Scholarly Program Notes for Graduate Clarinet Recital Featuring Works of Eric Mandat, Dan Welcher, Jacob ter Veldhuis, and Carlos Velez.

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SCHOLARLY PROGRAM NOTES FOR GRADUATE CLARINET RECITAL FEATURING WORKS OF ERIC MANDAT, DAN WELCHER, JACOB TER VELDHUIS, AND CARLOS VELEZ.

by

Katherine Serbinowski

B.M., University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2020

A Research Paper
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master of Music

School of Music
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Southern Illinois University Carbondale
August 2023
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SCHOLARLY PROGRAM NOTES FOR GRADUATE CLARINET RECITAL FEATURING WORKS OF ERIC MANDAT, DAN WELCHER, JACOB TER VELDHUIS, AND CARLOS VELEZ.

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A Research Paper Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Music in the field of Music

Approved by:

Eric Mandat, Chair

Graduate School
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
August 2023
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CHAPTER 1

PEG AND HOLE COLLIDE BY ERIC MANDAT

From his groundbreaking innovations in clarinet technique to his experimental work blending live performance with interactive technology, composer and clarinetist Dr. Eric P. Mandat (b. 1957) has spent his lifetime flipping the script on music. His life as a performing artist has taken him around the globe, and he often uses his experiences and knowledge of other cultures to incorporate elements of folk music into his modern compositions. Described as a “musical giant in the clarinet community,” Mandat’s work continually inspires and influences the way the clarinet is approached by new and seasoned musicians alike.¹ He has been honored with many awards for his art, such as several Illinois Arts Council Artist Fellowships for composition and an Outstanding Scholar Award from the Southern Illinois University of Carbondale, where he has worked as the professor of clarinet for a majority of his career.² In group settings, he has been a part of the Chicago Symphony’s MusicNOW ensemble, the Tone Road Ramblers, the Transatlantic Trio, and more.³ Mandat is an alumnus of the University of North Texas, the Yale School of Music, and the Eastman School of Music.

Peg and Hole Collide was written in 2006 for Howard Klug (b. 1944), professor of clarinet at Indiana University Bloomington’s Jacobs School of Music. Klug is also a flutist and


saxophonist, but *Peg and Hole Collide* was written with him as a bass clarinetist in mind. The work, which was Mandat’s first composition for clarinet quartet, was commissioned to be played at the 2006 ClarinetFest in Atlanta, Georgia. Having real people and real personalities to reference while making compositional decisions is Mandat’s preference when it comes to writing, and *Peg and Hole Collide* gave him the opportunity to cater to specific individuals and their playing styles. Each part was meant to be representative of a different character. Mandat composed the bass clarinet line to be a dominant voice in the quartet as an embodiment of Klug’s insistent teaching style and strong tone of voice. The clarinet I and clarinet III parts were written for two of his students: Jorge Montilla and Min-Ho Yeh, respectively. Clarinet II was written to represent Mandat himself.

The composition of *Peg and Hole Collide* began with the bass clarinet part (clarinet IV), and incidentally the bass clarinet plays alone for the first 13 measures of the piece. Arguably the most important part of this solo, however, is the first bar and a half. Mandat built the entire piece based on the opening seven notes in the bass part. The pitch class of those notes can be seen throughout all four parts in the piece, whether inverted, transposed, or quoted directly. This and the rest of the opening solo paints a picture of Klug “laying down the law” for his dutiful students. At rehearsal letter A, Klug’s character asks his students, “do you understand?” to which they reply, “yes sir.” Montilla and Yeh’s parts are meant to be robotic and square whenever this motive appears. An example of it can be seen below in Figure 1, taken from the clarinet I part.

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5 Eric P. Mandat, email message to author, June 17, 2023.
Occasionally, Mandat’s character will speak up with little interjections reminiscent of what Klug is saying, but said in an almost mocking manner. The interjections become increasingly frequent and complex as the music goes on, all while Klug’s character is still attempting to maintain control of the music and Montilla and Yeh’s characters are still being obedient to the bass part.\(^6\) Eventually Mandat’s part takes over in a cadenza of quintuplets and sextuplets, then Klug’s part regains control starting at rehearsal letter B (Figure 2).

Figure 1 - *Peg and Hole Collide* measures 71-72\(^7\)

![Figure 1](image1.png)

Figure 2 - *Peg and Hole Collide* measures 33-34\(^8\)

![Figure 2](image2.png)

Every character in *Peg and Hole Collide* is given their own theme(s) in the music. Just as with the people they represent, the themes are all very different. Mandat’s intention was to make each part uniquely independent and contrasting from the others so that they sounded like they could never merge, yet they still manage to make music together anyway. Throughout the piece,

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\(^6\) Eric P. Mandat, email message to author, June 17, 2023.


\(^8\) Ibid.
each part has a chance to shine and “lead” the group as their theme comes to the forefront of the music. This was not only a compositional strategy on Mandat’s part, but also a commentary on the characters as real people. They all had their own unique voices and goals for themselves as musicians. After Klug’s theme starts the piece and Mandat’s melody eventually takes over, the next theme to arise is that of Min-Ho Yeh.

Min-Ho Yeh (b. 1970) is from Taichung, Taiwan. He obtained his bachelor’s degree from the National Taiwan Normal Conservatory, then moved to the United States for his master’s degree from the New England Conservatory. He became a student of Howard Klug when he attended Indiana University for his D.M.A. His part in Peg and Hole Collide, the clarinet III part, is much more relaxed than the others, representing his calm and quiet demeanor. Beginning in measure 66, this part comes to the forefront of the music in a folk-like melody (Figure 3). It is accompanied by quarter-tone trills in clarinet I and clarinet II, adding to the impression of Eastern music. This solo is interrupted twice by the “yes sir” motive discussed previously and shown in Figure 1. Yeh’s melody is also different because the solo line is a pentatonic scale whereas the rest of the piece uses mostly half steps, minor thirds, and/or tritones. The Min-Ho theme is not a direct reference to any melodies that already exist, but instead is a tune of Mandat’s creation based on his extensive knowledge of folk music around the world.


9 Eric P. Mandat, interview by author, Carbondale, IL, April 25, 2023.
11 Eric P. Mandat, email message to author, June 17, 2023.
12 Tout d’Alessio, “Multiphonic Meditation on a Composer,” 34.
Figure 3 – *Peg and Hole Collide* measures 65-80\(^{13}\)

![Figure 3 - Peg and Hole Collide measures 65-80](image)

Jorge Montilla’s theme is the last one to appear in the piece. Montilla (b. 1970) currently works as the Assistant Professor of Clarinet at the University of Iowa’s School of Music. He studied at Instituto Br. Elias Cordero Uzcategui before attending Indiana University for his master’s degree and Artist Diploma under the instruction of Howard Klug. He is best known as a spokesperson for Latin American music and for his work on the Eb clarinet, both of which are represented in *Peg and Hole Collide*.\(^{14}\) Mandat captured Montilla’s vibrant, spirited personality through playful lines in the clarinet I part, played on the Eb clarinet. The Eb part gets its first big moment in the spotlight starting in measure 133, as seen below in Figure 4.

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Mandat’s part (clarinet II), played on both the Eb and Bb clarinets, is an instigator to stir up musical conflict with other characters. When asked why he chose to include an additional Eb clarinet part in the ensemble, as is atypical for a clarinet quartet, Mandat mused that it might have been because this piece came on the heels of his composition *2 Cool 2 B Flat* (a duet for two Eb clarinets). The clarinet I part of *Peg and Hole Collide* bounces back and forth between being supportive and antagonistic. Before its cadenza in measures 29-32, the purpose of the part is to “mess everyone up.”

At the end of *Peg and Hole Collide* all the parts come together and play their themes at the same time. In Figure 5, the final five measures of the piece are shown. The line bracketed in red is a reference to Montilla’s theme, the first iteration of which was seen above in Figure 4. Yeh’s melody began its restatement several bars before in measure 166 (not shown) and continues with the line bracketed in purple. These final bars are a diminution of the melody from Figure 3. Klug’s part, bracketed in green, is a reference to the theme it first introduced at

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17 Ibid.
rehearsal B, shown in Figure 2. Just as it began the piece, the clarinet IV part is also the one to end it, playing two final notes in measure 177 after all the other parts have already concluded several beats prior. The rhythm and pitches of last two notes are the exact same as the first ones in bar 1. Mandat’s part is unique in that it does not borrow from one specific spot in the music, but is instead comprised of short “cells,” or groups of notes, taken from different parts all over the piece (see Figure 6).18

Figure 5 - Peg and Hole Collide measures 173-177

18 Eric P. Mandat, email message to author, June 17, 2023.

Figure 6 (below) shows how the conclusion of Mandat’s part samples from the aforementioned “cells” in the music. The bottom line in the chart is measures 172-175 in clarinet II. There is a box around the first measure, and four boxes above it. The highlighted portions of these boxes are the cells from which measure 172 borrows its rhythm and/or pitch relationships. The subsequent examples follow the same pattern. In these measures, the cells shown borrow mainly from the bass clarinet and earlier lines in clarinet II’s part. The other two parts (clarinet I and clarinet III) are also sampled in other locations. This can be seen not just in the final bars of Peg and Hole Collide, but all throughout it as well. Mandat describes this approach of building larger melodies from smaller cells as a “common stylistic trait of [his] compositional approach.”\textsuperscript{20} Having an affinity for musical analysis, playing with intervallic relationships and building both small- and large-scale connections throughout his compositions provides the basis for a great deal of his writing.\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{20} Eric P. Mandat, email message to author, June 17, 2023.

\textsuperscript{21} Tout d'Alessio, “Multiphonic Meditation on a Composer,” 42.
Figure 6 - *Peg and Hole Collide* measures 172-175

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CHAPTER 2

DANTE DANCES BY DAN WELCHER

Dan Welcher is a pianist, bassoonist, and composer from Rochester, New York. As a versatile composer, Welcher’s music spans almost every musical genre imaginable, from operas and symphonies to chamber music and solos such as *Dante Dances* for clarinet and piano, which is the focus of this chapter. He has won a great many awards for his work and is currently considered “one of the most-played composers of his generation.”

*Dante Dances* was commissioned by clarinetist Bradley Wong, another highly awarded musician. “Go to the devil [for inspiration]” was Wong’s advice. Having already written a clarinet concerto, trio, and quintet, Welcher decided to this time write a sonata. There are no separate movements, but rather seven sections possibly representing the seven deadly sins. Each section (apart from the first) also represents a different style of dance, as well as a different character from Dante Alighieri’s *Divine Comedy*. The piece also begins with the famous quote “abandon all hope ye who enter here” alongside a cadenza that represents the gates of Hell and the introduction to the first section. This warning against hope, Welcher said, is directed at the soloist playing his piece.

While he recognizes that the clarinet “is not the most diabolical of instruments,” he believes it to be the strongest and most versatile. In his program notes, Welcher references Niccolò Paganini, an 18th century musician commonly known as the “devil’s violinist,” reminding the soloist that a


25 Ibid.
good musician can seem possessed by unearthly spirits.\textsuperscript{26}

Dante Alighieri’s \textit{Divine Comedy} tells the story of a character (also named Dante) who is being led through Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise. The novel is broken up into three sections for the three locations, called \textit{Inferno}, \textit{Purgatorio}, and \textit{Paradiso}. \textit{Dante Dances} pulls from the first section detailing Dante’s journey into Hell. Welcher wrote the sections of his music to align with the order in which Dante meets the associated characters in the novel. This means that the second section, beginning in measure 18, corresponds with one of the first characters that Dante and his guide Virgil meet on their adventure. This section is called “Tango (- for Charon)”. Charon is the ferryman of the River Acheron and known as one of the warders of the lower world.\textsuperscript{27} This character is drawn from Greek mythology, as is a great deal of other material in the novel. The character in \textit{Inferno} is the exact same as the one from mythology, other than the fact that Charon’s mythological counterpart is also the ferryman for the River Styx.

Although Charon’s section is described as a tango, it is not a tango in the traditional sense of the word. The tango, often described as a “love-dance,” has origins in gypsy rhythms of Spain and was further developed in Argentina and Uruguay.\textsuperscript{28} It is quick, usually around 126 beats per minute, and each measure of music usually corresponds with the completion of one basic step by its dancers. It is also characterized by four well defined beats per measure. Welcher’s tango has the 4/4 beat pattern, but the fourth beat is in 9/8 every other measure, which can be seen below in Figure 7. This results in the feeling of a dance littered with missteps, as if one or both dancers is

\begin{center}
\end{center}

\textsuperscript{26} Dan Welcher, \textit{Dante Dances (Danzi D’Inferno)}, score, Theodore Presser Company, 1995.


\textsuperscript{28} Alma and Israel, Heaton, \textit{Ballroom Dance Rhythms}, (Dubuque, IA: WM. C. Brown, 1961), 157.
tripping their way through the movements. Interestingly, though the tango is often danced by a couple, Charon is a solitary character, and initially doesn’t even want to allow Dante or Virgil access to his boat. It is possible that the stumbling feeling of Welcher’s tango is a reference to the way Charon’s progress across the river is always hindered by lost souls in the water who grab at his boat and try and climb aboard. His rowing movements are often interrupted as he is forced to jab at the intruders with his oar, shoving them back into the Acheron. Welcher instructs the clarinetist to play in a “sinuous” manner, possibly to emulate the motion of Charon’s boat. Phrases in this section often begin with minor thirds (also seen in Figure 7), contributing to the uneasy feelings the dance invokes.

The section following the tango is called “Charleston (for Cerberus).” Cerberus is another character taken from Greek mythology, in which he guards the gates of Hell and makes sure no one escapes from the river Acheron. In Dante’s Inferno, he is found in the third circle of Hell, which is reserved for those who have committed the sin of gluttony. He is most often

\[\text{Figure 7 – Dante Dances measures 22-24}^{29}\]

\[
\text{\textit{sinuous}}
\]

\[
\text{mp}
\]


depicted as a giant three-headed dog. In the many different references of Cerberus in literature, people opt to find ways to sneak past him rather than try and slay or tame him. Dante and Virgil evade him by throwing dirt and slime into his three mouths.

Cerberus’s dance, the Charleston, is a social jazz dance that reached peak popularity during the roaring twenties. There are many different versions of the song, dance, and lyrics, but the original tune came from a man named James P. Johnson. Johnson said its characteristic syncopated rhythms were borrowed from songs of South Carolina longshoremen, which in turn came from Gullah-Geechee “ring shouts.” The Library of Congress defines ring shouts as “a compelling fusion of counterclockwise dance-like movement, call-and-response singing, and percussion consisting of hand claps and a stick beating the rhythm on a wooden floor.”

The call and response element of the ring shouts that inspired the Charleston may be represented by the repetition of different motives and rhythms in this section of Dante Dances. In Figure 8, two different potential call and response sections are bracketed. The simplest characteristics of the Charleston are its 4/4 meters and fast tempo, which can also be seen in Welcher’s music; “Charleston (- for Cerberus)” is in cut time with a tempo of 116 beats to the half note. Welcher includes instructions such as “gaining momentum” (measure 69) and “rushing” (measure 73) that could be a reference to the chase between Cerberus and those who try to escape the circle of Hell.


he guards. The only time this section deviates from its cut time meter is when it throws in the occasional bar of 3/2, possibly representing the conflict between the three-headed dog and the two protagonists, Dante and Virgil.

Figure 8 – *Dante Dances* measures 64-70⁴⁴

The next section is called “Polka (- for the Furies).” Yet another nod to Greek mythology, the Furies are said to be goddesses of vengeance who live in the underworld and torture sinners.⁵⁵ In *Inferno*, the Furies appear when Dante and Virgil reach the gates to Dis, a city where the lower circles of Hell are located. The Furies bar the men’s way and call upon Medusa to turn them into stone, but Virgil is familiar with Medusa and instructs Dante to cover his eyes to avoid looking at her. Eventually the antagonists are driven away by the appearance of an angel, who assists by opening the gates to Dis when Virgil cannot.


The book *A Passion for Polka* by Victor Greene explains that polka music “stems from dance forms associated with specific ethnic groups, such as the [...] Swedish schottische, the Italian tarantella, and even the dances of the Yiddish klezmer ensembles,” referencing several of the other dance styles used by Welcher in *Dante Dances*. There is much debate on the specific origin of the polka, but many believe it to be the Czech Republic, with the word “polka” coming from the Czech word “pulka,” meaning “half-step.” The basis of the quick, upbeat dance is one step followed by two half-steps, usually danced by a couple. Polkas are also typically in 2/4 time. Welcher’s polka is no different, written in 2/4 at a tempo of 152 beats per minute. He describes this section as a “frenzied romp” and instructs the soloist to play breathlessly. “Polka (- for the Furies)” contains primarily upward-sweeping gestures (possibly in reference to the flight of the Furies) and is peppered with smears and grace notes in the clarinet part.

The next section, and the midpoint of the piece, is “Gymnopedie (- for Paolo and Francesca).” This time, Dante Alighieri’s inspiration for these two characters was not Greek mythology, but a true story. Paolo Malatesta was thought to have lived sometime during the late 1200s. His brother was married to a woman named Francesca da Polenta. Despite the marriage, Paolo and Francesca ended up falling in love. When the affair was discovered by Paolo’s

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brother, he murdered them both.\footnote{British Museum, “Paolo Malatesta,” accessed on June 20, 2023, \url{https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/term/BIOG167400}.} In Inferno, Paolo and Francesca are naturally found in the circle for the sin of lust.

The word “gymnopedie” is said to have been invented by French pianist and composer Erik Satie. Two of his gymnopedies were later orchestrated by Debussy, making them Satie’s most well-known works.\footnote{Eric Frederick Jensen, “Satie and the ‘Gymnopedie,’” Music & Letters, Volume 75, May 1994, 236-240.} There are many different theories as to what inspired the word, but most people believe it comes either from the French word gymnopaedia or from a Greek word meaning “dance.” Satie himself claimed to have gotten it from Salammbo, a novel by Gustave Flaubert, but some people speculated that he pulled it from the poem Les Antiques by J. P. Contamme de Latour.\footnote{Mary E. Davis, Erik Satie, Reaktion Books, 2007, 31.} The word can also be seen in several French music dictionaries. For example, “gymnopaedia” appears in Dominique Mondo’s Dictionnaire de Musique, defined as a “nude dance, accompanied by song, which youthful Spartan maidens danced on specific occasions.”\footnote{Eric Frederick Jensen, “Satie and the ‘Gymnopedie,’” Music & Letters, Volume 75, May 1994, 236-240.} Other definitions describe it as a dance for Spartan men, the music for which is provided by Spartan women.\footnote{Eduard, Bernsdorf, Neues Universal-Lexington der Tonkunst, (Dresden: R. Schaefer, 1857).} A connection can be made, therefore, with Paolo and Francesca and their sin of lust that sent them to Hell. The ancient Spartan festival where the dance was performed was associated with the god Apollo, whose name could have inspired the connection to the character Paolo. The gymnopedie section of Dante Dances is played primarily in a slow $\frac{3}{4}$,
and Welcher includes the words “sweetly, sadly” alongside the melody. In *Inferno*, Dante empathizes with Paolo and Francesca despite the sin they’ve been damned for.\(^{45}\)

The penultimate section of *Dante Dances* is entitled “Schottische (- for Ulysses).” Ulysses is known best by the name Odysseus, the protagonist from Homer’s *Odyssey*, but Alighieri likely borrowed the character from writers Virgil, Statius, Ovid, and/or Cicero, not Homer.\(^{46}\) Dante finds Ulysses in the 8\(^{th}\) circle of Hell, called ‘Maelbolge,’ and references him multiple times beyond that point throughout *The Divine Comedy*.\(^{47}\) Ulysses, a Greek king, is being punished for the deceit he used to win the Trojan War. He is trapped in an argument with another king, Diomedes, about the decisions they made during the battle.\(^{48}\)

The word “schottische” means “a slow polka,” but this section of *Dante Dances* is quick: 144 beats per minute. The dance is typically in 2/4 time and is known for a hop at the end of the main melodic phrase.\(^{49}\) This hop may be represented by the slurred octave-or-larger jumps all throughout Welcher’s melody, some of which are highlighted in Figure 9. The section contains many staccatos, staccotissimos, and accents, giving it an aggressive, clipped feeling that could be representative of the conflict between Ulysses and Diomedes.


The last section is called “Tarantella (for Gianni Schicchi).” Just like Ulysses, Gianni Schicchi is found by Dante in the 8th circle of Hell. He is not a character drawn from another source, but was a real person just as Paolo and Francesca were. He was condemned to Alighieri’s Hell because he helped someone forge a will in order to steal the riches of the deceased. Though this character is only briefly mentioned in *The Divine Comedy*, Welcher may have included him because of the musical significance he holds; Schicchi’s role in Alighieri’s story inspired the famous composer Puccini’s only comic opera. In this section of *Dante Dances*, the melody from the gymnopédie section returns as a countermelody.

The tarantella, or “dance of the spider,” is a fast-paced dance, often in 6/8 time. It

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comes from southern Italy some time prior to the 15th century, already giving it connections to Schicchi, who was an Italian knight from around the 13th century. The dance is meant to be performed by couples and is known for quick steps and flirtatious behavior between partners. It was often said to be unlucky to dance alone. Schicchi is a solitary character, which could possibly be why the gymnopedie melody of Paolo and Francesca was layered into the music, adding a couple into the mix. The fact that Schicchi was given a dance meant for couples could also just be a nod to the unluckiness of a person sent to Hell for their sins. There is another version of the tarantella, however, that is meant for individuals. This version was danced after a person was bitten by a spider (not a tarantula, as the name suggests, but a wolf spider). The person would begin a frenzied dance to cure themselves of the bite’s effects by sweating out the venom. The association with this erratic, convulsive dance may have been a result of the text around Schicchi’s mention in the Inferno:

…she barked, out of her senses, like a dog –
her agony had so deformed her mind.
But neither fury – Theban, Trojan – ever
was seen to be so cruel against another,
in rending beasts and even human limbs,
as were two shades I saw, both pale and naked
who, biting, ran berserk in just the way
a hog does when it’s let loose from its sty.
The one came at Cappocchio and sank
his tusks into his neck so that, by dragging,
he made the hard ground scrape against his belly.
And he who stayed behind, the Aretine,
trembled and said: “That phantom’s Gianni Schicchi,

54 Italian Community Services, “Dance the Tarentella,” Italian Community Services (blog), April 29, 2022, https://www.italiancs.org/blog/dance-the-tarantella/.

and he goes raging, rending others so.”

Descriptions like “out of her senses,” “agony had so deformed her mind,” and “ran beserk” could all be used to describe someone suffering from the bite of the wolf spider. The quotes “biting” and “he goes raging, rending others so” could be connected with the spider itself.

CHAPTER 3

GRAB IT! BY JACOB TV

Jacob ter Veldhuis, also known as JacobTV, is a Dutch composer born in 1951. With roots in rock and electronic music, his unique “avant-pop” writing style has earned him recognition across the globe, making him one of the most performed European composers of his time.\(^\text{57}\) Among his most popular compositions is his Boombox repertoire: music for a live, solo instrument accompanied by a speech-inspired soundtrack. He currently runs a reality opera called THE NEWS and tours with them worldwide, and he was awarded the first BUMA Classical Award (a Dutch award for composers and lyricist of best-selling works) in 2016.\(^\text{58}\)

TV’s *Grab It!* is a piece originally composed for tenor saxophone with boombox accompaniment. It uses quotes from *Scared Straight*, a 1978 film about juvenile delinquents visiting a prison and meeting the inmates. The inmates attempt to frighten them by talking about the realities of prison and life as a criminal in the hopes that it will help them turn their lives around.\(^\text{59}\) The quotes TV uses come together to tell a story about suicide in prison, but it is not meant to come across as a sad piece. Rather than being about death, it is a celebration of life, and means to encourage people to take advantage of the lives they have and live life to the fullest. The choice to write this piece for tenor saxophone was made to match the range of the male prisoners’ voices. The saxophone also has the ability to create rough, aggressive sounds that mimic the passion in the men’s voices as they tell their stories to their audience. This chapter will


explore the different saxophone styles used in the piece, as well as the different ways TV creates motives based on the natural rhythm and pitch of the human voice. A few techniques to making this piece more approachable for musicians (specifically clarinetists) who are new to the music will also be discussed.

In the program notes to *Grab It!*, TV writes: “Language is one of the origins of music… In *Grab It!*, the ‘no-man’s-land’ between speech and music is explored. Speech becomes music.” Sometimes TV replicates just the rhythm of the speakers’ voices, sometimes just the pitches, and sometimes both. He even recreates sounds such as laughter, and sometimes deconstructs words into syllables that he uses individually. When the words are broken up into syllables, they lose meaning and become sounds rather than words, which TV uses as percussive elements and interjections between the main lines of the piece.

The melody of the piece is based on the quote “grab it, motherfucker.” In a 4/8 time signature, it becomes six eighth notes in unison pitches to the speaker’s voice, as seen below in Figure 10. The articulations and dynamics are also based on this quote. In *Scared Straight*, one of the prisoners screams this at a teenager, demanding that they hold onto him, as they are now his property. Mimicking the scream, this motive is to be played forte. The first two notes (“grab it”) are slurred together, creating a stronger attack on the first word and a more clipped release to the second word, which imitates the clipped release that results from a word ending in the letter T. Throughout the piece, this motive will return many times in different forms, often times broken up into different rhythms and interrupted by other ideas, but always recognizable based on the original pitches used in this introductory phrase; the notes G-C-D-C-F-E represent the

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“grab it motherfucker” idea. For example, when the subsequent section has lots of Gs seemingly at random, they are always representing the word “grab,” even if they aren’t followed by the rest of the notes in the chain that makes up the original phrase.

Figure 10 – *Grab It!* measure 1

While the original pitches of the speaker’s voices are almost always the basis for the notes that accompany them in the piece, sometimes notes are modified after their first appearance to add more melodic interest. One example of this is in measure 72, which is where the quote “motherfucker punch” is first used (seen below in Figure 11). In this measure, all of the pitches match the ones made by the prisoner’s voice when he first uttered the command in the film. “Motherfucker punch” is a five-syllable phrase but is represented by six sixteenth notes; the last word “punch” is given two sixteenth notes to replicate the way the speaker’s voice drops in pitch as he says it. The following three bars are all a repetition of the same phrase, but TV changes the final note each time. As mentioned, this could be to add melodic interest, or it could be to draw attention to the ambiguity of the last pitch; even though it is changed each time, it sounds correct with the speaker’s voice. Speech doesn’t conform to specific pitches like music typically does and will glide between notes freely and rapidly. Any of the notes TV ends this

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phrase on (G, A-Flat, B-Flat, then G again) can be heard during the drop the speaker’s voice makes at the end of the word “punch.”

Figure 11 – *Grab It!* measures 72-75

In *Grab It!* there are five different famous tenor saxophonists mentioned throughout the piece: Sonny Rollins, George Adams, Archie Shepp, Clarence Clemons, and Ben Webster. Jacob TV wrote in the preface of the piece that he mentioned them to give the performer a specific playing style to use as reference for each section. The most frequently referenced musician is Sonny Rollins, who is mentioned four different times in the piece. Each of the other musicians is referenced only once, with the exception of Clarence Clemons, who is mentioned twice. Therefore, the majority of the piece is meant to be played in the style of Rollins.

Sonny Rollins’ music often has contrasting styles within it. He goes back and forth between phrases made up of harsh staccato and separated notes, to long phrases of tenuto notes that bleed together with almost no distinct articulation style. A lot of his phrases include


63 Ibid.

improvised scoops up to specific notes, where Rollins uses his embouchure to approach a note from below in what can be described as a miniature version of a glissando. All of these things are present in the Sonny Rollins sections of the piece. TV dictates where the player should add scoops up to notes, rather than leaving it up to improvisation, occasionally adding the instruction “rough upbeat glissando” alongside the scoop notation. Most of the Rollins sections are primarily staccato, but there are brief tenuto sections integrated within the phrases as well. Knowing Rollins’ style involves longer tenuto phrases can be helpful when it comes to one’s own personal interpretation of the piece, however, because there are some sections that involve rapid tonguing that would not be possible for the average player to accomplish. Double tonguing is a difficult technique to master on instruments like the saxophone, which this piece was originally written for, and the clarinet, which a revised version of the piece was created for by the author of this paper. But even if the player cannot double tongue, it still fits into the Sonny Rollins style to add long slurs to more challenging sections in order to make them more manageable. The tempo of the piece cannot be altered since it is accompanied by boombox, so adding slurs is necessary in many of the quicker sections. For example, measures 91-95 would be nearly impossible to play at 120 beats per minute if the player cannot double tongue. Therefore, it makes the most sense to add slurs to each group of three sixteenth notes in succession, as seen below in Figure 12.
The George Adams section of the piece begins with a performance note from Jacob TV: “free, extremely rough, growling.” To imitate Adams’ style, the performer is meant to play this phrase with a raspy tone. This part of the music (measure 210-215 and 221-231) is an augmentation of the very first phrase of the piece. Jacob TV electronically alters the vocal line “grab it motherfucker” and stretches it to last six bars instead of six eighth notes. The raspy tone adds additional interest to the section in order to further differentiate it from the beginning phrase. In the middle of the George Adams section is a small interjection labeled “Shepp” in reference to saxophonist Archie Shepp. This could be because Shepp and Adams performed together during their lifetimes. The Shepp section is a single note: a whole note on a B-flat. TV has instructed the performer to “freak out in decrescendo,” and also puts the note “overtone” in reference to the aspect of Shepp’s playing style that he wants the performer to imitate. This note should have a long, echoing effect, incorporating multiphonics if possible, to accentuate

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66 Ibid.

overtones. Multiphonics are two or more notes being produced on an instrument at one time. Creating them is an advanced or “extended” technique for woodwinds.\(^{68}\)

There are two sections marked “Clarence Clemons.” The first one, beginning in bar 243, is similar to the style of the Sonny Rollins sections: quick, and ornamented with scoops into introductory pitches. The reason this section is labeled “Clemons” instead of “Rollins” could be because TV wanted a bit of a growl incorporated into the performer’s tone.\(^{69}\) In fact, the second time he mentions Clemons in bar 280, TV adds the performance marking “growl and vibrato.” This shows that the growl in Clemons’ sound is one of the most distinct parts of his style to TV, and something he wants brought out in the Clemons sections. They are also different from the Rollins sections in that they are broader, sweeping phrases with longer notes and extended ideas.\(^{70}\)

The last saxophonist referenced in the piece is Ben Webster. His playing style is one of the most distinct and easily recognizable of all jazz saxophonists.\(^{71}\) His phrases always end with a release of toneless air through the instrument, and his sound is fuzzy and uses a great deal of vibrato. The very short section of *Grab It!* that he is referenced in (only three bars long) should mimic the airiness of his sound. The shape and throb of the air is almost more important than the


actual pitches being produced because the focus of this section is on the way the air fades away over those three bars. In some recordings you can hardly hear any distinct notes at all over the sound of the performer’s breath.

The things discussed in this chapter – different tenor saxophone styles and the way TV used speech to create rhythm and melody – are the most important concepts to understand before delving deeper into what *Grab It!* has to offer. Jacob TV’s unique and innovative way of finding music in the human voice is contemporary and forward-thinking, and his references to jazz saxophonists of the past shows that even when exploring new musical territory, TV takes great inspiration from the history of where music has been before him. *Grab It!* is a fascinating and meaningful piece, and so much can be learned from it by listening to it, studying it, or playing it, whether that be on the original instrumentation or a modified one.
CHAPTER 4

PULSE BY CARLOS VELEZ

Dr. Carlos Velez, born in 1980, is a composer and flutist based in Oregon. His past teaching and education experiences have taken him through many esteemed universities, such as the Cleveland Institute of Music, Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, Stetson University, Conservatoire Olivier Messaien École Nationale de Musique, Danse, et Theatre du Grand Avignon, and Western Oregon University, where he teaches to this day. Despite being a flutist most of his music is for the clarinet, and Pulse was his first clarinet sonata. This extensive collection of clarinet repertoire is due to a long friendship with clarinet virtuoso Dr. Shawn Copeland, who commissioned this piece. Pulse is part of a larger project of the same name, a CD compiling all of Velez’s clarinet pieces.

Velez and Copeland met at Stetson University, where Copeland obtained his bachelor’s degree. Copeland also holds two other degrees from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro as well as one from the University of Central Florida. In addition to being a successful clarinetist, Copeland is an Alexander Technique specialist and a traveling clinician. Pulse has touched the lives of many people throughout the country thanks to Copeland’s travels and captivating performances. Outside of his solo career, he is a member and founder of the groups TOSCA DUO, Hammers & Reeds Trio, and Relevents Wind Quintet.


74 Ibid.
Pulse was composed in response to the deadly shooting at Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida, which occurred on June 12th, 2016 and claimed the lives of 49 people. Having visited the club many times themselves in the past, Copeland and Velez both felt a strong connection with the location and a deep sense of loss due to the tragedy. As a reflection of the lives lost, Pulse is a celebration of life rather than a remembrance of death. The idea for the piece came to Copeland during the 2017/2018 academic year, and he wrote a grant for the CD project in 2018. The CD (PULSE) was funded by the Olson Grant, which allowed Copeland to commission the Pulse clarinet sonata. The grant also allowed him to record and produce Pulse and the other pieces that appear on the CD. The work was premiered at Stetson University in Florida, which was meaningful to both Velez and Copeland because it was the state of both the Pulse tragedy and where the two musicians met. The grant money also made it possible to collaborate with clarinetists Christopher Kirkpatrick, Lynn A. Musco and Jessica H. Speak, as well as pianist Rajung Yang. The group recorded together at producer Bill Stevens’ Ovation Studios in Winston Salem, North Carolina.

Though Velez is the composer of Pulse, he considers Copeland its logistical mastermind. “Shawn did all the heavy lifting,” Velez said when interviewed, yet at the same time, the piece still holds a great significance to him as a writer and musician as well. Pulse is his proudest accomplishment, and the process of writing it was incredibly freeing. “Everything aligned perfectly.”


Carlos Velez, interview by author, Carbondale, IL, March 12, 2023.
more naturally into the clarinet with Copeland’s help. Copeland wanted to create something academically valuable to contribute to the repertoire of clarinet music. The goal was a piece that was conversational between the soloist and pianist, and it was meant to sound difficult without reaching the realm of “unplayable” for most advanced clarinetists. Still, Velez wrote what he heard in his head and tried not to approach things with a level of difficulty in mind. “The piece has to be what the piece has to be,” he recalled thinking at the time. This kind of honesty and clarity when writing resulted in a piece of music that allows high-level performers to move beyond the typical restraints of technical perfection and begin to challenge their levels of musicality and depths of interpretation. The process of writing the entire piece took over three months, with the first movement developing over the longest frame of time and the second movement coming together quickest.

Velez is a skilled music theorist but considers this piece to be relatively simple in terms of theory, leaving plenty of space for the soloist to express themselves through the music. This was the first time Velez allowed himself to write in a more traditional style, fully embracing his love for pop as well as his own Latin roots. The music all came naturally: growing up in a Puerto Rican family had given Velez lots of experience with the dance music of the Latinx community. The Latin influences are also a nod to the fact that the shooting occurred on the nightclub’s Latin Night, and many of the victims were Latinx themselves. *Pulse* also contains influences of jazz, a style of music Velez hadn’t been taught to compose, so everything he wrote was a result of


79 Carlos Velez, interview by author, Carbondale, IL, March 12, 2023.

80 Ibid.
listening to so much pop and rock in his lifetime. His natural intuition as a composer shines through in every movement of the piece, making it autographical in many ways. The piece is also somewhat of a biography of Shawn Copeland; from the very first time Velez heard Copeland perform, he was blown away by how powerful his playing was, and therefore sought to highlight that brilliance when writing *Pulse*. When interviewed, Velez stressed the importance of social justice in the United States. “*Pulse* is about a new movement in artistic expression and represents a marginalized community,” he said. The list of people who inspired the piece and are represented in the music is extensive: the LGBTQ+ community, the Latinx community, Velez, Copeland… Even 90s pop icon Cher greatly influenced *Pulse*, as will be discussed later in this chapter.

The first movement of the piece is entitled “Firestone”. It was named after a nightclub in Orlando, Florida, that was built inside an old Firestone Tires building. The club no longer exists but was extremely popular in its time, visited by thousands of people who formed long lines just for the chance to get in the front door. Like Southern Nights, a club that will be discussed later in the chapter, Firestone was one of the most popular Orlando clubs in the 1990s and 2000s. The “Firestone” movement is written in classic sonata form, and the introduction is meant to emulate the experience of a newcomer approaching a club for the first time. Excited and perhaps a bit anxious, they hear the muted sound of an upbeat bassline escaping from inside. It gets louder and louder as they draw nearer, then they open the doors and the rest of the music floods over them. The first theme appears directly after this initial excitement, between measures 26 and 28. As the

81 Carlos Velez, interview by author, Carbondale, IL, March 12, 2023.
music switches to a 6/8 time signature and the second theme begins (measure 54), the story’s character is instantly immersed in the nightclub experience: the adrenaline of the dance floor and the anticipation of the moment the beat drops. The development section explores related keys and motives from the main themes through falls in energy, dynamics, and range of the clarinet that dramatically rise back up again into high, flourishing gestures. In the recapitulation, theme 1 returns in its original key around measure 135, and the 6/8 section’s distinguishing theme 2 returns soon afterwards between measures 147 and 151 (a comparison of these two themes between their initial appearances and their returns can be seen in Figures 13 and 14 below). The coda creates a departure from the mood of everything that has been played thus far. With performance notes of “tenderly” and “freely,” it brings the energy back down and resolves in a sustained chalumeau F in the clarinet that transitions the music into the next movement.\(^{82}\)

Figure 13 – *Pulse* measures 28-34; 135-138\(^{83}\)


\(^{83}\) Ibid.
The second movement is also named after an Orlando nightclub, this one called “Southern Nights.” The club is still in business today and frequently hosts drag performances. The atmosphere of Southern Nights is much different from Firestone or Pulse; it is a smaller building and more of a bar than a club, making it a good place for more casual hangouts. It has a cabaret room with a small stage where drag artists often perform and an outdoor area for socializing. Velez found this movement to be the most honest in terms of self-expression, which is why he composed it the fastest out of the three. He classifies it as a “pop ballad” and wrote it to mimic a drag queen lip sync performance, like the ones Southern Nights is known for.

The transition between movements two and three is a turning point in the music. Copeland describes this section as “where hope begins.” The repeated chords in the piano part...
(seen in Figure 15) are an exact quotation of the introductory chord progression in “Believe” by Cher. Cher has been celebrated by the LGBTQ+ community for decades. In 1979 she performed onstage alongside two drag queens, which was almost completely unheard of in mainstream entertainment at the time.\textsuperscript{88} Her songs are a staple of LGBTQ+ culture and are still extremely popular choices for drag queen lip sync performances, as “Southern Nights” is emulating. The song “Believe” was written after Rob Dickins, the man who signed Cher with Warner Music Group UK, suggested she create something to cater to her many queer fans.\textsuperscript{89} Being such an important part of both gay culture and club culture, Velez’s choice to reference “Believe” in \textit{Pulse} makes perfect sense. The opening of “Believe” follows the following chord progression pattern: F-sharp major – D-flat minor– G-sharp minor.\textsuperscript{90} Taking enharmonics into account, the end of “Southern Nights” is the same: G-flat major – D-flat minor – A-flat minor. Velez uses the chord progression to create a cyclical pattern that can be vamped for as long as the performer and their accompanist choose. In addition to being a reference to Cher, Velez wrote this transition as a dedication to Copeland. It is a highly emotional moment in the piece and should be played powerfully by the pianist.\textsuperscript{91}

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\textsuperscript{91} Shawn L. Copeland, interview by author, Carbondale, IL, March 3, 2023.
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The third and final movement is titled the same as the piece, as well as the CD it as a part of: “Pulse.” Velez’s heritage enabled him to create a conclusion to his piece with the same celebratory, joyful feelings as the dances in the Latinx community. Salsa, samba, reggaeton, bachata, and tango dance styles are all represented through modal melodies in this rondo-form movement. The construction came naturally, with the entire movement taking only about a week to compose. In measure 380, a percussive element is introduced for the first time in the piece, shown below in Figure 16. The pianist stops playing chords and is given the performance note: “clavès – tap on piano, or use drumstick on woodblock.” Copeland encourages performers to choose the woodblock option for maximum effect. “Pulse” was written to be a celebration of life, and the performer’s energy and enthusiasm should convey that.

92 Carlos Velez, Pulse, score, Carlos Velez, 2018.
94 Carlos Velez, interview by author, Carbondale, IL, March 12, 2023.
95 Carlos Velez, Pulse, score, Carlos Velez, 2018.
Dr. Mark J. Cramer, Assistant Professor of Clarinet at the Tennessee Tech University School of Music, performed *Pulse* recently and decided to place 49 candles out in seats in the audience to pay respects to the 49 people who lost their lives at the 2016 Pulse shooting. Copeland loved the idea and said he would be happy to see more people include similar gestures of memorial when performing the piece, whether it be candles in the audience, candles onstage, or even 49 chords played during the piano vamp between movements two and three.\(^{98}\) The most important part of *Pulse* is the impact on its audience and the message they receive. For Copeland, the project “changed everything.” It started dialogues in settings that might not have been exposed to LGBTQ+ issues before. The clarinet community tends to be dominated by straight white men, and the classical music community has made attempts at hiding associations with

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queerness on many occasions. Pulse makes both communities more inclusive and gives people the bravery to share their own stories; Copeland has been approached by countless audience members after performances of Pulse to discuss the ways the piece affected them. He takes responsibility for being in a visible role in the clarinet community. People look up to him, so he wants to provide representation for the nonbinary and teach everyone that they shouldn’t have to conform to anyone’s standards but their own. “Just say no to fitting in,” he said in an interview about Pulse. The PULSE CD was Copeland’s tenure project and the whole thing felt both risky and organic when it began, but the results have been humbling and lifechanging to both him and Velez. Today, it continues to be lifechanging for people who experience it. The CD is available for purchase on Copeland’s website, and all proceeds go to the Pulse Foundation.

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