

The Clarinet

Vol. 49 • No. 1
December 2021



INTERNATIONAL
CLARINET
ASSOCIATION

ANTHONY MCGILL

Early Brahms Performances in America
Basset Horn in the 21st Century
Clarinet Works of Mike Curtis
Virtual ClarinetFest® 2021 Report
History of the Clarinet in Venezuela

In a market saturated by etudes, Fraioli distinguishes his collection by combining his keen compositional skills and an ineluctable knowledge of the clarinet. The *Dieci Studi* target potential weaknesses (awkward or unfamiliar finger patterns, articulations, intervals, etc.) while preserving a sense of self-awareness that keeps them idiomatic. The music, meanwhile, moves in meaningful phrases, providing ample opportunity for expression. Fraioli intentionally omits breath marks, leaving the performer maximum freedom to decide where and whether to break phrases or employ circular breathing. Considering the price (free), advanced clarinetists have no excuse not to get to work. In addition, the *Dieci Studi* have received an excellent reference recording on YouTube by Italian clarinetist Gabriele Coggi.

— Matthew Nelson

Brett L. Wery. *Clef and Key Studies for Clarinet*. Sonata Grendel Publishing, Scotia, NY, 2021. Print edition \$46.95, digital download \$35.95



American composer and arranger Brett L. Wery's *Clef and Key Studies for Clarinet* is a comprehensive method for learning to transpose at sight by developing clef reading

skills beyond treble clef. Wery presents a systematic approach to gaining fluency in alto, tenor, mezzo-soprano and bass clefs to handle common orchestral transpositions (e.g. playing D clarinet parts on E♭ clarinet, playing bass clarinet bass clef parts in A on bass clarinet in B♭).

After a thorough guide about how to use his text, Wery divides the major and minor keys into three groups based on diminished seventh chords. This change from the typical organization via circle of fifths lends itself to variety while practicing. Within each key, Wery provides scales and arpeggios, technique drills, clef studies and transposition drills. The scales and

arpeggios include basic and full-range scales (natural, harmonic and melodic versions for minor); triads; thirds; scale in trills; supertonic, dominant and leading-tone seventh chords; and chromatic scale.

Following the scales and arpeggios, Wery incorporates clef reading in each key. The technique drills address all common clefs in brief exercises similar to those found in Kroepsch's *416 Studies*, albeit with greater rhythmic and melodic variety. In the clef studies, Wery rewrites different melodies from orchestral, opera and chamber music literature in non-treble clefs, with the first few measures also in treble clef to help clarinetists start on the correct pitches. The transposition drills feature a single melody written in all clefs, illustrating the difference between a printed part and what the transposing clarinetist would play in different situations.

Wery includes indexes of the various musical works used in this text, scales and arpeggios by initial pitch, clefs and meters. This makes it very easy to find exercises that address a specific skill or concept. There is also an introductory video available on Wery's YouTube channel. *Clef and Key Studies for Clarinet* is a valuable resource for all clarinetists, but especially for those that want to take their transposing skills to the next level.

— David Cook

CLARINET WITH PIANO OR GUITAR

Piero Vincenti, editor. *The Great Italian Clarinet Tradition, Vol. 1, The Italian "Belcanto."* Fano, Pesano-Urbino, 2020. 23 pp. www.academiaitalianaclarinetto.com €10,00



This is a selection of eight solos all from published clarinet solos or exercises written in a florid, "belcanto" style, particularly popular from the mid-19th century through the mid-20th century. The

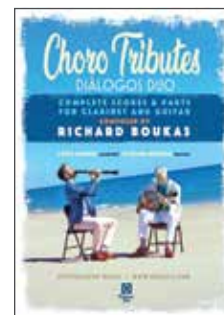
composers are among the most outstanding

and brilliant Italian clarinetists of their day, and one trombonist and composer is also included: Luigi Bassi (1833-1871), Giovacchino Bimboni (1810-1895), Giovanni Bimboni (1813-1893), Pompeo Cavallini (1809-1884), Gaetano Lebranchi (1829-1908) and Giuseppe Marasco (1860-1930). The historical and biographical notes are written by Adriano Amore, the most important scholar of the clarinet and clarinetists in Italy, and Piero Vincenti chose the solos and carefully edited them for this volume.

The selections are excellent examples of clarinet music for the pleasure and joy of playing and hearing their well-written and idiomatic themes and phrases. They are full of technical challenges that invite players to extend themselves by working on the passages and perfecting them. The virtuosity that is required to play them at the correct tempo and with a deep understanding of the musical content is worth the extra practice and repeated performances. Piero Vincenti is congratulated for his astute choices of solos and exercises that highlight the creativity of these six Italian musicians. This volume is highly recommended for all advanced clarinetists.

— Albert R. Rice

Richard Boukas. *A Dozen Choro Tributes*. Diatessaron Music/boukas.com, 2020. Play-along bundle \$25.00, pdf or print scores: \$20.00 or \$25.00



Richard Boukas, composer, has contributed 12 "choro-type" pieces for clarinet and guitar that are a welcome addition to the clarinet repertoire. Composed for his Diálogos Duo, with Louis

Arques on clarinet, the works appear on their CD recording titled *A Dozen Choro Tributes*. One composition is for solo guitar. Most of the pieces are dedicated to famous *choro* performers and composers such as Pixinguinha, Jacob do Bandolim,

Ernesto Nazareth, Villa-Lobos, Paulo Moura and Gnatai among others. The styles include samba-choro, waltz, and lament with lyrical and technical passages typical of *choro* vocabulary. Some of the pieces have high technical demands for the clarinet, although quite playable, with the clarinet range reaching a concert A in the altissimo. The compositions are not unlike traditional *choros* with their high demand of breath control, endurance and difficult technique. Boukas writes the clarinet parts for both A and B \flat clarinets, depending on the particular key of the *choro*.

Articulations are clearly designated and can be interpreted further according to the style. The musical style in each piece is clearly indicative of who it is dedicated to, which is impressive and inspiring to hear. This is a great credit to Boukas's talent and creativity. Writing as a performer of *choro* since 1996, these pieces are a great addition to our clarinet repertoire, with the style and compositional intuition of Boukas. His attention to harmony, rhythm, balance, and style, create a unique familiarity within the *choro* genre, along with the respect and tribute to those great Brazilian performers and composers who we all are indebted to. We owe Boukas a hearty thank you.

The music is available via download or printed hard copy. The play-along bundle includes pdfs of the clarinet and guitar parts, audio tracks with clarinet left channel and guitar right channel isolation. There is a user guide for changing tempo, key, and the looping of segments with the audio app of your choice.

— Maurita Murphy Marx

Evan Erickson. *Stained Glass*. Self-published, 2021. \$20.00



Evan Erickson is an 18-year-old clarinetist and composer from Dubuque, Iowa. He began composing during his freshman year of high school and lists the music of Igor Stravinsky and John Adams

as his inspiration. Although just beginning his career, Erickson has already written several short works which are available for purchase from his website (www.EvanEricksonMusic.com) including an orchestral work commissioned by the Dubuque Symphony Orchestra. This fall, Erickson is headed off to the University of Memphis to study music industry. There he will join the clarinet studio of Robyn Jones and composition studio of Kamran Ince.

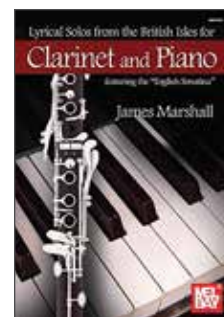
Stained Glass for clarinet and piano is a short, capricious work written for Erickson's father as a special gift before Erickson left to attend college. According to Erickson's website, *Stained Glass* was initially planned as a two-movement sonata, but the first movement developed into its own standalone work. It is in ABA form with an opening section that explores two contrasting ideas. One is percussive and giddy, featuring double-dotted eighths, 32nd notes and quick triplets; the other is light and articulate, featuring 16th notes that explore the clarinet's range including the upper clarion and altissimo. The clarinet and piano play off one another until the music relaxes and slows to the more lyrical and fluid middle section. Although more soulful, this B section still contains flashes of the opening flourishes and articulations. A low trill and grand scalar flourish launch the piece back into the opening A material which then dissolves into a contemplative ending, recalling the introduction.

Stained Glass is an engaging work for performer and audience alike which comes in at just over 5 minutes in length. Keep an eye out for this young composer; I'm sure we can expect to see much more from him. *Stained Glass* can be purchased from Erickson directly as a digital download from his website.

— Zachary Dierickx

James Marshall. *Lyrical Solos from the British Isles* for clarinet and piano. Mel Bay Publications, 2020. \$17.99

Lyrical Solos from the British Isles is a collection of short, easy pieces based on traditional English folk music, arranged by James Marshall. It includes recognizable favorites such as *Scarborough Fair*, *Be Thou*



My Vision and *Flow Gently, Sweet Afton*. All of these are arranged for clarinet and piano with the young clarinetist in mind.

Also included in this collection is James Marshall's *English Sonatina*.

This is a four-

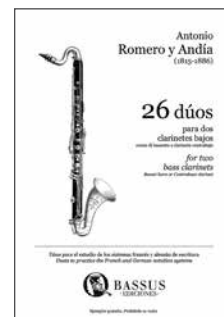
movement work written in a modal, folk-song-like style that is at home among the sonorities of the traditional pieces. The rhythmic and technical difficulty of the *English Sonatina* make it appropriate for third or fourth-year players; it is accessible for students.

Both the clarinet and piano parts are easy to read and are bound in a substantial book. This will be an excellent resource for private teachers and young clarinetists looking for variation from the usual beginner solo collections.

— Madelyn Moore

CLARINET DUOS AND BASS CLARINET DUOS

Antonio Romero y Andía. *26 dúos*, arranged by Pedro Rubio, for two bass clarinets, basset horns or contrabass clarinets. Bassus Ediciones, 2020. Free download.



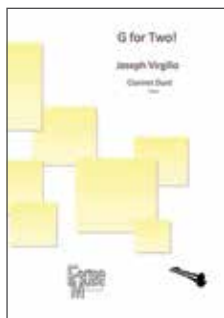
Composed by Romero for his 1873 *Bassoon Method*, these short, medium-easy duets have been given a second life for budding bass clarinetists by arranger Pedro Rubio. Romero

(1815-1886) writes in a melodic/harmonic style akin to Rose, and Rubio builds on this familiarity to give low C bass clarinetists music to master French and German notation conventions. Each duo is written first in the French manner in treble clef and then in the German reading in bass clef.

The music is presented with the top and bottom parts on the same page, with each duo one to two pages in length. Their short nature invites sight reading with student and teacher and each is an excellent setting to explore the intricacies of intonation in bass clarinet playing. The parts are fairly equal, with the bottom one utilizing more of the extended low range. Musically satisfying, a few of the longer duos could be grouped in a suite for recital performance for bass clarinetists. Highly recommended.

– Gregory Barrett

Joseph Virgilio. *G for Two!* Forton Music, 2020. Print edition £8.00, digital download £6.00



Joseph Virgilio (b. 1951) studied music from a young age and began his adult life as a composer but then left music for an alternate career. Upon his retirement he returned to composition and

has recently published *G for Two!*, a duet in three movements for two young clarinetists.

In a note on the first page of the publication, Virgilio says that this work is “intended to add some spice for young ears, to enable them to hear more than just the traditional way of traversing the sound palette, going beyond that found in the typical music compositions for early players.” Indeed, this simple duet does provide some surprising shifts in harmony, but remains accessible to young listeners. Furthermore, it is full of opportunities to develop other important skills for young students. The range never crosses into the altissimo, and none of the movements are written at a tempo that would be prohibitive for students.

The first movement, marked *Adagio meno mosso* before transitioning to *Andante*, consists primarily of a lyrical line in the first clarinet, with some tricky 16th and eighth note rhythms in the second clarinet. This would present a nice challenge for second and third-

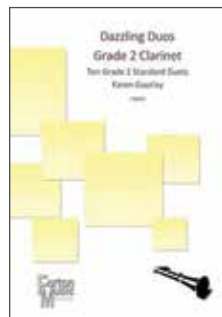
year players, both in terms of part independence as well as rhythm.

The second movement, *Allegro piu mosso*, sounds ethereal, and provides a good opportunity for the aural stretching that Virgilio discussed in the introduction to the piece. It also highlights changes in articulation and style – going from slurs to staccato eighth notes – and includes grace notes.

Finally, the third movement, *Allegro ma non troppo*, gives several opportunities for *rubato*, *ritardando*, *fermata* and *caesura*. In addition to the stylistic, rhythmic and ornamental lessons that could be taught with the first movement, it would be an excellent resource for teaching students the communication skills necessary for chamber music.

– Madelyn Moore

Karen Gourlay. *Dazzling Duos - Grade 2 Clarinet.* Forton Music, 2019. Print edition £8.00, digital download £6.00



Karen Gourlay is a flutist who originally studied jazz at Leeds College of Music. She now enjoys a career both as a teacher at her alma mater and as an award-winning composer. Gourlay's *Dazzling*

Duos is a charming collection of 10 short duets for young players.

These duets are an ideal teaching tool because they incorporate many challenging skills for students. The first part in most of the duos crosses the break into the clarion register, but never into the altissimo. Therefore, these would be best suited for first- and second-year students.

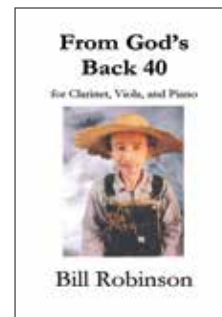
Rhythmically, the challenge varies between each duo. Most of them focus on quarter note and eighth note rhythms in duple meter. However, a few of the duos incorporate dotted-quarter eighth note patterns, and one of them is in 6/8 time with both triplets as well as quarter note/eighth note lines. This is an excellent resource for presenting these skills to students for the first time.

These duets will assist teachers in guiding students through developing stylistic playing habits. Gourlay makes good use of dynamic variation, as well as changes in articulations. The students' musicality and listening skills will be helped by the fact that there are duets both in major and minor keys. This collection of duos is a welcome and pleasant addition to any private clarinet teacher's library.

– Madelyn Moore

MIXED CHAMBER MUSIC

Bill Robinson. *From God's Back 40* for clarinet, viola and piano. Second Edition. Parrish Press, Cleveland, North Carolina, 2019. billrobinsonmusic.com Free download.



As his notes indicate, Bill Robinson composed *From God's Back 40* for clarinet, viola and piano in 2017 at the request of clarinetist Fred Jacobowitz and pianist Carl Banner. The

piece derives its title from the rustic environment in which Robinson created the piece in Cleveland, North Carolina, after he had relocated to the area from Raleigh. With a performance time of about 28 minutes, the work is in four movements. All of the movements feature imitative writing, and repeated tones are infused throughout. The first of the movements, “Gimme that Old-Time Tetrachord,” focuses on the tetrachord, a staple in the composer's music, and it clocks in just shy of 8 minutes in length. Interspersed among the brighter segments are *dolce* sections that frequently provide opportunities for the clarinet to sing. The 6-minute second movement, “Yet Another Waltz,” follows, its appellation drawing attention to the composer's apparent affinity for waltzes. This movement is a quick waltz, with articulation patterns providing a hemiola effect. In the third

movement, ‘Sic Transit Mundi,’ the tempo relaxes to *lento* at dotted quarter note = 46 in compound meter. Meter changes abound throughout the 7 ½-minute movement, in which the sicilienne rhythm is also prominent. At 5 ½ minutes, “The Albuterol Stomp” rounds out the set. Named after the composer’s COPD medication, the movement lives up to its title’s stimulating implications.

The score and parts are easy to read with no awkward page turns for the clarinetist or violist, although the pianist would almost certainly require a page turner. The clarinet part requires a range up to an altissimo G and thus would mandate a moderately advanced performer at minimum. That the clarinet and piano parts tend to obscure the viola at times in terms of balance is but a minor drawback of the work; the piece would nevertheless be a welcome contemporary addition to the repertoire for this instrumentation.

– Lacey Golaszewski

CLARINET QUARTETS

Kyle Hovatter. *under the Presence, whatever there is else is moving.* Forton Music, 2019. Print edition £12.00, digital download £9.00



San Francisco-based composer Kyle Hovatter (b. 1986) strives to create compositions for unusual instruments. At first glance, his work for four bass clarinets, *under the Presence, whatever there is else is moving*, does not seem particularly unusual. However, upon closer study, one can hear that it is indeed a unique composition.

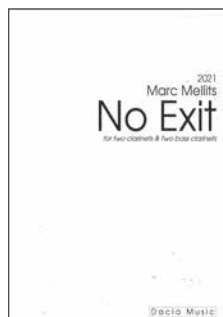
The title of the work is taken from a poem by William Carlos Williams (1883-1963), which also serves as the inspiration for the construction of the piece. Hovatter says that he has “attempted to capture that same sensation of attention being given to what is not in the foreground ... The

goal is for the listener (and especially the performers) to notice what cannot be notated.”

The piece itself consists of tone clusters achieved by long notes in all four parts that move at different times. It results in an ethereal effect and provides for slow, but interesting changes in the harmony. It should be noted that all parts include extreme altissimo notes, so the work is best performed by an advanced ensemble. The overall effect of the piece moves between peaceful and unsettling. It is a thought-provoking, enjoyable work that would be an interesting addition to a recital.

– Madelyn Moore

Marc Mellits. *No Exit* for two clarinets and two bass clarinets. Dacia Music, 2021. Score and parts \$75.00



Since 2008 and the premiere of his two bass clarinet work *Black*, Chicago composer Marc Mellits has had an avalanche of fans. No wonder he has responded with over two dozen chamber

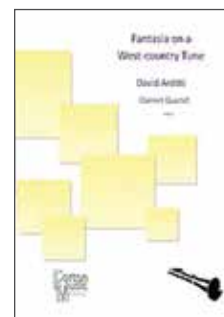
music works including clarinet or bass clarinet. The latest, *No Exit*, was commissioned by clarinetist Bruce Belton and composed during the Covid pandemic. Mellits – whose current style can be categorized as postminimalist with characteristic prolonged harmonies, varying uncomplicated rhythmic textures and contrasting formal sections – has created a quartet that is an antidote for the pandemic. Minor and major key tonalities flourish, dissonance is mild, music with a sense of motion alternates with slower contemplative sections and a somber yet peaceful closing becomes a spiritually fulfilling remedy.

At approximately 21 minutes in duration, *No Exit* is an endurance test of concentration and embouchure. Mellits includes suggested tempos but endorses a range of possibilities – this fact and that almost all the music stays within

tonalities of one flat and that the parts have conservative altissimo writing allows performance by a wide range of players. Playing *No Exit* is a team event due to the equal parts. Interlocking 16th notes will test rhythmic expertise and both bass clarinetists need an extended range instrument. This is music to compete with pop music whether in an informal setting or in a concert hall.

– Gregory Barrett

David Arditti. *Fantasia on a West-Country Tune.* Forton Music, 2020. Print edition £12.00, digital download £9.00



David Arditti’s works include all genres, among them clarinet concerto, and are especially well known for accessible, intermediate-level essays such as this quartet for two B♭ clarinets,

alto clarinet (alternate B♭ clarinet part included) and bass clarinet. Perfect for middle school ensembles and up (no extended range needed on bass clarinet), the brief *Fantasia* features four tempo sections, solo or soli opportunities for each performer, a 16-measure section of duple versus compound meter and a pleasing sequential circle of fifths passage, all cast within a tuneful British folksong style.

– Gregory Barrett

RECORDINGS

Flute/Clarinet Chronicles. Crescent Duo: Joanna White, flute; Kennen White, clarinet/bass clarinet; Tracy Watson, mezzo-soprano; Zhao Wang, piano; Robert Fanning, narrator. C. Komschlies: *Steam, Book of Spells*; D. Dorff: *Two Cats*; R. Banks: *Taxonomy*; C. McMichael: *Dog Chronicles*; M. Berry: *Ice Music*; R. Zare: *(Re) Inventions, Zodiacal Light*. Blue Griffin Recordings, BRG 543. Total Time: 47:10 (disc 1); 40:47 (disc 2).



Crescent Duo's *Flute/Clarinet Chronicles* is a potpourri of diverse literature in a two-disc set. Joanna Cowan White and Kennen White's fourth duo album begins with *Steam*, a steampunk fantasy world by Chelsea Komschlies. The whimsical fourth movement "Flying Machine" is particularly attractive and exhibits both performers' tonal warmth and masterful blending of timbres. The flowing arpeggiation and soaring melodies that interlace each other are performed with virtuosity and a lightness that captures the imagery of flight.

Daniel Dorff's *Two Cats*, composed for the Dutchess County SPCA's annual fundraising gala, is a two-movement character piece about cats Hootie and Tiki. "Hootie" has a sonorous and lyrical tranquility, which suits the Crescent Duo's warm expressiveness. "Tiki" is a graceful scherzo in which articulated passages are executed brilliantly and dynamic shadings are expertly done.

A continuation on the animal theme, the four movements of *Taxonomy* by Rusty Banks explore characteristics of a particular snake genus. The first, "Elaphe" is perhaps the most compelling because of its unique composition. Like the rat snake in its ability to blur the patterns on its back by quick movement, the clarinet begins a pattern alone that is later obscured or "blurred" by heterophonic flute gestures. The winding patterns created are augmented by the attention to timbral detail by the performers. The covered, diffused sound that Kennen achieves to weave in and out of the flute timbre is superb and satisfying.

Chelsea Komschlies's *Book of Spells* takes the listener back to the fanciful. Dark and moody melodies in the bass clarinet are complimented by melancholy whispers of the flute that culminate in a round dance in the third movement, "Summon the Dead." The contrasting last movement, "To Command Fire," opens with a bubbling brilliance that is interrupted by a jaunty "buffa-like" character in the chalumeau. In particular, Kennen and Joanna's finesse between the capricious styles of light staccato and floating lyric passages is effective and effortless.

Dog Chronicles for flute, clarinet, soprano, and piano, by Catherine McMichael, is a sonic testament to the role that dogs play in our lives. The movement "The Dog's Book of Virtues" is especially striking. There is a sensitive partnership between all performers that allows the listener to enjoy the clever, witty and sometimes sentimental text sung beautifully by mezzo-soprano Tracy Watson.

Marilyn Biery's *Ice Music* for flute, clarinet, mezzo-soprano and piano was inspired by poet Terry Blackhawk's poem of the same name. The piece begins with whispering trills and flutter-tonguing that reminds me of falling snowflakes. The work gradually gives way to a more aggressive and passionate middle section. A lilting underpinning in the piano yields to a pastoral melody in the flute and clarinet. In general, the flow is effortless in the connection between the contrasting sections and the way in which the music is delivered.

The last two pieces on this disc are Roger Zare's *(Re)Inventions* and *Zodiacal Light*. *(Re)Inventions* is a series of duos in the form of Baroque inventions using 21st-century compositional techniques. The first movement, "Lively," is a tight eighth-note canon that is quite technical. This performance exhibits control and finesse. As the music becomes more raucous, the lightness of the canon is never lost.

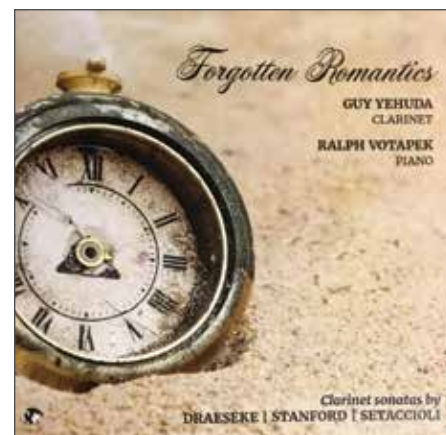
Zodiacal Light for flute, clarinet, and piano is a three-movement work based on the awe-inspiring events that light up the night sky. "Aurora Borealis" is colorful and highlights a wonderful brightness between the flute and clarinet in the altissimo. In "False Dawn" Kennen's

clarinet sound rings with beautiful clarity in the opening and his color changes are impressive once Joanna's searching melody joins. Joanna and Kennen's expressive phrasing shine and Zhao Wang's expertise is demonstrated in this movement especially. Wang's sensitivity and support are first-rate. "Leonids" is a tour-de-force where all players demonstrate excellent style, dexterity, rhythm and finesse. This movement was inspired by Zare's love for astronomy and his memory of watching the Leonid meteor shower. The bright meteors are represented with driving pulse and excitement, and the instruments exchange motives frequently in this energetic work that ends in a flourish.

The engineering of this recording is excellent, and the liner notes are informative and copious. They give context and comprehensive information for any performer or listener interested in these exciting works for flute and clarinet. This album is a whimsical and delightful addition for any music lover to add to their library.

— Anna Roach

Forgotten Romantics. Guy Yehuda, clarinet; Ralph Votapek, piano. F. Draeseke: *Sonata in B \flat Major for Clarinet and Piano*, Op. 38; C.V. Stanford: *Sonata*, Op. 129; G. Setaccioli: *Clarinet Sonata*, Op. 31. Blue Griffin Recordings, BGR 495. Total Time: 64:04.



This delightful collection of pieces for clarinet and piano from the Romantic era is a welcome treat after a long and serious year. Clarinetist Guy Yehuda and pianist

Ralph Votapek join forces on this album to give the listener several lovely and lesser-known clarinet options to Brahms and Schumann. This recording will be a welcome addition to the collections of both clarinetists and the general public.

The CD moves chronologically through three Romantic pieces for clarinet and piano and is perfect to listen to as a thoroughly-conceived album. It is fascinating to hear the added lushness and depth as the pieces move from the late 1880s into the early 20th century and to tie these works in with their proper historical context. Though Draeseke was a supposed member of the “New German School,” idolizing Liszt and Wagner, his writing in the *Clarinet Sonata* is rather tame and simple. By the time listeners get to Setaccioli’s *Sonata*, they have the feeling that time has passed and they are indeed in a different era. This experience is possible due to Yehuda and Votapek’s adherence to appropriate stylistic elements, which they seamlessly integrate into rapturous and effortless musical moments.

Yehuda is a master in this idiom, weaving the melody around the lovely harmonic twists in the music. He is well versed in the art of the subtle inflection, creating organic vocal lines at every turn. He truly takes the listener with him on his journey of story-telling in this interpretation of Felix Draeseke’s *Sonata in B^b Major*, Op. 38, written in 1887. He does this all without becoming staid or self-important in his interpretation, which often can become the case in realizing music of this era.

Yehuda’s mellifluous playing is again on full display in Charles Villiers Stanford’s *Sonata*, Op. 129, written in 1911. His sweet tone is so controlled through the different registers that the listener feels like they are listening to the human voice. As in the Draeseke, Votapek and Yehuda put the music first and resist succumbing to theatrics to make their point, instead sticking to sensitive and appropriate turns of phrase. They both play without unnecessary ego, as if they are simply having a conversation between two friends. This elegant yet profound interpretation lends itself well to Stanford’s tonal and playful writing.

Finally, Giacomo Setaccioli’s *Sonata*, Op. 31, from 1921 feels like the culmination of this time period, with sweeping and grand statements cascading into rippling resolutions. Yehuda’s sound is so pure that the listener is aware of his every deft innuendo. Each note has a purpose and is the beneficiary of his innate knowledge of phrasing and technical command of the clarinet. Even the smallest gestures receive support and consideration without weighing down the buoyancy of his playing.

Ralph Votapek’s performance on the piano is a strong collaboration for Yehuda’s technical and musical prowess through this CD. As can be imagined in an album of clarinet music from this era, the music rests on undulating changes in tempo and rubato. The players are completely in sync throughout, combining the highest level of nuance with the vivid storytelling of the composers. *Forgotten Romantics* is a must-hear for any aficionado of music from this time period.

– Stephanie Zelnick

James Campbell: Clarinet. James Campbell, clarinet; John York, piano. M. Arnold: *Sonatina*, Op. 29; C. Debussy: *Petite Pièce, Première Rhapsodie*; G. Pierné: *Canzonetta*; A. Berg: *Four Pieces for Clarinet and Piano*, Op. 5; W. Lutoslawski: *Five Dance Preludes*; P. JeanJean: *Carnival of Venice*; C.M. von Weber: *Seven Variations on a Theme from Silvana*, Op. 33. Crystal Records, CR 330. Total Time: 57:00.

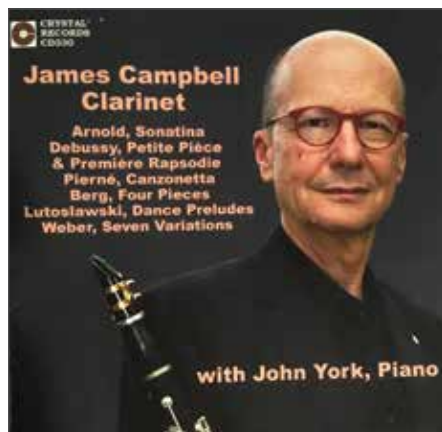
James Campbell’s honors and awards are too numerous to mention them all. He

has performed as a soloist and chamber musician in over 35 countries with over 60 orchestras. He has toured with over 35 string quartets, been named Canada’s Artist of the Year, been awarded numerous distinctions including the Queen’s Gold, the Diamond Jubilee Medal, an honorary Doctor of Law and Canada’s highest honor, the Order of Canada. He has been artistic director of the Festival of the Sound in Ontario since 1985 and was professor of music at Indiana University from 1988 to 2019. He is a Conn-Selmer artist and regularly gives master classes worldwide.

Pianist John York is a winner of the International Debussy Prize and has been soloist with numerous orchestras. For 33 years he was professor of piano at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London and was head of keyboard at St. Paul’s Girl’s School in London for 20 years. His many recordings include a substantial portion of the cello and piano repertory with cellist Raphael Wallfisch.

This CD was compiled at the request of Peter Christ of Crystal Records, who asked for Campbell and York to make an album using the material from four recordings that the duo made between 1973 and 1980. Some of the most cherished clarinet solos are masterfully recorded by Campbell and York.

An early work of Malcolm Arnold, *Sonatina*, is characteristic in the colorful vitality of the outer movements and the attractive lyricism of the middle slow movement. It is superbly played by Campbell and York. The complex subtleties and technical obstacles of Debussy’s *Première Rhapsodie* are only part of the immense challenges for any clarinetist. Campbell performs this work with unreserved ease, capturing the many nuances with his refined tone and superior technical facility. The ever-popular *Petite Pièce* is charming and an enjoyable addition to this CD. The *Canzonetta* by Gabriel Pierné embodies the charm and grace of French culture of the late 19th century. Campbell and York perform this lyrical and flourishing work with verve and panache. Berg’s *Vier Stucke* utilizes the clarinet’s wide range and rich timbral quality most effectively. This work is multihued and the mixture



of timbres between the piano and clarinet is thoroughly illustrated by the expert collaboration of the duo.

The delightful folk-inspired *Dance Preludes* by Lutoslawski is wonderfully executed in an undeniably exciting rendition. These charming movements provide a variety of contrasts in rhythm, tonal color and character. There have always been composers who earned their place in history by bestowing works of great technical brilliance, especially during the time when musical soirées were presented by musical virtuosi in the mid-to-late 19th century. Paul Jeanjean's *Variations on Carnival of Venice*, was first published in 1900 and fits into this category. Campbell does not disappoint, playing this showpiece effortlessly. One of the most prominent composers of clarinet music during the Romantic period was Carl Maria von Weber. The *Seven Variations on a Theme of Silvana*, Op. 33, was written in 1811 for the prominent clarinetist Heinrich Baermann. Known for his operatic writing, Weber also produced many wonderful operas, and the melody for this theme and variations was taken from his opera *Silvana*. This is probably the least known of the works on this CD, but it is a welcome addition.

Needless to say, James Campbell's mastery of the clarinet is second to none. The collaboration of these two virtuosi makes this CD a must for every clarinetist's library.

— Lori Ardovino

Czech Music for Clarinet. Karel Dohnal, clarinet; Pavla Vykopalová, soprano; Eliška Novotná, piano; Lukáš Michel, piano; Benda Quartet. E. Drízga: *Sonata for Clarinet and Piano*; R. Kubín: *Humoresques*; P. Wajsar: *Birdie Pranks*; V. Černohorská: *Rondo*; A. Tučapsky: *Love and Sorrow*. RadioServis, CR 1073-2. Total Time: 58:08.

Czech Music for Clarinet includes works by composers Eduard Drízga, Rudolf Kubín, Petr Wajsar, Václava Černohorská and Antonín Tučapsky. Clarinetist Karel Dohnal is a graduate of the Ostrava Conservatoire, Prague's Academy of Music, Guildhall School of



Music and Drama in London, Universität der Künste Berlin and Rimsky-Korsakov State Conservatory in Saint Petersburg. He currently teaches at the Faculty of Fine Arts of the Ostrava University.

The *Sonata* by Eduard Drízga is influenced by the music of Jolivet and Shostakovich yet representative of Drízga's style and status as a major Czech composer. He revised and reduced the version of this work and personally asked Karel Dohnal to perform this version. Pianist Lukáš Michel and Dohnal open this album with an exciting and emotional performance of this work.

Humoresques by Rudolf Kubín is a set of miniatures related to those of Dvorák. The five movements are titled "In the Train," "Evening Bells," "Cinematograph," "Modern Love" and "Clown." Performed by Dohnal and the Benda Quartet, the use of colors and characters gives delightful life to these pieces.

Petr Wajsar's *Birdie Pranks* for solo clarinet was a collaboration between the composer and Dohnal. *Birdie Pranks* employs a variety of techniques and characters as well as humor, all brilliantly depicted in Dohnal's performance. The five movements are "Thrush Blackbird," "Melodious Cuckoo," "Common Buzzard," "Black Woodpecker" and "Chicken."

Václava Černohorská's *Rondo for Clarinet and Piano* was written while she was a student at the Ostrava Conservatory with the inspiration of her grandfather Jindrich, who himself was an amateur clarinetist. A pianist herself, Černohorská and Dohnal premiered the work together. Dohnal's exciting performance is

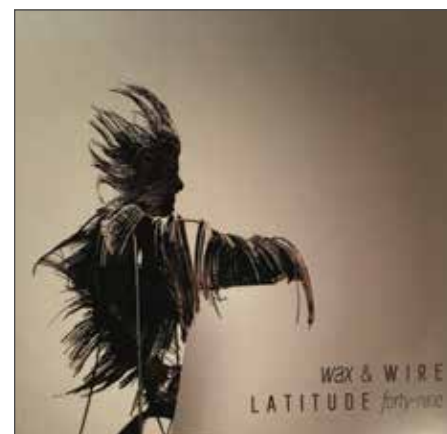
masterfully partnered in this recording by pianist Lukáš Michel.

Love and Sorrow by Antonín Tučapsky is based on Moravian folk songs. The five movements are charming and spirited: "My Lad," "How I Miss You," "Oh Yesterday," "Mother Dear Mother," "Hey A Young Swallow Fast She Flew" and "If only I Knew." Pavla Vykopalová's voice intertwined with Dohnal's elegant sound and Eliška Novotná's magnificent piano collaboration deliver a marvelous conclusion to this impressive album.

The journey through this recording is a delight for the listener. The liner notes by Lukáš Herink give a rich background to each composer and work. Karel Dohnal and his collaborators have presented a superior album all clarinetists should explore and furthermore consider programming these selections for performance worldwide.

— Julianne Kirk Doyle

Wax and Wire. Latitude 49. G. Smith: *Number Nine*; V. Cuong: *Wax and Wire*; S.K. Snider: *Thread and Fray*, *You Are Free*; A. Socolofsky: *a sense of who*; C. Sies: *these (were) used to harm*. Latitude49music.com. Total Time: 55:00.



The highly versatile mixed-chamber music ensemble, Latitude 49, has been playing together since 2012 and has already presented over 60 world premieres. Fans have been waiting patiently for the second album release of *Wax and Wire* incorporating some of the ensemble's most all-time beloved works. This dynamic album features a perfectly-timed release answering the demand of what is expected

of contemporary chamber ensembles. The album contains compositions by living composers specifically created for Latitude 49's unique instrumentation, which consists of violin, cello, saxophone, clarinet, piano and percussion. Andy Hudson, assistant professor of clarinet at the University of North Carolina Greensboro, is the ensemble's clarinetist. The works utilize a diverse array of complex contemporary compositional musical idioms and performance practices that push the players to their limits. This album was well worth the wait.

The first track on the album, *Number 9* by Gabriella Smith, is fittingly titled as it is an advanced *musique concrète* work based on The Beatles' controversial track "Revolution 9" from *The White Album*. Smith creates a sound collage with the unique timbres and extended techniques possible of Latitude 49's instrumentation that seemingly transcends the listener into a psychedelic experience. There is significant layering, looping and repetition of parts throughout the ensemble. The winds create beautifully haunting sounds by using controlled glissandos and a variety of well-placed screaming multiphonics. Subtle panning is used throughout to help feel the full intensity of the wailing sirens, drones, and layering.

The second track, *Wax and Wire* by Viet Cuong, is a vividly wild ride of microtonal scales and glissandi. Andy Hudson has shown his extraordinary technical abilities throughout this work by mastering the microtonal scale and being able to delicately finesse it or blast through it in perfect unison with other members of the ensemble. From beginning to end, this piece has forward motion and will invigorate the listener. The third track *Thread and Fray*, a tonal trio for viola, bass clarinet and marimba by Sarah Kirkland Snider, offers a slower pace than the previous works. This piece opens with a unison melody that is then traded, fragmented and passed around the ensemble using a variety of canonical compositional techniques. Contrasting from the last work, it showcases the strong lyrical and melodic playing styles in the middle-register instruments.

The fourth track on the album, *a sense of who* by Annika Socolofsky, was

originally written for the 2015 Bang on a Can Summer Festival and was later arranged for Latitude 49. This work uses live voice, prerecorded voice and electronic sounds combined with acoustic instruments. The piece is written to express the journey a person goes through to find their place within the community. Evan Chambers sings using traditional folk-style melodies and allows the electronic and acoustic instruments to wax and wane around him. *a sense of who* will meditatively transform the listener from beginning to end with its shimmering beauty, introspection and wonderment.

The penultimate track, *these (were) used to harm* by Chris Sies is designed to showcase power electronics and death metal genres using contemporary compositional elements and acoustic instruments. The composer was inspired to write the piece after reading the July 4, 2016, New Yorker article by Alex Ross titled "When Music is Violence." The article discusses instances when music and sound have been used in war or as a weapon of torture and gives musical examples that Sies incorporated into his piece. *these (were) used to harm* is an abounding acoustical and timbral journey that really rocks. Get ready to turn up the volume and possibly headbang a little. The final track on the album, *You Are Free* by Sarah Kirkland Snider, is a wonderfully calming and lush neoromantic work with obvious Arvo Pärt influences. This work and its calming, undulating flow is a beautiful close, leaving the listener calm and centered.

This album is a wonderfully diverse compilation of contemporary musical styles using Latitude 49's instrumentation to its fullest capacity. Andy Hudson has clearly showcased his superb extended technical abilities with the clarinet. The album presents a true balance between soothing contemplative works contrasted with aggressive compositional styles. Contemporary music fans will want to listen to *Wax and Wire* on repeat.

— Natalie Szabo

s'Zwitscherl: Music for Two Clarinets and Piano. Rolf Weber, clarinet; Barbara Heilmair, clarinet/bass clarinet; Kazue Tsuzuki, piano. C. Camilleri: *Divertimento No. 1 for Two Clarinets*

and Piano; I. Müller: *Duo Concertante*, Op. 23; C. Baermann: *Duo Concertant*, Op. 33; A. Leroy and E. Jancourt: *Duo on Bellini's "La Sonnambula"*; F. Holzkamp: *Musica Masonica, Orfeo e Eurydice*; F. Cibulka: *s'Zwitscherl für Zwei*. Centaur Records, CRC 3837. Total Time: 66:04.



Ensemble s'Zwitscherl's unique self-titled recording is performed by Barbara Heilmair, Rolf Weber and Lazue Tsuzuki and features works for two clarinets and piano. Original works by Camilleri, Müller and C. Baermann are followed by arranged works of Leroy/Jancourt, Holzkamp and Cibulka for the trio. Swiss clarinetist Rolf Weber, principal clarinet in the Bavarian Gärtnerplatz in Munich, and German clarinetist Barbara Heilmair, professor of clarinet at Portland State University, began collaborating with Japanese pianist Kazue Tsuzuki, professor at the Hochschule für Musik in Munich, in 2015. Their international point of view is very musical and expressive with well-executed ensemble playing.

Interestingly, Weber plays a German Oehler-system clarinet while Heilmair plays a French Boehm-system clarinet. Heilmair's recent article in *The Clarinet* 48/2 (March 2021), "Collaboration with Boehm and Oehler Clarinets," provides a good discussion of the challenges and intonation differences between the two clarinets. While listening to the CD I was never quite sure who played what part but on occasion my "clarinet ears" would identify a German or French timbre. Heilmair and Weber alternated who played first and second throughout

the CD. Their musically interesting and colorful performances feature full, singing tone qualities, good blend and mostly excellent intonation.

The Camilleri *Divertimento* is played with spirit and flair, with all three performers exhibiting fluidity, exceptional blend, excellent dovetailing within the thematic interplay and good balance. This work, dedicated to Manuel de Falla, would be a fun, flashy recital opener.

Iwan Muller's *Duo Concertante*, Op. 23, in E \flat is set in three sections and the ensemble is beautifully in sync in their musical presentation. The opening features lovely solos from both clarinetists, although there were slight tonal differences and the second clarinet sounded quieter and a bit more distant than the first. The cadenza is truly outstanding while the faster section sounds a bit careful. The Allegro molto features dynamic piano playing from Tsuzuki.

Carl Baermann, son of Heinrich Baermann, is of course a well-known name to clarinetists. The *Duo Concertant*, Op. 33, like Müller's work, follows the pattern of grand 19th-century concert pieces. The melodramatic opening is played with great

feeling and panache and the following theme and variations are musically excellent as well. Articulations are unclear in the second clarinet in the second variation, but the difficult third variation leaps for the first clarinet are well executed. The rondo was laid-back and enjoyable.

The duo on Bellini's *La Sonnambula*, written in the 19th century by Parisian musicians Leroy and Jancourt, was nicely arranged for Ensemble s'Zwitscherl by Rolf Weber in 2018. This work provides ample opportunity for both clarinetists to shine in various operatic melodies, and Weber's arrangement "highlights elements of dialoguing and harmonious interplay between the two soloists." Although there are slight timbral differences in the first section, the theme and variations are extremely well played especially in the second section. The Andante and Allegro Brillante were excellent with some slight sharpness in the first clarinet.

Two works follow by contemporary German composer Holzkamp. His *Musica Masonica* was written for a Masonic lodge celebration in 2011, and he rearranged the work for the trio in 2018. This work features Heilmair's lovely bass clarinet

playing, Weber's soulful phrasing and Tsuzuki's crisp piano playing. *Orfeo e Euridyce* is rearranged for two clarinets. Both works are lush with tight-knit harmonies that are performed with outstanding intonation. The musical expression and blend are excellent throughout both pieces and I was sorry they were not more substantial works.

The last work by Austrian composer Franz Cibulka, *s'Zwitscherl Fur Zwei*, was arranged for the trio in 2015. The liner notes state that the work was "originally a solo piece for clarinet with piano or accordion, [and] the composition describes a small songbird expressing a variety of moods." Ensemble s'Zwitscherl lives up to the bird's nickname in this lush, expressive and emotionally satisfying work.

Overall this disc features a variety of styles for clarinet duo with piano. The small discrepancies in intonation do not detract from the enjoyment of this album. It would be especially valuable to clarinetists seeking to explore new music for the duo with piano medium.

– Karen Danessa

AUDIO NOTES

by Kip Franklin

A Gentle Notion. The Hanick Hawley Duo: Richie Hawley, clarinet; Conor Hanick, piano. A. Copland: *Clarinet Sonata*; J. Higdon: *A Gentle Notion* and *Clarinet Sonata*; J. Tower: *Wings*; P. Jalbert: *Clarinet Sonata*. Il Pirata Records, 2021. Total Time: 66:13.

A new album by Richie Hawley and Conor Hanick features several delightful new works paired with contemporary standards in the repertoire. The concept for the album began as a track listing scribbled on the blank side of a receipt in a New York City restaurant, the goal being to give attention to music for clarinet and piano by modern American composers and to commission new works for the medium. The duo have accomplished that goal handily and have produced an album that is simultaneously retrospective and forward-looking.

Copland's *Clarinet Sonata* (his own transcription of his *Violin Sonata*) is the album's initiating work. The impeccable balance and sensitivity of the performers is immediately palpable within the opening seconds of the first movement. Hawley's tone is utter purity and refinement, and Hanick's playing is deep and fully voiced. They orbit one another in perfect rhythmic and melodic counterpoint, delivering an interpretation imbued with the bittersweet lyricism for which Copland is known. Hawley is fleet-footed in his upper register articulation. The second movement is plaintive and pastoral. Hanick's undulating lines glide elegantly underneath Hawley's pensive, brooding melodic line. Hawley's upper register is intimately tender without any inkling of force or harshness. The "Allegro giusto" percolates with jaunty energy and verve, and the rapid technical passagework is well intertwined and swirls with vigor. Hawley's playing is affable and

charismatic; his intonation and response across wide intervallic leaps is pristine. Taken as a whole, the interpretation Hawley and Hanick weave is graceful and nostalgic.

The album's eponymous work, Jennifer Higdon's *A Gentle Notion*, is brief but heartfelt. Here, Hawley's chalumeau register speaks with a solid, rich clarity. The pitch in his throat-tone range is remarkably accurate and resonant. Hanick and Hawley seem uniquely connected in this work – their playing is practically conversational. Each attack is delicate and both players move in complete rhythmic synchronicity.

Hawley's technical control and tonal facility are ardently showcased in Tower's *Wings*. He expertly achieves the various gradients of timbre that make the work effective. The manner in which he can manipulate and shade a single sustained pitch is astounding. The ease of his intervallic connections is eloquent and



the oscillating technique in the altissimo sizzles with blistering fury. He readily conveys the terraced dynamics and compound melodic lines in the piece, and carves out a clear and perceivable architecture amidst its harmonic and formal complexities. Hawley's playing is powerful and poignant, showcasing nuance of articulation and finesse of tone.

Higdon's *Clarinet Sonata* (adapted from her *Viola Sonata*) opens with Hanick's delicate touch producing spacious, ethereal sonorities. Those familiar with Higdon's *Blue Cathedral* will hear similarities in the opening movement, "Calmly." Higdon's harmonic language is deep and complex, and Hawley and Hanick achieve an ensemble blend that gives the illusion of a single hybridized instrument. They exude ensemble precision, and Hawley's soliloquy passages are well paced and evocative. Their collective energy builds to a boisterous, suspenseful climax, and the

denouement is meditative and peacefully conveyed. "Declamatory," the sonata's second and final movement, is bold and forceful, featuring spry syncopations and spotless articulations. Hawley communicates a jovial, blithe spirit, and tackles difficult register leaps and rapid passagework with poise and nonchalance. Hanick's elegant voicing yields solo chordal passages that are sensitive and refined. The duo's immaculate intonation and blend, rhythmic precision and perfect pacing unite in this emotive and impassioned interpretation.

The shining star on this album is Pierre Jalbert's *Clarinet Sonata*, a work written specifically for Hawley and Hanick. The opening movement, "Dramatic and driving," is exactly as expected. Hawley is in his element as he combines wild flutter tonguing with crisp, incisive articulations.

Driven by Hanick's muted-string ostinato, the energy of the movement is

unrelenting; it burns with a boisterous energy. "Timeless, mysterious" offers intriguing nuances of timbre, with Hawley again displaying his consummate ability to manipulate sound by way of timbral trills, portamento and glissando. His soft playing in the upper register is robust and full. Together with Hanick, he creates an icy, infinitely-reverberating soundscape. Hawley's longevity of phrase builds in elements of suspense and longing to the movement. His melodic line is even and unblemished. Ricocheting rhythms feature heavily in the final movement, "Presto agitato." Frenetic, frenzied and bouncing-off-the-walls, the character here recalls the style of Muczynski fused with Reich and Albright while still maintaining Jalbert's unique signature. Hawley's facility of register is again apparent as he fluidly and flawlessly scampers from chalumeau to altissimo. Hanick's rhythmic drive is vivacious and energetic, and he once again exhibits his control of piano timbre by proficiently playing on muted strings with harmonics. The movement bubbles with animated, ever-changing vitality. A brief but intense cadenza by Hawley portends the movement's conclusion, which rollicks with effervescence and brings the work to a broiling finish.

Beyond the album's enjoyable program, listeners will be struck by its crystal clear recording quality. The presence and balance of both players is such that one feels as if they are in the front row of the audience. *A Gentle Notion* is refreshingly invigorating. The works by Higdon and Jalbert are ripe additions to the repertoire, and the Hanick Hawley Duo delivers an inaugural recording of these pieces that is engaging, effective and endearing. ♦

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Clarinet *Chronicles*

by Jenny Maclay

HOW TO USE INSTAGRAM TO BECOME A BETTER MUSICIAN

If used correctly, social media can actually improve your musical skills! There are several different social media platforms available, but here are some Instagram-specific ideas to help you become a better musician:

- **Follow accounts that motivate you.** Fill your feed with content that educates, inspires and encourages you both in the practice room and on the stage.
- **Follow hashtags to discover new content.** Did you know that you can also follow hashtags on Instagram? Follow hashtags such as #iclarinet, #clarinet and other keywords to find new accounts you like.
- **Start a practice-gram.** Create an account specifically for your clarinet progress. You can upload videos and recordings of your progress and share your own advice to other musicians who follow you.
- **Participate in practice challenges.** There are several practice challenges, such as the 100 days of practice

challenge, that encourage artists to share their progress on Instagram.

- **Connect with other musicians.** The key word in social media is social, so follow and interact with clarinetists from around the world. This is a great way to learn about a variety of different ideas, and it will broaden your musical perspectives.
- **Learn about new opportunities.** If you want to study music in college, follow university clarinet studio pages to learn more about different programs. If you want to learn more about an orchestra or other ensemble, follow their account for behind-the-scenes content. Some organizations even publish vacancies and job opportunities on their accounts. Instagram is a great place to learn more about performers, ensembles, educators and other musicians from different backgrounds.

There are countless ways you can use Instagram to become a better musician, and I hope these tips will help you get started!

Don't forget to follow us on Instagram @iclarinet! ❖

ABOUT THE WRITER

Photo by Ann Weis Photography



Jenny Maclay enjoys a diverse career as a soloist, recitalist, orchestral player, chamber musician, educator and blogger. She is a Vandoren Artist-Clinician and has performed throughout Europe and North America. She welcomes an international audience of clarinet enthusiasts on her award-winning blog Jenny Clarinet.

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