

A PANORAMA OF THE SOLO LITERATURE FOR THE E $\flat$  CLARINET:  
A Recording of Four Works for Solo E $\flat$  Clarinet 1834-1997

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## PERMISSIONS

I have reproduced excerpts from the following works with the permission of their publishers:

Bolcom, William. *Little Suite of Four Dances*. New York: E.B. Marks and Bolcom Music, 1993.

Casas, Bartolomé Pérez. *Aires Sicilianos*, ed. Pedro Rubio. Madrid: Bassus Ediciones Musicales, 2007.

Hindemith, Paul. *Clarinet Quintet, Op. 30*. Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne, 1955.

Panizza, Giacomo. *Ballabile con Variazioni nel ballo Ettore Fieramosca*, ed. Colin Bradbury. London: Lazarus Editions, 2000.

Thimmig, Les. *Endless Springs V*. Hollywood: Judy Green Music, 1997.

## ABSTRACT

The Doctoral Performance and Research submitted by Kai-Ju Ho, under the direction of Professor Marc Vallon at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Musical Arts consists of the following:

### I. Written Project:

“A Panorama of the Solo Literature for the E<sub>b</sub> Clarinet:  
A Recording of Four for Solo E<sub>b</sub> Clarinet 1834-1997”

The project consists a professional recording featuring four works written for the E<sub>b</sub> clarinet in various styles between 1834 and 1997. The recording is accompanied by a thesis that gives a historical survey of the high clarinets, the development of the E<sub>b</sub> clarinet, as well as detailed program notes for the four recorded works:

Giacomo Panizza: *Ballabile con Variazioni* (1834)

Bartolomé Pérez Casas: *Aires Sicilianos* for E<sub>b</sub> Clarinet and Piano (1901)

William Bolcom: *Little Suite of Four Dances* (1984)

Les Thimmig: *Endless Springs V* (1997)

### II. Solo Recital, December 2, 2013, Morphy Hall, University of Wisconsin–Madison

Roberto Sierra: *Cinco Bocetos* for Solo Clarinet (1984)

Max Reger: Sonata for Clarinet and Piano, Op. 49 No.1 (1900)

Alban Berg: Vier Stücke für Klarinette und Klavier (1913)

Sergei Prokofiev: Sonata for Clarinet and Piano, Op. 94 (1943) (transcribed by Kent Kennan)

III. Concerto Recital, February 8, 2014, Mills Hall, University of Wisconsin–Madison

Aaron Copland: Concerto for Clarinet (1948)

IV. Chamber Recital, April 22, 2014, Grand Hall, Capitol Lakes Retirement Center

Franz Schubert: “Shepherd on the Rock,” D. 965 (1828)

Max Bruch: Eight Pieces for Clarinet, Viola, and Piano, Op. 83 (1910)

Johannes Brahms: Clarinet Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115 (1891)

V. Solo Recital, February 22, 2015, Morphy Hall, University of Wisconsin–Madison

Johannes Brahms: Sonata for Clarinet and Piano in F Minor, Op. 120 No. 1 (1894)

Carlos Guastavino: Sonata for Clarinet and Piano (1970)

VI. Lecture Recital, April 30, 2018, Humanities Building, University of Wisconsin–Madison

Giacomo Panizza: *Ballabile con Variazioni* (1834)

Bartolomé Pérez Casas: *Aires Sicilianos* for E $\flat$  Clarinet and Piano (1901)

William Bolcom: *Little Suite of Four Dances* (1984)

Les Thimmig: *Endless Springs V* (1997)

## INTRODUCTION

Because the instrument so often serves as an auxiliary instrument in the orchestra and wind ensemble, the existing solo literature for the E $\flat$  clarinet is limited and largely unknown. Like the other clarinets, the E $\flat$  clarinet not only allows for a wide range of register, but also provides a rich profusion of instrumental color. In addition, it is capable of producing a broad range of dynamics, including sound levels so quiet as to be nearly inaudible. Because of its flexible range, color, and dynamics, the E $\flat$  clarinet should be used as a standard solo instrument in the same way that the B $\flat$  and A clarinets are. The goal of this project is to give the E $\flat$  clarinet wider recognition it deserves and to provide performers and educators with valuable resources.

My interest in the E $\flat$  clarinet began when I first played it in a performance of Ravel's *Bolero* (1928) with the Taipei Philharmonic Youth Symphony Orchestra in 2010. I have always been attracted to the particular sound of the E $\flat$  clarinet. It features a vibrant and resonant high register difficult to simulate on the B $\flat$  and A clarinet. Since the E $\flat$  clarinet has almost never been featured as a solo instrument on recordings, I decided to make a recording of a number of pieces that represent the character of this incredible instrument in order to draw attention to its overlooked potential as a solo instrument. My desire to promote this instrument and its solo literature motivated me to devote my research project to it. Improving my skills on this instrument has definitely opened my professional horizons, since many advertised positions require a secure proficiency on the instrument; experienced E $\flat$  clarinet players are in much demand in modern orchestras.

The recording presents four solo works originally written for the E $\flat$  clarinet at different times between 1834 and 1997. The choice of repertoire focuses on pieces that demonstrate the

soloistic qualities of the instrument, and which are well suited for performance on solo recitals.

The written part of this project consists of two chapters. The first chapter gives a historical survey of the high clarinets, focusing on the history and development of the E $\flat$  clarinet. The second chapter discusses the four works presented in the recording.

## Chapter 1: BACKGROUND

### 1. The High Clarinets in Historical Perspective

The high clarinet family has eight members. Geoffrey Randall divides them into “octave clarinets” in C, B $\flat$ , A $\flat$ , and G, and “sopranino clarinets” in F, E, E $\flat$ , and D.<sup>1</sup> Some of them have been neglected in the literature on the clarinet due to the lack of existing repertoire. The E $\flat$  clarinet is the only high clarinet used extensively today and continues to appear in a fair amount of solo, chamber, ensemble, and orchestral repertoire.

The octave C and B $\flat$  clarinets and the sopranino E clarinet are mentioned in some historical documents from the first half of nineteenth century. However, no actual instruments have survived, nor has anyone ever found any music composed for them.

According to Basil Tschaikov, an octave **G clarinet** was used in the famous Schrammelquartett in Vienna around 1879.<sup>2</sup> The instrumentation in this quartet consisted of two violins (played by the Schrammel brothers), one bass guitar (played by Alois Strohmayr), and a G clarinet (played by Georg Dänzer). After the Schrammelquartett disbanded in 1890, its repertoire languished unperformed until 1964, when a new group called the Klassisches Wiener Schrammelquartett was formed to play Schrammel brothers’ music. To date, the only record of a G clarinet having ever been played in an ensemble are in these two mixed-instrument quartets.

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<sup>1</sup> Geoffrey Randall, *The Clarinet: Some Notes Upon its History and Construction* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1971), 3-4. “Octave clarinets” are so-called because they sound one octave higher than notated.

<sup>2</sup> Basil Tschaikov, “The High Clarinets,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Clarinet*, ed. Colin Lawson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 52.

The octave A $\flat$  **clarinet** is less rare. It is an essential military-band instrument and is still in use. The A $\flat$  clarinet has been popular in some European countries for a long time, and it figures in continental bands, mostly in Italy and Spain. It is not, however, as popular in the orchestral repertoire. Only a few orchestral works include it. Béla Bartók wrote a large part for it in his *Scherzo for Piano and Orchestra*, Op. 2 (1904), but most of the part is in unison with the piccolo and E $\flat$  clarinet:

The image shows a musical score for three clarinets. The top staff is labeled 'Cl. (in Lab)', the middle 'Cl. (in Mib)', and the bottom 'Cl. (in Sib)'. The music is written in 3/4 time and consists of several measures. The bottom staff has a '1 2' marking at the beginning. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'f' and 'ff'.

Example 1. Béla Bartók, *Scherzo for Piano and Orchestra*, Op. 2, mm. 297-302.<sup>3</sup>

The most recent orchestral work to include an A $\flat$  octave clarinet is *Celtic Requiem* (1969) by English composer John Tavener (1944-2013).<sup>4</sup>

As a popular band instrument from around 1780 through the late nineteenth century, the **F clarinet** had been used in military bands in Germany and some countries under German influence. Beethoven included the F clarinet in his three Military Marches: WoO 18, WoO 19 (1809), and WoO 24 (1827). Mendelssohn also used it in his *Overture in C Major for Wind Instruments*, Op. 24 (1816). Even though the F clarinet was popular in bands over a long period, it appears that the only music ever written for it were parts in band music.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Béla Bartók, *Scherzo for Piano and Orchestra*, Op. 2, ed. Denijs Dille (Budapest: Zeneműkiadó Vállalat, 1961), 45.

<sup>4</sup> Tschiaikov, "The High Clarinets," 53-55.

<sup>5</sup> Tschiaikov, "The High Clarinets," 52.

A far more popular instrument, the **D clarinet**, appeared the most in the first half of the eighteenth century. The very first major solo work for the D clarinet may have been the *Six Concertos* by Johann Melchior Molter (1696-1765),<sup>6</sup> published in 1957. The Molter concerti number among the most appealing solo pieces for the instrument. In addition to its solo role, the D clarinet was also employed in many orchestral scores in the nineteenth century. Richard Wagner used the D clarinet in his opera *Tannhäuser* (1845), after which many composers began using the D clarinet in their orchestral music.<sup>7</sup> Richard Strauss used the D clarinet in his *Till Eulenspiegel* (1895) for the mocking laughter of its roguish and droll protagonist:

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is labeled 'Clar. (D)' and contains a melodic line with various ornaments and dynamics including *mf*, *sfz*, and *dim.*. The bottom staff is labeled 'Clar. (B)' and contains a shorter melodic fragment starting with a *pp* dynamic marking.

Example 2. Richard Strauss, *Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks*, Op. 28 Rehearsal 40.<sup>8</sup>

Although the part is explicitly written for the D clarinet, most clarinetists today play it on the E $\flat$  clarinet.

Since the D clarinet is close in range to the E $\flat$  clarinet, they were often used as a pair by some composers. Strauss used them as a pair in his opera *Der Rosenkavalier*, Op. 59 (1911), where the third clarinet is asked to switch between D, E $\flat$ , and B $\flat$  clarinets! Igor Stravinsky also paired D and E $\flat$  clarinets in *The Rite of Spring* (1913). Examples 3 and 4 are famous excerpts for the D and E $\flat$  clarinets from the ballet:

<sup>6</sup> Nicholas Shackleton, "The Development of the Clarinet," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Clarinet*, ed. Colin Lawson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 17.

<sup>7</sup> Tschiaikov, "The High Clarinets," 45.

<sup>8</sup> Richard Strauss, *Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks* (Mineola: Dover Publications, 1979), 57-58.



Example 3. Igor Stravinsky, *The Rite of Spring*. D clarinet solo, Rehearsal 10.<sup>9</sup>



Example 4. Igor Stravinsky, *The Rite of Spring*. E $\flat$  clarinet solo, Rehearsal 48.<sup>10</sup>

In actual practice, however, clarinetists nearly always perform the D clarinet part on the E $\flat$  clarinet. Playing D clarinet parts on the E $\flat$  clarinet has become standard practice since the D clarinet has largely disappeared from modern orchestra; good D clarinets have become extremely scarce. Therefore, the E $\flat$  clarinet eventually supplanted the D clarinet and became the primary high clarinet used in solo, chamber, band, and orchestral music today.

## 2. Development of Solo and Chamber Literature for the E $\flat$ Clarinet

Use of the E $\flat$  clarinet did not begin as early as the other high clarinet members. In *The Baroque Clarinet* (1992), Albert Rice claims that the E $\flat$  clarinet was first used in the ballet *Céline* (1756) by Le Chevalier d'Herbain (1730-1796). It is arguably the earliest music that includes the E $\flat$  clarinet. (D and F clarinets were used in *Céline* as well.)<sup>11</sup> Solo and chamber

<sup>9</sup> Igor Stravinsky, *The Rite of Spring* (Mineola: Dover Publications, 1989), 2.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>11</sup> Albert Rice, *The Baroque Clarinet* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 134.

music written for the E $\flat$  clarinet starts to appear around 1830, and a large portion of the repertoire comes from several Italian composers, including Giacomo Panniza (1804-1860), Ernesto Cavallini (1807-1874), Amilcare Ponchielli (1834-1886), and Giuseppe Capelli (1875-1918). Capelli wrote five pieces for the E $\flat$  clarinet, all of which have been lost.<sup>12</sup> Panizza's *Ballabile con Variazioni* for E $\flat$  clarinet and piano was composed in 1834, and has recently become available through Colin Bradbury's Lazarus Editions. The *Carnival of Venice Variations* is another famous piece for solo E $\flat$  clarinet that is available today. It was composed around 1850 by Cavallini, one of the great clarinet virtuosos of the nineteenth-century Italian school. In addition to solo works, the E $\flat$  clarinet was employed in chamber music as the primary melodic instrument in Ponchielli's *Quartet*, Op. 110 (1857), for flute, oboe, E $\flat$  clarinet, and B $\flat$  clarinet. Tschaikov speculates that other works for solo E $\flat$  clarinet lie in the archives of the Giuseppe Verdi Conservatory in Milan, waiting to be discovered.<sup>13</sup>

While little solo or chamber music for the E $\flat$  clarinet dates from before the nineteenth century, the repertoire expanded significantly during the twentieth century and now includes a large variety of compositional styles. In the twentieth century, texture and tone color were subject to great innovation. Composers made extensive use of the distinctively colorful tone quality of the E $\flat$  clarinet, both in solo literature and in chamber works. Paul Hindemith used the E $\flat$  clarinet in the third movement of his *Quintet for Clarinet and String Quartet*, Op. 30 (1923). This work exemplifies his thorough understanding of the E $\flat$  clarinet, particularly in the sense that it is treated as a solo instrument akin to the regular clarinet. The E $\flat$  clarinet is featured heavily in

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<sup>12</sup> Kathleen M. Gardiner, "An Annotated Bibliography of Twentieth-Century Solo and Chamber Literature for the E $\flat$  Clarinet." (DMA thesis, The Ohio State University, 2002), 8-9, accessed September 13, 2016, <https://goo.gl/BC32Q5>.

<sup>13</sup> Tschiakov, "The High Clarinets," 50.

this work. Example 5 is an excerpt from the third movement in which the E $\flat$  clarinet stands out and carries the melodic line:

Example 5. Paul Hindemith, Clarinet Quintet, Op. 30, third movement, mm. 71-78.<sup>14</sup>  
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In Example 6, the E $\flat$  clarinet is given a spectacular opportunity to demonstrate different tone color throughout most of its range:

<sup>14</sup> Paul Hindemith, Clarinet Quintet, Op. 30 (Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne, 1955), 25.

Example 6. Paul Hindemith, Clarinet Quintet, Op. 30, third movement, mm. 213-221.<sup>15</sup>  
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Other noteworthy works include Stravinsky's *Berceuses du chat* (1915) for voice, E $\flat$  clarinet, B $\flat$  clarinet, and B $\flat$  bass clarinet, Anton Webern's *Drei Lieder*, Op. 18 (1925), for E $\flat$  clarinet and guitar, Arnold Schoenberg's Suite, Op. 29 (1926), for E $\flat$  clarinet, B $\flat$  clarinet, bass clarinet, violin, viola, cello, and piano, and Jean Absil's Quatuor (1967) for E $\flat$  clarinet, two B $\flat$  clarinets and B $\flat$  bass clarinet.

### 3. The E $\flat$ Clarinet as a Band Instrument

With its penetrating tone, the E $\flat$  clarinet retained an important role in wind bands starting in the nineteenth century, despite the fact that only a few solo and chamber works were written for it at that time. Since high clarinets were first used in the military bands as substitutes for violins, the variety and amount of the repertoire for the band was significantly increased.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 34.

The E $\flat$  clarinet, along with the A $\flat$  and F clarinet, was a common member of military bands in the nineteenth century. Heinrich Christoph Koch mentions the use of the high clarinets in the military band in his *Dictionary of Music* (1802): “In the military band, if the clarinet is used only together with fifes and drums, an E $\flat$  clarinet is used, because, due to its small size, it has a shriller tone than the larger ones.”<sup>16</sup> According to Kathleen Gardiner, the E $\flat$  clarinet was the primary high instrument in military bands in Great Britain around 1800.<sup>17</sup> As she notes, Henry George Farmer listed the instrumentation in his *Memoirs of the Royal Artillery Band* (1839).<sup>18</sup> The list for the woodwind section includes one piccolo, two flutes, four oboes, three E $\flat$  clarinets, fourteen B $\flat$  clarinets, and four bassoons. By 1857, the band had increased the number of E $\flat$  clarinets to four from three. While bands in Austria, Germany, and Italy still maintained one or two A $\flat$  clarinets, the E $\flat$  clarinet gradually replaced the A $\flat$  clarinet in France, England, and the United States in the mid-nineteenth century.

The wind band started the transition from ceremonial outdoor music to concert music performed in the concert hall in the twentieth century, which allowed more instruments to be added into the ensemble. More flexible instrumentation led to greater variety in sound and texture. More composers were drawn to writing music for the wind band, and the repertoire expanded significantly. Many compositions written for the wind band or wind ensemble require the E $\flat$  clarinet. Consequently, it is included as part of the standard instrumentation in several bands. In contrast to orchestral literature, the E $\flat$  clarinet acts as the upper voice of the woodwind section and almost always plays throughout.

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<sup>16</sup> Quoted in Kurt Birsak, *The Clarinet: A Cultural History* (Buchloe: Druck und Verlag Obermayer, 1994), 115.

<sup>17</sup> Gardiner, “An Annotated Bibliography of Twentieth-Century Solo and Chamber Literature for the E $\flat$  Clarinet” 11.

<sup>18</sup> Henry J. Farmer, *Memoirs of the Royal Artillery Band* (London: Boosey & Co, 1904), 78-116.

Example 7 shows the opening section of John Philip Sousa's *The Glory of the Yankee Navy* (1909):

Example 7. John Philip Sousa, *The Glory of the Yankee Navy*, mm. 1-10.<sup>19</sup>

Here the E $\flat$  clarinet serves as high-voice color and doubles the melodic line with other woodwind instruments. It also plays throughout the entire piece. Instead of being given a short excerpt to represent a specific character or sound effect as in many orchestral works, the E $\flat$  clarinet is occasionally used in exposed passages to color the woodwind sound.<sup>20</sup> In the twentieth century, folk songs and marches were the two most popular compositional style for the wind band. Well-known pieces include Vaughan Williams's *English Folk Song Suite* (1924), Gustav Holst's *Hammersmith, Prelude and Scherzo* (1930), Percy Grainger's *Lincolnshire Posy* (1937), all of which employed the E $\flat$  clarinet as either a standard or solo instrument.

<sup>19</sup> John Philip Sousa, *The Glory of the Yankee Navy* (The John Church Company, 1909).

<sup>20</sup> Jennifer M. Tinberg, "Pedagogical and Performance Practices of the E $\flat$  Clarinet Teaching Method and Solo Repertoire" (DMA diss, The Florida State University, 2015), 19-20, accessed May 30, 2017, <https://goo.gl/GuQo4>.

#### 4. The E $\flat$ Clarinet as an Orchestra Instrument

The use of the E $\flat$  clarinet is widespread in nineteenth and twentieth-century orchestral literature. It has generally been given major solo parts and used to create special sound effects. Hector Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* (1830) may well be the first orchestral work featuring a solo for the E $\flat$  clarinet.<sup>21</sup> In this work, Berlioz created a theme to represent a specific character, known as the "idée fixe." Example 8 is the very first occurrence of the idée fixe, played by the first violin and flute in the first movement:



Example 8. Hector Berlioz, *Symphonie fantastique*, first movement, mm. 72-79.<sup>22</sup>

The idée fixe recurs throughout the work, played in different forms by different instruments. In the last movement, the E $\flat$  clarinet has a remarkable solo in which it presents a variant of the idée fixe:



Example 9. Hector Berlioz, *Symphonie fantastique*, fifth movement, E $\flat$  clarinet solo, mm. 40-47.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Tschiakov, "The High Clarinets," 45.

<sup>22</sup> Hector Berlioz, *Symphonie fantastique* (New York: Edwin F. Kalmus, no date.), 10.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

In addition to the different time signature, the original *idée fixe* is ornamented by grace notes and trills. Although this variant of the *idée fixe* is first played by the B $\flat$  clarinet eleven measures earlier, the E $\flat$  clarinet is far more intense:



Example 10. Hector Berlioz, *Symphonie fantastique*, fifth movement, B $\flat$  clarinet solo, mm. 21-28.<sup>24</sup>

This well-known solo promoted the instrument's unique capability and unique sound. Berlioz's exemplary use of the E $\flat$  clarinet in the *Symphonie fantastique* set an example followed by many other composers.<sup>25</sup>

Mahler had a real liking for the E $\flat$  clarinet, which he used extensively in his symphonies. The E $\flat$  clarinet excerpt from the third movement of his First Symphony (1888) shows how well he understood the instrument's potential for color and sound effect. In Example 11, two E $\flat$  clarinets are used in a lower register to create an exceptional sound effect unobtainable on regular clarinets.<sup>26</sup>



Example 11. Gustav Mahler, *Symphony No. 1*, third movement, mm. 45-49.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 102.

<sup>25</sup> Jennifer M. Tinberg, "Pedagogical and Performance Practices of the E $\flat$  Clarinet Teaching Method and Solo Repertoire" (DMA thesis, The Florida State University, 2015), 7-10, accessed May 30, 2017, <https://goo.gl/GuQo4T>.

<sup>26</sup> Tschiaikov, "The High Clarinets," 47.

<sup>27</sup> Gustav Mahler, *Symphony No. 1* (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1906), 81.

A number of Richard Strauss's works famously include parts for the E $\flat$  clarinet. In *Ein Heldenleben*, Op. 40 (1898), there are frequent uses of staccato in the altissimo register for the E $\flat$  clarinet, demonstrating his interest in the crisp sound of that register:



Example 12. Richard Strauss, *Ein Heldenleben*, Op. 40, E $\flat$  clarinet part, mm.124-137.<sup>28</sup>

Other Strauss works with important E $\flat$  clarinet parts include *Also sprach Zarathustra* (1896), *Salome* (1905), *Elektra* (1906).

The E $\flat$  clarinet appears in large orchestral works more often during the twentieth century. Stravinsky used the E $\flat$  clarinet in several of his major compositions. His use of high clarinets in *The Rite of Spring* (1913) differs from that of Berlioz and Strauss. Instead of using it to produce particular sound effects and represent themes or characters, Stravinsky gave the E $\flat$  clarinet more lyrical material in a comfortable register: for an example, see Example 4 on p. 6 above.

Dimitri Shostakovich, too, used the E $\flat$  clarinet extensively in his orchestral music. He wrote a lot of brilliant solo passages for the E $\flat$  clarinet, examples of which can be found in the ballet *The Age of Gold* (1925), Symphony No. 5 (1937), Symphony No. 6 (1939), and Symphony No. 8 (1943). In addition to solos, his symphonies feature some very fast technical passages for the E $\flat$  clarinet in wind-instrument tuttis. Example 13 is a prominent solo from the Symphony No. 5. The solo is humorous in nature.

<sup>28</sup> Richard Strauss, *Ein Heldenleben*, Op. 40 (Leipzig: F.E.C. Leuckart, 1899).

The image shows a musical score for Example 13. It consists of three staves. The top staff is labeled 'SOLO' and contains a melodic line for the E♭ clarinet. The middle staff is labeled 'Cl. piccolo E♭' and contains a melodic line for the piccolo. The bottom staff is labeled 'E♭' and contains a bass line. The score includes various dynamics such as *p*, *f*, *dim.*, and *marc.*, and a tempo marking 'a 2'.

Example 13. Dmitri Shostakovich, *Symphony No. 5*, second movement, E $\flat$  clarinet solo, Rehearsal 49.<sup>29</sup>

Ravel's orchestral music often includes unique solos for the E $\flat$  clarinet, which he uses in multiple ways. Example 14, from the Second Suite from *Daphnis et Chloé* (1913), occurs right after the piccolo solo, shown in Example 15:

The image shows a musical score for Example 14. It is a single staff labeled 'P1e Cl. sur la scène'. The score includes a dynamic marking of *mf* and a tempo marking 'en s'éloignant'. The music features a series of eighth notes and sixteenth notes.

Example 14. Maurice Ravel, *Daphnis et Chloé*, Suite No. 2, E $\flat$  clarinet solo, Rehearsal 160.<sup>30</sup>

The image shows a musical score for Example 15. It is a single staff labeled 'P1e Fl. sur la scène'. The score includes a dynamic marking of *mf* and a tempo marking 'en s'éloignant'. The music features a series of eighth notes and sixteenth notes.

Example 15. Maurice Ravel, *Daphnis et Chloé*, Suite No. 2, piccolo solo, Rehearsal 159.<sup>31</sup>

The solo is short but impressive. The E $\flat$  clarinet part engages in a conversation with the piccolo, which gives a crucial touch to the entire harmony. In another excerpt, the E $\flat$  clarinet and other woodwind instruments play a highly technical part that includes forays into the altissimo register:

<sup>29</sup> Dmitri Shostakovich, *Symphony No. 5* (New York: Edwin F. Kalmus, no date.).

<sup>30</sup> Maurice Ravel, *Daphnis and Chloé seconde suite No. 2* (Paris: Durand, 1913).

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

Example 16. Maurice Ravel, *Daphnis et Chloé*, Suite No. 2, E $\flat$  clarinet solo, Rehearsal 200-202.<sup>32</sup>

A different style of excerpt can be found in *Boléro* (1928), where the E $\flat$  clarinet presents an exotic melody in lower register. Because of Ravel's choices of pitches and register, the E $\flat$  clarinet produces a special color. This excerpt is not only one of the longest, but also one of the most rewarding orchestral solos for the E $\flat$  clarinet:

Example 17. Maurice Ravel, *Boléro*, E $\flat$  clarinet solo, mm. 59-75.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Maurice Ravel, *Boléro* (Paris: Durand & Cie., 1929).

Another work containing prominent exposure for the E $\flat$  clarinet is Ravel's Piano Concerto in G Major (1931). There the E $\flat$  clarinet is used several times to introduce the main theme because of its ability to project in a high register. Example 18 is the most prominent solo in the third movement:

Example 18. Maurice Ravel, Piano Concerto in G Major, third movement, E $\flat$  clarinet solo, mm. 17-22.<sup>34</sup>

The solos in this work may not be as long as in *Bolero*, but they are sparkling, and give the E $\flat$  clarinet a more primary role than those of the standard B $\flat$  and A clarinets.

Although the E $\flat$  clarinet is not a standard member of the orchestra, it is frequently used, often with prominent solos. A large number of remarkable solos for the E $\flat$  clarinet can be found particularly in the orchestral literature of the twentieth century. In addition to the ones mentioned above, composers who made prominent use of the E $\flat$  clarinet include Arnold Schoenberg, Alban Berg, Aaron Copland, Benjamin Britten, and Leonard Bernstein.

<sup>34</sup> Maurice Ravel, *Piano Concerto in G major* (Paris: Durand & Cie., 1932).

## 5. Conclusion

Since the E $\flat$  clarinet has a much narrower body than the standard B $\flat$  clarinet, most clarinetists find it difficult to produce a pleasant tone quality while also playing in tune. For this reason, the E $\flat$  clarinet is not a popular instrument for solo recitals even though it plays an important role in the band and orchestra. Fortunately, modern repertoire for the instrument is expanding, particularly in the solo and chamber genres, increasing the opportunities for using this instrument in recitals. Contemporary composers are also using the instrument in new ways. For example, Sohrab Udumann's *Contour* (2001) combines the E $\flat$  clarinet with electronics. William Holab's *Woodshedding* (1958) requires the player to use extended techniques such as multiphonics, removing the bell and inserting a paper tube into the lower joint, and singing while playing on the instrument. In addition to its use in solo, chamber, orchestral, and band music, the E $\flat$  clarinet has also been used in jazz bands, music for films such as Henry Mancini's *Baby Elephant Walk* (1961), and musicals such as Leonard Bernstein's *West Side Story* (1957).

## Chapter 2: Selected Solo Works for the E $\flat$ Clarinet 1834-1997

The recordings were made in the *Audio for the Arts* studio in Madison, Wisconsin, between April and May, 2018. The instruments used in these recordings were a Selmar Recital E $\flat$  clarinet and a Yamaha C6 piano. The recording equipment included an AEA R88 stereo ribbon microphone, which was used to pick up the piano, a spaced pair of Earthworks QTC40 omnidirectional microphones to pick up sound from every direction, and a Shure KSM 44 highlight microphone to pick up the clarinet. The selected works were composed between 1834 and 1997 and feature the E $\flat$  clarinet either alone or together with piano. The four pieces offer a variety of styles, presenting an overview of the solo literature for the instrument in different historical periods.

### 1. Giacomo Panizza: *Ballabile con Variazioni nel ballo Ettore Fieramosca* (1834)

Giacomo Panizza's *Ballabile con Variazioni nel ballo Ettore Fieramosca* for E $\flat$  clarinet and piano was composed in 1834. It is an excerpt from the "festa di ballo" (a festive dance set in a magnificent banquet hall) in the third act of his opera *Ettore Fieramosca* (*The Challenge of Barletta*). The story is based on a popular novel, an action-packed tale of love and intrigue written in 1503 by the Marchese d'Azeglio. The opera premiered at La Scala in Milan on October 10, 1837. Even though this five-act opera never entered the repertoire, the ballet was a lavish enough spectacle for the opera to run for 47 performances.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Giacomo Panizza, *Ballabile con Variazioni nel ballo Ettore Fieramosca*, ed. Colin Bradbury (London: Lazarus Edition, 2000), 2.

This piece was written for Ernesto Cavallini, who served as the principal clarinetist of the La Scala orchestra from 1831 to 1851. Panizza was the conductor at La Scala during the last thirteen years of Cavallini's tenure there. He composed two operas and thirteen ballets for the theater, and many brilliant clarinet solos from his works were dedicated to Cavallini.<sup>36</sup>

*Ballabile con Variazioni* is one of the best instrumental pieces to have been inspired by Cavallini's playing. Featuring vocal lyricism and virtuosity, it is typical of the traditional elements of the nineteenth-century Italian instrumental music. The writing style is similar to that of the "opera fantasy," which originated as improvisations on tunes from popular operas. The opera fantasy first appeared in the time of Mozart and Beethoven. By the 1820s it had become a popular genre for composer/performers, who were often virtuosos on their own instruments, and who commonly premiered their own pieces. The writing was intended to show off the performer's technical skills.<sup>37</sup> Most of the prominent opera fantasies for the clarinet are by Italian composers, such as Benedetto Carulli, Ernesto Cavallini, and Cavallini's student Luigi Bassi, among others.

*Ballabile con Variazioni* begins with a slow introduction consisting of loud piano chords calling for attention followed by the clarinet's dulcet response. The clarinet is used to imitate the coloratura soprano in the introduction, where fast notes span the instrument's range and a fast descending arpeggio ends the sentence:

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Edition Silvertrust, "Edition Silvertrust Present Luigi Bassi," Raymond Silvertrust, accessed March 11, 2018, <http://222.editionsilvertrust.com/bassi-fantasia-rigoletto.htm>.



Example 19. Giacomo Panizza, *Ballabile con Variazioni*, mm. 2-8.<sup>38</sup>

Similar writing styles can be found in several clarinet fantasies composed during this period.

Example 20 is the introduction from the *Rigoletto Fantasy* (1865), written for the B $\flat$  clarinet by Luigi Bassi (1833-1871), based on tunes from Giuseppe Verdi's *Rigoletto* (1851).

Example 20. Luigi Bassi, *Concert Fantasia on Motives from Verdi's Rigoletto*, mm. 1-17.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Giacomo Panizza. *Ballabile con Variazioni nel ballo Ettore Fieramosca*, ed. Colin Bradbury (London: Lazarus Edition, 2000), 1.

<sup>39</sup> Luigi Bassi, *Concert Fantasia on Motives from Verdi's Opera: "Rigoletto"* (New York: Carl Fischer, 1901).

The writing style is like that of the *Ballabile con Variazioni*. It, too, begins with *f* piano chords followed by a series of cadenza-like passage for the clarinet.<sup>40</sup>

*Ballabile con Variazioni* is simple in style and format, following the same format as other opera fantasies. The solo instrument is always given melodic lines accompanied by the piano, and the entire piece is based on the most notable tunes from the opera. Four different tunes are used in this piece. The first tune has a prominent dotted-eighth-and-sixteenth-note figure played alternately by the clarinet and piano, follows a minor tune. Marked *vivace*, the next tune features a series of ascending eighth notes introduced by the piano. Finally, there's a *più mosso* final theme featuring chromatic triplets, shown in Example 21. The tempo of each section is faster than section preceding it, which makes the piece very compact and exciting to hear.

Example 21. Giacomo Panizza. *Ballabile con Variazioni*<sup>41</sup>

First Theme, mm.17-27.<sup>42</sup>

Second Theme, mm.89-93.

<sup>40</sup> Another similar piece is Gioachino Rossini's (1792-1868) famous Introduction, Theme, and Variations for Clarinet and Orchestra (1819).

<sup>41</sup> Giacomo Panizza. *Ballabile con Variazioni nel ballo Ettore Fieramosca*, ed. Colin Bradbury (London: Lazarus Edition, 2000), 2-4.

## Third Theme (Vivace)



## Fourth Theme (più mosso)



As always in these pieces, the piano basically functions as the orchestra. Besides playing chords and introducing or repeating melodic lines given to the solo instrument, the piano is also used to bridge different sections of the piece, transitioning to different keys and tempos.

This piece is straightforward and easy to play on a standard B $\flat$  clarinet; on an E $\flat$  clarinet, however, some passages are a real challenge. The range of this piece is quite wide, and registers will often shift within a phrase. In addition, most of the register shifts are from the clarion register into the altissimo, which is an extra challenge. In Example 22, moving from G at the end of the first measure to F at the beginning of the second involves a register shift from the clarion to the altissimo. This is demanding for the clarinetist, and in order to make it more even, one solution might be to use alternate fingerings. For most clarinetists, playing in the altissimo register of the E $\flat$  clarinet is an arduous task. The challenge is making this register speak immediately. Alternate (or fake) fingerings are perhaps the best solution for some passages even alternate fingerings can sometimes adversely affect intonation.



Example 22. Giacomo Panizza. *Ballabile con Variazioni*, mm.72-74.<sup>43</sup>

*Ballabile con Variazioni* recently became available through Lazarus Editions, which founded by Colin Bradbury in 1997. Lazarus Editions was named after the famous Victorian clarinetist Henry Lazarus. It makes available masterpieces of nineteenth-century wind music that have been long out of print. The original purpose of the edition was to publish forgotten works for clarinet and piano that Colin Bradbury and Oliver Davis recorded for *Clarinet Classics* and *Divine Art*. The works were popular in Victorian and Edwardian England and range in musical style from Italian operatic fantasies to English drawing-room pieces. According to the Lazarus Edition website, sixteen of the works are now available, together with five songs with clarinet obbligato by the nineteenth-century composers Alexander MacFarren, Andreas Spaeth, Jan Kalliwoda, and Mariano Obiols.<sup>44</sup>

## 2. Bartolomé Pérez Casas: *Aires Sicilianos* for E $\flat$ Clarinet and Piano (1901)

Bartolomé Pérez Casas (1873-1956) was one of the most influential Spanish musicians in the first half of the twentieth century. He was born in Lorca (Murcia) and started his career as a clarinet player. At the age of 16, he was an E $\flat$  clarinet player with the Marine Infantry Band, and

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>44</sup> Colin Bradbury “A Unique Collection of Nineteenth-Century Masterpieces for Wind Instruments,” <http://www.clarinet.demon.co.uk/panizza.htm>. Accessed March 11, 2018.

later became a band master with the Spanish Infantry Regiment. In 1897 he moved to Madrid and started to conduct the prestigious Royal Corp of Alabarderos Band. He founded the Society of Wind Instruments for the Chamber Music with the famous clarinetist Mariano San Miguel in 1906. In 1915, he founded the Philharmonic Orchestra of Madrid, and was famous for his spectacular work as conductor of the orchestra. Besides a career as a conductor, he was also a composer who contributed to the development of symphonic music in Spain. His iconic Suite *A mi Tierra* received an award in 1905 by from the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando. In addition, Pérez Casas also composed numerous instrumental and chamber works. The works he composed for the clarinet especially reveal his obvious familiarity of the instrument. His works for clarinet and piano including *Primer Solo* (1897), *Intermezzo* (1900), *Segundo solo* (1901), *Aires Sicilianos* (for E $\flat$  clarinet) (1901), *Andantino* (1915), and *Romanza* (for bass clarinet) (1917).

Spanish music often draws on the guitar, folk tunes, and dance music for inspiration. *Aires Sicilianos* is a mixture of folk tunes and dance music. It starts with a slow melody followed by Tarantella, a lively, whirling dance music in 6/8. The melody is based, for the most part, on the “plagal” form of an F minor scale, extending from low C to high. Because of the augmented second between D $\flat$  and E $\natural$ , some listeners consider this scale to have a Spanish coloring.



Example 23. Bartolomé Pérez Casas, *Aires Sicilianos*, mm. 25-31.<sup>45</sup> © Bassus Ediciones, Madrid 2007. Edited by Pedro Rubio. Reprinted by permission.

<sup>45</sup> Bartolomé Pérez Casas, *Aires Sicilianos*, ed. Pedro Rubio (Madrid: Bassus Ediciones Musicales, 2007), 1.

*Aires Sicilianos* is a technically demanding composition for the E $\flat$  clarinet. The challenging component is connecting large gaps between intervals. The major 6ths in Example 24 are difficult to play on the E $\flat$  clarinet without using alternate fingerings. Alternate fingerings can also be used to improve the intonation of several notes in altissimo register. A long passage containing sextuplets is also another problematic place since it is marked to be played “Lo más piano y delicadamente posible” (as quiet and delicately possible):



Example 24. Bartolomé Pérez Casas, *Aires Sicilianos*, mm. 36-38.<sup>46</sup> © Bassus Ediciones, Madrid 2007. Edited by Pedro Rubio. Reprinted by permission.

Similar leaps occur frequently throughout the Tarantella:



Example 25. Bartolomé Pérez Casas, *Aires Sicilianos*, mm. 39-40.<sup>47</sup> © Bassus Ediciones, Madrid 2007. Edited by Pedro Rubio. Reprinted by permission.

This piece is one of the best solo pieces for the E $\flat$  clarinet even though it has traditionally been overlooked. It allows the player to show different characters on different registers of the instrument, such as the crisp sound of the altissimo register, the beauty of the clarion register, and the humorous character on the Chalumeau register.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 2.

*Aires Sicilianos* was composed in 1901. A new edition was published in 2007 by Pedro Rubio, who revised the clarinet part. Rubio currently serves as clarinet professor at the Turina Conservatory and the Royal Conservatory, Madrid. He has performed with pianist Ana Benavides since 1991. They have participated in music festivals and received prizes in international music competitions, and have recorded seven CDs; *Aires Sicilianos* was included on *Bartolomé Pérez Casas: Su Obra para Clarinete y Piano* (Anacrusi, 2012).

### **3. William Bolcom: *Little Suite of Four Dances* (1984)**

*Little Suite of Four Dances* is likely one of the best-known works for the E $\flat$  clarinet, and is often performed in recitals today. This work was composed in 1984 by American composer William Bolcom (b.1938), who has received numerous prizes for his compositions, including the Pulitzer Prize for Music in 1988 for his *12 New Etudes for Piano*. He has also won four Grammy Awards, including one in 2005 for a recording of *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (1982), settings of poems by William Blake. Bolcom was a professor composition at the University of Michigan from 1973 to 2008. Besides his successful career as a composer, he is also active as a pianist; he and his wife Joan Morris, a mezzo-soprano, frequently perform and record his works, in addition to American popular songs from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

*Little Suite of Four Dances* was commissioned by clarinetist Conrad Josias and premiered on June 19, 1985. Josias had the idea of commissioning a work in memory of his father Murray Josias after hearing Bolcom's *Graceful Ghost* in 1975, which Bolcom had dedicated to his own father. Josias wrote to Bolcom about the idea in 1984, and the proposed commission was

accepted. In December of that same year, Bolcom sent Josias a copy of the manuscript of his *Little Suite of Four Dances for Piano and E♭ Clarinet*. Josias never met or spoke to Bolcom about the commission, communicating only by letter; “the work was Bolcom’s imagined portrait of Murray Josias based only on the biographical notes and photographs I sent to the composer.”<sup>48</sup>

The four movements are based on four different dance styles: *Rag*, *Apache-Jungle*, *Quasi-Waltz*, and *Soft Shoe*.

The specific rhythm and accent design of *Rag* are those of the traditional rag dance.

Example 26 shows the main theme of this movement in the clarinet:

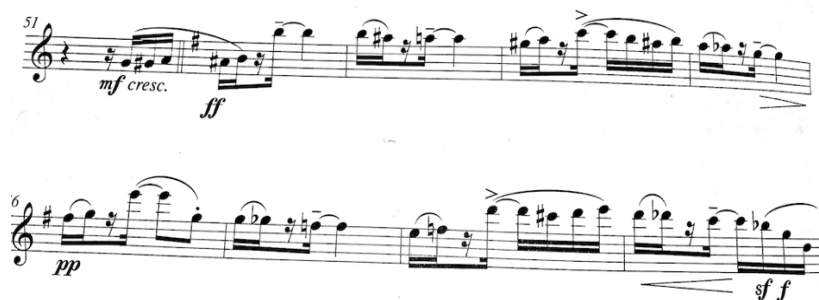


Example 26. William Bolcom, *Little Suite of Four Dances*, first movement, mm. 5-12.<sup>49</sup>

Most of the accents happen on the last sixteenth-note count of the beat, joined with a tie to the beginning of the following beat. In addition to accenting this last sixteenth note, the tenuto marking is often applied to emphasize the syncopation. Example 27 shows the second theme, with a tenuto marking once again emphasizing characteristic syncopation:

<sup>48</sup> Conrad Josias, “Unusual Instrumental Works by Bolcom and Ponchielli,” *The Clarinet* 17.2 (1990): 51-55.

<sup>49</sup> William Bolcom. *Little Suite of Four Dances* (New York: E.B. Marks and Bolcom Music, 1993), 1.



Example 27. William Bolcom. *Little Suite of Four Dances*, first movement, mm. 51-59.<sup>50</sup>

Overall, this movement is very accessible, and the range is friendly to the E $\flat$  clarinet. As befitting tempo and expressive markings like “not frantic” and “carefree,” *Rag* is a relaxed, laid-back, and breezy piece.

**Apache-Jungle** — the second movement — is fast and aggressive. The term “Apache” refers to a number of dramatic, extroverted dance forms in early of twentieth-century French popular culture. The main character is defined by the repeated figure of two B $\flat$ -G eighth notes, which dominates the entire movement. The grace notes and short glissandos at the beginning of the main figure in Example 28 bring a strong jazzy feeling to the piece:



Example 28. William Bolcom. *Little Suite of Four Dances*, second movement, mm. 4-7.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 3.

This movement is perhaps the most technically demanding of the set. A passage with fast-ascending quintuplets brings the solo clarinet to a high, altissimo G in Example 29, a difficult note to play in tune:

Example 29. William Bolcom, *Little Suite of Four Dances*, second movement, mm. 8-12.<sup>52</sup>

Similar figures with the same high G recur seven times in this movement.

The third-movement *Quasi-Waltz* features the most heartwarming melody. The solo range flows through the Chalumeau register more often than it does in the other movements. It is a simple, flowing piece with a flexible rubato throughout. In Example 30 the meter alternates between 3/4 and 2/4, producing the dual feeling of a melody that both flows and drags:

Example 30. William Bolcom, *Little Suite of Four Dances*, third movement, mm. 1-10.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 5.

We hear the measures in 2/4 as interrupting the more flowing 3/4 of the waltz, which is what makes it “quasi,” and all the more enchanting. The movement doubles as an homage to the song “Autumn Leaves” by Joseph Kosma, a famous Hungarian-French composer, who wrote many songs in collaboration with Jacques Prévert.

**Soft-Shoe** is a dance done with soft-soled shoes without metal taps. The style of the dance is elegant and relaxed, and was popular in vaudeville. It is performed tapping and sliding on sand scattered across the stage so as to give a sand-paper sound to the sliding; it is sometimes referred to as a “sand dance.” The music in this movement conveys the smooth and floating lilt of the dance. The melody is simple, sometimes with a staccato added on the last note of a phrase to represent the characteristic light and lifting steps of the dance; the dynamic is soft throughout.

Example 31 shows the main figure:



Example 31. William Bolcom, *Little Suite of Four Dances*, fourth movement, mm. 1-5.<sup>54</sup>

It contains two eighth-notes figures that span large intervals alternately down and up. This figure is the only technically challenging part of the movement since the last note of the phrase ends with an articulated high note. Additionally, the large interval of this figure crosses different partials, making it even more difficult to get the high notes to speak.

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 7.

#### 4. Les Thimmig: *Endless Springs V* (1997)

The American clarinetist, composer, and educator Les Thimmig (b. 1943) received degrees in composition from the Eastman School of Music and Yale University. After graduating, he taught music theory at Yale for a year before assuming the directorship of the composition/music-theory program at the University of Victoria in British Columbia. In 1971 he joined the composition program at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, where he added woodwind performance and jazz studies to his teaching resumé in 1980. His compositions have been performed in various countries and are published by G. Schirmer, E.C. Schirmer, Margun, and Turquoise Flame. He has received commissions from many prominent ensembles and soloists, including the DaCapo Chamber Players, Marimolin, American Composers Orchestra, hornist Adam Unsworth, and Larry Combs, principal clarinet of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

*Endless Springs V*, for unaccompanied E $\flat$  clarinet, was composed in 1997. It is one of the composition on the composer's compact disc *Solo*, recorded in concert at the University of Wisconsin–Madison School of Music on March 10, 2007. What makes this work so remarkable are the long, slow-moving, fluttering harmonies and a fascinating “jazz element.” It is a great showpiece for the instrument, using different thematic figures to contrast the different registers, and for the way it is almost but never quite drops into jazz. In his program notes for the March 10, 2007 performance, Thimmig writes: “*Endless Springs V* was written ten years ago (almost to the day). It is a fantasy that works its way in and out of various expressive circumstances. Beneath the surface, a bit of music long familiar to me acts as a spine: driving down the center of the

music, attracting all the gestures and figuration to it.”<sup>55</sup>

The piece consists of several characteristic thematic figures that recur in various guises throughout the piece. It begins with a series of mysterious rapid broken chords, which are marked as “distant” and “breathy,” and are heard at a single, uniform, piano dynamic, as shown in Example 32:



Example 32. Les Thimmig, *Endless Springs V*, mm.1-6.<sup>56</sup>

The meter changes regularly with the succession of harmonies, each of which evokes its own distinctive expressive atmosphere. This allows the clarinet to be heard in a mellow timbre on the lower register. The following part is a recitative-like passage featuring a great number of register shifts emphasizing the higher register, as shown in Example 33. This recitative-like figure occurs twice in the piece.



Example 33. Les Thimmig, *Endless Springs V*, mm.34-43.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Les Thimmig, liner notes to *Solo* (University of Wisconsin–Madison School of Music 9781931569194, 2008 [compact disc]).

<sup>56</sup> Les Thimmig, *Endless Springs V* (Hollywood: Judy Green Music, 1997).

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

The next figure is a brilliant jazz episode. The most splendid passages in this piece are perhaps the two jazz sections. They are not only fast but very demanding for the performer since it jumps around between registers, and because several of these passages include some of the highest pitches on the instrument:



Example 34. Les Thimmig, *Endless Springs V*, mm. 436-445.<sup>58</sup>

The most difficult task for the performer is to present the piece as though it were a jazz improvisation. Another important figure are staccato sixteenths interrupted frequently with sixteenth rests, marked “light funk.”



Example 35. Les Thimmig, *Endless Springs V*, mm. 226-233.<sup>59</sup>

It appears as a long phrase following the first jazz interlude. The long concluding section works over content from the introduction. It gives the audience another chance to recall the mysterious atmosphere created by the opening harmonies.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

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