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Book Reviews by John M. Cipolla.

Cipolla, John M. Review of *Chips Off the Ol' Block for Solo Bass Clarinet* by Eric P. Mandat, *The Clarinet*, Vol. 39, 2012.

Review by John Cipolla Eric P. Mandat (b. 1957). *Chips Off the Ol' Block* for solo bass clarinet, 1999. 8'. Van Cott Information Services, Luyben Music, Just for Winds, Cirrus Music, P.O. Box 61, Carbondale, IL 62903. Eric P. Mandat is known throughout the world for his ground breaking contributions to contemporary clarinet music—music that includes such techniques as multiphonics, quarter tones and alternative fingerings. Each of his works are extremely unique and refreshingly individual. *Chips Off the Ol' Block* is Mandat's only solo bass clarinet work. It is printed, as much of his music is, on very large, thick paper—this work is nine pages long. It can be performed with one music stand. The work requires a low C bass clarinet. It has some clearly defined sections (distinct motives, phrases, or tempo shifts), and then some other areas that transition more gradually into new sections, reminding me of Brahms' developing variation approach to transforming an idea through gradual changes. The aggressive opening to this work immediately displays a range from the lowest C to high F, three ledger lines above the staff. There are many such passages throughout the work that contain leaps from thirds through elevenths and beyond. One must adhere to dynamics carefully throughout the work so the contrasts come across to the listener. The second main section of the piece (pages 2 and 3) utilize some beautiful diads that gradually transition into a soft and lyrical melody in the clarion register. This melody is accompanied by soft low note punctuations. This melody being accompanied by the same player is an example of Mandat's compositional craftsmanship and lyricism, skillfully interwoven. The work contains some references to jazz-type rhythmic phrases, none of which are developed beyond giving the listener a hint of each stylistic reference. There are also repetitive phrases that enable the performer to explore the multiphonics, quarter tones and other timbres not normally heard on the bass clarinet. This advanced work has become a standard work in many American university clarinet courses of study. It is well worth the effort and time that it takes to master.

Cipolla, John M. Review of *Divertimento for Clarinet & Piano, The Clarinet, Vol. 39, No. 2, 2012.*

Review by John Cipolla Gioachino Antonio Rossini–Carlos Pässler, Editors: Daniele Zanettovich, Nicola Bulfone. *Divertimento for clarinet and strings, arranged for clarinet and piano sulle arie: “Cimentando i venti e l’onde” e “Se ancor tu m’ami,”* © 2008 Edition Kunzelmann GmbH., CH 8134 Zürich Includes B flat clarinet part and piano part, \$30. This *Divertimento* is based on the cavatina "Cimentando i venti e l'onde" and the aria "Se ancor tu m'ami" from the opera *L'italiana in Algeri* by Gioacchino Rossini. Carlos Pässler, the arranger, was an oboist in the theaters in Venice in the early 19th century. It is likely that Pässler played oboe in Rossini's first production of his opera, *L'italiana in Algeri* in Venice in 1813. This edition of the *Divertimento* is written in the key of concert B flat, adapted from the original E major, which places the technical challenges within the playing abilities of amateurs and students. The editors added embellishments and cadenzas, which were common performance practice when this opera was written. They also added some suggested dynamics and articulation. The piano score of this edition contains both the original clarinet part and the revised clarinet part. Both the clarinet parts are quite similar except for occasional passages where the original clarinet part contains the tutti sections. The range of the clarinet part is from low F—three ledger lines below the staff, to high F—three ledger lines above the staff. The work begins with a recitative—a ten measure section marked, *Andante Maestoso*. This is followed by an eleven bar section marked, *Andantino con grazia*, which is then followed by an *Allegro* section. The cadenzas are relatively brief, yet effective, containing mostly arpeggiated embellishments of the dominant harmony. This *Divertimento* is a welcomed addition to the high school/early college—level clarinet repertoire, providing an opportunity for a clarinetist to experience the Italian operatic style, without having to possess the advanced technique required to perform the various popular opera fantasies such as the many technically advanced fantasies by Luigi Bassi.

Cipolla, John M. Miguel del Aguila *Pacific Serenade, Op. 59 for Clarinet & String Quartet* Review, 2011.

Miguel del Aguila. *Pacific Serenade, Op. 59 for Clarinet and String Quartet*. Peermusic, 2000, \$24.95 < <http://peermusicclassical.com>> Duration 10 minutes *Pacific Serenade* was written in 1998, commissioned by the Pacific Serenades ensemble of Southern California. Composer, Miguel del Aguila notes that he is striving to treat the clarinet as the “singer” in this improvisatory, peaceful serenade for clarinet and string quartet. The work utilizes Latin song elements (especially the nostalgic Brazilian folk song). The movements are generally structured with a simple repetitive bass line in the string quartet accompaniment, colored by the clarinet playing (singing) the melodies over the accompaniment. As the composer says in his introductory notes, “In an age of boom boxes, media bombardment of information, and pop culture becoming increasingly aggressive, boisterous and violent, I felt the need to write just the opposite...to show once more that less is more.” The glissandos and mordents coupled with the lilting syncopated rhythms all create a relaxed improvisatory character to the *Con nostalgia* opening movement. The second movement requires more control for the clarinetist in making legato connections through various registers. There are some unorthodox arpeggios containing non-repetitive intervals of thirds, fourths, fifths, and even sometimes an occasional interval of a sixth. This movement ends with a series of four trills that are marked, *molto rall.* Movement III, *Recitativo* begins with a rubato arpeggio that culminates in a slow note bend. The note bends that are marked throughout this movement are left to the discretion of the performer. This work is mostly accessible for an advanced high school or early college student, though, the very last note of the piece (a high A at a *pppp* dynamic level) and the occasional note bends in the upper clarion and altissimo registers in movement III are not very easily executed. *Pacific Serenade* offers a nice contrast to more technically involved works for clarinet and string quartet—a good work to program between more intense works that require more audience concentration. The piece contains the string quartet parts, clarinet part, and a concert-pitched score.

Cipolla, John M. *Colour Studies for Clarinet* Book Review, *The Clarinet*, Vol. 37, 2010.

Review by John Cipolla Jeffery Wilson, *Colour Studies for Clarinet*. Camden Music www.camdenmusic.com *Colour Studies* is a collection of eight etudes that explore the concept of colour. My first inclination was to think of colour as tone and timbre, in which case, I expected to see a collection of slower pieces with longer note values that would give the player freedom to explore the colours of particular notes. Though the clarinet has an inherent spectrum of tonal colours through the registers (chalumeau, clarion and altissimo), these studies consider the concept of colour in a broader sense. Most of these studies contain eighth and sixteenth notes. The pieces cover a wide spectrum of issues that clarinetists encounter, all of which potentially affect the overall colour of individual notes, a phrase, or an entire piece. The pieces examine legato fingers, tone production in various registers, dynamics, use of the pinky fingers and various articulations. It is refreshing to read through studies that consider colouring articulated passages in various manners. Articulation is all too often only considered a technical issue, not a musical/phrasing tool in which the attack and release of a note can be varied for musical purposes. The pieces span from the lowest E to a high G, four ledger lines above the staff. Each piece is given a title and then a brief description of the issues that the clarinetist will focus on while studying that piece. These pieces should not be approached as a comprehensive, all-encompassing collection of tone studies, but rather should be treated as an addition to the players' continual exploration of tone and timbre studies on the clarinet. Technically, this collection of pieces, that progress in level of difficulty, is suited for high school and early college, though it is certainly useful for advanced players.