



Treasures for Clarinet and Piano

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Charles West, *Clarinet*
Susan Grace, *Piano*

TREASURES FOR CLARINET AND PIANO

CHARLES WEST, *Clarinet*

SUSAN GRACE, *Piano*

Side One	
1. Sonatine - Pierre Gabaye	
I. Allegro	03:06
II. Largo	04:29
III. Prestissimo	04:03
2. Petite Pièce - Claude Debussy	01:27
3. Erwin, Fantasia for Clarinet - G. Meister	09:53
4. Canzonetta - Gabriel Pierné	03:23
Side Two	
5. Hillandale Waltzes - Victor Babin	10:19
6. Perigi verbunk op. 40 - Leó Weiner	04:45
7. Fille aux chevaux de lin - Claude Debussy	02:36
8. Bucolique - Bozza	06:18
9. Pièce en forme de habanera - Ravel	02:56

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The four short French works, *Canzonetta*, *Petite Pièce*, *Fille aux chevaux de lin*, and *Pièce en forme de habanera* have more in common than their brevity. All three composers studied at the Paris Conservatory at very young ages—Debussy and Pierné entering at ten and eight, and Ravel at the advanced age of fourteen. Debussy and Pierné were born within a year of each other in 1862 and 1863, and Pierné and Ravel died in 1937.

Debussy's *Petite Pièce* was composed in 1910 at a time when he was involved in numerous conducting engagements: that year in Paris, Vienna, and Budapest, and the following year in Turin. This short work was used as a sightreading piece for the Conservatory's annual *concours*, just as his more famous *Première Rhapsodie* has several times been the required prepared piece. Dating from the same year was Debussy's first book of twelve preludes for piano, in which *Fille aux chevaux de lin* (Maid with the Flaxen Hair) is found. The transcription of this work is by Conservatory professor Gaston Hamelin, who knew Debussy and who has also contributed excellent didactic works to the clarinet's literature.

Ravel was regarded by most contemporary French critics as a talented disciple of Debussy, although the harmonic languages differ in important ways: Debussy's use of the whole tone scale and resulting augmented harmonies was much more pervasive than the younger Ravel's *Pièce en forme de habanera* predates the two Debussy works by only three years and is here transcribed from the original vocalise.

Canzonetta, by Gabriel Pierné, is found in music libraries in many academies and schools today, and is a work that clarinetists often overlook. Yet it is a work of uncommon attractiveness. Even after many years of study and performance, one's return to this childhood friend is a warm homecoming experience rewarded by the discovery of graceful lines stated with the utmost simplicity. Pierné's dual background as a pianist and organist reflects clearly in the piano accompaniment, contrasting the outer sections' piano-like writing with the more organ-like center section.

Most wind musicians outside France know Eugene Bozza for his wind chamber music, but upon examination of his output, one finds much more including two ballets, three operas, four symphonies, and a number of other orchestral and choral works. Born in Nice in 1905, Bozza is an accomplished violinist, composer, and conductor. From 1934 to 1948 he conducted at the Opera-Comique in Paris and in 1951 he was appointed

Director of the Ecole Nationale de Musique in Valenciennes. *Bucolique* dates from the 1940's and resembles many of the mid-Twentieth Century French chamber works in its melodic fluency, elegance of structure and idiomatic writing. The opening section is fairly free in the style of an accompanied cadenza, followed by a large solo cadenza that leaves little question about Bozza's upbringing as a violinist. A slow section is followed by a perky scherzo, ending abruptly on the third beat of the final 3/8 measure.

Although Weiner's *Peregi verbunk* dates from only 1951, a composition date within the last half of the Nineteenth Century might better fit its style. Weiner resisted the compositional innovations of Stravinsky and Bartók, remaining essentially a Romantic while, to certain extent, sharing nationalistic concerns with his countrymen Bartók and Kodály.

This work is published for the violin, viola, or clarinet and shares a flare for the virtuosic with the *Caprices* of Paganini. Marked *tempo di Csárdás*, it is essentially an A-B-A form with a highly ornamented return of A and a cadenza. As an interesting aside, many years prior to *Peregi verbunk*, Weiner won a Schunda Prize for *Magyar ábránd* (Hungarian Fantasy), for tárogató (a saxophone-like Hungarian instrument built by W.J. Schunda) and cimbalom (a large dulcimer used by Hungarian gypsies). One hears the nationalism of the earlier work in full bloom in this short recruiting dance.

The waltz theme of *Hillandale Waltzes* appears several times in the works of Johann Nepomuk Hummel, including as the final variation of a set for oboe or C clarinet and piano. Pianist of the Vronsky and Babin two-piano team, Victor Babin began where Hummel finished, writing eight waltz variations which, though spanning the emotional range from sad to brilliant and joyous, never lose their delicious sense of humor in movements named "somber," "of good humor," "elegant," or "forgotten." Born in Russia, Babin went to the U.S. via Berlin and settled in Cleveland before the Second World War. He became Director of the Cleveland Institute, and split his time in later years between Cleveland and Santa Fe. After his passing in 1972, this work fell temporarily out of print. Clarinetists and audiences have rediscovered it, and it is now enjoying a growing number of performances worldwide.

Erwin, fantasia for clarinet, is typical of a broad category of Nineteenth Century works whose penchant for pyrotechnic display casts it under a "virtuoso" rubric. Not unlike the piano works of Liszt, the violin works of Fritz Kreisler or even other clarinet works by Weber and others, *Erwin* exists so that its performer can display the best of his technique (if not depth of musical understanding!). An abundance of florid cadenzas, a romantic melody in grand operatic style with its skittering variation and a pompous polonaise are woven together in this not-too-serious musical diversion.

-- notes by Charles West.

Charles West Clarinetist

As a solo clarinetist, Charles West has performed throughout the United States and Mexico, and in Asia and South America. Among the orchestral principal positions he has held are the El Paso Symphony Orchestra, and he currently performs as principal in the Flagstaff Festival Symphony Orchestra and with the Virginia Opera. As a performer of contemporary music he has held positions with the University of Iowa Center for New Music and is now in Richmond Virginia's new music ensemble CURRENTS. West was the first



president of the combined International Clarinet Society/ClariNetwork International and he performs frequently on this organization's international convention programs.

Charles West is currently Professor of Clarinet at Virginia Commonwealth University. Previous appointments have included the University of Arizona, New Mexico State University, and Grinnell College. He holds the Doctorate in Performance and is a Fulbright Scholar. Having

studied at the University of Iowa with Himie Voxman and at the University of Northern Colorado with Loren Bartlett, he has done additional study with Leon Russianoff and Robert Marcellus. West has published many articles and a composition for band, he has performed for national and international conventions of composers, teachers and performers.

SUSAN GRACE

Pianist

Susan Grace is Lecturer, Artist-in-Residence, and Director of Student Performance at Colorado College where she has been on the faculty since 1976. She is also Artistic Director of the Colorado College Summer Conservatory and Music Festival. She has been Principal Pianist for the Colorado Springs Symphony, Principal Accompanist for the Central City Opera, the Colorado Opera Festival, the Colorado Children's Choral, and has performed with the National Affiliate Artist Program.

Ms. Grace studied at the University of Iowa with John Simms; she currently coaches with Benjamin Kaplan in London. She has performed solo recitals and appeared as soloist with orchestras in the United States and Europe. She has, in addition, earned recognition as a chamber music artist with performances in the Soviet Union, and China, and has performed in numerous festivals, including the Grand Teton Festival, the Music at Oxford and Helmsley Festivals in England, and the Astoria Concert Series in Brussels, Belgium. She has recorded for the Belgian National Radio and the American Society of University Composers. Ms. Grace is a member of The Colorado College Trio, Bricolage -- a piano-percussion duo specializing in new music, and Quattro Mani -- a two-piano ensemble with Alice Rybak.

Technical Notes

The recorded perspective of the instruments in this recording is close... As though the 9' Hamburg Steinway and the clarinet are being played for you in your living room. Of course the actual recording was not made in a living room! Instead, the great room at Lucasfilm's Skywalker Ranch, with its incredibly low noise floor and fully adjustable acoustics, was used.

To capture a clean, dynamic, and harmonically rich instrumental presentation, a pair of Shoen's Omni microphones were employed. The microphones' signals were amplified by two superb pure class-A microphone preamps custom-built for Wilson Audio by John Curl. MIT cable carried the balanced line level signal to Wilson Audio's Ultramaster™ 30 ips analog recorder. Subsequent digital master tapes were made through the Pygmy A/D converter on a Panasonic SV-3700. Playback reference monitoring was performed on Wilson Audio WATT II/Puppies, driven by a Spectral DMA-50 amplifier through MIT CVT Terminator cables.

Acknowledgements/Credits

Executive Producer	Sheryl Lee Wilson
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TRANSFER EDITING: Bruce Brown, Puget Sound Studios

SONIC EVALUATION: David A. Wilson, Sheryl Lee Wilson, Daryl C. Wilson

TECHNICAL NOTES:

Description of equipment and processes used for Master Tape transfers in
Dave Wilson's Music Room:

BRUCE BROWN FLEW FROM SEATTLE TO PROVO TO WORK HAND-IN-HAND WITH DAVE AND DARYL WILSON. EACH MASTER TAPE WAS INSPECTED, CLEANED, AND TREATED WITH LAST #9 AND #10 PRESERVATIVES. ALL OF THE MASTER TAPES WERE BAKED TO REFORMULATE THE BINDING. THIS WAS DONE IN AN INCUBATOR AT 135 DEGREES AND THEN THEY WERE LEFT TO COOL BACK DOWN TO ROOM TEMPERATURE. ALL SPLICES WERE INSPECTED AND REPAIRED, IF NECESSARY.

EACH TRANSFER WAS EXECUTED ON THE ULTRAMASTER, A ONE-OF-A-KIND STUDER A80 DESIGNED AND BUILT BY JOHN CURL WITH CUSTOM ELECTRONICS.

EACH MASTER TAPE WAS STORED BY WILSON AUDIOPHILE "TAILS-OUT" IN WHICH PUGET SOUND STUDIOS DID A LIBRARY WIND TO THE TAKE-UP

REEL. ALL LEVELS WERE SET ACCORDING TO INCLUDED EQ SHEETS AND EACH 1 KHZ TONE WAS FURTHER SET AT PRECISELY 1 KHZ, VIA A CUSTOM VARI-SPEED ADJUSTMENT. THIS PROVIDED THE EXACT SPEED THE MASTER TAPES WERE RECORDED AT.

A TOTAL OF FIVE DIFFERENT ANALOG-TO-DIGITAL CONVERTERS WERE USED TO PROVIDE SAMPLES FOR THE WILSONS TO EVALUATE. ULTIMATELY AN EMM LABS ADC-8 MK IV, CUSTOM MODIFIED BY ANDREAS KOCH, WAS CHOSEN BY DAVE AND DARYL WILSON FOR THE TRANSFERS FROM THE ULTRAMASTER USING THE ORIGINAL MASTER TAPES INTO A SONOMA DSD WORKSTATION FOR CAPTURE AND EDITING. MONITORING FROM THE SONOMA DSD WORKSTATION WAS ROUTED THROUGH A MODIFIED PLAYBACK DESIGNS MPS-5 VIA USB-X WITH LIGHT HARMONIC USB CABLE. ALL DSD FILES WERE TRANSFERRED INTO A MERGING TECHNOLOGIES PYRAMIX DSD/DXD MASSCORE WORKSTATION FOR SAMPLE RATE CONVERSION, FORMAT CONVERSION, AND META-DATA TAGGING. THE PYRAMIX HEPTA FILTER WAS USED FOR CONVERSION TO PCM. FILES WERE THEN LISTENED TO FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE.

Description of the Equipment used in the Provo, Utah "Wilson Music Room" that Wilson Audiophile Recordings, LLC put to use for Sonic Evaluation:

SPEAKERS: WILSON AUDIO ALEXANDRIA XLF, TWO THOR'S HAMMERS
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