

# The Clarinet

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INTERVIEW WITH

## Béla Kovács

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Rudolph Dunbar

The Albert-System Clarinet

Vietnamese Composer Nguyen Phuc Linh

Marco Mazzini and Clariperu



have just made a masterpiece, that's the *Bolero*; alas, it contains no music at all." Such self-effacing talk could be interpreted in many ways, but I think we are all the richer for this singular work, a model of economy and relentless forward drive. Beyer's arrangement is also vital, even with reduced forces compared to the augmented orchestra that Ravel used.

Ravel painted one color combination after another, stacked end to end creating a colossus. Beyer has shortened Ravel's original 430 bars to 268 and provides directions for an optional further cut of 53. He suggests performing with a percussionist; after all, the snare drum player is really the star of the show. If no snare drum is used the oboist is instructed to put the bolero ostinato into motion with key clicks through the first 20 bars. Beyer is ingenious in his own orchestration. Variety is on hand with every new phrase by changing the role of each instrument among melody, melodic harmony, ostinato and harmonic structural duties.

This virtuosic work brings intonation and rhythmic accuracy into the spotlight and would challenge any ensemble. It would be effective at school shows highlighting each instrument.

— Gregory Barrett

## RECORDINGS

**Homage and Inspiration: Works by Schumann, Kurtág, and Weiß.** Iris Trio: Christine Carter, clarinet; Molly Carr, viola; Anna Petrova, piano. R. Schumann: *Märchenerzählungen*, Op. 132; G. Kurtág: *Homage à Robert Schumann*, Op. 15d; W.A. Mozart: *Trio in E Major "Kegelstatt"* K. 498; C. Weiß: *Drittes Klaviertrio für Klarinette, Viola, und Klavier* "Gespräch unter Freunden." Coviello Classics, LC 12403. Total Time: 62:46.

Iris Trio skillfully pairs classics and contemporary music in their album *Homage and Inspiration*. Comprised of clarinetist Christine Carter, violist Molly Carr, and pianist Anna Petrov, Iris Trio debuted in 2013 in concert at the German



Consulate in New York City; a multi-country concert tour and collaboration with Christof Weiß furnished inspiration and impetus for this album. Liner notes in English and German provide descriptive program notes, detailed performer bios and insight into the creative process.

Talented soloists in their own right, the interplay and musical collaboration of Iris Trio shine brightly. Lines weave into unified constructs that highlight timbral nuances. Seamless melodies combine with impeccably balanced tutti passages. Intense musicality reigns throughout, with luminous depth of resonant tone in all registers. Dynamics empower without shocking the senses. Simply, this disc by Iris Trio is immaculate in its musical and technical presentation, bringing forth depths of sound palettes for the listener's delight.

In the opening work, the time-honored *Märchenerzählungen (Fairy Tales)*, Op. 132, by Robert Schumann, performers move seamlessly between foreground and background, as melodic lines are woven between instruments with unblemished intonation. Phrasing comes to light at every turn, highlighting the vocal quality of the work.

Harkening to the album's title, György Kurtág's *Homage à Robert Schumann*, Op. 15d, pays tribute to the inspirational composer. It is crafted as six vignettes, and striking musicality is heard from the first note. Lines are meticulously phrased, with each performer adding expressive nuances. Musical stories unfold in every movement; the technique is flawless and intense musicality breathes life into the fragments.

The enduring "*Kegelstatt*" *Trio in E Major*, K. 498, by Mozart receives a fresh interpretation. Daring risks of phrasing and spotless ensemble artistry enliven the classical structure. The authoritative presentation is decisively infused with playful turns of musicality, aptly capturing the compositional spirit. Supreme technical command supports rubato that creates lyrical dynamism throughout the composition.

The *Third Piano Trio (Conversation among Friends)* by Christof Weiß demands exceptional virtuosity from performers both individually and collectively. Individual parts are complex, combining into a multi-tiered organized cacophony of sounds that evokes a conversation with each voice vying for attention. Intricate rhythms belie stark melodies, with rapid interplay of voices and contrasts of registration pushing the boundaries of performance. The exquisite collaboration of the Iris Trio comes to the forefront in the interpretation, as technique and musicality intertwine to present an enthralling performance. The interpretation and level of execution are exceptional.

Iris Trio's ability to blend superior technique with sensitive musicality comes to the forefront, as flawless intonation, resonant tone, and perfect balance brings these works to life. Iris Trio presents a compilation that beckons listeners to stay for a while and ask for more. This disc presents a strong recording, which hopefully preludes subsequent projects by the ensemble. This recording would be a welcome addition to any personal or public chamber music collection.

— Michelle Kiec

→ **Choro Tributes.** *Diálogos Duo*: Louis Arques, clarinet; Richard Boukas, guitar. R. Boukas: *Não Diga Agora; Anacletozinho; Solstício de Verão; O Bandalim Sabe Tudo; Meu Violão é o Chorão; Manhoso; Requiem; Choro do Sol; Dois Irmãos no Céu; Sambando na Praia; Choro Sussuro; Som Livre*. Self-published (available at <https://boukas.com/dialogos-duo>). Total Time: 51:58.

*Choro Tributes* consists of music written for clarinet and guitar exclusively by New-York-based guitarist and composer



Richard Boukas. All the themes are original, and they are written in homage to famous Brazilian composers of both popular and academic music.

The idea of a CD for clarinet and guitar with music of popular styles is not new, but the fact that this CD features original works makes it quite appealing and pleasing. Clarinetist Louis Arques and Boukas form the ensemble Diálogos Duo.

Duos for clarinet and guitar are a complicated ensemble because of the inherent difficulties in intonation and balance in both instruments. Arques, a French-born clarinetist that lives in New York, is a well-seasoned clarinetist and rises to meet these challenges. There are no inconsistencies or discrepancies in intonation on this recording.

Arques's sound is very resonant throughout all registers and incorporates lots of vibrato, which is typical in Brazilian popular music. The vibrato was employed with elegance and charm at the beginning of the CD and seemed to become more fervent as the CD progressed. Arques seizes every opportunity to display his artistry, his solid technique, his abilities to produce sweltering melodies and his precise articulation. Noticeable was Arques's ability to control very soft altissimo notes as he did in *Requiem*, a work that pays tribute to Heitor Villa-Lobos. Close to the end of the CD Arques's sound was more relaxed and incorporated idiomatic pitch bends and ornamentations.

Boukas plays the guitar with deep sound and infallible technique. The role of the guitar was mostly accompanimental, but several times the guitar and the clarinet

had small outbursts of music together. Boukas's work, *Meu Violão e O Chorão* (*The Guitar is the Real Choro Musician*), for solo guitar showcases his technical and lyrical command of the instrument.

The CD packaging is aesthetically pleasing and features pictures of the performers playing their instruments with the ocean in the background, as well as the titles of the tracks, technical recording information and a website ([www.boukas.com/dialogos-duo](http://www.boukas.com/dialogos-duo)). The website contains a wealth of information about the duo, program notes for each of the tracks on this album and many other resources. Boukas has generously made play-along tracks with click count offs available through the website or by contacting him directly.

The album has many beautiful musical moments of true musicianship and collaboration between these two wonderful players. It provides an excellent balance between fast, virtuosic dances and slow, lyrical dances, making it a delight to listen to from beginning to end. The CD is a successful example of an approach to popular music from musicians with a classical background instead of from a jazz background, which is what we seem to be more used to finding. The disc is highly recommended!

— Jorge Montilla Moreno

### XX Century Chamber Music for Violin, Clarinet and Piano.

Luigi Magistrelli, clarinet; Giambattista Pianezzola, violin; Ruta Stadalnykaite, piano. B. Bartók: *Contrasts*; D. Shostakovich (arr. Magistrelli): *Five Pieces for Two Violins and Piano*; N. Rota: *Lo Spiritismo nella Vecchia Casa* (*The Spiritism in the Old House*); D. Milhaud: *Suite*, Op. 157b; I. Stravinsky: *Three Pieces for Clarinet Alone*, *L'Histoire du soldat*. Gallo, CD 1616. Total Time: 67:01.

Clarinetist Luigi Magistrelli, assisted by violinist Giambattista Pianezzola and pianist Ruta Stadalnykaite, has produced a tremendous album of some of the greatest trio works for clarinet from the early 20th century. Béla Bartók's *Contrasts* and Igor Stravinsky's reduction of *L'Histoire du soldat* are each tour de force performances, and they alone make this album a



worthy purchase. Darius Milhaud's *Suite*, Op. 157b, and Dmitri Shostakovich's *Five Pieces for Two Violins and Piano* – arranged for violin, clarinet and piano by Magistrelli himself – complete the trio offerings. Finally, serving as palate cleansers are two works for solo clarinet: *Lo spiritismo nella vecchia casa* (*The Spiritism in the Old House*) by Nino Rota and Stravinsky's *Three Pieces*.

Magistrelli recorded the album at Villa Borromeo's Aurora Hall in Cesano Maderno, Italy. The beautiful resonance of this space is most apparent in *Contrasts*. Pianezzola's opening pizzicato of "Verbunkos" vibrato beautifully before Magistrelli enters with the playful dance melody that defines much of the first movement material. Already, Magistrelli's technical mastery is on display as he sails through melismatic flourishes. In the second movement, his expressivity and clear, ringing tone shine, especially in the lower clarion and upper chalumeau registers. "Sebes," the third movement, is an impish dance with devilish harmonies, all of which are navigated lithely and energetically by the trio.

The next two works are the weakest on the album. Magistrelli writes in the liner notes that Shostakovich's *Five Pieces* are "easy, melodical with very charming tunes." These pieces are great to have in the repertoire; however, Magistrelli and Pianezzola do not always match their phrasing on this recording. For example, in the beginning of the second movement, a lively "Gavotte," Pianezzola easily bounces his way through his line. It is bright and upbeat and done naturally