A CLARINET REPERTOIRE SOFTWARE DATABASE

FOR COLLEGE TEACHERS

by

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A Research Paper in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Musical Arts

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

May 2004
ABSTRACT

First-year clarinet professors should have a command of the major works in the standard clarinet repertoire. During their undergraduate work they will have studied and performed pieces such as the Mozart Clarinet Concerto, Poulenc Sonata, and Fantasiestücke by Schumann. As they move into graduate school and their techniques become more advanced, however, it is common for clarinetists to focus on twentieth-century works that demand extended techniques. This focus on modern music during final years of schooling leaves little time to study the vast repertoire of works that suit younger students. A gap is thus created between literature with which the new professor is most familiar and that which is most suited to undergraduate clarinet majors. Designed to bridge that gap, this research project results in a CD-ROM database that comprises all literature found in the personal libraries of two leading clarinet pedagogues, Robert Spring of Arizona State University and Howard Klug of Indiana University. The database will also assist new professors in finding unfamiliar works, which will be useful in teaching college students.

In utilizing the personal libraries of Spring and Klug, I hoped to access a large percentage of the most current and best-regarded music for the undergraduate clarinetist. I chose the libraries of these two professors due to their unique styles of teaching and their reputations in the clarinet world. Each has extensive performance and teaching credentials, as well as very different styles of performing. I have conducted a personal interview with each professor, which centered on pedagogical issues.

My clarinet repertoire database does not include all literature from other clarinet bibliographies; however, many of the current works are also included in other indexes.
The repertoire is organized by specific difficulty levels that correspond to the grades: novice undergraduate, advanced undergraduate, and graduate student. The user may search the database by composer, title, genre (i.e., Sonata or Concerto), instrumentation, or grade level. The CD-ROM includes not only the repertoire database, but also transcripts from my pedagogical interviews. The user may consult the interviews to gain further insight into teaching university students. Finally, the software is written so that the user may add works according to individual needs.
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CLARINET REPERTOIRE DATABASE ENTRIES

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

First-year clarinet professors should have a command of the major works in the standard clarinet repertoire. During their undergraduate work they will have studied and performed pieces such as the Mozart *Clarinet Concerto*, Poulenc *Sonata*, and *Fantasiestücke* by Schumann. As they move into graduate school and their technique becomes more advanced, however, it is common for clarinetists to focus on twentieth-century works that demand extended techniques. This focus on modern music during final years of schooling leaves little time to study the vast repertoire of works that suit younger students. A gap is thus created between literature with which the new professor is most familiar and that which is most suited to undergraduate clarinet majors. Designed to bridge that gap, this research project results in a CD-ROM database that comprises all literature found in the personal libraries of two leading clarinet pedagogues, Robert Spring of Arizona State University, and Howard Klug of Indiana University. The database will also assist new professors in finding unfamiliar works, which will be useful in teaching college students.

**Rationale**

The usefulness of an electronic repertoire database is two-fold: first, the technology of computer software allows for rapid searching and retrieval of relevant information about each repertoire entry; secondly, categorizing the music by grade level will be a valuable tool in planning a curriculum. Currently, a software database of clarinet literature, categorized into difficulty levels based on collegiate skill levels, does not exist.
In addition, this CD-ROM database can be customized for personal needs. If the user copies the contents of the program from the CD-ROM to his/her hard drive, they will have complete access to the database. As new pieces are composed, the clarinet teacher may add entries into the database. This aspect of customization is a unique characteristic of this project.

Many of the current bibliographies focus on one genre of clarinet music (i.e. unaccompanied solos). The aims of these bibliographies are to create a comprehensive list of repertoire without regard for quality of music. My repertoire database includes many genres of clarinet literature, which are selected from a teacher’s perspective. Each piece in my database has been deemed suitable for university students by experienced professors; therefore, the user will not have to sift through lower-quality works.

**Delimitations**

My clarinet repertoire database consists of works from Howard Klug’s and Robert Spring’s personal libraries. It does not include all literature from other clarinet bibliographies; however, there are many pieces from the professor’s libraries that are also included in other indexes. I have chosen these two professors due to their unique styles of teaching and their reputation in the clarinet world. Each have extensive performance and teaching credentials, as well as very different styles of performing. It is not my intention to include every possible work for clarinet, but instead to create a substantial database of works suitable for use in the university setting. Annotations are not provided for every entry, but are included for pieces that required further information. The comments are based on my own opinions as well as those of Howard Klug and Robert Spring. Only one
publisher is listed for each piece. Works with multiple publishers are cited with the best-known publisher. Some pieces are out of print and therefore do not include publisher information.
CHAPTER TWO: CLARINET PEDAGOGY

Interviews With Two Leading Professors

Along with cataloging their libraries of music, I conducted a pedagogical interview with Robert Spring and Howard Klug. My interview questions emphasized the unique challenges that face a teacher of college-aged students. Music students have varying career goals ranging from full-time performance to full-time education. I was interested in finding out how repertoire choices might influence a student’s learning experience and how new teachers might use varying repertoire to accomplish pedagogical goals. While my questions focused on repertoire, the responses addressed many issues about clarinet pedagogy and working in a university setting. I sought to discover valuable teaching pieces that each professor uses on a regular basis as well as to gain insights into their respective teaching philosophies. Complete transcripts from each interview are included in the appendix of this document.

I posed the following questions to each professor.

1. What do you listen for in a freshman audition?

2. How does that differ from the abilities of an incoming graduate student?

3. What pieces have you used in the past to teach extended techniques? Why?

4. What pieces have you used to help a student with articulation problems? Why?

5. What pieces have you used to help a student mature as a musician? Why?

6. What technical goals do you have for your students when they graduate?

Undergraduate vs. Graduate?
7. Which pieces that have been written since 1980, do you consistently use in your teaching?

8. How do you determine when a student is mature enough to study the Mozart concerto and two Brahms sonatas?

9. Do you have a set of core pieces that every student learns, or do you tailor the curriculum for each individual student?

10. There are many masterworks that all of us return to throughout our careers; what are some examples of teaching pieces that are valuable to learn but may not necessarily be revisited?

11. Do you approach music education students differently than performance majors? Explain.

12. What pieces have you used in the past to help students break out of their shell and become individual and charismatic performers?

13. What is your stance on electronic music? At what maturity level do you encourage students to pursue electronic pieces?

14. Which pieces have you taught that are exclusively suited for graduate levels clarinetists? What makes these works too difficult for undergraduates?

15. How have your expectations as a teacher influenced your students’ musical growth?

16. How important is it to have your students prepare concertos, versus other solo works? Besides Copland, Debussy, and Mozart, which concertos do you consistently teach and why?
17. What is a typical workload for a lower classman (etudes, technical exercises, solos) versus an upper classman and graduate student?

**Pedagogical Concepts**

During each interview, each professor cited several favorite teaching pieces.¹ Three specific categories of music are most interesting: classical concerti, twentieth-century extended techniques, and music written since 1980.

In teaching freshman, both professors cited the use of classical concerti to establish finger dexterity and the ability to play in the classical style. Klug remarked, “I like to spend a good bit of the early years, their first couple of years, playing pieces from 1780 to 1830, such as Mozart, Spohr, Weber, Krommer, Xavier LeFevre, Devienne, Baermann and others, because I think the musicality of that music is pretty straightforward: four and eight-bar phrases, themes and variations, and technical demands that are moderate in most cases if you’re careful of the pieces you’re choosing.” Spring also pointed out the necessity of building a strong technique at an early age.

I start my freshmen routinely on an early classical piece. The first thing I want them to do is stand up and play something with even sixteenth notes. It sounds really silly, but I truly believe that if you can get technique working at a young level, you can ease in the back door and get their sound and musicality going at the same time. I do a lot of early Classical pieces such as the Stamitz concertos. I tend to stay away from the Johann Stamitz concerto and stay with Carl Stamitz, Kozaluch, Krommer, and maybe the Mozart *Four Church Sonatas*. I will also use the Tartini concerto, which is a transcription of a Baroque piece, but it still requires this type of playing. They’re in an easy key, mostly C and F major, and pretty straightforward as to phrasing.

¹ The following comments are extracted from the transcripts of my interviews, which are also found in the appendix.
Robert Spring is known for his interest in and mastery of extended techniques, while Howard Klug prefers a more traditional style of playing, yet, both professors cited the same literature for teaching extended techniques: Ronald Caravan’s *Excursions for a Clarinet*, and *Polychromatic Diversions* by the same composer. Spring explained, “It covers everything. Within it, you have one piece with quartertones, multi-phonic, spatial notation, and improvisations. It also isn’t very hard. The multiple sounds are relatively easy to get. I’ve used that piece with everyone from freshmen to doctoral students. I just think it’s great; there’s nothing quite like that piece. We have nothing that is so short, covers everything, is playable, and you can give it to a student to perform in three weeks.” Spring also uses much of Eric Mandat’s music for teaching and exploring extended techniques. “His etudes are very hard, but his *Etude for Barney* can be used to break away from the concept that every note has to sound perfect. When you are playing these kinds of pieces, some notes are like ‘blue notes,’ and you can break away from the concept that a lot of students have that every note has to sound like those in the Mozart Concerto. I also like *Tricolor Capers* by Eric Mandat because the first two movements work really well for students, but the third movement is generally so fast that it is harder for them to learn.”

One of my motivations in producing this database was to generate a bibliographic tool that could be used to keep up with new music. One of the major flaws in other bibliographies is that they are not kept current. Many of the indices that I studied were published before the year 1980 and therefore exclude new music for today. I asked the two professors to comment on clarinet music that has been written since 1980 and list
works that they believe to have staying power. These included Muczynski’s *Time Pieces*, Corgliano’s Concerto, and the music of Eric Mandat.

In addition to examining repertoire choices, several important pedagogical concepts came out of the interviews. Despite the differences in teaching and performing styles between Howard Klug and Robert Spring, their teaching philosophies coincided on several issues. When auditioning new students they both expressed their desire to find students who are willing to change. Spring said, “I’ve accepted freshman who have had less than great basics if they had a real desire to learn and a desire to change.” This willingness to change becomes especially important at the graduate level, due to the minimal time that the teacher has to work with the student. Klug stated, “The thing is, particularly with the masters degree at most institutions in this country, is that they are one-year, which is completely ridiculous, or two-year programs. My rule of thumb is that it takes me three years to get somebody to play where I want him or her to go, and that’s with them being on board from day one.”

When teaching music education majors, both professors expressed the importance of preparing teachers who can also be great performers. As a music education major during my undergraduate years, I understand the tendency for professors to treat music education students as non-performers. Klug remarked, “In a weird sort of way, if we are not to see the end of classical music as we know it, it’s more important that music education majors go out with an enthusiasm to teach, and be capable of playing with a fine characteristic sound, decent technique, and an understanding of musicality than it is for the performance majors. Performance majors can only hurt themselves. Music education majors have the chance to hurt a whole lot of people around them.”
At some institutions, the music education majors are not required to perform in a senior recital. When asked about the recital requirements at ASU, Spring made the following comment.

I like the recital issue, if for no other reason than that for some of those kids, it may be the only time they ever do a full recital, and I think it’s important that they know what their students are going through. They need to know what it feels like in your stomach just before you walk out. This is something that we’ve all experienced. Some people say, ‘Oh, I don’t get nervous.’ They are lying through their teeth because everybody gets nervous. They’ve got to know what their kids are going through when they take them to contests and their kids are getting shaky and playing wildly; they have to know what it is like.

Finally, both professors spoke of the need to develop a strong teaching repertoire. This is particularly important for new college teachers who may be teaching at a school that has fewer and less experienced students. Spring gave the following advice to new college teachers.

Well, the big advice for a new college teacher is that you need to make sure that you have teaching repertoire under your fingers, not only solos, but etudes that are not the standard etudes. When I really learned these types of etudes was when I was in Iowa. The next level up was too hard for them, so I had to dig down and find more etudes. That’s when I started using the Mazas violin studies. It was about the time that the David Hite books were coming out. Book two was a godsend because it bombarded those kids with patterns. They had to learn patterns over and over again, and I think that if you can teach young students those patterns, then you’re fine. In terms of repertoire, you have to have a real working knowledge of repertoire, which I don’t know if you can get until you’re thrown into it. Getting a working knowledge of teaching repertoire is really important.
CHAPTER THREE: RELATED LITERATURE

Clarinet Bibliographies

Several bibliographies of clarinet music have become standard resources for clarinetists. Each has specific strengths and weaknesses, and they are all in book form.

*Klarinetten Bibliographie*, written by Eugen Brixel, was published in 1978. The repertoire entries are organized into chapters based on instrumentation (e.g., Four clarinets, trios with piano, etc.). Within each chapter, the pieces are alphabetized by composer. Each entry is separated into three columns, which lists composer, title, and publisher. No attempt was made to annotate or rank the pieces by difficulty. One strength of this bibliography is that it is comprehensive for works written before 1978. Brixel includes many chapters listing chamber music as well as solo clarinet works.

James Gillespie’s *Solos for Unaccompanied Clarinet: An Annotated Bibliography of Published Works* lists works composed before 1973. The annotations are very complete and provide information about the composer as well as reviews of premiere performances. Each entry includes the following: composer, composer’s birth and death dates, composer’s nationality, title, opus number, length of piece, publisher, date of publication, movement titles, and annotation. The entries do not include a rating scale for difficulty. The book is organized alphabetically by each composer’s last name.

*The Index of Clarinet Music*, compiled by Wayne Wilkins, was published in 1975. This small book is organized like Brixel’s, in that there are chapters based on instrumentation and each entry is given three columns that list composer, title, and publisher. Wilkins uses a series of abbreviations to indicate specific instrumentation, as
well as names of publishers. The entries are very close together on a page and the abbreviations make browsing cumbersome. Wilkins does not attempt to rate pieces by skill level, and there are no annotations.

*Clarinet Solos de Concours, 1897-1980* by Harry R. Gee lists the pieces for clarinet that were composed for the annual solo competition of the Paris Conservatory. Gee begins the book by giving background about the Paris Conservatory and the clarinetists who taught there. The repertoire entries are very complete and include the following: title, duration of piece, composer, composer’s dates, difficulty level, list of all known publishers, and annotation. The annotation provides biographical background on the composer and an aural description of the piece. The difficulty rating scale is based on a European model, which rates each piece with a number between 1 and 10. The lower numbers represent easier works with 10 being the most difficult level. The repertoire is organized by year of composition as opposed to the composer’s name.

Finally, F. Gerard Errante’s *A Selective Clarinet Bibliography* was published in 1973. This book has a brief, ten-page chapter on lists of repertoire, while the majority of the book lists works written about the clarinet. The entries on lists of repertoire are not individual pieces, but rather bibliographies on articles that list specific pieces.

Each of the bibliographies mentioned has a common weakness of being in print, rather than computerized form. Only one of the bibliographies attempts to categorize pieces by difficulty level. The final shared weakness is that they were all published before 1980 and therefore they omit new music that has been composed in the past twenty-five years.
Other Computerized Databases

In 1992, Patricia Halbeck, a D.M.A. student at the University of Oklahoma, developed a computer database for piano literature. She limited her study to 100 intermediate piano pieces from the romantic era that are suited for the young pianist. Halbeck studied each piece and calculated a series of specific performance skills that each work required. Her database included the following information for each work: composer, title, key of piece, tempo marking, meter, length, prominent rhythmic pattern, mood, level of difficulty, performance skills, and publisher information. The user could choose a set of criteria and search for specific pieces that met the criteria. The software was not designed for keyword searches. Instead, the user selected from several lists of criteria before performing a search. The software was written in 1992 and designed for use on a computer running Microsoft’s Disk Operating System (MS-DOS). The program is becoming obsolete as time moves forward because it is only accessible from a floppy disk.

Pamela Wilson also developed a piano repertoire database, which focuses on intermediate piano literature. This database is designed to search collections of music as opposed to individual works. Wilson organized her database into a series of lists in which the user can browse. The lists contain the following headings: book, composer, piece, editor, and publisher. The database is written in Hyper Text Markup Language (HTML) format and posted on the Internet, which makes it easy to access. Wilson could have improved the design by including a search capability. With its current construction, Wilson’s database is simply an online index.
Program Design

The Clarinet Repertoire Search Program consists of three primary windows: a main search screen, a window for browsing the database, and a pedagogy section. The main search screen is the default window that opens following a brief title window.

Figure 1. Screen Shot of Clarinet Repertoire Search Program, Main Screen
This screen is divided into four sections: repertoire information, search engine, pedagogy access, and explanation of difficulty levels. The user may scroll through the database to see the complete entries for each piece, or they may search for specific pieces. Add and edit buttons also allow the user to add new pieces or to change the information for each repertoire entry. Two search functions provide the user with the option for performing a
simple one-word search, or an advanced search with multiple criteria. The search results appear individually in the repertoire information frame, or a complete list may be generated for browsing. The browse window shows all of the database entries with the ability to sort the records by composer, title, period, publisher, genre, and difficulty level.

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Figure 2. Screen Shot of Browse Window

The pedagogy sections contain lists of the interview questions and summaries of the responses of both Howard Klug and Robert Spring and are grouped by question so that
they may be compared.

**Figure 3. Screen Shot of Pedagogy Section Window**

Finally, brief biographies of each professor describe their unique background and experience.

**User’s Manual**

Each piece in the database has been assigned one of the following genre categories: sonata, concerto, unaccompanied, ensemble, and electronic. For the purpose of this project I chose one-word genre titles to facilitate a simple user interface. All works under the sonata category refer to pieces for clarinet and piano. The term sonata is not used to indicate the respective forms of these works but rather that all of these pieces are written for clarinet and piano. The works under the heading of concerto are for clarinet
and large ensemble, such as orchestra or wind ensemble, including the piano reductions of these pieces. Unaccompanied works describe works for solo clarinet. Pieces under the ensemble category are primarily for chamber music, which includes clarinet and unlike instruments. I have included a few clarinet duets but no clarinet trios, quartets, or clarinet choir pieces. I chose to focus my attention on pieces in which the clarinet part was soloistic. The instrumentation for these works is listed in the notes section of the database. Pieces described as electronic include works for clarinet and tape, cd, or computer-controlled electronics.

The program is designed so that the user may add new works, edit existing pieces, and print lists of repertoire. To add a new piece, click the add button. The add window
will appear with fields for composer, title, publisher, period, date, genre, and notes.

**Figure 4. Screen Shot of Add Entry Window**

At the bottom of the window, the user has the option of classifying the difficulty of the new piece. Three checkboxes are listed with choices corresponding to the college class levels. For proper use select only one checkbox.
To edit an existing work, click the edit button. The edit window will appear with the currently selected work.

![Edit Repertoire Entry Window](image)

**Figure 5. Screen Shot of Edit Entry Window**

The same fields that were listed in the add window also appear in the edit window. Any of the fields may be changed according to the user’s desires. The fields for period and genre are preset with contextual menus and therefore cannot be customized. Once the changes are in place, click the update button. The screen will return to the main window with the updated information.

To print a list of pieces, select the print command from the file menu at the top of the screen. This will display a print window that allows the user to choose to print the
entire database, or only a selected list of works. A search must be performed before the “print as list” option is available. The resulting printout consists of four repertoire entries per page with all of the record’s information, including notes.

**Grading Scale**

I carefully examined each repertoire entry and assigned one of three suitability/difficulty levels, which correspond to the following classes: freshman/sophomore, junior/senior, and graduate. While classification is highly subjective, these categories give insight into the contents of each work. I chose to follow a three-level grading scale rather than a ten-level scale because of the challenges associated with delineating between many sections. The criteria are largely based on technical difficulties, as opposed to musical challenges. For example, the Brahms’ Sonatas are musically challenging for the most seasoned professional, yet they have been assigned to the level of junior/senior, due to their technical requirements. Following is a set of criteria for each classification level, which is also included in the software database.²

Works that have been assigned as freshman/sophomore level are relatively narrow in range and technical difficulty. These pieces seldom go up to a high G above the staff. If they contain passages with sixteenth notes, these phrases are often based on scale patterns. Many works from the classical period, and many transcriptions of baroque

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² Placing the mouse arrow over the difficulty levels in the bottom left-hand corner of the main window shows the classification criteria.
music, are included in this category. In addition, these works are generally shorter in length and require less endurance.

Pieces assigned to the level of junior/senior have many technical passages, including sixteenth-note patterns that do not conform to major and minor arpeggios. This category also includes works that require a few extended techniques such as multiphonics and microtones. The range may go up to high G or above. The majority of the music in this category was written in the twentieth century and also includes the masterworks from the romantic and classical periods. In addition to technical complexities, these works require that the student possess musical maturity.

The entries assigned to the graduate level are pieces suitable for the professional. These works demand technical mastery and the ability to play throughout the full range of the clarinet. All manner of extended techniques are required including flutter tonguing, fluting, singing while playing, circular breathing, and double tonguing. All of the works in this category were composed in the twentieth century.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Spring, Robert. Interview by author, 26 October 2003, Tempe. Tape recording. Arizona State University, Tempe.


1. What do you listen for in a freshman audition?

One thing about a young freshman audition is that they’re not going to have every basic concept exactly the way you want it because they may have a little bit of a tonguing issue or an air issue or an embouchure issue or even hand/finger issues, but if they have pretty good basic ideas, then you can work from there. They also must have a willingness to learn, willingness to listen, and a desire to learn. It’s kind of like what a friend, a former student of mine in Texas, used to call the “killer instinct.” You can tell in a freshman if they have that desire. If they don’t have that desire and that willingness, you just let them go. I think that is a big issue. I’ve accepted freshman that have had less than great basics if they’ve had a real desire to learn and a desire to change.

2. How does that differ from an incoming graduate student?

One of the things that you listen for in a graduate audition is that they have to be better than your undergraduate students. That in itself is a hard concept because if in fact you bring in a masters student who plays at a lesser level than your top undergraduate students, then it causes problems when you have undergraduates sitting above all these masters students. The reality is that masters student should play better; it doesn’t always happen. The big issue with masters students, and doctoral students too, is that you have very little time to correct issues, so you need to have pretty much everything set on the plate and correct in the beginning. Also, one of the things that you look at is how much literature they’ve gone through. It’s really funny because you get these kids that say, “Oh, I’ve played this, I’ve played this, I’ve played this,” but you find out later that they haven’t really played it at all, they’ve just sort of run through it. You want someone who
has a pretty good concept of musical styles. I listen in graduate auditions for willingness to change or work with me, even more so sometimes than the actual talent level, because if you have someone who’s not willing to change and not willing to grow when they get older, that’s a real problem. You don’t want to spend a lot of time correcting basics; if you do, then you are not going to get through any literature.

3. What pieces have you used in the past to teach extended techniques? Why?

I use the Caravan Excursions a lot. It covers everything. Within it, you have one piece with quartet tones, multi-phonics, spatial notation, and improvisations. It’s also nice because it isn’t very long. It also isn’t very hard. The multiple sounds are relatively easy to get. I’ve used that piece with everyone from freshmen to doctoral students. I just think it’s great; there’s nothing quite like that piece. We have nothing that is so short, covers everything, is playable, and you can give it to a student to perform in three weeks.

Eric Mandat has written some wonderful pieces to teach these things. His etudes are really hard. His Etude for Barney can be used to break away from the concept that every note has to sound perfect. When you are playing these kinds of things, some notes are like “blue notes,” and you can break away from the concept that a lot of students have that every note has to sound like those from the Mozart Concerto. Tricolor Capers by Eric Mandat I also really like. The first two movements work really well for students, but the third movement is generally so fast that it is harder for them to learn.

Ron Caravan’s Polychromatic Diversions is a set of ten etudes. They all have a variety of concepts and it is generally pretty easy to get the desired sounds. That’s the whole issue. If you give someone something at the beginning that is really difficult, they
are just going to give up on it in terms of getting the multiple sounds or desired fingerings. Extended techniques for some students are really hard to teach. They just don’t want to do them, and you’ve got to ease into it so that they can understand what it’s all about. If it takes too long to learn them, they just give up.

4. What pieces have you used to help a student with articulation problems? Why?

I tend to use etudes for this as opposed to solos. I use page 22 from Langenus book three. If the concept of air remaining constant is held, and the student works on the study daily, articulation is not a problem. John Mohler always said that the whole notion of page 22 was that you were building muscles the same way perhaps a weight lifter would build muscles. You have tension and relaxation. The tension in lifting, and the relaxation in bringing it back down. That’s about the only thing I’ve used. Sometimes I have used interrupted sounds where I have the student play, then put the tongue on the reed but keep the air going and keep a subtone going. Another etude is page 23 in that same book which is in 6/8, and some students have better luck with that.

5. What pieces have you used to help a student mature as a musician? Why?

I start my freshmen routinely on an early classical piece. The first thing I want them to do is stand up and play something with even sixteenth notes. It sounds really silly, but I truly believe that if you can get technique working at a young level, you can ease in the back door and get their sound going at the same time and get their musicality going at the same time. If you abandon technique and say, “Oh, we’re just going to work on sound,” then I think what happens is that you end up having someone with no technique. They
may sound like a million bucks, but they can’t play the notes. I think you can accomplish more than one thing at a time. What I tend to do is give them something in a classical style that is going to make them play evenly and exactly at the beginning. If you can do that while working on a good sound, then I think you’ve got them. If you tend to ignore that at the beginning, then I think it’s going to be a problem forever. If you ignore the fact that they don’t have fingers, it’s going to be a problem. I do a lot of early Classical pieces such as the Stamitz concertos. I tend to stay away from the Johann Stamitz concerto and stay with Carl Stamitz, Kozaluch, Krommer, and maybe Mozart Four Church Sonatas. I will also use the Tartini concerto, which is a transcription of a Baroque piece, but it still requires this type of playing. They’re in an easy key, mostly C and F major and pretty straightforward as to phrasing. You can kind of work in the backdoor making phrases, and it’s almost natural. It’s like when I’m speaking to you or you’re talking to me, your voice goes up, your voice goes down. No one every taught you how to do that. It’s just that you listen to your parents, or you listen to other people talk, and you know how to do voice inflection. That’s why I think these pieces work so well; it is so obvious. Then as you start to give them more advanced things, they can see how they work. I think it is a real art, and a real subversive art, to get the students to be good musicians and good technicians and make them work hand in hand without making them try too hard at the beginning.

Once the student gets beyond these Classical works, there are some useful pieces from the Romantic era such as the Gade *Fantasy Stucke*. They’re technically easy, but really hard to make musically interesting. All of a sudden they realize, “Oh, I don’t have to practice this. “The next week they come in and it’s just as dull as dishwater. Then you
say, “Well, you have to do this, this, and this,” and they’re pretty embarrassed most of the time. Most of the time I don’t have to yell at them because they get so embarrassed that they are not able to do something that they come back the next week and are able to do it.

I also like the Burgmüller *Duo*. The problem with the Burgmuller *Duo* is one measure that nobody can play in the first movement that makes it really hard. Schumann *Romances* and the first two of the *Fantasy Pieces* work really well. The third movement of the *Fantasy Pieces* is a little harder. A lot of teachers will throw students the Debussy *Rhapsody* when they are Juniors but I just think that’s too hard. I think you end up having a student working on a solo for four months. I like the Pierre *Andante Scherzo* and several other French contest pieces that Bill Stubbins put in a couple of his recital literature books that work really well. I feel that we need these teaching pieces before going into Mozart, Brahms, and Debussy. Nothing is worse than putting a student into a piece before they are ready.

One of the other pieces I sometimes use at the beginning is the Devienne Second Sonata. If they have pretty good technique, you can throw the Devienne Second Sonata at them. They’ll make some mistakes, but they’ll get the ideas.

The other area that I like to work on in the beginning is the unaccompanied repertoire. The problem is that we have very little unaccompanied clarinet repertoire that doesn’t involve pretty extensive extended techniques. The Osborne *Rhapsody* is one that I really like to use at the beginning to make them think outside the bar line.

6. What technical goals do you have for your students when they graduate?

Undergraduate vs. Graduate?
Ideally, we should be able to play music like we are speaking now, without thinking about it. I guess that my major goal for anybody is that they’re able to do that to a greater extent. For younger students, I really think you now have to have some knowledge of new techniques, or at least have played something new. I think that a lot of teachers disagree with me on this, and maybe even a lot who are no more than ten years older than I am don’t have students do that. I just think it’s important in this day and age that the students know how to at least get through something like that. Even if they can’t play it all, at least know how to play it.

I think that for the graduate students, when they graduate, a doctoral student should be able to go out and figure anything out at this point. My goal for a doctoral student is that the student can be independent, and that you can go out, and if someone hands you a piece of music, you can figure it out or at least begin to figure it out. Those are all the goals wrapped up into one; that’s technical, musical, everything. For a masters student, it is a little more difficult. Masters students are essentially going to do one of three things. They’re going to go on to get a doctorate, they’re going to go and teach public school, or they’re going to join a military band. Very few of them are going to go out and get a college job in this environment. It’s just not going to happen anymore unless they’re really motivated. In that case, you are preparing them for different things. I would hope that masters students are technically and musically prepared to take on most of the challenges they are going to have musically. That’s what you’re aiming for. With undergraduates, I think that you want to have basic concepts down and some knowledge of new techniques.
7. Which pieces that have been written since 1980, do you consistently use in your teaching?

Eric Mandat’s music. The reason I consistently use Eric’s music is because he’s the only one writing stuff that’s cool. I’ve got drawers full of stuff in here that are written since 1980. When you’re playing unaccompanied pieces, one of the really hard things to do is to have something that is enjoyable to listen to. There are a lot of things in there that I’m sure you looked at when you were cataloging that have some really good concepts but are about five minutes too long. A lot of unaccompanied pieces use silence way too much I think. You have all these pieces that use way too much silence in them, and it’s just not interesting when you’re alone on the stage and there is all this silence. People want to hear something.

There’s also Flammes by Janos Komives that I use. I really like that piece as well, but I find myself consistently using Eric’s music because it’s just cool. Students like to work on it, there’s some kind of a challenge there. How many times have you worked and worked on a piece, and you get to the concert, and halfway through you’re thinking, “Man, this really wasn’t worth it.” I just wish that there were more geniuses like Eric that were writing pieces like this. I also like Norbert Goddaer’s Clarinet Unlimited. I think this piece works well for younger students. It has some cool little rhythms in it. I think that you have to have something that uses the clarinet to its full extent and is going to challenge the student to try new things.

8. How do you determine when a student is mature enough to study the Mozart concerto and two Brahms’ sonatas?
Let’s go with Mozart first. Mozart I think is just about the hardest piece in our repertoire. The reason is, there is nothing to hide behind. In some pieces you can ghost a few notes, but in Mozart, you can’t get away with that. It has to all be there. I played the Mozart in high school, and then I didn’t really play it again until I was a senior in college. I actually played it on my senior recital. I still don’t think I was really ready then, but it was better. I mean, some of the concepts to think about are really hard. Just think about the first movement; let’s talk about that first. Aside from the subtle phrasing issues, the intonation issues present a challenge. I always laugh when someone comes into a competition with the old Carl Fischer edition of the Mozart Concerto. The first part is very pretty, and then they crescendo down the arpeggio. The low F is blown flat because it says forte there, and everyone has to play forte. I don’t know who put that forte there anyway. I think you have to have a really great ability to control the clarinet before you get into that. That’s why when I do Mozart with a younger student, I’ll do the beginning through the exposition only for a while. The third movement of the Mozart Concerto presents real problems because that’s one of those issues we talked about earlier with regard to articulation. You actually have to keep the air going or it sounds bad. So anyway, what do I look for? I look for when their fingers are really even, when I feel like they can make phrases without me telling them, when they can make phrases within phrases, and when their technique is pretty even, so they don’t get to the end of the exposition and every open G pops out in the arpeggios.

Brahms is just given way to early for most students, and they just don’t get it. I mean, I’m forty-eight, and I don’t think that I get it. There are just so many things about it that are so difficult to make happen. If I’m going to give it to someone, I will give them
the E-flat before I give the F minor. I think that the E-flat plays itself a little better than the F minor does. When I give it to them is when I feel that they can play phrases without me showing them how every phrase goes, without me putting little hairpins in everything, and when I think that they can make music without changing tempos all over the place.

We had an audition here just the other day for the doctoral program, and his Brahms had some great ideas in it, but every single time he had a cadence, he slowed down. You can’t do that. Sometimes you just have to play through things and let the music take care of it.

I just think that is a maturity level thing. It depends on each individual student, but when they can play a phrase, when they don’t have major technical issues is when I’ll allow them to try it. Also, one of the other things is when they can work with a piano player, and not just plug along and expect the piano player to follow them. I mean when they can actually work with a piano player. I think that’s really important.

9. Do you have a set of core pieces that every student learns, or do you tailor the curriculum for each individual student?

One of my colleagues has a list that every student learns. He’s got every level on his list. Now, there’s something to be said for that; I don’t work well with that personally for a number of reasons. One of the reasons that I don’t deal well with it is that I teach twenty-four lessons a week. I just can’t stand to hear the same music over and over again. That may sound really trite, but you just get to a certain point where you want to hear other things. The other reason is that I want students to hear something they have never heard before. When they’re out teaching, they can say, “You know, there’s this piece I heard. I think this might be good for you.” Those are the two big reasons right there.
Every student has to do part of Mozart, part of Weber, and if they don’t do Debussy, something very similar to Debussy like Pierne’s *Andante Scherzo*. I mean, there are some students that I’ve had through the years that are now unbelievable teachers in the area of music education who were never going to play at a certain level to play Debussy, but they did do something like it. Other than that, I just don’t want my students to go never having done some traditional pieces. I think that particularly in what I do, it’s very easy for me to have my students not do enough traditional pieces.

10. There are many masterworks that all of us return to throughout our careers; what are some examples of teaching pieces that are valuable to learn but may not necessarily be revisited?

I don’t think that everybody plays the Stamitz concertos as much. Occasionally you’ll hear them played, but they’re really good teaching pieces. You may never play the Mozart *Four Church Sonatas*. The Gade *Fantasy Pieces* is another you might not play on a regular basis. You probably won’t return to the Szalowski Sonatina over and over again, but those are good pieces to learn. I think the biggest ones would be the early Classical concertos. You’ve got to use those. I’ve got a pretty good library of those, and the reason is that when I was teaching in Iowa at the beginning, those types of teaching pieces may have lasted into their junior year! You need to develop a good teaching repertoire.

11. Do you approach music education students differently than performance majors? Explain.
I have been complained to about this on both sides. When I get my evaluations back, it used to be that my education students said that I made them feel that they were second-class citizens if they couldn’t play like the performance majors. Now I get comments back, “He treats us all equally,” which I try to do. I feel that the education majors need to know how to play as well as the performance people. The thing that might actually change is the amount of literature they can get through versus the performance students. I think that would be the main difference. It just takes an enormous amount of time, plus they’re out observing other schools, and then of course student teaching time. You’re limited a little by the amount of time they have. I do think that there is a bit of a problem here because I know that a lot of my colleagues here refer to the performance students as the majors and the education majors as the non-majors. I think these education students are the future! So, I think if I had a huge flaw in my teaching, there are two actually, but I think that this is one of them, that I wouldn’t treat people differently.

The education majors are required to give a senior recital. I like the recital issue, if for no other reason than for some of those kids, it may be the only time they ever do a full recital, and I think it’s important that they know what their students are going through. They need to know what it feels like in your stomach just before you walk out. This is something that we’ve all experienced. Some people say, “Oh, I don’t get nervous,” they’re lying. They are lying through their teeth because everybody gets nervous. They’ve got to know what their kids are going through when they take them to contests and their kids are getting shaky and playing wildly.
12. What pieces have you used in the past to help students break out of their shell and become individual and charismatic performers?

The Weber Concertos are really good. You can make the students change articulation; you can make them change dynamics. I would have to look at an actual manuscript to see what he actually wrote, which is probably pretty minimal. I think most of the time it really helps them break out. Other pieces I have used are Osborne’s *Rhapsody*, Schumann’s *Fantasy Pieces*, Eric Mandat’s music, Tower’s *Wings*, and essentially anything that does not have a standard interpretation that one might be held up to. When I started really getting into new music, it was actually because I wanted to do something that nobody knew. I got into new music because my teachers didn’t know it, and they let me do what I wanted to do. That to me was a way of breaking out of a shell. I teach with anything that does not have a standard interpretation. I think that is really important. Then the students feel like they can be free.

13. What is your stance on electronic music? At what maturity level do you encourage students to pursue electronic pieces?

There are a lot of tape pieces. Most of them I don’t use much anymore because they’re so hokey. They haven’t been written for a long time, and those that have been are just so hokey that people don’t want to do them. That is unfortunate, because some of them are actually kind of neat. The other side of it is that one of the problems with electronic music now is that you never know when something is going to break down on you. I try to get everyone to do some kind of electronic piece. At what maturity level? Just as soon as they get the basics in place. There are a couple relatively easy pieces you
can do with them. Another problem with a lot of them is that you get old reel to reel tapes with a lot of hissing, and you have to transfer them to a CD. It’s kind of a pain. The new repertoire is using technology that is sometimes hard for students to deal with. The problem is that the technology has come farther than what a student is able to comprehend on a regular basis.

14. Which pieces have you taught that are exclusively suited for graduate levels clarinetists? What makes these works too difficult for undergraduates?

Pieces that have technical issues that requires a certain level of performance that might be more than undergraduates have. It may not necessarily be technical finger techniques; it may be musical techniques; it may be electronic techniques; it may be timing techniques; it may be the ability to spend eight weeks on a piece of music. Some of them like the Tower Concerto took me nine months to learn. The Tower Fantasy took me nine months to learn, just to be able to play all those things. It depends greatly on the individual.

15. How have your expectations as a teacher influenced your students’ musical growth?

Actually, I think that my students play better now than they did before my career took off as a performer. I think it is because I do so much of it now that I expect them to live to the level that I am playing at. That may be nonsense, but I guess that when I get back from a trip, get off the plane at Sky Harbor, go to my car, drive in here, haul my stuff in here, sit down and play, I want to hear them play like I just played the night before. I
think they are playing better because of that. My expectations have gone up. I think that students can rise to meet your expectations to a certain extent. If your expectations are low, they will play to that level. I don’t think that they mean to. I just think that the more you expect out of them, the more you are able to get. There are certain time commitments that they are never going to get beyond. Some give up; others flourish. I am losing younger students because I expect more than they think they can do at that time. About five years ago I decided to quit watering weeds. Now, when I was a young teacher working at a small school, I had to water the weeds a little more because I to prune them back to make them look like a flower, and occasionally that would work. If a student is not going to work for me, generally I let them go because it is too hard of a field now for students who don’t have that inner desire. If the student does not grow with me, I let them go. I have no patience for those who have no drive. This has been a huge change in my teaching. I just don’t have patience if they don’t have the drive. I just don’t have the desire to teach them. There are times when I think maybe I would have been better off if I had given a little more of a chance to a student but after three or four weeks in a row where they are not doing something, my patience runs thin.

16. What do you tell a student who wants to be a concerto soloist for a career? How important is it for students to have the experience of playing as a soloist with an orchestra?

I say, “That’s not realistic.” Shifrin and Stoltzman are the only two, but they also play in a lot of other things. I don’t think it’s a realistic goal. I think that it is important to know these concertos, and I think it’s important to be able to play concertos. If you’re
going to work in that direction, then you should work in what both Stoltzman and Eddie Daniels have done and that is to work through the whole entertainment/jazz side of it.

I think it’s really important for students to get the chance to play in front of an orchestra, but it’s incredibly difficult to find those kinds of situations. With younger students, it’s almost impossible unless you can get them to play with their high school orchestra because they’re not going to win competitions against doctoral and piano students. It’s just not going to happen, but even playing with a band would work. That is where you really learn the concertos. That’s why I said with the Mozart Concerto that the first time I really learned it was when I played it with the orchestra. Then you find that the dynamics that you’ve always been taught don’t work! When it says “piano” there and you’ve got the strings in the background, “piano” takes on a whole new meaning. Copland is the same way. You find that you just don’t play that softly. You learn that everything has to be played out and that’s one reason I make students play with the piano lid up. It’s a whole different sound. You develop a piano sound that has some substance.

17. What is a typical workload for a lower classman (etudes, technical exercises, solos) versus an upper classman and graduate student?

Seventy-five percent of the time is spent on technique for younger students. Maybe I’m wrong, but like I said, technique has to be developed in these early stages. People may say that this is a backward approach to music, but realistically, we need technique to play the clarinet. Older students can and should have more of an emphasis on repertoire. Graduate students should be working almost exclusively on repertoire. The only reason I’m so adamant about this is because of the number of graduate students that I get that
can’t play technical things. I just feel like my hands are tied. I mean, how many pieces
can you pull out that have things that they can’t do.
1. What do you listen for in a freshman audition?

You want to hear an opinion. By in large, you want to hear people who are playing with heart, with an opinion, a point of view. That’s got to be step one. I want to hear personality. Wild and out of control? Sure. That I can shape, but if there’s nothing there, and you’ve got to make them into a person, then that’s hard.

2. How does that differ from an incoming graduate student?

The thing is, particularly with the masters degree at most institutions in this country, is that they are one-year, which is completely ridiculous, or two-year programs. My rule of thumb is that it takes me three years to get somebody to play where I want him or her to go, and that’s with them being on board from day one. Some can make it shorter, two years, or a year and a half on a rare occasion, but right around three years. I can get a junior to play much better than most masters students that come in, so they’re at a little bit of a disadvantage to audition here. The program is only two years, so if I’m thinking a three-year timeline, I never get them to where I want them to be! As you can imagine, I’m a little pickier about what I accept. For the doctoral level, they have to be young professionals. We can’t say, “Oh this would be a good student, but the rhythm is a little…and the tone is a little…” They’re not a doctoral student; they’re not doctoral material.

3. What pieces have you used in the past to teach extended techniques? Why?

Well, to tell you the truth, I don’t do a lot. I’m pretty conservative, I think. I’ve done a bit of it. I used to play with the University of Illinois Contemporary Chamber players, but mostly on flute. Flute is much easier to do most of that. You can do cool things. On
clarinet it sounds kind of goofy sometimes. I have a couple of clarinet and tape pieces, and I can do that stuff, but I’m not so interested in it. Caravan’s Excursions and Preliminary Exercises in Polychromatic Diversions are two books that are as good as any in teaching people.

4. What pieces have you used to help a student with articulation problems? Why?

I would rather fix problems in exercises. Interestingly enough, I remember some years ago, half a dozen years ago I had a young lady come play for me who was a senior in high school. She had a really heavy, slow tongue, and I said, “So what are you doing with your teacher to work on articulation?” She said, “Oh, we’re doing the Kell Staccato book.” I’m thinking, “Oh, this is just great. This is just cementing this sucker right in. She’s doing page after page of heavy, thuddy, slow tonguing.” I thought, “What’s wrong with this picture? You know—fix the technique! Don’t just keep doing the same thing over and over and over.” It’s like rewarding bad behavior. She’ll never get out of it. The earliest impressions are the most long-lasting ones, mentally and muscually, so they better be right from the start. The longer you go without fixing them, the harder they are, and the more impossible to fix. Someone should have caught that when she was ten or twelve, rather than when she was seventeen or eighteen. Suddenly you’ve got to not staccato. You’ve got to go back to a brushy “the-the-the” and let the tongue relax, and let the tongue motion reduce itself, and that’s not going to happen overnight. My job is to fix things on exercises that are appropriate, not in the pieces. Let’s get your face together, your articulation together, your tone, then you can play the piece! It becomes an
impossible task if you are trying to fix your sound in the Mozart or a Brahms; that’s crazy!

5. What pieces have you used to help a student mature as a musician? Why?

There’s so much wonderful literature. I like to spend a good bit of time with them playing pieces from 1780 to 1830. Think about if we didn’t have that fifty-year chunk of time; Mozart, Spohr, Weber, Krommer, Xavier LeFevre, Devienne, Bermann. There are some little simple pieces by Bermann I like to have them play because I think the musicality is pretty straightforward, four and eight-bar phrases, themes and variations, technical demands that are moderate in most cases if you’re careful with the pieces you’re choosing. Students come in playing pieces from their high school teachers. In many cases, that student was the best that the teacher had in many years, or had ever had, so they want them to do literature that they studied in college. One of the big adjustments for a pedagogue or potential pedagogue coming out of college is to wrench down your expectations, find a whole body of literature that you’ve never dealt with, because that’s what your students are going to need. Their embouchure has to be solid. They have to be able to do downward slurs across the break without losing the sound or screwing up the pitch. There’s got to be solidity in their embouchure. When those are in place, then they can start moving music from one register to another without having the mechanics break down. If the mechanics are breaking down, you’ve got to spend time on the mechanics.

6. What technical goals do you have for your students when they graduate?

Undergraduate vs. Graduate?
It’s sort of a cliché to say it, but “To be the best they can be.” It works for the U.S. army, and it works for me. That’s really all we are ever trying to do. We are trying to divine what these people are capable of doing. My job here is not usually to light fires on people, but to cool them down and have the fires be the balance. I can be a taskmaster, and I’ve been in situations where I’ve had to be. Most of the time the kids are harder on themselves than I would be or should be.

7. Which pieces that have been written since 1980, do you consistently use in your teaching?

The Muczynski Time Pieces come to mind. I think that everyone would agree that it is the most commonly played piece in this country. Still, there are people around the world that have never heard it, so it’s primarily an American piece. The Corigliano Concerto I suppose is often played, and that is played around the world. The Horowitz Sonatine. My little student Julian Bliss is recording that next week for EMI, so last week he and his accompanist went over and played it for Mr. Horowitz in his parlor, and he gave his impression. That’s a good piece. He also has another good piece, the Sonata, but the Sonatine is very effective. It has clear jazz and pop. Curiously enough, Horowitz hates to have anyone swing it.

8. Technically speaking, the Mozart Concerto and the Brahms sonatas aren’t terribly difficult, but their difficulty is in musicality. How do you determine when a student should study these standard works?
Someone said the other day, “What’s the big deal about the Mozart? I don’t find it all that hard. Why does everyone say it’s such a great work and so difficult?” I’m thinking, “It would be an absolute waste of time to take this student by the lapels and put him in a corner and lecture him about it because he doesn’t have the proper background yet.” It’s like a naïve freshman. They’re not ready for it. You can help get them to be sensitive to simpler musical things to understand, the Classic period in particular.

9. Do you have a set of core pieces that every student learns, or do you tailor the curriculum for each individual student?

I would say the curriculum is tailored for each student. A lot of it is based on where they’ve been. I don’t want to go over the same old ground. I think clarinet teachers should be told you cannot play the Mozart, the two Brahms Sonatas, the Poulenc, the Schumann, the Martinu, the Saint-Sains. Fill out your top ten or twelve pieces. Now what are you going to teach? “Ugh….” A good many people would be stopped in their tracks. I think the clarinet repertoire is a rich one. Those are good pieces for a reason. I still like, no matter how many times I’ve heard it, taught it, and played it, the Weber Concertino. It’s a wonderful piece. I don’t ever get tired of hearing it. I try to do a better job of explaining it every time. I like to explore other parts of the repertoire and find a piece that is tailor-made for the student. You know their strengths. You know their weaknesses. If the piece breaks them, that’s my fault. I was not a good teacher. For the most part, all my students are doing different pieces. Now, in the group lessons, the pieces are less traveled pieces that I know none of the people in the classes have done. We listen to a recording
of it and play it. That would be one of the only situations in which I have multiple people
do the same piece.

10. There are many masterworks that all of us return to throughout our careers; what
are some examples of teaching pieces that are valuable to learn but may not
necessarily be revisited?

I think if any piece is worth studying, it’s worth playing, and maybe it’s worth
coming back to because you’ll change. When you come back to it, you better do it
differently, hopefully better.

11. Do you approach music education students differently than performance majors?
   Explain.

I try to get them to be the best they can. I know music education has other agendas.
They’re in more classes, and they don’t have as much time to practice. In the fall
semester when they have to be in marching band, we’re lucky if we can get them to
practice at all. I hate it, and I regularly tell them, “Go out on the field without a reed.
Fake play. Don’t leave your chops on the fifty-yard line. If you have to do it, just
pretend.” They obviously can’t practice as much. In a weird sort of way, if we are not to
see the end of classical music as we know it, it’s more important that those people go out
with an enthusiasm to teach, and be capable of playing with a fine characteristic sound,
decent technique, and an understanding of musicality than it is for the performance
majors. Performance majors can only hurt themselves. Music Education majors have the
chance to hurt a whole lot of people around them.
12. What pieces have you used in the past to help students break out of their shell and become individual and charismatic performers?

I don't know that there are pieces like that. Sometimes I think we can do a better job of freeing them on technical exercises than we can on pieces. Maybe some strange, cadenza-like unaccompanied piece would allow potentiality for greater freedom. I was making the point today that warm-ups are boring because we play them boring. We play mono dynamically. What’s to be gained from that? There’s a book in use that is two volumes of a bunch of nothing. There is not one crescendo or decrescendo in two volumes. Do you think the kids are going to just do it if you don’t push them, encourage them, or make suggestions? On the flip-side of the coin, that’s why I enforce a structure. Structure for tone, structure for technique, and structure for rhythm. We have a rigid approach in teaching technique and rhythm; why can’t we have that same approach with musicality? Give them a framework that works, that’s valid and logical. It’s sort of formulaic, but start from there. It’s not a far step then to make that person an individual, but if you don’t start with that, if you don’t give them that framework, they can’t learn individuality.

13. What is your stance on electronic music? At what maturity level do you encourage students to pursue electronic pieces?

I’ve done a few over the years. Some of it is good and some is funny. A lot of it can be ugly. I tend to favor where the clarinet is another instrument, not just another accompaniment, but fits into the tape. Clearly it would be senior/graduate level. They
have to assume command of the instrument. They can’t be thinking nuts and bolts of moving their fingers and making good tone.

14. Which pieces have you taught that are exclusively suited for graduate levels clarinetists? What makes these works too difficult for undergraduates?

There are the pieces that require big technique: the Nielsen, the Francaix, a lot of the French literature, Bozza, Tomasi, in some cases the Bassi or some of the opera paraphrases. I think talent cuts across that. I give students pieces that they are ready for, regardless of what that age might be. Sometimes I’m still waiting for graduate students to play musically. In some cases I can give Brahms to a freshman. It’s a continuum. I don’t think, “This is graduate stuff, this is undergraduate stuff.” In your mind you do have an expectation that they should be able to do this body of literature, but it doesn’t always go that way. Sometimes I think we measure our progress in “higher, faster, louder.” “Oh, I’m doing the Nielsen, I’ve arrived!” Well, why don’t you do the Baermann Adagio and make us melt?

15. How have your expectations as a teacher influenced your students’ musical growth?

I don’t cut them any slack. I have high standards for myself, and I think that I set a good example. It’s a tough business. There is no coasting. There is no “I’ll take the night off.” It’s got to be as good as they can achieve. You have to have high standards for them. You have a feeling that they fit into a junior level, a first-year masters, but there is something more to that. I’m almost harder on those that are already above where they
would normally be expected to be and aren’t achieving what they’re capable of achieving than I am on those who are working their hardest and still can’t quite get where they need to be. I applaud the work ethic. I think of the tortoise and the hare. The tortoise is going to get there, and those people will find a place for themselves in the world. The hare might, but they get diverted. I put value in good old-fashioned work ethic.

16. How important is it to have your students prepare concertos, versus other solo works? Besides Copland, Debussy, and Mozart, which concertos do you consistently teach and why?

We’ll do the typical concertos. We have to do the Mozart, the Copland, the Webers, Krommer…Sometimes we hear so much Weber and Krommer with piano that we think, “those aren’t concertos.” Maybe the Krommer Double Concerto as well. I have a young lady who just came in from Paris. She’s been studying in Paris for ten years with all the big clarinetists and she’s twenty-nine. She’s an incredible player. She won the concerto competition in the clarinet department three weeks after she arrived on campus. She wants to do that. We have to have our goals and aspirations, but they have to be tempered by reality. Even thinking Symphony Orchestra is a stretch. We’re currently going through a bad time for those ensembles, and a lot of people are looking for other kinds of jobs. Orchestras are folding. You’ve got to be pretty pragmatic in dealing with a plethora of things out there. Say to yourself, “I’m going to learn to play the whole clarinet family. After I learn the whole clarinet family, I’ll learn a little saxophone. I’ll learn to play a little bit of jazz. I want to be a good soloist when I have to. When I sit with an orchestra,
I want to blend in.” I try to teach versatility. That’s been my background, to do a variety of things. I think it’s a potentially employable type of thing.

17. What is a typical workload for a lower classman (etudes, technical exercises, solos) versus an upper classman and graduate student?

I think it’s fair to say that half to two-thirds of the lesson with me for an underclassman would be drills: interval studies, long tones, drills, patterns, exercises, and then twenty minutes we’d probably get into some interpretive time. That would probably be flipped around with the graduate student. Particularly with the graduate students, I end up teaching them things they’ve already had, but in a new way. I try to package my technique in a way that keeps the brain working. All the patterns aren’t written out. They’re starting on different degrees of the scale. Clearly, muscles require repetition, and that’s a bit mindless, so I try to package it in an interesting and different way, so that the mind stays engaged while you exercise the body.

For the graduate students, I sometimes have them survey pieces in their lessons to solve the problem of them not knowing any solos appropriate for high school kids. I think that there are different depths of learning you can do on pieces. Some are survey pieces, some we study in depth, and others we perform. We won’t perform everything. Sometimes it’s just a precursory overlook at it, just to get a feeling for it, and it may be a long way from being perfected. There are three or four depths to learning. There is that place in a classical piece where people say, “Man, you really own that.” It was like you had your name written all over it. There’s something in your fiber. From that type of total immersion to something that is just barely known, each has its value. One’s going to be a
teaching piece, and they are totally different scenarios. One might be a great piece to go out and play for a rotary club or church. It goes back to “We measure ourselves incrementally by the difficulty of the piece.” It’s fun to go out and play a simple little piece that people like. People don’t need a lot of notes to be impressed with you. It’s a big mistake that we as players make. That would be the nature of the balance of a lesson.