

Bassoon Music Reviews

By **Ronald Klimko**
 Moscow, Idaho

WORKS FOR SOLO BASSOON AND ORCHESTRAL STUDIES

Hugh Aitken: Montages:

Partita for Solo Bassoon (New York, Oxford University Press 97.201) \$1.50.

This is a very interesting, short set of ten variations for solo bassoon based on several thematic-motivic ideas which the composer presents early in the work and develops throughout. The style is generally atonal, but not overly disjunct or pointillistic. Although the work encompasses the entire range of the bassoon, it only ascends to high c#2. Each short movement/variation is in a new tempo and conveys a different mood. The overall effect of the work is quite striking, although its technical demands are enough to give it an overall IV-rating. It is a nice work, however, and I can recommend it strongly for the advanced player.

Tanis Tramontin: Five Tableaux for Solo Bassoon (1999 Camerida Music)

This is a pleasant, neo-classical work in five short movements. Its overall style is expanded tonality, and generally lyrical. The five tableaux are entitled: "Vigorous, Scherzetto, Pastoral, Romance, and Three Legged Waltz". The range is very limited-ascending only to high a flat. Technically it is about III+ in difficulty, capable of performance by an advanced student as well as by the professional performer.

Werner Seltmann and Günter Angerhöfer: Orchesterstudien: Book 6: Richard Wagner (Fh 7070); Book 7: Offenbach, Franck, Smetana, Borodin, Brahms, Ponchielli, Saint-Saëns, Balakirev, Bizet, Mussorgsky, and Strauss (Fh7071); Book 8: Tchaikovsky, Dvorák, Rimsky-Korsakov (Fh7072); Book 9: Janáček, Humperdinck, Martucci, Elgar, Leoncavallo, Puccini (Fh 7073); and Book 10: Mahler, Debussy, Mascagni (FH 7074). Friedrich Hofmeister Musikverlag, Hofheim and Leipzig, Germany.

These are the final five volumes, which comprise the completion of the Seltman/Angerhöfer project of a highly comprehensive set of major orchestral studies. It is the obvious replacement and successor to the old Ricordi

Stadio studies. Each volume varies in size from a minimum of 27 (Book 9) to a maximum of 44 (Book 8) pages. Unlike the earlier Stadio studies, however, each excerpt is quite extensive, encompassing the entire difficult passage, and each is clearly separated and marked with the tempo changes, dynamics, etc., as they occur in the original score. The printing is beautifully clear on very high quality paper.

To give you an idea of how comprehensive the coverage is in each volume, the following works by Tchaikovsky are covered in Book 8: *Symphonies* 1-6 (including the rare first 3 symphonies!), *Manfred*, *Suites 1-3*, *Francesca da Rimini*, *Capriccio Italien*, *Schwanensee*, *Dornröschen*, *Nutcracker Suite*, *Eugene Onegin*, and *Pique Dame*. The Wagner book (6) contains excerpts from all his operas from *The Flying Dutchman* to *Parsifal*, and including the *Siegfried Idyll*. For those of you who aspire to an orchestral bassoon position in the future, or are in a good job and looking for a Stadio upgrade, this is the set for you. The nice thing about having each in a separate volume is that you can buy them as you need them. I recommend this excellent-now completed-series strongly to you.

WORKS FOR BASSOON AND PIANO (OR TAPE)

Leland Forsblad: Triparta for Bassoon and Piano (Larry Gardner, 6167 Tracy Ave., Fresno, CA 93722-3261. Tel: (209) 271-1451)

This is a very well written 3-movement neotonal work written for and published by bassoonist **Larry Gardner**. The style is an assertive, lyrical, "Americana-type" character. The outer movements are in F major and the middle in F minor. The movement is a traditional fast-slow-fast format and the technical demands are not excessive, making it a strong level III technically. The highest note is c2 and even these are logically and easily reached. The entire work has a warm, friendly feeling to it, making it a solid choice for a fairly short (ca. 8 minutes), moderately modern piece which is sure to be an audience pleaser. Although the composer is unknown to me, the score indicates that he is a member of ASCAP. I recommend this nice work to you for contrast on your next recital.

Michael Burns: Swamp Song (1997) for Bassoon and Tape (Michael Burns, School of Music, UNCG, P.O. Box 26167, Greensboro, NC 27402-6167, tel: (336) 334-5970, fax: (336) 334-5497, e-mail: mjburns@uncg.edu)

Bassoonist-composer **Michael Burns**, has written a fascinating, ca. 10 minute work for bassoon with an electronic music tape for accompaniment. Although decidedly modern, with a few sections in multiphonics, (all carefully fingered for the performer in the appendix), the style is still quite lyrical at times and is not overly disjunct or pointillistic. It is fairly demanding technically, however, ascending to a high e-flat2, it is a strong level IV- in difficulty, demanding a definitely advanced bassoonist. Co-ordination with the tape is carefully indicated in the score generally, but there is a long 44 second section where the composer instructs the performer to: "Improvise - GO WILD! Start frantic and gradually get softer and more spasmodic." Overall, it is a very attractive composition, ending in a lovely lyrical theme, followed by the bassoonist tonguing on the reedless bocal in the bass register, following the gradual fadeout of the taped sounds-nice touch!

I strongly recommend this modern-but-accessible new work to the advanced bassoonist for his or her next recital.

Jerome Besozzi (1713-1786): Sonata in B flat Major for Bassoon and Keyboard (Edited by William Waterhouse) Oxford University Press, ISBN 0 19 355505, \$11.95

This is a re-publication, I believe, of a 1963 edition of this very nice three-movement work. It is a wonderfully "Baroque-style" composition, all the more valuable because technically it is an easy level II in overall difficulty. As such, it could be the first Baroque work for a talented beginning student, or equally valuable to someone struggling with learning the Baroque bassoon! There is only one short section in tenor clef-suitable for introduction of that clef to a beginner-and it encompasses a simple range from low G to high g. The second movement requires some careful attention to the subdivided rhythm, but this could also be a valuable teaching tool to a young student. The very versatility of the work, however, does not rule out its use by an advanced student as well. It is a piece "ripe" for additional ornamentation by the skillful artist. The editing by William Waterhouse is very clearly and logically done. I

recommend this piece for EVERY bassoonist's library as a versatile and, more importantly beautiful piece of Baroque music.

David S. Kirby: Reverie and Dance for Bassoon and Piano (Michael Burns-see address above)

Bassoonist **Michael Burns** sent me this work, along with his own reviewed above. I know nothing of the composer, but it is a very nice level III+ work worthy of a larger audience. It is a one movement slow-fast-slow format, written in an expanded tonal style. The melodic style is smooth and not overly disjunct. The range is only to high c2, appearing only as the last note of the work and reached by scale. The most difficult part is in the mixed meters (5/8-3/4-7/8 alterations) in the Dance movement. Even here, however, the technical demands are not too extreme, and a talented student could easily master it. Overall it is a nice, accessible, rhythmic composition that would probably go over very well to the audience. I recommend it strongly to you.

BASSOON CONCERTI

(Editor's Note: The following four Concerti are not new works, but are now available in either new transcriptions or with piano accompaniment.)

Antonio Vivaldi: Bassoon Concerto in A minor, F. VIII, No. 7 (Transcribed for Bassoon and Guitar Ensemble by Bryan Johanson) Editions VIENTO (8711 SW 42nd Ave., Portland, OR 97219-3571. Tel/fax: 503/244-3060. EV 905)

This is a nice transcription for a 4-guitar accompaniment to one of Vivaldi's most popular bassoon concerti. Bryan Johanson is resident composer and guitar instructor at Portland State University. This is another of the fine publications by Editions VIENTO, which is the labor of love of retired PSU bassoon professor **Gordon Solie**. As with all of his editions, both the score and parts are beautifully engraved, with the score in smaller notes and the parts in very legible larger script. If you are looking for a practical (and inexpensive!) accompaniment for this work, this arrangement might just be your "cup of tea"!

Ray Luke: Concerto for Bassoon and Orchestra (1965) (Edition for Bassoon and Piano) Oxford University Press (Full score and parts available on rental from the publisher.)

This *Concerto* was commissioned by Guy Fraser Harrison for the late bassoonist **Elizabeth (Betty) Johnson** and the Oklahoma City

Symphony, and was first performed in Oklahoma City in March, 1965. It has been recorded by ____ on _____. It is written in a traditional 3 movement format and an expanded tonal style. The melodic writing is rhythmic, especially the last movement, but generally lyrical. Well written for the bassoon, the work is not overly difficult, rising only to a2 rangewise, and is a level III+ in difficulty, capable of performance by an advanced student. Most of the formal structure is based on an ABA format, and the second movement is quite lovely and lyrical.

David Amram: Bassoon Concerto (1970)
(Reduction for Bassoon and Piano by the
composer) C.F. Peters, 70-30 80th St., Glendale,
NY 11385 Tel: (718) 416-7800, Fax: (718) 416-
7805, e-mail: sales@cfpeters-ny.com \$17.95
(Orchestral parts available for rental.)

David Amram wrote this interesting *Concerto* for retired National Symphony principal bassoonist **Kenneth Pasmanick**, who has recorded it on Newport Classics NPD 85584. Its style is described very well by the composer in his Notes in the front of the score: "The combination of the language of jazz and European classical techniques provide the rich palette of rhythms, sounds and textures on which the concerto is built. The piano reduction also makes it possible to perform as a duo." Both the score and the bassoon part are clearly handwritten, probably in the composer's hand. The bassoon part is not overly difficult rangewise, rising only to high d flat2, but the performance would require very careful preparation of a fairly intricate part and a good "feeling" for jazz. The work alternates often between so-called "straight" and jazz sections. There is also an extensive written-out cadenza in the first movement. Because of this, I would rate the work as a solid IV in difficulty-possibly even a IV+ because of the jazz element. The piece is in three movements, although the short 3rd movement is more like an epilogue. One nice touch to the work is that the piano score has a wire spiral binding, making it extra easy for use on a piano music stand. Overall it is a nice work and, as the composer notes, deserves to reach a larger audience.

Joseph Haydn: Concerto in F Major for
Bassoon and Orchestra (Piano Reduction)
Arranged and Reconstructed from the Concerto
in C Major for Oboe and Orchestra Hob.VIIg:C1
by Mordechai Rechtman. Collection Mordechai
Rechtman: Accolade Musikverlag (D-83607
Holzkirchen, Austria) ACC.R004

This is the "standard" Haydn *Oboe Concerto*

transcribed for bassoon. More than a transcription, the work has been reconstructed in the orchestral parts with material in addition to the original, transposed from C to F major, and arranged not only for bassoon and piano, but also available for bassoon and orchestra *and* in a bassoon and string trio version!

The bassoon part, as is typical of Mordechai, is very carefully edited, with even nicely written cadenzas provided for both the first and second movements. Overall the piece works very well in this new guise for bassoon. Technically it is a solid level III+, requiring, as the original probably would, at least an advanced student for a solid performance. Once again we have Mordechai Rechtman to thank for expanding our bassoon repertoire!

WORKS FOR VOICE WITH BASSOON

José Ruiz (Spanish 17th Century): Lamen-
tation: Aria for Tenor, Two Oboes and
Continuo (EV 706) Editions VIENTO (Address
previously given) \$8.00

Juán de Navas (17th Cent. Spain) "La Rosa Que
Reyna": Aria for Soprano, Two Oboes and
Continuo (EV 706) Editions VIENTO \$8.00

Sebastian Duron/José Martínez de Arze (17th
Cent. Spain): "Abril Floreciente": Aria for Alto,
Two Oboes, Bassoon and Continuo (EV 708)
Editions VIENTO \$8.00

The first two arias feature the bassoon (or cello) only as the bass of the continuo realization, and as such, are very easy. The third has a very easy, but separate bassoon part. The duo oboes in all three arias look to be a level II+ in difficulty overall.

Diego Duron (17th Cent. Spain): "Resuene
En El Orbe": Aria for Contralto, Oboe, English
Horn (Oboe II), Two Bassoons and Continuo
(EV 709) Editions VIENTO \$10.00

This is a more extensive work and involves some interesting counterpoint between all the instrumental parts. The parts also include an adaptation of the English horn part for second oboe. Finally, as with all the Editions VIENTO, the score is printed in smaller notes, but the parts are clearly printed in large, easy to read music. Of all the 17th Century Spanish works listed above, this one seems the most interesting and colorful.

Robert H. Bowers (music) and Francis DeWitt (lyrics): "The Moon Shines on the Moonshine" (Humorous Prohibition Song with Optional Bassoon Part) Arr. by Gordon Solie (EV 710) Editions VIENTO.

This is a great, cute, short, "encore-type" piece for any voice (range only to high f) optional (drunken) bassoon (lots of gliss.!) , and piano. It could be lots of fun at the end of a recital (or at the party following!!).

MUSIC FOR BASSOON AND OTHER WOODWINDS

W.A. Mozart: Duo-Sonate KV 292 for Flute (or Oboe, Clarinet in B flat, Violin) and Bassoon (or Cello) Collection Mordechai Rechtman. Accolade Musicverlag ACC. R005 (Address previously given).

This is a re-arrangement of the traditional *Sonata for Bassoon and Cello* for a treble and a bass instrument. By transposing the work from its original key of B flat Major to F Major, the work fits very well as a duo for this new combination(s) of instrument.

Georges Adam Goepfert (c.1727-c.1809): Six Easy Duos, Op. 30 for Clarinet in B flat and Bassoon (with an added part for Bass Clarinet) Vol. I: Duos 1-3 (EV 205) Vol. II: Duos 4-6 (EV 206) Editions VIENTO (Address previously given) \$14.00 for each volume.

Georges Goepfert, previously known to bassoonists only as the composer of the *Sonata for Bassoon and Guitar*, makes a new appearance here as the author of these six very nice 3 movement *Duo-Sonatas* for clarinet and bassoon. Each separate duo is in a different key and, within the Classical style tradition, a different mood and tempo. All of them are readily capable of being sightread with ease by reasonably advanced students at about a level III- ability. Only the second *Duo* in g minor, with its arpeggiated "Alberti bass" passages should provide any problems for the bassoonist. The range is very modest throughout, and tenor clef is never used. They should be delightful works to "rattle off" with your clarinet colleagues in informal get-togethers, or possible as recital (or audition) pieces. At any rate, they could be a useable addition to your chamber music library.

Clyde Thompson: Four Miniatures for Woodwind Trio: Flute, Oboe and Bassoon Editions VIENTO (EV 315) (Address previously given.)

These are four short, but technically demanding pieces for woodwind trio by the Oregon based composer. They are definitely for an advanced ensemble, featuring rapid rhythmic and metric changes and the full range of all three instruments. Despite this level IV- of difficulty, the works are very striking and interesting, conveying a variety of moods and expression. The style is expanded tonality, highly rhythmic, but not overly pointillistic. They are a nice addition to the meager repertoire for this particular trio combination of wind instruments. As such, I recommend them strongly as a nice "change of pace" work for your next woodwind ensemble recital.

Michael Burns: Riffs for Flute, Bassoon and Piano (1997-1998): (Contact Michael Burns-address previously given)

Bassoonist/Composer **Michael Burns** gives us two delightful, jazzy works here-not overly difficult technically, but a lot of fun to play. The first *Riff* is a Waltz in 3 and the second a more extensive Shuffle in 4. Written in 9/8 and 12/8, the composer leaves it up to the performer to "make it swing", which is the primary reason for its level IV- (possibly a III+ to a "jazzier") rating. The bassoon part only ascends to high c2, and except for some occasionally complicated rhythms and grace notes, is really quite playable. If you are looking for a "different" work for your next recital, this one looks particularly appealing as one that could be lots of fun to play!

WORKS FOR BASSOON AND STRINGS

W.A. Mozart: Adagio in F Major KV 580a for Bassoon and String Trio (or Piano): Collection Mordechai Rechtman: Accolade Musicverlag (ACC.R003)

This is another wonderful arrangement (more a reconstruction!) of a work left unfinished at Mozart's death. Originally for English horn and an unspecified accompaniment and in C Major, Mordechai has transposed it to F Major and completely added the accompaniment for everything after bar 28! Another nice touch is the fact that Mordechai has also added an ornamented version for the soloist to use on the repeats of the rounded binary form-a very nice touch. This is a beautiful, melodious work-somewhat reminiscent of Mozart's *Ave Verum*. It

would make a perfect encore piece on a bassoon/string recital!

Georg Wenzel Ritter (1748-1808): Six Quartets for Bassoon and Strings Op. 1 (Edited by Daniel G. Lipori) A-R Editions (801 Deming Way, Madison, WI 53717, Tel: (608) 836-9000, Fax: (608) 831-8200, e-mail: jameslz@areditions.com) Score: \$40.00; Parts: \$36.00 per set

Georg Wenzel Ritter was a bassoonist at the Mannheim court and considered one of the virtuosos of his day. These six quartets attest to his ability. Written in every flat key thru E flat Major, plus one in G Major, they are now available in this beautiful new publication edited by bassoonist **Daniel Lipori**. The edition is preceeded by an excellent, scholarly introduction and followed by a "critical report", both of which give the performer valuable historical background to Ritter's life and works. The bassoon writing, while quite technical scale and arpeggio-wise, is not bad range-wise, rising only to high g. (Apparently Ritter's bassoon lacked a high a key!) Also the low register is not used at all. (Leaky bassoon???) The works are comparable to the Danzi and Devienne *Quartets*, and probably a Level III+, capable of performance by an advanced student. I recommend this wonderful new edition strongly to you as excellent works for those exciting, and often too rare bassoon/string performances.

BASSOON QUARTETS

Arthur Frankenpohl: Fanfare for Bassoons (ICOCRR) 1998, Editions VIENTO (EV 421) (Address previously given.) \$5.00.

This is a short, unique work written to celebrate the 85th birthday of bassoonist/teacher C. Robert Reinert in 1998. The acronym ICOCRR stands for "IN CELEBRATION OF CHARLES ROBERT REINERT" provides the composer with the melodic fragment: CEEBAFCAEBEE (octave lower) E. The composer then uses this as a cantus firmus in two-bar phrases played subsequently by each of the 4 bassoons in bars 20-27 of the work. It's a cute piece and a clever idea! The da capo form is only 39 bars long, but should be in every bassoonist's library. Technically, it is a level III, the top bassoon rises only to c2, and the lower parts could easily be covered by students. It's a fun piece!

David Heckendorn: Three Songs for Bassoon Quartet Op. 48 Lizzy B Music (118-11 84th Ave. #209, Kew Gardens, NY 11415. Tel: (718) 846-5977, e-mail: Dhecken48@AOL.com)

According to the program notes, this nice three movement work was first performed at the CW Post campus of Long Island University, New York, on October 24, 1999, by bassoonists **Leonard Hindell, Howard Rockwin, Gilbert Dejean, and Jonathan Watkins**. It is written in an expanded tonal style, and is quite lyrical, with occasional elements of jazz intermixed. The top two bassoon parts are fairly difficult, though none of the parts are particularly easy technically. The first bassoon part rises to high e flat2, and this note must be articulated at the beginning of a phrase at one point. Overall I would rate it as a IV-, and it would require some careful preparation-not necessarily "sight-reading" material. One minor irritation with the score and parts, which are computer generated, is the reluctance of the composer to use the tenor clef, even when the first bassoon is playing high e flat2 passages, making the part much more difficult to read than necessary. This is a minor flaw, however, and overall the work is quite beautiful and interesting throughout. ❖