

An Annotated Bibliography of Pedagogical Repertoire and Literature for the Bassoon

Elizabeth Rusch Fetters and Daniel Perttu
Kent, Ohio

This is an annotated bibliography of bassoon repertoire and articles on pedagogy which was compiled during a graduate seminar in bassoon pedagogy led by David DeBolt at Kent State University. The repertoire listed is appropriate for beginning through high-school bassoon students, and the articles are applicable to all levels of bassoon teaching, with a particular emphasis on early instruction. While this bibliography is not comprehensive, it is intended as a ready-reference of items we found to be pertinent to the teaching of the bassoon.

The range indications in the repertoire list uses “c” as middle C. “C” is the octave immediately below (C in the staff) and “c’” is the octave above.

A SELECT REPERTORY FOR BEGINNING BASSOONISTS

Bach, Johann Sebastian. Bourrée I and II from *Third Cello Suite*. Found in *Solos for the Bassoon Player* (q.v.)

Meter: cut time. **Tempo:** Poco Allegro. **Key:** C-major, C-minor. **Range:** E - f'. **Tenor clef:** no. **Rhythm:** straightforward quarters and eighths.

This is a very attractive piece for beginning players and that has an easy range. It may be difficult for younger players to keep a steady tempo if they play without an accompanist. The piano part is realized in the *Solos for the Bassoon Player* book.

Bakaleinikoff, Vladimir. *Three Pieces for Bassoon and Piano*.

Meter: common, 2/4. **Tempo:** I. Andante, II. Allegro, III. March tempo. **Keys:** G-major, B-minor, C-major. **Range:** B¹ - g'. **Tenor clef:** no. **Rhythm:** includes triplets, dotted eighths/sixteenths.

This piece has both lyrical and marked sections. The first movement will help students to develop the ability to play frequent slurred skips of a third or more in the melody.

Baines, Francis. *Introduction and Hornpipe*.

Meter: 4/4, 3/4. **Tempo:** intro is Moderato, hornpipe is Un poco più mosso. **Key:** G major. **Range:** C - f#. **Tenor clef:** no. **Rhythm:** includes quintuplets, sixteenth-note triplets, dotted eighths/sixteenths, and sixteenth note pick-ups.

This is a short, lively piece of intermediate difficulty with sixteenth-note triplets that may help students to understand ornamentation.

Beethoven, Ludwig van. Adagio from *Sextet*, Op. 71. Sol Schoenbach has arranged the original solo into a full-length work for solo bassoon with accompaniment. Found in *Solos for the Bassoon Player* (q. v.) **Meter:** 2/4, felt in 4. **Tempo:** Adagio. **Key:** B-flat Major. **Range:** F - g'. **Tenor clef:** no. **Rhythm:** fairly simple.

This is a beautiful piece which teaches phrasing and lyrical playing. Students may experience difficulty reading complex rhythms while feeling the eighth note pulse.

Besozzi, Jerome. *Sonata*.

I. Allegro. **Meter:** 2/4. **Tempo:** allegro. **Key:** B-flat. **Range:** A - f'. **Tenor clef:** no. **Rhythm:** frequent switching between rhythmic values.

II. Adagio. **Meter:** common. **Tempo:** eighth = 80. **Key:** F-major. **Range:** A - d'. **Tenor clef:** no. **Rhythm:** fairly complex, greatest concern is keeping the eighth note pulse continuous. Includes complex ornamentation and subdivisions of the beat.

III. Presto. **Meter:** 3/8. **Tempo:** dotted quarter = 66. **Key:** B-flat. **Range:** G - f'. **Tenor clef:** yes. **Rhythm:** Feeling one beat to a bar can make sixteenth notes and sixteenth note triplets difficult.

This piece is a useful tool for teaching complicated rhythmic relationships and ornamentation. Composed in a standard sonata structure of fast/slow/fast, this work teaches both simple and compound meters.

Billaudot, Gérard. *Pièces Classiques*.

(In five volumes, ranging from “very easy” to “quite difficult”; includes piano accompaniment)

This is a collection that takes orchestral themes and arranges them into short pieces for bassoon and piano. Unlike Schoenbach’s *Solos for the Bassoon Player* (q.v.), these orchestral themes are not necessarily taken from standard bassoon solos. This collection is great for exposing students to orchestral repertoire beyond bassoon excerpts.

Boismortier, Joseph. *Three Baroque Dances*.

Meter: cut time, 3/8. **Tempo:** half note = 68, dotted quarter = 42. **Key:** C-major. **Range:** Eb - f'. **Tenor clef:** no. **Rhythm:** straightforward. Complicated form includes repeats, multiple endings, and a dal segno between two minuets.

Students will learn standard minuet form, with the

first minuet in major, the second in minor, and the return to the first.

Bourdeau, E. *Premier Solo.*

Meter: common. **Tempo:** Moderato, Plus vite. **Key:** C-minor, C-major. **Range:** B_♭¹ - c^{''}. **Tenor clef:** no. **Rhythm:** not terribly complex, many running sixteenth note passages.

Composed in a romantic style, this flashy piece demands a steady tempo, but also allows for rubato. This piece has many runs, but they are mainly scales and arpeggios. The most difficult aspect is the extreme range and the facility needed in that range.

Donizetti, Gaetano. "Romanza" ("Una furtiva lagrima") from *L'elisir d'amore*. Sol Schoenbach has arranged the original solo into a full-length work for solo bassoon with accompaniment. Found in *Solos for the Bassoon Player* (q.v.)

Meter: 6/8. **Tempo:** Larghetto. **Key:** B-flat minor. **Range:** f - a_♭¹. **Tenor clef:** entirely. **Rhythm:** Fairly simple, felt in six, with ornamentation.

This lovely bassoon solo opens the climactic tenor aria in Donizetti's opera. The key, reading tenor clef, lyrical phrasing, and sustaining a long line are the most difficult factors.

Dunhill, Thomas. *Lyric Suite for Bassoon and Piano.*

I. Allegretto amabile. **Meter:** 4/4. **Key:** D-major. **Range:** D - b_♭¹. **Tenor clef:** no. **Rhythm:** simple.

II. Scherzino. **Meter:** 3/4. **Tempo:** Allegro molto giocoso. **Key:** G-major. **Range:** D - g¹. **Tenor clef:** no. **Rhythm:** fairly simple.

III. Nocturne. **Meter:** 9/8. **Tempo:** Andante con moto grazioso. **Key:** E-flat major. **Range:** c - a_♭¹. **Tenor clef:** no. **Rhythm:** Compound meter may present challenges.

IV. Intermezzo alla Gavotta. **Meter:** 4/4. **Tempo:** Animato. **Key:** D-minor. **Range:** D - a¹. **Tenor clef:** no. **Rhythm:** fairly simple.

V. Vivace. **Meter:** 6/8. **Key:** D-major, A-major, E-flat major; change in key signatures may present challenges. **Range:** D - a¹. **Tenor clef:** no. **Rhythm:** may be complicated by the compound time.

The combination of fast tempos, complicated meters, overall length, and wide variety of keys make this piece more appropriate for the more advanced student.

Garfield, Bernard. *Two Pieces for Bassoon and Piano.*

I. Andante espressivo. **Meter:** common. **Tempo:** quarter note = 60. **Key:** B-flat major. **Range:** B_♭ - e_♭¹. **Tenor clef:** no. **Rhythms:** simple

II. Scherzo. **Meter:** 3/8. **Tempo:** dotted quarter = 80. **Key:** no key signature, numerous accidentals. **Range:**

C - d^{''} (alternate ending avoids use of high d). **Tenor clef:** yes, and treble clef. **Rhythm:** eighth notes, sixteenths, sixteenth note triplets, and quarters in compound meter, a few ties.

The first movement is rather straightforward, but is a good tool for teaching lyrical playing and phrasing. The second movement is more technically and rhythmically demanding and has an extended range.

Godfrey, Fred. *Lucy Long.*

Meter: 2/4. **Tempo:** Maestoso, Moderato, Adagio, Allegro. **Key:** F-major. **Range:** C - c^{''}. **Tenor clef:** no. **Rhythm:** straightforward

This is another nice piece that sounds more difficult than it is. Frequent leaps over an octave may be difficult for younger players. Sixteenth note passage work lies easily in the fingers.

Jacob, Gordon. *Four Sketches for Bassoon and Piano.*

Meter: common, 3/4, 3/2, 2/4. **Tempo:** various, see below. **Key:** C major, B-flat major. **Range:** B_♭¹ - e_♭¹. **Tenor clef:** no. **Rhythm:** simple.

This piece is in four short movements, all contrasting styles: I. A Peaceful Piece (quarter note = 52), II. A Little Waltz (waltz tempo), III. L'Après-Midi d'un Dinosaur (quarter = 72), IV. Polka (quarter = 96). This work is very accessible and attractive. The movements can stand on their own if necessary; the whole work is good for teaching contrasting styles.

Millars, Haydn. *Adagio and Rondo.*

Meter: common, 2/4. **Tempo:** Adagio and Moderato. **Key:** B-flat major, F major. **Range:** B_♭¹ - b_♭¹. **Tenor clef:** no. **Rhythm:** frequent syncopations and switching between eighth notes, eighth note triplets, sixteenth notes, and sixteenth note triplets.

The technically challenging sections are mainly scales and arpeggios, but the rhythmic complexity may make this piece difficult. This is a good piece to reinforce students' work in scales and arpeggios.

Phillips, Burrill. *Concert Piece for Bassoon and Strings.*

Meter: 2/4. **Tempo:** Allegro, 132. **Key:** no signature, numerous accidentals. **Range:** B_♭¹ - a¹. **Tenor clef:** yes. **Rhythm:** includes dotted-eighth/sixteenth patterns, all note values, and cross accents.

This piece's most difficult aspects are the cross-rhythmic accents which are more easily felt by rewriting three 2/4 bars into four 3/8 bars, with the eighth notes remaining constant.

Schoenbach, Sol, ed. *Solos for the Bassoon Player* (includes piano accompaniment).

This is a compilation of standard orchestral solos

transformed into complete solo pieces, which functions as an excellent introduction to learning orchestral excerpts for more advanced players. The piano part provides a musical context for the bassoon solos, so that the student can understand how his part fits in with the other voices.

Senaille, J.B. *Allegro Spiritoso*.

Meter: 2/4. **Tempo:** Adagio non troppo, Allegro spiritoso. **Key:** A-minor. **Range:** E - g'. **Tenor clef:** no. **Rhythm:** Fairly simple, but introduction includes thirty-second notes.

Similar to the Bourdeaux *Premier Solo* (q.v.), this piece sounds flashy but is not seriously difficult. The most challenging part for students is holding the eighth notes steady after the sixteenth-note runs.

Sharrow, Leonard. *Master Solos*..

This book is most appropriate for beginning and intermediate students. It has a wide range of solos that represent various historical periods and styles.

Sheen, Graham. *The Really Easy Bassoon Book: Very First Solos for Bassoon with Piano Accompaniment*.

Range: F - d'. **Tenor clef:** no.

This book is comprised of thirteen solos within an easy beginning range, some of which are excerpts from orchestral music, such as "The Elephant" from *Carnival of the Animals* by Saint-Saëns. The solos do have a variety of dynamics, articulations, meter, and phrase structures that could present valuable learning opportunities. The solos progress by difficulty, and the piano part is easily accessible.

Siennicki, Edmund. *Romanze*. Found in *Master Solos* for the bassoon, by Leonard Sharrow (q.v.)

Meter: 4/4. **Tempo:** Moderato; Allegretto. **Key:** F major, B-flat major, a few accidentals. **Range:** E - f'. **Tenor clef:** no. **Rhythm:** easy

Mr. Siennicki, a bassoonist and an alumnus of Kent State, has provided young bassoonists with this piece, which allows for lyric playing and scalar sixteenth passages.

BOOKS AND ARTICLES RELATED TO BASSOON PEDAGOGY

Dawson, William J. "Ask the Doctor: Physical Conditioning." *Double Reed* 21, no. 3 (1998): 118-120.

Written by a physician, this article provides the bassoonist with specific strategies for improving general cardiovascular, respiratory, musculoskeletal health, particularly as it relates to playing the bassoon. These strategies are important for young players to learn from the beginning to develop good habits.

Dee, Renee Anthony. "Nurturing the Young Bassoonist: A Holistic Approach." *Double Reed* 24, no. 4 (2001): 113-123.

A well-known bassoon pedagogue shares her teaching techniques which she presented at the 2001 IDRS conference at West Virginia University. Her article is particularly unique in its approaches to motivating students, teaching students how to practice, helping students to simulate performance conditions, and encouraging students to become independent thinkers.

Durran, Daryl. "User Friendly Bassoon Tunes." *Double Reed* 22, no. 1 (1999): 63-65.

This article offers an annotated list of bassoon solos appropriate for beginners through advanced high school students and college students. It provides a rubric that rates the difficulty of both the bassoon part and the piano part. The solos are organized by time period, and a list of collections is offered. Some of the items on the list are not commonly performed, but might deserve more attention.

Echols, Gary. "Solo and Ensemble Literature for Bassoon: A Selected Bibliography of Material for the Bassoon Teacher and Student." *Woodwind Anthology: A Compendium of Articles from The Instrumentalist*. Evanston, Ill.: Instrumentalist Co., 1983: 512-515.

This list is organized by the following categories: bassoon alone; bassoon and piano; bassoon ensembles; duets including one bassoon; bassoon and strings; and etudes, studies and orchestral excerpts. Pieces are ranked from Grade I to Grade V and include publishers.

Hough, James. "A Not Sung Enough Hero: The Bassoon Teaching and Playing of Loren Glickman." *Double Reed* 23, no. 1 (2000): 31-34.

After commenting upon Glickman's distinguished career, Hough discusses Glickman's specific ideas about tone production, varying tone color by varying embouchure, varying the use of vibrato, incorporating phrasing techniques from string players, and using very smooth and light finger technique.

Jansen, Will. *The Bassoon, Its History, Construction, Makers, Players, and Music*. Vols. 1-5. Buren, The Netherlands: Uitgeverij Frits Knuf, 1978.

This is possibly the most exhaustive source of information on the bassoon. An engineer by trade, Will Jansen was an amateur bassoonist and enthusiast for collecting information on the bassoon. The text treats both the German and French systems equally, has numerous pictures, and includes an index of names, list of illustrations, and a list of

musical examples. Topics of particular interest to bassoon teachers might include the history of the bassoon, a bibliography and discography of bassoon solos and ensemble music, and a biography of bassoon players.

Leech, Alan. "An Approach to the Bassoon and Its Literature." *The Journal of the International Double Reed Society* vol. 16 (1988): 53-60.

Formerly a course syllabus for bassoon students, this is a list of method books and literature divided by the following categories: for the beginner, moderately easy, intermediate, advanced intermediate, moderately difficult, difficult, and advanced. Also includes: the bassoon in chamber music, bassoon and other solo instruments with orchestra, and orchestral excerpts. Lists publishers.

Lipori, Daniel. *A Researcher's Guide to the Bassoon*. Lewiston, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2002.

This is possibly the most comprehensive book on the bassoon since Will Jansen (q.v.), and by far the most scholarly publication on the instrument to date. This book is a list of bibliographies for the bassoon and all related topics. Of special interest to the pedagogue are the chapters on teaching and tutors (method books) which also include bibliographies.

Ramey, Richard. "Ravel's *Bolero*: Practice Techniques for the Bassoon Solo." *Double Reed* 17, no. 3 (1994): 67-70.

This article outlines a history of the development of *Bolero* and provides a structural/ analytical outline of the work. It then discusses the importance of practicing it at a range of tempos and keeping it in strict time, the importance of subdividing, the importance of adjusting to a pedal tone to control intonation, and the importance of incorporating carefully choreographed breaths into the music.

Reinert, C. Robert and Goodman, Alan. "Breathe, Don't Blow." *Double Reed*, 21, no. 3 (1998): 115-117.

This article provides bassoonists with strategies for improving tone production. The authors first discuss the importance of imagining the sound that one wishes to produce and to conceive of sound as a singer might. They then discuss the importance of proper embouchure placement and relaxation,

of reed design, and of controlling muscle tension in the upper body. Finally, they address anatomical issues related to breathing and explain how effective breathing technique should feel.

Waln, Ronald L. "From ? to Bassoon." *Woodwind Anthology: A Compendium of Articles from The Instrumentalist*. Evanston, Ill.: Instrumentalist Co., 1983: 501-503.

This article discusses the relationship between skills gained on flute and saxophone to those used on the bassoon, and advocates transferring students from these instruments over other woodwind instruments.

Williams, Robert S. "Bassoon Basics for the Flicking Bassoonist." *Double Reed*, 18, no. 2 (1995): 41-47.

Williams offers suggestions on the use of the whisper key, the size of the half-hole, which keys to use to flick certain notes, and how to attack notes using flick keys. In addition, he suggests alternate fingerings to help to tune or improve responsiveness of problematic notes all over the entire range of the instrument. Finally, he discusses specific excerpts for which the use of flick keys is very important.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS:

Elizabeth Rusch Fetters has just completed a Master of Music degree at Kent State University, studying with **David DeBolt**. Other teachers include **Fernando Traba**, **Jason Worzby** and **David Borst**. She is currently teaching fifth grade general music in Hudson, Ohio and bassoon privately. Most recently, she was invited to the Delta Omicron Triennial Conference in Louisville, Kentucky as an Alumna Performer. She and her husband reside in Stow, Ohio.

Daniel Perttu is currently completing a Master of Music degree in bassoon and conducting, and a Master of Arts degree in composition at Kent State University, where he studies bassoon with **David DeBolt**. This past summer he studied at Brevard Music Center, focusing on bassoon with **William Ludwig** and composition. He recently won a bassoon scholarship from the Akron Federation of Musicians and a Jacob K. Javits Fellowship from the United States Department of Education for graduate study in music.

