

2019

## A master of music recital in clarinet

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A MASTER OF MUSIC  
RECITAL IN CLARINET

An Abstract of a Recital  
Submitted  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Music

Lucas Randall  
University of Northern Iowa  
December, 2019

This Recital Abstract by: Lucas Randall

Entitled: A Master of Music Recital in Clarinet

has been approved as meeting the recital abstract requirement for the  
Degree of Master of Music.

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Date

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Dr. Amanda McCandless, Chair, Recital Committee

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Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Stephen Galyen, Recital Committee Member

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Date

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Dr. Ann Bradfield, Recital Committee Member

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Date

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Dr. Jennifer Waldron, Dean, Graduate College

This Recital Performance by: Lucas Randall

Entitled: A Master of Music Recital in Clarinet

Date of Recital: November 22, 2019

has been approved as meeting the recital requirement for the

Degree of Master of Music.

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Date

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Dr. Amanda McCandless, Chair, Recital Committee

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Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Stephen Galyen, Recital Committee Member

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Date

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Dr. Ann Bradfield, Recital Committee Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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Dr. Jennifer Waldron, Dean, Graduate College

## ABSTRACT

Lucas Randall presented a graduate clarinet recital on Friday, November 22, 2019 at eight o'clock in the evening in Davis Hall of the Gallagher-Bluedorn Performing Arts Center at the University of Northern Iowa. This recital, in collaboration with Dr. Robin Guy (piano) and Jarod Kral (bassoon), was given in partial fulfillment of the Master of Music degree. The program includes works by Ludwig van Beethoven, Johannes Brahms, Leslie Bassett, and Robert Muczynski, representing a variety of styles and periods from the clarinet repertoire.

Ludwig van Beethoven - *Three Duos for Clarinet and Bassoon, no. 1 (WoO 27)*

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) is a household name and regarded as one of the greatest composers of all time. Beethoven bridged the Classical and Romantic musical periods with his symphonies, sonatas, chamber music, and many other genres. The duos were written between 1810 and 1815,<sup>1</sup> around the same time as his seventh and eighth symphonies. The Heiligenstadt Testament written in 1802 was a large turning point in Beethoven's career towards a certain severity of seriousness that led to the Romantic movement. In the middle of this shift, the duos remain staggeringly classical.

The first movement, "Allegro comodo," is in sonata allegro form. With the exposition and recapitulation both separately repeated, the work is clearly classical. Everything about the duo makes it classical, from its simple harmonic structure to its predictable four bar phrasing. The harmonic content is limited to the tonic, pre-dominant, and dominant key areas.

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<sup>1</sup> John Burk, *The Life and Works of Beethoven* (New York: Random House, 1943), 407.

The second movement, “Larghetto sostenuto,” is through composed with four sections. C minor pervades this movement which ends with a half cadence in G major with an attacca to the third movement back in C major. If the first movement puts the clarinet on display, the second puts the bassoon on display with scales, arpeggios, and multiple-octave leaps, while the clarinet stays comfortably in mostly scalar ideas.

The third movement, “Rondo allegretto,” returns to both the major key playfulness in the first movement and the minor espressivo of the second. The A section theme belongs exclusively to the clarinet, with the bassoon set to harmonically simple arpeggios. The B section passes the important line back and forth between the voices, leading to a transition from the A’ to a C minor C section. A *DC al Fine* brings the melody back to C major with the A section.

In general, the duo is less serious in tone compared to the works discussed later in this abstract. Beethoven highlights the quality of articulation that double reeds can attain with ease, making matching the articulations between bassoon and clarinet a significant difficulty in performance. The piece plays like a conversation between friends, with each part mutually beneficial, as there is no stagnant or dead space.

Johannes Brahms - Sonata for Clarinet and Piano in F minor (Op. 120)

Among Schubert, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and Mahler, Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) is one of the most celebrated and performed German Romantic composers. A well certified member of the Western musical canon, Brahms was seen by some as a progressive, and others as conservative. Brahms was a student of Robert Schumann and spent a lot of his time with Robert and Clara Schumann. In 1890, Brahms chose to retire

from composition after writing in most popular genres at the time (save for opera). In a letter to his friend Fritz Simrock, he wrote “With this scrap [I] bid farewell to notes of mine – because it really is time to stop.”<sup>2</sup> Richard Mühlfeld would soon change that, however. Mühlfeld was principal clarinet in the Meiningen Orchestra and performed under Brahms in 1891 in the composer’s *Symphony No. 4 in E minor*. After a request for a private performance of Mozart and Weber, Brahms wrote to Clara Schumann, “It is impossible to play the clarinet better than Herr Mühlfeld does here.”<sup>3</sup>

Brahms composed both of his clarinet sonatas with Mühlfeld in mind in the summer of 1894. By February 1895, Brahms and Mühlfeld performed the sonatas about twenty times.<sup>4</sup> “While the technical demands are moderate, a greater challenge is to perform [the F minor sonata] with control, finesse, tonal beauty, and an understanding of each movement’s construction.”<sup>5</sup> This work should ideally be thought of as more of a duet than a clarinet sonata, as both instruments are equally important, rather than thinking of the piano as an accompanying instrument.

The first movement, “Allegro Appassionato,” is in sonata-allegro form. A short piano introduction finds its way to the exposition in the clarinet. The verticality of the exposition is deceiving, as the ease and flow of the piece are introduced in a technically progressive way. (See figure 1)

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<sup>2</sup> Albert Rice, *Notes for Clarinetists: A Guide to the Repertoire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 33-4.

<sup>3</sup> Pamela Weston, *Heroes and Heroines of Clarinetistry* (Victoria, BC: Trafford Publishing, 2008), 125.

<sup>4</sup> Rice, *Notes for Clarinetists*, 35.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.



Figure 1

As the dominant voice shifts between instruments, the melody is written in the clearest and most expressive timbral range of each. The development explores keys near and far (chromatic mediant, relative major, half step relations). In the recapitulation, the “high point is the slurred forte eighth notes F6-G#5 and F5-G#4.”<sup>6</sup> (See figure 2)



Figure 2

Culminating in the coda, the movement (almost entirely in F minor) ends with sotto voce clarinet and the use of the Picardy third in the final piano chords, bringing the movement to a peaceful end in the relative F major, ending the minor strife of the movement, guiding the listener’s ear to the comparatively restful second movement.

The second movement, “Andante un poco Adagio,” is in ternary form. The movement is in the predictable key of Ab major, and only occasionally wanders away.

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<sup>6</sup> Rice, *Notes for Clarinetists*, 36.



The quicker, scalar aspects of the movement purvey an improvisatory feel in the clarinet. The A theme and its return use these scalar motives in moments of rubato that lead to the next important, longer tones. The B theme picks up where the piano leaves off, relying on more arpeggiated motives in a quieter section of the movement. The coda is frail, meek, and beautiful. The quiet, cutting clarion tone pierces the veil of uncertainty to end on the tonic Ab.

The third movement, “Allegretto grazioso,” is also in ternary form. Generally, the movement is light spirited in comparison to the others, with its whimsical motives echoed in the lowest register of the clarinet. The A section is free and playful, dominated by a single rhythm (dotted quarter note followed by three eighth notes). (See figure 3)



Figure 3

A moment of repose is introduced as the piano takes the melody in transitional material. The trio B section is sober and serious. With an *espressivo* marking, this section has more rubato than either section surrounding it.

The fourth movement, “Vivace,” is a five-part rondo with a short development and coda. From a striking accented piano, the beginning of the piece is somewhat carefree and gay. The first phrase that the clarinet plays is in striking dynamic contrast within itself, setting a guideline for the dynamic differences between sections later in the movement. (See figure 4)



Figure 4

The A section has driving staccato eighth notes and a vast bombast leading to a B section that is dreamy, reminiscent, and mostly quiet until the transition back to the A'. The C section heavily features the piano while the clarinet is written as a technically simple accompaniment. Always returning to that playful primary theme, the movement ends with a triumphant hurrah in F major.

In general, the sonata is lyrical, singable, and dynamically particular. It requires and demands interpretation and personalization. Ultimately, it is an exploration on the written song-like clarinet lines very carefully put together in their best registers.

#### Leslie Bassett - *Soliloquies*

Leslie Bassett (1923-2016) was an American composer of high caliber, earning a Pulitzer Prize and multiple Guggenheim Fellowships. Returning from the army following World War II, Bassett studied composition, obtaining bachelor's and master's degrees in composition in 1947 (Fresno State) and 1949 (University of Michigan) respectively. He studied under Honneger and Boulanger for a year thanks to a Fulbright scholarship. Bassett completed his DMA in 1956 at the University of Michigan and was awarded the coveted Rome Prize and two Guggenheim Fellowships. He retired in 1991 after thirty-nine years at the University of Michigan, having attained the university's highest honor,

being named the “Henry Russell Lecturer” just seven years prior.<sup>7</sup> *Soliloquies* (1976) was written during a prosperous time in his career. In that same year, Drake University and University of Wisconsin – River Falls would hold festivals dedicated to his music.<sup>8</sup> He was quickly becoming one of America’s favorite composers. In his personal life, however, things had not turned out as well.

*Soliloquies* is a raw glimpse into the human psyche, and an essay on how we interpret and cope with loss and grief. The work’s composition came shortly after the death of his teenage son. Wrought with grief, he was commissioned by his friend and amateur clarinetist Reverend Robert Onofrey to write a piece as a form of therapy to cope with his loss. *Soliloquies* is written in four movements, each representing a stage of grief: anger, sadness, pleading, and acceptance. The most difficult aspect of the work, besides the composer’s demand for technicality, is putting oneself in the proper emotional state to convey the exact subject of each movement. The anger is blind and intense, doesn’t know what it is directed towards, and has no goal or resolve (as evidenced by the ending multiphonic trill). The sadness is busy, and often accompanied by consoling voices in grace notes that bring the melodic line where it needs to be. The pleading is omnidirectional, reaching out to a higher calling, trying to figure out what it is. The acceptance flows with the calmness of understanding, having gone through the journey and emerging with a new perspective. Each movement is through-composed, with the end of each foreshadowing the next in emotional tone.

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<sup>7</sup> Barbara Ballard, “Leslie Bassett: His Life and Music with Special Emphasis on Sounds Remembered” (MA thesis, Michigan State University, 1990), 10.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

The movements have no titles, but rather rely on the characteristic descriptions. The first movement, “fast, aggressive, driving, dramatic,” represents anger. The anger is immediately acknowledged as the opening segment is a repeated rip up and down the clarinet’s range at fortissimo “as fast as possible,” ending with a harsh popping resonance trill and aggressively articulated sixteenth notes with a lack of resolution. (See figure 5)

Figure 5

The extreme and rapid register changes in the following segments end high with unkempt moments of repose between. The peak note of the entire work is introduced early in the movement. A piercing, fortississimo concert A6 precedes the rest of the dynamically-intense movement. Resonance trills and popping notes persist throughout the rest of the movement before the ending send off to a fortissimo multiphonic trill.

The second movement, “flowing, singing,” represents sadness. The smooth lines of the second movement are accompanied by guiding grace notes that usually come from

underneath. Resonance trills make a return with an upwards motion, imitating the similar effect found in the first movement. (See figure 6)



**Figure 6**

Often melodic ideas are approached from the bottom by fast tuplets starting at pianissimo and crescendoing to the dramatic segments. After the climax of the movement, these tuplets settle down towards a final unsatisfying conclusion to nothingness.

The third movement, “fast, abrasive, contentious,” represents pleading and bargaining. The opening bursts are rhythmic, precise, and intense, only gaining in intensity. (See figure 7)

Fast, abrasive, contentious

gradually

gaining in intensity

*ff*

Figure 7

The movement culminates in a repeated figure gaining in speed as fast as the performer can play it before abruptly cutting short at its apex, to be replaced by a slow building cry to the end of the movement.

The fourth movement, “slow, lyrical, expressive,” is just that. Rhythmically simple, the gentle melody is accompanied by the recurring grace notes that come from the bottom towards the melodic notes. (See figure 8)



**Figure 8**

The grace notes never disrupt the phrase, as they are built in to guide the important notes. A long, drawn out resonance trill to niente on a timbrally colorful note ends the work with equal parts rest and restlessness.

Robert Muczynski - *Time Pieces* (Op. 43)

Robert Muczynski (1929-2010) was a composer and pianist, earning both bachelor's and master's degrees in piano performance. In 1958 he made his Carnegie Hall debut, performing his own work. He was chair of the Loras College piano department for a short time, and composer in residence at the University of Arizona, Tuscon, for 25 years until 1988.<sup>9</sup> Renowned clarinetist and pedagogue Mitchell Lurie commissioned the piece after hearing his flute sonata played many times in juries at the

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<sup>9</sup> Rice, *Notes for Clarinetists*, 136.

University of Southern California.<sup>10</sup> He believed that because of Muczynski's exemplary writing for flute, he would be just as good at writing for clarinet. The piece was premiered in London at the 1984 International Clarinet Congress by Lurie. The work became a standard overnight as critics raved about its contents. The title of the work, *Time Pieces*, is "an awareness of the fact that everything exists in time: history, our lives, and... in a special way... music."<sup>11</sup>

The first movement, "Allegro risoluto," is in ternary form and "exhibits a restless rhythm and continuous momentum."<sup>12</sup> The tonality of the first movement is hard to pin down initially, as much of the harmony is in quartal or quintal structures. By the end of the movement, however, we are brought to a sense of belonging in C major, where it has been floating around for much of the A and A' sections. "Like the phrases of Brahms and Hindemith, phrases in *Time Pieces* are often sprinkled with rests, whereafter one resumes after the rest with the same intensity as before, continuing the upward growth of the phrase."<sup>13</sup> A 3+3+2 rhythm is established that is later developed in the fourth movement.

The second movement, "Andante espressivo," is in ternary form. The opening clarinet line is yearning, distant, and prevailing. After the B section, it makes its return in a slowly accelerating cadenza with colorful notes between the fleeting notes of the melody. These melodic notes in the cadenza are an emulation of the notes of the opening clarinet line with a slightly compressed verticality. (See figure 9)

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 137.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 139.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 139.

<sup>13</sup> Charles West, "Masterclass: Time Pieces for Clarinet and Piano, Op. 43 by Robert Muczynski," *The Clarinet* (September 1999): 6.



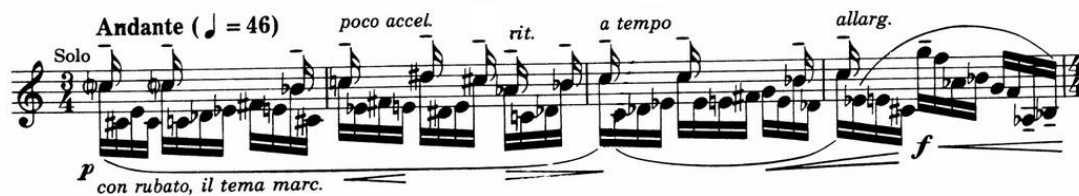


Figure 9

The movement ends with a short memory of the B section before fading away to nothing.

The third movement, “Allegro moderato,” is in ternary form. The movement opens with solo piano that establishes the A theme leading to the same repeated in the clarinet. The graceful, flowing melody is cut short as the piano cuts into a jaunty, dancing B section. The sudden meter change from 4/4 to 6/8 pushes the tune along through many large dynamic contrasts. Trading pairs of measures between clarinet and piano round out the B section. The A’ section is completed with an out of character, full-bodied octatonic scale sent off into the fourth movement.

The fourth movement is titled “Andante molto – Allegro energico.” The Allegro energico is in ternary form, whereas the Andante molto provides an introduction that, in tone and character alone, harkens back to the cadenza in the middle of the second movement. The entire movement is serious in tone with a wide dynamic range. The tentative light at the beginning of the movement slowly dissolves into an angular, aggressive allegro which remains for the duration of the work. I believe there is little connection rhythmically or melodically between the introductory cadenza and the rest of this movement. Short, sneaky interjections and long flowing lines characterize the middle section of the movement (see figure 10), which also features the development of the 3+3+2 rhythm from the first movement.

Figure 10 shows a musical score for a clarinet piece, likely from the *Time Pieces* by Muczynski. The score is in 4/4 time and features a complex, virtuosic line. It includes dynamic markings such as *mp*, *f*, and *p sub.*, and various articulations like slurs and accents. The score is divided into four systems, with measures 85-93 highlighted in boxes.

Figure 10

This time around, Muczynski adds another two beats to the end to create 3+3+2+2. A whirling virtuosic line brings the attention solely to the clarinetist before delivering an extensive cadenza with a bombastic ending worthy of finishing such an intense piece.

In general, *Time Pieces* is an angular warping of ideas. It is a study in vertical melody that is driving and persistent. The work undulates from fearsome and in your face to singable and tune-like. The ultimate difficulty of the piece is introducing ease amid technical prowess.

The music presented in Lucas Randall's graduate recital is representative of some of the most popular Romantic and Twentieth-Century composers. These selections give the performers an opportunity to demonstrate complex musical, artistic, and technical abilities in works from vastly different eras of Western music history.

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# School of Music

## University of Northern Iowa

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presents

### Lucas Randall, clarinet In a Graduate Recital

assisted by:

Robin Guy, piano

Jarod Kral, bassoon

In partial fulfillment of the requirement  
for the MM degree in Clarinet Performance  
From the studio of Dr. Amanda McCandless

*Three Duos for Clarinet and Bassoon, WoO 27, No. 1* (c.1815)  
Allegro commodo  
1827)

Ludwig van Beethoven  
(1770-

*Sonata for Clarinet and Piano in F minor, Opus 120* (1894)  
Allegro appassionato  
Andante un poco adagio  
Allegretto grazioso  
Vivace

Johannes Brahms  
(1833-1897)

#### Intermission

*Soliloquies* (1976)  
Fast, aggressive, driving, dramatic  
Flowing, singing  
Fast, abrasive, contentious  
Slow, lyrical, expressive

Leslie Bassett  
(1923-2016)

*Time Pieces, Opus 43* (1984)  
Allegro risoluto  
Andante espressivo  
Allegro moderato  
Andante molto – Allegro energico

Robert Muczynski  
(1929-2010)