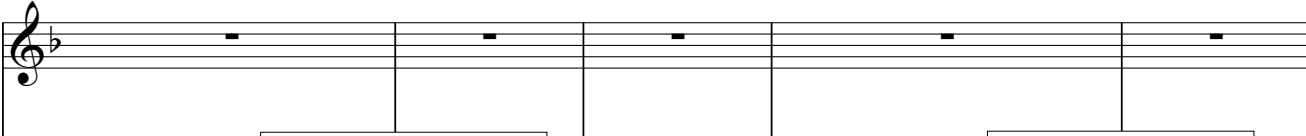
Narr. 


262 **M** Intro but slower $\text{♩} = 65$

Ob. 

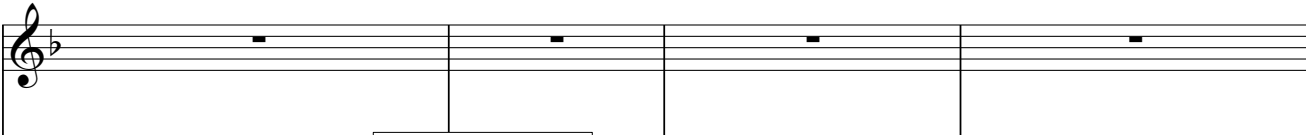
Narr.  So I've managed to make an oboe sound working-class.. But have I really? Because, would you know that the oboe is sounding working-class if I hadn't talked you through the process of making it working-class?


266

Ob. 

Narr.  Would I need to further emphasise the working-class stereotype by having the performer in a tracksuit, or a flat cap, or wearing golden jewellery, or all three? Do I need the performer themselves to be working-class to truly make the oboe become working class because of who is playing it?

271

Ob. 

Narr.  And, if I didn't talk to you about what I was doing, would you just think the Oboe is sounding a bit shit? Because, even though we know that an Oboe isn't classed at all, an Oboe doesn't sound working-class.

12

275 Cue - "doesn't sound working class" **N**

Ob. *pp*

Narr. But that doesn't change the fact that some instruments are more familiar with particular social classes in the same way as certain accents and ways of speaking.

279

Ob.

Narr. But what this familiarity does is limit the possibility of thinking that certain instruments and accents can be in different contexts.

For example, many working-class actors with working-class accents end up only doing working-class roles,

283

Ob.

Narr. such as cleaners and criminals.

And this is even if they can speak in received pronunciation, both for a role and in presenting themselves at an audition.

So it's hard to make an Oboe sound working-class because you are dealing with familiarity

288 **O**

Ob. *p* *mf*

Narr. And it's hard to make an Oboe sound working-class because any attempt to make it working-class will make it feel unfamiliar to what is an oboe.

292

Ob. *f* *p* *fp*

Narr. So maybe the idea is not to actively make an Oboe sound working-class

295 *molto rit.* hold as long as possible

Ob. *mf* *p*

Narr. but simply to make you think about why it is hard to make an oboe sound working-class.

And to question familiarity a bit more.

Isn't it lovely...
Such a clear sound...
So expressive...
So clean...
So...