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VOL. 53 • NO. 3
JUNE 2026



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THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear ICA Members,

안녕하세요, 한국에서 개최되는 2026 ICA 클라리넷 페스티벌을 앞두고 깊은 설렘과 기쁜 마음으로 인사드립니다.

Hello, it is with great excitement and joy that I greet you ahead of the 2026 ICA ClarinetFest® in Korea.

It is almost time for the much-anticipated ClarinetFest® in Incheon, South Korea! Our festival has only once been held in Asia, and it was over a quarter-century ago. This will be the first time that we come together to celebrate the clarinet in Korea. I am thankful that we can make our festival geographically accessible for members who may not have been able to attend in recent years. With each new conference location, we are able to reach new members and experience different cultures.

The journey to ClarinetFest® is as important and educational as the event itself. In preparation for any trip, I try to learn as much as I can about the destination—important phrases, landmarks, historical and political background, and what makes a place culturally distinct. I have been taking weekly Korean lessons over the past year; it has been both fascinating and humbling. For those of you who have started a new language or instrument as an adult, you likely understand what I mean. I've also really enjoyed my "research" into Korean cuisine!

ClarinetFest® would not be possible without the hard work and creativity of the ICA staff and Board. The ICA committees, competition co-ordinators, jurors, and volunteers are integral to the success of each conference. The guest artist performers and presenters, along with all attendees, are the heart of every ClarinetFest®. This year's festival includes a variety of incredible concerts, presentations, and unique events thanks to the vision and hard work of Artistic Director, Wonkak Kim, and his Artistic Leadership Team.

Not everyone is able to travel to the annual ClarinetFests®, but the ICA offers many free events year-round. Upcoming events such as the Lunch and Learn Series, Discover at Dinner, Clareidoscope, New Music Weekend, ICA Enthusiasts Workshop, and more can be found on the ICA website. If you cannot attend, you can view past events on our YouTube channel.

다가오는 7월, 한국에서 여러분과 함께할 소중한 시간을 기대하겠습니다. 감사합니다.

I look forward to the precious time we will share together in Korea this coming July. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Catherine Wood
President, International Clarinet Association



The Clarinet



Leopold Wlach, c. 1949

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GRAPHIC DESIGN

Karry Thomas Graphic Design
karry@karrythomas.com

THE CLARINET [ONLINE]

Jeremy Ruth
TCO@clarinet.org

The Clarinet (ISSN 0361-5553)

is published 4 times a year by the International Clarinet Association

International Clarinet Association
3900 Old Cheney Rd, Suite 201
PMB 203
Lincoln, NE 68516
EDO@clarinet.org | +1 888-983-5441

www.clarinet.org

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CLARINOTES

BASKLARINET FESTIJN: SEPTEMBER 2025 TO FEBRUARY 2026

by Fie Schouten

The *Basklarinet Festijn* is a traveling festival founded by bass clarinetists and Amsterdam residents Fie Schouten and Tobias Klein. It focuses on the versatility of the bass clarinet—as a soloist and accompanist, as a chameleon in timbre, and as a “jukebox” full of surprising sounds. The festival presents both established names and new talent, with an international lineup of artists. Over a period of six months, this fifth edition visited seven provinces in the Netherlands and included three performances abroad (France and Germany), with 19 concerts in total and one workshop. Some 14 bass clarinetists and 17 other instrumentalists from different nations and generations were

featured on stage, and many new compositions and improvisations were performed.

Festijn is an older Dutch word which means “a festive activity.” The *Basklarinet Festijn* is more than a production of one new project. Rather, the program has longterm partners in different cities, and every edition enagages new partners with whom to collaborate. These inspiring, rich experiences connect with audiences in diverse locations and environments. Each event is different.

PREVIOUS EDITIONS

Since 2014, the *Basklarinet Festijn* has presented 53 concerts, 15 educational activities, and 22 world premieres in collaboration with Bimhuis, November Music,

Gaudeamus Festival, Paradox, Lantaren-Venster, and others. Audiences and critics alike have praised the festival for its innovative programming and distinctive signature.

NEW COMPOSITIONS

The *Festijn* always includes composition commissions. Due to the disruption of the pandemic, many newer works have received limited performances in recent years. In this year’s event, a recent trio for two bass clarinets and cello by Jérôme Combier was performed three times and recorded for the first time. In addition, we collaborated with the Utrecht-based Gaudeamus Festival, a festival featuring young composers and makers. We presented new bass clarinet duos by the Canadian/Polish (and Neth-



Photo by Elisabeth Melchior

Bass clarinets at Bimhuis, Amsterdam, September 2025, from left to right: Rie Watanabe, Thomas Jaspers, Lida Brouskari, Sofia Borges, Chris Watt, Federico Calcagno, Fie Schouten, Frank Gratkowski, Shabnam Parvaresh, Tobias Klein, Vincent Courtois



Photo by Co Broerse

Bowing in the Orgelpark, Amsterdam, February 2026, from left to right: Bart van Dongen, Tobias Klein, Fie Schouten, Silvia Castillo, Femke van den Bergh, Germaine Sijstermans

erlands-based) composer Philip Przybylo and the Romanian composer Bianca Diana Popa. Both works were performed multiple times during the fifth *Basklarinet Festijn*.

HERITAGE HARRY SPARNAAY

In November 2025, I visited Silvia Castillo, Harry Sparnaay's widow. Together with my son, I set off with two empty suitcases to bring sheet music, documents, photos, cassettes, and documentation back to the Netherlands. I am in contact with the Nederlands Muziek Instituut based in The Hague. They have collections from composers, but also from special and innovative musicians. It will be given a place there, and after all is scanned, the material will be made publicly accessible. Silvia Castillo still lives in Lloret near Barcelona where she lived with Harry for 10 years, after first living together in Amsterdam for 10 years. Silvia is Argentinean and an organist.

At the moment of this writing, the very last concert of the fifth *Basklarinet Festijn* is still ahead of us. It takes place at the Amsterdam Orgelpark, a wonderful venue with many excellent organs, and a partner of our initiative for 10 years. This made the beautiful occasion of inviting Silvia and performing two pieces with her written for her and Harry Sparnaay special, with emotional value. And in the same concert my former student is also playing, somehow three generations. Also, composers of different generations will be present. Following the nature of our initiative not only fully composed music will be heard, but also (structured) improvisations. Tobias Klein on bass clarinet will share the stage with Bart van Dongen.

When we played in 2012 with Harry in Bethaniënklouster Amsterdam (me, Tobias, Oguz Büyükberber, Petra Stump-Linshalm, Laura Carmichael, Lothar Ohl-meier, and

Ainhua Miranda), Harry said: "In 2014 I'll become 70 and I will stop playing the bass clarinet, I had enough of practicing, I'll just touch the tenor saxophone for fun. So please organize a party!"

This we did in the form of the first edition of the *Basklarinet Festijn*, April 2014, with Harry and 11 bass clarinetists on stage. With Tobias, my fellow "motor" in this matter and husband, I am already brainstorming of what to do as a next edition. Although it is kind of "start from scratch" every time, there is a warm community of fellow bass clarinetists and other friends—colleagues without whom such a thing couldn't take place. It is great to continue the work of Harry, a hard worker, following in his footsteps, yet making our own path. Like when one has children, you don't want copies of yourself, or at least I don't!

CLARINET DAYS IN TÜRKIYE: THE ANATOLIAN CLARINET CONNECTION

by Yağızcan Keskin

The Ankara Music and Fine Arts University hosted "Clarinet Days 2026" on March 27-30, 2026, bringing together participants from across Türkiye. This marked the first time in 19 years that such a comprehensive clarinet-focused gathering has been organized in Türkiye.

The event included 23 active participants and 17 passive participants, with a total of 51 lessons conducted throughout the program. The lessons were given by Yağızcan Keskin (Lecturer at Ankara Music and Fine Arts University), Çağdaş Engin (Lecturer at Istanbul University State Conservatory), and Onur Ustaş (Assistant Principal Clarinet of the Presidential Symphony Orchestra). In addition, three seminars were held on consecutive days, covering the following topics: "Mozart and Anton Stadler," "Articulation Techniques in Clarinet Performance," and "Stage Anxiety." The opening concert featured Anatolian Clarinet Connection, while the closing concert presented a clarinet choir composed of the active participants.

With the support of Keylan Music Store, the official distributor of Buffet Crampon in Türkiye, a stand was set up where participants had the opportunity to try various clarinets and clarinet accessories. Additionally, the bass instruments used in the clarinet choir were generously provided by the Istanbul Clarinet Choir.

Anatolian Clarinet Connection (2024), the sponsor of the event, is an ensemble dedicated to expanding the artistic and cultural presence of the clarinet through innovative projects, concerts, and educational initiatives. The group focuses on both classical repertoire and contemporary works, often exploring interdisciplinary collabora-



Anatolian Clarinet Connection performing at Clarinet Days 2026

rations and new arrangements tailored to different members of the clarinet family. Through its activities, the ensemble aims to contribute to the development of clarinet

culture both in Türkiye and internationally. The ensemble members are: Yagizcan Keskin (soprano clarinet), Çağdaş Engin (alto clarinet), Onur Ustabaş (bass clarinet), and

İlter Vurucu (piano). See anatolianclarinet.com for more information.

"FOREST AND MUSIC OF AFRICA" EVENT HELD IN TOKYO

by Masatoshi Tanaka

On June 22, 2025, a special program entitled "Forest and Music of Africa" was held at the JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) Ichigaya Building in Tokyo. The day included a lecture on sustainable forestry and African blackwood, followed by a clarinet ensemble performance featuring more than 70 participants, ranging from junior high school students to adults. For many participants, it was their first time playing African music or performing in such a large clarinet ensemble, creating a powerful, unified soundscape.

The program was organized by JICA and was an official side event of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development, connecting music with global environmental issues and fostering collaboration between Japanese and African communities. Sessions focused on the relationship between musical instruments and African forests, including Yamaha's "Sound

Forest Project," an ongoing effort to protect and reforest African blackwood trees.

The clarinet ensemble performed four works connected to African themes and cultural exchange, concluding with a traditional Japanese melody to symbolize the bridge between Japan and Africa. Composed by Junya Hokoyama specifically for this event, *Amadeus in AFRICA* for solo clarinet and clarinet choir blended classical technique with African-inspired rhythmic elements. Van McCoy's *African Symphony* and Heiner Wiberly's *Ulla in Africa* brought powerful rhythmic drive, vibrant melodic lines, and energy from African musical traditions and motifs. Finally, *Furusato*, a beloved Japanese folk song, was performed in a setting composed by Teiichi Okano, concluding the program with a sense of home and reflection.

The event successfully connected music with environmental awareness, offering participants a deeper understanding of the importance of sustainable forestry.

Through learning and performance, the day highlighted how music can inspire action and strengthen our connection to the natural world.



Forest and Music of Africa event participants

TROY UNIVERSITY CLARINET DAY

by Timothy Phillips

On March 28, 2026, the John M. Long School of Music hosted its 19th annual Troy University Clarinet Day. Led by Timothy Phillips, the event brought together students and a wide range of guest artists, including Cecilia Kang and Eric Mandat, for a day of performances and educational sessions.

The festival began with a recital featuring Phillips alongside Michael Thrasher, Michael Rowlett, J. David Harris, Joshua Choi, and Seungho Choi. Their program included music by Pleyel, Singer, Poulenc, Widor, and Gershwin/Mangani, with pianists Benjamin Crook and Yuecheng Lu providing accompaniment.

Michael Rowlett later presented a lecture on chamber music performance, joined by five of his students from the University of Mississippi. Eric Mandat followed with a recital of his own compositions, including selections from *Chiral Symmetries* (2013) for solo clarinet and *Shrouded Angels* (2026) for clarinet and interactive technologies, and also led a master class.

Cecilia Kang, accompanied by Crook and Lu, performed works by Gerald Finzi, Georg Philipp Telemann, Sang Jin Kim, and Myroslav Skoryk. She also contributed to the day's instruction by teaching a master class.

The event concluded with a showcase featuring the guest artists and clarinet en-

sembles. Phillips conducted the Troy University Clarinet Choir in the first movement of *Finding the Words* by Michael Markowski. A quartet consisting of Joshua Choi, J. David Harris, Seungho Choi, and Michael Rowlett performed Mendelssohn's *Romance*, op. 67, no. 2 (arranged by Nicholas Baldeyrou). Mandat performed *Hommage à Carl Maria von Weber* by Kovács, and Kang presented *Andromeda* by Marc Mellits.

The combined clarinet choir closed the program with Pachelbel's *Canon*, *Westward*

Engine by Emily Stuart, *Irish Suite* by Elliot del Borgo, and *The Washington Post* march by John Philip Sousa, under the direction of Jerianne Larson.

Phillips and the festival team extend their sincere appreciation to this year's sponsors, including Troy University students and staff, Vandoren Paris, BG France, Playground Music, Buffet Crampon, and D'Addario. They invite everyone to join them again for next year's event, scheduled for early April 2027.



Artists from left to right: Yuecheng Lu, Benjamin Crook, Seungho Choi, Timothy Phillips, J. David Harris, Eric Mandat, Cecilia Kang, Michael Rowlett, and Joshua Choi.

ARTISTS' DAY CELEBRATED IN INDIA

by K. Yoga Raveesh Bharath

On January 21, 2026, Bharath Samskruthika Kala Kendra organized the Artists' Day and "Suggiya Sobagalli Sangeetha Sanje" program, a celebration of artists and an acknowledgement of the contributions of institutions, governments, and individuals who provide platforms and encouragement for art, which is held on the birthday of internationally renowned clarinet maestro and International Clarinet Association Chairperson of India Dr. Pt. Narasimhalu Vadavati. The event was held at Anjanapura BDA Layout in Bangalore, India and it was

attended by 100 people.

Presiding over the function was renowned Hindustani classical music vocalist, President of Bharath Samskruthika Kala Kendra, and former member of the Karnataka Sangeetha Nritya Academy, Vadati Sharada Bharath. She stated that the role of parents and institutions in nurturing children's interests in the arts is immense.

The Assistant Director of the Department of Kannada and Culture for the Government of Karnataka, R. Chandra Shekhar remembered Vadavati as an outstanding artist after the program's inauguration. Chandrashekhar said that although

the government has many departments, he feels fortunate to have the opportunity to serve in the Department of Kannada and Culture. Through this department, he has had the chance to meet and interact with artists ranging from young talents to eminent personalities such as the internationally-acclaimed Vadavati.

He further stated that those who read, appreciate, perform, and present literature, music, and art possess a unique aura. Artists and writers are never stagnant; they are always dynamic and ever flowing with enthusiasm and brilliance. Therefore, celebrating Artists' Day is meaningful, as creativity

emerges primarily from artists. Art inspires people to become cultured individuals. He praised Vadavati for his remarkable achievement of performing Indian music on a foreign instrument and earning appreciation from audiences abroad.

Such traditions form an integral part of our cultural heritage. He appreciated the institution for inviting artists from different regions and organizing programs, which help audiences learn about their talent and promote cultural exchange. When a person's inner skills are nurtured and brought out, both the individual and their abilities

gain greater value.

Addressing the children, he advised that arts help develop concentration, discipline, patience, and dedication in studies, encouraging them to achieve higher academic results. Along with professional success, they can also earn recognition through their artistic pursuits and bring pride to their parents.

Following this, the Secretary of Bharath Samskruthika Kala Kendra, K. Yoga Raveesh Bharath, highlighted the importance of artists and acknowledged the contributions of those who provide platforms and

encourage the growth of art. He said Artists' Day is celebrated to remember and honor all such contributors to the arts.

Performances were made by several artists, including Jahnvi B. Singh, who presented an Anklung performance; Vadavati Thejashree Bharath, Vadavati Shreyankitha Bharath, Sai Sanjana, Vinutha and Vadavati Sharada Bharath, who rendered Hindustani classical vocal music; and various students of Bharath Samskruthika Kala Kendra also performed. These performances were accompanied by Kedar Pujari on the tabla.

COLLEGE AND PRE-PROFESSIONAL ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE UPDATE

by Anthony J. Costa, Committee Chair

The International Clarinet Association's College and Pre-Professional Engagement Committee (CPEC) supports undergraduate, graduate, and pre-professional clarinetists—those who have completed a degree but are not yet employed in a full-time position. Our mission is to connect members with resources and mentorship that support their career development, performance goals, and professional growth through targeted initiatives and events. A list of current committee members is available at: <https://clarinet.org/about/ica-committees/>

CPEC also maintains a webpage featuring past presentations and curated resources for ICA members: <https://clarinet.org/cpec/>
Available resources include:

- **ClarinetFest® 2023 Sessions:** Chamber Music Opportunities; Entrepreneurship; Navigating the Audition Circuit; Arts Administration Opportunities; and an Overview of College Teaching
- **ClarinetFest® 2024 Session:** The University Job Search
- **ClarinetFest® 2025 Session:** Working as a Private Instructor

In addition, CPEC provides:

- A suggested reading list
- A college/university teacher database
- Fireside interviews (coming soon)
- A curated list of online resources organized by topic
- Additional helpful links

We hope ICA members find these resources valuable at every stage of their professional journey. If there is a topic you would like CPEC to address in a future session, please submit your suggestion using the form available at: <https://clarinet.org/cpec/>

College and university teachers who would like to be included in our database are invited to complete the form at the same link above.

CPEC extends its sincere thanks to the ICA administration, board, and membership for their continued support. We look forward to continuing to serve the clarinet community.

2026 EASTERN NEW MEXICO UNIVERSITY SINGLE REED CELEBRATION

by Kiana Ramirez

The Eastern New Mexico University Single Reed Celebration was hosted by Pamela Shuler and Richard Schwartz on February 20 and 21, 2026. This year's featured guest artists were Corey Mackey, associate professor of clarinet at Texas Christian University's School of Music, and Allen Cordingley, assistant professor of saxophone and

director of jazz studies at Texas Christian University's School of Music. The festival consisted of master classes, presentations, recitals, and performances of three new works premiered by the ENMU Festival Clarinet and Saxophone Choir.

The event opened with a concert featuring performances by Cordingley, Mackey, and collaborative pianist Lanjiabao Ge. Mackey performed works by John Heins,

Jacob Nance, Joel Love, Kinan Azmeh, and Marc Mellits. On February 21, Cordingley and Mackey presented a session with information on their teaching of music in higher education. Mackey also worked with ENMU clarinetists in a master class.

The event concluded with a performance of Nancy Nourse's *Fantasia on Land of the Silver Birch* by the ENMU Clarinet Ensemble, followed by a performance



Photo by Sidney Shuler

ENMU Single Reed Celebration Festival Choir

of new works from composers Jonathan Bjorklund, David Bowman, and Daniel Jimenez by the ENMU Festival Clarinet and Saxophone Choir.

A special thank you to the ENMU Friends of Music Organization for their support of this year's event.

KEY CHANGES AND CLOSING CHORDS

Compiled by Emily Kerski

KEY CHANGES

Andrea Caputo won the associate principal clarinet position with the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

Yan Liu was appointed principal clarinetist of the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra.

Ángel Martín won the solo clarinet position with the Opéra national de Paris.

Louis Milne won the second and E♭ clarinet audition for the Long Beach Symphony Orchestra.

Anders Peterson won the principal clarinet audition for the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra.

CLOSING CHORDS

Freddy Arteel, leading Belgian clarinetist and former principal clarinet of the Philharmonic Orchestra of Antwerp, passed away on April 29, 2026, at the age of 88. Arteel taught at the Royal Conservatory of Ghent, served as a faculty member for numerous international music courses, and performed chamber music with the Belgian Clarinet Quartet, Windquintet of Antwerp, and Ensemble Contrasts. In 1993, he hosted the International Clarinet Festival in Ghent, attended by 700 clarinetists from around the world.

Ashley Booher, Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra bass clarinetist and professor, passed away on March 16, 2026, at the age of 41. A tribute will appear in an upcoming issue.

Angela Malsbury, British clarinet soloist and longtime clarinet professor at the Royal Academy of Music, passed away in January 2026, at the age of 80. A tribute appears in this issue.

Ken Peplowski, American jazz clarinetist and tenor saxophonist, passed away on February 2, 2026, at the age of 66. Widely regarded as one of the leading voices of the clarinet in contemporary jazz, his work was noted by critics and fellow musicians for its warm tone and stylistic versatility within mainstream and swing jazz. Born in Cleveland, he developed an early affinity for the clarinet and went on to build an influential career combining technical mastery with deep respect for jazz tradition. Peplowski came to prominence in the 1980s through his work with swing ensembles and became a prolific recording artist, appearing on hundreds of albums as a leader and performer.



Ken Peplowski

(Information drawn from Alex Williams, "[Ken Peplowski, Who Helped Revive the Jazz Clarinet, Dies at 66](#)," *The New York Times*, February 11, 2026.)

Send information for this column to associateeditor@clarinet.org.

A TRIBUTE TO ANGELA MALSURY (1945-2026)

by George Caird

Angela Malsbury, who has died at the age of 80, was one of the most distinguished clarinetists of her generation, a sought-after orchestral player who also shone as a chamber musician and soloist and an eminent teacher whose students include some of our most successful players today.

Born in Preston on May 5, 1945, Angela moved to Leicestershire at an early age where her musical ability soon became apparent both as a pianist and a clarinet player. She joined the Leicestershire Schools Symphony Orchestra, gaining her early training that led naturally to being offered an Associated Board Scholarship to the Royal College of Music in 1962 where she studied with the legendary Thea King, who in later life became a mentor, colleague, and close friend.

Angela began her orchestral career with the BBC Training Orchestra in Bristol but was soon to be appointed to the London Mozart Players as second clarinet to Thea King. Appointed as principal clarinet in 1983, she retained this position for over 30 years, working closely with the orchestra's principal conductors, Harry Blech, Dame Jane Glover, Matthias Bamert, Andrew Parrott and Gérard Korsten. She was quickly absorbed into the London music profession performing regularly with the London Sinfonietta, the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, and many other orchestras.

Angela had a special affinity with chamber music, where her wonderful clarinet sound and her astute ability to play within an ensemble underpinned countless performances and recordings. She worked regularly with such illustrious quartets as the Amadeus, Allegri, Medici, and Maggini, and later extensively with the Coull String Quartet with whom she recorded the Mozart Clarinet Quintet. With the Medici Quartet she recorded the beautiful Clarinet Quintet by Wilfred Josephs, a work dedicated to her. With the cellist Rohan de Saram and pianist David Pettit, she was a member of the De Saram Trio, was also a member of the Albion Ensemble, and played regularly as a guest with the Nash Ensemble and London Winds. She made her Festival Hall concerto debut in



Angela Malsbury

1972 and performed in many other major halls during her career, playing the Mozart and Weber on many occasions as well as concerti by Crusell, Alice Mary Smith, Joseph Horowitz and the premiere of Paul Patterson's Clarinet Concerto.

But perhaps her most important and personal performing was with her husband, the pianist and organist, David Pettit. Having met when he was a young teacher at her school in Leicestershire, David and Angela enjoyed over 60 years of marriage and performed as clarinet and piano duo for all that time. Together, they were sought after artists on the music club circuit and, working with the promoter Stephanie Williams, performed on over 30 cruises presented by Richard Baker for P&O and taking them to many parts of the world.

Angela had a lifelong interest in teaching the clarinet, perhaps feeling strongly the legacy that she had received from her studies with Thea King. For many years, she taught for the Birmingham School of Music (now Royal Birmingham Conservatoire) and from 1987 she was professor of clarinet at the Royal Academy of Music (RAM). Her dedication and attention to the needs of every student set her apart and over the years a great many of her students have progressed to enjoy success in the music profession.

Every day seemed to have excitement in it and Angela's energy helped everyone she worked with through all eventualities. With a colorful dress sense and a true touch of glamour, life itself was a performance to be relished and every day not to be missed.

REMEMBERING OUR 'DARLING' ANGIE

"Without Angela Malsbury's inspirational teaching and unwavering support, believing in me at a time when I didn't believe in myself, I wouldn't be in this wonderful profession today."

— Robert Plane,
former Principal Clarinet of
BBCNOW, clarinetist of
Ensemble 360

"Angie's warmth and generosity benefitted her colleagues and students alike. Our many predominantly chamber music collaborations were defined by her serious, but not overbearing artistry, always combined with a lightness of touch and her irrepressible sense of fun."

— Andrew Marriner,
former Principal Clarinet,
London Symphony Orchestra and
Academy of St Martin in the Fields

"I knew Angie from the 1980s, when we played together in the London Mozart Players and the Albion, and always admired the warmth of her playing, her friendship and loyalty, and the shared laughter and fun that earned us the name 'the terrible twins;' she will be greatly missed."

— Philippa Davies,
Nash Ensemble and
Former Principal Flute,
London Mozart Players

"From the moment I walked into the RAM audition room, I wanted to study with Angie. I feel so privileged to have had the opportunity. Angie not only taught



Angela Malsbury and David Pettit

me how to play, but helped me to find my confidence as both a person and a performer. I feel lucky to

have had such a strong and powerful woman nurture, guide and inspire me during those four years, and the impact in turn has helped form the way I am as a teacher."

– *Dr. Sarah Watts,
Low clarinet specialist and
Performance Lead at
the University of Sheffield*

"I'm sure many fellow students would recognize Angie's gift for bringing out the best in each individual, taking care to understand us as people and to help us find our own path in the profession, always with joy and a glint in the eye!"

– *Chi-Yu Mo,
Principal E-flat Clarinet,
London Symphony Orchestra*

"Angie was one of the most influential people in my life. She was

the most supportive teacher imaginable and later became a wonderful friend and lifelong mentor, from whom I often sought advice. She inspired me, not only in terms of music but how to live life to the full, with positivity, humour and kindness. I miss her so much."

– *Katherine Lacey,
Principal Clarinet,
Royal Philharmonic Orchestra*

"Angie warmly welcomed her many international RAM students; how potent was her impact that after only a year of study, I still find myself constantly remembering her sayings, her wit, and her grounded, practical advice: without which I would not have my professional career today."

– *Emily Kerski,
The U.S. Army Band "Pershing's
Own" and ICA Associate Editor*

TRIBUTE TO MICHEL PORTAL (1935-2026)

by *Jean-Marie Paul*

French clarinetist Michel Portal passed away on February 12, 2026. How to sum up Michel's musical life? Even after 40 years of friendship, I don't know precisely how to do it. Each time I met him, I discovered an aspect of his life, of his thoughts, that I was not aware of. On the other side, he was living from day to day in his Parisian flat, no curtains on the windows, with luggage ready to go. In 2015, for his 80th birthday, I made a book of pictures for him, where I had collected photos, interviews, discography, filmography, etc. He had tears in his eyes looking at all these souvenirs that suddenly came to light. This is what I remember of him. Michel, multi-instrumentalist, playing and recording classical music to free jazz, composing films, giving interviews ranging from specialized magazines to newspapers and TV. A career which was and will remain unique in France. And he was still playing on stage until two years before his death. He died in Paris, aged 90; he was buried at the Père-Lachaise cemetery.

Portal was born in Bayonne, a city on the Atlantic Ocean, not far from the Spanish frontier. From the age of 8, he studied clarinet at the Bayonne National School of Music. He played with local folk groups and chamber orchestras.

He then studied clarinet with Ulysse Delécluse and conducting with Pierre Dervaux at the Paris Conservatory. He won first prize for clarinet in 1959. Delécluse told Robert Van Doren (who told me the story) that Portal was one of his best stu-



Guy Deplus (former Paris Conservatory professor 1978-1988) and Michel Portal pictured at the Vandoren Music Store in 2006.

Photo by Jean-Marie Paul



Photo by Laurent Sultan

Paul Meyer, Michel Portal, and Jean-Marie Paul in 2012 at the Vandoren door. Meyer and Portal often played concerts and recorded together in the last years.

dents, even if he disliked his nights spent in free jazz (“for the embouchure”). The class was collective; the students were listening to their fellows on a bench, waiting for their turn. Sometimes Portal did not have time to learn the studies or solos de concours (Delécluse instituted the rules of performing by memory), so he was trying to be called among the final students, giving him the time to finish memorizing the piece. He was a good reader; he had a special scholarship but could not learn the whole repertoire as this was a time of military service. He was sent to Algeria where war was occurring at the end of the 1950s.

He began to earn his livelihood by playing everywhere: cabarets, musical balls, jazz clubs, and with famous French singers including Barbara, Édith Piaf, Claude Nougaro, Charles Trénet, and more.

A FEW LANDMARKS

- 1963: Won the Geneva International Music Competition and the Swiss Jubilee Prize for clarinet.

- 1965: Won the 8th International Music Competition Of Budapest.
- 1979: On February 3, he played the evening concert of “Michel Portal Unit” (free jazz) at the Olympia Hall in Paris, the mythic hall where most of the French and international pop singers performed. He performed at the Olympia Hall a second time in 2006 with Paul Meyer and other jazz clarinetists; a second performance at the Hall is exceptional for a non-singer and he was probably the only clarinetist given the freedom to organize a concert like this.
- 1983: Won the Grand Prix National de la Musique.
- 2020: Release of his last CD (free jazz) in commemoration of his 85th birthday (*MP 85*).
- 2025: Release of *Le Souffle Portal*, a book of interviews with Franck Médioni.

SELECTED PREMIERES

- 1969: Stockhausen’s *Aus den sieben Tagen* recording.
- 1995: *Portal*, a clarinet concerto dedicated to him by Franco Donatoni.
- 1970: *Domaines* (version with 21 instruments), recorded for LP and CD (conducted by Diego Masson). He told me that Boulez had changed his mind after the recording: no more performing other than the version for clarinet alone. Boulez said, “He is a musician who crosses styles with incredible freedom; he doesn’t play, he explores.”
- 1980: Georges Aperghis: *280 Measures* for clarinet alone.
- 1996: György Kurtág: *Tre Pezzi* for clarinet and cymbalum.
- 2003: Bruno Mantovani: *Metal for Two Clarinets* (for Paul Meyer and Michel Portal).
- 2005: Jean-Louis Agobet: *Génération*, concerto for three clarinets (Paul Meyer, clarinet, Michel Portal, bass clarinet, and Alain Billard, contrabass clarinet).
- 2012: Five premieres for clarinet duet in concert with Portal and Meyer from composers Cavanna, Dusapin, Jarrell, Escaich, and Connesson.

The number of recordings in jazz is too important to list them here. He is consid-

ered “one of the architects of modern European jazz.”¹

Among many instruments, Portal played mainly the clarinet, bass clarinet, saxophone, bandoneon, and tárogató. He performed and recorded classical and modern music by Mozart, Brahms, Berg, Poulenc, Boulez, Stockhausen, Berio, Kagel. Throughout his career, notably from the 1980s, he composed numerous scores for film and television. He won the César Award three times for Best Music Written for a film. In 1990 and 1995, he won a *Sept d’or* Award for best music for TV.

In 1997, he spent 15 days in seclusion with young musicians to work in depth on Mozart’s clarinet concerto. This experience resulted in *Le concerto de Mozart*, a film by Jean-Louis Comolli and Francis Marmande in which Portal reinterprets the meaning of each note and reflects on each measure.² Between 2021 and 2023, he agreed to be the main character in Benjamin Delattre’s *Quelques notes sur la liberté* (*Some Notes on Freedom*), a film exploring the composer and improviser’s creative process, which premiered at the Côté Court festival in Pantin in June 2025.

To conclude, the best way to understand Portal is perhaps to let him speak. This is a summary from my last interview with him, which I translate: “I remain a bit off-road. This musical versatility fits well with me. I am here to serve Mozart and respect the score. By contrast, in jazz it is the revenge, violence; I want to explode.”³ Portal the musician knew where he wanted to go, even if he did not want to settle down. He loved the image of birds that never land! Portal thought that the musician had to stir music like the sea shakes the waves, and then something original would emerge.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Clifford Allen, “Michel Portal: Meanings, Feelings and Rivers,” *All About Jazz*, July 1, 2005, www.allaboutjazz.com/michel-portal-meanings-feelings-and-rivers-michel-portal-by-clifford-allen (accessed May 2, 2026).
- 2 Éditions Montparnasse, “Le Cinema de Jean-Louis Comolli (DVD),” www.editionsmontparnasse.fr/p1420/Le-Cinema-de-Jean-Louis-Comolli-DVD (accessed May 2, 2026).
- 3 Jean-Marie Paul, “Michel Portal: fou de musique depuis l’enfance,” *Profession Musique* 15 (2016).

ICA ANNOUNCEMENTS

SITE SEARCH – CLARINETFEST® 2029/2030

Interested in hosting a future ClarinetFest®? The ICA board of directors is soliciting the assistance of the general membership in identifying potential international and USA sites for ClarinetFests® 2029 and 2030. In order for the proposal to be considered, all documents must be submitted by the proposed Program Director(s) and include:

- Cover letter by proposed Program Director(s) stating intent
- Detailed biography and contact information for proposed Program Director(s)
- Three letters of recommendation for proposed Program Director(s)
- Names of proposed artistic team members
- Proposed dates, which are typically Wednesday through Saturday, in July or early August (4-day festival with 3 days of exhibition)
- Written proof of financial support from various agencies
- Complete addresses and detailed maps of all hotels and performance/exhibitor venues, including an outline of their proximity to each other
- Proposal addressing all site requirements as listed below

Being sought are locations with the following attributes:

- **Performance Spaces** – Superior acoustical space with multimedia capabilities conducive for the presentation of concerts, recitals, lectures, and master classes. Having two or more performance venues in the same location is considered optimal. Minimum capacity of the large hall should be 1,000-1,200 seats.
- **Exhibition Space** – Approximately 15,000-25,000 sq. ft. exhibition/ballroom space located in or near the same facility where program presentations will take place. Four additional nearby smaller rooms to be used as instrument manufacturer tryout spaces. All exhibition spaces must have the ability to be secured during non-business hours.
- **Housing** – Hotel with a variety of price options able to accommodate budgets ranging from students to corporate executives. Capability to house a minimum of 800 individuals, with additional hotels nearby.
- **Travel** – Access to major transportation centers (e.g., airports, train stations).
- **Excursions** – Interesting tourist activities in, or within the vicinity of, the city/area of the venue.
- **Other** – Incorporation of area musical resources (e.g., professional symphony orchestras, jazz ensembles, chamber musicians, military ensembles) adds greatly to the local experience for those attending ClarinetFest®.

Proposals are accepted electronically on a rolling basis with the above listed requirements. Interested parties can find a copy of the ClarinetFest® Artistic Director Handbook [HERE](#). Please send materials to:

Catherine Wood
ICA President, President@clarinet.org

Jessica Harrie
ICA Executive Director, EDO@clarinet.org

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SITE SEARCH – LOW CLARINET FESTIVAL 2029/2030

The ICA board of directors is soliciting the assistance of the general membership in identifying potential international and USA sites for Low Clarinet Festival 2029 and 2030. In order for the proposal to be considered, all documents must be submitted by the proposed Program Director(s) and include:

- Cover letter by proposed Program Director(s) stating intent
- Detailed biography and contact information for proposed Program Director(s)
- Three letters of recommendation for proposed Program Director(s)
- Names of proposed artistic team members
- Proposed dates have typically been Wednesday through Saturday and historically in January. However, the total number of conference days and the month in which the conference is offered could be flexible as needed so long as it does not conflict with ClarinetFest®
- Written proof of financial support from various agencies
- Complete addresses and detailed maps of all hotels and performance/exhibitor venues, including an outline of their proximity to each other
- Proposal addressing all site requirements as listed below

Being sought are locations with the following attributes:

- **Performance Spaces** – Superior acoustical space with multimedia capabilities conducive for the presentation of concerts, recitals, lectures, and master classes. Having two or more performance venues in the same location is considered optimal. Minimum capacity of the large hall should be 250-300 seats.
- **Exhibition Space** – Approximately 5,000 sq. ft. exhibition/ballroom space located in or near the same facility where program presentations will take place (space for between 15-20 tables). Two additional nearby smaller rooms to be used as instrument manufacturer tryout spaces. All exhibition spaces must have the ability to be secured during non-business hours.

- **Housing** – Hotel with a variety of price options able to accommodate budgets ranging from students to corporate executives. Capability to house a minimum of 200 individuals, with additional hotels nearby.
- **Travel** – Access to major transportation centers (e.g., airports, train stations).
- **Excursions** – Interesting tourist activities in, or within the vicinity of, the city/area of the venue.
- **Other** – Incorporation of area musical resources (e.g., professional symphony orchestras, jazz ensembles, chamber musicians, military ensembles) adds greatly to the local experience for those attending Low Clarinet Festival.

Proposals are accepted electronically on a rolling basis with the above listed requirements. Please send materials to:

Catherine Wood
ICA President, President@clarinet.org
Jessica Harrie
ICA Executive Director, EDO@clarinet.org



CLARINETFEST® 2027: GENERAL CALL FOR PERFORMANCE AND LECTURE/WORKSHOP PROPOSALS

Application Deadline: October 1, 2026

ClarinetFest® 2027 will take place in beautiful Salt Lake City, Utah, July 7-11, 2027. The Artistic Leadership Team consists of Jaren Hinckley, Madeleine LeBaron, Lee Livengood, Jenifer Olson, Jeremy Reynolds, Darrin Thiriot, and Artistic Directors, Laura Grantier and Jeffrey O'Flynn.

The theme for 2027 is *Bridging Communities*. The Artistic Team would like to invite headlining proposal submissions that explore the following key concepts:

- Fusion of traditional and modern musical elements
- Exploration of musical community
- Collaborative approaches across regions and peoples

In addition to performance proposals, the ICA would like to invite members to submit proposals for the following types of sessions:

- Hands-On Workshops where members can readily participate
- Panel Discussions
- Sessions focusing on topics of Community Building, Strategies for Industry Success, Health and Wellness, and Global Styles

ClarinetFest® 2027 will be held at the University of Utah, just 15 minutes from the Salt Lake City International Airport and 10 minutes from downtown Salt Lake City. Connected to the airport by the UTA Trax Public Transit, Salt Lake City offers an abundance of lodging, shopping, parks, and dining. Major attractions include Abravanel Hall,

Delta Center, Temple Square, State Capitol, Utah Museum of Natural History, Cottonwood Canyons, and more. Only 3-4 hours away are the NPS "Mighty Five" – Arches, Bryce, Canyonlands, Capitol Reef, and Zion. Also, Utah boasts many amazing state parks such as Antelope Island, Dead Horse, Great Salt Lake, Wasatch Mountain, and more! Come experience "Life Elevated" in this beautiful state!

There are several public transportation options from the SLC International Airport to downtown SLC with train and bus services. Taxis are also available.

The ICA will be arranging room blocks at a discounted rate for Little America Hotel near the University of Utah.

There is a \$20 application fee for each proposal. Proposals without accompanied payment will not be considered.

The fee can be paid at the following link:
<https://clarinet.wildapricot.org/event-6410318>

For questions about the application process, contact clarinetfest2027@clarinet.org

For payment questions, contact EDO@clarinet.org



CALL FOR HONORARY MEMBERSHIP NOMINEES

In accordance with the International Clarinet Association by-laws (Article V, Section 6), a special category of Honorary Membership has been created for persons of "unusual distinction." The International Clarinet Association board of directors invites the general membership to nominate living individuals for Honorary Memberships from the areas of professional service, teaching, performance, and/or lifetime achievements. Nominators should include a brief biographical sketch of the candidate along with further information as specified below. There is a limit of one nomination per person. Nominations must be emailed or postmarked no later than **December 31, 2026**, and sent respectively to sec-retary@clarinet.org or by mail:

International Clarinet Association
Attn: Secretary
83900 Old Cheney Rd, Suite 201
PMB 203
Lincoln, NE 68516 USA

Nominations for Honorary Memberships should include:

- 1 Printed name of the nominator
- 2 Nominator's address, phone number, and email address
- 3 Name of nominee
- 4 Nominee's address, phone number, and email address
- 5 Biographical sketch of nominee
- 6 Supporting documentation of nominee's qualifications 📄📄



PEDAGOGY CORNER

by Shawn Copeland and Jackie McIlwain

A CLARINETIST ON HER HEAD: REDEFINING SUPPORT

For decades, “support” has been one of the most frequently used and least clearly defined words in clarinet pedagogy. We are told to “support more,” “push from the diaphragm,” or “hold up the sound.” These directions are meant to help. Often, they produce immediate results. But they also produce confusion and require unnecessary effort.

In our previous two articles, we clarified two essential pieces of the breathing mechanism. First, inhalation is organized by the diaphragm contracting and the ribs swinging upward and outward. Second, rib movement, not the diaphragm, is the primary structural driver of air movement. When ribs move freely, air flows. When rib movement is restricted, the rest of the system compensates.

If ribs move the air, and the diaphragm contracts only on inhalation, how then does the definition and explanation of support change in the clarinet studio?

WHAT SUPPORT HAS COME TO MEAN

In studio language, “support” often blends three different ideas:

- increasing airspeed
- maintaining pressure
- preventing loss of tonal focus

Clarinetists, however, frequently interpret “support” as:

- to push
- to brace
- to tighten
- to hold

This mismatch is the root of much confusion. Breath cannot hold anything up. Air is not a manufactured column we push through the instrument. Support, in its quieter and more accurate sense, means to assist.

We assist the sound by organizing the movement of the body during exhalation in relationship to the instrument’s resistance.

WHY WE GET IT WRONG

Pushing works, at least at first.

If we push the abdominal wall outward during exhalation in order to play loudly, the tone often improves immediately. The sensation feels powerful and active. Our

teachers hear more volume and respond positively. The instruction appears validated.

If this direction is given in the context of increasing volume, this direction contradicts the intended result. By pushing outward during exhalation, we interfere with rib descent and the diaphragm’s natural rise. Remember, the abdominal cavity does not fill with air, and it does not increase in volume. It changes shape. When we push the belly outward, we oppose the natural return of the diaphragm and ribs. The front of the torso braces. The upper ribs often become fixed. The shoulder girdle tightens. Tone may grow louder, but flexibility diminishes. The system works harder than necessary.

Support is not pushing more air. It is regulating the release of air.

SUPPORT AS SLOWING, NOT FORCING

Consider a simple experiment. Take a casual inhale and blow out a candle. The exhalation is quick. Too quick to vibrate a reed. The clarinet requires both air velocity and duration.

Photo by Swak Photography and Karen Cubides Agency



Shawn L. Copeland is a pioneer in the fields of musician wellness and performance training. His innovative, creative, and transformational approach has set him apart as a multidimensional musician, pedagogue, and entrepreneur. His unique methods have established him as a leader, culminating in the founding of [mBODYed, LLC](#), a company that is reshaping the landscape of performance training for musicians, actors, and dancers. Shawn is a performing artist and clinician for Buffet Crampon USA, Gonzalez Reeds, Inc., and the Silverstein Group.



Jackie McIlwain, D.M., is a passionate clarinet pedagogue whose innovative teaching infuses principles of Body Mapping and Alexander Technique, providing fresh ideas and perspectives that not only help her students grow musically but also challenge them to incorporate their whole selves into their music. Dr. McIlwain has been at the University of Southern Mississippi since 2013 and currently serves as associate professor of clarinet. She is also a Buffet Crampon performing artist and Vandoren artist-clinician.

- A fast airstream is not the same thing as a fast exhale.
- The reed needs velocity. The phrase needs time.
- Support is the modulation of time under pressure.

When we play, we are not trying to force air forward. We are slowing and regulating the natural release so that it matches the resistance of the reed, mouthpiece, and bore.

HOW THE ABDOMINAL CAVITY ACTUALLY WORKS

The abdominal cavity is a sealed space. No air enters it (see Figure 1, the torso).

On inhalation, the diaphragm descends and the abdominal contents shift to accommodate the expansion of the lungs above. The cavity changes shape, not volume. On exhalation, the diaphragm releases upward, the ribs descend, and the abdominal contents return toward resting position.

During exhalation, different muscular engagements create different musical outcomes.

Figures 2 and 3 (abdominal wall and intercostal muscles) show the muscles needed for support. For louder dynamics, the rectus abdominis assists the internal intercostal muscles to create faster rib descent. Faster rib descent increases air velocity. This is often inaccurately described as “push from the stomach,” but the underlying coordination is rib driven.

For softer dynamics, the transverse abdominis (TA) plays a more nuanced role. The TA wraps around the torso and provides gentle circumferential containment rather than outward pushing. At the same time, rib descent becomes more precisely regulated. The internal intercostal muscles assist the downward movement of the ribs, while the external intercostals remain partially active to prevent sudden collapse. This balanced co-contraction¹ allows the ribs to descend slowly and steadily. Air remains pressurized even as the release is extended. The reed continues to vibrate, though the phrase is quieter.

Both loud and soft dynamics rely on rib movement. What changes is the rate of rib descent, the degree of co-contraction between the internal and external intercostals, and the way the abdominal wall engages to regulate pressure.

LOUD AND SOFT: VARIATIONS OF THE SAME MECHANISM

Loud playing:

- Faster rib descent
- Front-of-abdominal wall assists
- Increased air velocity over a shorter duration

Soft playing:

- Slower rib descent
- Balanced engagement of the transverse abdominis
- Sustained pressure with extended duration

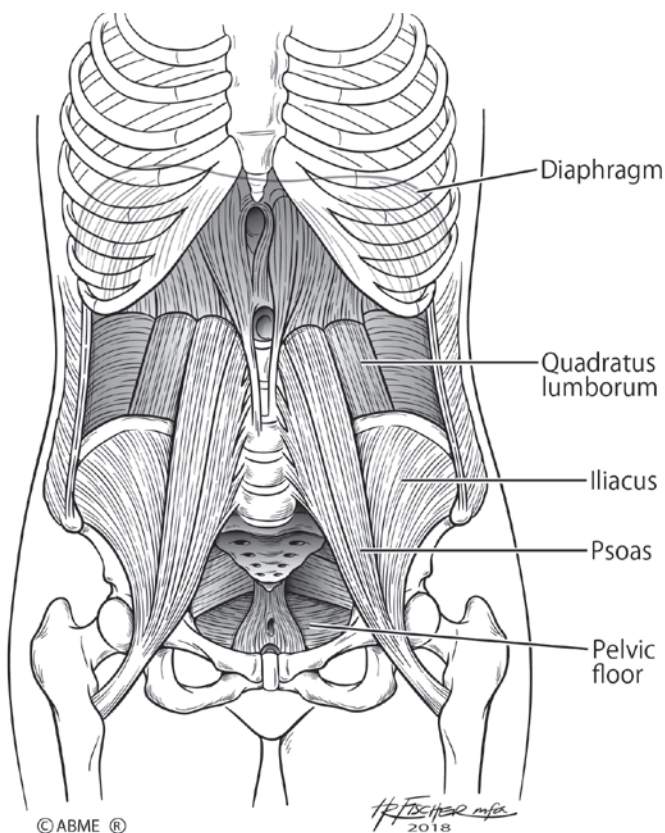


Figure 1: The Torso

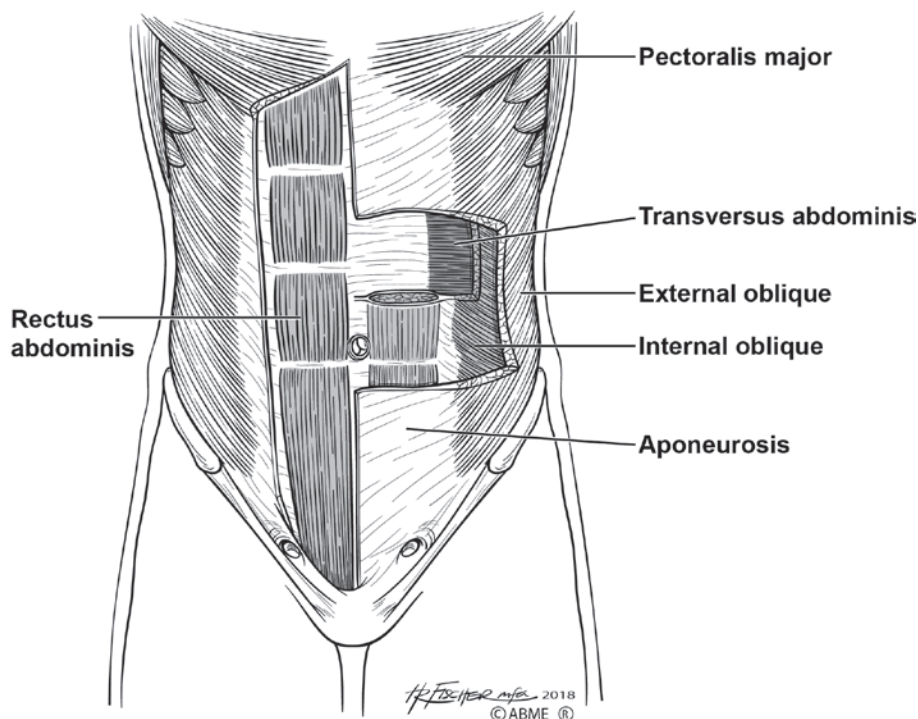


Figure 2: Muscles of the Abdominal Cavity

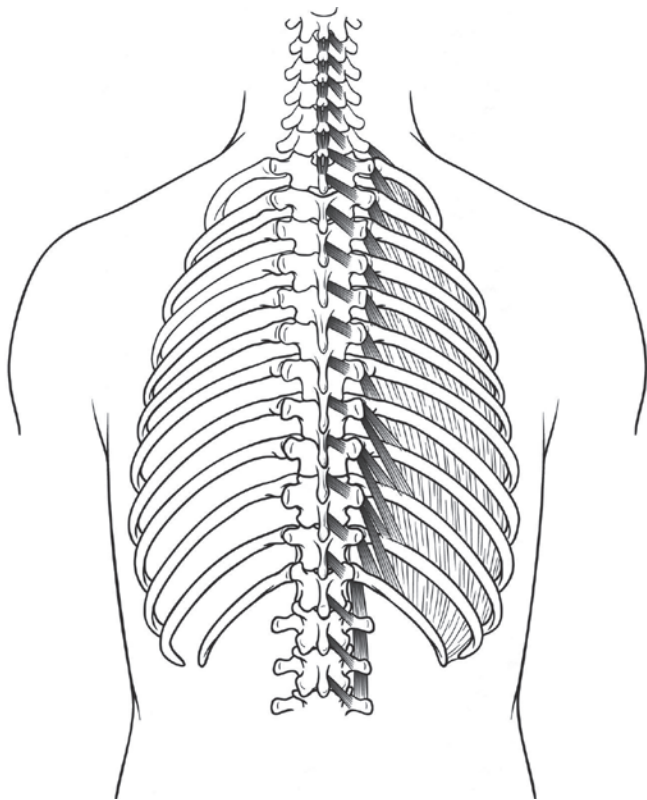


Figure 3: Intercostals and Levatoris muscles

These are not separate systems. They are coordinated variations of the same mechanism responding to musical intention.

THE TONGUE'S ROLE

The torso organizes pressure. The tongue refines compression.

When the tongue rises toward the hard palate, the oral cavity narrows and airflow accelerates. This shaping influences pitch, voicing, and tone focus. The throat does not drive airflow. The tongue and embouchure shape what the torso supplies.

Support is therefore distributed coordination:

- Ribs regulate timing
- Abdominal musculature assists pressure
- Tongue shapes velocity
- Embouchure balances resistance

WHAT SUPPORT IS NOT

Support is not:

- pushing the belly outward
- bracing the ribs
- lifting the chest
- involving the throat
- collapsing the lower back

These patterns interrupt coordination and replace organization with effort.

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

- 1 Allow and observe rib movement during long tones at multiple dynamics. Are the upper ribs free to descend?
- 2 Notice whether loud passages increase pushing or increase rib speed.
- 3 Explore soft playing by allowing rib descent to slow while gently engaging the transverse abdominis.
- 4 Take only the breath that matches the phrase. Avoid stacking air.

When rib movement leads and abdominal musculature assists rather than opposes, support becomes reliable and adaptable.

CLOSING THE SERIES

In this series, we have clarified three essential ideas:

- 1 Inhalation organizes itself within a balancing body.
- 2 Ribs are the primary drivers of air movement.
- 3 Support is the regulation of exhalation, not the forcing of air.

When these elements are understood anatomically and applied pedagogically, breath ceases to be mysterious. Tone becomes less muscular and more resonant. Phrasing becomes less effortful and more temporal.

You were born knowing how to inhale and exhale. Clarinet playing does not require replacing that design. It requires understanding it. ♪♪

ENDNOTES

- 1 Co-contraction refers to the simultaneous engagement of muscles that produce opposing actions in order to regulate and refine movement rather than generate force. In breathing for clarinet playing, this may occur when the internal intercostals assist rib descent while the external intercostals remain partially active to slow that descent, allowing controlled pressure and steadiness in the airstream without bracing or collapse.

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MASTER CLASS

by Luigi Magistrelli



Luigi Magistrelli has served as an ICA national chair for more than 20 years. He teaches at the Milan Conservatory and has performed widely in Europe, Asia, and the US. Magistrelli has recorded almost 100 CDs featuring solo and chamber music repertoire of the Classical and Romantic periods, often highlighting neglected or rediscovered clarinet literature. He has a personal clarinet collection of 250 instruments of different types and epochs. For his recordings, Magistrelli has used different types of clarinets, from the chalumeau to 5-, 8-, and 10-keyed boxwood clarinets; Müller, Albert/Baermann, Boehm, and Oehler system; clarinets in E♭, D, B♭, C, and A; and basset horns and low clarinets. Past recording collaborators include Dieter Klöcker and Karl Leister.

NINO ROTA SONATA IN D MAJOR FOR CLARINET AND PIANO (1945)

The *Sonata for Clarinet in D major* by Nino Rota is considered one of the most interesting and appealing Italian clarinet sonatas of modern times. Its conservative style makes it quite unique in the panorama of clarinet compositions of the modern period.

Giovanni Nino Rota (1911–1979) was born into a musical family in Milan, and was renowned as a child prodigy. At the age of 11, he wrote the oratorio *L'infanzia di San Giovanni Battista*, which was performed in Milan and Paris as early as 1923. At 13 he composed *Il Principe Porcaro*, a three-act lyrical comedy, which was published in 1926.¹ Rota studied at the Milan Conservatory under Giacomo Orefice and then undertook composition study with Ildebrando Pizzetti and Alfredo Casella at the Conservatorio Satna Cecilia in Rome, graduating in 1929.² Rota later moved to the United States, where he lived from 1930 to 1932 while attending the Curtis Institute, where he studied conducting with Fritz Reiner and composition with Rosario Scalero. He earned a degree in literature from the University of Milan, graduating in 1937, and began a teaching career that led to a directorship in Bari.³

Rota was particularly known for his work in motion picture soundtracks, producing more than 150 film scores for various productions from the 1930s until his death in 1979. Most notably, he composed music for the films of Federico Fellini, Luchino Visconti, and Francis Ford Coppola.⁴ This culminated in an Academy Award for his music in Coppola's *The Godfather* trilogy, specifically the *Godfather, Part II* (1974).⁵

Rota had a special affection for the clarinet, writing not only this sonata for the instrument,

but also an *Allegro Danzante* for clarinet and piano (published by Schott in 1977); a *Trio* for clarinet, cello and piano; and a wind quintet bearing the title *Petite Offrande Musicale* (written in 1943, dedicated to the composer Alfredo Casella). He also produced *Lo spiritismo nella vecchia casa* (*Spirit Raising in the Old House*)—incidental music for solo clarinet for one of Ugo Betti's plays. This demanding composition features spectral effects and diverse atmospheres. Also worth mentioning is an interesting, melodic, and brilliant *Nonet* for strings and winds published by Ricordi in 1959.

The *Sonata* was dedicated to clarinetist Attilio Torquato Scotese (1899–1988). We know of a documented performance of the work at the *Sala di musica* of Mr. Bruno Giannini in Bari on January 20, 1948. Personally, I have greatly



Cover of the Ricordi edition of Rota's *Sonata*.

enjoyed performing this sonata both in Italy and abroad, and I have recorded it twice on compact disc. The work clearly has a lightness in character, perhaps related to Rota's many film soundtracks. It is imbued with typical Italian lyricism and a hint of nostalgia. An uncomplicated work, it is clearly missing the bold experimentalism of his contemporaries. This is a calm, largely serene, and very lyrical work, shining in some places, yet reflective and dreamy in others.

In this sonata, Rota followed the neo-classical approach that was fashionable in the mid 20th century. Despite its simplicity, the formal structure is quite solid. Interestingly, Rota wrote for the A clarinet, perhaps thinking of the instrument's darker and mellower sound. In studying the original manuscript, it can be seen that Rota later

changed a number of details, particularly in the last movement. For example, 26 bars in the middle section of that movement were later omitted, as well as other measures just before the last page of the published version.

Unfortunately, the 1945 Ricordi first publication of the *Sonata* does not have measure numbers, so I will refer to staves and page numbers.

FIRST MOVEMENT: "ALLEGRETTO SCORREVOLE"⁶

The initial "Allegretto scorrevole" of the first movement, conceived in the typical sonata form, is presented in traditional sections with an underlying lightness and simplicity that dominates the entire work. The two main sections, in the tonic (D) and dominant (A), support two distinct

themes. Melodic material is subsequently expanded through transformations that never seem unsettling. The recapitulation, which blends a few harmonic surprises from the development, brings us back to the calm and light atmosphere that characterized the opening.

In the first staves of the sonata, persistent triplets create a lyrical and cantabile mood. Emphasize the longer line, but also consider the single hairpins. It is very important to honor the long diminuendo through the third bar of the third stave before the *pianissimo* marking. Relax the phrase, then build up the tension into the *forte* marking, followed by a clear and relaxed diminuendo.

The following two patterns with 16th notes should be flowing and played *mezzo forte* before and *forte* later. At the beginning

Opening of movements two and three of Rota's *Sonata*.

of page two of the clarinet part, we have three statements of an important eighth note pickup slurring to high E or E $\flat$; these should be played with good expressive emphasis. The triplet figuration at the end of the phrase should be played with freedom and a meditative feeling. Later, until the third stave of page three, we have phrases that should be approached with a dreamy character, with some figurations similar to the ones present on the first page. The *tranquillo* (calm) section includes groups of 16th notes which embellish the phrase. The clarinetist must be careful not to rush this section, maintaining the *tranquillo* character through the end of the movement. A short incipit taken from the beginning leads to a calm and thoughtful conclusion of this first movement.

SECOND MOVEMENT: "ANDANTE QUASI ADAGIO"

The central movement begins with a quiet, meditative opening. There is a small degree

of contrasting material in the middle section where we should use a good amount of *rubato* in order to move the phrase forward. I would think about balancing the tempo (which is *Andante quasi Adagio*—not the opposite!) in order not to make the melodic lines too heavy, in spite of the meditative feelings clearly conveyed by Rota. The clarinetist should approach the long melodic lines in different registers with smooth and expressive feelings. The reprise is shifted an octave lower, thus generating a darker mood. With an undemanding conclusion, which effectively balances the opening mood, the work ends with a recitative-like phrase. In almost all aspects, this movement requires a very liquid quality of legato. The key of F $\sharp$ minor was clearly chosen to evoke a particular quality and mood.

THIRD MOVEMENT: "ALLEGRO SCORREVOLE"

In the first theme of this final movement, Rota requires a carefree, almost childish

melodic approach. The tempo must be clearly thought in two. In the first phrase, think about the longer line, with a good sense of direction leading to the first bar of the third stave of page six. After this cheerful opening, the composer inserts contrasting reflective material, but be sure to maintain a flowing tempo. At the end of the last page, we have an indication of *un poco animato*, meant only for two staves. Note that in the Ricordi edition, there are two mistakes to be corrected in the third and fourth bars of the second stave of page seven: both of the As should be A $\sharp$, as appears in the original manuscript. All of these calm eighth notes through the *animato* serve to prepare the final part at double tempo, concluding the piece with a sparkling and impressive accelerando.

This is a lovely composition that clearly demonstrates Rota's inventiveness and command of rich harmonies. The clarinet writing exudes a graceful charm, while the piano part is playable yet appealing. Although Rota's writing reflects 19th century aesthetics, his works also convey the influence of many of his 20th century contemporaries. While his traditional style was sometimes criticized, he reportedly quipped, "When they tell me that in my works I am only concerned with bringing a little nostalgia and a lot of good humor and optimism, I think that is how I would like to be remembered: with a little nostalgia, a lot of optimism, and good humor."⁷

ENDNOTES

- 1 Nicolas Slonimsky, *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1992), 1548.
- 2 Francesco Dalla Vecchia, "Nino Rota," in *Musicians and Composers of the 20th Century*, edited by Alfred W. Cramer (California: Salem Press, 2009), 1241.
- 3 Slonimsky.
- 4 Vecchia, 1241.
- 5 Vecchia, 1243.
- 6 *Scorrevole*, meaning "flowing," is not present in the autograph and was apparently added later.
- 7 Cf. Mary Kenedi, "Nino Rota and His Beautiful Sonata for Clarinet and Piano," accessed April 14, 2026, www.gabrielblasberg.com/en/post/nino-rota-and-his-beautiful-sonata-for-clarinet-and-piano.

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ÉTUDE

by Daniel Dorff



Daniel Dorff began composing at the age of 16 to provide himself with repertoire for saxophone, his first instrument. He soon switched to clarinet and has primarily remained a composer while staying active as a wind player. Dorff's composition teachers included George Crumb, Karel Husa, and George Rochberg. He studied clarinet with Ronald Reuben and Gary Gray, and saxophone with Sigurd Raschèr. Dorff became the Editor for Theodore Presser Company in 1985 and has been Presser's VP of Publishing since 2006.

CONCERT ÉTUDE NO. 1 (2026)

Concert Étude No. 1 was composed for this issue of *The Clarinet*. All its thematic motives are taken from the first movement of my *Concerto No. 2*, premiered by clarinetist Christopher Hill with the South Dakota Symphony in 2024.

My fun challenge in writing the étude was choosing phrases from a long concerto movement, originally composed as the soloist's dialogue with a busy orchestral accompaniment,

then creating a three-minute unaccompanied solo sounding organic and coherent, and then letting the music evolve further from that starting point.

I hope the fun challenge for performers will be nailing the rhythm and feel. While *Concert Étude No. 1* looks relatively straightforward at first glance, driving through its irregular syn-copations while always pushing forward can be deceptively tricky and the key to an exhilarating performance. 🎷

2026 ICA ELECTION RESULTS

Results of the ICA officer election for the 2026-2028 term are listed below:

President Elect:

Cecilia Kang – 130
Jeremy Reynolds – 126
Scot Humes – 53
Abstain – 13



Cecilia Kang



Julianne Doyle



Corey Mackey

Secretary:

Julianne Doyle – 132
Vanessa Davis – 63
Christy Banks – 52
Osiris J. Molina – 49
Abstain – 26

Treasurer:

Corey Mackey – 117
Andrea Vos-Rochefort – 100
Vanguel Tangarov – 48
Abstain – 29
Lucas Willsie – 28

Congratulations to our new officers who will start their terms on September 1, 2026. We thank all of the candidates for their willingness to serve our association.

– Diane Barger, Past President and Chair of Nominating Committee

Concert Étude No. 1

(on excerpts from *Concerto No. 2*)

DANIEL DORFF

Driving (♩ = c. 104)

f

4

5

p sub.

f

7

mp sub.

9

f sub.

11

cantabile

14

poco rit.

15

a tempo

f

sfz sub.

f

17

sfz

f sempre

20

22

23

26

cantabile

poco rit.

mf

f

30

mp

f

mf

f

34

(f)

mf

mp

mf

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37 *(mf) cresc.*

40 *mp sub.*

43 **44** (2+2+3 sempre) *f sempre*

47 **49**

51 **53**

54

57 *mf sfz p sub. sfz*

61 **62** *f mp mf*

64 *f sempre*

67

71

74 , grandiose *ff*

SALON DE LA CLARINETTE

by Eric Hoeprich



Eric Hoeprich is a specialist in performing on historical clarinets in music from the Baroque to the late Romantic. Educated at Harvard University and the Royal Conservatory of Music in The Hague, he was for decades on the faculties of the Royal Conservatory of Music (The Hague), the Paris Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique, London's Royal Academy and at Indiana University, Bloomington. He was a founding member of Frans Brüggen's Orchestra of the 18th Century, where he served as principal clarinet for 40 years. His monograph, *The Clarinet*, was published in 2008 by Yale University Press.

This column, curated by Eric Hoeprich, explores the historical clarinet—the instrument, its players, its music, and its portrayal in images—through original columns and featured guest writers.

HONORÉ DAUMIER & LA CLARINETTE

A previous incarnation of this column (“Hysterically Speaking”) centered around humorous depictions of clarinetists, for the most part from the 18th and 19th centuries.¹ Several columns referred to creations by French caricaturists including Honoré Daumier (1808-1879), a French illustrator, painter, and sculptor active in the mid-19th century. Daumier was a keen observer of hypocrites, slightly dodgy individuals, and outright imposters. And he loved to satirize, poke fun, and occasionally hold forth. Importantly, he also seems to have had a particular fondness for the clarinet; one could estimate that Daumier employed this particular musical instrument in his images more than any other.²

By the 19th century, the clarinet had become well known in French musical life. From its founding in 1795, the *Conservatoire* had some 13 clarinet teachers on the faculty, and the instrument had become relatively common—from military bands to the opera. As a result, there were also numerous clarinet makers in Paris, and elsewhere in France, making the instrument easily accessible.³ Curiously, one notes that the players depicted here invariably have the left hand below the right, which might perhaps in itself appear to be a sort of joke.⁴

In spite of a professed preference for painting, Daumier spent most of his life creating political cartoons for Parsian newspapers such as *Le Charivari* and *La Caricature*. By some reckoning he produced over 4,000 lithographic prints, and thousands more images in other mediums. Although themes relating to music were rare, among these, clarinet players appeared relatively frequently. And what intrigues us is that so of-

ten the clarinet is played by slightly disreputable types—street musicians, beggars, down-and-out former military musicians, etc., as seen in the first example, illustration 1, *Chanteur Des Rues* (“Street Singer”). Here the clarinetist is not “in action,” but the mouthpiece is easily visible.⁵ The player actually looks half asleep (inebriated?), standing out on the street next to his trusty partners—a violinist and another *copain*, apparently able to play the violin *and* sing at the same time. We do not get the impression it would have sounded especially beautiful.⁶

In illustration 2, Daumier again features the “classic” combination of clarinet and violin, this time with a large drum added to the mix in this *Les Musiciens de Paris*. The text of the first two lines of the caption refers to a French equivalent of “There’s no place like home ...”⁷ Daumier, a staunch Republican, slyly mocks this sentimental view of the return of a constitutional monarchy under King Louis-Philippe I, who ruled France from 1830-1848—much of Daumier’s lifetime.

“Ou peut un être mieux (bis)
“Qu’an sein de sa famille ...”

*Les trois artistes se trouveraient mieux au
seindu cabaret, et leur jeune associe au
sein d’une partie de billes.*

“Or perhaps one could not be better off
(bis)

“Than within the bosom of his family ...”
These three artists would be better off in
the cabaret, and their young associate
in a game of marbles.

At the time, the populist appeal of another reign of “royalty” simply led to years of corrup-

tion, and the eventual return of a Republic for a second try in 1848.⁸ (Daumier's grotesque depiction of Louis-Philippe, called *Gargantua*, which appeared in *La Caricature*, would lead to his imprisonment for six months in 1831.)

After a successful career as a journalist, Léon Faucher entered politics following the demise of Louis-Philippe in 1848 and the creation of the second Republic. Unfortunately, Faucher did not manage to navigate the complexities of French political life for more than a year. In illustration 3, we see Daumier capturing his ignominious departure as a news item (*Actualités*), serenaded by two rather scruffy looking clarinetists, serving as a sort of “honor” guard. The caption drips with irony, and we sense the shame of both parties.

Monsieur Léon Faucher tenant à se faire rendre à la sortie de son hotel les honneurs accordés par le decret de Messidor an VIII aux ministres dégommes.

Mr. Léon Faucher insisted on receiving, upon leaving his *hôtel*, the honors granted by the Messidor decree of year VIII to dismissed ministers.⁹

The sign reading “Avis Portefeuille Perdu” (“Notice of Lost Waller”) presumably refers to his lost position in government. All quite miserable, especially given the great promise Faucher had shown earlier in his career.

In a lighter vein, illustration 4 shows a pair of musicians (yet again, clarinet and violin) approaching the mayor of a provincial town with an offer of a “benefit concert.” Entitled “*Les Philantropes du Jour*” (“Philanthropists of the Day”), we gather that this proposal may not quite be on the level; certainly the sum of 800 Francs for “expenses” is nothing less than exorbitant.¹⁰

— *Monsieur le Maire ... de passage dans votre ville nous venons vous proposer de donner un grand concert au benefice des pauvres... nous ne préleverons sur la recette absolument que nos frais de voyage ... qui ne montent qu'à huit cents francs.*

— Mr. Mayor ... passing through your town, we come to propose to give a big concert for the benefit of the poor ... we will absolutely only take our travel expenses from the proceeds ... which amount to a mere eight hundred francs.

To be fair, the pair appears to be a step up from the street musicians above, with decent-looking clothing and some politesse. The mayor is not buying it, but seems more amused than outraged. The handsome top hat at center stage suggests this accessory just might have also been used to collect money on some previous occasions.

And finally, in illustration 5, we have the emergence of the clarinet to the *Salon* of a self-satisfied, “former” clarinet player:



Illustration 1. Chanteur des Rues, Honoré Daumier (private collection).



Illustration 2. Les Musiciens de Paris, Honoré Daumier (private collection).



Illustration 3. Actualités, Honoré Daumier (private collection).

— Oh ! Monsieur quel talent possède mademoiselle votre fille ... quel talent, quel talent!

— Dans notre famille nous sommes tous supérieurement organisés pour la musique ... moi même, dans ma jeunesse, j'ai été de première force sur la clarinette.

— Oh, sir, what talent your daughter possesses ... what talent, what talent!

— In our family, we are all exceptionally gifted in music ... I myself, in my youth, was a first-rate clarinetist.

We appear to have arrived at the *Salon de la Clarinette*! Far from the street and the *hoi polloi* of the scenes above, we've entered a beautiful *salon*, with a chandelier and elegant drapery, affording a suitable background to a performance by the lovely,



Illustration 4. Les Philanthropes de Jour, Honoré Daumier (private collection).



Illustration 5. Croquis Musicaux, Honoré Daumier (private collection).

young “mademoiselle,” playing on a grand piano with at least one admirer nearby. The conversation in the foreground between a pair of sycophants (twins?) and their host—well-dressed, presumably well-off, and certainly well-fed—oozes with the self-satisfaction of an *arriviste*. And with it, we might say the clarinet has also arrived.

Yet there is the nagging suspicion that, as usual, Daumier might be making fun, that we might be observing a parvenu in spite of the evident comfort and sophistication of the lovely *Salon avec “famille.”* The reference to, of all things, the clarinet, hangs in the air. Why, exactly, the clarinet? We will probably never know. From what we have seen in Daumier’s other images, this might belie what is otherwise a scene of domestic tranquility. Perhaps the smug patriarch’s prosperity has a less than distinguished source? After all, he played the clarinet in his youth. ♪♪

ENDNOTES

- 1 For example, see *The Clarinet* 43, no. 2 (March 2016): 22.
- 2 See also chapter 1 in *The Clarinet*, ed. Jane Ellsworth (University of Rochester Press, 2021).

- 3 Early Parisian makers included initially Prudent, Porthaux, Geist & Amlingue, followed by Adler, Brelet, Lefèvre, Guerre, Baumann, various members of the Buffet family (from c. 1810), Gentellet, Godfroy, members of the Lot family, Martin frères, Pezé, Sax, various members of the Thibouville family, and Winnen, to name but a fraction.
- 4 Presumably this is *not* just an error resulting from a reversed graphic image. Daumier would have been wise to that, and in any case his signature and the text are not backwards.
- 5 Interesting that the clarinet appears with the reed below—not exactly the French way in this period, but also not entirely surprising.
- 6 Pairing the violin and clarinet was a tradition in Romani music.
- 7 Possibly a reference to the 1823 song, “Home! Sweet Home!” by John Howard Payne, and about a hundred years before “The Wizard of Oz.”
- 8 France would endure similar upheavals several more times before achieving the current Fifth Republic, established by Charles de Gaulle in 1958.
- 9 After the Revolution, the French had adopted the “Republican” calendar in which Messidor is the tenth month, spanning June and July. Here, the French word *hôtel* refers to a government building.
- 10 According to various sources, 800 Francs in c. 1850 would have been equivalent to roughly \$10,000 in purchasing power today.



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INTERNATIONAL SPOTLIGHT

by Marta López Arquillos

ENGLISH VERSION



Born in Martos (Jaén, Spain), Marta López Arquillos studied at the Professional Conservatory of Music "Ramón Garay" in Jaén, graduating with highest honors, and later completed her bachelor's degree at the Higher Conservatory of Music "Manuel Castillo" in Seville. She has performed as principal clarinet with orchestras such as the Deutsch-Skandinavische Jugend-Philharmonie in Berlin, and has been selected for the Andalusian Youth Orchestra roster. An active chamber musician, she is currently pursuing a master's degree in performance at Musikene in San Sebastián.

THE SOURCES OF WEINBERG'S CLARINET SONATA¹

Just six months after the end of World War II, 1945, Mieczysław Weinberg (1919-1996) finished his *Sonata for Clarinet and Piano*, op. 28. The Polish composer was living in exile in Moscow, within the artistic sphere of Dmitri Shostakovich. The sonata vividly conveys a synthesis of nostalgia, the composer's personal identity (expressed through subtle inflections of Jewish folk-music elements) and the aesthetic demands of Soviet Socialist realism. An understanding of Weinberg's music, born of a composer who came of age amid profound upheaval, requires situating it within the complex historical context of his life. His professional trajectory was deeply shaped by the political and social turmoil of the first half of the 20th century. It is impossible to separate his compositional output from the events of World War II and the horrors of the Holocaust; correspondingly, his musical language (and this sonata in particular) bears the imprint of his exile, the Soviet communist regime, and Stalinist repression.²

The circumstances surrounding the composition of the sonata are directly rooted in the Nazi invasion of Poland. Weinberg had just completed his studies at the Warsaw Conservatory when his parents and sister were forcibly relocated to the Łódź ghetto. From there, they were deported to the Trawniki extermination camp, where they were murdered in 1943. Weinberg was the sole member of his family to survive.

Weinberg lived in exile in Minsk for two years, from 1939 to 1941. It was there that he

first encountered the music of Dmitri Shostakovich, an experience that profoundly impressed him and marked a decisive turning point in his development as a composer. This period came to an end in 1941, when Minsk was occupied during Operation Barbarossa. Along with thousands of Jewish refugees, Weinberg fled eastward, eventually reaching Tashkent (Uzbekistan).

In Tashkent, Weinberg composed several important works, including *Symphony No. 1*, op. 10, and the song cycle *Jewish Songs*, op. 13. This Yiddish song cycle is among his most intimate and moving compositions, paying tribute to his Jewish heritage and his childhood. Weinberg sent a copy of the symphony to Shostakovich, who was deeply impressed by the work; as a result, he arranged for Weinberg and his family to relocate to Moscow.³

Among the works composed during Weinberg's early years in Moscow are the *Piano Quintet*, op. 18, the *String Quartet No. 4*, op. 20, and the sonata that is the subject of this study.⁴

The present study examines the sources of the *Sonata for the Clarinet and Piano*, op. 28, with the aim of providing a detailed account of its compositional and editorial history. This examination has direct implications for a more informed interpretation of the work, one that seeks to remain as faithful as possible to the composer's musical intentions. The sources consulted for the sonata are as follows:

- **A:** Autograph manuscript.
- **M:** Russian edition published in Moscow in 1971 by Musyka.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32



Kelly Suero is Chair and Associate Professor of Spanish at Troy University. She earned her PhD and MA in Spanish from Purdue University and a BA in English and Spanish from Oklahoma State University. Her research centers on Latin American literature, human rights, and the intersections of technology and culture. She has conducted archival research in Argentina, including work with Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo, and is the author of *Technology and Gendered Genre Evolution in Latin America* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2020), as well as articles on digital culture and memory. She has presented her work nationally and internationally and received Troy University's Ingalls Award for Excellence in Teaching. She will begin an additional master's degree in Higher Education Administration at the Harvard Graduate School of Education in 2026.

LAS FUENTES DE LA SONATA PARA CLARINETE DE WEINBERG

por Marta López Arquillos

Apenas seis meses después del fin de la Segunda Guerra Mundial, en 1945, Mieczysław Weinberg (1919–1996) terminaba su *Sonata para clarinete y piano*, op. 28. El compositor polaco vivía exiliado en Moscú, bajo la órbita de Shostakovich. La sonata expresa a la perfección la combinación de nostalgia, la identidad del compositor (reflejada en sutiles pinceladas de folclore judío) y las exigencias del realismo soviético. Comprender su música requiere situarla en el complejo contexto histórico en el que transcurrió su vida. Su trayectoria profesional estuvo profundamente marcada por los difíciles acontecimientos políticos y sociales de la primera mitad del siglo XX. Es imposible no desvincular su producción de los avatares de la Segunda Guerra Mundial y de los horrores del Holocausto; del mismo modo, su música en general, y esta sonata en particular, están profundamente condicionadas por su exilio, el régimen comunista de la Unión Soviética y la represión estalinista.¹

Las circunstancias de la composición de la sonata se sitúan directamente en el contexto de la invasión nazi de Polonia. El compositor acababa de terminar sus estudios en el Conservatorio de Varsovia cuando sus padres y su hermana fueron trasladados al gueto de Łódź. Desde allí fueron deportados al campo de exterminio de Trawniki, donde murieron en 1943. Weinberg fue el único miembro de su familia que logró sobrevivir.

Weinberg vivió exiliado en Minsk durante dos años, desde 1939 hasta 1941. Fue allí donde escuchó por primera vez la música de Shostakovich, lo que lo dejó profundamente fascinado y marcó un antes y un después en su trayectoria como compositor. Este período llegó a su fin en 1941, cuando Minsk fue ocupada en el marco de la Operación Barbarroja. Junto a miles de refugiados judíos, Weinberg huyó hacia el este hasta llegar a Tashkent (Uzbekistán). Allí compuso varias obras importantes, como su *Sinfonía n.º 1*, op. 10, y *Canciones judías*, op. 13. Este ciclo de canciones se convirtió en una de sus obras más íntimas y conmovedoras, en la que rinde homenaje a su herencia judía y a su infancia. En cuanto a la sinfonía, Weinberg envió una copia a Shostakovich, quien quedó profundamente impresionado por la obra, lo que llevó a organizar el traslado de Weinberg y su familia a Moscú.²

Entre las obras compuestas durante los primeros años de Weinberg en Moscú, cabe mencionar el *Quinteto con piano*, op. 18, el *Cuarteto de cuerda n.º 4*, op. 20, y la sonata que constituye el objeto de este estudio.³

El estudio de las fuentes que proponemos para la *Sonata para clarinete y piano*, op. 28, ofrece una visión detallada del proceso editorial y compositivo, con implicaciones para una interpretación más fundamentada, con el objetivo de ser lo más respetuosa y fiel posible al pensamiento musical del autor. Las fuentes disponibles para la sonata son las siguientes:

- **A:** manuscrito autógrafo.
- **M:** edición rusa publicada en Moscú en 1971 por Musyka.

Con la letra **P** nos referimos a las distintas ediciones publicadas por Peermusic Classical (© 2005), que son:

- **P1:** edición publicada aproximadamente en 2007, facsímil de **M**.
- **P2:** edición revisada sin fecha.
- **P3:** edición actualizada, aproximadamente en 2017.

A, el manuscrito, consta de una portada y 16 páginas numeradas, además de algunas páginas en blanco al final del documento. Solo se conserva la partitura completa de la obra, sin parte independiente de clarinete. Aunque el manuscrito no presenta tachaduras, algunos pasajes fueron corregidos mediante fragmentos de papel pautado adheridos a la partitura original, fácilmente reconocibles debido al contraste entre el color ocre del papel inicial y el tono más blanquecino de las correcciones. En la portada figuran el número de opus y la fecha de 1945 y, al final, la partitura aparece firmada y fechada mediante un código inusual que podría interpretarse como indicativo de que fue compuesta entre el 6 y el 13 de noviembre de 1945. El manuscrito original se conserva en posesión de la viuda del compositor, Olga Rakhalskaya. La copia fotográfica con la que se ha trabajado es la utilizada para la preparación de la edición **P3**.

A finales de 1971 se publicó **M** por la editorial Música de Moscú (ИЗДАТЕЛЬСТВО «МУЗЫКА» en el original en ruso). Consta de una partitura completa de 31 páginas y de una parte de clarinete en La de 12 páginas. Asimismo, en la

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Figure 1. © Olga Rakhalskaya

- **P:** Editions published by Peermusic Classical (© 2005), designated as follows:

- **P1:** Edition published approximately in 2007, issued as a facsimile of **M**.
- **P2:** Revised edition, undated.
- **P3:** Updated edition, published approximately in 2017.

A, the autograph manuscript, consists of a title page and 16 numbered pages, followed by several blank pages at the end of the document. Only the full score of the work is known to survive; no separate clarinet part appears to be extant. Although the manuscript contains no deletions or crossings-out, several passages were revised using pieces of ruled paper pasted onto the original score. These revisions are clearly visible, as the base manuscript is written on ochre-colored paper, while the inserted corrections appear on lighter, whitish paper.

The manuscript bears the opus number and the date 1945 on the title page. At the end of the score, it is signed and dated using an unusual coded notation, which may be interpreted as indicating that the work was composed between November 6-13, 1945. The original manuscript is preserved by the composer's widow, Olga Rakhalskaya. The photographic copy consulted for the present study is the one used for the preparation of edition **P3**.

At the end of 1971, source **M** was published by the Moscow publishing house

Musyka (in Russian: ИЗДАТЕЛЬСТВО «МУЗЫКА»). This edition consists of a full score of 31 pages and a separate clarinet part in A comprising 12 pages. In addition, the back cover includes technical publication data printed in Russian and in the Cyrillic alphabet, translated below.⁵

Index 9-6-5

VAINBERG MOISÉI

SAMUILOVICH

For clarinet and piano

Editor: S. Sapozhnikov

Technical editor: G. Zablotskaya

Proofreader: A. Bariskin

Approved for printing on November 16, 1971

Paper format: 60 x 90 1/8

Printed sheets: 5.5

Publisher's sheets: 5.5

Print run: 2,300 copies

Edition no. 6941

Year of production: 1971, no. 581, order 3433

Price: 54 kopecks

Paper no. 2

Publishing House "Musyka," Moscow, Neglinnaya Street 14

Moscow Printing House no. 17

of Glavpoligrafprom, Press

Committee under the Council of

Ministers of the USSR, Shchipok Street 18

The numerical code 9-6-5, which I have translated as an index, is most likely

an internal editorial code, although its precise meaning remains unknown. We are also able to identify the individuals responsible for the edition, who were likely members of the regular staff of the Soviet publishing house. However, my research has uncovered no evidence of any direct relationship between these three individuals (editor, technical editor, and proofreader) and Weinberg, nor, by extension, Shostakovich.

Additional details are provided, including the price, the name of the printing house, and the edition number 6941, which corresponds to the publisher's plate number printed at the foot of each page. Today, this edition is relatively difficult to obtain, despite a WorldCat listing (OCLC 255321376) indicating more than eighty holdings. These records, however, actually refer to the facsimile **P1** (the first Peermusic Classical edition). Only two original copies of the Russian edition appear to be accessible in public libraries: the University of Toronto Library (Music Library Stacks M250.V25 op.28)⁶ and the Houston Cole Library at Jacksonville University (M250.V34 op.28, 1971).⁷ I have consulted both copies and have been unable to identify any differences between them.

P1 is the first edition published by Peermusic Classical and reproduces the Moscow edition (**M**) with very few modifications. These include the removal of the plate number from the bottom of the pages and the replacement of the Cyrillic page headers with Latin lettering and a German title. However, the editors failed to remove the marking "2. Вайнберг" at the bottom of page nine, which likely reflects an element of the structural organization of the original Russian edition possibly indicating booklet two of *Vainberg*.

In addition, this edition contains two introductory texts: a bibliographically-oriented introduction by Per Skans (2003) and a contextual introduction to the work by Nicholas Cox (2007). For this reason, the edition may be dated to the latter year. Both texts are presented in German and English. At the beginning of the score, the editors also identify a number of errata present in the Russian edition and propose corresponding corrections. I consulted the copy held at the Bibliothek der Musik-Akademie Basel (Switzerland) (C 12238).

CONTINUED ON PAGE 34

contraportada aparecen los datos técnicos de esta edición, en ruso, en alfabeto cirílico, cuya traducción se presenta a continuación:⁴

Índice: 9-6-5

VAINBERG MOISÉI
SAMUILOVICH

Para clarinete y piano

Editor: S. Sapozhnikov

Editor técnico: G. Zablotskaya

Corrector: A. Bariskin

Aprobado para impresión el
16/11/1971

Formato de papel: 60 × 90 1/8

Hojas impresas: 5,5

Hojas editoriales: 5,5

Tirada: 2300 ejemplares

Edición n.º 6941

Año de producción: 1971, n.º 581,
pedido 3433

Precio: 54 kopeks

Papel n.º 2

Editorial «Música», Moscú,
Neglinnaya, 14

Imprenta de Moscú n.º 17 de

Glavpoligrafprom del Comité de
Prensa ante el Consejo de Ministros
de la URSS, calle Shchipok, 18

El código numérico 9-6-5, que se ha traducido como “índice”, probablemente corresponda a un código editorial interno, aunque su significado exacto se desconoce. Asimismo, se conocen los nombres de los responsables de la edición, que probablemente formaban parte del personal habitual de la editorial soviética; sin embargo, no se ha encontrado evidencia en la investigación de una posible relación entre estas tres personas (editor, editor técnico y corrector) y Weinberg o, en su defecto, con Shostakovich. También se dispone de información como el precio, el nombre de la imprenta y el número de edición, 6941, que corresponde al número de plancha que aparece al pie de cada página.

En la actualidad, esta edición resulta difícil de localizar, a pesar de su registro en WorldCat (OCLC 255321376), donde se contabilizan más de 80 ejemplares; no obstante, estos corresponden en realidad al facsímil **P1** (primera edición de Peermusic Classical). Solo dos ejemplares originales de la edición rusa parecen accesibles en bibliotecas públicas: la Toronto University Library (signatura Music Library Stacks

M250.V25 op. 28)⁵ y la Houston Cole Library de la Universidad de Jacksonville (signatura M250.V34 op. 28, 1971).⁶ Ambas copias han sido consultadas sin que se hayan encontrado diferencias entre ellas.

P1 es la primera edición publicada por Peermusic Classical y reproduce la edición de Moscú (**M**) con muy pocas modificaciones. Entre los cambios se encuentran la eliminación del número de plancha al pie de las páginas y la sustitución de los encabezamientos en cirílico por alfabeto latino, con el título en alemán. Sin embargo, no se eliminó un “2. Вайнберг” al pie de la página 9, que probablemente corresponde a algún elemento de la estructura de la edición rusa, quizá el cuadernillo dos de Vainberg.

Además, esta edición incluye dos introducciones: una de carácter más bibliográfico, firmada por Per Skans en 2003, y otra centrada en el contexto de la obra, firmada por Nicholas Cox en 2007; por lo que puede inferirse que esta edición data de ese mismo año. Ambos textos están escritos en alemán e inglés. Asimismo, al inicio de la partitura, los editores identifican una serie de erratas presentes en la edición rusa, que reproducen y para las cuales proponen correcciones. El ejemplar consultado corresponde a la Bibliothek der Musik-Akademie de Basilea (Suiza) (signatura C 12238).

P2 constituye un estado intermedio entre el facsímil de la edición rusa y la edición actual, según información proporcionada por la propia editorial.⁷ La edición fue reescrita, aunque todavía no incluía las notas críticas que se incorporarían posteriormente, y tuvo una difusión muy limitada durante un breve período de tiempo. El objetivo de esta edición era ofrecer soluciones a las distintas erratas, incorporándolas directamente al texto musical lo antes posible, incluso antes de la finalización del comentario crítico, que sería incluido en **P3**.

La edición más reciente de la obra es **P3**, actualmente distribuida por Peermusic Classical. Esta edición ofrece la opción de elegir entre la versión para clarinete y la transcripción para viola realizada por Julia Adler en 2008, versión que ha tenido una gran acogida en los últimos años. No presenta una fecha de publicación explícita, pero debió publicarse en 2017 o a prin-

cipios de 2018, ya que fue reseñada por Juan Martín Koch en ese período.⁸ Asimismo, mantiene los mismos dos prólogos presentes en **P1**. Desde un punto de vista crítico, incorpora un valioso comentario final con las variantes entre **A** y **M**, y añade números de compás, de gran utilidad y ausentes en las ediciones anteriores.⁹

Es significativa la diferencia de fraseo y articulación entre **A** y **M**. Las comas de respiración, cuidadosamente colocadas y claramente visibles en **A** (fielmente reflejadas en **P3**), están completamente ausentes en **M**. En relación con este aspecto, las ligaduras difieren notablemente entre ambas fuentes.

En 1971, Weinberg se encontraba en plena madurez personal y artística, y gozaba de reconocimiento político; la editorial del régimen soviético publicó entonces su antigua sonata. Residía en Moscú, por lo que resulta razonable suponer que estuvo, de algún modo, involucrado en esa edición. Por lo tanto, la cuestión radica en determinar si los cambios en las articulaciones presentes en **M** fueron autorizados por el autor.

Gracias al trabajo crítico de los editores de Peermusic Classical, puede constatar que la edición **M** de 1971 salió con muy pocas erratas (anotadas en **P1**), lo que refuerza la idea de que el compositor trabajó en estrecha colaboración con los editores y que existió un proceso editorial cuidadoso. Sin embargo, resulta llamativo que, pese a la precisión del texto musical (prácticamente libre de errores a pesar de su complejidad armónica), las articulaciones difieran de manera tan significativa con respecto al manuscrito.

El manuscrito, sin duda, fue redactado en noviembre de 1945, ya que tanto la doble barra final como la rúbrica parecen haber sido realizadas con la misma tinta. En cuanto a las correcciones adheridas al manuscrito mediante papel añadido, puede sostenerse que corresponden al propio año 1945 o a un momento muy próximo. Esta conclusión se basa en que ambas caligrafías son tan similares que no parecen corresponder a 1971, veintiséis años después.

La primera gran sección corregida abarca los compases 34 a 46 del primer movimiento, y la segunda, los compases 33 a 38 del segundo movimiento, únicamente en el pentagrama del clarinete. Al

CONTINUED ON PAGE 35



Figure 2. © Olga Rakhalskaya

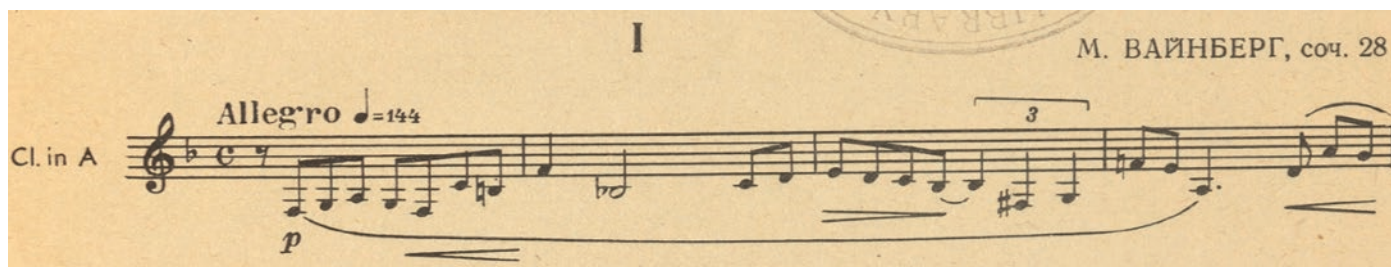


Figure 3. © Moscow: Musyka, 1971

P2 represents an intermediate state between the Russian facsimile (**M**) and the current edition (**P3**). The existence of this edition was communicated to me directly by the publisher.⁸ Although the score was rewritten, it did not yet include the critical notes that would later be incorporated, and it circulated only briefly and in very limited numbers. The purpose of this edition was to implement corrections to the various errata as quickly as possible by incorporating them directly into the music, even before completion of the final critical commentary later included in **P3**.

The most recent and up-to-date edition of the work is **P3**, which is currently distributed by Peermusic Classical. This edition also offers the option of performing either the original clarinet version or the transcription for viola by Julia Adler (2008), a version that has enjoyed considerable success in recent years. Although no official publication date is indicated, it was likely released in 2017 or early 2018, as it is reviewed by Juan Martín Koch in that year.⁹ This edition retains the same two introductory texts as **P1**. From a critical standpoint, **P3** incorporates a valuable commentary at the end detailing the variants between **A** and **M**. It also introduces measure num-

bers, which are extremely useful and absent from the earlier editions.¹⁰

A striking difference can be observed between **A** and **M** with regard to phrasing and articulation. The breath commas, carefully placed and clearly visible in **A** (and accurately reproduced in **P3**), are entirely absent from **M**. Related to this, articulation slurs differ substantially between the two sources.

By 1971, Weinberg was at the height of his artistic and creative maturity and enjoyed a significant degree of political acceptance; it was at this time that the Soviet state publishing house issued his earlier sonata. As Weinberg was living in Moscow, it is reasonable to assume that he was involved, at least to some extent, in the preparation of this edition. The central question, therefore, is whether the changes in articulation found in **M** were authorized by the composer.

Thanks to the critical work carried out by the editors of Peermusic Classical, it is clear that the 1971 edition (**M**) was published with very few errata (documented in **P1**), a fact that supports the idea that the composer worked closely with the editors and that the edition was produced with considerable care. Nevertheless, it re-

mains striking that, despite the remarkable precision of the musical text (virtually free of errors in spite of its harmonic complexity) the articulations differ so markedly from those found in the manuscript.

The manuscript was undoubtedly written in November 1945, as both the final double barline and the signature appear to have been written using the same ink. With regard to the corrections affixed to the manuscript on separate sheets of paper, I maintain that these were made in 1945 or very shortly thereafter. This conclusion is based on the striking similarity of the hand in both layers, which do not appear to correspond to work carried out in 1971, 26 years later.

The first major corrected passage encompasses measures 34 to 46 of the first movement, while the second covers measures 33 to 38 of the second movement, in both cases limited to the clarinet staff. When compared with the Russian edition, these passages coincide in every respect (including articulation) with a high degree of precision. This correspondence provides further evidence in support of the use of the known manuscript as the basis for the preparation of **M**.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 35

compararlas con la edición rusa, coinciden en todos los aspectos, incluidas las articulaciones, con gran precisión. Este hecho puede considerarse un argumento adicional a favor del uso del manuscrito conservado como base para la elaboración de **M**.

Se observa únicamente un pequeño signo en el compás 45 del primer movimiento, donde se produce un cambio de 4/4 a 3/4. El compositor indica, aunque de manera apenas visible en la partitura, la equivalencia de negra = negra. Este detalle no aparece en la edición **M** y, debido a su reducido tamaño, también pasó inadvertido para los editores de **P3**. En cambio, el mismo tipo de indicación presente en el compás 32, correspondiente al cambio a 6/4, sí fue recogido en ambas ediciones.

Así pues, el resultado de este análisis es que el manuscrito **A** constituye la base sobre la que la editorial rusa trabajó para publicar **M**, pero que, durante el proceso de corrección de pruebas, Weinberg desarrolló una concepción distinta de la articulación de la obra, fruto de un cuarto de siglo de experiencia musical. Esta nueva perspectiva es la que refleja **M** y, en cualquier caso, debe considerarse autorizada por el compositor. No parece plausible que los editores o correctores rusos tomaran esta decisión de manera autónoma, especialmente considerando su notable coherencia musical.

El artículo se abre con la circunstancia biográfica del compositor y continúa con la providencial presencia de Shostakovich en su trayectoria, que condicionó el traslado a Moscú y, con bastante probabilidad, la primera edición impresa de la sonata. No queríamos concluir este estudio sin ubicar las coordenadas ideológicas en las que consideramos que esta obra debe ser entendida e interpretada.

El análisis realizado revela un importante vínculo estético con Olivier Messiaen que merece ser destacado en relación con esta obra concreta. Para ello, resulta necesario detenerse en el antepenúltimo acorde del tercer movimiento de la sonata (c. 81). Se trata de un acorde de dominante con apoyaturas cuya función es proporcionar un color armónico específico; es decir, no parte de una tríada o cuatríada ordinaria, sino que persigue un efecto tímbrico o cromático.

Este acorde cumple exactamente la misma función y presenta la misma resolución que el primer acorde asignado al piano en el *Quatuor pour la fin du temps* de Messiaen. Lo que Messiaen plantea al inicio, Weinberg lo sitúa al final de la obra. Se establece así la hipótesis de una relectura del horror presente en el cuarteto transformado en un mensaje de esperanza en la sonata.

Cabe incluso plantear que la elección del clarinete como instrumento para esta obra podría estar condicionada por el eco de los compases iniciales del cuarteto, en los que clarinete y piano suenan solos. Conviene recordar que el cuarteto fue publicado en Francia tres años antes de la composición de la sonata de Weinberg.¹⁰ La inspiración del cuarteto parte del *Libro del Apocalipsis* y, en este sentido, guarda una estrecha relación con el propio “apocalipsis” vivido por Weinberg en 1945, año de composición de la sonata.

Esta lectura comparativa de las diferentes fuentes y versiones de la sonata tiene como finalidad establecer un punto adicional de reflexión sobre la trayectoria de una obra crucial del repertorio del clarinete del siglo XX. A partir del análisis realizado y de las hipótesis planteadas, este estudio se propone ofrecer al intérprete nuevas perspectivas de interpretación, enriqueciendo una lectura que aspire a mantenerse coherente con la idea compositiva que Weinberg tenía sobre la obra. ♪♪

ENDNOTES

- 1 El presente artículo es un extracto de una de las secciones de mi Trabajo de Fin de Grado, defendido en el Conservatorio Superior de Música “Manuel Castillo” de Sevilla en junio de 2025, bajo el título *Música tras el Holocausto: Sonata para clarinete y piano, op. 28 de Mieczyslaw Weinberg*. Mi agradecimiento a Israel Sánchez López la dirección del trabajo. El trabajo íntegro puede consultarse en la biblioteca del Conservatorio Superior de Música “Manuel Castillo” de Sevilla.
- 2 David Fanning, *Mieczyslaw Weinberg: In Search of Freedom* (Hofheim: Wolke, 2010); Verena Mogl, “Juden, die ins Lied sich retten” – der Komponist Mieczyslaw Weinberg (1919–1996) in der Sowjetunion (Münster: Waxmann, 2017).
- 3 David Fanning, *Mieczyslaw Weinberg: In Search of Freedom* (Hofheim: Wolke, 2010).
- 4 Mi agradecimiento a Anastasia Pichurina y a su madre, Ella Esipovich, su ayuda en la traducción de este fragmento.
- 5 Mi agradecimiento a Avery Brzobohaty y Becky Shaw la gestión de la reproducción.
- 6 Mi agradecimiento a Kimberley Westbrooks su amabilidad al localizar y reproducir el ejemplar que conserva en su biblioteca.
- 7 Mi agradecimiento a Arnt Christoph Nitschke, director de producción de Peermusic Classical, por la información proporcionada sobre el historial de las ediciones de la obra y por facilitar una copia del manuscrito, así como otros detalles de utilidad para este estudio.
- 8 Mieczyslaw Weinberg: *Sonate, op. 28 für Klarinete in A (oder Viola) und Klavier*. Peermusic PCH 3639, ISMN 979-0-50011-926-5,” en *Neue Musikzeitung* 67, no. 6 (Junio 2018).
- 9 Se reconoce la versatilidad e inmediatez que la edición digital actual permite en la modificación de detalles puntuales. La versión utilizada, considerada la más reciente en el momento de redacción de este estudio, es la que la editorial denomina 04_2024.
- 10 Hasta donde alcanza el estado actual de la investigación, no existe ningún estudio analítico previo que haya explorado las posibles relaciones entre la *Sonata, op. 28* de Weinberg y el *Quatuor* de Messiaen, ni, de forma más general, entre ambos compositores.

Only a small notation appears in measure 45 of the first movement, at the point where the meter changes from 4/4 to 3/4. The composer indicated, albeit very discreetly in the score, the equivalence of quarter note to quarter note. This marking does not appear in edition **M** and, owing to its extremely small size, also appears to have gone unnoticed by the editors of **P3**. By

contrast, the same type of indication found in measure 32, accompanying the change to 6/4, is included in both editions.

The result of this analysis is that manuscript **A** served as the foundational source from which the Russian publisher prepared **M**, but that during the proof-correction process Weinberg had developed a different conception of the work's articula-

tion, shaped by a quarter century of musical experience. This later conception is the one reflected in **M** and must in any case be understood as having been authorized by the composer. It seems implausible that the Russian editors or proofreaders would have independently made such a decision; one that, moreover, displays a high degree of musical coherence.



Figure 4. © Olga Rakhalskaya

The article began by situating the sonata within the biographical circumstances of its composer, followed by an examination of the decisive role played by Shostakovich in Weinberg's life: a presence that conditioned both his relocation to Moscow and, quite likely, the first printed edition of the sonata. We would not wish to conclude without addressing the ideological framework within which we believe this work should be understood and interpreted. Our analysis reveals a significant aesthetic affinity with certain aspects of Olivier Messiaen's harmonic language that, in our view, deserves to be highlighted in relation to this particular composition.¹¹

This connection becomes evident in the antepenultimate chord of the third movement of the sonata (m. 81). It is a dominant chord enriched with appoggiaturas, whose function is to impart a specific harmonic color. Rather than deriving from a conventional triad or seventh chord, the chord is conceived for its timbral and chromatic effect. This sonority fulfills precisely the same function and resolves in the same manner as the opening chord assigned to the piano in Messiaen's *Quatuor pour la fin du temps*. What Messiaen places at the outset of his work, Weinberg situates at its conclusion. From this parallel emerges the hypothesis of a re-reading of the horror expressed in Messiaen's quartet as a message of hope articulated through Weinberg's sonata.

One might further conjecture that the choice of the clarinet as the principal instrument of the sonata was influenced by the resonance of the quartet's opening measures, in which the clarinet and piano sound alone. It bears recalling that Messiaen's quartet was published in France three years prior to the composition of Weinberg's sonata.¹² Inspired by the Book of Revelation, the quartet may thus be seen as closely connected to the personal apocalypse experienced by Weinberg in 1945, the year in which the sonata was composed.

This comparative reading of the different sources and versions of the sonata ultimately seeks to offer an additional perspective on the evolution of a work that occupies a central place in the 20th-century clarinet repertoire. Through our analysis and hypotheses, we aim to provide clarinetists with new interpretive ideas and perspectives, enriching performances that strive to remain coherent with the compositional intentions Weinberg held for this work. ♪♪

ENDNOTES

- 1 English translation by Kelly Suero, PhD, prepared from the original Spanish text.
- 2 This article is an excerpt from a section of my bachelor's thesis, defended at the *Manuel Castillo Conservatory of Music* in Seville in June 2025, under the title: *Music after the Holocaust: Sonata for Clarinet and Piano, op. 28*, by Mieczysław Weinberg. I am grateful to Israel Sánchez López for his supervision of the project. The complete thesis may be

consulted at the library of the Manuel Castillo Conservatory of Music in Seville.

- 3 David Fanning, *Mieczysław Weinberg: In Search of Freedom* (Hofheim: Wolke, 2010); Verena Mogl, "Juden, die ins Lied sich retten" – der Komponist Mieczysław Weinberg (1919–1996) in der Sowjetunion (Münster: Waxmann, 2017).
- 4 David Fanning, *Mieczysław Weinberg: In Search of Freedom* (Hofheim: Wolke, 2010).
- 5 I am grateful to Anastasia Pichurina and her mother, Ella Esipovich, for their assistance with the translation of this excerpt.
- 6 I am grateful to Avery Brzobohaty and Becky Shaw for facilitating the reproduction.
- 7 I am grateful to Kimberley Westbrooks, who kindly located and reproduced the copy held in her library.
- 8 I am grateful to Arnt Christoph Nitschke, Production Manager at Peermusic Classical, who shared the editorial history of the work and provided me with a copy of the manuscript, along with many other details relevant to this chapter.
- 9 "Mieczysław Weinberg: *Sonate*, op. 28, für Klarinette in A (oder Viola) und Klavier," Peermusic PCH 3639, ISMN 979-0-50011-926-5, *Neue Musikzeitung* 67, no. 6 (2018).
- 10 We are aware of the flexibility and immediacy afforded by the current digital edition for making specific revisions. The version consulted for this study (identified by the publisher as 04_2024) was, to the best of our knowledge, the most recent version available at the time of writing.
- 11 To my knowledge, no previous analytical study has discussed possible connections between Weinberg's *Sonata*, op. 28 and Messiaen's *Quatuor*, or, more generally, between the two composers.
- 12 Olivier Messiaen, *Quatuor pour la fin du Temps pour violon, clarinette in B♭, violoncelle et piano* (Paris: Durand, 1942).



FROM THE ICA COMMITTEES

by the ICA Pedagogy Committee: Caitlin Beare, Luke Ellard, Lisa Kachouee, and Kylie Stultz-Dessent

THE SPACE BETWEEN THE NOTES: CULTURE, COMMUNICATION, AND FEEDBACK IN THE CLARINET STUDIO

THE POWER OF THE APPLIED TEACHER

CAITLIN BEARE

Your student walks into your studio for her clarinet lesson. From the moment she enters the room, you have the power to shape how the lesson might unfold. Do you ask how her week was, how that theory exam went? Or do you cut right to the chase: “*How much did you practice this week?*”

That choice conveys something larger about what your studio values and what kind of learning is possible. My intent as a teacher is to empower my clarinet students to be self-directed and curious by providing them with the tools and resources necessary to achieve their goals. I recognize that I can have a profound effect on not only a student’s musical development, but on their well-being and capacity to learn. In her book *Compassionate Music Teaching*, Karin S. Hendricks reminds us of an important truth: “As long as there is a superior-inferior relationship, there is a need to control power...[And] as long as there is a power struggle, true learning cannot take place—at least not the learning that is intended.”¹ Instead of defaulting to the hierarchical relationship that has long defined one-on-

one music instruction, we as teachers have the opportunity to choose differently: to build a dynamic that is grounded in mutual respect.

LUKE ELLARD

I’ve been thinking a lot about June Boyce-Tillman’s *Constructing Musical Healing* and the question she asks: “How do we avoid, on the one hand, a community that stifles individuality and rebellion and, on the other, a competitive individuality that has no roots or responsibility?”² As sharers of experiences and collective lessons learned, we bear a complicated burden and blessing as teachers. We strive to scaffold support and structure for our students, hoping to foster feedback cycles of curiosity, all while trying our best to navigate changing demographics, expectations by our employers, and move through forces outside our control. I believe a salve for this imbalance is often found in communication. The instructor has the power to model methods of sharing that build others up through the ways we structure and facilitate feedback. The ways we hold space for students and set respectful boundaries can instill a feeling of safety; this in turn can allow students to explore more creatively. Open communication also builds community and has an impact far

deeper than focusing on “just the music.” More than ever, we need to promote community. After all, we’re humans first.

KYLIE STULTZ-DESSENT

I recently attended a series of workshops at my university focused on elevating faculty impact through feedback literacy. Most of my colleagues attending the workshop teach outside of music, and much of the feedback they provide is in the form of written comments on papers, responses to discussion posts, or notes on exams. It suddenly occurred to me just how different this feedback environment is from the applied studio. Many instructors have hours or even days to reflect on a student’s work, carefully craft a response, revise their wording, and ensure their feedback aligns with both the assignment goals and the individual student’s needs. In the applied clarinet lesson, there is little time for reflection. Feedback is immediate. We rely on our expertise, instinct, experience, and what we hear in real time. As applied teachers, we must be exceptionally well-versed in the qualities of effective feedback and feedback literacy. Because our feedback is immediate and verbal, we have fewer opportunities to revise or soften our words. The tone we use, the pacing of

our comments, and the balance between critique and encouragement all impact our students' growth and emotional well-being. Our words do not disappear once spoken. They can linger in our students' minds for weeks, months, and even years!

LISA KACHOUÉE

As a teacher, I strive to inspire curiosity without judgement—the spark for a life of learning and wonder. For students to become their own teachers, they need a foundation of skill, understanding, and the curiosity to continue unearthing the previously unattainable. Over the course of my time as a student, I saw many peers abandon their pursuit of music. While sometimes this was related to skill or a mismatch of music with personal priorities, far too often it was because the person could no longer tolerate a life spent practicing with their relentlessly pernicious inner critic. I ask questions in lessons for a snapshot of the mental processes taking place within a student's mind. If together we can train the mind to be curious and compassionate, then a lifelong pursuit of music can be a sustaining and rewarding endeavor. Furthermore, if these processes within are less judgmental and more curious, that radiates into thoughts and actions shared with others. The studio can be an honest and supportive community, and the individuals in it can carry that work into their lives and to new communities. I am always seeking ways to better communicate and connect in an ever-evolving social landscape of polarization and isolation.

In this article, we aim to bridge the worlds of research and real-world teaching, with a particular emphasis on the collegiate music studio. College music majors typically see their studio instructor for at least one hour a week over 15 weeks a semester, accumulating roughly 120 hours of contact across four years—a relationship unlike almost any other in a student's education. Moreover, the studio is not just a dyad; it is a community, a microcosm of a much larger and more complex institutional system, where each member of a community serves a function and contributes to the operation of the whole. At its best, the studio is a place where students support one another, spend time together

outside of lessons, and feel a sense of shared purpose. At its worst, it becomes a site of competition, resentment, and tension. The difference largely comes down to culture, and culture starts with the teacher.

THE POWER OF COMMUNITY

Think back to your early music-making memories: what experiences stand out? It is not a stretch to assume that community played a significant role in those memories. For many, a music community is a place alive with meaning. Hendricks writes that “the need to belong is satisfied through the combination of two experiences: frequent, positive interactions with an intimate group; and a stable relationship of mutual support and concern that endures over time.”³ Music instructors are in a unique position to provide these places for students to thrive and experience a sense of belonging.

However, the one-on-one teaching model—rooted in traditions of apprenticeship—has the potential to exacerbate feelings of loneliness and isolation and render the student relatively passive in lessons.⁴ This is no small concern, given that we are currently in what has been described as an epidemic of loneliness and social isolation. In May 2025, the World Health Organization passed a resolution acknowledging the essential role of social connection in combating loneliness, social isolation, and inequities in health.⁵ Loneliness has even been linked to an increased risk of cardiovascular disease and mental health conditions, including substance abuse, depression, and cognitive decline. In a 2024 Pew Research survey, nearly a quarter of adults aged 18–29 reported feeling lonely—a statistic that, when coupled with the rigorous demands of collegiate music programs, might leave teachers wondering what we could possibly do to alleviate such a far-reaching problem.⁶

Moreover, when students have weak social connections, executive function—the brain's capacity to sort and apply new learning—is diminished by stress and cognitive load.⁷ Isolation doesn't just feel bad; it actively impedes learning. Fortunately, an applied studio—by its nature—is a community, and that communal potential is something that teachers can intentionally foster. Research has shown that learning

within a community improves outcomes, and “a sense of belonging has a profound effect on the knowledge and skills that students can learn, retain, and apply.”⁸

Yet the apprenticeship model—in other words, a centralized, linear transfer of knowledge—is still the prevalent model in applied music pedagogy. One way to combat this approach is through decentralization, which comes about by establishing a knowledge community.⁹ In a collegiate setting, the knowledge community often takes shape as a studio, where members learn to function together within a community; their knowledge resides in practice, and they share paradigms that guide their research or learning. The social nature of co-creating musical experiences invites a space for belonging and offers opportunities to move away from abrasive behaviors such as intimidation, competitiveness, and degrading judgement. In this intentional space of belonging and learning, students can move through moments of challenge and growth, emboldening them to take more musical risks while trusting in the support system around them.¹⁰

This egalitarian approach to the clarinet studio raises a powerful central question: what if we, the teachers, taught from a place of curiosity and vulnerability? For example, Lisa once had a robust discussion with her studio about performance anxiety, including snippets from inner monologues, unhelpful thoughts that heighten stress, and how to combat them. One student commented that a teacher had never shared or acknowledged these internal challenges, and as a result, the student felt like their experience was unique, a possible indicator that they were not fit to be a performer. This emphasizes that while we as teachers can demonstrate confidence in our skills and expertise to inspire others, we also must “pull back the curtain” to reveal our struggles and show our students that we are, like them, continually learning.

When our students experience belonging through collective growth, acts of vulnerability, and a sense of curiosity, their intrinsic motivation grows. Consider employing the following activities:

- Encouraging your students to get curious about their mistakes instead of engaging in negative self-talk.

- Creating intentional opportunities in the studio for your students to experience success alongside challenges.
- Establishing a supportive community where your students view the success of their peers as the success of the entire studio. When one experiences a moment of growth, the whole can learn from that experience.
- Highlighting the reality that we are humans first and our well-being is vital to our overall growth.¹¹

These practices align with what Hendricks describes as compassionate music teaching: an orientation in which teachers remain “open to learning from students,” recognizing that students can teach them things they had never considered or perhaps forgotten.¹² Knowledge communities, decentralization, and compassionate teaching are not separate ideals but expressions of the same underlying commitment: the studio is a place of mutual inquiry, not linear transmission. Breaking down the traditional teacher-student hierarchical model of learning creates space for communal learning, a decentralized exchange of ideas, and a cultural emphasis on curiosity. In other words, curiosity is modeled from the center out.

THE POWER OF COMMUNICATION

RESEARCH ON FEEDBACK

Instructional feedback can be understood as any information about a performance that learners use to improve their learning, whether it comes from the teacher, peers, or the task itself, and whether it clarifies current performance, future goals, or the strategies needed to progress.¹³ Research suggests that students view high-quality feedback as usable, detailed, and attentive to their individual characteristics and emotional well-being.¹⁴ Interpersonal dynamics are equally critical as students report greater trust in instructors they perceive as caring rather than merely competent.¹⁵ Conversely, students are less likely to engage with feedback when it lacks clarity, carries a negative tone, or is delivered with the absence of trust.¹⁶ Within the intimate context of a clarinet studio, these findings reveal impactful feedback to be not only technical guidance, but also an interper-

sonal practice; together, these foster student growth and agency.

OUR STUDENTS AS FEEDBACK CARRIERS

Imagine your students as “feedback carriers.” Each student comes to a lesson with a clear and common purpose: to receive feedback on their progress from their teacher. They leave the lesson with the responsibility of applying that feedback to the following week’s practice and assignments.

Feedback-carrying capacity refers to the amount and type of feedback a student can effectively absorb, process, and act upon at a given time, based on their current skills, mindset, emotional resilience, and available support.¹⁷ Because each student brings unique life experiences and circumstances, not everyone will have the same feedback-carrying capacity. A student’s capacity can shift from week to week depending on factors such as academic workload, financial pressures, personal stress, or a particularly demanding schedule. A student who is ahead in their schoolwork and confident in their week’s practice sessions may be able to handle detailed feedback about phrasing, tone production, and intonation tendencies all within the same lesson. In contrast, a student who has just performed poorly in a jury, is overwhelmed with midterms, or is navigating personal stress may only be able to productively process one or two focused suggestions before becoming discouraged or cognitively overloaded. In both cases, the musical needs may be similar, but the amount of feedback the student can meaningfully carry forward differs.

The minutes in a lesson leading up to the first note are crucial in assessing a student’s current capacity. Use this time as a brief diagnostic check. Does the student seem focused or distracted? Energized or fatigued? Have any significant events occurred in the past week? Weigh the results of this informal assessment alongside what you already know about the student’s personality, strengths, struggles, and resiliency.

Fortunately, effective feedback can increase a student’s feedback-carrying capacity. When feedback provides cognitive fuel—clear, actionable next steps that the student fully understands—and is delivered in a way that feels emotionally safe, students

are able to process more information.¹⁸ For instance, if you ask a student to play with lighter articulation, does the student understand exactly what physical or technical adjustments are required? Do they know how to practice that skill effectively during the week? Additionally, students should feel free to express themselves musically without fear of judgment. Mistakes should never be a source of shame but rather recognized as a natural and necessary part of the learning process. McPherson et al. write, “An ideal learning environment is one where mistakes are seen in a positive light, with quality feedback being the mechanism to help the learner grow from errors and misconceptions.”¹⁹ Over time, learner characteristics such as skill level, mindset, and resilience can grow when feedback both fuels the intellect and safeguards the learner’s emotional well-being.

RESEARCH ON IMMEDIATE FEEDBACK

In one-on-one instruction, feedback is often instantaneous—we catch ourselves interrupting a student in the middle of an étude or phrase to offer our insights and suggestions. In a recent blog post on *The Bulletproof Musician*, Noa Kageyama discusses findings from an article in the *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition* titled “Information Feedback for Skill Acquisition: Instantaneous Knowledge of Results Degrades Learning.”²⁰ In this study, 76 students were divided into three groups and asked to practice a simple motor skill 90 times. The first group received their score immediately after each repetition. The second group had to wait eight seconds before seeing their score. The third group also waited eight seconds, but in addition, they were required to estimate their own score four seconds after completing each attempt. Two days later, participants were tested for retention. The results were revealing: the group that received instant feedback performed the worst, while the group that was asked to reflect and wait for feedback performed the best.

Applying these findings to musical study illuminates how important it is to offer our students time to reflect before sharing our suggestions for improvement.

This might not always be possible with students who don't yet have the awareness or knowledge to properly assess what changes need to be made. However, over time we can train our students to diagnose, solve, and overcome their musical and technical challenges. This insight by Kageyama proves just how vital this reflection and skill-building process is for our students. In a sense, our job as teachers is to work our way out of a job! We want our students to become independent musicians and effective problem solvers, confident in their abilities as musicians and clarinetists.

ACTIVITIES FOR CULTIVATING COMMUNITY AND COMMUNICATION IN THE CLARINET STUDIO

- **Ask students to give feedback on your feedback!** Check in halfway through the semester to assess how things are going. Is your feedback clear? Does it feel safe and encouraging? Ask the students to submit written feedback on the feedback they have received in lessons and studio classes. Use this information to adjust your methods for each student. Maybe some students prefer for you to demonstrate with your instrument more often while others need a detailed explanation.
- **Create a shared rubric!** Assessment in the applied studio can feel like a conundrum. In a highly individualized, one-on-one setting, assigning a single letter grade to a semester's worth of nuanced artistic growth can seem reductive. Invite your students to collectively design the rubric that will determine their lesson grades for the semester. Ask your students to identify the essential characteristics of an effective clarinet lesson. What elements must be present for both student and teacher to make meaningful progress toward the student's short-term and long-term goals? Then, synthesize their ideas into a shared rubric to evaluate lessons and overall progress throughout the semester. This collaborative process gives students ownership of the criteria by which they are assessed. It shifts grading from something imposed to something co-constructed

and removes the sense that the teacher alone is stamping a final judgment on their work.

- **Step back as the dominant figure in studio class!** Hold "peer teaching days" in which each student leads a masterclass-style session with a colleague. Invite students to share a favorite warm-up or exercise with the group.
- **Be vulnerable!** Performing for a teacher in a lesson or in a masterclass in front of the entire studio is a vulnerable act. If we as teachers expect this from our students, we also have to engage in vulnerability, be it performing, admitting when we do not know something, or sharing relevant personal experiences.
- **Implement a framework for feedback in group settings: Liz Lerman's *Critical Response Process*!**²¹ This four-step framework includes statements of meaning, the artist as questioner, neutral questions from responders, and opinions shared only with the performer's permission.
 - 1 *Statements of meaning:* Responders highlight specific aspects of the performance that impacted them with the goal of uplifting the performer through clearly defined feedback. A statement of meaning in a studio class setting could resemble, "The way you used dynamics throughout the performance has inspired me to explore dynamics more in the solo I'm working on."
 - 2 *Artist as questioner:* The performer sets parameters by asking questions that avoid "yes/no" responses. Responders answer these questions directly without leading to a suggestion or critique. An example of "artist as questioner" could be, "At letter B, I've been working on connecting my air through the leaps. What were some spots that sounded connected and where was the connection lacking?" An appropriate response might be, "I only heard a disconnect when crossing the break. However, your leaps to the altissimo were connected." Through these first two

steps alone, clear boundaries are established that intentionally support the performer, creating a safer environment focused on meaningful and lasting impact.

- 3 *Neutral questions from responders:* The group inquires about the work and the process by which it was created, taking care to avoid sharing opinions or judgments within those questions. For example, "What has inspired you while working on this piece?" or "What connections do you feel you're making to your fundamentals through working on this piece?" The boundary of neutral questions allows the studio to honor the performer's agency and dignity, recognizing that a personal creative process is unfolding behind the scenes that may not be fully visible to others.
- 4 *Permissioned opinions:* Responders ask opinions with the permission of the performer. Additionally, permission must be granted to offer potential suggestions on how to fix the stated issue. For example, "I have an opinion on that triplet section, would you like to hear it?" or "I have an opinion that includes a suggestion about your reeds, would you like to hear it?" The performer may respond with "no" to any questions, which further encourages boundaries. This also provides an opportunity for the responders to think critically about what they are sharing or suggesting. "Is what I'm sharing to benefit my colleague or uplift my ideas?" or "Am I focusing on meeting the needs of my colleague or am I nervous that I won't be heard in this situation?"

FINAL THOUGHTS

Acknowledging the human beyond the instrument is part of what helps students feel safe, engaged, and ready to learn. Psychologist Dr. Susan David references the power of establishing connection with the Zulu word *Sawubona*. It is a common greeting in South Africa she translates to, "I see you, and by seeing you, I bring you into being."²² The more teachers know about a

student's goals, aspirations, and economic and social realities, the better equipped they are to help them as people and players.

One of the best parts of music study is the one-on-one teaching model itself. It is relatively rare to meet with a teacher individually for an hour each week, devoted entirely to one's growth. Without our clarinet teachers, we would not be who or where we are today. When students and teachers come together by choice, it creates a uniquely powerful dynamic. And when this relationship is grounded in trust and respect, it becomes a vibrant partnership with potential to transform both the teacher and student. ♣♣

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The First Generation of Professional Clarinetists Trained in the People's Republic of China

An international cultural exchange helped establish China's earliest clarinet pedagogy and performance standards.

by Tie Bai

COMMEMORATING THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GERMAN EXPERT TRAINING PROGRAM (1956–1957)

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In 2026, the Chinese clarinet community commemorates the 70th anniversary of the German Expert Training Program of 1956–1957, a landmark event in the early development of professional wind performance education in the People's Republic of China. Organized only seven years after the founding of the nation, this initiative represented the first nationally coordinated and systematic professional wind-instrument training program in modern Chinese music history.¹ Its historical significance is profound, as it directly cultivated the first substantial cohort of clarinetists trained according to modern professional standards in China.

In 1956, the Central Philharmonic Society was formally established under the Ministry of Culture. With governmental approval, several leading music specialists from the German Democratic Republic (the former East Germany) were invited to China to provide instruction in multiple disciplines, including conducting and wind instruments.² Music conservatories, orches-

tras, military ensembles, and professional performing organizations throughout the country submitted candidates for admission. To ensure both selectivity and in-

structional quality, the Ministry of Culture established four wind-instrument expert classes and stipulated that each institution could recommend only one candidate.



Photo Courtesy of Bai Zheming's personal archive

Oskar Christmann with clarinet students during the German Expert Training Program, 1956.

THE CLARINET EXPERT: OSKAR CHRISTMANN

The clarinet expert appointed to the German Training Program was Oskar Christmann, a mid 20th-century German clarinet pedagogue identified in surviving program documents as a German woodwind expert from Dresden, German Democratic Republic.³ Christmann's artistic background was rooted in the Austro-German tradition, and his pedagogical philosophy reflected the hallmarks of the German clarinet school: tonal focus, stable intonation, refined technique, and a clear understanding of the clarinet's structural role within orchestral texture.⁴

In 1956, Christmann was invited by the Ministry of Culture of the People's Republic of China to serve as a foreign expert and assumed responsibility for all clarinet instruction within the Central Philharmonic Society. He personally conducted entrance examinations for prospective students, evaluating candidates on technical ability, repertoire familiarity, musical understanding, and artistic insight through discussion of orchestral literature and performance experience.

Following these examinations, 10 students were formally admitted to the national clarinet expert class, representing conservatories, orchestras, military ensembles, and performing organizations throughout China. They included Bai Wenshun of the Yanbian Song and Dance Ensemble (Jilin Province), Gu Peng of the Shanghai Opera House, Li Shuming of the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra, Liang Yu of the Central Opera House, Liu Houpeng of the Beijing Children's Theatre, Mu Lidi of the PLA Military Band, Wang Zhijian of the Central Conservatory of Music, Yang Jinrong of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, Yu Qixiong of the Central-South Military Region, and Zhou Dan of the Shenyang Conservatory of Music. Together, these musicians formed the earliest nationally selected cohort of systematically trained professional clarinetists in the People's Republic of China.

In addition to these nationally selected participants, several clarinetists from the Central Philharmonic Society also studied directly with Christmann as formal members of the training program, including



Oskar Christmann with clarinet students during the German Expert Training Program, 1956.

Bai Zhemin (later principal clarinetist of the Central Philharmonic Society), Chen Kaihao, Liu Entao, and Tian Rongjiu. Because of their active roles within the orchestra, these musicians received not only individual clarinet instruction, but also extensive ensemble and orchestral training under Christmann's supervision.

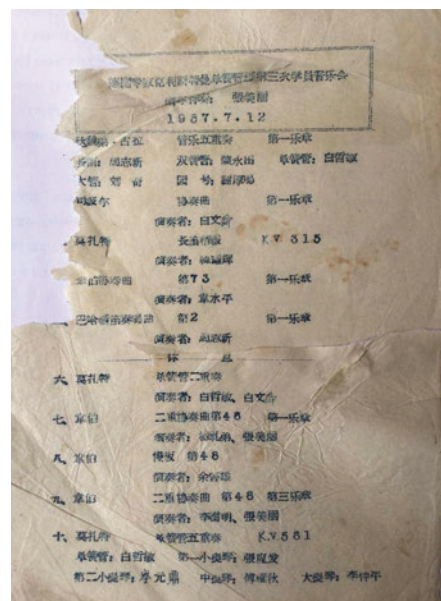
Additional participants attended as auditors, and at least one candidate received private instruction outside the formal program.

PROFESSIONAL INSTRUCTION WITHIN THE CENTRAL PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY

Beyond the formal expert class, Christmann also provided daily instruction within the Central Philharmonic Society, working closely with both the clarinet and flute sections. His teaching addressed technical development, ensemble coordination, phrasing, balance, and interpretation in accordance with the conductor's artistic intentions. This sustained pedagogical work contributed significantly to the establishment of professional standards in China's earliest orchestral wind performance practice and helped shape the artistic development of China's emerging national symphonic ensemble tradition.

TEACHING CONTENT AND ARTISTIC PHILOSOPHY

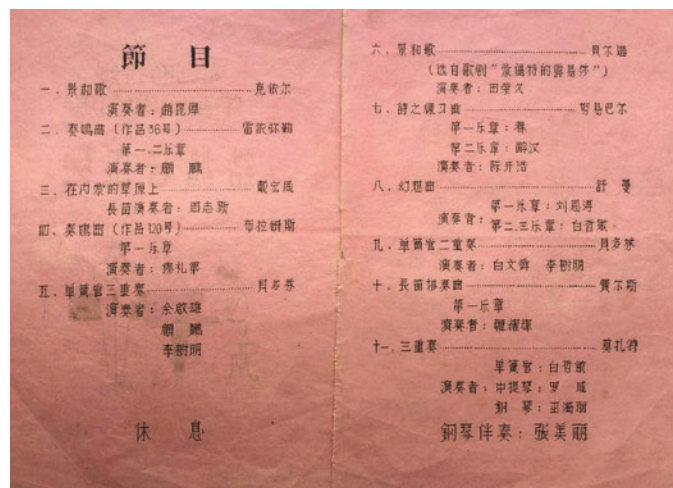
Christmann's teaching style was rigorous yet pragmatic. Notably, he did not require students to adopt German-system clarinets, and most participants continued performing on French-system instruments



Concert program of the German Expert Training Program, 1957.



Final concert program of the German Expert Training Program, 1957.



throughout the training period. His curriculum emphasized technical exercises, études, solo repertoire, sight-reading, and stylistic versatility.

Repertoire studied during the program included arrangements of works by Johann Sebastian Bach, compositions by Paul Hindemith, and various unaccompanied clarinet works. Some handwritten pedagogical materials from this period have survived in private archives, providing rare documentary evidence of the teaching content employed during the program.⁵ Together with preserved concert programs and photographs, these materials constitute some of the few surviving primary documents related to the German Expert Training Program.

STUDENT LIFE AND EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

The educational environment of the German Expert Training Program was disciplined, focused, and performance oriented. Students regularly presented public concerts during the training period, and programs from both interim student recitals and the final concert remain preserved as valuable historical documentation.

Beyond formal lessons, teacher–student relationships developed through shared travel and social activities, fostering a collaborative and collegial atmosphere. Photographic records from the period further document the interpersonal dy-

namics and educational environment of the program.

Upon completion of the program, participants returned to institutions throughout China, where many became leading performers, principal orchestral musicians, and pioneering pedagogues in conservato-

ries and professional ensembles. Through their artistic leadership and teaching, they disseminated the pedagogical principles acquired during the program and helped establish the foundation of modern clarinet performance and education in China.



Oskar Christmann with clarinet students during the German Expert Training Program, 1956.

CONCLUSION

Although the German Expert Training Program lasted for only one year, its impact on the development of clarinet performance and pedagogy in China was profound and enduring. Oskar Christmann played a pivotal role not only in training the first substantial cohort of professionally educated clarinetists in the People's Republic of China, but also in shaping the performance standards of China's earliest national orchestral clarinet section.

As the Chinese musical community commemorates the 70th anniversary of this landmark initiative, renewed scholarly attention to the German Expert Training Program offers an important opportunity not only to honor its historical legacy, but also to better understand the origins of China's modern clarinet pedagogy and professional performance tradition. This formative chapter in Chinese clarinet history deserves continued scholarly research, preservation, and recognition within the broader history of global clarinet pedagogy.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author extends heartfelt gratitude to the surviving participants and witnesses of the German Expert Training Program—including Bai Wenshun, Bai Zhemin, Li Shuming, Mu Lidi, Wang Zhijian, Yang Jinrong, and others—whose firsthand recollections, preserved documents, and historical insights have made possible the reconstruction of this important chapter in Chinese clarinet history. Through inter-

views conducted by the author over many years in China, Hong Kong, and the United States, these individuals generously shared invaluable oral histories, photographs, concert programs, and archival materials essential to the preparation of this article.

ARCHIVAL NOTE

Primary-source materials referenced in this article—including interview recordings, transcripts, original photographs, concert programs, handwritten documents, and related archival materials—are preserved in the author's private research archive. ♪♪

ENDNOTES

- 1 Personal interviews were conducted by the author with surviving participants of the German Expert Training Program, including with Bai Wenshun, Bai Zhemin, Li Shuming, Mu Lidi, Wang Zhijian, Yang Jinrong, and others, over multiple years in China, Hong Kong, and the United States. Audio recordings, interview transcripts, and supporting archival materials are preserved in the author's private research archive.
- 2 Oskar Christmann is identified as a "German Woodwind Expert, Dresden" in a written evaluation prepared for student Yang Jinrong during the German Expert Training Program. Document is preserved in the author's private archival collection.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Christmann's pedagogical philosophy and stylistic orientation are reconstructed from oral recollections of former participants and teaching materials preserved from the training period.
- 5 Private pedagogical manuscripts, handwritten teaching materials, and preserved archival documents were provided by participants of the German Expert Training Program.



Tie Bai graduated from the University of Southern California. He has performed in the United States, Europe, and Asia, and has participated in International Clarinet Association conferences in Paris, Columbus, Tokyo, Atlanta, and Assisi. His recording 20th Century's Dedication was recommended by The Clarinet as a reference for clarinet repertoire. Bai has served as a juror for several international competitions, including the Beijing International Clarinet Competition, the Japan Clarinet Competition, and the International Clarinetist Corona Competition. In 1998, he founded the Beijing International Clarinet Festival and served as the Festival Director. He has since been involved in organizing and directing several festivals, including the 2025 Shanghai International Clarinet Festival. He previously served as Professor of Clarinet at Bethesda University in Los Angeles.



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Some Notes on the Life and Career of Leopold Wlach: Part 1

A review of archival materials and firsthand recollections offers deeper insights into the life and career of the influential Viennese clarinetist.

by David Ross

BACKGROUND

The name of Leopold Wlach is still widely known among clarinetists and others even today, almost 70 years after his death. Indeed, many of his recordings are still in print and prized by collectors worldwide. Even in Japan, there is a society of clarinet enthusiasts devoted to the Viennese style of clarinet playing and in particular to the playing of Leopold Wlach.

This view is of course not universal. There are those who prefer this or that player as the ideal representative of Viennese playing. But even Peter Schmidl, certainly an outstanding example of Viennese playing and teaching later in the century, has said that he feels Wlach was the most important Viennese clarinetist of the 20th century.¹ This is in spite of the fact the Prof. Schmidl was himself a student of Rudolf Jettel, a distinguished colleague of Wlach in both the orchestra and Academy.²

Wlach's reputation as a player and teacher extended well beyond the Austrian border. For instance, when in the mid-1930s, Philippe Gaubert, the famous French flutist and principal conductor of the Paris Opéra, wished for a different and more Viennese sound in the woodwinds of the opera orchestra (especially in the German repertory), he contacted the Academy of Music and Wlach for recommendations. Eventually, Wlach sent in 1938 one of his

favorite pupils, Wilhelm (William) Sallander, to Paris, where Wilhelm played for several years before emigrating to America.³

LACK OF INFORMATION ON WLACH

It is with some justification that one might ask why so little has been written about Leopold Wlach despite his fame as a player and teacher, both in his lifetime and afterwards. The reasons are numerous, sometimes complicated, and even to-

day are subject to varying interpretations.

The first obstacle in constructing some sort of narrative today on Wlach's life and career is the distance of time involved. Many, if not most, of his colleagues and students have passed from the scene, as well as some of those I interviewed for this project.

Another reason for the lack of details on his life is Wlach himself. Through his positions with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra (VPO) and State Opera, his work as professor at the Academy, and his activities as soloist and chamber musician, he was a minor celebrity in the Viennese musical scene. Yet he was a private person, not sharing many of the details of his life. He had a wife (no children), a sister, and several female relationships. But neither Wlach nor any of these family members saved an archive or scrapbook of his many and varying activities. This is quite unlike the situation with Rudolf Jettel, the clarinet colleague who is most often linked with Wlach, and whose family (wife and grandnephew) have been active in saving, publicizing, and promoting Jettel's life and career.⁴ In a similar vein, Robert Freund had an abundance of materials from a variety of sources for his recent study of his horn teacher, Gottfried von Freiberg.⁵

This apparently was not the case with Wlach. Such details as Wlach chose to pass along, mostly to students, were done in a



Leopold Wlach

piecemeal basis, with individuals receiving bits of information or anecdotes, but certainly not in a systematic way or with enough material to compile a comprehensive narrative. And it should be added that the 1930s and 1940s were tumultuous times for the VPO. When the Nazis came to power in 1938, they attempted to use the orchestra (as well as other cultural institutions) for cultural propaganda. Some musicians and conductors fought against this Nazification. But there were many in the orchestra hierarchy—musicians and administrators alike—who went along with these new policies. A post-war examination and appraisal of policies enacted during this period was put on hold for some time, during which time the orchestra (and Austria as a whole) wrestled with the problem of how to deal with this dark period. But within the last several decades, newly available archival materials have become available. As Leopold Wlach joined the Nazi Party early on, we must at least consider his activities and outlook during this period.

FAMILY AND EARLY YOUTH

The surname (family name) of Wlach points towards some sort of Czech origin, but Leopold was born in Vienna on September 9, 1902, and never learned to speak any Czech. His birth and baptismal certificate survive and provide some interesting facts. His mother is given as Barbara Wlach (profession: “unskilled temporary worker”), living in the 15th district of Vienna. His mother was born on November 11, 1870, in Vienna. The name of the father was unrecorded, and thus Leopold was recorded as an “illegitimate male,” baptized as a Roman Catholic. Perhaps the most unusual fact in this document is that Leopold’s birth is recorded as a *Gassengeburt* (street birth), which meant that the mother did not make it to the hospital, but had to give birth in the streets or under a house entrance. Despite this difficult beginning (or perhaps because of it), Leopold kept contact with his mother throughout his life, and when she died in 1951, he arranged to have her buried in a cemetery plot used later by both him and his wife.

The city archives on Wlach confirm much of this. Here the mother is listed as above, with an elder sister “Rosa Hauer”



Wlach with the VPO Wind Ensemble, Salzburg, c. 1954

Photo courtesy of VPO Archive

(1898-1986). Father is listed as “Unknown.” This information is repeated in several other archival documents, including in the National Archive of Austria (ÖSTA). Thus, both Leopold and his sister were illegitimate. Leopold was therefore in the grim social position of growing up in a fatherless family, and it is no wonder that Wlach chose not to mention this. Later in life he often told students that his father (*sic*) was a barber and wanted his son to follow in that profession. But early in his life Leopold had decided that that wanted to become a musician, and to this end he took up the violin.

Viennese society of the class into which Wlach was born often treated such illegitimate offspring quite harshly, and the early years of Wlach’s life must have been difficult. These difficulties in his early life must have been compounded by his poor education. In the Academy archives, there is a file submitted by Wlach where he was asked to submit details of his life. In this, there is a section marked *Schulbildungung* (school education). Wlach’s answer was *Pflichtschulen* (or compulsory schooling). This was a phenomenon of the time, and meant that

the student stopped going to school past the required six-year time frame. This was common for musicians at that time. These young people did not need any high school degree for admission to the classes; “talent” was sufficient. In essence, this meant that a normal school education was over by Wlach’s early teens. *Pflichtschulen* was the lowest level of education/culture possible. No high school or gymnasium, no *realschule* (secondary or middle school), and certainly no university. In terms of professional preparation, one might summarize Leopold’s status at this point as he left school as being hardly educated, but already recognized as extremely talented musically. And it is this potential in music that carried Wlach into the next stage of his life.

MUSIC ACADEMY

At the conclusion of his *Pflichtschulen*, it was now time for young Leopold to pursue his goal of becoming a musician. Accordingly, he auditioned for admission to the Academy for Music. Unfortunately, actual audition notes or reports from this period no longer exist. But from anecdotal evidence and materials in the “mdw” ar-

"The years between 1927 and 1956, the years of Wlach's tenure in the orchestra, are certainly among the golden years in the history of the VPO."

chives, we can piece together the probable process. At this point, aged 14 or 15, Leopold was more of a violinist than a clarinetist, so he auditioned on violin and was turned down.

He was told there were no more vacancies for violin students, but that he should return the next day to audition on one of the wind instruments. At this point, the recruiting emphasis for the Academy lay with violin and keyboard students, principally as a way of partially funding the institution. Most students on these instruments paid full tuition, while other orchestral instruments (i.e., the wind instruments) were deemed less desirable and there were fewer applicants. And in order to assist in recruiting the required number of wind players, the tuition fees for these instruments were reduced or taken away altogether.⁶ In fact, Wlach only paid half the normal tuition fees his first year at school, and none whatsoever for his remaining time at school.

So young Wlach had several reasons to return the next afternoon. The oboe and bassoon professors rejected him because of a supposed "overbite" in his embouchure, but Bartolomey, the clarinet professor, accepted him into his clarinet class. At this point, particularly for wind applicants, the decision on whether to admit was based less on the applicant's present performance skills and more on what the professor saw as potential for growth, based on general musical background, preparation, and perhaps other factors as well. A striking example of this, albeit at a somewhat later time, is Robert Freund's horn audition for the horn professor, Gottfried von Freiberg. Though he had prepared some difficult études, Freund

was only asked to play a C Major scale taking all of a few seconds, and then told that he was accepted.⁷ And Gerhard Stradner, the distinguished musicologist and instrument collector, told me in an interview that in his clarinet audition, Wlach told him that the entrance examination was not so much to find out how well one played at the moment, but rather to discern how well one might learn to play.⁸

Wlach spent the next years at the Academy for Music. He studied with Bartolomey from 1917-1920, and when Bartolomey died in November of 1920, he continued his studies with Viktor Polatschek and passed his performer's exit examination (*Reifeprüfung*) on June 13, 1923. His school transcript shows that his focus was on his clarinet studies, orchestra, and chamber music. He did not attend courses in other subjects for the most part.

AFTER GRADUATION FROM THE ACADEMY

When Wlach graduated from the Academy in 1924, there were no jobs available in Vienna's leading orchestras. And Leopold needed to begin earning a living. But even as a student he was becoming well-known as a player. For instance, on July 20, 1924, he played with his teacher Polatschek in the premiere of Anton's Webern's *Six Songs after Poems by Georg Trakl*, op. 14, in the revised chamber ensemble version. This was at the Fourth Donaueschingen New Music Festival.⁹ It wasn't until 1927 that there was a vacancy in the State Opera, and in the following year he was admitted to the VPO.¹⁰

His activities during the three- or four-year period between his graduation

and full employment have been unclear. Some writers have suggested that Wlach traveled worldwide with an ensemble during this time.¹¹ But Prof. Rolf Eichler, a student of Wlach, added information. He said that during part of this time Wlach traveled on ships traveling to and from the United States.¹² And it was on these ships that Wlach learned from the crew his English, which was always a bit rough and unschooled.

This whole question of what Wlach did after graduation but before he gained a position with the Vienna State Opera Orchestra and Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra was clarified during a recent visit (December 2025) to the National Archive of Austria (ÖSTA) to examine their files on Wlach. Several documents were found that shed light on his activities during this period.

In a file titled *Personenstandesblatt* (Civic Registration Certificate), Wlach included a handwritten biography or Curriculum Vitae. This reads in part:

From 1923 to 1927, I played in various orchestras, including almost two years abroad. On March 2, 1927, I was appointed to the Orchestra of the State Opera, with a contractual agreement beginning on April 1, 1928. In September of the same year, I became a member of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. In 1931 I became a Junior Lecturer at the Academy of Music, and from 1932 I became a Senior Lecturer.¹³

To add to this, in a document filed with the *Bundesministerium für Unterricht* (Federal Ministry of Education) in 1956, Wlach listed his employment history. This included:

- Orchestra member "Orchestra Wacek" (January 1, 1923 to December 31, 1925)
- Orchestra member of the Pecht Schiffskapelle (January 1, 1926 to November 11, 1927)
- Member of the orchestra at the Kurhaus Bad Hall (Bad Hall Spa) (July 1, 1928 to August 31, 1928)
- Provisional member of the Vienna State Opera and Vienna Philharmonic



Photo courtesy of the VPO Archive

Wind Ensemble of the Vienna Philharmonic, c. 1954. Standing, from left to right: Karl Mayrhofer, Franz Bartosek, Rudolf Hanzl, Leopold Kainz, Karl Swoboda. Seated, from left to right: Gottfried Freiberg, Leopold Wlach, Karl Öhlberger

Orchestra (January 12, 1927 to June 30, 1928)

- Permanent member of the Vienna State Opera and Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra (August 1, 1928 to present)
- Teacher (full time) at the Vienna Academy für Musik (November 1, 1932 to present)¹⁴

THE ORCHESTRAL YEARS

When Wlach first joined the State Opera and VPO, his position was that of “Springer,” a position which involved playing either first clarinet or second clarinet, depending on the requirements of the score and the schedules of the other players in the section.

It wasn’t until 1936 that Wlach was promoted to one of the two “Solo-Klarinette” positions in the orchestra.¹⁵ And it is worth noting that Wlach’s promotion came about partly because of the situation with several other players who, if they had

remained in their “Solo” positions, probably would have prevented Wlach from moving up.

First, of course, was Polatschek, who moved to Boston in 1930, though he retained his official position in the VPO until 1932 but did not play with them in his final year. Wlach then inherited Polatschek’s position in the orchestra and the teaching job at the Academy, first provisionally in September of 1931, with a permanent appointment as clarinet professor the following year. With Polatschek’s resignation from the orchestra in 1932, there were two solo players: Johann Löw and Viktor Schmidl. But Viktor Schmidl (father of Peter), who had been a “Solo-Klarinette” since 1923, resigned in 1936, both for health reasons and because he found the political situation in the orchestra unbearable.¹⁶

Another young player who was gaining notice was Rudolf Jettel, who joined the orchestra in 1934 as one of the second

clarinets. But Jettel had a Jewish wife, and the politics of the time argued against his promotion, though he continued to play in the orchestra. It wasn’t until a few years later, just before the war and during it, that the situation for Jettel became dangerous, and only the intervention of Furtwängler saved his position.¹⁷ Of course, after the war he became a very influential personality, both within the orchestra (where he served on the governing committee) and at the Academy. No doubt much of this was due to his own skill, talent, and personality, but also the fact that he was not tainted with any Nazi associations was certainly a contributing factor.

And so, in 1936, the field was clear for Leopold Wlach to assume one of the two “Solo-Klarinette” positions in the orchestra, and thus began a long period of sustained artistic excellence.

The years between 1927 and 1956, the years of Wlach’s tenure in the orches-



Photo courtesy of VPO Archive

Wlach with conductor Karl Böhm

tra, are certainly among the golden years in the history of the VPO. Pamela Weston was certainly right when she wrote, "The high reputation of Viennese wind playing in the 1930s and 1940s was due in great part to the influence on interpretation by Wlach. His tone was extremely beautiful and he had superb control of dynamics."¹⁸ And the continuing stream of re-released recordings of the orchestra are a testament to the steady and ongoing interest in the orchestra's playing during these years. Wlach and his colleagues played under most of the important conductors of the day, and in addition to his normal orchestral repertoire, he was a soloist on a number of occasions. Merlin lists many of these programs, and they include not only the usual and expected pieces—Mozart *Concerto* and *Sinfonia Concertante*, Weber works, and so on—but also some unexpected repertoire. Wlach was fond of some of the French clarinet repertoire and played the Debussy *Première Rhapsodie* with the orchestra several times. Some of these solo performances were with the VPO; others were with different Viennese orchestras.¹⁹ He was also an accomplished saxophonist, and performed Debussy's *Saxophone Rhapsodie*, both at the beginning of his time with the orchestra (performance in 1931) and near the end of his career (performance in 1950). His activities as a saxophonist are not so well known, and the Academy of Music docu-

ments show that Wlach was also appointed to teach saxophone at the Academy starting in 1932.

Wlach also played and recorded most of the standard chamber music repertoire for clarinet—Beethoven *Septet* and *Piano Quintet*, Schubert *Octet*, Mozart *Quintet* and Wind Ensemble works, Weber *Quintet*, and others—mostly with his VPO colleagues. His extensive discography at this point includes some 50 items, and it seems likely that additional recordings will surface.

For the players in the State Opera and VPO, the work schedules were punishing. Both symphonic and operatic repertoire were expected to be played with familiarity, and for the most part they were. In the 1940s and 1950s, the saving grace was conservatism, with very little new music. The VPO was justly praised for its excellence, but it was surprisingly slow to learn new music. Most of what they recorded was old music, freshly performed in Vienna or on tour. The opera schedule was enormous, often putting on two shows a night, one at the main opera house and one at the Redoutensaal. The five or six regular clarinetists were often added to by hiring subs from the Volksoper. When this failed, students were hired for about two and a half dollars for, as one student substitute put it, "a night of pure terror."²⁰ No doubt the heavy work schedule plus bad

life habits (like smoking) played a significant role in the health problems of players like Wlach and Freiberg.

TEACHING

Another of Wlach's musical activities was his teaching at the Music Academy. Wlach inherited this position in 1932 from his teacher when Polatschek moved to Boston, and Wlach taught there until his death. What seems remarkable today is the low fees paid then to the professors at this world-famous music school. According to Academy records, in 1938 he received 4,125 Reichsmarks per year (343 per month), a very low wage. This is per year only for his teaching. Robert Freund writes that this was about the same as his mother made as a bookkeeper in a hospital. A year later, though a series of complicated maneuvers, he got it raised to 9,000 RM (750 RM/month), still not so much.

In his book on Freiberg, Robert Freund writes of the "ridiculous, immorally low salaries of our Philharmonic professors...Freiberg and the other wind teachers taught for a salary that was closer to an expense allowance, simply because it was a matter of prestige and honor, and in the final analysis also part of the Viennese tradition [was] that a wind soloist of the Vienna Philharmonic should also teach at the Academy and pass along his art, so preserving the tradition."²¹

William McColl related to me his memories of his lesson experiences with Wlach around 1954 and 1955. The following is distilled from his notes: "Instruction consisted of two lessons a week, mostly études, in front of the class, many of whom were former choirboys with long performing experience. It was much like a masterclass, save that after performing their usual 10 or so minutes, one could leave. The more advanced students usually played first and then left. Everybody stood when the professor walked in at 1:30pm. Wlach would point to a student and that student would stand up and play, with Wlach expertly conducting in front of the student. If the student played well at the beginning, Wlach might stop that performance and proceed to the next student. If the reed was too stiff, the conducting tempo might slow down and the student would suffer. With a too soft reed, the emphasis would be on 'blossoming' or sing-

ing out. Wlach made reeds for all of his beginning students, and in time if they made progress with the slightly soft reeds he handed out to beginners, he would teach them to make their own reeds.” William McColl has a YouTube video showing how Wlach taught reedmaking.²²

For the most part he was civil in lessons, but he could become angry if the student was not prepared. There are reports of him knocking over and breaking a desk, yelling, and making a student cry. In short, he was a demanding, sometimes hard teacher, in a manner that is probably not possible today. And of course, students who excelled in his class worshipped him and could say no wrong.

Most of his students were interested in professional playing or a teaching career, but some (like Dr. Stradner) used music as a second or backup career option. Some of his best-known students were Alfred Prinz, Alfred Boskovsky, Rolf (Rudolf) Eichler, Alfred Rosé, Wilhelm Salander, William McColl, and Karl Österreichler.

Like all clarinet teachers, he had students who took off on their own path. One such student, then quite prominent but now deceased, was Franz Georg Pressler (1927-1982), better known as “Fatty George.” He quit Wlach’s class, dropped out of the Academy, bought a Selmer Boehm (French) system clarinet, and was a huge success as a jazz clarinetist. He became famous for his many reenactments of the original jazz migration up the river from Vienna to Melk an der Donau, and back again. Wlach considered him an amusing eccentric. 🐶🐶

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[Part two of this article is scheduled to appear in the September 2026 issue of *The Clarinet. Ed.*]



David Ross is a professional clarinetist and music historian, recently retired from his positions in orchestral playing and university teaching. His research interests include clarinet organology/history, early wind recordings, and biographical studies on earlier clarinetists. On all these topics, he has written articles and given lectures both in America and abroad. In his retirement, David lives in El Paso, Texas, and enjoys travel, writing, playing in several ensembles with his friends, making reproductions of selected historical clarinets in his workshop, and camping in the Rocky Mountain outdoors with his two collie dogs.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Conversation with Schmidl, 2019.
- 2 The Academy of Music and Performing Arts has gone through several name changes over the course of time. In this article, I will use “Academy” for references to the school during the time Wlach was there (both as a student and professor), and “mdw” (today the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna) to refer to present-day activities and correspondence with faculty there. “VPO” will refer to the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra.
- 3 The story of the Salander’s family escape from Vienna is told on the VPO website, and has been confirmed in conversation by Roger Salander, William’s son.
- 4 See Barbara Schickbichler, “Rudolf Jettel: Leben und Werk” (PhD diss., Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst, 2007).
- 5 See Robert Freund, *Gottfried von Freiberg: Hornist, Teacher, Role Model*, translated by Elisabeth Freund Ducatez (Vienna: Robert Freund, 2022).
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- 8 Interview with Stradner, 2019.
- 9 See Simon Obert, “Anton Webern 1924 in Donaueschingen: Zur Uraufführung der *Sechs Bagatellen für Streichquartett* op. 9 und der *Sechs Lieder nach Gedichten von Georg Trakl*, op. 14,” in *Laboratorium der neuen Musik: Die Donaueschinger Kammermusikstage 1921–1926*, ed. Simon Obert and Matthias Schmidt, *Resonanzen: Basler Publikationen zur Älteren und Neueren Musik*, no. 4 (Basel: Schwabe Verlag, 2022), 237–57.
- 10 These are the dates supplied by Wlach in the 1949 submission to the Academy. In other sources, 1927 is listed as the admission date for both organizations.
- 11 See Pamela Weston, *More Clarinet Virtuosi of the Past* (London: Emerson Edition, 2002), 274.
- 12 Interview with Prof. Rolf Eichler, 2019.
- 13 ÖSTA, “Leopold Wlach” folder, document entitled *Lebenslauf* (handwritten by Wlach; translation by the author).
- 14 ÖSTA, “Leopold Wlach” folder, document entitled *Verzichtserklärung auf Ruhegehalt abgeben* (regarding pension payments).
- 15 See the orchestra rosters in Christian Merlin, *Die Wiener Philharmoniker*, 2 vols. (Vienna: Amalthea Verlag, 2017).
- 16 Merlin, 147.
- 17 See Schickbichler, Merlin, and the Vienna Philharmonic website.
- 18 Weston, 274.
- 19 See the interesting preface to the discographic study John Hunt, *Vienna Philharmonic and Vienna State Opera Orchestras* (London: John Hunt, 2000), where Hunt discusses which recordings are actually VPO performances and which are “pseudo” or *ersatz* performances falsely attributed to the VPO or the State Opera Orchestra.
- 20 Quote from correspondence with William McColl.
- 21 Freund, 21-22, and in personal correspondence with Freund.
- 22 “Making Clarinet Reeds the Viennese Way,” YouTube video, demonstrated by William McColl, video by Edwin Rodriguez, accessed April 8, 2026, www.youtube.com/watch?v=268zi0fENMs.



THE GOMEZ CLARINET QUARTET: The First Four-Clarinet Quartet in England

As one of the earliest documented professional clarinet quartets, the Gomez ensemble demonstrated the artistic potential of such formations.

by Charlotte Kennedy and Pedro Rubio

To date, the history of the four-clarinet quartet as a distinct ensemble remains largely unexplored. Unlike other homogeneous instrumental ensembles that appeared during the 19th century, the clarinet quartet never fully settled, despite the wide availability of professional clarinetists and the instrument's early participation in collective performance contexts. One of the few studies to explicitly address the history of this type of ensemble is Jennifer Reeves's 2017 dissertation, the introduction of which outlines a theoretical timeline for the emergence and development of the four-clarinet quartet.¹

In her study, Reeves traces this genealogy through three interrelated historical processes: 1) the development of chamber music for wind instruments in Europe; 2) the expansion of the clarinet in military bands (both of these processes consolidated between the late 18th century and the first decades of the 19th century); and 3) the emergence of a specific repertoire for four-clarinet quartets, primarily associated with James Waterson (1834–1893) in the second half of the 19th century. Reeves also highlights the connection between these early quartets and the formation of clarinet choirs in the early 20th century, with Simon Bellinson's clarinet choir, established in 1928, standing out among them all.²

However, evidence of the first professional clarinet quartet established for pub-

lic performance has yet to emerge. This article aims to complement the information available to date by providing concrete evidence regarding the establishment of the first documented clarinet quartet in England: the Gomez Clarinet Quartet.

HARMONIEMUSIK AND MILITARY ENSEMBLES

The historical antecedents of four-clarinet quartets must be sought in two fundamental areas of European musical development between the end of the 18th century and the 19th century: the tradition of the *Harmoniemusik* and the progressive institutionalization of wind bands. Although neither of these contexts directly gave rise to the appearance of four-clarinet quartets, both established the instrumental, technical, and professional conditions that would make their subsequent consolidation possible.

Harmoniemusik emerged in Central Europe in the mid-18th century as a practice linked to court music and aristocratic society. This tradition comprises a repertoire for wind ensembles characterized by an initially flexible but gradually standardized instrumentation. At the end of the 18th century, the *Harmonie* model was well established, consisting of pairs of oboes, clarinets, bassoons, and horns, a widely disseminated ensemble model that was instrumental in defining the clarinet's role in chamber-music.³

On the other hand, throughout the 19th century, the development of military and civilian bands played an even more decisive role in the expansion of the clarinet. The incorporation of the clarinet into these ensembles contributed to technical improvements, mass production of the instrument, and a growing appreciation of its sound projection, timbre, and versatility. The regulation and professionalization of the bands, which also served as schools and reservoirs of performers for other ensembles, significantly increased the number of clarinets included in them, organized into sections with differentiated functions.

A noteworthy precedent in the use of clarinet in quartets deserves mention, given the importance of the musicians involved. In 1831, Heinrich and Carl Baermann, together with two additional performers, offered a musical evening for Felix Mendelssohn. They performed arrangements for two clarinets, basset horn, and bassoon of string quartets by Beethoven, Haydn, Weber, Spohr, and Mozart.⁴ Had a bass clarinet been employed instead of the bassoon, this might have constituted one of the earliest instances of a clarinet quartet. The decision to use the bassoon may reflect the unavailability of a bass clarinetist. Although bass clarinets capable of substituting for cello were already in existence, the instrument had not yet gained widespread acceptance.

EARLY WORKS FOR FOUR CLARINETS

In the 19th century, a small body of works explored writing for four clarinets within the contexts of chamber music and military bands. Though they failed to generate a stable performing tradition, these works suggest that the clarinet quartet was already conceptually present in the period's musical language.

Among the works composed for four clarinets, one of the earliest examples is the *Concertstück for four clarinets and orchestra* by Louis Schindelmeisser (1811-1864), composed around 1833. An equally revealing case is the production associated with James Waterson in the second half of the 19th century.⁵ According to Ellsworth,⁶ his works included duets, trios, and four undated clarinet quartets—one of them, a *Grand Quartet*, is still being performed to date. But by then, other works were being produced all over Europe: in Italy, Ernesto Cavallini composed two quartets;⁷ in Germany, Robert Stark included his *Fantasiestück* in the *Clarinett-Schule*;⁸ in Spain, in 1899, Manuel Monlleó wrote a quartet for the students of the Madrid Conservatory;⁹ and in Paris, the Italian composer Giuseppe Gariboldi published his *Andante quasi lento* in 1897.¹⁰ These compositions, rooted in band, didactic, and functional music contexts, reflect an instrumental practice in which multiple clarinets were already commonplace.

The cases of Schindelmeisser, Waterson, Cavallini, Stark, Monlleó, and Gariboldi reveal a shared characteristic of these early experiments: their sporadic nature. Although works for four clarinets are documented throughout the 19th century, they were not associated with stable ensembles devoted to their performance. The absence of professional groups hindered the consolidation of this repertoire, limiting its circulation and impact, despite the abundance of clarinetists and the instrument's widespread presence in bands, orchestras, and wind ensembles.

The first efforts to establish clarinet ensembles emerged in England in the mid-19th century, through initiatives such as the clarinet band competitions at Belle Vue and associations like the *Anemoic Society* of Lazarus.¹¹ Some 40 years later, similar

initiatives began to emerge in other countries (for instance, the American ensemble formed by C. A. Gregory, A. Howell, and L. D. Robertson, who performed regularly to present clarinet quartets at various musical events in the Duluth area, Minnesota).¹² The transition from early clarinet quartet works to the formation of specialized professional ensembles required not only suitably trained performers, but also a receptive musical environment for new chamber wind formations—conditions which were not met until the last decade of the century.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FIRST PROFESSIONAL CLARINET QUARTET IN ENGLAND

The necessary conditions for the establishment and proliferation of the first quartets for four clarinets in England were consolidated in the last decade of the 19th century, when the Spaniards Manuel (1859-1922) and Francisco Gómez (1866-1838) arrived in Great Britain.

Born in Seville to a family of limited means, the Gómez brothers received their early musical training at the San Fernando Asylum, an institution with a solid music program within the 19th-century Spanish civil band tradition, where the clarinet played a central role. This training provided a rigorous instrumental foundation, early ensemble experience, and familiarity with repertoires requiring coordination among

multiple clarinets. The Gómez brothers adopted music as a livelihood and advanced to more prominent professional contexts.

After some years, when Manuel studied at the Madrid Conservatory, the brothers pursued advanced clarinet studies at the Paris Conservatoire, a leading 19th-century center for professional wind training. Their formation followed the principles of the French clarinet school, combining individual and orchestral instruction, as well as ensemble practice. The Conservatoire's chamber-music culture—shaped by established wind ensemble traditions and practices—provided an important framework for their later professional careers.

Attracted by the professional possibilities that England offered, the Gómez brothers moved to London in 1886. Manuel became the first clarinet of the Royal Italian Opera just three years after Henry Lazarus had vacated this position. Later, in 1895, both brothers accompanied Henry Wood in the establishment of a new ensemble: the Queen's Hall Orchestra. The Queen's Hall had opened in 1893 and had quickly become one of the main centers of London's musical life. Under Wood's artistic direction, the space hosted not only major symphonic concerts, but also chamber music cycles conceived with a clear experimental spirit. Within the framework of these initiatives, Wood promoted the formation of quartets for different instru-



Manuel Gómez (ca. 1905)



Francisco Gómez (ca. 1890)

Photo courtesy of the Gómez family archive, Toronto, Canada

Photo courtesy of the Wardale family archive, East Yorkshire, England

"The Gomez Clarinet Quartet demonstrated, for the first time, that the homogeneous clarinet quartet could function as a professional artistic project."

ments, understood as a way to renew the repertoire and attract new audiences.

Manuel and Francisco Gómez combined a solid band background, a diversified chamber music experience, and a well-established presence in English musical life. These factors, combined with Wood's approach to promoting chamber music, placed them in a unique position and created the necessary conditions to transform a long-dormant idea—the homogeneous clarinet quartet—into a stable artistic medium. Established in London in the late 1890s as part of a chamber-music initiative for the Queen's Hall Promenade Concerts, the Gomez Clarinet Quartet (GCQ) comprised an ensemble modeled on the string quartet format (two violins, viola, and cello): Manuel Gómez

and Percy Egerton on B $\flat$ clarinets, George Anderson on basset horn, and Francisco Gómez on bass clarinet.

The basset horn had been introduced to London in the 1780s by the itinerant virtuoso clarinetists David and Springer, who performed works featuring the instrument in 1789. It enjoyed considerable popularity in England during the first half of the 19th century, both as a solo instrument and in obbligato roles. J. H. Maycock was the first English specialist on the basset horn, an instrument also employed by Joseph Williams.¹³ Like the basset horn, the bass clarinet gained prominence in England during the first half of the 19th century. George Wood produced the first English bass clarinet, which he termed the "*bass clarone*," an instrument later used extensively by Will-

man and Maycock for obbligato passages and solo repertoire. As noted above, Maycock was a leading specialist on the instrument and the first permanent English bass clarinetist.¹⁴ With the arrival of the Gómez brothers, Francisco followed Maycock's example, specializing in both the basset horn and the bass clarinet.

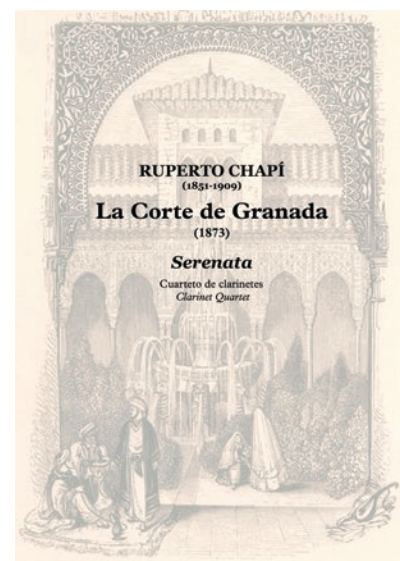
Manuel Gómez conceived the quartet with the aim of "making better known the wonderful variety of tone-colour furnished by the clarinet family,"¹⁵ a combination that—owing to the instruments' construction—spanned four octaves and a sixth, exceeding the range of any string ensemble. He also envisaged the possible expansion of the group into a sextet.¹⁶

At a time when stable chamber ensembles for the clarinet were still rare, the GCQ primarily performed arrangements of works by major composers, penned by Francisco Gómez and George Anderson. Notable examples include arrangements of Weber's *Invitation to the Waltz*, Mendelssohn's *Song Without Words*, and Chapí's *Serenata* from *Fantasia Morisca (La Corte de Granada)*. The quartet made its debut at the Proms on September 24, 1898, where it received an enthusiastic response.

Although the GCQ never expanded into a sextet, as Manuel Gómez had originally intended, it remained active in chamber concerts and special events until the



Queen's Hall, Langham Place, London (commercial postcard, publisher uncertain), c. late 1890s



Ruperto Chapí's *Serenata* from *La Corte de Granada* (Madrid: Bassus Ediciones, 2025)

early 20th century. Its last documented appearance took place at the Press Club Smoking Concert in January 1901. The ensemble stands as a significant example of innovation in English chamber music for wind instruments.

EXPANSION OF THE GENRE

Thanks to the activity of ensembles like the Gomez Clarinet Quartet, clarinet quartets became increasingly common from the early 20th century onward. New ensembles were established in England, like the Klosé Clarinet Quartet in Coventry, whose members were H. W. and A. F. Collingbourne, C. Boissonade, and P. Wareham. The ensemble took its name from the clarinetist whose celebrated method was taught at Kneller Hall and performed pieces like James Waterson's *Grand Quartet* and Gari-boldi's *Andante Quasi Lento*.¹⁷

In the newspapers of the time, we can see that several new clarinet ensembles emerged in England in subsequent years, including the Springfield Clarinet Trio and the Renard Clarinet Quartette. The latter, comprising Charles Renard, James Parke, Alex Smith, and Robert Smith, was reputed by the *Scottish Referee* to be the finest clarinet ensemble in the world.¹⁸ One of its recordings—the *Marche Grotesque* by Jean Renard—has survived and is included on *The Clarinet: Historical Recordings, Volume I*; it is currently considered the earliest known recording of a clarinet quartet. In the United States, the work of Howell and his colleagues led to the establishment of the Warmelin Quartet in the mid-1930s. At roughly the same time in France, Gaston Hamelin was founding the Hamelin Quartet, comprising Gaston Hamelin, Henry Dionet, Maurice Cliquennois, and André Dupont.¹⁹

This growing interest in clarinet quartets is further reflected in original compositions for this type of ensemble, such as Joseph Holbrooke's Quintet "Apollo," op. 120 (1907), for four clarinets and piano; Gaston Hamelin's *Variations sur un thème Populaire russe* (1917); W. A. Crosse's *Petit Quartet* (1919); and Virgil Thomson's *Five Portraits* (1929).

From this perspective, the historical importance of the Gomez Clarinet Quartet lies not only in its condition as a chronological antecedent, but also in having dem-



MAD4clarinets (Justo Sanz, Josep Arnau, Pablo Fernández, Pedro Rubio).

onstrated, for the first time, that the homogeneous clarinet quartet could function as a professional artistic project. Its influence is manifested less in a direct continuity of ensembles than in the opening of a horizon of possibilities that would mark the subsequent evolution of the genre.

A TRIBUTE TO THE GOMEZ CLARINET QUARTET

2026 will mark the 125th anniversary of the last concert offered by the Gomez Clarinet Quartet, held in London in January 1901. This milestone provides the perfect opportunity to revisit the significant role that this important ensemble played in expanding the artistic possibilities of the clarinet family at the turn of the 20th century.

MAD4Clarinet, comprising Justo Sanz, Josep Arnau, Pablo Fernández, and Pedro Rubio, one of Spain's leading clarinet ensembles, with extensive chamber, orchestral and pedagogical experience, have taken over this commemorative initiative, recovering and revitalising the music once performed by the Gomez Clarinet Quartet. The aim is to restore the Gomez repertoire, honoring this pioneering ensemble and highlighting its historical significance. Among the projects currently underway are the recording of a CD devoted to the repertoire performed by the Gomez Clarinet Quartet, a concert tour, and the publication of the recorded pieces, making these

works available to clarinet quartets interested in their performance.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to thank Jane Ellsworth, Jean-Marie Paul, and Luigi Magistrelli for the invaluable information they provided on clarinet quartets in the United States, France, and Italy. 🙏🙏

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- 2 Margaret Thornhill, "Bellison's Clarinet Ensemble: A Story in Scrapbooks," *The Clarinet*, 2010, 32-38.
- 3 F. G. Rendall, "A Short Account of the Clarinet in England during the 18th and 19th centuries," *Proceedings of the Musical Association* 68, no. 1 (Winter 1932): 55-86.
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- 5 An interesting article about Waterson's life can be read in J. Krebs, "Remembering James Waterson (1834-1893). Clarinetist, Bandleader and Composer," *The Clarinet* 37, no. 2 (May 2010): 84-85.
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- 7 Ernesto Cavallini. Quartets numbers 1 and 2. Published by Edizioni Musicali Eufonia, catalogue no. 07537C. These quartets are preserved through a copy dated 1932, it is

possible that the version for quartet is not original by Cavallini. The manuscript is preserved in the Philharmonic Library of Bologna. We thank Luigi Magistrelli for providing this information and the score.

8 Robert Stark (1892), *Grosse theoretisch-praktische Clarinett-Schule*. C. F. Schmidt: Heilbronn, 98-112.

9 "Del conservatorio," *El Globo*, Madrid, February, 3, 1899, 2. The press reported that the quartet "was highly applauded." Unfortunately, this piece has yet to be found. A trio for three equal clarinets by Manuel Monlleó was found in a Madrid library and published by Bassus Ediciones in 2021. We know it is not the same piece because the newspaper mentions the names of the four

clarinetists: Enrique Arteta, Isidoro Martín, Juan Sentana, and Maximino Monroy, all students at the Madrid Conservatory under Manuel González.

10 Gariboldi's piece had been originally composed for two violins, viola, and cello, but had been arranged for four B $\flat$ clarinets around 1897.

11 Rendall.

12 We are grateful to Jane Ellsworth for providing the reference to this early American amateur clarinet quartet. The quartet had three permanent members—C. A. Gregory, A. Howell, and L. D. Robertson—while the fourth position was filled by a rotating clarinetist. Among those who occupied this fourth position were Finstead, Heath, C. E. Johnson, and H. A. Johnson. There is some information available

about this ensemble in the Duluth newspapers from 1898 (e.g., "Getting Quite Mature," *Duluth News Tribune*, February 22, 1898, 2).

13 Rendall.

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Charlotte Kennedy is an independent researcher in genealogy and history, with a particular interest in the reconstruction of historical narratives through archival and documentary sources. She is the author of Manuel Gómez: "The Best Clarinetist in the World" (2023), a study devoted to the life and artistic legacy of the clarinetist Manuel Gómez, one of her ancestors.



Pedro Rubio is a clarinet professor at the Conservatorio Superior de Música de Castilla y León (COSCYL) in Salamanca, Spain. In 2007 he founded the publishing house Bassus Ediciones, whose principal objective is the restoration and retrieval of the Spanish clarinet repertory of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century. He was one of the artistic directors of ClarinetFest® 2015 in Madrid.

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CLARINETFEST® 2026: A Final Look Ahead

by Wonkak Kim

As ClarinetFest® 2026 approaches, the full scope of this landmark gathering in Incheon continues to come into sharper focus. Building on the festival overview shared in the March issue, this final preview highlights additional performances, special initiatives, and community voices that will help define this historic first ClarinetFest® in Korea.

This year's festival will feature an exceptional roster of artists spanning multiple generations of clarinet performance. Internationally celebrated figures such as Michael Collins (UK) and David Krakauer (USA) will be joined by many of today's leading artists, including Annelien Van Wauwe (Belgium), Vítor Fernandes (Portugal), István Kohán (Japan/Hungary), Joë Christophe (France), Jerry Chae (Korea), and Joel Cardoso (Portugal), as well as Korea's prodigious young clarinetists and sisters, Se-Yeon Lee and Do-Yeong Lee, recent winners of the ICA Junior Young Artist Competition. These artists, along with many others, will appear throughout the week in headlining concerts and featured performances.



Beyond the concerts, participants will have access to more than 150 sessions, including recital performances, lecture-recitals, master classes, competitions, ensemble showcases, and clinics representing a wide cross-section of today's international clarinet activity. Festival highlights also include the Wednesday evening Jazz Headliner featuring Eiji Taniguchi, Ko-Ko-Ya, and Oriol Marès with members of the Tala Fayad Quartet. Another headliner concert will feature a special collaboration with the Seoul National University Korean Tra-

ditional Ensemble under the direction of Eun-Ah Noh.

For those arriving early, the "Prelude to ClarinetFest®: Enthusiast Workshop" offers a welcoming introduction to the festival experience. Designed for passionate amateur clarinetists and lifelong learners, this two-day program provides ensemble playing opportunities, guided instruction with distinguished faculty, and a chance to connect with fellow enthusiasts from around the world before the official opening of ClarinetFest®.

VOICES FROM KOREA'S CLARINET COMMUNITY

A defining feature of ClarinetFest® 2026 is its deep connection to the local musical community. Korea's clarinet scene—rich in artistic tradition, educational excellence, innovation, and social impact—will be represented not only on stage, but through the voices of the artists, educators, and leaders who continue to shape its future. I invited several representative voices from across Korea's clarinet community to share their perspectives on what it means to welcome the world to Korea for this historic festival.

Few have witnessed the remarkable rise of Korea's young clarinetists more closely than Jerry Chae, internationally acclaimed soloist and professor of clarinet at the Korea National University of Arts. For Chae, the next generation represents both exceptional technical preparation and a growing artistic individuality.

"Korea's younger generation of clarinetists is extraordinarily impressive—technically refined, musically mature, and increasingly individual in their artistic voice. Many are already earning interna-



Dream With Clarinet Ensemble



Jerry Chae



Michael Collins



David Krakauer



Do-Yeong Lee



Se-Yeon Lee



Annelien Van Wauwe

tional recognition, which reflects both the strength of their training and their ability to thrive on the global stage. Hosting ClarinetFest® 2026 is an important opportunity to showcase this momentum and to further strengthen Korea's presence within the international clarinet community."

— *Jerry Chae, Professor of Clarinet, Korea National University of Arts*

That spirit of artistic excellence is deeply rooted in Korea's ensemble tradition. The Seoul Clarinet Ensemble, one of the nation's longest-standing professional clarinet ensembles, has played a central role in cultivating Korea's clarinet culture for more than three decades.

"Founded in 1989 by clarinetists from the KBS Symphony,

Seoul Philharmonic, and Korean Symphony, the Seoul Clarinet Ensemble has spent over 30 years exploring the full artistic possibilities of the instrument—from chamber music to large-scale ensemble works. Through our annual concerts and Summer Music Camp, we have also worked to nurture generations of young clarinetists. We are truly honored to share our work as an opening headliner at ClarinetFest® 2026."

— *Jeongmin Song, Ensemble Leader, Seoul Clarinet Ensemble*

ClarinetFest® 2026 also highlights Korea's growing contributions to instrument craftsmanship. DuoMusic, one of Korea's most respected clarinet ateliers, recently introduced the *HanGang Clarinet*—

the first professional clarinet line developed by a Korean company.

"Hosting ClarinetFest® in Korea is a meaningful milestone for our musical community. For the past 32 years, DuoMusic has dedicated itself to repair, craftsmanship, and instrument development, always with the goal of helping musicians perform at their highest level. The launch of the HanGang Clarinet is only the beginning—we hope to continue building a brand that can proudly represent Korea on the global stage."

— *Wooseop Ryoo, President, DuoMusic Korea*

Equally inspiring is the growing visibility of inclusive performance initiatives in Korea. Two ensembles in particular—Dream With Ensemble and FaLaSol Ensemble—demonstrate the power of music to transform perceptions while creating meaningful artistic opportunities for musicians with developmental disabilities.

"Dream With Ensemble is Korea's first professional performing group composed entirely of musicians with developmental disabilities. Since our founding in 2015, our 10 full-time members have presented more than 800 performances, proving through dedication, discipline, and music that limitations can become possibilities. Through ClarinetFest®, we hope to share not only our artistry, but also a message of resilience, inclusion, and human connection."

— *Dong Hyuk Yoon, Ensemble Leader, Dream With Ensemble*



FaLaSol Music Group



Songdo ConvensiA

“FaLaSol is a professional clarinet ensemble led by musicians with developmental disabilities, actively contributing to Korea’s contemporary music scene while opening new possibilities for inclusion through performance. We are honored to participate in ClarinetFest® 2026 and look forward to sharing the artistic voice and value of our musicians with an international audience.”

– Dae In Go, President,
Music Group FaLaSol

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As headlining artists, presenters, and exhibitors, these voices will be an integral part of ClarinetFest® 2026. I encourage all participants to attend their performances, visit their presentations and exhibits, and engage with the musicians, educators, and innovators who are helping shape Korea’s place on the global clarinet stage.

TRAVEL AND LODGING

The International Clarinet Association is pleased to partner with the Music Association of Korea in the final stages of planning for ClarinetFest® 2026. Through this col-

laboration, the two organizations hope to further connect Korea’s music and educational communities with international participants while fostering future artistic and educational exchange.

ClarinetFest® 2026 will take place in Songdo International City, Incheon, a modern and accessible district located just minutes from Incheon International

Airport—one of the world’s major travel hubs. The festival venues, including Songdo ConvensiA and the Incheon Arts Center, are conveniently connected by public transportation, making navigation easy for international and domestic travelers alike.

Participants are encouraged to review registration options and secure accommodations early. A range of hotel options



Seoul Clarinet Ensemble (ca. 1980). Front row from left to right: Hyungjik Yoo, Hyungon Kim, Jeongmin Song, Hyungak Shin, Changsoo Lee, Jongwook Lee, Woondae Jung; back row from left to right: Dongchul Choi, Youngdae Yoo, Hyunwook Koo.



From left to right: Wonkak Kim (Artistic Director, ClarinetFest® 2026), Jessica Harrie (Executive Director, ICA), Cheol Gu Lee (President, Music Association of Korea), and Taehoon Kim.

at special festival rates are available within close proximity to the festival venues, offering both convenience and access to Song-

do's dining, parks, and waterfront spaces. Discounted hotel rates are available through the Incheon Tourism Organization.

For full registration details and lodging information, please visit the ICA website:

Registration: <https://clarinet.wildapricot.org/event-6226447>

Hotels and accommodations: <https://clarinet.org/clarinetfest-2026-hotels/>

Single-day tour packages are also available on July 6, 7, or 12 through our partner FnF Travel. Visit Incheon's historic traditional market and ChinaTown. Try on the traditional Korean hanbok and visit a historic temple. Or try the famous Korean fried chicken. Full tour details and registration are available at www.clarinet.org/clarinetfest-2026. ☺☺

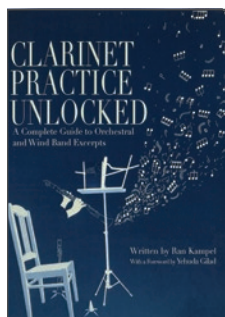


Wooseop Ryoo and Jinsung Moon at Duo Music Seoul



REVIEWS

BOOKS



Ran Kampel. *Clarinet Practice Unlocked: A Complete Guide to Orchestral and Wind Band Excerpts.* Conway Publications, 2025. \$32.

Ran Kampel's *A Complete Guide to Orchestral and Wind Band Excerpts* presents a well-organized and unique approach to learning orchestral and wind band excerpts in preparation for auditions. Kampel's approach blends thoughtful, positive-minded pedagogy, introducing

26 detailed practice techniques that are applied to the excerpt examples throughout the book. The book contains 80 standard excerpts from orchestral, opera, and wind band literature. The author presents his ideas about studying these excerpts in an encouraging tone that helps the player to learn this material more deeply and permanently than through mindless hours of simple repetition, which often does not result in long-term consistency.

The author's encouraging words of "Be patient with yourself! Progress takes time and often is not linear," resonated with me both as a player and as a teacher. The introduction begins by defining the purpose of practicing, followed by the value of facing failure, setting goals, tools needed to practice, ways to evaluate and optimize progress, and a strong emphasis on slow practice. The chapters focus on using a metronome, shaping the air, intonation, technique, dynamics, articulation, and breath. I found the author's ideas about playing with air only to be quite effective, particularly in smoothly connecting intervals. I applied his technique of playing with air only to the Brahms Symphony No. 3 and Sibelius Symphony No. 1 excerpts provided, which helped me to hyper-focus on subtleties of my articulation and dynamics, all very enlightening. The chapter on using a metronome includes exercises on varied off-beats and on big beats of a bar. This helps the player focus on developing a strong inner sense of pulse, particularly while counting rests.

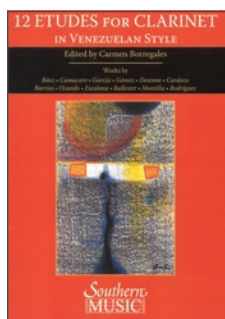
The author's Practice Method 8, "Speed Games," suggests playing excerpts at different tempi to reveal musical challenges that may be overlooked when playing at the normal tempo. For instance, when I practiced the Shostakovich Symphony No. 9, movement II excerpt at various faster tempi, I found that I was hearing the shapes of the lines more clearly, and then when I returned to a slower tempo, I was able to retain the forward-moving

flow and shapes of those lines at the correct, slower tempo. I also tried this method with his suggested excerpt of Grainger's *Lincolnshire Posy*, "The Brisk Young Sailor." Playing this excerpt at a slower tempo helped me to refocus my practice on lyricism and the beauty of sound and dynamics, instead of focusing solely on speed and accuracy. The author's approach to studying intonation, encouraging "flexibility" instead of "being right," resonated with me both as a teacher and as a player. This is something that I focus on with my students, and I found the author's explanations and rationale to be quite compelling.

The author's focus on awareness of tuning both melodically and harmonically was clearly presented and thoroughly supported with practice examples. Some key points about intonation were: prioritizing tone quality over playing in tune with a compromised sound, focusing on playing with accurate tuning, intervallically in relation to preceding and following notes, giving extra focus to leading tones and thirds within a chord (thinking harmonically), retaining a memory of pitch at the end of a phrase, when beginning a new phrase after a rest, and retaining accurate pitch after breaths to not tend towards playing sharp. All these suggestions emphasize the importance of flexibility. The ideas and approaches in this book have been tested through many hours of practice by Kampel. Multiple excerpts support each chapter topic. The "Practice Reflections" follow the practice methods throughout the book, offering a personalized challenge to the student to reflect on their own practice. The final portion of the book contains a section of orchestral and wind band excerpts, to which the methods can be applied.

This resource should unequivocally be on the shelf of all teachers and advanced clarinet students. It offers a methodical approach to studying this repertoire and preparing for auditions, while also simultaneously strengthening the fundamentals of a player's overall musicianship.

— John Cipolla



Various Composers. *12 Études for Clarinet in Venezuelan Style.* Edited by Carmen Borregales. Southern Music Publishing, 2025. \$19.99. [Performance Link](#).

12 Études for Clarinet in Venezuelan Style, edited by Carmen Borregales, is a delightful and significant addition to the canon of clarinet repertoire. Each étude is meticulously crafted, making them excellent candidates for recital performance as well as important pedagogical tools for

the advanced player.

Carmen Borregales is the former Principal Clarinetist of the Simón Bolívar Orchestra. Her musical education stems from the renowned El Sistema program in Venezuela, where she excelled as a young clarinetist. She has built a significant career as both an educator and musician around the world. Her extensive performance and teaching experience are evident in the meticulous editing of *12 Études*.

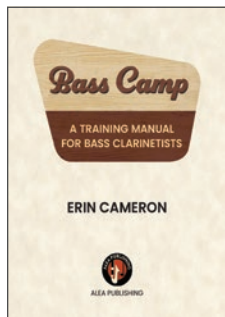
Expressive and engaging, *12 Études* will quickly join the ranks of the highest level of études for clarinet. Borregales commissioned 12 Venezuelan composers to write these pieces, providing them with specific genres, references, and skill/technique parameters. Each one is written in a different style that explores both the musical landscape of Venezuela and the full range of timbral and musical possibilities of the clarinet. Borregales has recorded all the études, and they are available on YouTube as a pedagogical reference to the stylistic, rhythmic, and expressive elements.

12 Études provides a write-up for each piece and composer, describing the purpose of each work and the history of its genre. In these descriptions, Borregales identifies the folk elements and pedagogical goals of the pieces, along with detail about the desired effects and outcomes. She also writes briefly and charmingly about the stylistic underpinnings and regional rhythms of each work. Composers include many notable musicians, such as Jorge Montilla, Andrés Barrios, Pablo Camacaro, and others. The works are elegantly and beautifully written, highlighting all of the gorgeous timbral and technical possibilities of the clarinet.

12 Études fulfills an important need in the clarinet ecosystem, not just for music from Venezuela, but also for effective contemporary études. This collection joins the landscape of études by Cavallini and Rose, while incorporating the articulations, syncopations, and phrasing of genres from Venezuela. The études marry traditional style with contemporary underpinnings in an effective and satisfying combination for both clarinetist and audience. Not only are the works significant pedagogical innovations, but they also effectively canonize folk traditions for the student or professional.

Since I received *12 Études*, they have not left my music stand, and I have enjoyed using them extensively in my own teaching and practice. Challenging yet accessible, they are the perfect combination of technique and musicality. I highly recommend them to any teacher or player looking for fresh and inspiring works to add to their daily routine.

— Stephanie Zelnick



Erin Cameron. *Bass Camp: A Training Manual for Bass Clarinetists.* Alea Music Publishing and Recordings, 2025. \$20 PDF and hard copy.

Dr. Erin Cameron is an American clarinetist and bass clarinetist and is currently assistant professor of clarinet at Arkansas State University. She has studied at the University of North Texas, Bowling Green State University, and Northwestern University. Cameron has written a new guide

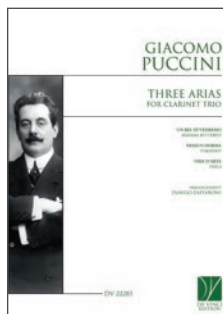
to learning the fundamentals of bass clarinet playing. She states in the introduction that the book is intended for high school-age or early college-age musicians, or for those of any age who are new to playing bass clarinet. This text fulfills that goal, and in fact, I have already started incorporating the book into the lessons of my own bass clarinet students. The text is divided into three major sections: Long Tone Warm-ups, Scale Exercises, and Technique Pages, along with a series of appendices and a web-link that provides additional information on equipment (mouthpieces, reeds, ligatures, and instruments), recommended performers, method books, repertoire, and other online resources.

I appreciate the thoroughness with which Cameron has compiled and organized this material. The musical examples are

printed large enough to be easily visible (those of you who know me know how important I find this). The book doesn't try to overstep its mission. Cameron gets to the point, presents it thoroughly but not redundantly, and makes sure that the visual presentation is clear. There is no attempt to explore multiphonics or other extended techniques. Other books do a great job of this. But this book is concerned with fundamentals and does a wonderful job of presenting them. One other thought: in working with student bass clarinetists, I have noticed their hesitance to play notes in the clarion register at all, never mind the altissimo. This book doesn't shy away from exploring those registers early on, which I commend. Cameron gets the student into clarion register work on the second page of the warm-up section, and into the altissimo on the fifth page. By page 10, the student is playing an altissimo G. I think that this is an important aspect of modern bass clarinet performance and should be encouraged. Highly recommended.

— Timothy Bonenfant

MUSIC



Giacomo Puccini. *Three Arias for Clarinet Trio* (three B $\flat$ clarinets). Arranged by Danilo Zaffaroni. Da Vinci Edition, 2025. €16.90.

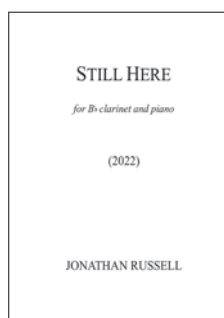
Here is a recent publication of three significant arias chosen from the many written by Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924) in his beautiful operas. Puccini was, after Bellini, Donizetti, Rossini, and Verdi, a very important proponent of the Italian opera repertoire in the last part of the

19th century and the first decades of the 20th century. His operas *La Bohème*, *Tosca*, *Madame Butterfly*, and *Turandot* gained tremen-

dous popularity for their deep feelings described through both text and music, enriched by Puccini's unique command of melody.

Danilo Zaffaroni, an Italian bassoonist, teacher, and composer, offers us three wonderful adaptations of Puccini arias arranged for three clarinets: "Un bel di' vedremo" from *Madame Butterfly* (1904); "Vissi d'arte" from *Tosca* (1900); and "Nessun Dorma" from *Turandot* (1924, unfinished). Da Vinci Edition has prepared a very nice edition of these arrangements. Located in Japan, Da Vinci is also (and above all) a recording label with hundreds of publications. These aria arrangements are a good way to enjoy such masterpieces in a small, flexible chamber music ensemble. A very welcome addition to the repertoire!

— Luigi Magistrelli



Jonathan Russell. *Still Here* for clarinet and piano. Self-published, 2022. \$35. [Performance Link](#).

Still Here for clarinet and piano by Jonathan Russell is a powerful work, composed in 2022. Another exciting aspect of this piece is that Russell also did an arrangement for clarinet and orchestra, and it premiered at ICA ClarinetFest® 2025. It is also interesting to note that it was commissioned by 52 clarinetists. The composer

does an excellent job providing program notes for this four-movement work. He discusses how he was influenced by a selfie video of defenders of Ukraine in the face of Russian aggression in 2022, as they stated, "We Are Here. Still Here." Russell states that he was moved by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's "calm resolve and courage." Russell drew a parallel to his own Jewish heritage, which is represented in one of the movements.

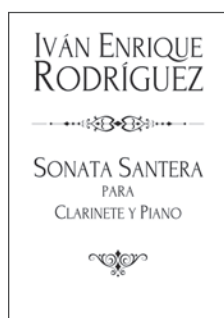
The first movement begins with an eight-measure clarinet solo in the chalumeau register on double-dotted rhythms. It is soft and slow and has a mournful quality. It moves up in tessitura and intensity as well as tempo. The piano also plays a flowing line up and

down, and the clarinet builds to a climactic high F before it shouts on a low E, recalling the opening dotted rhythm once more.

The second movement is a scherzo and is incredibly fast and energetic. The main theme uses eighths followed by 16ths and a pattern of 16ths in chromatic motion. Towards the middle, a klezmer tune appears, followed by a return to the theme from movement one. The composer says that he struggled to accept a "playful, humorous music that seemed to want to be a part of this piece ... but then read an article about the thriving stand-up comedy scene in Ukraine and thought about the rich comedic tradition in my own Jewish heritage." The third movement is, as the composer states, a "simple love song tinged with nostalgia." The composer notes, "if you play with vibrato, this movement is a great time to use it!" It is moderately slow in 12/8 and has a cadenza to be played freely and improvisationally at the end.

The fourth movement has a wild, klezmer-like quality. It is marked "defiantly joyful." It is indicated that players with experience might ornament and *ad lib*, but this is not required. Thematic material from earlier movements reappear, and the music returns to a low E (as in the outset of the first movement). Russell comments: "It comes back around to say, 'We Are Still Here.'"

— Katrina Phillips



Iván Enrique Rodríguez. *Sonata Santera* for clarinet and piano. Self-published, 2021. \$35. [Performance Link](#).

Sonata Santera (17') is a three-movement work that, according to the composer, draws upon three ritual practices within Santería: the *espojo* (cleansing), the *ofrenda* (offering), and the *bembé* (an energetic, rhythmically driven celebration). These rituals are prevalent in Puerto Rico and throughout Latin America and reflect

a syncretic cultural tradition shaped by African diasporic practices, Taíno heritage, and Catholic elements introduced through Euro-

pean colonization and the transatlantic slave trade.

Movement I, *Espojo*, is characterized by vigorous contrapuntal writing that alternates with expansive lyrical passages, consistently interweaving these contrasting textures throughout the movement. Rodríguez employs dramatic gestural flourishes to articulate formal divisions and heighten structural clarity. Episodes of call-and-response dialogue frame the principal thematic material and contribute to the sense of forward momentum. Precise rhythmic coordination is essential for both performers as these contrasting textures exchange prominence within the ensemble. Through these compositional strategies, Rodríguez creates richly stratified sonorities. The clarinet and piano function in a balanced, chamber-like partnership, each complementing the other's timbral and

expressive roles. The clarinetist must exhibit secure control of the altissimo register and articulate with agility across all ranges. At the same time, the pianist must exercise refined sensitivity in balancing the subtle shifts of texture and dynamic nuance.

Movement II, *Offrenda*, unfolds as a serene, contemplative meditation, characterized by a calm, flowing melody enriched by luminous harmonic colors. The performers are required to sustain a seamless legato and exercise refined control across wide intervallic spans. As the woven melodic lines traverse the full range of the instruments, Rodríguez's sensitive lyricism evokes a spiritual, almost devotional atmosphere that resonates deeply with the listener. Subtle shifts of timbre, in conjunction with nuanced harmonic and dynamic contrasts, lend depth and dimension, effectively suggesting the reverent character of a sacred offertory.

Movement III, *Bembé*, bursts forth as a jubilant, dance-driven celebration, prominently featuring rhythmic clapping and chest-beating gestures propelled by an insistent, driving tempo. Rodríguez layers a sustained clarinet melody over the pianist's compound rhythmic patterns, producing a buoyant, almost "flying" sensation. Technical flourishes in the clarinet's upper register combine with hocketed exchanges between the two instruments,

creating a percussive dialogue that heightens the work's vitality and excitement. The movement unfolds in waves of accumulating energy, punctuated by brief, more reflective episodes in which sustained harmonies preserve the sense of flight while projecting a gentler, more introspective calm. At the culmination, the clarinet offers a final impassioned outpouring of joy before the music subsides into a tranquil close. Rodríguez thus reminds the listener that these three movements are not merely representations of a distant culture but living expressions that resonate vividly with both performers and audience alike.

Rodríguez's deep engagement with history and cultural reference makes this work an exciting addition to the clarinet repertoire, offering vivid portrayals of contemporary cultural practices. Recommended for advanced collegiate performers through the professional level, the piece requires a rhythmically secure and highly collaborative artist capable of shaping nuanced colors throughout each movement. Its playful yet insightful interwoven textures position the work firmly in the realm of chamber music. Exciting, exuberant, and impactful, Rodríguez has crafted a composition that is sure to captivate any listener.

— Vic Chávez, Jr.



Volodymyr Runchak, *Anti-Sonatas No. 28, 29, and 53* for clarinet and piano. Self-published, 2003. [Performance Link](#).

Volodymyr Runchak, born in 1960, is a distinguished and prize-winning Ukrainian composer whose oeuvre spans a broad spectrum of genres and instrumental combinations. Among his most compelling works are *Anti-Sonatas No. 28, 29, and 53* for clarinet and piano. Though the numbering implies a long sequence

of related works, these three movements function as a single, continuous triptych. The choice of numbering is deliberately ironic, subtly challenging conventional expectations while reflecting Runchak's inventive approach to form and narrative.

The triptych is a deeply reflective and politically resonant work that meditates on war, trauma, devastation, and the persistent endurance of humanity and artistic expression. Its musical language is characterized by a modern, nuanced expressionism. Emotional extremes, fragmentation, and abrupt contrasts shape the discourse, while silence often carries expressive weight to sound. Tension permeates even the most subdued passages, creating an atmosphere that is simultaneously fragile and intense.

The technical demands for both performers are considerable and extend beyond conventional instrumental mastery. The clarinet part requires control of extended techniques, including pitch bends, flutter tonguing, and handling extreme registers, and nuanced timbral shifts. The pianist navigates virtuosic keyboard passages alongside percussive effects, clapping, knocking on the piano body, chanting, and other theatrical gestures. Together, the performers transform the stage into a dramatic environment in which musical and physical expression are inseparable. Certain passages

recall historical precedents such as Igor Stravinsky's *The Soldier's Tale* and the experimental vocal writing of Luciano Berio.

Runchak provides detailed instructions for the work's theatrical dimension. Performers must internalize both the musical material and the embedded choreographic elements. Although the directions are precise, they demand focus and allow space for personal interpretation, requiring both technical skill and interpretive maturity.

To offer readers and performers a description and interpretation of the composition, the following outline highlights the triptych's dramatic trajectory and expressive devices.

The work opens with a soldier-like presence, characterized by gestures reminiscent of marching and abrupt commands. The clarinet emits virtuosic fast runs and harsh cries while quarter tones destabilize pitch, producing unsettled sonic terrain. Extreme dynamic contrasts heighten the sense of urgency and violence, and sudden silences interrupt the flow, intensifying the atmosphere of disruption. Gradually, a more lyrical and tentative voice emerges. The music is subdued and fragile, yet never fully stable. Interruptions recur, suggesting aftershocks of grief and memory. The clarinet ascends into the high register, occasionally approaching a scream, while repetitive figures circle insistently, evoking entrapment and psychological tension.

Clarinetist and pianist then chant, clap, and move rhythmically, half-singing and half-speaking in distorted fragments, sometimes in Bebop or swing-like patterns. These episodes introduce grotesque elements and often end abruptly, leaving silence that unsettles the listener and amplifies the work's expressive intensity.

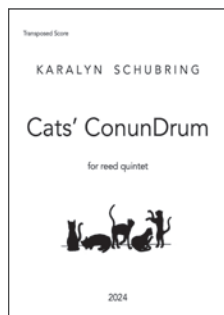
The clarinet is eventually divided into two separate pieces, creating the impression of a duet performed by a single musician. As the performers move or withdraw while playing, clapping, and chanting, the effect is fractured and uneasy while occasionally hinting at hope. This passage introduces a subtle playful energy, yet it is carefully controlled and fully integrated into the composi-

tion's serious arc. It stands in clear contrast to the overt humor of Adolf Schreiner's *Immer kleiner*.

Anti-Sonatas No. 28, 29, and 53 represents a major contribution to the contemporary clarinet repertoire. It demands not only technical mastery but also ethical and emotional commitment. While the work avoids graphic depiction, its thematic weight requires

thoughtful programming. Considering its artistic power and urgent relevance, particularly from a Ukrainian composer whose homeland continues to endure war, the triptych merits wide performance and careful engagement from both performers and audiences.

— Barbara Heilmair



Karalyn Schubring. *Cats' ConunDrum* for reed quintet (oboe, clarinet, alto saxophone, bass clarinet, bassoon). Self-published, 2024. \$50. [Performance Link](#). 2025 ICA Composition Competition Winner.

American composer Karalyn Schubring has written a wonderful new piece for reed quintet (oboe, clarinet, alto saxophone, bass clarinet, bassoon). Commissioned by Novus Reed Quintet and Paradise Winds, *Cats' ConunDrum* was selected as the chamber music winner of the 2025 International Clarinet Association Composition Competition. The title has a double meaning, with “cat” referring to both jazz musicians and the numerous cats that could be found observing Schubring and the members of Paradise Winds while workshopping ideas for this piece. Similarly, the stylization of *ConunDrum* refers to Schubring's belief that the piece would also be played with percussion (which has not, to my knowledge, been done yet, but I would love to hear such a performance!).

Originally composed in 2024, *Cats' ConunDrum* draws on Schubring's love of jazz-fusion grooves. She structures the piece in what could be described as either a rondo or what she describes as “a jazz head interspersed with soloistic sections.” Either way one wants to look at it, the main theme is a catchy, syncopated eight-measure tune reminiscent of Chick Corea's “Spain.” The first solo section evolves gradually out of cascading 16th notes in the oboe before the clarinet and alto saxophone join in with the idea. Following another statement of the jazz head, the clarinet takes center stage in the second solo section before the alto saxophone takes over, followed by the oboe. The third solo section is the most lyrical, with Schubring casting long melodic lines against oscillating dyads in polyrhythm. Here she gives the bass clarinet and bassoon their first moment in the spotlight, generating a wonderful moment of textural variety.

At this point, Schubring masterfully begins developing the ideas she has already introduced in the piece, rather than continuing to incorporate entirely new material. She cleverly reworks the

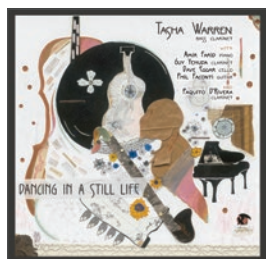
head into triple meter before fragmenting it away into an impressionistic descent of scalar fragments borrowed from the third soloistic section. This gives way to the most contrapuntal section of the piece, where each instrument plays its own melodic line, some based on previous material and others new. This passage requires careful counting and strong, rhythmically independent musicians. Schubring cleverly builds intensity through this section of dense counterpoint by increasing the rhythmic activity until the piece seems to reach a boiling point and collapse simultaneously. Her placement of the softest and most simple music at this point in the structure creates heightened anticipation for the inevitable: the return of the jazz head, but again with slightly varied accompaniment figures. These subtle changes in rhythm and voicing again create needed variety in what could otherwise be redundant in less skilled compositional hands. In the final soloistic section, the bass clarinet and bassoon get their most glorious moment to shine in a lush and impassioned melody not yet heard in the piece. A final iteration of the jazz head, cleverly varied with some meter changes, provides an exciting conclusion to the piece.

The score (transposed score) is meticulously notated, with careful attention given to individual dynamics among instruments, ease of reading, and clarity of notation. However, this is not to say that Schubring is overly prescriptive; she indicates in the score that “In keeping with the jazz inspiration behind this work, players are welcome to embellish any soloistic lines with their own improvised alternatives.”

While all five instrumental parts of this piece require excellent musicians with a strong sense of rhythmic accuracy and jazz inflection, most of the melodic responsibility falls on the oboe, clarinet, and alto saxophone. The scalar passages in parallel thirds and sixths between players will test even experienced players, as will the great variety of articulations and rhythmic figures Schubring calls upon in the spirit of jazz style. I enthusiastically recommend this piece for any reed quintet up to the task, particularly for those seeking a satisfying and toe-tapping closer for a concert.

— David Cook

MUSIC



Dancing in a Still Life. Tasha Warren, bass clarinet; Guy Yehuda clarinet; Paquito D'Rivera, clarinet; Dave Eggar, cello; Phil Faconti, guitar; Amir Farid, piano. P. Harlin: *Dance Suite for Bass Clarinet and Piano*; A. Piazzolla/arr. G. Yehuda: *Histoire Du Tango*; N. Endicott: *Riding to School with Samuel*

Beckett; D. Akiva: *Dance Preludes*; P. D'Rivera: *Contradanza*. Blue Griffin Recording, BGR699. Total Time: 71:02.

Tasha Warren and her award-winning collaborators give stunning performances in the album *Dancing in a Still Life*. The recording includes a captivating collection of dance-inspired duos featuring Warren on bass clarinet and collaborators on piano, clarinet, cello, and guitar. The various instrument combinations with bass clarinet make for a cohesive program with nice variety.

Patrick Harlin's lively *Dance Suite for Bass Clarinet and Piano* opens the album with its rhythmic intensity, wide leaps and fast passagework. Amir Farid joins Warren in this three-movement work originally written for bassoonist Eric Van der Veer Varner. Harlin later recast the piece for bass clarinet, and Warren gave the premiere. The first movement begins with a catchy tune in the bass clarinet and a pulsing piano motive that becomes increasingly insistent. In the second movement, the piano introduces an introspective melody before the bass clarinet erupts in wide intervals and rapid articulated gestures. Slow pulsing piano chords return in the middle that seem to make a fleeting reference to Messiaen's *Quatuor pour la fin du temps*. The third movement is a real showstopper. It bursts with energy and culminates with great intensity. Warren and Farid adeptly navigate the technical challenges with remarkable precision.

Fellow Michigan State University colleague Guy Yehuda joins Warren in a brilliant performance of Piazzolla's *Histoire Du Tango* that he arranged for clarinet and bass clarinet in 2024. The arrangement of this popular work is well-written for these two instruments, and the performance is bright and filled with character. Yehuda and Warren play with a lovely vocal quality and great clarity to the articulations. They also achieve a striking dynamic range, especially in the magical softer moments. The bass clarinet solo at the opening of the second movement is particularly memorable, as is the virtuosic ending of the final movement.

Cellist Dave Eggar joins Warren for Neal Endicott's *Riding to School with Samuel Beckett*. Each movement of this work is inspired by one of Beckett's popular quotes and the composer's inter-

pretation of the quote. The first movement opens with rhapsodic figures and flashy interjections. The quick interplay between parts is well-paced and coordinated. The third movement conjures an other-worldly atmosphere with soft melodic fragments in the bass clarinet that float over whispered lines in the cello. Warren and Eggar show incredible tonal control. The bold fourth movement is also memorable with its fast passagework and rousing conclusion.

Daniel Akiva's *Dance Preludes* was written in five movements in 2024 for bass clarinet and guitar and is dedicated to Warren. Phil Faconti joins Warren on guitar in this work that explores "movement, sound and meditation." The first movement introduces a pensive bass clarinet solo that is followed with lovely dance-like gestures. The contrasting second movement begins with a beautifully reflective guitar solo. Warren and Faconti play with excellent balance and matching articulation styles. The playful third movement is inspired by the klezmer tune *Abu's Courtyard*. Warren and Faconti achieve a nice flowing conversational quality in this movement as they seamlessly trade lines. The final movement recalls themes from the first and second movements through a more upbeat lens. Listeners will enjoy the colors explored in this vibrant work.

The album concludes in a joyous celebration with Paquito D'Rivera and Warren playing his ever-popular *Contradanza*. The performance is full of vitality and spontaneity. It is the perfect way to round out this album showcasing these delightful works inspired by dance.

—Justin Stanley



American Landscape. Chad Burrow, clarinet; Amy I-Lin Cheng, piano. D. Baker: *Clarinet Sonata*; E. Kurtz: *Logo II pour clarinette et piano*; T.R. George: *Sonata* for clarinet and piano; R. Etezady: *Bright Angel* for clarinet and piano. Centaur Records, CRC 4160. Total Time: 65:01.

American Landscape is an album of four pieces for clarinet and piano written by American composers. Chad Burrow, who is professor of clarinet at the University of Michigan, was accompanied by Amy I-Lin Cheng, who serves there in the Department of Piano and Department of Chamber Music.

The first piece, *Clarinet Sonata* (1989), was written by jazz composer and conductor David Baker (1931-2016), who was known as the founder of the jazz studies program at Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. The work occurs in three movements: "Blues," "Loneliness," and "Dance." The jazz influence is apparent in the colorful and lush harmonies, sultry melodies of the clarinet, use of glissando, comping in the piano, and complex rhythmic combinations. The third movement features a Latin flair with its use of *contradanza* and *samba* styles. The work comes to life with Burrow's admirable nuance of color and style, expert story-telling, and precise rhythmic collaboration with Cheng.

Logo II pour clarinette et piano (1978–79), composed by Eugene

Kurtz, is the second work of the album. The French influence, as is evident from the title of the piece, is derived from Kurtz's time living in Paris, where he studied with two of *Les Six*, Arthur Honegger and Darius Milhaud. The first movement, "Introduction," is a depiction of nocturnal sounds from childhood. The opening idea is reminiscent of the third movement Stravinsky's *Three Pieces*, with its quick grace notes combined with repetitive melodic motives in displaced groupings. The second movement, "Breakdown," is again reminiscent of Stravinsky, with driving, repetitive, and dissonant chords in the piano, believed to be a nod to the primitivism of *The Rite of Spring*. The title of this movement refers to the African American dance of the same name, which Kurtz says, is known for its "obsessive character and inexorable rhythmic flow." The ensemble playing in this work is quite remarkable, as Burrow and Cheng navigate complex rhythms and sustained intensity.

The third piece on the album is *Sonata* for clarinet and piano (1967) by Thom Ritter George (b. 1942). The work occurs in four movements and sounds quintessentially American, drawing from the harmonic and melodic language of Bernstein and Copland, which can be clearly heard in the outer two movements. The simple intimacy of the second movement sparkles thanks to Burrow's exquisite sound and mature phrasing. The third movement is understated in its melodies and sparse accompaniment, akin to some movements of Rade's *Suite from The Victorian Kitchen Garden*.

The final work on the album is *Bright Angel* for clarinet and piano (2007) by Roshanne Etezady (b. 1973). The piece takes

inspiration from the work of Mary Jane Colter, who helped create the quintessential American style of architecture at the Grand Canyon. With each movement named after one of Colter's buildings, Etezady explains that she aims to convey "the essence of each of these structures—the 'flow' of each building, the use of light and space ... something of their character as well." The first movement, "Lookout," is atmospheric in effect, created by repeated decaying sustains in the clarinet part, highlighting Burrow's expert control of the instrument, especially in the lower dynamics. The second movement, "Phantom," is brooding and aggressive, with extended use of chromaticism and quick runs, which show off the technical prowess of both performers. The third movement, "Kiva," is unaccompanied clarinet, allowing for more nuance of sound through use of timbre trills and frequent registral shifts. The fourth movement, "Hermit's Rest," is clearly inspired by hymnal

writing; it is simple in phrasing, patient in pacing, and beautiful in harmonies. The fifth movement, "Bright Angel," is an exciting end to this work. The angularity of both intervals and rhythms drive intensely to the end, before abruptly tapering on an altissimo note—a risky and beautifully executed finale.

Bravo to Chad Burrow and Amy I-Lin Cheng on this exquisite album. This collection is a celebration of the diversity of sound that has sprouted in American composition in the post-Romantic era. The works on this album are effective and engaging, thanks in no small part to the musical conviction of both Burrow and Cheng. Each piece reflects the care and expertise brought to the performance, from thoughtful phrasing and style, attention to nuance of color and articulation, and commitment to storytelling through music. This album is a must-listen for all clarinetists!

— Kelsey Paquin



That's a Different Groove. Marcus Eley, clarinet; Lucerne DeSa, piano; Jason Williams, drums; Karl Vincent Wickliff, bass; Music Alive Ensemble: Rachel Jordan, violin; Amy Thiaville, violin; Franco Sixto, viola; Rachel Hsieh, cello; Yuiko Asano, piano. A. Batiste: "Swing in the Abstract" from *Tune Suite No. 1*; D.N. Baker: *Sonata*

for clarinet and piano; Y. Lateef: *Sonata* for clarinet and piano; O. Nelson/arr. M. Eley: *Sonata* for alto saxophone and piano. Navona Records, NV6712. Total time: 61:00.

Marcus Eley's *That's a Different Groove* is a celebration of Black composers and music creators, featuring four works written by jazz artists. This album is an excellent introduction to four lesser-known works in the clarinet repertoire. For clarinetists, another noteworthy aspect of the album is that it features Eley's playing during two different periods of his career: two of the pieces were recorded in the late 1990s, and two were recorded in the 2020s.

Works by Alvin Batiste and Yusef Lateef were recorded more recently. The first piece on the album, "Swing in the Abstract" from *Tune Suite No. 1* by Batiste (relative of singer Jon Batiste), is a jazz ensemble work mixing clarinet alongside strings and a rhythm section. While it is not specifically a clarinet feature, Eley's clear,

direct clarinet sound makes this an enjoyable listen for clarinetists. Lateef's *Sonata* for clarinet and piano is a striking homage to Brahms. The work's four movements share titles with Brahms's *Sonata*, op. 120, no. 1, and each movement begins similarly to its counterpart. The music is dense and thick, like Brahms, and contains complexly intersecting lines between clarinet and piano. The harmonies are far more dissonant, as if imagining what Brahms would sound like if he had lived 100 years later, performed jazz, and was influenced by modernism.

The older recordings on the album show how Eley's artistry (and recording technology) has developed since the 1990s. The classic sonata by David Baker may be the most recognized work on this album; the sonata's three movements contain written-out improvisatory lines, with each movement exploring a different jazz groove. Oliver Nelson's *Sonata* for alto saxophone and piano (arranged by Eley) is written with clean lines and clear forms, balancing moments of consonance and dissonance. Nelson, a jazz woodwind player and composer, integrated influences from Ravel and Hindemith, and was also known for writing film and television music.

Taken together, the works on this album represent an effective "alternative canon" of works by composers who have not yet received the recognition they deserve.

— Erin Cameron



Wild Winds. MiamiClarinet: Margaret Donaghue Flavin, clarinet; Dawn McConkie, clarinet; Michael Walsh, clarinet; Danielle Woolery, clarinet. E.A. Kelly: *Wild Winds*; D. Kaufman: *Quartet for Four Abstract Expressionist Paintings*; S. Kraevska: *Clarinet Quartet III*; B. York: *Elements*. Independent Release. Total Time: 48:45.

This digital release presents four contemporary works that engage an avant-garde aesthetic while remaining firmly idiomatic for

the clarinet family. Featuring compositions by Elizabeth A. Kelly, Dana Kaufman, Sofia Kraevska, and Barbara York, the program offers a varied yet cohesive exploration of extended techniques, timbral nuance, and structural experimentation.

Elizabeth A. Kelly's contribution is energetic and rhythmically vibrant, demonstrating a compelling balance between contemporary language and structural clarity. The writing is idiomatic and demands rhythmic precision, tight ensemble coordination, and confident projection of contrasting articulations and dynamic layers—all of which are effectively realized in this performance.

The work by Dana Kaufman—herself a clarinetist and peda-

gogue—inhabits a sound world shaped by extended techniques, including registral extremes, flutter-tonguing, and pronounced vibrato. A brief quotation of the familiar nursery rhyme *Ring Around the Rosie* appears, integrated with subtle irony. Importantly, these devices function not as mere sonic effects but as expressive tools within a coherent musical argument. The writing reflects a sophisticated understanding of clarinet acoustics and technical design. Rapid registral shifts and layered rhythmic passages lie idiomatically under the fingers, revealing an informed sensitivity to breath control, resonance, and instrumental response.

Sofia Kraevska's work is thoughtfully constructed, balancing atmospheric textures with rhythmic propulsion. Her sensitivity to the clarinet's tonal spectrum is evident as lines pass fluidly among voices in closely coordinated exchanges. The piece demands refined ensemble precision and nuanced dynamic control, rewarding performers who sustain textural clarity while shaping long arcs of tension and release.

Barbara York's contribution provides a complementary expressive voice within the program. Known for her lyrical sensibility in other instrumental contexts, York adapts her compositional language effectively to the clarinet medium. Her harmonic palette, though modern, privileges line and contour, offering moments of introspection that contrast meaningfully with the more abstract textures elsewhere on the recording. The result is music that balances lyricism with structural integrity and moments of virtuoso playing.

Performance—individually and as an ensemble—throughout the recording is confident, technically solid, and stylistically com-

mitted, with particularly commendable work of the bass clarinetist. The quartet's renditions of the extended techniques were precise and delivered with care. Rapid articulation passages, altissimo, and subtle coloristic shifts were rendered with clarity and poise.

There is, however, a brief instance of audible air leakage in one track. Although minor and not structurally disruptive, it is perceptible within an otherwise polished production. The overall recording quality is clear and well balanced, allowing the intricate textures to emerge distinctly.

A more substantive limitation concerns the absence of detailed digital documentation. No liner notes, performer credits, instrumentation listings, or recording data are provided. In certain passages characterized by penetrating brilliance and focused tonal projection, one might suspect the use of E♭ clarinet (Kaufman?); however, without explicit instrumentation details, this remains speculative. The lack of attribution reduces the recording's scholarly and pedagogical utility.

In sum, *Wild Winds* constitutes a meaningful contribution to the contemporary clarinet repertoire. The works are adventurous yet idiomatic, technically demanding yet performable, and interpreted with evident artistry and commitment. Greater transparency in digital presentation would enhance its value for performers, educators, and researchers; nevertheless, the artistic merit of both the compositions and the performances secures this release as a noteworthy addition to the modern clarinet discography.

—Jorge Montilla Moreno



Big Crass Monster. Whistling Hens: Jennifer Piazza-Pick, soprano; Natalie Groom, clarinet. J. Stevenson: *Musical Invective*; M. Dunphy: *Chants*; J. Brandon/arr. N. Groom: *Multitudinous Stars and Spring Waters*; C.D. Leiter: *Dear Old Year (the memories of a matriarch)*. Navona Records, NV6775. Total Time: 57:00.

The ensemble Whistling Hens (Jennifer Piazza-Pick, soprano and Natalie Groom, clarinet) is dedicated to performing and commissioning works by women composers, to create an equitable awareness and financial standing for women in music. The selection of masterful works on this album is a tribute to their mission and the collaborative ecosystem that encourages creative processes to flourish and stand as exemplars of strength, determination, and artistic excellence.

Critics can support and scathe with equal deftness. *Musical Invective* by Jennifer Stevenson brings this to light by setting scathing critics' words in the musical style of the scorned great composer. Highlighting the melodic qualities of the clarinet and piano and permitting them equal footing in the collaboration, the duo flawlessly moves between the styles of Beethoven, Debussy, Webern, and Gershwin with adept musicality and technical prowess, providing an exceptional listening experience.

In *Chants*, Melissa Dunphy sets the poetry of New Zealand-born artist and occultist Rosaleen "Roie" Norton into a woven

masterpiece, melding the lines of the clarinet and voice into a seamless dialogue. Reminiscent of the multitudes of her life, the composition flows through dynamic and poignant statements. Each poem languidly and expressively punctuates close intervals, with the emotional sensibilities uplifted through the performance. The flawless intonation, ensemble balance, and beautiful phrasing of Groom and Piazza-Pick are an exceptional testament to ensemble communication in this powerful composition.

The words of Chinese women poets are masterfully set in Jenni Brandon's *Multitudinous Stars and Spring Waters*. Expressing the themes of love and longing, the haunting tones of clarinet and voice bring the women's words to life. Tight intervals, depth of expression, and beauty of voicing by Whistling Hens resonate, synergizing the poignant words. The duo's impeccable phrasing highlights the haunting, deeply personal texts. Originally composed for soprano and oboe, this arrangement by Natalie Groom speaks to the adaptability and resourcefulness of women throughout the centuries.

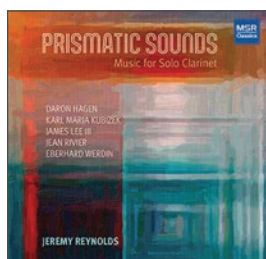
Drawing on the personal letters and notes of her great-great-grandmother, Cherise D. Leitner transforms the ordinary into the extraordinary in *Dear Old Year (the memories of a matriarch)*. The multi-faceted expressiveness and fluidity of timbre bring to life a letter to her late husband, common cures for ailments, and daily life on a farm. Impressive in technical and musical expression, the duo musically portrays these events with equal seriousness and humor, underscoring the depth of human emotion. Leaping intervals, pointed articulations, quiet phrases, and stand-alone motions

are treated with equal seriousness and playfulness, each performed at the highest musical and technical level without a hint of the underlying difficulty inherent in the scoring.

Whistling Hens's performance displays impeccable technique, stand-out expression, and flawless ensemble communication. Languid lines are equally parsed with punctuated fragments, all performed with seemingly effortless ease. Exceptional musicality, flawless technical execution, and masterful compositions highlight the

powerful scope of creativity inherent in this synergistic collaboration. The cover art and liner notes, which give equal credit to performers and composers, illustrate the ensemble's mission to support women in music and the essential partnership between performers and composers. Artistic, musical, and technical qualities are all a win in *Big Crass Monster*. Bravi tutti on the production of an exceptional album that exemplifies creativity, spirit, passion, and cooperation!

—Michelle Kiec



Prismatic Sounds: Music for Solo Clarinet. Jeremy Reynolds, clarinet. J. Rivier: *Les Trois "S" pour clarinette solo*; E. Werdin: *Impressionen für klarinette solo*; K.M. Kubizek: *Capriccio—6 Stücke für klarinette solo*; D. Hagen: *Icarus for Solo Clarinet*; J. Lee III: *Principal Brothers No. 3 for Solo Clarinet*. MSR Classics, MS1781. Total Time: 48:53.

Unaccompanied clarinet works comprise an ever-rising percentage of our repertoire, and both recitals and albums of these works have become increasingly popular due to their versatility, variety, and accessibility. This album features five lesser-known works for unaccompanied clarinet spanning from the late 20th century to the early 21st century performed with artistry and interest by Jeremy Reynolds, professor of clarinet at the Lamont School of Music at the University of Denver.

Les Trois "S" pour clarinette solo, composed by Jean Rivier (1896–1987), is in three movements. The first movement, “Sil-lages” (Wakes), displays the intense control of timbre and style in all registers along with an incredible sense of time by Reynolds. The movement begins with a playful and chaotic melody, giving way to a more mellow middle section, before returning to the opening thematic material in the final section. The virtuosic ability of Reynolds is on display throughout, featuring the beauty and flexibility of his clarinet sound. “Soliloque” (Soliloquy), the second movement, is comprised of what almost sounds like one long and flowing phrase that never ends. The control and shaping of the wind that Reynolds displays is equally as impressive as his technical abilities throughout the outer movements of this work. The final movement, “Serpentins” (Streamers), is energetic and excited, similar in style to the second movement of von Koch’s *Monologue No. 3 for Clarinet*. Reynolds’s use of timbral variation as an element of tension building to the top of each phrase is done expertly and draws attention to the very different style of this movement, delineating it from the other two.

Eberhard Werdin’s (1911–1991) *Impressionen für klarinette solo* (1987) is a six-movement work. Each movement is a short miniature study in character. With no movement except the finale exceeding two minutes, it is a challenge to establish and then develop a musical character, but Reynolds achieves this with clarity and consistency. Each movement is a thoughtfully crafted musical experience. The use of extreme dynamic contrast accentuates the first and second movement’s lush phrases. Articulation and ornamentation are highlighted in the third and fourth movements, all while

Reynolds continues to spin beautiful, almost never-ending phrases with the more colorful aspects of his tone. Movements five and six together create two sides of a coin with the “Burlesco” fifth movement being very angular and mysterious, and the “Finale giocondo” being the most tonally melodic movement of the work, primarily in the chalumeau register.

Capriccio—6 Stücke für klarinette solo by Karl Maria Kubizek (1925–1994) is also a work consisting of six movements. Unlike the more angular Werdin, the Kubizek is much more like a series of six short *tableaux*. “Allegretto con spirito” is playful and childlike in nature, and Reynolds embodies this with a lightness of articulation and clarity of phrasing that makes tricky passages sound graceful. “Adagio sensibile” is markedly darker and more introspective not just in the melodic material, but in the facet of Reynolds’s tone color that he employs here. The “Allegretto capriccioso” is much more mischievous and spans a much wider range of the clarinet, where Reynolds treats the listener to an impressive display of his altissimo prowess. “Più lento e molto espressivo” is another more reflective movement, but much less dark in atmosphere than the “Adagio sensibile.” This segues nicely to the fifth movement, “Allegro,” a never-ending energetic technical ride. The phrasing is used as a tool here to create even more tension than the melodic material could alone, sounding almost as if it doesn’t rest. The final movement, “Agitato,” connects all movements—not just in style, but in tone as well. Reynolds’s performance of light articulations and multi-voiced melodic lines throughout all ranges of the instrument is particularly remarkable here.

The fourth work on the album is Daron Hagen’s (b. 1961) *Icarus for Solo Clarinet* (2007). Reynolds begins from *niente*, highlighting his intense control of register and tone color in the lowest chalumeau, before jumping effortlessly to the altissimo. Unlike the other works on this album, this work is through-composed, climbing slowly through the registers, much as the character from mythology climbed until he rose too close to the sun. Unlike Icarus, there is no register that ever sounds as if it is too high for Reynolds—he makes the altissimo register, no matter where it originates from or is going, sound absolutely clear and unforced.

The final work on the album is *Principal Brothers No. 3 for Solo Clarinet* (2020), by James Lee III (b. 1975). This work was composed in 2020 amid racial tension, so Lee decided to honor four of his African American orchestral colleagues by writing short unaccompanied works for them. *Principal Brothers No. 3* was written for and premiered by clarinetist Anthony McGill. The composer writes that these works all begin in ways “that are representative of their names ... A for Anthony ... All four of these works are rhapsodic

in nature with elements of improvisation.” The first movement, “Calmly,” begins in the style named in the title, but gets worked up rather quickly, climbing to the very highest points of the altissimo. Each phrase is crafted with detail and purpose, conveying the intensity of the lines and showing off Reynolds’s deep understanding of how to create a sonic world in an unaccompanied piece. The second movement, “Playful,” reflects this spirit in the use of a light articulation style reflective of the interesting rhythmic figures crafted by Lee. Reynolds highlights these rhythmic aspects and brings them to life with clarity and insistence. The final movement, “Con Spirito,”

seems to reflect a persistence of spirit reflected in the sparkling use of intense technical passage work and repeated movement to the altissimo register that is unyielding in its intensity and expertly executed by Reynolds.

This album is a must-have for any clarinetist with an interest in unaccompanied clarinet repertoire. Both the choice of works along with the thoughtful performance of each work is a master-class in how to approach interpretation of both standard tonal and non-standard phrases in unaccompanied repertoire.

– Vanessa Davis

NEW RELEASES



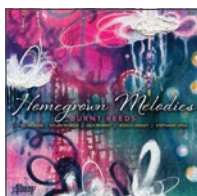
Duos. Emily Hoppe, flute; Cris Inguanti, clarinet. Redshift Records, TK559.



Connections. Osiris J. Molina, clarinet; Jenny Grégoire, violin; Silvia Rath, violin; Jennifer Whittle, violin; Jacob Adams, viola; Moisés Molina, cello. Blue Griffin Recording, BGR717.



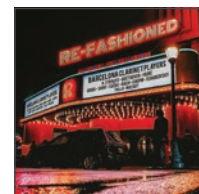
Spark. Aaron Irwin, clarinet, saxophone; Mike Baggetta, guitar; Bill Campbell, drums. Adhyâropa Records, AR00167.



Homegrown Melodies. Burnt Reeds: Teil Taliesin, oboe, English horn, ocean drum; Dylan Taliesin, clarinet; Jack Murray, soprano saxophone, alto saxophone; Jessica Lindsey, bass clarinet; Stephanie Lipka, bassoon. Albany Records, TROY2016.



First Impressions. Trio Tempestoso: Andraž Golob, clarinet; Sanja Mlinarič, accordion; Urban Megušar, cello. Independent Release.



Re-Fashioned. Barcelona Clarinet Players: Manuel Martínez, clarinet; Javier Vilaplana, clarinet; Martí Guasteví, bass set horn; Alejandro Castillo, bass clarinet. Club del Disco. ♪♪



CLARINET CHRONICLES

by Jeremy Ruth



Jeremy Ruth is assistant professor of music at Lander University, where he teaches music history and applied clarinet lessons in addition to coaching the Lander Woodwind Ensemble. His performance interests are wide-ranging, but he has a particular interest in contemporary music, performance art, and exploring new extended techniques for the clarinet. He is a founding member of the Ambassador Trio, past winner of the ICA Research Competition, and current editor of [The Clarinet \[Online\]](#).

RESEARCH: GATHERING AND REVIEWING SOURCES

Greetings fellow clarinetists! In the September 2025 issue of *The Clarinet*, I wrote about the process of picking a research topic.¹

As I stated then, libraries—including the ICA's James Gillespie Online Library—are your friends. They can help spark ideas as you pick your topic, but even after you've found a promising area of research, libraries will remain your friends as you venture into the next stage of the research process: gathering and reviewing sources.

Once you've selected a topic, you'll need to narrow it down and determine what previous research has been conducted on it. To that end, you'll want to find as many books, journal articles, recordings, scores, and other resources as you can that relate to your topic. If you attend a college, university, or other institution with access to digital research databases, make use of those! Search for your topic using multiple search terms, being careful not to stay too narrow—your topic is narrow, but your search net should be cast wide. You want to get as many resources as you can—don't worry about getting too many at first. If you check out a stack of 50 books, you might end up using only five of them, but you won't know until you review the literature!

Just as you went from a broad idea to a narrower and more focused one when selecting your topic, your goal in this step of the research process is to go from having every source that might remotely relate to your general topic to only the ones that are relevant for your specific

topic. You can achieve this by scanning through the various sources and taking notes. Don't attempt to read through every source in detail in its entirety at this point—you're only conducting preliminary research and focusing in on the sources that will be useful to you. An effective approach is to make brief notes in a notebook, indicating what each source contains and how it might relate to or be useful for your research topic. Annotated bibliographies can also be a great help as you review materials, but it's still a good idea to take your own notes on how each source might specifically relate to your research topic. Taking these notes will help you keep track of your sources, determine which ones will likely be useful to you, and reinforce your own understanding of the subject matter.

As you review your sources, you should also start to become aware of whether you have an original topic and what challenges you might face in pursuing it. If you can find many sources that relate to your topic in a direct manner, this means that you will likely have plenty of information to draw on in your writing. However, this also means that you must be extra careful that you aren't simply rehashing previous research—having a lot of prior research on a topic means that finding a fresh, original angle that adds to the body of knowledge in our field may be more difficult. Our goal is to search for new knowledge, not to simply repeat what has already been said. Though this can make research seem daunting, don't let it deter you—this just means

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that narrowing your topic into something original might be more of a challenge, while finding sources will be easy.

On the other hand, a topic with very little prior research may have great potential to add to the body of knowledge within our field. The obvious challenge here, however, is that drawing on existing sources in your writing will be much more difficult. In this case, you may need to create unique or original studies, analyses, or experiments to pursue your topic. You might also find that you need to cast a wider net in your search for sources—the connections you make might be more distant ones, but these are often the ones that prove to be the most thought-provoking. There is a good chance that you may find yourself taking these kinds of approaches if you are working on a major research project, like a thesis or a dissertation.

The principles that I've laid out here apply whether you're writing a simple research paper for an undergraduate class, starting your thesis or dissertation in graduate school, or even working on a major research project that you hope to submit for the ICA Research Competition or for publication in *The Clarinet*. Doing preliminary research and reviewing existing materials is an integral part of the research process, and I hope that this gives you some useful tips that make the process easier and more straightforward! ♪♪

ENDNOTES

- 1 Jeremy Ruth, "Clarinet Chronicles—Research: Finding a Topic," *The Clarinet* 53, no. 1 (September 2025): 80.

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