

## ABSTRACT

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COMPOSITIONS FOR CLARINET  
INFLUENCED BY NON-WESTERN  
EUROPEAN MUSICAL TRADITIONS

Allison Lee Bridges Yacoub, Doctor of Musical  
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Music

The interest in the music of foreign lands is not a new occurrence, as can be seen in the Romantic idea of Exoticism. Since the mid-1800s, composers have been fascinated with the idea of incorporating new, exotic sounds into their works.

In order to explore the influence of Non-Western European musical traditions within the clarinet repertoire, I have chosen twelve works that are inspired by the sounds of Japan, China, Bali, India, Nairobi, Israel, Egypt, Argentina, Brazil and Venezuela. The musical traditions that are represented include the performance practice of the *shakuhachi*, Chinese folk songs, Balinese *gamelan*, Indian *ragas*, *Klezmer*, Arabic modes, the Brazilian *chôro*, the Argentinean *tango* and the Venezuelan *merengue*.

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By

Allison Lee Bridges Yacoub

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Advisory Committee:  
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## Dedication

To my Heavenly Father, who gave me a vision for my life, guided my path and provided the means in which to achieve my goals.

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## Recital One

Allison Yacoub, clarinet  
Jackie Stokes, piano  
Ben Chapin, Amber Abbott and Yvonne Parsons, clarinets

*Compositions for Clarinet Influenced by Non-Western European Musical Traditions*

April 20, 2008  
8 p.m.  
Joseph & Alma Gildenhorn Recital Hall

Variations on a Northern Chinese Folksong Zhang Wu

Jackie Stokes, piano

Four Impersonations Evan Ziporyn (b. 1959)  
*Honshirabe*  
*Pengrangrang Gde*  
*Thum Nyatiti*  
*Bindu Semara*

### INTERMISSION

Raga Music for Solo Clarinet John Mayer (1930-2004)  
*Vilasakhani*  
*Megha*  
*Vibhasa*  
*Gunakali*  
*Shri*  
*Pilu*  
*Puravi*  
*Kanada*  
*Vasanta*

China Journal, Op. 152 Michael Kibbe (b. 1945)  
The Great Wall  
Harvest Song  
The Forbidden City  
Yangtze River

Ben Chapin, Amber Abbott and Yvonne Parsons, clarinets

## Program Notes

**Variations on a Northern Chinese Folksong** by Zhang Wu is a short piece for Bb clarinet and piano that is based on a traditional folk song normally associated with a bountiful harvest. Editors John Denman and Paula Fan obtained this composition from Wu, who at the time was the clarinet professor at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, China.

Over 93 percent of the Chinese population belongs to the Han nationality, whose songs are often divided into northern and southern styles. They are associated with either the Huang He (Yellow River) of the North or the Chang Jiang (Yangtze River) of the South. **Variations on a Northern Chinese Folksong** possesses the traditionally high tessitura of the northern area as well as its smooth, curved melody and conjunct motion.

Completed in 2000, **Four Impersonations** by Evan Ziporyn consists of four movements which are close transcriptions of melodies from other cultures: *Honshirabe*, *Pengrangrang Gde*, *Thum Nyatiti* and *Bindu Semara*. Throughout the movements Ziporyn includes altered fingerings to produce the desired sounds that represent the original instruments.

*Honshirabe* (“Central Investigation”) is inspired by the melody in the recording by Japanese *shakuhachi* player, Kohachiro Miyata. The art of playing the *shakuhachi* (bamboo flute) is a meditative one, requiring time and concentration to master.

***Pengrangrang Gde*** (“Big Lullaby”) is an often-used *ginoman* (ametric introduction) to Balinese *gamelan pelegongan*, an instrumental form centered on bronze instruments. The instrumentation is originally for *gender rambat* (a resonating metallophone), *suling* (bamboo flute), and *rebab* (bowed spiked fiddle). The *jegogan* (large, low-pitched metallophones) punctuate the arrival tones. This version is inspired by a recording by the Gamelan Semar Pegulingan of Binoh Village and is attributed to I Wayan Lotring.

***Thum Nyatiti*** is a type of East African plucked string playing, either on a guitar or traditional string instrument. Ziporyn’s version is based on an anonymous 1950s recording released on “The Sound of Nairobi” on Original Music. The main difference in the performance on the clarinet is that it is gentle and smooth, as opposed to the separated, plucked sound of the strings. However, it still retains the strict time and perpetual motion of the original model.

***Bindu Semara*** (“Semar’s Sadness”) is a *manisan* (“sweet style”) accompaniment for *wayang kulit*, the Balinese puppet shadow play. It was taught to Ziporyn in 1981 during his time as a Fulbright Scholar in Indonesia by I Wayan Suweca who learned it from his father, I Wayan Konolan. Originally, the music coexists with the puppeteer’s singing and moves in response to his phrasing.

**Raga Music for Solo Clarinet** (1952) by John Mayer is a nine-movement work, which was one of the first pieces to infuse Western musical techniques with Hindustani music. Since its composition, ***Raga Music for Solo Clarinet*** has become a part of the standard clarinet repertoire.



Best known for his collaborative work in the 1960s with Jamaican saxophonist Joe Harriott to create Indo-Jazz Fusions, Mayer was also one of the first composers to write for Indian soloists accompanied by a traditional symphony orchestra. The Dance Suite for Sitar, Flute, Tabla and Tambura was first performed with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra in 1958.

Each movement is a different kind of *raga*, or melodic mode that is used in classical Indian music. The titles specify the particular *raga* that is to be used, the character qualities it evokes and the time of day or year in which it is traditionally performed. The movements within the piece are:

***Vilasakhani*** - to be played in the daytime, first quarter from sunrise with a sense of intense activity.

***Megha*** – to be played at night or at all times during the rainy season with a sense of deep happiness.

***Vibhasa*** – to be played at early dawn with the twittering of the birds and a sense of loveliness.

***Gunakali*** – to be played in the morning with a sense of confidence and nervous activity.

***Shri*** – to be played in the afternoon as a call for evening prayer, with a tender sadness.

*Pilu* – to be played in the late afternoon before sunset with an ever changing quality, as if satisfied but longing for something else.

*Puravi* – to be played at the end of the day with a tender and calm strength.

*Kanada* – to be played in the late night with deep emotion and passion.

*Vasanta* – to be played in the spring with a calm, tender and delicate quality.

**China Journal, Op. 152** (2005) by Michael Kibbe is a composition for clarinet quartet that evokes the sounds and images of China in its four movements: **The Great Wall, Harvest Song, The Forbidden City and Yangtze River.** Pentatonic scales are the foundation of Kibbe's work, which he then combines with mixed meters and various rhythms to give each movement a unique character quality.

**The Great Wall** has an air of solemnity, passion and excitement that represents the awe-inspiring sight of the Great Wall of China, while **Harvest Song** mimics a folk song melody that would be sung during a time of harvest. **The Forbidden City** begins with an atmosphere of severity and continues to develop its sense of mystery, representing the Chinese imperial palace from the mid-Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) to the end of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912).

**Yangtze River** portrays the sound and strength of moving water, representing the third longest river in the world as well as one of the most important rivers in Asia.

## Recital Two

Allison Yacoub, clarinet  
Jackie Stokes, piano  
Ed Walters, clarinet  
Lori Fowser, bass clarinet

*Compositions for Clarinet Influenced by Non-Western European Musical Traditions*

May 4, 2009  
5:30 p.m.  
Joseph & Alma Gildenhorn Recital Hall

Egyptian *Ma-wal* for Clarinet and Piano Ali Osman (b. 1958)

*Klezmer* Fantasy for Clarinet and Piano Adam B. Levowitz (b. 1968)  
ed. Michele Gingras  
Jackie Stokes, piano

PAUSE

The New Egyptian-Arabic Sufic Art Music Abdo Dagher (b. 1936)  
*Longa Nahawand*  
*Nidaa'*  
*Layali Zamaan*  
*Sama'i Kurd Yakaa*

*Shtetl Tanzen* for Clarinet Trio Michael Kibbe (b. 1945)  
Part One  
Part Two  
Ed Walters, clarinet  
Lori Fowser, bass clarinet

## Program Notes

**Egyptian *Ma-wal* for Clarinet and Piano** (2001) is a unique composition by Ali Osman, Professor of Composition at the Cairo Conservatory of Music. The *ma-wal* is a very emotional and expressive piece that portrays sadness and angst.

Osman takes the style of the *ma-wal* and incorporates the compositional techniques that were taught to him by Gamal Abdel-Rahim, the founder of the composition department at the Cairo Conservatory of Music. Known as the “Bartók of Egypt,” Abdel-Rahim was the first composer to use Arabic modes in place of the Western major/minor tonal system while incorporating irregular 5, 7 and 9 beat patterns, percussive accents and dissonant intervals within his music.

Within ***Egyptian Ma-wal***, Osman uses the Arabic modal system to create its foundation and adds irregular 10/8 and 7/8 time signatures, percussive accents and quartertones to portray emotion. Osman also includes two cadenzas for the clarinet, a contrast to the strict rhythmic pulse throughout the work.

**Klezmer Fantasy for Clarinet and Piano** (2007) by Adam B. Levowitz reflects the style of the traditional dance music of the Yiddish people. Michele Gingras, Professor of Clarinet at Miami University (Ohio) provides editorial performance notes on how to achieve the sounds that *klezmerim* (“Jewish musicians”) would use to convey emotion in their performances. Throughout ***Klezmer Fantasy***, the clarinet performs a variety of ornaments including the use of *dreydlekh*n (turns), *krechtn*, trills, *boyp*, grace notes, bent notes, *glissando* and *schmears*.

*Kreichtn* (“moans”) imitate the sound of the break in the voice that one would hear from the synagogue cantor when chanting prayers. The *kreicht* is created by suddenly dropping the pitch at the end of the main note and is usually present in the clarion and altissimo registers of the clarinet.

A *boyp* is placed right after a main note within the melody and quickly moves up a minor third or larger interval depending on the register. Trills are included to vary repeated notes in a melody and grace notes are ornaments placed right before individual notes.

*Glissando* and *schmears* are also used to connect notes with added emotion. In a *glissando*, a musician uses a chromatic run to connect the intervals, while a *schmear* connects notes by manipulating the fingers and throat.

**The New Egyptian-Arabic Sufic Art Music** by Abdo Dagher is a transcription of several of Dagher’s violin solos that he performed while a member of the orchestra of Um Kulthum, the most well-known singer in Egypt during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Transcribed by Riad Abdel-Gawad, Mudassar Abol Wafa, Ayman An-Noweihy and Mamdouh Wariqi, the solos are divided into six movements that span from 1954 to 1971, although only four have been placed on this program. This piece can be performed unaccompanied or it can be performed in a homophonic group ensemble.

***Longa Nahawand*** describes the form and mode that Dagher uses for this movement. The *longa*, a lively dance that is written for 2/4 time, is combined with the Arabic mode *nahawand* to create a festive solo.

*Nidaa'* ("The Call") is reflective of an Islamic call to prayer, while *Layali Zamaan* ("Nights of the Past") portrays the emotion of one recalling the nights of one's youth.

*Sama'i Kurd Yakaa* also describes the stylistic form and mode used as inspiration for its composition. The *sama'i* form utilizes a 10-beat rhythm pattern that is interchanged with another beat pattern such as 6/8 meter. *Kurd Yakaa* is the Arabic mode selected for this movement.

**Shtetl Tanzen for Clarinet Trio** by Michael Kibbe is a work for Eb and Bb soprano clarinets as well as Bb bass clarinet. Described as "village dances in the *klezmer* tradition," Kibbe draws upon the stylistic elements of traditional *klezmer* dances such as the *Doina*, *Rumanian Hora (Zhok)*, *Khosidl*, *Polka*, *Bulgar* and *Frehlakhs*.

The *Doina* is a slow, semi-improvised melody that displays the skill of the *klezmer* (clarinetists in particular) as they convey emotion. Kibbe gives the Eb soprano clarinet the privilege of playing this solo line, which leads into the *Rumanian Hora (Zhok)*, a popular Romanian Jewish dance played in 3/8 time.

The *Khosidl* is a solo as well as a slow, dignified *khasidic* dance in 2/4 time that can be performed either in a circle or a line. The Bb soprano and bass clarinets perform the somber background while the Eb soprano clarinet plays the melody that leads into the *Polka*. Originating in Bohemia around 1830, the major key and up-tempo 2/4 time signature of the *Polka* lifts the spirit of the listener. Kibbe interchanges the melody between the Eb and Bb soprano clarinets, while the Bb bass clarinet provides a stable bass line.

The *Bulgar* (or *Bulgarish*), a circle/line dance originally from Bessarabia and southern Ukraine, is one of the most common American *klezmer* dance tunes.

Written in 4/4 time, Kibbe ornaments the melody with turns and rich harmonies.

The Bb bass clarinet also has the opportunity to play a beautiful solo that displays the range of the instrument.

The final dance, the *Frehlakhs*, is the most common upbeat *klezmer* dance. It is heard often at Jewish celebrations, played in a fast 2/4 meter that brings people to their feet.



## Recital Three

Allison Yacoub, clarinet  
Jackie Stokes, piano  
Melody Bridges, flute  
Lori Fowser, clarinet

*Compositions for Clarinet Influenced by Non-Western European Musical Traditions*

November 21, 2009

5:30 p.m.

Joseph & Alma Gildenhorn Recital Hall

### *Tango-Études*

Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992)  
ed. Michel Pellegrino

- No. 1
- No. 2
- No. 3
- No. 4
- No. 5
- No. 6

Jackie Stokes, piano

### *Chôros No. 2*

Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887-1959)

Melody Bridges, flute

INTERMISSION

### *Venezuelan Burlesque*

Jorge Montilla (b. 1970)

Lori Fowser, clarinet

### *Histoire du Tango*

Astor Piazzolla  
arr. Dimitriy Varelas

- I. Bordel – 1900
- II. Café – 1930
- III. Nightclub 1960
- IV. Concert *d'aujourd'hui*

Jackie Stokes, piano

## Program Notes

**Tango-Études** by Astor Piazzolla is a collection of six studies that were originally written for solo flute in 1987. The collection was transcribed and adapted for alto saxophone by Claude Delangle and Astor Piazzolla, which were then edited for Bb soprano clarinet by Michel Pellegrino in 1989. Piazzolla provided the piano accompaniment for the etudes in the same year, but it was not published until 2003. The handwritten manuscript was very difficult to read and was shelved after Piazzolla's death until Yann Ollivo carefully deciphered the original copy.

Astor Piazzolla is best known for his unique compositional style that combines the elements of Argentinean *tango* with those of classical music and American jazz. Throughout his life he pursued new sounds with different types of instruments and ensembles, while encouraging the performers to play the music with emotion and passion.

Each study focuses on elements that are present in Argentinean *tango* music such as accented rhythms grouped into beats of 3+3+2, mixed time signatures, various articulations and lyrical melodies. These pieces challenge the performer to play the music as written as well as to portray the emotion of *tango* to the listener.

**Chôros No. 2** by Heitor Villa-Lobos, a duet for flute and clarinet in A, was written in 1924 as a part of a series of sixteen *chorões* that Villa-Lobos used to reflect Brazil's unique musical style. The absence of European influence upon Villa-Lobos' music is an important characteristic that sets him apart from other Brazilian composers of his time. The *chôro* is a purely instrumental form of music that is often performed within a social gathering. It features a soloist such as a flutist or other

wind player that plays highly ornamented variations of Brazilian melodies, while supported by musicians who improvise harmonic and melodic accompaniment.

This piece is dedicated to Mario de Andrade, a Brazilian musicologist and prominent figure in literature, who was influential in creating the “Week of Modern Art” in 1922. This event ignited Villa-Lobos’ nationalistic feelings for Brazil and his definitive decision to compose music in an authentic Brazilian style.

**Venezuelan Burlesque** by Jorge Montilla, a duet for two Bb soprano clarinets, was written in 2005 and premiered at the Oklahoma Clarinet Symposium. It is dedicated to his friend and colleague, Robert Spring. Using the Venezuelan *merengue* dance as his inspiration, Montilla set the rhythmic pulse in 5/8 meter, which is different from the traditional Dominican *merengue* performed in 2/4 time. The burlesque component is present in the use of dissonance, wide intervals and sudden bursts of loud and high notes.

Jorge Montilla, a former professor of clarinet at Arizona State University, currently teaches clarinet at the Latin American Clarinet Academy and is Principal Clarinet of the Simon Bolivar Orchestra of Venezuela.

**Histoire du Tango** by Astor Piazzolla was originally written for flute and guitar in 1986 and then arranged for Bb clarinet and piano by Dimitriy Varelas in 2005. The “History of the *Tango*” consists of four movements: **Bordel – 1900**, **Café – 1930**, **Nightclub 1960** and **Concert d’aujourd’hui** (“concert of today”).

**Bordel – 1900:** The first movement is reflective of the style of early *tango* that was danced in the brothels of Buenos Aires. Percussive African rhythms and

heel stamping, combined with the dance style of the *milonga* provide a foundation for the growth of the *tango*.

**Café – 1930:** A military coup in 1930 overthrew the existing Argentinean government, taking away the citizens' right to vote. Along with the effects of the Great Depression, these events caused the people of Argentina to have a depressed view of the *tango*. This movement reflects the yearning for the return of the *tango* in its full glory as well as a hopeful optimism for its future.

**Nightclub 1960:** Argentina during the 1960s was open to a younger cultural influence, welcoming the sound of rock-and-roll bands such as the Beatles. Professionals, university students and intellectuals often listened to Piazzolla perform in *tangierías*, which were small nightclubs that were created more for music than dancing. This movement contains the youthful energy that was present in the cultural atmosphere of the decade.

**Concert *d'aujourd'hui*:** The last movement evokes the style of Piazzolla in the late 1980s: a contemporary treatment of *tango* with the fusion of elements such as polyrhythm and polytonality (inspired by Stravinsky and Bartók) with the jazz concept of “swing.”

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