

admits, “This was a little bit of a stretch for me,” especially notating devices like bent notes and glissandi. He consulted clarinet players as part of his process. Dunlap did an excellent job.

Chords are provided for each tune and in almost every case the transcription starts with the melody. Most of the solos are rather intricate, a good challenge even for professional players, but I can also picture teachers sending intermediate players to the woodshed with some of these tunes. Recordings of nearly every piece are available on YouTube.

– Bob Jacobson

Sergio Brusca. *La scuola del clarinetto: A lezione dai grandi maestri (Clarinet School: Lessons with the Great Masters)*. Edizioni Curci, 2021. €23,00



La scuola del clarinetto is a new publication of the Italian clarinetist Sergio Brusca – active as the bass clarinetist in the Stark Quartet – published by Edizioni Curci.

This clarinet method has been

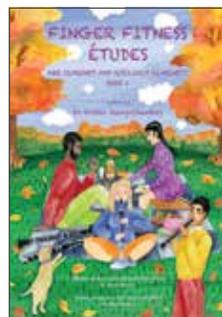
developed by an author experienced with many years of teaching activity. It is intended for beginners, students of public or private music schools, music high schools and local bands. Brusca has put together, in a very clever way, five units with a total of 135 small studies. They include a variety of exercises and simple clarinet trios, organized with gradually increasing degree of difficulty. The aim is for the student to develop correct control and technique on the instrument.

There are ample simple but important tips and there is an appendix with more demanding studies and difficult scales. The 20 chamber music pieces were conceived for students to have the opportunity to play together after even a few lessons. One innovative and strong feature in the method is the contribution of so many well-known Italian clarinetists who accepted to help Brusca by giving their ideas and theories to the young

clarinetists on all the different aspects of clarinet playing. These clarinetists are: P. Beltramini, C. Giuffredi, R. Parisi, C. Palermo, G. Mirabassi, P. Vincenti, V. Serangeli, A. Fraioli, J. Cipolla (American player of Italian origin), S. Berti, F. Belli, V. Baccari, D. Casadei and C. Cavallaro. The Italian clarinet scholar Adriano Amore has given his contribution as has Fulvio Creux, the conductor of leading Italian military bands. My personal contribution was to write a brief clarinet history. This new method is highly recommended, even though it is written in Italian (there may possibly be a future English translation) for the high didactic value of its content.

– Luigi Magistrelli

Kristen Denny-Chambers. *Finger Fitness Études for Clarinet and Auxiliary Clarinets, Book 2*. Clarinet Playground, 2021. clarinetplayground.com for print, digital, teacher and bundle prices.



If you have been loving Kristen Denny-Chambers's *Finger Fitness Études Book 1* (reviewed in Vol. 48, No. 2, March 2021), you will be glad to know that her Book 2 is now available.

Where Book 1 focused on small intervals of minor and major 2nds, and a few minor 3rds, Book 2 lets the player have a fun and joyous experience with major 3rds, 4ths, 5ths and minor 6ths all wrapped up in catchy tunes and rhythms. These one-page etudes will challenge a player in their third to fifth year of study with rhythmic variety, modulation to a closely related key in the middle of each etude and expressive use of chromatic variants. More experienced players will also grow from the focused practice of important fingering combinations. The beauty and craftsmanship of these lavish musical poems will perhaps be most appreciated by someone, such as this reviewer, in their 50th year of playing!

As in Book 1, about half of the etudes are given in a second version for bass

clarinet, mostly for a low C instrument. Anne Watson made the modifications, and she is just one of the many in Denny-Chambers's growing community. Andrew Simon was the primary editor and consultant for Book 2 and Trevor Stewart has recorded all 40 etudes in MP3 format – see the clarinetplayground.com website.

Book 2 has even more jazz-inspired etudes than Book 1, and thanks to Tom Puwalski's influence there is a two-page klezmer piece. Jazz and klezmer tips are included in the appendices along with all the “finger drill” combinations that are the organizing principle behind this 78-page triumph. Highly recommended.

– Gregory Barrett

SOLO CLARINET WORKS

Natalie Groom. *April 22nd*. www.nataliegroom.com/sheetmusic, 2020. \$15.00 (digital download)



Composer and clarinetist Natalie Groom's three-movement solo clarinet work *April 22nd* responds to powerful emotions stemming from an isolated seven-week government-

mandated lockdown during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. At the time of its composition, she was in the midst of service as a live-in artist in residence on the campus of a senior living retirement community. Groom describes anger, despair, grief, resentment and defiance as she watches the seemingly endless pandemic affect her livelihood and the wellbeing of the seniors surrounding her. Despite these obvious emotions and the composer's explicit notes to express them (*defiantly, angrily, restlessly*, etc.), the piece itself seems shot through with hopeful gestures, dancing from one movement to the next and culminating in a movement entitled “Resilience.” Nevertheless, she notes that the final vamp in the piece symbolizes “the never-ending drudgery of continuing to fight for normalcy, health and economic

sustainability for artists during a pandemic.”

The first movement, “Defiance,” dances brashly out of the gate with a syncopated groove. The groove eventually fragments and becomes nonchalant, morphing into indifferent legato ideas. After a pause, the initial motive returns in the upper register, expressing anger. Floating grief follows this aggressive outburst, and the movement finishes softly, wearily echoing the fragments from the beginning. The second movement, “Despair,” grieves and searches. Groom creates strong metric dissonances that contrast with the simplicity of “reminiscent” and “sad” figures. The movement gains restless momentum at its midpoint, culminating in a “triumphant” echo of the early syncopations. Like the first movement, this ends softly and slowly, echoing the initial motive. The final movement, “Resilience,” makes no apologies for its spunk and determination. It also presents performers with the greatest technical challenges, leaping quickly across registers and venturing into the seventh partial (altissimo A).

Overall, Groom keeps the technical demands accessible and idiomatic, and *April 22nd* could be approached by an advanced high school student. She brings a clarinetist’s sensibilities to the music, along with myriad opportunities for expression. In spite of the fact that a very serious situation led to the composition of this piece, it remains ineluctably fun to play and hear.

– Matthew Nelson

Armando Ghidoni. *Clarinetisticamente.*

Armando Ghidoni Music Collection, 2021. Contact Armando Ghidoni via Meta (Facebook) €12,00



Armando Ghidoni (b. 1959) is a French composer with Italian origins who blends elements of both influences in his music. This work was commissioned by

Zac Ligation for their 2021 online solo clarinet competition.

This is a fun and immediately accessible piece because some sections are sight-readable, within the standard playing range, and in the meter changes between common time and 6/8, the beat remains constant. The work begins with a lyrical cadenza *libero ad libitum* that leads into the main body of the work with three contrasting sections. The first, a rollicking jig, essentially in A minor, is briefly interrupted by a rock music feel. Next is a lyrical Andante that meanders harmonically before returning to its tonal center, also in A. It introduces a 16th-note syncopated figure that becomes an element in the return of the extended jig that will conclude the piece. The Andante is less convincing than the closing section, which is a frolic and a romp.

– Robert Riseling

DUOS

Manuel de Falla. *Suite popular española.*

Adaptación de Siete canciones populares españolas transcribed for bass clarinet by Lara Díaz. Manuel de Falla Ediciones, 2021. \$36.62



Lara Díaz is clarinet professor at the Salamanca Conservatory (Spain), the ICA national chair for Spain and a well-known bass clarinet performer. She has contributed considerably

to our repertory; either as soloist or as member of the *Trio Contrastes* (violin, clarinet and piano), her work in this regard is remarkable.

Her latest contribution is the transcription for bass clarinet and piano of the *Siete canciones populares españolas* by Manuel de Falla. The maestro wrote them for voice and piano in 1914 and soon they became very popular. In 1925 a version for violin and piano was made, and a year later, another for violoncello and piano.

“Falla works by elimination, by successive dispossession, up to bareness,” said the great Spanish poet Gerardo Diego in 1938. And this is quite true in his *Siete canciones*. They are very short pieces – the famous and beautiful *Nana (Lullaby)* is barely 29 bars long – with a clear piano accompaniment that is highly effective as a support to the melody.

Díaz’s knowledge of the bass clarinet is evident, giving us a totally idiomatic version for the instrument and at the same time being respectful of the original. The work is recommended for medium-advanced performers with a good command of the high notes. As recommended by Díaz in the preface, most of these notes can be played with open fingerings, thus taking advantage of the vocal quality of the bass clarinet sounds at the top of the second register.

The music has been published by Manuel de Falla Ediciones, a publishing firm linked to the *Archivo Manuel de Falla*, the place where the composer’s legacy is preserved. That this version is endorsed by this important institution gives us an idea of the excellence of this work.

– Pedro Rubio

Collection Jean-Guy Boisvert: Four suites

for clarinet and piano by Richard Gibson, Nicolas Gilbert, François-Hugues Leclair and Alain Perron in four volumes. Dobermann-Yppan publisher, 2019. Print edition: \$15.00 to \$20.00, digital: \$13.50 to \$18.00

If there is one initiative to be welcomed, it is that of Jean-Guy Boisvert, distinguished clarinetist and professor at the Université de Moncton in Canada. His *Belle aventure* is a commission of 150 works for clarinet by leading Canadian composers, dedicated to young clarinet players. The first compilation, consisting of

