

bassoONLY

Some Good Pieces You Probably Don't Know About

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When seeking to program an unaccompanied work, bassoonists most often turn to the music of Osborne, Mignone, Jacob, or to one of the other handful of pieces that have managed to become mainstays in our repertoire. And why not? They are fine compositions that deserve to be frequently performed and heard. But among the other 400-plus compositions for unaccompanied bassoon (most of which do not come close to the artistic level of those mentioned above) one may occasionally encounter works that truly stand out. The following pieces are not at all well known (I believe only one of them has even been mentioned in *The Double Reed.*), but possibly could be. They encompass a variety of styles and techniques; from conservatively tonal through atonal to the most avant-garde, from capricious to austere, from lyrical to technically virtuosic. I recommend them all as potential additions to your repertoire.

Miklós Csemiczky (b. 1954)
Partita per fagotto solo
Editio Musica Budapest Z. 13 532
www.emb.hu
email: musicpubl@emb.hu

Commissioned by the Hungarian Radio for the 1988 National Woodwind Competition, this piece has all the hallmarks of a contest piece and is excellent music as well. Lyrical sections alternate with more jocular sections that are stylistically reminiscent of Stravinsky's *Three Pieces* for clarinet. There are technical and rhythmic intricacies throughout this six-minute tour-de-force; the lyrical sections may even be more challenging than the allegros in this regard. The bassoon's full range is exploited, with an articulated leap to high E near the end. While the composer's manuscript facsimile is not easy to read, the music is thoughtfully laid out as a tri-fold to avoid a page turn. The music is fun to play and fun to hear, and is a fine showpiece for a recital.

Patrick Hardish (b. 1944)
Intensities II
available from the composer for \$9.78 at:
P.O. Box 20548
PABT
New York, NY 10129 USA
email: pathardish@hotmail.com

Intensities II was composed for Andy Lustig in 1978. As its title suggests, this appealing, occasionally subtly humorous, and moderately adventurous four-minute work consciously explores musical tensions and intensities; some sudden, and some gradually built up and then released. While at first apparently atonal, the work's tonality emerges through various minimalist-flavored patterns and repetitions. While employing the full range of the bassoon to high D, the music is not overly demanding technically. Some elementary extended techniques are called for, including flutter tonguing, enharmonic trills, quarter-tone trills, glissandi, and an instruction to play the highest possible tone. The score contains a few misprints; be sure to obtain corrections from the composer.

Kirk O'Riordan (b. 1968)
Temptation
available from the composer at:
600 W. Grove Parkway, apt. 1106
Tempe, AZ 85283 USA
email: kirkholly@aol.com

Dating from 1994, *Temptation* was written for and dedicated to **Jeffrey Lyman**. Readers with good memories may recall his performance of it at the 1996 IDRS Conference in Tallahassee. The piece, according to the composer, "is about the experimentation we engage in as we go through life: the main conflict occurs between the person's need to deviate, and the threat of guilt that restrains."

This idea is very effectively portrayed in this excellent seven-minute work. Simple lyrical material is presented and then developed; cautiously at first and then more adventurously. After being subdued, the material is again explored more ambitiously, eventually even with wild abandon including multiphonics and very fast virtuoso passages, only to end in restraint.

The music fully exploits the lyrical capabilities of the bassoon, as well as its full range up to high D, with extended use of the upper register both at the beginning and end. The music lies just at the edge of tonality and, while requiring an agile facility, is not as difficult as it looks. Most of the rapid passages lie well, as do the multiphonics. The fingerings for the multiphonics came from Bartolozzi's *New Sounds for Woodwind*, and four of the five work well for me. As with the Hardish work, consult the composer regarding a few errors in the score.

Aleksandër Peçi (b. 1951)
Broken Dream
 June Emerson Edition 354
 email: JuneEmerson@compuserve.com

Aleksandër Peçi, who is virtually the only Albanian composer to have achieved any sort of significant recognition outside of his native land, wrote *Broken Dream* for June Emerson in 1998. According to notes in the score, it was composed after hearing Argentine tango recordings while staying with her at Windmill Farm.

This very evocative five-minute work is itself a rather surreal tango, undulating back and forth in a dream-like fashion between slow sensuous sections and others that are torrid and intense. Although the music is only marginally tonal, traditional tango rhythms and melodic figures keep the music “in character.” While in general not overly difficult technically, there are a few widely leaping arpeggio passages, some jumping up to high D. The overall effect is still one of passionate lyricism. While very successful on its own, I look forward to a performance including a solitary dancer. (More on this thread in a future issue.)

Willy Schneider (1907-1983)
Partita für Fagott solo
 Mösel Verlag

Imagine the lightness of Gordon Jacob’s *Partita* combined with the harmonic language of Paul Hindemith and you will have a reasonable concept of this delightful piece, published in 1981. Its five contrasting movements (Moderato, un poco rubato; Allegro, ma non troppo; Amoroso; Scherzando; and Allegro) last about six minutes and utilize the full range of the bassoon up to high D. Technically, it is somewhat more challenging than the Jacob, in part because of numerous rapid wide leaps. While not a centerpiece for a recital, it would make a fine lightweight foil for contrast in a “meaty” program.

Tôn-Thất Tiêt (b. 1933)
Jeu des Cinq Elements II
 Éditions Jobert
www.jobert.fr
 email: info@jobert.fr

Jeu des Cinq Elements II was commissioned by the French Ministry of Culture for **Alexandre Ouzounoff** in 1982, and incorporates an impressive

number of extended techniques into its very angular and constantly varying textures. Flutter-tonguing, quarter-tones, glissandi, tongue-slaps, timbral variations and trills, and multiphonics all appear as integral elements in the music rather than as mere effects. The timbral and multiphonic fingerings were taken from Ouzounoff’s book *Actuellement le bassoon* and, being conceived for the French bassoon, will not always work with a Heckel-system instrument. No pitch collections for the multiphonics are indicated in the score, only single fundamentals. A Heckel-system player will need to be creative in their execution. The range, up to high C#, is not a problem, especially considering that the piece was conceived for the bassoon. The rhythmic complexities, however, are formidable with many different note groupings, asymmetries, syncopations, and densities.

The composition’s form is essentially episodic (The composer is primarily known for his film music.) and the three connected sections last about eleven minutes. They may be performed separately, however. If you are looking for a challenging piece of “new” music consider this one.

P. Kellach Waddle (b. 1967)
Stolen From Churches
 available from the composer at:
 1720 S. Lakeshore Blvd. #204
 Austin, TX 78741 USA
 email: GusMahler2@aol.com

While P. Kellach Waddle’s name and music, like those above, is not well-known, the quality of his music has not gone completely unnoticed. His *The Unseen Shooting Stars: Double Concerto for Two Cellos and Orchestra* earned a nomination for the 2002 Pulitzer Prize in Music. *Stolen From Churches* dates from 1994 and was written for **Chris Ulfers**. It is a four-minute reverie in the manner of the Osborne *Rhapsody* and is enigmatically tonal between A major and F# minor. The range is conservative, ascending only to high Bb, and while technical problems are minimal a wide dynamic range (from triple piano to quadruple forte) coupled with some very long lines requires considerable effort. For the player who favors lyrical expression there is much emotion here to explore.

Lest anyone be offended by the title; it refers, according to the composer, not to desecration but rather to a friend’s hobby of collecting trinkets from demolitions sites, often broken-down churches.