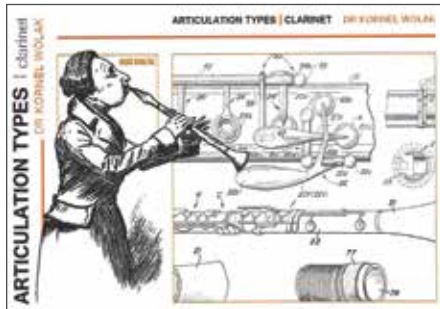


Reviews

BOOKS

Kornel Wolak. *Articulation Types for Clarinet.* Music Mind Inc., 2017. 54 pp. PDF e-book \$14.99, hard copy \$19.99



Kornel Wolak's book *Articulation Types for Clarinet* is an extension of his work for Music Mind Inc. and his graduate research at the University of Toronto. This book, presented similarly to an owner's manual for a car, is a 54-page text familiarizing the reader with the myriad permutations of articulations on the clarinet. It is written as a quick-hit reference for clarinet instructors and performers and briefly describes the physical processes by which different types of articulations are produced. For each type of articulation, a diagram of the inner workings of the mouth and tongue shows the exact areas of the body necessary to execute the specific articulation. Wolak includes descriptions of other writings and/or exercises to practice these articulations.

Wolak, assistant professor at Queen's University in Ontario, Canada, presented a lecture of this material at the 2017 ClarinetFest® in Orlando, and it was one of the most talked-about sessions at the conference. His book sold out after the presentation, and for good reason.

The explanations are succinct without sacrificing depth of understanding. The pictures highlighting each muscle group are well presented and clear, and the bibliography of materials for additional study compliments his explanations nicely. I found this part of the book particularly helpful. It directs the student to additional exercises and methods that will help refine the technique in question. *Articulation Types for Clarinet* is an excellent primer and first step in the understanding and application of the various available articulations. It was an enjoyable read, and I recommend it to anyone looking to present articulation concepts to students in a fresh and novel way.

— Osiris Molina

MUSIC

BASS CLARINET

Juan de Dios López-Maya. *The Stick and the Mask* for unaccompanied bass clarinet. Cayambis, 2017. Duration 5'30" \$18.90

Juan de Dios López-Maya (b. 1962) is a Venezuelan composer and musicologist. His medium-difficulty four-movement work *The Stick and the Mask* can be played on a bass clarinet without extended low range. The upper range is modest too, only reaching to clarion A. The four short movements portray in music the grisly plot of a novel by José Manuel Briceño Guerrero. Full of mixed meter and short repeated motifs, the music is often dance-like and includes a few measures with slap tongue, key clicks and flutter tongue.

— Gregory Barrett

CLARINET AND PIANO

Brian Balmages. *Dream Sonatina* for clarinet and piano. Potenza Music, 2015. Duration 10'30" \$24.95

American composer Brian Balmages (b. 1975) has written numerous works for wind and brass instruments. *Dream Sonatina* was composed for clarinetist Marguerite Levin and premiered by her in Weill Recital Hall, New York City. Balmages fulfilled the specifics of the commission by composing a work reflecting life in his 30s. For Balmages this centered on the birth of his two children and three types of dreams they experienced: daydreams, sweet dreams and bad dreams. The dreams are each portrayed in a separate movement.

The music is well-written, convincing and of medium-hard difficulty, and it uses a fluidly mixed language of classical and pop music. There is good musical and emotional contrast between movements and enough difficulty to be engaging for the performers.

— Gregory Barrett

Ivan Boumans. *Sea Episodes* for B-flat clarinet and piano. Gérard Billaudot Éditeur, 2011. Duration: 5' €7.54

Born in Madrid in 1983, Ivan Boumans spent his childhood in Valverde del Júcar, Spain. He began his early music study in 1993 at the Conservatory of Cuenca. A year later he entered the Conservatory of Luxembourg where he studied piano, clarinet, composition, conducting and a myriad of other music subjects. He later enrolled in the Paris Conservatory where he received a Master Diploma in music composition in 2011. His catalog of works contains more than 100 pieces of various genres including

chamber music works, film music and symphonic pieces. He currently teaches at the Conservatory of Luxembourg where he combines composition and conducting with other projects.

Sea Episodes is a short, descriptive piece which has four subtitles indicated by the composer. It begins with “The Sailor’s Farewell,” a lilting tune in 6/8 time in the key of C minor (concert pitch). The next section is “Mermaid’s Song” and it begins with a brief section marked *Liberamente*. The composer states that articulations and tempo are to be chosen by the performer. The piano part consists mostly of tremolos. A new theme marked *Andante* continues with the piano echoing the phrases of the clarinet. This is followed by a much faster section, “Storm.” Dotted rhythms provide intensity and loud, accented quarter notes appear in both parts. The clarinet emulates a strong wind with chromatic lines ascending and descending while the piano supplies much of the energy underneath. None of this lasts very long – less than a minute – and the storm calms with the onset of softer dynamics and flowing triplets in the piano. The piece concludes with “Return Home,” a rather brief ending of five measures. Most of the piece is tonal, but there are dissonant chords in the piano part.

This piece is listed in the “Collection Éric Perrier.” The composer indicates that this is Opus 66. It is not difficult, and perhaps could be performed by an intermediate student.

– Robert Chesebro

Frank Bridge. *Serenade*. Arranged for clarinet and piano by Russell Denwood. Emerson Edition, 2011. Duration: 2’40” £6.00

Frank Bridge (1879-1941) – English composer, conductor, violist and teacher of composition prodigy Benjamin Britten – composed this lovely, clear-lined work for violin or cello and piano. The music is technically very easy, the sentiment sincere and the harmony enchanting. The last seven measures are an abrupt *presto* that brings our reverie back to reality.

– Gregory Barrett

Frédéric Chopin. *Nocturne No. 2*, Op. 9. Transcription for clarinet and piano

by Guy Dangain. Gérard Billaudot Éditeur, 2013. Duration: 4’ €6.75

This most famous and delicate nocturne by Chopin is presented by Guy Dangain in the original key of E-flat major – a friendly key for the clarinet. The melody is unaltered but for several instances of octave transposition and a slight shortening of the repeated trill-like measure at the end. In this medium-difficulty work, Dangain has specified rhythmic groupings for several of the melismatic measures in Chopin’s original.

– Gregory Barrett

Claude Debussy. *Valse Romantique*.

Transcription for clarinet and piano by Zoltán Kocsis. Editio Musica Budapest, 2016. Distributed in North America by Hal Leonard. \$14.95

Hungarian pianist and conductor Zoltán Kocsis (1952-2016) recorded Debussy’s *Valse Romantique* (1890) and shared his advocacy of this work for clarinetists with this transcription. The idiomatic medium-easy clarinet part is scored for B-flat clarinet, playing in the sounding keys of F minor and F major.

– Gregory Barrett

Edward Elgar. *Salut d’amour*, Op. 12.

Transcription for A clarinet and piano by Graham Bastable. International Music Company, 2017. \$9.50

This evergreen dedication of love from Elgar to his future spouse Caroline Alice Roberts has been transcribed for A clarinet and piano maintaining the original key of E major. Medium-easy difficulty except for the four measure pianissimo altissimo G in the clarinet in the concluding phrase. This could be altered for ease of performance.

– Gregory Barrett

Gabriel Fauré. *Après un rêve*, Op. 7, No.

1. International Music Company, 2017. Transcription for clarinet and piano by Graham Bastable. \$8.95

_____. *Sicilienne*, Op. 78. International Music Company, 2017. Transcription for clarinet and piano by Graham Bastable. \$12.25

Dreaming of Fauré? This arrangement of *Après un rêve* will fulfill your desire. The

beloved song is set entirely in the B-flat clarinet’s chalumeau register.

Fauré’s *Sicilienne* is familiar from his orchestral suite *Pelléas et Mélisande* and from its many arrangements. This version, set in A minor for the clarinet, favors the chalumeau register and rises above the treble staff only once. Correct the first note in measure 15 to B flat.

– Gregory Barrett

Jesús de Monasterio. *Adiós a la Alhambra*.

Bassus Ediciones Musicales, 2015. \$19.50

Are you suffering withdrawal symptoms from ClarinetFest® 2018 – Ostend, Belgium? If so, in a roundabout way, this work by the Spanish composer and violinist Jesús de Monasterio (1836-1903), may be the antidote. You see, de Monasterio studied at the conservatory in Brussels from 1852-1854 and was even offered a professorship there in 1870.

He wrote *Adiós a la Alhambra* (1855) for violin and piano but we know from a Madrid newspaper account that clarinet-phenom Antonio Romero performed the work on clarinet in 1873 at a concert where de Monasterio also performed. In fact, they played the Beethoven *Septet* together.

For Bassus Ediciones Musicales, clarinetist Pedro Rubio and pianist Ana Benavides have given us an immensely enjoyable version for clarinet (in either B-flat or A) and piano. This nostalgic, 6/8 Andantino/Allegretto ABA-form single-movement work with introduction and concluding cadenza is sweepingly tuneful. The melodies are embellished with grace notes and trills and the harmony poignantly alternates between minor and major. Highly recommended.

– Gregory Barrett

José Manuel Fernández Pérez. *Evocazione*

Barocca for A-flat piccolo (or E-flat piccolo) clarinet and piano. Eufonia, 2018. €14.50

The A-flat piccolo clarinet is quite an unusual and demanding small clarinet to handle due to its harsh, sharp and piercing tone, just like the other very seldom-used piccolo clarinets in C, B-flat, F and G (for Schrammelmusik in the Viennese tradition). Usually it is used in big military

DEBUSSY'S PREMIÈRE RHAPSODIE: THE 2017 BÄRENREITER URTEXT EDITION

by Dennis Nygren

The long-awaited Bärenreiter Urtext edition of Debussy's *Première Rhapsodie* – both for clarinet and piano and clarinet and orchestra – was published in 2017. Researched meticulously by Douglas Woodfull-Harris, the beautifully printed edition contains scrupulous historical program notes, source information, critical commentary, and textual notes, in English, French and German. Despite my own intense research leading to my dissertation¹ and a subsequent article in *The Clarinet*,² this Bärenreiter edition detailed some information of which I was unaware. For example, not having access to the contract between Debussy and publisher Jacques Durand, I had no idea that the work composed as a Conservatory *solo de concours* for clarinet and piano (1909-1910) was from the onset intended for clarinet with orchestral accompaniment.³ My sources previously suggested that Debussy's decision to orchestrate the work came later in 1911.

Textual discrepancies usually fall into one of two categories: 1) those for which a wealth of evidence points to the appropriate text, and 2) those where one must choose the text based on logic and preference, but which remain debatable. I believe that the controversial notation in measure 201 falls into the former category. Both autograph manuscripts clearly indicate a beat 3 notation of D-sharp/E-natural/G, with the clarinet/piano autograph even reiterating the natural sign on E in beat 3 (see Examples 1 and 2). The first printed edition of the orchestral score also presents this notation. Finally, this same precise motive appears twice in measure 123, with one final enharmonic spelling in measure 203. In only the first printed clarinet/piano edition does the notation appear D-natural/E-flat/G. Douglas Woodfull-Harris prefers the strongly-evidenced D-sharp/E-natural note choice.

It is my recommendation that Woodfull-Harris's textual indications be followed to the letter, with three exceptions. I would argue with his preference of F-flat in measure 6. His choice is based on a single, slightly blurred F-flat (see Example 3) in the clarinet/orchestra autograph and the subsequent first printed orchestral score. This notation, I believe, falls into the latter text category, one of a debatable choice. In the Peters Edition of 1976 (Reiner Zimmermann) the printed notation is F-flat, while in the more recent 2009 Henle Edition (Ernst-Gunter Heinemann), it is F-natural. Could it be that Debussy made an error in penning the single F-flat while orchestrating the work?

My preference is for F-natural, for the following reasons: First, the clarinet/

piano autograph clearly indicates the F-natural notation (see Example 4), as does the Durand first edition. In addition, the primary motive or cell of the work is a falling 4-note chromatic scale followed by a minor *or* a major third. Notice, for example, that in the *Scherzando* theme, in measure 96 the rising third is *minor* (C-natural/E-flat), while in measure 97, it is *major* (A-flat/C-natural). This organic alteration of an interval within a motive is a primary procedure within Debussy's compositional techniques, and it recurs many times throughout the *Rhapsodie* as well as his other compositions. Finally, note the concert E-flat in the accompaniment – both piano and orchestra – on this same upbeat.^{4,5} Would Debussy have intended that dissonance, despite the shortness of the 32nd note?



Example 1: Debussy *Rhapsodie*, m. 201, clarinet/piano autograph manuscript



Example 2: Debussy *Rhapsodie*, m. 201, orchestral autograph manuscript



Example 3: Debussy *Rhapsodie*, m. 6, clarinet/orchestra autograph



Example 4: Debussy *Rhapsodie*, m. 6, clarinet/piano autograph

The articulations in measures 34 and 35 would also be a matter of choice. In my research I discovered three different articulations for these measures.⁶ Woodfull-Harris selected the articulation in the orchestral autograph, with the final two eighth notes of measure 35 articulated. My preference is for the articulations in the clarinet/piano autograph and the first Durand printed edition, where these two notes are slurred. This choice is for a purely musical reason: having the final two notes of measure 35 slurred results in a smoother connection into the trills in measures 36-37, in which beautiful parallel harmonies occur in the accompaniment.

A further recommendation would be to connect all the pitches in measure 43 under a slur, as it appears in the clarinet/piano autograph (see Example 5). By doing so, all three statements of these notations (in measures 14, 43, and 155) remain consistent. My final recommendation – one not in the Bärenreiter edition – concerns notation in Debussy's own hand. In measure 202 the composer beamed the 32nd notes in two sets of seven, making the measure appear to be in 4/4 time (see Example 6). This could be rectified simply by connecting the beams of all 14 notes, clearly indicating a triple meter.

Lastly, I concur wholeheartedly with Woodfull-Harris concerning the following textual choices: 1) the notes between the end of measure 44 and the beginning of measure 45 included under a slur, and 2) the final note of measure 113 being C-natural (not C-flat).

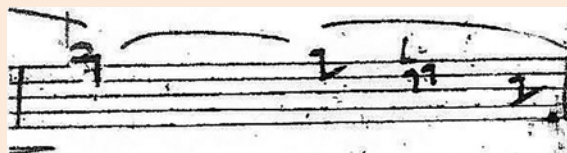
If one seeks the “last word” in scholarship and detail concerning Claude Debussy's *Première Rhapsodie*, I highly recommend the Bärenreiter clarinet/piano and clarinet/orchestra editions, skillfully edited by Douglas Woodfull-Harris.



Example 6: Debussy *Rhapsodie*, m. 202, clarinet/piano autograph manuscript

ENDNOTES

- 1 Dennis Nygren, “The Music for Accompanied Clarinet Solo of Claude Debussy: An Historical and Analytical Study of the *Première Rhapsodie* and *Petite Piece*” (D.M. dissertation, Northwestern University, June 1982).
- 2 Dennis Nygren, “Debussy's works for clarinet – Part 1,” *The Clarinet* 12, No. 1 (Fall, 1984): 40-42.
- 3 The contract (12 January 1910) titles the work “PREMIÈRE RHAPSODIE/ pour clarinette en si b/avec accompagnement d'orchestre/et réduction de piano.” Claude Debussy, *Première Rhapsodie*, Edited on the basis of sources by Douglas Woodfull-Harris (Kassel: Bärenreiter Urtext, 2017).
- 4 Raymond Roy Park, “The Later Style of Claude Debussy” (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1967), p. 33.
- 5 Nygren, “The Music for Accompanied Clarinet Solo of Claude Debussy,” end note 1, p. 13.
- 6 Within the two autographs and the 1976 Peters Edition (Reiner Zimmermann), there are three different articulation varieties in measures 34 and 35.



Example 5: Debussy *Rhapsodie*, m. 43, clarinet/piano autograph manuscript

bands. It is practically nonexistent in solo or chamber music repertoire. On the contrary, for the E-flat piccolo clarinet we have a number of interesting works: arrangements from famous Italian operas by Cappelli, Cavallini and Panizza; and for D piccolo: Molter concertos, Pessina's *The Nightingales* with piccolo flute and the Handel *Trio* with a second D clarinet and a horn. E-flat piccolo and B-flat clarinet are used together in works by Bassi, Pillevestre, Filippa, Ponchielli and others.

The Spanish clarinetist and composer José Manuel Fernandez Perez wanted to offer this nice piece to the brave Italian clarinet player Giovanni di Lorenzo,

who is one of the very few real specialists on this hard-to-play instrument. Di Lorenzo conceived a “Piccolo A-flat Clarinet Experience” project, including a recording. Fernandez Perez composed for him this new piece conceived as a small baroque suite including an “Ouverture” or “Bourrée,” a “Sarabanda” and a small “Fandango” in the style of Antonio Soler or Boccherini. It is a small but very pleasant and well-structured piece. It comes with an optional part for E-flat piccolo clarinet. Hoping that this can be a starting point to build up a new repertoire for this rare piccolo clarinet!

– Luigi Magistrelli

WORKS WITH THREE TO SIX PERFORMERS

Louis Moreau Gottschalk. *Two Pieces, Volume One: La Jota Aragonesa and Souvenir de la Havane.* Arranged by Michael Webster. International Music Company, 2016. Duration: 9'40" \$26.50

_____. *Two Pieces, Volume Two: Souvenir de Cuba and Grande Tarantelle.* Arranged by Michael Webster. International Music Company, 2016. Duration: 9' \$29.50

Michael Webster's contributions to the repertoire for flute, clarinet and piano

are invaluable. Under his leadership with flutist Leone Buyse, the Flute/Clarinet Duos Consortium has commissioned original works from composers including Libby Larsen, Derek Bermel and Pierre Jalbert. Webster's arrangements of works by Debussy, Bizet, Dvořák, Brahms and others showcase his insight of the music in its original form and also his deft understanding of tone color and timbre of each instrument making for effective adaptations to the flute, clarinet and piano medium. His first volume of arrangements of works by Louis Moreau Gottschalk contains *La Jota Aragonesa* and *Souvenir de la Havane*. The former work is a sprightly dance juxtaposed with boisterous, colorful interjections and flourishes, while the latter contains a habanera followed by another perky dance. Both works showcase the coloristic and stylistic capabilities of the ensemble, exhibit a perfect balance of melodic material between the parts and are enjoyable for both performers and audience. Webster incorporates relevant biographical and programmatic information regarding Gottschalk and these pieces in the preface. An essential companion to these arrangements is the Webster Trio's CD *World Wide Webster*, which contains this arrangement and many others.

Michael Webster's second volume of arrangements from the works of Louis Moreau Gottschalk includes *Souvenir de Cuba* and *Grande Tarantelle*. *Souvenir de Cuba* divides melancholic melodies between the three instruments in a manner that is equally flirtatious and imitative. The arrangement of *Grande Tarantelle* is so effective that one might think Gottschalk had originally written it for this combination of instruments! Its charm and wit are readily apparent. The piece requires utmost dexterity and musicianship from each performer and would easily bring an audience to its feet when performed. As with Volume One, the pieces are cleanly laid out, may be performed together as a set or separately as single concert pieces and are recorded on the Webster Trio's album *World Wide Webster*.

– Kip Franklin

David Bennett. *Prelude and Scherzo*, quartet for clarinets in B-flat. Carl Fischer, 1939; Copyright Renewed. Duration: 5' 30" \$16.99

No longer out of print, this early quartet (1937) – like Bennett's contemporary work *Deepwood* for bass clarinet and piano – reflects Bennett's (1892-1990) career in popular music during the big band days in Chicago. Medium-easy in difficulty, the work is charming and old-fashioned. It is written in a range of tempos from Lento to Presto, and, though for four clarinets, the fourth part could be played by an agile bass clarinetist.

– Gregory Barrett

Johann Melchior Molter. *5 Märsche für 2 Oboen, Klarinette, 2 Hörner und Fagott*. Musikverlag Bruno Uetz, 2016. €16.00

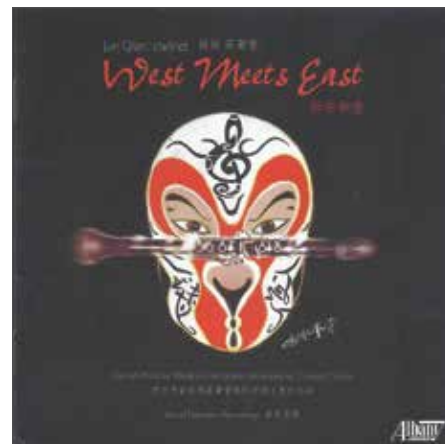
Prolific German composer Johann Melchior Molter (1696-1765) is known to clarinetists primarily for his enchanting concertos for piccolo D clarinet. Molter used the same instrument in these five brief marches all in the key of D major. The clarinet, though sometimes playing a high descant line or doubling oboe 1, is functionally grouped with the two horns in providing harmonic and rhythmic support for the two oboes. The two oboes have almost all the melodic lines, replete with trills and alternating duple and triple division of the beat. Because of the simple nature of the D clarinet part it would not be difficult to play it a half step lower on a piccolo E-flat clarinet except for several resulting awkward trills of D flat to E flat and A flat to B flat – all in the clarion register.

– Gregory Barrett

RECORDINGS

West Meets East. Jun Qian, clarinet; Ben Quarles, bass clarinet; Todd Meehan, percussion; Paul Sánchez, piano; Kayleen Sánchez, soprano; Scott Steele, percussion; Jing Zhou, guzheng; Jianbing Hu, sheng. J. Merritt: *Monkey King*; M. Mueller: *Arabesque*; P. Lenz: *Funk Shui*; E.J.F. Taylor: *Azure Dragon*

of the East; P. Sánchez: *Free Translations of Li-Chig-Chao: Three Musical Settings*; J. Qian & J.B. Hu: *New York Improvisatory Dialogue II*; S. Steele: *Su Counterpoint*. Albany Records TROY1681. Total time 72:56. Amazon and iTunes



Jun Qian's recent album **West Meets East** explores the nature of cross-cultural influences in music. Qian currently serves on the faculty of Baylor University in Texas and is principal clarinetist of the Waco Symphony. Among many other previous appointments, he also taught at St. Olaf College and performed as principal clarinetist of the Shanghai Philharmonic Orchestra. The title of the album stems from the two previous albums in this series, **East Meets West** Volumes 1 and 2. While **East Meets West** explores the intersection of Chinese and American culture through well-known Chinese composers working in the United States – featuring Bright Sheng, Chen Yi, and Zhou Long among others – **West Meets East** is Qian's reversal of this theme, bringing together American and European colleagues to reflect and explore Chinese influences from a Western perspective.

Monkey King for B-flat clarinet and fixed media (2016) by Justin Merritt, composition professor at St. Olaf College, features highly programmatic, energetic clarinet writing that shows off Qian's technical flair. He is able to traverse wide ranges and furious 16th-note passages with ease and a warm color palette that contrasts the backing tape track. The work itself is based off of the tale of the Monkey

King, as depicted in the 16th-century Chinese classical novel *Journey to the West*, with both movements following different narrative arcs of battles. Each has many exciting points that evoke a film score aesthetic, though I wish the tape track had made more transformative use of electronics as a medium.

Matthias Mueller's *Arabesque* for solo clarinet (2016) uses lilting lines and Debussy-like passages to explore the warmth of the clarinet. As professor of clarinet at the Zurich University of the Arts, Mueller writes in a way that epitomizes the clarinet's sound and ability to sing through phrases, which Qian effectively captures in his performance. The composition sounds idiomatic and should interest professionals, pedagogues and students alike.

Patrick Lenz's take on the project's theme, *Funk Shui* for B-flat clarinet and bass clarinet duet (2016), depicts what he sees as internal and external categories of Chinese martial arts against long melodic passages and funk-inspired pitch bends and harmonies. Ben Quarles anchors the work with a solid, recurring bass clarinet ostinato, which Qian weaves through melodically.

Edward J.F. Taylor's *Azure Dragon of the East* for B-flat clarinet and percussion (2016) explores stargazing with the Azure Dragon of the East, which is "the astral representation of the stars visible along the ecliptic during the spring months," according to the liner notes. The work is by far the longest on the album at 24 minutes, with a sound that is similar to that of Taylor's former teacher Charles Wuorinen. The composition makes use of the richness of tone available with the combination of marimba, woodblocks and clarinet. Percussionist Todd Meehan and Qian work well together, with the unison and imitative passages showing their rhythmic precision and ability to shape phrases together.

Free Translations of Li-Ch'ing-Chao: Three Musical Settings for clarinet, soprano and piano (2016) by Paul Sánchez sets three poems by 12th-century female poet Li Ch'ing Chao, translated by Luke Taylor, capturing the spirit of three stages of life, titled "Youth," "Middle Age" and

"Old Age." Soprano Kayleen Sánchez uses a pure tone with little vibrato that evokes the text perfectly. Repetitive piano figurations ebb and flow across each movement, expressing each stage of life eloquently. "Old Age" creates a particularly effective emotional shift with dark and openly voiced piano chords.

New York Improvisatory Dialogue II for clarinet and sheng (2016) developed out of Qian's visit to New York's Morgan Library to research copies of the original Brahms sonata manuscripts. He and Jianbing Hu approach the improvisational dialogues with influence taken from both the Brahms clarinet sonatas and Chinese dance music, but never so overtly as to detract from the gorgeous colors achieved by blending the unique sound of the sheng with the warm chalumeau register of the clarinet.

Scott Steele's *Su Counterpoint* for clarinet, percussion, and zheng (2014) is the least tonal work on the album and the most timbrally varied. Steele's work is a dichotomy of stasis and placidity against moments of dense texture and motion. Qian sounds rich in the blend with percussion and zheng, and the treatment of the material was a refreshing variation from the harmonic palette of the preceding works.

Qian's latest recording brings together many talented composers and performers in this ambitious project. It offers many interesting moments, showcases his superb ability as a musician, and disseminates many accessible new works to explore. Although I desired more timbral variety and ventures out of the overtly melodic realm, the positive attributes of this recording overshadow those thoughts. **West Meets East** definitely deserves to be heard.

— Ford Fourquarean

Portraits. Anthony McGill, clarinet; Demarre McGill, flute; Michael McHale, piano; Mahershala Ali, narrator. C. Rogerson: *A Fish Will Rise*; V. Coleman: *Portraits of Langston*; G. Connesson: *Techno-Parade*; S. Rachmaninov: *Vocalise* (arr. M. McHale); P. Schoenfield: *Sonatina*; P. Hammond: *The Lamentation of Owen*

O'Neil; Traditional: *The Lark in the Clear Air* (arr. M. McHale). Cedille Records CDR 90000 172. Total time 66:17. Amazon and iTunes



Portraits is a new compact disc by the McGill/McHale Trio. The recording is full of interesting world premieres and arrangements for the trio and was recorded at the Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts at the University of Chicago in 2017.

First up on the recording is Chris Rogerson's *A Fish Will Rise*. In this opening work the ensemble establishes a well-balanced sound that is present throughout the recording. Rogerson's work is immediately recognizable and pleasing to the listener. His style is reminiscent of Copland and he is able to create the spacious and open feeling that you might experience in the great plains of the American heartland. The ensemble delivers a good performance of this work; however, it felt somewhat heavy at times and I may have preferred a slightly lighter sound. Intonation of the trio is impeccable and interplay between voices is well-balanced and clear. In the soft passages the group lost some of the resonance it achieved in the forte sections, but overall the performance has great conviction and charm.

Next up is the world premiere recording of *Portraits of Langston*. This innovative and refreshing work, by the award-winning African-American flutist and composer Valerie Coleman, is a six-movement suite interspersed with readings of poems of Langston Hughes by Mahershala Ali, the American actor

revered for his roles in *House of Cards* and *The Hunger Games*. Like the writing of Hughes, this work is diverse and full of African folk culture influences. The trio delivers a well-balanced and clean performance, though at times, I found it difficult to connect the poetry to the music. Ali's voice seemed acoustically drier and emotionally out-of-sync with the group. Coleman evokes a wonderful American sound that is present throughout much of this compact disc. She has skillfully and successfully encompassed many styles in her writing. I found the piece extremely interesting and moving, but wished for a few more memorable melodic statements. Valerie Coleman is clearly one of our great emerging American artists and composers.

The highlight of the recording for me was the Connesson *Techno – Parade*. This high-energy work is played flamboyantly by the group and seemed a perfect fit. The virtuoso piano playing of McHale was impressive and the technical ensemble work of the McGills was tight and flawless.

Rachmaninov's famous *Vocalise* was the least satisfying work for me. Unlike the other works on this recording, McGill's clarinet tone seemed airy and did not draw me in to the beauty of this piece. Though I must confess, I found myself whistling the tune all day after hearing it just once. The arrangement clearly showcases the greatness of Rachmaninov and his ability to write an incredible melody.

Paul Schoenfield's *Sonatina* captures three different dance feels in this recording: "Charleston," "Hunter Rag" and a "Jig." This release mislabels this as a world premiere recording, as recordings by the Scott/Garrison Duo and Webster Trio precede it. That said, the group is in strong form for this work and their playful style is evident throughout. The composition captures each dance with great ease and the virtuosity of the playing is again evident throughout the group. Schoenfield is able to create a good balance between old and new traditions by using the rhythmical influences of these traditional dance styles and blending them with his modern style of composition.

The recording wraps up nicely with two short works of Irish and Celtic

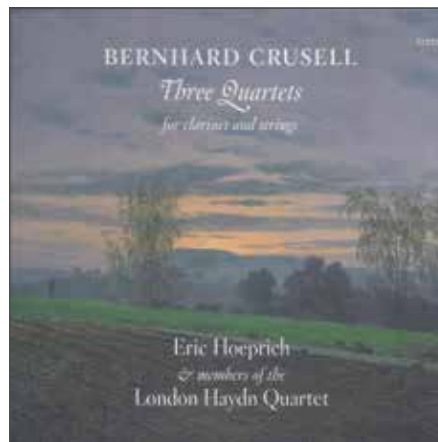


heritage. They are both characteristically folk-like and contain a pensive and loving feeling. *The Lark in the Clear Air* could have been more convincing if the group had created a more *semplice* and *sostenuto* feel in the melodic lines, but still has a heartfelt quality.

With this recording comes a booklet with well-written program notes by Elinor Olin from the Northern Illinois University School of Music. This is a fine recording with wonderful new additions for the chamber music trio repertoire.

– Robert DiLutis

Bernhard Crusell: Three Quartets for Clarinet and Strings. Eric Hoeprich, clarinet; members of the London Haydn Quartet: Catherine Manson, violin; John Crockatt, viola; Jonathan Manson, cello. B. Crusell: *Quartet in D Major*, Op. 7, *Quartet in C Minor*, Op. 4 and *Quartet in E-flat Major*, Op. 2. Glossa Music GCD 920609. Amazon and iTunes



A lonesome traveler is wandering alongside a plowed field. Behind the distant hills the sun slowly begins to rise, coloring the cloudy grey sky in warm shades of pink and orange. This scenery depicted on the cover of the recording, a painting from 1830 by Caspar David Friedrich, perfectly captures the mood of the opening chords of the recording; bright and refreshing as the first rays of the morning sun, the music rises and unfolds itself in the most vibrant colors. Due to the historically informed rendering on period instruments, the music is presented as it might have been heard 200 years ago, opalescent yet translucent. Even 10-year-old Mikhail Glinka, who according to a letter witnessed a performance of one of the quartets, raved about the "unbelievable, novel impression" the music left on him.

The author of this memorable music is no one less than the "chamber musician and clarinetist to the King of Sweden," Bernhard Henrik Crusell. Crusell, who lived from 1775-1838, is mostly remembered today as a clarinet virtuoso who wrote three fabulous clarinet concerti and the variations on a Swedish theme. However, Crusell also composed three equally beautiful quartets for clarinet, violin, viola and violoncello. Since no autograph has been found, the recording is based on the first editions of the quartets, published in the years 1812, 1816 and 1823. They are presented in reverse chronological order on the disc, starting with Op. 7 in D major, then Op. 4 in C minor and ending with Op. 2 in E-flat major.

As a common structure they each have four movements, and with the exception of the *Quartet Op. 4 in C Minor*, where the Menuetto precedes the slow movement, they roughly follow the compositional structure of their time. While the framing Allegro and Rondo movements are of a lively brilliant character and require great virtuosity of the instrumentalists, the *menuetti* are of a light-footed and elegant tone. Especially imaginative and appealing are Crusell's slow movements, titled "Romance" or "Pastorale," where lovely arioso themes are bestowed on the clarinet, expressing the sort of "northern melancholy" inherent to Crusell's compositions.

The rendering discussed here has been recorded in 2016 by clarinetist Eric Hoepfich and members of the London Haydn Quartet. Hoepfich, a well-known expert on original instruments, performs on a 10-keyed boxwood clarinet modeled after Crusell's original instrument, which was made by Heinrich Grenser, Dresden and is in possession of the Musikmuseet Stockholm. The quartets Op. 2 and 4 are written for a clarinet in B-flat; Op. 7, however, requires a clarinet in A, which in the 19th century was obtained through a *corps de rechange*, a longer middle joint that could transform a clarinet pitched in B-flat into an A clarinet. Hoepfich's playing displays great virtuosity, supple articulation and a singing tone quality, with a luminous and bright sound in the altissimo and a warm voice in the lower register. The string players also use period instruments with gut strings and lighter bows, giving the ensemble a homogeneously brilliant yet warm sonority, complementing that of the clarinet. The ensemble's rendering of the quartets is an expressive indulgence, the musicians breathe together and the music feels as if coming out of one heart and soul. Besides a few moments where the strings slightly overpower the clarinet in loud sections and a lack of edge in the clarinet's articulation possibilities compared to the string section, there is really no desire left unfulfilled by this disc. Five golden reeds from my side!

– Simone Weber

4+1. Javier Asdrúbal Vinasco, clarinet; Cuarteto Q-Arte: Juan Carlos Higuaita Estrada, violin; Liz Ángela García Castro, violin; Sandra L. Arango Calderón, viola; Diego García Castro, cello. M. del Águila: *Pacific Serenade*; B.E. Atehortúa: *Quintet*, Op. 247; A. Posada: *Helix*; C. Garrido-Lecca: *Amaru*; J. Álvarez: *Jardín de otoño*. Artist produced. Total time 65:01. Amazon and CDBaby

4+1 is a CD of modern works for clarinet and string quartet featuring music by Latin American composers. Clarinetist Javier Asdrúbal Vinasco performs with the Q-Arte String Quartet, and together they



produced a virtuosic, engaging and well-engineered recording. Vinasco plays with a beautiful sound and great expression which is matched by the nuanced and compelling performances of the members of the Q-Arte Quartet. Each piece presents a diversity of content, colors, textures and technical demands that are performed at the highest level of artistry and refinement.

Pacific Serenade, Op. 58, by the Uruguayan composer Miguel Del Águila is the first piece. Written in three movements, this work evokes moods and sonorities that reminds one of music one might hear “after hours” in a South American night club. Vinasco performs the simple song-like melodies with a smooth and sensuous tone and natural flowing phrases appropriate to the style. His melodic lines are supported by rich string textures and colors which function not only to accompany the melody, but to create atmosphere and establish style. The balance of instruments in the recording is perfect and spacious. This piece is ideal for the stage, but also to listen to on a stereo and relax at the end of a long day.

The remaining four works are more modern, much more of what one might expect on a recording project of new music. *Quinteto para cuerdas* by Colombian composer Blas Emilio Aterhortúa and *Amaru* by the Peruvian composer Celso Garrido-Lecca are both engaging works that are based on recognizable melodic lines, but utilize a modern harmonic and rhythmic language. Although both works do sound different in their content, the challenging virtuosic

demands and impressions of the recorded performances are more or less the same. Both pieces feature complex interactions between Vinasco and the individual members of the quartet. The ensemble is tight and impressive as the performers effortlessly shift between sustained florid musical lines and complex motivic gestures. The quality and beauty of Vinasco's playing is remarkably consistent as he shifts from one texture to the next, and collectively the ensemble plays with the refinement and excitement of a truly great chamber ensemble.

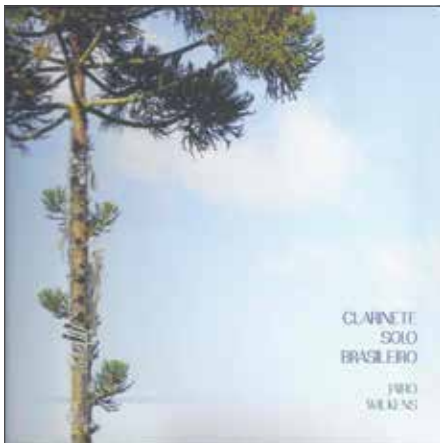
Helix by the Colombian composer Andrés Posada was commissioned specifically for this project. Unlike the previous works, this piece is more atmospheric and relies less on a rhythmic pulse to drive the music. Glissandi, microtones and complex textures establish the tonal environment for the piece. The clarinet part requires the use of multiphonics, microtones, timbre trills and harmonics, as well as frequent glissandi. Vinasco executes these extended techniques effectively and is able to blend them perfectly into the textures and string sounds that evolve around him. This performance is compelling and the writing is extraordinary.

The final piece is *Jardín do Otoño* by Mexican composer Javier Álvarez. This is a large-scale work consisting of four movements. The first and third movements focus on long sustained pitches and shifting colors with an almost kaleidoscopic effect. Each player shows great skill in their control of sonority and creation of beautiful and expressive lines. The second and fourth movements are more driving and angular, with the performers developing and exchanging motivic gestures with great precision and energy. Throughout this recording, the ensemble does a truly outstanding job bringing this piece to life by delivering an engaged and dramatic performance.

– David Shea

Clarinete Solo Brasileiro. Jairo Wilkens, clarinet. C. Santoro: *Fantasia Sul América* and *Três Estudos*; G. Bauer: *Três Peças*; E. Frigatti: *IGUAÇU – da nascente à Garganta do Diabo*; A. Ficagna:

Inquietações; H. Crowl: *Introspecção*; R. Miranda: *Lúdica*; L. Pitombeira: *Suite for Clarinet*, Op. 65; O. Lacerda: *Melodia*; M. Santos: *Pequena Peça Brasileira*; A.G.M. de Carvalho: *Três Movimentos*; J. do Bandolim: *O Vão da Mosca*. Tratore ETU 196. Total time 63:32. Amazon and iTunes



Brazilian clarinetist Jairo Wilkens' first album, **Clarinet Solo Brasileiro**, showcases the solo clarinet writing of Brazilian composers between 1942 and 2016. There is a wealth of solo repertoire written by Brazilian composers, and it is interesting to hear the varied styles on this recording.

Wilkens studied at the School of Music and Fine Arts of Paraná, as well as Indiana University and the University of Missouri–Columbia. He serves as clarinet professor at University of the State of Paraná School of Music and Fine Arts, performs with the Municipal Symphony Orchestra of Campinas, and regularly plays in the Duo Palheta ao Piano with pianist Clenice Ortigara. In addition, he was a featured guest artist at ClarinetFest® in 2008, 2010 and 2014.

The album includes two pieces by the prolific Brazilian composer Claudio Santoro: *Fantasia Sul América* and *Três Estudos*. Santoro wrote South American fantasies for many orchestral instruments for the 1983 Young Interpreters of Brazilian Music Contest. The clarinet fantasy is vibrant and brimming with character. Santoro showcases the expansive range and expressive potential of the instrument. Wilkens expertly executes the varied articulations and technical demands and demonstrates incredible control in the

upper register. *Três Estudos* is a good study for refining tonal consistency and smooth legato between wide intervals. The second is especially memorable with its dance-like rhythms and rapid technical patterns that recall bird songs.

Santoro's student, Guilherme Bauer, composed *Três Peças* beginning in 2008. According to the liner notes, the first movement references Caravaggio's use of *chiaroscuro* in his paintings. Fortissimo interruptions abound in the lyrical second movement. The third movement opens with a distinctive oscillating ascending motive and includes playful passagework. I especially enjoy the dialogue Wilkens creates between the lines as well as the bubbly articulated gestures.

IGUAÇU and *Inquietações* were written in 2016 and dedicated to Wilkens. Eduardo Frigatti's *IGUAÇU* was named after a river and attempts to "find the ONE that exists in contrasting events." It features varied techniques, including glissandi, multiphonics, flutter tonguing, pitch-bending, vibrato, tremolos and microtones. The rapid outbursts are memorable as are the upbeat melodic sections. Wilkens plays with a clear sense of direction and allows the disparate technical elements to flow seamlessly into one another. Alexandre Ficagna's *Inquietações* also includes extended techniques, rapid outbursts and dramatic dynamic contrasts and was written in memory of the composer's uncle.

One of my favorites is Ronaldo Miranda's lively *Lúdica I*. It is full of energy and character and was also composed for the same competition as the *Fantasia Sul América*. Wilkens plays with a beautiful and rich tone and skillfully navigates the technical challenges.

Also written in 1983, Harry Crowl's *Introspecção* features moments of unmeasured elements, including flutter tonguing, out of which virtuosic melodic figures rise. Extended techniques, including the use of microtones, add color to the texture. Wilkens gives a committed performance, although I found a few fortissimo sections to be slightly forced.

Liduíno Pitombeira wrote his *Suite for Clarinet* in three attractive movements. The playful first movement opens with a memorable major seventh motive and is based on the interval of a minor second.

The second movement is a lullaby that recalls motives from the first, while the third is "a fast type of march danced frenetically at the carnival" with rhythmic energy and percussive gestures. Wilkens accentuates the strong rhythmic drive of the outer movements and plays with the requisite character.

Oswaldo Lacerda's brief *Melodia* is lyrical but less memorable than the others. Murillo Santos' *Pequena Peça Brasileira* is notable for its catchy introduction and melodic lines that bounce up and down the instrument. Wilkens achieves a beautiful and even tone across the registers and imparts great clarity to the articulated passages.

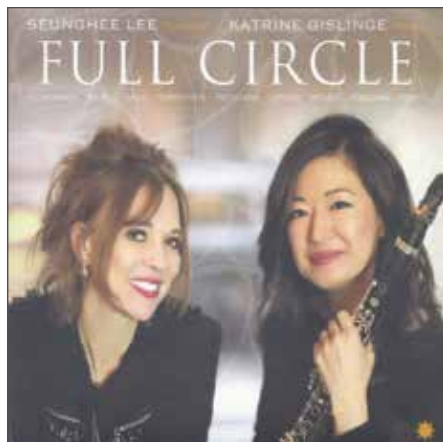
Antonio Gilberto Machado de Carvalho's *Três Movimentos* is rhythmic and exciting. I especially like the first movement's driving accelerando and fast articulations as well as the bold opening of the third movement.

Wilkens concludes the album with a stunning rendition of Jacob Do Bandolim's *O Vão da Mosca*. The piece, originally written for mandolin, is a virtuosic showstopper in the vein of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Flight of the Bumblebee* – perfect for an encore. Bravo to Wilkens, who brilliantly plays the continuous articulated runs at a lightning-fast tempo! This is an incredible performance, and I cannot think of a better way to complete this enjoyable journey through Brazilian solo clarinet literature.

– Justin Stanley

Full Circle. Seunghye Lee, clarinet; Katrine Gislinge, piano. R. Schumann: *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 73; M. Ravel: *Pièce en Forme de Habanera*; M. Mangani: *Executive*; P. Reade: *Suite from the Victorian Kitchen Garden*; O. Messiaen: *Vocalise-Etude*; N. Gade: *Fantasy Pieces*, Op. 43; B. Sørensen: *Romance*; L. Foss: *Three American Pieces*; A. Gross: *Coming Home*. Musical Solis. Total time 64:00. Amazon and iTunes

Full Circle by Seunghye Lee and Katrine Gislinge is a series of lyrical and expressive works for clarinet and piano. It contains some repertoire standards, some transcriptions, and some original works from the 20th and 21st centuries, all of which focus on melodic playing.



The works are short or consist of short movements that are overwhelmingly pleasing and largely tonal.

The recording of Paul Reade's *Suite from the Victorian Kitchen Garden* is a highlight of this project. The sweet innocence of the work is matched by Lee's light, shimmering sound. She perfectly encapsulates the breezy quality of the music and her interpretation should be emulated by any performer approaching this work.

Another charming work in this series is *Executive* by Italian composer Michele Mangani. The work is cinematic in nature and would be a satisfying addition to a recital, perhaps as a way to lighten the mood. The other two original 21st-century works, *Romance* by Bent Sørensen and *Coming Home* by Augusta Gross, are more melancholy. The lyricism and sadness of both works makes them easily comparable, yet Sørensen makes use of the clarinet's ability to negotiate large leaps within lyrical lines while the Gross is more traditionally lyrical with smaller intervallic content. Both would be good works to perform on a concert if looking for a gentle foil to a larger, more aggressive work.

The transcription of Messiaen's *Vocalise-Etude* is another way for clarinetists to experience Messiaen in a chamber setting beyond his quartet. Though an early work, it has the color palette associated with Messiaen's works which is brought to life by Lee's interpretation. The *Pièce en Forme de Habanera* by Ravel also works well for clarinet, despite the fact that it was originally written for bass voice.

The two standard 19th-century works, *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 73, by Robert

Schumann and *Fantasy Pieces*, Op. 43, by Niels Gade, are well known to clarinetists. These works typically elicit thoughts of the dark richness of the Germanic clarinet sound and the plethora of colors a skilled performer can produce, demonstrating many moods and characters. In both recordings, the performer's lighter and brighter sound is a departure from what is often expected. Lee does not adjust the quality of her sound for the works she is approaching, which is an interesting yet viable choice. It may or may not be pleasing to every listener, depending on his or her expectations. The level of contrast in the performances are more than appropriate and one feels the different moods the composers had in mind, yet the voice one hears is a departure from tradition.

Three American Pieces by Lukas Foss was originally transcribed for clarinet and piano by Richard Stoltzman, but with the composer's supervision, Lee edited the transcription to make it more idiomatic to the clarinet. The work is in three energetic movements, with a short songlike passage in the second movement. The double tonguing in the third movement sounded heavy and difficult at the tempo Lee was taking. I am not convinced that this movement works well for clarinet, though Lee makes a valiant effort. One could consider playing the movements on their own, as they could stand alone as independent works.

This recording is a series of beautiful works in which the star recordings are not the standards of the repertoire, but the more modern original works that are sure to be a delight to clarinetists looking for something new to perform. Lee's approach to the clarinet is unique and uncompromising, and her love of lyricism and romanticism is clear.

— Amanda McCandless

Movimenti. Claros Clarinet Quartet: Karipekka Eskelinen, E-flat and B-flat clarinet; Marjo Aho, B-flat clarinet; Eija Särkimäki, B-flat clarinet; Ilkka Teerijoki, B-flat and bass clarinet. M. Henry: *Birdwatching (A Fancier's Handbook)*; P. Harvey: *Quartetto Quarantoli*; F. Farkas: *Scenes from Hungary*; J. Bondon: *Movimenti*. Artist



produced. Total time 45:00. karipekka.eskelinen@gmail.com

The Claros Clarinet Quartet was established in 1999 by four Finnish clarinetists and educators who have concertized in Finland, Hungary, Slovenia and Italy. In 2017 they recorded their compact disc **Movimenti**, with support from the Finnish Clarinet Society. The attractive booklet includes a photo gallery, group biography and liner notes about the composers in Finnish with English translations. Individual biographies would have enhanced it, especially for those unfamiliar with the group. The instrumentation varies for each piece as noted in this review. The blend of the group is nice, with occasional discrepancies in balance between inner parts and the E-flat clarinet, but the overall playing features lovely tone quality.

The excellent repertoire on this recording includes works by Paul Harvey, Ferenc Farkas, Michael Henry and Jacques Bondon. My favorite work was the opener by Michael Henry, a Jamaican-born Londoner, called *Birdwatching (A Fancier's Handbook)* for four B-flat clarinets in six movements. The work features fine playing by the quartet that depicts the whimsical, descriptive movements perfectly. "Swallows Fleeing," "Sparrows Bickering," "Vultures Looming," "Capercailles Courting," "Roadrunner Racing" and "Phoenix Rising" are all played with accuracy, energy, drive and tonal consistency. The legato connection and imitative passages handed off from instrument to instrument were smooth

and silky, and I enjoyed the well-thought-out interpretations and execution.

English clarinetist Paul Harvey, professor at The Royal Academy of Music, is well-known for his various articles and musical publications. His *Quartetto di Quarantoli* for three B-flat clarinets and bass clarinet is a work in four movements: “Rhapsody,” “Scherzo,” “Marcia Funebre” and “Galoppo.” Claros’s well-connected legato lines, sensitive blending and excellent soft dynamic balance and color variation are on display in this work. Their deft handling of the delightful and technical “Galoppo” is an especially fun listen.

The last two works by Farkas and Bondon are scored for E-flat clarinet, two B-flat clarinets and bass clarinet, which results in a less homogeneous and more versatile color spectrum and sound. Ferenc Farkas’s *Scenes from Hungary* is technically easier than the other three works, but isn’t played quite as well. Group attacks are somewhat flawed and there are minor tuning issues throughout. The E-flat clarinet tends to overpower the texture and balance at times in “Play,” “Shepherd” and “Round.” While some nice musical lines are executed, the group sounds brighter and thinner than the other works.

Jacques Bondon’s *Movimenti* is a substantial 15-minute work and the first movement is a knockout. In this well-written movement the playing is controlled with impressively executed technique and excellent blend. The second movement is slow and somewhat repetitive, making it difficult to sustain musical creativity. The last movement, “Allegro deciso,” has some unevenness between the imitative lines, overdone articulations, and attacks that are not in sync. In addition, I felt this movement could have used better musical shape. However, the work did have more reverberation in the recorded quality which added warmth to the group’s tone color.

While this recording has some slight flaws, the selection of compositions could not be better. All the quartets could serve as fine recital selections for good amateur and professional players and be fun and challenging to work up and perform. The variety of style of the works was well-served by the Claros Clarinet Quartet and their recording is an excellent representation of the music.

– Karen Dannessa

Conversations Between Friends. Diane Barger, clarinet; Jeffrey McCray, bassoon; Mark Clinton, piano. W. Hurlstone: *Variations in G Minor* and *Trio in G Minor*; B. Douglas: *Trio No. 2*. Potenza Music PM1052. Total time 49:50. www.justforwinds.com and www.potenzamusic.com



This recording by Trio 402 is an offering of lesser-known or more recently available works by William Hurlstone and Bill Douglas for clarinet, bassoon and piano. Clarinetist Diane Barger is currently professor of clarinet at University of Nebraska–Lincoln, is principal clarinet of Lincoln’s Symphony Orchestra and actively serves in the International Clarinet Association. Barger recently recorded *Bling Bling*, her solo album of music by Scott McAllister and others on the Potenza Music label. Her primary teachers were Frank Kowalsky and Robert Marcellus. The other artists in Trio 402 are Barger’s colleagues at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. Jeffrey McCray is professor of bassoon, principal bassoon of Lincoln’s Symphony Orchestra, and a member of the Colorado Springs Philharmonic. Mark Clinton is professor of piano, head of the keyboard area and a Steinway Artist.

British composer William Yeates Hurlstone (1876–1906) devoted much of his short life of 30 years to composing chamber music, some thankfully including clarinet. One can’t help but wonder “what might have been” – as McCray writes in the liner notes – for this talented composer who studied with Sir Charles Stanford at the Royal College of Music. His *Variations*,

the opening of this recording, precedes Hurlstone’s formal training, completed at age 17. Hurlstone’s experimentation in his use of the three timbres throughout the variations and counterpoint is mature for his age. His variation in 5/8 is particularly remarkable. The trio’s youthful approach is spirited and assured. Barger’s tone is cored and crystal clear. Balance is fine throughout, note lengths are well-matched and precision is with synchronicity.

Hurlstone’s *Trio in G minor* was completed only two years later and reflects his formal training. It is a full-length, substantial 25-minute work in four-movement symphonic structure, with first and last movements in sonata form. Based upon research of Richard Moore, early editions of this work are seriously flawed. He found, when examining the autograph, that the third movement, Scherzo, had been omitted, the first and last movements were interchanged and many other alterations made. Moore’s fascinating research can be found online at MusicWeb International. An updated edition in 2006 includes the Scherzo and correct movement order. Trio 402 is up to the emotive, dramatic, and substantive qualities of this music. Here, very expressive playing is noted from all three. Blend is admirable, and balance, particularly at points of dynamic alteration, is effectively achieved.

Composer, pianist and bassoonist Bill Douglas performed for decades with clarinetist Richard Stoltzman. His *Trio No. 2* was a result of a commission by a consortium of 123 clarinetists and bassoonists in 2010. Douglas’ distinct jazz-influenced style and harmonies are present here. The trio achieves great dialogue, or “conversation” as in the album title. Their approach to the work really shines in the third movement, “Rondo Antico,” which has a nifty lilt and a charming, more intimate and laid-back feel.

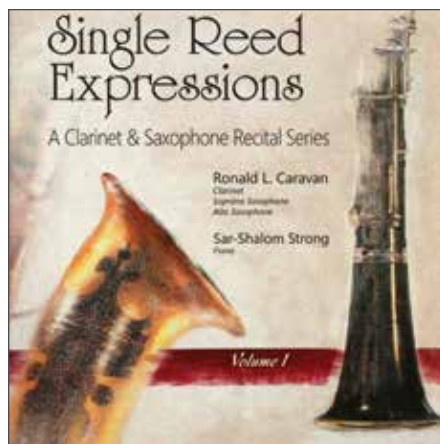
The recording features touching, heartfelt liner notes authored by bassoonist Jeffrey McCray. Informative, yes, but McCray also offers a personalized commentary about friendship, as the album title touts. Collaboration of collegiality and companionship for more than ten years by Trio 402 is evident

through their performance of these works. This is an excellent recording that provides exposure to these works through great chamber music playing captured by a well-done production.

— Gail Lehto Zugger

Single Reed Expressions (8 volumes).

Ronald L. Caravan, clarinet, soprano and alto saxophones; Sar-Shalom Strong, piano. C.M. von Weber: *Grand Duo Concertante*; W. Hartley: *Sonatina Romantica, Metamorphoses, Diversions, Duo, Sonorities IX* and *Petite Suite*; R. Caravan: *Excursions, Quiet Time, Sketch, Sonata, Recitation, Fantasy Piece, Monologue, Improvisation (Romani), Soliloquy & Celebration “A tribute to the classic jazz saxophonist Paul Desmond”* and *Echoes of a Crimson Twilight*; F. Tull: *Sarabande & Gigue*; J.D. Lamb: *Three Antique Dances*; K. Husa: *Postcard from Home* and *Elegie & Rondeau*; J. Demersseman: *Fantaisie-Pastorale*; L. Lunde: *Sonata “The Alpine”*; R. Schumann: *Fantasy Pieces, Op. 73*; W. Osborne: *Rhapsody*; S. Rachmaninoff: *Vocalise, Op. 34*; W. Benson, *Aeolian Song*; P. Creston: *Sonata*; J. Brahms: *Sonatas in F Minor and E-flat Major, Op. 120, Nos. 1 & 2*; C. Debussy: *Première Rhapsodie*; E. Dressel: *Partita*; J. Corigliano: *Clarinet Caprice* and *Serenade & Rondo*; J. Massenet: “Meditation” from *Thais*; O. Mácha: *Pláč Saxofonu*; E. von Koch: *Sonata, Monolog No. 3 & 4, Dance No. 2*; F. Poulenc: *Sonata*; I. Stravinsky: *Three Pieces*; R. Muczynski: *Time Pieces* and *Sonata*; J. Rueff: *Chanson et Passepied*; P. Maurice: *Tableaux de Provence*; D. Bédard: *Fantaisie*; P. Hindemith: *Sonata*; B. Martinů: *Sonatina*; E. Krenek: *Suite, Op. 48*; K. Reiner: *Dvě Skladby*; B. Heiden: *Solo, Sonata* and *Sonatina*; E. Gates: *Incantation & Ritual*; L. Bernstein: *Sonata*; S. Adler: *Canto XIV, A Klezmer Fantasy* and *Canto IV*; R. Starer: *Dialogues*; J. Worley: *Sonata*; E. Siegmeister: *Around New York*; E. de Coriolis: *Tarentelle*; R.R. Bennett: *Sonatina*; A. Berg: *Vier Stücke*; R. Sierra: *Cinco Bocetos*; K. Penderecki: *Three Miniatures*; O. Bull: *Saeterjentens Søndag*; L. van Delden:



Sonatina; E. Bozza: *Aria*. Mark Records 51601-51608 MCD. Total time 05:29:00. Amazon.com and iTunes.

American single reed virtuoso Ronald L. Caravan presents meticulously crafted interpretations of quality repertoire for solo single reeds in the eight-volume set **Single Reed Expressions**. This set represents the culmination of Caravan's 40-plus year career as a performer, teacher, composer, arranger, author and mouthpiece designer. Most notably, Caravan served on the faculty of Syracuse University from 1980 to 2015, teaching applied clarinet and saxophone and directing the Syracuse University Saxophone Ensemble. During this time, he performed an annual faculty recital which placed equal emphasis on showcasing works for clarinet and saxophone. His recital programming ranged from established classics to progressive new works, including his own compositions.

This set follows Caravan's recital model, with an equal division of works

for clarinet and saxophone. In addition to the conventional repertoire, each disc includes one of Caravan's compositions and one piece for the soprano saxophone. Furthermore, at least one composition on each disc utilizes unconventional sound techniques such as quarter-tone intervals, timbre variation, multiphonics, uncommon tremolos and trills. The sheer variety of compositions is staggering, and the set presents ample opportunities for performers and aficionados to relish hearing familiar repertoire while engaging with new and interesting compositions.

Caravan's adept engagement with the repertoire for clarinet and saxophone is evident in every piece. Throughout, his execution of the score is flawless and the interactions with the collaborative pianist are dynamic and harmonious. Impeccable intonation permeates the full register of every instrument, and it is paired with a robust, but not overpowering, tone. Musicality stands at the forefront of each interpretation; a thoughtful combination of solidly developed phrasing and attention to large-scale musical form shapes every nuance, from the single note to the entire work. Meticulous attention is paid to executing every gesture with grace, finding ease even when performing extreme registers and difficult extended techniques.

Perhaps most striking, however, is Caravan's ability to record this sheer volume of repertoire at this high level of performance for not just one, but three instruments (clarinet, soprano and alto saxophones). Each composition is presented convincingly, and without bias

to genre or the performance medium. Caravan is unequivocally convincing as a master performer of both the clarinet and saxophone, leaving the listener with no hint of which instrument he would consider as “primary.” Furthermore, the ordering of pieces illuminates substantive programming opportunities for a solo recital that includes both the clarinet and

saxophone, a testament to Caravan’s many years as a practitioner and pedagogue of a substantive single reed studio at a quality university music program.

These masterful recordings showcase the immense variety of recital repertoire available to advanced performers of the clarinet or saxophone. Overall, it provides an abundance of opportunities

for the university pedagogue to engage students with standard and contemporary repertoire, while also serving as a solid base for teachers of a single reed studio to enhance their own knowledge base. This eight-volume set is an invaluable addition to any university library or single reed studio resource collection.

– Michelle Kiec

AUDIO NOTES

by Christopher Nichols

NEW MUSIC FOR CLARINET DUO

Duets have been a significant aspect of pedagogy throughout the development of the clarinet, with notable contributions found in the methods of Jean-Xavier Lefèvre, Hyacinthe Klosé and Aurelio Magnani, to name only a few. However, in recent years the clarinet duo has found a place on the concert stage with an ever-expanding and diverse repertoire that exploits the capabilities of the instrument to extremes. Recent releases from three ensembles, AdZel Duo, Tosca Duo and Das Klarinettduo, epitomize this trend with world-premiere recordings of a variety of commissioned works.

AdZel Duo is comprised of Mariam Adam, former clarinetist with Imani Winds, and Stephanie Zelnick, associate professor of clarinet at the University of Kansas School of Music. The duo has performed together since 2009 with

appearances across the country and Europe at notable institutions and venues such as Yale School of Music, Eastman School of Music and Carnegie Hall.

AdZel, the ensemble’s debut release, includes commissioned works by Jason Barabba, Mohammed Fairouz and Anne Guzzo, as well as selections by Bernhard Henrik Crusell.

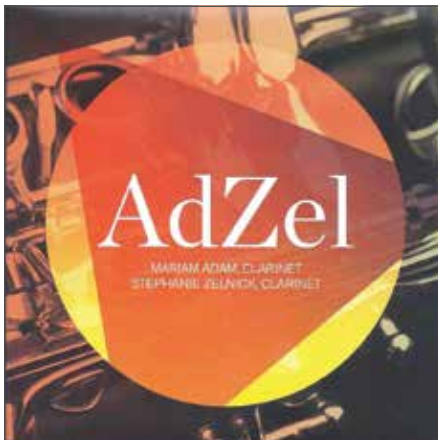
Catawampus by Jason Barabba opens this recording with an unpredictable journey featuring “dissonant tritone(s) and slightly offbeat rhythms,” according to the program notes. Dialogue between contrasting personalities is evident throughout this work, but with a compelling unity of sound and excellent ensemble. Excerpts from Crusell’s *Clarinet Duos* follow with an inspired and sensitive account of this charming core repertoire. Next, Mohammed Fairouz’s *AdZel*, structured in four contrasting movements, explores the diverse backgrounds of Adam and Zelnick with inspirations from Middle Eastern cultures, including timbral trills, microtones and elements of klezmer technique. The recording closes with two works by Wyoming composer Anne Guzzo, *Antelope Pavane* and *The Color of Honey*. The former conveys the image of antelope on the high plains, either motionless or running, in slow and fast sections. The latter cites as inspiration the landscape of the Middle East and the challenging historical circumstances of the region.

Throughout this recording, AdZel delivers polished, committed performances of stunning new works that clearly demonstrate close collaborations between the artists and composers. Although this release is on the short side at 35 minutes, it

left me desiring to hear more! Information about AdZel with links to purchase this new disc and detailed program notes are accessible at www.adzelduo.com.

Founded in 2007, Tosca Duo’s members are Lynn A. Musco, professor of clarinet at Stetson University, and Shawn L. Copeland, assistant professor of clarinet at the University of Idaho. The group maintains an active performance schedule at clarinet festivals and conferences throughout the country and is the ensemble-in-residence for the annual Stetson Clarinet Clinic held each summer in DeLand, Florida.

Tosca Duo, the group’s self-titled debut release, includes premiere recordings of four substantial and contrasting works, two of which were commissioned and premiered by the group. One of these commissions, Marcus Karl Maroney’s *Paeon*, begins this recording. According to the liner notes, Maroney found inspiration for this work in the etymology of its title, both in antiquity (lyric poem expressing triumph or thanksgiving)

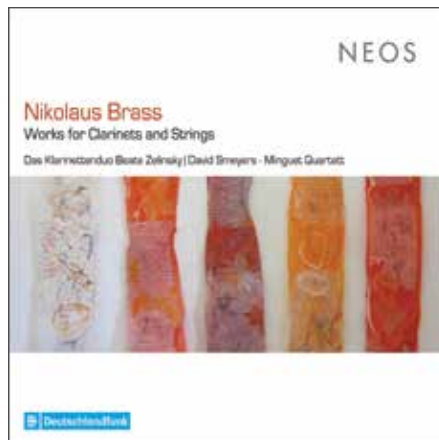


and modern usage (praise or exultation). This composition explores the unique capabilities of the clarinet, such as ease of shifting at the interval of the 12th and wide-ranging dynamic palette, especially notable at soft dynamics.

Michael Kibbe's *Serenade*, Op. 131, follows – by no means new literature, but previously without a commercial recording. This charming suite of seven contrasting movements, “Prelude,” “March,” “Blues,” “Tango,” “Tarantella,” “Elegy” and “Hora,” is light, attractive and idiomatic. It is easy listening in comparison to the rest of the program, but truly enjoyable as the Tosca Duo effectively captures the requisite style for each of these movements.

Next, Akira Miyoshi's *Rêve colorié* evokes five distinct images with descriptive movement titles: “Crimson/Scarlet,” “Young Monster,” “Canal,” “Red Cherry” and “Tumble through Space.” This work synthesizes French impressionism with traditional Japanese music and intonation of the composer's native tongue. The disc closes with another commissioned work, Carlos Velez's *Wood and Wind*. Although I enjoyed the entire recording, this two-movement work is my favorite. The first movement, “Willow's Litany,” fully exploits the unique blend and diverse palette of color available in this genre, while “Maelstrom” contrasts with energetic rhythms accents to bring this program to a lively finish.

As Tosca Duo, Musco and Copland share unified sonorities, excellent



intonation and an instinctive sense of musical line as an ensemble. Their performances are exceptional throughout this disc of significant premiere recordings of diverse literature. For complete information about the ensemble, visit www.tosca duo.com.

Das Klarinettduo, consisting of Beate Zelinsky and David Smeyers, has performed together since 1980 with a number of commissions, premieres and recordings. The ensemble's recent release by Neos Music contrasts with the previously discussed discs, as the group is featured in a chamber settings with strings, in addition to two solos and a duo. This recording features the works of acclaimed German composer Nikolaus Brass, with whom the duo has collaborated extensively.

Nikolaus Brass: Works for Clarinet and Strings, NEOS 11704, is a composer-centric disc recorded in collaboration with the Minguet Quartet. Despite its title, the first and last works are for unaccompanied clarinet, titled *Salut* and *Adieu*. These two works originated as pieces for solo flute and were later adapted for clarinet solo as the composer's first effort at creating a solo clarinet work. Brass and Das Klarinettduo forged an ongoing relationship that resulted in the other four works: *SPUR* for two clarinets and string trio, *Dialoghi d'amore VI* for two clarinets, *Strophen* for viola and two clarinets, and *String Quartet No. 5 with Two Obligato Clarinets*.

It is unique that Smeyers performs on Boehm system and Zelinsky performs on German system. In the liner notes,

Smeyers states that this is “generally considered an ‘impossibility.’” However, due to the inherent acoustical differences, the multiphonic palette varies on these systems. After experimentation, Das Klarinettduo provided Brass with a number of sonorities only possible with the pairing of different systems. Truly innovative discovery in clarinet performance has become increasingly challenging, with so many fantastic clarinetists around the world engaged in creative activity and research. However, this composer/performer relationship has resulted in something truly unique, however subtle it may seem.

As alluded to by Smeyers, the pairing of these systems typically presents challenges of intonation and blend – Smeyers and Zelinsky make it sound effortless, as they draw us into a sound world created in collaboration with Brass. For complete information about Das Klarinettduo, visit www.das-klarinettduo.de.

Each of these remarkable ensembles has contributed to the discography and repertoire of the clarinet duo in a special way through their activities. I hope you explore each disc and consider these new works for future programming! ❖

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